

Filets mignons are treat

The following recipes are reprinted from the February issue of Gourmet magazine, from a menu for an adult birthday party.

FILETS MIGNONS WITH ORANGE BEARNAISE SAUCE

Filet of 1 navel orange, removed with a vegetable peeler and minced (about 3 tablespoons), plus additional rind cut into fine julienne strips for garnish.
2 teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried tarragon, crumbled
four 2-inch-thick filets mignons, the edges wrapped with thin slices of fresh pork fat or bacon secured with kitchen string
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, roasted green beans and roasted scallions (recipes follow) as accompaniments
orange bearnaise sauce

Let the julienne strips of rind stand at room temperature for 3 hours, or until they are curled. On a plate combine well the minced rind, the ground peppercorns, and the tarragon, press the mixture onto the tops and bottoms of the filets, and chill the filets, wrapped in plastic wrap, for at least 6 hours or overnight. In a heavy skillet heat the oil over moderately high heat until it is hot but not smoking and in it sear the filets, brushed off lightly and sprinkled with salt to taste, for 2 minutes on each side. Reduce the heat to moderate and cook the filets, turning them on all sides, for 15 minutes; more for rare meat. Transfer the filets to a platter; remove the strings, and garnish the filets with the curled julienne rind. Garnish the platter with some of the roasted green beans and roasted scallions and serve the remaining roasted green beans and roasted scallions and the orange bearnaise sauce separately. Serves 4.

For added convenience the green beans and scallions can be roasted at the same time.

ROASTED GREEN BEANS

1 1/2 pounds green beans, trimmed if desired
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

In large bowl toss the green beans with the oil and salt and pepper to taste until they are coated well, spread them in one layer in a jelly-roll pan, and roast them in a preheated 500 degree oven, stirring once, for 10 minutes. Serves 4.

ROASTED SCALLIONS

24 scallions, trimmed into 8-inch lengths
1 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Coat the scallions with the oil, arrange them in one layer in a jelly-roll pan, and sprinkle them with salt and pepper to taste. Roast the scallions in a preheated 500 degree oven for 5 to 7 minutes, or until they are just tender. Serves 4.

ORANGE BEARNAISE SAUCE

1/4 cup tarragon-wine vinegar (available at specialty foods shops and many supermarkets)
2 tablespoons minced shallot
2 tablespoons minced fresh tarragon or 2 teaspoons dried
1/4 teaspoon freshly grated orange rind
3 tablespoons fresh orange juice
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
3 large egg yolks
2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

In a small heavy saucepan combine the vinegar, the shallot, the tarragon, the rind, the orange juice, salt and pepper, bring the liquid to a boil and reduce it over moderately high heat to about 2 tablespoons. Transfer the mixture to a blender or food processor, add the yolks, and turn the motor on and immediately off. With the motor running add the butter in a stream. Transfer the sauce to a bowl and keep it warm, its surface covered with a buttered round of wax paper, in a saucepan of warm water. Makes about 1 cup.

cooking calendar

A two-part cooking series, "Cooking for Today's Lifestyle," is being sponsored by the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater Detroit Section. Classes will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays, Feb. 29 and March 7, at Kitchen Glamour at Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield.

Chef Tim Brolus will prepare vegetarian and side dishes on Feb. 29. The following week he will demonstrate low-cholesterol recipes. Seaters are to and non-members for \$8 each. Preregistration is preferred. Program chairwoman is Phyllis Schwartz of West Bloomfield. For further information, call 258-6000.

Latin lovers inspire romantic food

"Latin's make wonderful lovers," or so the story goes.

I know it's wrong to generalize, and I'm sure there are one or two Italian wives out there who might rebut the legend. But I'll never argue against it because all of my own romantic experiences with Latin men have been extremely enjoyable.

One of the things responsible for Mediterranean people earning such a reputation may be the foods they eat and the seasonings they use in preparing the dishes. Garlic and oregano are known to inspire passion.

Another delicacy often employed in French, Spanish, Italian and Greek cooking is the caper.

Capers are tiny, green, unopened flower buds from a bush that grows wild on the mountain slopes around the Mediterranean Sea.

These flavorful, tender little buds blend well with tomatoes and are often used in both hot and cold sauces.

Although bottled capers, packed in either salt or vinegar, are available in most American supermarkets, many people in this country are not acquainted with them.

Since folklore has it that they possess definite aphrodisiac qualities, you might want to try using some in a recipe or two when the romantic aura of Valentine's Day is fading, and your love life needs some perk-up again.

Capers can be used to enhance meat, poultry and fish, as well as vegetable dishes.

Here are a few of my favorite recipes:

TAPENADE

A terrific snack to serve when you and your someone special are spending a long winter evening in front of the fire, or the TV, as the case might be.

You will need a loaf of good Greek bread to dip in it, and a bottle of your favorite wine to wash it down.

Tapenade can be made a day in advance, if need be, and stored in the refrigerator. If you do this, be sure to mix it well before serving, and place it in a fresh dish.

1 7-oz. can tuna
1 can little black olives
1/4 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup (1 small jar) capers
2 (2-oz.) cans flat anchovy filets
2 (or more to taste) garlic cloves

Place all of the above in blender, and mix together at medium speed. Gradually add: 1/4 cup olive oil and 1/4 cup cognac and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

Blend until smooth.

STEAK TARTARE

An elegant raw beef appetizer, using capers, usually served only in the finest restaurants, but really quite easy to make. Serve with crackers or toast, by candlelight.

1. For each serving, use one 1/4 pound raw beefsteak (fillet or tenderloin is best). Cut off fat, and mince the steak finely. You can use your food processor, but don't overdo it, and make the meat paste.

2. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

3. Shape each serving into a little "cake," and place in the center of a small individual plate.

4. Make an indentation or nest in the center of each "cake," and slip the yolk of a raw egg into it.

5. Sprinkle with freshly chopped parsley.

6. Around each serving, on the edge of the plate, arrange decoratively a tablespoon each of chopped white onion, gourmet mustard, and capers (drain off the vinegar first).

Serve by candlelight.

If this dish is new to your guests, and they are not sure how to go about eating it, demonstrate by using your fork to break up the egg yolk, and mix it lightly into the beef.

Then spread the mixture on your toast or cracker, and top with a bit of mustard and a sprinkle of capers and onions.

Some people like to add oil, lemon or Worcestershire sauce to the beef and egg mixture, so you might like to serve these on the side.

Place all of the above in blender, and mix together at medium speed. Gradually add: 1/4 cup olive oil and 1/4 cup cognac and freshly ground black pepper, to taste.

Blend until smooth.

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kitchen witch

Gundella

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3. Add:
1 cup cooked, diced ham
2 tablespoons capers
1 tablespoon vinegar
1 cup diced fresh tomatoes
6 cups shredded cabbage
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup water

4. Mix well
5. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup soft bread crumbs.
6. Cover and cook until cabbage is tender (about 10-15 minutes).

Here are a couple of good caper sauces that can be used with your own recipes.

CAPER BUTTER SAUCE (Serve with vegetables or fish)
1/4 pound sweet, unsalted butter
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 cup capers
salt to taste

Melt butter and add capers, lemon juice and salt. Serve hot.

1. dice 1/4 pound bacon and fry until crisp.
2. Add 1 clove of garlic (chopped) and 1/4 cup chopped onions. Cook until onion is limp and transparent.

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