

## Laura's Basic Vegetable Soup

One large red or yellow onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

2 ribs celery, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1/2 cabbage, shredded

Choice or combination of: String beans, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli (or any other vegetable)

1/2 teaspoon, dried or 1 teaspoon fresh seasoning

Choose 1 or 2 seasonings to taste. Sage and rosemary work well together.

Other suggestions; thyme, marjoram, basil, or oregano

8 cups liquid; vegetable stock ("Better than Bouillon" comes in a jar) and/or fat free beef or chicken broth, or a combination. The liquid should just cover the cut-up vegetables.

OPTIONS: 1 16-ounce can whole tomatoes; beans: lentils, split peas (no need to soak either), cannellini, lima, navy, etc.

Sauté the onion, garlic, celery and carrots until they soften, about 10 – 15 minutes. Add cabbage and any other vegetables you want (no others are needed if you're using beans).

Use the first four ingredients as a base and then whatever you have on hand. Simmer 1 - 2 hours, or longer.

Taste to adjust seasoning. You can purée part in a blender to thicken, or use a hand-held pureeing appliance. I usually store the soup in quart containers and freeze a few portions. Then I can rotate an all-vegetable soup with lentil soup, white bean soup, etc. Different beans make very different soups. I love the giant lima beans. Add leftover vegetables as you have them. I even add leftover salad to a portion, as long as there's no yogurt in the dressing. Mustard and vinegar just make the soup tangy. You never need to waste vegetables if you've got a soup in the refrigerator. Don't discard the tough, outer leaves of a head of lettuce; throw them in the soup. You can't make a mistake with vegetable soup. Any combination will work. Adding beans makes it much heartier.

To defat regular broth, store in the refrigerator and remove the hardened fat

## Zucchini Soup

6 - 8 small to medium zucchini, peeled and coarsely cut (reserve 1/2 cup, cut in thin strips, for garnish)

2 large onions, chopped

1/2 teaspoon curry powder, or more to make it spicier

4 cups fat free chicken broth or vegetable stock

Dill or chives for garnish

Non-fat, plain yogurt or low-fat buttermilk, optional

Zucchini Soup is delicious hot or cold. It's inexpensive and takes only a few minutes to prepare. Place chopped zucchini and onion in saucepan. Sprinkle with curry powder and stir to coat pieces. Add broth. Bring to boil. Cover and simmer 40-45 minutes. Spoon mixture into blender or food processor and purée. Add 1/2 to 2/3 cup buttermilk to make it creamy or a dollop of yogurt for each serving. Garnish with reserved zucchini strips. Chill if desired. Serve sprinkled with dill or chopped chives. Serves 6.

NOTE: This is a great template for broccoli, cauliflower and mushroom soup. You can make any one-vegetable soup using these proportions. You can vary the seasoning and garnish (use basil and flat leaf parsley, for example, or sage and parsley). For a mushroom soup, a variety of mushrooms, including some dried mushrooms, and fat free beef broth, will make it richer tasting.

## Beet and Fennel Soup

- 6 medium beets
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 3 thinly sliced fennel bulbs, reserve the feathery leaves for garnish
- 1/4 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 2 -3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 6 tablespoons light sour cream for garnish

Preheat oven to 400-degrees.

This is a real crowd-pleaser. There are a few steps but it's easy to make and it looks beautiful. To prepare the beets for roasting, cut off the leaves, retaining a few inches of stem. Scrub well and wrap the beets tightly in heavy duty aluminum foil. Roast until tender, about 1 1/2 hours. Let stand until cool enough to unwrap and handle. Peel the beets and chop into 1 - 2-inch pieces. Heat the oil and sauté the onions and fennel seeds, stirring, until the onions are softened and translucent. Add the fennel and 1/2 cup of broth and cook, covered, until the fennel is soft, about 20 minutes. Stir in chopped beets and the remaining broth and simmer uncovered for 15 - 20 minutes more. Let cool and puree in small batches in a blender. You can prepare the soup to this point and store in the refrigerator for a day or two. Just before serving, reheat the soup, add the orange juice, heat through and spoon into serving bowls. Garnish with a dollop of light sour cream and the fennel leaves. Serves 6

## Perfect Roasted Vegetables

I don't know what I would do without roasted vegetables. Any and all combinations work. They're easy to prepare and everyone loves them. I've suggested a number of variations to get you going.

