

Eat, Read, & Be Happy



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National Book Month

Under The Tuscan Sun Appetizers

Olive Puffs

- 1 can buttermilk biscuits
- 40 stuffed green olives
- 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Cut biscuits into quarters. Wrap each piece firmly around an olive. Roll in cheese. Place 1 inch apart on greased cookie sheet. Bake 6 to 8 minutes until golden brown.

Stuffed Mushrooms

- ½ pound fresh mushrooms
- 4 oz. pkg. Rondele spread with garlic & herb
- ¼ cup fresh crab meat
- 1 Tablespoon fresh parsley
- 2 Tablespoons dry sherry

Wash carefully and remove stems from mushrooms. Combine remaining ingredients in small mixing bowl. Fill mushroom caps with stuffing mixture. Broil until tops are browned, 5 to 8 minutes.

"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket."
Chinese proverb

My Secret Garden Salad

Baby Lettuces with Snap Peas and Extra Herby Ranch

Serves 4-6

4-8 oz. snap peas

Salt

6 packed cups baby lettuces (about 9 oz.)

3 medium spring carrots

1/2 cup toasted pumpkin seeds

1/2 cup toasted sunflower seeds

Finely shred the carrots using a mandolin or food processor

Destring snap peas by pinching off the top of the pea, pulling inward to remove the string along the inside edge of the pea. Repeat along the outside edge.

Add peas to boiling water along with a generous amount of salt. Cook for 30 seconds until the peas have slightly softened, but still have a snap. Drain and dunk into an ice bath to stop the cooking.

Add peas and lettuces and carrots. Just before serving add the seeds and dress the salad to taste.

Extra Herby Ranch Dressing

1 clove garlic

1 1/2 Tbsp. minced shallot

1/2 cup Aioli or mayonnaise

1/2 cup buttermilk

1/2 cup sour cream

1/2 tsp. salt

1/8 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup finely chopped fresh chives

1/3 cup finely chopped fresh dill

Combine garlic, shallot, Aioli Buttermilk, and sour cream in a blender. Blend until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Fold in the chopped herbs and allow to sit in the refrigerator for at least 10 minutes to thicken up a bit.

Notes: I refrigerated it overnight, then added the herbs just before serving. I used half aioli and half mayonnaise.

Aioli

Yields 1 cup

1 large egg yolk @ room temperature

1 1/2 tsp. Champagne vinegar or other light-colored vinegar such as apple cider

3/4 tsp. cold water

1/4 tsp. Dijon mustard, optional

1 1/4 tsp. salt

1 cup refined olive oil or other neutral oil such as grapeseed or avocado oil

By Hand (Recommended):

Add egg, vinegar, water, mustard and salt in medium bowl. Whisk to combine. Slowly whisk in the oil a few tablespoons at a time, making sure that the oil completely incorporates the egg yolk mixture each time before adding more.

By Food Processor:

Do the same as by hand, adding ingredients gradually. Blend slowly and completely. Blend until thick. Adjust the seasonings.

The Lion Women Of Jehran

Lamb with Couscous and Roasted Grapes

BBQ LAMB CHOPS – Scott 2025

Rack(s) of lamb, 7-8 chops on each rack

balsamic vinegar

extra-virgin olive oil spray (like La Tourangelle organic)

salt and pepper

1. Night before or at a minimum 2 hours before grilling, cut between each chop to about ¼ inch from bottom of the rack. Put rack into plastic zip-lock bag and pour balsamic vinegar & sprinkle salt & pepper on the chops. Zip close bag. Refrigerate one hour.
2. Pre-heat grill to 250-300 degrees.
3. Cut the rack into chops. Return chops to zip-lock bag & rest on counter until room temp, about 1 hour.
4. Spray olive oil on both sides of the chops before laying flat on the grill. For thin chops, grill about 3 minutes on each side. For thicker chops, grill about 3-1/2 minutes on each side.
5. Spray tops of chop with olive oil & turn over onto grill. Depending upon thin or thick chops, grill 3 to 3-1/2 minutes.

COUSCOUS WITH ALMONDS, APRICOTS, HERBS – Hilary 2017

1 cup Israeli (pearl) couscous

1 1/4 cups vegetable stock (optional, could use water, or chicken stock)

Extra-virgin olive oil (about 1 tbsp)

1 small red onion, small dice

1/4 cup dried apricots, coarsely chopped

1/4 cup whole almonds toasted, coarsely chopped

1/2 teaspoon lemon zest

2 scallions green parts only

1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, roughly chopped

1/2 bunch fresh cilantro leaves, roughly chopped plus leaves for garnish

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Prepare couscous according to directions on package.
2. In a medium saucepan add the extra-virgin olive oil. Add red onion, apricots and almonds and sauté gently over low heat until translucent and slightly fragrant. Add cooked couscous. Stir with a fork to combine, add lemon zest, scallions, mint, and cilantro. Fluff with a fork. Season with salt and pepper.

ROASTED GRAPES – The Mediterranean Dish

3 cups seedless table grapes (about 1 pound)

1 1/2 cups tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 1/2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

1/4 small red onion, small dice

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

black pepper, freshly ground and fresh thyme sprigs

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Add grapes to baking sheet. Toss with olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper and thyme sprigs.
3. Bake for 20 minutes, or until grapes start to burst and char in places.

Notes:

1. Better if not large size grapes. Any variety or can roast a mixture of grape varieties.
2. Red onion, small dice (not mini size). Too small size will burn while roasting.
3. Removed roasted thyme sprigs before serving.
4. If increasing recipe, do not crowd in roasting pan. Better to roast in 2 pans.
5. Check after 20 minutes. My roasting took longer than 20 minutes.

"You know you've read a good book when you turn the last page and feel a little as if you have lost a friend."

Paul Sweeney

"I cannot remember the books I've read any more than the meals I have eaten; even so, they have made me."

Emerson

Mr. Darcy's Favorite Sticky Toffee Pudding



Yield 15 Servings (2-1/2 Cups Sauce)

Sticky toffee pudding is a sponge cake that's loaded with softened dates and soaked to the core with a heavy-handed pour of homemade butterscotch sauce.

Ingredients :

2 cups coarsely chopped dates (about 12 ounces)
2-1/2 cups water
2 teaspoons bakingsoda
1/2 cup butter, softened
1-2/3 cups sugar
4 large eggs, room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

Butterscotch Sauce:

7 tablespoons butter, cubed
2-1/4 cups packed brown sugar
1 cup half-and-half cream
1 tablespoon brandy
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
Whipped cream, optional

Directions

- 1** Preheat oven to 350°. In a small saucepan, combine dates and water; bring to a boil. Remove from heat; stir in baking soda. Cool to lukewarm. Once the dates have soaked thoroughly, feel free to add them to a food processor to make the mixture extra smooth and creamy.
- 2** In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. In another bowl, mix flour and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture. Stir in date mixture.
- 3** Transfer to a greased 13x9-in. baking pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 50-60 minutes. Cool slightly in pan on a wire rack.
- 4** Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, melt butter; add brown sugar and half-and-half. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in brandy and vanilla. Serve sauce warm with warm cake. If desired, top cake with whipped cream.

*"The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not
pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid."
Jane Austen*