

“EASTER WEEK”

Can you believe it is already Easter! I hope you have an absolutely beautiful holiday celebrating renewal, rebirth, and resurrection! Maybe you'll have enough time to get your shopping done and make these guest-pleasing recipes on Easter Sunday. If not, they are still delicious springtime recipes to use for the rest of the week.



BASIL PESTO MARINATED RACK OF LAMB WITH ASPARAGUS



CARAMELIZED CHICKEN, BRIE AND BRUSCHETTA SANDWICHES

- WHAT'S FOR DINNER**
- Basil Pesto Marinated Rack of Lamb with Asparagus
 - Pesto Potato Gratin
 - Caramelized Chicken, Brie and Bruschetta Sandwiches (*with or without bread*)
 - Herb and Butter Simmered Chicken
 - Fusilli with Creamy Spinach, Sausage and Asparagus Sauce

- EXTRAS**
- Basil Puree
 - Angel Cake with Marinated Strawberries and Lemon Glaze

- SUGGESTED EXTRAS**
(Recipes and shopping list items not included.)
- The “Herb and Butter Simmered Chicken” recipe may be eaten with steamed vegetables or a simple salad, but these are not included in the recipe.

- PLANNING NOTES**
- Make “Basil Puree” ahead of time and marinate lamb in it for at least 5 hours before using for recipes.
 - The “Herb and Butter Simmered Chicken” recipe this week requires 8-10 pieces of chicken. The best choice is to buy a full chicken and cut the pieces out (*or have a butcher do this*), then save the backbone of the chicken to make a delicious stock for soup or a nourishing drink.



HERB AND BUTTER SIMMERED CHICKEN



FUSILLI WITH CREAMY SPINACH, SAUSAGE AND ASPARAGUS SAUCE



ANGEL CAKE WITH MARINATED STRAWBERRIES AND LEMON GLAZE

BASIL PESTO MARINATED RACK OF LAMB WITH ASPARAGUS

Total Time: 30 minutes

**Marinate lamb with basil puree for 5 hours, up to a few days.*

**This recipe can also be served with "Pesto Potato Gratin".*

Ingredients:

French cut rack of lamb chops or individual lamb chops, as much as needed

¼ cup "Basil Puree" - on this week's recipe list

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra

½ cup white wine

asparagus spears, as much as needed- 4-6 spears per person recommended

salt and pepper

Parmesan cheese, finely grated or crumbled

Place lamb and basil puree plus 2 tablespoons oil in a container or ziplock bag and massage marinade into meat. Let rest in refrigerator for 5 hours, up to a few days.

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Heat some oil in a large skillet and sear lamb for 5 minutes per side, until a deep golden crust forms. Transfer lamb to a baking dish and place in oven for 10-25 minutes, depending on thickness of meat, until cooked to desired doneness. Medium-rare meat is ideal for lamb chops and will feel like the pad of your palm beneath your thumb when pressed with your middle finger.

When lamb is transferred to oven, keep skillet over heat and deglaze pan with wine, stirring to remove bits from bottom of pan. Add ½ cup water to wine and bring to a boil. Season liquid with salt and simmer asparagus for 3-5 minutes until bright green and slightly soft. Transfer asparagus to a serving dish and serve with lamb. Season, as needed, with salt and pepper and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

PESTO POTATO GRATIN

Total Time: 30-45 minutes

Ingredients:

6-8 white potatoes, cleaned well and sliced into very thin medallions (*using a mandolin, food processor, or carefully with a very sharp knife*)

1/4 cup "Basil Puree", from this week's recipes

½ cup butter

1 cup Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Melt butter and basil puree together.

Butter a rectangular baking dish or casserole dish. Place a layer of potatoes along bottom of dish, about 2-3 potato slices thick. Spread 1/3 of basil butter over potatoes, then sprinkle with 1/3 of the cheese. Repeat two more times to create 3 layers. Top with remaining cheese to form a thick layer of Parmesan and place dish in oven for 25-30 minutes, until a golden crust is formed and potatoes are soft (*a knife will slide easily into center of gratin*). Let cool and set for 10-15 minutes, then slice into squares and serve.

