

Citrus Marinated Red Snapper

In an effort to eat a bit healthier, I've been testing out some different combinations of foods. Saying no to meat and pasta is tough, but if you use the right grains and veggies you can at least add some bulk to a meal and not starve yourself.

This red snapper dish with cauliflower and lentils was surprisingly satisfying. Okay, would I have rather had spaghetti carbonara? Yes, but my cardiologist will be glad I made this instead.

INGREDIENTS (serves 2-4)

- 1 pound red snapper filets
- 4 tablespoons of olive oil
- 2 onions, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 cup black lentils
- 1.5 cups mushroom broth or water
- 1 cup white wine
- 1 cauliflower (chopped into small pieces)
- salt and pepper
- zest of one orange for garnish
- 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped for garnish
- seeds of one pomegranate (optional)

MARINADE

- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon ginger, minced
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce

PREPARATION

In a small bowl, whisk together all of the marinade ingredients. Season the snapper filets with salt and pepper. Gently place the filets in a Ziploc bag. Add the marinade and seal tightly. Allow the marinade to cover the filets and place the bag in the refrigerator for one hour.

In a large skillet over medium-low heat, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil. When hot, add the onions and garlic and sauté until they begin to brown, about twenty minutes. Set aside.

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees. Place a sheet of aluminum foil over a large baking sheet. Spread out the cauliflower evenly over the aluminum foil. Season with salt and pepper. Generously drizzle 2 tablespoons of olive oil over the cauliflower. Mix with your hands and re-spread out evenly over aluminum foil. Bake for 20 minutes or until the cauliflower begins to brown. Set aside.

In a medium sized saucepan, add one cup of lentils and 1.5 cups of broth and 1 cup of white wine. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer for 20 minutes.

While the lentils are cooking, spread the onions out onto a medium sized baking dish. Gently remove the fish filets from the marinade and lay on top of the onions. Pour the remaining marinade over the fish. Bake for 25 minutes at 400 degrees.

To serve, use a spatula to gently place the onions and fish filets on a platter. Place the lentils on one side of the fish and the cauliflower on the other.

Garnish with orange zest, pomegranate seeds, and parsley.

JACK'S SUNGOLD GAZPACHO

Not surprisingly, a lot of our friends tend to be serious cooks. I recently had this gazpacho at my friend Jack's house. He's one of those guys that knows how to make classic French dishes with wildly naughty sauces. I was surprised that he actually served us this gazpacho – a lean and mean starter that was unbelievably delicious.

It's a quick and easy recipe that is a great way to use all those tomatoes in your garden. He likes to use Sungolds, but cherry tomatoes will work too. They both tend to be a bit sweeter than larger tomatoes and they add a nice flavor profile to the dish.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4-6)

4 cups Sungold tomatoes or cherry tomatoes

1 cucumber, rough chopped

1 green or red pepper, rough chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

4 tablespoons olive oil

4 tablespoons sherry or white wine vinegar

1 teaspoon salt

fresh basil for garnish

PREPARATION

Combine all ingredients (except fresh basil for garnish) in a food processor. Combine until smooth. It may be a little chunky, which I like, but if you like it super-smooth, continue pulsing it in the food processor until you get a consistency you like.

Chill in refrigerator for one hour. Garnish with fresh herbs.

The Classic Side Car

When it comes to cocktails, I usually default to a margarita or gin martini. But sometimes I like to shake things up and use those dusty bottles in the back of my liquor cabinet. One day I found a nice bottle of unopened cognac way in the back and decided to put it to good use by making an old classic, the Sidecar. Whenever I drink one of these, I feel as if I should be wearing a sequined dress, sipping quietly at a booth in an old speakeasy. It's very Nick and Nora.

I can't take credit for the recipe, but here is the standard way to make one.

INGREDIENTS

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounces cognac

$\frac{3}{4}$ ounce Cointreau

$\frac{3}{4}$ ounce fresh lemon juice

Sugar (to garnish rim)

Orange twist (for glass garnish)

PREPARATION

Using a coupe glass, rub some lemon around the rim. Coat the rim of a coupe glass with sugar, and set aside. In a shaker, add the cognac, Cointreau and lemon juice. Add ice $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the shaker. Shake well until chilled. Strain and pour into coupe glass. Garnish with an orange twist.

CHICKEN WITH MUSHROOM & QUINOA

I think this might be my third or fourth recipe using chicken and mushrooms as the star, but it's one of the few combos that seem to please everyone in our house. This dish is super flavorful and the addition of quinoa makes you think that you're doing something good for yourself. I like it because I cook the quinoa in the same pot so that it absorbs the most flavor and leaves me with one less pot to clean!

