MAIN DISHES

BOUILLON DE CHAMPIGNONS COMME UN CAPPUCCINO

(Mushroom Cappuccino)

SERVES 4

Michelin three-star chef Alain Chapel wowed author Gael Greene with this innovative "cappuccino" (pictured on page 52), a rich, earthy soup made with mushrooms. To foam the broth, use the steamer attachment on a cappuccino machine, or froth it in a blender.

- 6 tbsp. butter
- 1 lb. button mushrooms, halved
- 8 oz. mixed mushrooms, such as oyster, shiitake, and blue foot, thinly sliced, trimmings reserved
- 1 oz. dried shiitake mushrooms
- 1½ cups heavy cream
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Cayenne pepper, to taste
- 12 crayfish tails, cooked and shelled, or 4 oz. cooked lobster meat, cut into bite-size pieces
- 4 sprigs fresh chervil or tarragon leaves

❶ Heat 3 tbsp. butter in a 3-qt. high-sided skillet over medium heat. Add button mushrooms and mushroom trimmings and cook, stirring often, until they release their liquid, about 10 minutes. Add ¾ oz. dried shiitakes and 4 cups of water; boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until liquid has reduced to 3 cups, about 10 minutes. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a 2-qt. saucepan. Strain broth, pressing mushrooms with the back of a spoon to extract liquid; discard solids. Add cream to mushroom broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until flavors meld, about 10 minutes. Season broth with salt and a pinch of cayenne and set aside.

❷ In a spice grinder, grind remaining dried shiitake mushrooms to a fine powder. Transfer mushroom powder to a small skillet over medium-high heat and toast, swirling pan constantly, until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Transfer mushroom powder to a small bowl; set aside.

❸ Heat remaining butter in the skillet over medium heat. Add mixed mushrooms, season with salt, and cook, stirring gently, until tender, 4–5 minutes. Add crayfish, season with salt, and cook until hot. Remove pan from heat and set aside.

❹ To serve, foam reserved broth on high speed in a blender or with the steamer attachment on an espresso machine. Mound crayfish mixture in 4 teacups or small bowls, and ladle in broth. Spoon foam on top, dust with mushroom powder, and garnish with chervil.

BROWN BUTTER PASTA

SERVES 4

Chef Gabrielle Hamilton of New York City's Prune restaurant gave us her recipe for this delicious pasta (pictured on page 94), which is tossed in brown butter and pine nuts, then topped with sunny-side-up eggs.

- Kosher salt, to taste
- 8 oz. fresh pasta, such as fettuccine or tagliatelle
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- ¾ cup pine nuts
- 4 eggs
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Freshly grated Parmesan and grated nutmeg, to taste

❶ Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add pasta; cook, stirring occasionally, until al dente, about 4 minutes. Set a strainer over a bowl; drain pasta, reserving ½ cup pasta cooking water, and set aside.

❷ Melt butter in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add pine nuts and cook, stirring often, until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer pine nuts to a bowl. Working in two batches, crack eggs into butter and cook, spooning butter over yolks, until whites are set but yolks are still runny, about 3 minutes. Transfer eggs to a plate and keep warm. Add pasta and half the pine nuts to skillet and toss until hot. Stir in some of the reserved pasta water to create a sauce, and season with salt and pepper. To serve, divide pasta between 4 serving plates and top each serving with a fried egg. Sprinkle with remaining pine nuts, Parmesan, and nutmeg.

CLASSIC MEATBALLS

SERVES 4–6

The key to making these meatballs (pictured on page 64) is to brown them first in a skillet and then braise them in a sauce of red wine and tomatoes. Serve them with crusty bread or spaghetti to sop up the sauce.

- 10 oz. ground beef chuck or veal
- 10 oz. ground pork shoulder
- 2 oz. minced pork fat or unsmoked bacon
- 2 oz. prosciutto, minced
- 1¼ cups loosely packed flat-leaf parsley leaves, minced, plus more for garnish
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1½ tsp. fennel seeds
- 1 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. ground allspice
- 7 slices white bread, finely ground in a food processor
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ⅔ cup ricotta, drained in a strainer for 2 hours
- 2 tbsp. milk
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 6 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing
- ¼ cup dry red wine
- 4 cups canned tomato purée
- 1 cup beef or veal stock or water
- Grated Parmesan, for garnish

❶ In a large bowl, combine beef, pork, pork fat, prosciutto, parsley, oregano, fennel seeds, chile flakes, cumin, allspice, and bread crumbs and season generously with salt and pepper. Using your fingers, mix ingredients until combined; set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together ricotta, milk, and eggs; add to meat mixture and gently mix until incorporated. Chill for 1 hour.

