

TURMERIC SHRIMP WITH SPINACH

I love working with turmeric, even if it stains my fingers for the next couple of days. I love the color it adds to a dish, not to mention the flavor. For those of you that can't get enough shrimp, this recipe is for you!

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

FOR MARINADE

1 teaspoon ground turmeric

1 teaspoon curry powder, *hot or mild depending upon your preference*

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cumin

3 large garlic cloves, grated

1 teaspoon ginger, grated

Kosher salt

Fresh ground pepper

2 tablespoons olive oil

1.5 lbs large shrimps, peeled and deveined

FOR RICE

1.5 cups Basmati rice

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup coconut milk

2 cups chicken stock or water

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins or currents

FOR SHRIMP DISH

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 medium Vidalia onion, thinly sliced

1 (14-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk

1 tablespoon soy sauce

2 packed cups baby spinach

1 Serrano chili, thinly sliced

2 scallions, thinly sliced

Zest of one lemon

Thai basil or parsley, chopped for garnish

PREPARATION

FOR MARINADE

In a large bowl, mix together all the marinade ingredients. Add the shrimp and mix to coat well. Cover the bowl and place in refrigerator for one hour.

FOR RICE

Rinse rice under cold water until the water is clear. In a medium sized pot, combine rice, salt, coconut milk, chicken stock or water and currents. Bring to a boil and then down to a simmer for 20 minutes. Using a fork, fluff the rice and set aside with the cover on.

FOR DISH

Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add the onions, and sauté until they begin to caramelize, about 8-10 minutes. If they start to burn, lower the temperature.

Add the shrimp and whatever remaining marinade there is to the pan. Spread the shrimp out and cook for two minutes. Flip the

shrimp over and pour in the coconut milk and soy sauce, stirring to combine all the ingredients with the shrimp. Cook for about 2-3 minutes until the sauce starts to thicken. Try to keep at a simmer, rather than a boil.

Add the spinach until it begins to wilt, about 2 minutes.

In shallow bowls, scoop out about a cup of rice in each and place 6-8 shrimp on top. Pour the sauce over each and garnish with scallions, lemon zest, thai basil and/or parsley.

PASTA WITH PARMESAN MUSHROOM SAUCE

I know this is sacrilege, but I'm not a big fan of tomato based pasta sauces, mostly because they give me terrible heartburn. So, I'm always trying to think of new sauces to create. I was playing around with some ideas, and I thought I'd do a spinoff of an Alfredo sauce, but not quite as heavy as most. With the addition of mushrooms and some white wine, this sauce really sings!

INGREDIENTS (serves 3-4)

1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced

4 strips bacon

4 shallots, diced

4 cloves garlic, minced

olive oil (optional)

3 tablespoons of butter

3 tablespoons of flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup white wine

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup cream

pinch of ground nutmeg

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes

salt and pepper to taste

1 pound pasta of your choice

1 cup parmesan cheese, large grate

parsley, chopped for garnish

PREPARATION

In a large non-stick skillet, render the bacon. Remove bacon strips and chop into small pieces, and set aside. Sauté the shallots in the bacon drippings until translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for 4 minutes. If too dry, add some olive oil. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove all from pan and set aside.

Prepare the pasta as per boxed instructions. When ready, strain out pasta, but reserve one cup of the pasta water.

Remove skillet from heat and wipe down with a paper towel. Place skillet back on burner on low heat. Melt the butter. Add the flour and mix using a wooden spoon. Cook until the mixture looks like a smooth paste and is a blond color. Slowly add the white wine, cream, nutmeg and red pepper flakes. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a light boil and then immediately lower to a simmer. (When you add in the liquids, the mixture may clump. Don't worry, just keep stirring and it should all come together.)

Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cheese and stir. Add in the mushrooms and gently fold into the sauce.

Add the strained pasta to the sauce in the pan and lightly toss with the sauce. If the sauce is too thick or you feel you need a bit more, add some of the pasta water a little bit at a time until it's the consistency you like. I usually use about 1 cup or less.

Serve in bowls. Garnish with remaining parmesan and parsley.

