

Getting Creative with Cauliflower

A Very Versatile Vegetable

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Pop quiz! What vegetable is chock full of nutrients, delicious and is so versatile you can use it to create everything from hummus to rice to pizza crust? Why.... it's cauliflower! Cauliflower is a nutritional powerhouse containing several vitamins and minerals including vitamin C, vitamin K, magnesium, potassium, several B vitamins plus fibre and a dose of antioxidants. Like broccoli, cabbage and kale, cauliflower belongs to the cruciferous family. These foods are rich in glucosinolates, which help the liver to detoxify. They are also a good source of sulfur-containing compounds which have been shown to lower the risk of several types of cancers. In addition, cauliflower contains the anti-inflammatory compound indole-3-carbinol (I3C) which may help prevent inflammatory responses in the body as well as balance hormones.

If you have only served cauliflower steamed or broiled as an accompaniment to your main or as crudité, you may be surprised at how versatile this vegetable is. I love experimenting with different ways to use this vegetable and have shared some of my favourite choices with you. They are simple to follow and are so tasty most people don't even realize they are eating cauliflower making it really easy to sneak more vegetables in our daily diet. So if you are looking for ways to increase

your vegetable consumption (and we probably all should) or you are parents of picky eaters, these recipes are for you!



Cauliflower Rice

This is a very simple recipe to make and tastes great too. I found that it really does mimic the look of rice and is great to serve alongside any main or other side dish because the taste isn't overpowering. Top it off with a few fresh parsley sprigs to create a beautiful presentation at your table.

Ingredients:

- 1 small head of cauliflower
- 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil or camellia oil
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- ¼ tsp Celtic or Himalayan sea salt

Directions:

Cut cauliflower into florets. Place florets in a food processor and pulse until they resemble rice grains.

Heat a large pan on medium-high. Add oil and then the onion. Cook until soft, approximately 2 to 3 minutes. Add cauliflower and cook until tender. About 2 more minutes.

Stir in salt and season with freshly ground black pepper.



Mashed cauliflower

You can serve up this dish as you would mashed potatoes. Your kids won't even know that they are eating cauliflower with this recipe. I often use this as a topping for my Shepherd's pie. On one occasion, I served it to my guests but never told them the topping wasn't the conventional potato topping. At the end of the meal one of my guests asked, "What was the topping on that pie? It was so good. It was like potato but it tasted a bit different than potato". When I told her it was cauliflower she was floored. Her six year old son happily enjoyed the Shepherd's pie with us.

Ingredients:

1 medium head of cauliflower, trimmed and cut into florets

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 clove of garlic crushed and peeled (but left whole) – add an additional clove of garlic if you like more garlic flavour

Chopped fresh herbs such as chives (optional)

Celtic or Himalayan sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste

Directions:

Place cauliflower and garlic in a steamer basket in a pot over boiling water

Steam until very tender, about 10-12 minutes

Reserve 1/4 cup of the cooking liquid and then drain cauliflower and garlic well and transfer to a food processor (you can also use an immersion blender or potato masher if you don't have a food processor)

Add oil and reserved water, 1 tablespoon at a time, and purée until smooth. Don't over purée the mixture or it will get gummy.

Season with salt and pepper and top with fresh chives if using.

*You can also add some grated parmesan cheese to this recipe for a different taste. Just add the cheese in when you are puréeing.



Cauliflower Pizza Crust

Yes you can even make pizza crust from cauliflower! When I told my sister I was going to make a pizza crust out of cauliflower she shot me her “that sounds gross look”. But she certainly didn’t give me that look when she took a bite of that pizza. Once again, your kids will never even know they are eating cauliflower. Your cauliflower pizza is almost fully vegetable-based!

Ingredients

1 head of cauliflower

1/4 cup mozzarella and Parmesan cheese

1 tbsp dry parsley and oregano

1 egg

salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Cut 1 head of cauliflower into florets and steam until tender.

Pulse the steamed cauliflower in a food processor until you have tiny “rice like” bits

Put the cauliflower into the center of a thin clean dish towel and wring out the moisture. This is an important step. A lot of liquid will be released, leaving you with a dry lump of cauliflower.

Place the cauliflower lump in a large mixing bowl and add in the egg, oregano, parsley, cheese, salt and pepper. Mix well until evenly blended.

Transfer the cauliflower mixture to the baking sheet and shape into a circular or rectangle crust about ¼ inch thick. Press firmly on the crust ensuring that you’ve spread the “dough” evenly and there are no thin spots.

Bake the crust for 20-30 minutes, until the top is dry and golden. Remove the pan and carefully flip the crust over and bake for an additional 10 minutes.

Remove the crust from the oven and add your favourite sauce and toppings and bake for another 10 minutes until the toppings are cooked to your liking. TIP: Don’t overload the crust with sauce and toppings or it may become soft.

Tanya Caruana is a Holistic Nutritionist that specializes in helping clients achieve their health goals through natural nutrition. For more information visit www.tyananutrition.com