

Food and Wine: Sauvignon blanc prepares palate for Asian-inspired chicken dish

by Ron James

THE CHEF

Let's face it. No one who works can cook gourmet meals every night. In today's fast-paced, multitasking environment, it's tempting to get takeout or just plunk something in the microwave. If you're in that kind of a rut, Food Network's Robin Miller is here to help make your culinary life a bit easier and healthier.

"We all lead frantic lives," she writes in her new cookbook, "Quick Fix Meals" (Taunton Press and the Food Network, \$18.95). "But, none of us wants to forgo healthy, home-cooked meals. I'm no magician. My trick for getting weeknight meals on the table in a flash is my strategically stocked pantry, refrigerator and freezer."

ROBIN MILLER - Robin Miller is a cookbook author, nutritionist and host of Food Networks' 'Quick Fix Meals with Robin Miller.' CNS Photo.

CASHEW-LIME CHICKEN WITH RICE - Robin Miller's Cashew-Lime Chicken with Rice takes less than a half-hour to prepare. You can add some red chiles or Chinese hot sauce to the chicken stock to spice it up, she adds. CNS Photo.

Miller suggests that with a little planning, weekday-cooking tasks are fast and minimal. "Here's the deal," she says. "Spend an hour on the weekend (or less in some cases), and you can enjoy scrumptious weeknight meals in a fraction of the time it would take to start from scratch. Some recipes take under 20 minutes, thanks to a little advance planning."

Miller's career as a food writer, nutritionist and television personality spans a dozen years. She is a contributing editor at Health and Cooking Light magazines and has regular features in many others. She has written six cookbooks and stars on the Food Network in "Quick Fix Meals with Robin Miller."

THE DISH

Cashew-Lime Chicken With Rice is a flavorful and healthy dish that takes less than a half-hour to prepare.

"My son Kyle calls cashews 'moon nuts,'" Miller writes in her cooking notes. "Because their little curve reminds him of a crescent moon. Shape aside, their salty, slightly sweet crunchy flavor is the perfect partner for otherwise bland chicken in this Asian-inspired winner.

"I like to serve this dish with a fresh salad of baby spinach leaves and mandarin oranges tossed with a light (store-bought!) vinaigrette," Miller said. "It's a salad that comes together while the dish reheats."

Miller suggests saving time and money by buying cashew pieces instead of whole cashews.

If you want to spice up this dish, add some red chiles or Chinese hot sauce to the chicken stock. And sprinkle the finished dish with some chopped sprigs of cilantro.

THE WINE

A crisp white wine with delicate and exotic flavors will be a great match for this quick gourmet meal. Try one with tropical flavors to match, like Sauvignon Republic Cellars 2005 Russian River Valley Sauvignon Blanc (\$18). This Sonoma Valley wine has crisp acidity and flavors of passion fruit and pineapple with hints of lemon grass and herbs.

Sauvignon Republic Cellars is a bold venture formed by four partners, winemaker John Buechsenstein, fourth-generation winemaker, Paul Dolan, restaurateur Tom Meyer and star chef John Ash. They search the world for the best sauvignon grapes and have produced some amazing, award-winning wines. To date, they

have produce sauvignon blancs from Australia, South Africa and the Russian River.

CASHEW-LIME CHICKEN WITH RICE

1 cup basmati or jasmine rice

2 teaspoons peanut oil

1 tablespoon peeled and minced fresh ginger

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 1/4 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into 1-inch pieces

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 1/2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth, divided

1/4 cup hoisin sauce

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

1 teaspoon finely grated lime zest

1 cup salted dry-roasted cashews

Yields 4 servings

Cook rice according to package directions. Let cool to room temperature, then transfer to large zip-top plastic bag and seal.

Meanwhile, heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add ginger and garlic and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add chicken and cook, stirring, until browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper and stir to coat. Add broth, hoisin, lime juice and zest, and bring to a simmer. Partially cover pan and simmer until chicken is cooked through and sauce thickens, 8 to 10 minutes.

If you are stopping here: Let cool to room temperature, then transfer mixture to plastic bag or plastic container and refrigerate along with rice for up to 3 days.

When ready to eat: Reheat rice in microwave. Reheat chicken mixture in microwave or large saucepan over medium heat, simmering for 5 minutes to heat through. Meanwhile, chop cashews. Serve chicken mixture over rice and top with cashews.

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