



OqGQMPXe

University of Connecticut

Entry details

Entry Name:	Eggplant Stacker with Creamy Pesto Beans and Balsamic Gastrique
Institution Name:	University of Connecticut
Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>):	Rebecca DesRoches Publicity & Marketing Manager

The University of Connecticut, Department of Dining Services, is excited to share one of our favorite vegetarian and gluten-free recipes with NACUFS: Eggplant Stacker with Creamy Pesto Beans and Balsamic Gastrique.

We originally showcased this recipe in our McMahon Dining Hall and received positive responses from students. We used digital signage to promote the newly tested recipe and asked students for feedback. Immediately after the meal, students asked whether we could make the Eggplant Stacker a staple on our menu.

What we liked about this recipe was that the main ingredients (eggplant, tomatoes, and cannellini beans) are used in abundance in many of our recipes on campus, so we always have them on hand. Eggplants are rich in nutrients, high in antioxidants, and boost the immune system. They are rich in potassium, which supports heart health, and vitamin K, which helps maintain bone density. Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, which helps regulate blood pressure, are a good source of vitamin C for immune system support, and are high in fiber. Given the huge increase in students diagnosed with Celiac Disease/gluten intolerance and the movement towards more plant-based vegetarian choices, we thought this dish would be a winner.

This dish begins by tossing diced tomatoes with olive oil, garlic, and basil to make the bruschetta, then sautéing garlic and shallots in olive oil, adding cream, pesto, and beans, reducing, and finishing with freshly grated Parmesan cheese and lemon juice. Cannellini beans are high in fiber and provide 12 grams of protein per serving. The eggplant

is sliced, breaded in gluten-free breadcrumbs, and pan-fried to a golden brown. Plate all these components together and finish with a drizzle of balsamic gastrique, and you have a dish that makes the taste buds dance.

The raw food cost per serving was only \$1.41, making it an affordable addition to our menus.

We have always been very proud of our dietary program here at UConn, and we have seen a significant increase in the number of students diagnosed with dietary needs and food allergies. In 2001, we had around twenty or so students with food allergies, and we now have well over twelve hundred students with dietary needs and allergens, about ten percent of our meal plan population. Our first two students with Celiac arrived on our doorstep in 2002, and we can now safely say that it is the most common allergy we deal with on campus.

Tracking food allergies and dietary needs has allowed us to adjust recipes and menus in residential dining, retail, and catering to meet the ever-changing needs of the students and community members who dine with us. We appreciate all our customers and take the steps necessary to source safe ingredients and prepare delicious allergy-friendly dishes.

“Students Today, Huskies Forever”

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