

Winter Wonderland

January 13, 2010

**Prosciutto and Port-Fig
Tea Sandwiches**



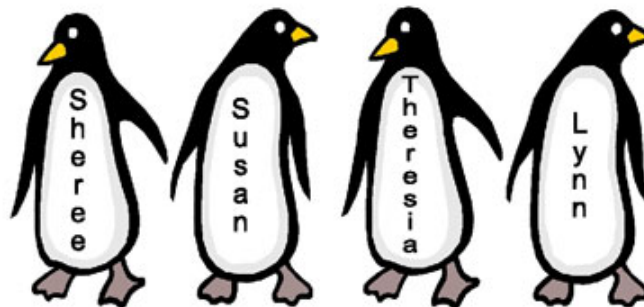
Warm Veggie Salad



Beef Burgundy



Baked Alaska



Prosciutto and Port-Fig Butter Tea Sandwiches

From Martha Stewart's Hors d'Oeuvres Handbook

Prosciutto and figs are a classic Italian flavor combination, and the port adds another layer of richness. Two-colored marble bread blends rye and pumpernickel for a very attractive look, but if you can't find marble, substitute white or rye.

Makes 2 dozen.

3 ounces Port-Fig Butter (see below), at room temperature
12 ¼ inch thick slices of marble bread
3 ounces thinly slice prosciutto

Generously butter all of the slices of bread. Place the prosciutto in an even layer over 6 of the bread slices. Top each with a second slice of bread, butter slice down. Trim the crusts. Cut each sandwich into 4 squares and serve.

Port-Fig Butter

Makes enough for 4 dozen tea sandwiches.

4 large dried figs (3 to 4 ounces)
3 Tbsp port wine
8 Tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
½ tsp kosher salt

Place the figs in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse just until the figs are finely chopped, about 30 seconds. Transfer the figs to a small bowl. Set aside.

Heat the port in a small saucepan for about 1 minute to warm. Pour the port over the figs. Let soak until the port is absorbed, 10 to 20 minutes.

Place the butter in the bowl of the food processor. Add the figs and salt. Pulse just until well combined with no chunks of butter remaining.

Transfer the butter mixture to a sheet of parchment or wax paper. Roll into a 1 inch wide log. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Warm Vegetable Salad

Recipe courtesy Giada De Laurentiis, FoodNetwork.com

Prep Time: 15 min

Cook Time: 25 min

Level: Intermediate

Serves: 4 to 6

- 2 whole red peppers
- 1 1/2 pound assorted red and white new potatoes
- 3/4 pounds green beans, trimmed and halved
- 1 bunch scallions, sliced
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons chopped oregano leaves
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the broiler. Place the red peppers on a foil lined baking sheet.

Place the red peppers under the boiler. Turning every 2 to 3 minutes cook the peppers until the skin is blistered, about 8 to 9 minutes total. Place the blistered peppers in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and allow the peppers to sit for 10 minutes to allow the skin to separate and to let cool.

Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the potatoes and cook until tender, about 10 to 12 minutes. Remove the potatoes to a cutting board. Add the green beans to the pot. Cook the green beans until tender, about 3 minutes. Remove the green beans to a large bowl. Slice the potatoes in half while still warm and combine them with the green beans in the large bowl. Remove the peppers from the plastic bag. Peel off the skin from the peppers. Slice the pepper flesh into wide strips and remove the seeds and veins. Place them in the bowl with the potatoes. Add the scallions, parsley, and garlic and toss to combine.

In a small bowl combine the oregano, lemon juice and zest, and white wine vinegar. Whisk in the olive oil. Stir in the salt and pepper. Toss the warm vegetables with the herb vinaigrette. Serve immediately.

Beef Burgundy

This is a slight variation on Julia Child's Boeuf Bourguignon recipe. It is also similar to Ina Garten's except that she puts brandy or Cognac in hers and flames it. I'm not that brave!

Serves 6 people

- 6 oz bacon, diced
- 1 Tbsp olive oil or cooking oil
- 3 lbs lean stewing beef cut into cubes
- 1 sliced carrot
- 1 sliced onion
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 2 Tbsp flour
- 3 cups red wine
- 2 to 3 cups beef broth, plus ½ cup for braising onions
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- 2 cloves garlic, mashed
- ½ tsp thyme
- 1 bay leaf, crushed
- butter and oil for sautéing mushrooms and onions

18 to 24 small white onions, brown-braised in ½ cup beef broth (see below)

1 lb quartered mushrooms, sautéed in butter and oil (see below)

Preheat oven to 450°.

