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**TABLE APPETIZERS:****Mixed Seafood Salad**

Brimming with a combination of six types of fresh seafood, this simply seasoned salad could be the star of your dinner. Use any combination you like. Flavorings are minimal to allow the seafood to shine. To ensure the octopus becomes tender, it needs lengthy cooking in barely simmering water. Cook the seafood a day ahead, and then refrigerate; toss with remaining ingredients a couple of hours before serving.

Ingredients:

- 6 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ pound cleaned squid
- ½ pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ½ pound bay scallops
- ½ pound cleaned octopus
- ½ pound cooked lobster meat, cut into 1-inch pieces (about 3 tails)
- ½ pound lump crabmeat, drained and shell pieces removed
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Lemon wedges (optional)
- Parsley sprigs (optional)

Preparation: Bring 6 cups water and salt to a boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add squid; cook 3 minutes or until squid is just tender. Remove squid from pan with a slotted spoon. Plunge squid into ice water; drain. Cut squid into 1-inch pieces. Place squid in a large bowl.

Add shrimp to boiling water; cook 3 minutes or until done. Remove shrimp from pan with a slotted spoon. Plunge shrimp into ice water; drain. Add shrimp to bowl with squid.

Place a vegetable steamer in pan. Reduce heat to medium-low. Arrange scallops in steamer; cook over simmering water 6 minutes or until done. Plunge scallops into ice water; drain. Add scallops to bowl. Cover scallop mixture; chill.

Remove steamer from pan. Add octopus to simmering water; cover and simmer 2 to 2½ hours or until fork-tender (add additional water, if necessary, to cover octopus.) Plunge octopus into ice water; drain. Rub off skin. Cut octopus into 1-inch pieces. Add octopus, lobster, and crabmeat to scallop mixture. Add juice and next 4 ingredients (through garlic); toss gently to combine. Chill for at least 2 hours. Garnish with lemon wedges and parsley sprigs, if desired.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1 cup)

Nutritional Information: Calories: 247 (27% from fat); Fat: 7.3g (sat 1g, mono 3.6g, poly 1.4g); Protein: 38.8g; Carbohydrate: 5.1g; Fiber: 0.2g; Cholesterol: 237mg; Iron: 3.9mg; Sodium: 608mg; Calcium: 108mg.

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TABLE APPETIZERS:

Figs and Prosciutto with Mint and Shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano

Ripe figs are the secret to this simple yet refined salad. It's best made just before serving.

Ingredients:

- 8 fresh figs, quartered
- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1 ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, thinly shaved
- 12 mint leaves, thinly sliced
- 4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto

Preparation: Place figs in a bowl; drizzle with oil. Sprinkle figs with pepper; toss gently. Place fig mixture in the center of a platter; top with cheese and mint. Top with prosciutto.

Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 4 fig quarters, about ½ ounce prosciutto, and ⅛ ounce cheese)

Nutritional Information: Calories: 90 (34% from fat); Fat: 3.4g (sat 1.2g, mono 1.8g, poly 0.3g); Protein: 4.8g; Carbohydrate: 9.5g; Fiber: 1.4g; Cholesterol: 11mg; Iron: 0.3mg; Sodium: 270mg; Calcium: 64mg.

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FIRST COURSE:

Parmesan Flans with Tomatoes and Basil

Use a variety of colorful tomatoes, including red, yellow, orange, and green, to make this elegant dish more visually appealing. Serve as an appetizer or side dish, or pair it with a chilled soup, salad, and wine for a light meal.

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup 1% low-fat milk
- 4 large egg whites, lightly beaten
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- ¾ cup (3 ounces) finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups chopped seeded tomato
- Dash of salt
- Dash of freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup thinly sliced fresh basil

Preparation: Preheat oven to 375°.

Coat 4 (6-ounce) custard cups or ramekins with cooking spray. Place 3 tablespoons flour in a medium bowl. Gradually add milk to bowl, stirring constantly with a whisk until blended. Add egg whites and eggs; stir well. Add Parmigiano-Reggiano, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper; stir well. Divide mixture evenly among prepared custard cups. Place custard cups in a 9-inch square baking pan; add hot water to the pan to a depth of 1 inch. Bake at 375° for 25 minutes or until puffy and set.

Combine tomato, dash of salt, and dash of pepper in a medium bowl. Loosen edges of flans with a knife or rubber spatula. Place a plate, upside down, on top of each cup; invert onto plates. Spoon ½ cup tomato mixture over each flan. Top each serving with 1 tablespoon basil.

