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Food as Medicine

At AfriThrive, we believe Food is more than fuel, it's medicine, memory, and a source of strength. Our vision with Food as Medicine is to bring together medical professionals, dietitians, and community wellness advocates to explore how traditional African foods can prevent disease, support healing, and build healthier communities.

The following recipes have been carefully curated for their health benefits by the Chefs who believe in our mission and purpose.



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From the Kitchen of Chef Lee Vanterpool

Kenyan callaloo and curry coconut pumpkin with chickpeas are both deeply nourishing dishes rooted in tradition and whole-food ingredients. Kenyan callaloo, made from leafy greens like amaranth or spider plant (sagaa), is packed with iron, calcium, and vitamins A and C—supporting immune health and strong bones. Similarly, the curry coconut pumpkin with chickpeas brings together fiber-rich legumes, antioxidant-loaded pumpkin, and heart-healthy coconut milk. The combination of plant-based proteins, leafy greens, and anti-inflammatory spices like turmeric makes both dishes not only filling but also excellent for gut health, blood sugar control, and overall well-being. These meals reflect the wisdom of traditional diets that emphasize balance, simplicity, and seasonal nourishment.

Callaloo Recipe



INGREDIENTS

- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 2 fresh garlic cloves, diced
- 1 whole carrot, diced
- 2 onions, diced
- 4 teaspoons thyme
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1-2 bunches callaloo leaves (or substitute with spinach/collard greens)
- 2-3 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- Optional: scotch bonnet pepper (to taste)
- Optional: coconut milk (1/2 cup for creaminess)

INSTRUCTIONS

- STEP-01** **Prep the vegetables:** Wash and chop all vegetables. Remove stems from callaloo leaves and roughly chop.
- STEP-02** **Sauté the aromatics:** Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onions and cook until softened, about 3-4 minutes.
- STEP-03** **Add peppers and garlic:** Stir in diced red pepper, green pepper, and garlic. Cook for 2-3 minutes until fragrant.
- STEP-04** **Add carrot:** Add diced carrot and cook for another 2-3 minutes
- STEP-05** **Season:** Add thyme and salt, stirring to combine.
- STEP-06** **Add liquid:** Pour in broth gradually, bringing to a gentle boil.
- STEP-07** **Add callaloo:** Stir in the chopped callaloo leaves. They will wilt down significantly.
- STEP-08** **Simmer:** Reduce heat to low and simmer for 15-20 minutes until vegetables are tender and flavors meld.
- STEP-09** **Final touches:** Taste and adjust seasoning. Add coconut milk if desired for richness.
- STEP-10** **Serve:** Serve hot as a side dish or over rice as a main course.



Serves:
4-6 people



Cook time:
25-30 minutes

Curry Coconut Pumpkin with Chickpeas



Serves:
5 people



Prep Time
5 minutes



Cook time:
20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 teaspoons oil (vegetable or coconut oil recommended)
- 1 can (13.5 oz) coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup curry powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup diced pumpkin (fresh or canned)
- 2 cans (15 oz each) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup fresh spinach leaves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup onion powder (or substitute with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped fresh onions)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup garlic powder (or 3–4 cloves fresh minced garlic)
- Salt, to taste



INSTRUCTIONS

STEP-01

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat.

STEP-02

Add curry powder and let it simmer for about 2 minutes, stirring frequently to release the spices' aroma.

STEP-03

Stir in coconut milk and bring to a gentle simmer.

STEP-04

Add pumpkin, chickpeas, onion powder, garlic powder, and salt. Stir well to combine.

STEP-05

Simmer uncovered for 15–20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until pumpkin is tender and the flavors meld together.

STEP-06

Add spinach in the last 2 minutes of cooking. Stir until just wilted.

From the Kitchen of Chef Ablawa Zinoun

The ingredients in these recipes are rich in nutrients with proven medicinal benefits. Chickpeas, a cornerstone in dishes like hummus and roasted snacks, are packed with plant-based protein, fiber, and antioxidants that support heart health and digestion. Pumpkin, featured in our creamy soup, is loaded with beta-carotene, known to boost immunity and reduce inflammation. Kale, the star of our vibrant salad, offers calcium, vitamin K, and powerful cancer-fighting compounds. Apples and red cabbage bring detoxifying and anti-inflammatory properties, while garlic and lemon enhance flavor and immune defense. Every ingredient is intentionally selected to nourish, heal, and empower — reminding us that food truly is medicine.

