

Matthew May's

TEACHING KITCHEN

BETTER LIVING THROUGH FOOD AND SCIENCE

November 2023 “Classic Comfort Foods”

WHITE CHEDDAR MAC & CHEESE

1-pound macaroni noodles or medium pasta shells
1-tsp. salt
½-pound sharp white cheddar cheese, shredded
1-cup reserved pasta cooking water
ground/cracked black pepper to taste

In a large saucepan, add 2-3 quarts of water and salt. Heat over high heat until water is boiling. Add pasta and cook for 5-7 minutes or until pasta is very under done, or al dente. The pasta will continue to cook at the same time you're making the sauce. Remove 1-cup of pasta water before draining the pasta in a colander. Drain pasta in the sink using a colander. Add drained pasta back into the same pot. Over very low heat, add shredded cheese and ½-cup of the pasta cooking water to hot pasta. Using a wooden spoon or spatula, stir the pasta from the bottom and gently fold the cheese into the pasta. As you stir, the movement of pasta will release its starch and begin to thicken the cheese sauce. Once the liquid has been absorbed into the pasta, add more of the pasta cooking water. This water is already seasoned and starchy, so it will not dilute the cheese sauce. Add ground or cracked black pepper to taste and continue to stir until you have achieved the rich and creamy cheese sauce! You should not need to use any salt as the white cheddar cheese and the pasta cooking water is providing all of the salt you will need.

“NOT YOUR MAMMA’S” MEATLOAF

2 pounds 85% lean ground beef
1 rib celery, finely chopped
2 medium carrots, peeled and finely chopped
1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 TBSP. chopped garlic
3 TBSP. unsalted butter
1-cup breadcrumbs
¼-cup ketchup
¼-cup Worcestershire Sauce
½-cup cream or whole milk
1/8-tsp. ground black pepper
1-tsp. salt

sauce:

2-cups ketchup, or catsup

1-cup Sriracha

½-cup brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F. Using a food processor, add the carrots, celery, and onion (already cut into smaller pieces) and pulse in food processor 4-5 times, until finely minced. Over medium-high heat, add butter to a sauté pan or skillet and sauté veggies and garlic until soft and all moisture has evaporated (7-10 minutes). While the veggies are cooking, combine breadcrumbs, ketchup, cream or milk, Worcestershire sauce, salt, and pepper. Allow breadcrumbs to become fully hydrated before moving to the next step. This is called a 'panade' and will keep the meatloaf moist and tender. Combine panade, cooked veggies and cold ground beef; mix thoroughly. On a baking sheet pan or cookie sheet, form the mixture into a uniform loaf (as appears in the image above.) Bake for 45 minutes. While meatloaf is baking, combine ketchup, Sriracha, and brown sugar in a small bowl. After 45 minutes, remove the meatloaf from the oven and spoon a generous amount of sauce over the top, saving some sauce for serving. Put meatloaf back into oven for an additional 15-20 minutes, or until the interior temperature reaches 160°F. Remove from oven and let rest 10-15 minutes. The interior temperature of the meatloaf will continue to climb to approx. 165°F. This is called "carry-over-cooking". Slice and serve with additional sauce spooned over the top.

GARLIC-PARMESAN SOUS VIDE CHICKEN WINGS

4-pounds chicken wings, tips removed

1 TBSP. Garlic & Herb sea salt (found at www.eastcoastsaltcompany.com)

1 TBSP. fresh garlic, chopped

½-cup grated Parmesan cheese

½-tsp. freshly grated black pepper

Set up your immersion circulator to 160°F for three hours. Meanwhile, place chicken wings into one or two zipper-lock plastic storage bags and season evenly with sea salt and garlic. Squeeze the outside of the bag(s) to move the chicken wings around inside the bag to coat them evenly with the seasoning. Lower bags into the water bath and allow the air to escape through the top of the bag(s) before sealing. Make sure there is space all around each bag (while in the water bath) to allow the water to circulate around them. Cook for 3 hours. Preheat oven to high broiler with the top rack about 6-8 inches below the heating element. After 3 hours of sous vide cooking, remove the bags from the water, open each bag and transfer the wings into a colander or strainer in the sink to drain. Transfer wings to a baking sheet pan or cookie tray. Place the tray about 6-8" under the broiler heating element. Close the oven door, but be sure to keep a close eye on the wings, as they can burn quickly. The heat from the broiler will evaporate any moisture off the wings. Once the moisture has evaporated, they will begin to brown (the Maillard reaction). When wings have browned (after 5-6 minutes), remove pan from oven and turn wings over and return the tray to oven. Broil another 3-5 minutes on this second side. They will brown more quickly on this second side as most of the moisture has already been evaporated. After this second side has browned, remove them from oven and transfer the wings to a large mixing bowl. Add parmesan cheese and black pepper. Stir or toss the wings to coat them evenly with the cheese and pepper. Serve immediately.

VANILLA/AMARETTO CRÈME BRÛLÉE

1 whole egg

3 egg yolks

1 TBSP. the best pure vanilla extract

For Amaretto Crème Bruleè: substitute: 1 TBSP. Amaretto and 3 drops almond extract for vanilla.

1-cup heavy whipping cream

2 TBSP. white sugar (divided)

2 6-ounce glass baking cups or ramekins

Optional fruit-on-the-bottom ingredients: strawberry or raspberry jam, orange marmalade, etc.

(Makes two desserts)

Preheat oven to 300°F. Separate egg yolks from three eggs into a small bowl. Add one whole egg and 1-TBSP sugar to the yolks. Gently, whisk to combine. Bring cream and vanilla or amaretto to a low boil 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 9"x9"-inch pan. Divide the custard mixture into the ramekins. 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: Cover each Brulée with 1-tsp. of white sugar and tilt Brulée around to evenly coat with sugar. Pour off any excess sugar. Bruleè the tops with a kitchen torch or under the broiler until sugar browns. Wait a few minutes before eating, as the sugar is very hot.