

Fine Wines for Romantic Meals

Classic Caesar Salad

Short Ribs Braised with Port Wine

Potato Gratin with Bacon and Thyme

Caramelized Banana Tartlets with Chocolate Sauce

Classic Caesar Salad

2 clove garlic, minced
4 anchovies (optional)
2 egg yolk
2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce
2 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 cup vegetable oil
Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper

1 head romaine lettuce
1 cup croutons

1. In a large mixing bowl, mash the garlic and anchovies into a paste with a fork.
2. Mix in the egg yolk, mustard, lemon juice, Worcestershire and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Slow drizzle in the oil, whisking constantly, until the dressing is combined.
4. Add parmesan cheese and adjust seasoning (if sauce is too thick, whisk in a small amount of water). Transfer dressing to a small bowl.
5. Trim romaine and discard core. Cut into 1-inch pieces and add to the mixing bowl along with the croutons.
6. Toss salad with enough dressing to coat the leaves (reserve remaining dressing). Season with salt and pepper and serve.

Short Ribs Braised with Port Wine

3 tablespoons olive oil
3 pounds boneless short ribs
1 bag frozen pearl onions
8 garlic cloves, peeled
1 cup good quality ruby port
1 cup rich beef stock, or as needed
1 cup chopped canned tomatoes
3 sprigs fresh thyme
Salt and pepper

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Bring a large Dutch oven to medium high heat and add the oil. Season the ribs with salt and pepper and add to pot. Cook, turning, until nicely browned on all sides. Set aside.
2. Reduce the heat and cook the onions and garlic until beginning to brown.
3. Add the port and cook until reduced by half. Add the beef stock and tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Add back the beef and bring back to a simmer.
4. Add the thyme, cover and transfer to the oven. Cook until tender, about 2-1/2 hours. Serve.

Potatoes Au Gratin

½ pound bacon, diced
2 large onions, thinly sliced
5 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and sliced 1/8 inch thick
1 pint heavy cream
¾ pound fontina cheese, grated
Fresh thyme
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Add bacon to a large skillet and set over medium heat. Cook until fat is rendered out and bacon is crispy. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to plate lined with paper towels. Pour off all but two tablespoons of bacon fat from the pan and cook onions slowly over medium heat until nicely browned. Set aside.
3. To assemble the dish, cover the bottom of the baking dish with a layer of overlapping potatoes. Sprinkle with ½ of the onions and bacon and 1/3 of the cheese. Season with thyme, salt and pepper. Repeat with second layer. Top with remaining cheese. Pour cream over potatoes (cream should come to just below top layer of potatoes).
4. Bake for approximately 1 hour or until potatoes are tender and top is golden brown.

Caramelized Banana Tartlets with Chocolate Sauce

2 sticks cold unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons
1- $\frac{3}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup walnuts, toasted, cooled
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon baking powder
Pinch of salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, room temperature
5 tablespoons plus 4 teaspoons sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar, packed
2 large eggs
4 large bananas, sliced

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate

1. Add butter, salt and flour to food processor; pulse until it resembles coarse meal. Add the water and pulse just until dough forms. Remove dough from processor, divide in half, flatten each into a disk and wrap in plastic; refrigerate for 30 minutes. Roll out each piece into a 6-inch by 14-inch rectangle and line two 4-inch by 12-inch tart pans. Set aside.
2. Add the walnuts, flour, baking powder and salt to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until finely ground. In a stand mixer, beat butter, 5 tablespoons sugar, and brown sugar in bowl until blended. Add eggs one at a time and mix until incorporated. Stir in walnut mixture.
3. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Divide nut mixture between the two shells and spread a thin layer on bottom of tart pan. Arrange banana slices over mixture. Sprinkle bananas on each tart with 2 teaspoons sugar. Bake until pastry is deep golden and bananas begin to brown, about 40 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool to room temperature.
4. Bring heavy cream to a simmer in a small saucepan. Add chocolate to mixing bowl and pour hot cream over. Let stand five minutes to melt the chocolate and then gently whisk until smooth. Pour ganache over tarts. Refrigerate until glaze is set and then serve at room temperature.