

January 2023

BAY LEAVES

Bay Custard Ice Cream

Dominican Bay-Rum Sauce

Greek Chick Pea Stew

Pickled Apricots

Vegetables *Bourgignon*

Vegetarian Tomato – “Fish” Chowder

I am pretty sure that my mother and my mother-in-law dropped a dried bay leaf into a tomato sauce because the recipe called for it. I do not think they really tasted the effect. Bay leaves have always been given little respect for what they do but just leave them out of treasured recipe and you will know that something is missing. Laurel leaves contain more than fifty compounds. Menthol or camphor taste together with eucalyptus are most apparent at first. As a stew or sauce simmers the whole palate of flavors is releasing, minimizing the menthol and eucalyptus and introducing subtle nuances that do make a difference, naysayers aside.

Every year I plant a bay leaf plant, not hoping that our zone 5 herb beds will suddenly profit from global warming but because, as an annual, I can use fresh bay leaves in my cooking and harvest the rest of the bay leaves every fall to dry. I don't fuss about whether it is *Laurus nobilis*, the mild species usually imported from Turkey but available from nurseries here, or *Umbellularia californica*, the much stronger California-grown species. The latter must be used judiciously if used fresh from the garden.



In tasting dishes at their source, as we have been so fortunate to be able to do, we have found that many familiar dishes have been sadly Americanized to appeal to the less adventuresome eater. If wings and huge burgers with layers and layers of everything on them appeal to the majority, the restaurant industry will follow suit. Food trucks are a newer phenomenon in America and they have had the unique opportunity to preserve the subtlety of ethnic combinations and spicing. Television programming has taken up the cudgel of quantity over quality and all too often emphasizes the large, over-proteined servings that barely fit in a human mouth when taste is the real reason to eat in a country of plenty. In a country where there are so many choices, food doesn't need to fill your mouth, it needs to fill your senses as you satisfy this ever-present instinct for survival that pervades the day of *homo sapiens*.

I mentioned fresh bay leaves above for use in cooking. If you have never used fresh bay leaves, you have a treat coming. The leaf imparts a phenomenal nuance to cooking. Although I will make my Portuguese potatoes with dried bay leaves in the winter, in the summer they are a whole different dish because the fresh bay flavor is really nothing short of extraordinary. [See *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*, vol. I, p. 334.] After a trip to Portugal in the 1970s, the trip where I first tasted potatoes with bay leaves, I started exploring the cuisines of the former Portuguese colonies. The taste of bay had been introduced by the Portuguese and it had been

embraced. A vegetable stew from Angola that we enjoy very much would be simply white beans and vegetables without those two large bay leaves that simmer in the stew (*see A Worldwide Journey . . . , vol. II, pp.13-14*); bay leaves lend nuances to Cape Verdean rice and limas (*see A Worldwide Journey . . . , vol. II, p. 41*) and to their bean stew with hominy (*see A Worldwide Journey . . . , vol. II, pp. 42-43*); and Malagasy add the magic of the bay leaf to their zucchini and rice in tomato sauce (*see A Worldwide Journey . . . , vol. II, p. 150-51*).

Laurus nobilis leaves, the most common dried laurel leaves found in our stores, unlike other members of the genus *Laurus* are not toxic and can be eaten. They are bitter and difficult to chew and digest so they are generally removed from dishes before serving. Indian bay leaves or *tej patta* [*Cinnamomum tamala*] may also be available to you. This citrusy leaf of the Indian cassia tree contributes the flavors of allspice and cinnamon with a hint of orange. It is used extensively in Indian cooking and you may find it an interesting addition to your spice tools.

BAY CUSTARD ICE CREAM

TPT - 9 hours and 15 minutes;
1 hour = bay infusion period;
8 hours = freezing period

Bay is an unusual, but extremely fascinating, taste. Here it is presented in an even more unusual manner which is a lovely end to a salad menu . . . perhaps eaten in the garden. This custard ice cream tastes less rich, provides a load of protein, and is one of our most favorite ice creams.

3 tablespoons water
4 large fresh bay leaves, if possible, or dried bay leaves, if necessary

1 cup heavy whipping cream

2/3 cup fat-free sweetened condensed milk
1 cup fat-free pasteurized eggs (the equivalent of 4 eggs)*
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract



Prepare a **7 x 3 x 2-inch non-stick-coated loaf pan** by placing it in the freezer until required.

In a small saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat water. When hot, remove saucepan from burner, add bay leaves, and set aside at room temperature for 1 hour. Stir occasionally.