❷ Heat oven to 300°. Grease 2 rimmed baking sheets with oil and set aside. Using a 2-oz. ice cream scoop, portion mixture, roll into meatballs with your hands, and transfer to greased baking sheets. Heat 3 tbsp. oil in a 3-qt. high-sided skillet over medium-high heat. Add half the meatballs; cook, turning occasionally, until browned, about 10 minutes. Transfer meatballs to a plate; wipe out skillet. Repeat with remaining oil and meatballs. Return reserved meatballs to skillet along with any juices from the plate. Add wine; increase heat to high and cook for 2 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and beef stock, bring to a boil, and tightly cover skillet. Transfer to oven; bake until meatballs are tender and have absorbed some of the sauce, about 1½ hours. To serve, transfer meatballs to a platter; spoon over sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan and parsley. Serve with bread or spaghetti, if you like.

ELEGANT PORK CHOPS

SERVES 4

Authors Jane and Michael Stern gave us this recipe from Virginia Miller, a home cook from Iowa who bakes thick-cut pork chops in a sweet, tomatoey sauce (pictured on page 76).

- 4 double-cut, bone-in pork chops
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 2 cups soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. molasses
- 1¾ cups ketchup
- 1½ cups chili sauce, such as Heinz
- 2 tbsp. French dressing
- 1 tbsp. dry mustard

❶ Put pork chops into a baking dish and season with salt and pepper. In a small bowl, whisk ½ cup brown sugar, soy sauce, molasses, and 1 cup water and pour over meat. Cover with plastic wrap and let pork chops marinate in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours.

❷ Heat oven to 375°. Drain pork chops

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and transfer to a 9" x 13" baking dish. Whisk together remaining brown sugar, ketchup, chili sauce, French dressing, mustard, and ⅓ cup water in a small bowl. Pour sauce over pork chops and bake, turning pork chops and basting with sauce occasionally, until pork chops are tender and sauce has thickened, about 45 minutes. Let pork chops rest for 10 minutes before serving.

JOE'S STONE CRAB POT PIE

SERVES 2

A store-bought crab soup base (see page 115 for a source) intensifies the flavor of the creamy filling in these puff pastry–topped pies (pictured on facing page).

- **3 tbsp. unsalted butter**
- **2 tbsp. flour**
- **1¼ cups heavy cream**
- **¼ cup milk**
- **2 tbsp. crab soup base (see page 115)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- **1 small carrot, peeled and cut into ⅛" cubes**
- **1 small new potato, peeled and cut into ⅛" cubes**
- **⅓ cup frozen peas**
- **12 pearl onions, peeled**
- **1 large button mushroom, stemmed and minced**
- **1 small rib celery, minced**
- **¼ red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and minced**
- **10 oz. stone, jonah, or jumbo lump crab meat**
- **1 9" x 11" sheet store-bought frozen puff pastry, thawed**
- **Paprika, to garnish**

❶ Melt 1 tbsp. butter in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add flour and cook, stirring, until lightly toasted, 1–2 minutes. Add cream, milk, and crab soup base and bring to a simmer; cook, whisking often, until smooth and thick, 3–4 minutes. Season cream sauce with salt and pepper and set aside.

❷ Heat 1 tbsp. butter in a 10" skillet over medium-high heat. Add carrots and potatoes and cook, stirring often, until just soft, 4–5 minutes. Add peas, onions, mushrooms, celery, and bell peppers and cook until hot, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl, gently stir in reserved cream sauce and the crab meat, and season with salt and pepper. Divide crab mixture, mounding if necessary to fit, between two 4½"-diameter, 10-oz. ovenproof ramekins or mini pie pans; set aside.

