

“NEW YEAR RESOLUTION”

Happy New Year! I think the feeling of a brand new start is the wonderful thing about this holiday. Of course, it's really just another day in the life...there's no better reason to begin steps toward a new goal tomorrow than there was yesterday. But, we all do it. We all make resolutions for the New Year. I can't think of a year that I didn't make a resolution to work harder to achieve optimal health, and here I am doing the same thing this year. This includes losing some extra "poundage" to get a little closer to my pre-baby size, or at least a size I feel better in. The best way to begin my road toward optimal health is to strictly cut sugar and carbohydrates from my diet. In my book, Complete Guide to REAL FOOD, I outline a complete Blood Sugar Regulation Diet. Although most of my meal plans adhere to nourishing dietary guidelines that eliminate sugar and carbohydrates, I've selected a week of recipes for this week's meal plan that supports a true Blood Sugar Regulation Diet. These recipes include foods like sweet potatoes, which are a perfect alternative to starchy potatoes and are known to support blood sugar by stabilizing the adrenal glands. Spaghetti squash is an excellent alternative to pasta. You may also wish to include making Kombucha Tea a New Year Resolution! Kombucha is SO good for you, full of enzymes and probiotics. It is a perfect replacement for sugary, carbonated, caffeinated, or alcoholic drinks...yet it contains none of the above and makes you feel wonderful! Enjoy...and cheers to your New Year!!!

-Roz Mignogna



HERB ROASTED CHICKEN WITH SWEET POTATOES



LIVER (OR STEAK) AND CRISPY ONIONS WITH SWEET POTATO SPUDS



POT ROAST WITH SWEET POTATO GRATIN CRUST



CHICKEN AND SPAGHETTI SQUASH "PASTA" WITH BAKED PROSCIUTTO

WHAT'S FOR DINNER

- Herb Roasted Chicken with Sweet Potatoes
- Pot Roast with Sweet Potato Gratin Crust
- Liver (or Steak) and Crispy Onions with Sweet Potato Spuds
- Leftovers Creation ~ Chicken and Spaghetti Squash "Pasta" with Baked Prosciutto

EXTRAS

- Grilled Cinnamon Apples with Mascarpone Cream

NOURISHING ADDITIONS

- Kombucha Tea

SUGGESTED EXTRAS

- (Recipes and shopping list items not included.)*
- You should have lots of leftovers for lunch from the Pot Roast!

PLANNING NOTES

- Preserve leftover chicken from the roasted chicken recipe for the chicken and spaghetti squash recipe.
- Chicken stock is needed this week, so plan ahead if you're going to make it from scratch (*which is the healthier option!*)

Shopping List

New Year Resolution

December 31, 2011

MY EXTRA MEALS THIS WEEK:

Be sure to check for ingredients you already have!

If you are new to **Real Food Weekly**, you may need to buy more basic ingredients than normal for the first two weeks. Basic pantry ingredients are used in many of the meal plans, so soon you won't have to buy them because you'll already have them stocked in your pantry. Go to www.RealFoodFamily.com/substitutes if you'd like a list of substitutes for various ingredients.

PRODUCE:

6-12 medium-sized sweet potatoes (2-3 per person)

garlic

onions (1-2)

1 spaghetti squash

carrots

celery or fennel

***Consider extra lettuces and veggies for salads, tacos, etc.**

FRUIT

1 apple per person (for extra grilled apples recipe)

lemons (if making liver instead of steak)

***Consider extra fruit for snacks.**

FRESH HERBS:

Mixed rustic herbs, such as rosemary, thyme, and sage

Green onions (optional)

MEAT AND FISH:

1 whole roasting chicken

prosciutto (nitrite/nitrate free)

3-5 pound beef chuck roast or brisket

4oz. liver (soaked in fresh lemon juice for 12-24 hours, and outer film removed) or steak per person (such as rib-eye or New York)

***If available, add organic chicken and/or beef liver and other organ meats to your shopping lists to secretly add to dishes for extra nutrition.**

EGGS AND DAIRY:

Butter

Sour Cream (optional)

Parmesan cheese

Cheddar cheese

Heavy cream

Mascarpone cheese

***Consider extra milk, yogurt, eggs, cheeses, etc., for drinks, snacks and additional recipes**

Shopping List

New Year Resolution

December 31, 2011

MY NOTES:

PANTRY:

Extra virgin olive oil

Frying fat, such as organic lard, olive oil, beef tallow, etc.

