

It's almost that time again...

It's time to start thinking about Passover. Can you believe it? Time flies when you're eating bread, I guess. There is no better way to ease into the sometimes difficult task of Passover eating than Chocolate Covered Matzoh. There's also not an easier way to become the most popular person at a Passover Seder, or a Tuesday night in June (or any other time of the year). The secret way to truly win friends and influence people is to learn how to make CCM. Seriously. Memorize what I'm about to teach you. Make it for your Seder. Then? Randomly surprise people with it throughout the year. You'll never be lonely again...or skinny...

This recipe is delightfully simple and easy. It just takes a few minutes, but the joy goes on forever. I'm not kidding when I tell you that this dessert can change lives.

What?

4 to 6 sheets of Matzoh...(I use a high fiber Matzoh to feel healthy)

1 cup (two sticks of butter or margarine)

1 cup of packed light brown sugar

1 pinch of Kosher Salt

1/2 teaspoon of pure vanilla extract

1 bag of chocolate chips

1 cup of pecans or favorite nut chopped (optional)

extra Kosher Salt for sprinkling

How?

Pre-heat the oven to 350°F. Line an 11-by-17-inch baking sheet completely with foil. This step isn't completely necessary but it'll make the clean up a zillion times easier.

Line the bottom of the baking sheet with matzoh, covering all parts. You'll need to break pieces to fit any extra spaces, which will be annoying because despite being perforated, it does not actually break in straight lines. Don't get stressed out about this part. Like life...making Chocolate Covered Matzoh is a little messy and imperfect.

In a saucepan, melt the butter and brown sugar together, and stir it over medium heat until it begins to boil. Once it has begun boiling, let it bubble for three more minutes, stirring it well. I use a whisk... It will thicken a bit as it cooks. Remove from the heat and add the salt and vanilla, and then quickly pour it over the matzoh or crackers. You'll want to spread it quickly, as it will begin to set as soon as it is poured.

Bake the caramel-covered crackers for 15 minutes, watching carefully as it will bubble and the corners might darken too quickly and/or burn. You can reduce the heat if you see this happening.

Remove from oven and immediately cover with chocolate chips. Let stand for a couple of minutes, and then spread them evenly across the caramel using a spatula. It's like magic it's so unbelievably easy. If you're using them, sprinkle the chocolate with toasted chopped nuts. I usually skip the nuts and sprinkle the top of the gooey chocolatey goodness with Kosher Salt. Trust me here. The salty sweetness = new bffs.

Once the salt is on, I throw the baking sheet into the freezer to speed up the process. When it's solid you're ready to go! If you're short on Matzoh, or (G-d forbid) you don't have any

where you are use saltines. It's the same-ish feel...just not necessarily Kosher for Passover. I'm sorry that there aren't any pictures of my CCM, I kinda ate it all before I could remember to get out my camera. Oops. Now for a run, I guess?

Just in time for Meatless Monday

Oy va voy it has been a while. Mad props to the bestest co-author ever for taking over the blog for the last week and a half (well, let's keep it real, 2 weeks). Anyway, I'm back and I've got a back log of recipes so hang on to your hats.

Now, a while ago Jeremy, whose love of all things Oprah might rival Oprah's own love for all things Oprah, suggested we start a Meatless Mondays section of the blog in honor of O's dedication to the John Hopkins School of Public Health's meatless campaign. It was hard to agree to, what with being married to an Ashkenazi Jewish man weened on chicken bones and schmaltz, but at the end of the day, meat is expensive so we unknowingly support and celebrate Meatless Mondays on a weekly basis. So, for this post, I want to share one of my most favorite vegetarian/vegan recipe. It's simple, it's inexpensive, it provides leftovers for several days and best of all—it's delicious!!

Spicy Peanut Noodles with Baked Tofu

What??

Tofu Prep (You want to marinate the tofu for at least 20 minutes before you bake it so let it marinate while the noodles cook)

- One package of extra firm tofu
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons of Frank's Hot Sauce (match)
- Dash or two of ginger powder

Preheat oven to 350

Take the tofu out of package and wrap in a few paper towels. Give it a good squeeze in order to remove all that excess water. You want to make sure to get out as much water as possible so that the tofu can absorb all that soy sauce goodness. Let the tofu sit on paper towel. Put the soy sauce, hot sauce and ginger into a bowl and stir. Next, put the cubed tofu into the sauce and make sure the sauce covers the tofu as much as it can. Cover the bowl and refrigerate while you prepare the peanut noodles.

