

Fresh Italian Menu

(Monday, September 24, 2011)

Antipasti: Crostini with Olive Tapenade, Eggplant Caponata, and Prosciutto, Figs and Mint

Secondo: Artichoke Ravioli with Tomato Cream sauce served with a Radicchio and Frisee Salad

Dolce: Mascarpone and Berry Parfaits served with espresso

Drinks: Sparkling Mineral Water, Sun Tea



Trendy American Menu

(Wednesday, September 26, 2011)

Starter: Belgian Endive and Apple Salad with Blue Cheese and Cranberry Vinaigrette

Entrée: Pan Seared Pheasant Breast with Red Currant and Balsamic Glaze, served with Lightly Salted, Roasted, Eggplant and Fragrant Jasmine Rice. (Vegetarian Option: replace pheasant with Extra Firm Tofu.)

Dessert: Vanilla Cream and Berries in Puff Pastry served with hot coffee and tea

Drinks: Sparkling Mineral Water, Sun Tea



MOVIE NIGHT MENU

(Tuesday, September 25, 2011)

Movie: Inception

Tokyo, Japan

Sushi - Tuna Maki and Vegetarian Sushi

Paris, France

Goat Cheese and Sun-dried Tomato Tartines

Los Angeles

Maple Pecan Popcorn

Mocktails - Mulled Cider and Cranberry Sparkler – Cranberry juice, sparkling apple cider, lime



Fresh Italian Recipes:

Antipasto: Crostini with Black and Green Olive Tapenade

Yield: Makes 1 heaping cup

Ingredients

1 loaf of ciabatta bread, cut into 1/2-inch slices
1 large clove of garlic, peeled and cut in half
Good-quality extra virgin olive oil

1 cup Niçoise olives, pitted
1 cup small green French olives (Picholine), pitted
1/4 cup Oven-Dried Tomatoes , drained
1 tablespoon capers
1 garlic clove
1/2 tablespoon chopped fresh basil leaves
1/2 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
1/2 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
1/4 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano leaves
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

Preparation

Grill your slices of ciabatta. While they're still hot, rub them gently with the cut side of the garlic and drizzle with good-quality extra virgin olive oil.

In a food processor, combine all the ingredients except the olive oil. Using the pulse button, process until coarsely chopped and well blended. Continue to process, slowly adding the olive oil. Refrigerate in a covered container. Use as needed.

Source Information

From *Wolfgang Puck's Pizza, Pasta and More!* Recipe courtesy of Wolfgang Puck,(C)2000. Reprinted by arrangement with Random House Value Publishing.



Antipasto: Crostini with Classic Caponata

5 tablespoons olive oil
1 1 1/2-pound eggplant, unpeeled, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 medium onion, cubed
4 large garlic cloves, chopped
1 14 1/2-ounce can diced tomatoes with Italian seasonings in juice
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons drained capers
1/3 cup chopped fresh basil
Toasted pine nuts

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add eggplant, onion, and garlic cloves. Sauté until eggplant is soft and brown, about 15 minutes. Add diced tomatoes with juice, then red wine vinegar and drained capers. Cover and simmer until eggplant and onion are very tender, stirring occasionally, about 12 minutes. Season caponata to taste with salt and pepper. Mix in fresh basil. Transfer caponata to serving bowl. Sprinkle with toasted pine nuts. Serve warm, at room temperature, or cold.

Antipasto: Crostini with Prosciutto, Figs, and Mint

6 large ripe figs
12 slices of prosciutto
Small bunch of fresh mint
Extra virgin olive oil
Balsamic vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper

Tear the figs in half, then drape a piece of prosciutto over each of your hot crostini and squash a piece of a fig on top. Finish with mint leaves and serve drizzled with a little extra virgin olive oil, a drop of balsamic vinegar, and some freshly ground black pepper.



Secondo: Artichoke Ravioli with Tomatoes

For pasta:

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons water

For filling:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
1 small onion, chopped (1/2 cup)
1 (10-ounce) box frozen artichoke hearts, thawed and patted dry
1 ounce finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (1/2 cup)
1/3 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1 large egg yolk
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1 large egg white, lightly beaten with 2 teaspoons water (for egg wash)

For assembly:

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into pieces
3 medium plum tomatoes, trimmed and cut into 1/4-inch dice (3/4 cup)
1/4 cup water
1/3 cup heavy cream
1 ounce finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano (1/2 cup)
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Special equipment: a pasta machine; a 3-inch round metal cookie cutter; a shallow oval 2-quart ceramic or glass baking dish (12 by 8 1/2 inches)

To make pasta dough in a food processor:

Blend flour, eggs, salt, and water in processor until mixture just begins to form a ball, adding more water, drop by drop, if dough is too dry (dough should be firm and not sticky). Process dough for 15 seconds more to knead it. Transfer to a floured surface and let stand, covered with an inverted bowl, 1 hour to let the gluten relax and make rolling easier.