SKATE WING WITH SPINACH PROVENCAL

Have you ever gone into your local fish market and seen that weird looking fish that looks sort of like a fan? Well, that's skate wing. It's a surprisingly inexpensive fish considering how delicious it is. It's a light, succulent fish that holds up beautifully when sautéed in butter. It's part of the ray family and can be found in east coast waters.

I like to serve it alongside spinach Provencal, a classic vegetable dish I learned way, way back in my college days. Give it a try!

INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

FOR FISH

1 skate wing (have your fishmonger remove the cartilage)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour

1 egg, beaten

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup panko

1 tablespoon [Gustus Vitae "Taste of Provence"](#) seasoning (or your favorite spice blend)

Salt and pepper to taste

4 tablespoons butter

FOR SPINACH

1 package pre-washed baby spinach (5 oz)

1 shallot, chopped

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1 egg, beaten

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Parmesan, grated

Salt and pepper to taste

1 tablespoon butter

1 scallion, chopped for garnish.

PREPARATION

Set up three shallow bowls—one for flour, one for the beaten egg, and one for the panko. Split the spice blend evenly into each of the three bowls and mix. Season each with salt and pepper.

Dredge the fish first in the flour, then the egg, and then the panko. Set aside.

Heat a large skillet on medium heat. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Gently place the skate wing in the skillet and cook for 4 minutes. Using a large spatula, lift the fish, add 2 tablespoons of butter into the pan, then gently flip the fish, trying to keep it in one piece. Cook for another 4 minutes.

Remove the fish and set aside on a plate while you make the spinach.

Using the same skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of butter. Add the shallot and sauté for 2-3 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for one minute. Add the spinach and cook until it has wilted, about 1-2 minutes. Add the egg and Parmesan and mix with tongs until the egg has cooked, about 1-2 minutes.

TO PLATE: Use a large platter and place the fish on one side and the spinach on the other. Garnish the fish with scallions. (NOTE: If the fish has cooled down too much, place in microwave for no more than thirty seconds to reheat).

CHICKEN KORMA

My favorite Indian dish is Chicken Korma. Try as I might, I never quite get it to taste as good as my local Indian restaurant, Bombay, but I've been working on my recipe for years, so this is pretty close. I like to serve it with some basmati rice on the side.

INGREDIENTS

FOR MARINADE

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs—cut into 1" cubes

4 tablespoons yogurt

1 tablespoon ginger

1 teaspoon turmeric

1 teaspoon garam masala

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder

FOR KORMA

4 tablespoons ghee or butter

1 large onion, sliced

1 bay leaf

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cardamom

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cloves

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon coriander

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garam masala

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper, plus more as needed

6 almonds

6 cashews

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup yogurt

Pinch of saffron (optional)

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric

Kosher salt

1(14-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk

2 cups cooked basmati rice

Chopped parsley for garnish

Slivered almonds for garnish

DIRECTIONS

FOR MARINADE

In a large bowl, combine the yogurt, ginger, turmeric, garam masala, salt and chili powder. Mix together and pour into Ziploc bag. Add in the chicken pieces and massage. Store in refrigerator over night.

FOR KORMA

Melt 2 tablespoons of ghee or butter in a dutch oven. Sauté onion until it starts to brown, about 8 minutes. Add the bay leaf, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, coriander, garam masala, salt, chili powder, black pepper, almonds and cashews and sauté for an additional four minutes.

Remove the bay leaf. Pour the onion mixture into a blender. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of yogurt and blend. Set aside.

In the same dutch oven, melt the remaining ghee or butter on medium heat. Pour in the chicken with all the marinade and sauté for 5 minutes.

Add the saffron (if using), turmeric and salt to taste. Add in the onion mixture and coconut milk. Fill the empty can of coconut milk with water and add it to the pot, stirring to make sure there aren't any lumps. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to a simmer for 15-20 minutes until the chicken is cooked through.

Serve with basmati rice on the side and garnish chopped parsley and slivered almonds.

CHOCOLATE RASPBERRY OATMEAL COOKIES

Although my husband is the baker in the family, sometimes I like to hover over him with suggestions. He was craving oatmeal cookies and I thought it might be fun to try to make them like pinwheels, putting raspberry jam on the rolled out dough. Although they didn't end up looking like pinwheels, they did taste pretty great!

