

Chicken Normandy▯ ▯ Blistered Brussel Sprouts▯ ▯ Decadent Chocolate Cakes



When the evenings are cooler and the leaves turn shades of gold and red, it's time for the apple harvest! Apples are abundant year round but are at their peak in the autumn. Along with baking a traditional apple pie this fall, try using apples in a delicious entree' – Chicken Normandy. Normandy, France is known for its apples, so this traditional French dish bears the name of the town. The dish is usually prepared with thin veal cutlets, which can be expensive and sometimes hard to find, so I've replaced the veal with chicken, but the resulting dish is just as sublime! Cutting thick chicken breast halves horizontally into two pieces eliminates the step of pounding the chicken into thin cutlets. Chicken Normandy can be prepared just before serving or can be made earlier in the day. When preparing the dish ahead, brown the chicken cutlets on both sides and place them in a baking dish. Complete the sauce and pour it over the chicken. Cover and refrigerate until 30 minutes before dinner. Let the dish sit at room temperature for 20 minutes, then bake the chicken, covered, at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through and the sauce is bubbly. The chicken pairs really well with Blistered Brussel Sprouts sauteed with shallots, garlic, and prosciutto.

Blanching the Brussel sprouts and then shocking them in cold water will decrease the saute time while ensuring that they are tender throughout. You can even blanch the sprouts early in the day and refrigerate them until dinnertime. Just before serving, toss them into a hot skillet with the other ingredients, letting the heat of the skillet blister them just a bit on the outside. Decadent Chocolate Cakes are the perfect ending to the meal! You don't have to head out to a gourmet restaurant to savor this indulgence. Success is certain if you purchase the highest quality chocolate you can find. The batter for these cakes can also be prepared early in the day, divided among cupcake tins, and refrigerated. Pop the tins into the oven while you enjoy your dinner, then serve the cakes with a drizzle of hot fudge sauce. Enhance store-bought hot fudge sauce with a bit of espresso to create a mocha-fudge sauce, and serve cakes with a scoop of goodcoffee ice cream for a divine dessert!

Chicken Normandy

3 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, sliced in half horizontally into cutlets
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 cup sliced onion
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced

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1 cup apple cider
1/2 cup whipping cream

Place flour, salt and pepper on a dinner plate and stir to combine. Dredge both sides of each chicken cutlet in the seasoned flour. Spray a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat the skillet at medium-high and add 3 of the chicken cutlets. Brown for 2 to 3 minutes, then turn to brown on the other side. Remove to a plate and set aside.

Repeat with the remaining 3 cutlets. Add the onions to the skillet and saute' until wilted and translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the apple slices and saute' 2 to 3 minutes more, until they begin to soften. Pour in the apple cider and whipping cream and bring to a boil. Return the chicken cutlets to the skillet, reduce heat and simmer until sauce is reduced slightly and chicken is done, about 5 minutes more. Taste the sauce for seasonings, add salt and pepper if needed, to taste. Serves 6.

Blistered Brussel Sprouts

2-1/2 pounds Brussel sprouts, washed and trimmed
8 cloves garlic, peeled
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 shallots or 1/2 small onion, coarsely chopped
6 sliced prosciutto, chopped
Salt and pepper, to taste

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the Brussel sprouts and the peeled garlic cloves and blanch for 4 to 5 minutes. Pour into a colander, drain and rinse with cold water until completely cool. Slice the Brussel sprouts in half and cut the garlic cloves into thin slivers. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the olive oil and shallots and saute' until tender, about 2 minutes. Add the prosciutto and saute' 1 minute. Add the Brussel sprouts and slivered garlic and stir well to combine the ingredients. Cook, without stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes. Stir the ingredients again, and then cook, without stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes more, until the shallots and Brussel sprouts begin to caramelize. Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Serves 6 to 8.

Decadent Chocolate Cakes

2 (3.5-ounce) bars good quality bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped
10 tablespoons butter, cut into chunks
3 large eggs
3 large egg yolks
1/3 cup sugar
5 tablespoons all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Butter and flour 12 muffin tins. Place the chocolate bars and butter in a double boiler. Heat, stirring constantly, until chocolate mixture is smooth. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Beat the eggs, yolks, and sugar until pale and thick. Mix in the flour

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at little at a time. Add the chocolate mixture and beat until thick and glossy. Divide the mixture among the prepared tins. (At this point, the cakes may be covered and refrigerated up to 24 hours before baking.) Bake the cakes until they are set around the edges but the centers jiggle slightly, about 12 minutes. Cool slightly, less than 5 minutes, turn onto plates and serve. Serves 12.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at covingtoncats@embarqmail.com.