



### Cauliflower with A New Slant on Mornay Sauce

A topping of Mornay sauce is a delicious treatment for numerous vegetables: broccoli, asparagus, fennel, Belgian endive, to name a few. In my revised version, I have replaced some of the high-fat cheeses and cream with low-fat cottage cheese, which contributes a rich dairy flavor without the fat. Even children will eat cauliflower prepared this way.

- 1 head cauliflower (about 1 3/4 pounds), cut into large florets
- 1 1/4 cups nonfat milk, divided
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese, preferably Gruyère
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black or white pepper
- 3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 tablespoons unseasoned fine dry breadcrumbs

Set rack in upper portion of oven; preheat to 375°F. Coat a shallow 2-quart baking or gratin dish with cooking spray. Place cauliflower florets in a steamer basket over boiling water, cover and steam until tender but not soft, 5 to 7 minutes.

(Alternatively, place florets in a microwave-safe bowl with 1/4 cup water, cover and microwave on High for 1 to 3 minutes.) Refresh under cool water and set aside.

Scald 1 cup milk in a medium heavy saucepan over medium heat. Stir together flour and the remaining 1/4 cup cold milk in a small bowl to make a smooth paste. Stir into the hot milk mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Remove from the heat and whisk in cottage cheese, Swiss cheese, salt and pepper. Transfer sauce to a food processor or blender and puree until smooth.

Spread one-third of the sauce in prepared baking dish. Arrange the steamed cauliflower over it and top with the remaining sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan and breadcrumbs. Bake until golden brown and bubbly, about 30 minutes.

**To Make Ahead:** Prepare through scald the milk stage; cover and refrigerate the sauce and steamed cauliflower separately for up to 1 day.



### Blu-Cheese Creamy Green Beans with Toasted Walnuts

Tender-crisp green beans tossed with creamy blue cheese and topped with toasted walnuts pair well with roasted turkey, grilled steak or chicken.

- 1 pound green beans, trimmed
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1/3 cup toasted chopped walnuts (see NOTE)

Bring green beans and water to a boil in a large skillet. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the beans are just tender, 3 minutes.

Uncover and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until the water has evaporated, 3 to 4 minutes more. Add oil, salt and pepper to the pan and cook, stirring, 1 minute more. Transfer the beans to a large bowl and toss with blue cheese until well coated. Sprinkle each serving with walnuts.

**NOTE:** To toast chopped or sliced nuts, stir constantly in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat until fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.



### Brussels Sprouts with Chestnuts & Sage

Chestnuts and Brussels sprouts are a classic pair—the toasty, rich nuts balance the sprouts. This dish cuts down on the holiday oven gridlock because it can be all done on the stovetop.

2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
3 tablespoons reduced-sodium chicken broth  
3/4 cup coarsely chopped chestnuts (about 4 ounces; see Tip)  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil. Add Brussels sprouts and cook until bright green and just tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain well. Melt butter with oil and broth in a large skillet over medium heat.

Add Brussels sprouts, chestnuts and sage and cook, stirring often, until heated through, 2 to 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**NOTE:** You do not need to prepare your own chestnuts for this dish. Cooked and peeled chestnuts are available in jars at this time of year. Look for them in the baking aisle or near other seasonal food items.

**To Make Ahead:** Prepare through drain the sprouts, cover and refrigerate for up to 8 hours.



Here, a medley of root vegetables and winter squash are roasted with chermoula (also spelled charmoula), a quintessential Moroccan spice combination. (Any combination will work in this dish; start with about 12 cups of peeled vegetable pieces.)

**NOTE:** Be sure to peel turnips well; their skin is thicker and more fibrous than other root vegetables’.

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 teaspoons paprika, preferably sweet Hungarian  
2 teaspoons ground cumin  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 medium baking potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks  
1 medium sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks  
1 medium turnip, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks  
1 medium rutabaga, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks  
2 medium carrots, cut into 1/2-inch slices  
8 ounces peeled and seeded butternut squash, cut into 1-inch chunks (see Shopping Tip)

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place oil, garlic, paprika, cumin and salt in a food processor or blender and pulse or blend until smooth.

Place potato, sweet potato, turnip, rutabaga, carrots and squash in a roasting pan large enough to accommodate the pieces in a single layer. Toss with the spiced oil mixture until well combined.

Roast the vegetables, stirring once or twice, until tender, 45 to 50 minutes.

**Shopping tip:** Look for already peeled, seeded and quartered butternut squash in the prepared-vegetable section of the produce department.



