

Dining by Design



FRESH FOODS

TO FIT THE SEASON



By Becky McKinley
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Summer is here and we cannot get enough of fresh, bright flavors. Fresh lemon, herbs, berries especially strawberries, asparagus and any other seasonal produce that hits the market.

It is hard to think about summer without focusing

on lemon and salmon. The smooth light taste that lights up any dish. As long as we are speaking of lemon, how about a batch of bright and sunny lemon curd? It is a favorite of mine.

With swimsuits ever on the horizon, what could better round out the perfect meal than a chicken power bowl?

And, of course, strawberries! I love berries in all adaptations but with summer in mind, I have opted for the perfect strawberry salad. This salad is light and fresh and always a hit.

My favorite thing right now is a mixed salad of grilled vegetables. Why not fire up the grill and make this delicious grilled veggie salad? Have fun and enjoy these delicious yet healthy dishes.

SALMON ON A SHEET PAN

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| <p>4 salmon fillets, skin removed (about 2 lbs total)</p> <p>2 C. halved brussels sprouts</p> <p>2 C. small pieces cauliflower</p> <p>1 C. butternut squash, cubed the size of the other veggies</p> <p>4 T. olive oil/divided (3 T. for the veggies and 1 T. to be brushed on salmon)</p> <p>2 T. chopped fresh rosemary (or use 1 T. dried)</p> | <p>2 T. chopped fresh parsley (or use 1 T. dried)</p> <p>1 T. minced garlic</p> <p>2 medium lemons, divided</p> <p>½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper, divided</p> <p>Kosher salt, to taste (I use Lowry's seasoned salt instead of Kosher salt)</p> |
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Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. If using foil, spray with Vegetable oil spray. Place all vegetables in a bowl and toss with 3 T. of olive oil. Arrange salmon and vegetables evenly spaced on top of the parchment paper or foil. Brush remaining 1 T. of olive oil on top of each salmon fillet.

In a small bowl, stir the rosemary, parsley, garlic, juice of 1 lemon (around 4 T.), and ¼ tsp. pepper together. Spoon the mixture evenly onto each fillet and all vegetables. Slice ½ of the 2nd lemon and arrange 1-2 slices on top of each fillet. Squeeze the other lemon half on top of the vegetables. Sprinkle sea salt and pepper evenly over the whole pan— not much is needed, but go by your desire.

Bake the salmon and veggies for 15-20 minutes. Serve warm.



CHICKEN POWER BOWL

Prepare according to package directions

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| 1 plus ½ C. cooked quinoa | 1 C. cooked wild rice |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|

Preparation of chicken / rotisserie chicken / any preferred protein

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|---|---------------------------------------|
| 2 T. extra virgin olive oil | 2 large oranges, peeled and segmented |
| 1 pound skinless boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces | 1 C. black beans, drained |
| 1 clove garlic or roasted garlic, finely chopped | 1 C. frozen corn, thawed and drained |
| ½ tsp. smoked paprika | 1 ripe avocado, sliced or cubed |
| ½ tsp. salt | |

Dressing preparation

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| ¼ C. lime juice | 1 tsp. cumin |
| 1/3 C. chopped fresh cilantro (packed) | 1 T. honey |
| 1 T. orange juice | 1 T. Dijon mustard |
| 6 T. extra-virgin olive oil | 3 green onions, diced |
| | Salt and pepper, to taste |

Cook the quinoa according to the package directions. Drain very well. Cook wild rice according to package directions. I use a paper towel and squeeze all the moisture out of the quinoa.

Pour olive oil into a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and garlic, stirring it all around to coat with oil. Sprinkle with paprika and salt. Stir and cook until chicken it is done, about 8 minutes. Remove from the skillet.

Add to cooked chicken – the oranges, black beans, corn and avocado. Stir this mixture into the quinoa and wild rice.

Make dressing: Whisk the dressing ingredients together. Pour over the salad and toss to coat everything evenly. Serve at once.

