

Cooking on a deadline:

# Chicken with spinach in creamy sauce

By Katie Workman

**A** while back, in honor of Julia's Child's birthday (she would have been 104 this year), I created a dish that embodies one of her many excellent sayings: "The only time to eat diet food is while you're waiting for the steak to cook."

You can fuss all you want with fancier dishes, exotic ingredients and new techniques, but isn't it true that when you make something super-homey, super-comforting, that's when everyone asks for seconds? When in doubt, choose comfort food. Here, thinly sliced chicken breasts are enveloped in a creamy, cheesy sauce peppered with wilted spinach and sundried tomatoes.

Sundried tomatoes were all the rage years ago, and then they faded out of fashion, but it seems a shame to turn your back on a great ingredient just because it was a little overexposed for a while. If you can find real sundried

tomatoes - which won't be hard little dried-up disks but rather pliant, brick-red, chewy bites - then that will make all the difference. Look for them in a store that sells good Italian ingredients. Oil-packed sundried tomatoes can also be used, but use paper towels to blot excess oil before chopping them.

You can buy thin-sliced chicken cutlets at the market or butcher, or use a steady hand and a large sharp knife to cut regular chicken breasts horizontally into thinner slices. Depending on how thick your chicken breasts are, you will get two or three slices per breast, about 1/2-inch thick apiece. And if you don't have fresh herbs, dried are perfectly acceptable here. This makes a nice amount of sauce, which is a good thing, because when you serve up this chicken over a plate of steaming pasta or rice you'll want to have lots of starchiness alongside the chicken, and you can ladle the luscious sauce over it.



## Ingredients

Start to finish: 25 minutes  
Serves 4 to 6

2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 1/2 pounds thin-sliced boneless, skinless chicken cutlets  
2 large shallots, chopped  
3/4 cup chicken broth  
1 cup heavy cream  
1 teaspoon minced fresh oregano  
1/2 teaspoon minced fresh thyme  
1/2 cup grated Fontina cheese  
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese  
2 cups roughly chopped spinach  
1/2 cup roughly chopped sundried tomatoes  
Hot cooked rice or pasta to serve

## Preparation

In a very large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium high heat. Sear the chicken for about 3 minutes on each side, or until browned and just barely pink in the center. Do this in batches if needed, and remove the chicken to a plate and set aside. Return the skillet to medium heat, add the shallots, and saute for 2 minutes until they start to become tender. Add the chicken broth and bring to a simmer, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom. Stir in the heavy cream, oregano and thyme, and heat until the edges of the sauce start to bubble. Sprinkle in the Fontina and Parmesan cheeses and stir until they are melted. Stir in the spinach and sundried tomatoes, and keep at a very low simmer until the spinach is wilted, about 2 minutes. Return the chicken to the pan and allow it to heat through, about 2 minutes. Serve the chicken with the sauce over hot rice or pasta. — AP