
VEGAN FOR THE HOLIDAYS



ZEL ALLEN

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Dedication

*To **Reuben**, who nourishes me
with constant inspiration
and sweet, loving support.*

Acknowledgments

REUBEN, MY LIFE PARTNER, CHEERLEADER, LOVING HUSBAND, and 24/7 supporter team, earns 20 percent of my love and appreciation for having such steadfast faith in my cooking endeavors. He never let me give up when I had a bad day and my Apricot, Date, and Hazelnut Sticky Pie failed for the fourth time in a row. Vegan households across the country may also want to thank Reuben while they feast their eyes on this delicious treat at dessert time.

Chuck, Bruce, Amy, and Gregg, my four fabulous offspring, are always in my heart and earn my loving appreciation for their continued encouragement of my creative efforts.

Great big bear hugs to Amy, who spent three precious days of her vacation to apply her cook's eye, reading through the manuscript with me and offering a multitude of creative suggestions.

My faithful recipe testers belong to a very impressive category of human beings dedicated to making this a better vegan world. Because I've incorporated many of their thoughtful suggestions, I felt I had my own staff of kitchen elves. Their efforts have been so invaluable, and I remain indebted to them. Sincere thank-you's to Alberta Knaack, Aoife McGuirk, Arlene Zsilka, Betty Bobu, Beth Hahler, Bianca Phillips, Chris Summers, Midge Constantino, Cyndi Leedy, Tammy Allen, Debra Edwards, Nancy DeVries, Fay Kahn, Yvonne Fide, Gina Sengupta, Joanne Mitchell, JJ Loyonne, Kathi Schilling, Lane Goldman, Leona Minckler, Lenore Skomal, Marilee Collins, Lee Yeager, Marlene Cantin, Michael Montroy, Michelle Monteleagre, Patty and Jim Moore, Tom Peacock, Michael Pickens, Doug Watkins, Saul Beaumont, Sue Hansen, Sharon St. James, Stacey Matrazzo, Susan Lasken, Tanita Kettle, Ted Lai, and Yael Kisel.

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When Cynthia and Bob Holzapfel of Book Publishing Company accepted this, my second cookbook, for publication, I was elated and nearly burst with joy. I owe them my deep gratitude for welcoming *Vegan for the Holidays* into the BPC family and showering it with nurturing support.

Over the years I've been co-publishing the Internet magazine *Vegetarians in Paradise* with my husband, I've reviewed numerous vegan books and am keenly aware of the sharp eye and intuitive sense it takes to be a good editor. My cup runneth over with not one, but two exceptional editors. Carol Wiley Lorente, editorial director, took my unpolished manuscript and honed and shaped it into its present shiny, sleek form, while copy editor Terry Christofferson made sure none of the delicious ingredients went astray.

Another leg of the publishing team is Chef Ron Maxen and photographer Warren Jefferson. When Chef Ron prepared and styled the holiday dishes, Warren applied his art with skilled camera work, resulting in brilliant, colorful, and enticing photos. Working with Warren were Barbara Jefferson and Andrew Schmidt. A banquet of thank-you's go to the whole publishing team for its part in bringing *Vegan for the Holidays* to life.

Introduction

WITH AN IDEA SIMMERING IN THE BACK OF MY MIND FOR SOME TIME NOW, I feel this is the right time to bring it to a boil, finish it off, plate it, garnish the platter, and present it at the holiday table. Braising, roasting, and sautéing in my kitchen is an abundant crop of indulgent recipes harvested just for the holidays. While many of us take pleasure in cooking throughout the year, we know the holiday season is that special time when those who seldom cook a meal from scratch will haul out the chopping block, mash some potatoes, and consult the family about vegetable preferences.

These past four years, I've poked a spatula into every nook and cranny of my kitchen, gleaned ideas to infuse plenty of spice into those special festive meals when people come together with friends and family to celebrate the holidays.

My aim is to offer vegan holiday foods that are just as delicious, innovative, and elegant as their hallowed meat-based counterparts. Holiday dishes for the festive vegan table center on fresh foods harvested from nature and prepared from scratch and are far more healthful and lower in saturated fat than traditional fare.

