

Linguine Con Broccoli Aglio E Olio

Sometimes the simplest dishes can be the most satisfying. This is one of my go-to dishes when I need to get something on the table quickly. The aroma of the garlic always brings me right back to a wonderful lunch I once had in Venice.

(This recipe appears in my new book, *"GETTING SAUCED – How I Learned Everything I Know about Food from Working in TV."* For more stories and recipes, click here to purchase a copy – <https://bit.ly/gettingsauced>

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

1 lb linguini

1 large head of broccoli, cut into florets

3 tablespoons olive oil

6 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

In a large pot, bring 4 quarts of water and 2 tablespoons of salt to a boil. Cook pasta as per boxed instructions.

Add the broccoli florets to a lidded pot, or a vegetable steamer, filling the bottom quarter of the pot with water, and steam the florets for about 5 minutes until they are bright green.

In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute, or until fragrant. Stir in the red pepper flakes and cook for another minute. Add in the broccoli and cook for 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and set aside over low heat.

Drain the pasta, setting aside some of the pasta water, and add pasta to the sauté pan. Stir to combine the ingredients and, if dish looks too dry, add in 1/4 cup pasta water.

Pour out onto large serving platter and garnish with Parmesan cheese.

Tuna Noodle Casserole

No one really wants to admit that some of those 1970s semi-homemade dishes our busy moms fed us were actually tasty on occasion. In truth, there is some comfort to them, if you can just get past the guilt of opening cans, dumping the contents, and then heating. I have trouble with that, but in times of stress, I need this dish. So, here's my take on it, using fresh ingredients. You'll note that I have substituted edamame for peas. I hate peas.

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INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

1 stick butter, divided, and softened

1 pound elbow macaroni

$\frac{1}{2}$ medium onion, finely chopped

1 clove garlic, minced

1 cup sliced cremini mushrooms

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour

2 cups milk

Salt and pepper to taste

1 large can tuna, drained and flaked

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

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheddar cheese

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded Gruyere cheese

4 tablespoons breadcrumbs

PREPARATION

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Using 1 tablespoon of butter, grease a large Pyrex or ceramic baking dish.

Fill a large pot with salted water. Don't be shy; I use 2 tablespoons of salt. Bring to a boil on high heat. Cook the pasta as per boxed instructions until al dente. Drain and set aside. Do not rinse the pasta.

Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and sauté until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook for 1 minute. Add the mushrooms and cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms have softened. Remove from heat and set aside.

In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, melt 4 tablespoons butter. Whisk in the flour until smooth. Slowly whisk in the

milk, and cook 5 minutes, or until the sauce slightly thickens. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

With the saucepan on low heat, add the tuna, edamame, the mushroom mixture, the cooked pasta, and the cheddar and Gruyere cheeses, and stir to combine just until the cheese begins to melt. Pour into the buttered baking dish.

In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs with the remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter and mix well. Sprinkle evenly on top.

Bake 25 minutes, or until the breadcrumbs are lightly browned. Let the casserole sit at room temperature for a few minutes before serving.

Air-Fried Bay Scallops With Mango Salsa and Sautéed Asparagus

I recently retired my beloved Magic Chef after 30 years of good use and replaced it with a [GE Cafe range](#). Surprisingly, it came with an air fryer built in, which I rarely use. But, today I thought I'd fire it up. The bay scallops came out very tender with a nice crunch. Give it a whirl.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 2)

FOR THE FISH

1 pound bay scallops

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

2 egg, beaten

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

3 teaspoons [KK's Exotic Spice Blend](#) (or your favorite spice rub)

spray oil

FOR THE ASPARAGUS

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 shallot, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

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

10 asparagus spears, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces

Salt and pepper to taste

White and black sesame seeds for garnish

FOR THE MANGO SALSA

12 cherry tomatoes, quartered

$\frac{1}{2}$ mango, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes

1 scallion, chopped into small rings

$\frac{1}{2}$ orange, zested, then juiced

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon honey

salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

Preheat air fryer to 400 degrees. Season scallops with salt

and pepper.

Place the flour, eggs and panko in separate bowls for dredging. Add one teaspoon of the spice mixture to each of the bowls and combine each separately.

Place $\frac{1}{2}$ of the scallops in the flour to cover, shaking off any excess. Place scallops in eggs and using a slotted spoon, turn them until covered. Use the spoon to scoop them up, letting the excess egg drip off first, and then place in panko. Make sure all are covered and shake off any excess. Place scallops on parchment lined baking sheet, making sure they are separated enough so they aren't touching each other. Repeat process with the other half of the scallops.

