

Lifetime Learning Proudly Presents

Easy Meals – Four ingredients or less

Presented By

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In recent years, cooking and eating trends have changed considerably, with more emphasis on dishes that are quick and easy to prepare, yet that are still exciting, sophisticated and delicious. In the hour and half we will spend together, I want to show you how to really make the most of food – with simple, fabulous recipes that use only four ingredients or less. Just as exciting as the lower number of ingredients, is the fact that most of these recipes are for no more than four, many of them for two servings only.

Using a limited number of top-quality ingredients allows you to really savor the aroma, taste and texture of a dish and saves time on writing out shopping lists or looking for hard to find ingredients. It also allows for fuss-free preparation, giving you more time to sit back, relax and enjoy.

I have listed the recipes to give you an appetizer, an entrée with some sides, and of course, a dessert. Each recipe uses no more than four ingredients, well a few may have five but that's OK because it will taste great. Some recipes use ready-made stocks and sauces; however, you can always use a homemade one if you prefer. Some serving suggestions and ideas for garnishes or decorations are included where appropriate, but these are not essential for the success of the dish. There are a few instances of suggestions for variations that offer alternative or additional flavorings and handy cook's tips that will help you achieve successful results every time.

It is understood that your pantry contains many of the herbs, spices, sauces or other ingredients mentioned in the recipes and are not counted as one of the four major components. As for equipment, there are only a few items that are really needed. Knives, pans, mixing bowls, wooden spoons, roasting and baking pans, measuring spoons and cups, both dry and liquid, as well as assorted size whisks

and sieves are essential items to be found in the well-stocked kitchen. As for perishable items, we are talking butter (unsalted please) flour, salt, sugar, oil – either vegetable or olive oil, bread crumbs, salt and pepper, as well as many of the most popular herbs and spices found in almost every home today.

So, as they say in show-biz, “Sit back and let me entertain you” or as I like to say, “Sit back and let me entice your tastes buds.”

Chef Cal

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RECIPES

Roasted Olives

Roasted Rosemary Cashews

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Simple Crème Brulee

French Chocolates

Blueberry & Banana Pie

RECIPES

Roasted Olives

3 – 5 Cups assorted green and black olives
2 – 3 Rosemary springs cut in half
Zest of 1 orange, cut into thin long strips
¼ Cup extra-virgin olive oil
¼ Teaspoon dried chili flakes
Salt – to taste (Kosher salt)

Preheat oven to 400-degrees. In a bowl, combine olives, rosemary, orange zest, oil, chili flakes and salt and toss to coat. Place olive mixture into roasting pan and bake until olives are warmed through, 7 – 10 minutes. Serve warm or at room temperature.
Serves 4 to 8 – can be doubled or tripled

Roasted Rosemary Cashews

1 – 1 ¼ pound(s) cashews or mixed nuts
2 tablespoons rosemary – fresh leaves chopped fine
½ teaspoon cayenne – go lightly here, too much is not good
2 teaspoons brown sugar – either dark or light
2 teaspoons salt
2 – 2 ½ tablespoons melted butter

Preheat oven to 325-degrees.

Place nuts on an un-greased baking sheet and bake for about 10 minutes until they are warmed through. Watch that the nuts do not burn. Stir after about 5 minutes. Note: let your nose tell you when the nuts are roasting, you should be able to smell them. You can also smell if they are burning.

Meanwhile, combine everything else in a large bowl. As soon as you take the nuts out of the oven, toss them in the bowl until completely coated – keep tossing them to ensure they are all completely coated - this takes about 3 – 5 minutes. Serve warm, if desired. The flavor of the nuts increases as they cool down. Store in a zip lock bag or other airtight container. This recipe makes about 3 cups.

Bacon-Wrapped Rumaki:

1 – 2 cans (8-oz ea.) whole water chestnuts, drained
¼ cup soy sauce
1 tablespoon white granulated sugar

1 package of bacon cut in half *
Wooden toothpicks**

In a small bowl combine water chestnuts, soy sauce and sugar, mix well. Let stand at room temperature for 20 – 30 minutes to marinate, or overnight in the refrigerator.

