

Fig, walnut and rocket salad. Recipe on page XXX.

Good and green AND FRESH

Only the freshest ingredients find their way onto Antonia De Luca's table

Is this vegan cheese or mayonnaise on the fig, rocket salad?

TEXT: LYN WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTOPH HOFFMANN THESE RECIPES ARE SUPPLIED BY THE ENTERTAINER AND WHILE EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ENSURE THEY ARE CORRECT, THEY HAVEN'T BEEN TESTED BY GARDEN AND HOME



MENU

- RAW MINT MOJITO
- ZUCCHINI FRIES
- MINISTRONE SOUP
- MELANZANE
- CASALINGA'S SPINACH SALAD
- FIG, ROCKET AND WALNUT SALAD
- BANANA CREAM PIE

XXX XXXX, XXXXX XXXXX, XXXXXX XXXX, Antonia De Luca, XXXXX XXX and XXXX XXX

As the daughter of well-known restaurateurs Peter and Jenny De Luca of Casalinga in Johannesburg, it was only natural that Antonia De Luca would dream of one day owning her own café. "I was brought up a vegetarian in a family passionate about food and cooking," she says. "I became fascinated by the idea of raw food and went to the US to train as a raw food chef under Matthew Kenney in Oklahoma, who has the first and only classically structured Raw and Living Food educational institution in the world."

After visiting numerous raw food restaurants abroad, Antonia returned home filled with inspiration. She opened Leafy Greens Café on her family's farm in Muldersdrift, where her parent's popular eatery is also based. "My idea was to offer a daily menu inspired by what's currently at its best in the garden," she explains. "It's a concept that's really encouraged me to be creative."

The café serves raw food and sustainable plant-based dishes made with the freshest ingredients, which are grown in huge

"My Italian grandmother passed many heritage seeds on to my father, who has turned growing vegetables into a very successful operation. My grandmother also taught me how to preserve fresh produce through bottling and pickling. In turn, I've developed a passion for preserving food without using sugar or preservatives."

Antonia has just published her own cookbook *Recipes From Our Organic Garden* (publisher). "I want people to discover the pleasures of growing their own food, to enjoy the authentic flavours of vegetables, fruits and herbs and to eat simply again," she says.

At home her cooking style echoes that of her café: deliciously fresh and tasty vegan meals. Thanks to her heritage, she often prepares Italian classics like the dishes on her lunch menu today. "When entertaining, I always try to keep it 'homey' but nice with a beautiful table set with my best crockery and cutlery. What's most important is to keep the conversation and the wine – which should preferably be organic – flowing." >



RAW MINT MOJITO

(Serves 6)

1 cup sake or vodka
48 mint leaves, bruised
1 cup lemon or lime juice,
freshly squeezed
½ cup? agave or sugar syrup
few ice cubes

TO SERVE:
ice

12 slices fresh lime
1½ cups chilled soda water or
sparkling water

1. To make the mojito mix:
Place the alcohol, mint, lemon
or lime juice, agave syrup and a
few cubes of ice into a cocktail
shaker and shake well.
2. To serve: divide the ice and
lime slices into 6 glasses. Pour in
the mojito mix and top up with
soda water or sparkling water.

COOK'S NOTE: The mojito
mixture lasts up to a day in
the fridge.

QUICK CHAT WITH THE COOK

When it comes to food, simple is best! Raw honey, almond milk
and avocados are some of my favourite natural ingredients.

I couldn't live without my Vitamix blender and my
Benriner Mandolin.

One of my best foodie discoveries is agave nectar. **Explain what it is (a sugar
substitute)? and why use you should try it.**

What I have growing in my garden right now are figs, kale and grapes.

The best thing I ever ate was grilled endive served with olive oil and lemon while
skiing in France. **I've since started grilling fennel in the same way at home.**

No autumn meal is complete without soup and lots of olive oil.