Make filling:

Heat butter in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until foam subsides, then sauté onion, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 6 minutes. Add artichoke hearts and sauté, stirring occasionally, until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly.

Transfer all but 3/4 cup artichoke mixture to cleaned bowl of processor (reserve remaining artichoke mixture in skillet), then add cheese, parsley, yolk, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and nutmeg and pulse until



mixture is coarsely chopped.

Roll pasta and make ravioli:

Cut pasta dough into 4 pieces, then flatten each piece into a rough rectangle and cover rectangles with an inverted large bowl. Set rollers of pasta machine on widest setting.

Lightly dust 1 rectangle with flour and feed through rollers. (Keep remaining rectangles under bowl.) Fold rectangle in half and feed it, folded end first, through rollers 7 or 8 more times, folding it in half each time and feeding folded end through. Dust with flour if necessary to prevent sticking. Turn dial to next (narrower) setting and feed dough through rollers without folding. Continue to feed dough through rollers once at each setting, without folding, until you reach narrowest setting. Dough will be a smooth sheet (about 24 inches long and 4 inches wide).

Put sheet of dough on a floured work surface and drop 6 (1 1/2-teaspoon) mounds of filling 1 1/2 inches apart in a row down center of one half of sheet. Brush egg wash around each mound, then fold other half of sheet over filling. Press down firmly around each mound, forcing out air. (Air pockets increase the chance that ravioli will break during cooking.) Cut pasta (between mounds) with cutter into 3-inch rounds. Line a large shallow baking pan with a clean kitchen towel (not terry cloth) and dust towel with flour, then arrange ravioli in 1 layer in it. Make more ravioli with remaining pasta dough, 1 sheet at a time, and remaining filling, transferring ravioli to lined pan.

Bring a 6- to 8-quart pot of salted water to a boil. Add ravioli, carefully stirring to separate, and, adjusting heat to keep water at a gentle boil, cook until pasta is just tender, about 6 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a colander.

While ravioli boils, reheat reserved artichoke mixture in skillet with butter over moderately high heat, then add tomatoes and water and cook, stirring, until tomatoes are softened, about 5 minutes.

Top ravioli with artichoke tomato sauce and serve.

Gourmet

January 2007

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Dolce: Mascarpone and Berry Parfaits

Yield: Makes 8 servings

2 cup chopped strawberries plus 4 whole strawberries, hulled

1 cup plus 12 raspberries

2 tablespoons sugar

2 8-ounce containers mascarpone cheese

Blend 1 cup chopped strawberries, 2/3 cup raspberries and sugar in processor to smooth puree. Drop 1 whole strawberry into each of 4 Champagne flutes or wineglasses. Top with 2 rounded tablespoons mascarpone cheese and 2 tablespoons fruit puree. Repeat layering 2 more times. Top each parfait with some of remaining cheese, then 3 raspberries. Chill at least 1 hour or cover and chill overnight.

Bon Appétit | May 2000



Trendy American Recipes:

Starter: Belgian Endive, and Apple Salad with Blue Cheese and Cranberry Vinaigrette

Yield: Makes 8 Servings

Ingredients

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

4 tablespoons cranberry juice concentrate

2 tablespoon white wine vinegar

6 heads Belgian endive, thinly sliced crosswise

4 Red Delicious or other ripe apple, unpeeled, cored, chopped

1 cup chopped fresh cranberries

1/2 cup thinly sliced green onions

1/2 cup walnuts, toasted, coarsely chopped

Preparation

Whisk oil, cranberry juice concentrate and vinegar in small bowl to blend. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Combine endive and apples in medium bowl. Pour dressing over; toss to coat. Sprinkle cranberries, green onions, walnuts and blue cheese over and serve.



Entrée: Pan Seared Pheasant Breast w/ Red Currant & Balsamic Glaze, served with Lightly Salted, Roasted Eggplant and Fragrant Jasmine Rice.

