


Your Cooking Questions— Answered!

Huevos Rancheros Spaghetti





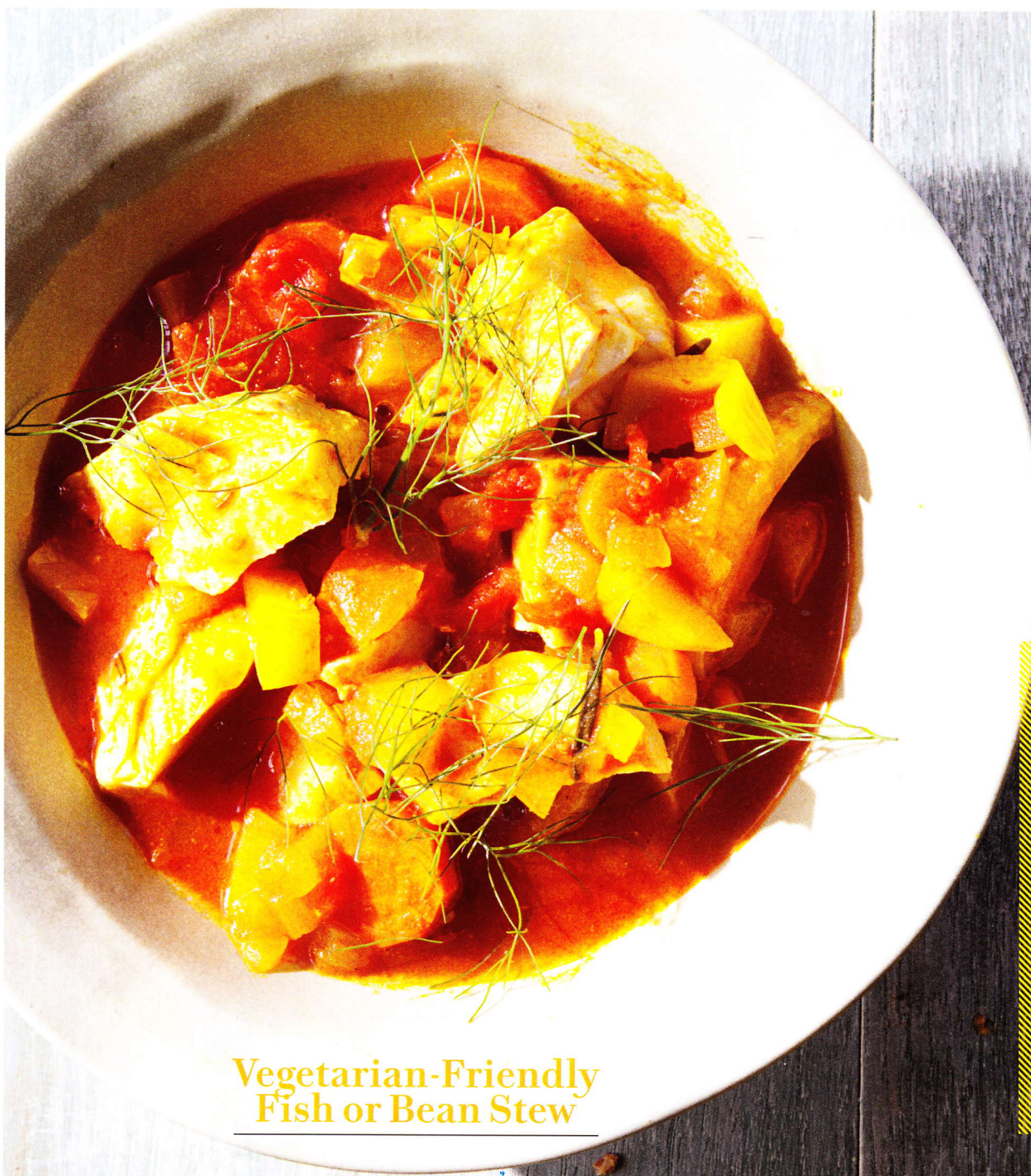
What's an easy way to spice up roast chicken? Is there a dinner party dish that satisfies vegetarians and carnivores alike? How do I eat more kale—without feeling like I'm eating more kale? For these and other issues that bedevil home cooks, we asked chefs and cookbook authors to share their expert advice.

BY *Kate Rockwood*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY *Gentl & Hyers*

Q: *I didn't have time to stop at the grocery store. What can I make for dinner?*

A: "People are always surprised by the healthy, tasty meals you can pull from pantry ingredients," says Melissa d'Arabian, host of the Food Network show *Ten Dollar Dinners* (her cookbook by the same name was just published). The trick, she says, is to get adventurous with ingredient swaps—say, replacing meat with canned beans or fresh vegetables with frozen. "Familiar flavors are comforting, but don't hesitate to present them in a new package," she says. In her dinner-friendly variation on the Mexican breakfast dish *huevos rancheros*, d'Arabian substitutes spaghetti for the usual tortillas. When serving, break the egg yolk and mix it into the salsa for a silken pasta sauce that's light, fresh—and wholly original. (For recipe see page 194.)



