

Dinner with family

simmer, stirring often, until thick, 45 minutes to 1 hour. If needed, crush tomatoes with a spoon to break up. Stir in basil sprigs. Turn off heat; keep warm.

2. Meanwhile, make meatballs: Heat 1 tbsp. oil in a large frying pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add mushrooms, fennel, salt, and pepper. Cook until mushrooms are tender, 5 minutes.

Remove from heat and stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup wine and the bread until liquid is absorbed.

3. Transfer mixture to a food processor and pulse to finely chop. Scrape into bowl of a stand mixer and let cool. Add parsley, meats, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup wine and beat on low speed until well blended, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Using wet hands, shape meat into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in. balls. Heat 2 large frying pans over medium heat with 1 tbsp. oil each. Brown

about a third of meatballs in each pan, turning once and adding oil if needed, 6 to 8 minutes per batch. With a slotted spatula, transfer meatballs to a platter. Repeat with remaining meatballs and oil.

5. Scrape all the drippings into 1 pan. Whisk in flour, then cook over medium heat until bubbling, 1 to 2 minutes. Whisk in 2 cups sauce to loosen browned bits. Scrape into pan with rest of sauce and stir.

6. Return sauce to a simmer. Gently stir in meatballs; simmer, covered, until flavors are blended, about 20 minutes. Discard basil sprigs. Cut remaining basil leaves into fine slivers and stir into sauce. Meanwhile, cook spaghetti as package directs.

7. Drain pasta and transfer to a large shallow bowl. Ladle all the meatballs and about half the sauce on top, and toss to coat. Serve with cheese and extra sauce.

**Crack fennel seeds with a mortar and*

pestle, or buzz in a clean coffee grinder.

Make ahead: Chill sauce and meatballs up to 1 day, or freeze up to 1 month.

PER SERVING 872 CAL., 37% (323 CAL.) FROM FAT; 47 G PROTEIN; 36 G FAT (9.5 G SAT.); 88 G CARBO (7.2 G FIBER); 2,116 MG SODIUM; 92 MG CHOL.

Spinach, mushroom, and fennel salad with warm bacon vinaigrette

SERVES 8 **TIME** 45 minutes

"Every hippie menu in the '70s had a spinach and mushroom salad," Peel says about this recipe, inspired by a restaurant from his college days in Isla Vista, California. Cut it in half for a smaller group.

3 qts. (7 to 8 oz.) lightly packed baby spinach

3 large eggs, hard-cooked and cut into wedges

5 oz. mushrooms, thinly sliced

5 oz. good-quality thick-cut bacon

2 tbsp. each canola oil and extra-virgin olive oil

1 large head fennel (about 4 in. wide), trimmed and thinly sliced

2½ tbsp. minced shallot

1½ tsp. roughly chopped fresh thyme leaves

2½ tbsp. sherry vinegar

2 tsp. Dijon mustard

About ½ tsp. each kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Combine spinach, eggs, and mushrooms in a large shallow serving bowl.

2. Cut bacon on the diagonal into strips about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick and $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. long. Cook bacon with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water in a large frying pan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until water disappears, 8 to 12 minutes. Add oils and cook until bacon is light golden but still supple, 3 to 5 minutes more. Transfer bacon with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain.

3. Add fennel to pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly softened, about 2 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to more paper towels.

