

Elegant Valentine's Day Recipes!

Cheese Soufflés

Serves 4 - Prep time 10 minutes - Cook time 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ½ cup milk, heated
- 1 cup Gruyere cheese, shredded
- 3 eggs, separated
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and lightly oil 4 soufflé ramequins.
2. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour slowly and whisk until a paste forms.
3. Add the milk slowly, whisking constantly.
4. Reduce the heat to low and keep warm, stirring frequently to prevent burning or sticking.
5. Place the egg whites in a bowl and beat until stiff. Set aside.
6. Lightly beat the egg yolks and add them to the cream sauce, together with the cheese. Mix gently until the cheese has melted. Season with salt, black pepper, and nutmeg.
7. Gently fold in the egg whites and carefully spoon the mixture into the soufflé cups.
8. Place in the oven and bake for approximately 15 minutes.
9. Carefully remove the soufflé cups from the oven and serve immediately.

Potage Printanier (Green Spring Vegetable Soup)

Serves 4-6 - Prep time 10 minutes - Cook time 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed and minced
- ½ cup leek, sliced
- ½ cup celery, diced
- 6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
- 1 cup turnip, chopped
- 1 cup white asparagus
- 1 cup fresh peas
- ¼ cup fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon fresh tarragon, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ cup crème fraîche
- Pistachios, chopped, for garnish

Directions

1. Melt the butter in a stock pot over medium heat.
2. Add the garlic, leek, and celery. Cook, stirring frequently, until the leeks begin to become tender, approximately 3 minutes.
3. Add the chicken or vegetable stock, increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil.
4. Add the turnips, white asparagus, and peas.
5. Cover, reduce heat to low, and let simmer for 30-40 minutes.
6. Strain the vegetables out of the stock and place them, along with ½ cup of the stock, in a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.
7. Combine all of the cooking stock and pureed vegetables together in the stock pot.
8. Season with parsley, tarragon, salt, and black pepper. Cook over low heat for 5-10 minutes.
9. Ladle the soup into serving bowls and swirl a dollop of crème fraîche into the center of each bowl.
10. Serve immediately, garnished with chopped pistachios, if desired.

Coq Au Vin

Serves 6-8 - Prep time 15 minutes - Cook time 1 hour

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup pancetta, chopped
- 2 pounds bone-in chicken pieces
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 cups carrots, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup yellow onion, sliced
- 1 cup turnip, chopped
- 2 cups mushrooms, quartered
- 2 tablespoons shallots, diced
- ½ cup brandy
- 3 cups dry red wine
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 2 tablespoons sweet cream butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon flour

Directions

1. Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat.
2. Add the pancetta and cook, stirring frequently, until browned, approximately 5 minutes.
3. Remove the pancetta with a slotted spoon and set aside.
4. Season the chicken with salt and pepper and then place the chicken in the Dutch oven and cook until browned, approximately 3-5 minutes per side. Remove the chicken and set aside.
5. Add the carrots, onion, and turnip to the Dutch oven. Cook, stirring frequently for 5-7 minutes.
6. Add the mushrooms and shallots. Cook for 2-3 minutes.
7. Place the chicken and pancetta back into the Dutch oven.
8. Add the brandy, red wine, and chicken stock. Season with the thyme, oregano and rosemary.
9. Increase the heat to medium-high until the liquid just begins to bubble. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 35-40 minutes.
10. Combine the butter and flour and stir it into the liquid of the Dutch oven. Cover and cook for an additional 10-15 minutes.
11. Remove from heat and let rest 10 minutes before serving.

Mussels with Cream Sauce

Serves 4 - Prep time 10 minutes - Cook time 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 pounds mussels, washed
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup leeks, sliced
- 1 tablespoon shallots, diced
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 ½ cups dry white wine
- 1 cup vegetable stock
- ¼ cup crème fraîche
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 2 teaspoons fresh tarragon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

Directions

1. Place the butter in a large pot over medium-high heat.
2. Add the leeks and shallots, and sauté for 3 minutes.
3. Add the mussels, parsley, and white wine. Cook for 1 minute before adding the vegetable stock. Bring to a gentle boil.
4. Cook until the mussels open. Remove the mussels from the pan, and discard any that have not opened.
5. Remove the pot from the heat and add the crème fraîche, lemon zest, tarragon, salt, and black pepper. Whisk quickly until well blended.
6. Spoon the cream sauce into serving dishes and top with the mussels. Serve immediately.

Mousse au Chocolat (Classic Chocolate Mousse)

Serves 4-6 - Prep time 15 minutes - Cook time 10 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup dark chocolate pieces, chopped
- 8 eggs, separated (only 4 yolks required)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup white sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 2 teaspoons brandy
- 1 vanilla bean, scraped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon finely grated orange zest

Directions

1. Place the chocolate in a double boiler and melt it over low heat.
2. Place the egg whites in a bowl, together with all but one tablespoon of the sugar, and beat until stiff peaks form. Set aside.
3. In another bowl, combine the 4 egg yolks and the remaining sugar, brandy, vanilla, and orange zest until lightly frothy and creamy.
4. Add the heavy cream to the chocolate, and mix until smooth.
5. Slowly stir the egg yolks into the chocolate, whisking constantly to prevent the eggs from scrambling. Blend until creamy.
6. Remove from the heat, and gently fold in the beaten egg whites.
7. Carefully spoon the mixture into serving dishes, and place it in the refrigerator to chill for at least 2-4 hours.
8. Serve well chilled.

All the recipes are from Sarah Spencer's cookbook *French Bistro Cooking: Easy Classic French Cuisine Recipes to Make at Home*. To get the book. click on the cover or [here](#).

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