

COOKING AT REN

March 1, 2012

Roasted Grape Tomatoes

3 pints grape tomatoes
9 garlic cloves, smashed
1 cup plus 1 1/2 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 tea crushed red pepper
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 sprig fresh rosemary
2 sprig fresh oregano
twelve 3/4-inch slices of ciabatta

Preheat the oven to 400°. On a large rimmed baking sheet, toss the tomatoes with the garlic, crushed red pepper and 1 1/2 tablespoon of the olive oil and season with salt and pepper.

Roast the tomatoes for about 20 minutes, until they burst and their skins begin to shrivel, stirring once halfway through.

Pour the remaining 1 cup of olive oil into a medium bowl. Crush the rosemary and oregano between your fingers and submerge them in the oil.

Add the tomatoes and their juices, stir gently and let stand for 30 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 350°. Arrange the ciabatta on a baking sheet and toast for 10 minutes, or until crisp.

Spoon the tomatoes and some of the infused oil over the ciabatta, sprinkle with salt and serve.

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Sweet Potato Gnocchi

6 pounds sweet potatoes,
scrubbed
Salt
1 1/2 cup plus 4 tablespoons
all-purpose flour
4 large egg yolks, beaten
Freshly ground pepper

In a saucepan, cover the sweet potatoes with water; add salt and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer until tender, about 30 minutes; let cool slightly.

Peel the sweet potatoes and puree them in a food processor. Transfer 6 2/3 cups of the puree to a large bowl. Lightly beat in the flour and egg yolks and season with salt and pepper. Spoon the dough into a pastry bag fitted with a 1/2-inch round tip. Working in batches over a large saucepan of simmering water, pipe out the dough, cutting it into 3/4-inch lengths.

Cook the gnocchi for 45 seconds. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the gnocchi to a baking sheet.

In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of the butter. Add half the gnocchi and cook over moderate heat until golden, about 2 minutes.

Serves 12

Parmesan Cream

1 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup milk
2/3 cup shredded Comté
cheese
2/3 cup grated parmigiano
Salt and White Pepper

In a saucepan, bring the cream and milk to a boil; transfer to the food processor.

Add the Comté and Parmigiano-Reggiano and let stand for 5 minutes. Process until smooth. Season with salt and white pepper.

Sausage and Peppers

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 large red onion, cut into 2-inch chunks
4 red bell peppers, cored, seeded, and cut into 2-inch chunks
4 green bell peppers, cored, seeded, and cut into 2-inch chunks
6 fresh hot Italian sausages
6 fresh sweet Italian sausages
2 cup milled or crushed canned Italian plum tomatoes
1 1/2 cups dry red wine
Pinch of dried oregano
Salt and freshly ground pepper

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, onion, and peppers, and cook, stirring, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes.

Add the sausages, and cook about 4 minutes more, until sausages begin to brown. Add the tomatoes, wine, oregano, and a large pinch of salt.

Cover, bring to a simmer, and simmer gently about 25 minutes, until the peppers are very soft. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve immediately.

Broccoli Rabe with Melted Garlic

3/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
20 cloves garlic thinly sliced
1 tea crushed red pepper
4 lbs broccoli rabe thick stems trimmed

Heat olive oil in small saucepan over low heat. Add garlic and simmer until garlic is very tender, about 10 minutes (do not brown).

Remove from heat; stir in dried crushed red pepper.

Cook broccoli rabe in very large pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain well. Toss with melted garlic and oil. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Rosemary Polenta

1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter
1/4 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary leaves
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 cups chicken stock
2 cups half-and-half
2 cups milk
2 cups polenta
1/2 cup grated Parmesan

Heat the butter and olive oil in a large saucepan. Add the garlic, red pepper flakes, rosemary, salt, and pepper and saute for 1 minute.

Add the chicken stock, half-and-half, and milk and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and slowly sprinkle the cornmeal into the hot milk while stirring constantly with a whisk. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for a few minutes, until thickened and bubbly. About 15-25 mins

Serve immediately.

Pear Chocolate Cake

1 cup all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 3 eggs, at room-temperature
 4 ounces (1 stick) unsalted butter
 3/4 cup sugar
 3 pears, peeled, in a small dice (I used anjou, but would recommend a softer variety, like a bosc or any other of your favorites)
 3/4 cup bittersweet chocolate chunks

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan and dust with flour

Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together, set aside.

Using a mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the eggs on high speed until pale and very thick. 5 - 9 mins depending on the mixer.

While the eggs are whipping, brown the butter. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan and cook it until the butter browns and smells nutty (about 6 to 8 minutes). It helps to frequently scrape the solids off the bottom of the pan in the last couple minutes to ensure even browning. Remove from the flame but keep in a warm spot.

Add the sugar to the eggs and whip a few minutes more.

Just as the egg-sugar mixture is starting to lose volume, turn the mixture down to stir, and add the flour mixture and brown butter. Add one third of the flour mixture, then half of the butter, a third of the flour, the remaining butter, and the rest of flour. Whisk until just barely combined — no more than a minute from when the flour is first added — and then use a spatula to gently fold the batter until the ingredients are combined. It is very important not to over-whisk or fold the batter or it will lose volume.

Pour into prepared pan. Sprinkle the pear and chocolate chunks over the top, and bake until the cake is golden brown and springs back to the touch, about 40 to 50 minutes or a tester comes out clean.

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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