

Miso-Rubbed Rack of Lamb with Broccoli Rabe Red Curry

4 servings

The Japanese believe that the new year provides a chance to leave the old year's worries and troubles behind. Give your family a fresh start to their New Year with this lovely rack of lamb. Glazed with miso and crusted with panko bread crumbs, it has a distinctly Japanese taste. Even better, it can be cooked in advance and reheated just before serving, making it a fairly simple way to present a standout dish. The broccoli rabe red curry is the perfect Asian-inspired side dish.

2 tablespoons dark miso
1 tablespoon Spiced Butter (page 16) or
unsalted butter at room temperature
1 tablespoon mild chili powder
1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon chopped sage
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 frenched racks of lamb (1½ pounds each)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup panko bread crumbs
Broccoli Rabe Red Curry

1 Preheat the oven to 400°F.

2 Combine the miso, butter, chili powder, egg yolk, and sage in a small bowl. Set aside.

3 Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan. Season the lamb with salt and pepper. Add the lamb to the pan and sear until browned, 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Let cool slightly, then smear the miso-butter mixture over both sides of the lamb. Firmly press the panko into the miso-butter mixture on the rounded side of each rack.

4 Place the racks, rounded fat sides up, in a roasting pan. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the rack reads 125°F, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the lamb to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes. Serve with the broccoli rabe red curry.

Broccoli Rabe Red Curry

4 servings

2 cups broccoli rabe (about ½ bunch)
5 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons black mustard seeds
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
1 red onion chopped
4 garlic cloves thinly sliced
Juice of 2 limes
2 kaffir lime leaves
2 curry leaves
One 2-inch piece ginger peeled and finely chopped
2 tablespoons red curry paste
½ cup coconut milk
2 small Yukon Gold potatoes peeled and cut into ¼-inch cubes
2 tablespoons chopped blanched almonds

2 tablespoons plain yogurt
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
Salt

1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the broccoli rabe and simmer for 30 seconds. Strain and rinse with cold water. Pat dry.

2 Heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the mustard seeds, cumin, coriander seeds, onion, garlic, lime juice, lime leaves, curry leaves, ginger, and curry paste and sauté until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Add the coconut milk and 2 cups water. Bring to a simmer and cook for 15 minutes.

3 While the liquid is simmering, heat the remaining 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large sauté pan over high heat. Add the potatoes and sauté for 3 to 4 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and add the almonds. Cook with the potatoes until golden brown, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

4 Stir the broccoli rabe and potato mixture into the simmering liquid and heat through. Stir in the yogurt and garnish with the cilantro. Season with salt.

Chicken Saté with Baby Spinach and Garlic-Feta Dip

4 servings

One of my favorite areas in the world is Southeast Asia. Culinarily, it's a playground of flavors, particularly for someone like me who was raised on the restrained flavors of northern Europe. Most exciting is the amazing array of food served by street vendors, like the spicy chicken saté I had in Thailand, which inspired this recipe.

Here, I pair a traditional saté with a Mediterranean-inspired garlic feta dip, a flavor combination that takes the heat off the saté and adds a counterpoint to the watermelon in the recipe. You can also serve the dip on its own with rounds of pita.

Saté can be eaten hot from the grill or at room temperature, making this a convenient do-ahead recipe for parties, particularly in the summer, when the sweet, refreshing watermelon is in season (see Tip). Note: You'll need four bamboo skewers to prepare this recipe.

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into quarters
2 red onions cut into quarters, leaving stems intact
8 garlic cloves
1/2 tablespoon mild chili powder
1 tablespoon soy sauce
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 pounds seedless watermelon cut into 2-inch pieces
1/4 cup olive oil
2 cups baby spinach
Sesame Vinaigrette
Juice of 1 lime
1 teaspoon chopped cilantro
Garlic Feta Dip

Tip: If you like spicy food but can't take the heat, chunks of watermelon, Asian pear, mango, and cucumber are a great accompaniment to cut down spiciness.

1 Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat.

2 Toss together the chicken, onion, garlic, chili powder, and soy sauce in a large bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

3 Prepare the skewers by threading pieces of chicken, onion, and garlic onto each skewer. Season with salt and pepper. Place the skewers on the grill and cook until the chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes on each side.

4 Meanwhile, toss the watermelon with the olive oil in a large bowl. Place the watermelon pieces on the grill and cook for 3 to 5 minutes on each side.

5 To serve, toss the spinach with the vinaigrette. Divide the watermelon among four plates. Top the watermelon on each plate with a chicken skewer and some spinach. Drizzle with lime juice and sprinkle with chopped cilantro. Serve the garlic feta dip on the side.

Sesame-balsamic Vinaigrette

Makes about 1 ½ cups

1 tablespoon sesame seeds
Juice of 1 lime
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
5 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 Heat a small sauté pan over medium heat. Add the sesame seeds and toast until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Add the lime juice, sesame oil, olive oil, and vinegar and simmer for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool.

Garlic-Feta Dip

Makes about 3 cups

1/2 cup olive oil
6 garlic cloves
1 tablespoon pine nuts
Juice of 1 lemon
2 canned white sardine fillets
2 cups crumbled feta cheese
1 teaspoon tahini
4 basil leaves torn into small pieces
1/2 tablespoon chopped parsley
Freshly ground black pepper

1 Heat ¼ cup of the olive oil over medium heat. When the oil begins to shimmer, add 3 of the garlic cloves and the pine nuts and sauté, swirling the pan occasionally, until golden brown, about 4 minutes.

2 Transfer to a blender with the remaining ¼ cup olive oil, the remaining 3 garlic cloves, the lemon juice, sardines, and feta. Puree until smooth.

3 Transfer to a bowl. Fold in the tahini, basil, and parsley. Season with pepper.

Apple Cake

12 servings

I always joke about how bad my mom's cooking was, but as I've gotten older, I've come to realize that a lot of what I know about cooking came from her. I can't even count how many times she made this honest, simple apple cake—it seems as if we always had one in the refrigerator and another in the freezer, just in case we had unexpected company. Even now, when we are all out of the house, she always has apples on hand, just in case she needs to whip up a quick dessert for visitors.

2 tablespoons unseasoned bread crumbs
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
2 Granny Smith apples
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter at room temperature, plus more for greasing the pan
1 large egg
1 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
2/3 cup half-and-half
2 teaspoons confectioners' sugar

1 Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan and coat with the bread crumbs.

2 Toss together the granulated sugar and brown sugar. Set aside.

3 Peel and core the apples, then slice one apple into 16 wedges. Combine the cinnamon and 1/3 cup of the sugar mixture in a medium bowl. Add the apple wedges and toss to coat. Roughly dice the remaining apple.

4 In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat together the butter and the remaining sugar mixture on medium speed until light, fluffy, and lemon colored, about 2 minutes. Add the egg and mix until combined. Reduce the speed to low and add the flour and baking powder. Slowly add the half-and-half, and mix until combined. Fold the diced apple into the batter.

5 Pour the batter into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Arrange 14 of the apple wedges fanned along the outer edge of the pan and place the 2 remaining wedges in the center. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the center is golden brown.

6 Remove from the oven to a wire rack to cool completely. Run a small offset spatula around the edges to release the cake from the pan and remove the springform. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar, then cut into 12 wedges.