### Savory Carrot and Tarragon Tart

The bright orange carrots in this savory tart are a feast for the eyes and the palate. Tarragon lends bold flavor to the tart. Other herbs, such as thyme or rosemary, would be delicious too.

Preheat oven to 350°F. To prepare crust: Coat a 9- to 10-inch tart pan with cooking spray. Place all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, tarragon and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a food processor; pulse to combine. Add butter one piece at a time, pulsing once or twice after each addition, until incorporated. Add 1/4 cup oil and 1/4 cup yogurt and pulse just until the dough starts to come together.

Transfer the dough to the prepared pan (it will be crumbly), spread evenly and press firmly into the bottom and all the way up the sides to form a crust.

Bake the crust until set but not browned, about 15 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack. To prepare filling: Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in carrots and 1 tablespoon sherry (or rice vinegar) and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Spread mustard over the crust. Sprinkle with Cheddar, then evenly spread the carrot mixture in the tart shell. Whisk 1/2 cup yogurt, milk, eggs, tarragon, the remaining 1 tablespoon sherry (or rice vinegar), 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Place the tart pan on a baking sheet and pour in the filling.

Bake the tart until the filling is firm and the edges are golden brown, 40 to 45 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes before slicing. Serve warm or chilled. Ingredient note: Sherry is a type of fortified wine originally from southern Spain.

Don't use the "cooking sherry" sold in many supermarkets—it can be surprisingly high in sodium. Instead, purchase dry sherry that's sold with other fortified wines in your wine or liquor store. To Make Ahead: Prepare the crust (Step 2), wrap tightly and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Loosely cover and refrigerate the baked tart for up to 1 day. (Equipment: 9- to 10-inch tart pan (with or without removable bottom))





### Chard with Shallots, Pancetta & Walnuts

For this Italian-inspired, simple sautéed chard with rich-tasting pancetta and walnuts, we prefer the milder taste of green chard.

- 2 thin slices pancetta (1 1/2 ounces), diced (see Tip)
- 2 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 pound chard, stems and leaves separated, chopped (see Note)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts, toasted (see Tip)
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Cook pancetta in a Dutch oven over medium heat, stirring, until it begins to brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. Add shallots, chard stems and thyme to the pan drippings and cook, stirring, until the shallots begin to brown, 4 to 5 minutes.

Add chard leaves, water and lemon juice and cook, stirring, until wilted, about 2 minutes. Cover and cook until tender, 2 to 4 minutes more. Remove from the heat; stir in the pancetta, walnuts and pepper.

**Tips:** Pancetta is an un-smoked Italian bacon usually found in the deli section of large supermarkets and specialty food stores.

**NOTE:** Regular or turkey bacon may be substituted. **To toast chopped walnuts:** Cook in a small dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until fragrant and lightly browned, 2 to 4 minutes.

**Note:** After washing the chard for these recipes, allow some of the water to cling to the leaves. It helps steam the chard and prevents a dry finished dish.



### Garlicky Green Beans

I cook then cool the beans in advance so they can be heated up and seasoned moments before the meal. If you don't like tarragon, substitute dill or leave it out completely.

2 pounds green beans, trimmed  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
3 tablespoons minced garlic  
3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon or 2 teaspoons dried  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
Freshly ground pepper to taste

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Place a large bowl of ice water next to the stove. Add half the green beans to the boiling water and cook until tender-crisp, about 4 minutes.

Transfer the beans with a slotted spoon to the ice water to cool. Repeat with the remaining beans. Place a kitchen towel on a baking sheet and use a slotted spoon to transfer the beans from the ice water; blot dry with another towel.

3. Just before serving, heat oil in a large Dutch oven or large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Add the green beans and stir. Add parsley, tarragon, salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until heated through, 1 to 3 minutes.



### Honey-Lemon Glazed Carrots with Parsley

NOTE: I made this above with lo-sautéed onions but was not so crazy about the two together once I was done so am just leaving them out this time in the recipe below.

The mellow sweetness of honey brings out the best in carrots. Here, I have added a liberal dose of butter and a touch of lemon & zest to make this side dish sing.

- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 pounds carrots
- 1/2 cup honey
- 3 cups water
- 1 tablespoon freshly grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Melt butter in a deep, heavy 12-inch skillet over medium high heat until foam subsides. Trim and peel carrots, then cut diagonally into 1/2-inch-thick pieces. Add carrots along with honey and water, then cover skillet and bring liquid to a boil.

Steam carrots until they are just tender, about 15 minutes. Uncover skillet and continue to boil until liquid is reduced to a glaze, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in zest, juice, and parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste.