**Extraordinary Enchilada Casserole**

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| **Ingredients for Stew:**  2 boneless chicken breasts (or 1 lb. cubed veal stew meat, or 1lb. pork loin, cubed) 1 medium red potato (other types of potatoes are fine; the red skin just adds a bit of color) 1 medium onion 1 stalk celery 4 garlic cloves 1 Tbsp capers, drained  (The Lady in Red LOVES capers, so feel free to ad more!  She added a 1/2 a jar!) 6 cups chicken stock (vegetable stock may be substituted for a vegetarian version) 1 lemon (optional:  a second lemon used for garnish) 1/2 cup milk  (WARNING:  do NOT use soy milk!  It will ruin the broth!) 1/4 cup flour (The Lady in Red recommends Wondra.  She learned a little trick from [Chef Nicholas Hararay](http://www.theladyinredblog.com/1/post/2012/05/restaurant-nicholas-a-lot-more-than-fine-dining.html), who runs the #1 Zagat & Gayot restaurant in NJ:  Wondra incorporates into sauces without lumps a lot easier than flour.) 1 stick butter 2 Tbsp. olive oil 1/4 cup dry white wine (optional, but recommended) 2 Tbsp. soy sauce 1/4 tsp. dried thyme 1/2 tsp. paprika 1/4 tsp. salt 1/4 tsp. ground pepper | **Ingredients for Quick Spaetzle:** (optional)  1 cup Wondra (or flour) <-- again, The Lady in Red Recommends Wondra for its easy ability to be dissolved without lumps 1 tsp. salt 1/4 tsp. pepper 2 large eggs 1/4 cup milk 2 Tbsp. butter  **WARNING**:  DO NOT ADD NUTMEG TO THIS SPAETZLE! (Most spaetzle recipes call for nutmeg.  Trust us; you don't want nutmeg in your piccata!  It spoils the flavor profile.)  **Instructions for Quick Spaetzle:**  1.  Mix all of the ingredients together.  You want the consistency of pancake batter.  2.  If the batter is too thick, add a little more milk 1 Tbsp. at a time.  3.  Using 2 spoons, fill a spoon with batter and use the 2nd spoon to push off 1/2" dumplings into the stew, which should be bubbling hot.  The spaetzle should float to the top of the stew when it's done cooking. |

**Instructions for Stew:**  
  
1.  Cut each chicken breast in half the long way if you are using thick filets.  This will make 2 thin filets from each chicken breast.  (If your chicken breasts are already thin, skip this step.)  Then, cut the filets into 1/2" strips, then into 1/2" pieces.  (If using cubed veal, cut each cube into 1/2" chunks.  If using pork loin, cut that into 1/2" chunks.)You can definitely freeze leftovers!  Don't freeze it with the garnishes, though.  Just make sure you freeze extra enchilada sauce separately on the side, so you can rehydrate the dish when serving.

2.  Place the meat in a bowl and add the soy sauce.  Mix well, cover, and put it aside - a little marinating magic.

3.  Melt 4 Tbsp. of the butter and add the 2 Tbsp. of olive oil to the stock pot.  
  
4.  Chop the onion, carrot, potato, and celery into 1/2" pieces.  (You don't have to peel the potato.)  Mince the garlic.

5.  Sauté the vegetables with a little salt and pepper in the stock pot for about 5 minutes, until the carrots start to caramelize.  Add the thyme and paprika.  Then add the garlic, and sauté for another 2 minutes, stirring constantly.

6.  Turn up the heat to high and add the white wine.  Use a wine that you like to drink. The flavors of the wine will enhance the flavors of the food.  I recommend a dry or mostly dry chardonnay that you really like.  The best wine pairing with this meal will be the one you cook with.  If you aren't using wine, go on to the next step.

7.  Scrape the bits from the bottom of the pot, as the wine deglazes it.  Bring the wine to a simmer.  If you aren't adding wine, then do the scraping as you now add 4 cups of the chicken (or vegetable) stock to the pot.

8.  Add the capers.  (Chef Jeff says to rinse the capers prior to adding them to the stew.  The Lady in Red likes the salty, briny taste, so she doesn't rinse them. The choice is yours.)

9. Squeeze the juice of 1 lemon into the pot.  Add the rest of the butter.

10.  Meanwhile, on the side, in a separate bowl, mix 1/4 cup of flour (or Wondra) into 2 cups of room temperature chicken (or vegetable) stock.   Whisk until the flour is incorporated and there are no lumps.  If you are using Wondra for this step, you will have no lumps.  If you are using flour - well - you probably will have lumps.  Chef Jeff recommends pouring the gravy through a strainer as you pour it into the pot to eliminate lumps.  The addition of this flour-infused stock will thicken the sauce.  
  
11.  Add the milk to the pot.  Stir.  
  
12.  Add the chicken/veal/pork with any leftover soy sauce drippings to the pot.  Stir.  The meat will poach in the sauce while the vegetables continue to soften for about 10 minutes more.  You can let it simmer for longer if you want to, while you prepare the (optional) spaetzle.

**Special Instructions:**  
  
1.  Try adding 1" pieces of cut fresh asparagus to the vegetable medley.  The lemon overtones complement asparagus nicely and add more color to the dish.  
  
2.  If you prefer rice instead of spaetzle, that works!  Just prepare some rice on the side and serve the stew over it.  
  
3.  If you want a purely vegetarian version, omit the meat and use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock.  Just be sure to add some spaetzle to give the stew substance.  
  
4.  Garnish each bowl with a lemon slice for presentation.  (optional)  
  
5.  Leftovers refrigerate or freeze well for future meals.  
  
Serves 4 - 6 people, depending on portion size.