



Cornish Hens with a Tropical twist

Vivien Cunha



I love to always add a tropical twist to my cooking to celebrate my roots, I was born in Brazil a country with so many wonderful produce, fruits, vegetables and famous to have an exotic and eclectic Cuisine.

In this dish, I add a tropical twist in the potato salad and the passion fruit sauce, a delicious citric and creamy sauce that will awaken your palate and will make you ask for more. It is a dish full of wonderful flavors, the bacon adds a smoky flavor to the hens and keeps them very moist and juicy.

Cornish Hens wrapped in apple smoked bacon and corn bread stuffing with a passion fruit sauce and ginger glazed asparagus

INGREDIENTS:

- ☞ 4 Cornish Hens (about 1 or 1 ½ pounds each)
- ☞ 2 pound of apple smoked bacon
- ☞ Salt & Pepper to taste

FOR CORN BREAD STUFFING:

- ☞ 2 cups of corn bread crumbled
- ☞ 4 tablespoons of unsalted butter
- ☞ ¼ pound of prosciutto
- ☞ ¼ cup of dried cranberries
- ☞ Salt & Pepper to taste
- ☞ For passion fruit sauce:
- ☞ 4 tablespoons of chopped shallots
- ☞ 1 cups of orange juice with no pulp
- ☞ 1 cup passion fruit juice
- ☞ 1 teaspoon of agar agar (seaweed flakes for thickening sauce, found in health stores)
- ☞ ¼ cup of heavy cream

TO MAKE STUFFING:

Pre heat oven at 375 degrees. Heat butter in a small sauté pan on medium heat, sauté shallots for 5 minutes, add prosciutto and sauté 2 more minutes. Place crumbled corn bread in a medium

bowl, add sautéed shallots to the bowl and dried cranberries, and mix well.

Stuff about ½ cup of corn bread stuffing into the cavity of each Cornish Hen. Season Hens with salt & pepper inside and out. Wrap sliced bacon around the Hens, making sure they are all covered, about 4 slices of bacon for each Hen. Place Hens in a baking sheet lined with foil then cover them with foil and bake them for 1 hour, remove foil and cover for another 25 minutes or until the bacon is crisp.

TO MAKE PASSION FRUIT SAUCE:

Heat butter in a medium pan and sauté shallots for 5 minutes. Add juices, bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium low and simmer for 15 minute or until mixture is reduced by half. Then add cream and bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer for 5 more minutes. Add 1 teaspoon of agar agar and simmer for 8 more minutes or until sauce is thickened. Strain the sauce with a small colander.

TO ASSEMBLE AND SERVE:

After removing Hens from oven, allow them to

rest for 5 minutes, then cut them in half's and place in a plate and add sauce around the Hens. Serve with Tropical potato Salad and ginger glazed asparagus.

CHEF'S TIPS:

This is a great dish for Fall and the arrival of the Holidays. You can make the stuffing 5 days in advance and keep refrigerated. The passion fruit sauce can also be made 3 days in advance. Passion fruit juice can be found in most groceries stores, also in Latin and Asian markets. If you are not able to find it, substitute with mango, pineapple, tangerine and carrot juices.

Agar Agar is a natural dried seaweed, used to thicken sauces, soups, puddings and etc. I like it because it doesn't alter the color and taste of the sauce, it is used a lot in Asian Cuisine, you can find it in health food stores or Asian stores. ■

Vivien Cunha is an LA-based chef, caterer and food writer. She traveled worldwide, influencing her cooking style that she calls "Ethnic with a Brazilian Twist". She was a finalist in 2007 on The Next Food Network Star, a reality show about cooking. For more information, go to www.viviencunha.com