

Meal Plan Week 54

Day 1: Red and White Beef Manicotti with Garlic Bread and Ceasar Salad

- Make manicotti according to recipe.
- Bake garlic bread.
- Make ceasar salad.

- Make marinade for blackened chicken and start marinating.

Day 2: Blackened Chicken Salad with Creamy Honey Mustard Dressing

- Prepare chicken.
- Assemble salad

Day 3: Thai Larp

- Prepare according to recipe.
- Make 4 cups of jasmine rice (to have leftovers for day 5)

Day 4: Chicken al Diavlo Penne with Mixed Greens drizzled with Balsamic and Olive Oil

- Make according to recipe.
- Prepare a salad using leftover salad greens from the fridge. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Season with salt and pepper.

Day 5: Lemon Chicken and Fried Rice

- Prepare lemon chicken according to recipe.
- Use the leftover rice from earlier in the week to make fried rice.

Red and White Beef Manicotti

1 225 g (8 oz) box manicotti noodles

1 1/2 lbs lean ground beef

1/4 cup parmesan cheese, grated

2-3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tsp dried basil

1 egg

1 650 ml jar (22 oz) red pasta sauce

1 450 ml jar (15 oz) alfredo pasta sauce
2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
1 tsp dried oregano

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Bring large pot of salted water to a boil and cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse with cold water. Set aside.

While pasta is cooking, brown the ground beef in a large frying pan over medium high heat. Add the garlic and basil. Once browned, remove pan from the heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in 1/4 cup of the red pasta sauce, parmesan cheese and the egg.

Spread 1/2 of the remaining red pasta sauce in a 13×9 inch pan. Fill the cooked manicotti noodles with the meat mixture and place in prepared pan. Pour on the alfredo sauce. Top with remaining red sauce, and mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle with oregano. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for an additional 20 minutes. At the end, I like to turn my broiler on, and broil the top for 2-3 minutes until the cheese gets golden. Remove from the oven and serve.

Blackened Chicken Salad with Creamy Honey Mustard Dressing

Chicken & Marinade:

3 chicken breasts or 5-6 thighs, boneless and skinless
3 tbsp lime juice
2 tbsp soy sauce
1/2 tsp Worcestershire sauce

Spice Mix:

1/2 tbsp kosher salt
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp paprika (regular or smoked)
1 tsp onion powder
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper

1 tsp black pepper
1/2 tsp white pepper

Salad:

Lettuce, chopped
1/2 cup shredded red cabbage
1/2 cup shredded carrots
1 large diced tomatoes
1/2 cup shredded mozzarella
1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Dressing:

1/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tbsp Dijon mustard (or for a more toned down flavor use regular mustard)
2 tbsp honey
1 tbsp vinegar
1/8 tsp paprika (regular or smoked)

Mix together the marinade ingredients. Place the chicken in a large resealable bag or plastic container and pour the marinade over the top. Marinate the chicken at least 4 hours or overnight.

In a small bowl or plastic container, mix together the spice mix. When the chicken has marinated, sprinkle the seasoning liberally on both sides of the chicken.

In a frying pan over high heat melt a couple tablespoons of butter and sear the chicken for 2-3 minutes on each side. At this point you can either transfer to a bbq heated to medium-high or place the chicken on a pan under the broiler. It takes at least 10 minutes or so to no longer be pink in the middle, but just check it to make sure.

While the chicken is finished cooking, chop all the salad ingredients. Place the dressing components in a resealable jar and shake to combine. When the chicken has finished cooking, let rest for about 5 minutes and then cut chicken crosswise into strips. Toss the dressing with the salad, dish onto plates and serve chicken over top.

Thai Larp

Nam Pic (Sauce):

1/4 cup lime juice
1/4 cup fish sauce
1 garlic clove, sliced
1 Thai chili's, deseeded and chopped
1-2 tsp brown sugar

Larp:

1 lb ground pork (or ground beef or ground chicken)
3-4 tbsp Jasmine rice grains
3 tbsp lime juice
3 tbsp fish sauce
3-4 tbsp fresh mint, chopped (or 2 tsp dried mint)
3-4 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped

Cooked Jasmine rice
Lettuce leafs and/or napa cabbage leaves

To make the nam pic:

Add all the nam pic ingredients in a jar, stir well and let sit. This can be made well ahead of time and once made will store in your cupboard for a month (the longer it sits the more potent it becomes). If you find this is a dish that you really like and make often (like we do), I recommend making up a double or triple batch to save time the next time you make the dish.

