

CIY: CREATE IT YOURSELF

PROJECT: R1 - Thai Lettuce Wraps

Summer Recipes - Featuring Mint

**Eating from the garden series with
 "Intentional Chef" Ryan Balas**

"Intentional Chef" Ryan Balas explores the herbal mint family with his "Summer Eating From the Garden" series of recipes



This dish can be served hot or cold. To serve cold, be sure to chill the ingredients quickly and do not let it sit out too long before service.

CHEF'S NOTES

- I prepared this dish with all breast meat and with both breast and thigh meat. The combination of dark and white provided a dish with more flavor and better mouth feel. If you do use all breast meat, be careful not to over cook the meat – it can become too dry.

- Please do not use ground chicken or turkey. If you do not have a food processor to chop your meat, chop the breast and thigh meat while still slightly frozen. The meat will not escape you and will be very easy to cut and chop to the desired size.

- Your choice of oil will influence the dish – I used grape seed oil. Not only for its healthy properties and taste, it has a smoke point of 485 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Be careful with both the cilantro and mint leaves – bruising will darken the leaves – you may want to chop those just before tossing and service.

- Romaine lettuce leaves will allow you to easily create a quick wrap or lettuce "taco". I love the look and feel of Romaine (pictured).

- Iceberg lettuce leaves will allow you or your guest to truly wrap the chicken before eating. And, with iceberg's ability to hold a bit more water – the contrast between the wrap and the stuffing is more pronounced and delish!

- One pound boneless Chicken breasts and thighs - chopped
- 4 Tbsp oil for sautéing
- 2 small garlic cloves (fine chop or run through a garlic press)
- ½ cup white wine (not too dry)
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce (or Bragg's)
- ¼ cup fresh squeezed lime juice
- ½ cup green onion chopped
- ½ cup fresh cilantro chopped
- 18-20 fresh mint leaves chopped
- Romaine or Iceberg lettuce leaves need to be fresh and crisp



A cool summer treat for an afternoon salad or patio dinner



Prep Time

Prep the lime juice, green onion, cilantro and mint leaves – set aside half of the greens for garnish.

Preparation

Heat the oil in a fry pan or steel wok until hot (some oils will begin to smoke at this point) add chopped chicken. Sauté/stir the chicken for approximately five minutes and add the soy sauce, garlic and wine. Continue to sauté the chicken until thoroughly cooked. Remove from heat. Drain the chicken, if necessary.

Plating Suggestions

In a separate bowl, toss the cooked chicken, lime juice, green onion, cilantro and mint and serve in or with chilled Romaine or Iceberg lettuce leaves.

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PROJECT: R1 - Citrus Infused Barbeque
Chicken Tenders/ Buttered Mint Potatoes

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Try this as a crowd pleaser for your 4th of July celebration, a grilling party, your next tailgate event or a fun summer picnic.

CHEF'S NOTES

- This dish can be served hot or cold. To serve cold, be sure to chill the ingredients quickly and do not let sit out too long before service.

- The marmalade glaze can be prepared in advance. Reheat it gently until it reaches a consistency that the barbeque brush can easily apply a nice thick coat to the chicken.

- Have a spatula handy to help keep the chicken from sticking when turning and removing from the grill.

- While I know not everyone likes spicy hot, I feel that this glaze needs just enough of a background "zing" to truly enjoy all the flavors. You will know what is best for you.

- You can marinate the chicken before skewering and glazing though, it is not necessary. If you do marinate – consider like elements and don't venture into too many commercial prepared mixtures – keep it clean and light!



One pound boneless Chicken breast/thigh meat – cubed

One jar Orange Marmalade

16 ounces chicken or vegetable broth

Lemon Pepper

Crushed Red Pepper Flakes (adds zing!)

Bamboo Skewers

Pastry brush/ barbeque brush



Add my Buttered Mint Potatoes to cool your summer palette.



Prep Time

Cut/Cube chicken to desired "bite" size, skewer and set aside.

Preparation

Combine marmalade and broth in a saucepan over low heat. Continue stirring and add one tablespoon lemon pepper and a dash of crushed red pepper flakes. As the mixture comes to a slow boil adjust and lower heat so the mixture does not climb above the rim of your pan. (Sometimes, the act of stirring will agitate the mixture and it will climb a bit before settling down.)

When the mixture reaches a consistent, smooth slow boil, you can take occasional tastes and add more lemon pepper and crushed red pepper flakes until you get the right "zing" or overall taste that you are looking for. At this point, you do not need to constantly stir and watch over the mixture as it continues to reduce. Keep the heat low, stay attentive or set a timer so you can keep track of the consistency and taste.

