

# Dear Granny

*A mini-collection of granny-inspired plant-based plates.*

by Melissa A. Matthews



This mini-collection of recipes is inspired by and  
dedicated to the person who sparked my love/  
obsession with food and cooking.

In honor of what would've been your 100th  
birthday on October 1st, 2023, this one is for you,  
Veronica Adams.

Love you like cooked food granny!

May you continue to rest in peace.

--Mel

Dear Granny

Do you remember when Mi'chele and I came home from preschool absolutely transfixed by chili with white rice? We asked you over and over "Granny, can you make chili with white rice?" I'm not sure you knew what it was but you figured it out and it was mouthwatering with your unique blend of seasonings. I serve my slow cooker meatless version with rice or quinoa and I think of your version every time.

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

- 1-2 (8 ounce) cans of diced tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons of brown sugar or equivalent of agave or maple syrup
- 4 large cloves of garlic diced
- Tomato paste
- Black pepper
- Sea salt
- Chinese five spice
- 1 can or 1/2 cup dry red beans parboiled soft
- 1 can or 1/2 cup dry black beans parboiled soft
- 1 green bell pepper diced
- chili powder (cumin, garlic powder, sea salt, brown sugar, red chili flakes, paprika)
- 5 pimento peppers
- Cayenne pepper
- Black pepper
- 1 onion diced
- 1 tbsp. of Trini green seasoning or sazón

# Instructions

- #1 Drop all ingredients in the slow cooker and cover with water or vegetable stock.
- #2 Set to high for 2 hours.
- #3 Check liquid levels and add more if necessary.
- #4 Turn down to low for 3 hours or until you've achieved your desired texture. I like mine soft and creamy.
- #5 Adjust seasoning to taste. Add tomato paste to thicken, if necessary, and serve over white rice or your grain of choice.



Dear Granny

You absolutely mastered the art of a one-pot meal especially cooking five nights a week. And Macaroni and beef was always a mid-week treat to come home to. We would grate ungodly amounts of cheese on it and eat seconds, thirds and when no one was watching fourths. Whew! I don't make it as often since going plant-based but when I do, I think of you!

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1 block of extra firm tofu   | 1 package of elbow macaroni or short grain pasta of your choice |
| Trini green seasoning        | 1/2 a small onion   |
| Paprika                      | 1 pimento   |
| Garlic powder                | 1 large garlic clove  |
| Sazón seasoning              | 1 package of your fave vegan cheese shreds (optional)           |
| Five spice powder (optional) | Soy sauce/ Liquid or coconut aminos/tamari                      |
| Tomato paste                 | Ketchup   |
| Nutritional yeast (optional) | Tamari  |

# Instructions

#1 Decide on your meat replacement. *I like to use tofu but you can use beefless tips or any kind of vegan mince.*

#2 Prepare your meat replacement. For tofu, you want to use extra firm. Freeze it, defrost it, press out any excess water, and season it lightly with sazón and Chinese five spice powder. Add a splash of oil and mix until it's fully coated. Put in the air fryer or oven at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 minutes or until crispy. Set aside.

#3 Boil your pasta according to package instructions. Drain and set aside.

#4 Dice up a small onion, 1 pimento pepper, 2-3 cloves of garlic, and 1 small tomato. Set aside.

#5 Bring the dish together. In a large pot, take one wooden pot spoonful of brown sugar and a splash of your favorite high-heat oil (not olive oil). I'm partial to coconut oil. Stir continuously until your sugar is a rich dark brown color.

#6 Add your diced veg and aromatics to the pot with a splash of water. Stirring vigorously.

#7 Add a hefty spoon of green seasoning, a splash of soy sauce, a few splashes of ketchup, a tablespoon of tomato paste, and your dry seasonings to taste.

#8 Once this sauce tastes like a rich stew, stir in your crispy tofu until it softens to a meaty texture.

#9 Stir in your pasta making sure everything is fully coated in that dark stew sauce.

Adjust your seasonings after adding each ingredient to maintain the rich flavor.

#10 Serve up with grated vegan cheese or a sprinkle of nutritional yeast.

 6 servings

Dear Granny

Remember when you would make Shepherd's Pie for us? I learned when I got older that your version would actually be considered cottage pie because you used beef and not lamb. Now, I use neither and it is still as delicious as I remember no matter what we call it!

