

COOKING AT HOME



by Chef DAN GRIFFIN

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SUMMERTIME SHRIMP SOUP

This is a soup that I came up with while raiding my cabinet and freezer, I like to combine shrimp, corn, and roasted peppers in light broth that isn't too heavy and good for a light soup option. The shrimp, corn and peppers all have this slightly sweet undertone that when combined with bay leaf, sweated onions and garlic makes for a savory sweet combination. Hope you enjoy it.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of sweet corn
- 2 roasted peppers, skin removed and diced
- 2 lbs baby shrimp or whatever size you have just keep in mind we want everything to fit on a spoon.
- 1 medium Vidalia onion diced
- 5 minced garlic cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 3-4 cups of shrimp stock or however much you need to cover shrimp
- 1 Tbls old bay seasoning
- OPTIONAL- consider adding diced andouille sausage, if you do just brown it with the onions.

PROCEDURE

Heat a pot to med heat, and then add approx 2 oz vegetable oil and 1 Tbls of butter. Add onions and begin sweating add a little sprinkle of salt to assist the process. Once translucent add garlic cook for 5min's until slightly brown and fragrant Lightly dust bottom of pot with flour, not much at all we still want a light broth. Add shrimp stock, bay leaf, old bay seasoning, can of corn (without water), and roasted peppers. Bring to a boil then simmer for about 30min Then add shrimp simply let them cook thru and your soup is ready, season with salt and pepper.



CLAM CHOWDER

I love this New England Classic, but I do have one major problem with ordering it out. Where are the CLAMS?? Usually when I order it, it does taste good but it feels like I am eating potato chowder instead of clam chowder, so that is why I make it at home and encourage you to do the same. I am also originally from Massachusetts and clam chowder reminds me of going to Boston with my mom and sharing a bowl on the steps of the Quincy marketplace while watching the street performers.



INGREDIENTS

- 4 cans of clams, and about 10-15 whole clams
- 1 bundle of fresh thyme
- 1 med Spanish onion diced, white onion or Vidalia is fine also
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 4-5 pieces of diced bacon
- 3-4 cups of seafood stock
- 3-4 peeled and cubed Yukon gold potatoes
- 1 bay leaf
- 8oz heavy cream
- About 2 Tbls of flour just enough to dust the bottom of the pot.

PROCEDURE

Get 2 pots heated to med-low heat, and in 1 add diced bacon, and the other put whole clams, 3 thyme sprigs, and garlic clove. Render fat out of bacon until crisp and then remove bacon and save for later and keep bacon fat in pot. In the other pot add enough hot water to cover clams cover and steam until clams open up and are done cooking. Add diced onion bay leaf to pot with rendered bacon fat and sweat onions till translucent (If needed pour off some of the bacon fat to much bacon fat will dominate the chowder) once onions are translucent add minced garlic. Once clams are cooked strain, save liquid and you have the choice of keeping clams in shells or removing and chopping them. After about 3mins since adding garlic it should become fragrant, then dust bottom of pot with flour a tablespoon at a time to form rye. Be sure to cook out raw flour taste. After you have formed rye add reserved cooking liquid from clams, seafood stock, and canned clams juice and all, and rest of the Thyme approx 15-20 sprigs. Cover and simmer for about 30mins. Stir occasionally to keep rye from burning on the bottom, after 30mins add potatoes and cream simmer for another 15-20 min or until potatoes are cooked. Then dish out and garnish with the crisp bacon that you reserved on the side season with salt and pepper, and enjoy your clam filled chowder.

TEX MEX STEW

This is one of my favorite things to eat on football Sunday or when it actually gets cold in Florida I know oxymoron. I like to get up early and have it simmering on the stove thru ought the day. I am a big fan of the Tex Mex flavors like cumin, oregano, and chili powder and I feel like they really shine thru in this dish. The stew is also pretty easy to make and I only have to clean one pot at the end of it so that's a perk also.



