

COOKING AT REN

March 12, 2012

Cauliflower Vichyssoise

2 Tbl unsalted butter
2 large leeks, white and tender green parts, thinly sliced
2 lb cauliflower, cut into large florets
6 cups water
1/3 cup crème fraîche
Salt and freshly ground white pepper
2 Tbl finely diced peeled cucumber
2 Tbl minced chives
1 Tbl minced shallot

1 Tbl rice vinegar
1 Tbl extra-virgin olive oil

Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Add the leeks and cook over low heat until tender, about 8 minutes. Add the cauliflower and water and bring to a boil. Simmer over low heat until the cauliflower is soft, about 35 minutes. Add the crème fraîche, bring back to a simmer and remove from the heat.

Puree the soup in a blender in batches until very smooth. Season with salt and pepper and chill thoroughly. if serving cold

Just before serving, combine the cucumber, chives, shallot, vinegar and olive oil in a small bowl. Ladle the soup into 4 shallow bowls and spoon the cucumber mixture in the middle of the soup.

Serves 6

Zucchini Tomato Verrines

2 tablespoons pine nuts
4 medium tomatoes-peeled, seeded and finely diced
1/2 cup finely diced zucchini
1 garlic clove, minced
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1 Pinch of ground cumin
1 tablespoon finely chopped basil, plus small basil leaves for garnish
1 tablespoon finely chopped dill
1 tablespoon finely chopped chives
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/2 cup mascarpone cheese, at room temperature
2 large eggs, separated
1/3 oz finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (about 4 ounce)
3 very thin slices of prosciutto, cut in half

In a small skillet, toast the pine nuts over moderately low heat until golden, about 4 minutes. In a bowl, toss the tomatoes, zucchini, garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, cumin and chopped herbs. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon the salad into small glasses or jars.

In a medium bowl, mix the mascarpone with the egg yolks and grated parmigiano cheese. In another bowl, beat the egg whites with a pinch of salt until soft peaks form. Using a rubber spatula, fold the beaten whites into the mascarpone until no streaks remain. Season with salt and pepper. Spoon the mascarpone cream into each glass over the zucchini salad. Cover each

glass with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

Heat oven to 350° F. Place prosciutto in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake until crisped, 8 - 10 mins and let cool.

Sprinkle the pine nuts over the mascarpone cream, top each verrine with a prosciutto crisp and a few basil leaves and serve.

Serves 6

Provençal Braised Lamb Chops

6 (1/2-inch-thick) lamb shoulder chops (1 3/4 pounds total)
 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
 9 garlic cloves, thinly sliced lengthwise
 3 medium onions, sliced
 2 bay leaf
 2 1/2 cups dry white wine
 4 large thyme sprigs
 2/3 cup oil-cured black olives
 24 oz can chicken stock or broth

Preheat oven to 375°F with rack in middle.

Pat chops dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a heavy skillet over medium-high heat until it shimmers, then cook garlic, stirring constantly, until golden, about 1 minute. Transfer garlic to a plate. Brown chops in 2 batches, turning once, about 4 minutes total per batch. Transfer to a plate.

Add onions, bay leaf, salt, and pepper to same skillet and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, 10 to 12 minutes. Add wine and bring to a boil, scraping up brown bits, then remove from heat.

Scatter half of onions in a shallow 3-quart baking dish, then top garlic, thyme, and olives over onions, then top with lamb chops. Repeat layering remaining onions, then pour wine, broth, and meat juices over top.

Bake, uncovered, basting top with juices once or twice, until meat is tender when pierced with tip of a knife, about 1 1/2 hours.

Serves 6

Vichy Carrots

2 lbs carrots, coarsely chopped
3 cups sparkling water
4 Tbl Butter
Salt & Pepper
1 Tbl chopped parsley

In a large saucepan, cover the carrots with the sparkling water and bring to a boil over moderately high heat. Stir in 3 tablespoons of the butter and 1 teaspoons of salt. Reduce the heat to moderate and simmer until the carrots are tender when pierced with a knife and the cooking liquid is reduced to 1/4 cup, about 25 minutes.

Transfer the carrots and their cooking liquid to a food processor and let cool for 10 minutes. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter and process until smooth. Add the chopped parsley and pulse until just incorporated. Season the carrot puree with salt and pepper, transfer to a bowl and serve.

Serves 6

Roasted Asparagus with Pistachio Polonaise

1/3 cup shelled pistachio uts
3 1/2 lbs peeled green asparagus tough stems snapped off
3 Tbl butter
Salt
2 hard cooked eggs
1 1/2 Tbl chives
1 1/2 Tbl Parsley
1 1/2 tea tarragon

Preheat oven to 400. Spread the pistachios in a sheet pan and toast for 8 mins until slightly brown. Let cool and then chop

Arrange spears on a baking sheet. Toss with olive oil and salt and pepper. Roast in the oven until asparagus is tender and just turing golden about 10-12 minutes.

In a large skillet, melt the butter over high heat until lightly browned about 3 mins. Add the asparagus, toss to coat transfer to a platter. Coarsely grate the eggs over the top. Sprinkle with the nuts, chives, parsley and tarragon

Serves 6

Berry Gratin with Lemon Sabayon

Lemon Sabayon

1/4 cup water
 1/2 teaspoon lemon zest grated
 3 tablespoons juice from 2 large lemons
 pinch salt
 3 large egg yolks
 1/3 cup sugar

Berries

1 cup fresh raspberries
 1 cup fresh blackberries
 1 cup fresh blueberries
 3 tablespoons sugar for caramelized crust

Sabayon:

Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees.

Combine the water, lemon zest, lemon juice, and salt in a small bowl and set aside.

Whisk the egg yolks and sugar in a medium bowl until frothy, about 1 minute. Set the bowl over a pan of simmering water. Continue whisking until the mixture begins to thicken, about 1 minute.

Gradually whisk in the lemon mixture and continue cooking, whisking constantly, until the mixture is thick, light yellow, and tripled in volume, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove the bowl from the saucepan, whisk constantly for about 30 seconds to cool, then set aside while preparing the berries, occasionally whisking the mixture.

Berries:

Combine the berries in a wide, shallow 2-quart broiler-safe gratin dish or divide among 6 ramekins or individual gratin dishes set on a rimmed baking sheet.

Bake the berries until the fruit is warm and just beginning to release its juices, about 8 minutes. Remove the berries from the oven. Spoon the lemon sabayon over the berries and sprinkle with the sugar. Ignite a kitchen torch and caramelize the sugar. Serve immediately

Serves 6

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Cooking At Ren **Meet The Chef**

Chef Mark Wright dining restaurants cooking is an
has been cooking in the Chicago experience that
since his area. He combines anyone can enjoy
childhood. He his passion for given the right
received his formal food with his inspiration.
training from two desire to educate
renowned culinary and delight with
programs and has every meal he
worked at several prepares. His
restaurants fine philosophy is that