

HASSELBACK POTATOES

I've always loved hasselback potatoes. I think they make for a fun presentation and people will think you fussed. They're also a nice alternative to the classic go-to baked potato. I always thought they would be tricky to make, but as it turns out, it's surprisingly easy. Give it a go.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

4 medium Russet or Idaho baking potatoes, washed and dried

Salt and pepper

6 tablespoons olive oil

6 tablespoons butter

1 garlic clove, finely minced

1 tablespoon chopped chives

2 tablespoons parmesan, fine grate

Sour cream (Optional)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place two chopsticks down on a cutting board horizontally. Place a potato between them, making sure the bottom of the potato is touching the cutting board and not resting on the chopsticks. Move the chopsticks so they are resting snuggly against the potato. Cut thin vertical slices down the potato. The knife will stop on the chopsticks, leaving the bottom intact. (Be careful around the ends, they may fall off if you don't stop the knife before they hit the chopsticks.) Repeat for all the potatoes. Season with salt and pepper.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter. Take off the heat and add the olive oil, garlic and chives. Mix to combine.

Place the potatoes on a baking sheet. Using a basting brush, brush $\frac{1}{2}$ of the butter mixture onto the potatoes, making sure to brush in between the slices.

Place in the oven for 60-70 minutes until fork tender. Brush the remaining mixture on the potatoes every 20 minutes.

To serve, garnish with parmesan.

Easy Rustic Pear Tart

I'm not much of a dessert maker. I usually leave that to my husband who has a way with sugar and flour. But he's not a fan of fruit desserts, so if I have a craving, I'm on my own. Although you can certainly use apples for this tart, I thought I'd give pears a try. They just don't get the same adoration that apples do, but I think they deserve it.

INGREDIENTS

1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed

3 large pears, thinly sliced

4 tbsp maple syrup

2 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

pinch nutmeg

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

1 tsp flour

Chopped pecans for topping

Ice cream (optional/preferably vanilla based)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400F.

Roll out the thawed puff pastry dough into a 10 inch by 12-inch rectangle. Using an 8 x 11 rectangular tart pan, place the dough inside the pan. Gently push the dough into the sides of the pan trying not to stretch the dough too much. You'll have some excess on the sides, so fold that into the edges. Run a rolling pin over the top of tin to cut off any more excess. Use your fingers to neaten up the edges.

In a bowl mix together the maple syrup, melted butter, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt and flour. Then toss the sliced pears in the mixture.

Line the pears on the pastry as neatly as you can.

Bake for 30-40 minutes or until the edges are golden brown.

Remove from the oven and let cool on the baking sheet for 10-15 minutes.

For garnish, sprinkle with pecan pieces and place a scoop of your favorite vanilla based ice cream on top.

EASY CHICKEN POT PIE

I know this might not seem like the most romantic dish you can make for Valentine's Day, but it is nice and cozy for a cold

winter's night. It's also one of my hubby's favorites, so why not? It's a great dish for using all those leftover veggies and chicken you have in the fridge. I like to use puffed pastry as the crust. I find it more delicate and tastier than a classic pie crust. You can still dress up the meal with a nice bottle of pinot noir or even champagne. Happy Valentine's Day!

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 onion, sliced

1 carrot, chopped

2 stalks celery, chopped

8 cremini mushrooms, sliced

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 cups chopped or shredded chicken

1 can cream of mushroom soup

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

Salt and pepper to taste

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes

1 sheet puffed pastry

1 egg, beaten

Cranberry sauce, for garnish

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

On the stove top, heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the

onions, carrot and celery. Sauté for about 8 minutes until the onion starts to caramelize. Add in the mushrooms and garlic and continue to sauté for another 3 minutes. Add in the chicken, mushroom soup and water. Season to taste with salt and pepper and add in the red pepper flakes. Stir and bring to a light boil.

NOTE: If the sauce looks too watery, allow moisture to boil off for a few minutes. If sauce is too thick, add water a tablespoon at a time until it is the consistency of a thick chowder.

Turn off the heat and allow to cool for ten minutes.

Roll out one puffed pastry sheet on a floured surface. Using a deep-dish pie pan as a guide, cut out a circle one-inch larger than the pie pan.

Grease the deep-dish pie pan with butter. Pour the chicken mixture into the pie pan. Cover the pie pan with the puffed pastry. Crimp the edges with a fork or fold the overlap of the crust under itself. Cut out a 1-inch hole in the middle so that the steam can escape.

