

Kids spice up dinner menu with easy, fresh ingredients

Variety is the spice of life and an important key to meal enjoyment. When junior cooks add fish and chicken cookery to their culinary repertoire, the possibilities for "spicing up" menus increase, too.

Versatile fish and chicken are all-time favorites, but they are also perishable foods that require special handling. To prevent food borne illnesses and start children on a lifetime of safe and healthy cooking habits, adult "cooking coaches" will want to emphasize these important kitchen guidelines as they work with beginners:

• Wash hands before and after handling fish, chicken and all other foods.

• Remove fish and chicken from the refrigerator only when ready to cook them. Do not allow uncooked fish or chicken to stand at room temperature.

Wash uncooked fish and chicken pieces under cold running water and dry with paper towels before beginning a recipe.

• Wash cutting boards, knives, counter tops and everything that has touched uncooked fish or chicken before reusing. Use hot soapy water to wash and hot water to rinse.

When junior cooks begin casting for compliments, Fish Roll-Ups are great bait. Cheese-filled and easily

Red wine chicken

Chicken prepared in a light sauce of red wine vinegar and chicken broth makes an elegant Italian dish. Baked chicken breasts are quickly browned in olive oil first; the rest takes only about 15 minutes. The anchovies, while authentic, are optional. If you prefer more garlic, substitute the garlic-flavored red wine vinegar.

PIQUANT CHICKEN

(Pollo Piccante)

1 lb. boned and skinned chicken breasts (cutlets), halved
Flour
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 tsp. minced garlic
1 Tbsp. chopped anchovies (optional)
1 cup chicken broth
¼ cup red wine vinegar
½ tsp. basil leaves, crushed
A pinch of ground black pepper

Place chicken between 2 sheets of wax paper or plastic wrap. Pound with a mallet until ½ inch thick. Coat lightly with flour, shaking off excess. In a large skillet heat olive oil until hot. Add chicken. Brown on both sides. Remove from skillet. Drain off all but 1 tablespoon oil. Add garlic and anchovies. Cook and stir for 2 minutes, mashing anchovies with back of spoon. Add chicken broth, red wine vinegar, basil and black pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 5 minutes. Add reserved chicken. Simmer, covered, until chicken is tender, 5 to 10 minutes. Serve with steamed rice, if desired. Makes 4 servings.

Cool chicken beats the heat

Do you wilt when cooking a special dinner in a stuffy kitchen? Beat the summer kitchen heat by using your microwave oven.

Here's a recipe with sweet and sour chicken as the main ingredient. Complete this summer meal with a fresh garden salad and seasonal fruit.

SWEET & SOUR CHICKEN

1 can (8 oz.) pineapple chunks, drained; reserve juice
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
2 Tbsp. vinegar
1 Tbsp. soy sauce
1 Tbsp. cornstarch
¼ cup chopped green pepper
1 small onion, sliced
1 pkg. (12 oz.) frozen prepared chicken sticks

In medium microwave-safe bowl, combine reserved pineapple juice, brown sugar, vinegar, soy sauce and cornstarch. Heat, uncovered, on HIGH 2 to 3 minutes or until mixture is thick and bubbly, stirring once. Prepare chicken sticks according to package instructions. Serve sauce over chicken. Makes 4 servings.



baked to perfection, children are sure to enjoy mild-flavored sole fillets. If frozen fish is used, be sure to thaw it overnight in the refrigerator. Explain that thawing at room temperature allows bacteria to grow on the surface.

To prepare, have children sprinkle the fillets with lemon juice before topping with a savory mixture of bread crumbs, mayonnaise, green onions and shredded sharp natural cheddar cheese. The cheese can be purchased either shredded, for convenience, or in a chunk for children to shred over wax paper.

Beginning at the narrow end of each fillet, roll snugly and secure with wooden picks. Bake until the fish flakes easily when tested with fork. An experienced cook will need to demonstrate this procedure to first timers.

FISH ROLL-UPS

4 servings

You will need:
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded sharp natural cheddar cheese
1 cup fresh bread crumbs
2 Tbsp. mayonnaise
2 Tbsp. green onion slices
2 tsp. lemon juice
1 lb. sole fillets
1 Tbsp. margarine

Take out:
Measuring cups and spoons
Narrow rubber scraper
Cutting board and small sharp knife
Medium mixing bowl
Wooden spoon
Metal teaspoon
Wooden picks
10 x 6-inch glass baking dish

Pot holders or oven mitts

Trivet

1. Reserve ½ cup cheese.
Combine remaining ½ cup cheese, crumbs, mayonnaise and onions in bowl.

Mix lightly.

