Is your idea of a great time staying in and cooking a nice dinner? Ever felt the urge to celebrate “nothing special” on a Saturday night? Maybe you just want a casual meal to impress a new sweetie. Whatever your cooking-for-two needs may be, the following menu is for you. Easy but elegant, it’ll turn any evening into a chance to relax and unwind together without all the fuss or fancy ingredients that usually go into a gourmet meal.

This simple supper for two makes any night an occasion to celebrate

dinner à deux
Warm Avocado Halves with Pink Grapefruit and Endive
SERVES 2 | VEGAN | 30 MINUTES OR FEWER
GLUTEN FREE

There’s no need to dress up this dish for a pretty presentation—the pale green of the avocado halves along with the deep pink of grapefruit segments make this a feast for your eyes without any extra trimmings. Try the recipe with smooth-skinned Fuerte avocados, which have a firmer, less fatty texture and won’t turn mushy when baked.

1 Tbs. olive oil
1 endive, halved and sliced crosswise into half-moons (1 cup)
1 shallot, thinly sliced (¼ cup)
1 Tbs. chopped parsley
1 avocado, halved and pitted
⅔ pink grapefruit, peeled and cut into segments
⅔ fresh lime, for juice

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Heat oil in skillet over medium-high heat. Add endive and shallot, and sauté 3 to 4 minutes, or until vegetables are softened and brown around edges. Stir in parsley, and season with salt and pepper, if desired. Sauté 1 minute more.
3. Sprinkle avocado halves with salt and pepper, if desired, and place on baking sheet. Fill with endive mixture. Bake 12 minutes, or until avocado begins to brown. Serve warm surrounded with grapefruit segments. Drizzle with lime juice.

PER SERVING (¼ AVOCADO AND ¼ CUP FILLING): 225 CAL; 3 G PROT; 17 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT FAT); 19 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 156 MG SOD; 7 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

Wild Rice with Glazed Carrot and Tomato Ragout
SERVES 2 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE

Nutty, chewy wild rice makes this simple dish special. We’ve called for extra-firm silken tofu, but you could also use your favorite baked tofu or sliced soy sausage in the sauce.

⅓ cup wild rice or wild rice blend
3 tsp. olive oil, divided
6 oz. extra-firm silken tofu, cut into 2-inch strips
1 cup peeled baby carrots, sliced lengthwise
9 cherry tomatoes, halved (⅓ cup)
2 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
1½ Tbs. lemon juice
2 Tbs. chopped parsley, plus more for garnish
3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
¼ tsp fennel seeds

1. Cook rice according to package directions.
2. Heat 1 tsp. oil in nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add tofu, and cook 5 minutes, or until browned, turning once. Transfer to plate.
3. Add remaining 2 tsp. oil to skillet, and reduce heat to medium. Add carrots to skillet, and cook 10 minutes, or until softened and beginning to brown, stirring occasionally. Add tomatoes, balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, parsley, garlic, and fennel seeds, and simmer 2 minutes, or until liquid is thickened and reduced, stirring occasionally. Stir in reserved tofu; cook 1 minute, or until heated through. Season with salt and pepper, if desired, and serve over rice garnished with additional parsley.

PER SERVING (¼ CUP RICE AND 1 CUP SAUCE): 424 CAL; 19 G PROT; 12 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT FAT); 62 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 342 MG SOD; 8 G FIBER; 10 G SUGARS
Cardamom Baked Pears
SERVES 2 | VEGAN | GLUTEN FREE
Warm or chilled, these lightly spiced baked pears make a luscious low-fat dessert. If you don't have ground cardamom on hand, try sprinkling the pear halves with nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger, or allspice for a different flavor twist.

3/4 cup white wine
1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
Pinch ground white pepper, optional
1/2 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise
2 firm ripe pears, such as Comice or Anjou, halved and seeded
1 1/2 Tbs. lemon juice
2 Tbs. sugar
1 tsp. nonhydrogenated vegan margarine, such as Earth Balance, cut into 4 pieces
2 Tbs. pine nuts, optional

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Place one oven rack in top of oven and one in middle of oven. Combine wine, cardamom, and white pepper, if using, in 8-inch-square baking dish. Scrape vanilla bean seeds into wine mixture, and add scraped pod.

2. Place pears cut-side up in baking dish. Pour lemon juice over pears, allowing excess to spill over. Sprinkle with sugar, and top each pear half with margarine piece. Cover pan with foil, place on middle rack in oven, and bake 30 minutes, or until tender.

3. Remove foil; turn oven to broil, and shift baking pan to top rack. Broil 5 minutes, or until lightly browned.

4. Meanwhile, toast pine nuts in skillet over medium heat, shaking pan frequently, 4 to 5 minutes, or until browned.

5. Transfer pears to serving plates, drizzle with juice from pan, and sprinkle with pine nuts.

PER SERVING (1 PEAR WITH 1 TBS. SAUCE AND 1 TBS. PINE NUTS): 207 CAL; 1 G PROT; 2 G TOTAL FAT (<1 G SAT FAT); 5G G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 25 MG SOD; 7 G FIBER; 36 G SUGARS

When cooking for herself and her husband, Joyce Sangirardi likes to put together simple, elegant meals they can enjoy together.