INGREDIENTS

About 2lbs of cubed stew beef
1 large onion
1 ½ Green bell pepper cut into large pieces about thumb size
1 ½ Red bell pepper cut the same as green
5 cloves garlic chopped/minced
1 can yellow corn (water removed)
1 can black beans
1 bay leaf
1 can Mexican beer (it's ok if there are a few ounces missing)
1 tsp of cayenne pepper, 2Tble of oregano, 2 Tbl Chili powder,
3 Tbl of Cumin. You can mix all together then add at same time.
Some Tortilla chips. Minced cilantro it's for garnish so only cut what you need.

PROCEDURE

Get one heavy bottom pot on stove and set to med-high heat once hot coat bottom with vegetable oil. Season Beef with salt and pepper, and begin searing meat in pot. IMPORTANT- Only place a few pieces in pot at a time, if you add to much the meat it will steam and you will not get the delicious caramelized brown exterior. Once meat is done browning remove, add diced onion and bay leaf, cook for approx 5-7 min then add chopped garlic. Cook until garlic is fragrant and brown then add Beer, Beef, corn, and black beans with liquid. Add approx 2 cups of water or until all beef is covered. Also add seasoning mix and cover and simmer for approx 1 ½ hours stirring occasionally. After 1 ½ hours of simmering add bell peppers and continue simmering for another 1 ½ hours or until the beef is tender and can be shredded with a fork. Taste for seasonings salt and pepper ECT, then dish out garnish with crushed tortilla chips and minced cilantro.

SIMPLE DUVAL QUESADILLAS

I recently made these for a trip that I took to Key West with some friends. The idea was to avoid spending too much money on food, but to also have something that I could make quickly so I could still continue to enjoy my time in Key West. It worked out well we would eat them before we went to Duval Street and defiantly after it was my favorite trip to Key West yet.



INGREDIENTS

About 3-4 thinly sliced chicken breast
Corn Tortillas(whatever size you like)
Mexican Cheese blend (spend a little more and get the better cheese it's worth it)
1 medium Vidalia onion
6 Roma tomatoes
3 minced garlic cloves
1 bundle chopped cilantro
Vegetable oil
2-3 limes
1 ½ Tbl of cumin
Hot sauce and Mayo combined approx ½ cup of mayo

PROCEDURE

Make Pico di Gallo by dicing onions, tomatoes, cilantro, 1 garlic clove, and then combine and squeeze fresh lime juice over the top and lightly season with salt and pepper. I like to do this the night before. Marinade chicken with minced garlic, lime juice, cumin. Vegetable oil (just enough to coat chicken), salt and pepper. Let marinade for a couple hours or more then Grill, once chicken is cooled dice. Heat a pan to medium coat with vegetable oil, and place tortilla in pan Cover tortilla on one half with cheese, then place your chicken, Pico, and light dollop of spicy mayo. Then top with more cheese (don't be shy with the cheese). Let cook for about 1 min then fold over the other side of tortilla so that it looks like a taco. Press down with spat hula to help cheese stick then flip and brown other side, then serve them up.

POP AND J POTATO SALAD

I never liked potato salad growing up and I've always been skeptical of mayo based products. So I decided to take matters into my own hands and make a potato salad that I would like. First I added crispy bacon pieces and also added corn and peas for a kind of sweet and salty combination. Another thing I do is I make sure not to use too much mayo. I call this pop and j potato salad because I made it for my grandparents recently and they really seemed to enjoy it.



INGREDIENTS

Russet potatoes peeled and cut into cubes
Bacon crisped and crumbled
Canned corn
Canned peas
Mayo
Mustard
Red wine vinegar
Sugar
Hot sauce
Salt and Pepper

PROCEDURE

Place potatoes in proper sized pot and cover with cold water. Place pot on burner and turn on med heat. Let potatoes simmer until cooked thru. Drain. Combine all the dressing ingredients minus the corn, peas, and bacon. Then toss potatoes with dressing. Add corn, peas, and bacon and enjoy. I find I like it best slightly warm or at room temp.