AMAZING STRAWBERRY AND SPINACH SALAD

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| 2 T. fresh lemon juice | 6 C. packed baby spinach (5oz.) | ¼ small red onion, |
| ½ tsp. Dijon mustard | 2 rotisserie chicken breasts, | thinly sliced |
| ¼ C. extra-virgin olive oil | cut into 1/2" pieces | 5 oz. feta or goat cheese, |
| Kosher salt to taste | 2 C. thinly sliced strawberries | crumbled |
| Freshly ground black pepper to taste | 3/4 C. chopped candied pecans | |
| | (buy in the produce dept.) | |

In a large bowl, whisk the lemon juice with the mustard. While whisking, slowly pour in the oil until the dressing is combined. Season with salt and pepper.

Add spinach, chicken, strawberries, ¼ C. pecans, and onion to the bowl with the dressing and toss to combine. Pile salad onto plates and top with the remaining pecans and a generous crumbling of feta.

GRILLED SUMMER SALAD

- 1 small to medium eggplant
- 3 ears fresh sweet corn
- 2 medium zucchini
- 2 small yellow squash
- 1 whole red onion
- 1 bunch asparagus
- 1. red bell pepper
- ¼ C. olive oil
- 2 pounds heirloom cherry tomatoes
- 4 ounces Maytag blue cheese or any other blue cheese

Dressing preparation

- ¼ C. olive oil
- Juice from one lemon (¼ C.)
- 1.tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. salt
- Black pepper to taste
- 2.T. basil pesto, recipe to follow

Homemade Basil Pesto

- 2 C. basil leaves
- 4 garlic cloves
- ½ C. pine nuts or walnuts
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ½ C. grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ tsp. salt or more to taste
- ½ C. olive oil

Heat grill to the hottest temperature.

Cut ends from eggplant and cut lengthwise into three or four thick slices. Shave the skin off the two outside pieces so the flesh will get grill marks. Lay the slices on your board or plate and salt both sides liberally. This will draw out the bitterness.

Husk the corn and place on a tray.

Cut the ends off the zucchini and summer squash then cut in half lengthwise. Place on tray with corn.

Cut the top off the red onion but leave the root attached. Cut it in quarters, leaving root attached to each quarter. This will help keep it together while grilling. Place on tray with other vegetables.

Cut the tough ends off the asparagus and place spears on tray with vegetables.

Cut the red pepper in half. Remove core and seeds and place the two halves on tray with vegetables.

Rinse and dry eggplant and add to tray with other vegetables.



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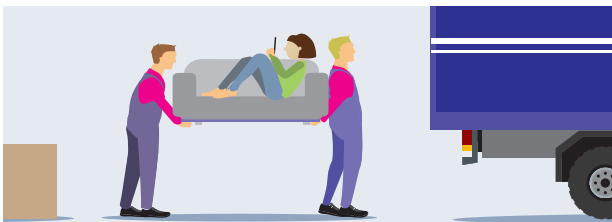
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Brush all of the vegetables on all sides with olive oil. Once all of the vegetables are brushed with oil, lay them all out on your grill. After grilling, cut each vegetable into bite-sized pieces and place in a large bowl, remove kernels from corn and place in bowl.

Cut all of the tomatoes in half and add to the bowl.

Make the dressing by combining all dressing ingredients and add to bowl. Toss until combined.

Top with the cheese and serve.



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EASY LEMON CURD in the Blender

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| 1 T. <i>finely grated lemon zest</i> | 1/8 tsp. <i>salt</i> |
| 1/2 C. <i>fresh lemon juice</i> | 1/2 C. <i>butter, cut into 8 pieces,</i> |
| 5 <i>large eggs</i> | <i>at room temperature</i> |
| 1 C. <i>sugar</i> | |

Place the lemon zest, juice, eggs, sugar and salt into a blender. Cover and blend for 5 minutes on high speed.

Reduce the speed to medium, remove the lid plug, and carefully add the butter one cut at a time. When all the butter is added, blend for 30 seconds more or until glossy.

Remove the lid carefully and transfer the curd to a glass jar or other heat proof container to cool to room temperature and 20 minutes. Cover and refrigerate to thicken overnight. Oh so good with fresh berries, pound cake and whipped cream!

