

## Spring Menu (Dinner For 8)

### Hummus With Pita Chips

***This is a classic standard that changes a little each time I make it. As with so many of my recipes, I start with a basic formula and adjust it to the mood of my taste buds. The pita chips are a little bit of a hassle, but they're really worth it.***

4 cups canned garbanzo beans (chick-peas), drained

¼ cup tahini (sesame paste)

1/3 cup warm water

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

juice of 2 to 3 lemons

3 garlic cloves

1 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon ground cumin seed

freshly ground pepper to taste

1 package of 8" white pita bread (about 12 pieces)

8 tablespoons butter (1 stick)

½ teaspoon salt

2 cloves garlic, chopped

Put the chickpeas in a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Process for a few seconds, then add the olive oil, juice of 1 lemon, and warm water. When smooth, add the tahini and process until incorporated.

Use a garlic press to mash the garlic, and add it, the cumin seed, salt and pepper. Process and taste. Add more lemon juice and adjust seasoning to taste. Scrape into a storage container, cover, and refrigerate until ready to use.

Preheat oven to 350.

Melt butter in a small sauce pan over low heat. Add garlic and salt, cover, and let it sit over low heat until the garlic is soft.

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Lay a piece of pita flat, cut in half, and open the pocket being careful not to tear the bread or split it in two. Lay the halves flat, and cut into thirds, open them up, and cut at the fold. Baste both sides with the garlic butter, and put them crust side down on cookie sheets. Bake until the tops are golden and the chips are crisp. Let them cool, and put them in an airtight container until you're ready to serve.

### Oven Roasted Asparagus With Green Sauce

***I found the original recipe in Bon Appetit in April 1991 and made a couple of changes along the way. I always start making the sauce as it reads below and adjust as I go... sometimes a little more lemon, sometimes a little more anchovy, sometimes a little more mustard...start here and see where it takes you. This is definitely a crowd pleaser.***

2 cups loosely packed fresh Italian parsley leaves

2 cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

5 oil-packed anchovy fillets

2 tablespoons drained capers

1 garlic clove

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

¼ teaspoon pepper

Pinch of salt

2/3 cup olive oil

2 pounds asparagus, trimmed

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 tablespoons water

Combine first nine ingredients in processor. Blend until smooth. With machine running, gradually add 2/3 cup olive oil through feed tube. Taste and adjust seasoning. (Sauce can be prepared 2 days ahead.) Cover and refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Position rack in top third of oven and preheat to 450. Place asparagus on heavy large cookie sheet. Drizzle 2 tablespoons oil and water over. Toss gently to coat. Bake asparagus until just tender and light brown, about 10 minutes. (Start checking them with a fork at about 7 minutes.) Divide asparagus among plates, spoon sauce over and serve.

### Caramelized Onion And Garlic Tart

***This comes from a September 1993 issue of Bon Appetit. I replaced the crust***

***recipe with one I got from my brother-in-law Sam Douglas, a professional chef, and have adapted it over time. The measurements for the pastry are by weight, so that the results are consistent. This is a very sexy tart.***

CRUST

4½ ounces unbleached all-purpose flour

4½ ounces cake flour

4 ounces frozen unsalted butter, cut into cubes

2 ounces chilled solid vegetable shortening

3 ounces ice water

FILLING

2 tablespoons olive oil

2½ pounds onions, chopped

10 large garlic cloves, chopped

1 large fresh thyme sprig, or

¼ teaspoon dried

1 bay leaf

½ cup dry white wine

1 cup packed shredded Gruyere cheese

( about 4 ounces )

For crust: Combine flour, butter and shortening in a food processor fitted with a steel blade and pulse the on/off switch until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Blend in the water one tablespoon at a time until the dough forms moist clumps. Gather the dough in a ball, flatten it into a disk, and wrap it in plastic. Refrigerate for 30 minutes. (Dough can be prepared 4 days ahead. Let it soften slightly before continuing.)

Preheat the oven to 400. Roll out dough on a floured surface (I use a pastry cloth) to a 12-inch round. Roll up dough on rolling pin, and transfer it to a 9-inch tart pan with a removable bottom. Press dough into pan and trim the edges. Poke some holes in the dough with a fork. Freeze for 15 minutes.

