

“SPRING FORWARD”

Our farmer's markets and farm stands are bursting at the seams with fresh spring produce. The best part of this season at our house is the rich, ripe and delicious organic strawberries available for just a window of time. Asparagus is also something I'll only enjoy in season, which is right now! I'm continuing with my theme of being inspired by the season and the deliciously delicate foods that represent the best of spring cooking.



SPINACH CRUSTED CHICKEN



CHICKEN AND CORN CHOWDER



POACHED HALIBUT WITH ASPARAGUS AND HOLLANDAISE SAUCE



FAJITA STYLE STEAK WITH CREAMY VEGGIE RICE



STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE TIRAMISU

WHAT'S FOR DINNER

- Spinach Crusted Chicken
- Chicken and Corn Chowder
- Poached Halibut with Asparagus and Hollandaise Sauce
- Leftovers Creation- Fajita Style Steak with Creamy Veggie Rice

EXTRAS

- Strawberry Shortcake Tiramisu
- Salad Dressing ~ Lemon Vinaigrette

PLANNING NOTES

- The best and most economical way to approach this week's chicken recipes is to buy a whole chicken and cut the legs, thighs, wings and breast pieces out of it. Use the legs, thighs and wings for the Spinach Crusted Chicken recipe. Use the remaining backbone pieces of the chicken to make the stock for the Chicken and Corn Chowder recipe, then keep the breast meat in a separate container to chop and cook with vegetables at the end of the recipe.
- Reserve 1 cup leftover Chicken and Corn Chowder for Fajita Style Steak with Creamy Veggie Rice
- Brown rice is needed for Fajita Style Steak with Creamy Veggie Rice. Soak overnight before making recipe, or buy pre-cooked brown rice with no added preservative ingredients.

SPINACH CRUSTED CHICKEN

Total Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

Extra virgin olive oil
 ¼ cup butter, plus and additional ¼ cup
 1 onion, finely chopped
 salt and pepper
 6-10 pieces of chicken, such as bone-in legs and thighs
 ½ cup white wine (*or Marsala wine*)
 1 large bunch of spinach (*about 3 cups packed leaves*)
 2-3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Heat a large saucepan or skillet with a coating of oil and ¼ cup butter. Sauté onion for 10 minutes, lightly seasoning with salt and pepper, until translucent and lightly browned. Remove onions from pan and set aside. Add a little more oil to pan. Season chicken with salt and pepper and sear for 5-7 minutes per side, until a golden crust forms. Add wine to pan and gently stir around chicken pieces to remove bits from bottom of pan. Pour onions back over chicken then carefully pile spinach on top of chicken in pan. Melt remaining ¼ cup butter in a small saucepan and sauté garlic for 1 minutes. Pour garlic butter evenly over spinach, then place in oven for 15-20 minutes, making sure chicken is fully cooked. Serve immediately.

CHICKEN AND CORN CHOWDER

Total Time: 1 hour, plus 3-6 hours to make stock (*could be done overnight*)

Ingredients:

Chicken pieces or body of chicken to make stock,
 plus 2 cups boneless chicken meat cut into
 small cubes
 2 onions- one sliced and one finely chopped
 salt and pepper
 extra virgin olive oil
 2 bell pepper, seeded and chopped
 2 zucchini, chopped
 1 cup carrots, finely chopped
 1 cup celery, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, chopped
 2 cups corn kernels, from fresh corn or canned,
 drained and rinsed
 ½ cup butter
 ½ cup flour (*arrowroot powder may be substituted*)
 2 cups milk
 ½ cup heavy cream
 avocado slices (*optional*)

Place chicken pieces for stock in a large stockpot or slow-cooker. Add sliced onion, a liberal amount of salt and pepper, and 10 cups of water to pot. Bring to a boil, then simmer for at least 3 hours, up to 8 hours over very low heat. Strain stock and reserve liquid for the rest of this recipe.

Coat a stockpot with oil and sauté chopped onion for 8 minutes, until beginning to brown. Add zucchini, carrots, celery, garlic, corn and chicken meat pieces for 8-10 minutes, season with salt and pepper, and add chicken stock. Bring to a boil, then let simmer.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in flour and let simmer, whisking often, for 5 minutes. Whisk in milk and simmer until very thick. Whisk in one cup of simmering stoup stock to temper cream mixture, then slowly whisk into soup. Let soup continue to simmer until thickened, then stir in cream and season as needed with salt and pepper. Serve soup topped with avocado sliced and a dash of salt (*optional*).

POACHED HALIBUT WITH ASPARAGUS AND HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

Total Time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup butter
1 cup white wine
4-8 oz. halibut filets (*or other white fish*) per person
6-10 asparagus sticks per person (*bottoms cut off if thick*)
salt and pepper

For Hollandaise:

Juice of 1 lemon
3 egg yolks
1/2 cup butter, melted and still very warm (*but not too hot*)
salt

Melt butter and wine in a large covered saucepan or stockpot until simmering. Place fish filets in liquid, then place asparagus over fish. Season liberally with salt and pepper, then cover and cook until asparagus is bright green and slightly soft and fish is fully cooked.

Meanwhile, pulse lemon juice and egg yolks in a blender with a dash of salt. While pulsing blender, slowly add butter until mixture is thickened. *Make sure butter isn't hot enough to cook the eggs and scramble the sauce. Season, as needed, with salt.

To serve, carefully place fish filets on a serving dish, topped with asparagus and a generous amount of Hollandaise sauce.

FAJITA STYLE STEAK WITH CREAMY VEGGIE RICE

Total Time: 25 minutes

**Use leftover soup from Chicken and Corn Chowder for this recipe.*

** Soak brown rice overnight before making recipe, or buy pre-cooked brown rice with no added preservative ingredients.*

**For added flavor, steaks can be marinated in balsamic vinegar for many hours before beginning recipe.*

**Steaks can be grilled on an outdoor grill instead of seared in a pan.*

Ingredients:

4-8 oz. steak per person (*such as Sirloin, Ribeye, or New York*)

1/4- 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar

Extra virgin olive oil

2 onions, sliced

2 bell peppers, seeded and sliced into thin strips
salt and pepper

3 cups brown rice, soaked overnight or pre-cooked

1 cup leftover "Chicken and Corn Chowder"

avocado sliced (*optional*)

Place steaks in a container with balsamic vinegar and marinate while preparing onions and peppers (*or marinate for many hours in the refrigerator*).

If using an outdoor grill, preheat outdoor grill.

Coat a large pan with oil and sauté onions and peppers until soft and slightly browned. Season with salt and pepper and keep warm. Remove steaks from balsamic marinade and season with salt and pepper. Sear in an oiled skillet or on an outdoor grill for 3-6 minutes per side, depending on thickness, for desired done-ness.

Meanwhile, place leftover chowder and rice in a small saucepan or stockpot and bring to a simmer until rice is soft. (*Additional soup may be used for desired creaminess.*) Season as needed with salt and pepper and serve with with steak and vegetables and avocado slices sprinkled with salt (*optional*).

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE TIRAMISU

Total Time: 25 minutes

**This recipe calls for optional freeze-dried strawberries (usually available at Trader Joe's or health food stores). Use a rolling pin or other heavy device to crush strawberries into a powder.*

**This recipe also calls for a pre-made pound cake or lady finger cookies. Look for only basic ingredients, with no added preservatives or chemical ingredients. Or, find a basic recipe online and make your own!*

Ingredients:

3-4 cups strawberries, sliced (about 20-25 strawberries)
juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons sugar, plus ¼ cup
3 egg yolks
8 ounces mascarpone cheese, at room temperature
1 ½ cups heavy whipping cream
1, 8-ounce package of freeze-dried strawberries, crushed into a powder (*optional*)
1 pre-packaged or freshly made butter pound cake or lady finger cookies

Place sliced strawberries in a large bowl and gently toss with lemon juice, vinegar, and 2 tablespoons sugar. Let set while preparing cream.

Place egg yolks and ¼ cup sugar in a bowl and beat with an electric mixture or very strong arm until pale yellow and fluffy, and sugar has dissolved. Whisk in mascarpone cheese until smooth and blended. Add cream and whisk until smooth and cream has whipped and puffed up slightly. Do not over-beat or cream will separate and mixture will become oily. Finally, gently stir in strawberry powder.

Place thin sliced of cake or cookies on the bottom of a baking dish to create a base layer. Spread half of the strawberry slices, with juices, over the layer of cake/cookies. Spread half of the cream mixture over the strawberries. Repeat with one more layer of cake/cookies, marinated strawberries, and cream. Serve immediately or chill for a few hours in the refrigerator and serve.

LEMON VINAIGRETTE

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon honey
2/3 cup lemon juice (*1-2 lemons*)
pinch of lemon zest
1 cup extra virgin olive oil

Place all ingredients except oil in a small bowl and whisk until smooth and blended. While whisking, slowly drizzle in oil until emulsified, then pour remaining oil in a steady stream, while whisking. Season as needed, then serve immediately or store refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.