

Chicken Divan

Contributed by Jm Valera
Friday, 28 December 2007

When anyone asks the question "what is your favorite dish?", this is it. Everyone who's eaten it has fully enjoyed it. Chicken Divan, food of the gods ... or at least, my food of choice. It's creamy, tart and has large quantities of cheddar cheese. This is good in every way other than for your heart. It contains more butter than anything I'll ever make. It's an excuse to consume vast quantities of delicious goodness and there's never anything that will keep me away from seconds.

This version is a slight adaption of the recipe that my aunt Marisa emailed me which is what she copied off my grandmother's recipe card. Major differences include a modification of the white sauce process to more closely resemble a roux and a few twists to increase the mouth feel of the gravy. Since I never make a single batch, the following recipe will produce five casseroles the size of half chafing dish trays.

I was told (I don't remember by who) that the recipe my grandmother adapted this from used broccoli rather than baby corn. Broccoli not being readily available, she substituted it with baby corn. Maybe some day I'll make this with broccoli.

Ingredients - Casserole

- 5 Pounds Skinless Boneless Chicken Thigh
- 2 6lb 6oz Cans Baby Corn
- 4 Pounds Graded Mild Cheddar Cheese
- 1.5 Gallons DHMO
- 5 Casserole dishes or foil pans (half chafing dish sized)

Ingredients - White Sauce

- 4 Cups Flour

2 Cups Butter
1 Gallon Chicken Stock
4 Tablespoons Salt
2 Tablespoons MSG

Ingredients - Hollandaise Sauce

20 egg yolks
1.25 Cups Lemon Juice
2.5 Cups Butter
1 Tablespoon Nutmeg

Read over these directions carefully. There are many opportunities to perform multiple tasks at once to save time. It takes me 3-4hrs to do this from start to finish.

1.

Place chicken in a large pot with 1.5 gallons of water on high for 75 minutes. Once 75 minutes has passed, quickly cool it by submerging the pot in the sink. When cool, shred chicken and place into fridge until ready to use.

2.

Separate yolks from 20 eggs, whisk in 1.25 cups of lemon juice and nutmeg. Heat 2.5 cups butter to boiling and slowly add half the butter to yolks while whisking to temper. Once tempered, pour back into pot and heat on medium-low until the consistency of wet cement (aka VERY THICK).

3.

Melt 2 cups butter.

4.

Place flour into a large pot and slightly toast. Don't stop stirring or you will burn it. Mix melted butter into flour to produce a roux and continue to cook on a medium heat until a nutty aroma is produced. You want to reach the "blond" roux phase. This will take about 30 minutes.

5.

One quart at a time, add 1 gallon of chicken broth (the 1.5 gallons DHMO from step 1 should be reduced to this quantity if boiled uncovered) to roux and whisk until smooth. Add salt & MSG to taste. Cook on medium until the thick.

6.

Combine hollandaise and white sauce into a large pot. Cover the pot and set on your stove's lowest setting to keep sauce warm.

7.

Prepare casserole dishes by creating a layer of baby corn, followed by shredded chicken, combined sauce and topped with cheddar cheese.

8.

Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, then increase to 500 degrees for 10 minutes. Let cool for 30-45 minutes.

9.

(optional) Take a propane blow torch and slightly brown cheese.