**Vegetables:** Onions, carrots, eggplant, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, shallots, canned artichoke hearts, peppers, cabbage, leeks (Depending on how you cut them, cooking time will be around 20 minutes)

String beans, asparagus, broccoli (8 – 12 minutes)

Olive oil and/or lemon, vinaigrette, soy, Teryaki, etc, as desired

Preheat oven to 450-degrees. Cover one or two cookie sheets with heavy duty aluminum foil. Baste or spray the foil with olive oil. Cut desired vegetables, thinly or thickly, as desired (see suggestions below). Place on cookie sheet by individual groups or mix together. They look beautiful presented both ways. Spray or baste the vegetables with oil, and lemon juice, vinegar, soy or Teryaki, if desired. Vinaigrette or any salad dressing also works well. If using two cookie sheets, roast on top and bottom of oven and switch sheets mid-way through. Place veggies on platter. Here are suggestions to think of as templates.

- Roast wedges of red onion, cauliflower florets, thickish strips of red and yellow pepper, a drained can of artichoke hearts and thick strips of carrots on one or 2 cookie sheets. Keep each vegetable separate. When done, arrange in stripes on a serving dish. Looks gorgeous.
- Cut thin strips of cabbage, carrots, peppers and onions. Baste with vinaigrette. Roast either separately or together. Toss with oil and vinegar.
- Cut veggies in small chunks (try, onion, peppers, eggplant, zucchini). Roast all mixed together with or without a drained can of diced tomato. Great as colorful vegetable or as a pasta sauce.
- Super easy: Eggplant slices basted with vinaigrette; Cauliflower basted with olive oil and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice; A drained can of artichoke hearts and some peeled carrots basted with olive oil or any salad dressing.

NOTE: Leeks and Brussels sprouts benefit from having about 1/2 cup of vegetable or chicken broth added to the pan. I often do them together even though they're both green.

**Tomatoes are best slow-roasted for 2 -3 hours at 275-degrees or for a few hours.**

## Basic Vegetable Sauté

1-2 Tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion, thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 red pepper, thinly sliced

? pound mushrooms

Salt and pepper to taste

? cup dry sherry (optional)

1-2 tablespoons plain, non-fat yogurt (optional)

Herbs as desired: A few Tablespoons chopped fresh basil, oregano or rosemary, or 1 teaspoon dried.

This combination of vegetables is just one suggestion. Green peppers, peapods, snap peas, slim carrot sticks, scallions, leeks, eggplant cubes, cherry tomatoes, anything works. If you use broccoli or cauliflower, it's best to microwave them for 2 minutes first. I use Vegetable Sauté as a side vegetable dish, or as a main dish with brown rice, quinoa or pasta.

Sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is wilted, 5 minutes. Add red pepper and saute 5 minutes more. Add the mushrooms. Sauté 5 - 10 minutes, until the mushrooms "give up" their juice. Saute over medium heat, letting the liquid boil down, another 5 - 10 minutes, depending on the firmness you like. Add salt, pepper and herbs. If desired add sherry for rich taste at the end. Boil briefly over high heat to burn off the alcohol. Stir in 1 - 2 tablespoons of yogurt if you want a creamy consistency once it's slightly cooled. Serves 2 - 4.

## Pureed Eggplant Dip

- 1 large eggplant, or 2 smaller ones
- 3 - 4 cloves Baked Garlic (see below), or to taste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine or balsamic vinegar, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- Few drops Tabasco, if desired

Bake eggplant 1 hour at 375° F. Remove from oven and cool for one hour. Scrape out flesh. Mix hot eggplant with all other ingredients if a food processor or blender. Chill. Use as a dip for microwaved or raw vegetables. It's also delicious with vegetables in a pita. And you can make a great cold pasta salad by tossing it with ziti and slivers of red pepper. Makes approximately 2-3 cups.

