

The Chef's Table

Fresh and Flavorful:

The Essence of Summer

By Helen Nash

I'd like to introduce some recipes that call for seasonal ingredients. These dishes do not require much cooking and are nutritious and easy to prepare.

Tuna with Avocado

4 servings

This is one of my favorite raw tuna preparations. The tuna, of course, has to be of top quality and very fresh. It is lovely as an appetizer or as a main course.

1 1/4 pounds sashimi quality tuna, without gristle

1 firm but ripe avocado

Chives, snipped, for garnish

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Sauce:

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

4 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons soy sauce (Kikkoman Lite)

2 tablespoons rice vinegar

1 teaspoon vegetable powder dissolved in 4 tablespoons water

Cut the tuna into 1/2-inch cubes, and place into a bowl. Refrigerate.

Place sauce ingredients into blender to combine well, or whisk well together. Refrigerate.

Half an hour before serving, peel and cut the avocado into 1/2-inch cubes. Gently combine with the tuna using a fork.

*Tuna with Avocado
Photos: James Poster*

To serve:

Pour 2 tablespoons of sauce onto individual plates.
With a measuring cup, measure out 1/2 cup servings of tuna, and place each one over the sauce.
Decorate with chives.

Roasted Tomato Consommé

6 servings

The summer, when tomatoes are full of flavor, is the ideal time to make this light, delicious soup. It tastes good hot or cold.

2 pounds ripe plum tomatoes
2 pounds ripe regular tomatoes
1 head garlic
3 tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon sugar
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Chives, finely snipped, for garnish

Preheat oven to 400°.
Rinse tomatoes, and pat dry. Place in a roasting pan large enough to fit tomatoes in a single layer.
Peel garlic cloves, and scatter them under the tomatoes; drizzle tomatoes with olive oil.
Roast for 1 hour, turning the tomatoes over once; they will look charred. (While roasting, check that the garlic does not burn or the soup will have a bitter flavor.)
Using the medium blade, strain the tomatoes in a food mill along with all the juices.
Season to taste with sugar, salt and pepper.
Garnish with snipped chives.

Marinated Salmon with Mango-Kiwi Relish

4 servings

This summer dish can be served at room temperature on a bed of lettuce.

4 skinless salmon fillets
Marinade:
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon soy sauce (Kikkoman Lite)
1 tablespoon olive oil
Freshly ground black pepper
Kosher salt

Relish:

1/3 cup mango, peeled and diced
2 kiwis, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh orange juice

Combine the marinade ingredients in a large zip-top plastic bag. Add the fish to the bag, and seal. Marinate for about 10 minutes.

Combine the relish ingredients.
Preheat the broiler.
Line the rack of a broiling pan with heavy foil, and oil it lightly. Place the fish, with the marinade, on the pan. Broil the fish 6 inches from the heat source for 5-6 minutes, or until the fish is lightly pink on the inside.
Serve with the relish spooned over it.

Pasta with Broccoli Pesto

6 servings as a first course
4 servings as a main course

This nutritious pasta can be served warm or at room temperature. It is also a good way to serve broccoli, which is a good source of calcium.

1 small bunch broccoli (2 stalks, no more than 1 1/2 pounds; save the rest for decoration)
1 small clove garlic, peeled and quartered
2 tablespoons pine nuts
1/3 cup olive oil
1 pound any small shaped pasta, such as Orecchiette
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons lemon juice, approximately

Cut off tops of broccoli, and cut into bite-size pieces. Trim stems, peel and cut into small pieces. Place in a steamer basket, and steam for 3 minutes or until al dente. Cool.

Place garlic and pine nuts into a food processor fitted with the steel blade, and pulse until finely chopped. Add the broccoli, and pulse while dribbling in the olive oil through the feed tube until the broccoli is coarsely chopped.

Transfer to a saucepan or bowl while the pasta is cooking.

Meanwhile, bring 5 quarts of water to a rolling boil in a large covered pot. Add 2 tablespoons salt and all the pasta at once; stir well. Boil briskly, uncovered, for about 6 minutes, or until the pasta is al dente, tender but still firm to the bite. Drain, but do not shake vigorously. This pasta does not need to be very well drained. Toss with broccoli pesto. Season to taste with salt, pepper and lemon juice.

Note:

Cut leftover broccoli into small florets, steam, and serve as a garnish over the pasta.

If you cannot tolerate raw garlic, bake the clove (unpeeled and wrapped in foil) in a toaster oven, until tender. Then squeeze out the pulp. Or, you can omit the garlic.

Turkey Cutlets with Capers

2 servings

White turkey meat tends to be little dry. Quickly sautéing the meat and using this flavorful sauce makes it moist.

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 shallots, peeled and minced

1 clove garlic, minced

1/4 cup dry white wine

2 tablespoons capers, rinsed, drained, dried and coarsely chopped

1-2 tablespoons lemon juice

1 dash Worcestershire sauce

1 tablespoon flour

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

2 turkey cutlets

Italian parsley, coarsely chopped, for garnish

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a small saucepan that has a cover. Add the shallots and the garlic, sauté, covered, over low heat until the shallots are soft. Add the wine, capers, lemon juice and Worcestershire sauce. Boil for a few minutes. Season to taste, and keep warm.

Combine flour, salt and pepper on a piece of wax paper. Pat dry turkey cutlets with paper towels, and dredge them lightly in flour. In a medium skillet, heat the remaining tablespoon of oil over medium heat. Brown cutlets on both sides until the meat has a trace of pink on the inside. Place the turkey on individual plates, spoon the hot sauce over it, and garnish with the chopped parsley.

Note:

If you like the turkey thinner, the butcher can cut it for you into scaloppini. 

Pasta with Broccoli Pesto

