

# BEET SALAD WITH GOAT CHEESE DRESSING

I've never been a huge fan of beets, but I seem to be able to tolerate them if they are dressed up with a bunch of other tasty ingredients. I do like the color they add to a dish and from a nutritional standpoint, they are a very respectable vegetable. Paired with goat cheese, beets can be down right delicious—even for non-aficionados.

## DRESSING INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup crumbled goat cheese (feta is a good substitute)

2 tbsp red wine vinegar (balsamic glaze is a good substitute)

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1/2 tbsp Dijon mustard

1 clove garlic, grated or minced

1 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped

1 tbsp fresh chives, finely chopped

1/2 tsp Kosher salt

Pinch of fresh ground pepper

1/4 cup cold water

## SALAD INGREDIENTS

2 beets (cooked, and sliced  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick)\*

Salad greens

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup crumbled goat cheese

1 dozen cherry tomatoes, sliced in half lengthwise

salt and pepper

## **PREPARATION**

Cut off ends and stems of beets. Rinse to clean off any dirt. Place beets in medium size pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, then turn down heat to simmer and cover for 45 to 60 minutes until fork tender. Drain out water and let cool for twenty minutes. (\*NOTE: You might want to use disposable gloves for this next step so that the dye from the beet doesn't stain your hands.)

Once cooled, the skins should easily peel off in your hands. Slice beets into rings and set aside.

In a medium size bowl, whisk 1/3 cup crumbled goat cheese, balsamic glaze, olive oil, mustard, garlic, dill, chives, salt, and pepper together until creamy.

Slowly pour in the water and continue to whisk until it is the consistency of a creamy salad dressing. You may need more or less of the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water to get to a consistency you like. (Note: Dressing will only keep for a few days in the refrigerator because it has no preservatives.)

In a large salad bowl, lay out salad greens and lightly season with salt and pepper. Lay sliced beets and cherry tomatoes on top of greens. Sprinkle the remainder of the goat cheese on top. Pour dressing over salad and serve.

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# **LIONS AND RHINOS AND SCARES,**

# OH MY!

I've never been much of an animal lover. I was chased by a Great Dane as a kid and he almost bit me as my bell bottoms flapped in the wind, nearly getting caught in the spokes of my bike as I lifted my feet from its hungry mouth. I still have a fear of dogs to this day. Anytime I'm near a cat, my gums numb and my hands swell from an intense allergy. I tried having tropical fish for a while until my brother scooped my favorite one out of the tank just to watch it flop around on the floor. So, it was surprising to many that one of my bucket list travel experiences was to go on safari.

Fortunately my husband was game to see some game, so we chose South Africa as our destination, not knowing much about the nuances and differences in safari experiences. As it turns out, South Africa is home to the big five— lion, elephant, leopard, buffalo and rhino. But if you want to see gorillas, you have to go to Uganda or Rwanda or Congo. Like life, you just can't have everything in one place at one time.



