

Published November 5th, 2014

5th Annual Olive Festival a Pit-Spitting Hit

By Susie Iventosch



Victoria Reynoso's winning Fig and Olive Tapenade Photo Susie Iventosch

and Olive Tapenade, and Heather Barrett won a prize for her Kalamata Pasta Salad. Reynoso also provided this year's Chef's Demonstration tent. Though Reynoso's recipe calls for reconstituted dried figs, I made the dish with fresh figs, since they are available right now at specialty grocers for the fall crops and it turned out very well. It is a delicious recipe! I haven't had a chance to make Barrett's pasta salad yet, but plan to soon!

Victoria Reynoso's Fig and Olive Tapenade

By Susie Iventosch

INGREDIENTS

1 cup dried figs, chopped
 1/2 cup water
 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
 1 teaspoon dried thyme
 Splash of white wine
 2/3 cup pitted Kalamata olives, finely chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon extra-virgin California olive oil
 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 Salt and pepper
 1/4 cup sun ripened tomatoes, chopped
 1/3 cup chopped toasted walnuts
 8 oz. cream cheese

DIRECTIONS

Soak the dried figs then mix in seasonings, wine, chopped olives, garlic, olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve with thin rounds of bread or crackers and the three garnishes: chopped tomatoes, toasted walnuts, and cream cheese.

The 5th Annual Olive Festival was a big success with hundreds of children and adults gathered at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area in Orinda to tour the 132-year-old historic olive grove, sample a variety of olive oils and balsamic vinegars, and play some good old-fashioned games, like the olive pit-spitting contest! McCauley, Calolea, Cecchetti and Calivirgin olive growers supplied the tastings and Diablo Foods sponsored the "Spit Pit" providing a variety of deli olives for the contest. Brad McCullough was the overall winning pit-spitter with a distance of 26 feet, 9 inches! His daughter, Claire, won the high school contest, coming in at 22 feet, 3 inches, while Audrey Spindler was the middle school champion at 20 feet, 7 inches. All of these distances are very impressive, indeed!

Meanwhile, in the recipe contest, Diablo Valley College Culinary School student, Victoria Reynoso, was a winner in the Olive Recipe Contest for her Fig

Susie's note: I used Kalamata olive bread, sliced quite thin, lightly brushed with olive oil and broiled just until beginning to get crunchy, but still soft in the middle. Then, I spread a very thin layer of goat cheese, topped with the fig-olive tapenade and then sprinkled blue cheese over the top and broiled it until the cheese turned bubbly and slightly browned. Finally, I topped with the toasted walnut pieces and chopped tomatoes.

Heather Barrett's Kalamata Pasta Salad

By Susie Iventosch

INGREDIENTS

16 oz. pasta of choice
6 oz. of pesto
6 oz. jar of sun-dried tomatoes
9 oz. jar of pitted Kalamata olives
1 tablespoon extra-virgin California olive oil
6 oz. tub of feta cheese crumbles

DIRECTIONS

Cook pasta about 8 minutes and set aside to drain. Add pesto to warm pot (enough for a thick coat). Add pasta to warmed pesto and stir. Add diced Kalamata olives and sun-dried tomatoes and feta cheese. Stir until mixed. Drizzle and stir in a tablespoon of olive oil to keep the pasta moist (if needed). Eat warm or serve chilled.

Reach the reporter at: suziven@gmail.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA