

Haddock Marsala



When reducing starchy carbs from your diet, it becomes necessary to rebalance your nutrition sources. My personal approach has been to severely restrict high glycemic load carbs – mostly in the form of the so-called starchy carbs and increasing the amount of fruit and vegetables in my diet while also increasing protein.

I try to keep the protein I consume on the lean side in the way of poultry and fish. Unfortunately, I've never been much of a seafood lover and have stayed completely away from anything that tasted even remotely "fishy". That pretty much eliminated everything except shrimp, canned tuna (Albacore only), and the occasional crab cake (I'm from Maryland after all). I'd pretty much head in the other direction from any kind of white fish as that would be crossing my "fishy" threshold.

I've since reversed my hardline stance against fish and have begun introducing it gradually into my low carb eating plan. Though I still have a long way to go before becoming a complete convert, the dish below has made a big difference towards getting me headed in that direction. It's a variation on one of my favorite chicken dishes: *Chicken Marsala* and it goes great with [Broccoli Parmesan Bake](#) on the side to soak up the excess Marsala sauce (the lead photo may look familiar).

Before you scream at me in outrage about the flour coating defeating the low carb nature of the dish, please keep in mind that the coating is very minimal and is just enough to give the fish a nice brown outer coating while keeping the fish tender inside and providing a surface for the Marsala sauce to adhere to. This is a very low glycemic load ingredient that more than makes for up things by adding a heightened taste

component to the dish.

Tip: I always thought that it was an old wives' tale about soaking fish in milk for a few minutes before cooking in order to reduce the fishy taste. It might actually be, but I think it does work and it also helps the flour mixture adhere better to the fish. Just be sure not to leave the fish in the milk too long or else it will become too mushy when you cook it.



Ingredients:

- 1 medium sized haddock filet – best if skin is removed from both sides. Frozen filets are great for this.
- 1/4 c milk – whole or skim, doesn't matter
- 1/2 c white flour
- 1/4 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp garlic salt or powder
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 thick lemon slices with seeds removed + 1 tsp of extra lemon juice from an end piece
- 1/4 c Marsala wine

Directions:

1. Soak filet in milk bath for 10 minutes – flip a few times during soaking.
2. On a large plate add flour, garlic salt, black pepper, and paprika. Sift together with a fork.
3. Remove fish from milk bath and gently squeeze out excess

milk being careful not to break the flesh

4. Coat both sides of the fish with the flour mixture. Use a large metal soup spoon to help distribute the flour mixture to the fish.
5. Heat butter and olive oil in a medium sized stainless steel saute pan.
6. Once butter and oil are sizzling, carefully place filet in the saute pan.
7. Cook approximately 6 minutes per side or until the coating is well-browned.
8. Carefully remove the filet using a spatula and place on a plate.
9. Reduce heat on the pan and pour in Marsala. De-glaze the pan with a wooden spoon.
10. Add lemon slices and juice to the pan and let simmer until the sauce begins to thicken.
11. Carefully add back the filet to the pan and let simmer for about 2 minutes. Spoon the wine over top the fish to create a glaze.
12. Place the fish on a plate and top with the lemon slices.

Servings: 1

Broccoli Parmesan Bake



Unlike a certain former American president, I happen to enjoy broccoli. In fact, I LOVE broccoli! I don't recall being as enthusiastic about broccoli when I was kid however. Perhaps it's more of an acquired taste.

The health benefits of broccoli are constantly being trumpeted and in fact, it's been dubbed "The Miracle Food" and deservedly so. Broccoli contains vitamin C, vitamin A, folic acid, and calcium. For vegetarian eaters or folks who don't consume dairy products, broccoli is a good place to start when looking for alternative sources of calcium. And as you can probably tell, the fibrous stalks of the broccoli plant are a good source of fiber, which becomes even more important when eating low carb.

The other great thing about broccoli is that there are so many different ways to prepare it.