INGREDIENTS (Makes 24 Cookies)

1 stick salted butter, room temperature

1/2 cup dark brown sugar, packed

1/2 cup white sugar

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 teaspoons molasses

1/4 teaspoon table salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

1 1/2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

3/4 cup mini-chips

1/4 cup raspberry jam

PREPARATION

Preheated the oven to 350°F.

In a large mixing bowl, beat together the butter and sugars. Add the egg, vanilla, and molasses and beat until smooth. Stir in everything else—except the raspberry jam—and mix until well combined.

Take half the dough and roll it out onto a floured silpat to about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thickness. Try to shape into a rectangle as best you can. Spread $\frac{1}{2}$ of the raspberry jam thinly onto the dough, leaving a 1" border all around. Place the rectangle with the widest side facing you. Starting from the bottom of the widest side, roll the dough up to the top until you have a nice dough log. Place in refrigerator for ten minutes to make it easier to cut.

Remove from refrigerator and slice log into 12 pieces. Round each cookie, and flatten slightly to get a consistent shape and place on silpat or parchment lined baking sheet.

Bake the cookies for 12 -15 minutes until they're golden brown. Cool on a rack.

Repeat process with the other half of the dough.

BAKED BRIE IN PUFFED PASTRY

This may look like it took some time to do, but in fact, it's one of the easiest recipes I've ever made. It's also a huge crowd pleaser. When I'm having guests over and I want them to think I fussed—but in reality I have no time—then this is my go-to welcoming dish. It's great to make around the holidays when everyone is indulging a bit more than usual.

INGREDIENTS

1 puffed pastry sheet (I like [Dufour](#), but most will do)

1 wheel of Brie (6-8 inches in diameter)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup fig jam

3 apples, sliced into quarters

1 large baguette, cut into ring size slices

1 egg, beaten

PREPARATION

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Make sure the puffed pastry sheet is thawed as per box instructions (usually between 2-3 hours). Using a floured surface, gently roll out the pastry sheet. You just want to smooth out the creases and make sure it's an even thickness. Don't roll it too thin.

I like to bake this on a large pie pan, so I can just take it right from the oven to serve. There should be enough room on the pie plate for the final cooked Brie and space to place the apples and baguette pieces around it once it's out of the oven.

Lay the puffed pastry over the pie plate. Place the wheel of Brie in the center of the pastry sheet, leaving the rind on. Schmear the fig jam on top of the Brie in an even, thick layer. Wrap the Brie in the pastry sheet. You'll find that you have more puffed pastry than you need to cover the entire Brie, so just cut off the excess.

Since the seams probably won't look great, I use the remaining puffed pastry pieces to cover the seams and make a design. Gather up the excess puffed pastry pieces into a ball and then roll it out on the floured surface. Using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " round cookie cutter (or whatever small shaped cutter you have), cut out as many round pieces as you can. Place them in whatever pattern you like to cover the seams.

Brush with beaten egg. Place in oven and bake until golden brown, about 20-25 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Place the apple slices and baguette pieces around the baked Brie.

MUSSEL STEW

As much as I love making my own broth, sometimes I just don't have the time. There are some great boxed soups out there and every once in a while I try a new flavor and see what I can do with it. This mussel stew paired really well with Potato Leek Soup. It's a nice variation on simple steamed mussels.

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, thinly sliced

1 large Yukon potato, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes

3 cloves garlic minced

6 ounces sliced turkey kielbasa

salt and pepper

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes.

1 quart [Imagine Creamy Potato Leek Soup](#)

1 8-oz jar clam juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 teaspoon fish sauce

1 pound mussels

parsley, chopped for garnish

crusty bread (optional)

PREPARATION

In a large dutch oven, heat olive oil. Add onions and sauté for 4 minutes until translucent. Add potatoes and sauté for 3 minutes until they begin to brown. Add sausage and garlic and continue to sauté for one minute. Season with salt, pepper and red pepper flakes.

Add the potato leek soup, clam juice, wine, soy sauce and fish sauce. Bring to a boil, then down to a simmer for 15 minutes.

Add the mussels on top and cover the pot. Allow to steam until the mussels open, about 6-10 minutes.

Serve in bowls and garnish with parsley. A loaf of sliced crusty bread – preferably grilled or toasted – is a great side for soaking up the broth.