

## Summer Menu (Dinner For 6)

*I got the inspiration to do an all cold-item menu in the middle of a heat wave last summer. We had guests coming, and I wasn't about to sweat over a hot grill while everybody else was comfortably sipping their gin and tonics in the air conditioning. Also, I didn't want to heat up the kitchen since everyone invariably ends up hanging out there. The beautiful part about this menu is, all the cooking is done in advance. The beef can be prepped two days in advance and then cooked the day before it is to be served. The soup can be made a day or two in advance, and the beets also benefit from being marinated over night. So when your guests arrive all you have to do is assemble and serve.*

### **COLD CUCUMBER SOUP**

*I tried several different recipes and then found this one, hand-scrawled on a piece of brown paper, in the back of one of my oldest cookbooks. I don't know where it came from, but I thank whoever took the time. It is wonderful.*

4 large cucumbers, peeled, seeded and cut into 1/4" pieces

4-6 scallions, thinly sliced (white part only)

2 tbsp butter

1 tbsp vegetable oil

2 tbsp flour

2 1/2 cups chicken broth

1/2 cup milk

1 1/2 tbsp lemon juice

2 tsp dill weed

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp white pepper

2 cups sour cream

Heat broth and milk in a small pan. Meanwhile, in a large, heavy-bottom pan, saute cucumbers and onions in butter and oil for 10 minutes. Stir in flour and cook while stirring for 3-4 minutes. Add milk-broth mixture, lemon juice, dill weed, salt and pepper. Simmer gently until thick, about ten minutes. Puree in a blender or food processor. Cool

completely, add sour cream and stir until smooth. Refrigerate until serving time, then ladle into chilled bowls.

**STEAK SALAD with HORSERADISH SAUCE, MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE  
and MARINATED BEETS**

***Il love these beets, as do most people I have served them to. Some people can't stand to be in the same room with beets. You can substitute with some other marinated vegetable or say what my father would say, "Eat 'em, they're good for ya'."***

1½ lb. trimmed beef tenderloin, cut from the middle of the roast so that it is the same thickness throughout

½ Vidalia or red onion, sliced thinly

several sprigs thyme

2 cloves garlic, cut into slivers

salt

pepper

olive oil

¼ cup whipping cream

4 tsp. mayonnaise

2 tbsp. prepared horseradish, drained

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

pinch of sugar

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

2 tbsp. White wine vinegar

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

½ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil

salt and pepper to taste

6 large beets, trimmed with peels left on

2½ tbsp. Sherry wine vinegar

½ cup Walnut oil

salt and pepper to taste

6 hands full mesclun greens, washed and dried

#### BEEF:

Make a small slit in the beef with the tip of a paring knife and insert a sliver of garlic. Repeat this, spacing them about 1½ inches apart. Lay enough plastic wrap to cover the beef on a work surface. Spread half of the onions and thyme on the wrap in an area the size of the beef. Salt and pepper the beef and coat it with olive oil. Lay beef on the onions and thyme, and put the remaining onions and thyme on top. Wrap it tight and put it in the refrigerator for 8 hours or overnight.

Pre-heat oven to 400 degrees. Remove the herbs and onions. Brown the beef well in clarified butter on all sides over medium-high to high flame in a roasting pan or skillet. Then place beef on a rack in a roasting pan and put it in the oven, turning every 10 minutes. Cook 20 minutes for rare, 25 minutes for medium rare, and 30 minutes for medium. Check with an instant-read thermometer at the thickest part: 125 for rare, 130 for medium rare, and 135 for medium. Cool, cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator until serving time.

#### BEETS:

Place beets in a large pan and cover them with cold water. Bring water to a boil and simmer about 45 minutes, or until you can stick a fork in them. Drain and plunge beets in ice water. When they are cool enough to handle, peel and slice them in half, then cut the halves into wedges. Put the sherry wine vinegar in a large bowl, add a dash of salt and pepper, whisk, and then whisk in the walnut oil until it emulsifies. Add the beets and toss until well coated. Place in the refrigerator, and toss them every few hours.

#### HORSERADISH SAUCE:

Whip the cream in a bowl until it forms soft peaks. Combine the mayonnaise, horseradish and mustard in another bowl. Fold in the cream using a rubber spatula. Add the sugar, salt and pepper and stir well.

#### MUSTARD VINAIGRETTE:

Whisk white wine vinegar with a dash of salt and pepper and Dijon mustard. Then whisk in extra-virgin olive oil, whisking until it emulsifies.

TO ASSEMBLE SALAD:

Toss greens in just enough of the mustard vinaigrette to coat. Mound greens on plates. Place beets in the center of each plate. Slice the beef in  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch slices and arrange them around the beets. Drizzle horseradish sauce on beef slices and serve.

**LEMON ICE**

*This is taken lick for lick from MAIDA HEATTER'S NEW BOOK OF GREAT DESSERTS. It is perfect, so why fool with it? I had some friends who were on a low-fat diet turn into animals over this stuff.*

8 cups warm water

4 cups granulated sugar

2 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups fresh lemon juice

Combine the water and sugar in a saucepan over high heat. Stir with a wooden spatula until the sugar is dissolved and the mixture comes to a boil. Boil without stirring for 5 minutes.

Remove from the heat and let stand until completely cool. Stir in the lemon juice. Chill well before churning. Freeze in an ice cream churn according to the manufacturers directions.