

BEST OF THE YEAR! bon appetit

EAT WELL / SAVOR LIFE

TOP DISH

MEATBALLS! 5 AMAZING RECIPES

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SMOKY ROAST
CHICKEN

QUICK
LENTIL SOUP

ASIAN SPINACH
SALAD

HEARTY
BEEF GOULASH

ITALIAN
SEAFOOD
STEW

THE \$5 SECRET
INGREDIENT
EVERY COOK
NEEDS

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TOP PARTY

VEGETARIAN
FEAST

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SPAGHETTI
AND MEATBALLS
WITH BACON
TOMATO SAUCE
P. 60

10 BEST
RESTAURANT
DISHES FOR
\$10 OR LESS

P. 31

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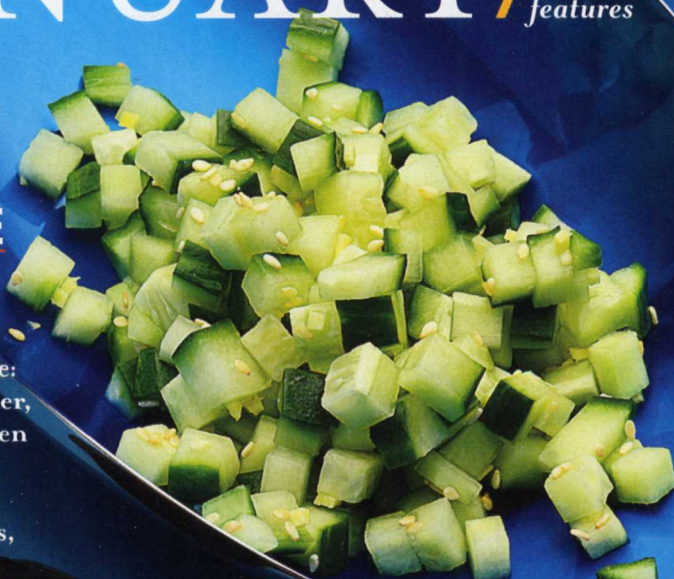
TOP DESSERTS

ALL-AMERICAN
PUDDINGS, CAKES,
AND PIES

P. 84

BEST OF THE YEAR

It was a very good year to be a foodie: Things got simpler, healthier, and even more delicious. Read on for the year's best recipes, ingredients, and destinations.



SPECTACULAR
SPA FOOD:
STRIP STEAK
WITH
CUCUMBER
RELISH

9

58/ dish of the year MEATBALLS

Easy to make and incredibly satisfying, meatballs are bouncing back. Prepare them *köfte*-style with ground lamb and mint, spiced up with poblano chiles, and other terrific ways.

BY JEANNE THIEL KELLEY

64/ cuisine of the year NEW AUSTRIAN

A perfect mix of bright flavors and hearty ingredients, Austrian food is the hottest restaurant cuisine this year—and you can make it right at home.

BY ANDREW CHASE AND
ERWIN SCHROTTNER

70/ ingredient of the year SRIRACHA HOT SAUCE

Sriracha is the secret ingredient in dishes served at both four-star restaurants and neighborhood mom-and-pop spots. DANIEL PATTERSON dishes up the story and recipes.

76/ entertaining with style® party of the year MODERN VEGETARIAN

A Florida family proves that a no-meat menu can still be fantastic. This party features great drinks, Mediterranean flavors, and a decadent chocolate cake.

TEXT BY DEB SCHWARTZ

PRODUCED BY REBECCA DONNELLY

84/ desserts of the year ALL-AMERICAN COMFORTS

This year, we took comfort in old-fashioned desserts that look and taste as good as the ones Grandma used to make.

