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Culinary Creations with Cauliflower

By Susie Iventosch

It was brought to my attention last week that cauliflower steaks are delicious, and they make a great platform for all sorts of different toppings. So, I thought out loud, how in the heck do you make a cauliflower steak? The answer is: You can, but only sort of. The idea is great, and in theory it works well, but it totally depends upon keeping the stem in the cauliflower, and then making your slices very carefully. You only want to remove the leaves and the very bottom of the stem, otherwise, your cau-

liflower will fall apart into so many florets and you'll be left with mini-steaks!

But the dish is really delicious, and while you can add all sorts of toppings from your favorite cheese to tomatoes, olives and even pesto, I really love them done simply, brushed with a little olive oil and seasoned with salt, pepper and a light sprinkling of grated Parmesan. It's also quite nice to use the purple and yellow cauliflower to add a splash of color to the plate.

Cauliflower rice is another dish I

learned about, but it doesn't have a speck of real rice in it at all. Instead, you process the cauliflower in the food processor until it resembles rice, or rather, bulgur. Then you sauté it along with onions and whatever herbs and spices you like and serve it in place of rice. This is great for folks who are on low carbohydrate diets. This vegetable is said to help with cardiovascular and digestive health and contains anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. And, it's rich in nutrients.

For more information about cauliflower, visit:
<http://www.whfoods.com/genpage.php?tname=foodspice&dbid=13>



Susie Iventosch is the author of *Tax Bites* and *Tasty Morsels*, which can be found at *Across the Way* in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

This recipe can be found on our website:

www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



Cauliflower three ways: as steaks, rice or roasted florets. Photos Susie Iventosch



Roasted Cauliflower "Steaks"

(Serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large head of cauliflower
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- Sea salt
- Pepper
- Lemon pepper

DIRECTIONS

Remove leaves from cauliflower and slice off the very end of the stem, leaving most of the stem intact. Place cauliflower on cutting board, stem side down. With a large knife, slice cauliflower into four steaks, starting at the top of the cauliflower with slices about 3/4-inch thick. Reserve any florets that fall off in the process. Lay "steaks" flat on sprayed or lightly oiled baking tray and lightly brush with olive oil. Season with salt, pepper, and lemon pepper and sprinkle Parmesan over the top. You will inevitably have some florets fall off, but don't worry, just oil and season them, and bake alongside the steaks! Bake at 425 F for approximately 8-10 minutes, or until tops are beginning to brown and cauliflower is cooked to desired doneness. Serve alone or with whatever toppings your imagination conjures up! This makes a great vegetarian entrée or an excellent side dish to grilled meats.

Cauliflower Rice Pilaf

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head cauliflower, processed in the food processor to rice or bulgur-sized pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (or oil of your choice)
- 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

In a frying pan, heat olive oil and sauté onion over medium heat until translucent. Add cauliflower and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until edges are just browning and cauliflower is cooked. This takes about 5 minutes! Season to taste and serve as a side dish in place of rice, potatoes or pasta.

Another LLC Distinguished Speaker Series Sell-Out Event

By Lou Fancher



David Sedaris Photo provided

You can call Lafayette's Senior Community Library Manager Vickie Sciacca a stalker, but you can't call her for tickets to the upcoming Distinguished Speaker Series event on May 7 at the Orinda Theatre. The Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation's presentation of author and humorist

David Sedaris has been sold out for weeks.

But that doesn't mean there aren't ample opportunities to get in on what has become a hot ticket item, with distinguished authors and thought-leaders filling the program's calendar. People discovering the series too late to enjoy Sedaris' talk can snare tickets for the coming lineup: Arabella Bowen, editor in chief of *Fodor's Travel*, May 19, and "Passion for Paris" chronicler David Downie, May 29.

Sedaris is the author of "Barrel Fever and Holidays on Ice," and is best known for his collections of personal essays, "Naked," "Me Talk Pretty One Day," "Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim," "When You Are Engulfed in Flames," and his most recent best-seller, "Let's Explore Diabetes with Owls." He is a frequent contributor to the *New Yorker* and BBC Radio 4 and has been nominated for three Grammy Awards for Best Spoken Word and Best Comedy Album. There are 7 million copies of his books in print.

"I've been trying to book him for

over three years," Sciacca says. "I've been working with his agent, Steven Barclay, but the problem has been that some years, Sedaris only travels one month out of the year. Prior writers' series I ran had a set-in-stone calendar slot, so it never timed out right."

With the Distinguished Speaker series, launched in 2011, Sciacca has the flexibility to adapt to a desired presenter's schedule. Even so, she says Sedaris will fit two events into his 24-hour visit to the Bay Area.

"He'll finish the other event, be driven here, do a sound check, and begin signing books before his talk. I suppose he'll eat dinner while signing books after the event," Sciacca says.

Petaluma-based Barclay says it's hard to explain the rigors of a book tour for a high-demand author like Sedaris, his most-requested client. "If you are not on a plane or train or in a car or checking into a hotel or onstage or doing a signing, there is virtually no time," Barclay says about the 40-cities-in-40-days tour that includes Orinda.

Sciacca says she's thrilled to in-

clude Sedaris in a series that has seen continued popularity since it started with a sold-out appearance by the late Louis Zamperini, World War II prisoner of war survivor, Olympic runner and the subject of Laura Hillenbrand's book, "Unbroken," now also a feature film. Past speakers include Dave Eggers, Rick Steves, Cheryl Strayed, Joyce Maynard and others.

"Sedaris has a tremendous sense of humor and presence. He's courageous about what he says and has so much wit, you can't help but be delighted," she says. "He's also incredibly generous to his readers and will sign everybody's books."

Perhaps the best way to illustrate Sciacca's points – and the feverish fans sweeping up Sedaris tickets – is a short story from Rusty Barnes, CAL Performances public relations associate. Sedaris' Fall 2014 CAL Performances appearance in Berkeley also sold out rapidly.

"The audience response was overwhelmingly positive," Barnes says. "David graciously participated in a book signing after his talk, and the line to meet him wrapped from

the corner of the mezzanine in the lobby around the entire cafe seating area and down both staircases." (A considerable distance, roughly equivalent to a football field.)

Barnes recalls one person asking Sedaris to write something inspirational in her book.

"In true David Sedaris fashion, he wrote: 'Don't die today,'" Barnes says.

Sedaris selects the work of a new or lesser-known author to introduce to audiences during his tours. In Orinda, Blake Bailey's "The Splendid Things We Planned" (Norton) will get the male equivalent of an Oprah recommendation.

Sciacca says the series is an opportunity for people to connect with an author in an in-depth way that bookstore appearances do not often allow. Often, she's struck by the authors' generosity and lack of super-ego.

"Dave Eggers has been one of my favorites," she says. "His style is so unassuming. Working with him, he never asked for anything. He was just humble, grateful to have the recognition in the community."

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