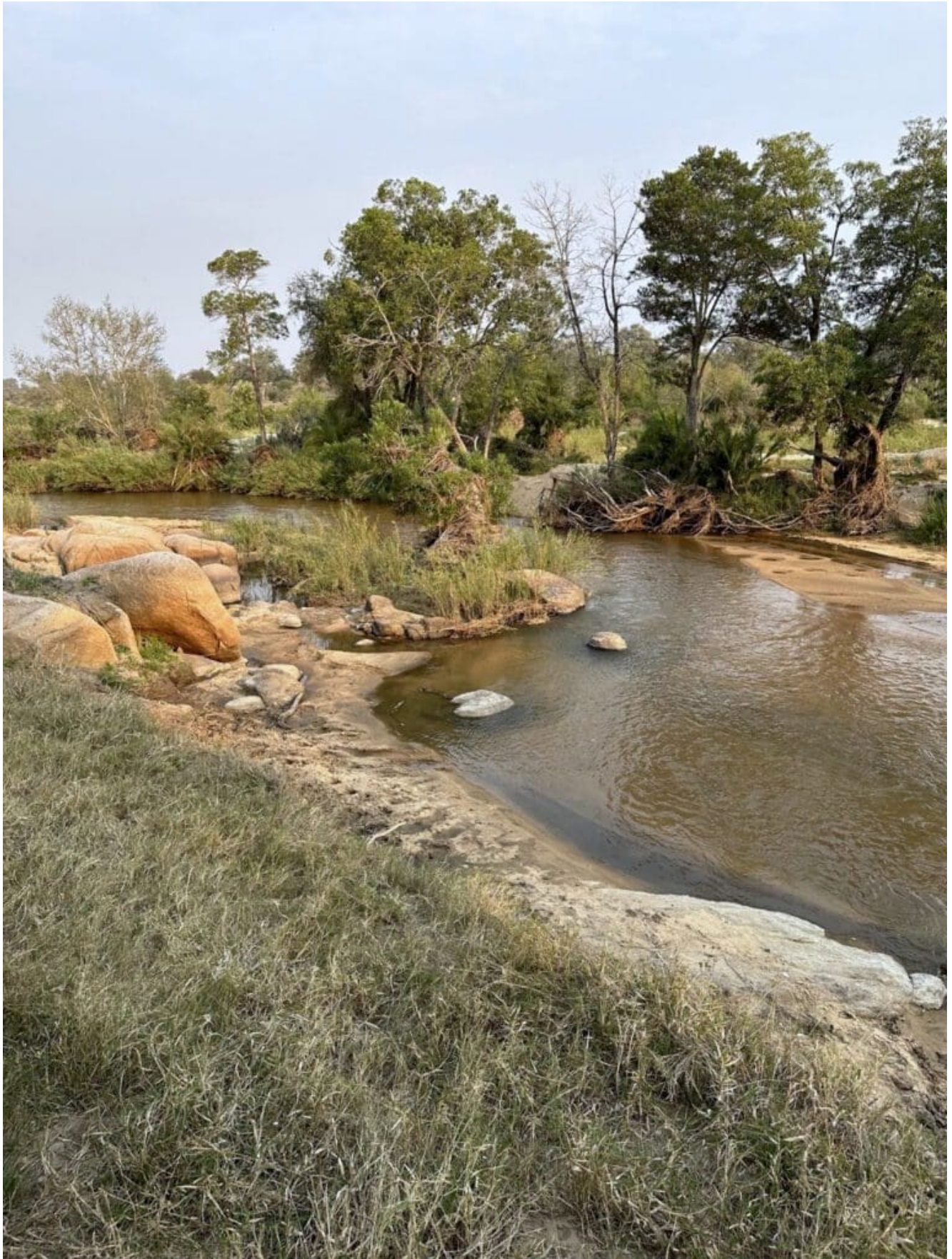
Arriving in a tiny airport near Kruger National Park, we made the two hour trip to our campsite, surprised to find elephants within meters of the road. We didn't expect to see them so soon, but this is their territory and who am I to tell them where and where not to roam?





The Mala-Mala Camp sits just outside the border of Kruger with its own land to explore. I really shouldn't call it a campsite—it's a total "glampsite." Huge round huts made of clay and straw encase an unexpected interior of luxury with well-appointed furniture, art, and floor to ceiling windows. It's completely incongruous with the surroundings, but what can I say? You can't take the city out of the girl. I knew if I was going into the bush, I didn't want to have to "go in the bush," if you know what I mean. No sleeping out in Boy Scout tents just waiting for a monkey to come steal my cosmetics case for this girl. I'm not opposed to roughing it, but given the option, I'll go for comfort. I don't need bragging rights about how I slept on a hard dirt floor just to be one with nature. I'm okay with just being nature adjacent.





We were instructed to rise and be ready each morning by 6:00 for our morning excursion. Fortunately the FOMO was greater than our desire to sleep, so we grumbled our way into the open air Land Rover. It's winter here and the land is dry and



brittle, stretching out into one big brown vista. We're told it's a better time of year to see the animals. Come summer and the rainy season, the grass is so high, it's hard to spot them. But the Jewish mother in me wonders how the animals can feed themselves with so little greenery and the rivers almost dry? I'm assured there's still enough for them to feed themselves, so I try not to worry, but you can imagine how that goes.



