

FOOD & WINE

NOVEMBER 2007

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**Healthy
oven fries
with garlic.**

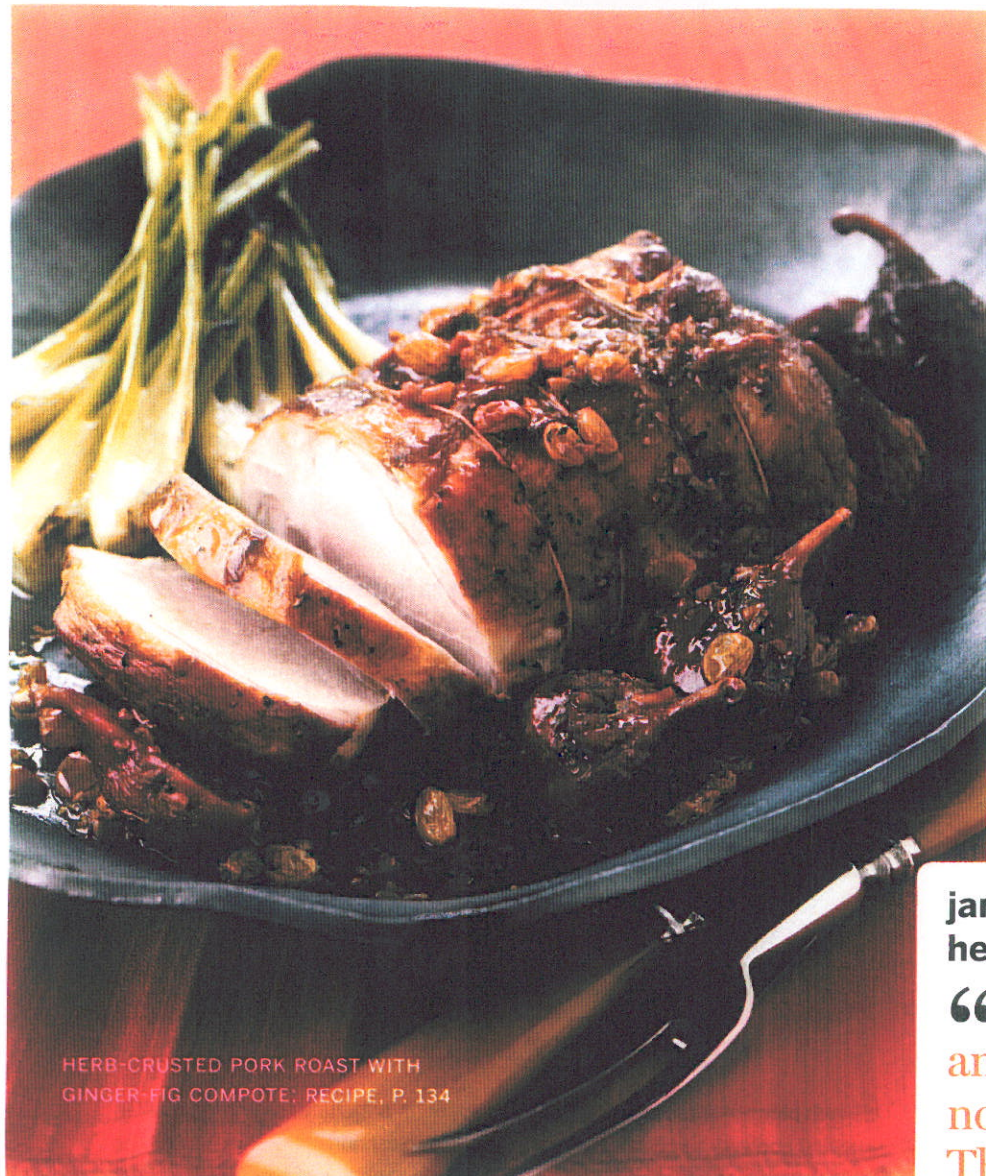


NOVEMBER 2007

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133 Well-Being How a Slimmed-Down Chef Stays Thin

By Nick Fauchald Recipes by Jan Birnbaum



HERB-CRUSTED PORK ROAST WITH GINGER-FIG COMPOTE: RECIPE, P. 134



jan birnbaum on healthy living

“I will skip almost anything, but I will not miss my workout. That’s my priority.”

