

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

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup mini-chips

$\frac{1}{4}$ 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.

CREAMY MUSHROOM SOUP

We're big mushroom lovers in our house, so I love to use them whenever possible. Here's a recipe for a delicious, elegant soup that really features that unmistakable mushroom flavor. Enjoy!

INGREDIENT (Serves 6)

- 1 cups dried porcini or shiitake mushrooms
- 2 cups warm water
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 12 fresh cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1 sweet onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 quart chicken broth

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
1 cup cooked chicken, cubed
6 large croutons
Parsley sprigs for garnish

PREPARATION

In a large bowl, soak the dried mushrooms in warm water for thirty minutes. Remove from water and slice. Reserve mushroom water.

Heat the olive oil in a medium sized Dutch oven. Sauté the onions until they begin to brown, about 8 minutes. Add fresh mushrooms, garlic and red pepper flakes. Season with salt and pepper and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Add the dried mushrooms with any remaining liquid.

Add the chicken broth and bring up to a boil. Lower to a simmer for 20 minutes. Add in heavy cream and half of the parmesan cheese and stir for one minute. Turn off heat.

Using an immersion blender, purée the soup.

To serve, ladle into soup bowls. Garnish with cooked chicken, croutons, remaining Parmesan cheese, and parsley sprigs.

Thanksgiving Casserole

Leftover

I went a little nuts this year and made twice as much of everything as I needed to feed my family. Admittedly, I love Thanksgiving leftovers, so somewhere deep in my psyche I knew what I was doing. If you've made the classics—turkey,

stuffing, mashed potatoes, some green thing, cranberry sauce, and gravy—then this recipe will work for you. Feel free to sub sweet potatoes for the mashed potatoes or green beans for the brussels sprouts. Basically— just use what you’ve got.

INGREDIENT (Serves 8)

3 tablespoons of butter
1 onion, diced
3 ribs celery, diced
1 large carrot, diced
6 mushrooms, sliced
4 cups of leftover turkey, chopped
2 cups of leftover stuffing, chopped
1 cup of leftover Brussels sprouts, chopped (or green beans)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup leftover gravy or turkey drippings
1 cup of leftover mashed potatoes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fried onions for garnish
1 scallion, chopped for garnish
3 tablespoons chives, chopped for garnish
1 cup of cranberry sauce for garnish

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Add the onion, celery and carrot and sauté for 8 minutes. Add the mushrooms and continue to sauté for three minutes. Add the additional tablespoon of butter if too dry.

Add in the turkey, stuffing, Brussels sprouts, and gravy. Mix all together. Heat for one more minute.

Grease a large baking dish. Add everything from the skillet. Spread the mashed potatoes on top. Sprinkle the fried onions on top of the potatoes. Heat for 30 minutes.

Remove from oven and serve, garnishing each dish with

scallions, chives and a dollop of cranberry sauce

INSIDE/OUTSIDE STUFFING

Across America, there continues to be the great debate—is stuffing better when it is cooked inside the turkey or just in a baking dish? For most of my family and me, we are definitely inside bird people and find the stuffing to be much moister than when it is cooked outside of the bird. But now everyone is afraid of everything, so if we don't get the stuffing to just the right temperature we'll all get salmonella and spend the next week living on tea and toast.

So in order to get that inside bird moistness without actually stuffing the bird, I think I've come up with a recipe that is safe, moist, AND delicious.

INGREDIENT

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 large chicken livers, chopped (optional)
- 3 hot Italian ground turkey sausage links
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 large Vidalia onion, diced
- 4 celery ribs, diced
- 1 pound cornbread stuffing cubes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ parsley, chopped
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons poultry seasoning
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups of chicken broth

PREPARATION

Heat the oil in a large skillet. Cook the livers and sausage until browned, about five minutes. Break up the meats so that there are no large chunks. Set aside.

In the same skillet, melt the butter. Add the onions and celery and cook until translucent, about 8 minutes.

In an extra large bowl, pour in the onions and celery, making sure to scrape down the sides of the skillet to get all the remaining butter. Add in the liver and sausage, cornbread cubes, parsley, poultry seasoning, salt and pepper. Mix until all are well incorporated. Add in one and half cups of the chicken broth, mixing well.

Scoop all of the stuffing into a buttered casserole dish. Drizzle the last half-cup of chicken broth evenly over the stuffing. Cover the dish and bake in the oven at 375 degrees for 45 minutes.

CHICKEN MOLE SOUP

Making mole from scratch is quite a daunting task. I once took a cooking course in Mexico and there were over 26 ingredients to the recipe. It was fun to do, but sourcing all the right ingredients, not to mention the long cooking process, isn't always practical. But, there are some fantastic mole pastes on the market. I use the mole poblano from [Hernan](#). It really gives this soup a wonderful, rich flavor. If you like it spicier, add some red chili flakes or cayenne.

INGREDIENT (Serves 6-8)

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 onion, sliced

1 green pepper, sliced
1 red pepper, sliced
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 cup shredded cooked chicken
1 can kidney beans
1 can corn
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons fresh ground pepper
3 ounces mole poblano paste
2 quarts chicken broth or bone broth
1 cup fresh baby spinach
blue corn chips, crumbled
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup queso fresco (chopped into small pieces, for garnish)
Sour cream for garnish

PREPARATION

In a medium sized pot, heat olive oil. Add onion and sauté for 6-7 minutes until they start to brown. Add the peppers, sauté for 2 more minutes. Add in garlic cloves, chicken, beans, and corn and sauté for 1 more minute.

Add the salt, pepper, and mole poblano and stir ingredients. Add chicken broth. Bring to boil, then add spinach and reduce heat to simmer for ten minutes.

Re-season to taste.

To serve, ladle soup into bowls. Garnish with corn chips, cheese, and a dollop of sour cream.

GRILLED SALMON OVER FORBIDDEN RICE

For my taste, rice is always a great side with fish. But, jasmine rice or brown rice can get pretty dull after a while. I like to use forbidden rice (black rice) for both its taste and color. It's got a lovely nutty flavor, yet isn't as chewy as wild rice. It also makes for a dramatic presentation.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4-6)

2 pounds salmon fillet
2 scallions chopped, for garnish
1 cup forbidden rice
salt and pepper

MARINADE

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup white sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar
4 garlic cloves minced
2 teaspoons ginger minced
1 cup tamari sauce
3 tablespoons sake
1 tablespoon mirin
1 teaspoon sriracha or other hot sauce

PREPARATION

Season the salmon fillets with salt and pepper.

Combine all of the marinade ingredients in a bowl and whisk until sugars are dissolved.

Place the salmon fillets in a large bowl or Ziploc and pour in $\frac{3}{4}$ of the marinade, making sure the marinade covers all of the salmon. Refrigerate for 4 hours. (Reserve the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of marinade in the refrigerator).

Prepare the rice as per box/bag instructions. (*NOTE: I like to substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of tamari with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water, but that's optional.*)

Take the salmon fillets out of the refrigerator 20 minutes before you're ready to grill. Oil your grill pan (or outside grill grates) and heat grill pan to medium high. Place the fillets on the grill pan for 3-4 minutes each side. Discard the marinade from the bowl/Ziploc. Use the reserved marinade that was set aside as a glaze and brush the salmon a few times on each side as it cooks.

Place the rice in the center of a plate. Place the salmon on top of the rice and garnish with scallions.