Over the next few days, we come upon herds of elephants, some with newborns in tow. One little guy is so brand new his ears are still matted to his head, only fanning out occasionally when he walks. He stumbles around, not knowing quite what to do with his trunk and we all let out a collective “awwww’” at his antics. It's like watching a Disney movie of a baby elephant who accidentally drinks too much hooch.



A few moments later, down a hill that opens into a huge field, we encounter a herd of at least 100 Cape buffaloes. They all stare at us as if we're playing a game of chicken. And then they surround us. This is starting to get a bit too close for comfort. Our driver then turns the engine off and the buffaloes lose interest and walk right past us.





Right around sunset, a male lion meanders down the road in front of us and plops himself down for a rest. He barely acknowledges our presence. With his big mane surrounding his face, he looks just like the MGM lion. Although as far as I'm



concerned, there's no need for him to start roaring. Watching him yawn is much more reassuring.



We follow a leopard as she walks over to a stream to quench her thirst and then rests up on a hill. What a gorgeous creature with its regal brown and black spots.





Lounging in a field, we spy some adorable lion cubs snuggling up to their mom, annoying her as they nurse. It seems that we could easily just get out of the Rover and pet them, but our guide tells us we'd only get to do that once before being mauled to death. Noted.



Unbothered by our arrival, some rhinos cause us to pause as they walk in front of our vehicle making it clear they'll take their time. All of them are tuskless to prevent poaching. The conservationists remove their tusks for their own protection. Imagine what that job must be like.





There are so many impala walking around that it doesn't take long before we simply pass them all by having exhausted ourselves shooting their pictures. What's so astonishing is how close we are to all of them, often within meters. They are so used to these huge non-threatening vehicles that they seem to say, "Ok lady, shoot your damn picture and just move on. Can't you see I'm trying to get some sleep here?"





It takes a day or so before we see our first giraffe. Their heads towering above the trees, they become fairly easy to spot after a while. Some are huge – almost 20 feet tall, maybe more. As they nosh on the leaves of their favorite trees, they



take a beat to look me straight in the eye as if to say, “You want some of this? You’ll have to climb up here to get it.”



But as the days pass, I start losing hope of seeing some zebras. I mention it to our guide Bens—short for Benson—who tells me they can be a bit shy when they see the 9-seaters around. But within an hour of talking about it, there they are in all their splendor—three beautiful zebras out in an open field. They are so beautiful with their black and white stripes and multi-colored manes getting blown out by the air as if they were sitting in a high-fashion salon. I don’t know why I have such a fascination with them, but watching them prance around I’m almost hypnotized as their stripes practically animate.



By the end of the week we did indeed see all of the Big Five and then some. Even on our last day, we waited patiently for a hippo to surface from the water just in time for me to snap a shot of him yawning. It was very kind of him to hold the pose for me.

It's ironic how I am terrified by the bark of a neurotic domesticated dog, but I feel totally safe watching a lion and his brother devour the carcass of a dead baby hippo. Maybe I just need to get out in the wild more often. It's so much more civilized there.

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## THE BEST LAID PLANS

Now that I'm getting to a certain age, I've started a bucket list of all the places I'd like to explore and visit while



I've still got the energy and adventurous spirit to enjoy them. The idea is to do the hard trips first because you never know what type of monkey wrench life can throw. First up—safari. I've planned a trip for my hubby, Dan, and me to South Africa, and we'll ease into it with a food and wine crawl from Cape Town to Franschhoek in the heart of wine country before heading deep into the bush in search of the big five.

Cape Town is a city known for its innovative food. I spent weeks researching all the hot new spots and managed to eke out a few hard-to-get reservations. One restaurant, FYN—voted one of the top 50 restaurants in the world in 2022—has an eight-course tasting menu where every course looks like a piece of art and I'm hoping tastes equally exquisite. It's a fusion of Japanese and African cuisines, so I'm sure there will be some incredibly inventive dishes. After a few days of sampling what Cape Town has to offer, we'll head up to wine country, where it's going to be hard to go wrong as we sip and nosh our way through the region.

