

SENSATIONAL SERVINGS



Energy Park 2008



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Thursday, July 31

SEARED SCALLOPS WITH BLACKBERRY-ORANGE BUERRE BLANC ON WILTED SPINACH AND SHITAKE MUSHROOM SALAD

Makes 4 servings

12 large sea scallops
2 Tbs. olive oil, divided
Salt and pepper to taste
Flour to dust scallops
1 Tbs. minced shallots
4 oz. shitake mushrooms
12 oz. baby spinach
1 red bell pepper, roasted and julienned

BLACKBERRY-ORANGE BUERRE BLANC

6 oz. fresh or frozen blackberries
1 Tbs. balsamic vinegar
Juice from 1 orange
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup salted butter, cut into pieces
Truffle oil to taste (optional)

Combine berries, vinegar, orange juice and cream in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Bring to simmer and reduce volume by half. Turn down heat to very low and whisk in butter one piece at a time until all of the butter is fully incorporated. Set aside and keep warm.

Make sure scallops are dry. Lightly season with salt and pepper; dust with flour. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil; sear scallops until golden brown on both sides. Set aside and keep warm. Sauté shallots and mushrooms in remaining 1 tablespoon oil until tender; add spinach and sweat until wilted. Add roasted pepper and toss.

Place 1/4 of spinach mixture in center of serving plate; surround randomly with 1/4 of sauce. Lean three scallops atop the salad. Drizzle with truffle oil, if desired.

PLANTAIN SANDWICH

Makes 2 servings

Oil for frying (preferably peanut oil)

2 green plantains, peeled and halved lengthwise

Salt and pepper to taste

2 Tbs. peanut oil

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 onion, thinly sliced

1/2 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced

Pinch of cumin

Pinch of Mexican oregano

6-8 oz. thinly sliced beef flank steak or beef tenderloin

2 Tbs. mayonnaise

2 slices creamy cheese (Monterey Jack, Baby Swiss, Provolone, etc.)

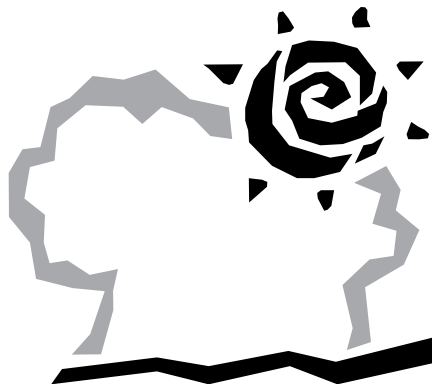
2 thin slices ripe tomato

4 leaves crisp Bibb lettuce

Heat frying oil to 350 degrees. Fry plantains in oil until they float, about 1-2 minutes; remove and drain. Place between two pieces of plastic wrap and gently pound plantains into round patties about 1/4-inch thick. Return flattened plantains to frying oil; fry until golden brown. Remove, drain and lightly season. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil and sauté garlic, onions and yellow pepper until tender and caramelized; season with cumin and oregano.

Grill beef over medium-high heat until cooked to your preference.

Spread mayonnaise on a plantain slice. Lay a cheese slice over mayonnaise. Add half of meat and sautéed vegetables. Cover with tomato slice, 2 lettuce leaves and another plantain slice. Skewer with a toothpick and slice into halves. Repeat steps to make second sandwich.



Friday, August 1

VANILLA BEAN PANNA COTTA WITH MERLOT SYRUP AND DRIED CHERRIES

Makes 8 servings

PANNA COTTA

1 cup whole milk

1 cup heavy cream

1/2 vanilla bean, cut and scraped into milk (may substitute 1-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract)

3/4 cup sugar

1/4 oz. envelope powdered gelatin (or 1 sheet, softened)

2 cups buttermilk

Fresh mint sprigs for garnish

In heavy-bottomed stainless-steel saucepan, bring milk, cream, vanilla bean (or extract) and sugar to a boil. Remove pan from heat and allow to cool slightly; stir in softened gelatin. Gently whisk mixture into cold buttermilk and pour into individual serving dishes. Ideally, refrigerate overnight; however, may let stand until set and serve after 1 to 2 hours. Serve with merlot syrup and garnish with fresh mint sprigs.

MERLOT SYRUP AND DRIED CHERRIES

3 cups merlot wine

3 Tbs. granulated sugar

1/2 cup dried cherries, chopped

Reduce wine and sugar to consistency of syrup, adding cherries when volume is reduced by half. Cool and set aside.

CHORIZO EMPANADAS WITH ROASTED EGGPLANT AND BELL PEPPER TAPANADE

Makes 12 pieces

EMPANADAS

6 oz. chorizo sausage, cooked and crumbled

One sheet puff pastry dough, thawed

Flour for dusting

1 egg for wash

Cut twelve 3-inch circles from puff pastry dough. Lightly brush each circle with egg wash. Divide chorizo evenly on one-half of each dough round; fold over to form a half circle. Gently pinch edges with fork to seal. Bake at 400 degrees until golden brown and puffed. Top with tapanade and serve immediately.

EGGPLANT AND BELL PEPPER TAPANADE

1 large eggplant
1 red bell pepper, roasted and diced
2 Tbs. olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
Juice from 1/2 of a lime
Zest from 1/2 of a lime
1/2 cup olives (green or black), diced small
1 Tbs. chopped cilantro
Salt and pepper to taste

Roast eggplant and red pepper in 400-degree oven until skins are charred and shriveled (this can also be done over an open flame). Place in stainless-steel bowl and cover tightly for at least 15 minutes. Scoop out insides of eggplant and clean pepper of all skin and seeds. In sauté pan, heat oil and sweat garlic. Add eggplant and diced pepper; sauté until well combined. Add lime juice, zest and olives; continue to sauté until heated through. Place mixture into food processor and pulse until slightly pureed but not liquid. Stir in cilantro and adjust seasonings. Serve at room temperature.

Saturday, August 2

DIRT CAKE

Makes 6 servings

6 small plastic flower pots
1 18-oz. package cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, crushed medium fine
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 8-oz. package cream cheese, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1/2 tsp. vanilla
3 cups milk
2 3-1/2 oz. packages instant vanilla or chocolate pudding
1 12-oz. tub non-dairy whipped topping (can use chocolate-flavored)
Gummy worms and/or other "critters"

Put 1/3 of crushed cookies into clean flower pot.

Cream together butter, cream cheese, sugar and vanilla; set aside. Combine milk and both boxes of pudding mix. Fold whipped topping into pudding mixture. Fold mixture into cream cheese mixture.

Layer about 1/3 of pudding mixture onto crushed cookies in the pot. Add a second layer of crushed cookies over pudding mixture. Continue layering until all ingredients are used. Garnish top with edible "critters."

Refrigerate if not serving immediately.

GARDEN BERRY SPONGE TART WITH VANILLA ICE CREAM

Makes 6 servings

Softened butter

1 cup fresh raspberries

1 cup fresh blueberries

1 cup fresh strawberries

1 cup fresh blackberries

1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted

2 eggs

2 Tbs. granulated sugar

2 Tbs. brown sugar

1 Tbs. all-purpose flour

6 scoops vanilla ice cream

6 sprigs fresh mint

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Evenly brush tart pan with softened butter. Cut a piece of parchment or waxed paper to completely cover bottom of pan. (Paper does not need to be greased.) Evenly distribute berries and almonds into pan. Whisk together eggs and sugar until frothy (medium peaks); fold in flour, making sure to retain as much air as possible. Pour mixture over berries and bake 15 minutes or until mixture has set. Remove from oven, unmold and cut into 6 portions.

Serve warm with vanilla ice cream and garnish with mint.

