



### **USDA Demonizes Starch, While Promoting Meat, Dairy, and Disease**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the government agency responsible for the health of Americans, has recently enacted two national nutrition policies that limit the consumption of traditional foods: the starchy grains and vegetables that have been the center of human diets for all of recordable history. The first policy will radically changed the diets of school children. In the January 2011 report titled *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*, the USDA Committee on Nutrition Standards for National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs recommended a [reduction](#) in starchy vegetables, such as white potatoes and corn, to one cup (total) per school week. Children are; however, encouraged to eat turkey sausages, egg patties, cheese omelets, chicken quesadillas, beef eggrolls, hot dogs, hamburgers, pepperoni pizza, roast beef, deli ham, chocolate milk, and margarine. The second policy prevents needy families from assistance in buying potatoes.

PAGE 2

### **Featured Recipes**

Swiss Chard Stew

North African Chard Soup

Yammy Kale

Curried Kale Soup

Brownies

Raspberry or Strawberry Sauce

Chocolate Frosting

Lemon Frosting

Black-eyed Peas and Collard Greens, New Orleans Style

Orzo Salad

PAGE 6

## USDA Demonizes Starch, While Promoting Meat, Dairy, and Disease

John McDougall, MD



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the government agency responsible for the health of Americans, has recently enacted two national nutrition policies that limit the consumption of starchy grains and starchy vegetables, two traditional food groups that have provided the bulk of human diets for all of recordable history.

The first policy will radically change the diets of school children. In the January 2011 report *School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*, the USDA Committee on Nutrition Standards for National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs recommended a [reduction](#) in starchy vegetables, such as white potatoes and corn, to one cup (total) per school week. Children, however, are encouraged to eat turkey sausages, egg patties, cheese omelets, chicken quesadillas, beef eggrolls, hot dogs, hamburgers, pepperoni pizza, roast beef, deli ham, chocolate milk, and margarine.

The second policy prevents needy families from getting financial assistance to buy potatoes. Currently, the USDA provides vouchers through the *Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program* for fresh fruits and vegetables. However, fresh potatoes are now specifically [excluded](#) from the list of allowable vegetables. In other words, under this second wide-reaching nutritional policy, a WIC recipient can receive butter, cheese, whole milk, and eggs through the program, but not a single white potato.

Both reports indicate that the primary reason for limiting starches, including the most popular of all vegetable foods, the potato, is to encourage people to choose more green, yellow, and orange vegetables. The net effect of both “anti-starch policies”—encouraging more nutrient-dense, low-calorie vegetables to be eaten—will be to harm the lives of women and children by causing them, by necessity, to get more of their daily sustenance from disease-causing animal foods.

### Less Starch Means More Meat and Dairy

Green, yellow, and orange vegetables, such as broccoli, cauliflower, and green peppers, because of their high nutrient density, are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and other important phytochemicals; but they lack sufficient calories to support life. Focusing on nutrient density reflects a “supplementation mentality” that suggests that our health problems are somehow due to deficiencies (such as those causing scurvy, beriberi, and pellagra) and the answer is to get more nutrients. However, the opposite is actually true; the health problems of Americans are due to excesses—as in too many calories, and too much fat, sodium, cholesterol, protein, and contamination. Focusing on deficiencies will not solve problems of excesses.

To obtain 2000 calories from broccoli, at 135 calories per pound, means that 15 pounds of these “little green trees” must be eaten daily. You don’t have the will or capacity to eat that much. Thus, because of their sheer volume, eating that many green, yellow, and orange vegetables is impractical, if not impossible, for sustaining life. Starches, like the white potato, on the other hand, provide plenty of readily available energy for active living. Fewer than 10 white potatoes would be sufficient to meet the daily caloric needs (2000 calories) of men, women, and children, while also providing an overabundance of proteins, vitamins, and minerals.

