RECIPES

Spring Greens and Berries Salad

Goat Cheese and Mushroom Bruschetta

Garlic Chicken Pasta with White Sauce

Panna Cotta

Hearts of Romaine with Craisins and Raspberries

Savory Dinner Rolls

Tournedos of Beef with Mushroom Ragout

Roasted Baby Red Potatoes with Rosemary

Pumpkin Cheesecake

Cheese Fondue

SPRING GREENS AND BERRIES SALAD

(Makes 1 salad)

1 cup mixed spring greens

6 fresh raspberries

5 fresh blackberries

3 fresh strawberries, hulled and quartered

$^{1}/_{4}$ cup toasted pecans

2 tablespoons gorgonzola

2 tablespoons balsamic vinaigrette (recipe follows)

Place spring greens on a chilled salad plate and spread to make a nice bed. Scatter berries across top, followed by the toasted pecans and the gorgonzola. Drizzle balsamic vinaigrette over salad and serve.

BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

(Note: Vinaigrettes are typically 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar)

$^{1}/_{4}$ cup high-quality balsamic vinegar

Herbs to taste (recommend $^{1}/_{2}$ tablespoon dried basil, $^{1}/_{2}$ teaspoon dried cilantro, and $^{1}/_{2}$ teaspoon dried tarragon; can use a comparable amount of fresh herbs instead but unused vinaigrette won't keep as long)

$^{3}/_{4}$ cup high-quality extra virgin olive oil

Pour balsamic vinegar into a mixing cup and add herbs. Slowly drizzle in extra virgin olive oil, whisking constantly until mixture is combined. Vinegar and oil should combine into an emulsion, but if the mixture separates simply whisk again immediately before serving.

GOAT CHEESE AND MUSHROOM BRUSCHETTA

TOMATO TOPPING

5–7 Roma tomatoes, diced

3–5 green onions (white and pale green parts only, thinly sliced 3–4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Splash of balsamic vinegar

Approx. 1 tablespoon dried basil

Approx. 1 tablespoon minced garlic

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

In a bowl, combine tomatoes and green onions. Pour on olive oil and balsamic vinegar (use enough olive oil to make it slightly soupy, and balsamic vinegar to taste). Add in basil and garlic, then sea salt and pepper, to taste. Toss to coat evenly. Cover and allow to marinate at room temperature for a couple of hours.

(Note: This mixture also works added to freshly tossed lettuce salads—the oil and vinegar works as a vinaigrette, and should be added like a salad dressing—at the table, not in advance.)

GOAT CHEESE AND MUSHROOM SPREAD

8 ounces button mushrooms, cleaned and halved (I have not tried this with other varieties)

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, plus more as needed

8 ounces goat cheese, softened

Season the mushrooms with salt and pepper and sauté in oil and butter over medium high heat until golden brown, adding more butter if pan becomes dry.

Meanwhile, cut the softened goat cheese into cubes. Combine mushrooms and goat cheese in food processor (at this point, you could add a clove of garlic, minced, and a splash of lemon juice). Process to desired consistency (I like small bits of mushrooms).

FOR THE BRUSCHETTA

1 loaf French bread, sliced approximately 1 inch thick (for this, I cut straight across, not on the bias)

Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Extra virgin olive oil

Goat Cheese and Mushroom Spread (see above)

Tomato Topping (see above)

$^{1}/_{2}$ pound Parmesan cheese, coarsely grated

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Arrange bread slices on cookie sheet. Brush with olive oil and season lightly with salt and pepper. Bake in center of oven until golden brown and crisp, approximately 12 to 15 minutes.

Remove from oven. Spread with Goat Cheese and Mushroom mixture. Spoon Tomato Topping over goat cheese mixture. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and serve warm.

GARLIC CHICKEN PASTA WITH WHITE SAUCE

(Makes 6 servings)

1 pound penne or rigatoni pasta
1 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon minced garlic
1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, sliced (as for stir-frying)
4 tablespoons olive oil
1 cup fresh mushrooms, brushed free of dirt and quartered
1/2 cup green onions (white and light green parts only), thinly sliced 6 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

WHITE SAUCE

8 ounces nonfat or light sour cream
1 tablespoon minced green onions (white and light green parts only)
1 tablespoon minced onion
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon finely snipped fresh parsley
1/2 tablespoon garlic powder
Dash cayenne pepper sauce, or to taste
2–3 tablespoons fat-free milk

In a medium bowl, prepare sauce by whisking together sour cream, green onions, onion, black pepper, parsley, garlic powder, and hot-pepper sauce. Thin mixture with milk. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Cook pasta according to instructions on package.

