

Recipes for May

Rhubarb Pie

This is the best recipe ever, unadulterated by berries (though I love a good Strawberry Rhubarb Pie). You get the distinctive rhubarb flavour really strongly. The trick is to get the sugar balance right and I find this recipe is just perfect!

filling:

5 cups of rhubarb, sliced about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick (a little over a kilo)
4 cups of sugar
1\4 cup of flour
Squeeze half an orange into mix
butter

Mix together all but the butter and let sit for 10 minutes; stir again and pour into pie crust; dot pie with small lumps of butter and cover with a top crust or lattice crust. **N.B.** Rhubarb has a lot of water in it and the pie can be liquidy. It doesn't make it soggy but can be a bit of a mess on the plate. If you want a firmer pie, try using preserving sugar.

crust:

2 cups of flour
1 tsp salt
2/3 cup of margarine (Stork)
2 Tblsp butter
4 Tblsp cold water

Put flour in a large bowl, add salt and stir into flour. Add margarine and butter and work into flour quickly with your hands or a pastry cutter. If the mixture feels too sticky, add a sprinkle or two of flour. Add water, stirring with a fork, then form into a ball. Wrap ball in baking parchment and chill in fridge for at least 30 minutes (a couple of hours is best, but if you don't have the time, 30 minutes is fine.)

Cut dough in half (this is a double crust recipe). Roll out half on a piece of tin foil sprinkled liberally with flour; you can then lift the tin foil and easily transfer crust to your pie pan. Trim overhang when you lay in crust and mark

edge with a fork **OR** leave a bit of overhang and push back onto rim, then pinch off crust to make a fluted edge.

With the second half of the dough, roll out again as above and lay over top of pie (once you've added the fruit) and pinch together along the edge. A lattice top is also lovely and not as hard as you may think. Cut the crust into strips about $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 inch wide and lay in alternating directions working across the pie and weaving over and under as you go. If this is too much, try cutting slightly wider strips and lay on a diagonal across the pie with smaller gaps between strips.

Spinach and Green Garlic Soup

2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp unsalted butter
300g green garlic, thinly sliced (use only the bulb and tender part of the stalk)
225g - 250g baby spinach leaves
3 - 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
1 Tbsp. crème fraîche
sea salt to taste

Warm the olive oil and butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the green garlic and a pinch of salt, and cook, stirring frequently, until it is soft and translucent. When the garlic is ready, add the stock, raise the heat a bit, and bring it to a boil. Then adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer, and continue to cook for about 15 minutes. Add the spinach, and immediately turn off the stove. Let it sit for 5 minutes - not too long, or the spinach will lose its color - and then, working in batches, purée the mixture in a blender. The soup should be a rich shade of green and very smooth.

Return the soup to the pot, and place it over low heat to rewarm gently. Add 1 Tbsp. crème fraîche and another pinch or two of salt. Taste, and adjust seasoning as necessary. Serve warm or hot, with a drizzle of olive oil or a dollop of crème fraîche.

Green Garlic and Leek Risotto

Risotto is made with canaroli or arborio rice and is a creamy short grained rice that cooks gradually. It's easily available at most supermarkets.

1 Tblsp butter
1Tblsp olive oil
3 - 4 green garlic, trimmed and chopped
1 large leek (approx. 2 cups)
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of arborio or canaroli rice
1 cup white wine
5 - 6 cups of vegetable or chicken stock, brought to a simmer
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup parmesan, grated
sea salt and black pepper to taste

Melt butter and olive oil in a deep pan; when melted add green garlic and leeks and cook on medium heat stirring constantly until starting to soften (I also add about $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt at the beginning). Add risotto and stir for another minute, then add wine; cook and stir until liquid is absorbed. Begin adding stock a ladle at a time and cooking until liquid is absorbed(stirring constantly); when rice is still firm but not crunchy (about 20 - 30 minutes after adding rice) add parmesan and continue cooking until rice is the texture you like (it shouldn't be mushy, but everyone's idea of al dente varies). Season to taste with salt and pepper and top with lots of parmesan.