

Chantal Soeters

A Healthy and Inspiring Christmas and 2013!



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Christmas is just around the corner. Do you want to have a healthy and inspiring Christmas dinner but have no idea where to start? These holiday recipes are here for you. All the recipes are based on a conscious and a healthy lifestyle and a plant-based wholefood diet.

The holidays are a typical time of the year where we tend to overindulge at our meals. If you are anything like me, you love to eat delicious food. Food to drool over, to enjoy and share with family and friends. Food is fun but it can also nourish you at a deep level.

I love cooking at Christmas and getting creative in my kitchen. I enjoy the typical flavors of the holiday, such as cinnamon, sage, cloves and orange. I also love creating tasty, healthy and wholesome meals that make you feel alive and deeply nourished.

Our traditional holiday foods are often low in nutrients and packed with saturated fats, white flour and large amounts of sodium and refined sugar. They are often so rich that they can make us feel sluggish and full. I believe food should give you energy and should make you feel great so you can enjoy the time you spend with your family and friends.

Eating healthy and wholesome foods simply make us feel good. I cook to enjoy food but also to feel good. I believe a healthy diet supports a healthy and inspiring lifestyle. The foods that we eat can give us energy, power, love and strength but can also drain our energy and leave us feeling disconnected and burnt out. In my recipes, I use lots and lots of organic veggies, whole gluten-free grains and seeds, good fats, unrefined sugars, and, occasionally, dairy products, fish and meat.

I have been experimenting in my kitchen these last few weeks and I have come up with seven different holiday recipes with tantalizing flavors that are high in nutrients and insanely delicious. All recipes in this Christmas menu are gluten-free, vegetarian and dairy-free (optional).

- Chai Spiced Hot Chocolate
- Roasted Mushroom Soup
- Apple, Avocado, Fennel Salad with Bergamot
- Quinoa with Lamb's Lettuce and Roasted Pumpkin
- Kale Salad with Pomegranate and Pistachios
- Roasted Veggies with Sage and Cinnamon
- Christmas Pudding with Glühwein

I hope that these recipes will inspire you to create your own healthy delicious holiday meals. You can make one dish or even prepeate the whole menu. Enjoy and be delighted by these creative and delicious recipes with easy to follow instructions.

Happy Holidays

Chai Spiced Hot Chocolate

4 - 6 portions

I love the warming and comforting effect of a great Chai Latte and the intensity of a hot chocolate. This recipe combines the best of both worlds. It is the perfect drink on a cold day, wrapped up in a warm blanket. Around the holiday season we tend to indulge in our cravings. For most of us when we get a craving, it's for sugar, especially in the afternoon or right after dinner. This Chai Spiced Hot Chocolate will satisfy your sweet tooth without creating a dramatic spike in your blood sugar levels. The best way to get a quick pick me up while enjoying the sweetness of life.



Ingredients

6 cups almond milk

4 pitted dates

4 tbsp raw cacao nibs

2 tbsp raw cacao powder

honey to sweeten to your taste

Chai spice blend

2 tsp ground cinnamon

¼ tsp ground cardamom

¼ tsp ground cloves

¼ tsp ground ginger

¼ tsp ground coriander

¼ tsp black pepper

1/8 tsp Himalaya salt

Or grind the contents of a bag Classic Yogi Tea in a mortar and pestle and use instead of the Chai spice blend.

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients except for the honey in a high-speed blender. Blend at medium speed until smooth.
2. Check sweetness and add honey to taste; blend once more.
3. Pour into a saucepan and heat, stirring at regular intervals, until steaming.
4. Serve hot. Drizzle with honey and a dash of cinammon.

Roasted Mushroom Soup

4 - 6 portions

There's nothing like a beautiful broth on a cold day or to start off a meal. This simple, no fuss recipe allows the ingredients to speak for themselves. By roasting the mushrooms the natural flavor of the different types of mushrooms is enhanced. A simple soup packed with flavor.



