



Mojito Grilled Chicken

the fab four herbs

From their aroma to their taste, our favorite herbs add fresh splash to eight summery selections.

Text and Recipes by Janice Cole

Mojito Grilled Chicken

The signature ingredients of a mojito cocktail—mint, lime juice and rum—give grilled chicken a Caribbean kick. To round out the island theme, serve it with black beans, fried plantains and, of course, mojitos.

- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, divided**
- 3 tablespoons lime juice**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons light rum or orange juice**
- 2 teaspoons grated lime peel**
- 4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves**
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse salt**
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper**

- 1** Blend 3 tablespoons of the mint, lime juice, oil, rum and lime peel in blender until smooth. Pour over chicken in resealable plastic bag. Refrigerate 6 to 8 hours, turning occasionally.
- 2** Heat grill. Remove chicken from marinade; discard marinade. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Grill, covered, over medium heat or coals 8 to 10 minutes or until no longer pink in center, turning once. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon mint.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 190 calories, 7.5 g total fat (1.5 g saturated fat), 26.5 g protein, .5 g carbohydrate, 75 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

WINE Pair with a spicy, dry white, like the 2007 Casa Lapostolle Chardonnay from Casablanca Valley, Chile (\$14), or the 2007 Raymond Reserve Sauvignon Blanc from Napa Valley (\$16).



mint

Numerous varieties of mint are grown. Spearmint and peppermint, which is stronger, are the most common. Other tasty varieties include apple, pineapple and chocolate. Use mint in drinks, marinades, salads, pestos or rubs. Stir very finely chopped fresh mint into your favorite cake batter.

Charred Cherry Tomatoes with Mint

These tomatoes are a nice accompaniment to grilled butterflied leg of lamb, pork chops or Greek-seasoned chicken breasts.

Toss 2 cups cherry tomatoes with 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil; spread on rimmed baking sheet. Broil as close to heat element as possible 3 to 6 minutes or until slightly charred. Toss with 1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. **4 (about 1/3-cup) servings**

chives



The most common type of chives is tube-shaped and has an onion flavor; the flat garlic variety tastes like its namesake. Serve chives with chicken, seafood, eggs or vegetables. Stir chives into butter for a bread topper. Use the blossoms on salads.



Shrimp Pasta with Chives and Asparagus

This pasta showcases shrimp tossed with fresh chives in a garlic-butter-wine sauce that's made in the time it takes to cook the pasta. Add the chives at the end of cooking so they retain maximum flavor and color.

- 1 (8- to 9-oz.) pkg. refrigerated fettuccine or linguine**
 - 1 lb. pencil-thin asparagus, sliced (1½ inches)**
 - ¼ cup unsalted butter**
 - 1½ lb. shelled, deveined uncooked large shrimp (21 to 30 count)**
 - 3 large garlic cloves, minced**
 - 1½ cups white wine, or 1½ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth and 1 tablespoon lemon juice**
 - ½ cup heavy whipping cream**
 - ⅔ cup sliced chives**
 - ½ teaspoon coarse salt**
 - ½ teaspoon pepper**
- 1** Cook fettuccine according to package directions, adding asparagus during last 2 minutes of cooking. Drain, reserving ½ cup pasta cooking water.
 - 2** Meanwhile, melt butter in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Cook shrimp 3 minutes or until almost pink, stirring occasionally. Add garlic; cook 30 seconds or until fragrant. Remove shrimp.
 - 3** Increase heat to high; add wine to skillet. Bring to a boil; boil 2 to 4 minutes or until slightly reduced

(about 1 cup). Add cream; bring to a boil. Sprinkle with chives, salt and pepper. Toss fettuccine and asparagus with shrimp and sauce, adding reserved pasta water if necessary.

4 (2-cup) servings

PER SERVING: 545 calories, 26.5 g total fat (15 g saturated fat), 35 g protein, 39 g carbohydrate, 350 mg cholesterol, 830 mg sodium, 4 g fiber

WINE Pour a dry, lightly herbal white: the 2007 Susana Balbo "Crios" Torrontés from Argentina (\$16) or the flavorful 2007 Burgáns Albariño from Spain (\$16).

Roasted New Potato Salad Smothered in Chives

Serve this fresh take on potato salad with your favorite burgers, hot dogs or grilled chicken.

Toss 1 lb. quartered unpeeled small new potatoes (Yukon gold if available) with 1 tablespoon olive oil; spread on rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 400°F. for 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Toss with ½ cup mayonnaise mixed with ½ cup sliced fresh chives, ½ teaspoon Dijon mustard and ¼ teaspoon each coarse salt and pepper. Serve warm or at room temperature.