The heat from processing the curd for 5 minutes can cause steam to appear. Be careful when transferring to a container. *AW*

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Inexpensive – under \$7.00

Moderate – \$7.00 to \$20.00

Expensive – over \$20.00

Sa-ovor Tapas Bar, 7679 Hillside Rd., Ste 600, 806-310-2600. Definitely an upscale, social dining experience! Urban, chic, small bites, big flavor. So many delicious options to choose but do start with the charcuterie board – bold, fresh and delicious, especially with an imaginative cocktail. Select cold or hot tapas to your liking – such as the Mejillones (mussels), Albondigas (pork meatballs with manchego), roasted artichoke flatbread... the list goes on and on! Of course, there're are salads, and entrees –including prime beef, seared snapper, Rainbow trout. Wines are extraordinary. Don't miss the crème brulee for dessert! Open daily 11 a.m. – Midnight; Brunch (Sat & Sun) 10 a.m. -3 p.m. Moderate to expensive.

Sad Monkey Mercantile, 9800 TX-217, Canyon, TX 79015, 806-488-2658. Just 15 minutes from Canyon and 25 from Amarillo, Sad Monkey Mercantile is the perfect stop for a relaxing break on your way to or from Palo Duro Canyon. This unique spot offers everything from hot sandwiches and fresh local coffee to craft beer from area breweries like Pondaseta Brewing Co., plus wine flights and mimosas at the Monkey Bar. The food trailer, open on weekends, serves delicious meals, while the pet-friendly patio with cornhole and occasional live music sets a laid-back vibe for all ages. Check out their Instagram for the latest on live music events. You'll also find camping gear, homewares, and "Panhandle Proud" merchandise to take home as souvenirs. With scenic views, a small dog park, and Texas longhorns nearby, Sad Monkey Mercantile offers a peaceful, family-friendly space to relax, grab a drink, and explore the best of the Texas Panhandle. Whether you're hiking, biking, or just looking to unwind, it's the perfect place to recharge. Open Sun – Thurs, 9 AM – 8 PM and Fri/ Sat, 9 AM – 9 PM. Moderate.

The Brunch Truck, 213 SW 7th, 806-373-4199. Downtown Amarillo has a flavorful new addition worth the stop—**The Brunch Truck**, the city's latest food truck concept with a twist. While meals are prepped in the truck, guests enjoy the comfort of indoor dining just steps away, combining the charm of street food with the ease of a sit-down experience. Offering a fast-casual approach to breakfast

and lunch, The Brunch Truck serves up an eclectic mix of morning favorites and midday staples. Think hearty breakfast burritos, fluffy pancakes, French toast, and the All-American breakfast alongside bold options like migas, tacos, burgers, enchiladas, salads, and sandwiches. Stop by for a quick bite that doesn't skimp on flavor—and stay for the fun, laid-back vibe that makes this local gem a standout. Lunch specials, Tues-Thurs (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.) Hours: Tues: 6:30 AM – 2 PM.; Wed-Fri: 6:30 AM – 7 PM; Sat-Sun Brunch: 9 AM – 3 PM. Call in orders for takeout. Moderate.

BORGER

Smitty Brothers All About Burgers, 3245 Fairlanes Blvd. 806-275-9107 Just off Hwy 136, west of Borger, sits a country-cozy stop made for hungry travelers. Family-friendly and laid-back, it's all about hearty, two-fisted burgers done right. Classics like the double cheeseburger and green chile burger never miss, but the standout is the **Triple "B" Burger**—topped with Kickin' Bourbon sauce, bacon, and your choice of cheese. For variety, try the avocado-topped **California Burger** or the smoky **Hickory Burger** with homemade BBQ sauce. Beyond burgers, there's crisp salads, golden chicken tenders, and catfish dinners. Don't skip the sides: hot, real-cut fries and irresistible onion straws seal the deal. Open for lunch 11 AM to 2 PM and dinner 4:30 to 8:00 PM, Mon – Fri. *AW*

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