❸ Heat oven to 350°. Using a rolling pin, gently roll out puff pastry to ¼" thickness; using a 6" round cutter, cut out 2 pastry rounds and place 1 on top of each ramekin, sealing edges around rims of ramekins. Transfer pies to an aluminum foil–lined baking sheet, and poke a small hole in the top of each pastry with a knife. Melt and brush remaining butter over pastry and sprinkle with paprika. Bake until golden brown, 35–40 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

LAHMACUN

(Flat Bread with Lamb and Tomatoes)

SERVES 4–6

Bake these Turkish spiced lamb and tomato flat breads (pictured on page 99) on a heated pizza stone in the oven so that the crust and topping cook evenly.

- **1 tsp. sugar**
- **1 ¼-oz. package active dry yeast**
- **2 cups flour, plus more**
- **1½ tsp. kosher salt, plus more**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **3 tbsp. tomato paste**
- **1 tbsp. minced flat-leaf parsley**
- **½ tsp. cayenne pepper**
- **¼ tsp. ground cumin**
- **¼ tsp. sweet paprika**
- **⅛ tsp. ground cinnamon**
- **3 oz. ground lamb**
- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1 plum tomato, grated**
- **1 small onion, grated**
- **½ serrano chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced**

❶ Combine sugar, yeast, and ¾ cup water heated to 115° in a small bowl; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Combine flour and salt in a bowl and make a well in the center. Add yeast mixture and stir to form a dough. Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth, about 6 minutes. Transfer dough to a lightly oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let dough rest until doubled in size, about 1 hour. Punch down dough, divide into 4 portions, and roll each portion into a ball. Transfer dough balls to a floured baking sheet. Cover with a damp tea towel and let rest for 45 minutes.

❷ Meanwhile, make the topping: In a large bowl, combine oil, tomato paste, parsley, cayenne, cumin, paprika, and cinnamon and stir vigorously with a fork. Stir in lamb, garlic, tomatoes, onions, and chiles and season with salt; set topping aside.

❸ Put a pizza stone in bottom third of oven and heat oven to 475°. Working with one dough ball at a time, use a rolling pin to roll dough into a 10" disk. Brush off excess flour and transfer dough to a piece of parchment paper. Spoon 3–4 tbsp. topping onto dough and using your fingers, spread topping evenly to edges. Season with salt. Holding parchment paper by its edges, transfer to baking stone. Bake until dough is golden brown and topping is cooked, 6–8 minutes. Repeat with remaining dough and topping; serve warm or at room temperature.

SANEEYEH BIL FERN

(Roasted Lamb Shoulder and Vegetables)

SERVES 4

Based on a recipe from Armenian-American author Peter Balakian, this dish (pictured on page 55) calls for slow-roasting lamb over okra, green beans, and eggplant until the lamb is tender and the vegetables have absorbed some of its juices.

- **4 10-oz. lamb shoulder chops**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- **8 oz. green beans, trimmed**
- **8 oz. okra**
- **6 cloves garlic, smashed**
- **2 medium tomatoes, sliced ½" thick**
- **2 medium zucchini, cut into ½" pieces**
- **2 onions, roughly chopped**
- **2 small eggplants, cut into ½" pieces**
- **½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley**

Heat oven to 325°. Season lamb with salt and pepper; set aside. Put green beans, okra, garlic, tomatoes, zucchini, onions, and eggplants into a large roasting pan. Add oil, season with salt and pepper, and toss to combine. Arrange lamb over top. Cover dish with foil and cook for 1 hour. Uncover and continue cooking until lamb is browned and tender, about 1 hour more. Remove dish from oven, sprinkle with parsley, and let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