Yield: 4 servings

Nutritional Information: Calories: 192 (34% from fat); Fat: 7.3g (sat 3.7g, mono 2.5g, poly 0.7g); Protein: 16.7g; Carbohydrate: 14.2g; Fiber: 1.3g; Cholesterol: 106mg; Iron: 1.5mg; Sodium: 478mg; Calcium: 286mg.

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FIRST COURSE:

Orange and Arugula Salad

The honey in the vinaigrette balances the salad's peppery, citrusy flavors.

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon honey
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 6 navel oranges
- 3 cups trimmed arugula
- 6 tablespoons (1½ ounces) crumbled feta cheese

Preparation: Combine first 4 ingredients in a small bowl, stirring with a whisk. Peel oranges, and cut each crosswise into 6 slices. Arrange 6 orange slices on each of 6 arugula-lined plates. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon feta over each salad, and drizzle each with 1 tablespoon dressing.

Yield: 6 servings

Nutritional Information: Calories: 118 (34% from fat); Fat: 4.4g (sat 1.7g, mono 2.1g, poly 0.3g); Protein: 3.1g; Carbohydrate: 18.8g; Fiber: 3.6g; Cholesterol: 8mg; Iron: 0.4mg; Sodium: 109mg; Calcium: 121mg.

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ENTRÉE:

Roasted Chicken with Asiago Polenta and Truffled Mushrooms

Mushrooms and truffle oil are paired with hearty polenta and simple roasted chicken. Look for packages of mixed wild mushrooms in the produce section, or use any combination of oyster, shiitake, chanterelle, and cremini mushrooms.

Ingredients:

CHICKEN:

- 1 (5-pound) roasting chicken
- 1½ teaspoons finely chopped fresh thyme
- 2 teaspoons fresh orange juice
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 orange, halved
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 (14-ounce) can fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth, divided
- Cooking spray
- ½ cup white wine
- 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour

MUSHROOMS:

- 2 teaspoons butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 12 ounces mixed wild mushrooms, sliced (about 8 cups)
- 1 (8-ounce) package presliced mushrooms
- 2 teaspoons truffle oil

POLENTA:

- 2 cups fat-free milk
- ¾ cup water
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¾ cup instant dry polenta
- ½ cup (2 ounces) grated Asiago cheese

Preparation: Preheat oven to 325°.

To prepare chicken, remove and discard giblets and neck from chicken. Rinse chicken under cold water; pat dry. Trim excess fat. Starting at neck cavity, loosen skin from breast and drumsticks by inserting fingers, gently pushing between skin and meat. Combine thyme, orange juice, ¼ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and garlic; rub over breast and drumsticks under loosened skin. Place orange halves in body cavity. Lift wing tips up and over back; tuck under chicken.

Combine 6 garlic cloves, 2 thyme sprigs, and 1 cup of broth in a shallow roasting pan. Place chicken on a rack coated with cooking spray; place rack in pan. Insert meat thermometer into the meaty part of thigh, making sure not to touch bone. Bake at 325° for 2 hours or until thermometer registers 180°. Let stand 10 minutes. Discard skin. Place chicken on a platter, reserving drippings in pan; cover chicken and keep warm. Add wine to drippings in pan, scraping pan to loosen browned bits; discard thyme sprigs.

Place flour in a small saucepan; gradually add remaining broth, stirring with a whisk until blended. Set aside. Place a zip-top plastic bag inside a 2-cup glass measure. Pour pan drippings into bag; let stand 10 minutes (fat will rise to the top). Seal bag; carefully snip off 1 bottom corner of bag. Drain drippings into flour mixture in saucepan, stopping before fat layer reaches opening; discard fat. Bring mixture to a boil, and cook 1 minute or until thick, stirring constantly with a whisk. Keep warm.

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**ENTRÉE:**
Roasted Chicken with Asiago Polenta and Truffled Mushrooms
 (continued)

To prepare mushrooms, melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add ½ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon pepper, and mushrooms; cook 5 minutes or until the mushrooms release moisture and darken, stirring frequently. Remove from heat; stir in truffle oil.

To prepare polenta, combine milk, water, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat; bring to a boil. Gradually add polenta, stirring constantly with a whisk; reduce heat, and cook 2 minutes or until thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat, and stir in cheese. Serve with chicken, gravy, and mushrooms.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: about 6 ounces chicken, 2½ tablespoons gravy, ½ cup polenta, and ½ cup mushrooms)

Nutritional Information: Calories: 467 (30% from fat); Fat: 15.8g (sat 5.6g, mono 5.9g, poly 2.7g); Protein: 52.4g; Carbohydrate: 27.5g; Fiber: 3.4g; Cholesterol: 135mg; Iron: 2.9mg; Sodium: 814mg; Calcium: 221mg.