Sunday, August 3

SHERRIED SHRIMP BISQUE

Makes 8 servings

4 Tbs. olive oil
2 cups mirepoix (1 cup onions, 1/2 cup celery, 1/2 cup carrots), medium dice
Shrimp and/or lobster shells, chopped
2 Tbs. garlic cloves, roughly chopped
2 Tbs. tomato paste
1/2 cup brandy
1-1/2 cups dry white wine
3 qts. clam juice
1/2 cup uncooked long-grain white rice
1 qt. heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste
Hot sauce and Worcestershire to taste
Cream sherry to taste
2 lbs. raw shrimp, cleaned and diced

In heavy-bottomed saucepan, heat oil and sauté mirepoix until caramel-brown in color. Add shrimp and/or lobster shells; continue to sauté over high heat until orange in color. Reduce heat to low; add tomato paste and garlic; sauté for 2 minutes. **VERY CAREFULLY** flame with brandy. Add white wine and reduce volume by half. When reduced, add clam juice and rice; simmer for approximately 45 minutes, or until rice is over-cooked. Puree this mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth; strain through fine sieve. Return to pot; bring to simmer. Add cream and adjust seasonings. (If bisque is too thick, thin with warm milk; if too thin, thicken with cornstarch slurry.) Add shrimp and return to simmer; turn off heat to prevent overcooking of shrimp.

POTATO CHAROULETTES, FRIED LEEKS AND ZUCCHINI SPAGHETTI

Makes 4 servings

POTATOES

1 Tbs. olive oil
2 Tbs. minced onions
1 garlic clove, minced
1 cup heavy cream

2 golden Yukon potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
1 sweet potato, peeled and thinly sliced
Salt and pepper to taste
Vegetable spray

Sweat onions and garlic in olive oil until tender. Add cream and reduce volume by 1/3. While cream is reducing, lightly coat large-size muffin tin with vegetable spray. Layer each muffin cup evenly with sliced potatoes; cover potatoes with cream until tins are almost full. Bake at 350 degrees until tender when pierced with fork; remove from oven and cool. Release edges of cooled potatoes with paring knife to remove from muffin tins. Reheat when ready to serve. Top with fried leeks.

FRIED LEEKS

1/2 leek (white parts only), washed and dried
1/2 cup cornstarch

Wash and dry leeks; slice into strips approximately 2 inches long by 1/16-inch wide. Toss strips in cornstarch and fry at medium heat until they JUST begin to brown. Do not overcook! Remove and drain on paper towel. Sprinkle lightly with salt.

ZUCCHINI SPAGHETTI

2 Tbs. olive oil
2 firm medium-sized zucchini
1 Tbs. chiffonade of basil
Salt and pepper to taste

Using mandolin or sharp knife, slice zucchini lengthwise, creating spaghetti-like long cuts. Heat oil in heavy-bottomed pan; sauté zucchini just until warmed but not brown. Season to taste with basil, salt and pepper.



Monday, August 4

BASIL AND PROSCIUTTO SHRIMP WITH RED PEPPER-TOMATO COULIS

Make 6 servings

18 shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 Tbs. minced garlic
1 Tbs. cumin
1 tsp. chopped fresh thyme
1 tsp. chopped fresh basil
1 tsp. fresh oregano,
1/4 cup minced onion
1/3 cup white wine
3 Tbs. rice wine vinegar
18 basil leaves
18 slices prosciutto ham

In large non-reactive bowl, combine garlic, cumin, thyme, basil, oregano, onion, wine and vinegar; add shrimp and marinate 1 hour. Remove shrimp from marinade; wrap each with a basil leaf and then with a slice of prosciutto. Secure with toothpick and grill or broil over low heat.

RED PEPPER-TOMATO COULIS

1 Tbs. olive oil
3 Tbs. minced onion
1 lb. red peppers, roasted, seeded and diced
1 lb. ripe tomatoes, diced
1 cup light clam stock
Salt and pepper to taste

In heavy-bottomed pan, heat oil; sauté onions until lightly caramelized. Add red peppers and tomatoes; sauté until hot. Add clam stock; simmer 15 minutes. Puree in blender or food processor; strain. Adjust seasonings. Keep warm.

Place pool of coulis on serving plate; arrange cooked shrimp atop sauce. Garnish as desired.

BLACK AND BLUE CHICKEN BREAST

Makes 6 servings

BACON AND BLUE CHEESE GRATIN

2 Tbs. butter
3 bacon strips, diced
1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
2 cups heavy cream
2 lbs. golden Yukon potatoes
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup dry crumbled blue cheese

Over medium heat, melt butter in heavy-bottomed saucepan. Add bacon and cook until halfway done. Add onion; continue to cook until onion is caramelized and bacon is crisp. Slowly add cream; season with salt and pepper. Add potatoes; simmer over low to medium heat about 10 minutes. Transfer to lightly buttered baking dish; sprinkle evenly with cheese. Bake uncovered in 350 degree oven until cheese is golden brown and potatoes are tender. Allow to cool slightly before serving.

