

COOKING AT REN

April 15, 2012

Roasted Grape Tomatoes

2 pints grape tomatoes
6 garlic cloves, smashed
2/3 cup plus 1 tablespoon olive oil
1/4 tea crushed red pepper
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 sprig fresh rosemary
1 sprig fresh oregano
Six 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 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 2/3 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.

Serves 6

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Asian Pear Salad with Lemon Dressing

1 1/2 cups water
2 Tbl sugar
1 tablespoons kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
1/2 lemon
2 large Asian pears—halved, cored and thinly sliced lengthwise
1/4 cup crème fraîche or sour cream
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 medium shallot, minced
1/2 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and cayenne pepper
2 small heads frisée lettuce (1 pounds), tender green and white leaves only, torn into bite-size pieces
2 bunches watercress (1 pounds), thick stems discarded
1/2 red onion, thinly sliced lengthwise
3 oz ricotta salada

In a medium bowl, combine the water, sugar, kosher salt and fennel seeds; stir to dissolve the sugar and salt. Squeeze the lemon over the water and drop in the bowl. Add the Asian pears and stir. Cover the pears with a plate to keep them submerged and refrigerate overnight.

In a bowl, whisk the crème fraîche with the lemon juice, shallot and lemon zest. Gradually whisk in the olive oil and season with salt and cayenne.

Drain the pears in a colander. Add the pears, frisée, watercress and red onion to the dressing, season with salt and cayenne and toss. Shave the cheese over the salad and serve.

Serves 6

Lasagna with Sausage Bolognese

2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 cup chopped yellow onion (1 onion)
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 1 1/2 pounds sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes in tomato puree
 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, divided
 1/2 cup chopped fresh basil leaves
 Salt and Pepper
 1/2 pound lasagna noodles
 1 (15 ounces) ricotta cheese
 3 to 4 ounces creamy goat cheese, crumbled
 1 cup grated Parmesan, plus 1/4 cup for sprinkling
 1 extra-large egg, lightly beaten
 1 pound fresh mozzarella, thinly sliced

Preheat the oven to 400 F.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes over medium-low heat, until translucent. Add the garlic and cook for 1 more minute. Add the sausage and cook over medium-low heat, breaking it up with a fork, for 8 to 10 minutes, until cooked through.

Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, 2 tablespoons of the parsley, the basil and season with salt and pepper. Simmer, uncovered, over medium-low heat, for 15 to 20 minutes, until thickened.

Meanwhile, fill a large bowl with the hottest tap water. Add the noodles and allow them to sit in the water for 20 minutes. Drain.

In a medium bowl, combine the ricotta, goat cheese, 1 cup of Parmesan, the eggs, the remaining 2 tablespoons of parsley, season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Ladle 1/3 of the sauce into a 9 by 12 by 2-inch rectangular baking dish, spreading the sauce over the bottom of the dish. Then add the layers as follows: half the pasta, half the mozzarella, half the ricotta, and one 1/3 of the sauce. Add the rest of the pasta, mozzarella, ricotta, and finally, sauce.

Sprinkle with 1/4 cup of Parmesan. Bake for 30 minutes, until the sauce is bubbling.

Serves 6

Broccoli Rabe with Garlic

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
6 cloves garlic thinly sliced
1/2 tea crushed red pepper
2 lbs broccoli rabe thick stems trimmed
Salt and Pepper

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the broccoli rabe and cook until just tender but still bright green about 3 mins drain and coarsely chop.

In a large deep skillet, heat the oil. Add the garlic and red pepper and cook over low heat until the garlic is golden about 3 mins. Add the broccoli rabe and cook over high heat stirring until hot about 4 mins season with salt and pepper.

Mascarpone Stuffed Dates

4 tablespoons mascarpone cheese or cream cheese
2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey
Pinch of finely grated lemon zest
Salt and freshly ground pepper
12 large Medjool dates (about 1/2 pound)
12 paper-thin slices of speck or prosciutto (1 1/2 ounces total), cut in half crosswise
2 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
4 teaspoons chopped parsley

Preheat the oven to 400°. In a small bowl, combine the mascarpone, lemon juice, honey and lemon zest and season with salt and pepper.

Make a slit in each date and remove the pit. Carefully fill each date with 1 1/2 teaspoons of the mascarpone mixture.

Wrap a slice of speck around each date and secure with a toothpick.

In a nonstick, ovenproof skillet, heat the olive oil. Add the dates and cook over high heat until the ham is crisp on the bottom, about 30 seconds. Turn the dates.

Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake for about 2 minutes, or until the dates are heated through and the centers are slightly runny. Discard the toothpicks and transfer the dates to a plate. Sprinkle with the parsley and serve.

Roasted Berry Panzanella with Zabaglione

1/4 cup plus 1 Tbl sugar
 1 Tbl hot water
 3 Tbl extra virgin olive oil
 One 3/4 lb loaf sourdough
 crust removed cut into 1 inch
 pieces (about 10 cups)
 1 cups raspberries
 1 cups blackberries
 1 cups blueberries
 2 Tbl orange juice
 3/4 cup plus 2 Tbl Moscato d'
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 8 large egg yolks
 1 Tbl mint

Preheat the oven to 350°. In a small bowl, mix 1 tablespoon of the sugar with the hot water, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil and stir to combine.

Arrange the bread cubes on a large rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle the bread cubes with the sugar-syrup-and-olive-oil mixture and toss to coat. Bake until the bread cubes are crisp and golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Combine the berries in a wide shallow 2 quart dish. Bake the berries until the fruit is warm and just beginning to release its juices, about 8 minutes. Remove the berries from the oven.

In a medium stainless steel bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar and 3/4 cup of Moscato. Fill a large bowl with ice water. Set the bowl with the eggs over a medium saucepan filled with 1 inch of barely simmering water (you can also use a double boiler).

Remove the zabaglione from the heat and whisk in the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Carefully set the bowl in the ice bath and whisk the zabaglione until chilled, about 5 minutes.

To serve, add the bread cubes and mint to the fruit in the bowl and toss well. Transfer the panzanella to shallow bowls, top each one with a large dollop of zabaglione and serve right away.

Serves 6-8

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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