Because my family and I share the holidays with friends and other family members who are not vegan or who may have only rarely tasted festive dishes without animal ingredients, I want to provide celebration foods anyone would be proud to serve. And because the eyes are the first to experience the feast, I unleash the usual boundaries and think extravagantly: A holiday meal doesn't have to cost more; it simply has to look that way. Imagine the praise when serving a lavish-looking dish that makes everyone inhale audibly and exclaim with sounds of delight.

Fresh from the oven to the Thanksgiving table are some delectable, hearty, and innovative entrées such as the picturesque, voluptuous wild rice, vegetable and nut-filled Thanksgiving Phyllo Pie, along with a lavish feast of cranberry appetizers, side dishes, and even beverages.

For Thanksgiving, I'd originally planned to include a recipe for mashed potatoes, but then I shelved that idea because most people already know how to prepare them. Then I had second thoughts and included it with the Thanksgiving side dishes we simply cannot leave behind. To offer a truly memorable stuffing, I prepared a pot of wild rice, combined it with shiitake mushrooms, pecans, and the perfect balance of seasonings to bring a bountiful bowl of Savory Sourdough and Wild Rice Stuffing to the table.

Dessert is that richly spiced old standby, Williamsburg "Pumpkin" Pie, along with Apples 'n' Cream Pie. Fondly, we can join together to raise cups of silky smooth Pumpkin-Apple Nog to end the meal with a toast.

While some choose to celebrate Christmas with simple, everyday comfort foods, I've adopted the philosophy that celebration foods ought to stand apart from our day-to-day fare. Holidays are distinguished from ordinary days and beg for foods infused with novel touches, such as Pear and Butternut Bisque with Cranberry-Pear Compote. I still bring the leafy greens to the table but with dazzling touches like those featured in the Spinach Salad with Beets and Pomegranates, brazenly decked out in bold Christmas colors and served with a knockout Cranberry-Pomegranate Dressing.

I feel grateful for the rich bounty sown and harvested by our American farmers who have enabled us to celebrate with an abundance of fresh foods.

Jewish holidays are emphatically centered on food, and Hanukkah is no exception. I couldn't resist ~~stirring up a kettle of Sweet and Sour Cabbage Borscht~~, a time-honored Eastern European soup that makes a delicious starter. To accompany the traditional Potato Latkes with Tofu Sour Cream and Applesauce, I've included Carrot and Sweet Potato Tzimmes. Another memorable sweet, the Cranberry Apple Strudel, is still the revered, old-fashioned dessert from Eastern Europe made even more irresistible by its twenty-first century makeover.

Kwanzaa, a recently created holiday, honors the ancient roots of the African-American culture and celebrates the weeklong holiday with special rituals and symbolic items. Eventually, each day's special ritual leads everyone to the table for a delicious meal. I hope you'll take part in exploring the traditional African-American foods such as Sweet Potato Pie with Cashew-Ginger Crème, Southern Cornbread, Mustard Greens with Tempeh Bacon, and a host of delicious pumpkin dishes.

Whether I've thrown a New Year's Eve bash with a lavish spread of great-tasting finger foods or welcomed in the new year with an open-house, soup-and-chili party, I always find the guests mingling at the table and sampling everything edible. And if, by chance, they leave the table briefly to chat with a friend, I see them returning to taste one more tidbit of New Year Log in Spicy Pecan Gremolata or dip their spoons into the thick and creamy Sweet Potato Soup.

So, I would like to welcome you to a season of jubilant celebrations, complete with irresistible vegan dishes that reflect the beautiful bounty of harvest foods—the creamy squash and pumpkins, tart cranberries, sweet persimmons, juicy pomegranates, freshly cooked chestnuts, crunchy nuts, earthy wild rice, and the herbs and spices that are inseparable from the season. In the pages of this volume you'll find a banquet of irresistible heritage dishes—some dating back to earlier centuries—innovatively updated with novel touches.

While my focus has been solely on the foods that grace the holiday table, I'm fully aware that holidays came about to mark meaningful events of historical or religious nature. But, after all the hustle and bustle of party planning, gift shopping, gift wrapping, addressing cards, and attending holiday rituals and ceremonies, it all boils down to gathering with friends and loved ones and enjoying a fabulous meal of simple comfort foods or elegant gourmet creations. Food, after all, is a powerful bonding agent that seals warm memories of cherished occasions.

