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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!

Pistachio-Raspberry Financiers

(Makes 6 three-inch individual cakes)

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup roasted, unsalted pistachios (available at Trader Joe's and Whole Foods)
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter (1 ½ sticks)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 large egg whites
- ½ cup fresh raspberries for cake



Apricot-Raspberry Glaze

- ½ cup apricot preserves
- ¼ 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.

*How to Pasteurize 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.

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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
- ½ 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.)

LAMORINDA's Restaurants

... updated January 5, 2011 ...

American	Petar's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 284-7117	Mucho wraps, 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor, 377-1203
Bistro, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108	Roya's Garlic Garden, 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3007	Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, 3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-8740
Chow Restaurant, 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 962-2469	Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf, 284-1330	Celia's Restaurant, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-8288
Ranch House, 1012 School St, Mor, 376-5127	French	El Balazo, 3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-8700
Terzetto Cuisine, 1419 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-3832	Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf, 385-0793	Maya Mexican Grill, 74 Moraga Way, Ori, 258-9049
The Cheese Steak Shop, 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-1234	Fuz, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-9930	Número Uno Taqueria, 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1333
BBQ	Hawaiian Grill	Pizza
Bo's Barbecue, 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7133	Lava Pit Hawaiian Grill, 2 Theatre Sq., St. 142, Ori, 253-1338	Lamorinda Pizza, 382 Park St, Mor, 376-4040
Burger Joint	Lava Pit Fire Grill, 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 385-0658	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6363
Flippers, 960 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-1567	Indian	Mountain Mike's Pizza, 504 Center St, Mor, 377-6453
Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 400 Park, Mor, 376-8888	Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9575	Pennini's, 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-1515
Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 76 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-8888	Italian	Round Table Pizza, 361 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1411
Café	Giardino, 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3869	Round Table Pizza, 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-0404
Ferrari-Lucca Delicatessens, 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 299-8040	La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf, 284-5282	Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori, 254-1200
Geppetto's caffè, 87 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-9894	La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-9191	Zamboni's Pizza, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori, 254-2800
La Boulange, 3597 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-1001	Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-3081	Sandwiches/Deli
Rising Loafers, 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf, 284-8816	Michael's, 1375 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-4300	Bianca's Deli, 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor, 376-4400
Susan Foord Catering & Cafe, 965 Mt. View Dr., Laf, 299-2469	Pizza Antica, 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0500	Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-7202
California Cuisine	Trattoria Lupetti, 65 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-7662	Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-0716
Artisan Bistro, 1005 Brown St., Laf, 962-0882	Postino, 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8700	Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0766
Metro Lafayette, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4422	Ristorante Amorama, 360 Park St, Mor, 377-7662	Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori, 254-1990
Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-9687	Japanese	Subway, 396 Park St., Mor, 376-2959
Table 24, Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-0124	Asia Palace Sushi Bar, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809	Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 284-2627
Chinese	Blue Ginko, 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9020	Subway, Theatre Square, Ori, 258-0470
Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809	Fuz, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-9930	Seafood
Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1740	Kane Sushi, 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-9709	Yankee Pier, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-4100
China Moon Restaurant, 380 Park St, Mor, 376-1828	Kirin Sushi, 356 Park Street, Mor, 284-2872	Steak
The Great Wall Rest., 3500 Golden Gate Way, 284-3500	Niwa Restaurant, 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori, 254-1606	Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori, 254-2981
Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine, 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori, 253-9852	Oyama Sushi, 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6888	Tea
Lily's House, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf, 284-7569	Serika Restaurant, 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori, 254-7088	Patisserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 283-2226
Mandarin Flower, 581 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-7839	Yu Sushi, 19 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-8399	Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2206
Panda Express, 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-0288	Mediterranean	Thai
Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 79 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2020	Petra Café, 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori, 254-5290	Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 283-8883
Uncle Yu's Szechuan, 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf, 283-1688	Oasis Café, 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-8822	Baan Thai, 99 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-0989
Yan's Restaurant, 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-2228	Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-2004	Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor, 377-0420
Coffee Shop	Mexican	Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori, 253-1975
Millie's Kitchen, 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf, 283-2397	360 Gourmet Burrito, 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-1270	Vietnamese
Squirrel's Coffee Shop, 998 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-7830	Casa Gourmet Burrito, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4415	Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor, 376-7600
Village Inn Café, 204 Village Square, Ori, 254-6080	El Charro Mexican Dining, 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-2345	
Club	El Jaro Mexican Cafe, 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-6639	
Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108	La Cocina Mexicana, 23 Orinda Way, Ori, 258-9987	

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Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net.



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