

Lab 3: Cooking

Cooking, like learning languages, is a wonderful microcosm of learning. Every part of learning that you might want to explore has a correspondent in some part of cooking, from the practical skill of wielding a knife to the art of putting together a menu.

One of the deepest skills of cooking is timing. If you make a ton of beautiful food, but all the hot dishes are cold and all the cold dishes are hot, you've lost a lot. Many kitchens are well-oiled machines. Ours will not be. But, we'll do our best to stagger things so that dishes come together when we're ready to eat them.

The Menu:

Dinner

Tuscan Grilled Pork Ribs (2 grillers)

Grilled Radicchio (the grillers)

Buttermilk-Marinaded Roast Chicken (1 person)

Radicchio Risotto topped with artichoke hearts (3 people, 2 prep, 1 cook)

Homemade Caesar Salad (2 people)

Sicilian Chard (1 person)

Fresh Pasta Caprese (2 people)

Butternut Squash Ravioli with Browned Butter-Pine Nut Sauce (3 people)

Dessert

Fresh Meringue (1 person)

Pannacotta Sauce (same as Meringue person)

Tiramisu (3 people)

Buttermilk-Marinated Roast Chicken

SAMIN NOSRAT

This recipe, adapted from Samin Nosrat's "Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat," is inspired by the Southern grandma method of marinating chicken overnight in buttermilk before frying it. You're roasting here, but the buttermilk and salt still work like a brine, tenderizing the meat on multiple levels to yield an unbelievably juicy chicken. As an added bonus, the sugars in the buttermilk will caramelize, contributing to an exquisitely browned skin. Be sure to leave 24 hours for marinating the chicken. While the beauty of roast chicken is that you can serve it anytime, anywhere, try serving it alongside panzanella, which plays the role of starch, salad and sauce.

PREPARATION

The day before you want to cook the chicken, remove the wingtips by cutting through the first wing joint with poultry shears or a sharp knife. Reserve for stock. Season chicken generously with salt and let it sit for 30 minutes.

Stir 2 tablespoons kosher salt or 4 teaspoons fine sea salt into the buttermilk to dissolve. Place the chicken in a gallon-size resealable plastic bag and pour in the buttermilk. (If the chicken won't fit in a gallon-size bag, double up 2 plastic produce bags to prevent leaks and tie the bag with twine.)

Seal the bag, squish the buttermilk all around the chicken, place on a rimmed plate, and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours. If you're so inclined, you can turn the bag periodically so every part of the chicken gets marinated, but that's not essential. Pull the chicken from the fridge an hour before you plan to cook it. Heat the oven to 425 degrees with a rack set in the center position.

Remove the chicken from the plastic bag and scrape off as much buttermilk as you can without being obsessive. Tightly tie together the legs with a piece of butchers twine. Place the chicken in a 10-inch cast-iron skillet or a shallow roasting pan. Slide the pan all the way to the back of the oven on the center rack. Rotate the pan so that the legs are pointing toward the rear left corner and the breast is pointing toward the center of the oven. (The back corners tend to be the hottest spots in the oven, so this orientation protects the breast from overcooking before the legs are done.) Pretty quickly you should hear the chicken sizzling.

After about 20 minutes, when the chicken starts to brown, reduce the heat to 400 degrees and continue roasting for 10 minutes.

Move the pan so the legs are facing the rear right corner of the oven. Continue cooking for another 30 minutes or so, until the chicken is brown all over and the juices run clear when you insert a knife down to the bone between the leg and the thigh. If the skin is getting too brown before it is cooked through, use a foil tent. Remove it to a platter and let it rest for 10 minutes before carving and serving.

Radicchio Risotto

We will double this recipe!

INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 cups (about) canned vegetable broth
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/3 cup chopped shallots
1 large head radicchio, halved, thinly sliced
1 cup arborio rice or medium-grain white rice
1/2 cup dry red wine
1/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter

PREPARATION

Bring 3 1/2 cups broth to simmer in medium saucepan. Reduce heat to low; keep broth warm. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium-high. Add shallots; saut until golden, about 3 minutes. Add radicchio; saut until wilted, about 2 minutes. Add rice; stir 1 minute. Add wine; stir until liquid is absorbed, about 4 minutes. Mix in 1 cup broth. Reduce heat to medium; cook until liquid is absorbed, stirring often. Continue cooking until rice is tender but still slightly firm in center and mixture is creamy, adding broth 1/2 cup at a time and stirring often, about 25 minutes. Remove from heat. Add cheese and butter to risotto; stir until melted. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon into bowls and serve.

Caesar Salad

We will double both these recipes!

Google Kenji Alt Lopez and Mayonnaise. Watch the video that comes up from The Food Lab. I think it will probably be best to just do this whole process twice rather than doubling the recipe.

INGREDIENTS

3 cloves garlic, peeled, divided

3/4 cup mayonnaise

6 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, divided

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon lemon juice, or more to taste

salt to taste

ground black pepper to taste

1/4 cup olive oil

4 cups day-old bread, cubed

1 head romaine lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces

Mince 1.5 cloves of garlic, and combine in a small bowl with mayonnaise, 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan cheese, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cut the remaining 1.5 cloves of garlic into quarters, and add to hot oil. Cook and stir until brown, and then remove garlic from pan. Add bread cubes to the hot oil. Cook, turning frequently, until lightly browned. Remove bread cubes from oil, and season with salt and pepper.

Place lettuce in a large bowl. Toss with dressing, remaining Parmesan cheese, and seasoned bread cubes.