On our first full day in Cape Town, we discover an upscale Indian restaurant in a trendy neighborhood off Kloof Street, called Thali. It's a cozy spot with a welcoming open kitchen. Aromatic spices like cumin and cardamom permeate the room. Course after course, it is hands down one of the best Indian meals I've ever had. Actually, no need to qualify that; it's one of THE best meals I've ever eaten. Masala Duck Tacos and Lamb Galouti Kebabs served with naan fresh from the oven are just a few of the many delectable dishes placed in front of us. Each is balanced perfectly—no one spice overwhelming another. We can't stop eating even though there is enough to feed twice as many people.



And then later that night, the glutton gods paid a visit and forced me to pay for my sins with a vengeance. Not to be too graphic, but everything that went in, decided to come out—from

both ends. I'm fairly certain it was not food poisoning. I think I caught a bug from that pill of a woman sitting next to me on the eleven-hour flight over. She looked like I feel now.

I can't sleep the entire night and the thought of ever eating again is nauseating. The only thing I can keep down over the next 24 hours is a half piece of toast with apricot jam. I force myself to rally and stick to our plans. My cousin Grayson is working and living in Cape Town and he's going to be our personal tour guide. I warn him that wherever we go, we need to be within a three-mile radius of a bathroom.





Although delicate, I am able to walk down to see a colony of penguins hanging out on the beach. I've always loved penguins and it's hard to believe that they live within thirty minutes of a major city. And they don't disappoint as they waddle

about chit chatting with each other.



We head over to “Fish on the Rocks,” THE place for fish and chips—at least according to Phil Rosenthal. The smell of fried food is so overwhelming, I force Grayson and Dan to sit at a separate table, preferably downwind from me. I place my head down on the table and wait as they munch on some fried calamari. I start to believe I will never have an interest in food again.

That night, I reluctantly cancel our dinner reservation at Fyn in favor of another piece of toast with a Pepto Bismol chaser. I’m starting to feel a bit better. At least I can extend the bathroom radius to ten miles now. In wine country, I spend the next few days tasting and then spitting, not being able to swallow anything for fear of a relapse.





Our next stop is a working farm with a serious commitment to sustainability, Babylonstoren. When we arrive there, the receptionist takes one look at me—my complexion still a light tinge of green—and conjures up a cure made of medicinal herbs from their garden. He makes me a brew of marigold leaves, rosemary and mint. The first few sips make me wonder if this is going to have the opposite effect and make me feel worse, but after about thirty minutes, I feel surprisingly better. I think he may have cured me.





I'm hopeful I can start to enjoy myself a bit more. It would be a shame to have to hold back because they use everything they grow on the farm for their restaurant, giving the term farm-to-table a literal emphasis. Just walking about the



grounds there are beautifully maintained orchards and vineyards and gardens that go on for acres to explore. You can learn to bake bread here or have a private wine tasting or see how they process their olives into oil. They've refurbished a few of the workers rooms into lovely suites for guests and there's a spa to help ease the tensions of your stressful life. They take pride in everything from the fresh pressed juices on the breakfast buffet to the Mary Poppins-esque fruit lady who stops by your table with a full basket of citrus to offer up an evening cleanse of tangerine or kumquat.

I'm finally able to start eating whole food again, but not with my usual gusto. In the end, it takes over ten days to feel "normal," and by then we are wandering among the beasts in the bush. After coming up close and personal with so many exquisite animals, it makes me start thinking I should become a vegetarian. After all, vegetables are so much easier to digest.

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## **PANKO CRUSTED STUFFED SQUASH BLOSSOMS**

Towards the end of each summer, I race to the greenmarket in time to beat the crowds before all the squash blossoms are gone for the season. These delicate zucchini flowers are great for stuffing and frying. But you have to handle them ever so gingerly. It's way too easy to get a split in a leaf that will cause your stuffing to ooze out—and not in a good way. To clean them, I gently blow them open, carefully remove the stamen and then lightly shake them to remove any dirt.

### **INGREDIENTS**

1 cup ricotta  
1 tablespoon fresh chopped chives  
1 tablespoon fresh chopped basil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon garlic powder  
salt and pepper to taste  
zest of one lemon  
1 dozen squash blossoms  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour  
2 eggs, beaten  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup panko  
canola oil for frying

### **PREPARATION**

Combine the ricotta, chives, basil, garlic powder, salt, pepper and lemon zest in a bowl. Using a Ziploc bag, spoon the mixture inside, pushing it all down into one bottom corner. Twist the bag (as if it were a pastry bag), and cut off the corner with a scissor, about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " opening.