Using an electric mixer fitted with *chilled* beaters or by hand, using a *chilled* wire whisk, beat heavy cream in a *chilled* bowl until stiff. Set aside.

Strain liquid from bay leaves. *Reserve the liquid.*

In a large bowl, combine sweetened condensed milk, pasteurized eggs, vanilla extract, and the bay-infused water drained from the bay leaves. Stir to blend thoroughly. *Whisk-fold* stiffly whipped cream *gently*, but *thoroughly*, into milk-egg mixture.

Pour mixture into chilled loaf pan. Spread evenly. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Freeze overnight or until firm—about 8 hours.

Either scoop ice cream from pan to serve or remove entire block of ice cream from pan and slice.

Leftovers should be returned to the freezer, tightly covered.

Yields about eight 1/2-cup servings

Notes: *Because raw eggs present the danger of *Salmonella* poisoning, commercially-available pasteurized eggs are recommended for use in preparing this dish.

This recipe is easily doubled, when required. Use a 9 x 5 x 3-inch non-stick-coated loaf pan when doubling.

1/8 SERVING (i. e., per 1/2 cupful) –
PROTEIN = 5.6 g.; FAT = 9.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 18.8 g.;
CALORIES = 189; CALORIES FROM FAT = 47%

DOMINICAN BAY – RUM SAUCE

TPT - 1 hour and 11 minutes;
1 hour = bay infusion period

You do not teach Long Island history without considerable knowledge of the rum/slave trade, the so-called “triangle trade.” It was, therefore, not exactly earth-shaking news that the French claim rum sauce as their own. Their colonies in the Caribbean provided rum for home consumption and trade with Europe, Canada, and the American colonies. However, in their years in the Caribbean they never seemed to combine rum with the leaves of the “Bois d’Inde or “Bwa den” (literally, Tree of India or Bay Tree). The British did recognize the combination but for use as a popular aftershave lotion.

Little cakes, bread puddings, or ice cream can be turned into a very special dessert with just a touch of sauce and this sauce can do it. I also use this sauce for baked apples and pears. It adds a very lavish touch and the hint of bay laurel is always commented upon.

6 tablespoons light cream or half and half
2 bay leaves—fresh or dried, as preferred

3/4 teaspoon corn starch

1 1/2 tablespoons butter
6 tablespoons sugar
1/2 cinnamon quill

1 1/2 tablespoons rum
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

In a saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, combine cream and bay leaves. Allow to come just to the simmer. Remove from heat and allow to stand for 1 hour. Remove and discard bay leaves.

Add corn starch and whisk until corn starch is in suspension.

Place over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat. Add butter, sugar, and cinnamon quill. Bring to the simmer and simmer for about 3 minutes, whisking constantly. Remove from heat. Remove cinnamon quill.

Stir in rum and vanilla extract. Thin with cream, if necessary. Turn into a small serving dish.

Serve warm or cool to room temperature and refrigerate. Reheat *gently* before serving.

Yields about 1/2 cupful

Note: This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING (about 2 tablespoonfuls) –
PROTEIN = 0.6 g.; FAT = 6.4 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 22.6 g.;
CALORIES = 149; CALORIES FROM FAT = 39%

GREEK CHICK PEA STEW

Revithia Yahní

TPT - 1 hour

I grew up not even knowing what a chick pea was and then when I married I learned only how to cook “ceci” in the Italian way. When I began to explore this wonderful legume, I found that all the countries of the Mediterranean basin and South America cook chick peas in unimaginable diverse and wonderful ways and that they all have different names for these versatile and nutritious nuggets. Cooked with a grain, as they are in this Greek stew, their protein is complemented. Boy, my Northern European ancestors didn't know what they were missing!

1/2 cup water

2 tablespoons *dry*, long grain, brown rice

1 tablespoon *extra virgin* olive oil

1 medium carrot—scraped or peeled and sliced into thin, round slices

1/4 cup chopped onion

1 large garlic clove—*finely* chopped

1 1/2 cups vegetarian stock of choice

2 bay leaves—broken and secured in a tea ball or in a *bouquet garni* bag

1/4 teaspoon ground marjoram

1/8 teaspoon dried oregano—crushed

1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste

3/4 cup cooked, dry *or* canned chick peas (*garbanzos*)

1/2 cup canned plum tomatoes—chopped—*or* peeled, seeded, and chopped fresh plum tomatoes

3/4 cup chopped fresh broccoli florets and tender stem pieces

Crumbled *feta* cheese, for garnish*

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, bring water to the boil.

