

## Brussels Sprouts with Bacon and Onion

### Ingredients:

½ lb. bacon, diced  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 lbs. Brussels sprouts, halved  
1 cup chicken broth  
1 cup dry white wine  
4 tablespoons butter

### Directions:

In a large heavy skillet or pot, fry bacon pieces until crisp. Remove bacon to drain on paper towels. Add onions and garlic to bacon drippings, and sauté over low heat until soft. Add Brussels sprouts, coat in bacon drippings, and sauté for 5 minutes. Add broth and wine, cover, and cook until Brussels sprouts are tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add butter, bacon bits, and toss to coat. Transfer to a serving dish or platter.

## Roast Duck with Czech Dumplings

### Ingredients (Duck):

1 or 2 fairly large ducks (6 to 7 lbs)  
extra virgin olive oil  
kosher salt  
poultry seasoning  
caraway seed  
ground allspice  
salt and pepper  
4 celery stalks  
2-4 medium white onions  
3 garlic cloves  
1 cup chicken broth

### Directions:

Thaw ducks completely, and remove giblets. Set liver aside, and place remaining giblets in a medium saucepan with water, two quartered celery stalks, garlic cloves, ½ of one onion. Season with salt, pepper, allspice, and poultry seasoning. Bring to a boil, then reduce and simmer for up to three hours to make stock.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Rinse ducks thoroughly and pat dry. Using a knife, poke a few holes in the skin. This will allow the fat layer beneath the skin to render out during cooking, and create a crispier skin. Rub ducks lightly with olive oil. Then, rub generously, inside and out, with kosher salt and black pepper, and sprinkle with poultry seasoning, allspice and a fairly generous

amount of caraway seed. Stuff the cavity of each duck with remaining onions and celery stalks. Roast the ducks on a rack in a fairly shallow roaster, uncovered, and pour 1 cup of broth in the bottom of the pan. Roast for 3 to 3 ½ hours. The skin should be well-browned and crispy. If it becomes too brown, cover with a foil tent for the rest of the roasting process. Remove from oven, place ducks on a platter, and separate and discard all but 2 tablespoons of the fat from the pan. Keep the pan drippings in the pan, and move to the stovetop. Add reserved stock, made earlier from the giblets.

**Ingredients (Dumplings):**

1 14 oz. package of Pepperidge Farm seasoned herb stuffing mix (white and wheat bread)  
1 14 oz. can of chicken broth  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoons ground allspice  
3-4 large garlic cloves, minced  
2 raw duck livers (If you are roasting only one duck, add equal amount of chicken liver)  
1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt  
½ teaspoon white pepper  
all-purpose flour

**Directions.**

In a large mixing bowl, combine the stuffing mix with chicken broth, stirring to incorporate. Add eggs and combine. Allow to sit for a few minutes, giving the bread crumbs an opportunity to absorb the liquid and soften. Add allspice, salt and pepper, and stir to incorporate. Finely chop the liver, and add to the mixture. Add flour in small amounts, and continue to stir until the dough becomes too stiff to stir with a spoon. At this point, you may want to use your hands. Mix in more flour, a little at a time, until it is manageable enough to knead. Transfer to a lightly floured surface and knead in flour until dough mixture is no longer sticky. Be careful not to add too much flour, as the dumplings may become too heavy. Form dumplings into balls, approximately 1 inch in diameter and roll liberally in flour to coat. These can be made a day or two in advance, and refrigerated in a well-floured container until ready to use.

Bring pan drippings and duck stock to a boil in the roaster, covering two burners for a more even distribution of heat. Depending on how many dumplings you intend to make, you may want to add some additional chicken stock. Flavor to taste with salt, pepper and allspice. Slowly add dumplings to the seasoned boiling stock, reduce heat slightly and simmer at a light boil, stirring constantly, until ingredients have had a chance to cook (approximately 10-15 minutes). The flour coating on the dumplings will serve as a thickening agent, and the end result should be delicious dumplings in rich brown gravy. Serve alongside the roasted duck.

## **Broccoli Mushroom Risotto**

**Ingredients:**

8 Cups chicken broth or stock  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, diced  
2 cloves of garlic, minced  
1 lb. fresh crimini mushrooms, sliced  
1 oz. dried porcini mushrooms  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 box frozen chopped broccoli (thawed)  
½ teaspoon dried thyme leaves (hand-crushed)  
3-5 sprigs of fresh flat leaf (Italian) parsley  
Salt and fresh-cracked pepper  
2 cups Arborio rice  
½ cup dry white wine (I use a Sauvignon Blanc)  
½ - ¾ Cup fresh-grated Parmesan cheese  
Fresh flat leaf (Italian) parsley for garnish

**Directions:**

Bring chicken broth to the brink of boiling in a saucepan, then immediately reduce heat to low, and keep warm. Remove 1 cup of warm broth with a ladle to a separate bowl, and use to reconstitute the dried porcini mushrooms.

In a large skillet, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and heat to medium. Add half of the diced onion and sweat until soft (3-5 minutes). Add half of the minced garlic near the end, taking care not to brown or burn it. Add the fresh crimini mushrooms, thyme, parsley and butter and sauté until lightly browned. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add reconstituted porcini mushrooms and return any porcini-infused broth to the saucepan. Add the chopped broccoli, and combine thoroughly. Season again to taste with salt and cracked pepper.

In another saucepan, add 2 tablespoons of olive oil, along with the remaining onions and garlic, and sauté. Add the uncooked rice, and stir until rice is coated. Allow to cook, stirring constantly, for about 2 minutes, but don't allow the rice to brown or burn. Add white wine, and continue stirring over medium heat until the wine is nearly evaporated. Next, ladle in warm chicken broth, a cup at a time, and continue stirring until most of the liquid is absorbed. Repeat this process until the rice is al dente, but not mushy. Add the mushroom broccoli mixture, and stir in Parmesan cheese until melted.

Garnish with fresh parsley and serve.

## **Asparagus Basil Soup**

**Ingredients:**

3 tablespoons butter  
2 leeks (white and light green parts only) sliced  
6 cups chicken broth

3 lbs. fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut into small pieces  
¾ to 1 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped  
salt and pepper  
fresh parsley (for garnish)  
croutons (for garnish)  
basil goat cheese (for garnish). Recipe follows.

**Directions:**

In a heavy soup[ pot, melt butter over medium heat and add sliced leeks. Cook, stirring constantly, until tender. Add chicken broth, asparagus and basil, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer covered, 15-20 minutes, or until asparagus is tender. Transfer in batches to a blender, and puree. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with fresh parsley, croutons and a small dollop of the basil goat cheese.

**Basil Goat Cheese:**

**Ingredients:**

8 oz. goat cheese  
2-3 tablespoons of fresh basil leaves, chopped  
½ roasted red bell pepper, drained and chopped  
Salt and pepper

**Directions:**

Soften goat cheese by allowing it to reach room temperature. Using a fork, mash in the other ingredients until well blended. Salt and pepper to taste.