PARAMEDIC PASTA SALAD

When I was in middle school I used to sell candy like airhead, ring pops, and starbursts. I was great having money in pocket and feeling like I had my own business. When I went to paramedic school money was tight, so I had to think of creative ways to make a few extra dollars, so I thought back to those middle school days and began selling my food at school. A top seller was this pasta salad. I would bring about it to class store it in a communal refrigerator and sell it in paper cups for 2 dollars a pop. The profit margin was great since my cost was 6 dollars and could get about 20 servings out of it. When I think about this pasta salad I think about to very good friends I made in Paramedic school Jimmy and Sean.



INGREDIENTS

1lb Penne Rigate
3-4 Roma tomatoes seeded and diced
Small handful of basil cut chiffonade aka rolled up and cut into strips
1lb button mushrooms sliced and sautéed
4oz balsamic vinegar
4oz Olive oil
2 TBL sugar
2 garlic cloves minced
Tsp salt
Tsp blk pepper
Tsp dried oregano

PROCEDURE

Cook pasta in salted water with a touch of oil, when done remove and cool. Remove seeds from tomatoes and dice slice mushrooms and sauté in veg oil salt pepper. Cut basil. In small bowl combine balsamic vinegar, oil, garlic, oregano, and sugar and whisk together until incorporated. Then in larger bowl preferably wooden combine pasta, tomatoes, mushrooms, and basil. Then cover with dressing and let sit for at least 1 hour, taste for salt and pepper then enjoy.

STEWED OKRA AND TOMATOES

Okra and Tomatoes are a classic southern side dish that I have come to like a lot. When I go food shopping I rarely have a plan, I usually see what is new, fresh, or on sale and let that make my decisions for me. I also like to challenge myself and buy products that I have never used before. I find that it expands my knowledge and also gives a certain satisfaction, when people ask me have you ever eaten, or cooked with a item that is maybe less popular or very popular but only with a certain demographic. That is how I came across Okra and I am very happy I did.



INGREDIENTS

1lb cut or whole okra (I usually buy mine frozen)
1 small Vidalia onion diced
1 12oz can of diced tomatoes
2 cloves of garlic minced
1 bay leaf
TBL of salt and pepper
Tsp red chili flake
TBL of honey

PROCEDURE

Place a small pot on burner and set to MED. Coat bottom with oil. Add diced onion and cook for approx 5min. Add garlic cook for 3min. Add okra. Add can of tomatoes with liquid. Fill empty tomato can half way with water and add to pot. Toss in bay leaf, S & P, chili flake, and honey. Then just let simmer for about 25-35min. Then serve up and enjoy.



EASY ASPARAGUS

Asparagus is one of my favorite vegetables I like to grill it, steam it, and sauté it, but in this recipe I roast it. I usually only make this side dish when the asparagus is in season and really cheap. It easy enough, just a few ingredients but tons of great flavor enjoy.



INGREDIENTS

Asparagus
Minced garlic
Parmesan Cheese
Salt and Pepper
Olive Oil or Veg oil

PROCEDURE

Start by taking one asparagus and begin bending the bottom until it breaks off, once you have done that cut the bottoms off the rest using that as a guide. Pre Heat your oven to 375 degrees. Get a sheet pan and lay down so aluminum foil for easy clean up and coat the bottom with some oil. Lay out asparagus evenly being sure not to overlap them. Lightly drizzle more oil over asparagus then top with minced garlic salt and pepper. Roast in Pre Heated oven for 10-12min (If the asparagus is really thin this will take about 8min) Remove Asparagus and turn oven up to 400 degrees. Grate Fresh parmesan over asparagus and roast for another 5min or until cheese has browned and there you have it easy asparagus.



CRISPY FRIED FROG LEGS

I know many people would be immediately turned off by frog legs which is one of the reasons why I was drawn to it. I find a lot of people especially Americans have complexes when it comes to eating anything besides chicken, beef, pork, or seafood. In fact the only friend I have even shared these with is Matt and he's from the Caribbean. Reality is there are so many great things to eat if you can manage to step outside the box and embrace what is not considered "Normal". Frog really does have nice flavor kind of a cross between chicken and crab. I also wanted to add this dish because it represents this region of America where I have lived for the last 20yrs; the frog legs I use come straight out of the Everglades just a short ride down the road.



INGREDIENTS

Frog legs
Flour
Everglades seasoning or whatever you like
Vegetable oil
4oz Mayo
Hot sauce
1 TBL Sugar
1 TBL Red wine vinegar

PROCEDURE

Add seasoning to flour. I usually use a half cup of flour then add 4TBL of whatever seasoning I am using. Combine mayo, vinegar, hot sauce, and sugar to make dipping sauce. Fill pot or skillet approx 2 inches with oil and turn on medium heat. Dredge frog legs in seasoned flour and let sit for about 10min before frying. Fry for approx 5min then serve up with dipping sauce. I usually like to eat these on my deck and throw the bones into the canal, returning them home in a way.

ITALIAN GRILLED CHEESE

I first got exposed to classic Italian flavors at home when my father used to make little pizza's on the grill. He would use things like pesto, roasted garlic, marinara, and Italian sausages. It was always a great meal we would usually have it on a Saturday or Sunday and casually eat them thru out the day. That is where I get my inspiration for this dish. It's what you think of as a classic grilled cheese but with those classic Italian ingredients.



INGREDIENTS

Loaf of Italian bread sliced (not a long loaf but a round one)
Softened butter mixed with a little bit of olive oil
Fresh mozzarella (consider using processed mozzarella, provolone, fontina all work great).
Basil leaves
Roasted peppers
1 tsp Salt, Pepper, Oregano, and garlic powder mixed together.

PROCEDURE

Start by taking butter out of fridge and placing on counter to get room temperature, add a little bit of olive oil to it. Heat a skillet to medium high heat. Once butter has softened, butter one side of two pieces of bread; be sure that the two buttered sides are on the outside just like a regular grilled cheese. Assemble the sandwich I like to put a layer of cheese, then a layer of basil, another layer of cheese, then a layer of roasted peppers, then another layer of cheese I also sprinkle the seasonings in between each layer not much. Once you have assembled the sandwich place buttered side down until brown then flip over and brown the other side and you are done. Consider making a few cutting them into small squares and using them as appetizers.



HAWAIIAN BURGER

This is a burger I was just having some fun with one day and actually turned out to be one that I really like. I use grilled pineapple, ham, and make an Asian glaze that I drizzle over the top. I've never been to Hawaii but I figure using pineapple, pork, and some Asian flavors give me the right to call this burger Hawaiian.



INGREDIENTS

Ground chuck or consider ground skirt steak 2lb
Pineapple rings in can or use fresh pineapple
½ lb of Some good quality ham Boars Head works great
Hamburger buns
2 Tbls teriyaki sauce
2 Tbls soy sauce
1 thumb size piece of ginger
1 clove garlic
1 thinly sliced scallion
1 Tbls sesame oil
2 Tbls cane sugar or honey
5 Tbls water
Approx 2oz of a cornstarch slurry
2 Tbls of room temp butter

PROCEDURE

Form ground beef into ½ lb patties or whatever size you like
Turn on grill to high and heat cast iron skillet (heat skillet either on grill or stove top). Season each side with salt and pepper. Pan sear in cast iron skillet until cooked to your liking. At same time as burger cooking grill pineapple (should only take a couple of minutes). When burgers are done remove from pan, wipe out and place ham into pan to heat thru, if you have the space place buttered hamburger buns in skillet buttered side down until golden brown. Assemble burger and enjoy

THE GLAZE-MAKE AHEAD OF TIME

Heat small sauce pot to medium low heat. Add all ingredients except sugar and cornstarch slurry Simmer for approx 15 min's or reduced by a third. Once reduced add sugar and slurry and taste for seasoning. Consider adding hot sauce for a little kick. I like to place in squeeze bottle or just spoon over.

BEEF BRISKET WITH AU JUS

This is a sandwich that I really enjoy; the best part about doing it at home is a little thing I refer to as the PROTEIN FACTOR. I get to put as much meat as I like, and make it exactly how I like it. When it comes to seasoning the brisket I feel like adding a bunch of seasonings is kind of pointless since it really is hard to impart much flavor on the meat. I would defiantly suggest making this on a Sunday or whenever you have a good amount of time.