Love, Mel

# Shepherd's Pie



 6 servings

## Ingredients

1-2 medium-sized potatoes (Sweet or English) peeled and boiled.  
2 small white onions julienned  
2 small pimentos diced  
1 small green pepper diced  
1 ½ can of black beans drained and rinsed  
¾ cup of lentils washed and parboiled  
½ head of garlic  
Soy sauce/tamari  
chili powder  
Paprika  
Ground Cumin  
Sazon (Badia complete) or Taco seasoning  
Trini Green Seasoning (optional)  
Ground Cinnamon  
Black Pepper  
Sea Salt  
Dried Thyme  
Everything Bagel Seasoning (optional)  
Brown Sugar  
Plant-based milk  
Margarine (optional)  
Lime juice  
Ketchup  
Roucou (annatto seed powder)

## Instructions

- #1 Put your diced potatoes to boil.
- #2 Drain and rinse your canned beans
- #3 Wash your lentils.
- #4 Put your lentils to boil with a splash of roucou, soy sauce, cinnamon, and a whole clove of garlic.
- #5 Dice and slice your veggies.
- #6 Once your potatoes are fork-tender, mash them until creamy with margarine and a splash of your plant-based milk. I used a drizzle of full-fat coconut milk, but soy or nut milk would work just fine. You only need a drizzle or two. Season with everything bagel seasoning/ garlic powder, salt and pepper. Set aside.
- #7 Put your veggies in a hot pan with a drizzle of oil. Season with dried thyme, roucou, and a pinch of sugar until the onions are translucent.
- #8 Add your drained black beans and parboiled lentils to the pan with a hefty dose of soy sauce, paprika, a pinch of cinnamon, a squirt or two of ketchup, lime juice, and the rest of your dried seasonings to taste. The combination of these spices and sauces with the texture of the legumes give an unbelievably meaty taste and feel. Cook until the beans are slightly creamy and the mixture comes together but is NOT dry.
- #9 Grease a small loaf tin.
- #10 Spoon in your filling and top it with your creamy mashed potatoes. I like to sprinkle the top with a little bit of Everything Bagel Seasoning, but you can use a fresh herb like parsley—paprika, or anything you like.
- #11 Bake in a 400-degree oven for 10-15 minutes or until light brown and crispy on the top.  
Your guests will thank you!!!



Dear Granny

Every Saturday morning we could be sure to have a hot bake and some kind of fish on the table.

Whether it was smoked herring, fried fish or Saltfish buljol--it was there tasting like pure love on a plate. In my plant-based experiments, I've come up with a potato buljol. You might be rolling your eyes but trust me it's pretty close to the real thing.

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

2 cloves of garlic grated  
1 large sweet potato grated  
1 small English (white) potato  
grated  
1 scotch bonnet pepper finely  
diced  
1 roma tomato finely diced  
1 small onion finely diced  
Pulverized nori sheets / fish  
seasoning / nori furikake  
Chadon Beni (culantro / recaon)  
finely diced  
Oil

# Instructions

#1 Peel and grate your potatoes

#2 Take a large bowl of cold water and submerge the grated potatoes in it. Let sit for 30 minutes to an hour. This will remove much of the potato starch which is going to be paramount to getting the texture we want. Set aside.

#3 Dice everything up finely.

#4 Chop your tomatoes, onion, and Chadon Beni (culantro) as finely as humanly possible because you don't want huge pieces that will overpower the potatoes. Set aside.

#5 Squeeze! Drain the potatoes and using your hands or a piece of cheese cloth squeeze all of the water out until the potatoes are almost dry.

#6 Submerge your drained potatoes in a bowl of boiling water for 2-3 minutes and then drain and squeeze it again. This par cooking will help the potato cook faster.

#7 Add your par-cooked potato to the glass bowl with the diced veg and season with sea salt and pepper to taste.

#8 Add heat. Put a frying pan on low heat with about a tablespoon of your fave high-heat oil, I like soybean or coconut. Add your grated garlic to the pan. Sauté until the garlic is fragrant and the oil is almost boiling.

#9 Chunkay the Buljol. Add the hot seasoned oil to your glass bowl with the potatoes and veg. Carefully mix thoroughly.

#10 Let the mixture sit and cook through in the hot oil for 5-10 minutes—until all the ingredients are soft and cooked through—before serving with bread for a delicious breakfast. Drain any excess oil before serving.

