
Cooking With Rania

KDKA Pittsburgh Today Live 11/04/2009

Apple and Fig Crostini

INGREDIENTS

- 1 jar fig preserves
- ¼ cup chopped toasted hazelnuts
- 24 baguette slices
- Olive oil, for drizzling
- ½ cup grated Pecorino Romano
- 1 large Granny Smith apple, thinly sliced into 24 slices
- ¼ pound chunk Pecorino Romano, for shaving 24 pieces

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

In a small bowl, combine the fig preserves with the toasted hazelnuts.

Place the baguette slices on a heavy baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil. Top each slice with 1 teaspoon grated Pecorino Romano. Bake until the bread is toasted and the cheese is melted and golden, about 7 minutes.

Top each slice of toast with 2 teaspoons of fig preserves, a slice of apple and a piece of shaved Pecorino Romano. Transfer the toasts to a serving platter and serve.

Cooking With Rania

KDKA Pittsburgh Today Live 11/04/2009

Blue Cheese Cheesecake with Baby Greens, Candied Pecans

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup toasted bread crumbs
- ¾ cup finely chopped toasted walnuts
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 pound Maytag blue cheese, at room temperature
- 1 pound cream cheese, at room temperature
- 4 eggs
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- Baby greens for serving
- ½ cup Dried cherries for garnishing
- Pear Vinaigrette, recipe follows
- Candied Pecans, recipe follows

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In the bowl of a food processor, combine breadcrumbs, walnuts and melted butter and process until thoroughly combined. Press the mixture on the bottom and partially up the sides of an 9-inch nonstick Springform pan. Set aside.

In a mixing bowl combine blue cheese and cream cheese and mix until smooth. Add the eggs 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the garlic, rosemary, salt and pepper and combine well. Using a spatula, transfer cheese mixture to the prepared pan and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until the cake is golden brown and not loose in the center.

While the cake is baking, make the Pear Vinaigrette and Candied Pecans.

When the cake is puffed, golden brown and not loose in the center, transfer to a cooling rack and allow to cool at least 30 minutes before serving.

Serve the cake warm, with a salad of baby greens tossed with the Pear Vinaigrette, garnished with the Candied Pecans and dried cherries.

Serves: 12

Cooking With Rania

KDKA Pittsburgh Today Live 11/04/2009

Pear Vinaigrette:

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (4-ounce) firm-ripe pear, peeled, cored and cut into ¼ inch thick slices
- ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons Champagne vinegar
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 ½ teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- Sea salt to taste
- 1 green onion - chopped
- ½ cup fruity olive oil

DIRECTIONS

Combine the pear, Champagne vinegar, shallots, sugar, rosemary and black pepper in a skillet and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the pears are tender, about 6 minutes. Remove from the heat and transfer to a blender or food processor.

Add the mustard, soy sauce, kosher salt, and green onions, and puree on high speed. With the motor running, add the oil in a thin stream and process until emulsified. Remove from the blender and refrigerate in an airtight container until ready to serve. (The vinaigrette will keep for up to 1 week refrigerated.)

Yield: 1 cup

Candied Pecans:

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup pecan halves
- 2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar

DIRECTIONS

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pecans and cook, stirring, until golden brown and toasted, 3 minutes. Add the sugar and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Transfer to a piece of waxed paper to cool.

Yield: 1/2 cup