Ingredients:

8 pheasant breasts
3 teaspoon salt, divided
1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper, plus more to taste
4 teaspoons fresh thyme
1 cup red currant jelly
8 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
3 lbs. eggplant
4 cups jasmine rice
1 tablespoon olive oil

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with foil and lightly oil or coat it with cooking spray.
2. In rice cooker or steamer cook jasmine rice for 15-20 minutes.
3. Season pheasant on both sides with 1/8 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper, then rub with 3 teaspoons thyme. Pan sear until skin is crispy and golden then transfer to a prepared baking sheet. Roast at 350 for 15 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 145 degrees.
4. Combine olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt with asparagus. Place on baking sheet and roast at 350 for 10-15 minutes. salt immediately following removal.
5. Meanwhile, heat jelly, vinegar and the remaining thyme in a small saucepan over medium-low heat until the jelly is melted. Season with the remaining salt and pepper and remove from the heat.
6. Brush liberally with the jelly glaze. Continue to roast, brushing twice with the remaining glaze, until the pheasant is cooked through, about 15 minutes more.



Dessert: Vanilla Cream and Berries in Puff Pastry

Ingredients:

2 (10 oz.) packages frozen puff pastry shells
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
½ cup sugar
4 tsp. vanilla
1 cup whipping cream
Assorted Fresh Berries
16 Mint Leaves

Method:

1. Heat the oven to 400° F. Bake, cool and remove the "tops" of the pastry shells according to the package directions.
2. Cool baked pastry shells.
3. Beat cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until smooth and creamy.
4. Whip cream until stiff peaks form.
5. Gently fold whipped cream into cream cheese mixture.
6. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
7. Fill or pipe cream mixture into pastry shells just before serving.
8. Garnish with fresh raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, and/or sweetened strawberries, and mint as desired.



MOVIE NIGHT Recipes:

Tuna Maki

- 1/2 lemon, thinly sliced crosswise
- 4 (8 1/4- by 7 1/4-inch) sheets roasted nori (dried seaweed), cut in half crosswise
- 4 cups prepared sushi rice
- 1/4 cup wasabi paste
- 1/2 pound sushi-grade yellowfin or ahi tuna, cut into 3/4-inch strips
- 1/2 cup sliced pickled ginger (gari)*
- 1 small daikon radish, peeled and julienned using mandoline
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and julienned using mandoline
- Soy sauce for dipping
- Special equipment: mandoline, bamboo sushi mat*
- *Available at Asian markets

Preparation

Fill large bowl with ice water and lemon slices.

Place sushi mat on cutting board with slats running crosswise. Arrange 1 sheet nori, shiny side down, on mat, lining up long edge of sheet with edge of mat nearest you. Lightly moisten hands with lemon water, then gently spread about 3/4 cup rice onto nori in even layer, leaving 1/2-inch border on long end opposite you.

Brush 1/2 teaspoon wasabi paste in thin horizontal line across rice about 1 inch from side nearest you. Arrange about 1/8 of tuna strips in horizontal line atop wasabi line, cutting tuna as necessary to fit from side to side.

Beginning with edge nearest you, lift mat up with thumbs, holding filling in place with fingers, and fold mat over filling so that upper and lower edges of rice meet. Squeeze gently but firmly along length of roll and tug top edge of mat away from you to tighten. (Nori border will still be visible below top edge of mat.) Open mat and roll log forward 1/4 turn, then fold mat over again and squeeze gently but firmly to seal nori border. Repeat to form remaining rolls.

Transfer 1 roll, seam side down, to cutting board. Dip sharp knife into lemon water, shaking off excess. Slice roll in half, then cut each half into 3 pieces. Slice remaining rolls in same manner. Serve immediately with remaining wasabi paste, ginger, daikon, carrots, and soy sauce.



Vegetarian Sushi

4 to 8 savoy cabbage or iceberg lettuce leaves
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1/2 cup matchstick-size strips carrots
1/2 cup matchstick-size strips green onion
1/2 cup matchstick-size strips red bell pepper
Fresh cilantro leaves
1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
2 tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon chili paste with garlic*
1 teaspoon sugar

*Thin Japanese wheat noodles and chili paste with garlic are available at Asian markets, specialty foods stores, and in the Asian section of some supermarkets.

Preparation

Bring pot of water to boil. Add cabbage and cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Using slotted spoon, remove cabbage. Refresh under cold water and drain. Pat leaves dry. Using small knife, remove thick center vein. Return water to boil. Add noodles and cook until tender, about 2 minutes. Drain. Refresh under cold water and drain.