Sicilian Chard**INGREDIENTS**

1 large bunch Swiss chard
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion
1/4 c. golden raisins
salt
2 tbsp. pine nuts (pignoli)

PREPARATION

Cut center ribs and stems from Swiss chard leaves. Cut ribs and stems into 1/2-inch pieces; set aside. Cut leaves into 2-inch pieces; transfer to colander to drain well.

In 7- to 8-quart Dutch oven, heat oil on medium until hot. Add onion and chard ribs and stems, and cook 7 to 9 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Add drained chard leaves, golden raisins, and 1/4 teaspoon salt; cover and cook 2 to 3 minutes or until leaves are tender. Remove Dutch oven from heat; stir in pine nuts.

Fresh Pasta Caprese

We will double this recipe!

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces of fresh mozzarella cheese cut into 1/2 inch pieces
6 ripe tomatoes cored, seeded and chopped
1 clove of garlic finely minced
6 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves roughly chopped
kosher salt and ground black pepper to taste

In a heavy large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and saute until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the tomatoes and saute just until heated through, about 2 minutes. Add the cooked pasta. Remove the skillet from the heat. Add the cheese and basil, and toss to coat. Season the pasta, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Ravioli Filling**FILLING**

2 cups pureed squash approximately 2 pounds/1 kilo fresh, if you use canned make sure it is only pureed squash and no extras, 460 grams
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese 50 grams
1/2 teaspoon salt 2.8 grams
2 tablespoons flour 16 grams

PREPARATION

Boil fresh squash in a pot of water, puree until smooth, (or canned no extras) place in a sieve and let drain 10-15 minutes. In a medium bowl combine well, pureed squash, Parmesan cheese, salt and flour.

Panna Cotta

1 envelope unflavored gelatin (about 1 tablespoon)
2 tablespoons cold water
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup half and half
1/3 cup sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

In a very small saucepan sprinkle gelatin over water and let stand about 1 minute to soften. Heat gelatin mixture over low heat until gelatin is dissolved and remove pan from heat.

In a large saucepan bring cream, half and half, and sugar just to a boil over moderately high heat, stirring. Remove pan from heat and stir in gelatin mixture and vanilla. Divide cream mixture among eight 1/2-cup ramekins and cool to room temperature. Chill ramekins, covered, at least 4 hours or overnight.

Dip ramekins, 1 at a time, into a bowl of hot water 3 seconds. Run a thin knife around edge of each ramekin and invert ramekin onto center of a small plate.

FOR THE SAUCE

12 oz. (about 2-1/2 cups) fresh or frozen sweet cherries
1/4 cup brandy
3 Tbs. granulated sugar
2 Tbs. plus 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
Pinch table salt
1-1/2 tsp. cornstarch
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

PREPARATION

If using fresh cherries, pit and halve them. If using frozen, thaw, drain, and halve them.

In a 2-quart saucepan, whisk together the brandy, sugar, lemon juice, and salt. Stir in the cherries. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce to a simmer and cook until the liquid thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 5 minutes.

In a small bowl, stir the cornstarch with 1 tsp. water. Add to the cherry sauce and cook until thickened, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the vanilla. Let cool to room temperature. If the sauce thickens during cooling, stir in water, 1 tsp. at a time, until it reaches your desired consistency.

Tiramisu

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CREAM:

4 large egg yolks

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup/100 grams granulated sugar, divided

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream

1 cup/227 grams mascarpone (8 ounces)

FOR THE ASSEMBLY:

$1\frac{3}{4}$ cups good espresso or very strong coffee

2 tablespoons rum or cognac

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

About 24 ladyfingers (from one 7-ounce/200-gram package)

1 to 2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, for shaving (optional)

Done correctly, a classic tiramis can be transcendent. A creamy dessert of espresso-soaked ladyfingers surrounded by lightly sweetened whipped cream and a rich mascarpone, tiramisu relies heavily on the quality of its ingredients. If you don't have a barista setup at home, pick up the espresso at a local coffee shop, or use strongly brewed coffee. As for the ladyfingers, make your own or buy them, but keep in mind that store-bought varieties can range from soft and spongy (like angel food cake) to hard and crunchy (like biscotti). Both kinds will work here, but if you're using the softer variety, stick to a light brushing of espresso, instead of a deep dip.

PREPARATION

In a medium bowl, whip together egg yolks and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup/50 grams sugar until very pale yellow and about tripled in volume. A slight ribbon should fall from the whisk when lifted from the bowl. Transfer mixture to a large bowl, wiping out the medium bowl used to whip the yolks and set aside.

In the medium bowl, whip cream and remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup/50 grams sugar until it creates soft-medium peaks. Add mascarpone and continue to whip until it creates a soft, spreadable mixture with medium peaks. Gently fold the mascarpone mixture into the sweetened egg yolks until combined.

Combine espresso and rum in a shallow bowl and set aside.

Using a sifter, dust the bottom of a 2-quart baking dish (an 8x8-inch dish, or a 9-inch round cake pan would also work here) with 1 tablespoon cocoa powder.

Working one at a time, quickly dip each ladyfinger into the espresso mixture – they are quite porous and will fall apart if left in the liquid too long – and place them rounded side up at the bottom of the baking dish. Repeat, using half the ladyfingers, until you've got an even layer, breaking the ladyfingers in half as needed to fill in any obvious gaps (a little space in between is O.K.). Spread half the mascarpone mixture onto the ladyfingers in one even layer. Repeat with remaining espresso-dipped ladyfingers and mascarpone mixture.

Dust top layer with remaining tablespoon of cocoa powder. Top with shaved or finely grated chocolate, if desired. Cover with plastic wrap and let chill in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours (if you can wait 24 hours, all the better) before slicing or scooping to serve.