

Pan-Seared Chicken with Two-Olive Tapenade and Sundried Tomato Cream

Recipe 101 of 365

There's more than enough of the rich, chunky tapenade for this recipe, so separate what you'll need (4 heaping tablespoons) from the rest of the batch so that you don't cross-contaminate the rest of the tapenade with chicken gook. Use it on sandwiches or in pasta, or smeared on a thick piece of good bread.

This chicken is delicious with our without the cream sauce.

TIME: 30 minutes

MAKES: 4 servings

For the tapenade:

1 cup pitted Kalamata olives
1 cup Manzanilla olives
2 tablespoons capers
1 large garlic clove, chopped
1 packed tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the chicken:

4 chicken breasts, trimmed
Salt and freshly ground pepper
4 ounces goat cheese
1 tablespoon olive oil

For the sauce:

1/4 cup finely chopped sundried tomatoes
1/2 cup heavy cream
Salt and freshly ground pepper

First, make the tapenade: add all the tapenade ingredients except the oil to the work bowl of a food processor, and pulse about 15 times. Add the oil, and pulse another few times, until the oil is incorporated but the mixture is still a little chunky. Set aside.

Then assemble the chicken: use a small, sharp knife to cut the chicken breasts almost all the way through horizontally, so that they open like books, with one long side of the chicken breast as the book's spine. Season both sides (inside and out) of each chicken breast with salt and pepper. Place all four breasts on the cutting board, open, and spread a heaping tablespoon of the tapenade onto one inside half of each of the chicken breasts. Crumble and divide goat cheese on top of the tapenade, and close the empty side of the chicken breasts over the cheese and tapenade, pressing gently to adhere and rearranging the meat where necessary to conceal the goat cheese.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the oil, then the stuffed chicken breasts, prettiest side down first. Cook for 7 to 8 minutes per side (undisturbed), reducing heat to medium after the first minute or two, or until the chicken is golden brown and cooked through and the goat cheese is beginning to melt. (Hint: you might find the chicken easier to flip over using two soft spatulas or two pairs of tongs.) Transfer the chicken to a serving plate.

Add the sundried tomatoes and the cream to the pan, and season with salt and pepper. Increase heat to high and simmer the sauce until thick, about one minute. Scoop the sauce over the chicken, and serve immediately.