(If you have leftover puffed pastry, feel free to use it to decorate the crust. You can roll it out and use cookie cutters to make different shapes or just twist a few long strands and braid it.)

Brush the crust with a beaten egg.

Place in oven and bake for 35-40 minutes until the crust begins to brown.

Remove from oven and let rest five minutes before serving. Garnish with cranberry sauce.

AIR FRIED CHICKEN QUARTERS

As much as I like a classic whole roasted chicken, in truth, no one in our family is a big white meat eater. So rather than some of us getting disappointed and stuck with the breast, I've started buying chicken quarters. This way, everyone gets the dark meat. Craving fried chicken without all the grease, I decided to make these in the air-fryer. It came out perfectly juicy with a nice crispy crust.

INGREDIENTS (serves 2)

1 tablespoon molasses

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice

1 teaspoon salt

1 chipotle pepper with 1 tablespoon adobe sauce

2 bone-in chicken quarters

Salt and pepper

2 eggs, beaten

1 cup flour

1 cup panko

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated parmesan, small grate

Spray olive oil

Maple syrup for garnish (Optional)

PREPARATION

Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Place in a large Ziploc bag. In a small bowl, combine molasses, orange juice, 1 teaspoon salt, chipotle pepper and adobe sauce. Pour in mixture in with chicken, seal bag and massage marinade around chicken. Place in fridge overnight.

When ready to cook, preheat air fryer to 400 degrees.

Lay out three shallow bowls. Place flour in one. Beat eggs and place in next. Place panko in third. Season each with salt and pepper. Add parmesan to panko and lightly mix.

Remove chicken from marinade. Dredge each quarter first in flour, then eggs, then panko. Spritz each side with olive oil.

Place chicken thighs in air fryer for 30-45 minutes based on size of chicken quarters. Turn thighs over half-way through. Remove from fryer and let rest for five minutes. (Internal temperature should be between 165-175 degrees).

For a nice touch, drizzle a little maple syrup on top before serving.

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

I've never been a huge squash fan, but every now and then I try to get out of my comfort zone. I really like to cook with local produce and this time of year, there are tons of big squash available in my greenmarket, so I figured, why not? I was surprised at how well this soup came out. For all of you who also aren't into squash, this dish may change your mind.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 2-4)

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut in half

horizontally

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 large vidalia onion, rough chop

1 teaspoon kosher salt

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 quart homemade turkey or chicken bone broth

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

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup maple syrup (optional)

Fresh ground pepper

Rosemary sprig for garnish

Croutons for garnish

Parmesan (small grate) for garnish

Cubed cooked turkey, chicken or ham for garnish (optional)

Toasted pumpkin seeds for garnish (optional)

Heavy cream for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the squash halves on a greased sheet pan. Season with salt and pepper. Brush with olive oil. Place in oven until soft, about 45 minutes. Once you can easily prick with a fork, remove from oven and allow to cool. Once cool, scoop out all of the squash and discard the skin.

Heat the remaining oil in a large dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Add the onion and season with salt and pepper until translucent, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook

through for 1 minute. Add the squash, broth and water. Bring to boil and then lower the heat to a simmer for about 15 minutes.

Allow to cool for ten minutes. Use an immersion blender or regular blender, blend until smooth. (*If using a regular blender, you may need to blend the soup in batches to avoid a mess.*)

Taste and re-season with salt and pepper if necessary. If there's a bitter taste or if you like a touch of sweetness, add in the syrup and blend until incorporated.

There are lots of options for garnishing. Mix and match as you like. One way is to ladle the soup into large mugs. Place a crouton on top. Place optional meat cubes on top of crouton. Sprinkle with parmesan. Garnish with rosemary. Or, you could add a drizzle of heavy cream and run a toothpick through it for a nice pattern and garnish with some toasted pumpkin seeds and chopped parsley.