Salt and pepper

Garlic powder

Herbs de Provence (dried mixed herbs such as thyme, rosemary, lavender, etc.)

Chicken stock

Red wine

Cinnamon

Vanilla extract

Arrowroot powder (best purchased in bulk from a health food store)

Dry breadcrumbs

For Kombucha:

sugar

black tea bags (Organic Orange Pekoe Black Tea suggested)

***Consider extra items for breakfast, lunches, snacks, and additional recipes such as tortillas for tacos, etc.**

Specialty:

For extra kombucha recipe:

1 kombucha mushroom or "scooby", available from:

www.GEMcultures.com

ROASTED HERBED CHICKEN WITH SWEET POTATOES

Total Time: 60-80 minutes

This recipe is made more than any other recipe in my kitchen. One of my favorite foods in the world is salty, crispy chicken skin. It's definitely a bummer when I eat a chicken with less-than-crispy skin. When you butterfly the chicken and roast at a high temperature at first, you get a fabulous chicken skin result without over-cooking the meat. I also never cut the backbone out of my chicken because the best skin and meat is on the backbone. Finally, some real, raw, cultured sour cream eaten alongside the chicken and potatoes will offer some good enzyme activity to this fully cooked meal. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

1 whole chicken
 Extra Virgin Olive Oil
 Salt and Pepper
 1 tablespoon Herbs de Provence
 3-5 medium-sized sweet potatoes
 ¼ cup butter
 2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh herbs such as thyme, sage, and/or rosemary
 Sour cream (optional)

Preheat oven to 425°.

Butterfly chicken with sharp kitchen shears and lay in large roasting pan, breast-side up. Drizzle liberally with oil, then season well with salt and pepper. Sprinkle evenly with herbs. Place in oven for 20 minutes, then reduce oven temperature to 365°.

Once chicken is in oven, prepare potatoes by chopping into ½-inch cubes and placing in a roasting pan. Melt butter over low heat and sauté garlic for one minute. Pour garlic butter over potatoes and season to taste with salt and pepper (about 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper). Add chopped herbs and toss potatoes until they are well coated with butter and seasonings. Add potatoes to oven when heat is reduced to 365°.

Continue roasting chicken and potatoes for 50-60 minutes, tossing potatoes every 15 minutes, until chicken skin is crispy and golden brown, and potatoes are soft and slightly caramelized. (You may wish to add some of the cooking liquid from the chicken to the potatoes while roasting.) Slice chicken pieces and serve with potatoes and sour cream (optional).

POT ROAST WITH SWEET POTATO GRATIN CRUST

Total Time: 4 hours

Ingredients:

3-5 pound beef chuck roast or brisket, cut into 1-inch cubes
 salt and pepper
 extra virgin olive oil
 1 onion, chopped
 2 cups carrots, roughly chopped
 2 cups celery or fennel, roughly chopped
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1 cup red wine
 1 ½ cups chicken stock (water may be substituted)
 1 tablespoon fresh sage, finely chopped
 2 teaspoons rosemary, finely chopped
 2-3 cups grated sweet potato (about 2-3 medium sweet potatoes)
 1 cup cheddar cheese
 4 tablespoons butter

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Season beef liberally with salt and pepper. Coat a large stockpot or Dutch oven with oil and bring to high heat. Sear beef cubes for 10 minutes, until browned on outsides. Remove beef from pot and set aside. Add onions, carrots, and celery and sauté for 10-12 minutes. Add garlic for 1 minute, then add wine, stirring to remove pits from bottom of pan. Stir in stock and herbs, season with more salt and pepper, then add beef. Cover and place in oven for 2 ½- 3 hours, until meat is extremely tender.

When beef is 45 minutes from being done, prepare sweet potatoes. In a large bowl, evenly mix grated sweet potatoes and cheese, plus salt and pepper. Remove pot roast from oven and spread sweet potato mixture evenly over top of pot roast. Dot with butter (all of it), then return pot to oven. Increase oven temperature to 375°F and let bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool slightly before serving.