CHICKEN

6 5-oz. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 Tbs. paprika
1 Tbs. granulated sugar
1 Tbs. freshly ground black pepper
2 tsp. salt
2 tsp. garlic powder
2 tsp. onion powder
2 tsp. ground mustard
1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 tsp. dried oregano
1 tsp. dried thyme
1/4 cup butter

Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Thoroughly blend spices together. Dredge chicken breasts in spice mixture; allow to absorb for 3 to 5 minutes. Heat a cast-iron skillet to medium-high heat and place butter in center of pan. Allow butter to melt completely and begin to brown. Place chicken into smoking butter; cook until seasoning is blackened but not burned. Carefully turn over and repeat process on second side. Remove chicken from skillet and place on an oven-safe pan. Finish cooking in 400 degree oven until juices run clear or internal temperature reaches 165 degrees.

Tuesday, August 5

PUMPKIN GINGERBREAD TRIFLE

Makes 12-15 servings

GINGERBREAD CAKE

2 large eggs, beaten
1 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup butter or shortening, softened
1/2 cup dark molasses
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1-1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 cup hot water
1 Tbs. granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat eggs; add 1 cup sugar and butter or shortening, beating until well blended. Add molasses. Mix flour, baking soda and spices; blend dry ingredients into creamed butter mixture; stir in water. Pour batter into lightly oiled 13x9-inch pan. Sprinkle batter with 1 tablespoon sugar. Bake at 350 degrees about 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely.

PUMPKIN PUDDING

3/4 cup granulated sugar
2 Tbs. cornstarch
1/4 tsp. salt
2 cups milk
2 egg yolks, slightly beaten
2 Tbs. cold butter, cut into small pieces
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 29-oz. can pumpkin pie filling
1/2 cup brown sugar
1 tsp. ground cardamom

In saucepan, stir together sugar, cornstarch and salt; add milk. Stir over medium heat until thickened and bubbly. Continue cooking an additional 2 minutes. Remove pan from heat. Whisk small amount of hot mixture into egg yolks, repeating this step 2 more times, until the 2 are fully combined. Return pan to heat and cook slowly for 2 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in butter and vanilla. Allow to cool until set. When set, add pumpkin pie filling to pudding and blend until smooth. Stir in brown sugar and cardamom.

TRIFLE

Baked gingerbread cake
Pumpkin pudding
2 cups heavy cream, whipped and sweetened
1/2 cup gingersnap cookies, coarsely crushed

Crumble 1/3 of gingerbread cake into bottom of large decorative glass bowl. Spoon 1/3 pudding mixture over cake. Spread 1/3 whipped cream over pudding. Repeat to create three layers, ending with whipped cream. Immediately before serving, sprinkle top with coarsely crushed gingersnap cookies.

ROAST RACK OF LAMB WITH APRICOT-MUSTARD SAUCE

Makes 4 servings

2 racks of lamb, cleaned, trimmed and Frenched
2 Tbs. olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
4 strips of bacon

In heavy-bottomed saucepan, sear lamb in olive oil. Remove from pan; season with salt and pepper. Cover with bacon strips and roast at 350 degrees until medium doneness (about 125 degrees). Drain grease from pan. (Remove bacon before slicing meat).

APRICOT-MUSTARD SAUCE

8 oz. apricot preserves
1 Tbs. freshly grated ginger
3 Tbs. whole grain mustard
1 Tbs. white balsamic vinegar
1/2 Tbs. fresh herb of choice

Combine all ingredients, except herb, in same saucepan in which lamb was seared. Simmer until consistency is that of syrup. Remove from heat; add herb of choice. Set aside and keep warm.