The primary reason to eat is for energy (referred to as calories). Long-term, over several months, proteins, vitamins, and minerals are required for life, but cells deprived of fuel die within hours. In natural foods there are three molecular sources of energy: pro-





teins, fats, and carbohydrates. For energy, the body rarely uses proteins. Only under desperate circumstances, for example, during starvation or while someone is following a very low-carbohydrate diet (an Atkins-type diet), does the body resort to using protein for fuel. Fat can supply daily energy needs, especially when insufficient carbohydrates are present in our meals. However, the usual destiny of dietary fat is the storage depots in our hips, thighs, and abdomen. This fat can then be used later during times of food deprivation. The human body preferentially burns carbohydrates to sustain life and provide for our daily activities. In practical terms, for everyday living, obtaining sufficient healthy carbohydrates means eating starches, such as potatoes, corn, and rice. Beef, pork, chicken, and cheese provide

only fat and protein, but no carbohydrate.

Therefore, when the USDA restricts starches (practical carbohydrates) from the diets of women and children, then their choices are limited to animal foods (fats) to obtain an adequate daily supply of energy. Whether done consciously or not, the USDA has boosted the sale of beef, poultry, eggs, and cheese to hungry Americans. With more animal foods also comes more obesity and chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis. Consider these two “anti-starch policies” from the USDA as two giant steps backwards for the health of Americans.

### The United States Department of Agriculture

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), created in 1862, was originally referred to as “the People’s Department” by President Abraham Lincoln. This was a time in history when farmers and their families made up roughly 50 percent of the US population. The role of the USDA was expanded when congress passed the Food and Drugs Act of 1906 after the uproar caused by the publication of Upton Sinclair’s muckraking book, *The Jungle*, exposing the filth and brutality of the meatpacking industries during the early-20th Century. The Act was “For preventing the manufacture, sale, or transportation of adulterated or misbranded or poisonous or deleterious foods, drugs, medicines, and liquors, and for regulating traffic therein, and for other purposes.”