While pasta is cooking, combine basil, salt, red pepper, and black pepper. Add chicken. Toss to coat evenly.

Heat oil in a 10-inch skillet. Add garlic and sauté for 2 minutes, or until golden brown. Add chicken. Sauté for 5 minutes. Add mushrooms and green onions. Sauté for 4 to 5 minutes or until everything is cooked through. Add sauce and cook for 2 minutes or until heated through.

Drain pasta. Toss with chicken mixture.

Serve with Parmesan cheese and breadsticks, garlic bread, or fresh Italian bread with dipping oil.

PANNA COTTA

Makes 8 servings

1 envelope unflavored gelatin (about 1 tablespoon)
2 tablespoons cold water
2 cups heavy cream
1 cup half-and-half
1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Berries, for garnish
Caramel sauce, butterscotch sauce, or chocolate sauce, for serving (optional)

In a very small saucepan, sprinkle gelatin over water and let stand about 1 minute to soften. Heat gelatin over low heat until gelatin is dissolved and remove pan from heat. (It's best to do this shortly before cream mixture is ready so gelatin is still dissolved when needed.)

In a large saucepan, bring cream, half-and-half, and sugar to a boil over moderately high heat, stirring. (This should be a full boil, not a simmer, but be careful that it doesn't boil over.) Remove pan from heat and stir in gelatin mixture. Add vanilla. Divide cream mixture among 8 five-ounce ramekins and cool to room temperature.

Chill ramekins, covered, at least four hours or overnight.

To serve, dip ramekins, one at a time, into a bowl of hot water for a few seconds. Run a thin knife around the edge of each ramekin and invert ramekin onto center of a small plate to remove panna cotta. Garnish with raspberries, sliced strawberries, or other fruit, and serve with caramel, butterscotch, or chocolate sauce, if desired.

HEARTS OF ROMAINE AND CRAISINS SALAD

(Makes 1 salad)

1 cup Romaine hearts (full leaf can be used, but the hearts provide a crisper salad)
6 fresh raspberries (golden if in season)
1 tablespoon craisins
$^1/_4$ cup toasted walnuts
2 tablespoons raspberry vinaigrette

Place greens on a chilled salad plate and spread to make a nice bed. Scatter berries across top, followed by the toasted walnuts. Drizzle raspberry vinaigrette over salad and serve.

SAVORY DINNER ROLLS

	2 Loaves	4 Loaves	8 Loaves
In a bowl, combine:			
*Water**	*½ c.*	*1 c.*	*2 c.*
Sugar	*½ tsp.*	*1 tsp.*	*2 tsp.*
Yeast	*1 tbsp.*	*2 tbsp.*	*4 tbsp.*

Let stand approximately 20 minutes. Mixture should be frothy (if not, then it's possible the yeast is no longer viable). Whisk until blended.

To yeast mixture, add:

*Water (warm)**	*1 c.*	*2 c.*	*4 c.*
Sugar	*¼ c.*	*½ c.*	*1 c.*
Oil	*¼ c.*	*½ c.*	*1 c.*

Dried spices to taste (recommended combinations include dill and tarragon or basil, chervil, and cilantro)

Stir, then add in:

*Flour***	*4½ c.*	*9 c.*	*18 c.*
Salt	*½ tbsp. (rounded)*	*1 tbsp. (rounded)*	*2 tbsp. (rounded)*

Allow to rise in warm, humid place until doubled in size (about 1 hour), then punch down and divide into individual rolls. To form individual rolls, tear off an amount of dough about the size of a golf ball, flatten slightly in the palm of your hand, and work the dough slightly, stretching the skin and folding the edges under. Pinch the bottom closed and form into a ball, then set aside to rise. It's simplest to place the raw rolls in rows on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Cover loosely and let rise until doubled (about 1 hour). Bake at 350°F for approximately 15 minutes or until done (rolls should be nicely browned). Place on wire rack to cool.

** Note that, as a rule, when working with yeast, water temperature should be no more than 110–115 degrees Fahrenheit, and cooler is actually better. Yeast is a living organism; if the water is too hot, it will kill the yeast and the bread will not turn out. Cool, or even cold, water works just fine, with the only noticeable impact being a slight slowdown in the yeast's rising speed—but since slower rising generally produces better flavor, this is not a bad thing!*

*** All purpose flour is slightly better for these, but the addition of herbs and spices makes the added gluten of bread flour appropriate as well.*

TOURNEDOS OF BEEF WITH MUSHROOM RAGOUT

Makes 4 to 6 servings; 2 cups Mushroom Ragout

TOURNEDOS

2 pounds center-cut beef tenderloin roast
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon butter

MUSHROOM RAGOUT

1 pound mixed mushrooms, such as shiitake, cremini, or white button
2 to 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 medium shallot or 1/2 small onion, chopped
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves stripped
1/2 cup Madeira, vermouth, or white wine
1/3 cup heavy cream

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Heat a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Season the beef all over with salt and a generous amount of pepper. Add the oil to the skillet and heat until shimmering. Add the butter and swirl to melt. Add the beef and sear until nicely browned on all sides, about 8 minutes total.

