

Add drama to meals with fat-free cooking method

BY DANA JACOBI
SPECIAL WRITER

Nothing does more to make you look like a culinary expert than cooking "en papillote," meaning food sealed in an envelope of baking parchment or aluminum foil.

Cooking parchment, sometimes called 'greaseless' or 'liner paper,' is traditionally used for cooking en papillote, dating back to a time when foil wrap was not available.

When you bring these ballooned packets with their elegantly folded edges to the table, and then slit them open, an enticing, aromatic cloud is released. Their interior reveals colors heightened by the steam—a harbinger of deliciously concentrated, succulent flavors.

Cooking parchment, sometimes called "greaseless" or "liner paper," is traditionally used for cooking en papillote, dating back to a time when foil wrap was not available.

WINTER SQUASH AND RED PEPPER EN PAPILLOTE

- 1 1/2 pounds delicata, acorn or butternut squash, or a combination of them
1 large red bell pepper, seeded and diced
1/4 pound shallots, peeled and sliced lengthwise
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary or 1 tsp. dried
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, or to taste
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
4 teaspoons chopped pumpkin seeds

Preheat the oven to 425° F. Cut four 15-inch lengths of baking parchment or foil wrap. Fold each piece in half, crosswise, to make 12-by-7-1/2-inch rectangles. As if making a valentine, cut each piece into the shape of half a heart. Set them aside.

Cut squash in half lengthwise. Scoop out and discard seeds. Cut squash crosswise into 1-inch slices, then peel. Cut into 1-inch cubes. Place squash in a large bowl and add bell pepper, shallots, rosemary, vinegar, salt and pepper. Toss to coat vegetables evenly.

Place one-fourth of vegetables in center of each heart along one side of fold. Drizzle 1/4 teaspoon oil over each mound of vegetables. Sprinkle one teaspoon pumpkin seeds over each.

Fold parchment over so edges of both sides meet. Starting at top of the heart, at the center, fold about an inch of paper over twice and press firmly to seal. Repeat along entire edge. Twist pointy end to seal tight. Make four packets in all and place on cookie sheets, two to a pan.

Bake 25 minutes or until vegetables feel slightly soft when packet is pressed gently. Remove from oven and let packets sit 10 minutes before serving.

To serve, place each packet on a separate plate. Using a sharp knife, slit each open down the center and fold back paper.

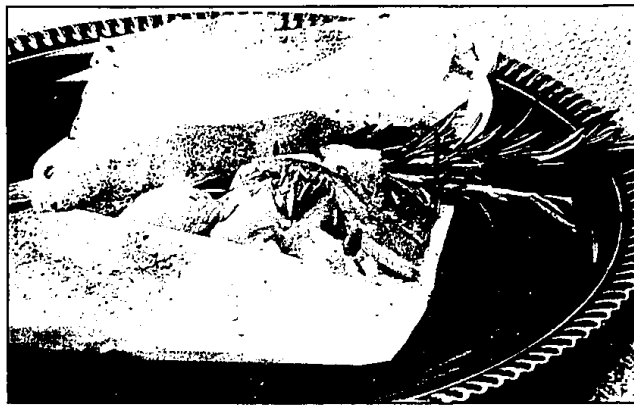
(Take care, as the released steam is scalding hot.)

Nutritional information: Makes 4 servings, each containing 91 calories and 3 grams of fat.

Suitable substitute

Although foil is a suitable substitute, it doesn't puff up attractively when steam is released, as happens with the heavy paper. Baking parchment is now as easily available as foil, in many supermarkets and specialty stores.

To make packets the traditional way, cut the paper into a heart shape. You will quickly get



Flavorful packet: Winter Squash and Red Pepper en Papillote is a healthful way to serve winter squash. "En papillote" means food sealed in an envelope of baking parchment or aluminum foil.

the hang of rolling, folding and pressing edges along the curves, twisting the point into a tight seal.

Chefs often use foil, which can also be formed into the classic heart shape, or into a rectangle by folding in the two short ends and sealing together the two long edges. Rectangular packets take up less room in the oven, a

good choice when doubling this recipe.

Fragrant herbs

Fresh herbs are often sprinkled over food cooked this way to add extra fragrance as well as flavor.

Balsamic vinegar contributes a bit of moisture to encourage

steaming, and a few drops of olive oil add to and meld the flavors.

Dana Jacobi is the author of "The Joy of Soy" and recipe creator for the American Institute for Cancer Research's book "Stopping Cancer Before It Starts."

Go wild for morel mushroom stew

See related column by Bruce Konovalov on Taste front.

Try this recipe developed by Master Chef Dan Hugelier, who teaches restaurant operations and ala carte cooking at Schoolcraft College's Culinary Arts Department.

Hugelier stresses the use of seasonal vegetables and adapts all of Schoolcraft's American Harvest Restaurant menus according to the season.

This recipe for a wild mushroom stew is an excellent appetizer when served in small puff pastry Vol-au-Vent or Bouché (both are different shaped puff pastry patty shells.) This stew would also make an excellent crepe filling. If you would like to try something a little different, mix this mixture into scrambled eggs. It makes a supreme brunch or light luncheon entrée.

combination of chanterelle, morels, shiitake, and "lobster chicken" or "hen of the woods," sometimes available at Eastern Market

- 8 ounces shallots finely diced
2 each whole lemons juiced
8 ounces whole butter, melted
8 ounces Madeira wine
2 ounces Armagnac
2 cups heavy cream
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, minced
Salt, pepper, and nutmeg to taste

Cook mushrooms until brown in butter, adding more butter if necessary. Add shallots, lemon juice and seasonings, sauté briefly.

Add the Madeira, Armagnac and cream. Reduce the sauce until it coats the mushrooms. Add the fresh parsley. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

MOREL WILD MUSHROOM STEW

3 pounds assorted wild mushrooms; use any variety or

ed A Doctor Fast? Accepting New Patients

ACCESS, p.c.
The best of Modern Medicine, Family Practice, Internal Medicine, And Pediatrics

On Staff, D.O.'s, M.D.'s
Edwin Pearce, M.D. - Family Practice
Linda Haddad, M.D. - Internal Medicine
Ernest Farnish, M.D. - Pediatrics
Frank Poché, D.O. - Family Practice
23974 New Rd. (just South of 10 Mile)
(248) 305-8875

Desert Sands
Middle-Eastern Dining
UNDER NEW MGMT
SAME OWNER
Enjoy the same Specialties
New Serving Cocktails and Wine
Call Us For All Your Catering Needs

29222 Orchard Lake Road
S of 13 Mile • Farmington Hills
(248) 855-1122
Fax (248) 865-6001
www.food.com/desertsands

LUNCH SPECIAL
Sandwich with soup or salad
Dinner lunch special
\$4.95 & \$5.95

20% off LUNCH or DINNER ENTREE
Dine-In or Carry-Out
7 days a week • exp. 4-31-01

Wanna feel this good about your bank?

All it takes is a little TCF

Get TCF Totally Free Checking and a go-anywhere-anytime, seven-day-a-week personal loan representative. We'll be at your side with virtually instant loan approval and personal loan service whenever and wherever you need us. Totally Free Checking and personal loan service.

That's why we're getting a reputation as Michigan's most convenient bank™

Call us at 1-877-452-2265.

TCF BANK
MEMBER FDIC

All it takes is a little TCF™