

ACORN NEWSPAPERS

# BEYOND THE ACORN

January/February 2021

# Finding Wellness



The spirit of local living

Courtesy of THE RANCH MALIBU



18



## DEPARTMENTS

### WELCOME FROM BEYOND

4 A note from the publisher and editor.

### NEIGHBORS

#### 6 [TAKING FLIGHT](#)

When this Ojai resident's world was turned upside down, she found hope and inspiration in the form of dragonflies.

#### 8 [A PLACE TO CALL HOME](#)

Author Parnaz Foroutan has always felt caught between two worlds: Iran, which she fled as a child, and Oak Park, where she grew up and lives. Her latest memoir, "Home is a Stranger," tells her story.

### INNOVATORS

#### 11 [FITNESS ON THE GO](#)

DreamQuest Fitness, the region's first mobile fitness gym, launches this month, just in time for Conejo Valley and Simi residents to start achieving their New Year's resolutions.

#### 13 [DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH](#)

Malibu's Ingrid De La O turned to homemade, healthful smoothies to help cure her Crohn's disease and postpartum depression. Now she's using TUSOL Wellness to share her superfood concoctions with others.

### ACORNUCOPIA

#### 15 [FINDING WELLNESS](#)

The best apps for achieving mental and physical well-being this year.

### AROUND THE TABLE

#### 18 [THINKING ABOUT FOOD, FOOD, FOOD](#)

Celebrity-heralded fitness retreat The Ranch Malibu shares recipes and lifestyle tips in its latest cookbook, "Food Food Food."

### SNAPSHOT

#### 33 [FROM HOSPITAL TO HOUSING](#)

The story behind the original building of St. John's Regional Medical Center in Oxnard.

### READERS CORNER

#### 34 [LET'S TAKE A HIKE](#)

Readers share snaps from their favorite local trails.

## FEATURES

### 25 [LIVING IN THE BLUE](#)

What do the world's five healthiest, longest-lived communities have in common? Learn how to apply a Blue Zone lifestyle here in our region.

### 27 [PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE](#)

The Abundant Table farm in Camarillo is a nonprofit, BIPOC- and women-led collective working to make healthy, organic food accessible to all.



34



Courtesy of THE RANCH MALIBU

# Thinking about our FOOD, FOOD, FOOD

The latest cookbook from a Malibu wellness retreat focuses on healthy living and a healthy planet

Written by STEPHANIE BERTHOLDO

The Ranch Malibu, a luxury fitness and wellness retreat on 200 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains just minutes from the sea, has built a reputation for its integrated, holistic approach to healthy living, but at the heart of the health haven is food.

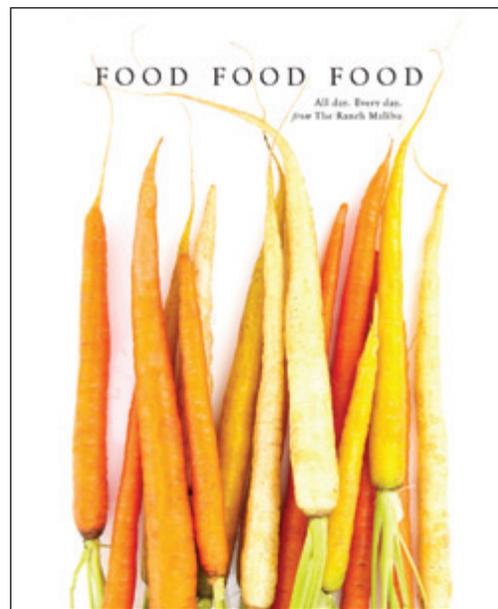
Since the sumptuous, plant-based, organic cuisine offered to guests at The Ranch has always been the icing on the proverbial dairy-free cake before, during and after the rigors of its daily programs, it was only fitting that the exclusive spa's team of chefs put together a cookbook of clean recipes for anyone to try at home.

"Food Food Food," which was released in March, is far more than a collection of recipes. Its pages capture the spirit of The Ranch by giving readers invaluable tips on how to transform their own kitchens into personal wellness retreats that respect the land, water, air, animals and, most importantly, human health and longevity.

Sue Glasscock, who co-owns The Ranch with her husband, Alex, is thrilled with the publication of "Food Food Food," which is The Ranch's second book. The first, "The Ranch at Live Oak Cookbook," was published in 2015.

"Plant-based meals not only support your health but are delicious and can be easy to make," Sue says. "At The Ranch, the foundation of every meal is the use of fresh, organic ingredients that are harvested daily from (our) on-site certified organic garden. The garden is a wonderful source of inspiration—the fruits, vegetables and herbs shape our daily menus."

The Ranch's executive chef, Meredith Haas, has an expansive definition of



The Ranch Malibu's latest cookbook, "Food Food Food," can be found at [theranchmalibu.com](http://theranchmalibu.com).

Courtesy of THE RANCH MALIBU





Meredith Haas, The Ranch Malibu's executive chef, believes in eating seasonally and investing in kitchen basics like Silpats to reduce waste and make choices that support environmental sustainability.

how food can feed the soul—and the heart, circulatory system, mind and more—which is woven into the recipes shared during the retreats and in the cookbook.

But first things first: Pantries must be properly stocked, and kitchens require some basic tools to whip up delicious and nutritious daily fare. Staples like apple cider vinegar, nutritional yeast, nuts, cinnamon, ginger, beans, lentils and a bevy of organic vegetables and fruits—along with a daily supply of onions and garlic that not only add flavor to a variety of dishes, but are known to boost the immune system—top the list of must-have foods that the retreat's team of chefs keep on hand in their professional and home kitchens.

