

Easter dinner offers Apricot-Glazed Ham

AP — If you don't want to spend hours in the kitchen preparing Easter dinner, try this quick-to-fix holiday menu.

Apricot-Glazed Easter Ham, Bountiful Spring Risotto, Minted Zucchini and Carrot Ribbons, and Fresh Fruit Sundae with Yogurt Cream and Caramel Sauce is an elegant menu, but is easy to prepare.

Use a basket of fresh spring flowers or decorated Easter eggs for your table centerpiece. Plan to add a fresh flower to each guest's place setting just minutes before dinner.

APRICOT-GLAZED EASTER HAM
one 3-to-5-pound extra-lean ham
¼ cup apricot preserves
3 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard
2 teaspoons freshly grated ginger-root
fresh apricots (optional)
fresh watercress (optional)

In small bowl, combine apricot preserves, Dijon-style mustard and gingerroot. Stir until well blended. Decoratively score ham. Place ham in shallow baking pan; shield ends with foil. Insert meat thermometer. Brush ham with ¼ cup of glaze. Bake, uncovered, in a 325-degree oven for 15-20 minutes per pound or until thermometer registers 130-140

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degrees. Brush with remaining glaze every 15 minutes. Transfer ham to serving platter. Garnish with fresh apricots and watercress leaves. Makes 4-5 servings per pound.

Preparation time: 6 minutes.
Cooking time: 15-20 minutes per pound.
Nutrition information per serving: 129 cal., 4 g fat, 51 mg chol., 17 g pro.

BOUNTY OF SPRING RISOTTO
1 cup frozen peas
¼ cup dry white wine
½ ounce dried porcini mushrooms (about pieces or ¼ cup fresh mushrooms, cut into thin slices)
3 cups chicken stock or canned chicken broth
¼ teaspoon powdered saffron or 6 threads saffron, crushed
3 tablespoons olive oil
¼ cup finely chopped yellow onion
1 large clove garlic, minced

1 ½ cups quick-cooking rice
1 cup water
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon freshly grated Parmesan cheese
salt and pepper, to taste
1 medium tomato, unpeeled, seeded and chopped

Place peas in colander. Run under cool running water. Set aside. In small saucepan, bring wine to boil. Add porcini. Remove pan from heat. Let mushroom mixture stand.

In medium saucepan, bring broth to boil. Reduce heat to allow broth to simmer. Remove ½ cup of broth. Let rest of broth continue to simmer. Add saffron to the ½ cup of broth, stirring to dissolve. Set saffron mixture aside.

In a 4-quart Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic. Add rice; cook and stir until grains are well coated, about 2 minutes.

Add 1 cup of remaining hot broth to rice, stirring continuously and scraping bottom and sides of pan until liquid has been absorbed. Add 1 additional cup hot stock, stirring until absorbed. Add saffron-flavored broth, stirring until absorbed. Add mushroom mixture, stirring until well combined. In ¼ cup portions, add the remaining broth and 1 cup water, allowing each addition to be absorbed before adding another, until rice is tender and mixture has creamy consistency; about 20 minutes.

Stir in peas and ¼ cup Parmesan cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer risotto to shallow 2-quart serving bowl. Sprinkle chopped tomato down center. Sprinkle remaining 1 tablespoon cheese over tomato. Cover; keep warm until serving time. Makes 6 servings.

Preparation time: 8 minutes.
Cooking time: 20 minutes.
Nutrition information per serving: 215 cal., 9 g fat, 4 mg chol., 7 g pro.

MINTED ZUCCHINI AND CARROT RIBBONS

6 small zucchinis (about 1 ½ pounds)
3 large carrots (about 12 ounces)
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 medium cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons fresh mint, minced, or

2 teaspoons dried mint, crushed
fresh mint sprigs

Trim ends off zucchini. Using swivel-bladed (standard) vegetable peeler, peel a few lengthwise strips from one side of each zucchini to create a flat surface. Place zucchini onto its flat side. Continue peeling the strips until all four sides have been peeled. Discard inner core and seeds. Repeat with remaining zucchini and carrots. (Recipe may be prepared to this point up to 1 day ahead. Cover vegetables and store in refrigerator.)

In large skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic. Cook until tender but not brown. Add zucchini, carrots and mint. Cook and stir for 6 to 8 minutes or until vegetables reach desired tenderness. Transfer vegetables to shallow serving bowl. Garnish with fresh mint sprigs. Makes 6 servings.

Preparation time: 16 minutes.
Cooking time: 6 minutes.
Nutrition information per serving: 78 cal., 4.7 mg fat, 0 mg chol., 2 g pro.

