



Fig & Syrah Glazed Chicken Thighs with Porcini, Oven Dried Tomatoes, Kalamata Olives and Polenta

Nickel & Nickel Darien Vineyard Syrah, Russian River Valley

by Executive Chef Trevor Eliason

Ingredients

- 8 dried figs
- 1 cup water
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup Syrah
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 3-inch lemon zest strips
- 8 chicken thighs, skin on
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ pound fresh porcini mushrooms, washed, wiped dry and sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Kalamata olives, halved
- 1 cup polenta
- 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water (for a richer polenta, substitute with 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk and 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups chicken stock)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup parmesan
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 4 oven-fried tomatoes, halved*

**Note: store-bought versions should be jarred and covered in olive oil. To make oven-fried tomatoes at home: Pre-heat oven to 200 degrees and turn on convection setting. Halve four Roma tomatoes and dry on a rack for two hours.*

METHOD

Poached Figs

Place figs in a small sauce pot with the Syrah, water, teaspoon of sugar, and lemon zest. Bring to a simmer on medium heat and poach for 30 minutes. Adjust the heat as needed to keep the liquid at a steady simmer. Remove zest and figs from liquid. Dispose the zest, slice the figs in half and set the liquid aside.

Glazed Chicken Thighs

Preheat oven to 375 degrees, and season chicken with olive oil, kosher salt, and fresh ground pepper. Gently place the chicken in a roasting pan, with the skin side up. Cook for 30 minutes, and then finish by turning on the broiler for one to two minutes. This caramelizes the tops of the chicken, and it happens quickly! We love to stand right by the oven and watch the fragrant brown crust develop. Remove chicken and set aside. Pour off the fat and discard. To create the glaze, add the Syrah-fig liquid to the chicken roasting pan; continue to scrape and stir the pan on medium heat, reducing the liquid to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Season with salt, place the chicken and the figs back in the pan and spoon the glaze over the chicken.

Creamy Polenta and Porcinis

Bring your water or milk/stock substitution to a boil, whisk in the polenta, and cook, covered, for 45 minutes on low. Add the parmesan, butter, and salt. Set aside.

Heat two tablespoons olive oil on high heat and add the sliced porcinis. Continue to cook on high heat for four minutes or until edges turn golden. If the edges begin to crisp, you may need to adjust your setting and cook at a lower heat. Season with kosher salt & fresh ground pepper. Remove porcinis from heat and add the oven-dried tomatoes and Kalamata olives to the porcinis. Gently stir together.

Presentation

Divide the polenta generously among four plates. Nestle the porcini ragout beside the polenta, then gently top with two pieces of chicken. Garnish with figs and any remaining Syrah sauce, open a bottle of Nickel & Nickel Darien Vineyard Syrah and enjoy!

Serves 4