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CHICKEN SUPREME

boneless, skinless chicken breasts
aromatics: shallots, sprigs of fresh thyme
poaching liquid: 10 to 12 oz mix of chicken stock and white wine
crème fraîche to finish sauce

1. Shallow poach the chicken breasts: butter the pan; add aromatics in an even layer; place chicken breasts on top of aromatics; pour poaching liquid about half way up the chicken; bring to a **bare** simmer over direct heat; cover with vented parchment. Finish cooking in 350 degree F oven (8 to 10 minutes). DO NOT ALLOW TO BOIL AT ANY TIME.
2. When chicken is cooked, remove from pan and keep warm.
3. Remove thyme and, if desired, strain out shallots. Reduce cooking liquid.
4. Stir in crème fraîche to finish and to thicken sauce.

CHICKEN SAUTE ARCHDUKE, #1533

SERVES 2

This is my version of Escoffier, #1533. It is much lower in calories than the original.

4 oz chopped yellow onion
4 tbs unsalted butter
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 oz brandy
1 tbs Madeira
2 tbs crème fraîche

1. Saute onion in two tablespoons butter. Cook slowly to caramelize the onions slightly.
2. Saute chicken in 2 ounces of butter. Cook just enough to stiffen. Do not brown.
3. Add cooked onions to chicken. Finish cooking the chicken without browning.
4. Remove chicken from pan. Place on a dish and keep warm.
5. Moisten onions with 2 ounces brandy. Reduce the brandy by about half. Add juice that has collected under the chicken.
6. OPTIONAL: If you want a sauce that is smooth and elegant, rub the onions through a sieve.
7. Add one tablespoon Madeira to the onion sauce. Bring to a boil to evaporate the alcohol.

8. Reduce the heat. Add crème fraîche. Mix well. Pour sauce over warm, plated chicken and serve.

CHICKEN WITH BASIL CREAM

SERVES 4

4 boned, skinless chicken breasts
6 oz crème fraîche
2 cups packed fresh basil leaves
1 tbs butter
1 tbs olive oil
1/2 cup dry white wine

1. Reserving 4 or 5 leaves for decoration, grind the basil in a blender with the crème fraîche. Set this mixture aside at room temperature for 2 hours to allow the basil to scent the crème fraîche.
2. Saute the chicken breasts in the oil and butter until done, about 15 minutes. Remove the chicken from the pan and keep warm.
3. Pour off any excess fat, turn up the heat in the pan, and deglaze with the wine. Reduce the wine by half.
4. Add the scented crème fraîche to the pan. Pour in any liquid that has accumulated from the chicken. Mix well. Bubble for a minute, just until the sauce is hot.
5. Return the chicken to the pan, and turn to coat the chicken with the sauce.
6. Chop the reserved basil leaves and sprinkle over the chicken for decoration. Serve at once.

CHICKEN WITH FRESH GRAPES

SERVES 4

4 boneless (skin on) chicken breasts
4 tbs butter
2 small shallots, minced
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 cup chicken stock
4 tbs crème fraîche
1 cup seedless green grapes
salt and freshly ground pepper
4 springs fresh lavender for garnish

1. Cook the breasts in 2 tbs butter over high heat until golden on both sides.
2. Set the chicken aside on a plate. Keep warm.
3. Add the remaining butter and shallots to the pan. Saute over medium-low heat to soften. Do not brown.
4. When the shallots have softened, add the wine. Bring to a boil and reduce by half.
5. Add the stock and reduce by half.
6. Place 4 tbs of crème fraîche in a small bowl. Whisk 2 tbs of hot stock into the crème fraîche. Pour the thinned, warm crème fraîche into the stock. Pour in any juice that has accumulated under the chicken.
7. Add the grapes. Bubble the sauce for a minute to warm the grapes.
8. Spoon the sauce over the chicken breasts. Garnish each with a sprig of lavender.

CHICKEN BREASTS STUFFED WITH MORELS

SERVES 4

1-1/2 oz dried morel mushrooms
1 cup chicken stock
4 tbs butter
5-6 shallots, thinly sliced
3-1/2 oz button mushrooms, thinly sliced
1/4 tsp fresh thyme
5 tbs crème fraîche
3 tbs brandy
4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
1 tbs vegetable oil
3/4 cup Champagne
salt and freshly ground pepper

The Morels

1. Rinse the morels in a strainer under cold running water. Put them in a bowl and cover with chicken stock. Leave to soak for several hours.
2. Remove the morels from the stock. Strain the stock through a cotton cloth. Set aside for the sauce.
3. Slice any large morels. Leave the small ones whole.
4. Melt 2 tbs butter in a saucepan. Add the shallots. Cook over medium heat until soft. About two minutes.
5. Add the morels and the sliced mushrooms. Cook, stirring often, for 2-3 minutes.
6. Season with thyme. Add brandy. Reduce the heat and simmer gently until any liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes. Stir from time to time.
7. Add 1 tbs crème fraîche. Stir well to incorporate. Remove the morel-mushroom mixture from the pan and set aside.

The chicken

1. Remove the small fillets from the chicken breasts. Make a pocket in the breasts by cutting a slit horizontally at the thicker edge.
2. Using a small spoon, fill each pocket with the mushroom mixture. If necessary, close with a toothpick.
3. Melt the remaining butter with the oil in a heavy saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook the breasts on one side only for 6-8 minutes. The breasts will be golden on the cooked side.
4. Set the breasts aside. Keep warm.
5. Add the Champagne to the pan and reduce by half. Add the strained stock from step 2 (Morels) above. Pour in any liquid that has accumulated under the chicken.
6. Reduce by half. Whisk in 4 tbs crème fraîche. The sauce should coat the back of a spoon. If too thick, add stock. If too thin, whisk in more crème fraîche.
7. Put the breasts back into the pan, golden side up. Simmer until the breasts are hot and cooked. Remove any toothpicks.
8. Plate the breasts and spoon the sauce over.

CHICKEN WITH TARRAGON

SERVES 4

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
1/2 cup dry white wine
1-1/2 cups chicken stock
2 tsp dried tarragon
2 tbs fresh-snipped tarragon
4 sprigs fresh tarragon
2 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
2 tbs crème fraîche
3 black peppercorns

1. Place chicken breasts in a heavy, non-reactive saucepan just large enough to hold them in one layer.
2. Pour over the wine and stock to cover. Add more stock if needed. Add 2 fresh tarragon sprigs, the dried tarragon, the garlic, and the peppercorns.
3. Bring the liquid to a simmer. Cover with parchment and a lid. Do not allow to boil. Cook for 8-10 minutes, until done.
4. Remove the chicken. Keep warm.
5. Strain the cooking liquid into a small saucepan. Reduce, over high heat, by two-thirds.
6. Place 4 tbs of crème fraîche in a small bowl. Add 2 tbs of the hot cooking liquid. Whisk. Add this thinned, warm crème fraîche to the rest of the sauce.
7. Stir in the fresh, snapped tarragon. Add any liquid that has accumulated under the chicken. Bring the sauce to a bubble to release the aromas of the tarragon.
8. Spoon the sauce over the chicken breasts. Garnish each with a sprig of fresh tarragon.