

Easter Dinner Menu

*Crisp Roasted Purple Potatoes
with Crème fraiche and Caviar*

*Butter Lettuce Salad with Pecorino,
Blood Oranges and Truffle Honey*

Fig Glazed Baked Ham

*Mashed Sweet Potatoes and Bananas
with Spiced Pecan Streusel*

Peas with Pearl Onions and Pancetta

Spring Vegetables with Lemon

Roasted White Asparagus

Italian Easter Bread

Lemon Angle Pie



Crisp Roasted Purple Potatoes with Crème Fraiche and Caviar

Makes 24

INGREDIENTS

12 fingerling purple potatoes
2 fresh lemons
½ cup water
4 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
¼ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
½ cup of crème fraiche (or sour cream)
1 teaspoon packed minced fresh dill
1 ounce caviar

Preserved Lemon (Make at least one day in advance.)

Using a vegetable peeler, remove the lemon peel from the lemon. (Use the yellow part only. Do not include any of the white pith, which can be bitter.) Simmer peel, water and salt in small saucepan over medium-high heat until the salt dissolves. Reduce heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until lemon/salt liquid is reduced to 2 tablespoons and the peel is tender. (About 10 minutes.) Transfer the peel and reduced liquid to a jar. Add fresh lemon juice and ¼ cup olive oil to the jar. Shake gently then refrigerate at least one day or up to one week.

Crème Fraiche Topping

Mince one tablespoon of the preserved lemon peel and the fresh dill. Combine the crème fraiche, the minced dill, and the preserved minced lemon peel in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate at least one hour, or up to eight hours.

Potatoes

Preheat oven to 450°F. Cut fingerling potatoes in half lengthwise or slice rounds from large potatoes. In a large bowl, drizzle potatoes with 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Toss gently to coat with oil, then sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Arrange potatoes on baking sheet cut side down and roast until cut sides are brown and crispy, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

Arrange potatoes on platter, cut side up. Top each potato with 1 teaspoon of cold crème fraiche and ½ teaspoon of caviar. Serve immediately. Very pretty and so delicious!

Butter Lettuce Salad with Pecorino, Blood Oranges and Truffle Honey

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

3 small heads of fresh butter lettuce

1/2 pound Pecorino cheese

6 ripe blood oranges

Vinaigrette

Citrus based salad dressing

Truffle Honey

Rinse and dry the butter lettuce. Tear or cut into bite-sized pieces. Place lettuce in large bowl and toss gently to coat with a vinaigrette and a citrus based salad dressing of your choice. Arrange lettuce on salad plates.

Grate or thinly slice the Pecorino cheese. Sprinkle cheese on lettuce or arrange slices on the side.

Slice the blood oranges into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wheels. Discard the end pieces. Cut the wheels into halves or quarters and remove the rind. Or, peel and remove membrane from each orange slice. Arrange the orange slices next to the cheese.

Drizzle truffle honey over the lettuce, oranges and cheese. Serve cool or room temperature.

OR

Toss all ingredients together and serve buffet style. A citrus based salad dressing may also be added just before serving.

Fig Glazed Baked Ham

INGREDIENTS

- 1 – boneless or bone-in Ham, pre-sliced or unsliced.
- 1 – 6 ounce jar of Fig Preserves or Fig jelly
- 1 – 6 ounce jar of honey Dijon mustard
- 6 ounces of pineapple juice
- 1 cup of brown sugar

Ham

Heat oven to 275°F. Remove the ham from its packaging. Place the ham in an open roasting pan inside the oven.

Bake ham according to instruction on package – or 25 minutes per pound, or until heated clear through. (The meat thermometer should read 130 °F when inserted into the thickest part of the ham.)

Glaze

Mix fig preserves, honey Dijon mustard, pineapple juice and brown sugar together in a small bowl.

Thirty minutes before the ham is finished baking, increase the oven temperature to 450°F. Brush the glaze over the ham. Finish baking.

When the ham is finished baking, remove it from the oven. Slice and serve hot.

Mashed Sweet Potatoes and Bananas with Spiced Pecan Streusel

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

10 medium-sized tan-skinned sweet potatoes (about 6 pounds), scrubbed clean
4 ripe bananas, unpeeled
1 cup (two sticks) butter, room temperature softened
Salt to taste
1/3 cup honey
1 1/2 cup chopped pecan pieces
3/4 cup packed golden brown sugar
1/2 cup all purpose white flour
1 teaspoon nutmeg or allspice, or cloves
1 teaspoon cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400°F. Pierce clean sweet potatoes with a fork. Place potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet or in a roasting pan and bake until almost soft, about 40 minutes. Thirty minutes into the baking process, add bananas to roasting pan and bake until banana skins are brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let potatoes and bananas cool at room temperature until they are cool enough to handle. Keep oven at 400°F.

