

Roasted Cauliflower



Girls Night Out has an annual holiday party at Judy's house. I'm not sure whether the highlight is the conversation, dinner or gift exchange. But, it's always wonderful to see my friends and catch up on the latest. Judy's husband, Carl, does the entree and we all pitch in the other dishes. This year I signed up for a vegetable thinking roasted broccoli would be wonderful. Then, a couple of days later, Renee wrote back and said she'd bring a broccoli salad. Well, I figured I had plenty of flexibility so would bring something else. Friday afternoon got here and I'd still not decided what I was going to take. Not only was I running out of time for the decision, but I was going to have maybe an hour to go to the grocery and prepare the dish. Our favorite carrots were an option. The recipe is from Melissa d'Arabian on Food Network. But, my tastebuds kept coming back to the roasted cauliflower we love.

How often have you had a dish and it's totally changed the way you think about an ingredient? I know, not very often. Every once in a while there's that break through that takes an ingredient from ok to OMG! This is one of those dishes. Best of all, it's easy. As in VERY EASY! And, stunning. Every time I serve it everyone ohh's and ahh's. Just what every hostess wants to hear!! My favorite way to cook cauliflower was in cauliflower cheese soup. But, I wasn't terribly fond of cooked cauliflower otherwise. It just didn't have enough oomph. This does. It's so packed with flavor that your tastebuds do a happy dance. I got the recipe several years ago from a wholesaler whose mother is a fantastic cook. So, thank you, Matt!!

The grocery had only really small cauliflowers so I picked up two, thinking that'd be plenty for 10 of us with a bit leftover for Connie and me. Um, that was my first mistake. This dish was inhaled! We got home and I turned the oven on, tossed my coat over a chair and started prepping. Ok, so the prepping is pretty darned easy. Got that finished and put the cauliflower in the oven and ran upstairs to clean up for the party. Took the cauliflower out of the oven, put the dressing on it, covered it with a couple of layers of foil and out the door we went. Connie was dropping me off on his way to play bridge and he'd pick me up afterwards.

Now, for the funniest part of the story... Judy and Carl live in a lovely duplex on what used to be Fort Benjamin Harrison. Theirs is one of oh, maybe twenty buildings - all of which are pretty identical. So, we turn onto their street and we kind of know which house it is but they do all look alike. Then, we see some of the other gals on a porch. Cool. We're there. I grab the cauliflower and Connie's got the wine and the gift for the exchange. Head to the porch. Pangga's knocking on the door and ringing the bell and nothing. The dogs are barking up a storm. I kept saying I wasn't sure this was Judy's house because I didn't remember wall paper in her front room. And, the decorations on the porch looked

different. But, everyone else kept insisting we were at the right house. I finally convinced Connie to go around back and check the back door. He came back around hooting and said he'd looked in and the dogs weren't Carl and Judy's and the kitchen didn't look the same. So, we went next door to Judy's :-) And, when the owners of the house next door got back home a few minutes later, they came over and joined us for a drink and a good laugh!

On to the recipe. Fortunately, we made this for ourselves a couple of weeks ago. I took a couple of photos then. It works equally well with half a head of cauliflower as you'll see in the photos. Or, if you're in a real rush you can break the cauliflower into florets and roast it that way. But, for the sheer magnificence of presentation, do yourself a favor and cook a whole head the first time. Toss the leftovers (if there are any) in a salad. Or, just eat them as is the next day for lunch like I do.

Roasted Cauliflower

Ingredients:

1 large head cauliflower
olive oil
lemon juice
olive oil
capers
parsley, finely chopped

Directions:

Preheat your oven to 450. Core the cauliflower making sure you don't cut too far in and cause the head to fall apart. Slather it with olive oil. Put the cauliflower in an ovenproof baking dish. Once the oven reaches 450, put the cauliflower in the oven.



Bake it for an hour. It'll get wonderfully mahogany brown. While it's roasting, mix your dressing. As soon as the cauliflower comes out of the oven, spoon the dressing over it. It'll spit and hiss a bit as it absorbs all that wonderful flavor.