BY JULIE RICHARDSON

92/ getaway of the year THE FOODIE SPA VACATION

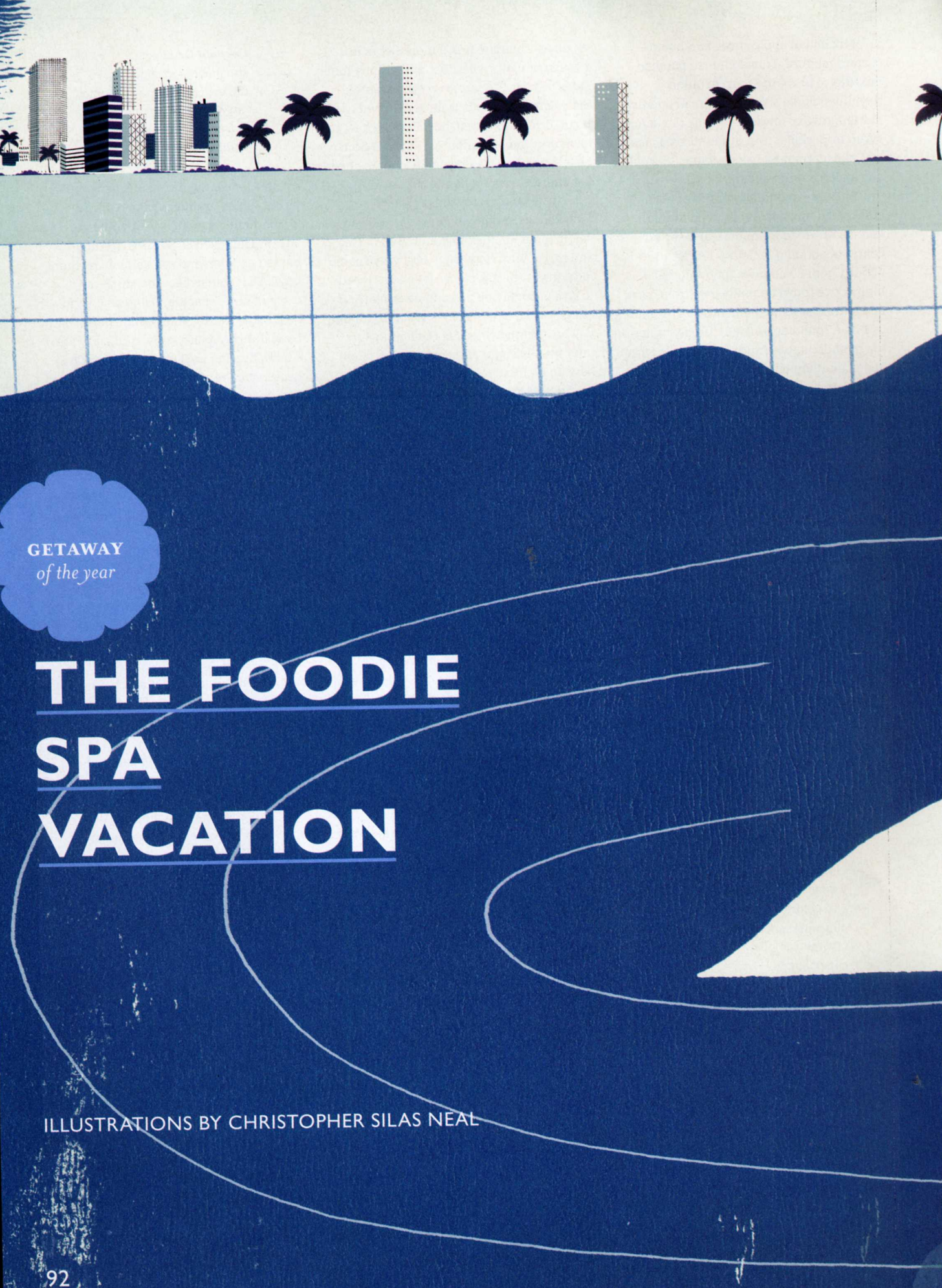
Whether you need to replenish mind and body, detox from an urban lifestyle, or just relax for a while, we find the top spas to help nourish your spirit.

BY MOLLIE CHEN, DANA DICKEY,
AND MARIA RUSSO



A healthful makeover doesn't have to be served with a side order of denial—it can be a simple, relaxed detox in sun-and-fun capital Miami.

Get started on your New Year's resolutions—to feel healthier, keep fit, and eat deliciously—with a trip to one of A NEW BREED OF HEALTH RESORTS DEDICATED TO TOTAL WELLNESS. We sent three women across the country in search of individualized stress relief. Their adventures, including simple culinary strategies, will surprise you.



GETAWAY
of the year

THE FOODIE SPA VACATION

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTOPHER SILAS NEAL

YOGA REBOOT

by Dana Dickey

Too little sleep, too much stress, and too little energy to make it all work. Sure, I had just moved cross-country, started a new job, and bought a house, but I loved my life—especially spending time with my small son and his father. So why was I always feeling so—exhausted? Apparently, I was not alone, since when I brought up my sluggishness, all my friends' eyes lit up and they murmured, "Yup, me too."

