

COMFORT FOOD NOW

bon appétit

MARCH 2009



LAMB AND
EGGPLANT
SHEPHERD'S PIE

P. 93

family style

dinner
for you and
your kids—
plus leftovers

BY MARIA HELM
SINSKEY



THE MENU/ SOUP AND SALAD FOR 4

Chicken and white bean soup with herb swirl
Green salad
Parmesan toasts
Chocolate cream cheese cupcakes

THE PAYOFF/ Simple chicken soup gets even more savory in this warm, comforting, hearty Italian-style version. For a perfect family meal,

pair it with garlicky cheese toasts, make a simple green salad to serve alongside, and finish with rich chocolate cream cheese cupcakes.

THE LEFTOVERS/ Poached Eggs and Ham on Parmesan Toast: The leftover cheese bread becomes the base for open-face breakfast sandwiches.

KIDS CAN COOK

Set your mini sous-chefs to work making the cheese toasts, lining the cupcake pan

with paper cups, measuring the dry ingredients, and spooning out the cupcake batter (and licking the bowl).

CHICKEN AND WHITE BEAN SOUP WITH HERB SWIRL

4 TO 6 SERVINGS/

- 8 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh sage
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 pound skinless boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, halved lengthwise, cut crosswise into ¼-inch pieces
- 1 large celery stalk, thinly sliced
- ½ cup tomato puree
- 4 cups low-salt chicken broth
- 2 15-ounce cans cannellini beans, drained
- ½ cup fresh Italian parsley leaves
- 1 bay leaf

Heat 4 tablespoons olive oil and next 4 ingredients in small skillet over medium heat until herbs are aromatic, about 1½ minutes. Pour herb oil into bowl; cool.

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in large pot over medium heat. Sauté chicken 5 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer chicken to bowl. Add 2 tablespoons oil to pot. Add onion, carrots, and celery; sauté until beginning to brown, about 15 minutes. Mix in last 5 ingredients. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 15 minutes. Add chicken; simmer until cooked through, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Ladle soup into bowls. Gently swirl 1 teaspoon herb oil into center of each.

PARMESAN TOASTS

4 SERVINGS/

- 8 ¾-inch-thick slices Italian bread
- 1 medium garlic clove, halved
- Extra-virgin olive oil

second helpings/

POACHED EGGS AND HAM ON PARMESAN TOAST

- Rewarm leftover PARMESAN TOASTS in oven; top with THINLY SLICED PROSCIUTTO. Top with POACHED EGGS. Sprinkle eggs with salt and pepper and drizzle with leftover HERB OIL. Finish with a sprinkle of SEA SALT.

- ½ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- Fleur de sel or coarse kosher salt

Preheat oven to 400°F. Arrange bread on baking sheet. Rub bread with garlic; drizzle with oil. Sprinkle cheese over. Sprinkle with fleur de sel. Bake until edges are lightly browned, about 12 minutes.

CHOCOLATE CREAM CHEESE CUPCAKES

MAKES 12/

FILLING

- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese
- 1 large egg
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup mini semisweet chocolate chips

CUPCAKES

- 1 cup all purpose flour
- 3 tablespoons sifted unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon coarse kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature

- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped, melted, warm
- ½ cup whole milk

FILLING/ Using electric mixer, beat cream cheese in medium bowl. Add egg, sugar, salt, and vanilla and beat until almost smooth. Fold in chocolate chips.

CUPCAKES/ Preheat oven to 350°F. Line standard muffin pan with 12 paper liners. Whisk first 5 ingredients in small bowl. Using electric mixer, beat sugar and butter in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in eggs. Stir in vanilla and chocolate; beat at high speed 5 seconds. Beat in flour mixture alternately with milk. Beat on high for 5 seconds to blend. Divide batter among cups, filling ⅓ full. Using tablespoon, hollow out center of each cupcake. Place 1 heaping tablespoonful cream cheese filling in each center.

Bake cupcakes until toothpick inserted into center (but not cream cheese filling) comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool 10 minutes in pan. Remove from pan; cool completely on rack. / ■

Maria Helm Sinskey is the author of The Vineyard Kitchen and the mother of two.

