



Supper at Six

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”
For Elizabeth, cooking wasn't some preordained feminine duty. As she'd told Calvin, cooking was chemistry. That's because cooking actually is chemistry.”

”

Let's get started, shall we?”

Fig Chili Spread Brie Bites

Ingredients

- 1 (8 ounce) round Brie cheese
- cooking spray
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
- ½ cup Fig Chili Spread (can substitute cranberry sauce/pepper jelly)
- ½ cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts
- sea salt to taste

Directions

- Remove and discard rind from Brie cheese. Place cheese in the freezer for 20 minutes to make it easier to cut.
- Meanwhile, oil a 24-cup mini muffin pan with cooking spray.
- Roll puff pastry sheet out into a 10x14-inch rectangle. Cut sheet lengthwise into 4 even strips and then crosswise into 6 even strips, making 24 squares. Separate squares and gently press each one into a prepared muffin cup.
- Remove chilled Brie from the freezer; cut into 24 pieces, approximately 3/4-inch in size.
- Add 1 teaspoon fig chili spread to each pastry-lined muffin cup, then press in a piece of Brie and top with 1 teaspoon chopped pecans. Season each bite with a pinch of sea salt. Transfer muffin pan to the refrigerator and chill for at least 30 minutes, or cover and chill for up to 3 days. When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
- Bake bites in the preheated oven until golden brown, 18 to 20 minutes.
- Serve warm, and enjoy!



Blue Lemon Drop

2 ounces vodka

1/2 ounce blue curacao

1 ounce lemon juice, freshly squeezed

1 ounce simple syrup

Garnish: sugar rim

Add ice and all items except the freshly squeezed lemon juice in a cocktail shaker. Give it a shake and add to your sugar rimmed glass. Add the lemon juice and serve.

Normally a lemon drop calls for triple sec vs blue curacao but they are both orange based so it works to give the cocktail a fun color change.

This recipe can also be made in batches, adding the vodka, simple syrup and lemon juice to a container and refrigerate. When serving add the pre-mixed cocktail to the sugar rimmed glass add the blue curacao and serve.

Caesar Salad Dressing

1/2 cup olive oil (extra light)

Juice of 1/2 a lemon

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 good size clove of garlic (minced)

1 teaspoon coarse black pepper

Whisk together all ingredients, toss with romaine lettuce, fresh parmesan cheese and croutons.

Yields 8 servings (I usually double this recipe for extras as it keeps well in the refrigerator)

This recipe does not call for anchovies or eggs. Even without these 2 ingredients it has wonderful flavor and emulsifies well so it clings to the lettuce.

”

Children, set the table. Your mother needs a moment to herself.”

Pan-Fried Crab Cakes

SERVES 4

*The amount of bread crumbs you ad will depend on the crab-meat's juiciness. Start with the smallest amount, adjust the seasonings, then add the **egg***. If the cakes won't bind at this point, then add more bread crumbs, one tablespoon at a time.*

- 1 pound jumbo lump crabmeat, picked over to remove cartilage or shell
- 4 scallions, green part only, minced (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh herb, such as cilantro, dil, basil, or parsley
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Old Bay seasoning
- 2-4 tablespoons plain dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- Salt and ground white pepper
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil

1. Gently mix crabmeat, scallions, herb, Old Bay, 2 tablespoons bread crumbs, and mayonnaise in medium bowl, being careful not to break up crab lumps. Season with salt and white pepper to taste. Carefully fold in egg with rubber spatula until mixture just clings together. Add more crumbs if necessary.

2 Divide crab mixture into four portions and shape each into a fat, round cake, about 3 inches across and 1 1/2 inches high. Arrange on baking sheet lined with waxed paper; cover with plastic wrap and chill at least 30 minutes. (Can be refrigerated up to 24 hours.) .

3. Put flour on plate or in pie tin. Lightly dredge crab cakes. Heat oil in large, preferably nonstick skillet over medium high heat-

***Egg Science:**The proteins in egg products, specifically in the whites, assist with adhesion and ingredient binding. When they are heated or exposed to acid, they coagulate, causing the egg product to change from a liquid to a semisolid or sold. When the proteins solidify, they function as an adhesive, connecting ingredients or food components with each other. The chemistry of egg protein coagulation explains how egg products assist with binding ingredients in multi-component prepared food system, preventing products from crumbling, losing their shape or falling apart.

Creamy Dipping Sauce (makes about 1/2 cup)

This sauce is richer and more complex-tasting than Tartar Sauce

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise cup sour cream
- 2 teaspoons minced **chipotle (smoked jalapeños)***
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 teaspoon juice from I small lime

Mix all ingredients in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate until flavors blend, about 30 minutes. (Can be refrigerated for several days.)

***Chili Pepper Science:** Capsaicin (pronounced "cap-SAY-a-sin") is the chemical in chili peppers that makes them spicy. Specifically, capsaicin occurs in the fruits of plants in the Capsicum family, including jalapeño peppers, cayenne peppers, and other chili peppers.

Remoulade Sauce | Crab Cake Sauce

This creamy, lemony, smokey, and spicy remoulade sauce pairs amazingly with any seafood! It makes a wonderful crab cake sauce or po' boy sauce.

Ingredients

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup mayo

1 Tablespoon dijon mustard*

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

1 Tablespoon chopped chives

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon lemon zest

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon smoked paprika

$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cayenne pepper

salt & pepper to taste

Instructions: Mix all the ingredients together in a bowl and serve it as a condiment.