Probably the most common encounter that most people have with broccoli is at the bottom of a Chinese food carryout carton, but there are an almost unlimited number of ways to prepare broccoli, both as a side dish as well as part of a main course. One of my key strategies when meal planning, is to find appetizing substitutes for traditional starchy side dishes. I used to go straight for the sides that I loved so much such as all kinds of potatoes, pasta, and rice. Unfortunately, these kinds of carbs didn't love me back in terms of what they did to my waistline and digestive health.

Nowadays, I look to substitute the starchy side dishes of old with tasty vegetable dishes. In prior times, I would typically have both a starchy and veggie side dish, but now I only have a larger portion of the vegetable side dish.

The broccoli side dish below is an old family favorite with an Italian accent and is extremely quick and easy to prepare. Unlike some broccoli preparations that produce an undercooked vegetable, this one is very tender without being turned to mush. It can be served with just about any main course and is right at home soaking up most any kind of sauce such as the Marsala sauce in the lead photo above. On a side note, you can substitute cauliflower just as easily for the broccoli using the same directions below (I used to hate cauliflower until I

started preparing it this way).

Ingredients:

- 4 long stalks of broccoli with leaves and bottoms peeled off
- 1/4 c grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Directions:

1. Bring a sauce pan 1/3 of the way filled with water to a boil
2. First dip the heads of the broccoli into the boiling water to quickly blanch. Rotate to get the entire head dark green and then place into the water.
3. Let simmer for 5 minutes, then drain into a colander. Make sure to drain well.
4. Preheat oven to 375F
5. Add 1 tbsp of evoo to a 9×9 glass baking dish. Add broccoli and toss to evenly coat the stalks with oil.



6. Use a metal soup spoon to evenly coat each stalk with Parmesan cheese. Add more if needed making sure that heads are fully coated.
7. Bake for 10-15 minutes until cheese has browned as shown in the photos.



Servings: 2 (Tip: be sure to scrape up all the browned

Parmesan crumbs from the baking dish – yum!)

Low Carb Chef Salad



My very first job where I actually punched a time clock, worked my butt off, and collected a real paycheck every two weeks was working as a dishwasher in the kitchen of a country club. I started there in the summer after my 14th birthday (minimum age to get a work permit).

It was bad enough that it was in the middle of summer in the Washington, DC area where the summer months are legendary not only for the heat, but the life-sapping humidity. Probably only Viet Nam can beat out DC for heat and humidity. Add a sweltering hot kitchen with hot grills, large pots of steaming liquids, and being stationed right next to an industrial sized automatic dishwasher and you have a facsimile of Hell itself. It truly was “Hell’s Kitchen” and in more ways than just the unbearable heat!

The only relief to be found for a teenage dishwasher like myself was to be sent down a flight of metal stairs to the stock room to fetch provisions for the various cooks and the head chef. The head chef was a particularly disagreeable chap whose bad side you didn’t want to get on. Fortunately, he seemed to like me or at least not detest like he did a lot of my younger co-workers.

Directly across from the dishwashing station was the salad and

sandwich station, which was commanded by the "salad lady" whom we all referred to as "Miss May". May was a large, matronly woman with a very heavy North Carolina accent. I often struggled to decipher what exactly she was saying, but just about everything she said to me began with "Honey, run down stairs and fetch me..."

She would have me up and down those metal stairs many times during the course of my shift fetching her the various ingredients that she would require for the sandwiches, salads, and even the desserts she made. Like the head chef, May didn't care for most of the boys who worked in the kitchen, but for some reason, she cut me some slack and would even sometimes offer me a large bowl of vanilla ice cream. I'm not exactly sure why, perhaps because most of my coworkers took every opportunity to slack off and though I wasn't terribly competent at most things in the kitchen, I did try really hard at it.

One of the specialty dishes the country club was known for was their Chef Salad.

Until coming to work in the country club kitchen I was not familiar with Chef Salads. It's a simple dish that is essentially a lettuce salad with chunks of ham and cheese sprinkled on top and served with the dressing of your choice. It was an early version of today's "Big Salad" and was enough to be a meal on its own. For this reason, it was quite popular with the ladies who dropped by the "Mixed Grill" at lunch time.

One day while I was sweating away at the dishwasher, I heard Miss May call me over. She said "Honey, run down stairs and fetch me a big jar of oleeves!" I had no clue what "oleeves" were, but I was sure that the stockroom manager would know. I ran down to the stockroom and told the manager that Miss May required a large jar of "oleeves". He looked at me like I was crazy and said to run back upstairs and find out what she

really wanted. I would do this two more times and each time Miss May would get more and more exasperated with me. "I said bring me a large jar of OLEEVEES!"

On the final trip back down to the stockroom, the manager and I had the same revelation at exactly the same time. "Oh! She wants a large jar of olives!"

And that's my background story about the Chef Salad – thanks for hanging around to the end. I never ate a Chef Salad until very recently when looking around for low carb lunch ideas. I consume a lot of salads, but they can get a bit boring after a while. That's when I decided to start adding meat and cheese to my salads and recalled my days back at the country club kitchen. It just goes to show that you never know when a particular experience or bit of acquired knowledge may come in handy someday way in the future!

Ingredients:

- Several romaine leaves with ribs cut out
- 2 large slices of vidallia onion
- 1/2 c chopped tomato
- 6-8 small Spanish oleevees (olives)
- 1 thick slice of boneless ham
- 2 slices provolone cheese or other white cheese
- 2 tbsp low carb salad dressing of your choice such as Ken's Lite Caesar

Directions:

1. In a large salad or soup bowl prepare a green salad of romaine, tomatoes, and onions
2. Slice ham into thick 1/4" strips and then slice into thirds
3. Slice cheese the same way as the ham
4. Layer ham and cheese on top of salad
5. Add Spanish olives to top of salad

6. Add dressing and toss

Cucumber Salad



In late spring every year, my wife and I plant a vegetable garden. It's really two small plots in our tiny backyard. We start out in March planting leaf lettuce, carrots, and green beans then followed by tomatoes and cucumbers around the beginning of May (in recent years the growing season has been starting earlier and earlier). Without fail, cucumbers provide the biggest yield of all our crops, save for perhaps the carrots.

We typically have so many cucumbers that we have to give many away as there is only so many cucumbers that you can eat – gas producing side effects notwithstanding! As luck would have it, our favorite use for cucumbers, besides sliced on top of salads, is as a marinated salad all on their own. For about two months in mid-summer, we have an unending supply of cucumber salad.

This recipe is one handed down from my Mom and it always brings back fond memories of summers past that never seemed to end. It's extremely easy to make and is also easy on the blood glucose and insulin levels. The secret to the salad is the combining of both bitter and sweet ingredients, but not to worry, the sweetening can be accomplished in one of two ways that are both natural and both low on the glycemic index.

The base for the marinade is a mixture of distilled white vinegar, water, and a sprinkle of sugar. The sugar is truly

needed to take some of the bite off the white vinegar and this is what my Mom used. I've since adapted the recipe to use just a few drops of liquid stevia in order to provide the necessary sweetness, however, you could just as easily use half a teaspoon of table sugar and not have any worries about playing havoc with your glucose levels.

The real secret to properly preparing this salad is to let the it thoroughly chill in the refrigerator. This will get the salad refreshingly cold as well as allow the marinade to thoroughly infuse the cucumber and onions. Letting things sit in the fridge over night is even better!

Ingredients:

- 1 cucumber (smaller varieties with smaller seeds work best)
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 vidallia onion coarsely chopped
- 1/4 distilled white vinegar
- 2 tbsp water
- 1/2 tsp sugar or 3-4 drops liquid stevia

Directions:

1. Slice cucumber into paper thin slices (we prefer to peel the cucumber, but you can leave the skin on if you prefer)
2. Place slices into a medium sized glass or ceramic bowl
3. Sprinkle salt over slices and toss
4. Add vinegar and water to the bowl
5. Add chopped onion
6. Sprinkle dried oregano over the mixture and toss
7. Cover the bowl with a pan lid or small plate and place into refrigerator
8. Let sit in the fridge for at least 4 hours until well-chilled and marinated

9. Spoon in small salad bowls and serve as a refreshing starter to a summer meal!