

September 2, 2015

A Crowd-Pleasing Italian Inspired Dinner

This Italian-inspired menu is simple enough for a regular family supper, yet delicious enough for entertaining guests.

Making your own pasta from scratch may seem like a daunting task, but it's easy once you get the hang of it and requires few ingredients. Our recipe uses a food processor to mix the dough, and if you have a stand mixer with a dough hook, it can be a completely hands-off process. Make a big batch and freeze for delicious weeknight dinners.

Dress your pasta with our Basil Pesto. We've added parsley for a bit of a peppery bite. If pine nuts are out of your budget, walnuts or almonds work just fine.

For the main course, our Salmon with Balsamic Glaze features a sweet, tangy sauce infused with thyme. Our Grilled Herbed Asparagus is marinated in an aromatic mixture of basil, thyme, parsley and green onion, pairing well with the rest of the flavourful meal.

FRESH PASTA

4 eggs
1 tbsp (15 mL) water
1 tsp (5 mL) olive oil
2 cups (500 mL) flour
1 tsp (5 mL) salt
Flour, optional

Whisk together eggs, water and oil until blended. Place 2 cups (500 mL) flour and salt in a food processor; process to combine. Add egg mixture and process, using an on/off motion, just until dough comes together, about 30 seconds.

Turn dough out onto a floured surface. If dough is too sticky, gradually knead in additional flour. Gather dough into a ball; flatten into a disc shape. Wrap disc with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at



least 30 minutes or up to 8 hours. Roll out using a pasta machine according to manufacturer's instructions or roll out by hand. *Makes about 16 oz (500 g).*

BASIL PESTO

1 cup (250 mL) fresh basil leaves, tightly packed
1/2 cup (125 mL) fresh parsley leaves, tightly packed
1/2 cup (125 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup (50 mL) pine nuts, walnuts or almonds
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt
1/2 cup (125 mL) olive oil

Place all ingredients except oil in a food processor; process until mixture is paste-like in consistency. With machine running, gradually add oil through feed tube in a thin steady stream, processing until mixture is the consistency of thick cream. Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days or freeze for up to 1 month. *Makes about 1 cup (250 mL).*

SALMON WITH BALSAMIC GLAZE

1/2 cup (125 mL) balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp (15 mL) oil
1/2 tsp (2 mL) packed brown sugar
1/4 tsp (1 mL) thyme, crumbled
1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) freshly ground pepper
2 lb (1 kg) salmon fillet

Combine vinegar, oil, brown sugar, thyme, salt and pepper in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer until reduced and slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Line a jelly-roll pan with parchment paper. Place salmon, skin side down, in prepared pan. Brush salmon with vinegar mixture. Bake at 425°F (220°C) for 30 - 35 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Using parchment paper as an aid, slide fish onto a serving platter. *Serves 4 - 6.*



GRILLED HERBED ASPARAGUS

1/4 cup (50 mL) olive oil
1/4 tsp (1 mL) basil, crumbled
1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) thyme crumbled
2 tsp (10 mL) chopped fresh parsley
1 green onion, finely chopped
1 lb (500 g) asparagus trimmed

To prepare marinade, combine oil, basil, thyme, parsley and green onion. Toss with asparagus. Let stand 30 minutes. Drain vegetables; discard marinade. Grill asparagus directly on grid over medium heat on natural gas barbecue for 12 - 15 minutes, turning occasionally. *Serves 4.*