CHICKEN AND SPAGHETTI SQUASH "PASTA" WITH BAKED PROSCIUTTO

Total Time: 60 minutes

Ingredients:

1 spaghetti squash
 salt and pepper
 2-3 cups cooked chicken, shredded (or cook about 1 pound of chicken while squash cooks)
 4-6 pieces of prosciutto
 ¼ cup butter
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 ½ cup mascarpone cheese
 1 tablespoon sage, finely chopped
 1 cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Slice squash lengthwise and place in a large baking dish, flesh side down. Fill the dish with an inch of water, then bake for 30-45 minutes, until squash is soft. Place prosciutto on a baking sheet and bake for 10-15 minutes, until crispy. Crumble crispy prosciutto and set aside.

Meanwhile, sauté garlic in butter (or cook chicken in butter first if using raw chicken). Stir mascarpone, sage, and Parmesan into garlic sauce until melted. Season with salt and pepper, to taste, then stir chicken into mixture. Using a fork (and a pot holder to handle hot squash), scrape cooked spaghetti squash into chicken mixture, then gently stir to incorporate sauce and squash. Season with salt and pepper, as needed, then top with crispy prosciutto and serve.

LIVER (OR STEAK) AND CRISPY ONIONS WITH SWEET POTATO SPUDS

Total Time: 45 minutes

Liver (**from organically raised cows fed exclusively grass**) is one of the most nourishing and nutrient-dense foods available in nature. Only eat liver if you are confident in the source. Liver may not be appealing to you, although it is a wise flavor to acquire (**for nutrition reasons**), but you may not be comfortable eating liver. Grass-fed steak is a good substitute for this recipe.

***Soak liver in fresh lemon juice for 12-24 hours before using in the recipe for a subdued flavor and stronger texture.**

Ingredients:

4-6 medium sweet potatoes (1 per person)

extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup butter

1 cup cheddar cheese, grated

4oz. liver (soaked in fresh lemon juice for 12-24 hours, and outer film removed) or steak per person (such as rib-eye or New York)

salt and pepper

2 teaspoons garlic powder

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil and/or frying fat

1 onion, sliced

2 tablespoons arrowroot powder

2 tablespoons dry breadcrumbs

sour cream (optional)

green onions, finely chopped (optional, for garnish)

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Slice sweet potatoes lengthwise and place, flesh side up, on a baking sheet or dish. Drizzle potatoes liberally with oil and salt and pepper, and roast for 25-30 minutes, until soft. Using an oven-mit and spoon, scoop center of sweet potatoes into a bowl, leaving a layer of sweet potato on skins. Mix butter and cheese into sweet potatoes in the bowl and mash until ingredients are incorporated. Scoop mixture back into sweet potato skins. Drizzle with a little more oil and/or dot with butter and return to oven and bake for 15 minutes. Prepare steak and onions while sweet potatoes are cooking.

Season liver/steak with salt and pepper and garlic powder and set aside. In a large bowl, evenly mix arrowroot powder and breadcrumbs, plus salt and pepper. Toss onions in mixture until well coated. Heat half of frying fat in a large skillet and sauté coated onions until crispy. Set onions aside, then add additional fat to pan (*as needed*) over high heat and sear liver/steak for 3-5 minutes per side, until cooked as desired. Serve steak and onions with sweet potato spuds, garnished with sour cream and green onions (optional).

KOMBUCHA TEA

Kombucha tea is said to aid in digestion, immunity, energy, weight loss, and more, and has become a very popular health food drink in America. Many claim Kombucha to be a wonder drink or elixir, used to address almost any ailment. With its effervescence tangy, sweet taste, it is a perfect replacement for processed sodas, energy drinks, or even beer and wine (although Kombucha is non-alcoholic). While delicious, pre-made options are available in most health food stores, store-bought Kombucha is astronomically more expensive than making it at home. You just have to be a little patient and work on your method until you get it just right. You can also add flavors to fully brewed tea such as freshly grated ginger, lemon, or a small amount of concentrated fruit juice. This is a cultured food, so once you invest in the equipment and your first starter "scooby" (the mushroom/fungus used to ferment the tea), the "mother" will produce "babies" every time your brew and ferment the tea, so you will be able to continue making this tea forever, as well as help your friends and family start brewing themselves!

