

Simple Gourmet Pantry Cooking

June 2011

Menu:

Spaghetti with Sundried Tomato Pesto and
Seared Feta

Quick Thai Shrimp over Jasmine Rice

Roasted Pepper & Tomato Soup with
Caramelized Onion Grilled Cheese Toast

Apricot Almond Crostada



Spaghetti with Sundried Tomato Pesto & Seared Feta

serves 4-6

1 lb spaghetti
2 cloves garlic
1 1/2 cup chopped sundried tomatoes
1 tsp chopped rosemary
1 tsp lemon zest
1/4 cup sliced almonds
1/4 cup grated parmesan
salt and pepper, as needed
olive oil, as needed
6 oz block feta cheese

***** Preparation ******

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Add a small handful of salt. Add the spaghetti and stir. Cook according to package instructions.

Meanwhile, combine the garlic, sundried tomatoes, rosemary, lemon zest, almonds and parmesan in a food processor and pulse until finely chopped. Drizzle in olive oil with the machine running until mixture is a thick paste. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Heat a large non-stick skillet over high heat. Add a drizzle of olive oil. Cut the feta into 4-6 thick slices and place into the hot oil -- allow one side to sear before turning carefully with a thin spatula. Cook the other side and remove from the pan. Toss the cooked pasta with the pesto, along with 1/4 cup of the pasta cooking water.

Serve topped with a chunk of the seared feta.



Quick Thai Shrimp over Jasmine Rice

serves 4-6

- 1 15 oz can coconut milk, (NOT light!)
- 1 tbl Thai curry paste, (red, yellow or green)
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 tbl lime juice, plus more to taste
- 1 tbl fish sauce OR soy sauce
- 1 1/2 tbl brown sugar
- salt and pepper
- 1 1/2 lbs medium shrimp, (defrosted, peeled, cleaned, tail removed)
- cooked jasmine rice , for serving

***** Preparation ******

Heat a medium sautee pan over medium-high heat. Open the coconut milk and scrape a spoonful of the coconut fat off the top into the pan. Add the curry paste. Cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Whisk in the rest of the coconut milk and the chicken stock. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes until reduced slightly. Add the fish sauce, lime juice and sugar. Taste and add more salt and pepper as needed. Add more lime as desired. Add the shrimp and cook for 5 minutes or JUST until the shrimp are cooked through.

Serve immediately over cooked rice.



Roasted Pepper & Tomato Soup with Caramelized Onion Grilled Cheese Toast

makes 8 cups

1 tbl butter
2 cups sliced white onions
olive oil
2 tbl chopped garlic
2 cup diced yukon gold potatoes
2 cups jarred roasted red peppers, rinsed, drained and patted dry
2 28-oz cans canned roasted tomatoes
1 tbl dried oregano
1 tbl honey
3-4 cups chicken stock, as needed
salt and pepper
4-6 large slices rustic bread
1 cup grated parmesan
1/2 cup greek yogurt

***** Preparation ******

Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add the butter. When melted add the onions. Cook until beginning to brown. Lower heat and cook slowly for 20 minutes until deeply golden. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat a large Dutch Oven or soup pot over medium-high heat. Add a drizzle of olive oil. Add the garlic and cook just until fragrant. Add the potatoes, peppers, tomatoes, oregano, honey and enough stock to cover the tomatoes by about 1-inch of liquid (NOTE: best to add less liquid to ensure that the soup is thick when it's blended -- you can always add more stock later to thin it out.) Bring to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes or until the potatoes are very soft.

Remove from the heat and use a stick blender to puree the soup. If using a traditional blender, be sure to only fill the blender half-way with the hot soup and blend in batches.

Once the soup is blended, taste and season with more salt and pepper and honey as needed.

Preheat oven to 450 degrees.

Divide the onions onto the bread slices and top with the cheese. Place on a baking sheet and into the oven. Bake for 5 minutes or until golden and melted.

Serve the soup topped with a dollop of yogurt and a warm toast on the side.



Apricot Almond Crostada

makes 1 crostada

1 round store-bought pie dough

8 oz almond paste, crumbled

1 cup apricot jam

1/4 cup sliced almonds

1 egg, mixed with 1 tbl water

***** Preparation ******

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Place the dough on a piece of parchment paper on a baking sheet. Sprinkle on the almond paste leaving about a 2-inch border all around. Top with the jam (still leaving the border). Fold up the edges, being sure all of the jam is encased. Top the exposed jam with almonds. Whisk together the egg and water. Brush the egg wash onto the top of the dough. Bake for 25 minutes or until very golden. Remove and let cool for at least 30 minutes before slicing to serve.