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## From Paris, with Love

By Susie Iventosch

It seems fitting, that since Paris is the "City of Romance" we invoke two traditional French dessert recipes for Valentine's Day! Who can deny the incredible allure of a silky chocolate mousse or the ecstasy of indulging in a delectable browned butter-pistachio-raspberry cake?

Financiers, individual cakes made with finely chopped nuts-usually blanched almonds -are a delightful Parisian delicacy. Named after the wealthy bankers who, in the late 1800s, frequented a certain boulangerie situated near the Paris Bourse, the city's stock exchange, "financiers" were a specialty of the house. This week's featured recipe is a variation on the original, made with finely chopped, unsalted pistachios, raspberries and an apricot glaze.

Chocolate mousse is another wonderful dessert for special occasions. Not only is it pretty, but it can also be made a day ahead of time, and you can use any flavoring you like, such as extracts, liqueurs, coffee, or fresh fruit! Mousse literally means "foam" in French and the foam comes from the use of beaten egg whites. Because I shy away from using raw eggs, the Deb El "Just Whites" powdered egg whites come in very handy. They work just as well as real egg whites in this recipe, and there are no worries or concerns about using raw eggs. That said, I also pasteurize the egg in the shell before adding the egg yolks to the melted chocolate mixture. You can use the egg white after this process too, if you don't like the idea of the powdered egg white. See below for directions on how to pasteurize the raw eggs.

Whether you try one of these recipes, or an old favorite from your old "romance" recipe file ...

Have a Sweet Valentine's Day!

\*How to Pasteurize Raw Eggs

[http://www.christonium.com/culinaryreview/How\\_To\\_Make\\_Pasteurized\\_Eggs\\_Cooking\\_With\\_Raw\\_Eggs](http://www.christonium.com/culinaryreview/How_To_Make_Pasteurized_Eggs_Cooking_With_Raw_Eggs)

Place the eggs in a pot with cold water. Put the water on medium heat. You don't want the temperature of the water to exceed 150 degrees. If you want to be exact, keep a thermometer probe in the water. When you pasteurize eggs, you bring them up to about 140-150 degrees for 3-5 minutes depending on the age and the size of the eggs. If the temperature goes any higher you start to cook the egg. When you reach this temperature, try to keep it there and watch so the temperature doesn't rise. Pasteurizing eggs won't completely eliminate the risks that eating raw eggs bring, but it will reduce the chance of contamination.

## Pistachio-Raspberry Financiers



Photo Susie Iventosch

(Makes 6 three-inch individual cakes)

### INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 cup roasted, unsalted pistachios (available at Trader Joe's and Whole Foods)

1 cup powdered sugar

12 tablespoons unsalted butter (1 1/2 sticks)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

6 large egg whites

1/2 cup fresh raspberries for cake

### Apricot-Raspberry Glaze

1/2 cup apricot preserves

1/4 cup raspberries

Heat jam in small saucepan, just until warm and slightly thinned. In a food processor, puree jam with raspberries. Reheat to serve warm over cakes and garnish with any extra raspberries.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Sift flour and salt together into a small bowl and set aside.

In a food processor, chop the pistachios until finely ground, about 1 minute. Add sugar and pulse until well combined, about 10 pulses. Transfer mixture to a large bowl.

Melt butter in a medium frying pan over medium-low heat, until butter turns amber and smells nutty, about 7 minutes, or so, depending upon your stove's heat. Swirl the pan occasionally to heat butter evenly and keep from getting too dark. Strain butter through a mesh sieve into a separate bowl. Add vanilla.

Beat egg whites in a medium bowl until frothy. Stir into pistachio-sugar mixture with a rubber spatula, until just combined.

Gently stir butter into flour mixture, just until evenly combined. Cover batter with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 450°. Using a muffin tin with six cups (each about 3-inches in diameter) spray or grease each cup well. Fill each with batter and bake for 6 minutes at 450°. Reduce heat to 400° and bake financiers just until

beginning to brown around the edges, about 8 more minutes. Remove from oven, turn cakes out from pan and cool on rack.

To serve, spoon Apricot-Raspberry Glaze over top and garnish with fresh raspberries.

## Chocolate Mousse

(Serves 5-8, depending upon serving size)

### INGREDIENTS

4 1/2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1-2 tablespoons Grand Marnier (or your favorite liqueur- Amaretto, Kahlua, etc.)

1 cup heavy cream

3 large eggs, separated (or powdered egg whites and pasteurized egg yolk)

1 tablespoon sugar

Garnish: Raspberries and extra whipped cream

### DIRECTIONS

Beat heavy cream to stiff peaks, and refrigerate until ready to use.

In a double boiler, combine the chocolate, butter and vanilla and cook over simmering water, stirring all the while, until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Remove from the heat and let cool until chocolate is just warm, but not cold. Once cooled, stir in pasteurized egg yolks\* and Grand Marnier. Mix well. Set aside.

While chocolate is cooling, beat egg whites (or egg white substitute) until foamy. Add 1 tablespoon sugar and continue to beat until stiff peaks form.

Using a spatula or wooden spoon, fold about 1/3 of the whipped cream into chocolate-egg yolk mixture. Fold in half the whites just until incorporated, and then fold in the remaining whites. Gently fold in remaining whipped cream.

Spoon the mousse into a serving bowl or individual dishes. You can also layer with fresh berries or whipped cream and sprinkle with chocolate shavings. Refrigerate for several hours. (The mousse can be refrigerated for up to a day.)

Reach the reporter at: [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com)

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