



Life

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Take your pumpkin dessert to a new level

Thank goodness the frost didn't hurt my sage and thyme. I needed some to make tea for a raging sore throat that I woke up with this morning. A cup of sage and thyme tea with a bit of honey and lemon is an herbalist's old-fashioned remedy for sore throats and colds.

CHEF SCOTT GUYNUP'S (HENKE WINERY) AMAZING PUMPKIN CRÈME BRÛLÉE

So many of you wanted this for the holidays. Chef Scott uses pumpkin pie filling that's already seasoned, but he said you could use pumpkin puree for a less sweet brûlée. Now if you don't have a torch, run the finished brûlées under a hot broiler just until sugar is melted.

- 16 egg yolks
- 1 whole egg
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 6 cups heavy (whipping cream)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 tablespoon bourbon (opt.)
- 3/4 cup pumpkin filling
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Nutmeg
- Brown sugar

Preheat oven to 325° F. Mix all eggs and sugar until smooth and set aside. Heat cream to scalding point. Remove from heat and add one ladle of hot cream to egg mixture to temper eggs. Slowly pour egg mixture into the cream and whisk. Continuing to stir, add salt, vanilla, filling, bourbon and cinnamon.

Pour 8 ounces of the mixture into oven safe 10-ounce dishes or ramekins. Sprinkle each serving with nutmeg. Place the dishes in a baking pan or deep baking sheet. Add water to the baking pan to 3/4 the way up the sides of the dishes. Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes, check and continue to bake until set. After baking, allow to cool for 15 minutes and refrigerate. When completely cool, cover with plastic wrap until you are ready to serve. Just before serving, cover with 1 tablespoon brown sugar and melt the sugar with a butane torch.

Optional: Top with a dollop of whip cream. Serves 10 to 12.

Tip from Joan Henke: If you are whipping your own cream, consider using ginger and cinnamon instead of sugar. This is a good sugar-free whip cream that complements the pumpkin flavors very well.

KEEGAN'S TIPS FOR PERFECTLY COOKED SEAFOOD

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RITA HEIKENFELD

Rita's kitchen



The more I know the more I realize I don't know. Take, for instance a class I took with Jess, my daughter-in-law and friends at Keegan's in Mount Washington. Proprietor Tom Keegan and chef Amy Garvey whipped up an impressive array of delicious seafood served with appropriate wines.

Tom's philosophy is straightforward: "When you start out with an excellent product, cook it simply to savor flavors." They did just that and here are some tips we picked up. For Arla, a Milford reader who said, "We need to eat more seafood, but I don't know how to prepare it."

SCALLOPS

Before sautéing, dry scallops and make a slight cross-hatch pattern on top before sprinkling with seasonings and sautéing in hot olive oil. Remove. Along with the drippings, add a bit of butter to the pan, toss in some greens just until barely wilted and sprinkle on good balsamic vinegar. (Tom fills his customers' containers straight from a vat of special balsamic vinegar.) Serve the greens under the scallops.


PRAWNS

Delicious when seasoned with salt and pepper and cooked in a small amount of hot olive oil. When center turns white, turn over and add your favorite sauce on top and continue to cook until done but don't overcook.

SQUASH IT!

Rita's tips for prepping winter squash: Punch holes in skin with a fork. Microwave on high a minute or so or until skin is tender enough to cut with a knife. Be careful - use mitts when pulling out of the oven. Cut a slice out of the squash and lay that down flat so you have a safe cutting surface. Cut and peel and either steam, microwave or bake. You can also leave the peel on and bake, peel side up on a cookie sheet, covered if you like, at 350 degrees until soft.

Rita Nader Heikenfeld is Macy's certified culinary professional and family herbalist, an educator and author. E-mail her at columns@communitypress.com with "Rita's kitchen" in the subject line. Or call 248-7130, ext. 356. Visit Rita at www.Abouteating.com.

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