Ingredients:

3 quarts filtered water

1 cup sugar (*Evaporated Cane Juice Sugar suggested*)

Four black tea bags (*Organic Orange Pekoe Black Tea suggested*)

1 kombucha mushroom or "scooby", available from:

www.GEMcultures.com or **www.Kombucha2000.com**

1 cup kombucha from previous batch (will come with purchased scooby)

From **www.Kombucha2000.com**:

Recommended Equipment:

stainless steel pot; skimmer ladle; cloth or paper towel; rubber band; gallon-size fermentation jars-5 inch in diameter, Kombucha electric heating panel; baster; funnel; pH test strips, stainless steel tea ball (*if using loose tea*).

Preparation:

1. Bring 3 quarts of distilled or purified water to boil in a stainless steel cooking pot (*stock pot*).
 2. When boiling, add one cup (8oz.) of organic evaporated cane juice sugar. Boil for five minutes.
 3. Turn off the heat, remove the cooking pot (*in order to stop the boiling*). Add four organic Orange Pekoe black tea bags or 4 teaspoons in a stainless steel tea ball, cover the pot with the lid. Let steep for 15 minutes.
 4. Remove and discard tea bags or empty tea ball.
 5. Allow sweetened tea to cool to room temperature, even if it takes overnight.
 6. When at room temperature, pour the sweetened tea into a one-gallon, 5-inch diameter size jar. (*This is where the tea will ferment.*)
 7. Before pouring the cooled tea into the jar, pour 1 cup (8 oz.) of the starter tea (*which came with the mushroom*) into the jar. Then pour the cooled tea into the jar to ensure an even mixture of the tea with the starter. For future batches you may use your own Kombucha tea starter. In the event that no starter is available to you, you may use 8 oz. of organic, raw, unfiltered apple cider vinegar as a starter.
 8. Place the Kombucha mushroom on top of the sweetened, cool tea, making sure that the darker rougher side faces down. (*Don't worry if it sinks to the bottom, it's O.K.*)
 9. Cover Jar with a piece of loosely woven cloth (*the mushroom has to "breathe". Cotton or linen or paper towel will do just fine.*)
 10. Secure with a rubber band to keep cloth (*or paper towel*) in place and to keep out any insects or contamination.
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11. Place the jar in a ventilated place (*preferably on a special Kombucha electric heating panel to keep the tea at an ideal constant temperature*) to ferment for at least 10 days, without moving it, but away from direct sunlight and kitchen odors, plants and pets. The ideal constant fermenting temperature, according to our several years of production experience, is 85°-89° Fahrenheit.

12. At about 10 days, remove cover and dip a pH test strip into the tea to measure the degree of acidity it has reached during the fermentation process (*degree of acidity to be no less than 3.0 pH*).

13. If it does not have a “bite”, continue with the fermentation process for few more days and retest.

14. After the fermented tea has passed the tests, it can now be called “Kombucha Tea.” Remove the mushroom that has formed on top of the “Kombucha Tea” If the “mother” and the “baby” mushroom are stuck to each other (*the baby on top of the mother*), separate the two carefully and place them in a jar with enough “Kombucha Tea” (*as a source of nourishment*) to cover it for future use or to give away. However after several batches discard the old mushroom.

15. Pour “Kombucha Tea” through a close mesh strainer and a funnel into a glass container. Store the “Kombucha Tea” in the refrigerator, ready for consumption.

* Using the pH strips (*if available*): If the pH test shows 3.0 or less on the pH scale, a further test with your taste buds is recommended. So take with the help of a baster a small quantity of sample to taste it. It should have a “sweet & sour” taste with a” bite”. If the pH test shows higher than 3.0 pH let it ferment a few days more.

GRILLED CINNAMON APPLES WITH MASCARPONE CREAM

Total Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

1 apple per person, cored and sliced into medallions

¼ cup butter

2 teaspoons cinnamon

½ cup heavy cream

¼ cup mascarpone cheese, at room temperature

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

dash of sugar (*optional*)

Preheat outdoor or indoor grill.

Melt butter in a small saucepan and stir in cinnamon. Pour cinnamon butter over apple slice and carefully toss to completely coat apples. Grill apples over medium-high heat for 1 minute per side.

For cream, beat heavy cream with electric mixer until stiff peaks begin to form. Whisk in mascarpone, vanilla and sugar (*optional*) until smooth and incorporated. Serve cream with grilled apples.