

COOKING AT TWO
Saturday, August 18, 2007

"HOT SUMMER NIGHTS"

Little Gem Salad
with lemon anchovy vinaigrette and soft-boiled eggs



Linguine with Florida rock shrimp
heirloom tomatoes and fresh basil



Frog Hollow Peaches and Ella Bella blackberries
baked in a buckle, vanilla bean ice cream



An international assortment of sparkling wines:

Jansz Brut Sparkling Wine, Tasmania, Australia, NV

Ricci Curbastro Franciacorta, Saten Brut, Chardonnay, Lombardy, Italy, NV

Baumard Cremant de Loire, Carte Corail Brut Rose, France, NV

Little Gem Salad

with lemon anchovy vinaigrette and soft-boiled eggs

makes salad for four and dressing for the next day

Ingredients

1 ½ c sourdough bread cubes, ¾"
1 clove garlic, minced very finely
1 ½ T extra virgin olive oil

3 eggs, coddled (boiled for five minutes, then plunged into ice water to cool)
1 large or 2 small cloves garlic, minced very finely
1 t anchovy paste
½ t Worcestershire sauce
1 t Dijon mustard
1 ½ to 2 lemons, juice only
1 c olive oil
¾ c grated Parmesan cheese

4 heads little gem lettuce, washed, spun dry and chilled

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 350 F. Combine the minced garlic and olive oil in a large bowl and mix well. Add the bread cubes, season well with salt and pepper and toss to coat the bread evenly with the garlic and oil. Transfer onto a baking pan and bake for 15 minutes, or until the bread cubes become golden brown throughout and crunchy. Cool and reserve.

Peel the coddled eggs and place into a medium bowl. Using a whisk, break the egg white into small pieces (the yolks should still be runny.) Add the garlic, anchovy paste, Worcestershire, mustard and half of the lemon juice, season with salt and pepper and whisk until combined. Add the olive oil slowly, whisking constantly, until it is completely incorporated. Add the remaining lemon juice, then season to taste with salt and pepper and chill.

To serve, arrange the leaves on a serving vessel then drizzle the vinaigrette evenly over the leaves and sprinkle the croutons over the top.

Linguine with Florida rock shrimp

heirloom tomatoes and fresh basil

makes entrée portions for four with a few leftovers

Ingredients

1 lb dried linguini (DeCecco brand or similar)

3 T extra virgin olive oil

1 T freshly minced garlic

pinch chili flakes

1 c white wine

1 c chicken stock

1 c heirloom tomato concassee

¼ c fresh basil chiffonade

1 ½ lbs fresh rock shrimp (or any small sized fresh shrimp)

4 T sweet butter

Method

Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil, and add salt until it is as salty as the sea. Add the pasta and stir continuously until the pasta has softened. Cook for one less minute than the manufacturer's directions, stirring occasionally, then drain and rinse with cold water.

Heat a suitable pan over high heat and add the olive oil, garlic and chili flakes. Stir or shake rapidly to distribute the garlic evenly, and cook until the garlic just begins to brown. Add the white wine and bring to a full boil. Cook until the wine has reduced to half of its original volume, then add the chicken stock. Boil the chicken stock until it has reduced by half, then add the tomatoes and reduce to a medium simmer. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Cook the tomatoes for about five minutes (less if they're very ripe), then add the shrimp and basil. Add the shrimp to the tomato mixture and cook until they are almost done, then add the pasta and toss well until the liquid is largely absorbed. Add the butter and adjust the seasoning. When the pasta is completely hot and the liquid is largely absorbed, transfer onto warm plates and serve.

Frog Hollow Peaches and Ella Bella blackberries

baked in a buckle, vanilla bean ice cream

Some Americana baking terms do have rational connections to their definitions. Grunts and pandowdies have their names' origins lost in time, but cobblers and buckles do have definite explanations: a cobbler has a cobblestone-like surface of biscuit dough on top; buckles have fruit and cake together under a streusel topping that buckles into the cake as it bakes.

In the best tradition of these fruit based desserts, the freshest, ripest, most fragrant fruit makes the best tasting dessert. In this late-summer version, which could be adapted to other seasons' fruits, peaches and blackberries are complemented with fresh vanilla ice cream. If you don't have an ice cream machine at home, make the ice cream base, call it "crème anglaise" and serve it on the side in a pitcher, as cold as possible. Hot fruit, cold creaminess and cake are a hard combination to beat.

Cinnamon Almond Streusel:

1 c. sugar
6 Tbsp. All-purpose flour
6 Tbsp. butter, cold and in pieces
1 ½ tsp. cinnamon
1 c. almonds, chopped into medium pieces by hand

In a standing mixer with a paddle attachment, place all the ingredients together. Mix until the mixture passes through a cornmeal stage and until it resembles pieces of gravel. Store, well-wrapped in a container in the refrigerator until needed. Can be made 1 week ahead.

