



# Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

## Playing around in kitchen gets edible results

One of the more pleasurable experiences for people who are interested in cooking, certainly for me, is to combine familiar ingredients in a different way to produce a new dish.

Although that may be a misnomer as I'm not sure there are any truly new dishes.

New cooks experiment with, for us, unusual combinations but it is hard for me to imagine any combination not having been put together by someone before.

But no matter, it's great fun to play around in the kitchen and — happy day — get an edible result.

The creative possibilities with chicken, particularly chicken breasts, are seemingly endless, each tastier than the last. Chicken has such a mild flavor that it goes well with a sprinkling of

herbs, a sweet sauce, vegetable combinations, rice mixtures, and on and on. Below are two results of some "playing around" I have done in my kitchen. Hope you like them.

### TUESDAY CHICKEN WITH VEGETABLES

- 4 medium chicken breast halves
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 small onion, coarsely chopped
- 3 tbsp. oil
- 3 tbsp. butter (more, if needed)
- 2 medium-to-large carrots, cleaned and sliced
- 1 1/2 tsp. salad herbs (or liberal sprinkling)
- Salt and coarse grind black pepper to taste
- 1/2 package frozen green peas

Heat butter and oil together in electric frying pan or skillet large enough to hold ingredients in one layer. Set at 350 degrees or medium heat. Wash chicken, pat dry with paper towels. Sauté. Add, right away, the potatoes, onion and carrots. Cook covered until chicken and vegetables are tender, approximately 30 minutes. Add salad herbs, salt and pepper and peas.

Cook approximately 16 minutes longer. On the serving platter, surround the chicken with the vegetables for a colorful, appetizing dish.

### TOMATO RICE CHICKEN

- 1 pkg. pick-of-the-chick, approx. 2 1/2 lbs.
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 1 1/2-oz. can tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cups liquid - 1 bouillon cube, dissolved in 1 cup boiling water, plus liquid from tomatoes plus enough additional water to make second cup liquid

- 3 tbsp. oil
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 1/2 cup rice
- 1 tsp. Italian herb seasonings
- 1/2 to 1 cup sour cream

Wash the chicken pieces and dry with paper towels. Heat the oil and butter in a large skillet or electric frying pan. (Two-and-half quart size works well.) Sauté the chicken and sauté at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes, covered except for last 5 to 8 minutes. The chicken will brown better uncovered. Remove the chicken to a bowl and pour off about half of the oil and butter. Add the onion to the pan and cook until transparent. Add the rice and stir for 3 to 4 minutes. Add the tomatoes and bouillon and additional water. While the mixture is returning to a boil, use a knife and fork to cut the tomatoes into small pieces (or run them briefly through a blender before adding).

Return the chicken to the pan and cook, reduced to simmer and covered, for 1/2 hour or until most of the liquid is absorbed. Rub the herbs between your hands and sprinkle over the chicken. Add the sour cream at the end of the cooking time, mix well with the rice and turn the chicken pieces over a few

times so they become coated with the sauce. Sprinkle coarse grind black pepper over the dish and serve. Serves 4.

Correspondence should be addressed to Vivian Byrd, c/o the Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham, Michigan 48009.

## Anise goes in cakes, chickens

### ANISE CHICKEN

- 2 tbsp. salad oil
- 3 lbs. chicken parts
- 1 cup chicken broth or bouillon
- 2 tsp. onion flakes
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. anise seed, crushed
- 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

1 lemon, cut in wedges

In a large skillet heat oil until hot. Add chicken, onion, salt, anise seed and black pepper; spoon over chicken. Simmer, covered until chicken is cooked through, about 35-45 minutes. Serve with lemon wedges.

By Ruth McDaniel

## Common sense cooking

Dear Ruth,

My biggest problem is getting "dew-drops" on my meringue. Sometimes I don't, but more often I do. Can you help?

I get more than 100 letters a month from readers who are having trouble making meringue. It seems to be a real "bugaboo" to many.

"Weeping" or amber beads forming over the surface of your meringue can be caused by liquid lost from the meringue. It's often caused by undercooking. If the meringue isn't baked enough to set its structure, the foam gradually collapses and the egg reverts to its original fluid state. That's why it's best to put the meringue on a HOT filling which helps cook the meringue adequately before it becomes too brown. Adding cream of tartar to the meringue increases the tendency to form beads.

Here's the way I've been making meringue for years with good results: Beat egg whites to the soft peak stage, then add the sugar, very gradually, beating well after each addition (about 2 tsp. per egg white). Beat to stiff peak stage; don't beat until it's rigid. The finished meringue should be pliable. Pour hot filling into cooled baked pie shell and place meringue on

top and spread over filling so it adheres to the crust all the way around, to anchor it and to keep it from shrinking. Bake in 425 degree preheated oven for 5 to 8 minutes to set the meringue which should be golden brown, not dark brown nor burnt. I use 2 or 3 egg whites. I am reprinting Pool Proof Meringue you may want to try. Guaranteed not to weep.

### NEVER-FAIL MERINGUE

- 1 tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 6 tbsp. sugar
- Dash of salt
- 2 tsp. cold water
- 3 egg whites
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Blend cold water and cornstarch. Add to boiling water and cook until thick and clear. Remove from heat. Beat egg whites until foamy. Add sugar gradually. Beat till stiff, not dry. Add cornstarch mixture. Beat at high speed until thick. Spread on pie. Be sure to bring meringue all the way to crust. Bake 10 minutes until lightly brown at 350 degrees.

If you'd like to ask the author any questions, please write to Ruth McDaniel, O&E Newspapers, 461 S. Main, Plymouth 48170.

## Make canned beans special

Canned pork and beans become something special when joined by canned kidney beans and other ingredients in the following recipe.

- DOUBLE BEAN BAKE**
- 3 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, cut in half lengthwise and sliced
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1/4 cup catsup
- 1 tbsp. brown sugar

- one-eighth tsp. dry mustard
  - 1 can (16 ounces) pork and beans
  - 1 can (15 ounces) kidney beans, drained
- Brown bacon and onion in large ovenproof frying pan; add green pepper and cook 3 minutes. Add catsup, brown sugar and dry mustard, stirring to combine. Stir in pork and beans and kidney beans, and bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) 30 minutes. Remove cover and continue cooking 10 minutes.

## Olympic athletes get plenty of pasta

Pasta is a prime energy provider and the Olympic athletes are being served pasta at every meal. Here's a hearty dish you might like to try.

- PASTA-POWERED TUNA**
- 8 ounces (7 1/2 cups) egg noodles
- 1 can (10 3/4 ounces) condensed cream of celery soup
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 can tuna, drained and flaked
- 1/2 cup cooked chopped spinach

Buttered bread crumbs  
Shredded sharp cheese

Cook noodles as directed on package; drain in colander. Meanwhile, in broiler-proof skillet or pan combine soup, milk, tuna and spinach; heat, stirring occasionally. Add noodles to tuna mixture; top with crumbs, cheese. Place under broiler a few minutes until cheese melts or crumbs brown lightly. Makes 4 servings.

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