Vegetarian-Friendly Fish or Bean Stew

What's the easiest way to throw a dinner party that accommodates everyone's diets?

A. Trying to find one dish to satisfy every preference and allergy means you're unlikely to satisfy anyone. Instead, Peter Berley, author of *The Flexitarian Table*, adopts a fork-in-the-road approach: Start with one base recipe, then add the protein or substitute ingredients at the end. For a vegetarian-friendly take on bouillabaisse, for instance, Berley waits until the last few minutes to divide the stew in two, then adds chunks of white fish to one half and plump white beans to the other. "The fish and beans have similar textures, flavors, and cooking times," he says, "so it feels like everyone's eating the same meal." (For recipe see page 194.)

SPLIT DECISIONS

More delicious dishes—with or without meat.

1. Serve croque monsieur sandwiches the classic way, with ham, or with the meaty flavor of sun-dried tomatoes.
2. Black bean enchiladas are tasty with either shredded chicken or smoked tofu.
3. Brown butter, tarragon, and thyme make a decadent sauce for sautéed shrimp or great northern beans, served on soft polenta.



Pan-Fried Quinoa Cakes

You can serve this dish with a quick, creamy sauce: Mix Greek-style yogurt with chopped dill, lemon juice, and salt to taste.

- $\frac{1}{2}$ pound kale, large stems removed and leaves finely chopped
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ pound sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ " dice
- 2 cups (12 ounces) quinoa, rinsed and well-drained
- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 ounces) finely grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp. minced fresh dill
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- Olive oil for frying

1. In a large pot, bring 4 cups water to a boil. Add kale and salt. Cook 1 minute. Using a slotted spoon, scoop kale into a large bowl, reserving cooking water. When kale is cool enough to handle, squeeze out excess water; set kale aside.

2. Bring reserved water back to a boil and add sweet potatoes. Simmer until crisp-tender, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, scoop sweet potatoes into a bowl; set sweet potatoes aside and reserve cooking water.

3. Measure out 3 cups cooking water, discarding the rest, and pour it back into the pot. Bring water back to a boil, add quinoa, and stir. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover pot, and simmer until water is absorbed, about 12 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside, covered, 10 minutes.

4. Add quinoa to bowl of kale and toss to combine. Gently mix in reserved sweet potatoes, onion, Parmesan, dill, and cayenne. Set aside to cool 10 minutes. Add eggs and mix to combine.

5. Set out a large, rimmed baking sheet. Using a $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup measure, scoop quinoa mixture, press firmly to level the top, then turn cup over on baking sheet. Repeat to form 14 patties total. (At this point, the cakes can be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated up to 1 day.)

6. In a large skillet, heat 2 Tbsp. olive oil over medium heat. Working in batches, cook 4 to 6 patties at a time until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Carefully flip the cakes and brown on the other side, about 4 minutes longer. Add more oil, as needed, to cook additional batches. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 14 (3") cakes.
Active time: 30 minutes
Total time: 50 minutes

Q: *What's the best way to get more superfoods into my diet?*

A. Many people relegate vegetables and whole grains to the role of side dish, part of the "eat them; they're good for you" attitude formed in childhood. Instead, try incorporating superfoods into the entrée in the middle of the plate. Here, Diane Morgan, author of the new cookbook *Roots*, mixes antioxidant-rich sweet potatoes and vitamin-packed kale with quinoa (a powerhouse grain) to form satisfyingly crispy patties. Using the same water to cook the kale, sweet potatoes, and quinoa helps retain the vitamins leached out by boiling.



Roast Chicken with Green Beans and Artichokes

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| 1 (3½-pound) whole chicken,
cut into 8 pieces | 3 Tbsp. olive oil |
| 1 Tbsp. dried oregano | ¾ cup white wine |
| 1 Tbsp. kosher salt, plus more
to taste | ¾ cup chicken broth |
| 1 tsp. ground black pepper,
plus more to taste | 1 pound fresh pork chorizo
or chicken sausage |
| ½ tsp. crushed red pepper
flakes (optional) | 2 cups fresh green beans |
| 4 scallions, coarsely chopped | 1 cup frozen artichoke hearts |
| 8 cloves garlic, crushed | 1 lemon, sliced into ¼"-thick
rounds |
| | ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf
parsley |

Preheat oven to 400°. Season chicken with oregano, salt, black pepper, and crushed red pepper (if using). Place chicken, scallions, and garlic in a large roasting pan and drizzle with olive oil. Roast until chicken starts to brown, about 30 minutes. Add wine, chicken broth, and sausage to the pan and roast an additional 10 minutes. Flip sausages and add green beans, artichoke hearts, and lemon slices, making sure vegetables are partly submerged. Cook until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes more. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with parsley and serve.