Transfer the skillet to the oven. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the center registers 125°F for medium rare (about 25 minutes). Transfer the roast to a cutting board, tent it very loosely with aluminum foil, and let it rest for 10 to 15 minutes.

FOR THE MUSHROOM RAGOUT:

Brush dirt from mushrooms. Remove the shiitake stems and discard. Trim the dry ends off the cremini and white mushroom stems. Quarter all the mushrooms and put in a bowl.

Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and spread evenly in the pan. Increase the heat to high. Let the mushrooms cook undisturbed until they brown, then shake the pan to turn them over. If the pan seems very dry as the mushrooms cook, add the additional butter along the sides of the pan. Continue to cook until nicely browned, about 5 minutes. Add the shallot and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Season the mushrooms with the salt and pepper and add the thyme. Pull the pan off the heat and add the Madeira, vermouth, or white wine. Return pan to the heat and scrape up any of the brown bits that cling to the bottom of the pan (a wooden spoon is best for this). Add the heavy cream and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and serve.

Slice beef into 1-inch-thick rounds and serve with the Mushroom Ragout.

ROASTED BABY RED POTATOES WITH ROSEMARY

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

2 pounds baby red potatoes, quartered

4–5 rosemary sprigs

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 500°F. In a jelly-roll or large baking pan, toss the potatoes with the rosemary and oil, season with salt and pepper, to taste, and roast, stirring once, for 30 minutes.

PUMPKIN CHEESECAKE WITH CARAMEL SWIRL

Makes 10 servings

CRUST

1 1/2 cups ground gingersnap cookies
1 1/2 cups (about 6 ounces) toasted pecans
1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

4 8-ounce packages cream cheese, room temperature
1 2/3 cups sugar
1 1/2 cups canned solid-pack pumpkin
9 tablespoons whipping cream, separated
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground allspice
4 large eggs
1 tablespoon (approximate) purchased caramel sauce
1 cup sour cream

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a food processor, finely grind ground cookies, pecans, and brown sugar. Add melted butter and pulse until combined. Press crust mixture onto bottom and up sides of 9-inch-diameter springform pan with 2 3/4-inch-high sides.

Using an electric mixer, beat cream cheese and sugar in large bowl until light and fluffy. Transfer 3/4 cup of the mixture to a small bowl; cover tightly and refrigerate to use for topping. Add pumpkin, 4 tablespoons whipping cream, ground cinnamon, and ground allspice to mixture and beat until well combined. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating just until combined. Pour filling into crust (filling will almost fill pan). Bake until cheesecake puffs, top browns, and center moves only slightly when pan is shaken, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Transfer cheesecake to rack and cool 10 minutes. Run small sharp knife around cake pan sides to loosen cheesecake. Cool. Cover tightly and refrigerate overnight.

Bring remaining 3/4 cup cream cheese mixture to room temperature. Add remaining 5 tablespoons whipping cream to cream cheese mixture and stir to combine. Press down firmly on edges of cheesecake to create an even thickness. Pour cream cheese mixture over cheesecake, spreading evenly.

Release pan sides from cheesecake. Slice and serve with caramel sauce.

CHEESE FONDUE

½ pound imported Swiss cheese, shredded
½ pound Gruyère cheese, shredded
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 garlic clove, peeled
1 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon cherry brandy, such as kirsch
½ teaspoon dry mustard
Pinch nutmeg
Assorted breads, vegetables, and fruits, for dipping

In a small bowl, coat the cheeses with cornstarch and set aside. Rub the inside of the ceramic fondue pot with the garlic clove, then discard.

Over medium heat, add the wine and lemon juice and bring to a simmer. Gradually stir the cheese into the simmering liquid. (Melting the cheese gradually will encourage a smooth fondue.) Once smooth, stir in cherry brandy, mustard, and nutmeg.

Arrange an assortment of bite-sized dipping foods on a lazy Susan around fondue pot. Serve with chunks of French and pumpernickel breads. Other suggestions include Granny Smith apples and blanched vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, and asparagus. Spear with fondue forks or wooden skewers, dip, swirl, and eat.