ZUCCHINI FRIES

(Serves 4–6)

12 medium zucchini
30ml salt
1 cup cake, gluten free or
spelt flour
¼ cup coconut oil* or olive oil,
for frying
sea salt, crushed
white pepper

1. Slice the zucchini into pieces
the size of French fries. Place
them in a colander and cover
with the salt. Allow to stand
for an hour to remove any
excess moisture.
2. Rinse the zucchini to wash off
the excess salt. Drain well and
pat them dry on kitchen paper.
3. Coat the zucchini in the flour
and shake off the excess.
4. Heat the oil in a pan and
fry the zucchini for about



5–7 minutes until golden.
Drain on kitchen paper.
5. Serve hot with a sprinkle of
coarse salt and white pepper.

MINISTRONE SOUP

(Serves 10–12)

45ml olive oil
2 carrots, peeled and cubed
2 celery stalks, roughly chopped
1 medium potato, peeled
and cubed
black pepper
45ml vegetable stock powder
2 cups boiling water
1 cup broccoli florets, chopped
2 tomatoes, deseeded and diced
1 cup zucchini, diced
5ml dried mixed herbs
salt
¾ cup tinned red kidney beans
(or any other beans), drained
½ cup baby spinach, chopped
5ml basil pesto (optional)

30ml Napoli sauce (see recipe
opposite) or store-bought tomato
pasta sauce
fresh bread, to serve

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over
a low heat. Fry the carrots, celery
and potato until fairly soft and
lightly golden in colour. Season
with black pepper.
2. Add the stock powder, water,
remaining vegetables and mixed
herbs and season to taste with
salt. Cook for an hour, adding
additional water as needed to
achieve a soup-like consistency.
3. Stir in the beans and spinach
and remove from the heat.
4. Stir in the basil pesto
(optional) and Napoli sauce and
serve hot with fresh, warm bread.

COOK'S NOTE: This soup
lasts for up to five days in the
fridge and freezes well.



MELANZANE

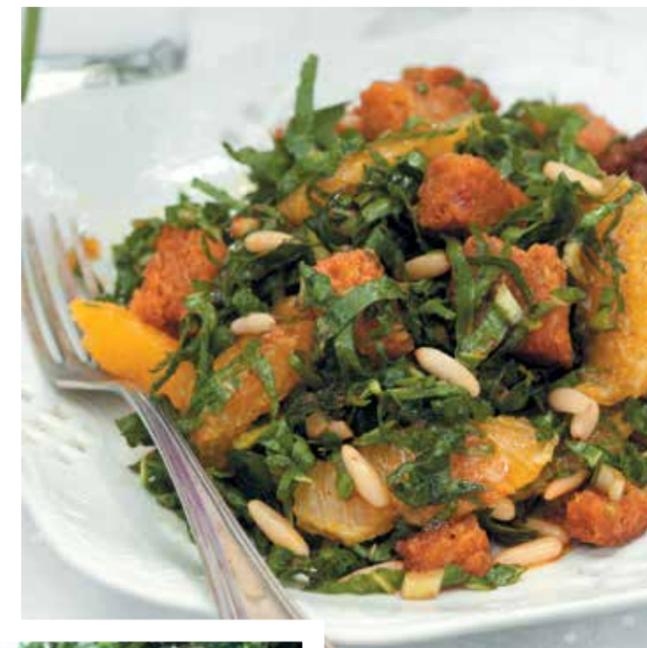
(Serves 6–8)

8 large eggplants
30ml salt
½ cup olive oil
½ cup cake? or spelt flour
1 cup Napoli sauce (see next
recipe) or store-bought tomato
pasta sauce
1 cup vegan* cheese or
mozzarella cheese, grated?
¾ cup basil pesto
¼ cup vegan* Parmesan
or regular Parmesan,
finely grated?