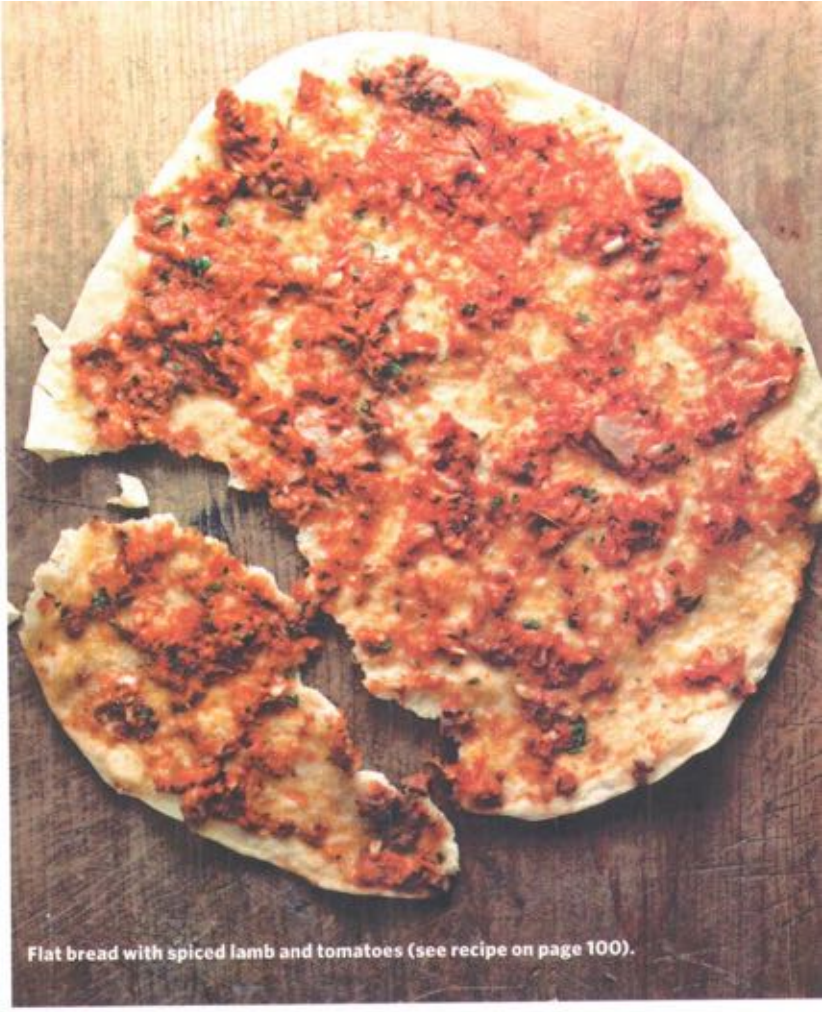
SPELT RISOTTO WITH BEETS AND HORSERADISH

SERVES 4

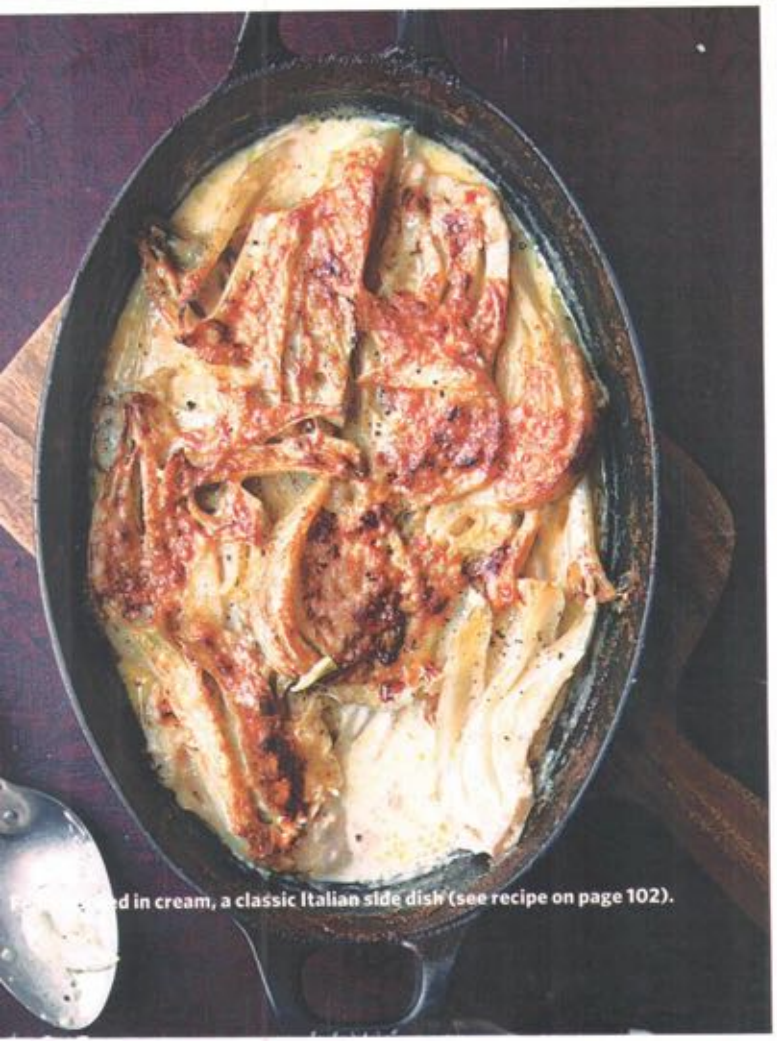
Heston Blumenthal, chef at the Fat Duck in Bray, England, gave us the recipe for this dish (pictured on page 68), which was inspired by his trip to Transylvania. Blumenthal substitutes spelt, a wheat berry found in most supermarkets, for the more common short-grain rice to give the risotto a nutty flavor and a toothsome bite.

