**Ratatouille**

Serves 5

2 Tbsp. olive oil

1 small yellow onion, diced

½ an eggplant, cut into 1 inch cubes

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 zucchini, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 bell pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces

5 ripe tomatoes, cut into 1 inch pieces

1 fresh thyme sprig

1/2 fresh rosemary sprig

1 dried bay leaf

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper

2 Tbsp. Minced fresh basil

Directions:

In a Dutch oven over medium heat, warm the olive oil. When it is hot, reduce the heat to medium-low, add the onions and sauté until translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the eggplant and garlic and sauté, stirring often, until the eggplant cubes are slightly softened, 3 to 4 minutes.

Add the zucchini and bell peppers and sauté, stirring and turning, until softened, 4 to 5 minutes more. Add the tomatoes, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, salt and pepper, and stir and turn for 2 to 3 minutes more.

Cover, reduce the heat to low and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are soft and have somewhat blended together, about 20 minutes.

Stir in the basil and remove from the heat. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve hot, at room temperature or cold.

**Rice Pilaf**

1 cup long-grain white rice

2 Tbsp. butter

1/2 medium yellow onion, diced

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 3/4 cups water

Rinse the rice: Place the rice in a strainer and rinse it thoroughly under cool water. The water running through the rice will look milky at first, but will then become clearer and only lightly clouded. It's fine if there's still some haze in the water. There is no need to dry the rice before cooking; a bit of moisture on the rice is fine. Set the strainer of rice aside while you cook the onion.

Cook the onion: Warm the olive oil or butter in the saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until the onion is translucent and soft.

Toast the rice: Add the rice to the pan and stir to coat with olive oil or butter. Continue to cook, stirring often, until the tips of the rice turn translucent and the rice smells fragrant and toasted.

Add the broth or water and boil: Pour the broth or water and salt into the saucepan and increase the heat to medium-high. Bring to a boil.

Cover and cook: As soon as the water comes to a boil, reduce the heat to low and cover the pot. Cook without lifting the lid for 15 to 18 minutes. At the end, check that the rice is tender and has absorbed all the liquid. If not, cover and cook another few minutes, adding a few tablespoons of water if needed.

Steam the rice: Remove the pan from heat and let it sit, covered, for another 5 to 10 minutes.

Fluff and serve: Remove the lid and fluff the pilaf with a fork. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve.