

# A Voyage to Well-being

Recipes from *The Holiday at Sea Cookbook* by Mark Hanna

Warren Wepman

Photos by Meg Pukel

February in the Caribbean, what could be better? Well, how about February in the Caribbean on a luxury cruise ship, with macrobiotic food and more than 500 macrobiotic friends for company? Plus classes in macrobiotic cooking, workshops, and lectures by leading authorities on alternative health and healing, and morning classes in yoga, tai chi, meditation, and Do-In. Well that's the experience that Marquita and I have had for the last two years.

From the moment we got on board the ship in Fort Lauderdale we could feel a tingle of excitement. There were more than 500 of us – all fellow practitioners of a healthier lifestyle – gaily joining the more than 2000 other passengers on the huge ship. The Costa Mediterranea is a veritable floating palace with every amenity you could think of offered for the enjoyment of her guests. All the cabins, from the least expensive to the three-room suites, were ample in size and fitted out in a most luxurious fashion.

Our little room, with its porthole onto the ocean had a comfortable queen-sized bed, three large closets, and the cutest, compact, and most comfortable bathroom, complete



**JOHN BELLEME AND SANDY PUKEL ABOARD SHIP**

with a shower, mirror, sink, and all the necessities. Adjoining the bed, the couch and table left plenty of room for a little vanity surrounded by dresser drawers – plenty of room for all of our stuff. There was even a safe for our ‘valuables,’ which only we could open, located below the television (we never had time to watch this). There was room under the bed for the luggage, so that the closets easily held all of the many changes of clothes that we thought we had to bring, including a fancy long dress

and my ageless tuxedo for the formal nights. There were two evenings when “dress up” was the costume of the evening, as a contrast from the casual attire suggested for all other occasions.

The ship sailed late Sunday afternoon and after a lovely almost 48 hours at sea docked in San Juan, Puerto Rico Tuesday afternoon. From there we sailed overnight to the Virgin Islands for a day on the pristine beaches. We continued again overnight to a magnificent swimming

resort on Catalina Island and then on to Santo Domingo. Finally after another day and a half at sea we arrived at the beautiful Bahamian port of Nassau. But this is just a skeleton description of the ports of call. The weather was calm and warm. (I got sunburned in St Thomas on the shore as I swam in a turquoise sea.) Each day in our floating palace we churned through a sparkling jewel of a sea.

Experienced macrobiotic chefs prepared three meals a day in a cavern of a modern kitchen. Five of the best macrobiotic chefs found their place among the 175 employees of the ship's culinary staff. All of our cooks had years of previous experience cooking macrobiotic meals for great numbers of hungry people.

A perfectly balanced macrobiotic breakfast of miso soup and grains was served at any time between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. every day. Five-course perfectly balanced lunches and dinners were provided every day. There were no dishes to wash, no pots to clean, and white-coated waiters were at our beck and call for each meal. Not only was the food of gourmet quality but the presentations were outstanding.

But I have left the best for last. Amid all this splendor – and competing with the food, the shore excursions, and the compelling sea – the real purpose for this trip was an almost unlimited opportunity to learn. For the early risers there were at least three different experiences waiting: Tai Chi, Yoga, or Do-in, each taught by a recognized master in the art. After breakfast the day was filled with



**TEACHER COMPOSITE BY WARREN WEPMAN**

lectures, workshops, cooking, and other classes all on alternate health and healing topics.

Presenters included such leading authorities as Dr. Sherry Rogers, Verne Verona, Denny Waxman, Patrick McCarty, Lino Stanchich, Amrit Desai, Ohashi, and Master Chu just to name a few. Christina Pirello, Jane Quincannon, and Marquita and I taught cooking classes. Many of the presenters were available for private or group consultations. Michio Kushi was unable to join us but plans to be on the 2006 cruise. On Wednesday evening a panel of 10 people who successfully recovered their

health from life-threatening illnesses through holistic and alternative medicine told us powerful and emotional stories.

At night after the last lecture we danced under stars.

Here's my take on this sort of a week: If the central theme of macrobiotics is balance with the universe around us, then this cruise was a perfect macrobiotic experience. Yin and yang energy surrounded us. It was traveling, but in complete luxury. It was fellowship with hundreds of persons each with different energy, but all interested in the same thing – holistic health. It was leisure to do as you please free from any requirements for cooking or cleaning up after your meals, yet a perfectly balanced macrobiotic diet was available three times a day.

A short DVD detailing the highlights of the cruise is available by calling 1-800-496-0989. Check out the website [www.http://atasteof-health.org](http://atasteof-health.org) for a virtual tour of the next cruise ship, a description of



the itinerary and presenters already booked for 2006, and all the information that you could ask for as well as various items for purchase.

In closing, the meals were so wonderful that, by popular demand, a full-length cookbook of the recipes for the meals prepared is in the works from Square One Publishers. This cookbook, to be called "*The Holiday at Sea Cookbook*," will feature up to 100 favorite recipes from the menus of the last two cruises.

Here are a few favorite recipes by master chef Mark Hanna.



## SHIITAKE MUSHROOM PATÉ WITH RICE CRACKERS

appetizer, serves 6 to 8

### Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 small onions finely diced
- sea salt to taste
- 3 pounds fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger grated for juice
- ¼ cup lightly toasted walnuts
- 1 tablespoon tahini
- 2 tablespoons shoyu
- rice crackers

1. Sauté onions with sea salt for 10 to 15 minutes or until fully cooked. Add mushrooms and cook 3 more minutes.

2. Place mushroom mixture in a strainer and place over a bowl. Drain, reserving cooking liquid.

3. Combine all ingredients in a blender, add enough cooking liquid to achieve the desired consistency, and blend until smooth.