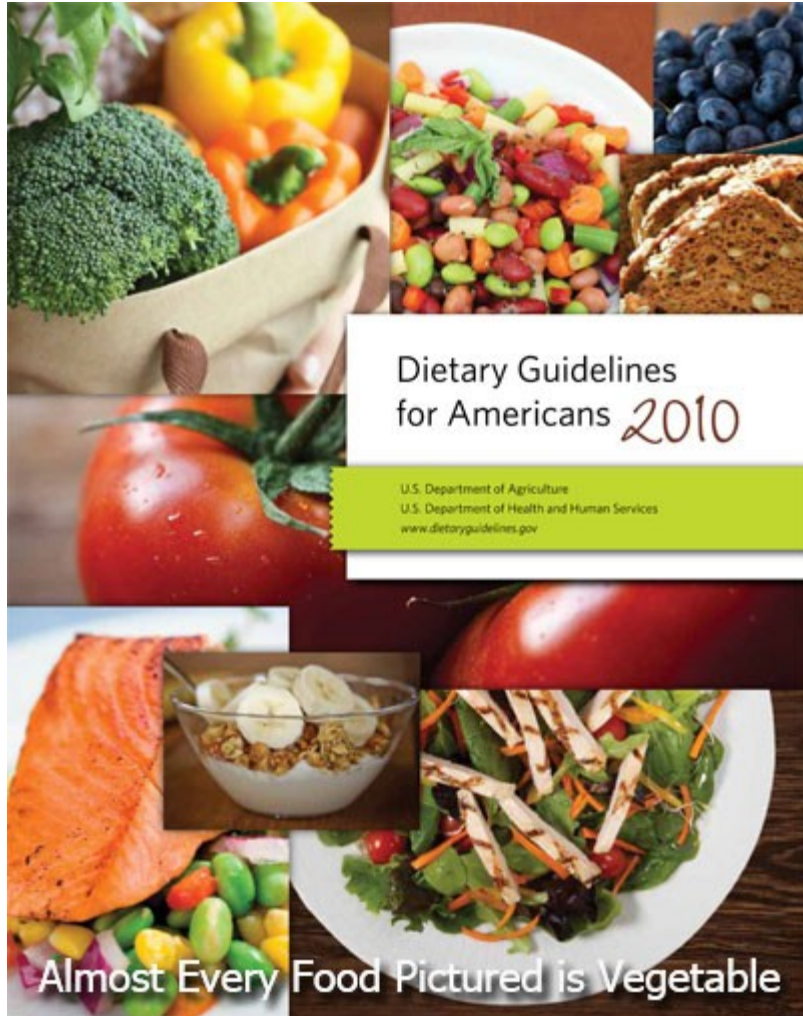


The USDA has the responsibility for overseeing food safety. But, it also has an opposing responsibility to promote agricultural businesses. Nearly 150 years after its creation, tens of thousands of small farms have been bought up and concentrated into a few large politically influential corporations, and the USDA has become the “[Agribusiness Industries](#)’ Department,” primarily serving the interests of giant food production and distribution corporations.

In [1935](#), the number of farms in the United States peaked at 6.8 million, with a US population of over 127 million citizens. As of [2005](#), with the US population more than doubled, four companies (Tyson, Cargill, Swift & Co., and National Beef Packing Co.) controlled the processing of 84 percent of the country’s beef and three of these same four companies (along with an additional fourth) processed 64 percent of the country’s pork. Processing of chickens and turkeys is also mostly limited to four companies. As a result of all this concentrated economic power the USDA has ignored scientific evidence in favor of placating the interests of big businesses. These conflicting responsibilities have affected the lives of every American, contributing substantially to our current costly epidemics of obesity and sickness.

A revolving door policy, where the people who work for industry move to roles as legislators and regulators in the government (and vice versa), has played a major role in dietary policies. Members of the USDA have had known associations with the [National Cattlemen's Association](#), [the Meat Packer's Association](#), [the National Pork Board](#), [the National Livestock and Meat Board](#), [the American Egg Board](#), [ConAgra Foods](#), [the National Dairy Council](#), and [Dairy Management Inc.](#)

### The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010: A Big Step Forward



In July of 2010 I submitted A [Scientific Critique](#) of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee's Report for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (I sent it to you and the USDA). I wrote that, "Except for a few hopeful sentences, the committee presented a report filled with fear mongering, doubletalk, omissions of major topics, consistently biased views of the scientific literature, and inexcusable factual errors that favored the livestock industries."

Six months later, on January 31, 2011, the USDA published a set of [Dietary Guidelines](#) for Americans more in favor of the people and less industry-friendly than I had ever expected. Americans were told to "emphasize nutrient-dense foods and beverages—vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products; seafood, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans and peas, and nuts and seeds." In the interest of people (not agribusinesses), they should have stuck with the plant foods: vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, and peas.

These 2010 Guidelines clearly emphasize the importance of whole grains, tubers, legumes, green, yellow, and orange vegetables, and fruits with positive discussions about the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet and the Mediterranean diet, and about vegetarian (even vegan) diets. Lacking, however, is communi-

cation about the importance of getting the bulk of our daily calories from starches: a message crucial for the practical application of a healthy diet. For the most part, starches were mentioned with negative connotations, such as "refined starches," and "to be minimized or excluded along with solid fats, sugars, and sodium."

The 2010 Guidelines continue to support the meat, poultry, egg and fish industries with recommendations to increase the intake of dairy products, including high-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese; to increase the amount and variety of seafood consumed; and to choose a variety of protein foods (seafood, lean meat and poultry, and eggs). The report was far from candid about communicating the importance of avoiding agribusiness' most profitable foods: meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products.

