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Local Author Lizette Marx, "Flavors of Health"

By Susie Iventosch



Quinoa Risotto Milanese

Photo provided

Lucky are those whose personal passions and life's work go hand in hand. This is the case for Lizette Marx, local yoga teacher, journalist, nutritionist, chef, and instructor of culinary arts and nutrition. She is also an author, with a recently published book, the "Flavors of Health Cookbook," a beautiful cookbook, chock full of recipes for the new S.O.U.L. food – Seasonal, Organic, Unprocessed and Local. The book, co-authored by Dr. Ed Bauman, is a guide to eating for health, but what I like is that it is not just about nuts, berries and edamame! It has some really fantastic recipes for every meal of the day.

Marx says she has always enjoyed cooking ever since she was a young girl growing up in Paradise, Calif. During college, she loved to cook for her friends. After graduating from Cal State Chico with a degree in journalism, she wrote a column for a paper in Paradise, before landing a job with Yoga Journal Magazine, which was her entree into health and wellness and yoga.

"I've always had a huge passion for cooking," she said. "Years ago, I started making healthy celebration cakes for children using organic and alternative ingredients. That business was great, but I wanted to prepare more nutritional foods, so I enrolled in Bauman College in Berkeley for a nutrition certification in order to change my focus to food and wellness."

Now, she is part of the faculty at Bauman College as a natural chef instructor, and teaches several classes at Back To The Table Cooking School in Lafayette, as well.

Besides classes for "healing anti-inflammatory foods" and cooking for "balancing blood sugar," one class that really caught my attention, was "Dinner with the Doctor," where doctors and other medical practitioners learn to cook and eat well, so they may pass these skills on to their own patients.

"It's really great that the doctors want to take this kind of class," she said. "They love it and they don't have to clean up after they cook. So, it's a bit of an unreal situation, but a great way for them to get inspired again. We talk about all of the tools and ingredients you need to have a healthy kitchen."

Marx along with her husband, Geoff, who is a clinical nutritionist at the Health Medicine Center in Walnut Creek, also own and operate Kitchen Treasures, a full spectrum catering and holistic culinary education company. They cater anything from small groups to gatherings of 50 or so people.

Marx keeps her son and daughter, Tyler and Reina Strohmayr, both Campolindo High School students, busy in the kitchen. And, this is one of my personal passions ... teaching children to love the art of cooking.

"They love to help with the cooking classes and are great assistants for the catering business," Marx said. "When they were 13 and 14, we did a 'Let's Do Lunch' program, which was a week-long cooking camp for teens."

When Marx is not cooking and teaching culinary arts, she unrolls her yoga mat and teaches at Studio E and at the Moraga Barn, both in Moraga, and at YogaWorks in Walnut Creek.

While it seems like a chaotic schedule with so many interests and time demands, Marx has found a way to seamlessly weave her passions with her work.

"Everything I do is compatible," she said. "I've found a way to bring my passions: writing, cooking and yoga together and that is very satisfying."

"Flavors of Health Cookbook," by Dr. Ed Bauman and Chef Lizette Marx offers recipes for every course of the meal. It is available on amazon.com. www.flavorsofhealthkitchen.com

Yoga Classes

Moraga Barn: Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. and in January, Sundays 9 to 10 a.m. before the Moraga Farmers' Market (taught by Lizette Marx and Meredith Avant).

Studio E

1605 School Street, Moraga (925) 388-6779
For class schedule: www.studio-e-moraga.com



Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **This recipe can be found on our website:** www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

RECIPES

There are so many wonderful recipes in "Flavors of Health," but the two I chose to try first were the Quinoa Risotto Milanese and the Black Olive Bechamel sauce, which we served over grilled fresh wild swordfish. Both were delicious. Next on my list is Cornish Game Hens with Latin Spices!

Quinoa Risotto Milanese

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups goat milk
- 2 large pinches of saffron threads (optional)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon thinly sliced leeks
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup uncooked quinoa
- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan, Manchego, or other dry aged cheese
- 1/4 cup scallions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 medium red pepper, diced

DIRECTIONS

1. Rinse and drain the quinoa three times, using a fine mesh strainer to remove the bitter outer coating. Set aside.
2. In a medium sauce pan on low heat, slowly heat broth and goat milk together until hot. Add saffron threads and stir gently. Keep liquid on low heat until ready to use. Do not allow to boil.
3. Heat butter in a large sauté pan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add leeks and shallots and cook until caramelized, about 15-20 minutes. Deglaze pan with white wine and while stirring constantly, scrape up the fond (the flavorful browned remnants that stick to the bottom of the pan) and incorporate into vegetables.
4. Add garlic and quinoa and continue stirring a minute or two.
5. Stir in 2 cups of the broth and milk and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer until quinoa is tender, stirring occasionally, approximately 10-12 minutes.
6. Stir in remaining broth and milk, cover, and continue cooking until liquid has nearly evaporated, about 30-35 minutes. Then, add grated cheese and stir until melted through. Fold in scallions and diced red pepper. Taste and add sea salt and pepper to taste if desired.
7. Transfer to a serving platter or onto individual plates and garnish with a little more grated cheese and scallions if desired. Serve immediately. Can be enjoyed as a side dish or as a lighter main dish.

Black Olive Bechamel

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 1/4 cup amaranth flour (a high-protein, gluten-free flour, available by Bob's Red Mill)
- 1 pint whole milk (or plain unsweetened nut milk for a dairy-free option)
- Pinch of sea salt
- Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 ounce pitted Nicoise or Kalamata olives, diced
- 1 ounce pitted Spanish green olives, diced
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and smashed

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat a sauté pan, add 2 tablespoons of the butter, and allow it to melt. Sprinkle in amaranth flour and stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until "roux" is lightly browned and has a nutty aroma.
2. Whisk in the milk in a slow steady stream, then add the salt and nutmeg and continue stirring until sauce begins to thicken.
3. Mash olives and garlic clove in a mortar and pestle until smooth and whisk into the sauce. Add a remaining tablespoon of butter and adjust seasoning to taste.
4. To serve, place a spoonful of bechamel sauce over fish, chicken, pasta or veggies.

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