Drain chestnuts, and wrap each one in a piece of bacon sliced in half, then secure with a toothpick. Place on a sheet pan sprayed with cooking spray and with a drain rack or better yet, on a disposable roasting rack; bake at 400 –degrees, till bacon is cooked and crisp (10 to18 minutes); or under broiler for 4 to 7 minutes, about 4 inches from heat. When baking under the broiler, be sure to stay at the oven as they will burn quickly if not watched. If cooking in the summer, grill them over low heat until the bacon is crisp. If your grill has an upper shelf, you can finish them up there too. Serve warm.

* = You can alter the taste by altering the type of bacon used. You can use Maple Cured, Apple wood Smoked Bacon or even Turkey Bacon. You want a medium or normal thickness since thick sliced bacon takes longer to cook and is somewhat harder to wrap around the chestnuts.

** = Remember to use only WOODEN toothpicks as plastic ones will melt.

Artichoke and Cumin Dip

2 – 14 oz. cans artichoke hearts, drained
2 garlic cloves, peeled
½ tsp. ground cumin
Olive oil
Salt and ground black pepper

Put the artichoke hearts in a food processor with the garlic and ground cumin, and a generous drizzle of olive oil. Process this mixture to a smooth puree and season with plenty of salt and ground black pepper to taste.

Spoon the puree into a serving bowl and serve with an extra drizzle of olive oil swirled on the top and slices of warm pita bread for dipping.

Options: Grilled artichokes bottled in oil have a fabulous flavor and can be used instead of canned artichokes. You can also vary the flavorings – try adding chili powder in place of the cumin and add a handful of basil leaves to the artichokes before blending.

Avgolemono – Greek Lemon/pasta soup

3 pints (7 ½ cups) chicken stock
½ cup (4 oz.) orzo pasta
3 eggs
Juice of 1 large lemon
Salt and black ground pepper

Pour the chicken stock into a large pan and bring to the boil. Add the orzo pasta or other small pasta shapes and cook for 5 minutes, or according to the packet instructions.

Beat the eggs until they are frothy then add the lemon juice and a tablespoon of cold water. Slowly stir in a ladleful of the hot chicken stock, then add one or two more. Remove the pan of stock from the heat, then pour in the egg mixture and stir well. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Serve immediately. ***Do not let the soup boil once the egg, lemon juice and stock mixture has been added or it will curdle.***

Butter Bean, Sun-dried Tomato and Pesto Soup

3 ¼ cups chicken or vegetable stock
2 – 14 oz. cans butter (Lima) beans, drained and rinsed
4 tbsp. sun-dried tomato- purée (paste)
5 tbsp. commercial pesto

Put the stock into a saucepan with the butter beans and bring just to a boil. Reduce the heat and stir in the tomato puree and pesto. Cook gently for 5 minutes. Transfer six ladleful's of the soup to a blender or food processor, scooping up plenty of the beans. Process this mixture until smooth then return the purée to the pan.

Heat gently, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes. Ladle into four warmed soup bowls and serve with warm crusty bread or breadsticks.

Tip: As an alternative to the butter beans, navy or cannellini beans will make good substitutes.

Orzo with Olives and Pistachios

¾ cup orzo pasta
½ cup chopped mixed olives
2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

2 tbsp. unsalted butter
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
½ cup roasted, shelled pistachio's, chopped

Cook orzo as per package directions, drain. Return to pan and add the rest of the ingredients; mix well. Serve warm or cold. Great with fish or other seafood dishes; refrigerate leftovers.

Potato and Olive Salad

8 large new potatoes
3-4 tbsp. garlic-flavored oil and vinegar dressing
4-6 tbsp. chopped fresh herbs, such as coriander (cilantro) and chives.
10 – 15 dry-fleshed black Mediterranean olives

Cut the new potatoes into chunks. Put them in a pan, pour in water to cover and add a pinch of salt. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and cook gently for about 10 minutes, or until the potatoes are just tender. Drain well and leave in a colander to dry thoroughly and cool slightly.

When they are cool enough to handle, chop the potatoes and put them in a serving bowl. Drizzle the garlic dressing over the potatoes. Toss well and sprinkle with the chopped fresh herbs and the black olives. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour prior to serving.