I was sick and tired of feeling sick and tired, so, seeking solutions, I took a trip to the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, to attend a weekend workshop conducted by Dr. Frank Lipman, author of the recent book *Revive: Stop Feeling Spent and Start Living Again*. As I pulled up at the Kripalu Center, the combination of Berkshires mountain air and colliding hues of green immediately relaxed me into a stupor. After checking into my sleek modernist Marimekko-accented room, I walked up a hill, past a Ganesh shrine and through soaring evergreens, then plopped down on a yoga cushion and smiled at the dozen other workshop attendees who, I could only assume, were also anticipating a weekend of "Turn off your television set" and "Eat less, move more" bromides.

Were we ever wrong. Over the next two days, Frank and his sidekick, yoga instructor Jodi Stuart, took us through a surprisingly thorough, science-packed indoctrination into feeling well. Every hour and a half, to alternately chill us out or pep us up, Jodi would take over the session and have us fold into restorative yoga poses, or press our feet onto tennis balls. Then Frank's South African lilt would narrate a slide show of contemporary ills: too much sugar, too many processed foods, nutritional deficiencies, dietetic allergies, environmental toxicity, media overstimulation. In his 30 years of medical practice, Frank had seen so many cases of what he called "the walking wounded"—that is, people who felt listless and unhealthy but couldn't be diagnosed with any major illness—that he'd devised a program to help.

He told us that cutting out sugar would stop insulin yo-yoing, a fatigue-inducing syndrome that was stressing our adrenal glands. Besides, he claimed, studies have shown that low-sugar diets enable people to live longer. "Do they live longer without sugar or does it just seem longer?" one woman asked. *Amen, sister*, I thought, as we all chuckled. But then, when Frank moved on to the purported toxicity of artificial sweeteners as well as the hormonal imbalances supposedly caused by ingesting caffeine, I blanched. It

seemed my story of fatigue might have a new villain—my beloved diet soda. Maybe my usual midday sugar-free drink was related to my urge to nap?

During the next three days, I'd feel listless without that soda, which the folks at Kripalu, in all their conscious-eating wisdom, had somehow forgotten to stock at the store. I woke up in the quiet, electronic media-free air, and drank tea, and took gentle yoga classes, and attended a slide show on the top 30 healing foods (including apples and ginger, natch, as well as dark-horse winners such as onions). Then I'd run, not walk, to the soaring cafeteria, where I'd choose among—let's take Friday, for instance—chicken or *seitan* with mandarin-orange sauce, tamari-ginger soup, cold sesame noodles, and barley-walnut bread, as well as an endless salad bar. I had an ayurvedic massage that made my limbs warm with increased circulation. I still felt a bit draggy, but I was hopeful that I could, after a dietitian consult and with a bit of willpower, feel better soon. After an hour-long chat about my health and eating habits, head nutritionist Kathie Madonna Swift handed over a list of preferred snacks (hummus, nuts, and seeds), dietary supplements (D and multivitamins, as well as fish oil softgels), and blood tests for me to follow up with at home. Then I met with life coach Aruni Nan Futuronsky. "I help people figure out how to take what happened here and do it at home," she said. "What would you do at 11:00 a.m. instead of having that soda? Take a walk? Maybe drink water spiked with pomegranate juice?"

On my last morning at Kripalu, I woke up and felt vibrant. My body felt lighter, and my abdomen was leaner and less bloated. Spontaneously, I did something I hadn't done in years: I meditated for 15 minutes. For breakfast I tried amaranth, a small green-tasting grain in a water slurry. It tasted good, actually—fresh and sap-like. I didn't want a diet soda. I felt alert—my mind had adjusted to the lack of television and newspapers and constant toddler chatter. Once a colleague said to me that she loved business trips because when she woke up, there was no one she needed to cook an egg for. I realized that sort of freedom was a key part of this place—lives of overconsumption, media inebriation, and service to others are reoriented, temporarily but wholly, into service to the self. To healthful eating, to spiritual nourishment, to physical refinement, growth, and pleasure. Maybe I was just getting the benefit of the previous day's massage at that moment, but I felt amazing. This place, I decided, was rehab for those addicted to the 21st century.

Dana Dickey is the senior editor at Bon Appétit.

I woke up in the quiet, electronic media-free air, and drank tea, and TOOK GENTLE YOGA CLASSES, and attended a slide show on the top 30 healing foods.





URBAN DETOX

by Mollie Chen

At some point in the past couple of years, I began to think of Negronis as a health tonic—they were bracing and slightly medicinal, and they helped to soothe the stress of the day or the excesses of the previous night. The fact that I turned to a cocktail of gin, Campari, and vermouth to remedy my indulgent lifestyle should have tipped me off: I was due for a detox.

