**Talking Points:**

-Types of salt: Salt is a crystalline solid (white, pale pink, grey) obtained from sea water or rock deposits. The slightly gray color comes from the minerals present naturally.

 Each type of salt has similar amounts of sodium by weight, not by volume. Thus, a tablespoon of kosher salt has less sodium than a tablespoon of table salt

~Natural/Unrefined: have different mineralities

 Sea Salt

 -Fleur de sel [French, Spanish, Portuguese], crystals are slightly irregular sized and shaped to dissolve at different rates

 Bamboo Salt [Korean] Roast salt in bamboo plugged with mud absorbing minerals from salt and bamboo, thus unique flavors

~Table Salt (unrefined)

~Iodized, usually table salt, but also found in kosher or sea salts (added)

~Kosher

-An increase in foods rich in zinc may reduce the desire for salt. Foods rich in zinc include: oysters, endive, alfalfa sprouts, seaweed, brown rice, asparagus, mushrooms, turkey, radishes

Salt Substitutes

Sumac

Samac or Sumach is an integral ingredient in Persian Chelo-Kabob as well as lamb, veal or beef kebabs. It is now increasingly used in high end cooking by master chefs to spice Lam, Veal and Beef Kebab or barbecued with sometimes extremely sophisticated approach in creating a crust of salty and lemony flavour without using Salt and therefore exceptionally good for low salt diets.

Sumac has a sour flavour and can be replaced by lemon in many recipes. For example in Lebanon and Syria it is used to flavour fish and seafood and salads. In Iraq and Turkey sumac is used in chicken, meatballs, kebabs and stews. Also in Iran and Georgia; it can be used to flavour stuffing, rice, legumes and breads.

It can also in general be combined with yogurt and herbs, it makes an excellent sauce or dip and it is an ingredient in zahtar, a typically Middle Eastern spice blend. The slight lemon taste of Sumac is similar to tamarind but without the bitterness. This is equally met with a herb flavour. In fact, there is even a hint of mild lavender in the aroma.

Tomato Powder:

 Use in homemade pasta

 Instead of using tomato paste in sauce recipes, use tomato powder

 Vinaigrette

 Bread

Popcorn:

 Tomato Powder

 Wasabi powder

 Truffle Salt

 Chili powder

Oils:

 Garlic with dried herbs

Other ingredients to add verses adding salt:

Garlic

Vinegar or type of acid (lemon/lime juice)

Chilies

Fruit or vegetable juices

Herbs (Marjoram enhances the flavor of many meat dishes)

Make your Own:

 Cut salt with ingredients like….

 Celery seeds toasted

 Gomasio [Japanese classic] Sesame seeds toasted, put on rice, cereal, vegetables and tofu

Marinade: meat and fish in advance, use chopped fresh and/or dried herbs, vinegar, citrus or vinegar and a little oil

Recipes

Chickpea Hummus

16 ounces chickpeas, canned or dried

¼ cup tahini

1/8 cup lemon juice

1/3 cup water

1 tsp dried thyme

1.5 tbsp sumac

¼ tsp kosher salt

Garnish: black sesame seeds and olive oil (optional)

Preparation:

Drain canned chickpeas, if using dried, soak for several hours and cook on the stovetop for about 1 hour or until soft, then drain.

Combine remaining ingredients in a food processor. Add the tahini, lemon juice, thyme, sumac and salt for 4 minutes until thoroughly mixed and smooth. While mixing, slowly add the water.

Place the chickpea mixture in a bowl, and create a shallow well in the center. Add a small amount of olive oil in the well and garnish with sesame seeds. If black sesame seeds are unavailable, you may substitute with toasted white sesame seeds.

Note: may sprout dried chickpeas for an earthier, grassier taste.

Roasted Eggplant Spread

1 medium eggplant

2 tsp cumin seed toasted, ground

½ tsp red pepper flakes

¼ cup tahini

Pinch of kosher salt

1 tbsp roasted walnut oil

1 tbsp chopped parsley

Over an open flame, roast the eggplant using a pair of tongs. Rotate every 30 seconds to 1 minute being careful the flame is not too high so that you don’t burn yourself. Another option is to cut the eggplant in half, the long way, and put in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes, or until completely soft in the meatiest part of the eggplant. Once the skin blackens, allow to cool and peel it away from the meat of the eggplant.

In a food processor or blender puree the eggplant and add cumin, red pepper flakes, tahini and salt.

Place in a bowl and drizzle the roasted walnut oil over the mixture, to finish, sprinkle the chopped parsley

Squash Bran Muffins

Muffin batter:

2/3 cup bran

400 g carnival squash, pureed

250 g brown sugar

100 g white granulated sugar

4 eggs

Pinch salt

1 tablespoon baking powder

½ cup walnuts

1 teaspoon cinnamon

130 ml grape seed oil

¼ teaspoon ground ginger

1 teaspoon five spice

¼ cup ground flax seed

Frosting:

Zest of 1 orange

Zest and juice of 1 Meyer lemon

150 ml soured cram

3 tablespoons confectioners’ sugar

Lavender flowers, garnish

½ vanilla pod, beans scraped

Preheat the oven to 350F. Line your muffin tins with paper cases.

Combine the pureed squash and sugar in a mixer and crack in the eggs, whisking until well combined. Add a pinch of salt, the flour, baking powder, walnuts, cinnamon, grape seed oil, ginger, five spice and flax seed until combined throughout. You may need to pause the machine at some point to scrape the mix down the sides with a rubber spatula. Try not to overdo it with the mixing – you want to just combine everything and no more.

Fill the paper cases with the cake mixture. Bake in the preheated oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Check to see whether they are cooked properly by sticking a wooden skewer or a knife right into one of the cakes – if it comes out clean, they’re done. If it’s a bit sticky, pop them back into the oven for a little longer. Remove from the oven and leave the cakes to cool on a wire rack.

Once your muffins are baking in the oven, begin your frosting. Place some of the orange zest, lemon zest and lemon juice in a small mixing bow. Add the soured cream, icing sugar and vanilla seeds and mix well. Taste and have a think about it – adjust the amount of lemon juice or icing sugar to balance the sweet and sour. Put into the fridge until your cakes have cooled down, and then spoon the topping on to the cakes.

Serve on a lovely plate (or on a cake stand if you’re feeling elegant, or on a rustic slab if you’re more of a hunter-gatherer type!), with the rest of the orange zest sprinkled over. For an interesting flavor and look, a few dried lavender flowers or rose petals are divine.

Popcorn

1 ounce = 1 quart popped (8, ½ cup servings)

5 ounces total to equal 40 servings at ½ cup each = 5 quarts

Various spices/spice blends