Cut cooled potatoes in half and scoop out flesh into a large bowl. Peel bananas and add them to the sweet potato flesh. Add 1/2 cup butter and honey. Mix until blended and fluffy. Season to taste with salt.

Transfer potato/banana mixture to ovenproof baking dish, cover with streusel mixture, and bake until streusel is golden brown and potatoes are hot, or about 25 minutes.

Streusel Mixture

Mix nuts, brown sugar, flour and spices in a bowl. Add 1/2 cup of softened butter, and mix together with fingertips until the mix is crumbly.

Note:

The potato/banana mixture can be made the day before and refrigerated. Remember to preheat oven and cover with streusel mixture before baking.

Peas with Pearl Onions and Pancetta

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

3 pounds of fresh, shelled green peas (Or substitute frozen peas, thawed.)

1 ½ pounds of fresh pearl onions

½ pound of pancetta, sliced 1/8" – 1/4 " thick

In a large pot of boiling salted water, blanch fresh peas for 2- 3 minutes, or until barely tender. Set aside.

In the same pot, blanch onions for 5 minutes. Drain, cool, and peel.

Sauté onions and pancetta in large skillet over medium heat until fat is rendered and pancetta is golden, about 10 minutes. Onions will be caramelized in spots. Add peas. Heat through. Season with salt and pepper before transferring into serving bowl. Serve hot.

Sautéed Spring Vegetables with Lemon

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

6 fresh shallots, cut crosswise into thin slices

2 pounds fresh sugar snap peas, trimmed

2 pounds fresh asparagus, trimmed and cut diagonally into ½" pieces

3 pounds fresh fava beans, shelled, blanched in boiling water for 1 minute, and outer skins removed. Or substitute 1 pound frozen beans that have been thawed.

4 Tablespoons olive oil

2 Tablespoons unsalted butter

2 lemons

Cut 2 – 3" strips of lemon zest from the lemons. Cut zest into thin julienne strips. Squeeze 4 teaspoons of fresh juice from lemons. Set aside.

In large skillet, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil and ½ tablespoon butter over moderately high heat until butter foam subsides. Add shallots and sauté until tender, about 2 minutes. Remove shallots from skillet and place into bowl.

Add snap peas to skillet, sauté until crisp-tender. Salt to taste. Remove the peas from the skillet and place them in the bowl with the shallots.

In skillet, heat remaining olive oil and butter over moderately high heat until butter foam subsides. Sauté asparagus until crisp-tender. Add fava beans, sauté for two more minutes, stirring occasionally. Return snap peas and shallots to the skillet. Add lemon zest, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste. Continue to sauté until heated through. Serve at once.

Roasted White Asparagus

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds fresh white asparagus
2 tablespoons olive oil
salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Wash the asparagus and snap off any tough bottom ends. Allow to dry or pat dry with paper towels. Lightly coat the asparagus with olive oil and place on a baking sheet.

Roast one hour or until gently browned and tender. Add salt and pepper to taste.
Serve hot.

Easter Bread

Making this bread requires some understanding of leavening and bread making, which is described below. It also requires patience, as this dough which is rich with eggs and butter, requires several long risings. For the effort, it pays to make a larger quantity and enjoy for weeks after.

Makes 3 Loaves

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cups golden raisins

1/2 cup dark rum

1 cup milk

1 cup granulated sugar plus 2 tablespoons

Four 3/5-ounce cakes fresh yeast, crumbled (1/3 cup), or four 1-ounce packages instant dry yeast

9 cups unbleached all-purpose flour, or as needed, sifted

3 large eggs, at room temperature

6 large eggs yolks, at room temperature

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature, plus more for the bowl of dough

1/2 cup Vin Santo, Verduzzo, or other sweet white wine

Grated zest (yellow part only, without the underlying white pith) of 2 large lemons

Grated zest (orange part only, without the white pith) of 1 orange

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

2 tablespoons water

Combine the raisins with the rum in a small bowl and toss to mix. Let soak, tossing occasionally, while preparing the bread.

In a medium-size saucepan, heat the milk over medium heat to lukewarm, about 100°F. Pour the warmed milk into a large bowl and add 1/2 cup of the sugar and the yeast. Stir until they are dissolved. Add 1 cup of the flour and stir until the mixture is smooth. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and let it rise in a warm, draft-free place (such as on top of the refrigerator or in a gas oven with the pilot light on) until frothy. (If it doesn't get frothy, that means the yeast is no longer active and you will have to start again with fresh yeast.)

Stir the dough with a fork to deflate it, then let it rise and froth two more times, stirring it down thoroughly and covering it again after each time. Depending on the environment, these three risings can take from 20 minutes to 45 minutes each.

In the bowl of a heavy-duty electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, whip 2 of the whole eggs, 2 of the yolks, and the remaining 1/2 cup sugar together at medium speed until foamy and pale yellow. Add 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) of the butter, the wine, zests, salt, and vanilla. Beat until only small pieces of butter remain. Scrape the yeast mixture into the mixer bowl and beat until blended.

