

Heart-Healthy Spring Menu

- *Slow Cooker Garlic Chicken*
- *Brown Rice Pilaf with Asparagus and Mushrooms*
- *Strawberry Rhubarb Crisp*

Nutrition Facts	
Serving: 1 meal	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 578	
Total Fat 19 g	
Saturated Fat 2 g	
Monounsaturated Fat 11 g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 4 g	
Trans Fat 0 g	
Cholesterol 58 mg	
Sodium 198 mg	
Potassium 831 mg	
Total Carbohydrate 75 g	
Dietary Fiber 7 g	
Sugars 30 g	
Added Sugars 25 g	
Protein 29 g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	82%
Calcium	11%
Iron	18%

Slow Cooker Garlic Chicken

Makes 8 servings

Ingredients

1 3-pound whole chicken, skin removed and discarded, chicken cut into 8 pieces
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
¼ teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
40 garlic cloves, peeled (about 4 whole heads)
½ cup fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
3 tablespoons dry white wine
2 tablespoons Cognac (optional – brandy, Armagnac or a local American marc produces nice results too!)
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
For serving: 4 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley, chives, or tarragon leaves

Preparation

Rinse chicken and pat dry. Heat the oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Sprinkle chicken pieces evenly with salt and pepper. Add chicken pieces to pan; brown the pieces 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Transfer the chicken from the skillet to a 4-quart electric slow cooker.

Return skillet to the stove over medium heat. Add garlic to drippings in pan; sauté 1 minute or until garlic begins to brown. Add the broth, wine, and Cognac to the skillet. Scrape pan with a wooden spoon to loosen the browned bits. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring the liquid to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until sauce is reduced to about 1 cup. Pour sauce over the chicken in the slow cooker. Sprinkle the thyme leaves to distribute evenly. Cover and cook on LOW for 4 hours or until chicken yields easily from the bone with the tines of a fork.

Serve sauce and garlic with the chicken. Garnish with chopped herbs.

Notes:

1. Feel free to replace the whole chicken with already broken-down chicken parts:
 - Boneless, skinless chicken breasts: cook 2 to 3 hours on Low
 - Bone-in chicken breasts, skin removed: cook 3 to 4 hours on Low
 - Bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed: cook 4 to 5 hours on Low
 - Chicken drumsticks and wings, skin removed: cook 3 to 4 hours on Low
2. In a rush? Skip the first step of browning the chicken in a skillet, and add all ingredients directly to the slow cooker. Proceed as directed.

Nutrition information (per serving): 145 calories, 4 grams total fat (1 gram saturated fat, 2 grams monounsaturated fat, 1 gram polyunsaturated fat, 0 grams trans fat), 58 mg cholesterol, 145 mg sodium, 249 mg potassium, 5 grams total carbohydrate, 0 grams fiber, 0 grams sugar (0 grams added sugar), 19 grams protein

Brown Rice Pilaf with Asparagus and Mushrooms

Makes 6 servings

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 cup brown rice

3 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth

½ small onion, chopped (about ½ cup)

½ pound fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced

1 bay leaf

⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg

½ pound asparagus

2 tablespoons fresh chives, minced – use the blossoms, if available

Preparation

In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the rice and sauté until it begins to toast and turn golden brown. Add the broth, onion, mushrooms, bay leaf, and nutmeg. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce heat to lowest setting. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add water if necessary to keep the mixture from drying out.

Cut asparagus into 1-inch pieces, discarding the woody stems. Stir asparagus into the rice mixture. Cover and cook another 5 minutes.

Sprinkle with the fresh chives and serve immediately.

Nutrition information (per serving): 144 calories, 3 grams total fat (0 grams saturated fat, 2 grams monounsaturated fat, 0 grams polyunsaturated fat, 0 grams trans fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 49 mg sodium, 320 mg potassium, 25 grams total carbohydrate, 2 grams fiber, 1 gram sugar (0 grams added sugar), 6 grams protein

Strawberry Rhubarb Crisp

Makes 8 servings

This simple crisp—bursting with sweet, juicy strawberries and tart rhubarb—is made with oats, whole-wheat flour, and nuts to increase the fiber and healthy unsaturated fats.

Ingredients

For the filling:

- 1 pound strawberries, stemmed and sliced
- 1 pound rhubarb (about 4 stalks), cut into ¼- by ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons arrowroot starch or 3 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For the topping:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup chopped almonds or pecans
- ⅓ cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup whole-wheat flour
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup canola oil

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 350° F. In a 9- by 9-inch baking dish, mix together the strawberries, rhubarb, honey, arrowroot starch (or cornstarch), and vanilla extract.

In a medium bowl, combine oats, nuts, brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Drizzle with oil and stir to combine. Sprinkle evenly over the fruit mixture.

Bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until the filling is bubbling around the edges and the top is lightly golden. Let the crisp rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Serving suggestion: Top with low-fat vanilla yogurt.

Nutrition information (per serving): 289 calories, 12 grams total fat (1 grams saturated fat, 7 grams monounsaturated fat, 3 grams polyunsaturated fat, 0 grams trans fat), 0 mg cholesterol, 4 mg sodium, 315 mg potassium, 45 grams total carbohydrate, 5 grams fiber, 29 grams sugar (25 grams added sugar), 4 grams protein