

Goat Cheese Stuffed Chicken Breast with Fresh Tomato Salsa and Orzo with Peas and Spinach

Recipe by Ana Maria Crowther

FOR THE FILLING:

4 ounces goat cheese
2 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted and coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons chopped shallots
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Salt and pepper

FOR THE CHICKEN:

4 boneless chicken breast halves with skin attached
Salt and pepper
¼ cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter

TO DEGLAZE PAN:

2 tablespoons chopped shallots
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
½ cup chicken stock
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Salt and pepper

Orzo with Peas and Spinach (recipe to follow)

Fresh Tomato Salsa (recipe to follow)

- ❖ Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
- ❖ Insert a thin, sharp knife into the thick side of each chicken breast and make a horizontal pocket, being careful not to cut all the way through to the other side.
- ❖ For the filling, mix the goat cheese, pine nuts, shallots, parsley and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Put mixture in a piping bag with a large plain tip (or you can use a Ziploc bag and make a small slit in one corner). Stuff each chicken breast.
- ❖ Lightly salt and pepper both sides of the chicken. Place the flour in a shallow dish and lightly dust the chicken, shaking to remove any excess. In a large ovenproof skillet, heat the olive oil and butter over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and sear skin-side down until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn and place in the oven and bake until the chicken

is cooked through, about 12 to 15 minutes. Remove from the oven, transfer to a plate, and cover with foil to keep warm.

- ❖ Add the shallots and garlic to the fat remaining in the pan and cook over medium-high heat, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the chicken stock and lemon juice. Cook until reduced by half, stirring to deglaze the pan. Remove from heat and whisk in the butter.
- ❖ Transfer the chicken to a cutting board and slice each breast in half on a bias.
- ❖ To serve, spoon the orzo into the center of each of 4 large dinner plates and arrange the sliced breasts on top of the orzo. Top the chicken with the tomato salsa.
- ❖ Yield: 4 servings

Orzo with Peas & Spinach

8 ounces orzo pasta

½ cup fresh shelled peas (you may use frozen peas if fresh not available)

1 tablespoon olive oil

¼ cup chopped green onions

1 cup of chopped fresh spinach

3 tablespoons olive oil

3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves

1 tablespoon of fresh thyme

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Salt

- ❖ Bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil. Add the orzo and cook until tender, about 6 minutes. Add the peas and cook until tender, about 3 more minutes. Drain well.
- ❖ In a skillet, sauté the green onions lightly in 1 tablespoon of olive oil, add the spinach and cook until wilted.
- ❖ In a large bowl, combine 3 tablespoons of olive oil, the parsley, thyme and wilted spinach. Season with lemon juice and salt, and toss.
- ❖ Serve at room temperature.
- ❖ Yield: 4 servings

Fresh Tomato Salsa

2 ripe plum tomatoes, cored, seeded, and chopped

1½ tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

2 leaves chopped fresh basil

½ teaspoon chopped garlic

½ teaspoon salt

- ❖ Mix all the ingredients together and set aside. (To allow the flavors to blend, you may make the salsa in advance and let sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes.)
- ❖ Yield: 4 servings