INGREDIENTS

Beef brisket aka Flank Steak any size approx 3lb
1 ½ Onions
2 onions thinly sliced for caramelizing
5 garlic cloves smashed
1 oz tomato paste
1 bay leaf
Tbl kosher salt
16oz of button mushrooms or whatever mushrooms you like sliced
Provolone cheese
A loaf of French bread or a number of French buns.
4 cups of beef stock

PROCEDURE

Heat a cast iron skillet to high or whatever size pan you need to fit brisket. Heat a pot to medium heat and start cooking 1 ½ onions rough chopped. Season brisket with salt and pepper (Its best to have brisket at room temperature not cold) Place small amount of oil in skillet when hot and sear both sides of brisket. After cooking onions for about 5-7 mins add garlic bay leaf and tomato paste. Continue cooking onions and others for 5 more min's and then add seared brisket and beef stock. Be sure to cover brisket with stock, cover and simmer for approx 3 ½ hours or until brisket is falling apart. When the brisket is almost done start caramelizing the thinly sliced onions in pan, should take about 30mins on med-low heat. Once onions about caramelized throw in sliced mushrooms and cook until your desired doneness Slice brisket and place back in au jus, slice bread fill with meat, top with caramelized onions, mushrooms, and provolone cheese and pour over au jus. Make as wet as you like I defiantly suggest having napkins Close by.

SHAUNAS SPICY CHICKEN SANDWICH

When I was 17yrs old my mom and I went to visit my sister Shauna at college. She was going to school in Tampa which was about a 4hour drive from us, so by the time we got there we were very hungry. Shauna made us these chicken sandwiches with diced chicken breast and green peppers sautéed seasoned with cayenne pepper then baked with mozzarella cheese. Now I had been working in a kitchen for about 6months but never cooked at home and when I saw her make these is was a eye opening experience that I needed to start cooking more at home, and that I really did like spicy food. It's funny to me now to think that I went to college and left with an education in chicken sandwiches. The sandwich I make now is a little different, but come on now I couldn't make it exactly like my sister.



INGREDIENTS

Boneless Skinless chicken breasts Sliced thin.
Swiss cheese
Julian red peppers
Julian Vidalia onions
Cilantro
Panko Bread crumbs
Flour
Beaten egg
Cayenne pepper
French rolls
Vegetable oil
Salt and Pepper
Hot sauce
Mayo

PROCEDURE

Start by sautéing the onions and peppers. Once soft season with salt and pepper, and cayenne then remove and keep on the side. Bread chicken by placing in flour then egg then bread crumbs, be sure to season the breading with salt and pepper. Bread Chicken by first placing in flour then egg then breadcrumbs, let sit about 10min before frying. Fry chicken in pan with vegetable oil until golden brown. Mix mayo and hot sauce together use however much you like. Then spread mayo and hot sauce mixture on both sides of bread. Place chicken cutlet inside French roll top with peppers, onions, and Swiss. Then Place under broiler until cheese is melted remove and add fresh cilantro on top.

GOURMET SAUSAGE PEPPER AND ONIONS HOAGIE

I have always liked this hoagie since my dad used to make them when I was a little kid. I even remember taking them to school and how good it tasted even at room temperature. I simply wanted to elevate what people think of when they think of a sausage peppers and onions hoagie.



INGREDIENTS

Sweet Italian sausage
Unsalted butter
Vidalia onions
Roasted Peppers
Basil
Pecorino Romano
Hoagie Rolls or Large Hot Dog buns
Provolone Cheese
Roasted Garlic
Garlic Salt

PROCEDURE

Start by making caramelized onions the night before or before serving. Cut or slice onions however you like and place in heated skillet on med/low heat with a light sprinkle of salt constantly moving onions in pan. This process should take about ½ hr. In another pan or heat some garlic cloves in the husk still for about 10-15 mins this will make your roasted garlic. Remove garlic and mix with softened butter this is going to be spread on the hoagie rolls. Once the onions have been caramelized remove and turn heat up to high also preheat oven to 375. Begin Browning sausages on both sides then place in the oven to finish cooking approx 15min. Place provolone cheese over sausages for the last 2min. In same pan you roasted the garlic in brown the hoagie rolls, spread garlic butter on rolls then place butter side down on pan. The roasted pepper is use for this are jarred you can make your own but this will save you some time, I like to cut them into stripes. Once sausages are cooked and rolls have been browned begin assembling the hoagie. I cover it with the peppers and onions then I grate some fresh pecorino Romano and sprinkle on a chiffonade of basil and there you have it.

STUFFED VEGETARIAN POBLANO

I am by no means a vegetarian but I have always been so amazed by fruits and vegetables, what blows my hair back is that many of them taste good and have such a great flavor yet are just given to us they just grow naturally. Chefs spend all sorts of time making things taste good but in nature it just happens. I get just as excited over fresh produce as I do over a great cut of meat, so I came up with this dish when I didn't have any meat in the house but still wanted something substantial.



INGREDIENTS

Poblano peppers 3-4

1 medium to large onions diced

(Spanish, Vidalia, white whatever you like)

2 minced garlic cloves

1 bag fresh spinach

About 2 cups of sliced button mushrooms

About 2 cups grated pepper jack cheese or Monterey or both

16oz can of tomato puree

TBL of cumin, oregano, and sugar

PROCEDURE

Begin by roasted the poblanos by lightly coating them in oil then roast over open flame like on your grill, once all sides have a nice char on them place them in Tupper ware container or a bowl with plastic wrap over the top. This will steam the peppers and make removing the skin very easy. Once peppers have cooled gently remove skin being sure not to break the pepper then cut a length wise slit and remove seeds. Heat a sauté pan to med and begin cooking half the diced onions, cook for about 5 min then add minced garlic, cook another 5 min then add mushrooms. Cook mushrooms for about 10-15min then add spinach, cook spinach down and let liquid evaporate. Then just place on the side this is going to be the stuffing. Heat a sauce pan to med then add a little bit of vegetable oil and the other half of the diced onions cook for 5-8min then add can of tomato puree. Heat tomato puree thru then add seasonings and let simmer taste for any seasoning adjustments. Either buy grated cheese or grate it yourself I like to grate it fresh. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Stuff peppers with spinach, and mushroom mixture then fill with as much cheese as you like and bake until cheese is melted and slightly browned approx 6min. Mirror tomato sauce on plate and then place pepper on top of sauce.

CAST IRON NY STRIP

Cast Iron is by far my favorite metal to cook with. I find that I am able to get great sears on meat, and it also is great for frying chicken. I especially like it for cooking steaks, I don't usually cook my steaks on the grill, I notice that they never seem to be quite as juicy as when I cook them in a cast iron skillet, so every now and then I like to get a nice cut meat and Michelle and I act like we are in a different tax bracket at least for a night.



INGREDIENTS

NY strip steak

Equal parts kosher salt. Fresh cracked black pepper and garlic powder
AKA house seasoning.

Vegetable Oil infused with garlic

PROCEDURE

First take steak out of fridge and let sit on counter top. Letting the meat get to room temp will help it cook much more even and accurate. Coat liberally with seasoning. Heat cast iron skillet to med/high heat. Coat skillet with oil be sure to cover the whole bottom. Then cook each side approx 4min, that should give you a medium steak. Let rest for 15min and then enjoy



GUINNESS BEEF WITH PARSNIP PUREE

I love slow simmered beef, I love Guinness, and I love parsnips so needless to say I love this dish. Parsnips are cheap but have tons of great flavor, so I peel them and prepare them like I would mashed potatoes, they have a very distinct anise flavor that when combined with rich beef makes for a comforting satisfying meal. I also wanted to use the parsnips because its different then just using a typical mashed potato.



