



DISHIN' WITH DEBBIE!

FOOD FOR HIGH ACHIEVING INDIVIDUALS

Happy June, All!

I hope your summer isn't all hustle and bustle, but that you take some time to luxuriate in the nurturing arms of Mother Nature! In looking for something that epitomizes the month of June, I came across the poem below. Isn't it perfect?!

June by Edgar Albert Guest

June is here, the month of roses, month of brides and month of bees,
Weaving garlands for our lassies, whispering love songs in the trees,
Painting scenes of gorgeous splendor, canvases no man could brush,
Changing scenes from early morning till the sunset's crimson flush.

June is here, the month of blossoms, month of roses white and red,
Wet with dew and perfume-laden, nodding wheresoe'er we tread;
Come the bees to gather honey, all the lazy afternoon;
Flowers and lassies, men and meadows, love alike the month of June.

Month of love and month of sunshine, month of happiness and song,
Month that cheers the sad wayfarer as he plods the road along;
Spreading out a velvet carpet, green and yellow, for his feet,
And affording for his rest hours many a cool and sweet retreat.



Before we get started on this month's theme, alert reader **Denise Levchak** pointed out that I neglected to mention the size jar of apricot preserves for the Sacher Torte in last month's column. It should say a 12 ounce jar. Thanks for bringing that to my attention, Denise! Denise indicated that DWD is "the first thing I read. I'm not much of a cook or baker but it's something I plan on starting once I get retired!!" I am über thrilled to have a fan!



Now, back to the regularly scheduled show.... DWD is presenting recipes brought to mind by the romantic comedy **Moonstruck** starring Cher and Nicholas Cage. And what other genre of food could be brought to mind by this movie than Italian? I saw this movie when it came out in 1987 and thought it was the most romantic movie ever made... and Nicholas Cage is pretty easy on the eyes! But it was Cher who really stole the show, as they say- and she won the Best Actress Oscar for it. Olympia Dukakis was also phenomenal in this and she won Best Supporting Actress.

Our first recipe comes from the ever-faithful **Tracey Meyers**, who writes, "the Moonstruck Restaurant in the chi-chi Fox Chase area of Northeast Philly has an Italian menu so good you'll want to cut your hand off... there is something for everyone including the low light, the romance, the laughter, the little old Italian Nonna telling you to quit feeding her food to the dog... They have this Pappardelle with brandied wild mushroom sauce that make me sob with happiness." The recipe calls for three kinds of wild mushrooms, but Tracey says you can substitute portabellas or even regular whites if you can't find them.



Pappardelle Pasta with Wild Mushroom and Brandy Cream Sauce with Boursin

Serves 2 (How romantic!)



Ingredients:

- 3 Tablespoons butter
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 French shallot, peeled and minced
- 8 ounces Crimini mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 8 ounces Shiitake mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 8 ounces Enoki mushrooms, ends trimmed
- 1 cup heavy cream or half and half
- 1/4 cup Brandy (or to taste... with a glass for the cook... Marsala is also very nice)
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme
- 3 Tablespoons Boursin (Garlic & Fine Herbes -it's that faboo soft cheese spread)
- 1 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 12 ounces dried Pappardelle pasta
- Maldon flaked sea salt for garnish if you happen to have gotten some of this fancy salt from some foodie pal... or use more of that nice coarse kosher salt... NOT TOO MUCH!!

Directions:

- 1) In a large skillet, heat the butter and oil over medium-high heat.
- 2) Once the butter is melted, add the shallot and sauté for about 8-10 minutes, until the onion is translucent and tender.
- 3) Add the sliced crimini and shiitake mushrooms and sauté 3-4 minutes, until the mushrooms are lightly browned.
- 4) Add the enoki mushrooms and sauté for about 2 minutes more.
- 5) Season with salt and pepper.
- 6) Add a glug (**Editor's note: very technical cooking term. Only VERY seasoned cooks know what this means! ;)**) of brandy and cook for 3-4 minutes allowing the mixture to reduce.
- 7) Stir in the heavy cream, boursin and thyme.
- 8) Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook the mushroom sauce for 10 minutes or so, stirring frequently.
- 9) Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
- 10) At the same time, bring a large pot of water to boil. Add the noodles and cook according to the instructions on the package.
- 11) Once done, add the pasta to the sauce and toss to coat.
- 12) Add a handful of Parmigiano to the sauce and stir to combine.
- 13) If the sauce is too thick, add some hot pasta water.
- 14) Serve in warmed dinner bowls and garnish with some sprig of fresh thyme, a grind of black pepper and a sprinkle of Maldon salt.