- **¼ tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste**
- **1 cup spelt, soaked overnight, drained, and rinsed (see page 115)**
- **¼ cup white wine vinegar**
- **1 tbsp. sugar**
- **1 small beet, peeled and cut into ⅛" cubes**
- **⅓ cup crème fraiche**
- **2 tbsp. prepared horseradish**
- **1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**
- **¼ small bulb fennel, cored and thinly shaved on a mandoline**
- **Freshly ground black pepper, to taste**
- **1 cup beet juice**
- **1½ cups chicken stock**
- **2 tbsp. canola oil**

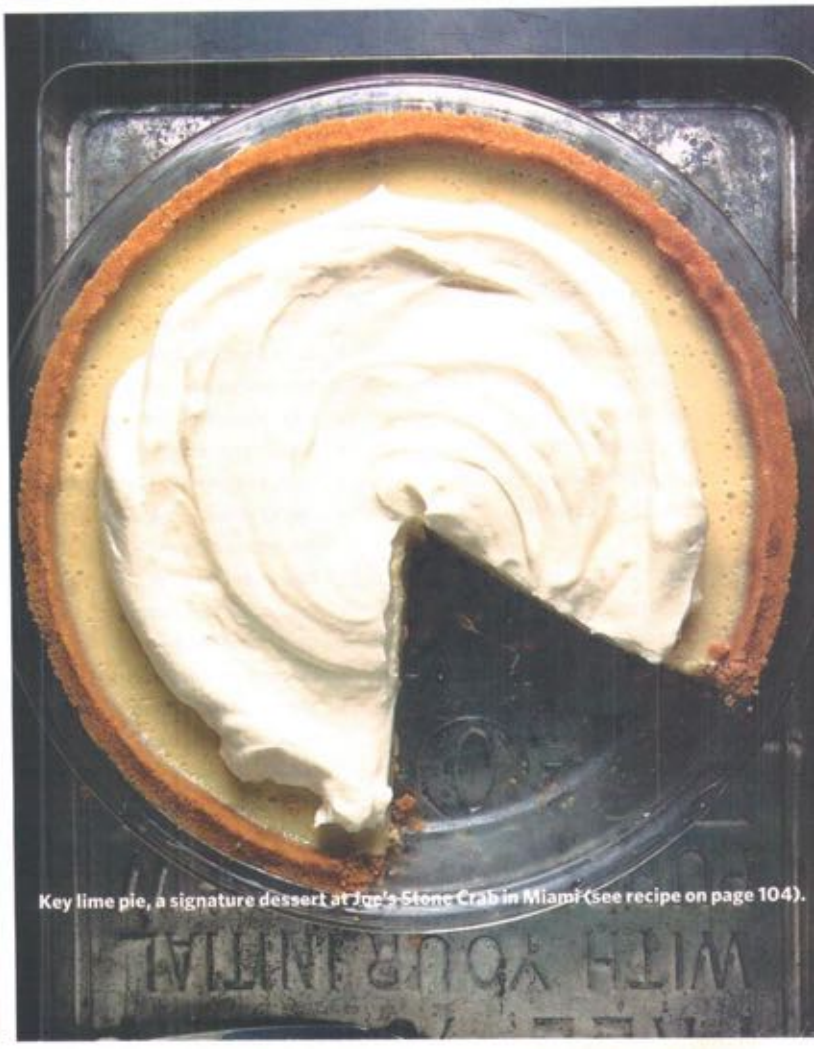
Vegetarian chili (see recipe on page 102).



Flat bread with spiced lamb and tomatoes (see recipe on page 100).



ed in cream, a classic Italian side dish (see recipe on page 102).