Buckle Batter:

1 ¾ c. All-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
4 Tbsp. butter, soft
1 c. sugar
1 egg
½ c. milk

In a medium bowl, mix the first three ingredients together and set aside. In a standing mixer with a paddle attachment on medium speed, mix the butter, sugar and egg until slightly fluffy. Stop the mixer. Add the dry ingredients and mix on slow until the batter is moistened and smooth. Gradually add the milk. Can refrigerate in a covered container overnight.

Assembly and Baking:

1 Tbsp. Butter

1 c. sugar, divided

1 ½ pounds peach wedges

2 pints blackberries, best tasting and sweetest ones possible

Preheat oven to 375.

Melt the butter in a small pan and paint the inside of the bowls, cups or molds with the melted butter. Fill the first bowl with a ¼ c. of sugar, and roll the sugar to coat the inside of the bowl. Pour out the excess sugar into the next bowl, and repeat the process until all the bowls are coated. If you have any extra sugar left, use it in the next measure of sugar for the fruit.

Toss the peach wedges and 1/2 c. + 1 Tbsp. sugar together in a large bowl. Place a dollop of batter at the bottom of each bowl, about the size of half a lemon. Place fruit on top: first three or four berries, then three or four peach wedges. The fruit should equal just under twice the batter quantity. Repeat with another “half-lemon” amount of batter, and the berries and peaches on top. Finish all the bowls, and if you have any extra fruit or juice at the bottom of the bowl, divide equally between all the bowls. Place the bowls on a parchment lined sturdy cookie sheet. The cake will puff up and juices might spill over if the buckles fill more than 2/3rds of the bowl.

Top the buckles with streusel and bake for 45–55 minutes, checking them ¾ of the way through. Rotate as needed.

Remove from oven when streusel on top is deep golden brown and juices bubble. If any cake peeks through the streusel, it should be a light golden color as well, not pale.

Let cool slightly (5–8 minutes) and serve with vanilla ice cream/crème anglaise and warn your guests the bowls are hot!

If serving the next day, cool the bowls at room temperature completely. Place in refrigerator overnight, uncovered. The next day, pull them from the refrigerator at the beginning of your meal so they can come to room temperature, and heat them in a 375 F oven for seven to ten minutes to warm them through when needed.

Vanilla Ice Cream or Crème Anglaise

When cooking this type of custard, a thermometer can be very handy. Egg yolks can curdle over 180 degrees F, which means the custard will overcook right before boiling. To prevent a lumpy overcooked-egg-flavored custard, before cooking anything, prepare the ice bath and strainer, with a metal container on the ice. Metal will transfer the heat fastest to the ice and can cool the custard faster than anything else, especially when stirred occasionally. This rapid cooling also helps prevent the growth of bacteria by taking the custard through their favorite luke-warm stage as fast as possible. Do not store longer than 4 days if kept in refrigerator. Keeps 1 week when frozen as ice cream.

2 c. heavy cream
2 c. half and half
½ vanilla bean, split open, seeds scraped out
6 oz. sugar
7 oz. egg yolks
½ tsp. Vanilla extract
1 Tbsp. vodka

Prepare the ice bath with medium metal bowl on the ice. Place the largest fine-mesh strainer you have near-by.

Bring the cream, half and half and vanilla bean to a boil in a medium pot. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk the sugar and egg yolks together vigorously until they have lightened in color. Also have a rubber spatula near-by. Remove pot from heat.

Pour 1/3 of the hot cream onto the lightened egg yolks and whisk in to incorporate. Pour the egg mixture back into the pot and whisk gently until incorporated again. Switch to the rubber spatula.

Place pot back on stove on medium-low heat and stir constantly in a consistent pattern to scrape the entire bottom surface of the pot: the eggs will cook at the point closest to the heat first. At first, nothing will seem to happen. The mixture begins to get thicker and thicker just towards the end of the cooking, steaming a little as any small bubbles on the top (from the whisking) disappear. If using a thermometer, the liquid should slowly come up in temperature to 178 to 180 degrees F. Don't get impatient because, depending on the heat used, the mixture might take 8-10 minutes to cook to the proper point: the rubber spatula should have a smooth medium-thick film of custard that holds the line when a finger drags across it, otherwise known as "napé."

Once the liquid has reached this point, immediately strain it into the metal bowl. Add some water to the ice to help the bowl cool down, and stir for a minute or two to get the cooling process started. Add the vanilla extract when

cool to the touch, and the vodka if making ice cream base.

Use this base in your ice cream machine, following the manufacturer's directions.