How a Slimmed-Down Chef Stays Thin

After losing weight, chef Jan Birnbaum stays healthy with daily workouts and delicious, oven-roasted dishes like the ones at his new restaurant.

by *nick fauchald* food photographs by *lucy schaeffer*

A FEW YEARS AGO, CHEF JAN BIRNBAUM decided to commit himself to a healthier life, shedding almost half of his body weight and reconstructing his day-to-day routine to include exercise and frequent nutritious snacks. “I can’t believe I could even walk across the room before,” he says. “It was like watching a guy carry a 50-pound sack of potatoes—but I was carrying four of those.” In addition to gaining stamina and energy, Birnbaum’s favorite thing about his new body is the anonymity it provides. “I enjoy not standing out in a crowd,” he says. “I

can be everybody, anybody and nobody at any given time.” Now, he’s giving the steak-house concept a healthy makeover with Epic Roasthouse in San Francisco, a project he created with restaurateur Pat Kuleto. “There was a time when you went to a steak house and put your diet aside,” Birnbaum says. “Epic is different; it’s about giving people healthy options.” To his menu he adds a tangy chicory salad, an herb-crusted pork loin and oven-roasted fries. Indeed, Birnbaum prefers a hot oven to a fryer: “Roasting is one of the most healthful ways to cook,” he says. “You don’t need to drop something in trans fats to make it crispy.”

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HUNDLEY (BIRNBAUM); FOOD STYLIST: ANNE DISRUDEI; PROP STYLIST: ANNA LAST

WELL-BEING roasting



HERB-CRUSTED PORK ROAST WITH SPICED PISTACHIOS, RECIPE, P. 136
Bowl from Oehre

jan birnbaum's healthy habits

on planning “In the morning, the first thing I do in the kitchen is set out a tray of vegetables and fruit. That way I have healthy things to eat in front of me all day long.”

on staff meals “We serve several small staff meals every day. We don’t serve leftovers, either; we plan the meals out on a calendar. I’m trying to create a healthy lifestyle for my cooks.”

on workouts “I will skip almost anything, but I will not miss my workout—that’s my first priority, even in the throes of opening a restaurant. I have to walk by my gym three or four times a day, which makes it easy to stop in.”

Herb-Crusted Pork Roast with Ginger-Fig Compote

ACTIVE: 45 MIN; TOTAL: 1 HR 35 MIN

PLUS 6 HR MARINATING

6 SERVINGS

THE GOOD NEWS Loin, one of the leanest cuts of pork, is also one of Jan Birnbaum’s favorite roasts. Here it’s flavored by a tangy sauce made with ginger and figs, which are high in fiber and antioxidants.

- 6 large garlic cloves, smashed and chopped
- 2 teaspoons chopped rosemary
- 2 teaspoons chopped thyme
- 2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

One 1½-pound boneless pork loin roast

- 1 cup water
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

One 1-inch piece of fresh ginger, peeled and very thinly sliced

- 6 allspice berries, cracked
- 6 black peppercorns, cracked
- 8 dried figs, left whole

Salt and freshly ground pepper

- ¼ cup raisins
- ½ cup dry red wine
- ¾ cup low-sodium chicken broth

1. In a bowl, combine the garlic, rosemary, thyme, mustard, lavender and ¼ cup of the olive oil. Add the pork and coat with the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight. Bring the pork to room temperature before roasting.

2. In a small saucepan, combine the water, honey, lemon juice, ginger, allspice and peppercorns and bring to a boil. Add the figs, cover and simmer over low heat until tender, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let steep for 10 minutes.