Meanwhile, rinse brown rice in several changes of cool water. Add rice to *boiling* water. *Immediately* reduce heat to *LOW*. Cover and allow to cook for 20 minutes. Remove from heat, remove cover to release steam, and set aside until required.

In a kettle set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat olive oil. When hot, add sliced carrot, chopped onion, and *finely* chopped garlic. Cook, stirring constantly, until onion is soft and translucent, *being careful not to allow vegetables to brown*. Add vegetable stock, bay leaf pieces secured in either a tea ball or a *bouquet garni* bag, ground marjoram, crushed oregano, and black pepper. Bring to the boil and allow to simmer for 10 minutes.

Stir in chick peas and cooked rice. Add chopped tomatoes and broccoli. Cook, stirring frequently, for about 15 minutes, or until all vegetables are heated through and broth is bubbling. If necessary, extra vegetable stock may be added. Remove and discard bay leaf pieces.

Turn into heated serving bowl. Serve into soup plates. Pass crumbled *feta* cheese.



Yields 4 servings
adequate for 2 people

Notes: *Omit *feta* cheese, if you prefer to go vegan.

This recipe may be doubled, when required.

Leftovers may be frozen but the contrasting textures of the vegetables is not preserved when reheated.

1/4 SERVING (exclusive of *feta* cheese) –
PROTEIN = 3.9 g.; FAT = 4.9 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 23.0 g;
CALORIES = 105; CALORIES FROM FAT = 42%

PICKLED APRICOTS

TPT - 1 month and 20 minutes;
1 month = full flavor development period

Having grown up in a family where pickles were often considered one of the vegetables at each meal, my files literally overflow with vegetable pickle recipes from Europe, from Asia, and adaptations from right here in the United States. Pickled fruits were new to me and this became a family favorite.

1 cup (about 25) large sulfite-free dried apricots
1/2 cup preservative-free dark raisins
2 bay leaves

6 tablespoons raspberry vinegar* or white wine vinegar
6 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds



Sterilize **two 1/2-pint canning (jelly) jars**.
Also sterilize lids and rings for the jar.

Put apricots, raisins, and a bay leaf into each sterilized jar.

In a saucepan set over *MEDIUM* heat, combine vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and mustard seeds. Allow to come to boil. Allow to boil until sugar is completely dissolved. Pour hot pickling liquid over fruit in canning jar, dividing it between the jars.

Carefully wipe lips of jars. Seal with hot, sterilized lids and rings. Refrigerate for at least two weeks, preferably for one month, to allow for flavor development.

If using for a garnish, chop apricot halves before serving.

Yields about 10 servings

Notes: *If you want to try your hand at making your own raspberry vinegar, my recipe can be found on p. 452 in volume II of *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/10 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.3 g.; FAT = 0.05 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 13.6 g.;
CALORIES = 53; CALORIES FROM FAT = <1%

VEGETABLES *BOURGIGNON*

Les Légumes Bourgignon

TPT - 2 hours and 10 minutes;
1 hour = marination period

I am reminded of the time, in the very early 1970s, when I removed several containers of my Beef Bourgignon from our freezer to transfer to the refrigerator of neighbors who had just suffered a loss. Since we did not eat any meat after 1973, that may have been the last time I had made the stew. Here I sit almost fifty years later trying to recapture succulent flavors I can now barely remember.

1 cup medium-bodied red wine

[A Burgundy or even a Pinot Noir would be our choice.]

4 ounces frozen soy analogue strips—cut into 1/2-inch cubes

1/4 cup chopped onion

12 frozen whole pearl onions

1 medium carrot—peeled and cut into 1/2-inch chunks

1 garlic clove—peeled and finely chopped

1 1/2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil

1/4 teaspoon Herbes de Provence

2 large bay leaves—broken in pieces and secured in a tea ball

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

1 1/2 teaspoons herb vinegar of choice

1 tablespoon tomato paste

Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

6 tablespoons water

4 ounces small crimini mushrooms—well-rinsed and brushed to remove any foreign matter*

2 tablespoons fresh or frozen parsley florets

In a large mixing bowl, combine red wine, soy meat pieces, chopped onion and whole pearl onions, carrot cubes, finely chopped garlic, 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil, *Herbes de Provence*, and bay leaves. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Pour vegetables into a strainer set over a mixing bowl. Set bowl of wine marinade aside until required.

In a heavy skillet set over *MEDIUM* heat, heat 1 tablespoonful olive oil. Add vegetables which have been strained from their marinade. Sauté, stirring frequently, until soy meat analogue cubes are browned on all sides.

Add vinegar. Stir to coat all vegetables.