Manhattan will do that to you. The city, with its endless diversions and pleasures, makes it seem like a duty to partake, and partake liberally. But I felt sluggish and puffy, overfed and underslept. Now, Miami Beach may not seem like the best place to simplify—are Cuban sandwiches considered spa food?—but the recent arrival of the Canyon Ranch Hotel & Spa means you can recharge without sacrificing civilization. Since opening its first location in Tucson in 1979, Canyon Ranch resorts have

earned a reputation for helping people make life changes—and making them stick. This new location has soaring high-rise hotel towers with sleek David Rockwell decor, and a restaurant that serves alcohol (organic and sustainable, mind you). It is, as a Canyon Ranch veteran quipped in my sunrise yoga class, “Canyon Ranch lite.” There’s no tough love: Instead, the place seeks to gently help you break bad habits, clear your head, or start anew. It doesn’t feel like a hard-core detox as much as a big warm hug.

I had signed up for the Stress Management for Healthy Living weekend, which included blood tests, a nutritionist consultation, a fitness assessment, and a massage. I went over my schedule with medical director Dr. Karen Koffler, a former student of wellness guru Andrew Weil. This unfussy Lauren Bacall type took one look at my activities schedule—with scribbled notes and yellow highlighting—and laughed. The point is to relax, she said. I was prescribed meditation classes, slow yoga, and sleep.

I still tried a bit of everything, from a muscle conditioning class led by a bouncy Cyndi Lauper type,



10 MORE PLACES TO RELAX AND RENEW

Want more options for healthful, energizing, and delicious life changes? These spas and health retreats offer everything from sheer indulgence to tough love, and all have great food.

1 / The Spa at Mandarin Oriental LAS VEGAS

A large spa in Sin City’s newest development, CityCenter (including restaurants by Michael Mina, Pierre Gagnaire, and more).
mandarinoriental.com

2 / The Allison Inn & Spa NEWBERG, OREGON

Nestled in the Willamette Valley wine country; Pinot Noir grapes show up on the skin-care menu.
theallison.com

3 / The Alluvian Spa and Viking Cooking School GREENWOOD, MISSISSIPPI

After mastering the almighty Viking range at the school, max your relaxation at the spa, where therapies have a Southern accent.
thealluvian.com

4 / The Lodge and Spa at Three Forks Ranch SAVERY, WYOMING

Cast a fly, hit the slopes, and take a steam high in the Sierras.
threeforksranch.com

5 / One&Only Palmilla LOS CABOS, MEXICO

Days are for biofeedback, Kinesis, and Pilates; nights, for enjoying the complimentary in-room tequila.
oneandonlyresorts.com

6 / Kapalua Spa at Kapalua Resort KAPALUA, HAWAII

This new 30,000-square-foot spa has open-air treatment rooms, private stone soaking tubs, and food from a 188-acre organic garden.
kapalua.com

7 / The Lodge at Woodloch HAWLEY, PENNSYLVANIA

Hiking, kayaking, and meals of natural meats and organic local vegetables, as well as cooking classes.
thelodgeatwoodloch.com

8 / Lake Austin Spa Resort AUSTIN, TEXAS

Lakefront beauty and one week a month devoted to culinary study with visiting chefs.
lakeaustin.com

9 / Rancho La Puerta TECATE, MEXICO

Guests can help plant vegetables in the six-acre organic garden, then learn from guest chefs such as Rick Bayless.
rancholapuerta.com

10 / Mii Amo SEDONA, ARIZONA

Daily yoga, Red Rock canyon hiking, or quiet meditation in a crystal grotto at this luxury retreat.
miiamo.com

to Budokon, a rigorous hybrid of yoga and martial arts. I climbed the rock wall, but I also had a guided one-on-one meditation session, and Gyrokinesis, a stretching and breathing practice. My first night, still sore from the previous day's 3½-inch heels, I had Sole Reflexology, which combines foot massage with sound therapy. I floated back to my room, where I slept better than I had in months.

It would have been very tempting to hang out at the restaurant and pool café all day, replacing all the calories I had burned—and then some. The food is that good. Thankfully, no foods are taboo here; they've just been tweaked: Meat is grass-fed, and desserts are made with wholesome sweeteners like honey. I began my days with strong iced coffee and creamy muesli topped with plump fruit. For lunch I ate huge Cobb salads made with local lettuces, veal bacon, and seared salmon, or a petite (four-ounce) cheeseburger. At night I sat at a counter and watched the chefs sear fat diver scallops to serve over a savory stew of melted leeks, sweet corn, and asparagus. For dessert, there were chewy white chocolate macadamia nut cookies, dense

banana bread pudding, and dark chocolate sorbet. As for cocktails, I had those, too—tangy mango puree with club soda one day, spicy homemade ginger ale the next.