3. Preheat the oven to 400°. Scrape the garlic and herbs from the pork and set them aside. Season the pork with salt and

pepper. In a medium, ovenproof skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil. Add the pork and cook over moderately high heat until browned all over, about 4 minutes per side. Transfer the skillet to the oven and roast the pork for about 20 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the meat registers 145° for medium. Transfer the pork to a cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes.

4. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil in the skillet. Add the reserved garlic and herbs and cook over low heat until the garlic is golden brown, about 5 minutes. Add the raisins and wine and boil over moderately high heat until the wine is reduced by half, about 3 minutes. Add the chicken broth and boil for 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the figs to the skillet. Simmer over moderate heat until the liquid has reduced to about ½ cup, about 4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Carve the pork into ½-inch slices and serve with the fig compote.

WELL-BEING ROASTING



OVEN FRIES WITH ROASTED GARLIC
*Baking sheet from Crate & Barrel;
 napkin from the Conran Shop*

MAKE AHEAD The figs can be refrigerated in their liquid for up to 5 days.

ONE SERVING 418 cal, 20 gm fat, 4.5 gm sat fat, 35 gm carb, 3.0 gm fiber.

Oven Fries with Roasted Garlic

ACTIVE: 20 MIN; TOTAL: 1 HR

6 SERVINGS

THE GOOD NEWS Skin-on potatoes, like the ones used for these crispy, low-fat fries, are high in vitamin C and potassium; they're also a good source of dietary fiber and vitamin B.

- 3 large Yukon Gold potatoes (1¾ pounds), halved lengthwise and cut into ½-inch-thick wedges
- 8 unpeeled garlic cloves
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons chopped thyme
- ¼ cup parsley leaves

Preheat the oven to 425°. On a large rimmed baking sheet, toss the potatoes and garlic cloves with the olive oil. Spread

the potatoes in an even layer, cut sides down. Season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the chopped thyme. Bake for about 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are browned on the bottom and very crisp. Peel the garlic cloves. Transfer the potatoes and garlic to a platter, sprinkle with the parsley leaves and serve.

ONE SERVING 172 cal, 7 gm fat, 1.0 gm sat fat, 25 gm carb, 3.1 gm fiber.

Chicory and Endive Salad with Spiced Pistachios

TOTAL: 35 MIN
 6 SERVINGS

THE GOOD NEWS Birnbaum makes this piquant salad with two kinds of Belgian endive and chicory, which is rich in potassium and magnesium, then adds crunch with spiced pistachios, a cholesterol-free source of monounsaturated fats. "This salad is a healthy alternative to the creamy Caesar salads people expect at a steak house," he says.

- 1 tablespoon hazelnut oil
- 2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- One 10-ounce head of radicchio, quartered
- ¼ cup shelled unsalted pistachios
- Salt
- Sugar
- Ground cumin
- Cayenne pepper
- Freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- One 6-ounce head of chicory, cut into bite-size pieces (6 cups)
- 1 red Belgian endive, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 yellow Belgian endive, thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 tablespoon chopped tarragon

1. Preheat the oven to 375°. In a shallow dish, mix the hazelnut oil with the sherry vinegar. Add the radicchio and let marinate for 10 minutes, turning often.

2. Scatter the pistachios on a rimmed baking sheet and sprinkle with a pinch each of salt, sugar, cumin and cayenne. Bake until toasted, about 5 minutes.

3. Light a grill. Season the radicchio with salt and pepper and grill over high heat until lightly charred on 2 sides, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a work surface and let cool slightly. Cut the radicchio into bite-size pieces.

4. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil. Add the shallot and cook over moderate heat until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the balsamic vinegar and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Add the chicory and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 5 minutes. Add the radicchio, red and yellow endives and chopped tarragon and toss well. Season with salt and pepper. Mound the salad on plates, garnish with the spiced pistachios and serve.

MAKE AHEAD The pistachios can be stored in an airtight container overnight.

ONE SERVING 167 cal, 14 gm fat, 1.8 gm sat fat, 8.7 gm carb, 3 gm fiber. ●