My hope is to bring grace and elegance to the table and establish new holiday food traditions with a compassionate focus that vegans can enjoy with guilt-free gusto.

As I sit down to plan my own family holiday dinners, I feel grateful for the rich bounty sown and harvested by our American farmers, who have enabled us to celebrate with an abundance of fresh foods. And it gives me deep pleasure to invite you to join me in the kitchen throughout the season, for together we participate in fun celebrations and conclude each event with a darned good meal. And now, let's bring on the holiday feasts!

Thanksgiving

Gone Deliciously Vegan



THANKSGIVING IS THE QUINTESSENTIAL HALLOWED AMERICAN HOLIDAY that plunges us into the season of treasured nostalgic memories and sends us scurrying and planning to celebrate with those we cherish. The holiday also gives us the opportunity to express appreciation for our many blessings.

Thanksgiving arrives with expectations for a day of royal feasting. Friends and family gather at the vegan table to enjoy a jubilant celebration rich with savory, succulent flavors that bathe the taste buds with stunning treats of the harvest. It's the holiday that kindles lasting food memories.

The season begs for dishes infused with aromatic herbs. Sweet potatoes and squash reach new heights with a touch of spice and a hint of tart fruits, such as fresh cranberries or quince. Fragrant herbal bouquets of sage, bay leaves, and marjoram drift from the kitchen, ignite the senses, and invite us to join the festivities at the table.

Thanksgiving desserts are a celebration of spices, such as cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and ginger that join together for the highly anticipated finish to the meal.

The vegan Thanksgiving menu yearns for a few classic signature dishes that have become cherished, annual must-haves for the main course. Those dishes ought to be easy to assemble, look inviting, have wonderful aromas, and deliver captivating flavors. In the many years my family and I have been sharing holiday meals with nonvegetarians, we've witnessed not one person who has remarked about missing the turkey. Quite the contrary, most guests are surprised at the bountiful variety of delicious foods and are delighted with the opportunity to experience a true vegan feast firsthand.

With a touch of playful sculpture, two tasty appetizer pâtés become one very striking presentation with an underlying philosophical message: a balanced approach to everyday life. Accompany with whole grain crackers or toasted pita wedges, or spoon into leaves of Belgian endive.

Carrot Pâté

1¼ cups chopped carrots

1¼ cups chopped red bell pepper (about 1 large pepper)

1 cup raw or roasted cashews or macadamias

2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1½ teaspoons minced peeled fresh ginger

¾ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground pepper

Pinch cayenne

Mushroom Pâté

1 pound cremini or button mushrooms, coarsely chopped

1 small onion, coarsely chopped

2 large cloves garlic, chopped

¼ cup water

½ cup walnuts

1 tablespoon nutritional yeast flakes

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 teaspoon salt

1. To make the carrot pâté, put the carrots, bell pepper, cashews, lemon juice, ginger, salt, pepper and cayenne in a food processor. Process for 1 minute, or until smooth, stopping occasionally to scrape down the work bowl. Transfer to a small bowl and wash and dry the processor bowl.
2. To make the mushroom pâté, cook and stir the mushrooms, onion, garlic, and water in a large skillet over high heat for 3 or 4 minutes, or until the onion is transparent and the mushrooms are softened. Add 1 or more tablespoons of water as needed to prevent burning. There should be at least 1 tablespoon of liquid remaining in the pan.
3. Transfer the mushroom mixture and remaining liquid into the food processor and add the walnuts, yeast flakes, lemon juice, and salt. Process until smooth, stopping occasionally to scrape down the work bowl.

4. To assemble, remove 1 tablespoon of each pâté and set aside. Spoon the remaining mushroom pâté onto half of a dinner plate. Using the back of a spoon, form half of the yin-yang symbol. (See illustration below.)
5. Spoon the remaining carrot pâté onto the plate and form the other half of the symbol. Place the reserved tablespoon of each pâté into the widest portion of the opposite color. Smooth the edges to form a circle.



Stuffed Tomatoes with Edamame Pâté

Makes 10 to 15 servings

Well-seasoned and perked up with chili powder, this tasty pâté tucked into hollowed-out cherry tomatoes makes a delicious and attractive holiday starter.

