

Mother's Day Dinner with Cornish Hens and Sauerkraut

We have had a consistent thread running through our celebrations lately, and that is not celebrating on the exact day - but boy do we celebrate! We've got our own calendar going! We celebrated Easter Sunday on the Saturday before, Zach's birthday (which is July 10th - but he'll be in Europe for the summer) on May 10th and Mother's Day for us was a week later as we had to travel to Boston for business on the actual holiday. My boys, with the help of one girlfriend, once again made a spectacular meal using recipes from Jamie Oliver, Mark Bittman, and the Chocolate Covered Katie blog. Not too shabby, right?! The standout main dish, unusual but terrific, was Bittman's Cornish Hens and Sauerkraut recipe.

My boys always ask what I want and I promptly say, "Surprise me!" I like/love nearly everything except processed food and of course they're not going to go there because after all, they were raised by me. When the older one texted me to ask if I had juniper berries at the apartment, I knew I was in for something great.



They started with a Jaime Oliver roasted tomato bread soup. It was different (I can always count on that from them) and delicious but was supposed to have used day-old bread which may have been better to add a bit more substance instead of the bread being so fresh as to soak everything up. No matter - that was a texture issue - the taste was fabulous! And since I was really hungry, it was substantial and great! Here's the recipe - cute name! <http://www.jamieoliver.com/recipes/bread-recipes/bread-and-tomato-soup-pappa-al-pomodoro>

The next course (yes, we have courses!) was this amazing salad of really unusual

ingredients – fennel, red onion, cucumber, radishes and oranges. Yes oranges! They provided a wonderful refreshing burst of flavor!



Here's the complete recipe – they did not use the ice cubes.

INSALATA AMALFITANA *Amalfi Salad* – Adapted from [Jamie's Italy](#).

1 bulb of fennel, washed
1 red onion, peeled
1 cucumber
a large handful of radishes, washed
2 tablespoons good-quality herb or red wine vinegar
good-quality extra virgin olive oil
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 oranges, peeled, segmented, and seeds removed

Optional: a small handful of ice cubes

Remove the herb-like tops from the fennel and set them aside. Then trim the fennel at both ends and take off the outer layer. Split the fennel in half and slice lengthwise as finely as possible. Put into a large bowl. Remove both ends of the onion, then halve it and slice it as finely as possible. Slice the cucumber finely into disk shapes. Leave the stems on the radishes as a grip. Then slice a little bit out of the side of the radish so it will be stable on the counter. Slice as finely as possible into disks.

Throw a few ice cubes in the bowl and toss the salad with them for a few minutes. Jamie says that this makes the vegetables get crunchier. I'm not sure why it works, but it really does.

Remove the ice cubes. In a bowl, mix together 2 tablespoons of good herb or red wine vinegar and about 6 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil. Mix well, and taste. If your oranges are super sweet, you may want some extra vinegar. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss the salad with the dressing, then add the orange segments with their juices. Sprinkle the reserved fennel tops over the salad right before serving.

And then we had the amazing main course of the Cornish hens with sauerkraut

served



CORNISH HENS AND SAUERKRAUT - By Mark Bittman

From the [How to Cook Everything Essentials](#)® app

An elegant but straightforward dish and an excellent introduction to sauerkraut. But steer clear of the canned stuff; instead, look for a bottled brand that contains no more than cabbage, salt, and water. This preparation also works well with pheasant, chicken, and duck.

- 4 Cornish hens, about 1 pound each
- 4 slices bacon, diced, or 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 pounds sauerkraut
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon juniper berries, crushed with the side of a knife
- 1 sprig fresh thyme or a pinch dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup dry white wine
- Stock or water as needed
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Remove the backbone of the hens by cutting along their length on each side. Separate breast and leg quarters. Cook the bacon over medium heat in a large, deep ovenproof skillet until crisp, about 10 minutes, or heat the oil until it shimmers. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve. Add the hen pieces to the bacon fat or olive oil and brown them on all sides. Meanwhile, rinse the sauerkraut in a colander and heat the oven to 300°F.

When the bird is nicely browned, add the sauerkraut, cloves, juniper berries, thyme, bay leaf, and white wine to the skillet. Cook over medium heat until about half of the liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes; move the skillet into the oven.

Bake for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding liquid as needed to keep the sauerkraut just moist, until the legs are tender and the sauerkraut is slightly browned. Remove the skillet from the oven, then remove the cloves and bay leaf. Taste the sauce, adjust the seasoning, garnish with the bacon pieces

(oops -



And for dessert, they made this amazingly rich, decadent chocolate mousse topped with fresh raspberries and strawberries, that had this secret surprise ingredient that not one of us could guess - it was tofu!!! Yes tofu was used instead of cream. Can you imagine?

It was delicious - and no doubt a whole lot healthier for you!

Here it is from the Chocolate Covered Katie blog. She apparently specializes in healthy chocolate desserts. How cool is that?!

<http://chocolatecoveredkatie.com/2012/02/06/chocolate-chocolate-chocolate-mousse/>



I couldn't eat the whole thing!

I know I'm lucky. Hope all you moms out there enjoyed a fantastic Mother's Day, filled with LOVE too!