



Culinary Chaos: hosting a vegetarian dinner party

BY: ELLA BARRY / ON: APRIL 23, 2024 / IN: FEATURES

The Scribe's chef hat, which once belonged to our food writer Swifty, has fallen onto my head this week. As the Scribe's token vegetarian, I knew what needed to be done.

While I'm no professional like Swifty, who sadly disappeared five months ago while pursuing a story about the UCCS catacombs, I've picked up some tricks during my four years as a vegetarian. There's no better way to honor the memory of Swifty than to throw a dinner party, so that's exactly what I did.

One thing I've learned about cooking vegetarian meals is that certain cuisines are more vegetarian-friendly, specifically Indian, Mediterranean and Italian foods, the latter of which I chose for this party.

The appetizer: Bruschetta dip



Bruschetta dip. Photo by Ella Barry.

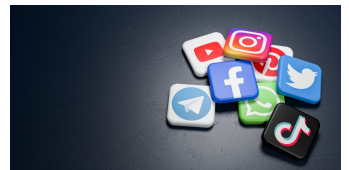
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While I do love a fancy dinner party, I'm still a college student short on time and money, so I decided on a simple appetizer: Bruschetta dip.

Ingredients:

Cherry tomatoes

Minced garlic

Olive oil

Salt

Pepper

Basil

Bread

Directions:

Start by toasting your bread. I bought a baguette and baked it in the oven at 350 degrees for roughly 10 minutes, which is about how long it took me to make the dip.

Chop the cherry tomatoes into quarters. In a bowl, combine the tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, salt, pepper and basil and stir. There are no measurements for this recipe, so lead with your heart.

When the bread is finished toasting, cut it into bite-size slices. Your dinner party guests can spoon the dip onto the bread and enjoy!

The entrée: Stuffed shells



Stuffed Shells. Photo by Ella Barry.

One of my all-time favorite meals, even before I converted to vegetarianism, has always been spinach and ricotta stuffed shells. As a vegetarian, I'm always searching for protein: beans, tofu, lentils, cheese and the highly underrated spinach.

Ingredients:

16 oz. of frozen spinach (or you can get it fresh if you're feeling fancy)

1 beaten egg

1 cup of ricotta cheese

1/2 cup of parmesan cheese

1/4 tsp of ground nutmeg

1/2 tsp of garlic powder

A pinch of onion powder



A hammocker's guide to Colorado Springs

A pinch of salt

A pinch of pepper

1 large jar of tomato sauce

1 box of jumbo shell noodles

Directions:

Start by boiling your noodles. You'll want them to be cool enough to touch by the time you stuff them, but not so cool that they get sticky and break.

Heat your spinach, then drain the excess water by pouring the spinach into a mesh strainer and pressing all the water out. In a bowl, mix the spinach, egg, cheeses and seasonings.

Pour 1/3 of the jar of tomato sauce into a 9×13 inch baking dish (ungreased) so it coats the bottom.

Use a spoon to stuff each of the shells with the spinach mixture. The fuller the better. Place each shell into the pan in neat rows — you should be able to fit three across. With all the stuffed shells in the pan, pour the remaining tomato sauce over the shells and sprinkle parmesan cheese on top.

Bake in the oven at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes. Serve hot and enjoy!

The side: Caesar salad



Caesar Salad. Photo by Ella Barry.

Nothing pairs better with Italian food than a classic Caesar salad. Unfortunately, most store-bought Caesar salad dressing is made with anchovies, but if you're not up for making dressing from scratch, I've found that Kraft Classic Caesar dressing is the best anchovy-free option.

Ingredients:

1 bunch of romaine lettuce

1 bag of salad croutons

Parmesan cheese

Kraft Classic Caesar dressing

Directions:

Wash, dry, and cut your lettuce and toss it into a large bowl. Add as many croutons and as much parmesan as your heart desires. Top it with the dressing and serve alongside the stuffed shells.

And there you have it, folks — you've just cooked a vegetarian meal for a real adult dinner party!

Graphic by Neako Hallisey.

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