10 to 15 large cherry tomatoes or small Roma tomatoes

8 ounces edamame, cooked and shelled

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 tablespoons tamari

2 tablespoons water

1 tablespoon tahini

1 tablespoon grated peeled fresh ginger

2 cloves garlic

1 teaspoon rice vinegar

¼ teaspoon salt

⅛ teaspoon chipotle chile powder

Pinch cayenne (optional)

Paprika, for garnish

1 cup sliced kalamata olives, for garnish

1. Using a serrated grapefruit or paring knife, cut the top off each tomato. Scoop out the tomato pulp and seeds. If using Roma tomatoes, cut them in half crosswise and scoop out the pulp and seeds. Save the pulp for another purpose. Set the tomatoes aside and prepare the filling.
2. Put the edamame, lemon juice, tamari, water, tahini, ginger, garlic, vinegar, salt, chipotle powder and optional cayenne in a food processor. Process until smooth and creamy, stopping occasionally to scrape down the work bowl.
3. Fill the tomatoes with the edamame mixture. Sprinkle lightly with paprika and garnish with an olive slice if desired.

Sesame Appetizer Balls

Makes 6 to 8 servings

These captivating starters explode with pungent flavor and can be served warm, chilled, or at room temperature.

2 slices whole wheat bread

1 tomato, seeded and coarsely chopped

½ cup coarsely ground walnuts

⅓ cup diced sweet onion

¼ cup minced Spanish olives

2½ tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced

½ teaspoon salt

½ to ⅔ cup unhulled sesame seeds

¼ bunch parsley, for garnish

3 cherry tomato halves, for garnish

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Line a 17½ × 12½-inch rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Tear the bread into pieces and put them in a medium bowl. Pour water over the bread to cover. Drain thoroughly, squeeze the bread very dry and put it in a food processor.
3. Add the tomato, walnuts, onion, olives, vinegar, garlic, and salt. Process until ingredients are incorporated and form a coarse mixture, stopping occasionally to scrape down the work bowl.
4. Put the sesame seeds in a small, deep bowl. Roll tablespoonfuls of the bread mixture into 1-inch balls. Roll each ball in the sesame seeds to coat completely.
5. Place the balls on the prepared pan. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until lightly browned. Arrange the parsley around the perimeter of a serving platter and place cherry tomato halves in parsley desired. Transfer the balls to the serving platter.

Garlicky Chestnut Butter

Makes 1¼ cup

Consider this buttery spread as a tasty accompaniment to any savory dish, and use as you would relish.

⅓ cup chopped onion

2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

¼ teaspoon dried thyme

½ cup water

1¼ cups cooked and peeled coarsely chopped chestnuts

¼ teaspoon salt

1 sprig parsley, for garnish

1. Cook and stir the onion, garlic, thyme, and ¼ cup of the water in a medium skillet over medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the onion has softened. Add 1 or more tablespoons of water as needed to prevent burning.
2. Transfer the mixture to a food processor. Add the chestnuts, salt, and the remaining ¼ cup of water. Process for 1 or 2 minutes, or until smooth and creamy, stopping occasionally to scrape down the work bowl. Transfer to a serving bowl. Garnish with the parsley if desired.

Cranberry-Pear Compote

Makes 8 to 10 servings

This recipe combines cranberries with pears, cinnamon, and ginger, and it's a winner. Prepare this compote a day in advance to give it time to set up in the refrigerator.

1 (12-ounce) package fresh cranberries

1 large firm pear, peeled, cored, and diced

1 cup organic sugar

¾ cup water

1 (3-inch) cinnamon stick

1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Combine all the ingredients in a 3-quart saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Just as the mixture comes to a boil, immediately decrease the heat to low and simmer for 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool completely and refrigerate 8 to 12 hours to thicken.

Curried Kabocha Soup

Makes 12 to 14 cups; 6 to 7 servings

Lightly spiced with curry, cardamom, and nutmeg, this creamy squash soup brings a golden glow to the holiday table and makes a delicious first course.

