

NEW YEAR'S DAY - COMFORT FOOD

Slow Cooker Chicken with Green Olives and Tomatoes

12 pieces chicken; legs and thighs

Salt and freshly ground pepper

2 C red wine such as Pinot Noir, or Cabernet Sauvignon

2 shallots, minced

1 clove garlic, minced

8 peppercorns

4 sprigs fresh thyme

3 medium tomatoes, seeded and chopped or 1 14.5 oz can diced

1 Tbls tomato paste

1 Tbls unsalted butter, cut in pieces

1 Tbls all-purpose flour

1 C green olives with pimientos, chopped

Season the chicken on all sides with salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a small saucepan, combine the wine, shallots, garlic, peppercorns and thyme. Bring the mixture to a boil and cook, stirring frequently until reduced to one-half cup (about 20 minutes).

Place the chicken in a slow cooker and add the wine mixture and chopped tomatoes. Cover and cook until the chicken is tender and completely opaque (about 3 hours on low setting and 1 ½ hours on high setting).

When chicken reaches level of doneness described above, transfer to a platter. Strain the cooking juices through a fine-mesh strainer, into a small bowl. Whisk the tomato paste into the remaining juices (about 1 cup).

Bring the juices to a boil in a large frying pan, over medium-high heat. Combine the butter and flour in a small bowl, and using your fingers or a fork, mix into a crumbly paste. Add the butter/flour mixture to the frying pan and cook while constantly whisking, for 7 to 10 minutes, until it becomes a thick sauce.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in the olives. Add the chicken. Turn the chicken to completely coat with sauce. Cook over medium-low heat until warmed completely (about 5 minutes).

Divide chicken among plates and cover with sauce. Serve with buttered egg noodles with parsley and pepper, and vegetable of your choice.

Pappardelle Bolognese

2 Tbls olive oil
1 yellow onion, coarsely chopped
1 rib celery, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
½ lb each, ground beef, veal and pork
½ C dry white wine (chardonnay)
2 C beef broth (low sodium)
2 Tbls tomato paste
1 Tbls fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 lb pappardelle
½ C grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a large saute pan, warm the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and saute until translucent (about 5 minutes). Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute (do not brown). Add the beef, veal and pork and stir to combine, breaking up clumps of meat with a wooden spoon. Cook until no longer pink (about 5 minutes). Add the wine and cook, frequently stirring until it has almost evaporated (about 3 minutes). Pour in the beef broth and stir in the tomato paste. Add the parsley and season with salt and pepper.

Transfer the mixture to a Dutch oven. Cover and cook approximately 1 ½ hours, or until thickened, stirring about every 20 minutes. If sauce appears to dry after first hour, add ½ cup water or broth.

About 20 minutes before done, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add 2 Tbls salt and the pasta. Cook according to instructions on package until al dente. Drain the pasta. Return pasta to the pot. Add ½ cup of the meat sauce and toss to coat.

To serve, divide pasta between bowls and top with more sauce. Sprinkle with cheese and serve with warm Italian bread and salad of your choice.

NEW YEAR'S EVE - PARTY FOOD

Emmentaler and Gruyere Cheese Fondue

1 ½ tsp garlic, minced
16 oz Emmentaler cheese, grated
16 oz Gruyere cheese, grated
3 Tbls cornstarch
2 to 2 ½ C dry white wine
3 to 4 Tbls kirsch (cherry flavored brandy)
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
1/8 tsp nutmeg
12 cups French bread, cubed
3 Granny Smith apples, sliced
3 Cups broccoli florets, lightly steamed
Other cut vegetable as desired (carrots, celery)

Recipe serves 8 to 10.

Rub side of a fondue pot with garlic.

Place grated cheeses and cornstarch in a small bowl and toss until cornstarch is mixed evenly over cheese. Set aside.

Pour white wine into the fondue pot and bring just to simmering point. DO NOT BOIL.

Gradually add cheese to the wine, stirring slowly to melt and blend. Let simmer for several minutes.

Finish by stirring in the kirsch and season to taste with cayenne and nutmeg.

If the fondue becomes too thick, stir in a splash or two of white wine.

Keep warm over a low flame or sterno. Serve with the bread cubes, fruit and vegetables.

Egg Nog – The Real One

6 large eggs
½ C sugar
¼ tsp salt
2 cups heavy cream, whipped
2 cups bourbon
½ cup dark rum
Grated nutmeg for garnish

In a large bowl, beat the eggs with an electric mixer until foamy.

Add the sugar and salt, continuing to beat until thickened.

Fold in the whipped cream. Add the bourbon and rum (add a little at a time so as to not make it too strong).

Chill until ready to serve.

Ladle from the bowl into glass cups and serve sprinkled with freshly grated nutmeg.

PLEASE drink responsibly, and get home safe!