CREAMY ROASTED VEGETABLE AND TURKEY MEATBALL SOUP

Given my love of soup and my desire not to waste any food, I found myself with a bunch of leftovers and an empty pot yearning to make something this afternoon. A few hours later, I had a hearty soup simmering away, a loaf of crusty bread warming in the oven and a bottle of wine at the ready—a nice cozy meal to start the weekend. Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS (Serves 6-8)

1 head cauliflower, cut into florets

2 potatoes, cubed

1 onion, sliced into 1/2" rings

1 head of garlic, cut in half

5 tablespoons olive oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound ground turkey

$\frac{1}{2}$ pound ground turkey sausage (hot Italian)

1 teaspoon garlic powder

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

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup parmesan, finely grated

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup bread crumbs

1 egg, beaten

6 cups chicken or turkey bone broth

1 cup gruyere cheese, large grate

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

salt and pepper

1 baguette or croutons (optional)

1 tablespoon parsley, chopped for garnish

PREPARATION

FOR ROAST VEGETABLES

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Place cauliflower, potatoes and onion rings in a large bowl. Drizzle on 3 tablespoons olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and toss. Pour out into an

even layer on a greased sheet pan. Place the two garlic head halves on a piece of aluminum foil. Drizzle with olive oil. Crimp the aluminum foil around the garlic head, covering all the way. Place on sheet pan. Bake for one hour, tossing the veggies once after the first 30 minutes.

FOR MEATBALLS

In a large bowl, mix the ground turkey, ground sausage, garlic powder, cayenne, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the parmesan, bread crumbs, beaten egg and season with salt and pepper. Using your hands, roll mixture into small meatballs, about 3/4" in diameter. Set aside. (It makes 20-24 meatballs.)

FOR SOUP

In a large dutch oven, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Brown the meatballs, turning them over every few minutes for a total of 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove from pot and set aside.

Add the roasted vegetables to the dutch oven. Add the garlic by squeezing the garlic halves and discarding the skins.

Add the chicken bone broth. Bring up to a boil and then down to simmer for 20 minutes.

Remove from stove and allow to cool for ten minutes. Using an immersion blender (or regular blender), puree soup until smooth.

Place back on stove, add the meatballs, cream and gruyere cheese. Reheat until the soup is at a simmer (but not boil). Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Serve in bowls. Garnish with croutons, parsley and remaining parmesan.

SHRIMP WITH SQUID INK PASTA

I first had this dish in the original Eataly in New York, and I couldn't stop thinking about it. Before I left, I bought some squid ink pasta, determined to try and recreate it at home. It took me a few tries, but I think this recipe gets pretty close. Let me know what you think.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4-6)

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

2 cups Lobster or shellfish broth

1 lb Squid ink pasta (available online)

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 shallot, minced

4 cloves of garlic, minced

Cherry tomato, sliced half

8 Prawns, bodies on

Baby shrimp, cleaned and peeled

Parsley, chopped for garnish

PREPARATION

In a saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add in the flour and whisk until it's the consistency of cake frosting. Continue whisking until the mixture just starts to bubble and the color is a nice blond-caramel. Add in the lobster broth,

half-cup at a time until it comes to a thickness you like for your sauce. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (You may not need both cups of stock if you like a thicker sauce.) Set aside.

Cook the pasta as per box instructions.

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil. Sauté the shallot until translucent, about two-minutes. Add in the garlic and sauté until fragrant, about another minute. Add in the prawns and shrimp and cook until pink, about 4-6 minutes. Add in the cherry tomatoes and toss.

Strain the pasta and add into the skillet. Using tongs, gently toss all together. Using a ladle, spoon out the lobster sauce on top, a little at a time. Lightly toss. (NOTE: Don't drown the pasta with too much sauce.)

Using tongs, place on plates and garnish with parsley.

MISO POACHED BLACK COD WITH BOK CHOY

You want simple and delicious? Here's one of my favorite dishes that I only make when my husband is out of town. (He's not crazy about certain fish.) It takes less than a half hour and it's a one pot dish. The perfect thing to have while watching the forbidden chick flick.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 2-3)

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound black cod, filleted

1 packet dashi*

2 cups water

1 heaping tablespoon miso paste

1 bunch bok choy, chopped

Salt and pepper

Fried onions for garnish

PREPARATION

Season the fish with salt and pepper, set aside.

Place the dashi packet and water together in a medium sized pot. Bring up to a boil, then down to a simmer. Add the miso paste and stir until dissolved. Add in the bok choy and gently place the fish in the center of the pot, skin side down. Baste the fish with some of the liquid. Cover the pot for 8-10 minutes and continue to simmer.

Gently remove fish from pot and place in center of soup bowl. Remove the dashi packet and discard. Ladle the bok choy and the liquid on top. Garnish with fried onions.

