



FROM TOP Flank steak and vegetables share a marinade to cut preparation time. Cumin-scented potato gratin bakes while you taste the wine before dinner—distracting but tantalizing. Mint adds a fresh touch to grilled vegetables.



2. Lay vegetables on a well-oiled grill over a solid bed of medium-hot coals or medium-high heat on a gas grill (you can hold your hand 1 to 2 in. above grill level only 3 to 4 seconds); close lid on gas grill. Cook vegetables, turning once, until beginning to brown and just tender when pierced, 7 to 8 minutes for eggplant, 8 to 10 for onion and bell peppers, and 12 for zucchini. Transfer to a large cutting board as done.

3. Cut vegetables into 1-in. pieces and put in a bowl. Add pine nuts, mint, and any remaining marinade. Mix, adding more vinegar, salt, and pepper to taste.

Creamy cumin-and-garlic potato gratin

A hit of cumin puts this gratin in the same flavor world as the Moroccan steak, and creamy potatoes are a great foil.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 1½ hours

MAKES 6 servings

NOTES You can assemble this dish up to a day ahead of time; chill airtight. Stick the gratin in the oven as your guests arrive.

2 cups whipping cream

1¼ to 1¾ cups whole milk

2 tbsp. minced garlic

1½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. pepper

½ tsp. ground cumin

2½ lbs. Yukon Gold potatoes

1. Preheat oven to 375°. In a medium pan, combine whipping cream, 1¼ cups milk, garlic, salt, pepper, and cumin. Simmer (don't boil) over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, peel potatoes and thinly slice crosswise. Spread level in a shallow 2½-quart casserole or baking dish. Pour enough milk mixture over potatoes to barely cover. If potatoes aren't quite covered, add up to ½ cup more milk. Cover tightly with lid or foil.

3. Bake gratin for 30 minutes. Uncover and continue baking until potatoes are tender when pierced and top is nicely browned, 30 to 40 minutes longer.

PER SERVING 458 CAL., 61% (279 CAL.) FROM FAT; 7.9 G PROTEIN; 31 G FAT (20 G SAT.); 36 G CARBO (2.1 G FIBER); 653 MG SODIUM; 117 MG CHOL.

Blueberries in black pepper–Syrah syrup

Enough already with pairing wine with each dish; just put it right in the dessert. Syrah often has blueberry flavors to contribute; add a little black pepper to the real berries to clinch the match.

PREP AND COOK TIME About 15 minutes

MAKES 6 servings

NOTES Serve these berries with dark chocolate truffles.

1 bottle (750 ml.) Syrah

¼ cup sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper

3 cartons (6 oz. each) blueberries, rinsed and