

Comfort Food Around the World

With Chef Christina Erdman

Chicken & Dumplings

comforting stew with chicken, vegetables, and fluffy dumplings

Shepherd's Pie

braised lamb and vegetables underneath creamy mashed potatoes

Spicy Mushroom Tofu Hot Pot

with noodles & rich broth infused with shiitake, soy, garlic, & chili

Ratatouille

provençal vegetables with garlic and olive oil, with crispy breadcrumbs

Born and raised in North Vancouver, Christina's passion for food is comparable to her love of traveling and the great outdoors. Whether she's cooking for royalty or in Canada's top hotels, exploring Europe's outdoor food markets, or creating a simple meal under the stars, she brings years of experience, knowledge, and passion to everything she does.

"My education in cooking started at a very young age, watching and learning from my grandmother. Her passion for making even the simplest items instilled in me not only the fundamentals of cooking, but the knowledge that food does not have to be complex and difficult: it just needs to contain love."

Chicken & Dumplings

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

4 whole chicken legs/thighs/drumsticks	½ cup chicken fat (schmaltz) or butter, melted, divided
1 leek, pale-green and white parts only	Freshly ground black pepper
4 carrots, 1 whole, 3 chopped	1½ cups all-purpose flour, divided
4 celery stalks, 1 whole, 3 chopped	2 teaspoons baking powder
1 medium onion, chopped	¼ teaspoon baking soda
3 garlic cloves, smashed	½ cup plus 2 tablespoons buttermilk
4 sprigs thyme	½ cup heavy cream
Parsley stems from ½ bunch	Chopped chives (for serving)
1 bay leaf	
2 tsp whole peppercorns + kosher salt	

Method

1. Bring chicken, leek, whole carrot, whole celery stalk, half of onion, garlic, thyme, parsley stems, bay leaf, peppercorns, and 3 quarts water to a simmer in a large wide pot.
2. Cook, uncovered, until chicken is cooked through, 40–50 minutes.
3. Transfer chicken to a plate and let sit until cool enough to handle. Shred meat from thighs and legs, discarding skin, bones, and excess fat.
4. Strain stock through a fine-mesh sieve into a large bowl; discard solids. Wipe out pot, pour stock back in, and bring to a simmer. Stir in 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. salt.
5. Heat ¼ cup plus 1 Tbsp. Chicken fat in a large skillet over medium.
6. Cook chopped carrot, chopped celery, and remaining onion, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened but not completely tender, 8–10 minutes; season with salt and pepper.
7. Add ½ cup flour and cook, stirring, until vegetables are coated, about 1 minute.
8. Add warm stock into vegetable mixture and whisk until liquid thickens, no lumps remain, then cook until vegetables are tender, 10–15 minutes.
9. Whisk baking powder, baking soda, 1 tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, and remaining 1 cup flour in a medium bowl.
10. Whisk buttermilk and remaining 3 Tbsp chicken fat in a small bowl.
11. Fold buttermilk mixture into dry ingredients just until dough comes together (be careful not to overmix or dumplings will be tough).
12. Add cream and reserved chicken to stew and return to a simmer.
13. Drop tablespoon-sized portions of dough into stew
14. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook 10 minutes. Uncover and check dumplings for doneness.
15. Divide chicken soup and dumplings among bowls, then top with chives.

Shepherd's Pie

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

2 tablespoons canola oil	1 teaspoon freshly chopped thyme leaves
1 cup chopped onion	½ cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
2 carrots, peeled and diced small	½ cup fresh or frozen English peas
2 cloves garlic, minced	
1 ½ pounds ground lamb <i>(if beef, called cottage pie)</i>	For the potatoes:
1 teaspoon kosher salt	1 ½ pounds russet potatoes
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper	¼ cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour	¼ cup butter
2 teaspoons tomato paste	¾ teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup chicken broth	¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce	1 egg yolk
2 tsp freshly chopped rosemary leaves	