Using a spray oil, spritz the scallops with oil, then place them in the air fryer at 400 degrees for 10-12 minutes.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a skillet. Sauté shallot for about two minutes. Add garlic and sauté until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add asparagus and sauté for about 4 minutes. They should be bright green and not too mushy. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish with sesame seeds.

Combine all of the salsa ingredients in a small pan and heat over a low flame, just to warm up, about two minutes.

To plate, using a round 4" cookie cutter, fill the cookie cutter first with the asparagus mixture, then the scallops next to that and finally the salsa, creating three separate circles of food. It's a fun way to present the dish and it's perfect for those picky eaters that don't like the different foods touching each other.

Spatchcock Chicken

If you're like me, whenever I roast a whole chicken, either the white meat is overdone or the dark meat is underdone. It's difficult to get it all right at the same time. That is, unless you spatchcock your bird. Spatchcocking gives you a fighting chance because you're literally flattening your bird allowing all of the pieces to cook evenly. It's a great dish for welcoming the summer this Memorial Day and a lot easier to do than you think.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 4-6)

4-5 pound whole chicken

BRINE

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup kosher salt

1 orange, juiced

2 chipotle peppers

3 quarts water

CITRUS BUTTER

1 orange, zested and juiced

1 stick unsalted butter

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey or apricot jam

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

1 Tablespoon rosemary, finely chopped

salt and pepper to taste

VEGETABLES

1 pound small potatoes, cut in half

1 large carrot, sliced $\frac{1}{2}$ "

1 onion sliced

olive oil

salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

In a large pot, combine all of the brine ingredients. Bring up to a boil, then down to a simmer for 10 minutes. Allow to cool.

To spatchcock the bird, place the bird on a cutting board breast side down with the legs facing you. Make cuts along both sides of the backbone, removing it from the bird. Save the discarded piece for stock. Flip the bird over and press down on the breastbone until you hear it crack and the chicken flattens. I learned this from watching this YouTube video—gotta love the BBC. It's much easier than it looks.

Place the chicken in a large Ziploc bag and add the cooled brine. Place in refrigerator over night.

The next day, preheat your grill to 400.

In a large bowl, combine the vegetables. Drizzle with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Place in aluminum foil and seal.

Remove the chicken from the brine and pat it dry. Season both sides with salt and pepper or your favorite spice rub.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter. Take off heat and add the orange juice and zest, the honey or jam, cayenne, rosemary and salt and pepper. Whisk to combine.

Place the vegetable pouch on the grill. Brush both sides of the chicken with half of the butter mixture. Place on the grill breast side up for 20 minutes. Lower the temperature to 375 and continue to baste every 15 minutes. You want internal temperature to be 165 for white meat, 170-175 for dark. Total cook time will be between 75 minutes and two-hours depending upon size of the bird. (Average cooktime – 15 minutes per pound). Start checking with a thermometer after 75 minutes.

When the chicken is to temperature, remove from grill. Place chicken on cutting board and cover with aluminum foil. Allow it to rest for ten minutes.

Take the vegetables out of the pouch and place them on a grill pan. Cook on direct heat for 5 – 7 minutes to add a bit of char, but don't overburn.

Remove vegetables from grill and place them on the bottom of a large platter.

To serve, cut the legs and wings off the chicken, slice the breast and place neatly on top of the vegetables.

ALEX'S MAC & CHEESE

In previous blog posts, I've mentioned how delighted I am that the next generation in our family is getting comfortable behind the stove. My young cousin Alex is a man of particular tastes, but when he finds something he loves, he likes to master it. He's always been a big fan of pasta and cheese and it was only a matter of time before he found his perfect Mac and cheese recipe. I loved watching him make this dish and hearing his preferences on texture, cheese types and what definitely should not be included.

This is the perfect type of dish that can be improvised based on your own preferences. If you're a blue cheese nut, then go for it. If you're more of a pulled pork kind of person, then throw that in too. This dish is so evil, you might as well go for broke.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 8)

1 head of garlic ($\frac{1}{2}$ to use with this dish, $\frac{1}{2}$ to reserve for other dishes)

3 tablespoons olive oil

4 tablespoons of butter

4 tablespoons of flour

2 cups of milk

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

$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

6 strips bacon or turkey bacon

1 cup grated parmesan cheese (large grate)

2 cups grated cheddar cheese

2 cups grated gruyere

1 lb Cavatappi pasta or elbow macaroni

2 tablespoons chopped chives for garnish

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place the head of garlic on its side and cut it in half. Place both halves on aluminum foil and pour olive oil over the cloves. Seal the foil around the garlic and place on baking

sheet. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes. Allow to cool and squeeze out garlic cloves. Chop the garlic and set half aside for other uses.