INGREDIENTS

3lbs Stew Beef or any tough cut don't spend too much money.
Parsnips about 2lbs peeled and cut into small pieces
1-1/2 Bottles Guinness Draught
2-3 TBLS Flour
4-5 Garlic cloves
About 3 sprigs Rosemary
2 bay leaves
Salt, Pepper
About a Tbls beef bouillon

PROCEDURE

Heat large pot to medium heat and coat bottom with vegetable oil. Season beef with salt and pepper and begin browning meat. Important- Brown the beef in batches if you put too much in the meat will steam and not get a proper browning. Remove beef place on plate-you want to make sure you save all the juices. Begin sautéing onions, and garlic add garlic a few minutes after onions. Place beef back in and dust with flour. Essentially you are making a roux, be sure to stir often. Once flour has been cooked add Guinness, be sure to test for quality control. Also add about 2 cups of water with beef bouillon mixed in. Then add bay leaf and rosemary and let simmer for 2-2 1/2 hours. Peel parsnips and cut into small pieces. Place in small pot and cover with half milk half cream. Add 1 TBL of kosher salt and a bay leaf. Then turn burner on to medium low. Once parsnips are soft puree and butter if you like, then dollop on a plate top with the beef and enjoy some good Irish comfort food.

CLASSIC OVEN ROASTED CHICKEN

If you asked me what my favorite food is I would be lost for words. I love so many foods for different reasons, at different times of the year. For example I enjoy wings during football season, fish tacos on the beach, and a Wendy's frosty while watching TV on a Sunday night with Michelle, but if you were to ask me what I would want my final meal to be I would most likely say a whole oven roasted chicken. Having all the pieces to choose from is the way to go, and a whole chicken only cost about three dollars can't beat that.



INGREDIENTS

1 washed and dried whole chicken approx 1 1/2-2lb chicken.
About 3 TBL vegetable oil (just enough to coat chicken)
A TBL per pound of whatever seasoning you like.
Butchers twine

PROCEDURE

Preheat oven to 385 degrees. Truss or tie chicken, you want to tie the legs and wings close to the body, this will ensure the chicken cooks even, and will also make for a juicer bird. If unsure how to do it look it up on YouTube it's pretty easy. Coat chicken with oil, I like to rub it on the chicken to ensure I get all those hard to reach places. Cover with seasonings- The chicken I have a picture of here is covered with hot smoked paprika, lemon pepper, and sugar, but use whatever you like. I do find that the simpler you keep it the better it is. Then place in oven if you have a roasting rack use it or just on a pan is fine. Cook for approx 1hr 15min or until internal temp is 180degrees in legs. Then pull out let rest for 15min and enjoy.

COOKING WHY?



My interest in food began long before I ever started cooking for money. My mom has always been a great baker, something all my friends will agree with, and my dad enjoyed to cook on weekends and had a real creative spirit about it. He would make things like fried rice, omelets, mini pizzas on the grill, and Gatorade marinated pork, that's right Gatorade marinated he would use the powder that I would take to my baseball games. It still to this day the best pork I have ever had. I started cooking when I was about 16, before that I was a busboy. I remember thinking that the cooks were the "cool guys" and seemed to get the most respect in the restaurant, so I wanted to be a part of that. Cooking on a line is not glamour's job by any means, it's hot, stressful, and painful and most of the people I have worked are not very good people ex cons, addicts, or just overall jerks. There is a certain pride that you have and share with other people who have also worked on a line. It is like belonging to a club that not many people ever expose themselves to, and that is why I am happy that I have done it. Now a days I don't work on lines, to be honest I am to smart and just don't need it. The work I do with food now is in catering, that is where the money is, respect for your skills and knowledge, and you don't have to break your back. Food has become a point of interest to a lot of people thanks to the food network, and I can see when I tell people I am Chef they respond with a smile, instead of a look of inferiority. I did recently work with a Chinese chef for about a year and a half to learn how to make Dim Sum, which has been quite rewarding; Dim Sum is a rather specific skill to have. I am a State Certified Paramedic and Firefighter, and want to get hired by the a Fire Department, so I volunteer as one, but my real passion and what interests me the most is working with food. Food is creative I get to take something, and turn it into something else, it's also relationship forming I have been able to connect too many people thru food. I wanted to put together a simple, carefree little cookbook for my family and friends, kind of a peek into what I do at home, and also what I have done for a living over the last decade. The recipes I choose are meant to be simple and not intimidating. I am currently working on another one that will require a bit more technique, but nothing to serious. I also want to thank all of you for being in my life, and hope to share many great meals in the future eat up and enjoy.

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