Key lime pie, a signature dessert at Joe's Stone Crab in Miami (see recipe on page 104).

- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1 large shallot, minced**
- **½ cup madeira**
- **½ cup freshly grated Parmesan**
- **4 tbsp. unsalted butter**

❶ Bring 6 cups salted water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan, add spelt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until al dente (the spelt will retain a slight crunch), 15–20 minutes. Drain and set aside.

❷ Whisk together ¼ tsp. salt, vinegar, and sugar in a small bowl until sugar is dissolved; add beet cubes and let marinate for 1 hour. Drain and chill beets. In a small bowl, mix together crème fraîche and horseradish; set aside in refrigerator. In another small bowl, toss together olive oil and fennel and season with salt and pepper; set aside in refrigerator.

❸ Pour beet juice into a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat and cook until reduced by half; set beet juice aside and let cool. Meanwhile, heat chicken stock in a small saucepan over medium heat; set aside and keep warm. Heat canola oil in a 10" skillet over medium heat and add garlic and shallots; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, 2–3 minutes. Add spelt and cook, stirring often, until lightly toasted, 2–3 minutes. Add madeira and cook until it is reduced to a thick syrup, about 5 minutes. Add half of reserved chicken stock and cook, stirring often, until absorbed, about 8 minutes. Add the remaining stock, ¼ cup at a time, and cook until it is absorbed before adding the next amount. Add the reduced beet juice and cook, stirring often, until liquid is creamy and spelt is tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in Parmesan and butter, and season with salt and pepper; let risotto sit for 3 minutes.

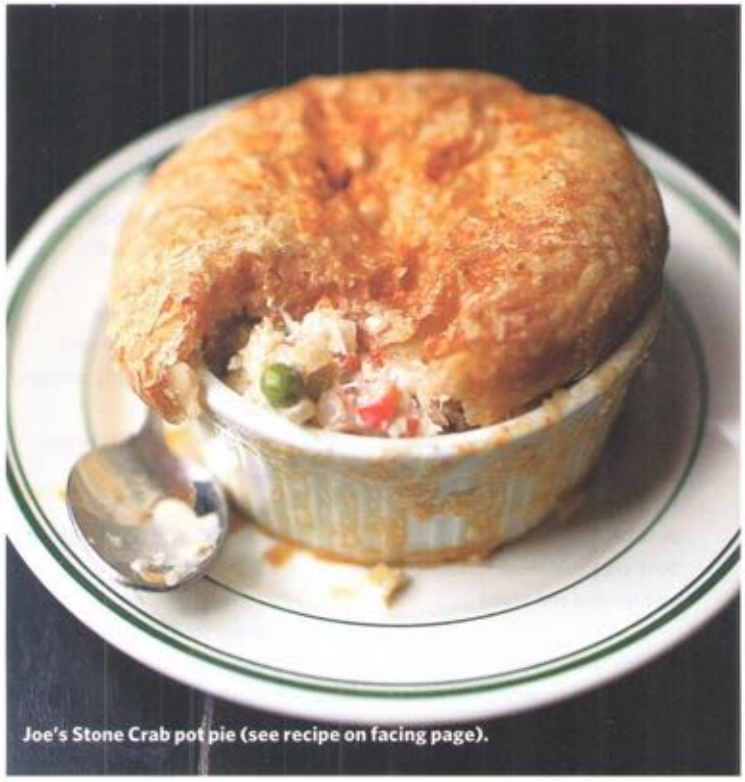
❹ To serve, divide the risotto between 4 shallow serving bowls and top with a dollop of the reserved horseradish cream. Garnish the risotto with the reserved fennel and beet cubes. Serve warm.

TAI KABURA

(Sea Bream and Turnip Hot Pot)

SERVES 2

The recipe for this elegant fish soup (pictured on page 92) was inspired by the version served at Kitcho, the legendary Kyoto restaurant. The soup's deeply flavored broth, called dashi, gets its boost of umami flavor from kombu seaweed (a type of kelp) and dried bonito flakes, two staples of the Japanese pantry. For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see page 115.



Joe's Stone Crab pot pie (see recipe on facing page).