Tip: Add a pinch of ground cumin or a sprinkling of roasted whole cumin seeds to spice up the salad.

Mahi-Mahi with Macadamia Nut Crust

1 10 ounce mahi-mahi fillet (1 inch thick) skinned, halved crosswise
½ cup fresh squeezed lime juice
1/3 cup Panko*
¼ Cup chopped macadamia nuts
1 teaspoon minced fresh cilantro
1/8 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, melted

Place the mahi-mahi in a shallow glass baking dish. Pour the lime juice over and marinate, refrigerated, at least 1 hour, turning the fish over occasionally. Do not marinate over 1 ½ hours or the juice will start to “cook” the fish.

Preheat the oven to 350 – degrees. Combine the Panko and the next 3 ingredients in a small bowl. Mix in 2 tablespoons of melted butter; season generously with pepper.

Remove the fish from the original glass baking dish and set aside while you rinse the dish and towel dry it. Now pour the remaining 2 tablespoons butter into the baking dish and return the fish to the dish, turning it to coat it with the melted butter. Spoon the Panko mixture on top of the fish fillets, dividing evenly. Press the topping gently to adhere to the fish. Bake in the preheated oven until the fish is cooked through, about 20 minutes. Transfer to plates and serve with a little green salad on the side and maybe a few lemon and/or lime slices for the fish.

Spaghetti with Lemon and Garlic

12 oz. dried spaghetti, your choice
6 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
Juice of 1 large lemon
2 garlic cloves sliced into very thin slivers

Cook the pasta in a pan of salted boiling water according to the instructions on the packet, then drain well and return pasta to the pan.

Pour the olive oil and lemon juice over the cooked pasta. Sprinkle in the slivers of garlic and add seasonings of choice (salt/pepper/Italian spice) to taste. Toss the pasta over a medium to high heat for 1-2 minutes. Serve immediately in four warmed bowls.

Hint: Spaghetti is the best type of pasta for this recipe, because the olive oil and lemon juice cling to its long thin strands. If you are out of spaghetti, use other dried, long pasta shape instead, such a spaghettini, linguine or tagliatelle.

Steak Teriyaki

1 flank steak
1 cup soy sauce
2 cloves garlic – mashed
1/3 cup sugars (½ white & ½ brown)
1/3 tsp ground ginger

Mix last four ingredients. Marinate steak 5 hours up to 24 hours in mixture, turning occasionally, piercing with fork occasionally. Keep covered, and refrigerated, if marinating the longer time. Grill outdoors 7 minutes per side. Slice thin slices on the bias and serve.

Chinese Spiced Pork Chops

4 large pork chops, about 7 oz. each
1 tbsp. Chinese five-spice powder
2 tbsp. soy sauce
2 tbsp. garlic-infused olive oil

Arrange the pork chops in a single layer in a non-metallic roasted pan or baking dish. Sprinkle the five-spice powder over the chops, then drizzle over the soy sauce and garlic infused oil.

Using your hands, rub the mixture into the meat. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and chill for 2 hours. Preheat the oven to 325-degrees. Uncover the dish and bake for 30 – 40 minutes, or until the pork is cooked through and tender. Serve immediately.

Hint: You can, if you wish, combine the soy sauce, five-spice powder and garlic-infused olive oil and then pour over the chops.

Boursin Potato Gratin

2½ cups heavy cream
1 5 oz. package Boursin Cheese with cracked black pepper or Herbs
2-3 tablespoons minced shallots – can add more if desired
1 – 2 cloves garlic, minced
4 -5½ pounds red new potatoes, scrubbed and skinned, diced into ¼ inch squares
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Fresh snipped chives
2 tablespoons snipped parsley

Generously butter a 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish. In a heavy 1½ or 2quart saucepan, heat cream, Boursin cheese, shallots and garlic over medium heat, stirring until cheese melts.

