



Menu du Jour

14 Jan 06

Vermont Roast Pork with pan sauce
Baked Stuffed Apples
Mashed Potatoes
Country Dressing
Caraway Green Beans
(Serves six)

Vermont Roast Pork with pan sauce

Roast pork, liberally spiked with slivers of fresh garlic and marinated with fresh sage, fresh thyme, and olive oil makes for a wonderfully elegant, yet simple-to-prepare, Sunday dinner. Have the butcher saw the chine bone to make carving easier.

1 (5-pound) bone-in pork roast
3 – 4 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced into slivers
3 tablespoons fresh sage, finely chopped
2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 tablespoons Cajun seasoning (recipe follows)

For the pan sauce:

3 tablespoons reserved pork fat
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 (12-ounce) bottle Woodchuck or Cider Jack amber hard cider
1/2 – 1 cup chicken stock

Using a sharp paring knife, make numerous deep slits into the meat. Press slivers of garlic into the slits. In a small bowl, combine the sage, thyme, and olive oil. Place the roast in a large roasting pan. Brush the marinade evenly over the roast and sprinkle the roast with Cajun seasoning. Allow the roast to marinate at room temperature for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Place the roast in the oven and cook 2 1/4 to 2 1/2 hours or to an internal temperature of 145 degrees F. Remove the roast from the oven, place on cutting board, tent with aluminum foil and allow to rest for 15 minutes before carving.

Meanwhile, pour all but 3 tablespoons of fat from the roasting pan and put the pan over medium heat on the stovetop. Add the flour, whisking to form a light roux. Add the hard cider and 1/2 cup of the stock. Stir, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until slightly reduced, about 5 minutes. Add remaining stock if necessary. Season to taste with salt and pepper.



Cajun Seasoning

This seasoning blend will keep stored in an airtight container about a month. It may also be used to season baked potatoes, vegetables, and a variety of meats. This is an excellent substitute for commercial seasoning blends that tend to have too much salt. (A 1/4 teaspoon of pure salt contains 600 mg of sodium; commercial spice blends often have as much as 300 mg of sodium for 1/4 teaspoon.)

5 tablespoons sweet paprika
1/4 cup coarse kosher salt
1/4 cup granulated garlic
2 tablespoons dried oregano
2 tablespoons dried thyme
2 tablespoons onion powder
2 tablespoons cracked black pepper
2 tablespoons ground cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons dried parsley

Combine ingredients in a medium mixing bowl until thoroughly combined.

Baked Stuffed Apples

6 Empire or Braeburn apples
1/2 stick unsalted butter, melted
4 tablespoons dark brown sugar, divided
1/2 cup crumbled cornbread
6 sage leaves, finely chopped
1/2 cup golden raisins
1 (12-ounce) bottle Woodchuck or Cider Jack amber hard cider

Core the apples and make a large cavity to hold the stuffing. Peel the shoulders of the apples.

In a mixing bowl, combine the butter, 3 tablespoons brown sugar, cornbread, raisins, and sage. Spoon the stuffing into the apples and place the apples in a baking dish. Sprinkle the tops with the remaining tablespoon of brown sugar. Pour the hard cider around the apples and cook in the preheated 375 degrees F. oven for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until the apples are soft when pierced with a knife.

Remove the apples from the baking dish and plate on a serving dish. Pour the sauce over the apples.



Mashed Potatoes

7 large Russet potatoes (about 10-ounces each)
Olive oil
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 cup sour cream
3/4 – 1 cup light cream, scalded
Coarse kosher salt and white pepper, to taste

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.

Wash and dry potatoes. Coat lightly with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake in a preheated oven for 1 to 1 1/4 hours or until easily pierced with a knife. Cool. Remove flesh from potatoes and mash. (The potato skins may be reserved for future use such as twice-baked potatoes or stuffed potato skins.)

Melt the butter in a 6 1/2-quart stockpot over medium heat; add the potatoes and the sour cream to the pot. Mash to combine. Slowly add the scalded cream until the potatoes reach the desired consistency. (The potatoes will tighten as they cook.) Cook for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring often, until potatoes are very hot. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Caraway Green Beans

2 pounds green beans, trimmed
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 teaspoons caraway seed
Kosher salt and cracked black pepper

Place trimmed green beans in a large saucepan and cover with salted cold water. Over medium heat, bring water to a boil and cook beans until crisp-tender, about 8 to 10 minutes. Drain and return to stovetop. Add butter and caraway seed. Cook briefly until caraway seeds release their aroma. Season to taste with kosher salt and black pepper.



Country Dressing

6 cups white bread cubes, baked until slightly dry
1/2 pound sweet (or hot) Italian sausage, casings removed
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 cups coarsely chopped leeks
1 tart apple, peeled, cored, and chopped
1 cup chopped celery
2 teaspoons poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
1/2 cup dried cranberries (Craisins)
2/3 cup chicken stock
Coarse kosher salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Sauté sausage in a large skillet over medium heat, crumbling coarsely, for about 10 minutes. Remove sausage to a large bowl with a slotted spoon. Drain all but 2 tablespoons of fat from the skillet.

Into the same pan melt the butter. Add the leeks, apples, celery, and poultry seasoning. Cook until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the rosemary, dried cranberries, and cooked sausage. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and add the dried bread cubes. Moisten with the chicken stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Spoon the dressing in a buttered casserole dish, cover with aluminum foil, and bake in a preheated 350 degrees F. oven for about 30 minutes. Uncover and bake for another 15 minutes to brown top.
