

Orzo Baked in Red Peppers

Serves 6 as a side dish

8 oz. Orzo, Ditalini or other small pasta shape, uncooked
2 tsp. vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 medium onion, finely diced
1 celery stalk, finely diced
1 tsp. fresh thyme, or 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided
4 oz. provolone cheese, grated and divided
6 medium red bell peppers
3 tsp. dry bread crumbs

Prepare pasta according to package directions; drain and set aside. Put the vegetable oil in a medium saucepan and warm over medium heat. Add garlic, onion and celery. Cover pan and let vegetables cook until very soft. Remove from heat. Stir in pasta, thyme, parsley, Parmesan cheese, salt, 1/2 cup of the chicken broth and half the provolone.

Preheat oven to 350-o F. Cut the tops off the peppers and remove the seeds. Cut a small piece off the bottom of each pepper so they will stand up. Spoon the pasta mixture into each of the peppers and then set the peppers in a baking dish. Sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon bread crumbs on top of each pepper. Sprinkle remaining provolone over top of each pepper. Pour the remaining 1 1/2 cups chicken broth around the peppers. Bake for 45 minutes, until peppers are brown on top and very tender. Remove peppers from baking dish with a spatula. Serve immediately.

Steamed Chicken Lasagne with Fresh Tomato Sauce

Makes 4 appetizer servings

4 pieces of Lasagne, uncooked
1 chicken breast, 6-8-oz., cooked
1 1/2 tbsp. tomato paste
1 tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided
1/4 cup freshly chopped tomato
1 tbsp. chopped capers
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1/2 tsp. hot red pepper flakes
2 tbsp. chopped fresh basil
2 tbsp. pitted and chopped black olives, such as Kalamata
20 basil leaves
1/2 cup chopped yellow onion
3 large tomatoes, chopped, with juice
1/8 tsp. black pepper
3 tbsp. chopped fresh basil (optional)
Basil leaves (optional)

Prepare pasta according to package directions. While pasta is cooking, cut chicken breast into 6-8 pieces. In a food processor or blender, puree chicken breast with tomato paste. Add oil slowly, then add 1/2 cup chicken broth. Transfer puree to a bowl and mix in 1/4 cup chopped tomatoes and capers. Add the salt, pepper, red pepper flakes, basil and olives. Set aside.

Preheat oven to 350° F. On a board, lay out 4 pieces of lasagne. Lightly season with salt and pepper. Lay 3-4 basil leaves on each piece of lasagne. Divide pureed chicken mixture into four equal parts. Spoon 1/4 of the mixture on one end of each sheet of lasagne. Roll up each sheet and secure each together with a toothpick. Pour 1/4 cups of chicken broth into four oven-safe coffee cups or ramekins. Place rolled up lasagnes into cups. Place the cups in a 9 x 13-inch baking pan. Slowly fill pan with 1 inch of water. Cover with foil and bake for 50 minutes.

In a small saucepan, cook onion and chopped tomatoes (with their juice) over medium heat until mixture has a sauce-like consistency (about 8-10 minutes). Add pepper and basil. Set aside.

When lasagnes are done, remove from ramekins by carefully draining liquid from each, and turning ramekins upside down. Remove lasagnes and turn right side up. Remove toothpicks. Divide among four bowls, placing a lasagne in center of each bowl. Top each lasagne with a little sauce and pour remaining sauce around sides of lasagne. Garnish with basil leaves.

For more pasta recipes, please visit www.ilovepasta.org

Chicken Tequila Fettuccine

Serves 6

1 pound spinach Fettuccine, uncooked
1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 tbsp. minced garlic
2 tbsp. minced jalapeño pepper
3 tbsp. unsalted butter or margarine
1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth
2 tbsp. gold tequila
2 tbsp. lime juice
3 tbsp. soy sauce
1 1/4 pounds chicken breast, diced 3/4-inch
1/2 medium red onion, thinly sliced
1/2 medium red bell pepper, thinly sliced
1/2 medium yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
1/2 medium green bell pepper, thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups heavy cream

Prepare pasta according to package directions; drain.

Saute cilantro, garlic and jalapeño in 2 tbsp. butter over medium heat for 4-5 minutes. Add chicken broth, tequila and lime juice. Bring the mixture to a boil and cook until reduced to a pastelike consistency. Set aside. Pour soy sauce over diced chicken. Marinate for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, cook onion and peppers, stirring occasionally, with remaining butter over medium heat until wilted. Add chicken and soy sauce; toss and add reserved tequila/lime paste and cream. Bring to a boil, until chicken is cooked through, about 3 minutes. Toss with hot pasta and serve immediately.