Ingredients

2 cups of mushrooms, stemmed & sliced, for example,

portobella, shiitake, chantarelle, oyster mushrooms

2 large shallots, finely minced

2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped

4 cups of porcini mushroom (gluten-free) stock

2 sprigs of rosemary

6 fresh leaves of sage

1 bay leaf

2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

1 tbsp pure maple syrup

freshly ground black pepper & sea salt

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees.
2. Place half of your prepped mushrooms in a roasting tray. Toss the mushrooms with the oil, vinegar, rosemary and sage. Roast at 200 degrees for about twenty minutes - or until they begin to caramelize around the edges. They should still be firm and moist.
3. In a large saucepan over medium heat, combine shallots, garlic and oil. Cook, while stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes or until very soft.
4. Add the rest of the mushrooms and 1 cup of the porcini stock. Add the bay leaf. Bring up to a gentle boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
5. Add remaining stock, the maple syrup and the roasted mushrooms including cooking fluid and herbs. Add freshly ground black pepper and sea salt to taste. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes.
6. Take out the rosemary, sage and bay leaves and serve the soup hot with a few rosemary leaves on top.

Apple Avocado Fennel Salad with Bergamot

4 - 6 portions

Want to surprise your taste buds with a ridiculously simple but insanely deliciously salad? This Fennel Apple Avocado salad is one of my favorites. The fennel is sweet, crunchy and refreshing and combines well with tartness of the apple and thick creaminess of the avocado. It makes a great side-dish for a richer entree. The Bergamot orange adds a special touch to this salad. I love its perfumy citrusy smell. There's a good reason why it's used in a lot of perfumes. It has a crisp, clean, floral scent that takes you right back to the Mediterranean. If you can't find Bergamot though, a normal lemon will work too.



Energy

Ingredients

1 large avocado, cut in bite-size chunks

2 Elstar apples, cut in bite-size chunks

1 red onion, finely diced

1 bulb of fennel, finely sliced,

1 Bergamot orange or 1 lemon, juice and zest

2 tbsp fresh cilantro finely diced

3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

freshly ground black pepper and sea salt to taste

Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients in a salad bowl,

2. Mix in the dressing and stir well.

3. Season with pepper and salt.

4. Enjoy! It's that simple.

Quinoa with Lamb's Lettuce and Roasted Pumpkin

4 - 6 portions

I recently had a similar dish at one of my favorite gluten-free lunch places in Amsterdam and became inspired to create my own version. Butternut Pumpkin is a great seasonal vegetable with an incredible natural sweetness and a slight nutty flavor but it can be on the heavy side when enjoyed on its own. The Lamb's lettuce in this recipe lightens up the heaviness of the pumpkin. This salad has a wide range of tastes; it's sweet, savory, nutty and tangy all at the same time, a beautifully balanced party for your taste buds.



Ingredients

200g of white quinoa

1/2 tsp of sea salt

2 cups of lamb's lettuce leaves

¼ cup of roasted almonds

vegan cheese/goat's feta (optional), cut in small pieces

1 clove of garlic minced

3 cups of butternut pumpkin, peeled and cut into cubes

1 tbsp Manuka honey

2 tsp coriander powder

1 tsp cinammon

fresh cilantro leaves, finely diced

freshly ground black pepper and sea salt to taste

Dressing

¾ cup tbsp olive oil

¼ cup date balsamic vinegar

freshly ground black pepper and sea salt to taste

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 180 celsius and place the pumpkin cubes in a roasting tray. Rub the pumpkin with the oil, spices and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Cover with alu foil and bake for 15 minutes.
3. Take off alu foil and bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until lightly caramelised.
4. When cooled down, drizzle with the honey.
5. Rinse the quinoa by placing it in a fine mesh sieve and run cold water through it for a few minutes. Drain and place into a saucepan along with twice the amount of water.
6. Bring up to a boil, reduce heat to low and leave to simmer for 15 minutes, or until tender. I like my quinoa to have a bit of a bite, so I take it off of the heat when it's not quite cooked. Drain the quinoa, cover and let stand for another 5-10 minutes.
7. For the dressing, mix the olive oil, vinegar and sea salt in a jar and shake well. Season with freshly ground black pepper.
8. Place quinoa in a large bowl and add the pumpkin, lamb's lettuce and fresh cilantro, and gently toss to combine. Serve with the roasted almonds and vegan cheese or goat's cheese. Drizzle the dressing over the salad.