- 1 kabocha squash (2 ½ to 3 pounds)**
- 1 large and 1 medium onion, chopped**
- 2 large carrots, finely diced**
- ½ cup water**
- 2 rounded teaspoons minced peeled fresh ginger**
- 1 ¼ teaspoons curry powder**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom**
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- 4 cups unsweetened soy milk, rice milk, or nut milk**
- 2 cups vegetable broth**
- 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup (optional)**
- ⅓ cup sweetened dried cranberries, for garnish**

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Line a 17½ × 12½-inch rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or aluminum foil.
2. Place the squash on the prepared pan. Bake for 1 hour, or until softened when lightly pressed.
3. Meanwhile, cook and stir the onions, carrots, water, ginger, curry powder, salt, turmeric, cardamom, and nutmeg in an 8- to 10-quart stockpot over high heat for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are lightly browned. Remove ⅔ cup of the onion mixture and set aside.
4. Cut the squash in half. Remove and discard the seeds. Scoop the flesh into the stockpot with the onion mixture. Add the soy milk and vegetable broth. Use an immersion blender to process the soup in the stockpot, or put the soup in a blender in batches. Process until smooth and creamy, stopping occasionally to scrape down the blender jar.
5. Return the soup to the stockpot. Cook over medium heat until heated through. Stir in the lemon juice and the optional maple syrup.
6. Ladle the soup into bowls. Spoon some of the reserved onion mixture into the center of each serving. Garnish with a few dried cranberries if desired.

Butternut Squash, Beet, and Apple Soup

Makes 8 to 10 cups; 5 to 6 servings

A small cup of this soup makes a tasty starter to a festive meal, while a hearty bowl will satisfy for a light meal during the busy holiday season.

SEE PHOTO FACING PAGE

- 1 butternut squash (1½ to 2 pounds), peeled**
- 2 small beets, peeled**
- 3½ cups water**
- 1 large onion, chopped**
- 1 large carrot, diced**
- 2 stalks celery, chopped**
- 1½ cups apple juice**
- 2 apples, peeled, cored, and coarsely shredded**
- ½ teaspoon salt**

Garnishes

- Pinch ground nutmeg**
- 1½ cups corn kernels**
- ½ cup sweetened dried cranberries**

- 1.** Cut the squash and the beets into ½-inch cubes and put them in an 8- to 10-quart stockpot with 3½ cups of the water. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Decrease the heat to medium and simmer for about 25 minutes, or until the squash and beets are tender.
- 2.** Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, cook and stir the onion, carrot, celery and the remaining ½ cup water for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are very soft and beginning to brown. Add 1 or more tablespoons of water as needed to prevent burning.
- 3.** Add the onion mixture and the apple juice to the stockpot with the squash and the beets. Use an immersion blender to process the soup in the stockpot, or put the soup in a blender in batches. Process until the soup is smooth or slightly chunky, as desired, stopping occasionally to scrape down the blender jar. Return the soup to the stockpot.
- 4.** Add the shredded apples and salt and mix well. Cook the soup until simmering.
- 5.** Ladle the soup into bowls. Garnish each serving with a pinch of nutmeg, 2 tablespoons of corn, and a few dried cranberries if desired.

Lemony Carrot Soup

Makes about 12 cups; 5 to 6 servings

This radiant, savory carrot soup sparks the appetite with its light texture and aromatic lemon-dill seasonings.

⅔ cup cashews

2 pounds carrots (about 7 large), coarsely shredded

1 large onion, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

2 cloves garlic, sliced

2 ½ cups water

4 cups vegetable broth

¾ cup chopped fresh dill weed

1½ teaspoons ground coriander

1 teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Freshly ground pepper

¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1. Put the cashews in an electric coffee grinder, food processor, or blender. Process the cashews to fine powdery meal. (Avoid overprocessing, or it will turn into cashew butter.) Set aside.
2. Cook and stir carrots, onion, celery, garlic, and ½ cup of the water in an 8- to 10-quart stockpot over high or medium-high heat for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened and beginning to brown. Add 1 or more tablespoons of water as needed to prevent burning.
3. Decrease the heat to medium-high and add the vegetable broth, the remaining 2 cups of water, ¼ cup of the dill, coriander, salt, nutmeg, pepper, and the reserved ground cashews to the stockpot and simmer 10 minutes.
4. Use an immersion blender to process the soup in the stockpot, or put the soup in a blender in batches. Process until smooth but slightly textured, stopping occasionally to scrape down the blender jar. Return the soup to the stockpot.
5. Add the lemon juice. Simmer for 1 or 2 minutes, and adjust the seasonings.
6. Ladle the soup into bowls. Garnish each serving with the remaining dill if desired.