Gently squeeze out about one to two tablespoons of the ricotta mixture into each squash blossom. This is where things can go very wrong. If you over stuff them, the sides will split, so be careful. Lightly twist the top petals to close. (*NOTE: if any do split, fry those last—why waste? The cheese mixture will ooze out into the oil and make a bit of a mess, but they still taste good even if they don't look that good.*)

In separate bowls, lay out the flour, egg, and panko. Season each with salt and pepper. Dip each blossom first into the flour, then the egg, then the panko, gently rolling them to



cover.

Pour about 2" of oil into a medium sized pot. (The oil should not fill more than half the pot). Heat the oil to 350 degrees. Gently place the squash blossoms into the oil. Do not over crowd. You may have to do this in a few batches depending upon the size of your pot.

Fry for about two to three minutes until panko has browned, turning each once midway. Drain onto paper towels and lightly season with salt.

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## EASY STUFFED POTATOES

If you've had a bad day and need a little comfort food, it's hard to go wrong with these stuffed potatoes. You can fool yourself into thinking how all the wonderful nutrients from the potatoes are helping your heart and blood pressure, while ignoring all the evils from the bacon, sour cream and cheese. Given the opportunity, you can rationalize anything.

### INGREDIENTS

4 Russet or Idaho potatoes

4 slices bacon

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sour cream, plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup for serving

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

2 tablespoons of butter

salt and pepper to taste

1 cup shredded gruyere (or cheese of your choice)

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup parmesan cheese

chives, chopped for garnish

### **PREPARATION**

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

Rinse the potatoes to remove any dirt, then dry. Poke holes around potatoes with a fork. Place on baking sheet and bake for one-hour.

Meanwhile, in a skillet render the bacon. Remove when crisp and drain on paper towels. When cool, crumble and set aside.

Remove potatoes from oven and let cool for ten minutes. Slice potatoes in half lengthwise. Carefully remove the flesh of the potato without damaging the skins. Place skins back on baking sheet.

In a large bowl, combine the potato flesh,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the bacon,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sour cream, yogurt, butter, and gruyere cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Gently mash to combine.

Spoon the mixture evenly into the potato skins.

Place back in the oven for fifteen minutes.

Using the remaining sour cream, place a dollop on each potato. Garnish with the remainder of bacon, parmesan cheese, and chives.

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## **ASIAN DUCK SOUP**

About once a year, my friends and I head down to Chinatown for a Peking Duck feast. There's a great restaurant – Hwa Yuan



Szechuan on East Broadway – that serves this classic dish tableside. After the waiter slices every last possible bit of meat off of the carcass, I ask him to wrap up the bones and leftovers for this amazing broth. I'm always a bit embarrassed to ask, but I forget about all of that once I sit down to eat this yummy soup.

**INGREDIENTS** (serves 8)

**FOR BROTH**

2 small cinnamon sticks

5 star anise

6 cloves

10 whole coriander seeds

10 whole peppercorns

1 duck carcass, preferably with neck

2 turkey necks

4 quarts tap water

1 onion, coarsely chopped

1 large carrot, coarsely chopped

2 ribs celery, coarsely chopped

3 garlic cloves smashed with a knife

1 inch knob of ginger, smashed with a knife

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon mirin

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

1 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

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

#### **FOUR SOUP**

1 tablespoon canola oil

1 onion, sliced

4 baby bok choy, rough chop

6 dried Chinese mushrooms, rehydrated and sliced

2 cups of cooked duck meat, cubed (chicken or turkey can be substituted)

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tablespoon mirin

10 cups of duck broth

1 pound of rice vermicelli or other rice noodles

Bean sprouts, for garnish

Scallions, sliced for garnish

Fried onions, sliced for garnish



**PREPARATION**

**FOR BROTH**



Combine cinnamon stick, star anise, cloves, coriander seed and peppercorns into a tied sachet. Set aside.