Cutting boards, high-powered blenders, food processors and Silpats also fill a well-equipped kitchen. The Silpat—a nonstick silicone mat that's used instead of parchment paper—is just one of many details that speaks to Meredith's firm belief in the need to reduce waste and make choices that support environmental sustainability. She also suggests eating seasonally to make the most of the nutritional value of food when it's harvested at its peak.

**Each day a person who eats a vegan diet saves\*:**

- .....
- 1,100 gallons of water
- 45 pounds of grain
- 30 square feet of forested land
- 20 pounds of CO2 equivalent
- One animal's life

\*Source: The Ranch Malibu

Meredith believes healthy eating is not as difficult as some home cooks might assume. She embraces comfort foods like pizza, pasta, enchiladas and a burrito bowl that she says is a Ranch favorite.

Take the cookbook's banana blueberry muffin recipe: In less than 15 minutes of prep time and 20 minutes in the oven, they're cooked to perfection. Each plant-based recipe in this book teaches readers about nutrition by outlining the health benefits of its ingredients. Blueberries, for example, "can increase collagen levels and keep our minds sharp by improving memory and slowing cognitive decline."

Meredith's definition of plant-based means no gluten, soy, alcohol or caffeine. The thought of giving up caffeine may be unimaginable to many folks, but Meredith makes a good case to cut back on coffee and other caffeinated drinks.

"We are not saying any of these things are bad," she says, "but it can be beneficial to occasionally cleanse and free ourselves from the dependence we have on things like caffeine."

As for forgoing dairy products, Meredith says that milk and cheese "can be inflammatory for some people and they might not be aware of it until they cut it out."

With winter upon us, Meredith says, the red curry with kabocha squash and the beet and arugula salad are great choices for cooler weather.

"The curry is a little spicy, which I like, and the combination of beets and arugula is a winner," she adds.

However, the vegan mac and cheese is a favorite any time of year.

"Our plant-based recipes aren't just delicious," she says, "but are also powerful, anti-inflammatory, hydrating and detoxifying meals that support every aspect of your body." **B**



Recipes from the "Food  
Food Food" cookbook  
By The Ranch Malibu



## VEGAN MAC & CHEESE

Serves 6-8

- One 12-oz package gluten-free macaroni
- 2 cups raw cashews, soaked at least 2 hours and drained
- 2 cups almond milk
- ¼ cup nutritional yeast
- Juice of half a lemon
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼-½ tsp ground cayenne pepper

Pepper, to taste

### For the Topping:

- 1 cup gluten-free panko bread crumbs
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp dried basil
- Salt & pepper
- Olive oil (for the baking dish)

Preheat oven to 375°.

In a large pot, bring water to a boil with a pinch of salt and cook the pasta to al dente. Drain and set aside in a large bowl.

In a small bowl, mix together the topping ingredients.

Place all of the cheese sauce ingredients in a blender and purée until smooth and creamy. Season to taste with salt, pepper and cayenne.

Pour the cheese sauce over the noodles and stir to coat.

Lightly oil an 8x10" baking dish, or one of similar size, and pour in the noodles. Sprinkle on the topping and bake for 15-20 minutes until bubbling and golden brown.

Serve immediately.

## BANANA BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

Makes 10-12 muffins

- 1¼ cups gluten-free flour
- ¾ cup rolled oats
- ½ cup almond flour
- ⅓ cup coconut sugar (also known as coconut palm sugar)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- Pinch of salt
- 3 very ripe bananas, mashed (the riper they are, the sweeter and easier they are to mash)
- ¼ cup almond milk
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (can also use vanilla powder)
- 1 cup blueberries

Preheat oven to 350°.

Line a 12-cup muffin pan with liners. If you don't have a muffin pan a cupcake pan will also work. Your muffins will just be smaller and you'll have more.

Combine all of the dry ingredients in a large bowl.

In another bowl, combine the bananas, almond milk, coconut oil and vanilla extract. Slowly whisk into the dry ingredients until just combined. Then, fold in the blueberries.

Scoop the batter into the prepared pan (you will get 10-12 muffins) and fill to at least ¾ of the way to the top of each cup. These won't rise like traditional



"High in Vitamin C, blueberries can increase collagen levels and keep our minds sharp by improving memory and slowing cognitive decline. Their blue pigment comes from the flavonoid, anthocyanin, which acts as an antioxidant that decreases inflammation and prevents cancer cell proliferation."

muffins so don't worry about overfilling them.

Bake for 18-20 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

## WILD RICE SALAD WITH ROASTED SQUASH

Makes 4 servings

- 1 cup wild rice
- 3 cups water
- ½ medium butternut squash or 1 delicata squash, peeled, de-seeded and cut into 1- inch pieces
- 2 Tbsp avocado oil
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, diced
- 2 cups arugula or spinach
- Salt & pepper
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds (for garnish)
- ½ cup roasted pistachios, chopped (for garnish)

### For the Tahini-Herb Dressing:

- ⅓ cup tahini
- 1 garlic clove
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Water, as needed to blend
- 2 Tbsp fresh parsley, basil or cilantro (or a combination)
- Salt, to taste
- Pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 450°.

Place the wild rice, water and a pinch of salt in a pot and bring to a boil. Cook until tender, about 40-45 minutes.

Drain and rinse, shaking off as much water as possible. Spread out on a rimmed baking sheet and let cool.

Meanwhile, toss the squash with

the oil on another baking sheet and season with salt and pepper.

Roast for 20-25 minutes, until golden brown and tender, tossing once mid-way through. Let cool while you make the dressing.

In a blender, purée the tahini, garlic and lemon together. With the machine running on low, add water as needed to get a pourable consistency. Add the herbs and pulse a few times to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, combine the wild rice, squash, peppers and arugula with the dressing, seasoning with salt and pepper if needed.

Garnish with the pomegranate seeds and pistachios.

