

Florida Citrus “Punches You in the Face with Flavor”

Take it from Florida Future Chef Remy Powell.

“Citrus — it’s everything,” says Remy Powell. Remy knows. She’s 10 and already a star in the kitchen. She’s the 2023 Florida Future Chef.

Sponsored by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Future Chef Championship brings together Florida kids ages seven to 13 for a cook-off showcasing Florida produce. Remy nailed it with her original recipe, Sunshine State on a Plate, a stylish, citrusy spin on roast chicken.

“I grew up making lemon chicken,” Remy says with a shrug. It’s classic and comforting, but for the Florida Future Chef Championship, Remy, who lives in Hollywood, wanted to up her game. She pairs the chicken with roasted Florida mushrooms and carrots, nestles them atop plush mashed potatoes, and finishes the dish with a chimichurri of carrot greens and Florida’s own fiery, rare datil pepper. It beat out 250 statewide entries.

The tough part was getting the citrus right. “We tried it with orange, and it was not that good,” Remy says. Fresh grapefruit “is too sour for me.” But when you cook with it, “it loses the bitterness, the bad stuff, and leaves the good stuff. It’s not, like, a usual thing people cook with. It punches you in the face with flavor.” Florida students will get to taste that bright-flavored punch. Remy’s recipe is being streamlined, standardized, and will be making its way onto school lunch menus.

\$5,000 PRIZE

In case you couldn’t tell, “cooking’s, like, my passion.” Remy’s passion and cooking chops come from her maternal grandmother, Tracey Broussard. A flight attendant by profession, Broussard’s also a karate black belt, amateur caterer, mixologist, kitchen whiz, and — full disclosure — this writer’s friend. To Remy, though, Broussard is Bubbe, her kitchen companion and sous chef.

Bubbe is naturally Remy’s biggest fan. “She’s gotten to be a real badass in the kitchen.” Broussard’s also become a fan of Florida Future Chef. First place winners like Remy receive a \$5,000 scholarship, and all finalists are treated to three days of fun, from sightseeing to pizza parties.

But like the two other finalists, Mia Puig Powell of Homestead (no relation) and Madden Grisoff from Destin, Remy came to cook and wow. “I always wanted to be on a cooking show,” she says. “It looked like so much fun.”



Remy Powell with her winning dish, Sunshine State on a Plate.

Turns out they’re a little more involved than they look on TV. Preparing her recipe for the judges, “there’s a camera looking at me. They tell me to do something again, get a closeup. And everything was bigger, more counter space, more equipment. And the stoves were fire stoves.” Remy means gas ranges rather than Broussard’s electric one. “I like Bubbe’s stove better.”

The cookoff taught Remy a lot. “I learned more ways of cutting, learned citrus is really good for cooking, and I learned not to give up and try and try again.”

How much did she have to try and try again to perfect her winning recipe? “I don’t mess up,” Remy announces. Then she remembers. “I made a soufflé but then it deflated.” She deflates a little herself.

FUTURE PLANS

Remy hopes to perfect creme brûlée next. It’s not that she loves the creamy custard — she’s never tried it. But she’s got her eye on the propane kitchen torch that creates the glasslike caramelized sugar on top. “It goes GZZZZZZ,” she says, blasting an imaginary torch. “It’s really cool.”

Remy’s plans also involve appearing this spring on your favorite nationally televised cooking show. You know the chef and host — blond hair, anger management issues. She also wants to come out with her own line of merch — ramekins and spatulas with her face on them, cooking for the homeless, “and I want to go to culinary school in Paris and then open a restaurant there called Loco Boca — I have a crazy mouth.”

Acing the Florida Future Chef Championship, competing nationally, building her Instagram following — check her out at @chefremywillow — they’re all part of being a 10-year old culinary star. But the best part of cooking, on or off the screen “is eating,” Remy says. “That’s my favorite part.”





SUNSHINE STATE ON A PLATE: GRAPEFRUIT ROASTED CHICKEN, CARROTS AND BABY BELLAS WITH A CARROT TOP AND DATIL PEPPER CHIMICHURRI

Chicken and Vegetables

- 5 cloves garlic
- ½ tablespoon kosher salt
- 4 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs
- 1 sweet yellow onion
- 2 red grapefruits
- 8 carrots with green carrot tops
- 1 pound baby portobello mushrooms

Datil Pepper and Carrot Top

Chimichurri

- 1 cup carrot tops, chopped fine
 - 1 whole datil pepper
 - 1 tablespoon grapefruit juice
 - ¼ cup canola oil
 - 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mashed potatoes (use your favorite recipe to make potatoes for 4 people)

Prepare chicken: Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Put garlic through the garlic press into a small bowl. Add kosher salt to the bowl with the garlic and mix into a paste. Divide the paste into four parts. Rub the paste under the chicken skin and around the top of the chicken. Peel and slice the onion into 4 large slices. Slice one of the grapefruit, ensuring that you have 4 round slices. Place one slice of grapefruit next to one slice of onion



on the sheet pan. Repeat so that all four slices of each are used. Place one chicken thigh on top of each side-by-side grapefruit and onion slice. Cut the remaining grapefruit in half. Squeeze some of the juice on top of the chicken quarters. Roast at 450 degrees for 25 minutes.

Prepare vegetables: Wash carrots and greens. Save greens for later. Peel carrots and cut into slices on the bias. Clean mushrooms by rinsing in a colander under cool water and patting dry with paper towels. Slice mushrooms if they are not pre-sliced. Squeeze 2 tablespoons grapefruit juice on the carrots and mushrooms. Sprinkle salt and pepper on the carrots and mushrooms and toss until evenly distributed. After the chicken has cooked for 25 minutes, scatter the vegetables around the chicken, taking care not to burn yourself. The sheet pan will be hot. Lower the oven temperature to 400 degrees. Place the sheet pan back in the oven and roast for an additional 20 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the chicken is 165 degrees.

Prepare chimichurri: Finely chop the carrot greens, avoiding tough stems. Using plastic gloves, wash the datil pepper. Cut pepper in half, removing membrane and seeds. Chop half of the pepper very finely. (Use the whole pepper if you like it spicy!) Combine the greens, pepper, oil, grapefruit juice, white wine vinegar and a little salt and pepper in a bowl. Cover and set aside to marinate.

Prepare potato puree. Keep warm.

To serve: Plate a generous amount of potato puree in a circle on a plate. Top with a chicken thigh. Arrange vegetables alongside the chicken. Divide the chimichurri into 4 ramekins. Depending upon the size of the plate, arrange next to the chicken and vegetables or serve with the plate. Enjoy the chimichurri by topping the chicken and/or vegetables with it.

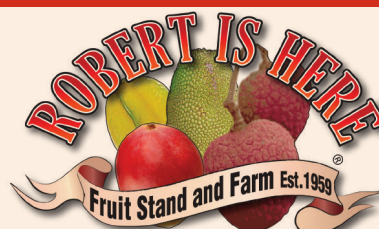
DOES YOUR KID WANT TO BE A FUTURE CHEF?

Student chefs can showcase their skills in the kitchen by creating delicious dishes in the ultimate lunchroom cook-off. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services hosted the competition to uplift the culinary aspirations of Florida students and highlight Florida commodities. Students between the ages of 7 and 13 were eligible to enter, and the top three were selected to compete in the Florida Future Chef Finale. Judges considered the following criteria: appearance 25%, presentation and creativity 25%, best use of Fresh From Florida ingredients 50%.

For more information, visit floridafuturechef.com



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