Variation: In a hurry? Make a delicious **bean dip** using the same method. Canned cannellini beans work well, require no cooking and benefit from an additional tablespoon of oil.

## Simple Salmon Dip

1 7.5 ounce can wild Alaskan Sockeye red salmon

2 tablespoons chopped onion

1 tablespoon light mayonnaise

1 - 2 tablespoons olive oil

Fresh ground black pepper

This is easy, delicious and it's high in omega-3 fatty acids. Puree the ingredients in a food processor or blender. I use the second tablespoon of oil sometimes to make it super creamy when I serve it to company. It's great on cucumber rounds or a dollop on an endive leaf makes an attractive hors d'oeuvres. I like it on celery for a 5:00 snack. It also works well for lunch with raw veggies in a pita pocket.

## Baked Garlic

1 large whole head of garlic

2 teaspoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 375-degrees. Remove the outer casing from a whole head of garlic (the larger the individual cloves, the better). Slice through the head about 1/3 of the way down. Place on a large square of aluminum foil and sprinkle with 2 teaspoons olive oil. Seal the foil, making a tight packet. Bake for 1 hour. The garlic will be soft and mushy. Squeeze out the soft, incredibly sweet (yes, sweet) garlic inside. You can add it to sauces, dips, as above, or use as a spread on steamed and raw vegetables, in mashed potatoes, or on crackers to complement a salad.

## String Bean and Carrot Salad

2 pounds string beans

2 sweet red peppers (optional)

3 medium carrots

1 tablespoon olive oil,

1/2 - 1 tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon crumbled feta, optional

The colors in this salad are beautiful, and the crunch of crisply cooked beans and carrots makes it very satisfying. Trim ends from beans. Scrape carrots and cut them into thirds and then strips. Core and seed peppers and cut them into thin strips. Steam or microwave beans and carrots briefly, 4 - 5 minutes. Don't overcook! Leave red peppers raw. Combine vegetables. Toss with a good olive oil and sherry or red wine vinegar. A tablespoon of crumbled feta cheese goes well, too. Serves 4 - 6

## Carrot Salad

2-3 large carrots, shredded

1 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon walnut or sesame oil

Juice of 1/2 lemon

1 tablespoon grainy Dijon mustard

This is a great salad to use as garnish for other dishes because the color provides an attractive contrast. It's also delicious with raw vegetables in a pita pocket, and it makes an appealing topping for potatoes. Simply mix all the ingredients in a medium-size bowl. Add additional mustard and/or vinegar to taste. Serves 2.

## Caesar Potato Salad

- 3 pounds red boiling potatoes
- 1 medium bunch of parsley, chopped
- 2-3 scallions, chopped
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- Juice of half a lemon
- 2 cloves garlic
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- A few dashes Teriyaki or Worcestershire sauce
- Black pepper
- 4 anchovies, (optional)

Here's a delicious and different potato salad. Cook potatoes in their skins in boiling water, chill, cut in quarters, and set aside. In food processor or blender, purée garlic. Add vinegar, Teriyaki sauce, Parmesan cheese, lemon and oil. Gently toss dressing with potatoes along with scallions and parsley. Garnish with anchovies if desired. Season to taste with fresh ground pepper. Serves 4 - 6.

Note: Any potato salad recipe can be made "German" style by using an oil and vinegar dressing instead of mayonnaise

## Salmon Salad

1 - 7.5 oz can wild Alaska Sockeye red salmon

2 tablespoons chopped onion

1 rib celery chopped

2 – 3 tablespoons light mayonnaise

Juice of 1/2 lemon

Pepper to taste

It's best not to clean the salmon. The little bones are full of calcium and the skin is rich in omega 3's. It's also easier. Having said that, I usually remove the more pronounced bones and some skin. Start with 2 tablespoons of the light mayonnaise. Don't think about old-style tuna salad. You just want it a little creamy. The extra tablespoon is for your first time or two. You won't need salt. Besides making a great center to a salad plate or a satisfying sandwich, salmon salad is delicious spread on celery as a snack.