Place duck carcass and turkey necks into a large stock pot or dutch oven. Add in water, cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and crack lid to allow evaporation. Every two hours, replenish water that has evaporated, bring back to boil, then down to simmer. The total simmer time should be 8 hours.

At the end of 8 hours, add the spice sachet, onion, carrot, celery, garlic, ginger, soy sauce, mirin, salt, pepper and chili flakes. Bring back to boil, then down to simmer for a final 90 minutes.

Turn off heat, remove spice sachet, and allow to cool on stove. Refrigerate over night.

In the morning, the liquid may have congealed due to the bone collagen. Just reheat enough to liquefy again, about five minutes. Using another large pot, pour liquid through a chinois or sieve. Discard vegetables and other solids. Refrigerate until you're ready to make soup, or freeze for up to two months.

## **FOR SOUP**

Place dried mushrooms into a bowl of warm water and rehydrate for 25 minutes. Drain water, slice mushrooms, and set aside.

In a separate large pot, heat canola oil over medium-high heat. Add in onion and sauté until it becomes translucent and begins to caramelize, about 6-8 minutes.

Add in duck meat, bok choy, sliced mushrooms and sauté for one minute. Add in soy sauce and mirin. Add in duck broth and bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer for 30 minutes.

In a separate pot, cook noodles as per package suggestion. (I keep noodles separate from broth until serving.)

Divide noodles into soup bowls, cover with soup. Garnish with scallions, fried onions, and bean sprouts.

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## STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Stuffed mushrooms are an old classic that never goes out of style. Why have they stood the test of time? Could it be the bacon or garlic or Parmesan that gets stuffed inside each cap? Personally, they had me at bacon.

I like serving these on a platter during a martini-fueled cocktail hour or placing three on a plate as a first course in a dinner party. But there's nothing stopping you from popping them into your mouth right off the baking tray. I promise, I won't tell.

### INGREDIENTS

2 slices bacon

1 shallot, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

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

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

Salt & Pepper to taste

Olive Oil

1 dozen cremini mushrooms

2 tablespoons chopped chives

Truffle oil or truffle salt for garnish (optional)



## **PREPARATION**

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a medium sized skillet, render the bacon until crispy. Remove bacon, then crumble when cool and set aside.

Sauté the shallot and garlic in the bacon drippings until translucent. With a slotted spoon, remove the shallot and garlic mixture and set aside.

In a medium sized bowl, combine the bacon, shallot and garlic mixture, panko, and cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle with two tablespoons of olive oil and gently mix all to combine.

Clean mushrooms with a brush and remove the stems. Place the mushrooms on a baking sheet and stuff each one with a tablespoon of the mixture. Lightly drizzle olive oil on top. Bake until the tops are golden brown, about 15 minutes.

Remove from oven and allow to cool for a few minutes. Garnish with chives.

*(For an extra burst of flavor, sprinkle on a few crystals of truffle salt or one drop of truffle oil on each mushroom just before serving.)*

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# **SALMON STEAK WITH GARDEN FRESH RELISH**

Every summer we plant lots of cherry tomatoes on our deck. Of course, they all become ripe around the same time, so I'm always looking for new things to do with them. This simple

relish is great on top of almost any fish. I like serving it on top of salmon steaks because the acidity cuts the natural fat from the fish. Just watch out for bones! Salmon steaks can be very boney.

### **INGREDIENTS** (serves 2)

2 Salmon Steaks

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup Japanese barbecue sauce (or Soy Sauce)

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup maple syrup

12 cherry tomatoes, quartered

2 basil leaves, chopped

1 sprig dill, chopped

4 chives, chopped

2 Tablespoons olive oil

salt and pepper

### **PREPARATION**

Season salmon steaks with salt and pepper and place in Ziploc gallon bag. Combine Japanese barbecue sauce and maple syrup in a bowl. Pour into Ziploc bag and close bag. Gently massage salmon steaks making sure marinade covers the fish. Place in refrigerator for 4-6 hours.

Remove fish from refrigerator 30 minutes before cooking. Oil the grates and preheat grill to medium heat. (This can be done on the stovetop with a grill pan, too.) Place salmon steaks on the grill for 4-6 minutes, each side, depending upon how well done you like your salmon.