Method

1. Peel the potatoes and cut into 1/2-inch dice.
2. Place in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water.
3. Set over high heat, cover and bring to a boil.
4. Once boiling, uncover, decrease the heat to maintain a simmer and cook until tender and easily crushed with tongs, approximately 10 to 15 minutes.
5. Heat whipping cream & butter in a pan over medium heat until warmed through
6. Drain the potatoes in a colander and then return to the saucepan.
7. Mash the potatoes and then add the cream and butter mixture, salt and pepper and continue to mash until smooth.
8. Stir in the yolk until well combined.
9. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
10. Place the canola oil into a 12-inch saute pan and set over medium high heat.
11. Add the onion and carrots and saute just until they begin to take on color, approximately 3 to 4 minutes.
12. Add the garlic and stir to combine.
13. Add lamb, salt & pepper, and fry until browned/cooked through, approx 3 mins.
14. Sprinkle the meat with flour and toss to coat, cook for another minute.
15. Add the tomato paste, chicken broth, Worcestershire, rosemary, thyme, and stir.
16. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer slowly 10 to 12 mins or until the sauce is thickened slightly
17. Add the corn and peas to the lamb mixture and spread evenly into an 11 by 7-inch glass baking dish.
18. Top with the mashed potatoes
19. Bake for 25 minutes or just until the potatoes begin to brown.

Spicy Mushroom Hot Pot

Serves 6-8

Ingredients

6 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons canola oil
2 cups fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced
2 Tbsp grated fresh ginger
1 Tbsp brown sugar
4 cups vegetable broth
¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
2 tsp chili-garlic sauce, or to taste
4 cups thinly sliced bok choy greens
14oz firm tofu, preferably water-packed
8oz fresh Chinese (lo mein) noodles
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Method

1. Drain and rinse tofu; pat dry. Cut the block into 1-inch cubes.
2. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat.
3. Add ginger and garlic; cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute.
4. Add mushrooms and cook until slightly soft, 2 to 3 minutes.
5. Stir in sugar, broth, soy sauce and chili-garlic sauce; cover and bring to a boil.
6. Add bok choy and tofu, cover and simmer until greens are wilted, about 2 mins.
7. Raise heat to high and add the noodles, pushing them down into the broth. Cook, covered, until the noodles are tender, 2 to 3 minutes.
8. Remove from the heat and stir in cilantro.

Ratatouille

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

1 onion, sliced
2 garlic cloves, minced
5 tablespoons grapeseed oil, divided
3c. eggplant, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 sm. zucchini, quartered lengthwise, thinly sliced
1 red bell pepper, chopped
1 ¼ c. small tomatoes, chopped coarse
½ tsp dried oregano, crumbled
¼ tsp dried thyme, crumbled
¼ tsp ground coriander
¼ tsp fennel seeds
¾ tsp salt
½ cup fresh basil leaves

For bread crumbs:
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
2 cups coarse fresh bread crumbs

Method

1. In a large heavy bottomed skillet cook the onion and the garlic in 2 Tbsp of the oil over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened.
2. Add the remaining 3 Tbsp oil.
3. Add eggplant and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 mins, until eggplant softens.
4. Stir in the zucchini and the bell pepper and cook the mixture over the moderate heat, stirring occasionally, for ~12 minutes.
5. Stir in the tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5-7 mins, or until the vegetables are tender.
6. Stir in the oregano, the thyme, the coriander, the fennel seeds, the salt, and pepper to taste and cook the mixture, stirring, for 1 minute.
7. Stir in the basil and combine the mixture well.
8. To make bread crumbs, Heat butter and oil in a 10-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat until foam subsides.
9. Then cook garlic and bread crumbs, stirring, until crumbs are golden.
10. Transfer to paper towels to drain and season with salt.
11. Add Ratatouille to an oven safe vessel, top with garlic bread crumbs and bake for 10-15 minutes at 375 F until bubbly.