Noodles!

- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 3 bulbs of garlic diced
- 3 carrots sliced into thin rounds
- 1 cup of broccoli florets
- 3 -5 scallions chopped
- a bunch of cilantro
- 1 package of sobu noodles

Spicy Sauce

1/2 teaspoon sesame oil

1/2 cup tahini

1/4 natural peanut butter (I like a combination of both)

1 tablespoon honey

1/4 cup soy sauce

1 tablespoon rice or wine vinegar

1/4 cup of hot water

Hot sesame oil, chili-garlic sauce, or other hot sauce to taste

HOW??

Put hot water on to boil to cook the noodles. While waiting for water to boil, heat medium-sized skillet with olive oil on medium-high heat. Add garlic to the skillet; turn heat down to medium.**** Add carrots to skillet and sautee until soft. Add the broccoli and sautee with carrots until very bright green. Meanwhile, add noodles to the boiling water and proceed as directed by the package. Once vegetables and noodles are cooked (and drained) put in one giant bowl. Meanwhile, beat together the tahini/peanut butter mixture, sugar (I use honey and you could use agave nectar or maple syrup as well), soy sauce, and vinegar. Add a little hot sauce and the sesame oil; taste and adjust seasoning as necessary. Thin the sauce with hot water, so that it is the consistency of heavy cream. I like to add cilantro and scallions to the mixture at this point. Finally, toss together the noodles and baked tofu.

****If your tofu has been marinated for 20 minutes, but on greased baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes. Make sure to turn over at the 10 minute mark.



Tomato Soup for the Soul



So, I make a lot of soup. What can I say? I'm obsessed with single pot meals. They're easy to clean up and since I'm the wife in this relationship (ie head housekeeper) the easier to clean up the better! I hate cleaning the kitchen and doing dishes! Therefore? Soup it

is. Though, I've got to tell you, this Chicago weather is zig-zagging from hot to cold so fast I can't get out of my winter soup making phase. Seriously. Two days ago I was outside jogging in shorts. Today? Snow flurries. Who can keep up with this mess? It's best to just pretend that the snow is here to stay (at least in the kitchen). Say what you want about snow, it inspired me in the cooking department today. Is there anything better than tomato soup? Yes! The grilled cheese, tomato and avocado sandwiches you make to go with it!

Today I got all fancy and pulled out my Barefoot Contessa cookbooks for inspiration. I found what looked to me to be a cure for my "why won't the winter go away blues." She calls it *pappa al pomodoro*. I call it the best damned tomato soup I've ever made. Please give this one a try. I promise you won't be disappointed. It's super simple and beyond delicious. Besides who doesn't want a soup made with bread?

What?

1/2 cup olive oil

2 cups chopped yellow onions (2 onions)

1 cup medium-diced carrots (3 carrots)
1 fennel bulb, trimmed, cored, and medium-diced (1.5 cups)
4 tsp minced garlic (4 cloves)
3 cups diced ciabatta bread
2 28oz cans Italian plum tomatoes
4 cups vegetable broth
1/2 cup dry red wine (I used Cabernet)
1 cup chopped basil leaves

HOW?

Heat the oil in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, fennel, and garlic and cook over medium-low heat for 10 minutes, until tender. Add the ciabatta cubes and cook for 5 more minutes. Place the tomatoes in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade and process just until coarsely chopped. Add the tomatoes to the pot along with the vegetable stock, red wine, basil, 1 tablespoon salt, and 1.5 teaspoons pepper. Bring the soup to a boil, lower the heat, and allow to simmer, partially covered, for 45 minutes. Once the soup is nearing the 45 minute mark? Get out your whisk and let out your frustrations. Give her a good whisking. You'll break up some of the tomatoes and bread. I hope you have some parmesan handy because you're going to want to sprinkle it generously in your bowl.

Seriously, y'all. This one is a keeper. As for your grilled cheese sandwiches? You're on your own!

xoxo