Arrange 4 leaves on work surface. Place additional leaves on each arranged leaf if needed to form 8-inch length. Place 1/4 cup noodles along 1 long side of each leaf forming 1-inch-wide strip. Arrange carrots atop noodles, then green onion, bell pepper and cilantro leaves. Starting from 1 long side, roll leaf over filling. Roll up tightly in jelly roll fashion. Place each roll on piece of plastic wrap and roll up tightly, twisting ends. Refrigerate rolls 1 to 8 hours.

Combine vinegar, soy sauce, chili paste and sugar in bowl.

Remove plastic wrap from rolls. Trim ends. Cut each roll into 6 pieces. Place pieces cut side up on platter. Place sauce in center of rolls and serve.



Goat Cheese and Sun-dried Tomato Tartines

12 (1/2-inch-thick) baguette slices
3 1/2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/4-inch dice
2 tablespoons julienned soft sun-dried tomatoes (not packed in oil)
1 tablespoon torn fresh basil
1 teaspoon Sherry vinegar
2 tablespoons bottled black olive tapenade
8 oz soft mild goat cheese log, cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick slices
Garnish: torn fresh basil leaves

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Brush 1 side of baguette slices with 2 tablespoons oil and arrange, oiled sides up, on a baking sheet. Toast bread in middle of oven until golden on top, about 7 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool. Leave oven on.

Stir together fresh and dried tomatoes, basil, vinegar, and 1/2 tablespoon oil.

Spread each toast with tapenade and top with a slice of goat cheese and a rounded teaspoon of tomato mixture. Arrange tartines on a baking sheet, then season with salt and pepper and drizzle with 1/2 tablespoon oil.

Bake tartines in middle of oven until cheese is softened, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a platter and drizzle with remaining 1/2 tablespoon oil.



Maple Pecan Popcorn

1 cup pecans (3 1/2 oz), toasted and coarsely chopped
About 8 cups plain popcorn
3/4 stick (6 tablespoons) unsalted butter
1 1/2 cups pure maple syrup
1/2 teaspoon salt
Special equipment: a candy thermometer

Preparation

Toss together pecans and popcorn in a large bowl.

Line a large shallow baking pan with foil, then lightly oil foil and a wooden spoon.

Melt butter in a 1- to 1 1/2-quart heavy saucepan over moderate heat. Add syrup and salt, then boil, without stirring, until mixture registers 300°F on thermometer, 15 to 20 minutes.

Pour syrup over pecans and popcorn, stirring briskly with oiled spoon to coat. Immediately spread popcorn in baking pan. Cool completely, then break into bite-size pieces.



Comprehensive Ingredient List

Ciabatta bread
Garlic
Niçoise olives
Green French olives (Picholine)
Oven-Dried Tomatoes
Capers
Fresh basil leaves
Fresh thyme leaves
Fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
Fresh oregano leaves
Onion
Can diced tomatoes with Italian seasonings in juice
Red wine vinegar
Toasted pine nuts
Figs
Prosciutto
Fresh mint
All-purpose flour
Eggs
Water
Unsalted butter
Artichoke hearts
Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese
Lemon juice
Nutmeg
Plum tomatoes
Heavy cream
Strawberries
Raspberries
Sugar
Mascarpone cheese
Extra-virgin olive oil
Cranberry juice concentrates
White wine vinegar
Belgian endive
Red Delicious or other ripe apple
Cranberries
Green onions
Walnuts

Pheasant breasts
Salt
Pepper
Fresh thyme
Red currant jelly
Balsamic vinegar
Eggplant
Jasmine rice
Frozen puff pastry shells
Cream cheese
Sugar
Vanilla
Whipping cream
Raspberries
Blackberries
Blueberries
Mint Leaves
Lemon
Sheets roasted nori (dried seaweed)
Sushi rice
Wasabi paste
Sushi-grade yellowfin or ahi tuna
Pickled ginger (gari)*
Daikon radish
Savoy cabbage or iceberg lettuce leaves
Somen
Carrots
Red bell pepper
Fresh cilantro leaves
Rice wine vinegar
Soy sauce
Chili paste with garlic*
Baguette
Sun-dried tomatoes (not packed in oil)
Sherry vinegar
Black olive tapenade
Mild goat cheese log
Pecans
Plain popcorn
Pure maple syrup

