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A Warm and Welcome Fish Dish for the New Year

By Susie Iventosch



Mahi-mahi with an herb-macadamia nut panko crust, served with browned-butter butternut squash and roasted Brussels sprouts Photo Susie Iventosch

was perfect.

Over Thanksgiving weekend, we had the good fortune to visit dear friends whom we had not seen in years. It was a wonderful reunion and, as per usual, Bob and Prudy served us a delicious homemade meal for lunch. On the day's menu was a beautiful broccoli salad along with a very tasty dish of grouper, baked with a macadamia nut-panko crust. It was fabulous!

Prudy is an amazing and creative cook, always using herbs, fruits and vegetables from her garden. I must say, they have a most unusual yard for Arizona, as it is filled with some 28 different types of citrus trees, a fig tree, as well as other fruit trees, herb gardens and plenty of rose bushes. I had never seen anything quite like it in all of my Arizona travels. And, because we were in Arizona, where the days are almost always filled with sunshine, we dined outside in this lush paradise. Prudy was happy to share the recipe for us to try and since I was not able to get grouper last week, Prudy suggested using mahi-mahi instead and it

Macadamia-nut panko-crusted Mahi-Mahi

(Serves 4)

INGREDIENTS

Fish

- 4 mahi-mahi filets (about 1/2 pound each)
- 1/3 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
- 1-2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup white wine

Crust

- 1 1/2 cups panko (bread crumbs)
- 1/2 cup macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped (I used dry roasted)
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan
- 3 tablespoons finely minced parsley
- 3 basil leaves, finely minced
- 2 springs thyme, minced
- 2 springs rosemary, minced
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted (browned butter is very good for this recipe, too)

DIRECTIONS

Rinse fish and squeeze lemon juice over. Marinate about 20 minutes. Drain lemon juice from fish and pat dry. Line a baking dish with foil. Place fish, skin side down, on top of the foil. Brush tops of filets with olive oil and season with garlic, salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, mix panko with Parmesan, herbs, and macadamia nuts. Drizzle melted butter over panko mixture and mix well. (If you want to use browned butter, simply melt the butter over medium-low heat, and cook until bubbly and crystals begin to form and butter turns golden-brown in color.)

Distribute panko-nut mixture evenly over the top of each filet. Pour wine in the bottom of the baking dish.

Bake at 350F for approximately 30 minutes, or until fish is done and topping begins to brown. If it seems to be taking too long, seal foil over fish to steam, and then open foil and broil for a minute or two to brown crust.

Roasted Butternut Squash with Browned Butter and Cranberries

INGREDIENTS

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into approximately one-inch cubes
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and pepper, to taste
1/2 cube browned butter
1/2 cup Craisins or dried cranberries

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425F. Toss butternut squash with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Spread squash out on a baking sheet (prepared with cooking spray) and bake for approximate 10 to 15 minutes until al dente and knife pierces easily. Remove from oven.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a sauce pan over medium-low heat and allow to continue to cook slowly for about 10 minutes, or until crystals form and butter turns golden brown in color. Remove from heat and set aside.

These two steps can be done ahead of time.

When ready to serve, sprinkle cranberries among squash pieces and toss all with browned butter. Heat in 425F oven for about 5-7 minutes longer, or until heated through, and serve.

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