ACCOMPANIMENT

2 russet potatoes, peeled, large dice
2 turnips, peeled, large dice
2 Tbs. butter, softened
Salt and pepper to taste

Boil potatoes and turnips in lightly salted water until tender; drain well. Place on oven-safe baking pan; let dry in a 350-degree oven for at least 10 minutes. (Note: this step is important or puree will be too thin). Mash mixture until smooth. Add butter; season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Place scoop of puree in center of serving plate. Ladle a portion of sauce at bottom of plate; fan sliced lamb rack onto sauce. Serve immediately.

Wednesday, August 6

COCONUT WINE SLICES

Makes about 5 dozen

BOTTOM LAYER

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup butter
2 Tbs. Sherry wine

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Combine flour, salt and brown sugar. Cut butter into dry ingredients as for pie crust. Add wine, a few drops at a time; mix lightly. Press dough into greased 11x7-inch pan. Bake at 300 degrees about 10 minutes.

TOP LAYER

2 eggs
2 Tbs. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/8 tsp. salt
1 cup moist coconut
1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
1-1/2 cups light brown sugar

Beat eggs until light and fluffy. Sift together flour, baking powder and salt; fold into eggs. Combine coconut, pecans and brown sugar; fold into egg mixture. Spread onto baked layer. Increase oven temperature to 325 degrees. Bake about 30 minutes; cool. Ice with lemon icing. Cut into thin slices.

LEMON ICING:

1-1/2 cups powdered sugar
2 Tbs. lemon juice
1 tablespoon Riesling wine

Gradually add lemon juice and wine to sugar. Beat until smooth and glossy. Spread on cooled coconut mixture.

MARASCHINO CHERRY BARS

Makes about 2 dozen

1/2 cup sifted all purpose flour
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 cup uncooked rolled oats
1/2 cup melted butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix and sift flour, soda and salt; add remaining ingredients and mix. Firmly press mixture on bottom of ungreased 9-inch square pan. Cover with topping. Bake at 350 degrees about 35 minutes. Cool and cut into bars.

TOPPING

1/4 cup sifted flour
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
2 eggs beaten
3/4 cup cut maraschino cherries
1/2 cup shredded coconut
1/2 cup chopped nuts

Mix and sift flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Add remaining ingredients and mix until well combined.

GOLD COOKIES

Makes about 5 dozen

1/2 cup butter
1 cup granulated sugar
4 egg yolks
1 tsp. vanilla
1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 cup nuts, finely chopped
2 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter. Add sugar and blend thoroughly. Add egg yolks and mix well. Add vanilla. Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Add to creamed mixture. Mix thoroughly.

Mix chopped nuts and cinnamon together. Form dough into balls about the size of a walnut. Roll in nut and cinnamon mixture. Place balls 3 inches apart on greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees about 12 to 15 minutes.

DATE BARS

Makes about 2 dozen

1 cup sifted all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 pound pitted dates, chopped small
1 cup chopped nuts
3 eggs
1 cup granulated sugar
Powdered sugar (optional)

Sift flour, baking powder and salt together. Mix in dates and nuts. In separate bowl, beat eggs until blended; add sugar gradually and mix well. Blend in flour mixture. Pour into greased 9-inch square pan. Bake at 350 degrees about 35 minutes. Cut into bars while warm. Roll in powdered sugar, if desired.

Thursday, August 7

BAKED PHYLLO WITH ASPARAGUS, GOAT CHEESE AND TRUFFLE VINAIGRETTE SALAD

Makes 4 servings

PHYLLO POUCHES

8 sheets thawed phyllo dough
1/4 cup butter, melted
24 pencil-thin asparagus stalks, cleaned and cut into 4-inch pieces
8 oz. firm goat cheese
12 oz. mixed baby greens
8 cherry or grape tomatoes, quartered
5 oz. truffle vinaigrette

Lay out one sheet of phyllo dough and brush lightly with melted butter; cut in half lengthwise. Place 3 stalks of asparagus across short end of sheet. Crumble 1 oz. of cheese over bottom 2/3 of asparagus. Roll up tightly, jelly-roll style. Place roll on remaining half of phyllo sheet, roll tightly and brush lightly with melted butter. Repeat this process 7 more times to complete pouches. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown. Keep warm.

