Bulgarian Pepper Casserole

Makes “enough to feed at least 6 to 8 people”

From The New Moosewood Cookbook by Mollie Katzen

1 ½ c. uncooked brown rice

2 ¾ c. water

1 Tbsp. lemon juice

2 to 3 Tbs. freshly minced dill, or 2 tsp. dried

1 ½ Tbs. olive oil

2 c. minced onion

4 to 5 (total) medium green and/or red bell peppers, chopped into ½ inch pieces

¾ tsp. salt (more, to taste)

fresh black pepper

½ tsp. oregano

2 tsp. basil

8 medium cloves garlic, half of them minced, half of them sliced (keep minced & sliced separate)

1 c. crumbled feta cheese

1 ½ c. cottage or ricotta cheese (lowfat, ok)

2 med. Fresh tomatoes

1 c. whole Nicoise olives (or sliced, pitted Kalamata olives), more to taste.

Place rice and water in a saucepan. Cover and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down as low as possible, and simmer without interruption for about 40 minutes, or until the rice is tender. Remove from heat, fluff with a fork, and stir in lemon juice and dill. Set aside.

Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Addonions, and sauté over medium heat 5 to 8 minutes, or until the onions become soft. Add peppers, salt, pepper and herbs, and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 more minutes, or until the peppers are tender. Stir in the minced garlic ( save the sliced garlic for later) and cook for just a minute more. Remove from heat, and stir in the feta cheese.

When you are ready to assemble the casserole, preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly oil a 9X13 inch baking pan.

Whip the cottage or ricotta cheese with an immersion blender until smooth.

Combine the rice, pepper sauté, and whipped cheese in a large bowl, and mix until very well combined. Transfer to the prepared pan, and spread into place. Top with tomato slices, then scatter olives and slices of garlic in a liberated, random fashion over the tomatoes.

Bake uncovered at 375 degrees F. until bubbly – about 30 – 40 minutes. Serve hot or warm.