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), a politically active nonprofit organization based in Washington DC, filed a [lawsuit](#) against the USDA on February 15, 2011. In their lawsuit they stated: "The problem is word choice. For healthful foods that people should eat more of, the *Guidelines* are clear. They encourage readers to eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. But when it comes to foods people need to eat less of (e.g., meat and cheese), the *Guidelines* resort to biochemical terms instead of listing specific foods, apparently out of fear of upsetting food producers. That is, the *Guidelines* call for limiting 'cholesterol,' 'saturated fat' 'solid fat.' Similarly, while dairy products account for more than 30 percent of the saturated ("bad") fat

in the American diet, the *Guidelines* disguise this fat by splitting dairy products into many categories, including cheese (8.5 percent), butter (2.9 percent), whole milk (3.4 percent), reduced-fat milk (3.9 percent), dairy desserts (5.6 percent), and pizza (5.9 percent), so their contribution to ill health is harder to see." Thus, as PCRM has voiced, more has to be done before the USDA again becomes "the People's Department."

### **The Pendulum Has Turned**

Setting money, politics, and some clarifications needed in the wording aside, the plant-food-strong message of 2010 Dietary Guidelines has eliminated any doubt about what are the major killers of Americans and has established a steadfast direction for restoring health to our nation. This landmark is professionally welcome to me because as I have traveled a straight and narrow path over the past four decades, I have seen "popular opinion" make unexplainable U-turns in directions of nutritional nonsense.

I was an important author at Penguin Books USA Inc. up until the early 1990s. Then there was a renewal of the Atkins Diet. I was approached by my book editor and told that it was time for me to change my writing style: "Dr. McDougall, your high-carbohydrate books recommending that people eat more starchy vegetables are of the eighties. The new diets will focus on meat and other high-protein, low-carb foods. We would like you to make this change in your future books." My response was, "You must be kidding. Essentially all of the respected science to date says that a diet high in animal products will give you heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. For the past 70 years researchers have clearly shown that a diet of starches, vegetables, and fruits is right for people." "Besides," I told my editor, "do you think I write these books just to make money?"

As history shows, Penguin Books was right about the direction that diet books were headed at that time. However, after six national bestselling books, over one million copies sold, during a 15-year relationship, I have had no new projects with this publisher for more than a decade. But times are changing.

Many other people now see that large-scale progress in the right direction is finally occurring, and they believe stronger than ever in my message about a starch-based diet for people. Confirming my positive attitude about the future, as the pendulum swings back with the beginning of the 21st Century, I now have a contract with one of the world's most influential publishers, Rodale Inc., to produce my new book, *The Starch Solution*, which will be available April of 2012.



## Featured Recipes

### Swiss Chard Stew

I have a Swiss chard plant in my garden that is over 2 years old and over this past winter it really grew like crazy! I love to go down to the garden and harvest the chard just before putting it into the pot for cooking. This recipe is fast and easy, yet very satisfying, and it also reheats well the next day.

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 4

- 2 pounds Swiss chard
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/8 cup vegetable broth
- 1 26 ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 15 ounce can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon slivered fresh basil (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- Dash sea salt (optional)

Put a large pot of water on to boil. Cut the large stems out of the chard and discard. Coarsely chop the chard and drop into the boiling water. Reduce heat and simmer for about 8 minutes. Remove from heat, drain in colander and set aside.

Meanwhile, place the onion, garlic, and red pepper flakes in a large pot with the vegetable broth. Cook, stirring frequently until the onion is translucent and softened.

Add the tomatoes and bring to a boil. Stir in the beans, cover and cook over low heat for 5 minutes.

Squeeze chard to remove excess water, then add to the pot along with the basil, pepper and salt. Continue to cook over low heat for another 3-4 minutes. Serve over brown rice or other whole grains.

### North African Chard Soup

Here is another wonderful recipe that makes use of all the chard I have in my garden. Serve this in a bowl with some whole grain bread on the side.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 25 minutes

Servings: 6

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 5 tablespoons tomato paste

1 cup cooked garbanzo beans  
¾ cup frozen lima beans  
½ cup whole wheat spaghetti, broken into pieces  
½ teaspoon ground coriander  
½ teaspoon smoked paprika  
¼ teaspoon ground cumin  
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper  
6 cups coarsely chopped Swiss chard leaves  
¼ cup fresh chopped parsley

Place the onion, celery and garlic in a large soup pot with ½ cup of the vegetable broth. Cook, stirring frequently, until onions have softened slightly. Mix the tomato paste into the remaining broth and whisk until well combined. Add to the pot along with the garbanzos, limas, pasta and spices. Mix well, bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook for about 5 minutes. Add the chard and continue to cook until chard is tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in the parsley and let rest for 1-2 minutes before serving.

### **Yammy Kale**

We grew several varieties of kale in our garden last year and they all kept producing over the winter months. My favorite is the Lacinato blue kale because it is just a bit more tender than the other varieties.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

2 Garnet yams, peeled and cut into chunks  
1 ½ cups water or vegetable broth  
1 onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 cups Lacinato kale, thinly sliced  
1 tablespoon vegetarian Worcestershire sauce  
½ to 1 teaspoon Sambal Oelek chili paste  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Place the yams and water or broth in a large sauté pan. Cover, bring to a boil, reduce heat and cook until yams are just barely tender, about 5 to 10 minutes depending on the size of the chunks. Add the onion and garlic and continue to cook over medium low heat until liquid has been reduced by half. Add the kale, Worcestershire sauce and chili paste. Continue to cook until kale is tender, stirring occasionally. Stir in the lemon juice just before serving. Serve over brown rice or other whole grains.

Hint: This may also be made with other varieties of kale, just remove the hard stem before slicing the kale. Garnet yams are the bright orange-fleshed sweet potatoes with reddish colored skins.

### **Curried Kale Soup**

Here is another use for delicious kale and yams, this time in a smoky, curried soup.

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 35 minutes

Servings: 6

1 onion, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
4 cups vegetable broth  
1 cup peeled and diced Garnet yam  
1 tablespoon curry powder  
1 tablespoon smoked paprika  
1 bay leaf  
3 cups chopped kale  
2 15 ounce cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup water  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice  
Freshly ground pepper to taste

---

Place the onion and garlic in a large non-stick pot. Dry sauté until onion and garlic have softened and are starting to brown slightly, stirring frequently. Add vegetable broth, yams, curry powder, paprika and bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the kale and continue to simmer until kale and yams are tender, about 10 more minutes.

Meanwhile, puree one cup of the beans with the water. Add to the soup pot along with the remaining whole beans. Cook an additional 10 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice and freshly ground pepper to taste. Serve at once.

## **Brownies**

Many people have written me to ask how I make my favorite brownies now that Wonderslim Fat Replacer is no longer available. I substitute Sunsweet Lighter Bake for the Wonderslim and I think they are even more moist and delicious than they were in the past. I usually make them one day early because we like the taste of them after they have been refrigerated overnight. Last month at the McDougall Program the chef turned these into a fantastic layered chocolate cake (see hints below) for a birthday celebration. These may be fat-free but they are not calorie-free and they contain quite a bit of simple sugar, especially with the frosting, so save them for a special occasion. I only make these a couple of times a year for birthday celebrations.

Servings: makes one 8 inch square pan

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 30 minutes

### **Dry Ingredients:**

1 cup unbleached white flour  
2/3 cup reduced fat cocoa powder (Wonderslim brand)  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped cashews or walnuts (optional)

### **Wet Ingredients:**

1 cup Sunsweet Lighter Bake



1 cup organic cane sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
2 tablespoons Egg Replacer mixed in ½ cup warm water

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine dry ingredients in a bowl. Set aside.

Mix Sunsweet Lighter Bake and organic sugar together in a separate bowl. Stir in vanilla.

Mix Egg Replacer and water together and whisk until very frothy. Add to sugar mixture and stir to combine. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and stir until mixed. DO NOT OVERMIX. Spoon into a non-stick 8 inch square baking dish and flatten. Bake for 30 minutes. Cool and remove from pan. Cut into squares for serving.