INGREDIENTS (Serves 6)

2 Tablespoons French Onion Seasoning, or your favorite spice blend (I love the spices from [Gustus Vitae](#))

4 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

2 teaspoons honey

1 teaspoon mirin

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Kosher salt and black pepper

6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 2-inch pieces

1 large vidalia onion, thinly sliced

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound mushrooms, brushed clean and thinly sliced

1 cup quinoa

1 cup white wine

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy sauce

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup mushroom broth (or vegetable or chicken stock)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup parsley, chopped (for garnish)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated (for garnish)

PREPARATION

Season the chicken with the spice blend, then place in a Ziploc bag.

In a medium sized bowl, combine two tablespoons of the olive oil, the vinegar, mustard, honey, mirin, and cayenne pepper. Add salt and pepper to taste. Mix with a whisk and pour into the Ziploc bag. Seal bag after letting the air out. Massage the marinade around the chicken and place in the refrigerator overnight.

Then next day, remove the chicken from the refrigerator while you prepare the vegetables.

Heat a large dutch oven over medium high heat. Add two tablespoons of olive oil. When oil is hot, add the sliced onions and cook for 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for an additional 4 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Move the veggies to the side and place the chicken pieces and any remaining marinade on the empty side of the pot. Cook for three minutes, then turn the chicken over and cook for another three minutes. Combine the chicken and veggies together.

Add the quinoa, wine, soy sauce, and broth. Mix together.

Bring to a boil, then put down to a simmer for twenty minutes, stirring occasionally. .

Remove from the heat and let rest for five minutes to allow

quinoa to absorb any remaining liquid.

Serve in bowls and garnish with the parsley and cheese.

APPLE SAUCE WITH RAISINS

There's nothing like a brisk autumn day in the country picking apples. Of course, once you get home you have the same dilemma we all do—what the heck do we do with all of these apples? Here's a simple recipe that solves that problem.

It's perfect for spreading on toast or using as the filling for fritters. I mix it with cottage cheese for a quick breakfast.

INGREDIENTS

6 apples, cored, skinned and cubed into $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces

1/8 teaspoon cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

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

1 tablespoon lemon juice

zest of one lemon

PREPARATION

Combine all ingredients in a pot over medium heat. Cover the pot, but stir every few minutes. If it starts to boil, bring temperature to a simmer. The apples will reduce and get mushy. Cook until you get the consistency you like. I prefer mine a bit chunky, so it takes about 10-15 minutes.

If you like it smooth, continue to cook and use a potato masher to tamp down the apples.

It will keep in the refrigerator for about five days.

SHRIMP RISOTTO

Recently on a family trip I decided to make shrimp risotto for the gang. Unfortunately, after buying the shrimp, some of the other ingredients I normally use were nowhere to be found. So I improvised and it may actually be better than my original recipe. Give it a try!

INGREDIENTS (Serves 6)

FOR SAUTÉED SHRIMP

2.5 pounds cleaned medium sized shrimp (chop 1 cup into small pieces for the risotto, reserve remaining shrimp to sauté)

½ stick butter

1 tablespoon garlic, minced

salt and pepper to taste

FOR RISOTTO

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 shallot, diced

2 teaspoons garlic, minced

1 cup mushrooms, sliced

2 cups Arborio rice

2 cups seafood broth

1 1/2 cups white wine

2 cups clam juice

1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated for garnish

parsley, chopped for garnish

salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

In a medium sized pot, heat the seafood broth, white wine and clam juice together. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Once it has come to a boil, keep on simmer.

Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the shallot and sauté for two minutes. Add the garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Add the mushrooms and sauté for two minutes. Add the rice and sauté for one minute. Season with salt and pepper.

Begin to add the liquid to the mixture one soup ladle at a time. Slowly stir it into the rice and continue to add the liquid as the rice absorbs it. After 18 minutes add the chopped shrimp. After an additional two minutes add the Parmesan cheese and continue to stir until the risotto is al dente or a texture to your liking. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed. (Total cook time for rice is between 22 – 25 minutes).

In a large skillet, heat the butter and add the garlic. Lay out the shrimp evenly in the pan and season with salt and pepper. Once the bottom starts to turn pink, flip the shrimp over and continue to cook until the shrimp are cooked through, pink and firm.

To plate, ladle some of the risotto into a bowl. Place 6 – 8

shrimp on top, garnish with Parmesan and parsley.

Asian Style Ribs

Since I was a kid, I have always loved the ribs from Chinese restaurants. The tangy, sweet Char Siu sauce beats out every other barbecue sauce in my mind. After a lot of trial and error, I think I've come up with a recipe that comes close. The only thing I don't use is the red food coloring that is often found in authentic recipes—I'm just not into that. It's a great dish to cook on the grill for an end of summer party.



INGREDIENTS (serves 6-8)

2 racks baby back ribs

Chinese five spice powder

salt

2 ziploc bags

MARINADE

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup hoisin sauce

2 tablespoons duck sauce
1/3 cup rice wine vinegar
4 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 teaspoon Chinese five spice powder
1/2 teaspoon mustard powder
1 teaspoon fish sauce

GLAZE

1/4 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup hoisin sauce
2 tablespoons duck sauce
1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar
1/4 teaspoon Chinese five spice powder

GARNISH

3 teaspoons scallions, finely chopped
1 teaspoon green wasabi sesame seeds

PREPARATION

Remove the thin membrane from each rib rack. Generously season the ribs with salt and Chinese five spice powder.

