BRAISED CARROTS WITH CRISP SAGE

Adapted from Lynne Rossetto Kasper
SERVES 6
ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 45 MIN

Fried sage works on two levels to make these carrots spectacular: First, the leaves' crisp texture offsets the carrots' tenderness, and second, the aromatic oil that remains in the skillet after frying infuses the vegetable with deep flavor.

- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **20 fresh sage leaves, rinsed and thoroughly dried**
- **2 lb carrots, cut diagonally into 1½-inch-long pieces**
- **1 cup chicken stock or reduced-sodium chicken broth**
- **1 cup water**
- **¼ cup minced onion (1 small)**
- **¾ teaspoon salt**
- **¼ teaspoon black pepper**

▸Heat oil in a 12-inch straight-sided heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot but not smoking, then fry sage leaves, stirring, until just crisp, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain.
▸Add carrots to oil in skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown, about 8 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients and simmer, covered, until carrots are just tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove lid and boil, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced to a glaze, about 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve carrots sprinkled with sage leaves.
COOKS' NOTE: **Carrots can be braised 6 hours ahead and chilled, covered. Reheat, then sprinkle with sage.**

SALAD OF SPRING GREENS

Adapted from *The Splendid Table*
SERVES 6
ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 15 MIN

This delicate salad is a balanced blend of beautiful spring lettuces, combining bitter, peppery, and sweet greens on a single plate. A simple dressing of nothing but oil and vinegar allows each of the contrasting elements to shine through.

- **½ lb mixed seasonal salad greens of varying textures, such as dandelion, arugula, frisée, and/or mâche**
- **3 to 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **¼ teaspoon salt**
- **1 to 2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar**

▸Toss greens with enough oil to coat, salt, and pepper to taste. Add vinegar (to taste) and toss again. Serve immediately.
COOKS' NOTE: **Greens can be washed, dried, and torn 4 hours ahead and chilled in a sealed plastic bag.**

MERINGUES OF THE DARK LAKE

Adapted from *The Splendid Table*
MAKES ABOUT 30 COOKIES
ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 1½ HR

These crunchy almond-studded meringues from the village of Pontelagoscuro ("bridge of the dark lake") are all about texture. Cooking the meringue before baking it makes the cookies firm and crackly rather than chewy. Dunked in coffee or the sweet juices from the strawberries in red wine (recipe follows), they're even more delicious.

- **Butter for greasing baking sheet**
- **⅔ cup all-purpose unbleached flour (preferably organic) plus additional for dusting**
- **2 cups whole blanched almonds (10 oz), toasted (see Tips, page 184) and cooled**
- **4 large egg whites**
- **1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar**

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: **a handheld electric mixer**

▸Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 350°F. Butter and flour a large baking sheet.
▸Coarsely chop almonds with a heavy knife.
▸Beat whites in a large metal bowl with mixer at medium speed until they just hold soft peaks. Add sugar a little at a time, beating until combined. Set bowl over a saucepan of simmering water and beat mixture at high speed until whites hold stiff glossy peaks and mixture starts to stick to bottom of bowl, about 5 minutes. Reduce speed to medium and beat in flour (⅔ cup) until just combined. Remove bowl from heat and fold in chopped almonds.
▸Spoon rounded tablespoons of meringue about 1 inch apart onto baking sheet. Bake until pale golden, about 30 minutes. Transfer immediately to a rack and cool completely, about 20 minutes.

STRAWBERRIES IN RED WINE

Adapted from *The Splendid Table*
SERVES 6
ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 1¼ HR (INCLUDES MACERATING)

Sweet early strawberries in their prime and a good bottle of fruit-forward red wine—you just can't go wrong with the simple combination of these two stellar ingredients.

- **2 cups fruity red wine such as Santa Maddalena, Barbera, Valpolicella, Merlot, or Zinfandel**
- **1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice**
- **About ½ cup sugar**
- **1 lb strawberries (2 pt), trimmed, and halved if large**

▸Stir together wine, lemon juice, and sugar (to taste) in a bowl. Stir in strawberries and let macerate at room temperature 1 hour, then chill until cold, up to 1 hour but no longer. (Fruit will become too soft if it steeps for more than 2 hours.)
▸Serve berries in small bowls with some of their juices.

MOTHER'S BROTH

Adapted from *The Italian Country Table*
MAKES ABOUT 3½ QT
ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 12½ HR

Although this turkey (or chicken) broth is time-consuming to make, it really does benefit from simmering on the stove for hours. The whole heads of garlic mellow into deep sweetness, giving the broth an authentic Italian flavor.

- **5 lb turkey wings or 1 (5-lb) whole chicken (preferably hormone- and antibiotic-free)**
- **6 qt cold water**
- **2 large onions, left unpeeled and coarsely chopped**
- **2 carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped**
- **1 large celery rib with leaves, coarsely chopped**
- **3 or 4 whole heads garlic, left unpeeled and halved horizontally**
- **2 whole cloves**
- **1 Turkish bay leaf or ½ California, broken**
- **1 cup well-drained canned whole**