In a fireproof casserole, sauté the diced bacon in the oil over moderate heat until lightly browned. Remove bacon to a side dish with a slotted spoon. Dry the beef cubes with paper towels; they won't brown if damp. Sauté the beef, a few pieces at a time, in the hot bacon fat and oil until nicely browned on all sides. Add each batch of beef to the reserved bacon. In the same fat, brown the sliced vegetables. Pour out the sautéing fat.

Return the beef and bacon to the casserole and toss with salt and pepper. Then sprinkle on the flour and toss again to coat the beef lightly. Set uncovered casserole in oven for 4 minutes. Toss the meat and return to oven for 4 minutes more. This browns the flour and forms a light crust on the meat. Remove casserole and turn down oven to 325°.

Stir in the wine and enough beef broth to barely cover the meat. Add the tomato paste, garlic, and herbs. Bring to a simmer on top of the stove. Then cover casserole and set in lower third of preheated oven. Regulate heat so liquid simmers very slowly for 3 to 4 hours.

While the beef is cooking, prepare small white onions and mushrooms:

Mushrooms:

Sauté quartered mushrooms in 2 Tbsp butter and 1 Tbsp oil until lightly browned. Set aside.

Onions:

Melt 1½ Tbsp butter and 1½ Tbsp oil in skillet. When bubbling, add onions and sauté over moderate heat for about 10 minutes, rolling the onions so that they will brown as evenly as possible. Pour ½ cup beef broth in skillet. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and simmer slowly for 40 to 50 minutes until the onions are tender but retain their shape, and the liquid has evaporated.

When the meat is tender, pour the contents of the casserole into a sieve set over a saucepan. Wash out the casserole and return the beef and bacon to it. Distribute the cooked onions and mushrooms over the meat.

Skim fat off the sauce. Simmer sauce for a minute or two, skimming off additional fat as it rises. You should have about 2 ½ cups of sauce thick enough to coat a spoon lightly. If too thin, boil it down rapidly. If too thick, mix in a few tablespoons of broth. Taste for seasoning. Pour sauce over the meat and vegetables.

Recipe may be completed in advance to this point.

If serving later, cover and refrigerate. About 15 to 20 minutes before serving, bring to a simmer, cover, and simmer very slowly for 10 minutes, basting meat and vegetables with sauce.

For immediate serving, cover casserole and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes, basting with sauce several times.

Serve with noodles or rice, or over toast points.

Baked Alaska

Serves 12

1 Quart Brick of Ice Cream
Meringue
Sponge Cake

Sponge Cake

1 cup cake flour
¼ tsp. salt
1 tsp. lemon or orange rind
1 cup sugar
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 ½ tsp. baking powder
4 eggs, separated
¼ cup boiling water

Stir rind into sugar. Beat egg yolks until very light. Gradually add sugar while beating. Beat in water. When cool, add lemon juice. Sift flour, baking powder and salt. Add to yolk mixture. Stir until blended.

Whip egg whites until stiff, but not dry.

Fold whites lightly into the batter.

Pour into 1 9" square pan and 1 9" round pan. Grease bottom of pan only, not sides. Save round cake for another purpose.

Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Place cooled cake on baking sheet. May layer sheet with foil first.

Place ice cream on cake. Trim cake around ice cream. Freeze cake and ice cream until rock hard.

Meringue

4 egg whites
½ tsp. cream of tartar
4 Tbsp. confectioners' sugar

Heat oven to 500 degrees. Beat egg whites and cream of tartar until foamy. Beat in sugar until stiff and dry. Completely cover ice cream and cake with the meringue, sealing it to the foil or baking sheet. This should be a thick coating. (If desired, it can be frozen up to 24 hours at this point.) Bake on lowest rack in oven 3-5 minutes until meringue is light brown. Cut cake into 6 slices and cut each slice in half.

Serve immediately.



Above left:
Prosciutto &
Port-Fig Butter
Tea Sandwiches

Above right:
Warm Veggie Salad

Left:
Beef Burgundy

Below:
Baked Alaska