TRUFFLE VINAIGRETTE

2 Tbs. white balsamic vinegar
1 Tbs. minced shallots
1/4 cup canola oil
1 Tbs. white truffle oil
Salt and pepper to taste

In blender or by hand, whisk together vinegar, shallots and canola oil. Blend in truffle oil; season with salt and pepper. For best results, prepare one day in advance.

To serve, gently toss baby greens with vinaigrette and place on upper portion of room-temperature serving plate. Garnish with tomatoes, lean 2 warm asparagus pouches across salad.

POTATO-WRAPPED WASABI SHRIMP

Makes 6 servings

6 large shrimp, peeled and deveined, tail on
2 large russet potatoes, very thinly sliced
Vegetable oil for frying, divided
4 Tbs. wasabi powder
1 Tbs. warm water (approximately)
Sugar, if needed
1/2 Tbs. minced garlic
1 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup brown sugar
9 oz. cooked rice noodles
2 Tbs. pickled ginger, chopped
Chopped cilantro to taste

Cut potato into long thin threads and wrap around shrimp, making sure to completely cover meat of shrimp. Set aside.

In separate bowl blend wasabi powder with enough warm water to make a smooth liquid. (If mixture is too bitter, season with small amount of sugar). Set aside.

In sauté pan, sweat garlic in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Add soy sauce and brown sugar; simmer until volume is reduced by about half.

In another pan, heat to medium temperature enough oil to come half way up shrimp; fry potato-wrapped shrimp until golden brown. If not cooked completely through, finish in 350-degree oven.

Toss noodles in soy sauce mixture; garnish with cilantro and chopped ginger. Stand cooked shrimp on noodles; drizzle with desired amount of wasabi and serve.

Friday, August 8

WATERMELON, FENNEL, TOMATO AND RED ONION SALAD

Makes 6 servings

- 1-1/2 pounds seedless watermelon, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, cut into eighths
- 1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
- 6 basil leaves, chiffonade
- 2 Tbs. finely chopped pickled sushi ginger
- 2 whole oranges, cut into segments
- 2 cups mixed baby greens

In stainless-steel bowl, combine watermelon, fennel, tomatoes, onion, basil, ginger and orange segments. Toss gently with vinaigrette and allow to stand for 15 minutes. Divide evenly onto six plates lined with baby greens and serve.

VINAIGRETTE

- 1 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
- 1 Tbs. orange zest
- 3 Tbs. white balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Combine sugar, juice, zest and vinegar in mixing bowl; slowly whisk in oil. Season with salt and pepper.

PAN-SEARED DUCK BREAST WITH CARAMEL SAUCE AND EGGPLANT RELISH

Makes 4 servings

EGGPLANT RELISH

2 oranges, zested, peeled and segmented (juice reserved)
1 small eggplant, peeled, seeded and diced
2 Tbs. dried cherries, diced
2 Tbs. brown sugar
2 Tbs. granulated sugar
1 tsp. ground cardamom
Pinch of chili powder

In small saucepan, combine everything except orange segments. Simmer over low heat until mixture begins to thicken. Remove from heat; stir in orange segments. Set aside and keep warm.

CARAMEL SAUCE

1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
Pinch of cumin
Pinch of ground cardamom
1/4 cup water
2 tsp. cream of tartar
1 cup heavy cream

In heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine sugars, cumin, cardamom, water and cream of tartar. Cook over medium heat until sauce turns amber brown, washing down sides of pan with water if necessary. Reduce heat to low and add cream, cooking until a nice sauce consistency is reached. Set aside.

DUCK

2 duck breasts, skin-on
Salt and pepper to taste

In cast iron skillet over medium heat, sear duck breast skin-side down until fat has rendered and skin is browned but not charred. Turn over and brown meat in rendered fat until medium doneness. Finish cooking in 350-degree oven until internal temperature reaches 140 degrees.

Spoon caramel sauce onto serving plate; top with eggplant relish. Place sliced duck breast on top.

Saturday, August 9

GRANDMA OLSON'S FAMOUS RHUBARB TORTE

Makes 12 servings

CRUST

- 1-3/4 cups flour
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 2/3 cup butter
- 3 Tbs. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 egg yolks, well beaten (reserve whites for meringue)

Mix well and press into a lightly buttered 13x9-inch pan. Set aside.

