

Ligurian Chicken Breast

Liguria, Italy, is the birthplace of Columbus and of many culinary treasures including San Remo basil, considered the most fragrant in the world. This Ligurian Chicken Breast—an authentic family recipe—was passed on to one of our chefs while visiting this area. It has since become one of our favorites. The potato-kale stuffing may be served alone as a side dish with seafood, game, poultry or beef. Leftover chilled breasts may be sliced into 3/4-inch thick medallions and served as hors d'oeuvres or snacks. This makes an impressive dinner when baked in a ceramic dish, which after baking may be placed on the table. The tomato, onion and lemon bake directly into the surface of the chicken, which imparts a sweet citrus taste. The light pan juices are fragrant with basil, mint and Kalamata olives and should be spooned over the crispy potato-stuffed breasts when served.

For the stuffing:

- 2 large Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, boiled (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups kale, chopped
- 2 scallions, chopped
- 6 basil leaves, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large boneless whole chicken breasts, cut in half and pounded lightly
- 1 medium tomato, cored and cut into 4 slices
- 4 slices red onion, about 1/4-inch thick
- 1/2 of a lemon, cut into 4 thin slices
- 1 cup sauténe or other sweet white wine
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- juice of 1 lemon
- 3 sprigs fresh mint, leaves torn or chopped
- 6 basil leaves, torn or chopped
- 1 tablespoon capers, drained
- 4 tablespoons Kalamata olives, pitted and chopped

To prepare the stuffing:

1. Place the potatoes in a medium bowl and mash lightly with a fork. Set aside. Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat and sauté the garlic and kale for 4-5 minutes, tossing often, or until the greens are wilted. Add the kale to the potatoes along with the scallions, basil, salt and pepper. Cool completely in the refrigerator.
2. Place about 1/2 cup of the potato-kale filling in the center of each pounded chicken breast. Fold the top of the breast over the filling to form a package, tucking in the breast wherever needed. Place the chicken on a baking pan. Top with a slice of tomato, a slice of onion and a slice of lemon. Secure with a toothpick if necessary.
3. Mix the sauténe or other white wine, olive oil and lemon juice together. Pour the wine mixture around the chicken then sprinkle with the mint, basil leaves, capers and olives. Cover with aluminum foil and bake in a preheated 375° F oven for 35 minutes. Uncover, brush the vegetables and chicken breasts with some of the pan drippings and cook an additional 10 minutes, uncovered, until golden.