FRESH FRUIT SUNDAY WITH YOGURT CREAM AND CARAMEL SAUCE
1 pound fresh nectarines or peaches,

cut into ¾-inch dice (about 3 medium)
1 pint fresh blueberries (2 cups)
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon honey
1 cup vanilla low-fat yogurt
1 ¼ cup frozen whipped dessert topping, thawed

¼ teaspoon almond extract
1 pint fresh raspberries (2 cups)
6 tablespoons commercially prepared caramel sauce
lemon peel curls (optional)
fresh mint sprigs (optional)

In medium bowl, stir together nectarines, blueberries, lemon juice and honey. Cover and chill. In small mixing bowl, combine yogurt, whipped topping and almond extract.

Cover; store in refrigerator until serving time. At serving time, gently stir raspberries into chilled berry mixture. Divide berry mixture between 6 chilled dessert dishes or glasses. Spoon 2 heaping tablespoons yogurt mixture on top of fruit in each dish. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of caramel sauce on top of each serving. Garnish with lemon peel curls and fresh mint sprigs, if desired. Makes 6 servings.

Preparation time: 12 minutes.
Nutrition information per serving: 217 cal., 3 g fat, 2 mg chol., 4 g pro.

What's File Powder? What's Hoisin Sauce?

AP — With thousands of choices on the shelves of the average supermarket, it's no wonder that recipes sometimes call for an ingredient that's unfamiliar. Get acquainted with some of these less familiar fixings.

● **FILE POWDER** (fee-LAY): The ground form of sassafras leaves. Its

subtle flavor tastes like a mild herb. In Cajun and Creole cooking, file is used to thicken and flavor saucy mixtures such as gumbo. Because file gets stringy when cooked, add it just before serving. Despite what you may have heard or read, file powder is perfectly safe to eat. Saffron, a possible carcinogen banned from food use by the Food

and Drug Administration, is found only in sassafras bark, not the leaves.

● **HOISIN SAUCE:** A thick, rich-flavored Oriental seasoning, hoisin sauce is made from soybeans, sugar, garlic, flour, vinegar and spices. Look for it among the Oriental ingredients at your supermarket, or at an Oriental market. If you can't find it, soy sauce is the closest substitute.

● **JICAMA** (HEE kuh muh): A root vegetable that's similar to a potato but has a milder, sweeter flavor and crisper texture than a potato. Peel it and slice or dice it to use raw

in salads or on relish trays. Or, cook as you would potatoes.

● **NEUFCHÂTEL:** Looks, tastes and cooks just like cream cheese but is made with 25 percent less fat. It contains 80 calories per ounce compared to 100 for regular cream cheese. Formerly labeled only "Neufchatel," this product now carries the word "light" on the label. You'll find it in 8-ounce packages in the dairy case. It can be substituted for cream cheese in any recipe.

● **ORZO** or **ROSAMARINA:** Although it looks like slightly flattened grains of rice, this is a pasta. Cook it in boiling, lightly salted water. Be-

cause it's so small, it cooks in just 5-8 minutes and is a good choice when you want pasta in a hurry.

● **SHALLOTS AND SCALLIONS:** Both are mild-flavored members of the onion family. Scallions are onions that have not yet formed a bulb. They are more commonly called green onions. Shallots, like garlic, grow in clusters joined at the bottom, each covered with a papery husk. Shallots are often used in French cooking, especially in sauces. When a recipe calls for either shallots or scallions, you can substitute green onions. Or use finely chopped mild onion instead of shallots.

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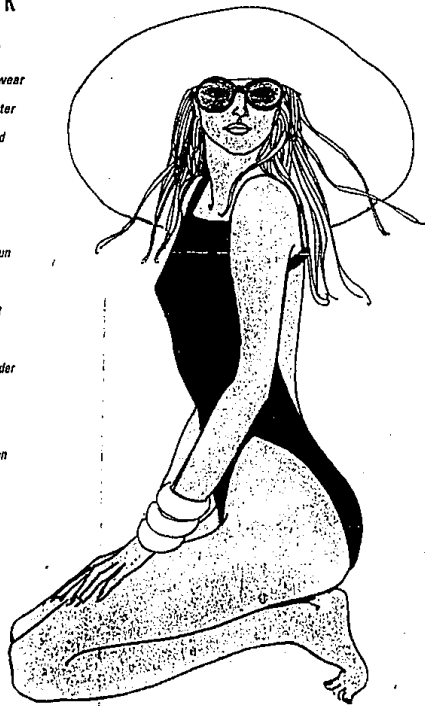
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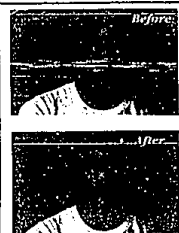
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