- **2 oz. kombu, cleaned with a wet paper towel**
- **½ oz. dried bonito flakes**
- **1 whole sea bream, red snapper, or black sea bass (about 1½ lbs.), cleaned**
- **Kosher salt, to taste**
- **½ cup plus 2 tbsp. sake**
- **1 tbsp. mirin**
- **14 oz. turnips, peeled and cut into 1" pieces**
- **1 tbsp. light soy sauce**
- **2 cups cooked rice (optional)**

❶ Combine kombu and 8 cups water in a 4-qt. pot and let sit for 30 minutes. Bring to a boil; using tongs, remove and discard kombu. Add bonito flakes and reduce heat to medium-low; simmer for 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let steep for 15 minutes. Set a fine-mesh strainer over a small oval pot or 3-qt. high-sided skillet. Strain stock, discarding bonito flakes; set aside.

❷ Using a knife, score fish ¼" deep, making one lengthwise cut down the middle of the fish from head to tail and two crosswise cuts spaced 2" apart. Repeat on other side and transfer to a bowl. Season cavity and skin with salt and pour ½ cup sake over fish. Refrigerate, turning fish occasionally, for 20 minutes.

❸ Heat the reserved stock over medium-high heat. Stir in the remaining sake and the mirin. Add turnips and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer turnips to a bowl. Drain fish, add to the pot, and simmer, skimming off any foam from surface and continually spooning broth over fish, until fish is cooked through, about 8 minutes. Nestle the reserved turnips in pot and season soup with soy sauce; let cook 2 more minutes. Serve soup directly from the pot with a side of rice, if you like.

TOM YUM GOONG

(Hot and Sour Shrimp Soup)

SERVES 2

Fragrant with lime juice and lemongrass, this hot and sour soup (pictured on page 59) is based on a recipe from our friend Nancie McDermott, author of *Real Thai* (Chronicle Books, 1992). For a source for hard-to-find ingredients, see page 115.

- **3 large stalks fresh lemongrass**
- **4 cups chicken stock**
- **12 fresh or frozen Kaffir lime leaves**
- **1 cup canned straw mushrooms, drained**
- **2–4 tbsp. roasted Thai chile paste (nam prik pao)**
- **8 oz. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- **1½ tbsp. fish sauce**
- **4–6 Thai chiles, stemmed and smashed with side of a knife**
- **3 scallions, cut into 1" lengths**
- **Juice of 1 lime**
- **2 cups cooked rice (optional)**

❶ Trim tip and root ends of lemongrass stalks and remove and discard tough outer layer. Using a meat mallet or the side of a knife, smash lemongrass to flatten it; tie stalks into a knot; set aside. Pour stock into a 2-qt. saucepan and bring to a boil. Add lemongrass and half the lime leaves, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until fragrant, about 5 minutes.

❷ Remove and discard lemongrass and lime leaves and increase heat to high. Stir in mushrooms and chile paste, to taste, and boil for 1 minute; add shrimp and fish sauce and cook until shrimp are just cooked through, about 45 seconds. Combine remaining lime leaves with chiles, scallions, and lime juice in a serving bowl or tureen. Pour soup into serving bowl, stir, and serve with rice, if you like.

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TROUT MEUNIÈRE AMANDINE

(Trout with Brown Butter and Almonds)

SERVES 4

Fried fish with a brown butter sauce and almonds (pictured on page 79) is a French classic, and one of the most popular dishes at the beloved New Orleans restaurant Galatoire's.

- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- Canola oil, for frying
- 2 cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups flour
- 4 8-oz. boneless, skinless sea trout, redfish, or red snapper filets
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 cups sliced almonds, toasted
- 1 tbsp. minced parsley, for garnish
- 1 lemon, cut into slices, for serving

❶ Heat butter in an 8" skillet over medium heat; cook, stirring, until solids turn dark brown, 20–25 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in vinegar and lemon juice; set sauce aside.

❷ Pour oil into a 6-qt. Dutch oven to a depth of 2"; heat over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. In a shallow dish, whisk together milk and eggs; put flour into another shallow dish. Season fish with salt and pepper. Working with one filet at a time, dip fish in flour, shake off excess, and then dip in egg mixture and shake off excess. Return filets to flour; transfer to a rack over a baking sheet. Working in two batches, fry fish until golden brown, 5–6 minutes, then drain on paper towels. To serve, divide fish between 4 plates; sprinkle almonds on top. Whisk sauce and spoon over fish. Garnish with parsley; serve with lemon slices.