Line crust with foil and fill with beans or pie weights. Bake until set. Remove foil and weights. Continue baking until crust is golden brown, piercing with a fork if crust bubbles, about 15 minutes longer. Transfer to a rack, and cool completely.

For filling: Heat oil in a large heavy skillet over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, thyme and bay leaf and cook until onions brown and mixture is jam-like, stirring occasionally, about 50 minutes. Add wine; stir until all liquid evaporates, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Cool. (Crust and filling can be made 6

an liquid evaporates, about 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Cook. (Crust and filling can be made 6 hours ahead. Cover separately; let stand at room temperature.)

Preheat oven to 400. Remove thyme sprig and bay leaf from filling. Stir in the cheese. Transfer filling to crust. Bake until filling is brown, about 20 minutes. Remove pan sides from tart. Serve warm or at room temperature.

### Herb-Crusted Lamb Chops

***Springtime seems to suggest lamb. Although, when I was growing up, we ate lamb, in one form or another, all year long. I came up with this treatment a while back, and it varies slightly from time to time. Sometimes I throw in a little Dijon mustard. One time I added sesame cracker crumbs and toasted walnuts to the mix. But this is my basic recipe.***

16 loin lamb chops cut 1¼" thick

3 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary, firmly packed

2 tablespoons chopped thyme leaves, firmly packed

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 tablespoon fresh ground pepper

1 teaspoon salt

extra virgin olive oil

Put the first 6 items in a mortar and pestle and slowly add olive oil as you mash the ingredients into a thick, grainy paste. Spread ¼ to ½ teaspoon of the herb mix onto both sides of the chops. Lay them flat in a single layer on a non-metallic tray or dish, and cover them with plastic wrap. Leave them overnight in the refrigerator or at room temperature for a few hours.

Arrange coals in your grill so that you have a hot spot and a medium-hot spot. Sear the chops over the hot coals and then transfer them to the medium-hot area and cook them 3 minutes on each side for medium rare.

### Lemon Poppy Seed Pound Cake

***My wife was craving lemon pound cake. This is the recipe that scratched her itch. It comes from The Cake Bible by Rose Levy Bernbaum. All the ingredients should be at room temperature. Serve slices of the cake with fresh berries.***

3 tablespoons milk

3 large eggs

1½ teaspoons vanilla

5¼ ounces sifted cake flour (measured by weight)

5¼ ounces sugar (measured by weight)

¾ teaspoon baking powder

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¼ teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon loosely packed grated lemon zest

3 tablespoons poppy seeds

13 tablespoons unsalted butter (softened)

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar

¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350. Grease an 8"x 4"x 2 ½" loaf pan, line the bottom with parchment or wax paper, and then grease again and flour it.

In a medium bowl lightly combine the milk, eggs and vanilla.

In a large mixing bowl combine dry ingredients and mix on low speed for 30 seconds to blend. Add the butter and half the egg mixture. Mix on low speed until the dry ingredients are moistened. Increase to medium speed (high speed if using a hand mixer) and beat for 1 minute to aerate and develop the cake's structure. Scrape down the sides. Gradually add the remaining egg mixture in 2 batches, beating for 20 seconds after each addition to incorporate the ingredients and strengthen the structure. Scrape down the sides. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the surface with a spatula. Bake 30 minutes, then cover loosely with buttered foil to prevent over-browning. Bake 25 to 35 minutes longer or until a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. (The cake should start to shrink from the sides of the pan only after removal from the oven.)

Shortly before the cake is done, prepare the lemony syrup: In a small pan over medium heat, stir the sugar and lemon juice until dissolved. As soon as the cake comes out of the oven, place the pan on a rack, poke the cake all over with a wire tester, and brush it with half the syrup. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes. Loosen the sides with a spatula and invert it onto a greased wire rack. Poke the bottom of the cake with the wire tester, brush it with some syrup, and reinvert onto a greased wire rack. Brush the sides with the remaining syrup and allow to cool before wrapping airtight. Store 24 hours before eating to give the syrup a chance to distribute evenly. The syrup will keep the cake fresh a few days longer than a cake without syrup.