Roasted Pumpkin Soup



Yield
6 servings



Prep Time
15 minutes



Cook
1 Hour



Total
1 hour 15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (3-pound) sugar pumpkin, halved, seeded and quartered
- 2 red bell peppers, quartered
- 2 Granny Smith apples, quartered and seeded
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 tablespoons olive oil (divided)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large sweet onion, chopped
- 4 cups vegetable stock
- 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup roasted chickpeas or croutons



INSTRUCTIONS

STEP-01

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly oil a baking sheet.

STEP-02

Arrange pumpkin, bell peppers, apple, and thyme. Toss with 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt, and pepper.

STEP-03

Roast 45–50 minutes or until fork-tender. Remove skins after cooling.

STEP-04

In a pot, sauté garlic and onion in remaining olive oil until tender.

STEP-05

Add roasted vegetables, stock, and rosemary. Bring to a boil, then simmer 5–10 minutes.

STEP-06

Blend until smooth, stir in cream, season to taste, and serve with toppings.

KALE SALAD



Yield
6 servings



Prep Time
20 minutes



Cook
25 minutes



Total
45 minutes

SALAD INGREDIENTS

- 2 bunches kale, thinly sliced
- 2 apples, diced or grated
- 2 red bell peppers, diced
- 1 small red onion, diced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ red cabbage, grated



DRESSING INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp garlic powder

INSTRUCTIONS

STEP-01 Combine all salad ingredients in a large bowl.

STEP-02 Whisk all dressing ingredients in a separate bowl and add to salad.

STEP-03 Chill for 30 minutes to soften kale and blend flavors.

STEP-04 Optional: Add grated cheese or nuts before serving.

Hummus without Tahini



Yield
4 servings



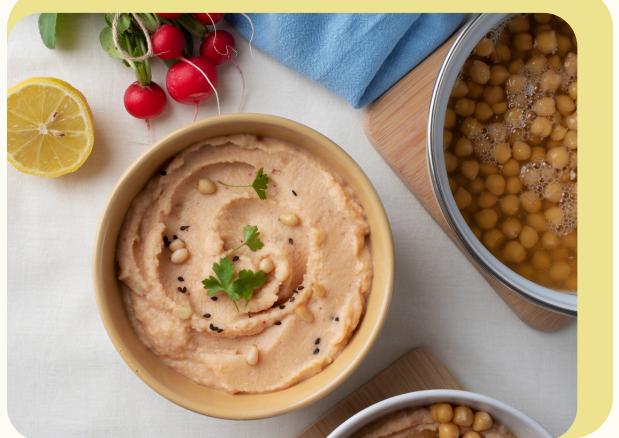
Prep Time
10 minutes



Total
10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (15 oz) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 to 4 tbsp water
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt



INSTRUCTIONS

- STEP-01** Blend chickpeas, water, oil, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, and salt until creamy.
- STEP-02** Adjust consistency with more water if needed.
- STEP-03** Store in the fridge and serve with pita or veggie chips.



Roasted Chickpeas



Yield
4 servings



Prep Time
10 minutes



Cook
45 minutes



Total
55 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp chili powder
- Pinch of sea salt
- Pinch of black pepper
- Dash of crushed red pepper
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 (15 oz) can chickpeas, rinsed and drained



INSTRUCTIONS

STEP-01 Preheat oven to 350°F.

STEP-02 Toss chickpeas with oil and spices.

STEP-03 Roast for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

STEP-04 Cool and enjoy as a snack or garnish.





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On Earth Day, we launched our **Grow With Us** campaign to do more than plant tomato seedlings. We planted the seeds of health, hope, and community transformation. As a donor, your support helps these seeds grow into something far greater—expanded access to fresh, culturally relevant food, hands-on gardening education, and healthier outcomes for families across our region. Your investment is not just helping us grow food. It's helping us grow a movement rooted in sustainability, connection, and lasting change.

Here's how you can help expand this vital work:

- **Donate to fund** our community food and nutrition programs
- **Sponsor a healing food workshop** or cooking class with Chef Abalwa
- **Partner with us** to bring Food is Medicine to clinics, schools, or local food pantries
- **Support our efforts to build gardens**, train families, and share recipes across generations
- **Spread the word** using the hashtag [#GrowWithAfriThrive](#)



Contact AfriThrive

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