

Spinach-Stuffed Chicken Breasts

Serves 4

Working time: about 45 minutes

Total time: about 1 hour

Calories 431
Protein 44g
Cholesterol 112mg
Total fat 22g
Saturated fat 9g
Sodium 684mg

*4 chicken breast halves, boned, skin left on
(about 1 lb.)*

1 tsp. fresh thyme, or ¼ tsp. dried thyme leaves

¼ tsp. salt

1 tsp. virgin olive oil

Spinach and cheese stuffing

1 onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp. unsalted butter

1 tbsp. virgin olive oil

1 lb. spinach, washed, stemmed and coarsely chopped

½ cup low-fat ricotta cheese

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1 tsp. fresh basil, finely chopped, or ½ tsp. dried basil

freshly ground black pepper

Yogurt-tomato sauce

1 cup plain low-fat yogurt

1 tbsp. red wine vinegar

¼ tsp. salt

1 ripe tomato, peeled, seeded and finely chopped

4 large basil leaves, thinly sliced

freshly ground black pepper

To prepare the stuffing, cook the onion in the butter and oil in a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat until translucent—about five minutes. Add the spinach to the pan and cook until it is wilted and the moisture has evaporated—about six minutes more. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and let it cool. Stir in the cheeses, basil and some pepper.

To make the sauce, mix the yogurt, vinegar and salt in a small bowl. Reserve 1 teaspoon of the tomato and 1 teaspoon of the basil, and stir the rest into the yogurt mixture. Add pepper to taste. Transfer the sauce to a serving bowl, garnish it with the reserved tomato and basil, and set it aside. Preheat the oven to 375° F.

To make pockets for the stuffing, loosen the skin of each breast by running a finger between the flesh and skin on one long side, leaving the skin attached on the other side. Rub the thyme and salt into the flesh. Drizzle ¼ teaspoon of the olive oil onto the skin of each breast. Neatly fill each pocket between skin and flesh with one quarter of the stuffing. Place the breasts skin side up in an oiled baking dish just large enough to hold them, and bake until the skin turns golden brown—about 25 minutes.

Remove the dish from the oven. Put the chicken breasts on a cutting board and allow them to cool for a few minutes. Cut each breast into ½-inch-wide slices and arrange them on a warmed serving platter or on individual plates. Serve with the yogurt sauce.

SUGGESTED ACCOMPANIMENT: steamed couscous.