Kale Salad with Pomegranate and Pistachios

4 - 6 portions

This is one of my favorite salads using some of my favorite ingredients: quinoa, fresh kale, avocado, pomegranate and nuts. Raw kale is one of the healthiest foods on the planet. This salad is packed with nutrients and full of antioxidants, the perfect meal to balance of the richness of the holiday season. A meal that will refresh you and give you power.



Ingredients

1 cup red quinoa

1 avocado, peeled and cut in bite-size chunks

1 lime, zest and juice

¼ cup pistachios, peeled

8 leaves of dinosaur kale, stemmed and finely sliced

1 bulb of fennel, finely sliced

1 pomegranate, seeds

2 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro

Dressing

1 thinly diced red onion

¾ cup extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

1 tbsp Dijon mustard

3 tbsp agave syrup or honey

freshly ground black pepper and salt to taste

Instructions

1. Rinse quinoa in water for a few minutes. Drain and place in a medium size pot; add 2 cups of water and bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer until ready.
2. Let the quinoa rest for 10 more minutes with the lid on.
3. Meanwhile, whisk olive oil, agave syrup or honey, diced red onion, lime zest and juice, and mustard in a bowl until smooth and creamy. Season with freshly ground black pepper and sea salt to taste.
4. Place quinoa in a large salad bowl and drizzle with the dressing. Mix in the kale and gently massage the dressing into the kale using your hands. This will 'cook' the kale and will add softness and flavor.
5. Mix in fennel slices and top with pistachio nuts, fresh cilantro and pomegranate seeds.

Roasted Veggies with Sage and Cinnamon

4 - 6 portions

There's nothing like a simple dish of seasonal roast veggies. It's easy and quick to prepare as the oven does most of the work. This is one of my favorite ways to roast sweet root vegetables. Sage and cinnamon are a great combination and typical flavors of the holiday season.



Ingredients

You can use any kind of winter root vegetable in here.

2 large carrots, halved if large

3 parsnips, halved if large

3 sweet potatoes, cut into thick sticks

2 whole garlic cloves, minced

2 tbsp olive oil

1 stick of cinnamon, broken into small pieces

½ cup fresh sage

1 dried red chili pepper

1 tsp sea salt

freshly ground black pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees.
2. Place vegetables in a roasting tray.
3. Grind red pepper, cinnamon, sage and sea salt with a mortar and pestle. Add olive oil to the spice blend; blend until smooth.
4. Rub veggies with the spice blend. Coat well. Sprinkle with black pepper and salt.
5. Roast in the oven covered with alu foil for 40 minutes.
6. Remove foil and roast for another 10 minutes until golden and crispy.

Christmas Pudding

4 - 6 portions

The best way to finish your Christmas dinner is with a traditional Christmas pudding. This hearty comfort food is packed with delicious dried fruits. It takes quite a lot of cooking time but is easy to prepare. Once it's boiling, you can sit back and relax. The best thing is that it keeps well and can be made days in advance. I love Christmas pudding but it is usually made with eggs and flour and packed with refined sugar. This year I have created my own Christmas pudding, a slightly lighter dairy-free and gluten-free version, which tastes just as good or perhaps even better. A little bit of heaven on a plate, the ultimate finale to your Christmas dinner!