To make the toasted rice:

In a dry wok or frying pan, add the rice grains over med-low heat. Let them toast until the grains have a nice golden color (will probably take about 10-15 minutes). Stir around to prevent from burning. A cool trick is to use an air popper popcorn maker if you have one. Add the rice grains, turn on and let toast until golden (probably about 5 minutes). I find this route shorter and you have to babysit the rice less. The rice doesn't burn quite so easily. Once toasted, remove from the heat and let cool. Place the toasted rice in a food processor, spice grinder, coffee grinder or mortar and pestle until they turn to a bit of a powder. My food processor only chops them to this consistency but we like them a bit chunkier and crunchy. This too you can make extra of, and store in a plastic container in the cupboard so prep is quicker the next time.

In a wok or large frying pan over medium-high heat, brown the ground meat until cooked through and crumbly. Once browned add the lime juice, fish sauce and about 1/2 of the toasted rice grains. Let sauté for about 4-5 minutes. Adding some of the toasted rice now, they will soak up the juices in the meat. When almost ready to serve, stir in the chopped mint and cilantro and top with the rest of the toasted rice. This adds a nice nutty crunch to the top.

Serve ground meat mixture with jasmine rice, nam pic and lettuce and/or cabbage leaves.

I like to put a scoop of rice of on my plate, with a big scoop of the meat mixture on top. I then spoon some of the nam pic over my meat, but this part is totally optional. The meat is already seasoned, but the nam pic just really blows the flavor out of the water and adds a good bit of spicy kick from the chili peppers. When adding nam pic to your food, just take the juice mixture and avoid the bits of garlic and chili. They are seriously potent! I then mix that together and scoop that into either a lettuce leaf or cabbage leaf and roll up like a burrito. Some people eat only the meat mixture in the lettuce/cabbage leaves and eat the rice separately, or eat the rice/meat mixture and skip the lettuce...it's all up to you. I like to the napa cabbage a bit better as a wrap, because it holds together better, is crunchier and has more flavor. But any way you serve this dish up, it's a winner.

Chicken al Diavlo Penne

1 lb chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 green or red pepper, sliced (or half of each...it looks really pretty that way)
1 cup mushrooms, sliced
1 lb penne rigate
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes (or more, depending on how spicy you like it)
1 450 ml jar (12 oz) Alfredo sauce
2 heaping tbsp pesto

Put a large pot of salted water on to boil. Add pasta when boiling.

In a frying pan over medium high heat, heat 1 tbsp oil and saute chicken for about 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, add mushrooms and chili flakes and continue to

fry a few more minutes until no longer pink. Add sliced peppers and saute for about 4-5 minutes (this still leaves them with a bit of crunch which is how my husband loves it...if you like them softer, add them with the mushrooms). Once all the veggies and chicken is sauteed, add the jar of alfredo and pesto. Stir and turn down heat to low. Simmer for a couple minutes until the pasta is done.

Drain pasta and toss with sauce.

Lemon Chicken

1 pound chicken breast or chicken thighs, cut into chunks

1/4 cup flour

Salt

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tbsp white or rice wine vinegar

1/2 cup chicken broth or stock

8 ounces (1 cup) prepared lemon curd (find in the jam aisle)

1/4 cup hot water

1 lemon, zested

2 green onions, finely chopped

In a wok or large skillet, heat oil to high heat. Toss chicken in flour, throw into hot pan and cook for 3 or 4 minutes until browned. Remove the chicken to a plate and reduce heat to medium.

Add the rice vinegar (stand back, the fumes are potent) to the pan and let evaporate. Then add chicken broth and scrape up all the chicken bits off the bottom of the pan. While simmering, loosen the lemon curd by mixing with the hot water (boiling is probably best). Add that to the pan, and keep simmering until all the chunks of lemon curd have melted and incorporated (will take a few minutes. Add the chicken back to the sauce, along with the lemon zest and green onions. Serve with Fried Rice.

Fried Rice

1 1/2 cups cooked day old rice

2 chopped green onions

1 clove minced garlic

1 inch grated fresh ginger

1 egg scrambled

Soy sauce

1 tbsp sesame oil

Frozen veggies or real veggies (whatever you prefer)

**Optional: add any diced meat you have*

Heat a wok to high. Add a bit of vegetable oil and scramble fry the egg. Set aside. Add more oil to the wok and add the veggies (add as many or as little as you'd like). Stir-fry a few minutes or until the veggies are almost cooked, then add the garlic and ginger. Stir fry only about 30 seconds so you don't burn the garlic. Add the rice, soy sauce and sesame oil. I just eyeball the soy sauce until it looks right, and seems to be seasoned properly. Keep the rice on high heat. You want each grain of rice heated through. Add the scrambled egg back to the rice and mix thoroughly. Turn off heat.