*FOR DASHI PACKETS: <http://bit.ly/3KeYlGK>

PORTUGUESE SEAFOOD RICE

On a recent trip to Portugal, I was overwhelmed by the amount of available fresh fish. I think I went a week without eating any type of meat in favor of devouring the bounty of their seas. In nearly every restaurant, a seafood rice dish was offered with a variety of shellfish or white fish. The key is to use the freshest fish available, so feel free to add whatever is available in your area. One important note—the

stock matters. Boxed seafood stock works, but homemade shellfish stock gives much better flavor. In a pinch, you could even use dashi!

INGREDIENTS(serves 4-6)

FOR THE SHELLFISH STOCK:

6 cups of shrimp, lobster, and/or crab shells

1 onion, cut into six pieces

2 stalks celery, rough chop

1 carrot, rough chop

3 sprigs parsley

1 bay leaf

2 quarts of water

2 teaspoons salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fresh ground pepper

FOR THE SEAFOOD RICE:

3 tablespoons olive oil

6 shallots, chopped

1 red pepper, stems and seeds removed, chopped

1 green pepper, stems and seeds removed, chopped

2 hot chilies, chopped

8 cloves garlic, chopped

1 tablespoon tomato paste mixed with 2 tablespoons water

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon hot sauce

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups long grain rice

1 cup madeira or white wine

2 cups shellfish stock

1 bay leaf

salt and pepper to taste

2 teaspoons sugar (optional)

2 cleaned squid, cut into rings/strips

1 lb mussels

10 large prawns or large shrimp

1 bunch of parsley, chopped

PREPARATION

FOR THE STOCK: In a large pot, place the fish shells. Add enough water to cover the shells. If you need more than two quarts, add more. Heat until water starts to bubble, then bring down to a simmer. You don't want a roiling boil. Skim any foam that comes to the surface. Add all the other stock ingredients and continue to simmer for one-hour.

Strain through a lined sieve. Discard the shells. Whatever stock you don't use for the recipe can be frozen for up to 6 months. (*Note – rather than putting in containers, I freeze excess stock in Ziplock bags so they can lay flat in the freezer and take up less space.*)

FOR THE SEAFOOD RICE: Heat 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large Dutch oven. Add the shallots, peppers and cook for about 6 minutes until the shallots are translucent. Add the garlic and cook for one minute. Add the tomato paste mixture, hot sauce and hot chilies and cook for another minute.

Add the rice and stir. Add in the white wine and let simmer for 2 minutes. Add in 2 cups of shellfish stock, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then down to simmer for 10 minutes. Taste and re-season. If it's a bit bitter, add in 2 teaspoons of sugar.

While the rice is simmering, rinse mussels, removing any beards. Devein the shrimps, removing the heads, but leaving the tails on the bodies. (*Save those heads and shells in the freezer for future stocks.*)

Add the shrimp and squid to the rice mixture, and gentle stir. Place the mussels on top, cover and cook until the shrimp turn pink and the mussel shells open, about 8-10 minutes.

Spoon into bowls and garnish with chopped parsley.

TURKEY LEFTOVER SANDWICH

It's Friday, you're exhausted from yesterday's feast, but you've still got a few stragglers who refuse to leave you in peace. Rather than jumping through hoops to feed them, just use what you've got. Here's a recipe for the ultimate leftover Thanksgiving sandwich. With some luck, once your leftovers are gone, maybe some of those *over-stayed-their-welcome guests* will be too!

INGREDIENTS (makes 1 sandwich)

2 pieces of good rye bread

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

4-6 pieces of sliced turkey

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup of stuffing

3 tablespoons of cranberry sauce

3 tablespoons butter

PREPARATION

Smear each side of the bread with mayonnaise. Place the slices of turkey on top of one slice of bread. Top with stuffing, then cranberry. Place other slice on top.

Heat a grill pan over medium heat. Melt one tablespoon butter to cover bottom of pan. Gently place the sandwich in the pan. Use a sandwich press to weigh it down. Allow to grill for 2-3 minutes. Remove with spatula and place on cutting board for a moment. Add second tablespoon of butter to cover bottom of pan. Return sandwich to pan, flipping it over to cook the ungrilled side. Use a sandwich press to weigh it down. Allow to grill for 2 minutes.

Remove with spatula and plate. I like to serve it with potato chips, but you could always serve it with a side of leftover mashed potatoes or sweat potatoes.