

Pistachio Covered Rack of Lamb with Wine Sauce

by Janet McCarthy, OVC 2010 Entrée Finalist, Category and Grand Prize Winner

Ingredients

2 lamb racks, trim off fat cap and save
2 Tbsp peanut oil (can use olive oil)
2 Tbsp balsamic
3 Tbsp dijon mustard
2 Tbsp honey
2 tsp minced fresh garlic
1 Tbsp fresh rosemary, minced
salt and fresh ground pepper
1 Tbsp Montreal Steak Seasoning
½ cup crushed pistachios (crushed in food processor)
Pam spray butter

Wine sauce:

2 trimmed fat caps from lamb
2 Tbsp olive oil
4 Tbsp butter
1 shallot, diced
1 tsp fresh minced garlic
½ tsp chicken soup base
½ tsp beef bouillon
2 springs fresh rosemary
1 cup red wine (cabernet or merlot)
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preparation

Trim fat off lamb and save the two fat pieces that have meat left on them. Salt and pepper on all sides. Heat oil in medium skillet. Sear all sides of lamb, about 5 minutes. Transfer meat to working space. Set skillet aside.

Drizzle balsamic vinegar over all sides of lamb. Mix mustard and honey together and by hand rub over racks on all sides. Spread garlic over meat. Sprinkle rosemary and steak Montreal evenly on all sides. Pour crushed pistachios over all sides of lamb. Spray with Pam so that all adheres to meat. Place lamb on cookie sheet with ribs curving down. Bake at 450 for 20 minutes.

This will turn out medium rare. Allow meat to sit on a plate with a foil tent for 5 to 10 minutes. Pour any juices into sauce. Carve into single chops.

Sauce:

Using same skillet the lamb was seared in, heat oil and sear the fat caps on all sides. Simmer to cook for 5 minutes. Add wine and the remaining ingredients and simmer until lamb is out of oven. For a smooth sauce strain the liquid through a sieve. Keep sauce on low simmer until ready to serve.

Pour sauce on individual plates and lay pieces of lamb on top and serve.

Spinach Chicken Crepes Alfredo

by Christine Dilanni, *OVC 2010 Entrée Finalist*

Ingredients

Crepes:

1 c water

1 c flour

6 eggs

Filling:

8 cups shredded cooked chicken

1 1/2 cups chopped fresh spinach

1 tsp pepper

1 tsp garlic powder

3/4 cup romano cheese

1/2 - 3/4 cup chicken broth

Sauce:

3/4 cup butter

2 cloves minced fresh garlic

1 qt heavy whipping cream

1 cup chicken broth

1-2 cups romano cheese

Directions

Whisk ingredients for the crepes in a bowl. Heat 8-10" skillet with Crisco. Pour enough batter on the bottom of pan to cover. (I use a coffee scoop). Cook 30 seconds and flip over and cook about 5-10 seconds on the second side.

Mix ingredients for the filling. Place in the center of a crepe and roll up.

Sauce: Melt butter & add 2 cloves of minced garlic and saute for 2-3 minutes. Add whipping cream and chicken broth and bring to a boil. Turn heat down to medium and whisk in cheese. When sauce starts to thicken, turn off.

Pour some sauce on the bottom of a 9 x 13 pan. Add rolled crepes and pour sauce over crepes until just covered. Bake 350 degrees for 45 minutes covered with foil. Pour extra sauce on right before serving if needed

Tucson Chicken stuffed with Goat Cheese Cilantro Pesto

by Tim Smith, *OVC 2010 Entrée Finalist*

Ingredients

2 large whole chicken breasts, boned, skin on (critical that skin is nearly intact)
¼ cup finely chopped cilantro (fresh please)
½ cup good quality chicken stock (or to cover, adjust according to size of container used to marinate)
Oil for pan
Ground pepper to taste
Goat cheese cilantro pesto (see following)

Pesto:

2 garlic cloves – peeled
2 serrano chilis, stemmed
2 cups cilantro leaves
2 Tbsp oil
2 Tbsp of freshly grated parmesan cheese
3 oz of good quality goat cheese (Gevre' is commonly available and quite good)
¼ cup ricotta cheese

Preparation

Step One: In a large, shallow flat container, place the chicken breasts (remember good poultry handling procedures) cilantro and chicken stock (to cover, don't be bashful) – pepper to suit your taste – marinate for 1 hour before use.

Step Two: In a blender or food processor, puree the garlic, chilies, cilantro, oil, parmesan cheese, goat cheese and ricotta until smooth green uniform color. Taste and adjust salt, pepper and heat to suit. Remember, when the pesto is heated, during the cooking of the chicken all flavors will amplify, be careful to not over season, nor be too generous with heat, they get more exciting as the item is cooked. Load the pesto in a pastry bag fitted with a medium pastry tip (or a freezer quality zip lock bag – cutting the corner to form the dispensing tip) and set aside.

Step Three: Heat oven to 375 degrees and place a large over proof pan, preferably one of either ceramic or glass, add the remaining marinade to the pan and allow to heat while searing the breasts (next). Heat a large skillet on the stove top, remove the chicken from the marinade (reserve) and place skin side down for a good 3 – 4 minutes, you want the skin to crisp and shrink a bit. Turn chicken and cook an additional 3-4 minutes, basting liberally with the reserved marinade.

Step Four: Pipe the pesto under the skin of each breast, forcing it down into every portion of the now separated and crisped skin and the chicken meat. Don't panic as the pesto oozes out of various points. Place the breasts, once crisped, into the oven pan skin side up, apply any unused pesto to tops and bake in the marinade juices for 12-15 minutes. Serve immediately upon removing from the oven preferably over a bed of couscous which will absorb the now creamy super rich pesto and chicken juices.

Chocolate-dipped Cannoli di Vino

by Jeanna Savstano, *OVC 2010 Dessert Finalist*

Ingredients

Cannoli:

2 large eggs, beaten
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup veg. oil
1 1/2 cup AP flour
1/4 tsp baking soda
1/8 tsp salt
1/2 cup very finely chopped almonds
6 Tbsp wine
12 oz bag semi-sweet chocolate chips

Filling:

1 lb ricotta, drained
1 cup confectioners sugar
1/2 tsp orange zest
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp almond extract

Glaze:

1 cup confectioners sugar
2-3 Tbsp wine

Preparation

Cannoli:

Add ingredients in order listed (except chocolate). Drop by spoonful onto pizzelle iron. Cook approx. 60 seconds and remove. While hot, roll into cylinder on cannoli form. Melt chocolate over a double boiler and dip half of each cannoli in the chocolate. Let chocolate set while preparing filling.

Filling:

Beat ricotta with stand mixer on high for 5-7 minutes until light and fluffy. Add sugar, zest, vanilla and almond extract. Mix on medium until just combined. Place filling into piping bag and fill.

Glaze:

Combine in a small bowl until smooth. Using a small spoon, drizzle cannoli with glaze.

First Date Cake with Happy Ending Sauce

by Dianne Zeller, *OVC 2010 Dessert Finalist – Category Winner*

Ingredients

Cake:

1 cup plumb pitted dates
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1 cup water
1 Tbsp melted butter
1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans)
1 ¼ cup flour
1 tsp baking soda (sifted together with flour)

Sauce:

1 ½ cup water
½ cup milk
1 ½ cup brown sugar (packed)
4 Tbsp butter
2 Tbsp cornstarch
2 Tbsp flour

Directions:

Cake:

In a large glass bowl, mix together (by hand) dates, sugar, egg, 1 cup water, 1 TBSP melted butter, 1 cup nuts until well-blended. Add dry ingredients, mix until smooth. Pour into 13 x 9 inch greased pan. Bake until moist on top, about 15 minutes.

Sauce:

In sauce pan, mix butter & brown sugar and cook 2 minutes until melted and sugar is dissolved. Add water and stir until blended. Add milk and stir until blended. Finally, stir in flour and cornstarch. Bring to a boil for 1 minute.

Serve a small square slice with sauce drizzled generously on top. Garnish with homemade whipped topping & fresh mint.

Deconstructed Chocolate Kahlua 'N Cream Pie

By Barbi Morell, *OVC 2010 Dessert Finalist*

Ingredients

Crust:

1 ½ cups chocolate wafer crumbs, prepped at home
¾ cup pecans, chopped
9 Tbsp butter
¼ cup granulated sugar

Filling:

2 cups heavy whipping cream*
½ cup milk
1 small box vanilla instant pudding
5 Tbsp Kahlua (no substitutes)
¼ - ½ cup semi-sweet chocolate, melted/cooled
½ cup chocolate covered espresso beans, chopped/pulverized
*Cook's note: always place a bowl and beaters in freezer when preparing whipping cream – more volume is achieved with less beating time.

Garnish:

Heart Shaped brownies, prepped/baked at home

Directions:

Melt butter in medium skillet. Add chocolate wafer crumbs and chopped pecans and toast lightly, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, add sugar and stir until blended. Transfer to bowl to cool slightly. Sprinkle 1-2 Tbsp chocolate crumbs in bottom of 6 oz. martini glasses and set aside to cool completely. Melt chocolate in microwave and cool. Finely chop/pulverize chocolate covered espresso beans and set aside. Combine remaining filling ingredients in large bowl and beat with electric mixer for approximately 5-6 minutes, and add all or small amount of melted chocolate. Your judgment call as to how much chocolate you prefer. I like just a hint of chocolate so the Kahlua can shine as the star of this dessert! Beat an additional minute or so until thick enough to mound in the glass. Sprinkle with the chipped espresso beans or a combination of the espresso beans and remaining chocolate crumbs from the bottom crust layer and add a brownie heart.

Chicken and Fettuccine with Smoky Chili Cream Sauce

by Kimberlea Porterfield, *OVC 2010 Pasta Finalist – Category Winner*

Ingredients

12 oz dry fettuccine

8 slices maple bacon, chopped

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast cut into 3/4" chunks

2 shallots finely chopped

8 oz baby bella or white button mushrooms sliced

1 - 15 oz jar good quality alfredo sauce,

1-2 chipotle peppers in adobo sauce (depending on amount of heat wanted), seeded and finely chopped

2 tsp chili powder

1 tsp salt

1/2 cup dry white wine or chicken broth

2 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro.

Directions

Cook pasta until al dente and drain.

While pasta is cooking, in a large heavy skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove to paper towel to drain. Remove all but 3 Tbsp drippings and raise heat to medium high. Brown chicken for about 4 minutes or until cooked through. Remove to a plate and reserve.

Add mushrooms to skillet and sauté 3-4 minutes. Add shallots and cook an additional 1 minute. Add chipotle pepper(s), chili powder and salt. Cook additional 30 seconds stirring constantly.

Deglaze the pan with the wine or chicken broth, cooking until liquid has nearly evaporated. Add alfredo sauce and chicken to pan and heat until bubbly. Place pasta back into pot and stir in the alfredo mixture.

Spoon onto a large platter and garnish with the reserved bacon and the chopped cilantro.

Makes 6 servings.

Greek Lamb and Spaghetti with Feta Cheese

by Nancy Roussos, *OVC 2010 Pasta Finalist*

Ingredients

1 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp garlic, minced
2 small onions, sliced thin
2 – 3 lbs lamb shoulder chops-round bone cut
4 cans beef broth, 14.5 ounce
½ lemon
½ cup red wine
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp oregano
½ tsp basil
½ tsp cinnamon
28 ounce can whole tomatoes
½ can tomato paste
Salt and pepper to taste
1 pound cooked thin spaghetti
crumbled feta cheese

Directions

Trim excess fat from chops and brown in hot oil along with onions and garlic until cooked, approximately 10 minutes. Remove meat to plate with slotted spoon.

To same pot add broth, lemon, wine, sugar, oregano, basil, cinnamon, salt and pepper.

Wisk tomato paste in bowl with approximately ½ cup hot water and add to pot. Add whole tomatoes with juice, crushing with your fingers as you add them.

Return browned meat and any juices from plate to pot and cook uncovered about 1 hour or until sauce is reduced by approximately 1/3 and meat is falling off bone.

Remove meat again to plate and debone, cutting meat into bite size pieces and return to sauce with any juice, etc. Serve lamb and sauce over hot pasta, garnishing with crumbled feta cheese. Sauce will be thin, but tasty.

Note: Lamb chops may be browned ahead with onions and garlic and refrigerated until needed.

Mediterranio Macaronia

by Jonathan Conrad, *OVC 2010 Pasta Finalist*

Ingredients

3 cans cut clams

2 lbs mussels

2 lbs medium size scallops

2 packages grape tomatoes

1 can diced and seasoned tomatoes (Gia Russa)

Olive oil to taste

fresh chopped basil and parsley to taste

black pepper to taste

sea salt to taste

“secret” Greek seasoning to taste

garlic powder to taste

lots of fresh garlic cloves (California garlic)

crushed red pepper seeds to taste

1 package frozen spinach

1 whole Vidalia onion

1 Tbsp red wine “BAM”

Wheat angel hair pasta (Gia Russa)

Preparation

Saute garlic and onion in olive oil. Place grape tomatoes on a baking sheet and lather with olive oil and Greek seasoning. Place in 300 degree oven for about 20 minutes or until tomatoes begin to plump up.

Add roasted tomatoes to garlic and onion. Add sea salt, pepper, garlic powder, and wine BAM. Smash all ingredients with a potato smasher and add can of diced seasoned tomatoes strained. Cook spinach, bring all ingredients to an initial boil, add spinach. Reduce heat to low and simmer.

Add seafood and cover, cook on low to medium heat. Simmer for about 15 minutes. Make sure all your mussels have opened properly. Stir and taste test. Add crushed red pepper and fresh chopped basil and parsley. Let reduce until sauce thickens.