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Chicken from the Village

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

enjoyed that evening. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did!

In November, my husband and I had the opportunity to visit our daughter in New York City and had several excellent meals during the trip. We had lunch at a darling spot called Alice's Tea Cup, where they serve every kind of tea imaginable along with some really interesting menu items like a roasted cumin carrot salad sandwich, served on semolina bread with goat cheese and olive tapenade. Or, an absolutely delightful endive and watercress salad with caramelized onions, warm pear and blue cheese served with a port vinaigrette. There you will spy a set of butterfly or fairy wings on every child you see! It was so much fun to see all of the little ones sipping tea and eating tasty treats. But one dinner in particular stood out above all others. It was an exquisite chicken dish served on a bed of pureed celery root and topped with watercress-tarragon vinaigrette. We discovered this delicacy at a tiny little restaurant called Whitehall Bar + Kitchen in Greenwich Village.

Though we did not actually get the recipe from the chef (I kept kicking myself for not doing so), I decided to try to replicate it myself based upon the menu description. I think we've come very close to the amazing flavors we

Baked Chicken Breast with Goat Cheese and Tarragon-Watercress Vinaigrette

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INGREDIENTS

Chicken

6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

3 tablespoons olive oil

Salt and pepper (or lemon pepper)

1 large shallot, finely chopped

Heat oil in a large skillet. Season chicken breast with S&P or lemon pepper. Brown chicken on both sides and remove to baking dish. In the same pan, add shallots and cook until translucent and beginning to brown. Set shallots aside to cool (these will be mixed into the goat cheese butter). Spread goat cheese-tarragon butter over tops of each chicken breast. Cover dish with foil. Bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes, or until chicken is just cooked.

Goat Cheese-Butter

1 tablespoon butter, room temperature

1/4 cup goat cheese

1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon

Cooked shallots (see above)

Mix butter, goat cheese, cooked shallots and tarragon and spread a thin layer evenly over the top of each chicken breast, just before baking

Tarragon-Watercress Vinaigrette

2 stems of fresh tarragon

1 cup loosely packed watercress, leaves and stems are okay

1 small clove garlic, minced

Juice of 1/2 lemon

1/4 cup rice vinegar

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Salt and pepper

In a food processor, blend tarragon and watercress along with garlic, until finely minced. Add lemon juice, rice

vinegar and olive oil. Blend in processor until well-mixed. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Celery Root Puree

3-4 large celery roots (celeriac) peeled and cut into large chunks

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon heavy cream

Salt and pepper

Place celery root in a pot fitted with a French steamer. Pour enough water in the bottom of the pot to just reach the bottom of the French steamer (about 2 inches). Bring water to a boil and then turn heat to medium-high. Allow celery root to steam until a knife pierces easily, but celery root is not too mushy. Check every few minutes, so you don't overcook it.

Place hot, steamed celery root into a food processor and blend until pureed. Add butter and cream. Blend well. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To Serve:

Distribute celery root evenly onto dinner plates. Serve chicken on top and spoon pan drippings over chicken. Drizzle tarragon-watercress vinaigrette over both chicken and celery root puree. Pass extra vinaigrette at the table.

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