

A quick company feast for four



Cheesy Peach Soup and Chicken Breast Montmorency are the basis for an elegant company dinner that can be on the table in 45 minutes.

Having company for dinner during the week or on busy weekends can be a challenge in time management. Today's fast pace and two-job families don't leave much time for leisurely preparation of party fare.

Here's one menu that uses pantry staples to help create elegant fare for four in just 45 minutes, start to finish—even less if you set the table in the morning before work. This fruit-filled dinner offers a pleasant bonus—a taste of warmer weather foods on a cool evening.

Cheesy Peach Soup
Chicken Breasts Montmorency
Buttered Noodles
Garden Salad
Vegetables
Brown-and-Serve Rolls
Apricot Cream

The entree is chicken breasts, and according to the National Broiler Council, Americans today eat nearly one billion chickens each year. Chicken is one of the most inexpensive sources of animal protein on the market. Low in cholesterol and sodium, it is also low in calories. Remove the skin before eating and a 3-ounce portion has only 125 calories.

For Chicken Breasts Montmorency, combine the chicken with canned condensed creamy chicken mushroom soup, which literally creates the sauce while it cooks. Canned bing cherries added just before serving give an elegant look and an interesting taste. Actual preparation time for this dish can be just about 45 minutes. An added time-saver tip: put it together the evening before; refrigerate and heat it when you come home from work.

Introduce the dinner with an unusual and delectable Cheesy Peach Soup. Everything in this first course can come from the pantry shelf or refrigerator. Canned condensed cheddar cheese soup combines with yogurt and canned peaches to make this blender soup in a hurry. Top with peach slices and serve piping hot.

A quick salad of fresh peppers, mushrooms and bibb lettuce sauced with your favorite oil and vinegar dressing round out the dinner menu. For vegetables, try a favorite frozen variety for convenience, or stir-fry snow peas with canned water chestnuts, broccoli or sliced carrots.

Top off the meal by pureeing a can of drained, pitted apricots with ¼ cup dark rum, or 2 tablespoons rum flavoring. Chill well and serve in wine glasses. Pass chilled heavy cream.

45 minutes before serving: Brown chicken breasts, add other ingredients, cover, to cook.

35 minutes before serving: Heat soup, puree.

25 minutes before serving: Set table. Put water on for noodles.

20 minutes before serving: Puree apricots with rum. Refrigerate. Prepare salad.

15 minutes before serving: Prepare vegetables.

10 minutes before serving: Add cherries to chicken. Pop rolls in oven. Add noodles to boiling water.

Small business tips offered

"Micro-businesses", those firms employing fewer than about twenty people, often aren't aware of where to get the useful information needed to solve their business difficulties. To help remedy the problem, James Stewart and Gwen Switzer formed Micro-Business Development Project to develop a hands-on workshop on business planning especially for micros. "We have tried very hard to design both the program and the planning manual so it will be hands-on," says Switzer.

"This sector is very important to our economy. In Oregon, fully 72% of manufacturing firms have fewer than 20 employees and 85% of all businesses in the service and construction sectors have fewer than ten employees," said Stewart, a consulting and research economist.

The first "Micro-Business Planning" workshop is scheduled for March 3rd, at the Greenwood Inn in Beaverton. "We are proud," said Ms. Switzer, "that we have managed to keep the price down to \$29 so that it's easily affordable to micro owners."

For more information on the "Micro-Business Planning" workshop, call 231-9142.

5 minutes before serving: Arrange chicken, vegetables and salad on serving plates. Ladle soup into bowls.

CHEESY PEACH SOUP

2 tablespoons butter or margarine
 2 tablespoons chopped onion
 1 can (11 ounces) condensed cheddar cheese soup
 1 cup drained, canned sliced peaches
 1 cup vanilla yogurt
 ½ cup milk

In 1½-quart saucepan over medium heat, in hot butter, cook onion until tender. Add soup, peaches and yogurt. In covered blender container at high speed, combine soup mixture; blend until smooth.

Return mixture to saucepan; gradually stir in milk. Heat, stirring occasionally.

To serve: Ladle into bowls; garnish with sliced peaches. Makes about 3½ cups or 4 servings.

CHICKEN BREASTS MONTMORENCY

2 tablespoons shortening
 1 whole chicken breasts (about 2 pounds), split
 1 can (10¼ ounces) condensed creamy chicken mushroom soup
 ¼ cup chopped onion
 2 tablespoons burgundy or other dry red wine
 1 medium clove garlic, minced
 1 can (about 14 ounces) pitted dark sweet cherries, drained
 Cooked noodles

In 12-inch skillet over medium heat, in hot shortening, brown chicken; pour off fat. Stir in remaining ingredients except cherries and noodles.

Cover; reduce heat to low; heat 30 minutes or until done. Add cherries. Cook uncovered to desired consistency.

To serve: Pour over noodles. Makes 4 servings.



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