Pomegranate-Apple Salad with Ginger and Mint

Makes 6 servings

With each bite of this tasty fruit mélange, pomegranate seeds release their rich, ambrosial juice delivering sweetness with a pleasing crunch.

- 1 large pomegranate**
- 2 sweet, crisp apples, unpeeled, chopped**
- 8 ounces edamame, cooked and shelled**
- 1 navel orange, peeled and chopped**
- 3 tablespoons maple syrup**
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice**
- 2 tablespoons pomegranate molasses**
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar**
- 2 to 3 heaping teaspoons minced peeled fresh ginger**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**
- 1 to 2 tablespoons minced fresh mint leaves**

- 1.** Cut the pomegranate into quarters. Carefully remove the seeds with your fingers. Put the seeds in a large bowl.
- 2.** Add the apples, edamame, orange, maple syrup, lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, balsamic vinegar, ginger, and salt and toss well to distribute the ingredients evenly.
- 3.** Add half of the mint leaves and mix well. Garnish the top of the salad with the remaining mint leaves. Serve immediately, or refrigerate. Serve the salad within 2 hours.

Stately, delicious, and aromatic, this is the dish that will change the minds of those who snicker at the thought of a vegan Thanksgiving dinner. Prepare the filling a day in advance.

SEE PHOTO FACING PAGE

Filling

3³/₄ cups water

³/₄ cup wild rice

¹/₂ cup pearl barley

2¹/₂ teaspoons salt

¹/₃ cup whole almonds, coarsely chopped

¹/₃ cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

¹/₃ cup pecans, coarsely chopped

2 small russet potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-sized chunks

8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems discarded, chopped

1 large onion, chopped

1 large red bell pepper, chopped

2 large carrots, coarsely shredded

2 stalks celery, diced

5 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon dried sage

³/₄ teaspoon ground cinnamon

³/₄ teaspoon ground allspice

¹/₂ teaspoon dried thyme

¹/₂ teaspoon dried marjoram

¹/₂ teaspoon dried rosemary

1 large or 2 medium tomatoes, diced

1 large zucchini, chopped

¹/₂ cup golden raisins

1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Freshly ground pepper

Crust

12 sheets phyllo dough, at room temperature

¼ cup canola oil

Garnishes

Ground cinnamon

1 to 2 tablespoons coarsely ground pistachios

1 tablespoon minced fresh mint or parsley

1 small tomato, cut into a rose

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
2. To make the filling, combine 3½ of the water, rice, barley, and 1¼ teaspoons of the salt in a 3-quart saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Decrease the heat to low and cook for 5 to 60 minutes, or until the rice and barley are tender and all the liquid has been absorbed.
3. Meanwhile, place the almonds, walnuts, and pecans in a single layer on a 17½ × 12½-inch rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until lightly toasted. Immediately pour the nuts onto a plate to cool.
4. Put the potatoes in a 1-quart saucepan with water to cover. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Decrease the heat to medium and simmer 5 to 7 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Transfer the potatoes to a medium bowl with a slotted spoon and mash them.
5. Cook and stir the mushrooms, onion, bell pepper, carrots, celery, garlic, sage, cinnamon, allspice, thyme, marjoram, rosemary, and the remaining ¼ cup water in a deep, 10 or 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened and beginning to brown. Add 1 or more tablespoons of water as needed to prevent burning.
6. Add the tomatoes, zucchini, raisins, chickpeas, the remaining 1¼ teaspoons of salt, and pepper to the skillet. Cook another 10 minutes, or until the tomatoes are broken down.
7. Add the rice mixture, toasted nuts, and mashed potatoes to the skillet and mix thoroughly. Adjust the seasonings and set aside.
8. To make the crust, place a dish towel horizontally on your workspace. Unroll the phyllo dough and place it on the dish towel. Cover it with another dish towel to prevent the phyllo from drying out. (Each time you remove a phyllo sheet, cover the dough with the dish towel.) Pour the canola oil into a small bowl and place it nearby. Lightly oil a 10-inch ovenproof skillet.
9. Remove one sheet of phyllo from the stack, and place it into the prepared skillet, allowing the ends to drape over the side of the skillet. Gently brush the phyllo with oil, including the portion that drapes over the side. Repeat with eight more sheets of phyllo, draping each of the sheets in a different direction to form a circle around the skillet.
10. Spoon the filling into the phyllo crust, packing it firmly. Lift up the edges of the draped phyllo sheets and place them over the filling. Place the remaining three sheets of phyllo on top of the pi

one at a time, brushing each with the oil. Tuck the ends of the three sheets down into the sides of the skillet. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes, or until the crust is golden.