## Sylvia's Tuna and Bean Salad

- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 2 12-oz cans chunk light tuna, well drained
- 2 19-oz can cannellini beans, drained, rinsed and dried
- ? cup chopped Italian parsley or fresh basil
- 2 – 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 – tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- Crudite for platter
- Salt and pepper to taste

This was my mother's favorite summer lunch. Combine all ingredients. Serve mounded on platter surrounded by raw carrot sticks, red pepper strips, cucumber slices, steamed green beans, etc and grape or cherry tomatoes. If you want to get fancy, you can shape the salad into the form of a fish. Use a slice of olive for the eye. Serve with fresh whole grain bread. Serves 6 – 8.

## Laura's Lemon Pasta

1 lemon

15 - 20 cloves of garlic (really)

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 bunch flat parsley and/or basil

4 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup reserved pasta water

Grated Parmesan

Grate the zest off the lemon into a small bowl, add the juice and 2 teaspoons of salt (less if you need to will work). Chop the garlic very finely in a Cuisinart or through a garlic press. Cover the garlic with 2 tablespoons olive oil. Chop the herbs in the Cuisinart or by hand. Reserve in a bowl and drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil.

Cook 1 lb of thin spaghetti very al dente (it will continue to cook while you prepare the sauce). Remember to reserve a cup of the salted water before draining. Leave the pasta in the colander and saute the garlic in 1 tablespoon oil and about 1/2 cup of the reserved pasta water. Boil down quickly until most of the water is gone. add more water slowly. Saute for about 1 - 2 minutes. Do not brown the garlic. Add the lemon juice and zest. Heat up but do not boil down. Take off the heat. Add the pasta and herbs and toss well. Serve with grated Parmesan.

## Mushroom Bolognese Pasta Sauce

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

3-5 cloves garlic

1 medium red onion

2 carrots, trimmed, scraped and cut into 4 -5 pieces

2 stalks celery, trimmed, strings removed and cut into 4 -5 pieces

1 lb white mushrooms, or a mixture of various mushrooms, cleaned with damp cloth and bottoms trimmed.

1 cup vegetable, chicken or beef broth (defatted)

? teaspoon dried sage, pepper to taste

A food processor makes this very easy to prepare. If you hand chop, you burn up half the calories preparing it. Chop the garlic and onion very finely in a food processor. Heat the oil and sauté while you chop the carrots and celery, again very finely. Add to the pan. Continue sautéing while you quarter the mushrooms. Chop them, also finely. Add to the pan. Add the sage and a few grinds of pepper. Sauté, adding about a 1/3 cup of the broth at a time. Let the broth absorb before adding more. Depending on the broth you use, you probably won't need salt. This is a very forgiving dish. It needs 20 – 30 minutes on a low flame but sometimes I leave it on simmer for longer.

Optional additions: A few tablespoons of feta cheese or canned or fresh tomatoes

## Tuna and Artichoke Pasta Sauce

- 4 – 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 small red onion
- 1/2 – 1 tin of anchovies
- 1 7 oz. can of water packed, chunk light tuna
- 1 14 oz can artichoke hearts, cut eat in 6 pieces
- 1 28 oz can diced tomatoes
- ? teaspoon dried oregano
- ? teaspoon red pepper, or to taste

Even people who think they don't like anchovies, enjoy this sauce. I always have the ingredients on hand and I can make a delicious dinner at a moment's notice. Sauté the garlic and onion until the onion is wilted, add the anchovies with their oil and sauté until they disintegrate. Add the tuna and sauté for two minutes. Add the artichokes and seasonings. Again sauté for a few minutes before adding the tomatoes with their juice. Simmer for 20 minutes, or until the tomato juice is absorbed.

Variations: In the summer I do use fresh tomatoes, no tuna and I substitute fresh basil for the oregano. You can substitute frozen or fresh peas for the artichokes and omit the tomatoes. I

Instant version: Just garlic, anchovies and tuna makes a delicious sauce. It's ready before the pasta water boils. You can add frozen peas and cook while the pasta is cooking.

