

Matthew May's TEACHING KITCHEN

“Springtime Teasers”

March 22, 2025

SPINACH ARTICHOKE DIP

6-8-ounces fresh baby spinach, any large stems removed

1-tsp. fresh garlic, minced

¼-cup water

¼-pound artichoke hearts, quartered

4-ounces cream cheese, room temperature

¼-cup grated parmesan cheese

cracked black pepper to taste

Using a large skillet or fry pan, add chopped garlic, artichoke hearts, and water; stir. Cook over medium heat until almost all the water has evaporated (about 2-3 minutes). Add spinach. Stir and cook for 2-3 minutes, or until all the spinach has wilted and the moisture has evaporated out of the pan. Turn heat off, then add cream cheese, parmesan cheese, and black pepper to taste; stir to evenly combine. If you see any moisture (water on the bottom of the pan, turn heat back on and stir until moisture has evaporated. Transfer to individual ramekins or a larger serving dish. Serving option: Make a double or triple batch, transfer to a casserole dish, top with breadcrumbs and parmesan cheese, and bake at 375°F until top is golden brown. Serve with toast points, bread, corn chips, smashed potatoes, and/or crackers.

SOUS VIDE BLACK TRUFFLE AND THYME CHICKEN BREAST

2 6-8-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts, rinsed and patted dry

¼-tsp. Black Truffle Sea Salt (found at www.eastcoastsaltcompany.com)

3-4 fresh thyme sprigs

1 TBSP. vegetable oil

¼-cup white wine

3 TBSP. unsalted butter

Using a heat-safe plastic container, soup pot or Dutch oven, fill with water up to the water level line of your sous vide wand. Set your sous vide wand to 155°F for 3-4 hours (more than four hours may result in a ‘mushy’ chicken as the proteins will begin to break down.) At this temperature of 155°F, your chicken will not be fully cooked. (Set your sous vide temperature to five degrees below your desired doneness). Evenly spread sea salt over both sides of each chicken breast. Place chicken breasts, side-by-side inside plastic bag. Add fresh thyme inside bag. With the top of the bag still open, carefully submerge the bag (with the seasoned chicken inside) into the water. Gently move bag around the chicken to release any air bubbles that may be trapped under them. Continue to submerge the bag all the way up to the top seal of the bag, while allowing the air to escape out the top. Once the air has been removed, being sure to keep the chicken below the surface of the water, seal the bag and lay the top flap of the bag over the top of your pan/container. Cook until timer is complete. Preheat your skillet on medium heat, about 375°F - 400°F. Using tongs,

remove the chicken from the bag and blot dry with paper towel until all surface moisture is removed. Do not squeeze or press the chicken! Add oil to hot pan and carefully place chicken breasts and thyme in the pan. The thyme will season the oil, but when it begins to burn, remove the thyme from the pan and discard. Allow chicken to brown for 2-4 minutes on each side, then remove from pan. Turn off heat. Add butter and white wine to the pan, stir. Slice the chicken breast into ¼-inch strips and return to pan. Gently stir to coat the chicken with sauce. Served sliced chicken with sauce poured over the top. You will immediately notice the amount of flavor that has permeated the chicken breasts. Because the chicken was cooked at a low temperature for a long period of time, “osmosis” was allowed to happen where the salt and herbs have been drawn into the meat, thus seasoning, tenderizing, and cooking the meat at the same time.

LEMON-GARLIC BROWN BUTTER PAN-ROASTED HALIBUT

1-pound wild caught halibut

½-tsp. Lemon Garlic Sea Salt (found at www.eastcoastsaltcompany.com)

1-tsp. cracked black pepper

6 TBSP. unsalted butter

1 lemon, juiced

2 cloves garlic, minced

Pat the fish dry and cut into desired sized portions. Four portions are ideal for a 1-pound piece of halibut. Ideally, you want the portions to be the same size to help them cook evenly. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add butter. Cook the butter for about 2-3 minutes, allowing the water to evaporate. The milk solids will rise to the top while the milk solids will fall to the bottom. The milk solids will brown once all the moisture has evaporated (the Maillard reaction). Once the butter has browned, carefully add the portions of halibut to the pan (skin side up), leaving space in between each piece. This is important as you want the moisture in the fish to evaporate for the fish to brown (the Maillard reaction). Cook this first side for about 3-4 minutes, allowing a nice sear to form on the bottom. Turn fish over and cook for another 2-3 minutes on this second side. Ideally, the goal is to cook the halibut one third of the way through on each side, allowing for ‘carry-over-cooking’. The halibut should be seared on the outside, and opaque and flaky on the inside when finished. Avoid overcooking. Remove from pan and transfer to a serving plate. Transfer the seared halibut to your serving plates or platter. Turn the heat down to low and add lemon juice, pepper, and minced garlic. Stir. Cook for about 2 minutes or until the garlic becomes fragrant. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. You want to taste the delicious brown butter, the salt, and the acidity from the lemon juice. Spoon the lemon garlic brown butter over the fish and serve. You will notice the halibut finished cooking while it rested and while you made the pan sauce.

LAVENDER VANILLA CRÈME BRÛLÉE

4 egg yolks

½-tsp. the best pure vanilla extract

½-tsp. lavender extract

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 eggs. Save the egg whites for another recipe. In a small mixing bowl, gently stir together the four egg yolks and three tsp. sugar; set aside. Meanwhile, bring cream,

lavender extract, and vanilla to a very low simmer over medium heat, just until you see a bit of steam. Remove from 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 or loaf pan. Divide the custard mixture into the two 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. (There will be a little 'jiggle' in the centers.) 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. Using your finger, spread the sugar evenly around the tops of the crème Brulée so it is completely covering the Brulée. Bruleè the tops with a kitchen torch or under the broiler until sugar browns. Wait at least three minutes before eating, as the sugar will be very hot.