SIDE:
Garlicky Broccoli Rabe

Boiling the broccoli rabe helps remove some bitterness before it's sautéed in garlic-infused oil. If you like it hot, double the amount of crushed red pepper.

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds broccoli rabe (rapini), trimmed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper

Preparation: Cook broccoli rabe in boiling water 6 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and plunge broccoli rabe into ice water; drain. Coarsely chop.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add garlic; cook 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in broccoli rabe, salt, and peppers.

Yield: 6 servings (serving size: ½ cup)

Nutritional Information: Calories: 67 (31% from fat); Fat: 2.3g (sat 0.3g, mono 1.6g, poly 0.3g); Protein: 5.4g; Carbohydrate: 7.6g; Fiber: 0.1g; Cholesterol: 0.0mg; Iron: 1.3mg; Sodium: 241mg; Calcium: 74mg.

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**DESSERT:****Ricotta Cheesecake with Fresh Berry Topping**

You'll need to make at least 1 1/2 batches of Homemade Ricotta Cheese for this luscious dessert. Although cream cheese-based cheesecakes are served chilled, ricotta cheesecakes are often enjoyed warm or at room temperature. If you've made this dessert in advance, cover and refrigerate, then let it stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before serving. While a shiny metal pan makes a delicious cheesecake, a dark metal or nonstick pan consistently gave us a taller, lightly browned cake.

Ingredients:**CHEESECAKE:**

- 4 cups (2 pounds) Homemade Ricotta Cheese
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 4 large eggs
- Cooking spray
- 1 tablespoon powdered sugar

TOPPING:

- 2 cups quartered strawberries
- 1 pint fresh raspberries
- 1 pint fresh blueberries
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Mint sprigs (optional)

Preparation: Preheat oven to 350°.

To prepare cheesecake, place first 5 ingredients in a large bowl; beat with a mixer at medium speed 2 minutes or until smooth. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Pour batter into a 10-inch springform pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until cheesecake center barely moves when pan is touched. Remove cheesecake from oven; run a knife around the outside edge of cheesecake. Cool slightly; remove outer ring from pan. Sprinkle cheesecake evenly with powdered sugar.

To prepare topping, combine berries, 2 tablespoons granulated sugar, and juice; toss gently to combine. Let stand 5 minutes. Serve berry mixture with cheesecake. Garnish with mint sprigs, if desired.

Yield: 12 servings (serving size: 1 cheesecake wedge and about ½ cup berry mixture)

Nutritional Information Calories: 286 (32% from fat); Fat: 10.2g (sat 5.6g, mono 3.1g, poly 0.7g); Protein: 18g; Carbohydrate: 31.7g; Fiber: 2.5g; Cholesterol: 101mg; Iron: 0.6mg; Sodium: 328mg; Calcium: 353mg.

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DESSERT:

Cappuccino Biscotti

Ingredients:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup chopped walnuts
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons instant coffee granules
- 2 teaspoons hot water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 egg white
- Vegetable cooking spray

Preparation: Combine first 8 ingredients in a large bowl. Combine coffee granules and hot water in a small bowl. Stir in vanilla and next 2 ingredients, and add to flour mixture, stirring until well-blended.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface, and knead lightly 7 or 8 times. Shape dough into a 16-inch-long roll. Place roll on a baking sheet coated with cooking spray, and flatten roll to 1-inch thickness.

Bake at 325° for 30 minutes. Remove the roll from the baking sheet to a wire rack, and let cool for 10 minutes. Cut the roll diagonally into 30 (½-inch) slices, and place, cut sides down, on baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Turn cookies over, and bake an additional 10 minutes (cookies will be slightly soft in center but will harden as they cool). Remove cookies from the baking sheet, and let cool completely on wire rack.

Yield: 2½ dozen (serving size: 1 cookie)

Nutritional Information: Calories: 75 (16% from fat); Fat: 1.3g (sat 0.2g, mono 0.4g, poly 0.6g); Protein: 2g; Carbohydrate: 13.7g; Fiber: 0.3g; Cholesterol: 15mg; Iron: 0.6mg; Sodium: 67mg; Calcium: 10mg.