



MICHAEL GEIGER

## STOCKING UP

THERE ARE FAIR-WEATHER COOKS WHO FIND pleasure in the kitchen only when they have the time. Their creativity tends to be confined to the span from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch. During the rest of their lives, you see them lined up at gourmet take-out stores and in neighborhood restaurants.

Rather than becoming victims of store-bought meals, some of these part-time cooks could have taken to preparing food on the weekend that then can be set aside and consumed during the week. In fact, stocking up on Saturday and Sunday resembles the old-fashioned notion of storing food for the winter.

Weekend efforts can produce a master sauce for pasta, a marinade for meat, poultry or fish, and a homemade vinaigrette for salads. During the week, dishes can be assembled from these foods in minutes, with the final touch of simmering, broiling and mixing.

A sun-dried tomato sauce is perhaps the most versa-

*Karen Lee is a New York-based cooking instructor and caterer. She and Alaxandra Branyon are the co-authors, most recently, of "Nouvelle Chinese Cooking," to be published by Macmillan.*

**P***reparing  
food in advance on  
the weekend can  
enhance dining  
during the week.*

tile of these foods. It can be frozen, or stored in the refrigerator for five days. Reheated, it can be served with straw and hay pasta, or over any fresh, dried or stuffed pasta. It also makes a wonderfully delicate condiment for hamburgers, and is far more interesting than bottled ketchup. This sauce is made with fresh, ripe tomatoes. If, however, vine-ripened tomatoes are unavailable, canned tomatoes from the San Marzano region of Italy make an excellent substitute. The addition of sun-dried tomatoes and porcini mushrooms gives the sauce its rich flavor.

Marinades are simple to make on the weekend, and have the advantage of producing main courses that require little additional work other than broiling and serving. A honey-hoisin sauce, for example, can be rubbed on lamb chops, or — if time permits a longer marinating and broiling — on a butterflied leg of lamb. It can also be used on steak or pork chops. The hoisin sauce in the marinade is made from a base of fermented soy beans. These beans are best known as the pungent Chinese condiment that is spread on the doilies for Peking duck. The sauce is sold in Chinese and Korean markets, as well as in some supermar-



kets. After opening, the hoisin sauce should be transferred to a lidded glass jar and placed in the refrigerator, where it can be stored for up to one year.

An aromatic mustard and pepper marinade works beautifully on all poultry, from broiled butterflied chicken to roasted whole duck or Rock Cornish hen. It is not necessary to baste these birds when roasting or broiling them. Instead, the marinade forms a flavorful crust, holding the juices in the meat. The mustard au poivre also works well on steak or swordfish.

Most recipes for vinaigrette advise that the dressing be prepared only hours before serving. That may not sound too taxing for some, as a vinaigrette takes only about five minutes to prepare. But for time-pressed cooks, that five minutes may be enough to lead them to bottled dressing. A balsamic vinaigrette, on the other hand, can be made well in advance without losing its flavor or becoming rancid. Balsamic vinegar, a northern Italian treasure, is made from unfermented white grapes. For a full aroma, look for a vinegar that has been aged at least 10 years. When opened, it should be stored in the refrigerator. The balsamic vinaigrette can be served on haricots verts, string beans that have been picked young. Fresh American green string beans are a fine substitute.

What makes these dishes especially appealing is not only that the flavors benefit by sitting a few days, but so do you.

## HARICOTS VERTS WITH BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

### The balsamic vinaigrette:

- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- Freshly ground black pepper (30 turns of the mill)
- ¾ cup olive oil

### The haricots verts:

- ¾ pound haricots verts
- ¾ cup scallions, cut into ½-inch rounds, white and green parts included
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
- Lettuce greens of your choice.

1. To make the balsamic vinaigrette: Dissolve the salt in the vinegars in a lidded glass jar. Add the mustard, pepper and olive oil. Secure the lid and shake vigorously. The vinaigrette can be refrigerated for up to five days. The yield is one cup. Set aside two tablespoons for this recipe.

2. Steam the haricots verts for three to four minutes, then plunge them into ice cold water to stop the cooking and hold the color. Drain well. Remove the stem end only.

3. Place the haricots verts in a serving bowl. Add the scallions, dill and two tablespoons of the vinaigrette to the bowl. Toss until well combined. Serve immediately or within a few hours on a bed of lettuce greens.

Yield: Two servings.

## STRAW AND HAY PASTA WITH PORCINI AND SUN-DRIED TOMATO SAUCE

### The tomato sauce:

- ½ cup olive oil
- 1 medium leek (white and green parts included), split, rinsed and diced
- 3 pounds very ripe fresh tomatoes or 4 cups canned Italian tomatoes (35-ounce can)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper (20 turns of the mill)

### The pasta:

- ½ cup dried porcini
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sun-dried tomato oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons diced sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper (10 turns of the mill)
- 1 tablespoon chopped Italian flat parsley
- ¾ cup crème fraîche or heavy cream
- ¾ pound fresh or dried straw and hay pasta
- 2 teaspoons salt for pasta water
- ¾ cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

1. To make the basic tomato sauce: In a 12-inch skillet, heat the olive oil. Add the leek and sauté over medium-low heat for about five minutes or until the leek becomes limp. Add the tomatoes (if using fresh tomatoes, dice them without peeling or seeding; if using canned tomatoes, crush them in your hands over the skillet and add the remaining juice from the can). Stir briefly, then add the sugar, salt and pepper. Bring to a simmer over high heat. Stir well to combine. Turn the heat to low and simmer uncovered for three-quarters of an hour or until the sauce has reduced by half. The yield should be about three cups. Once cooled, the sauce can be placed in lidded glass jars and refrigerated for one week or frozen for up to six months. Set aside half the sauce for this recipe.