In a medium sized pot, melt the butter on medium heat. Add the flour and combine until it is a blond roux. Slowly add the milk, a bit at a time, and whisk together. Bring to a low boil until it thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon, (about 10 minutes). Add the salt, pepper and half the garlic. Taste to see if more spices are needed. Don't over salt because cheese has a lot of salt on its own.

Cook the pasta as per boxed instructions. When al dente, strain out the water and set pasta aside.

Turn down the heat under the milk mixture and keep on a simmer. Add the Gruyère and cheddar and stir until melted. Add the bacon and pasta and stir. Add Parmesan cheese right before serving. Garnish with chives.

If you are like my cousin Alex and enjoy a creamier, cheesier texture, then your Mac and cheese is ready to eat. But if you prefer a nice crust on top or if you think there might be leftovers, then place the mixture in a 9 x 12 buttered pyrex dish and place in the oven to bake for ten to twenty minutes, depending upon how crispy you like your Mac and cheese.

CHICKEN VINDALOO

For years I've been trying to make a good curry from scratch. I buy all of the spices to create flavored pastes, but there's always something missing. Although my dishes are tasty, they are nowhere near as flavorful as what I've eaten in Indian restaurants. But thanks to my favorite spice store—[Kalustyan's](#)

on Lexington Avenue in NYC—they've done the hard work for me. I'm not a big proponent of semi-homemade dishes, but in this case, getting a little help is so worth it. They carry a line of different curry sauces that really add some zing to a dish. It also cuts the prep time down so much that you can make this dish in less than an hour.



INGREDIENTS

4 tablespoons olive oil or ghee

6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1" cubes

1 onion, sliced

1 red pepper, chopped into $\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes

3 cloves of garlic, minced

1" knob of ginger, minced

2 teaspoons of salt

1 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

1 ½ cups basmati rice

1-13.5 oz can coconut milk

1-12 oz jar of [Kalustyan's Vindaloo Spicy Curry](#)

PREPARATION

Heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil or ghee in a large dutch oven. Add the chicken and brown for four minutes, flipping the chicken pieces over half way through. Remove from pot and set aside.

Add 1 tablespoon of olive, the onion and red pepper and sauté for 6-8 minutes or until onion is translucent and beginning to brown. Add the garlic and ginger and sauté until fragrant, about one minute. Season with salt and pepper.

Using a strainer, rinse the rice until the water runs clear. Shake the strainer to remove any excess water. Add the rice to the pot and stir until integrated.

Add the coconut milk and Vindaloo Spicy curry. Stir well. Add the chicken and stir. Bring up to a boil, then down to simmer. Cover the pot and cook for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and let rest for 10 minutes.

Serve in bowls.

TEQUILA SURPRISE

In honor of Cinco de Mayo, it's time to break out the tequila—my go-to liquor of choice for this and most other occasions. But rather than making an ordinary margarita—which

I find way too sweet—I've come up with a variation that has a nice balance and a nice kick. I use pepper infused simple syrup to zip things up. Put on your brightest colors, grab a to-go cup and enjoy!

INGREDIENTS

2 oz Tequila

1/2 oz Cointreau

1/2 oz hot pepper syrup

1/4 english cucumber, very thinly sliced

1/2 lime, juiced

Ice

PREPARATION

Pour the tequila and half of the cucumbers into a shaker. Muddle the cucumber. Add the Cointreau, hot pepper syrup, lime juice and ice. Shake vigorously.

Wet a martini glass and shake out the excess water. Arrange six of the cucumber slices against the glass like polka dots. Pour in the contents of the shaker trying not to dislodge the cucumbers, but don't worry if they slip into the drink. Add four cubes of ice to the glass. Garnish with one slice of cucumber.

WHAT'S UP DUCK?

Okay, so I wanted to have a nice recipe ready to post for this week's "Feed Me Fridays." I had high hopes for this one

considering I bought a beautiful duck breast from my local Greenmarket. I wanted to do an Asian spin on Duck à l'orange, so I worked out a nice marinade. Now all I had to do was cook it. Well—things didn't go quite as expected.