In a small bowl, combine the cherry tomatoes, basil leaves, dill, chives, and olive oil. Season to taste with salt and



pepper.

To serve, spoon the relish on top of the salmon steaks.

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## 3-CHEESE GRILLED WHITE PIZZA

I know this is sacrilege, but I'm not a big fan of tomato sauce on my pizza. To be honest, it's not that I don't like it, it's that it doesn't like me. It gives me terrible heartburn. But I refuse to give up pizza, so I came up with this recipe for a white pizza, which is really just an excuse to add more cheese.

### INGREDIENTS

1 package Pizza dough

4 strips bacon, cooked & chopped

6 shiitake mushrooms, sliced

6 cremini mushrooms, sliced

1 shallot, minced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 pound taleggio cheese, grated

1/2 pound mozzarella, grated

1/2 pound parmesan cheese, grated

2 tablespoons olive oil

truffle oil

salt and pepper  
red pepper flakes

2 Tablespoons parsley, chopped for garnish (Optional)

### **PREPARATION**

Render bacon, cool and chop. Set aside. Using two tablespoons of bacon fat, sauté mushrooms, shallots and garlic. If there is not enough bacon fat, supplement with olive oil. Season with salt, pepper & red pepper flakes. Set aside. Grate cheeses separately and set aside. Stretch dough and set aside.

Heat grill to 400 degrees. Once hot, brush grates with olive oil. Stretch dough again and place on grill for approximately 2- 3 minutes until underside gets nice grill marks. Keep eye on it so it doesn't burn.

Flip dough onto pizza peel with the uncooked side down and cooked side up. Dress it quickly as follows: brush first with olive oil. Add mushroom mixture and bacon. Cover with taleggio and mozzarella cheeses. Sprinkle parmesan cheese on top.

Using tongs, pull pizza off peel and place back on grill. Close grill and bake for 2 – 3 minutes. Keep an eye on it. When cheese is fully melted, pull pizza off grill with tongs and place on pizza peel. Drizzle lightly with truffle oil. Garnish with parsley (optional). Cut with pizza cutter. Use the peel as a serving vessel.

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## **ASIAN GRILLED CHICKEN OVER**

# GREENS

When I was living and working in Asia, I had a tiny little kitchen in my flat. No oven, just a three-burner cooktop, a microwave, and a half-refrigerator. But I managed to cook up some feasts with all of the exotic ingredients I would find at the markets. This was one of my favorite go-to dishes that had all my burners cooking at once.

## INGREDIENTS

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

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

1 tablespoon lime juice

1 tablespoon lemon juice

2 tablespoons orange juice

1 tablespoon sweet chili sauce

1 teaspoon chile-garlic sauce

4 cloves garlic, minced

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

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon of five-spice

6 skinless, boneless chicken thighs

## **FOR GREENS**

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon sesame oil

2 cloves garlic minced

2 bunches Chinese spinach



1 red pepper, diced

$\frac{1}{4}$  head of purple cabbage, chopped

### **PREPARATION**

Place tamari, brown sugar, lime juice, lemon juice, orange juice, sweet chili sauce, chile-garlic sauce, garlic, cumin, and five-spice into a bowl and whisk together until sugar and spices are dissolved. Transfer to a large ziplock bag.

Place the chicken pieces into the ziplock and marinate overnight.

Remove the chicken thighs from the fridge 45 minutes before you're ready to cook them.

Preheat your grill pan on medium-high heat and lightly oil the grates.

Remove chicken pieces from ziplock and place on the grill pan for 7-10 minutes per side, or until chicken registers 165° F at the thickest part when tested with an instant read thermometer.

Pour the excess marinade into a saucepan. Bring the sauce to a boil for ninety seconds, then lower the heat and simmer for three more minutes. Use the marinade to baste the chicken every five minutes.

Prepare the greens. In a skillet or wok, heat the olive oil until just before smoking. Add the sesame oil and garlic and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add the greens, purple cabbage, and red pepper. Continue to stir-fry for about three minutes or until spinach is limp.

To plate: Place the stir-fried vegetables on the bottom of the plate, then place chicken thighs on top of the greens. Pour remaining marinade over chicken.