2. Place the porcini in a bowl and cover with one cup of cold water. Soak 30 minutes or until soft. Squeeze the porcini over the bowl, then dice. Strain the porcini liquid, then set aside.

3. In a 10-inch skillet, heat the olive oil, sun-dried tomato oil and butter until the butter foams. Sauté the shallots and garlic over low heat for about two to three minutes or until they are lightly browned.

4. Add one and a half cups of the tomato sauce. Bring to a simmer.

5. Add the porcini and porcini liquid. Simmer the sauce about 10 minutes or until it is quite thick.

6. Add the sun-dried tomatoes, one teaspoon of salt and pepper. Simmer the sauce for four minutes over a very low heat.

7. Add the parsley and crème fraîche. Simmer one more minute. Turn off the heat. The recipe can be prepared ahead through this step and refrigerated for up to five days.

8. When ready to serve, bring a large kettle of water to a rolling boil. Add the two teaspoons of salt and then the pasta. Cook the pasta about two minutes if fresh. If using dried pasta, cook about seven minutes or until tender but firm. Drain the pasta in a colander.

9. Bring the sauce to a simmer. Add the drained pasta to the simmering sauce. With the heat on high, stir and toss one minute or until the sauce has been well combined with the pasta. Turn off the heat. Add the cheese. Mix briefly and serve immediately.

Yield: Two to three servings as a main course.

## BROILED CHICKEN AU POIVRE

### The mustard au poivre marinade:

- 1 tablespoon Sichuan peppercorns
- 1 tablespoon green peppercorns in brine
- Freshly ground black pepper (20 turns of the mill)
- 1½ tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup minced shallots
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic

### The chicken:

- 1 broiler chicken, weighing 2½ pounds.

1. To make the mustard au poivre marinade: Place a small iron skillet or wok over high heat for one minute. Add the Sichuan peppercorns. Turn the heat to low. Stirring occasionally, dry-cook the peppercorns for about one to two minutes or until they turn a darker brown. Place them on a wooden chopping block, then crush them with a rolling pin. Drain, then crush the green peppercorns. Place the Sichuan and green peppercorns in a medium-size bowl. Add the black pepper, Dijon mustard, soy sauce, olive oil, shallots and garlic to the bowl. The marinade can be placed in a lidded glass jar and refrigerated for up to five days. The yield is approximately a half cup. Set aside a quarter cup for this recipe.

2. Have the butcher butterfly the chicken by cutting it on one side only so it will open up and lie flat. Rinse the chicken under cold running water, then pat dry with paper towels.

3. Using half the marinade, rub the chicken inside and out. Allow to marinate at least a half hour or up to 24 hours. If you are marinating longer than one hour, place the chicken in

the refrigerator. Allow to return to room temperature before broiling.

4. Preheat the oven to broil.

5. Place the butterflied chicken on a rack resting on a shallow roasting pan, meat side up. Broil three inches from the flame for 20 minutes or until the chicken is dark brown. Turn the chicken over and continue to broil for another 20 minutes or until the skin is brown and crusty. Turn the flame down during this period if necessary to prevent the skin from burning. Do not baste. Serve immediately or at room temperature.

Yield: Two servings.

## HONEY-HOISIN GRILLED LAMB CHOPS

### The honey-hoisin marinade:

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Oriental sesame oil
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
- ¾ cup chopped Italian flat-leaf parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper (20 turns of the mill)

### The lamb:

- 2 loin lamb chops, 1½ inches thick, weighing a total of ¾ pound.

1. To make the honey-hoisin marinade: In a medium-size bowl, mix together the soy sauce, lemon juice, honey, hoisin sauce, mustard, olive oil, sesame oil, onions, rosemary, parsley and pepper. Stir until well combined. The marinade can be placed in a lidded glass jar and refrigerated for up to five days. You can use this marinade for one to eight lamb chops, keeping in mind that each chop requires two and a half tablespoons of the marinade. Set aside five tablespoons (a quarter of the marinade) for this recipe.

2. When ready to marinate, place the lamb chops in a plastic bag. Add five tablespoons of the marinade to the bag and massage the chops until completely covered. Set the plastic bag on a plate. Allow to marinate at least a half hour or up to 24 hours. If you are marinating longer than one hour, place the chops in the refrigerator. Allow to return to room temperature before broiling.

3. Preheat the oven to broil.

4. Place the lamb chops on a rack resting on a shallow roasting pan. Broil as close to the flame as possible for five to seven minutes. Turn the chops over and continue broiling for another five to seven minutes. The finished chops should be pink and juicy with a dark brown, crusty exterior. Serve immediately.

Yield: Two servings. ■