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Passover Thoughts

There is nothing I love more than Passover seder with my family. Our favorite things to make are roast whole fish, brisket, and chicken things that take a while to cook and make the whole house smell delicious and feel warm and inviting. A lot of work goes into our Passover meals. Most dishes like gefilte fish and matzoh ball soup are rather labor intensive, but we never complain. Every bit of work and time is spent together, which doesn't happen too often throughout the year; we make the most of it and relish in its delicious rewards.

Passover Menu

Gefilte Florida wreckfish, horseradish confit, roast beets, lemon zest
Light as a feather matzo ball soup (Mamma Bernstein's recipe), pulled chicken, lots of dill
Brisket roasted over celery root, parsnips, turnips and carrots; caramelized onions, mustard and Worcestershire
Strawberry macaroon napoleons

Recipe

Moroccan Spiced Cornish Hens over roast vegetables

2 turnips, peeled and diced into ½ inch pieces
1 fennel bulb, diced into ½ inch pieces
3 carrots, peeled and sliced into ½ inch pieces
3 parsnips, peeled and sliced into ½ inch pieces
1 large beet, peeled and diced into ½ inch pieces
1 red onion, peeled and sliced into ¼ inch strips
6 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon rosemary, chopped
Salt and freshly pepper to taste
4 garlic cloves, minced
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest
1 tablespoon paprika
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 tablespoon Hungarian sweet paprika
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon cayenne
4 whole medium Cornish hens
1/4 cup chopped mint

1. Scatter the fennel, turnips, carrots parsnips, beet and onion in a bowl and sprinkle on 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, rosemary and salt and pepper to taste.

2. In another small bowl put 1 ½ tablespoons salt, the garlic, honey, lemon juice, lemon zest, the remaining olive oil, paprika, ginger, sweet paprika, cinnamon, and cayenne. Whisk to combine.
3. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees and put the vegetables on the bottom of a roasting pan. Put the Cornish hens breast side up on top of the vegetables. Pour half of the spice/oil mixture over the hens, season the hens with salt and pepper and cover pan tightly with foil. Roast in the middle of the oven for about 45 minutes. Shake the pan every once in a while to make sure the vegetables don't stick. Uncover, and pour the rest of the mixture over the hens and roast until hens are browned, 20 to 30 minutes more or until just cooked through. Sprinkle the fresh mint on top and serve half a Cornish hen per person with some of the vegetables over them.

Yield: 8 servings