

with Barb Agee - July 2016

# Apricot Apropos

Fragrant, sweet golden-orange apricots are one of summer's treasures. These dense versatile low calorie fruit are packed with rich sources of dietary fiber, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals.



### **Spinach Apricot and Cheese Salad**

#### Salad

5 ounce clamshell baby spinach (about 4 cups)

2 carrots, shaved with a peeler

1 cup shaved sharp white cheddar

1/4 cup salted sunflower seeds

6 to 8 ripe apricots, seeded and cut into thin slices

#### **Dressing**

1 minced shallot

1 tablespoons lemon juice

1 tablespoon honey

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

½ teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

2 large very ripe apricots, seeded and quartered

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

Place all salad ingredients in a large bowl and gently toss.

Make Dressing: combine, shallot, lemon juice, honey, mustard, salt, pepper and apricots in a food processor. Pulse until smooth. Slowly add olive oil and pulse until well blended. Makes 1 cup.

Drizzle 6 tablespoons of dressing over salad and toss. Add more dressing if necessary to lightly coat the spinach. *Salad serves 8* 

# **Frothy Apricot Drink**

One 15¼ ounces can chilled apricot halves, undrained\* ½ cup whole milk

¼ cup orange juice frozen concentrate 1 pint lemon sherbet

In a blender, place apricot halves with juice, milk and orange juice concentrate. Cover and process until smooth. Add sherbet and process just until combined. Makes 4 servings.

<sup>\*</sup> Substitute 2 cups sliced fresh apricots, 1 tablespoon honey and increase milk to ¾ cup.

# **Apricot Turkey Stir-Fry**

1 tablespoon cornstarch 1 teaspoon canola oil

½ cup apricot nectar 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

2 tablespoons soy sauce ½ medium onion, cut in half and thinly sliced

2 tablespoons rice vinegar 1 medium sweet red pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces

1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, optional 21/2 cups fresh snow peas

1 cup apricots, seeded and thinly sliced 3 green onions, thinly sliced on the diagonal

1 pound turkey tenderloin, cut into thin slices Hot cooked rice or couscous

In a small bowl, combine cornstarch, apricot nectar, soy sauce, vinegar and red pepper flakes. Add apricots; set aside. In a large non-stick skillet, stir-fry turkey in the canola and sesame oils until no longer pink. Add the onion and sweet pepper. Stir-fry until tender crisp, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove turkey and vegetables from skillet with a slotted spoon. Keep warm.

Stir cornstarch apricot mixture into the pan. Bring to a boil; cook until thickens about 1 to 2 minutes. Return meat and vegetables to skillet; add snow peas. Heat through. Serve over couscous and sprinkle with sliced green onions. *Serves 4* 

# Sautéed Chicken with Fresh Apricots and Basil

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided 4 medium ripe apricots (about 12 ounces), pitted

¼ cup sweet onion, finely chopped and cut in to bite size pieces

1/4 cup brown sugar 4 small boneless chicken breasts (about 1/4 pounds)

1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

2 tablespoons white semi-dry wine ½ cup heavy whipping cream

1½ teaspoons coarse ground country Dijon mustard ½ cup fresh basil, finely slivered

½ teaspoon salt, divided

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil, swirl to coat. Add onions and cook 3 minutes or until onions have softened. Add brown sugar, vinegar, wine, mustard and ¼ teaspoon salt. Simmer for 3 minutes or until sauce has thickened slightly. Add apricots and continue to simmer until apricots have softened. Set aside.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Rub the chicken breasts with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil; sprinkle with remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper. Add chicken to the pan; cook 3 minutes on each side until lightly browned.

Remove skillet from the heat and spoon 2 tablespoons of the apricot mixture over the chicken breasts. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes until a thermometer inserted into the chicken registers 155°F.

Remove chicken from the oven and cover lightly with foil. Let set while finishing the sauce.

To the apricots, add the whipping cream. Bring sauce to a simmer; continue cooking until sauce is reduced by one-fourth about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the basil and serve immediately.

To serve: slice the chicken and place on individual plate. Top with apricot cream sauce. Chicken maybe served over fresh spinach or spinach lemon couscous.

