

EASY STARTER RECIPES FROM

# SLOW COOK SOLAR

*Sun-Baked Summer Meals  
Good for People and Planet*

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Photographs by Philip M. Lew

WITH 100+  
PLANT-RICH  
RECIPES

# GREEN BEAN PESTO

MAKES about 1-1/2 cups | COOK 2 to 3 hours | **GLUTEN FREE, VEGAN**

*Once the green beans in the garden start ripening, I use this recipe a lot. Solar cooking makes the beans soft enough to blend while deepening their flavor. It doesn't preserve their crispness or bright green color, but that doesn't matter in this recipe. I love this pesto on crackers.*

## **Into the cooker:**

2 cups (about 8 ounces)  
green beans that have  
been trimmed and cut  
into 1-inch lengths

## **Into the blender:**

1/3 cup toasted pecan pieces  
1/4 cup avocado oil  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 or 2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

1. Place the green beans in a dark baking pan. Cover and bake in the solar cooker until tender when tested with a fork, 2 to 3 hours. Allow to cool.
2. In a blender, puree the green beans with the pecan pieces, oil, salt, and garlic until smooth. Scrape into a bowl to serve or store in the fridge.

# BEET AND CUCUMBER SOUP

SERVES 4 | COOK 4 to 6 hours or all day | **GLUTEN FREE, VEGAN**

*Purple soup! The beets lend an earthy sweetness and the horseradish gives it a kick. The ume plum vinegar gives it just enough saltiness. Pair this soup with Crustless Crab Quiche or Sesame Salmon and Orange Salad for a nourishing summer meal.*

## **Into the cooker:**

2 medium beets, peeled and  
coarsely chopped  
1 yellow onion, diced  
1-1/2 cups water

## **For the finish:**

2 large cucumbers, peeled, seeded,  
and coarsely chopped  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon prepared horseradish  
1-1/2 tablespoons ume plum vinegar  
  
chopped fresh dill weed  
for garnish

1. Place the beets, onion, and water in a dark baking pan. Cover and bake in the solar cooker until the beets are tender when tested with a fork, 4 to 6 hours or longer.
2. Let the vegetables cool and then transfer with their liquid to a blender or food processor, or use a handheld immersion blender. Add the cucumber, oil, horseradish, and vinegar, and blend until smooth.
3. Chill before serving. Garnish with fresh dill weed.

# SOUR CREAM DILL POTATO SALAD

SERVES 4 | COOK 2 to 6 hours or all day | **GLUTEN FREE, VEGETARIAN**

*I love this potato salad so much I've been known to put it on a bed of arugula and make a whole dinner of it. The skins can be left on the potatoes, which you can cook either whole or cut into bite-sized cubes. Cutting them up before cooking reduces their cooking time. This salad keeps well in the fridge for several days but tastes best if eaten at room temperature.*

## **Into the cooker:**

6 medium red potatoes, well scrubbed, whole or cubed

## **For the dressing:**

1/4 cup sour cream  
1/4 cup mayonnaise  
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar  
1/4 cup chopped fresh dill weed  
or 1 tablespoon dried dill weed  
1/2 teaspoon celery seed  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 green onions, thinly sliced  
freshly ground black pepper  
to taste

1. Place the potatoes, whole or cubed, in a dark baking pan. Cover and bake in the solar cooker until tender when tested with a fork, 2 to 3 hours for cubed potatoes and 4 to 6 hours or longer for whole potatoes.
2. If you left the potatoes whole, cut them into small cubes while still warm and allow to cool; otherwise, allow the baked cubed potatoes to cool. Place in a large serving bowl.
3. Whisk together the sour cream, mayonnaise, vinegar, dill weed, celery seed, salt, green onions, and pepper. Fold gently into the potatoes.

# PARMESAN SPINACH POLENTA BOWL

MAKES 4 | COOK 4 to 5 hours | **GLUTEN FREE, VEGETARIAN**

*I love this bowl because it's so easy and satisfying. Polenta (yellow corn grits) turns out beautifully creamy when left undisturbed in the solar cooker for 4 to 5 hours. No tending or stirring needed! Fresh out of the cooker, it's hot enough to wilt spinach and melt cheese that you stir in, so time it to come out of the cooker just before dinner is served. Top it with a mixture of sweet cherry tomatoes and black beans for summertime comfort food. Add a side of tortilla chips for some crunch.*

## **Into the cooker:**

1 cup polenta  
4 cups water  
2 tablespoons butter,  
    cut into little bits  
1 teaspoon salt

## **For the finish:**

1 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
3 cups firmly packed baby spinach

## **For the bowls:**

15-ounce can black beans,  
    drained and rinsed  
2 cups halved cherry tomatoes  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
2 tablespoons finely minced  
    fresh basil  
1/2 teaspoon salt

1. Place the polenta, water, butter, and salt in a dark baking pan and stir well. Cover and bake in the solar cooker until thick and tender, 4 to 5 hours. Remove from the cooker and immediately fold in the Parmesan cheese and then the spinach.
2. In a medium bowl, toss the black beans and cherry tomatoes with the oil, vinegar, basil, and salt.
3. Assemble the bowls by putting 1/4 of the polenta in each bowl and evenly distributing the beans and cherry tomatoes.

# CRUSTLESS CRAB QUICHE

SERVES 4 | COOK 1 to 2 hours | **GLUTEN FREE**

*Although quiches are easy and quick to make in a solar cooker, the usual pastry crust doesn't fare well at low temperatures. Consequently, a couple of the quiches here have unusual crusts and a couple have none. This crustless quiche goes together quickly and tastes delicious. Check this at 1 hour and be sure not to overcook. Serve with a big green salad and some crusty bread.*

4 eggs  
1 cup sour cream or plain  
Greek yogurt  
1 cup small curd cottage cheese  
or ricotta  
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1 cup (4 ounces) grated  
Monterey Jack cheese  
3/4 cup shredded crab meat  
1/4 cup thinly sliced green onions

1. Oil a dark 9-3/4-inch-round roaster.
2. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, sour cream or yogurt, and cottage cheese or ricotta. Stir in the cheeses, crab, and green onions. Scrape the mixture into the pan. Cover and bake in the solar cooker until firmly set, 1 to 2 hours.
3. Allow to cool slightly before cutting into wedges to serve.

# SUMMER FRUIT CRUMBLE

SERVES 4 to 6 | COOK 2 to 3 hours | **GLUTEN FREE, VEGAN**

*For this juicy crumble, you can use blueberries, cherries, raspberries, strawberries, boysenberries, apples, peaches, plums, apricots, or nectarines—whatever's in season. I tried using blueberries I had picked and then frozen, and the crumble turned out way too watery, so use only ripe fruit that hasn't been frozen. If you can't find almond meal, you can substitute almond flour.*

## **For the crumble topping:**

1 cup almond meal  
3/4 cup pecan pieces  
1/4 cup coconut oil  
1/4 cup maple syrup  
1/4 cup fine shredded coconut  
2 tablespoons flaxseed meal

6 cups (1-1/2 quarts) fresh  
or frozen fruit  
2 tablespoons arrowroot powder  
or cornstarch  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 tablespoon fresh lemon  
or lime juice

1. In a medium bowl, mash together the almond meal, pecan pieces, oil, maple syrup, coconut, and flaxseed meal until uniformly moistened.
2. In a dark baking pan, gently stir together the fruit, arrowroot powder or cornstarch, honey, and lemon or lime juice. Crumble the topping mixture evenly over the fruit.
3. Bake uncovered in the solar cooker until bubbly and browned, 2 to 3 hours.