Dear Granny

Now I know you loved your cabbage with corn beef or sauteed with other veg but getting these people I live with to eat cabbage is a task. So sometimes I have get adventurous. I've included this stuffed cabbage recipe as an ode to your beloved cabbage.

Love, Mel



## Ingredients

- 1/2 head of cabbage steamed
- 1-2 cups of pecan meat (pecans, green bell pepper, onion)
- 1 can of diced tomatoes
- 1 clove of garlic
- Geera (Cumin)
- Black Pepper
- Salt-free multi-spice seasoning
- Agave

## Instructions

- #1 Wash and core your cabbage.
- #2 Add it to a steamer or a colander over a pot of boiling water.
- #3 Season with a little bit of salt-free seasoning.
- #4 Let steam until the leaves are easily pulled apart.
- #5 As your cabbage steams, make your mince.  
You can use any version of pecan meat you like. In the pastelle recipe from a couple of weeks back, I used a pecan and mushroom mince. For this recipe, I just boiled my pecans in water seasoned with a little soy sauce, Badia Complete Seasoning, and a spoonful of brown sugar. Once they were fork tender, I added them to the food processor and pulsed until I achieved the texture of ground or minced beef.
- #6 I, then, seasoned them up with a little soy sauce, ketchup, liquid smoke, Badia Complete Seasoning, lots of paprika, and grated garlic.
- #7 Next, put a frying pan on medium heat with your favorite oil and a little bit of diced onion and green pepper. Sauté for one minute and then add your seasoned mince. Brown the mince and set aside.
- #8 Make your sauce. Add your diced tomatoes, paprika, Badia Complete Seasoning, and a hefty amount of geera with a splash of agave. Let simmer on low heat.
- #9 Stuff your leaves. Pull off the largest of your leaves, this is a quick lunch so 6-8 should do it. If you run across any leaves with large veins that aren't pliable, pull the veins off or cut them off and use the parts of the leaves that surround them. Then, take half of a tablespoon of your mince and put it in the center of the leaf. Wrap the leaf up gently as you would an egg roll or burrito. Add each stuffed leaf to your simmering sauce until you've completed all of them.  
A few of these would make a great stand-alone lunch or it can be paired with any side dish you love.

Dear Granny

No matter how many times you told us about the starving children in Africa, we refused to eat scallops. You found them alongside your spaghetti in the trash at least once. You smirked when we asked if we could send the scallops and spaghetti to the starving children but then you put our plates in the fridge and served it to us the next day. ?

get it now.

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

- 1 pack of thin spaghetti
- 1 can of hearts of palm drained and rinsed
- Nori Furikake/ seaweed/ dulce flakes (any sea-like flavored or seafood seasoning)
- Citrus blend seasoning/ lemon pepper
- Chili garlic paste
- Brown sugar /agave

# Instructions

- #1 Cut your hearts of palms into one-inch thick pieces. Make sure you've rinsed them off properly.
- #2 Put a cast iron or heavy-duty frying pan on medium heat, drizzle a tiny bit of oil into it, and gently place your hearts of palm in.
- #3 Season with the nori furikake or blitzed-up seaweed sheets and a hefty shake of your citrus blend seasoning.
- #4 Once your palms start to brown, flip them and season the other side.
- #5 As soon as both sides are browned, remove them from the pan and start to make your glaze.
- #6 Add brown sugar, a splash of water, a tiny bit of chili paste, more nori furikake, and your citrus blend to taste. Let simmer until viscous.
- #7 Toss your hearts of palms in the glaze lightly.
- #8 Serve over thin spaghetti.

Dear Granny

As I mentioned before, you were an absolute one-pot wizard and such, you perfected the art of cook-up rice. These days, I make my cook-ups with quinoa instead of rice but they are just as tasty. I think you would've liked this one with pumpkin and broccoli stems seasoned like saltfish.

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

2 nori sheets (pulvarized or julienned)  
1 cup of spinach (chopped)  
1 can/pint (200 ml) of coconut milk  
1/4-1/2 piece of pumpkin (diced small)  
Trini Green Seasoning  
3 pimentos (diced with seeds)  
2 large cloves of garlic  
2 cups of quinoa/1 cup of parboiled rice  
2 large broccoli stem (blanched and peeled)  
1 Scotch Bonnet pepper or a dash of your fave pepper sauce

# Instructions

#1 Wash and prep your veg and aromatics. Dice your pumpkin. Rough chop your washed spinach; when I'm lazy, I do this bit with my kitchen shears because it's so much faster. Rough chop your pimentos, peel and rough chop one garlic clove.