On my last day, I met with Brad Kerschensteiner, a life coach, to talk about ways to maintain my newfound calm. For me, that means simple pleasures: taking long walks, cooking, reading the Sunday paper. It's about doing less, he said, not more. Like a Chinese finger trap? I asked. Yes, exactly.

Back home, my worries and stresses returned, but they didn't seem as epic. I kept restaurant- and bar-hopping, but I also worked new, healthier recipes into my repertoire. A few weeks after my trip, I left work early on a Friday and started walking with no particular destination. I stopped at the Greenmarket, where I picked some perfect tomatoes and fragrant peaches, continued on to my favorite cheese shop, and grabbed a crusty baguette. It was a beautiful night, so I wandered over to the river, where I settled down on a patch of grass and had a picnic. It was simple, lovely, and easy.

Mollie Chen is a New York-based editor at Condé Nast Traveler.

GRASS-FED STRIP STEAK WITH SPICY HOISIN SAUCE AND CUCUMBER RELISH

6 SERVINGS Healthy steak from the California Health & Longevity Institute near Los Angeles. For a photo of this recipe, see page 4.

Sauce

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon finely grated peeled fresh ginger
- ½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- ½ cup low-salt chicken broth
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce*
- 3 tablespoons light soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons honey

Relish

- 2 unpeeled English hothouse cucumbers, cut into ¼-inch cubes
- ¼ cup seasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds
- 2 teaspoons minced peeled fresh ginger

Steak

- 2 1-pound grass-fed New York strip steaks (each about 1 inch thick)
- 2 Maui or Vidalia onions, cut into ½-inch-thick rounds
- Olive oil

SAUCE Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots and next 4 ingredients; sauté 5 minutes. Add broth, hoisin, and soy sauce; boil until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Stir in honey.

DO AHEAD Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Rewarm sauce before using.

RELISH Mix all ingredients in large bowl. Season with salt and pepper.

STEAK Prepare broiler or barbecue (medium-high heat). Brush both sides of steaks and onion slices with oil. Brush steaks with some of sauce. Broil steaks until cooked to desired doneness, about 5 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer to work surface to rest. Broil onions until charred, about 4 minutes per side.

Thinly slice steak. Separate onion rings. Spoon relish into 6 bowls; place 1 bowl on each of 6 plates. Divide steak, onions, and sauce equally among plates.

*Available in the Asian foods section of many supermarkets and at Asian markets.

BAKED HALIBUT WITH ALMONDS

4 SERVINGS A flavorful dish from the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Massachusetts.

Nonstick vegetable oil spray

½ cup yellow cornmeal

¼ teaspoon salt

Pinch of ground black pepper

4 5- to 6-ounce halibut fillets

¼ cup (½ stick) butter

½ cup golden raisins

¼ cup dry white wine

½ cup chopped toasted almonds

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 tablespoons chopped fresh

Italian parsley

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray baking sheet with nonstick spray. Whisk cornmeal, ¼ teaspoon salt, and pinch of black pepper in small bowl. Dredge fish in cornmeal mixture

and place on prepared sheet. Bake fish until just opaque in center, 10 to 13 minutes, depending on thickness of fillets.

Meanwhile, melt butter in small saucepan over medium heat. Add raisins and wine; bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes to soften raisins. Add almonds, lemon juice, and parsley.

Place fish on platter. Spoon sauce over.

FRUIT AND OAT MUESLI

6 SERVINGS This breakfast dish is served at Canyon Ranch Hotel & Spa in Miami Beach.

1¼ cups quick-cooking oats

⅔ cup reduced-fat (2%) milk

⅔ cup plain low-fat yogurt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

⅔ cup fresh orange juice

¼ cup honey

1½ cups grated peeled red-skinned apples (about 2 medium)

1 cup chopped raw almonds

3 cups chopped fresh fruit (such as apples, pears, and peeled oranges)

Mix first 4 ingredients in large bowl. Let stand 5 minutes to soften oats. Whisk orange juice and honey in medium bowl. Stir in grated apples and almonds, then 3 cups chopped fruit. Stir fruit mixture into oat mixture. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 8 hours ahead. Cover; chill. Spoon into bowls. ■

For complete nutritional info for all of the recipes in this issue, go to bonappetit.com