BASIL PUREE

Ingredients:

4-6 cups basil leaves

1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves

4-5 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped

3 teaspoons salt

2 teaspoons pepper

1 cup extra virgin olive oil

Place all ingredients except oil in a food processor or blender and pulse until finely ground. While pulsing, slowly add oil until smooth puree forms. Use immediately for recipes, or store refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

CARAMELIZED CHICKEN, BRIE AND BRUSCHETTA SANDWICHES (WITH OR WITHOUT BREAD)

Total Time: 30 minutes

**This recipe can be a delicious layered chicken vegetable and cheese dish, or can be made into a gourmet sandwich on a French baguette.*

Ingredients:

Extra virgin olive oil, plus 2-4 tablespoons
1 onion, chopped
1 cup mushrooms, chopped, such as crimini or button mushrooms
salt and pepper
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, divided
2 cups chicken meat, chopped, such as boneless thigh meat or breast meat
4-5 tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1/3 cup kalamata olives, pitted and chopped
¼ cup capers
1-2 cups cucumber, peeled and chopped into small cubes
¼ cup "Basil Puree" from this week's recipes
Brie cheese- 1 wedge
1 French baguette (*optional*)

Coat a saucepan or large skillet with oil and sauté onions and mushrooms for 8-10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and deglaze pan with 1 tablespoon vinegar. Add chicken to pan and sauté for 10-12 minutes, until chicken is cooked and mixture has become covered with a golden glaze from the caramelized onions.

Meanwhile, place tomatoes, olives, capers, and cucumbers in a large bowl. Toss gently with basil puree, 2-4 tablespoons olive oil and 2 tablespoons vinegar. Season, as needed, with salt and pepper.

If serving without bread, place chicken mixture on a serving dish and top with thick slices of cheese and vegetable mixture. If making sandwiches, slice baguette in half lengthwise with a larger bottom half. Scoop out some of center of baguette to form a canal on both pieces (*make dry breadcrumbs for future recipes*). Assemble into sandwiches and slice to serve.

HERB AND BUTTER SIMMERED CHICKEN

Total Time: 60 minutes

**This traditional French recipe uses a lot of fat to cook succulent chicken. Save leftover cooking fat for other recipes in place of olive oil or butter.*

Ingredients:

8-10 pieces of chicken
2 cups butter (*extra virgin olive oil, organic lard, coconut oil, or other fat may be integrated into the 2 cups*)
1 onions, sliced
5-6 sage leaves
¼ cup flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Place chicken in an oven-safe stockpot with butter, onion, herbs, and liberal amount of salt and pepper. Place in oven for 60 minutes, until chicken is fully cooked and very soft. Season as needed with salt and pepper and serve with fresh steamed vegetables or a simple salad.

FUSILLI WITH CREAMY SPINACH, SAUSAGE AND ASPARAGUS SAUCE

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

¼ cup butter
1 pound loose Italian sausage (*links may be pressed out of casing*)
3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 bunch spinach leaves, roughly chopped
8-10 asparagus spears, cut into 2-inch pieces
salt and pepper
8 ounces Mascarpone cheese
½ heavy cream
Parmesan cheese
1-2 pounds fusilli pasta (*or other available pasta - brown rice*)

Bring a large stockpot of water to a rolling boil.

Meanwhile, sauté sausage in butter in a large saucepan until browned. Add garlic, spinach and asparagus. Sauté for 10 minutes, then season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and stir in mascarpone cheese and cream.

While sautéing vegetables, season boiling water with a handful of salt and cook pasta for 8-10 minutes until al dente (*almost fully cooked*). Strain pasta and return to pan. Pour sauce into pasta and stir over low heat for 5 minutes together. Serve pasta topped with parmesan cheese.

ANGEL CAKE WITH MARINATED STRAWBERRIES AND LEMON GLAZE

Total Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Ingredients:

6 eggs, separated
1 cup sugar, plus 2 tablespoons, plus ½ cup sugar
1 cup flour
2 teaspoons vanilla
4 cups strawberries, sliced
zest and juice of 1 large lemon (*2 small*), separated
heavy cream, whipped (*optional*)

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Coat a cake pan, spring-form pan, or other baking pan with butter and flour.

Beat egg whites in a large bowl until soft peaks form. Whisk in egg yolks, sugar, and vanilla, then sift in flour and stir gently until blended. (*Do not over-stir or batter will flatten.*) Place batter in baking pan and bake for 40-60 minutes, just until golden brown and knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Meanwhile, place strawberries in a bowl and gently toss with 2 tablespoons sugar and juice of lemon. Let set until ready to serve.

Place ½ cup sugar in a small saucepan with ½ cup water and lemon zest. Bring to a boil and let simmer for 5-8 minutes until sugar is dissolved and glaze is slightly reduced.

To serve, drizzle cake with lemon glaze and strawberries and juice, topped with whipped cream (*optional*).