I couldn't remember the best technique so I scoured the “interweb” and came upon one that sounded sensible to me. It required scoring the fat, then searing both sides in a pan first and cooking the rest to temperature in the oven. 135 is supposedly medium rare, so I aimed for that.

I did everything as suggested, but after ten minutes in the oven as required, the internal temperature was nowhere near 135. So back inside the duck went. Eventually, doubling the time in the oven, the breast finally came to temperature.

I rested it and then began to slice it. My heart sank. I wasn't slicing into a duck breast, I was slicing into a leather shoe. I had way overcooked it. Not only was the technique flawed, but I had made things worse by not believing the timing. It was an epic fail and I don't think I deserve points for trying on this one. I attempted to make it look pretty on the plate, but as soon as we took a bite, there was a lot of heavy chewing going on.

The next day, I did a better job of scouring the internet and cross-referenced a few recipes for how to cook a duck breast. It seems there are a few varied options, none of which I actually accomplished. But I'll give it a go again someday.

One note — the next day I sliced the leftover meat paper thin, put small pieces on crackers and topped them with some Brie. Into the microwave for 15 seconds and I had a very nice hors d'oeuvre. By slicing the meat so thin, I was able to distract people from having to chew so vigorously. As I always say, why waste?

BRIAN'S DUTCH BABY PANCAKE

For years on our annual family ski trips, all the adults have shared the cooking chores as the next generation did their part to devour everything in sight. But as time has marched on, the day has finally come when that generation has stepped up to the stove.

My young cousin Brian—who has always been an enthusiastic eater—has perfected this no fuss Dutch Baby Pancake recipe. I admire his practicality of messing up only one pan by just placing all the ingredients directly into the baking dish and mixing it all together. His philosophy—why dirty an extra bowl if you don't have to?

He's also adaptive. We were staying at a rental house and the closest thing to a baking dish was an old style roasting pan. Now, I don't know if it was the oval shape or what, but the pancake did rise in a most unusual pattern. We all agreed it resembled the Rocky Mountains that surrounded us and it was meant to be. It certainly didn't affect the flavor—the dish was delicious and gone within minutes.



INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

4 tablespoons butter, melted

6 eggs

1 cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cup flour

1 dash salt

zest of one lemon

Confectioners sugar (for garnish)

Lemon juice (for garnish)

Maple syrup (for garnish)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Using a 9 x 12" baking dish, place the butter in the pan and melt it in the oven. This is not only a critical ingredient, but it will also serve as a way to grease your pan too. Once melted, remove from oven and allow to cool for a few minutes. Add a small amount of milk and stir to make sure butter has cooled down. Add the remaining milk, eggs and vanilla and combine.

Add flour, salt and lemon zest. Mix until all ingredients are combined and there are no lumps.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until it's fluffy and edges are golden brown and curling over.

To serve, cut into pieces and sprinkle with confectioners sugar, a few drops of lemon juice, and as much maple syrup as desired.

EASY DIM SUM

Try as I might, I'm all thumbs when it comes to shaping dim sum. Even though it tastes pretty good, it NEVER looks as good as it does in the restaurant. But I found this nifty inexpensive [press](#) that makes me look like a pro. All you have to do is place a wonton wrapper over the gizmo, put a tablespoon of filling in the middle, then just close and crimp to seal in the filling. After steaming them, I like to pan fry them to get a nice crispy bottom.



INGREDIENTS (Makes approx. three dozen pieces)

1 package dumpling wrappers

1 lb ground pork

1 large bunch Chinese chives chopped

1 teaspoon garlic, minced

1 teaspoon ginger, grated

1 tablespoon oyster sauce

2 tablespoons light soy sauce

1 teaspoon sesame oil

1 teaspoon sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon white pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon five spice powder

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

3 tablespoons canola oil

PREPARATION

Place pork in a bowl with your chopped chives, garlic, and ginger. Season with oyster sauce, soy sauce, sesame oil, sugar, white pepper, five spice powder, and salt.

With your hands, mix until the ingredients are thoroughly incorporated.

Place a dumpling wrapper centered on the dim sum press. Place 1 tablespoon of filling in the center of your dumpling wrapper. Wet the edges with water, then using the dim sum press, crimp together one end to the other.

Place a bamboo steamer basket in a wok. Fill the wok with water up to the bottom of the basket. Bring the water up to a simmer. Place the dumplings inside the steamer. Don't crowd them and don't allow them to touch. Cover and allow to steam for ten minutes.

Heat a large skillet with canola oil. Remove the dumplings from the steamer and place in the skillet. Pan fry each side for 1-2 minutes.