1. Peel the eggplants, slice
them into 1cm thick pieces
and lay them in a baking
dish. Cover them with the
salt and allow to stand for an
hour to remove any excess
moisture. **Rinse well.**
2. Heat the oil in a pan. Dip
the wet eggplant in the flour
and pan-fry them until lightly
golden in colour. Drain them

on kitchen paper and dab off
the excess oil; set aside.
3. Preheat the oven to
XXX °C.
4. **Grease** a medium-sized
ovenproof dish. Cover the
base with a thin layer of
Napoli sauce then a layer of
the fried eggplants, followed
by another layer of Napoli
sauce, then a layer of cheese
and finally a thin layer of
basil pesto.
5. Repeat the layers until all
the eggplant has been used.
6. Sprinkle some Parmesan
over the top and bake the
melanzane for 8–10 minutes
or until golden.
7. Serve with Casalinga's
spinach salad and the fig,
rocket and walnut salad.

COOK'S NOTE: This dish
freezes well.



4. Purée the sauce in a
blender until the desired
consistency is reached.

COOK'S NOTE: This sauce
lasts up to 10 days in the fridge.

CASALINGA'S SPINACH SALAD

(Serves 6–8)

¼ cup pine nuts, lightly toasted
6 cups spinach leaves,
finely sliced
1 cup croutons
2 avocados, peeled and chopped
2 oranges, peeled and
segmented
FOR THE DRESSING:
15ml agave nectar, maple syrup
or honey
30ml tamari or soy sauce?
15ml curry powder
45ml olive oil
15ml lemon juice

1. Place all the salad
ingredients in a bowl and toss
gently to combine. Transfer to a
serving dish.
2. To make the dressing: place
all the dressing ingredients
in a blender and blend
until smooth.
3. Pour the dressing over the
salad and serve immediately. ▷



FIG, ROCKET AND WALNUT SALAD

(Serves 6–8)

(Pictured on page XX)

3 cups *chopped* black figs
4 cups rocket
½ cup walnuts
⅓ cup olive oil
45ml mayonnaise
15ml agave nectar, maple syrup, or honey
salt and milled black pepper

1. Place all of the ingredients in a bowl and toss lightly, until just combined. Season to taste and chill for about XX minutes.
2. Transfer to an attractive dish and serve.

BANANA CREAM PIE

(Serves 8–10)

FOR THE CRUST:

1½ cups macadamia nuts, raw
½ cup shredded coconut
2ml salt
45ml agave nectar, maple syrup or honey
15ml coconut oil, melted
5ml vanilla extract

FOR THE BANANA FILLING:

3 cups cashew nuts, soaked in warm water for 30 minutes
2 cups banana, mashed
1 cup agave nectar, maple syrup or honey
10ml vanilla extract
15ml lemon juice, fresh
½ cup coconut oil, melted
1ml salt

FOR THE COCONUT CREAM:

1½ cup cashews, soaked in warm water for 1 hour
1½ cup coconut milk
½ cup agave nectar, maple syrup or honey
15ml vanilla extract
5ml lemon juice, fresh
1 cup coconut oil, melted
1ml salt

TO SERVE:

1–2 bananas, sliced and tossed in a little lemon juice

1. To make the crust: place the macadamia nuts, shredded coconut and salt in a food processor and blend until the mixture becomes crumbly.
2. Add the agave nectar, coconut oil and vanilla extract and lightly pulse until all the ingredients are well mixed and the mixture sticks together when pressed between your fingers.
3. Press the mixture into the base of a **greased? 23cm? spring form** tart tin.
4. To make the banana filling: drain the cashews and transfer to a blender. Add the agave nectar, vanilla extract and lemon juice and blend until smooth.
5. Add the coconut oil and salt and continue to blend until completely combined.
6. Pour the filling over the crust and chill for at least an hour.
7. To make the coconut cream: drain the cashews and transfer to a blender. Add the coconut milk, agave nectar, vanilla extract and lemon juice and blend until smooth.
8. Add the coconut oil and salt and continue to blend until completely combined.
9. Spoon the coconut cream over the tart and leave to set in the fridge for at least 30 minutes before serving.
10. To serve: top the tart with the banana slices. (**What's drizzled over these in the photo?**) **GH**

SOURCES Casalinga Ristorante Italiano

087 805 6222 or casalinga.co.za

Leafy Greens Café

082 882 7300 or leafygreens.co.za