

Summers, we grill. Spring we grill and fall we grill. My goal - figure out a way to endure the winter and continue to grill. I grill more now that I live slightly out into the country where the local natural gas company's line stops short of my house by 50 feet. UGH. So, I grill.

We had been up at the hospital with my daughter for the past two weeks and I wasn't in the mood to prepare anything extensive, so I pulled out the iPad and searched through my saved Pinterest recipes. Scoured the fridge and we came up with the following:

Grilled Chicken marinated in Sweet Balsamic Vinaigrette with Zucchini and Mushroom Cheesy Rice and a side of grilled cabbage

All of these recipes were inspired by Pinterest finds, but they also reminded me of favorites from home and friends. Of course, we adapted them and made them our own, as usual. I think that's what we all sort of do, especially in a pinch. I will link you the original inspiration for the dish as well - to pay homage to the cook/blogger that in most cases, lifted their idea from someone else too. Let's be real, we all really do that and that is the fun and enjoyment of what we do. Even the best do it, watch an episode of Top Chef!

Here we go - Remember to have fun with them.

Sweet Balsamic Marinated Grilled Chicken

1 jar Panera Balsamic Vinaigrette
1/4 c lime juice
2-4 T chopped Cilantro
4-6 chicken breasts or 8-10 chicken thighs
salt and pepper to taste

Season chicken pieces with salt and pepper. Combine first 3 ingredients in a Ziploc bag. Mix around til combined. Add the chicken to the bag and seal tightly. Marinate in the fridge for at least 1-2 hours, preferably 4-6 hours. If you don't like the lime/cilantro combination, lose it and just use the vinaigrette. Add a little more salt to the mix, though, to replace what is lost by the lime juice.

Heat your grill, place on the grill and grill skin side up for about 15 minutes, turn to grill skin side down for the rest of the time. Watch Carefully. Pull and enjoy!

Grilled Cabbage

1 head of cabbage, cored and cut into 4-6 wedges
12-16 pieces of thin sliced, hickory or apple wood smoked bacon
1 t olive oil
2 T lemon juice
1 T Worcestershire sauce
1/4 kosher salt
1/4 t fresh ground black pepper

Cut and core cabbage. Slice into 4-6 wedges. Place on a piece of nonstick tin foil. Mix olive oil, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Pour marinade in equal portions over the cabbage. Wrap wedge in bacon. Fold tinfoil around wedge, with the opening top side up. Place on grill around chicken. Cook for about 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of the wedge.

Zucchini and Mushroom Cheesy Rice

4 c good chicken stock

3 T butter

2 c rice (I had about 1-1/2 c of Basmati Rice and about a 1/2 c of regular short-grain rice and I combined them. Use a short-grain, sticky rice for this recipe. It works really well.

1 large zucchini, grated on a grater, large holes

1 small pkg of mushrooms - use any kind you would like. I had button, but baby portabellas would be nice as well.

1 small sweet onion, sautéed in about 1 T butter, til translucent

1/2 c pecan pieces

1 c cheese (any kind, we used a three cheese blend and some parmesan).

In a rice cooker, add the chicken stock, 2 T of butter and rice. Cook until done. (If on the stove, boil the stock first, then add rice, turn heat down and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat). When rice is cooked, open lid and stir in zucchini, onion and mushrooms. Close lid for approximately 5 minutes. Then add cheese and pecans. Mix and close lid again for about 2-3 minutes. Serve immediately.

Have fun!