Change to the dough hook attachment of the mixer and reduce the speed to low. Add 5 cups of the remaining flour, 1 cup at a time, beating until the mixture forms a sticky dough. Wait for each cup of flour to be incorporated before adding the next and stop the machine occasionally to scrape any unmixed ingredients from the sides and bottom of the bowl into the dough. The dough will be quite sticky; form it into a rough ball, clean the sides of the bowl, and cover the bowl with a kitchen towel. Let the dough rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk, 1 to 2 hours.

Return the bowl of dough to the mixer fitted with the dough hook. Mix the dough at medium-low speed until deflated. Add the remaining 4 egg yolks and 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter and beat until incorporated. Gradually add enough of the remaining flour — about 2 cups — to form a firm but slightly sticky dough, stopping the mixer occasionally to scrape any unmixed ingredients from the bottom of the bowl into the dough. Add the raisins and rum and mix until incorporated. Dough will be quite wet and sticky at this point.

Turn the dough out onto a well-floured surface. Knead the dough, adding as much of the remaining 1 cup flour as necessary to prevent the dough from sticking to your hands and to the table, until the dough is smooth, soft, and only very slightly sticky if left to rest a minute.

Place the dough in a large lightly buttered bowl and turn the dough to butter all sides of it. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and set the dough to rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk, 1/2 to 2 hours, depending on the environment.

Turn the risen dough out onto the floured work surface and knead until deflated. Cut the dough into three equal pieces and knead each into a ball, gathering and pinching the seam side of the dough together to form as smooth a ball as possible. (These formed loaves can be tightly wrapped in plastic wrap and refrigerated overnight. Allow extra time for refrigerated loaves to rise in the following step.)

Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Place two loaves on one of the baking sheets, leaving as much space between them and the edges of the pan as possible. Place the third loaf in the center of the other baking sheet. With a pair of kitchen scissors, make three 1 1/2-inch-deep, 3-inch long intersecting cuts that meet at the center to form a six-pointed star pattern on the rounded top of each loaf. The cuts should be quite deep — at least halfway through the loaf — to allow the dough to rise up from the center and form the traditional crests on the loaf. Cover the loaves lightly with kitchen towels and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in bulk, 1 to 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Bake the bread for 35 minutes. Whisk the remaining whole egg with the remaining 2 tablespoons sugar and the water until very smooth and the sugar is dissolved. Brush the bread with this egg mixture, return them to the oven, and continue baking until very deep golden brown and a knife inserted into the center of the loaves comes out clean, about another 20 minutes.

Cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.

Lemon Angel Pie

Makes 1 Pie

INGREDIENTS

Meringue Crust

4 egg whites at room temperature

Pinch of salt

1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar, or ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar. (I use vinegar.)

1 cup of superfine granulated sugar*

2 teaspoons cornstarch

Pie Filling

4 egg yolks

½ cup granulated sugar

¼ cup fresh lemon juice (1 lemon)

Grated lemon zest from two lemons (Only use the yellow part of the peel.)

1 cup whipping cream

Optional Garnishes

Sweetened whipped cream, shreds of lemon peel, fresh mint leaves.

Preheat oven to 350° F. Line a shallow 9 inch glass, ceramic, or metal pie pan with parchment paper. (Cut out a 12 inch circle and place it into the pan, pleat the paper so it lies flat around the sides.)

To make the meringue crust: Place egg whites in a clean bowl of a free-standing mixer fitted with a whisk. Beat the egg whites on medium-high, add salt, vinegar, and slowly add the sugar* 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time. Beat until soft peaks form, about 2-3 minutes. Increase the speed to high and beat until stiff and glossy, about 3 more minutes. Sprinkle in the cornstarch during the last minute. Spread the meringue on top of the parchment paper and up the sides of the pie pan, leaving the middle hollow. The back of a large spoon works nicely.

Place on the middle rack in the oven and reduce the heat to 300° F. Bake for 1 hour. Turn off oven and leave the meringue inside with the door shut until the crust is completely cool, about 4 hours. Remove the parchment paper when completely cool.

Note: *If superfine sugar isn't available, place a generous cup of regular granulated sugar into a food processor or blender. Blend for 15 seconds. Measure out 1 cup.

To make the filling:

Beat egg yolks well. In the top of a double boiler, combine the eggs, sugar, lemon juice and lemon peel. Mix well. Cook over simmering water until the mixture is thickened, about 10 minutes. Mixture is thick enough when it mounds slightly when dropped from a spoon. Remove the egg mixture from the heat and cool at room temperature, about 1 to 1 ½ hours.

After the egg mixture has cooled, whip the whipping cream until stiff. Fold whipped cream into cooled filling. Place the filling in the cooled meringue crust. (Without parchment paper.) Refrigerate at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours before serving.

Just before serving, garnish with whipped cream, lemon peel shreds, or mint leaves. Serve cold.