Makes 4 servings.

Active time: 20 minutes

Total time: 1 hour 10 minutes

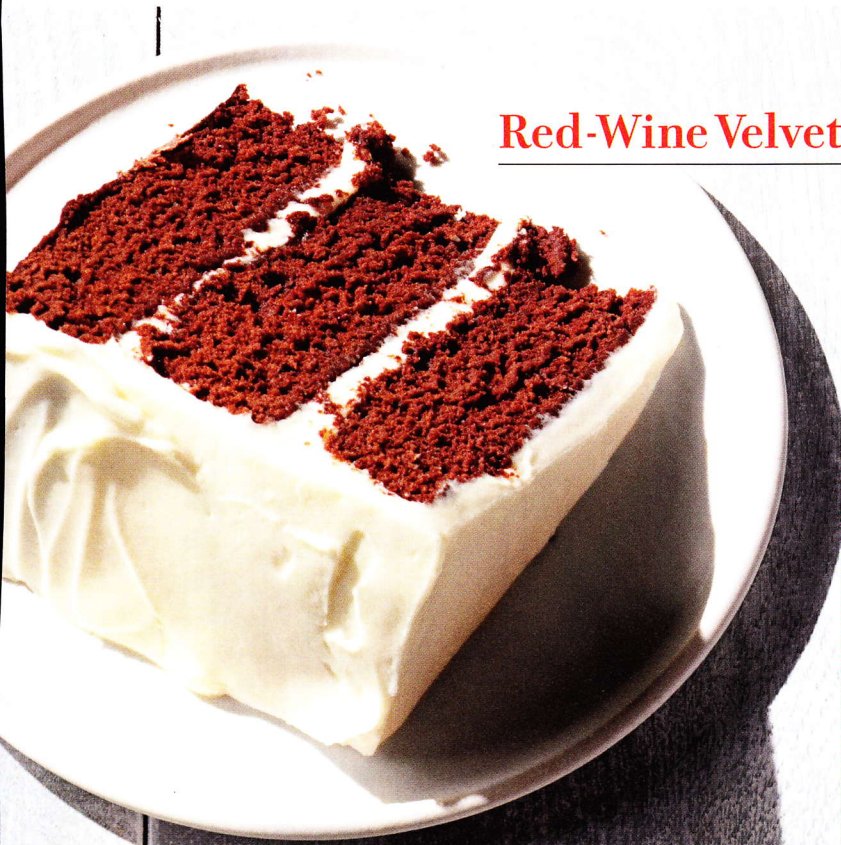


Q: *I'm bored with my standard roast chicken. Any suggestions?*

A: Try rubbing the chicken with different herbs and adding vegetables to the roaster to make an easy one-pan meal, suggests chef Art Smith of Table Fifty-Two in Chicago. Inspired by English food writer Nigella Lawson—"She made me her version of chicken Vesuvio, with oregano and artichokes, at her swish London apartment"—he creates his own variation here, throwing spicy chorizo and green beans into the mix along with white wine and broth for a juicier bird. "A dish can be simple and scrumptious at the same time," Smith says.

For more of Smith's suggestions, like a Chinese-inspired interpretation with bok choy or a Louisiana-style version with okra and sweet corn, visit oprah.com/omagextras.





Red-Wine Velvet Cake

BIT PARTS

Other inspired leftover tricks.

1. Extra spaghetti works beautifully in a frittata or, added to two whisked eggs and a splash of cream, an omelet.

2. Almost any cooked vegetables—broccoli, zucchini, potato—can be mashed and made into

fritters. Simply add to a beaten egg, flour, and salt (you want the mixture to resemble thick pancake batter), and fry in canola oil until brown on both sides.

3. Puree surplus berries, then add lemon juice and sugar to taste for an easy pancake topping or yogurt stir-in.

Q: *I always wind up with leftover ingredients. How can I use them?*

A. “Small bits can be so annoying,” admits blogger Deb Perelman, author of *The Smitten Kitchen Cookbook*, out this month. “If you had two cups of leftover potatoes, you’d serve them the next day for dinner. But half a cup?” Don’t bother trying to stretch ingredients into a lackluster repeat performance of the original meal, she says. Think creatively to make that single serving of pasta or broccoli the start of a completely different dish (for ideas see “Bit Parts,” *above right*). Rather than let an open bottle of red wine languish on the refrigerator shelf, Perelman uses it in place of the usual food coloring in a red velvet cake. The result—a rich, fudgy marriage of chocolate and wine—will leave you hopeful for more leftover Pinot Noir in the near future. (*For recipe see page 194.*)

