

Warm Brie with Strawberry Salsa

For salsa:

1 cup fresh strawberries
2 tablespoons finely minced red bell pepper
1/2 jalapeno pepper, finely minced
1/4 cup diced red onion
2 tablespoons finely chopped chives
2 tablespoons finely minced cilantro
2 tablespoons white Balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon tequila
1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon thyme
salt and pepper to taste

to assemble:

one 14 to 15 inch baguette, cut crosswise in 1/2 inch slices
2 – 3 tablespoons butter
1/2 pound best quality brie, cut into 1" x 1" x 1/2" pieces

for salsa:

Coarsely chop the strawberries. In medium bowl, place 1/4 cup of the strawberries; crush to release juices. Add remaining strawberries, peppers, onion, chives, cilantro and thyme. Pour vinegar over; stir gently to combine. Season with salt and pepper. Allow mixture to stand 15 minutes before serving for flavors to develop.

To serve:

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Butter baguette slices; place on cookie sheet and top each slice with one piece of brie. Place in oven until cheese melts, about 3-4 minutes. Remove from oven and top with a small spoonful of salsa. Serve warm.

Makes about 20 servings.

Grilled Mussels with Spicy Rosemary Butter

1 pound mussels, scrubbed and cleaned, debearded if necessary
lemon juice
freshly minced parsley
Garlic toast

Preheat grill to high heat. Arrange mussels on a grill tray, place over heat. Cover and grill 3 to 5 minutes, until shells open, about 6-8 minutes. Discard any unopened shells. Squeeze lemon over, sprinkle with parsley and serve immediately with spicy rosemary butter and garlic toast.

Spicy Rosemary Butter:

4 tablespoons butter
1 clove garlic, minced
½ teaspoon lemon zest
½ teaspoon fresh rosemary, coarsely chopped
red pepper flakes, to taste
1 teaspoon Frank's Red Hot Sauce
finishing salt, to taste

Melt butter; add remaining ingredients. Serve hot in a small ramekin or shallow bowl.

Salmon and Olive Tangine

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon sweet or hot paprika
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for frying
- 5 cloves garlic minced
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh ginger
- 1 handful fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 large pinch saffron
- 2 pounds salmon fillets, cut into serving portions
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 preserved lemon
- 1 cup cracked green olives
- ½ cup raisins
- 1 cup chicken stock

In a skillet over medium heat, toast the cinnamon, peppercorns, cumin, paprika, red pepper flakes, and coriander until fragrant be careful not to burn. Remove from the heat and grind in a spice grinder.

In a bowl large enough to accommodate the salmon, add the oil, spice mix, garlic, ginger, cilantro, bay leaves and saffron. Mix to a paste. Add salmon, rubbing the marinade over all the pieces. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours or overnight.

Remove the salmon from the marinade and reserve marinade. Pat salmon dry and season with salt and pepper. In a tagine or large casserole over medium high heat add 2 tablespoons olive oil. Put in salmon pieces and lightly brown on both sides, about 4 minutes. Remove salmon from pan. Add onions and cook until just starting to brown, about 3 minutes. Rinse preserved lemon well. Scoop out flesh and discard; cut peel into strips and add to pan. Add reserved marinade, olives, raisins and chicken stock. Cover tightly and cook over medium low heat for 15 minutes to develop flavor. Add salmon back to skillet with sauce, cover and simmer until salmon is cooked through, about 5 to 8 minutes more. Remove bay leaf and discard. Taste juices and adjust seasoning.

Place salmon on a warm platter. Spoon juices with the preserved lemon, olives, and onions over salmon and serve with braised fennel.

Serves 6-8.

Lamb Sliders

For aioli:

½ to 1 cup mayonnaise
2 garlic cloves, minced
1-2 teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 to 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, to thin mixture
Salt and pepper to taste
20 'slider' buns

For spice mixture:

1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon sweet or hot paprika
1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon coriander seeds

For lamb patties:

1 pound lean ground lamb
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons grated onion
¼ cup dry bread crumbs
Salt and freshly ground pepper
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
20 large mushroom caps
olive oil
aioli

Prepare aioli:

Stir together mayonnaise, garlic and lemon juice; add olive to achieve desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper. Spread insides of slider buns with aioli; set aside.