4. Refrigerate until firm and then serve with rice crackers.



## ADZUKI BEAN AND TARO POTATO SOUP

soup, serves 6 to 8

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups adzuki beans
- 1 piece kombu
- ½ pound taro potato, peeled, washed, and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 tablespoons shoyu
- sea salt to taste
- 1 bunch scallions cut for garnish

1. Sort, wash, and soak adzuki beans and kombu in a soup pot with 8 cups water.

2. Cut soaked kombu into ½-inch squares and return to pot.

3. Cover and cook beans for 1 hour or until about 80 percent are cooked.

4. Add taro potato and cook 20 minutes more, adding more water if needed.

5. Add sea salt and simmer 10 more minutes.

6. Finish with shoyu to taste, and serve with chopped scallions as garnish.

## SEITAN PAELLA

entrée, serves 6 to 8

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups short grain brown rice, washed and soaked for 2 hours

- 12 cups vegetable stock with kombu

- ¼ cup olive oil

- 1 cup onion, diced medium

- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced

- 1 teaspoon saffron

- ¼ cup carrots, diced medium

- ½ cup seitan, cut into ¼-inch cubes

- ¼ cup celery, diced medium

- ¼ cup burdock, diced small

- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced medium

- ¼ cup summer squash, diced medium

- 1 bunch parsley, minced

- 2 lemons, quartered

- sea salt and pepper to taste

1. Wash and soak the rice.

2. To make vegetable stock: Use about 6 cups of clean, unblemished veggie scraps, including shiitake stems and other mushroom scraps, and a 4-inch piece of kombu to about 12 cups of water. Simmer 30 minutes, then remove scraps and kombu. Retain kombu for other use.

3. Sauté onions and garlic in olive oil while stirring for 10 minutes. Drain rice, then add to onion garlic

mixture with saffron while constantly stirring. Cook for 10 more minutes.

4. Slowly add vegetable stock while stirring, adding more stock as the rice absorbs it, and continue cooking for 30 minutes on reduced heat.

5. Add carrot, seitan, celery, and burdock. Continue to stir, adding more stock as needed, and cook approximately 20 minutes or until tender.

6. While still stirring and adding stock, add mushrooms and squash.

7. Season with salt and pepper and cook 10 more minutes.

8. Serve on a plate garnished with chopped parsley and lemon wedges.

## **KASHA CABBAGE ROLL WITH MUSTARD SAUCE**

side dish, serves 6 to 8

### Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons stone ground mustard
- 3 cups plain soy milk
- 8 large Nappa or green cabbage leaves
- 3 tablespoons sunflower oil
- 2 medium onions, diced small
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 large potato, cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 2 cups Kasha, washed and drained
- ¼ sunflower seeds, washed and drained
- 3 cups water
- 3 tablespoons shoyu
- sea salt and pepper to taste

1. For sauce, add mustard to soy-milk in a small saucepan, simmer 20 minutes while stirring until the sauce slightly reduces volume and thickens.

2. Blanch cabbage leaves in slightly salted water, approximately 5 minutes or until pliable. Remove leaves and set aside to cool.

3. Sauté onions and garlic in oil with sea salt and pepper for 10 min-

utes, or until translucent. Add potato and sauté 5 more minutes.

4. Add Kasha and sunflower seeds to onion mixture, stir until well mixed and thoroughly heated.

5. Add water, mix, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes.

6. Season cooked Kasha mixture with shoyu and spread out on a tray until cool enough to handle.

7. Lay out a cabbage leaf and place the Kasha filling towards the bottom of the leaf; roll the leaf while folding in the sides. Repeat.

8. Place finished rolls in a casserole pan and place in low oven to reheat.

9. Serve topped with mustard sauce.

## **BLUEBERRY PEACH CRUMBLE**

dessert, serves 6 to 8

### Ingredients:

- ½ cup peach nectar
- 1 teaspoon arrowroot powder
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 cups fresh peaches, peeled and sliced
- 1 pint blueberries, sorted and washed
- cinnamon, nutmeg, and sea salt to taste

### For the topping:

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup unbleached white flour
- ¼ cup corn oil
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- cinnamon and sea salt to taste

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

2. Dissolve arrowroot powder and vanilla in cold peach nectar.

3. In a baking pan, combine fruit, arrowroot mixture, sea salt, and spices.

4. Mix oats, flour cinnamon, and sea salt. Rub in corn oil and maple syrup.

5. Place topping over fruit mix-

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ture and bake for approximately 45 minutes.

6. Garnish with fresh blueberries and mint and serve alone or with vanilla soy ice-cream.

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*Mark Hanna is an internationally-known natural food chef who has enjoyed cooking together with friends at summer camps, yoga retreats, meditation centers, and macrobiotic conferences around the world for more than 25 years. He can be reached at [markhanna@hotmail.com](mailto:markhanna@hotmail.com).*

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*Warren Wepman has practiced the macrobiotic lifestyle for over 28 years. He lives in Asheville, North Carolina and in Deerfield Beach, Florida with his wife Marquita. They teach macrobiotic cooking classes, lecture and counsel on macrobiotic lifestyle and diet in health food stores, colleges, and on cruises. Warren has written a cookbook, *A Man in The Kitchen* designed to provide recipes for men to prepare or for women to cook for their men.*