- 11.** To serve, invert the pie onto a large serving platter or tilt the skillet to slide it onto the platter. Garnish the top with the cinnamon, pistachios, and mint and place the tomato rose in the center if desired. Cut the pie into wedges with a serrated knife and remove each wedge with a pie server.

Pistachio and Sweet Pea Torte

Makes 10 to 12 servings

with Roasted-Tomato Aioli

Deliciously seasoned with flamboyant flavors, captivatingly aromatic, and visually appealing, this unique torte is a first-rate holiday entrée that delivers plenty of pizzazz.

Torte

1½ cups water

½ cup cashews

1 tablespoon plus ¼ teaspoon white vinegar or rice vinegar

2½ cups old-fashioned rolled oats

2 teaspoons baking powder

1¾ teaspoons salt

½ teaspoon baking soda

½ cup plus 3 tablespoons coarsely ground pistachios

2 onions, diced

2 carrots, diced

1 stalk celery, diced

1 red bell pepper, diced

6 cloves garlic, minced

1 (2-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled and grated

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 teaspoon poultry seasoning

½ teaspoon fennel seeds, coarsely ground with a mortar and pestle

½ teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon dried marjoram

½ teaspoon ground turmeric

Pinch cayenne

Freshly ground pepper

3 cups cooked short-grain brown rice

1 pound frozen peas, thawed

1 carrot, shredded, for garnish

3 tablespoons minced fresh parsley, for garnish

1 pound Roma tomatoes, cut in half lengthwise

1 cup water

½ cup cashews

2 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

¾ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground smoked paprika or liquid smoke

1. Cover the base of a 9-inch springform pan with a piece of parchment paper 2 inches larger. Snap the collar back onto the base, and cut away the excess paper with scissors. Lightly oil the sides of the pan, place it on a baking sheet, and set aside.
2. To make the torte, pour 1 cup of the water and the cashews into a blender. Process on high speed until smooth and milky. Transfer to a small bowl, stir in the vinegar and set aside to sour.
3. Combine the oats, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in a large bowl and mix well. Stir in ½ cup of the ground pistachios.
4. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Combine the remaining ½ cup of water, onions, carrots, celery, bell pepper, garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, poultry seasoning, fennel seeds, oregano, marjoram, turmeric, cayenne, and pepper in a large skillet. Cook and stir over medium-high heat for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened. Add 1 or more tablespoons of water as needed to prevent burning.
5. Add the cooked vegetables and the rice to the oat mixture and combine well.
6. Put the peas in a food processor. Process until creamy, stopping occasionally to scrape down the work bowl. Add the peas and the soured cashew milk to the vegetable mixture and mix well.
7. Spoon the mixture into the prepared springform pan and spread to the edges, packing the mixture firmly. Smooth the top and sprinkle with the remaining 3 tablespoons of pistachios. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes, or until the torte is firm when gently pressed. Let cool at least 30 minutes before serving.
8. To make the aïoli, place the tomatoes on a baking sheet, cut side up, and broil about 3 inches from the heat for 15 to 20 minutes, turning twice while broiling, until completely soft.
9. Meanwhile, put the water, cashews, and garlic in a blender. Process until smooth, stopping occasionally to scrape down the blender jar. Add the broiled tomatoes, lemon juice, salt, and paprika to the cashew mixture. Process until smooth and creamy, stopping occasionally to scrape down the blender jar. Transfer the sauce to a 1-quart saucepan and simmer over medium heat for about 5 minutes.

10. To serve, place the springform pan on a large serving platter. To unmold, run a knife around the edge to loosen the torte. Carefully lift off the collar. Garnish the edge of the platter with the shredded carrot and minced parsley if desired. Cut the torte into wedges and serve with aioli on the side.

Variation: Substitute Tofu Sour Cream ([page 83](#)) for the Roasted-Tomato Aioli.

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