FILLING

- 1-3/4 cups sugar
- 2 egg yolks, well beaten (reserve whites for meringue)
- 1/4 cup flour
- 5 cups washed and diced rhubarb or 5 cups thawed and drained frozen rhubarb

Mix well and pour over unbaked crust. Bake in preheated 350-degree oven for 40 minutes.

MERINGUE

- 4 egg whites
- 3/4 cup sugar

Beat egg whites until foamy; gradually beat in sugar until stiff peaks form. Gently spread meringue over baked torte, return to oven and bake until meringue is lightly browned.

Serve at room temperature. Do not refrigerate.

PISTACHIO-ENCRUSTED BEEF TENDERLOIN WITH ESPRESSO BOURBON SAUCE

Makes 4 servings

- 4 5-oz. beef tenderloin filets
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/3 cup chopped salted pistachio nuts
- 1/2 of an egg white whisked with 1 tsp. of water

Season filets with pepper; grill to just rare. Allow to cool slightly; top with pistachios that have been dampened with egg white mixture. Finish roasting in 375-degree oven until pistachios are slightly browned and steak is medium-rare.

ESPRESSO BOURBON SAUCE

1/2 cup bourbon whiskey
1/4 cup maple syrup
1/4 cup maple-flavored syrup
1/2 cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
1-1/2 Tbs. espresso coffee powder

Combine all ingredients in heavy-bottomed saucepan; simmer over low heat. DO NOT STIR. Reduce volume by approximately one-half, or until sauce begins to thicken. Keep warm. Serve under pistachio encrusted filet.

Sunday, August 10

RUSTIC ITALIAN BREAD SALAD

Makes 6 servings

Crusty Italian bread cut into 1-inch cubes to equal 4 to 5 cups

1 tsp. minced garlic

Salt to taste

Lemon pepper to taste

1 oz. white balsamic vinegar

4 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil

2 oz. small marinated button mushrooms

2 oz. each fire-roasted sweet red & yellow peppers, diced

8 oz. vine-ripened tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced (concasse)

3/4 oz. chopped fresh basil

1/2 oz. chopped fresh parsley

Chopped fresh parsley for garnish

Grated Parmesan Reggiano cheese for garnish

Allow bread cubes to dry at room temperature for at least 4 hours (bread should be crusty and dried throughout).

Combine garlic, salt, lemon pepper and vinegar in large bowl; whisk in olive oil until well combined. Add mushrooms and allow to marinate for 15 minutes. Combine tomato concasse with basil and parsley; add to oil mixture. Add peppers and bread cubes; toss until evenly coated.

CRAISIN GNOCCHI WITH GORGONZOLA SAUCE

Makes 6 servings

GNOCCHI

3 lbs. russet potatoes, peeled and quartered
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 whole egg, slightly beaten
Pinch of salt
1/2 cup minced dried cranberries

Boil potatoes in lightly salted water until tender; oven dry until flaky. Process potatoes through a potato ricer or food mill onto a clean cutting board. Make well in center of potatoes and sprinkle with 2 cups of flour. Place egg and salt in center of well. Using a fork, stir egg into flour and potatoes until thoroughly blended. Bring dough together, kneading gently until ball is formed. Add cranberries and knead gently another few minutes until dough is dry to touch; divide into smaller balls. Roll each ball of dough with your fingertips into 3/4-inch diameter ropes; cut each into 1-inch long pieces. Press each piece of dough against fork tines. Using fingertip, gently roll pressed dough back off fork. Drop dough pieces into large pot of boiling water; simmer until pieces float to top. Continue to cook for about 1 minute. Remove with strainer into ice bath until cooled. Set aside.

GORGONZOLA SAUCE

1 cup dry white wine
1 shallot, minced
1 qt. heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

Combine wine and shallots in saucepan; simmer until liquid is almost evaporated. Add cream; simmer until sauce begins to thicken. Adjust seasonings; blend in cheese. Add cooled gnocchi; cook until just heated through.

Place medium-sized portion in center of serving plate. Top with your favorite recipe for grilled Italian-seasoned chicken breast.

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