2. Sprinkle fish with lemon juice.
Spoon cheese mixture evenly over fish, using teaspoon.

Snuggly roll up fish, starting from narrow end.

Secure with wooden picks.

3. Place fish, seam side down, in baking dish.

Drizzle with margarine.

Bake at 350 degrees, 30 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork.

4. Remove fish from oven.

Sprinkle with reserved cheese.

Continue baking until cheese is melted.

Remove wooden picks before serving.

Learning to prepare great-tasting chicken dishes will give junior cooks something to crow about. Today, chicken has become such an everyday favorite that youngsters may be surprised to learn it was once reserved for Sunday dinners and special occasions.

Baking is a simple cooking method for first-timers to use and Baked Crispy Chicken is an easy, sure-to-please recipe. Show children how to use a pastry brush to generously coat a cut-up broiler-fryer chicken with salad dressing. The special spice blend in this unique salad dressing flavors the chicken as it bakes and helps retain the natural moisture.

A coating of crushed seasoned croutons adds a crispy crunch to the tasty baked chicken. Older children may be able to crush croutons by processing them in a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade. The croutons can also be placed in a plastic bag or between sheets of wax paper and crushed with a rolling pin.

To keep the crouton coating crisp have junior cooks bake the chicken on the rack of a broiler pan. Demonstrate how to line the bottom of the broiler pan — never the top rack — with foil, for ease of clean-up after baking.

BAKED CRISPY CHICKEN

3 to 4 servings

You will need:
1 ½ lb. broiler-fryer chicken, cut up
2 cups seasoned croutons, finely crushed
¼ cup mayonnaise type salad dressing

Take out: Metal measuring cups

Food processor or plastic bag with twist tie and rolling pin

Pastry brush

Shallow bowl

Broiler pan

Pot holder or oven mitts

1. Generously brush chicken with salad dressing.

2. Place crouton crumbs in shallow bowl or pie plate.

Coat chicken with crumbs.

3. Place chicken on rack of broiler pan.

Bake at 350 degrees, 50 to 60 minutes or until tender.

Old English meal easy picnic treat

A royal picnic in olden England required many cooks and easy to prepare an on-site lavish banquet — probably featuring a heavy meat roasted on a spit — for the lords and ladies.

Today we want simpler, lighter fare that can be prepared easily and packed conveniently so that we can spend our time relaxing and enjoying the outing. A quick, delicious idea is a salmon Pita Pouch, filled with a tasty salad made from pink skinless and boneless salmon chunks.

The appealing salmon, which already has unappetizing skin and bones removed for you, is combined with crunchy pea pods and thin radish slices, then quickly seasoned with a salad dressing. Cover the

sandwiches with plastic film or slip into a sandwich bag for easy toting to the picnic grounds. Bring along fruit, cheese and a favorite beverage for the perfect outdoor meal.

SALMON PITA PICNIC SANDWICH

1 can (6 ½ oz.) skinless and boneless salmon, drained and chunked
¼ cup Chinese pea pods, blanched, chilled
¼ cup thin radish slices
¼ cup Italian salad dressing
2 pita bread rounds (pocket bread)

Toss together salmon, pea pods, radish slices and salad dressing. Cut each pita round in half. Fill with lettuce and salmon salad. Makes 2 servings.

Classic dessert is a summer delight

BLUEBERRY PEACH TRIFLE

(Makes 10 to 12 servings)

1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk (NOT evaporated milk)
1 ½ cups cold water
2 tsp. freshly grated lemon rind
1 (3 ½ oz.) package instant vanilla pudding and pie filling mix
2 cups (1 pt.) whipping cream, whipped
4 cups pound cake cubes
1 lb. ripe fresh peaches, seeded, pared and chopped (about 2 ½ cups)
or 1 (29 oz.) can sliced peaches, well drained and chopped
2 cups fresh or dry pack frozen

blueberries, thawed, rinsed and well-drained

In large bowl, combine sweetened condensed milk, water and lemon rind; mix well. Add pudding mix; beat until well-blended. Chill 5 minutes. Fold in whipped cream. Spoon 2 cups pudding mixture into 4-quart glass serving bowl; top with half the cake cubes, the peaches, half the remaining pudding mixture, the remaining cake cubes then the blueberries and remaining pudding mixture. Spread to within 1 inch of edge of bowl. Chill at least 4 hours. Garnish as desired. Refrigerate leftovers.

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