



In the Kitchen

with Paula Leichter

December 2012



A Holiday Brunch!

Honey Roasted Pears

For each ripe fresh pear (Bosc pears work well in this recipe):

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons granola

2 teaspoons honey

1 teaspoon finely minced candied ginger

1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 400°F. Halve pears lengthwise (leave stems intact) and core (do not need to peel pears).

Melt the butter in a baking dish that is just large enough to hold pear halves in a single layer. Tilt the pan to coat the bottom completely with the butter. Arrange the pears, cut side down in the butter. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes until tender when pierced with a knife.

In a small bowl, combine the vinegar and honey. Place granola and candied ginger on top of pears. Spoon the honey mixture over the pears and roast until bubbly hot, for about 4 minutes longer.

To serve, arrange 1 pear half, cut side up, in a small decorative bowl. Sprinkle with granola and spoon some of the juices from the pan over top. Let stand 3-5 minutes to cool slightly.

Make Ahead: the pears can be roasted up to 8 hours in advance. Set aside at room temperature. Reheat in a 300°F oven for 10 minutes just before serving. *Serves 2*

Variations: Put some berries on top of pears during the last 4 minutes of cooking time. For a dessert, serve with a almond butter toffee ice cream, flavored whipped cream or whipped mascarpone.

Cranberry Pear Sauce

1 cup water

1 cup chopped dried mixed fruit

1 cup white sugar

1 cup chopped pecans

One 12 ounce package fresh cranberries

½ teaspoon salt

1 orange, peeled and pureed

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 apple - peeled, cored and diced

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 pear - peeled, cored and diced

Puree the orange in a food processor or blender. In a medium saucepan, boil water and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Reduce the heat to simmer, and stir in cranberries, pureed orange, apple, pear, dried fruit, pecans, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cover, and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries burst. Remove from heat, and let cool to room temperature. *Serves 12*

Join us for Taste the Holiday Spirit!

This Saturday, Dec 8th

11:00am-3:00pm



Stollen

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole natural almonds
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour, plus more for working the dough
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cardamom
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 cube) cold butter, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chunks
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup currants
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup golden raisins



1 cup cottage cheese
1 egg
2 tablespoons rum
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon almond extract
Grated zest of 1 lemon

Topping

2 tablespoons butter, melted
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar (raw or Turbinado sugar works well)

Preheat the oven to 350°F with the rack in the center position. Line a cookie sheet with baking parchment, a silpat mat or grease lightly.

Place the almonds in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade and pulse until finely chopped. Set aside. Replace the food processor bowl without washing. Dump the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, spices, and butter into the processor bowl. Pulse until the butter is cut into the flour and reduced to pea-sized bits. Transfer to a large mixing bowl. Stir in the finely chopped almonds, currants, and raisins.

Again replace the food processor bowl without washing. Add the cottage cheese. Process until pureed, then add the egg, rum, vanilla and almond extracts, and lemon zest. Process until smooth. Add this mixture to the dry ingredients and combine well. Turn the dough onto a floured surface, scraping the bowl to get out any remaining bits.

Flour your hands and the dough. Gently knead the dough with the help of a bench scraper, into a round mound, then flatten into a disk about 8 inches across and 1 inch thick. Fold the dough into a taco shape, but with one edge not quite meeting the other. Place on the prepared cookie sheet. Try doubling the cookie sheets, so that the bottom doesn't brown as much.

Bake the Stollen 20 minutes, rotate the pan, cover loosely with foil so the Stollen doesn't over brown and bake another 20 to 30 minutes until a paring knife inserted between the "taco" edges comes out clean of gooey batter. The top should be golden and the bottom butterscotch brown.

Brush the hot Stollen with the melted butter and sprinkle the sugar on to coat (this seals the loaf for storage). Remove to a rack. When completely cool, wrap in 2 layers of plastic wrap and store, freeze, or package for shipping.

Sausage, Roasted Red Pepper and Spinach Torta

Sixteen $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick baguette slices, cut on slight diagonal
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup diced, well drained roasted red peppers (from 12-ounce jar)
1 tablespoon butter
6 ounces fresh baby spinach leaves
 $\frac{3}{4}$ pound sweet Italian sausage, casing removed
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups grated Fontina cheese, divided
9 large eggs

1 cup heavy cream
2 cups whole milk
1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper



Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter 9x13x2-inch baking dish. Place 16 (or more as needed) baguette slices in bottom of dish and each side. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in large pot over medium-high heat. Add spinach; toss until just wilted, about 3 minutes. Transfer spinach to strainer; cool. Squeeze spinach dry. Transfer to medium bowl.

Heat same pot over medium-high heat. Add sausage. Sauté until cooked through, breaking up, about 7 minutes. Mix into spinach; mix in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cheese and peppers. Spread atop baguette slices in bottom of dish.

Whisk eggs in a medium bowl to blend. Whisk in last 4 ingredients. Pour over spinach mixture and stir lightly with fork to distribute evenly. Sprinkle remaining 1 cup cheese over.

Bake torta at 350°F until puffed and golden and center is set, about 55 minutes. Cover with foil near the end to prevent too much browning. Remove from oven and let rest 15 minutes before serving.