

Grilled Salmon with Herbs
Lemon & Herb Risotto Cakes
Garlic Sauteed Baby Spinach
Red Pepper Coulis



Last month I went home to Wilson, North Carolina to visit my parents for a few days. Wilson is famous not only for being the “World’s Greatest Tobacco Market” but also for its vinegar and pepper-based pork barbeque. As much as I look forward to eating a huge plate of barbeque and fried chicken at Parker’s Barbeque, I’m always looking for new menu ideas and new recipes. Mama and I scout out the most interesting restaurants and bistros in the area for our daily luncheons and tasting sessions. It was a sheer serendipity that we found a fabulous new restaurant named “Quince” at Brentwood. We loved the menu immediately! One item caught our attention and we both ended up ordering the exact same thing. Quince listed the entree as “Grilled Salmon Breast.” It was described as grilled salmon on a stewed tomato and risotto dumpling topped with wilted spinach, citrus aioli and red pepper coulis. The meal was delicious! I especially loved the crispy sauteed risotto dumpling. What a great way to use leftover risotto! As soon as I got back to Beaufort I had to put my own spin on the recipes and recreate the meal for Vince and me for dinner. This is what I came up with.

Be sure to prepare the risotto first so that it will have plenty of time to cool before shaping it into patties. To plate, drizzle each plate with the Red Pepper Coulis. Layer the remaining items, beginning with a hot Lemon and Herb Risotto Cake, a piece of Grilled Salmon with Herbs and top it all with Garlic Sauteed Baby Spinach. A garden salad and a glass of wine is all you’ll need to make the meal complete.

Grilled Salmon with Herbs

4 (4-ounce) salmon fillets
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 teaspoons chopped Italian parsley
2 teaspoons fresh rosemary leaves, chopped

Combine the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, pepper, garlic, parsley and rosemary in a bowl. Brush the mixture onto the fish. Grill over medium-hot coals until the fish flakes easily. Turn it gently halfway through grilling, about 3 to 5 minutes each side. Serves 4.

Lemon and Herb Risotto Cakes

1 cup arborio rice
1 tablespoon butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1 teaspoon garlic salt
1/2 cup dry white wine
3 cups chicken stock, heated
1-1/2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
3/4 grated Parmesan cheese
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
Vegetable oil for frying

In a heavy saucepan, saute arborio rice in butter, stirring constantly. Add onion and garlic salt. Saute until onion is tender. Add wine and saute until absorbed. Slowly add 1 cup of hot chicken broth, stirring frequently. As the liquid cooks down, continue to add remainder of the hot broth, 1/2 cup at a time, until all broth is used and the mixture is very creamy. Fold in the lemon zest, herbs and cheese. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Shape cooled risotto until patties. Dredge each patty in panko. Pan fry in hot vegetable oil until crispy and golden. Serves 4 to 6.

Garlic Sauteed Baby Spinach

1-1/2 pounds baby spinach leaves, washed and dried
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
4 cloves garlic, chopped
1-1/4 teaspoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Fresh lemon juice

In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil and butter and saute the garlic over medium heat for about 1 minute. Add all the spinach and the salt and pepper to the pot. Toss it with the garlic and oil mixture and saute, stirring with a wooden spoon, until all the spinach is wilted. Squeeze with fresh lemon juice before serving. Serves 4 to 6.

Red Pepper Coulis

6 red bell peppers
6 cloves garlic, roasted
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 tablespoons olive oil
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper

Broil or grill the red peppers for about 5 minutes until skins blister. Remove from the grill and place in a zip-top bag to cool. Remove the charred skins, pith and seeds. Place the peeled red peppers and the remaining ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com. She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at covingtoncats@embarqmail.com.