## Basic Brown Rice

Brown rice takes longer to cook than white rice but it's easy to make, versatile and offers rich nutritional value with a delicious, nutty flavor. Recipes call for anything from half again as much water to rice, to double or even more water. Try the following and adjust, depending on your preference:

2 cups water or fat free broth

1T olive oil (optional)

1/3 teaspoon salt (not needed with broth)

1 cup short or long grain brown rice

Bring the water, oil and salt to a boil, stir in the rice, cover and let simmer on low heat about 30 minutes. Don't stir again once it's covered. Remove from heat. Check to be sure all the water has been absorbed. If not, return to simmer a few minutes longer. Remove from heat, let stand, covered, another 5 minutes. Taste for firmness. If too firm, let it stand another 5 – 10 minutes, covered. If you want to test another method, use only 1.5 cups of liquid for 1 cup of rice. Cook the same way but for only 20 minutes and let stand for 10. This makes firmer rice.

To substitute Brown Rice for white rice, you can cook it as you would pasta in boiling water for 12 minutes. Then proceed with any recipe that calls for white rice. Some people cook it this way routinely, for 25 minutes or so. I find using the standard method with broth more flavorful.

## Eggplant and Rice Casserole

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large, firm eggplants (about 2 pounds total weight)
- 1/4 – 1/2 cup tomato juice (from the canned tomatoes, below)
- 1 large minced onion
- 1 green pepper, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes, reserve liquid
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 3 1/2 cups fat free chicken or vegetable stock
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

This is a very satisfying, one-dish dinner. Preheat oven to 375° F. Trim the ends off the eggplant, slice, and cut into 1-inch cubes. Sauté the eggplant cubes in the olive oil. Add the tomato juice and simmer, stirring, for a few minutes. (The tomato juice facilitates using less oil.) Add the onion, green pepper, garlic, thyme, and bay leaf, simmer, stirring for a few minutes. Add the tomatoes and continue cooking 5-10 minutes, until the liquid is absorbed. The ingredients must be thick, so continue to cook if too liquidy. Stir in the rice and stock and season with salt and pepper, if desired. Spoon into a nonstick baking dish. Sprinkle with grated cheese and bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes, until all the stock is absorbed and the rice is tender. If the rice needs to cook longer, just turn off the oven and let it sit for 10 minutes. To vary this dish, you can add a 1-pound can of cannellini beans when you add the rice. Serves 8 without the beans, 10 or more with them.

Note: Any sautéed or roasted vegetables can be added to rice and broth and cooked in the oven this way

## Chicken and Mushroom Risotto

- 2 - 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small onion, or several shallots, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 12 ounces mushrooms (half minced, half thickly sliced)
- 8 ounces cooked white chicken meat, cut into cubes
- Salt and pepper
- 2 1/4 cup liquid (use sauté liquid plus water)
- 1 cup uncooked brown rice
- 3 tablespoons non-fat half & half

With classic risotto, you add the liquid very slowly, letting the rice absorb it bit-by-bit. Depending on my mood, I sometimes go through the whole process. But this method works well and it's much less trouble.

Sauté onion and garlic in the olive oil a few minutes until they soften. Add the minced mushrooms and sauté for 6 - 7 minutes. Add sliced mushrooms and chicken and sauté over medium heat an additional 6 - 7 minutes. Remove the chicken-mushroom mixture with a slotted spoon. Pour remaining liquid into 4 cup measure. Fill measure with water to 2 cup line. Add to saucepan with 1 cup brown rice. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Stir in chicken-mushroom mixture and half & half. Cover and lower heat. Let steam an additional 5-10 minutes, until rice is just firm.  
Serves 4 - 6.

