

# Oven-Baked Chicken Breast with Sweet Potato Mousse and Sautéed Brussels Sprouts



This trio makes a delicious meal that uses up the last of the winter-stored harvest in a most delicious way. Cooking the breasts at high heat seals in the juices, and since the sweet potatoes are cooked at the same temperature, both can be ready at once. Put the sweet potatoes in the oven first. Ten minutes into baking, slide in the pan with the chicken. Cook another 20 minutes and both should be done. Remove from oven and cool for 5-7 minutes so the sweet potatoes won't burn the tongue and the juices can recirculate through the chicken. Have the Brussels sprouts prepped, and while the sweet potatoes and chicken are resting, quickly sauté the sprouts, and presto! Dinner is done!

## OVEN-BAKED CHICKEN BREAST

- 1 TBSP sweet or smoked paprika
- 1 TSP dried oregano or thyme
- 1 TSP kosher salt
- 1 TSP garlic powder
- ¼ TSP cracked black pepper
- ¼ TSP cayenne (optional)
- 4 chicken breasts
- 1 TBSP oil

**SERVES 4 (OR 2 WITH LEFTOVERS)**

## METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Pound each chicken breast lightly so all are about ¾" thickness.

In a large bowl, stir together sugar, paprika, salt, pepper and herbs. Toss in the chicken and rub to evenly coat the meat. Lay the breasts in a baking dish of a size that they can snuggle closely. Drizzle with oil.

Bake medium breasts for 16-18 minutes; large breasts for 20-25 minutes. Do not overcook: pressed gently, the meat should feel firm but not hard and should be golden with crisp edges. For a crispier finish, broil for 2-3 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest 5-7 minutes.

To serve, drizzle pan juices over the meat.

# Birder Murders Sweet Potato Mousse



This recipe comes from Steve Burrows, 2019 Springsong Guest Author and author of the Birder Murder Mysteries, most recently *A Tiding of Magpies*. More comfortable on a case than in the kitchen, he admits: “My only contribution to the meals last year was to shred part of my finger into the salad along with the carrots!” Happily, his wife, Resa, sends this colourful mousse that the Burrows family enjoys as a sweet side dish with a poultry dinner—usually turkey at Christmas or Thanksgiving.

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 medium sweet potatoes (about 9 oz each)
- 1 large egg
- ½ CUP granulated sugar or ¼ cup maple syrup (optional)
- ¼ CUP butter, at room temperature
- ¾ TSP vanilla extract
- ¼ CUP milk
- Pinch of salt
- ½ CUP finely chopped pecans
- ¼ CUP brown sugar (not Demerara)
- 3 TBSP all-purpose flour
- 2 TBSP butter, softened

**SERVES 4**

## METHOD

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Grease a small baking dish or individual ramekins.

On a baking sheet, bake the sweet potatoes for 45 minutes, or until soft. When cool enough to handle, peel the potatoes, place the flesh in a large mixing bowl, and mash until very smooth. The recipe can be made ahead to this point and refrigerated.

Add the sweet potatoes, egg, sugar, butter, vanilla, milk, and salt to the bowl of a stand mixer or use a hand mixer. Note: Sweet potatoes usually need no extra sweetening. Omit sugar or add gradually, tasting as you go. Beat the mixture well and turn into the baking dish.

In a small bowl, stir together the pecans, sugar, and flour, then cut in the cold butter with a fork until thoroughly combined. At the end, rub together with your fingers to create a crumbly streusel. Crumble the mixture loosely over the sweet potatoes in an even layer, not too thick or it will overpower the sweet potatoes. Bake for 30 minutes, or until slightly browned. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving.



# Sautéed Brussels Sprouts with Pine Nuts



Nancy Lockhart, of the Crow's Theatre in Toronto, Ontario, sent in this simple and delicious side dish that complements the flavours and brings fresh spring colour to this meal.

## INGREDIENTS

**¾ LBS** Brussels sprouts

**2 TBSP** olive oil

**4 SLICES** prosciutto chopped (optional)

**1 TBSP** pine nuts

Salt and freshly ground pepper

## METHOD

Remove the outer leaves, cut in half and core, then slice Brussels sprouts thinly.

Heat oil in skillet to medium-high. Add prosciutto and sauté until it begins to crisp. ( You can substitute bacon cut crosswise in fine strips; lightly crisp and drain excess oil.) Add sprouts and sauté for about 3 minutes until crisp. Cover and cook another 2 minutes until the sprouts are tender-crisp. Toss in the pine nuts, sauté a minute, then season with salt and pepper and serve.