And to go with this lovely pasta dish, how about a salad? I am not a big tomato fan unless they are freshly picked at the peak of ripeness from my garden and have never been refrigerated (which I think destroys the flavor. Yes- I'm picky!) Here's a recipe I love, but be sure to get the absolute freshest ingredients you can. People will know if you cheated! Also- this dish is best when it has had at least an hour or so to marinate- preferably at room temperature, but it can be put in the refrigerator.

Caprese Salad

Ingredients:

- Four large, ripe, meaty tomatoes, cored and thickly sliced
- One pound of fresh mozzarella cheese, thickly sliced (**Editor's note: the tomatoes and cheese should be about the same thickness to have the correct ratio of ingredients per bite. Very important!**)
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves- any variety
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh oregano



And...

- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

- 1) Layer the tomatoes, cheese and basil on a platter (**Editor's note: make sure it has a bit of a raised edge to it or you'll be making a mess!**)
 - 2) In a small bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients.
 - 3) Pour this mixture over the tomatoes and cheese.
- Enjoy!

Italian Cream Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 4 eggs- separated
- 4 teaspoons REAL vanilla extract, divided
- 2 cups cake flour
- 2 cups sweetened coconut, divided (Editor's note: toasting the coconut really brings out the nutty flavor. Just spread on a jelly roll pan and put in the oven for three or four minutes. Watch carefully, though. It burns easily and burned coconut is NOT so tasty. You can also toast the pecans. That takes longer and they don't burn as easily.)
- 2 cups chopped pecans, divided
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 4 cups confectioners' sugar

Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2) Grease and flour three 8 inch round cake pans.
- 3) Beat egg whites until they form stiff peaks.
- 4) In a large bowl, cream $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter and oil until light and fluffy.
- 5) Add sugar and beat until fluffy.
- 6) Beat in egg yolks.
- 7) In another bowl, stir together flour and baking soda.
- 8) Add to egg mixture alternately with buttermilk. Mix well after each addition.
- 9) Stir in 2 teaspoons vanilla, 1 cup coconut and 1 cup pecans.
- 10) Gently fold in beaten egg whites.
- 11) Spoon into prepared pans.
- 12) Bake for 25 to 40 minutes.
- 13) Cool in pans for 10 minutes.
- 14) Remove to wire rack to cool completely.
- 15) For frosting: Combine cream cheese, 1/2 cup butter, confectioners' sugar, and 2 teaspoons vanilla in mixer bowl.
- 16) Beat till smooth.
- 17) Stir in 1 cup coconut.
- 18) Frost the cooled cake.
- 19) Sprinkle remaining nuts on top.

Now...isn't that comforting! Enjoy that comforting feeling for a while and, after you are done being comforted, go digging through your recipe files for some good old western food that you can send to me for use in next month's column featuring **True Grit**. Enjoy your summer, yall. :)



Next month, we will be exploring recipes brought to mind by the romantic *Moonstruck* starring Cher and Nicholas Cage. \Until then...Ciao!

For the rest of the year...

- August- *Forest Gump*
- September -*The Green Mile*
- October - *The Exorcist*
- November - *The Pianist*
- December - *A Christmas Story*

Send me those recipes as soon as you can! I will be forever grateful to you to not have to come up with them all on my own. *Please send recipes to dereihart@pa.gov.* Hurry up and do it now so you



! -Debbie

UNTIL NEXT MONTH- KEEP ON DISHIN'!