***Gayina Agristada***

**Chicken with Lemon Sauce**

By Chef Sibel Pinto

Makes 4 servings as a main dish

**Chicken roulade**

2 thin chicken breast fillets

6-8 large spinach leaves

1 large carrot, cut in half, or 2 small carrots, trimmed and peeled

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

***Kofti Baharati* spice mix**

3 tablespoons ground cumin

2 tablespoons ground allspice

2 tablespoons onion powder

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon sweet paprika

1/2 tablespoon dried oregano or thyme

1/2 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon crushed red pepper flakes (such as Urfa, Antep or Aleppo pepper), optional

**Chicken *yullikas* (meatballs)**

10 1⁄2 ounces (2/3 pound) minced/ground chicken breast

1⁄2 cup bread crumbs

2-3 teaspoons *kofte baharati* spice mix (see previous recipe)

Leaves and thinnest stems from 10-12 stems parsley, finely chopped

2 cups chicken or vegetable broth or water

Bay leaves, fresh thyme, or other herbs, dried or fresh (optional)

***Agristada* sauce**

1 1⁄2 cups reserved cooking liquid from the *yullikas*

3 large eggs, at room temperature

Zest and juice of 2 lemons (keep separate)

Salt and ground black pepper to taste

**Red pepper-infused oil**

2-3 tablespoons olive oil or the oil from browning the chicken roulades

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes, or to taste

**Parsley-infused oil**

1 cup fresh parsley leaves, loosely packed

5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Pinch of salt, or to taste

If the chicken breast is not thin enough, place the cutlets between two pieces of

plastic wrap (cling film), then use the flat side of a meat tenderizer or small

cast-iron skillet to flatten the chicken until about a 1/4-inch thick.

Boil water in a saucepan. Add the spinach and blanch for just a few seconds, then

remove and lay over and around the edges of a bowl to drain and cool. Blanch the

carrot(s) in that same boiling water for about 5 or 6 minutes just until fork-tender. Let cool.

Season the chicken breast fillets with salt and pepper to taste. Lay 3 or 4 of the cooled

spinach leaves on top of each one, covering the chicken, then lay half the large cooked

carrot or whole small one at the end of each fillet closest to you. Roll up each fillet tightly, starting at the end with the carrot. When both roulades are done, roll each tightly in a

large piece of plastic wrap. When completely rolled, firmly twist the ends of the cling film

many times in opposite directions. Roll the wrapped chicken on the counter to make it

tight, then make a knot in the cling film at each side very close to the end of the chicken.

Cook the roulades in a steamer basket over simmering water for 10 minutes. This

cooking method gives a moist and tender chicken with pure flavors. Remove the roulades

from the steamer and let them cool.

Cut open and carefully remove the wrap from each chicken roulade. Cut each crosswise

Into 2 or 3 pieces. Heat the olive oil in a skillet until it shimmers. Add the chicken roulade

pieces and pan-fry them, turning onto all sides, until they are evenly golden in color.

You may wish to reserve the oil to create the red pepper-infused oil (see recipe below).

In a container with a tight-fitting lid, mix all the *kofti baharati* ingredients together until well

blended. Reserve 2-3 teaspoons for the *yullikas*, then seal and store the rest in a cool,

dry, dark place.

In a mixing bowl, combine the chicken, bread crumbs, spice mix (to taste) and parsley,

and use your hands to mix well. Use dampened hands to make 16-18 small balls

about 1 1/4 inch in diameter using all the chicken mixture. Put shaped balls on a large

plate, cover and refrigerate them for a half hour so the flavors blend.

In a medium saucepan, bring the broth or water to a boil over medium heat. (Add

bay leaves, fresh thyme or other herbs to the broth or water for different tastes, if

desired.) Adjust to a gentle simmer. Drop the chilled chicken meatballs into the

simmering liquid and poach until cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes. Reserve 1 1⁄2

cups of the cooking liquid (strain as needed).

Heat the cooking liquid in a saucepan. It should be warm, but not boiling. In a mixing

bowl, beat the eggs and add the fresh lemon juice (not bottled juice because it won’t

taste right). Whisk until frothy to emulsify the eggs with lemon juice.

So that the eggs don’t scramble, temper the warm cooking liquid into the eggs-lemon

on mixture by adding about half of it to the mixture in 3 or 4 small amounts, whisking

constantly. Gradually add this mixture back into the rest of the cooking liquid in the

saucepan, continuing to whisk. Simmer over medium heat. Cook slowly, still whisking continuously until the sauce thickens. Lower the heat if the mixture starts to bubble

more than a simmer. Once the sauce has thickened, add the lemon zest, to taste. Do

not overcook the sauce or let it boil. Taste the sauce, and season with salt and pepper

as needed. It should be salty, glossy, silky and lemony. Store in an airtight container in

the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

In a small saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the red pepper

flakes, remove from the heat and infuse for a few minutes.

Puree the parsley leaves and olive oil in a blender until smooth. Taste, and add

salt as needed. Use as, is or strain through a coffee filter to extract and use only the

green oil. (If you filter it, don’t throw away the parsley puree. It is wonderful over

soups, bruschetta, roasted or grilled vegetables.)

To assemble the finished dish: Spread a generous amount of *agristada* sauce on a

large rimmed platter or in 4 individual shallow wide bowls. Arrange the chicken

roulade pieces and the *yullikas* on top of the sauce, either on one serving platter or

dividing evenly among the 4 bowls. Drizzle with the red pepper and/or parsley

infused oils.

*Note: The roulades are very versatile and can help you use up what is in your*

*refrigerator or pantry. Instead of spinach, you can use kale, chard, green beans, peas*

*and mushrooms with any of these other vegetables, even pulling together leftover bits*

*for the roulade stuffing.*

*Chef Sibel Pinto is the author of* Kashkarikas Wasteless Kitchen *and* The

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