SOUS VIDE ASPARAGUS RECIPE

SERVINGS: 4 PEOPLE

How to cook perfect asparagus sous vide. Bright green, perfectly cooked spears. With three options for flavoring - garlic, parmesan or lemon.

I will use the lemon sauce. The asparagus would also be lovely with the remoulade.

EQUIPMENT

- Sous Vide Machine
- FoodSaver
- Sous Vide Weights

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bunch asparagus about 1 pound (can substitute cauliflower /brussel sprouts)
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 lemon zested and juiced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 cloves garlic minced or grated

INSTRUCTIONS

- Set sous vide to 180-degrees.
- Trim the woody ends of the asparagus.
- Add the asparagus, butter and a couple heavy butter knives or spoons to a FoodSaver bag and seal using a vacuum sealer. Alternatively, you can use a ziploc bag and the water displacement method. (The butter knives help to keep the bag weighed down in the water).
- Cook for 8-12 minutes based on the cooking chart below.
- Remove from water bath, season with salt and pepper, and serve.

PARMESAN:

- Sprinkle with parmesan cheese after cooking and season with salt and pepper.

LEMON:

- Sprinkle with lemon zest and juice and season with salt and pepper.

GARLIC:

- Before sealing, add garlic to bag of asparagus and butter.

NOTES for cooking time:

- Pencil Thin Asparagus: 8 Minutes
- Medium Asparagus: 10 Minutes

Classic Fresh Fruit Tart with Pastry Cream

from America's Test Kitchen

Pastry Cream

2 cups half-and-half

½ cup granulated sugar

pinch table salt

5 large egg yolks

3 tablespoons cornstarch

4 tablespoons unsalted butter (cold), cut into 4 pieces

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract

Tart Pastry (Pâte Sucrée)

1 large egg yolk

1 tablespoon heavy cream

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1 ¼ cups unbleached all-purpose flour (6 ¼ ounces; 177 grams)

⅔ cup confectioners' sugar, (about 3 ounces; 85 grams)

¼ teaspoon table salt

8 tablespoons unsalted butter (1 stick), very cold, cut into ½-inch cubes

Fruit, unwashed

FOR THE PASTRY CREAM: Heat half-and-half, 6 tablespoons sugar, and salt in medium heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat until simmering, stirring occasionally to dissolve sugar.

Meanwhile, whisk egg yolks in medium bowl until thoroughly combined. Whisk in remaining 2 tablespoons sugar and whisk until sugar has begun to dissolve and mixture is creamy, about 15 seconds.

Whisk in cornstarch until combined and mixture is pale yellow and thick, about 30 seconds.

When half-and-half mixture reaches full simmer, gradually whisk simmering half-and-half into yolk mixture to temper. Return mixture to saucepan, scraping bowl with rubber spatula; return to simmer over medium heat, whisking constantly, until 3 or 4 bubbles burst on surface and mixture is thickened and glossy, about 30 seconds. Off heat, whisk in butter and vanilla. Transfer mixture to medium bowl, press plastic wrap directly on surface, and refrigerate until cold and set, at least 3 hours or up to 48 hours.

FOR THE TART PASTRY: While pastry cream is chilling, whisk together yolk, cream, and vanilla in small bowl; set aside. Pulse to combine flour, sugar, and salt in bowl of food processor fitted with steel blade. Scatter butter pieces over flour mixture; pulse to cut butter into flour until mixture resembles coarse meal, about fifteen 1-second pulses. With machine running, add egg mixture and process until dough just comes together, about 25 seconds. Turn dough onto sheet of plastic wrap and press into 6-inch disk. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to 48 hours.

Remove dough from refrigerator (if refrigerated longer than 1 hour, let stand at room temperature until malleable). Unwrap and roll out between lightly floured large sheets of parchment paper or plastic wrap to 13-inch round. (If dough is soft and sticky, slip onto baking sheet and refrigerate until workable, 20 to 30 minutes.) Transfer dough to tart pan by rolling dough loosely around rolling pin and unrolling over 9- to 9 1/2-inch tart pan with removable bottom. Working around circumference of pan, ease dough into pan corners by gently lifting dough with one hand while pressing dough into corners with other hand. Press dough into fluted sides of pan. (If some edges are too thin, reinforce sides by folding excess dough back on itself.) Run rolling pin over top of tart pan to remove excess dough. Set dough-lined tart pan on large plate and freeze 30 minutes (can be sealed in gallon-sized zipper-lock plastic bag and frozen up to 1 month).

Meanwhile, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Set dough-lined tart pan on baking sheet, press 12-inch square of foil inside frozen tart shell and over edges and fill with metal or ceramic pie weights. Bake until golden brown, about 30 minutes, rotating halfway through baking time. Remove from oven and carefully remove foil and weights by gathering edges of foil and pulling up and out. Continue to bake until deep golden brown, 5 to 8 minutes longer. Set baking sheet with tart shell on wire rack to cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes.

TO ASSEMBLE THE TART: When tart shell is completely cool, spread cold pastry cream over bottom, using offset spatula or large spoon. (Can press plastic wrap directly on surface of pastry cream and refrigerate up to 30 minutes.) Arrange fruit on top of pastry cream.

Science Fun Fact: Tempering works due to the dilution of egg proteins in hot liquid and the slow heating. If the egg proteins are not diluted and are heated too quickly, they change form rapidly and group together in tight cluster, like scrambled eggs.