Prepare spice mixture:

In a skillet over medium heat, toast the peppercorns, cumin, paprika, red pepper flakes, and coriander until fragrant be careful not to burn. Remove from the heat and grind in a spice grinder. Set aside.

In a bowl, mix the lamb with the egg, grated onion, bread crumbs and 1 tablespoon of the spice mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Form the mixture into 1-½ -inch balls, then flatten into patties.

Heat the olive oil in a very large skillet. Add the lamb patties and fry over moderately high heat until browned on both sides. Transfer the patties to a plate; keep warm.

Toss mushroom caps with olive oil, grill until marks appear and mushrooms just begin to soften, turning once.

To assemble:

Place one lamb patty and one mushroom cap in each slider bun. Skewer with toothpick. Serve hot.

Makes about 20 sliders.

Rosemary Foccaccia With Flank Steak Ribbons

1 package yeast
2 tablespoons sugar
1 cup warm water (110 to 120°F)
1-1/2 cups unbleached bread flour
1-1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons fresh rosemary, divided
1 cherry marinated flank steak (recipe follows)
1 recipe caramelized onions (recipe follows)
4 ounces Gorgonzola cheese, crumbled
2-3 teaspoons alder smoked salt

Dissolve yeast and 1 teaspoon sugar in warm water, set aside to “proof.” Meanwhile, in food processor, process remaining sugar, flours and salt to combine. With machine running, add yeast mixture slowly. Then add oil. Process until ball forms, adding additional water if necessary. Check to see that mixture is soft but not too sticky, adjust with water or flour as necessary. Add oil, process 45 seconds to knead, making a very soft dough. Add 2 tablespoons of the rosemary, process about 10 seconds longer to distribute through dough. Cover and let rise on greased pan, about 1 hour, until doubled in size.

Meanwhile, prepare caramelized onions, and grill flank steak. Cool, then slice steak across the grain into thin strips.

Preheat the grill. When foccaccia dough is ready, divide into 6 portions. On a pizza peel, pat out each portion to form circle. Brush very lightly with olive oil. Top with steak strips, caramelized onions, gorgonzola, remaining rosemary and a light sprinkle of alder smoked salt. Drizzle with olive oil. Place foccaccia directly on the grill and cook until the bottom side shows grill marks. Move to the upper rack and continue cooking until cheese is melted and bubbly.

Cherry Marinated Flank Steak

2 pounds flank steak

for marinade:

1/3 cup minced shallots, or garlic

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons sour cherry concentrate

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1/4 cup olive oil

3 tablespoons fresh thyme

big dash hot pepper sauce

Mix marinade ingredients in shallow dish or large zip-lock bag. "Score" the steak: using the tip of a knife, make small cuts all the way through the meat, in horizontal, parallel pattern on one side. Turn steak over, "score" in vertical lines on the other side. Place steak in dish or bag, turn over. Turn steak and spread marinade over every half hour, for at least 2 hours, or up to 24 hours in refrigerator. Bring steak to room temperature before cooking.

Preheat grill or broiler. Remove steak from marinade, pat dry. Place steak on grill or under broiler at the distance from heat and for times given below. Turn every 1-2 minutes to help keep the meat tender. Remove to warmed platter, let stand 3-4 minutes.

Serves 6.

Caramelized Onions

3 large sliced onions

1 tablespoon butter

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon sugar

In large pan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in onions. Sprinkle with salt and sugar. Cook slowly, stirring occasionally, until onions are caramelized but not burned, 30 to 45 minutes.

Strawberry Buttermilk Ice Cream

1 cup sugar
1 cup strawberries, washed, hulled and quartered
Juice of 1 lemon
1 tablespoon corn syrup
Pinch of salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups buttermilk
Balsamic vinegar (for garnish)

In a small saucepan, bring sugar and strawberries to a boil; remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice, corn syrup, salt and vanilla extract. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until chilled.

In blender jar, blend cooled strawberry mixture and buttermilk. Freeze in an ice-cream maker, following manufacturer's instructions. Serve with a drizzle of good quality balsamic vinegar.

Makes about 5 cups.