

# California inspiration for Chicken Cilantro

Take a moment and picture this: the Pacific Ocean in all its deep blue, sparkling beauty on a sunny day in southern California.

Now, picture this: a lovely California contemporary-styled house situated on a little rise, just 100 feet from a sandy beach.

Take a moment and breathe in the smell of the fresh, ocean air. Feel the warm sand between your toes. Listen to the seagulls' plaintive cries as they wheel through the air.

Now picture a husband coming home from work, loosening his tie as he walks in the door of the above-mentioned house and saying, "Guess what, honey. We're moving to Detroit!"

This imaginary scenario was played out for real by this week's Winner Dinner Winner, MarkAnn Long. She recently moved with her husband to Birmingham from Redondo Beach, Calif.

Long's winning recipe for Chicken Cilantro is a flavorful dish that was an oft-requested favorite of her four children when they were growing up. Cilantro, for those of you who are not familiar with it, is a type of parsley that has a refreshing taste. It is an herb that is often used in Mexican cooking, which is such an integral part of West Coast cuisine.

Chicken Cilantro is good for family or company. Long likes to serve the chicken over fresh hot fettuccine. A tossed salad of mixed greens accented with a sprinkling of chopped cilantro and a crisp loaf of French bread to sop up the extra sauce fill out this delicious dinner.

Chocolate chip meringue cookies, whipped up in five minutes and "forgotten" in the oven for an hour or so, offer a sweet ending to a terrific, low-fat dinner.



family-tested winner dinner  
**Betsy Brethen**



JERRY ZOLYNSKY/STAR photographer

Markann Long of Birmingham makes Chicken Cilantro for family dinner. Herb cilantro also is used in the salad.

the many lakes and the uncrowded open land offer a welcome relief from the miles of jammed freeways and the exorbitant cost of living in California.

They have enjoyed the quaintness of Birmingham and the friendly, more relaxed pace of the Midwest.

Welcome to Michigan, MarkAnn Long, and congratulations on being our winner of the week. Readers,

here's hoping that this dinner will shake up your taste buds — California-style.

Submit your recipes, to be considered for publication in this column or elsewhere, to: Winner Dinner, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham 48012. All submissions become the property of the publisher.

## Observer & Eccentric

# Winner Dinner

Menu  
**CHICKEN CILANTRO  
FETTUCINE  
MIXED GREEN SALAD  
CILANTRO**

**FRENCH BREAD  
FORGOTTEN  
COOKIES**

### Recipes

#### CHICKEN CILANTRO

This dish takes about 20 minutes to put together and can be made in advance and reheated. The recipe calls for cilantro, also known as Mexican parsley, or Chinese parsley, which can be found at the larger grocery stores. This recipe amply feeds 6 people.

- 1 pound of boneless, skinned chicken breast, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1/2 large white onion, chopped
- 1 large or two small bunches of fresh cilantro, finely chopped (this amount can be adjusted, depending on your family's taste)
- 2 small zucchini squash, sliced diagonally into 1/4-inch pieces
- 2 small yellow squash, sliced diagonally into 1/4-inch pieces
- 2 16 ounce cans of tomato sauce
- 1 can water
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- garish with grated Parmesan cheese

In a large high-sided heavy skillet, add the olive oil. Once heated, add the garlic and onion and saute until lightly browned. Add the chopped cilantro (tops only) and saute for 3-4 minutes. Add the chicken and brown on all sides, about 10 minutes, and then add the remaining ingredients, except for the zucchini and squash. Add salt and pepper to taste. Bring to a hard cook and then simmer for 30 minutes. Add

zucchini and squash and cook 10 minutes more. Serve over fresh, hot fettuccine.

#### MIXED GREEN SALAD CILANTRO

- 1 head red leaf lettuce
- 1/2 head iceberg lettuce
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 2-3 Italian tomatoes, sliced
- 1 cucumber, chopped into bite-sized chunks
- 2 tablespoons cilantro, finely chopped (set aside when making the chicken)

Toss with a light Italian salad dressing

#### FORGOTTEN COOKIES

Busy moms will love this recipe as it literally takes 5 minutes to whip these cookies up. A few drops of red or green food coloring will turn these cookies into festive favorites for the holidays.

- 1 12-ounce package of chocolate chips
- 4 large egg whites
- 1 1/2 cup granulated sugar

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Beat the egg whites until they are firm. Gradually add the sugar and continue beating until the mixture is firm and forms peaks. Fold in the chocolate chips. Drop by teaspoons onto a greased cookie sheet. Place all the trays into the oven at the same time. Turn off the oven and "forget" about them for an hour or two. Remove when cool. This recipe makes about 3 dozen cookies.

## Shopping List

- 1 pound boneless, skinned chicken breast
- 1 pound fettuccine
- two 16-ounce cans tomato sauce
- 2 small zucchini squash
- 2 small yellow squash
- 1 large or two small bunches cilantro
- 1 head red leaf lettuce
- 1 head iceberg lettuce
- 1 large white onion
- 1 red onion
- 2-3 Italian tomatoes
- 1 cucumber
- garlic
- Italian salad dressing (bottled, packaged or made from scratch)
- olive oil
- sugar
- one 12-ounce package chocolate chips
- eggs
- 1 baguette French bread
- Parmesan cheese

### Notes

DESPITE SOME initial trepidation, Long and her husband have fallen in love with Birmingham and the Midwest. The lushness of the trees

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