In a bowl, combine all of the marinade ingredients. Cut the rib racks in half so that they can fit into a Ziploc. Put one 1/2-rack each into a Ziploc. Pour half of the marinade into one, half into the other. Close the bags tightly and massage the

ribs to make sure the marinade covers throughout. Place in fridge overnight.

When ready to grill, remove ribs from fridge 30 minutes before at room temperature.

Heat grill to medium heat. Place the ribs on the grill bone side down and cook for 2 hours on indirect heat.

In a bowl, combine all of the glaze ingredients. Split the glaze into two bowls, one for glazing and one for serving. Start brushing the ribs with the glaze during the last half-hour of cooktime. Keep an eye on them because the sugars in the glaze can burn easily. Glaze every ten minutes or so.

After two hours, test the ribs to see if they are at 185 degrees internal temperature. Once they are, remove from grill and allow to rest for ten minutes. While resting, in a small saucepan, bring the remainder of the glaze to a simmer. Set aside.

To serve, cut the racks into individual ribs and place on platter. Garnish with scallions and green wasabi sesame seeds. Serve with the remainder of the glaze on the side. I like to serve it with a nice [kohlrabi slaw](#).

Tomato and Cucumber Salad

Looking for what to do with all those delicious cherry tomatoes and cucumbers that all seemed to ripen at the same time? Are your herbs offering a particular big bounty this year? Try this garden salad and have the satisfaction of knowing you made it mostly from your own homegrown garden. It will never taste fresher.

INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

FOR SALAD

1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half

1 cucumber, skinned and diced into small cubes

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup red onion, very thinly sliced

FOR DRESSING

1 garlic clove, minced

3 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon fresh parsley, finely chopped

1 teaspoon fresh chives, finely chopped

1 teaspoon fresh oregano, finely chopped

zest of one lemon

salt and pepper

FOR GARNISH

4 ounces feta, crumbled

PREPARATION

In a medium sized bowl, combine the tomatoes, cucumber, and red onion. Gently toss.

In a jar, combine all of the dressing ingredients. Close jar and shake vigorously. Pour dressing on top of salad and gently toss. Garnish with feta cheese.

GRILLED STUFFED ARTICHOKE

One can only eat so much salad, so in the summer, I love to stuff and grill artichokes as a nice side dish alternative. It takes a little bit of prep, but it's well worth your time. It's great served with a nice dip like tzatziki or even some ranch dressing.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

2 artichokes

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup gorgonzola cheese, crumbled

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

3 tablespoons olive oil, plus some for brushing

salt and pepper

tzatziki or ranch dressing (optional)

PREPARATION

I like to trim the sharp points off of each of the artichoke leaves before I begin. It's optional, but this way no one will get pricked from the leaves. Just cut $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch from the bottom of each tip.

In a pot large enough to hold the artichokes, bring an inch of salted water up to a boil. Gently place the artichokes in and lower the heat to simmer. Cover pot and steam for 45 minutes.

Drain out the water and using tongs, gently place the artichokes on a cutting board. Allow them to cool for about ten minutes.

Cut the artichoke in half, lengthwise. Gently scoop out the fibrous elements in the middle being careful to leave the heart and most of the leaves in tact. It's okay if some of the center leaves get dislodged in the process. Just discard them.

In a small bowl, combine the cheese, panko, and olive oil. Mix with a small whisk and set aside. Brush the artichokes with olive oil on both sides. Season them with salt and pepper to taste.

Oil the grill grates. Heat the grill to medium-high. Place the artichoke halves cut side down on the grates and grill until you get grill marks, about two to three minutes.

Gently remove artichokes with tongs or a spatula and place on a cutting board, cut side up. Spoon the cheese/panko mixture into the center of each artichoke.

Gently place back on the grill, cut side up, to allow the cheese to melt—about 2-3 minutes.

Serve with tzatziki or ranch dressing on the side.

BBQ CHICKEN SALAD

Whenever we make a barbecue chicken, we like to use at least a five-pound bird on our rotisserie. If you're going to the trouble, you might as well have enough for leftovers. Here's a great idea for a quick next-day lunch.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 2)

2 cups of barbecued chicken, skin off, rough chop

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mayonnaise

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 tablespoon balsamic glaze

1 teaspoon hot sauce

salt and pepper to taste.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup celery, chopped

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup red onion, chopped

1 small roll, halved and toasted

PREPARATION

In a cuisinart, add the chicken and do a few quick pulses to chop the meat. Add in the mayo, olive oil, balsamic glaze, hot sauce, and salt & pepper. Continue to pulse until it's to a consistency you like. Taste, and adjust seasoning or mayo amount to your liking.

Add contents into a large bowl. Fold in the celery and red onion. Spoon out onto the roll halves. Serve alongside a fresh garden salad.