

# Bless Their Hearts

❁ Mom ❁

*Single Parenting With a Touch of Grace*



## Recipe Weekend: Enjoy the Beginning of Summer with These Seasonal Recipes

[Blesstheirheartsmom.blogspot.com](http://Blesstheirheartsmom.blogspot.com)

Don't let all of your Spring body prep go to waste during the Memorial Day Weekend!

**Certified nutritionist, personal trainer and exercise physiologist, Franci Cohen**, has created three beginning-of-summer recipes highlighting delicious seasonal produce for your Memorial Day Weekend get-together. They're perfect for watching your figure, and for when you may have vegetarian guests!

### **Eggplant Roll-ups:**

#### **Ingredients:**

- 2 medium long eggplants
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 1 cup pesto sauce
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- Homemade Pesto (combine all in food processor):
  - 2 cups packed fresh basil leaves
  - 2 cloves garlic
  - 1/3 cup pine nuts
  - 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
  - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
  - 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
  - 2 T lemon juice

#### **Directions:**

1. Preheat stovetop grill pan or outdoor grill over high heat.
2. Cut the eggplants lengthwise into 1/4-inch thick slices (about 6 slices each eggplant).
3. Brush the eggplant slices evenly with olive oil on both sides.

4. Grill the eggplant slices in batches for 2-3 minutes each side, then let cool.
5. Mix ricotta cheese, pesto and lemon juice together in a small bowl and spread a heaping tablespoon of the mixture evenly over each eggplant slice.
6. Roll up the eggplant slices, place on a plate seam-side down and serve!

## **Greek Quinoa Tomato Bowls:**

### **Ingredients:**

- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 tsp garlic paste
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup quinoa
- 2 cups red and yellow grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup pitted kalamata olives
- 2 scallions thinly sliced
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 3 English cucumber, diced
- 4 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
- 8 beefsteak tomatoes, insides scooped out, but leave shell on bottom

### **Directions:**

1. Whisk together the lemon juice, vinegar, oregano, garlic and some salt and pepper in a small bowl.
2. Slowly whisk in the oil until emulsified. Let sit at room temperature while you prepare the salad to allow the flavors to meld.
3. Combine the quinoa, 2 cups water, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a small saucepan, bring to a boil and cook until the water is absorbed and the quinoa is tender, about 15 minutes.
4. Transfer to a bowl, fluff with a fork and let sit for 5 minutes to cool slightly. Add the tomatoes, olives, green onions, red onions, cucumbers, feta cheese, and dressing and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 8 hours before serving. The longer it sits the better the flavor.
5. Fill tomatoes, arrange on platter and serve!

## **Stuffed Zucchini Zucchini Logs:**

### **Ingredients**

- 1 onion
- 1 cup short grain brown rice
- 1/2 cup canned chickpeas rinsed and drained
- 1/2 tsp allspice
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 6-8 skinny green zucchini squash

### **Sauce:**

- 8 dried apricots
- 2 tsp mint
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 heaping tsp salt
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1 cup lemon juice
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp apricot preservatives-optional

### **Directions:**

1. Sauté onion on med-high heat, add 1 cup rice and sauté together. Then add 1 1/2 cups boiling water and salt.
2. While rice is cooking, wash and peel the squash, leaving stripes of the green peel.
3. Cut squash in 1/2 lengthwise and scoop out insides with a spoon.
4. In a bowl mix cooked rice, chickpeas, allspice and olive oil, then fill the squash.
5. Line baking dish with stuffed squash in one layer.
6. Sprinkle dried apricots on top along with crush garlic, salt and mint.

**For sauce:** In a bowl mix water, fresh lemon juice, maple syrup and 1 tbsp. apricot preserves. Taste and adjust to your liking. Pour over stuffed squash and cover with aluminum foil lined with parchment paper and put it in the oven at **350°F**. Cook for 1 -1.5 hours.

### **About the Author:**

Franci Cohen is a personal trainer, and a certified nutritionist with a masters degree in both nutrition and exercise physiology. She is the creator of SPIDERBANDS, a total-body cardio resistance workout that leverages gravity and your bodyweight, with other intense exercise modules such as rebounding, kickboxing and indoor cycling. With over 18 years of experience, Franci has been a mainstay in the fitness and nutrition industries. Franci believes in a tough love approach to fitness and health. “We all have our fitness wake-up call at some point in our lives and it can be a powerful catalyst for change,” says Franci.

“Unfortunately, many people overcompensate and try to change everything at once, which is a disaster. Making lasting change involves going through stages that aren't necessarily linear. People fluctuate and transition between the stages. Knowing how to move through them can get you where you want to be.”

Franci says: “Exercise is one of the most important things you can do for your health, but sometimes it's hard to just get motivated. My goal is to keep it fun and interesting by creating out-of-the-box programs that wow my clients with both the innovative nature of the classes, as well as with the rapid results they see in their bodies! My classes are the ultimate playground where fitness meets fun, and nothing is off limits!”