4 (¾-cup) servings

tarragon



Pair this licorice-like herb with beef, eggs, chicken or fish. For a tasty vinegar, place several clean tarragon sprigs in a glass bottle. Heat white wine vinegar to the boiling point; pour over the herbs to cover. Let stand several weeks or until flavorful.

Steak and Mushrooms with Lemon-Tarragon Vinaigrette

Tarragon provides a fresh and delicious summer alternative to the usual steak seasonings. Lemon juice in the marinade boosts the herb's anise-like flavor and helps tenderize the meat.

- 4 (6-oz.) beef top sirloin steaks (1 inch thick)**
 - 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil**
 - 2 tablespoons lemon juice**
 - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon, divided**
 - 2 medium garlic cloves**
 - 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
 - 1/2 teaspoon coarse salt, divided**
 - 1/2 teaspoon pepper, divided**
 - 6 oz. sliced assorted mushrooms (such as shiitake with stems removed, oyster, chanterelle, crimini and/or button)**
 - 1 tablespoon unsalted butter**
- 1** Place steaks in resealable plastic bag. Blend oil, lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of the tarragon, garlic and mustard in blender until smooth. Pour half of the vinaigrette over steaks; cover and refrigerate 4 to 8 hours, turning occasionally. Reserve remaining vinaigrette.
 - 2** Heat grill. Remove steaks from marinade; discard marinade. Sprinkle steaks with 1/4 teaspoon each of the salt and pepper. Grill, covered, over medium heat or coals 8 to 10 minutes for medium-rare, turning once.
 - 3** Meanwhile, cook mushrooms in butter in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 4 to 5 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. Sprinkle with remaining 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Add reserved vinaigrette; bring to a boil. Pour over steaks. Sprinkle with remaining 1 tablespoon tarragon.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 375 calories, 18.5 g total fat (5.5 g saturated fat), 49 g protein, 2.5 g carbohydrate, 125 mg cholesterol, 265 mg sodium, .5 g fiber

WINE Try a rich red with a soft finish, the 2005 Montecillo Rioja Crianza from Spain (\$14) or the 2005 Guenoc Petite Sirah from California (\$16).



Tender Greens with Avocado and Tarragon Dressing

Pair salmon or other fish with this beautiful salad, or serve the salad alongside spicy chicken or Mexican entrees.

Combine 3 tablespoons canola oil, 1 tablespoon rice vinegar, 2 teaspoons chopped shallots, 2 teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon, 1 teaspoon grated orange peel and 1/8 teaspoon each salt and pepper in small jar; shake to blend. Toss with 4 cups torn Boston and/or red Bibb lettuce and 1 sliced avocado. 4 (1 1/4-cup) servings

dill



Dill's tender fronds have a light fennel taste. Pair with fish, poultry, meat, vegetables or eggs. Because dill is a delicate herb, add it towards the end of cooking for the strongest flavor. Mix chopped dill in salads or toss tiny boiled new potatoes with chopped dill and green onions.



Garlic-Dill Crusted Pork Loin

This pork roast delivers a triple dose of fresh dill. It's in the yogurt paste and the bread crumb topping that coats the meat as it roasts. And the herb is sprinkled over the meat just before serving, for fresh-from-the-garden flavor.

- 8 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, divided**
- 2 tablespoons plain yogurt**
- 3 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice**
- 1/2 teaspoon salt**
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper**
- 1 1/2 to 1 3/4 lb. single boneless pork loin**
- 1/4 cup panko**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**

- 1** Heat oven to 425°F. Combine 3 tablespoons of the dill, yogurt, garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper; spread over pork. Combine panko, 3 tablespoons of the dill and oil; pat over top of pork. Place on small rimmed baking sheet.
- 2** Bake 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F.; bake an additional 25 to 30 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 140°F. to 145°F. Let stand 10 minutes before slicing. Sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons dill before serving.

4 servings

PER SERVING: 335 calories, 17 g total fat (5 g saturated fat), 39 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 110 mg cholesterol, 395 mg sodium, .5 g fiber

WINE Serve a medium-bodied red: the 2004 Alexander Valley Vineyards Syrah (\$18) or the 2006 Joseph Drouhin "Laforet" Pinot Noir Bourgogne (\$18). ●

Janice Cole is *Cooking Pleasures'* food editor and food stylist.

Spinach and Rice with Dill

This easy do-ahead side is the perfect partner for ham, sausage or roast chicken.

In 2-quart casserole, layer one-third of these ingredients: 1 (5-oz.) pkg. fresh spinach (6 cups packed), 1 cup long-grain rice, 1/2 cup packed chopped fresh dill, 1/2 cup sliced green onions, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon pepper. Repeat twice. Dot with 2 tablespoons unsalted butter; pour in 2 cups boiling water. Cover and bake at 350°F. for 40 to 45 minutes or until rice is tender and water is absorbed. 6 (about 3/4-cup) servings