**Caprese Salad**

Serves 2-3  
*Ingredients:*
- 2 medium tomatoes  
- 1 package (8 ounce) fresh mozzarella cheese  
- Fresh basil leaves  
- Olive oil  
- Salt and pepper, to taste  
- Balsamic vinegar (optional)

*Directions:*
1. Slice tomatoes and cheese, about ¼-inch thick. Sprinkle the tomatoes with salt and pepper.
2. To serve, alternate the tomato and cheese slices on a serving platter. Place a basil leaf on top of each tomato slice. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar, if desired. Serve immediately.

*Caprese salad is sometimes referred to as tomato and mozzarella salad. The original name was insalata Caprese, literally meaning, salad of Capri. This salad is normally served as an antipasto or at the beginning of a meal and not as a side dish. The original dish did not use balsamic vinegar. You may use it or omit it, as you prefer.*

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**Slow-cooked Summer Squash**

Serves 4  
*Ingredients:*
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter  
- 1 small onion, diced  
- ½ teaspoon salt  
- 4 cups, cubed squash  
- 10 fresh basil leaves

*Directions:*
1. Over low heat, melt one tablespoon of the butter in a heavy saucepan. Add the onion. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook until onions are translucent and tender. If onions begin to brown, add about one tablespoon water.
2. Add the remaining butter. Once butter has melted, add the squash. Season with salt. Cover and cook, stirring often, for about 15 minutes, just until the squash is beginning to soften. Add basil and stir. Cook, covered, for another couple minutes, until the basil is wilted.

**Zucchini Chocolate Chip Cookies**

Makes about 2 dozen  
*Ingredients and directions:*
- 1 egg, beaten  
- ½ cup, butter, softened  
- ½ cup brown sugar  
- ½ cup honey  
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla extract

1. Combine above ingredients in large bowl.
2. Add white flour, whole wheat flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg.
3. Combine in a separate, small bowl and blend into liquid mixture.
4. Stir zucchini and chocolate chips into other ingredients, mix well.
5. Drop by spoonful onto greased baking sheet, and flatten with the back of a spoon.
6. Bake at 350°F, 10 to 15 minutes.
Tomato Testing Party

It seems that for years, all tomatoes were red and round. They also tasted pretty much the same. With the advent of farmers’ markets, we are now privy to a variety of tomatoes. Farmers grow tomatoes in various shapes, such as oblong, heart, round, and pear shaped. Thanks to farmers’ markets, we now know that tomatoes come in colors other than red. We can find green, red, yellow, purple, and orange tomatoes.

Local farmers are not attempting to grow for the masses. This enables them to choose varieties better suited for local areas. Locally produced foods oftentimes have flavors that are different from that which is massed produced. Farmers’ markets are a great place to pick up a variety of tomatoes. So why not hold a tomato tasting party? To get started, take a stroll through your local farmers’ market. Pick up tomatoes of various colors, shapes, and sizes. Be sure to get enough of each tomato for everyone to taste.

After getting them home, store on the countertop. To serve, slice tomatoes to show their best qualities. Some may need to be sliced, cut into wedges or halves. Dress the tomatoes lightly. Sprinkle with a small amount of salt and pepper. You want to taste the tomatoes, not extra seasoning. Allow to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. To get juices, serve with a spoon or slices of crusty bread.

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Garden Tomato Sauce

Yield 6 cups

Ingredients:
5 pounds of tomatoes, cored and peeled
3 Tablespoons olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 teaspoon dried basil
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 to 2 teaspoons sugar, optional

Directions:
1. Peel tomatoes.
2. Coarsely chop tomatoes; set aside
3. Chop onions and set aside. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring often, until translucent, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for about 1 minute. Add tomatoes, salt, pepper and sugar. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cook until thickened to desired consistency, stirring occasionally, 1 to 1½ hours. Taste and adjust seasoning.

To make pizza sauce, transfer mixture to a blender, add 2 tablespoons tomato paste and blend until smooth.

Note: One tablespoon of fresh herbs can be used instead of dried. Add the lower amounts of salt, pepper, and sugar. Additional amounts of these ingredients can be added as desired.

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