

Dr. Steven Masley's Better Brain Recipes

Spinach, Beet, and Goat Cheese Salad

The beets improve blood flow to your brain; the spinach and walnuts provide additional cognitive benefits—and taste great with the beets and goat cheese.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Baking Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 4

4 medium beets, unsightly skin peeled, cut into ¾-inch cubes
4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon Italian herb seasoning
4 cups raw, pre-rinsed, and drained baby spinach
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
4 ounces organic goat cheese
2 ounces walnuts, shelled, toasted

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Toss the beets with 2 tablespoons of the oil, the salt, pepper, and Italian herbs in an ovenproof baking dish and roast for about 40 minutes, until the beets are tender but not overcooked.

When the beets are cooked, remove them from the oven and let cool a few minutes. Toss the spinach with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and the vinegar and spoon onto individual serving plates. To each portion, add beets, then garnish with the goat cheese and walnuts.

Black Bean Soup

This soup is especially good with home-cooked beans, although using canned beans is both quicker and easier. Some cooks get into the habit of making a batch of beans once or twice a week, so the beans are always on hand. With precooked beans, you can have this velvety soup on the table in less than thirty minutes. This soup is absolutely loaded with brain-supporting plant pigments, fiber, nutrients, and probiotics.

Prep Time: 15 to 20 minutes

Simmering Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 6

8 cups black beans (or four 15-ounce cans), cooked, rinsed, and drained
1 tablespoon avocado oil
1 medium sweet onion, chopped
2 medium celery stalks, diced
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon ground paprika
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
4 medium garlic cloves, crushed and diced
15 ounces chopped tomatoes (about 2 cups)
2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

Garnish

2 tablespoons organic sour cream
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:

When the beans are ready, heat a large pot to medium-high heat. Add the oil, onion, celery, salt, oregano, and paprika and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onion softens. Add the red pepper flakes and bell peppers, and heat for another 2 minutes, continuing to stir occasionally.

Add the garlic, tomatoes, vegetable broth, and beans to the pot and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat to medium and simmer for 10 minutes. Divide among the soup bowls and garnish with the sour cream (1 teaspoon in each bowl) and cilantro.

Shrimp with Thai Curry Sauce

In a restaurant this would be served over rice, but with all the flavors here you won't miss it (nor will your brain miss its high glycemic load). You can easily substitute chicken, bay scallops, or tofu for shrimp and use any type of nut butter in the curry sauce. If using chicken, make sure it is fully cooked before adding it to the sauce.

Prep and simmering time: 30 minutes

Serves: 4

Curry Sauce

15 ounces canned coconut milk (from a BPA-free can, if possible)
2 tablespoons almond butter
2 tablespoons red chili sauce (to taste, 1 to 3 tablespoons; such as sriracha)
1 tablespoon fish sauce (or oyster sauce, or skip it if you don't have either)
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
¾ cup fresh pineapple chunks (or 8-ounce can unsweetened, drained)
2 medium garlic cloves, crushed and minced
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil (or Thai basil)
2 lemongrass stalks, cut 1 inch from the base into 2-inch pieces
½ cup low-sodium vegetable broth

Sauté

2 tablespoons macadamia oil (or avocado, almond, or other nut oil)
2 pounds wild extra-large shrimp
1 medium onion, slivered lengthwise
2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
½ cup low-sodium vegetable broth
2 cups sliced broccoli
1 medium red bell pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
1 cup snow pea pods

Garnish

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:

Whisk together the coconut milk, almond butter, chili sauce, fish sauce, lime juice, pineapple, garlic, basil, lemongrass, and vegetable broth in a saucepan. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer to let the sauce thicken.

Meanwhile, heat a wok or large sauté pan to medium-high heat. Add the oil, shrimp, and salt and sauté for a few minutes, stirring often, until cooked through. Remove the shrimp from the wok and set aside.

To the same wok over medium-high heat, add onion and carrots and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes, until the onions soften. Add the vegetable broth mixture and broccoli, stirring occasionally, and sauté for another 3 minutes. Add the bell pepper and snow peas, continue to stir frequently, and cook until the vegetables are al dente. Remove the lemongrass stalks from the curry sauce and discard. Return the shrimp to the simmering curry sauce, reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer for 3 to 4 minutes. Serve in bowls and garnish with fresh cilantro.

Italian Turkey Meatloaf

It's often easier to find organic, cage-free ground turkey than grass-fed beef or pork, and the turkey tastes terrific in this recipe. Rolled oats offer a very nice gluten-free and low glycemic load alternative to bread crumbs.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Baking Time: 50 minutes

Serves: 4

1 tablespoon avocado oil, plus more for the pans
1 medium white onion, chopped
2 cups chopped mushrooms
1 pound organic, cage-free ground turkey
2 large organic, cage-free eggs
1 cup rolled oats
½ cup dry red wine
1 tablespoon Italian herb seasoning
4 medium garlic cloves, crushed and diced
½ teaspoon sea salt
1¼ cups marinara sauce
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease an 8 × 4-inch loaf pan with avocado oil.

Heat a sauté pan to medium-high heat. Add the oil, onion, and mushrooms and sauté, stirring occasionally, for about 2 to 3 minutes until the onions are translucent.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine the ground turkey, eggs, oats, red wine, Italian herbs, garlic, salt, and ¼ cup of the marinara sauce, mixing well. Pour the mixture into the loaf pan.

Next, pour the remaining 1 cup marinara sauce over the mixture, then sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 50 minutes (the internal temperature should reach at least 165°F). Let sit for about 10 minutes before serving.

Fruit Crumble

Here is a dessert I look forward to serving. You can combine a variety of fruits (apples, pears, peaches, and berries), and it is loaded with brain-promoting pigments, fiber, and fat, yet it still has a low glycemic load. Be sure to pick organic fruit if they are on the Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Baking Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4

¼ cup port wine

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon organic lemon zest

2 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 medium organic apples, cut into small cubes

2 medium pears, cut into small cubes

2 cups organic blueberries (frozen or fresh)

½ cup sliced almonds

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Combine the port, lemon juice, lemon zest, tapioca, and cinnamon in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to a gentle boil. Add the apples and pears. Stir occasionally for 5 minutes, add the blueberries, remove from the heat, and pour into a pie plate.

While the fruit is cooking, heat a sauté pan to medium heat. Toast the sliced almonds until warm and fragrant, but stop before they brown. Top the fruit mixture in the pie plate with the sliced almonds. Bake for 15 minutes. Serve in small bowls.