

RHS Dinner: Healthy Cooking on the Cheap
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Teri Kleinberg, terik@post.harvard.edu

Menu:

Kale Chips with olive oil and sea salt
Chickpeas with salami, rosemary, and pistachios

Grilled chicken marinated in yogurt, garlic, and herbs
Roasted root vegetables and garlic
Arugula salad with lemon, olive oil, and parmesan

Floating islands

Skill taught today: How to cut up a whole chicken

Why do I teach this?

My general theory is this: the less processing, the better. Also, whole chickens average between \$0.89-1.50 per pound, which is significantly cheaper than buying processed parts. You also get a nice bony carcass at the end, which is perfect for making your own chicken stock for later use.

Kale chips

This recipe works best with curly leaf kale, but any kind will do. Remove the woody stem from the center of the kale leaves. Preheat broiler to 450 F. Arrange kale in 1 layer on a large baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Broil 4 minutes, turn over each leaf, and then return to broiler for another 2-3 minutes until leaves are crisp and browned but not burned.

Grilled chicken with yogurt and herb marinade

Serves 4

2 chicken breasts or 4 thighs
½ cup Greek yogurt
handful of fresh herbs, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
½ teaspoon salt
pepper to taste

Mix yogurt and spices in a bowl and then cover chicken in the marinade. Let sit at least 10-15 minutes but preferably overnight. BBQ or broil.

Ljiljana's Floating Islands

Serves 6-8

This is our Croatian neighbor's take on the traditional French dessert *œufs à la neige* ("eggs in snow") or *île flottante* ("floating island"). I love this dish because it is simple, inexpensive, fairly healthy, and impressive to serve.

You can use any kind of milk for the custard, but I would highly recommend at least 2% fat milk to make the dessert taste a bit richer. This may be a healthy dessert, but it's dessert nonetheless so indulge yourself a little! A little bit of liquor would also be a nice addition, perhaps amaretto or cognac in the custard for an extravagant touch. A garnish of fresh fruit (strawberries, perhaps) is also great.

For the islands:

6 egg whites
1 tablespoon sugar
pinch salt
milk for poaching

Beat egg whites with salt and sugar until very stiff. Simmer milk about 2 inches deep in a medium saucepan. Spoon big dollops of the egg whites into the milk. Let them poach for 30 seconds or so until firm, flip carefully to cook the other side and then remove into a bowl. The islands should be firm but not tough so this will take a little practice.

For the custard:

6 egg yolks
3- 3 ½ cups (700-825 ml) milk, whole preferable
5 tablespoons sugar
2 ½ tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Use your leftover boiling milk for this custard if you don't have much milk to spare. If you do use the milk you used for the islands, make sure to whisk in cold milk with the yolks first in order to avoid cooking them right away. Whisk yolks, milk, sugar, and flour together until smooth. Cook over medium heat whisking the whole time until the mixture thickens and comes nearly to a boil. Add milk if the custard is too thick. The ideal consistency is a like a thick sauce rather than pudding. Stir in vanilla then pour into a wide brimmed serving bowl.

Top the custard with your beautiful white islands and serve either warm or chilled. You can also make these individual desserts by spooning the warm custard into shallow individual bowls and topping each with one or two islands.