VEGETARIAN CHILI

SERVES 6–8

Author Suketu Mehta gave us the recipe for this chili (pictured on page 99). We recommend making a lengthwise slit down the side of each of the fresh chiles to release some of their intense floral heat (see page 113 for more about this technique).

- 12 oz. dried dark kidney beans, soaked overnight
- 12 oz. dried pinto beans, soaked overnight
- Kosher salt, to taste
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 dried chipotle chiles
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 large white onions, chopped
- 1 dried ancho chile
- 8 oz. button mushrooms, quartered
- 6 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1½ cups canned hominy, drained
- ½ cup tomato paste
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 8 sun-dried tomatoes, chopped
- 3–6 naga jolokia or habanero chiles, slit lengthwise down one side
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Sour cream, minced cilantro, and minced red onion

❶ Put kidney beans and pinto beans into a large pot and cover with 3" water; bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until beans are tender, about 1 hour. Season with salt; set pot aside.

❷ Heat oil in a 6-qt. pot over medium-high heat. Add garlic, chipotle chiles, bay leaves, onions, and ancho chile and cook, stirring often, until onions are golden, 12–15 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring often, until tender, about 8 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook, stirring, until they release their juices, about 5 minutes. Stir in reserved beans and their cooking liquid, along with hominy, tomato paste, vinegar, thyme, oregano, cumin, sun-dried tomatoes, and habaneros and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until chili thickens and flavors meld, about 1 hour. Serve chili topped with sour cream, cilantro, and red onions.

SIDE DISHES

APRICOT AND WALNUT STUFFING

SERVES 8–10

Author Marc Maron gave us this recipe for his showpiece Thanksgiving stuffing (pictured on page 82), studded with dried fruit and enriched with chicken livers.

- 1 1-lb. loaf white bread, crusts removed, cut into 1" cubes
- 1 cup white wine
- 2 cups dried apricots, apples, and currants, chopped
- 16 tbsp. butter, softened
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 4 oz. chicken livers, minced
- 2 cups walnuts, roughly chopped
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup minced flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tsp. orange zest
- 2 eggs, beaten
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

❶ Heat oven to 350°. Bake bread cubes on a baking sheet until browned, 20–25 minutes. Transfer bread cubes to a large bowl; set aside. Boil wine in a 1-qt. saucepan and add dried fruit; remove from heat and let steep for 30 minutes. Strain fruit; discard wine. Combine fruit with bread.

❷ Heat 4 tbsp. butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add celery and onions; cook, stirring, until browned, 12–15 minutes. Stir in 8 tbsp. butter and livers; cook until butter melts. Mix celery mixture with bread; stir in walnuts, cream, parsley, zest, and eggs. Season with salt and pepper.

❸ Transfer stuffing to a 2-qt. oval baking dish; dot with remaining butter. Cover with foil; bake for 50 minutes. Uncover, increase heat to 475°, and bake until browned, 8–10 minutes.

CHAO SIGUA

(Stir-Fried Loofah)

SERVES 2

This garlicky stir-fry (pictured on page 85) is made with loofah, a long, slender gourd that has soft, tender flesh beneath its ridged green peel. See page 111 for more information and page 115 for a source.

- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced lengthwise
- 1 lb. loofah gourd, peeled and cut diagonally into 1½"-long pieces (see page 115)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- Sugar, to taste

Heat oil in a 14" flat-bottomed wok or nonstick skillet over high heat. Add garlic; cook, stirring, until golden, 15–20 seconds. Add loofah and 1 tbsp. water; season with salt, white pepper, and sugar. Cook, stirring, until just tender, 30–60 seconds. Serve immediately.

FINOCCHIO AL FORNO

(Fennel Baked in Cream)

SERVES 6–8

Chef Gabrielle Hamilton of Prune restaurant in New York City turned us on to this simple, classic Italian preparation (pictured on page 99), which calls for baking fennel in the oven with cream and Parmesan to create a luxurious gratin.

- 1½ lbs. fennel (about 2 large bulbs), stalks removed, halved lengthwise, and cut into ½" wedges
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 1½ cups finely grated Parmesan
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cubed

Heat oven to 425°. In a bowl, toss together fennel, cream, and 1 cup Parmesan; season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a 3-qt. baking dish;