Preheat the oven to 400-degrees. Arrange half of the diced potatoes in the baking dish; generously season with salt and pepper. Pour half of the cheese/cream mixture over the potatoes. Sprinkle with the chives. Repeat layering with remaining potato, more salt and pepper, and cheese mixture. Bake about 1 hour or until potatoes are tender and the top is golden brown. Sprinkle with parsley. Makes 8 to 10 servings

Fettuccini with Butter and Parmesan

14 oz. fresh or dried fettuccini
1 ½ cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese
¼ cup unsalted butter, cubed
Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Cook the pasta in a pan of salted boiling water according to the instruction on the packet. Drain thoroughly then move the pasta into a warmed bowl.

Add the butter and Parmesan cheese a third at a time, tossing the pasta after each addition until it is evenly coated. Season to taste and serve.

Sliced Brussels Sprouts leaves with Pecans

2 tablespoons butter
1 cup chopped onion
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
8 cups halved and thinly sliced Brussel sprouts (about 1 ½ pounds)
½ cup low sodium chicken broth
1½ tablespoons sugar
½ teaspoon salt
8 teaspoons coarsely chopped pecans, toasted

Melt butter in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté 4 minutes or until lightly browned; stir in Brussels sprouts, sauté 2 minutes. Add broth and sugar, cook 5 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates, stirring frequently. Stir in salt. Sprinkle with pecans, spoon onto serving platter and enjoy.

Simple Crème Brulee

1 cup heavy cream (whipping cream)
1 cup half and half
2 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
3 egg yolks plus one whole egg
¼ cup sugar
Pinch of salt

You will need 12 of the 3 oz. size ramekins or 6 of the 6 oz. size for this recipe.

Warm cream, half & half, sugar and vanilla in a saucepan over medium heat just until steam rises. Do not boil.

In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together the yolks, one egg, ¼ cup of the sugar and a pinch of salt, whisking until the eggs are pale yellow. Slowly combine both mixtures.

Pour the combined mixture into the ramekins, and arrange them in a large baking dish filled with ¼" of hot water. Carefully transfer the baking dish to the oven. Bake the custards 20-30 minutes or until just set. The centers will jiggle slightly with a touch of the finger. Watch carefully and do not overbake.

Remove ramekins from dish with a towel to prevent burning your fingers. Let them cool completely. Wrap with plastic wrap and chill until completely cold or overnight. When ready to serve, unwrap and remove any moisture that accumulated on top of the custard with a paper towel. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar or just plain sugar. You can, if desired, use a small butane torch to caramelize the sugar prior to serving.

French Chocolates

1- 12 ounce package semisweet-chocolate chips
½ to 1 cup chopped walnuts
¾ cup sweetened condensed milk
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
Orange liqueur - optional
Chocolate sprinkles
Chopped peanuts
Coco Powder
Shredded Coconut – Note: Toast for best flavor

In double-boiler top over hot, not boiling, water, melt one 12 ounce package semisweet-chocolate chips. Stir in walnuts, sweetened condensed milk and salt, along with 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or orange flavored liqueur.

Using a wooden spoon, stir till smooth. Cool mixture in refrigerator for about 10 – 15 minutes. Using a mini ice cream scooper, scoop up mixture, and with buttered hands, shape mixture into 1-inch balls; roll each immediately into the chocolate sprinkles, chopped peanuts, shredded/toasted coconut or the coco powder. Bet you can't eat just one!

Tip – To make toasted Coconut – Sprinkle shredded coconut into a dry non-stick sauté pan. Over medium-low heat, cook coconut till it starts to toast, swishing the pan often to prevent

coconut from burning. Once a nice golden brown tinge, remove from pan to ensure the cooking stops. Roll French Chocolates in the toasted coconut and enjoy!

Blueberry and Banana Pie

1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup sugar
1 baked 9-inch pastry shell – as per package directions
2 bananas, sliced
1 cup blueberry pie filling
1 cup whipping cream, Whipped

Combine the softened cream cheese and sugar; beat at high speed with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Spread this evenly in the bottom of a cooked and cooled pastry shell. Arrange banana slices on top of the cream cheese mixture. Spread the blueberry pie filling over the bananas. Top with the whipped cream and chill.

Notes:

To soften cream cheese, remove the wrapper and microwave in a microwave safe bowl for 30 seconds.

Use a store bought pre-made pie shell, 9-inches or a graham cracker crumb crust, pre-made.

You can substitute frozen whipped topping for the whipping cream.