



Southwestern Stuffed Turkey Breast

This dish looks oh-so-elegant on the plate, but is very simple to prepare. We like that it's an unusual way to dress up the holiday turkey with a Southwestern flair, and this preparation is perfect for a couple or small family. You won't be burdened with several days of leftovers, and we love that you can vary the ingredients to make an Italian-style involtini.

4 servings

Ingredients

1½ pound turkey breast, in one piece
1 carrot, julienned
1 medium zucchini, julienned
1/3 cup ham, julienned
1 4-ounce can green chiles, chopped
2 thick slices of day-old bread
¼ cup milk
1 large clove of garlic, finely minced
4 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon chopped fresh oregano
1 egg
2 tablespoons freshly grated parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup chicken stock, heated through
1 lime, cut into wedges
2 tablespoons cold butter, for mounting the sauce

Equipment

Dutch oven or flameproof and oven safe casserole

Preparation

Prepare the turkey breast:

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Remove any skin or pockets of fat from the turkey breast. Using a very sharp knife, cut into the turkey breast on the long side, being careful not to cut all the way through. Open the breast up like the two halves of a book. Cover the turkey with a layer of plastic wrap, and flatten the breast out with a meat mallet or the bottom of sauté pan to an even thickness of about ¼-inch. Set aside, covered, while you prepare the filling.

Prepare the filling:

Blanch the carrots and zucchini strips in a small pot of boiling water for 2 minutes, and drain well. Mix in a bowl with the ham and the sliced green chiles.

Soften the bread slices in a little of the milk, then squeeze them gently to remove any excess milk. Break up the softened bread into a large mixing bowl, stir in the minced garlic, parsley and fresh oregano, and the egg. Mix well, adding the parmesan cheese, until thoroughly incorporated. Season with salt and pepper.

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Stuff and cook the turkey roll:

Remove the plastic wrap from the flattened turkey breast and spread the softened bread mixture in one layer over the surface, being careful to leave a border of about ½-inch on all sides. Cover with the vegetable and ham mixture. Roll the turkey breast up tightly in jelly roll fashion, removing any filling that oozes out the sides. Tie the roll with kitchen string in several places, both crosswise and lengthwise, to secure the roll.

Heat a flameproof and oven safe casserole dish or Dutch oven over high heat. Add the olive oil, and when it shimmers, begin searing the turkey roll on all sides, turning it as you go. Add the chicken stock and lime wedges, cover, and carefully transfer the dish into the preheated oven.

[Chef's Note: It is important that you brown the meat well, as this helps to develop caramelization, which will flavor the sauce and give a rich color to the finished dish.]

Cook the turkey covered for about 15 minutes, then uncover, remove the lime wedges, and baste the meat with the stock and juices. Cook uncovered for an additional 30 minutes, basting occasionally. Remove the dish from the oven and transfer the turkey roll to a warmed plate, tenting with foil, and allow to rest for 10-15 minutes.

Make the sauce:

Strain the liquid through a fine mesh sieve, and mount the sauce by stirring in the cold butter until melted and the sauce is thickened. Adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper.

Service

Cut the strings and carefully slice the roll into ¾-inch slices, making sure to hold the filling inside the roll. Serve warm with the thickened sauce.

Variations

This can be adapted to an Italian style by omitting the green chile and oregano, and adding chopped basil, chopped green olives and lemon zest. Instead of lime wedge, use lemon wedges in the braising liquid.

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