

New World Provence

MODERN FRENCH COOKING FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Alessandra and Jean-Francis Quaglia



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NEW WORLD PROVENCE

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COCO BEAN & WILD MUSHROOM RAGOÛT

This is comfort food at its best; prepare it when the bounty of wild mushrooms are in season.

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In a sauté pan on medium-high heat, melt butter. Add mushrooms and sauté for about 5 minutes, until brown on one side. Add onions, garlic, thyme, and bay leaf and sauté for about 2 minutes, until all liquid is absorbed. Deglaze with white wine and chicken stock. Add coco beans and bring to a simmer for 15–20 minutes. Remove herbs and serve.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS.

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THE COCO BEAN IS A WHITE BEAN THAT IS SIMILAR IN TASTE AND APPEARANCE TO THE NAVY BEAN BUT SMALLER. COCO BEANS ARE AVAILABLE IN GOURMET OR SPECIALTY MARKETS. IF YOU ARE USING DRIED BEANS, REMEMBER TO SOAK THEM OVERNIGHT AND COOK THEM BEFORE USING. FEEL FREE TO USE WHITE NAVY BEANS OR ANY TYPE OF DRIED LEGUME IN PLACE OF THE COCO BEANS.

2 tbsp butter

2 cups wild mushrooms (e.g., shiitake, Portobello, chanterelle), larger ones sliced

¼ medium onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 sprig fresh thyme

1 bay leaf

¼ cup white wine

½ cup chicken stock

1 can (13-oz/398-mL) coco beans, drained and rinsed (see note)





WARM GOAT CHEESE SALAD

This has been our most popular dish since we opened our first restaurant, one which people come from miles away to enjoy. The salad is best served as part of small or intimate dinners, as it gets messy if you cook more than 4 pieces of goat cheese at a time.

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TO PREPARE VINAIGRETTE: In a bowl, add mustard, vinegar, salt, and pepper and whisk to combine. Slowly add oil, continuing to whisk until emulsified. Set aside.

TO PREPARE SALAD: Slice goat cheese into 4 round pieces. (A good trick to cleanly slice goat cheese is to use plain dental floss: holding each end of string, place under width of goat cheese log and pull through.) Place goat cheese slices in a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate while preparing salad. In a large bowl, combine breadcrumbs and herbes de Provence. In a separate bowl, beat eggs. In another separate bowl, place flour. Remove goat cheese slices from refrigerator. Dip and coat each cheese slice in flour, then egg, then breadcrumb mixture, then return to bowl and refrigerate for another 10 minutes to firm up. Place 1 cup mixed greens on each plate and evenly distribute vinaigrette over top. In a frying pan on high, heat oil. Sear breaded cheese rounds on each side for about 1 minute until edges just turn golden brown. Place 1 seared cheese slice on side of each salad, and serve.

MAKES 4 SERVINGS.

VINAIGRETTE:

1 tsp Dijon mustard
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Salt to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
½ cup extra virgin olive oil

SALAD:

10½ oz (300 g) firm ripened goat cheese
2 cups breadcrumbs
1 tbsp herbes de Provence (see note on page 27)
2 eggs
1 cup flour
4 cups mixed greens
3 tbsp olive oil

(continued)

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TO GARNISH THE SALAD PLATE, TRY A BALSAMIC REDUCTION ALSO KNOWN AS *CREMA DI BALSAMICO*. YOU CAN PURCHASE IT AT SPECIALTY FOOD SHOPS, OR TO MAKE ON YOUR OWN: IN A SAUCEPAN ON HIGH, HEAT 1 CUP OF INEXPENSIVE BALSAMIC VINEGAR FOR ABOUT 10 MINUTES, UNTIL IT REDUCES TO $\frac{1}{4}$ CUP. LET COOL BEFORE USING, THEN DRIZZLE CREMA DI BALSAMICO AROUND EDGES OF EACH PLATE, SURROUNDING SALAD. REFRIGERATE LEFTOVERS.







CLAFOUTIS WITH WHITE CHOCOLATE & MIXED BERRIES

For dessert at home, we often enjoy traditional cherry clafoutis, which is a custard-based flan that originated in the Limousin region in central France. However, it's not the easiest dessert to serve in a busy restaurant because it's baked to order, so we adapted it to create a tarte with mixed local berries and white chocolate. We once took it off the menu but soon customers begged us to bring it back! This recipe will require an 8-in (20-cm) tarte pan which, in contrast to a pie pan, has a removable bottom and straight sides.

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TO PREPARE PASTRY SHELL: In a bowl, combine flour and sugar and cut in butter until butter resembles small peas. Make a hole in center of flour mixture and add egg and vanilla and mix until just combined. On a lightly floured surface, turn dough out and knead, adding water if needed. Return dough to bowl, cover in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour. Remove from refrigerator and on a lightly floured surface, roll out dough into a circle then press down and with fingers to form a larger circle that will fit into tarte pan. Line an 8-in (20-cm) tarte pan with parchment paper. Carefully place dough in pan and form edges with fingers.

PASTRY SHELL:

1 cup flour
¼ cup sugar
¼ cup cold butter
1 egg
½ tsp vanilla extract
1 tbsp water
(for kneading)

FILLING:

1 cup white chocolate,
chopped
2 cups fresh or frozen
mixed berries (e.g.,
raspberries, blackberries,
blueberries, and/or
strawberries)
1 cup whipping cream
7 tbsp butter
⅔ cup sugar
1 egg
¾ cups flour

(continued)

TO PREPARE FILLING: Distribute chocolate and berries evenly on bottom of shell, carefully cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate. In a stainless steel bowl or mixer, whip cream, then cover in plastic wrap and set aside in refrigerator. In a different or cleaned bowl of mixer, combine butter and sugar and whip on medium-high speed until well combined. Add egg and whip until light and fluffy and color changes from yellow to white. Stop mixer and add flour. On low speed, mix until just combined. Do not overmix. With a wooden spoon or rubber spatula, fold in pre-whipped cream.

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Remove tarte pan from refrigerator, carefully uncover, and pour filling evenly over berries and chocolate. Place tarte pan on a baking sheet and bake 45 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool for 2 hours before serving.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS.



AFTERWORD



Here is a recipe for love rather than food.

During our first year of dating, Jean-Francis and I took a vacation to Corsica with some friends, and each day we toured the island in search of the perfect beach. On one particularly beautiful day, our group found a spot that I thought was heaven on earth; we girls soaked up the sun while the boys went spear fishing for our evening meal. After a few hours in the intense Corsican sun, I needed to cool off. I swam out to a rock a short distance from the beach, climbed onto it, and quietly pondered the beauty around me. I turned and noticed Jean-Francis approaching me. He swam up and told me to wait while he dove back down. He quickly returned with a beautiful creature—*un oursin*—a sea urchin. Its large round body was covered with long black spines, which

made me a little nervous. I knew that stepping on one could be very painful but Jean-Francis assured me that holding it gently would not cause it nor I any harm. I was amazed as I held the sea urchin in my hands, its spines slowly swaying back and forth. He then carefully took the creature from me, placed it beside me on the rock, and cut it open with the knife he conveniently had strapped around his ankle, then picked out the delicate orange meat with his knife and fed it to me. Now, I thought, forget about the beach being heavenly; this was the ultimate!

If you are lucky to find fresh sea urchin at your local seafood market, another simple way to enjoy it is spread on some French baguette with unsalted butter, with a refreshing glass of rosé. And don't forget to close your eyes and picture yourself sitting on a rock on a beautiful Corsican day being fed freshly caught sea urchin by a cute Frenchman; it will make it taste so much better! —A.