

Dinner and A Book

Episode 603

Menu:

Mushroom Sherry Soup
Flattened Chicken Breasts with Piquant Basil Sauce
The Blackhawk's Creamed Spinach
Warm Rosy Berry Compote

Recipes:

Mushroom Sherry Soup

6 large portobello mushrooms, gills and stems removed
olive oil, as needed
8 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 stick butter
6 yellow onions, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 T. fresh thyme, plus additional for garnish
3 cups good-quality sherry
2 quarts chicken broth
salt and pepper to taste
2 cups heavy whipping cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place mushrooms upside down on a large sheet pan. Baste with olive oil and spread minced garlic over them. Roast for 15-30 minutes, or until brown. While mushrooms are roasting, melt butter in a large pot. Over low heat, sweat onions for 20 minutes. Add thyme, sherry, and chicken broth. chop mushrooms into 1-inch cubes and add to soup. simmer on low for 30 minutes. Remove from heat and puree. Season with salt and pepper. Add cream until soup reaches desired consistency. Garnish with thyme.

Flattened Chicken Breasts with Piquant Basil Sauce

4 large skinned, boned chicken breast halves, about 4 ounces each, trimmed, chilled
2 teaspoons honey
2 t. Dijon mustard
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
6 T. lower-salt chicken broth
2 t. olive oil
1/4 t. salt
Freshly ground pepper
2 T. julienned basil leaves

1. To flatten the chicken breasts, place a breast between 2 pieces of plastic wrap. Use a meat pounder, a heavy pot, or any heavy object with a smooth, 4-inch-diameter base, to

flatten it to about 1/8 inch uniform thickness. Repeat with the remaining breasts. You can freeze the flattened breasts for up to 1 month.

2. Combine the honey, mustard, vinegar, and chicken broth in a small dish and set aside.

3. Brush 1/4 t. of the oil on the top side of each breast; season with salt and pepper. Heat a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. when hot, cook 2 breasts at a time, oiled side down, until lightly browned, for about 1 1/2 minutes. Carefully brush or rub 1/4 t. oil on the top side. Brown the other side for another 1 1/2 minutes. cover the skillet for the last 30 seconds to be sure the chicken is cooked through. Transfer the chicken to a warm platter, tent with foil, and repeat with the remaining chicken.

4. To serve, add the honey mixture to the hot skillet. Cook to thicken, about 5 seconds. Add the warm chicken, spooning the sauce over them. As soon as they are warmed, transfer them to a warm serving platter and garnish with the julienned basil. Serve hot.

The Blackhawk's Creamed spinach

1 small onion, finely chopped, about 1/2 cup.

Two 10-ounce packages frozen whopped spinach, thawed, squeezed of moisture

2 T. each unsalted butter, flour

1/4 cup heavy cream

1 cup milk

1/2 t. salt Ground pepper

1. Heat some oil and fry onion until it is golden, about 8 minutes, stirring often. Stir in the spinach. Remove from the heat.

2. Heat the butter in a 1-quart saucepan over medium heat until it is melted. Stir in the flour. cook 2 minutes, stirring often. Slowly stir in the cream and milk. Bring to a simmer gradually and cook until thickened, about 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the seasonings and reserved spinach. Stir well. Heat through. Adjust the seasoning.

3. The spinach can be made a day ahead and refrigerated, covered airtight; to serve, gently reheat in a saucepan or, in a microwave oven on high power about 1 1/2 minutes.

Warm Rosy Berry Compote

2 pints, strawberries, hulled

1/3 to 1/2 cup sugar

2 t. cornstarch Grated zest (colored rind) of 1 large orange, removed with a zester or fine grater. about 1 T.

1/2 cup, orange juice.

1 pint blueberries

2 T. orange-flavored liqueur

1 pint raspberries Raspberry, peach, or vanilla ice cream.

- 1.** Puree 1 pint of the strawberries until smooth with the sugar, cornstarch, orange zest, and juice in a blender or a food processor fitted with the metal blade.
- 2.** Transfer the puree to a 1-quart non-aluminum saucepan. Stir in 1 cup of the blueberries. Cook over medium heat until the mixture is simmering and thickened, about 5 minutes, stirring to avoid burning. The sauce can be made 2 days ahead and refrigerated.
- 3.** To serve, gently reheat the sauce. When hot, add the remaining strawberries (quartered if large, otherwise halved) and blueberries. Heat about 30 seconds. Remove from the heat, stir in the liqueur, and gently fold in the raspberries. Serve warm, in stemmed goblets, topped with a dollop of ice cream or frozen yogurt, if you wish.