Add tomato paste. Stir to coat all vegetables and cook, stirring constantly, for about 1 minute.

Add reserved wine marinade. Deglaze, scrapping any browned material from the bottom of the skillet. *Reduce heat to LOW-MEDIUM*. Season with black pepper. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the whole onions and the carrots are tender. Stir occasionally.

Add water, whole mushrooms, and parsley florets. Simmer for an additional 10-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove tea ball and discard bay leaf pieces.



Turn into a heated serving bowl and keep warm on a warming tray until ready to serve. It can be served over rice, mashed potatoes, noodles or as stew with a good bread, as you prefer.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *If mushrooms are too large, cut in half.

We prefer this freshly made but have squirreled leftovers in the freezer for a future lunch with success and since this is a great filling for a small pot pie, leftovers often find their way back to our table in that fashion.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 13.7 g.; FAT = 5.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 17.0 g.;
CALORIES = 148; CALORIES FROM FAT = 34%

VEGETARIAN TOMATO – “FISH” CHOWDER

TPT - 54 minutes

Back in the 1970s and 1980s people often apologized for their meat eating by contending that they just didn't have time to cook vegetarian, suggesting that vegetarianism was a luxury for those who worked at home. Granted it was not always the world of Pierre Franey's "The 60-Minute Gourmet," but it was manageable if you used weekend time blocks to prepare double batches that could be frozen and prepared meal items early in the day. Planned leftovers were a trick we used too. By the 1990s some convenience items such as packaged tofu, canned, low-sodium organic soups, and organic yogurt eased the load quite considerably; an increase in imported cheeses gave us an opportunity to experiment, as did the widespread availability of organic eggs and pasteurized eggs. By the turn of the twenty-first century, we could find soy meat analogue products in every grocery store freezer. When we first retired to Central Pennsylvania the "international aisle" of our local grocery store was little more than pasta and sauces. Organic Indian and Thai menu options were soon present along with the sauces and condiments we had been making from scratch. No longer was a stir-fry the only act-in-town. The employment of convenience items need not send you to locking doors and pulling curtains to shamefully hide your transgression. On the contrary, good quality products can be found in health food stores and in the organic sections of well-stocked grocery stores. This "fish" chowder is a quick way to turn a couple of grocery store items into a terrific main course. Our favorite accompaniment would be thick steamed and chilled carrot slices accompanied by a creamy gorgonzola dressing.

1 small potato—peeled and cut into 1/2 inch chunks
3 cups boiling water

1 frozen, breaded “fishless” filet—brought to room temperature

1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons chopped onion
2 tablespoons diced celery

1 cup (8 ounces) organic tomato bisque soup
1/3 cup canned, diced tomatoes
1/4 cup wild mushroom stock or vegetarian sea broth*
1/4 cup corn kernels—fresh or frozen
1/2 teaspoon crushed dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon Old Bay Seasoning
1 large bay leaf

2 tablespoons light cream or half and half, or to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a large saucepan set over *HIGH* heat, boil potato chunks in *boiling* water for 10 minutes. Drain and set aside until required.

Slice the breading from the “fishless” filets. Cut the breading into small pieces. Place on a baking sheet and bake in preheated 350-degree F. oven for about 10 minutes until crisp. Remove from oven and set aside to garnish soup.

Cut the filets into 1/2-inch chunks. Set aside until required.

In a large saucepan set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, heat olive oil. Add chopped onion and diced celery. Sauté until both vegetables begin to soften, *being careful not to allow the vegetables to brown.*

Add tomato bisque soup, *diced* tomatoes, mushroom or seafood stock, corn kernels, crushed, dried thyme, Old Bay Seasoning, and bay leaf. Bring to the simmer.

Add pre-cooked potato and “fishless” fish chunks. Cook, stirring frequently for about 15 minutes. Remove and discard bay leaf.

Add cream and cook for about 3 minutes more. *Do not allow soup to boil once cream has been added.* Turn into heated soup tureen. Sprinkle the crisp “fish” breading garnish over.

Serve at once into heated soup bowls.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *A simple wild mushroom stock recipe can be found in *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*, vol. II, p. 694. My recipe for sea broth can be found on p. 411 of the same volume.

This recipe is easily doubled.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 3.4 g.; FAT = 6.0 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 16.4 g.;
CALORIES = 128; CALORIES FROM FAT = 42%

*If you use dairy products in your vegetarian plan,
perhaps for protein, perhaps as a calcium source,
you may not have fully explored the extra advantages
of products that are the result of lacto-fermentation.
Next month we'll discuss it a bit with a few easy recipes.*

Do drop by,

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

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