This is a great recipe for leftover chicken. It also works as a blueprint for any risotto. You can use shrimp or scallops, broccoli or asparagus, for example, in any combination, instead of the chicken and mushrooms. If I use only vegetables, I add 1/3 cup of Parmesan cheese at the end of the recipe and omit the half & half. (When I have dried mushrooms on hand, I use them to give the risotto extra flavor. Just soak a small handful in hot water for 20 minutes or so. Use their liquid to cook the rice and add the mushrooms, chopped, to the chicken-mushroom mixture

## Tuna Stuffed Potato

- 1 baked potato
- 1 3-ounce can water-packed chunk light tuna
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon non-fat cottage cheese or feta
- 1 tablespoons plain, non-fat yogurt
- 1 teaspoon dijon or other mustard

Scoop out the potato meat and mix it with the other ingredients. Stuff back into the potato skins. Bake at 375° F for 15-20 minutes, until crisp on top. Serves 1.

I prefer oven-baked to microwaved potatoes. If you keep potatoes on hand, you can bake a few when you're baking something else. Then this becomes a fast, easy solution to what to make for lunch or dinner. You can mix leftover vegetables or chicken with potatoes for stuffing as easily as tuna. Canned baby peas also work well. When I have no feta or cottage cheese in the fridge, I sprinkle with a tablespoon grated Parmesan.

## Favorite Fish Marinade

2 - 3 tablespoons sesame oil (or olive oil)

2 - 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon lite soy sauce

Juice of 1 lemon

1 - 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

3 - 4 cloves of garlic through a press

1/3 cup grated ginger

This marinade is perfect for salmon, tuna and swordfish. Combine all ingredients and marinate the fish for 1 – 2 hours before broiling, roasting or grilling. These quantities are sufficient for 2 pounds of fish.

## Roasted Cod and Vegetables

- 1 pound of cod, Pollack, halibut or other firm, white fish
- 1 large white or 2 medium red onions, sliced in half and sliced across in 1/2 widths
- 1 - 2 carrots, cut in 2-inch lengths and sliced in 1/2 widths
- 1 potato (optional), peeled and chopped in 1 - 2-inch pieces
- 2 – 3 tablespoons olive or sesame oil, salt and pepper
- 1 - 2 tablespoons light mayonnaise for glazing

Preheat the oven to 375-degrees. Oil a baking dish just large enough for the fish. Prepare the vegetables. If you are using the potato, toss with 1 tablespoon of oil and bake for 10 minutes. Add the onions and carrots, toss and bake an additional 10 minutes. Rinse the fish, pat dry, rub it with 1 tablespoon of oil, salt and pepper. Spread a thin film of light mayonnaise on top. Lay it over the vegetables and roast for 20 minutes or until it flakes and is milky when cut. Don't over-do. Serves 3. It doubles nicely to serve 6.

Another version: roast the fish on a bed of sliced leeks mixed with grape tomatoes. Be sure to rinse the leeks thoroughly in water to remove any sand. Use only the white part of the leek and about an inch of the green. You won't need to pre-roast the vegetables.

## Flounder Poached in Jasmine Tea

Two cups best-quality jasmine tea (you can substitute Twinings) plus 1 tbs. dry tea for garnish  
? lb. flounder fillet

Scant ? cup ginger, peeled and julienned (sliced into fine strips)

2 scallions, green part only, sliced into a fine julienne

1tablesponn almond or olive oil (less, if you wish), plus 2 – 3 drops toasted sesame oil

Coarse sea salt and soy sauce to taste

Brew a large pot of jasmine tea and set aside to cool (this step can be done earlier in the day). Season the flounder fillets with coarse sea salt and fresh-cracked black pepper. Next, slice the ginger and scallion into a fine julienne. This is the garnish. In a small sauté pan, warm the oil over medium heat and immediately toss in the ginger and the dry tea leaves. Allow the pan to rest undisturbed until the ginger starts to sizzle, then sauté, stirring every few seconds. The entire procedure should take no longer than three minutes. When the tea and the ginger are crisp, remove the pan from the heat and add the sesame oil. Now bring the brewed tea to a gentle simmer in a pan. Season the liquid with sea salt and a generous glug of soy sauce. Now gently submerge the fillets in the broth, checking for doneness after about four minutes. Do not overcook. With the help of two spatulas, remove the fillets from the broth and park them on warm plates. Spoon the garnish and some of the poaching liquid over the fish and finish with a scattering of spring onions. Serve with sautéed spinach, a small mound of brown rice and a cucumber salad. Eat at once. Serves 2.

