

COOKING AT REN

February 13, 2012

Mango Pomegranate Guacamole

6 ripe avocados (3 pounds total)

1 1/2 cup finely chopped white onion (Optional)

3 fresh serrano chiles, finely chopped (2 tablespoons), including seeds

3 oz fresh lime juice, or to taste

1 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds (from 1 pomegranate)

1 1/4 cup diced peeled mango

3/4 cup chopped cilantro

Halve, pit, and peel avocados. Coarsely mash in a bowl. Stir in onion, chiles, 1/4 cup lime juice, and 1 1/4 teaspoons salt.

Fold in pomegranate seeds, mango, and cilantro. Season with salt and additional lime juice.

Serving: 10

Crispy Bacon Wrapped Dates **With Almonds and Goat Cheese**

40 Medjool dates pitted
40 roasted almonds
4 oz mild goat cheese
20 slices of bacon halved
crosswise

Preheat the oven to 400°. Cut a lengthwise slit in the dates. Stuff each one with an almond and about 1/2 teaspoon of the goat cheese. Pinch the dates closed.

Wrap each date securely in a piece of bacon and arrange the dates, seam side down, on a wire rack set on a baking sheet. Bake the stuffed dates for about 20 minutes, or until the bacon is browned and crisp; turn each date after 10 minutes.

Serves 10

Braised Short Ribs With Ancho Chile Sauce

4 dried ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, and ribs discarded
2 cups boiling-hot water
1 medium onion, quartered
3 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped canned chipotle chiles in adobo plus 2 teaspoons adobo sauce
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon salt
6 lb beef short ribs or flanken
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1/2 cup brewed coffee

Preheat oven to 350°F. Soak ancho chiles in boiling-hot water until softened, about 20 minutes, then drain in a colander set over a bowl. Taste soaking liquid: It will be a little bitter, but if unpleasantly so, discard it; otherwise, reserve for braising. Transfer ancho chiles to a blender and purée with onion, garlic, chipotles with sauce, maple syrup, lime juice, and 1 teaspoon salt.

Pat ribs dry and sprinkle with pepper and salt. Heat oil in a heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then brown ribs in batches, turning occasionally, about 5 minutes per batch. Transfer browned short ribs to a roasting pan just large enough to hold ribs in 1 layer.

Carefully add chile purée to fat remaining in skillet and cook over moderately low heat, stirring frequently, 5 minutes. Add reserved chile soaking liquid (or 1 1/2 cups water or beef stock) and coffee and bring to a boil, then pour over ribs (liquid should reach about halfway up sides of meat).

Cover roasting pan tightly with foil and braise ribs until very tender, 3 to 3 1/2 hours. Skim fat from pan juices. Serve ribs with pan juices and chimichurri

Serves 6

Opal Basil Chimichurri

1/4 cup red wine vinegar
2 cloves garlic
1 jalapeño
2 dried bay leaves, crumbled
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup chopped opal basil leaves (regular basil works just as well)
1/2 cup olive oil

Combine the vinegar, garlic, jalapeño, bay leaves, and salt and pepper in a blender and purée until smooth. Pour into a bowl and stir in the basil and olive oil. Set aside.

Latin Spiced Seared Tofu With Onion & Mojo

Mojo:

4 cloves garlic, crushed
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons olive oil (not extra virgin)
1½ teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Tofu:

Latin Spice blend for coating tofu (see below)
1 (16-ounce) block of tofu, cut into 3 equal slabs
1 large onion, slivered or cut into strips
2 teaspoons olive oil

Latin Spice Blend:

2 tablespoons paprika
1 tablespoon cumin
1 tablespoon granulated onion
1 tablespoon granulated garlic
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon black pepper
2 teaspoons thyme
2 teaspoons oregano
1 tablespoon ground dry chile of your choice, such as chipotle, ancho or cayenne

In a small saucepan on very low heat, make the mojo by combining the garlic, lime juice, olive oil, salt, pepper, and parsley. Let it come up to a light simmer for 2 to 3 minutes, and then remove from heat.

Pan-sear the tofu and set aside.

In a large skillet, heat the olive oil on high heat until it starts to ripple, and add the onions and sauté them for about 2 to 5 minutes, until they begin to brown.

Continue cooking onions for about 5 minutes, then remove from heat and allow to cool for 2 to 3 minutes.

Pour the mojo mixture into the skillet containing the onions. Place the tofu on a plate and spoon the onion mixture over it.

Serves 2-3

Mashed Yucca

1 lb Yucca, peeled and cut into
1 inch cubes
1/2 cup warm milk
3 Tbl unsalted butter
Salt and Pepper

In a medium saucepan, cover the yucca with water and boil over moderately high heat until tender, 25 minutes. Drain well.

Return the yucca to the saucepan and shake over moderate heat for 10 seconds to dry it out.

Remove from the heat and mash the yucca with a potato masher. Mash in the milk and then the butter. Season with salt and pepper; keep warm.

Serves 5

Roasted Corn With Manchego & Lime

6 ears of sweet yellow corn,
unhusked (2 12 oz bags frozen)
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive
oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Kosher salt
freshly ground black pepper
1 jalapeño, seeded, finely diced
1/2 teaspoon crushed red
pepper flakes
1 lime, cut into wedges
1 cup finely grated Manchego
cheese
1/4 cup thinly sliced chives
2 teaspoons finely grated lime
zest

Preheat oven to 450°. Roast unhusked corn on a baking sheet, turning occasionally, until heated through and crisp-tender, about 15 minutes.

Let cool. Shuck corn and cut kernels from cobs. Discard cobs. Heat oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add corn kernels and sauté until heated through and light-golden in spots, 3–5 minutes. Add butter; stir until melted.

Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer corn to a large bowl or platter; sprinkle jalapeño and crushed red pepper flakes over. Squeeze lime wedges over; sprinkle with cheese, chives, and lime zest.

Serves 6-8

Chocolate Spiced Cake With Rum Ginger Ice Cream

14 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
 1 1/4 cups (2 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
 2 teaspoons ground coriander
 2 teaspoons ground cardamom
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
 6 large eggs
 6 large egg yolks
 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
 3 cups powdered sugar
 1 cup all purpose flour

Generously butter 8 3/4 cup soufflé dishes. Stir chocolate, butter, coriander, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, and white pepper in heavy medium saucepan over low heat until melted and smooth. Cool slightly. Whisk eggs, egg yolks, and vanilla in large bowl to blend. Whisk in powdered sugar, then chocolate mixture, then flour. Transfer batter to prepared dishes, filling to top and dividing equally.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Bake cakes until batter has risen above dish, top edges are dark brown, and centers are still soft and runny, about 15 minutes.

Run small knife around cakes to loosen. Allow cakes to rest in dishes 5 minutes. Using hot pad and holding dish very firmly, place plate gently atop 1 cake and invert onto plate. Repeat with remaining cakes. Dust with powdered sugar. Serve cakes with rum-ginger ice cream.

Candied Ginger Ice Cream

1 pint vanilla ice cream, softened
 2 tablespoons chopped crystallized ginger
 1 tablespoon dark rum

Place softened ice cream in medium bowl. Using plastic spatula, fold ginger and rum into ice cream. Transfer to airtight container. Freeze ice cream mixture until firm, about 4 hours. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep frozen.)

Serves 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