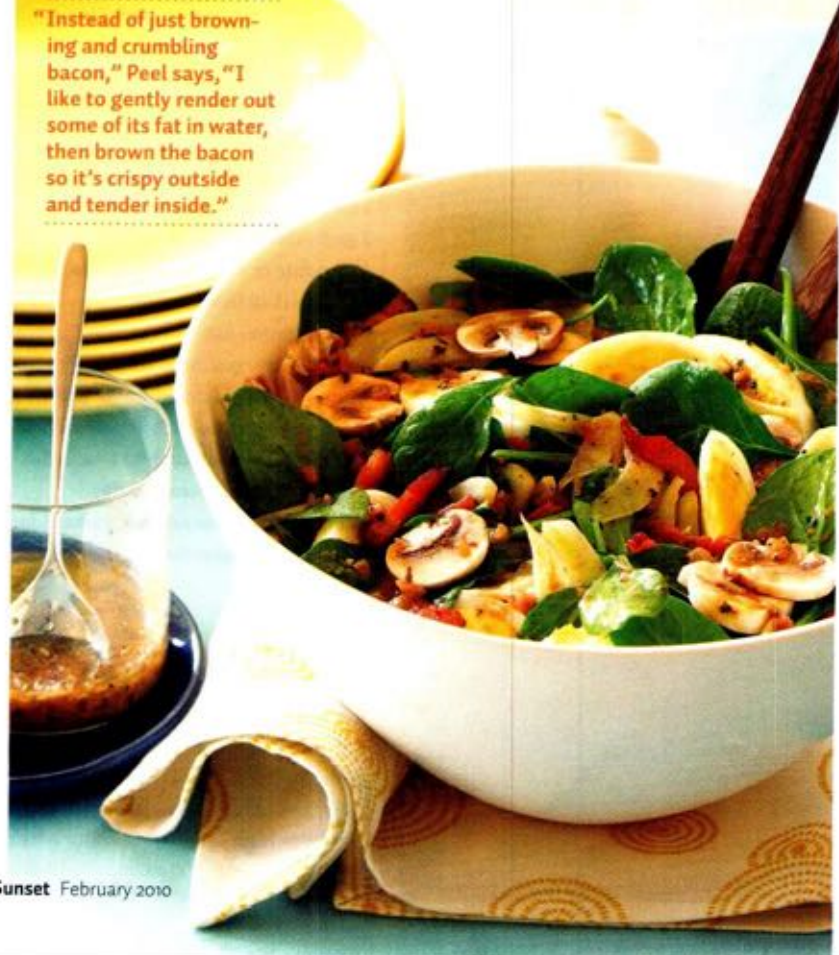
4. Stir shallot and thyme into fat in pan and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Remove pan from heat and whisk in vinegar to deglaze pan. Whisk in mustard, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. each salt and pepper, and 2 tsp. water.

5. Add bacon and fennel to salad, scrape dressing on top, and toss gently to coat. Season to taste with more salt and pepper.

PER SERVING 201 CAL., 75% (151 CAL.) FROM FAT; 5.9 G PROTEIN; 17 G FAT (4 G SAT.); 6.9 G CARBO (2.3 G FIBER); 380 MG SODIUM; 92 MG CHOL. **>91**

TIP RENDER THE BACON

"Instead of just browning and crumbling bacon," Peel says, "I like to gently render out some of its fat in water, then brown the bacon so it's crispy outside and tender inside."





PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNABELLE BREakey
FOOD STYLING BY KAREN SHINTO

Campanile's spaghetti and meatballs in red sauce

SERVES 8 generously **TIME** 2 hours

This dish illustrates the principle that, as Peel says, "It's not what you do, it's how you do it." The meatballs have three kinds of meat for flavor; they're made carefully and not overworked; and the sauce is clingy. For a small group, serve half the sauce (with half the pasta), then freeze the rest for dinner another night.

SAUCE

6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

6 large garlic cloves, halved and thinly sliced

3 cans (28 oz. each) diced tomatoes, preferably fire-roasted, such as Muir Glen

About 1½ tsp. kosher salt

About ¾ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

3 large fresh basil sprigs, plus ½ cup leaves

MEATBALLS

About ¼ cup olive oil, divided

1 medium onion, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

4 oz. white or cremini mushrooms, chopped

2 tsp. cracked fennel seeds*

1½ tsp. kosher salt

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

About ⅔ cup cold dry white wine, divided

4 oz. country bread such as pain au levain, crusts removed, cut into 1-in. cubes

3 tbsp. minced flat-leaf parsley

¾ lb. each cold ground pork, turkey (dark meat), and beef chuck

2 tbsp. flour

SPAGHETTI

1½ lbs. spaghetti

About 1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

1. Make sauce: In a 5- to 6-qt. pan, cook oil and garlic over medium-low heat until garlic softens, 5 to 6 minutes. Add tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Cover, bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat and