

Matthew May's

TEACHING KITCHEN

BETTER LIVING THROUGH FOOD AND SCIENCE

“A Taste of Italy”
January 11, 2025

BRUSCHETTA PUTTANESCA

1 loaf crusty baguette or French bread
1-tsp. anchovy paste (optional)
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
1 ½-pounds heirloom grape , cherry, or pear tomatoes
2 TBSP. capers (drained)
½-cup fresh Italian or flat leaf parsley, chopped
¼-cup fresh basil, chopped. (chop basil at the very last minute as it tends to oxidize)
1 hot cherry pepper, or peperoncini, minced
¼-cup Kalamata olives, seeded and chopped

Preheat oven to 400°F. Slice bread into ¼” slices, on the diagonal. On a cookie or baking sheet pan, brush or spray sliced bread on both sides with olive oil. Bake in hot oven until slightly golden brown. Remove from oven and set aside to cool. In a medium size mixing bowl, combine remaining olive oil, optional anchovy paste, minced garlic, basil, parsley, olives, and hot pepper. If adding the anchovy, no salt will be needed. If not using the anchovy, add 1/8-tsp. salt. Stir. Taste and adjust salt if needed. Top each slice of toasted bread with puttanesca topping and enjoy. Garnish with shaved Parmesan cheese.

PAN-FREID EGGPLANT PARMESAN/SIMPLE MARINARA

1 eggplant, ½-¾-pound, washed, top and bottom trimmed off
½-cup flour
¼-tsp. salt
1/8-tsp ground black pepper
2 eggs, beaten
2 TBSP. water
1-cup breadcrumbs
1-cup vegetable oil
½-cup shredded mozzarella cheese
2 TBSP. chopped fresh Italian flatleaf parsley

In a shallow plate or baking dish, add flour, salt, and pepper; stir to combine. In another shallow plate or baking dish, add egg and water; stir to combine. In another shallow plate or baking dish, add breadcrumbs. Slice the eggplant, lengthwise, into ¼-inch slices. This is best done by cutting one slice of eggplant, then laying the eggplant down on the cut side to give you a flat surface, making it much safer to slice. Preheat vegetable oil to 350°F in a skillet or fry pan. Now that you have all the eggplant sliced, take one slice at a time, and dredge it into the flour. This process will be much cleaner if you use two forks or small tongs, instead of your hands. Evenly coat the slice of eggplant with flour, shaking off any excess flour. Then submerge the floured eggplant into the egg mixture. Turn eggplant over to evenly coat both sides. Lift the sliced eggplant out of the egg wash and allow it to drip off any excess egg wash. Then, place the sliced eggplant into the breadcrumbs. You may want to gently press it down into the breadcrumbs to make sure they stick to the eggplant. Turn eggplant over to coat both sides with breadcrumbs. Lay the breaded eggplant flat onto a flat tray, without overlapping them. Once the oil is hot, carefully add 2-3 slices of the breaded eggplant into the hot oil. Fry the eggplant on each side about 2-3 minutes, or until evenly golden brown on both sides. Once browned, carefully remove the fried eggplant, and transfer them to a paper towel lined tray. If you have a lot of eggplant to fry, you may want to keep this pan in a warm oven, set to its lowest setting. Preheat oven broiler before you are ready to serve. To serve, remove paper towels from pan and lay breaded eggplant flat on tray, being careful not to overlap. Top with this simple marinara sauce (recipe below) and shredded mozzarella cheese. Place pan under broiler for 1-2 minutes, or until cheese is bubbly and slightly browned. Remove from oven and garnish with freshly chopped Italian parsley before serving.

QUICK MARINARA SAUCE

1 can 15-ounce crushed tomatoes
1/8-tsp. sugar (to balance the acidity of the tomatoes)
¼-tsp. dry oregano
¼-tsp. dry basil leaves
¼-tsp. garlic powder
¼-tsp. granulated or dry onion
dash salt
¼-cup grated or shredded Parmesan cheese for garnish

In a small saucepan, combine all ingredients (except for the cheese); stir and simmer on low heat for 10-15 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.

CHICKEN MARSALA

¼-cup all-purpose flour
½-tsp. salt lemon-garlic sea salt infusion (found at www.matthewmay.org)
¼-tsp. ground black pepper
½-tsp. dried oregano
4 medium skinless, boneless chicken breast, thinly sliced on the bias
4 TBSP. unsalted butter
4 TBSP. olive oil
1-cup button mushrooms, cleaned and sliced
½-cup Marsala wine

In a shallow bowl, mix the flour, salt, pepper, and oregano. Stir to evenly combine. Slice the chicken breasts diagonally, into 1/8"-1/4" slices. Coat each piece of chicken in the seasoned flour, set aside. In a large skillet, melt butter in olive oil over medium heat. Once the butter become a little frothy, begin sautéing the chicken until lightly browned on both sides. Remove browned chicken from pan and place on a plate while you continue sautéing the remaining pieces of chicken; set aside. Add mushrooms and Marsala wine; stir. Add the chicken back into pan into the pan. Cover skillet; simmer chicken for 10 minutes, turning the chicken over once during this time. The flour coating on the chicken will slightly thicken the pan sauce. Using a stem thermometer, be sure chicken is cooked thoroughly to 165°F. Remove pan from heat and serve with pasta or mashed potatoes.

TIRAMISU POT de CREME

2 lady fingers, cut in half

2 TBSP hot water

1-tsp. dark rum

½-tsp. instant coffee or espresso powder

½-tsp. cocoa

½-tsp. sugar

4 egg yolks

1 TBSP. the best pure vanilla extract

1-cup heavy whipping cream

2 TBSP. mascarpone or cream cheese (cream cheese works perfectly fine here)

2 TBSP. white sugar (divided)

2 6-ounce glass baking cups or ramekins

1 tsp. cocoa (garnish)

(Makes two desserts)

Preheat oven to 300°F. Combine hot water, rum, cocoa, coffee or espresso powder, and ½-tsp. sugar in a measuring glass; stir until cocoa and sugar have dissolved. Put two halves of each lady finger into the bottoms of both ramekins. Pour about 1 ½ TBSPS. of the cocoa, coffee, and rum mixture into each ramekin. Allow 5-10 minutes for the lady fingers to absorb the cocoa, coffee, and rum mixture.

In a small mixing bowl, combine egg yolks and 1 TBSP sugar. Bring cream and vanilla to a low simmer over medium heat. Very slowly, pour the hot cream into the egg yolk mixture (a little at a time), while stirring the eggs constantly. Pouring too fast will result in scrambled eggs. Place your 2 ramekins into a 6X9-inch loaf pan. Divide the custard mixture into the ramekins. The lady fingers may rise to the top. Pour water into the pan (around the outside of the ramekins) until it's about halfway up the side of the ramekins. Be careful not to pour water into the custard. Bake 40-45 minutes or until centers are just set. Cool to room temperature then refrigerate for a minimum of three hours. When ready to serve: using a powdered sugar shaker, shake cocoa over the tops before serving.