## Chicken with Rosemary and Oranges

Serves one with leftovers. (Or multiply for number desired.)

One boneless, skinless chicken breast, preferably hormone and antibiotic free

Grated rind and juice of half an orange plus the segments of the other half.

1 -2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped

Coarse sea salt and fresh-cracked black pepper

1 teaspoon olive oil

Splash of apple cider vinegar

1 - 2 tablespoons chicken stock

1 clove garlic, mashed or grated

1/8 -1/4 teaspoon butter, optional

Place the chicken between two sheets of plastic wrap and flatten to an even thickness with the palm of your hand. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels. In a small skillet over high heat, sear the chicken in the olive oil and remove it to a plate. Turn off the heat and let the skillet cool down for a minute or two. Off the heat, add the vinegar – it will bubble and spit — and the stock, scraping up all the sticky goodness at the bottom of the pan. Over low heat add the optional butter, the rosemary, and the grated garlic and orange rind, followed by the seared chicken. Cover the pan with a sheet of crumpled parchment paper and a lid\* and poach the chicken in the sauce for about two or three minutes, until just cooked through. (If in any doubt, cut into the fillet and check – when it is done, the juices will run clear.) After letting the meat rest a moment, slice it thinly on the bias and arrange it on a bed of steamed kale or spinach. Spoon the sauce over the chicken and the greens and garnish with the orange segments.

\*Because chicken breasts are so lean, they tend to dry out before they are fully cooked. The parchment paper/lid arrangement helps seal in the juices and prevents the sauce from evaporating. (Parchment is sold at most supermarkets and can be found keeping company with the tin foil and the plastic wrap.) You can, of course, cover the pan with a plain old lid; but if you do, chances are your supper will be tasteless and you may end up committing an act of dietary ridiculousness.

## Summer Pesto

1 large bunch of fresh basil, washed well, stems removed

4 – 6 garlic cloves, peeled

1 – 4 tablespoons olive oil

1 – 2 teaspoons kosher salt

Freshly ground pepper to taste

Optional: 2 tablespoons of feta or non-fat cottage cheese; a small handful of toasted pine nuts or walnuts, grated Parmesan to pass when the pasta is served

Traditional pesto is far more fattening than it needs to be. I use various versions of a basil/garlic paste all summer as a pasta sauce, marinade and to liven up vegetable sautés and soups. Mince garlic in a food processor. Add basil leaves, 1+ tablespoons of the oil, and the nuts if desired, salt and pepper. Process until the ingredients forms a thick paste. Adjust the oil, depending on how you plan to use it. As a pasta sauce, you'll need 3 – 4 tablespoons. To add to a vegetable sauté or soup, you'll need just one. Reserve a cup of pasta water before you drain the pasta and use some of it to moisten as you toss the pasta with the pesto.

Adding the cottage cheese makes a creamy pesto pasta sauce that allows you to cut back on the oil. The feta gives it a different and delicious taste. Waiting to add Parmesan until you serve the pasta saves hundreds of calories.

## Roasted Tomato Pesto Sauce

Halve a few pounds of plum tomatoes, roast them in a 300-degree oven for 90 minutes or a hotter oven for less. The skins will shrivel and you can pull them off easily when the tomatoes cool. Chop the tomatoes and add the pesto. Or, puree the tomatoes in the food processor with the pesto. (If fresh tomatoes aren't available, you can use canned diced tomatoes. I roast 2 large cans in their juice at 300-degrees for several hours, until the juice absorbs. Sometimes I make it with more pesto and just 1 large can – or 1 large and 1 small can.)

## Raw Tomato Pesto Sauce

Use only the best summer tomatoes for this sauce or you'll be disappointed. Halve a few pounds of tomatoes crosswise, seed them and chop the flesh. Salt, and let stand for at least an hour, preferably more. Pour off the liquid that accumulates. Add pesto to taste (I usually use about half and freeze the rest), a few tablespoons of chopped red onion and a few tablespoons of good olive oil.