

RAW! Indulge in Taste and Health

Recipes provided by Sheree Clark, a graduate of Living Light Culinary Institute and owner of Fork in the Road at <http://www.meetup.com/RawFoodDSM/>.

Wine recommendations for this article were made by Steve Richardson, Certified Wine Education and Bob Wersen, Owner, Tassel Ridge Winery, Leighton, Iowa.

The raw food lifestyle is experiencing a huge growth in popularity as more people embrace the concept that “you are what you eat.” A vegan raw and living foods diet centers around unprocessed and uncooked ingredients and features an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, sprouts, nuts and seeds (organic and locally grown, whenever possible!). The regime contains no trans fats and less saturated fat than the Standard American Diet. A raw food diet is also naturally low in sodium and high in potassium, magnesium, fiber and health-promoting plant-derived compounds called phytochemicals. Fresh, raw plant-based foods provide an array of vitamins, minerals and enzymes that we can all use to increase energy, lose unwanted weight and improve general health and mental disposition.

A raw food diet consists of vegan foods – preferably organic – that have not been heated above 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Raw food advocates believe that foods cooked above this temperature lose a significant amount of their nutritional value.

If all this sounds too healthy to taste good...think again! Just about any mainstream dish can be mimicked using only raw and living ingredients, and the results are not only healthful, they're yummy! And the best news of all? Wine – because it is fermented and not distilled or heated – is considered to be “raw” by those in the know.

Enjoying raw food doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing proposition. Here are a few easy recipes (and pairing suggestions) to get you started on your way to adding more living cuisine to your diet.

RECIPES:

TOMATO TARTLETS IN BASIL MACADAMIA CRUST

Recipe by Chef Cherie Soria

A quick but impressive dish. Serve with a mixed green salad a refreshing dry white wine such as Tassel Ridge Winery Dry Riesling or a red, either Tassel Ridge Winery Nouveau or the dry red Twilight. You'll be the toast of the town!

Serves 6

Equipment

Food processor

Ingredients:

CRUST

2 cups raw macadamia nuts
2 cups packed fresh basil, stems removed
1/2 teaspoon unrefined salt, such as Celtic sea salt
2 tablespoons coconut oil

FILLING

3 large heirloom tomatoes, diced
1/4 teaspoon unrefined salt
1/4 cup small capers

1. To make the crust, put macadamia nuts into a food processor outfitted with the “S” blade, and process to a meal.
2. Add the basil, salt, and coconut oil and continue processing until the mixture becomes sticky. The mixture should just stick together when pressed between your thumb and forefinger. *Do not over process or it will become too buttery.*
3. Press the crust mixture firmly into unbleached parchment paper-lined tartlet pans
4. Place 2-3 tablespoons of diced tomatoes onto crust. Sprinkle with salt and several capers. (Optional: drizzle top with a little olive oil). Serve immediately.

PUTTANESCA PASTA

This recipe comes out best if the zucchini is spiralized. A wonderful substitute for high-carb pasta dishes, this tastes great when paired with the Tassel Ridge Winery 2008 Iowa Nouveau or Candleglow Red or the dry Zinfull Red (big flavors in the sauce require big flavors in the wine.)

Serves 2

Equipment

Spiralizer

Ingredients

1 large zucchini, julienned or spiralized
1 large tomato, chopped
8 kalamata olives, chopped
4 large green olives, chopped
4 rehydrated sundried tomatoes, chopped
1 slice of red onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 handful of parsley or basil, chopped
1-1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon pine nuts, finely chopped

Preparation

1. Spiralize the zucchini and mix in a pinch of sea salt just to soften. Let sit while preparing the sauce.
2. Mix the next 7 ingredients to create sauce.
3. Drain water from the zucchini and top with the sauce. Garnish with pine nuts

Basil Honey Mustard Dressing

Recipe developed by Sheree Clark

There is nothing like a homemade salad dressing. This one is a favorite and would taste fabulous on some organic mixed greens or on heirloom tomatoes with a glass of dry red wine such as Tassel Ridge Winery American Chardonnay or Tassel Ridge Winery semi-sweet white Overture (citrus notes combined with a hint of sweetness compliment most salads and their dressings very nicely).

Equipment

Blender

Ingredients:

1 large bunch of basil (go ahead and fill up the blender!)
1 cup extra virgin olive oil
1/2 cup raw apple cider vinegar
1/3 cup raw honey
1 -1/2 teaspoon yellow mustard powder
1 teaspoon unrefined salt, such as Celtic sea salt

Put all together in a blender and liquefy. Dressing will keep in the refrigerator for at least a week.

Variation:

Omit the basil for a plain honey mustard dressing!

RAW TRUFFLES

This is a quick and easy recipe for a truffle from just three ingredients. Just whip together in the food processor and enjoy with the white Tassel Ridge Winery Prairie Snow sipping wine or the dessert wine, Tassel Ridge Winery Finalé Premier Red.

Equipment

Food processor

Ingredients:

3/4 cup raw walnuts or almonds

1/4 cup raw chocolate powder
3/4 cup pitted medjool dates or raisins

1. Place ingredients into food processor. Process until the mixture is a soft and sticky consistency.
2. Form into balls.
3. Refrigerate briefly. Enjoy!

Variations:

Add about anything you think you'd like: vanilla, cinnamon, etc. Use different nuts, such as hazelnuts or pecans. Roll balls in shredded coconut, chocolate powder, grated nuts – be creative!

Editor's Notes 1. Raw chocolate powder is available online and at some health food stores. You can substitute cocoa powder for Raw chocolate, but it will not be “really, truly” raw. 2. Medjool dates are available online and at specialty stores. Other types of dates may be substituted, but taste as you to – you may need to add more if you use a smaller or less sweet variety.

Ready-made Raw Snacks Made Locally!

Ankeny-based RAWphoriaLive makes creative dry raw goodies including granola and flax crackers. Robin Moyer and Kelly Ayers – themselves both raw foodists – created the company for people interested in a healthier lifestyle. The products are all gluten-free, and contain no yeast, wheat, preservatives or artificial ingredients. The company uses organic ingredients whenever possible. RAWphoriaLIVE currently offers Cornilla Chips, Tomato Basil Crackers, Jalapeno Crackers, Cinnamon Raisin Crackers, Nutty Coconut Granola, Apple Cinnamon Granola and Nutty Berry Granola. To order these delicious, Iowa-made raw food snacks, visit www.RAWphoriaLIVE.com

SIDEBAR

RESOURCES:

To learn more about the raw food lifestyle, check out these websites, books and magazines!

www.rawfood.meetup.com/360/ - A Des Moines area MeetUp group that meets regularly to share food and raw food experiences. The group presently has over 150 members!

www.rawfoods.com - Dedicated to educating the world about the power of raw and living foods.

www.goneraw.com - Raw, vegan food recipes from around the world.

www.purelydelicious.net - *Quarterly magazine with timely feature stories, tips and recipes.*

Raw Food Made Easy For 1 or 2 People by Jennifer Cornbleet, \$17.95.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Eating Raw by Mark Reinfeld and Bo Rinaldi, \$16.95.

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