Hints: Sunsweet Lighter Bake is made from plums and apples and is an excellent fat replacer in baked goods. Wonderslim makes the reduced fat and caffeine free cocoa powder. Organic cane sugar is made by Wholesome Sweeteners. (Regular granulated sugar may be used instead, if desired.) Egg Replacer is made by EnerG Foods. It is sold in boxes in the natural food store. It is used to replace eggs in baking. All of these products should be available in your natural food store. Sunsweet Lighter Bake can be ordered online at [www.sunsweet.com](http://www.sunsweet.com). To make these brownies into a layer cake, double the recipe and make in two separate 8 inch pans. Remove from pans after cooling and spread the top of one layer with strawberry or raspberry preserves (use the kind sweetened with fruit instead of sugar). Place the other layer on top of the one with the preserves and press together gently. Top with one of the sauces or frostings below, if desired.

### **Raspberry or Strawberry Sauce**

Preparation Time: 5 minutes

Servings: variable

1 10-ounce bag frozen, unsweetened, raspberries or strawberries, thawed  
¼ cup sugar

Place the raspberries or strawberries and sugar in a blender jar. Process until blended. Strain the sauce through a fine strainer, stirring often, to remove most of the seeds, pressing down with the back of a spoon to get most of the fruit through the strainer. Discard the remaining sauce with the seeds. Pour the seedless sauce into a covered container and refrigerate until ready to use. Drizzle this sauce over the cake for a fruity topping.

### **Chocolate Frosting**

This will make that birthday cake really special!

Preparation Time: 3 minutes

Servings: frosts one 8 inch square cake

2 cups confectioners' sugar (powdered sugar)

¼ cup Wonderslim cocoa powder

¼ to 1/3 cup soy milk

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

Place the confectioners' sugar and cocoa powder in a small bowl. Mix well. Stir in ¼ cup of the soy milk and the vanilla and mix well. Add the remaining soy milk a little at a time until the frosting is a spreadable consistency. Use to frost cakes or brownies.

### **Lemon Frosting**

Preparation Time: 3 minutes

Servings: frosts the top of one cake

2 cups confectioner's sugar (powdered sugar)

1/3 to ½ cup lemon soy yogurt

Place the confectioner's sugar in a bowl. Gradually add the soy yogurt until the frosting is a spreadable consistency. You may need a bit more or less of the yogurt depending on which brand you use. The frosting should be spreadable, but not runny. Use to frost cakes or brownies.

Hint: Any flavor of soy yogurt may be used in this recipe to vary the flavor of the frosting.

**The following recipes are by Tiffany Hobson; executive assistant to Mary & John McDougall.**

### **Black-eyed Peas and Collard Greens, New Orleans Style**

This traditional dish is served in New Orleans every year on New Year's Day. The greens represent money, while the swelling of the black-eyed peas symbolizes prosperity. Whether you are celebrating a New Year, needing some extra luck, or just want to eat some really good home style cooked food, I hope you enjoy this as much as I do.

### **Black-eyed Peas**

Preparation Time: 35 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 ½ - 2 hours

Servings: 6-8

1 white onion, finely diced

5 large garlic cloves, minced

4 stalks of celery, finely diced

1 red bell pepper, finely diced

3 bay leaves

2 tablespoons powdered thyme

½ - 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 – 2 ¼ cups black-eyed peas

6-8 cups vegetable broth  
Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
Sea salt to taste

First, sort through the black-eyed peas, making sure you have taken out any peas that are discolored or broken. Set aside. Place 1 cup of vegetable broth with the onion, garlic, celery and red bell pepper in a large pot. Cook over medium high heat for 5-10 minutes, stirring frequently. Once the vegetables become soft, add the bay leaves, thyme, cayenne and several twists of freshly ground black pepper. Mix well. Add black-eyed peas and the rest of the vegetable broth, mixing well. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 1 ½ - 2 hours with the lid slightly ajar. Beans will have a creamy consistency. Serve with rice and collard greens.

Hint: This recipe can be as mild or spicy as you like it. I love spicy food. I will use 1 teaspoon of cayenne pepper and enough freshly ground black pepper to give any mere mortal carpal tunnel!