Cut off the woody end of your broccoli stems and peel off the outer layer of the stalk.

#2 Make your "saltfish." Boil your broccoli stems for 5 minutes in salted water. Drain and add to your food processor with julienned/pulvarized nori sheets and one clove of garlic. Pulse it in the food processor until flaky like saltfish. Set aside.

#3 Start your base. In a large stock pot, add your broccoli stem "saltfish," a touch of soy sauce and a sprinkle of salt. Fry it up for 2 minutes, remove from pot and set aside.

#4 Add your spinach, pumpkin, and pimentos to your pot with a little bit of coconut oil, a spoonful of green seasoning, a splash of pepper sauce or a whole scotch bonnet. If using a scotch bonnet, you want to use it whole so that you can take it out once the food is finished. You don't want anyone accidentally biting into that. Sauté until everything is slightly wilted.

#5 Add your quinoa or rice to the pot with your base and lightly mix it in with your veg. Once it's well mixed, add half of a cup of water and 1 cup of coconut milk. Stir well and cover your pot. Make sure it is on a medium heat. Check every 5 to 10 minutes to make sure there is liquid in the pot. If making quinoa your process will take 15-20 minutes. If using rice, 35 minutes. Just before the food is finished, stir in your broccoli stem "saltfish" and allow it to combine with the other flavors.

#6 Serve it up. I like to have a fresh tomato salad on the side.



Dear Granny

Your weekend breakfasts made waking up special.

You made every dish feel and taste special even something as simple as scrambled eggs. You'd

scramble them with onions and tomatoes and it

would taste like a gourmet meal whether we were eating it with fry bakes or crackers. These days I

swap the eggs for tofu and I can't make bake so I

opt for crackers but ooh wee! it still hits!

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

- 1 block of extra firm tofu
- 1 Roma tomato chopped
- 1 small onion chopped
- Turmeric
- Black pepper
- Sea salt/ black salt- if you have it
- Olive oil
- 1 sleeve of crackers/ bread of your choice

# Instructions

- #1 Rough chop your tomato
- #2 dice or slice your onion - - whatever floats your boat
- #3 Add them to a small frying pan with a decent drizzle of oil
- #4 Saute with salt and pepper until the tomatoes begin to break down.
- #5 Add your tofu to the pan and use a wooden spoon or spatula to break it apart into egg-like shapes.
- #6 Add a sprinkle of turmeric for color. Enough to help the tofu turn yellowish and no more.
- #7 Adjust your seasonings for taste. I like a lot of black pepper and a light sprinkle of black salt (for an eggy taste) or sea salt.
- #\* Serve up with your carb of choice. This is also great for a breakfast for dinner night.

Dear Granny

You always loved porridge of any kind. I hated oatmeal, cornmeal porridge, and most of all flour porridge. The texture was always too mushy for me but lo and behold as an adult, I have fallen in love with a savory quinoa porridge. I don't know if you'd like it but I know you'd be amused by the fact that I'm eating and making porridge of any kind.

Love, Mel



# Ingredients

- 1/2 cup of quinoa
- 2 Roma tomatoes chopped
- 2 tbsps of smooth peanut butter
- Soy sauce
- Chili garlic paste
- Brown sugar/ agave
- Apple cider vinegar
- Sesame seeds (optional)
- Roasted Peanuts (optional)
- Chia seeds (optional)

# Instructions

- #1 Rough chop your tomato and put it on a foil-lined baking sheet drizzle with soy sauce, sesame oil, and a pinch of brown sugar.
- #2 Put the tomatoes in the oven for 10 minutes or until roasted.
- #3 Put your quinoa to boil in a small pot covered with water or vegetable stock. It should boil covered on low heat for 13 minutes. When the grain is soft and the liquid is all evaporated it's finished.
- #4 In a small bowl, mix sesame oil, peanut butter, chili garlic paste, soy sauce, a splash of apple cider vinegar, and a little water to thin it out.
- #5 Add your sauce to your quinoa stirring in until it is the consistency of thick porridge.
- #6 Serve up in a bowl. Add your tomatoes, seeds, and nuts.

37 Enjoy!



Thank You for being  
a part of the Recipe'd family!

XOXO,

Mel