Continue cooking marmalade mixture at a slow boil until the mixture reduces to a point where it coats the spoon or does not drip after a few moments of cooling.

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PROJECT: R1 - Citrus Infused Barbeque Chicken Tenders/ Buttered Mint Potatoes

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Chicken Tenders Contd.

Grilling Your Chicken Tenders

When your grill has reached its desired temperature, using a clean brush - glaze the skewered chicken with marmalade and immediately apply to the grill. Turn the chicken often and continue glazing until done. Save a little marmalade glaze to garnish the chicken just before service.



The addition of green onion will share the stage with the mint and offer a nice balanced flavor.

Roasting:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees

Toss cubed potatoes in a light olive or vegetable oil. Spread on a cookie sheet or roasting pan, sprinkle gently with fresh ground pepper and a dash of salt. Roast 20-30 minutes until done (soft in the center and golden brown and slightly crispy on the edges). While still hot, toss with mint butter and serve immediately.

Barbeque: place potatoes, mint butter, green onion and dash of salt and freshly ground pepper in a aluminum foil “boat” and seal so that as the butter melts it won’t leak out the sides or bottom. Place on grill screen and roast until done. With regular barbeque temperatures, you won’t have to check the potatoes for doneness until at least 15-20 minutes have passed.

Steaming: Steam cubed potatoes for approximately 25-35 minutes until soft. While still hot, toss with mint butter and serve immediately.



Buttered Mint Potatoes

1 pound Red Potatoes – skin on - cubed

4-6 Tbsp. Mint Butter (See page 4)

¼ cup green onion chopped (optional)

Salt and Pepper (to taste)



- CHEF’S NOTES: Potatoes**
- **Roasting:** This style of cooking will bring out the earthiness and strength of the potato flavor. By removing the moisture – you are going to be concentrating the flavors.
 - Your choice of oil in roasting will play a part in the overall finished flavor. You want it to compliment the butter that will be added just before service. There are some wonderful light olive oils that have a “pepper” snap/background to them. Some vegetable oils are very neutral and will let the butter and mint stay center stage.
 - **Steaming:** Steaming the potatoes will allow you to have a lighter taste and texture experience.
 - Steaming will also allow you to offer more of a mashed/smashed potato experience.
 - Fresh chopped mint leaves can be applied as a garnish just before service.

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PROJECT: R1 - Mint Butter

Summer Recipes - Featuring Mint

CHEF'S NOTES: Butter

- Can be served with lamb, tossed with steamed vegetables, etc.

- Use the sharpest knife you have when chopping the leaves. This helps cut down on oxidation and bruising (turning black).

- This butter can be prepared ahead of time and kept in the refrigerator or freezer.

- If you plan on freezing a portion of your recipe, use a cookie press or pastry bag and portion the Mint Butter for quick and easy use later. Use a layer or plastic wrap or wax paper for easy removal. If you freeze the butter directly onto a cookie or pan, warm the pan from the bottom so the chips of butter can be quickly removed and placed in a freezer container intact.-

- Be careful with decorator tips and choose ones where the chopped mint leaves will not clog the tip. A large star pattern will hold nicely for dinner presentation pieces(remove and place on serving dish frozen and let it soften before service).

- For those with Kitchen Aid mixers, use the Flat Beater attachment to whip your butter.

The longer and faster you whip the butter – the lighter (both in texture and taste) the butter will become. This also increases the volume of butter available by incorporating air into the recipe.

- It will take a bit of time for the mint to blend with the butter – give yourself some time from preparation to service so that everyone can enjoy this wonderful treat!



Fresh Mint Butter

8 ounces butter

8 Tbsp. fresh mint leaves finely chopped

1 Tsp. fresh squeezed Lemon Juice

Salt and Pepper (to taste)

- Salted, unsalted or sweet cream butter is fine. If you use salted – omit salt from recipe. It is easier for your guest to add a little salt at service than to try to figure out what to do with 8 ounces of over salted butter.

- You will need to experiment with the choice of mint. Lemon Balm is not as strong as Spearmint and Spearmint is not as strong as Peppermint. Find out what you and your family prefer.



Prep Time

Let butter rest until soft add to mixing bowl. Juice half a lemon, measure 1 teaspoon and set aside. Wash, pat dry and remove mint leaves from stem, set aside.

Using your electric mixer, begin whipping the butter at low speed, add lemon juice and add a dash of salt and pepper.

Begin to finely chop fresh mint leaves a little at a time and immediately add to the butter mixture. Continue chopping and adding until all Tablespoons of mint are incorporated into the mixture. Working with small amounts and in a safe and quick fashion – the mint leaves will have less of a chance to oxidize and turn black.