## **Rice**

Preparation Time: 1 minute  
Cooking Time: 20-30 minutes  
Servings: 6-8

2 cups of white Jasmine rice (traditional) or brown Basmati (healthier)  
4 cups vegetable broth  
1 bunch of green onions, cut finely

If you have a rice cooker: place the rice and broth in the rice cooker and turn it on. It will work its own magic and let you know when it is done. Stir the rice immediately. If you do not have a rice cooker, place the rice and broth in a medium saucepan, bring to a boil and cook until rice is tender and liquid has been absorbed. Serve the rice with the green onions on top alongside the black-eyed peas and collard greens.

## **Collard Greens**

Preparation Time: 10 minutes  
Cooking Time: 10-15 minutes  
Servings: 6-8

2 white onions, chopped  
4 bunches collard greens, stripped from stems and cut into large pieces  
4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar (or to taste)  
2 teaspoons brown sugar (or to taste)

In a large non-stick pan, cook the onions covered over low heat, stirring frequently. Onions should cook until they are caramelized (very brown and sticky). Add 2 tablespoons of the apple cider vinegar and 1 teaspoon of brown sugar. Mix well. Add the collard greens, 2 more tablespoons of apple cider vinegar and 1 more teaspoon of brown sugar. Mix well. Cook covered for 1 ½ - 2 minutes. Adjust the flavor of the collard greens if necessary (you do not want them sickly sweet, nor do you want them extremely sour). The flavor should be a perfect balance of a touch of sweetness, with a hint of sour flavor. Serve with black-eyed peas and rice.

## Orzo Salad

This is a great salad to take for a picnic. Make sure you make this hours before consuming; the flavors blend together in the refrigerator to give this salad an "oily" mouth feel consistency. I am often quizzed by my friends as to how I can produce a salad they swear has oil in it. Enjoy!

Preparation Time: 4 hours (including refrigeration time)

Cooking Time: 10 minutes

Servings: 6-8

2 cups fresh fava beans (about 20-30 large pods)  
4 ounces orzo  
1 small red onion, minced  
4 large garlic cloves, minced  
1 teaspoon dried marjoram  
6 tablespoons vegetable broth  
½ cup sundried tomatoes, cut into 1/8's  
1-2 fresh lemons, juiced (Meyers are fantastic in this recipe)  
½ - 1 ½ tablespoons fresh marjoram, minced  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Sea salt to taste

## Fava Beans

Take the fava beans out of their pods. Bring a large pot of water to boil. Meanwhile, prepare a large bowl of ice water. When water is boiling, add the fava beans and cook for 1 minute. Drain the beans in a colander and immediately place them in the ice water. Let them sit in the ice water until they have completely cooled, about 3-5 minutes. Shell the fava beans. Fava beans look like they have Mohawks; use your thumb nail to break the front of the Mohawk and pull to remove the "cap." Use your thumb and index finger to "pop" out the bean. Set aside.

## Orzo

Bring a pot of water to boil. Add the orzo and cook to an al dente consistency, about 5-10 minutes. Drain, rinse with cool water and set aside.

## The Salad

In a large non-stick pan, sauté the onion, garlic, and dried marjoram in the vegetable broth until soft (about 5-7 minutes). Add orzo, fava beans, sundried tomatoes, and lemon juice and mix well. Cook for 2-3 minutes. Add in the fresh marjoram and cook for 1 more minute. Place salad in a glass bowl and refrigerate, uncovered, for 2 ½ - 3 hours. Before serving, add freshly ground black pepper and sea salt to taste, if desired.

Hint: Marjoram is in my top 5 of favorite spices. The dried marjoram blends beautifully with the onion and garlic. Fresh marjoram adds a light freshness to this dish. You may cut the fresh marjoram to ½ tablespoon or add as much as 1 ½ tablespoons, but I would do no more or no less. For another variation to this salad, add a few drops of aged balsamic vinegar to the salad and toss just before serving.