Bliss

Ingredients

50g raisins

50g sultanas

50 gr prunes, deseeded and chopped

25g dried apricots, chopped

25g dried dates, deseeded and chopped

50g dried cranberries

75g ground almonds

75gr ground walnuts

1/2 large orange, peel and juice

1/2 large lemon, peel and juice

1 cooking apple, chopped finely, skin on

2 cm of fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1/4tsp ground nutmeg

3 tbsp date syrup

coconut oil

Wet ingredients

200ml apple cider (gluten-free, no barley added) and 50ml of whisky.

Flour mix

50gr of chickpea flour and 50gr of rice flour & 2 heaped tsp of gluten-free baking powder

Instructions

1. Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.
2. Mix juice and whisky and stir it into the dry mixture.
3. Sieve the flours together with the baking powder. Fold the flour into the fruit.
4. Put the mixture into a greased Christmas pudding basin and cover with the lid or use a heat-resistant greased glass bowl, covered with doubled greaseproof paper and tied with string making sure it's closed off.
5. Put the basin in a deep pan, pour in water to halfway up the bowl, cover and simmer for at least 4 hours, checking periodically if enough water remains in the pan. Add water when necessary.
6. Remove pudding basin from the pot. If you are not using it right away, allow the pudding to cool down, then store in the fridge. To serve at dinner, put pudding back in the pan as you did before and simmer for another hour.
7. Take the pudding out of the basin. To serve, pour a big spoon of whisky over the pudding and immediately light it with a match.

Christmas Glühwein

4 - 6 portions

This is a less sweet version of the Austrian glühwein. The ones you can buy in the supermarket are often too sweet to my taste. This is a slightly healthier variation as it leaves out the refined sugars. As a sweetener I have used raspberry and blueberry juice. I have created two versions, one with alcohol with red wine and one without, based on red grape juice, for those abstaining from alcohol. Nothing beats making your own, whether you are at home at Christmas with family and friends or just back from the ski slopes. This legendary après-ski drink shows up at every Christmas market but you haven't really tried it until you have made your own. The liquids are cooked with orange, lemon, cinnamon sticks, cardamom pods, star anise and cloves.



Ingredients

125gr frozen blueberries

125gr frozen raspberries

½ liter red grape juice

2 cups water

or with alcohol:

50gr frozen blueberries

50gr frozen raspberries

1 bottle of red wine

2 cups water

2-4 tbps maple syrup (optional)

2 oranges, skin on, sliced in thin parts

½ lemon, skin on, sliced in thin parts

12 whole cloves

12 cardamom pods, sliced open

4 whole Star Anise

2 large cinnamon sticks, cut in half

Instructions

1. Place blueberries and raspberries with 2 cups of water in a high-speed blender until smooth
2. In a large sauce pan add the grape juice or the red wine. Bring up to a simmer but don't let it boil.
3. Add the blueberry and raspberry juice to the saucepan. Bring the alcohol-free version up to a boil, lower heat, and let simmer.
4. For the alcohol version, add the blueberry and raspberry juice and allow to simmer. The alcohol-free version is quite sweet because of the red grape juice. If you like to add additional sweetness to the alcohol version, you can use maple syrup to your taste.
5. Add all the spices and the slices of 1 orange and the lemon. You can put the spices in a tea infuser or run the liquid through sieve when done.
6. Cook until hot but not simmering for at least 30 minutes.
7. Serve warm in a mug with slices of orange.

Thank you!

2012 has been a busy year for me with lots of exciting changes! From renovating my home, expanding my yoga practice, launching my new website and embarking on a new path to becoming a certified holistic health coach — it has definitely not been dull.

But through all these changes, I remain focused on doing on what I love to do most, teaching yoga and helping people to stay happy and healthy through nutrition and lifestyle-coaching.

Thank you for being a part of what made my year 2012 so wonderful! You have inspired me to dig deeper, to continue on my journey and to grow in my teaching and my practice.

Thank you for your engagement, your feedback and your enthusiasm, for meeting me on the path of yoga.

Thanks for an amazing 2012! I look forward to continue this journey with you in 2013!

As a thank you to you, I have created this e-book with delicious and healthy Christmas recipes. I hope you enjoy it!

Chantal

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