



www.gourmetcouples.com

TWENTY EIGHTH YEAR

May, 2010

NEWS LETTER

#118

Gourmet Couples Schedule for 2010

May 15 – Army-Navy Club Restaurant, Ann and Dick host
June 6 – Strawberry Brunch, Shelly and Linda host
June 27 – Restaurant Visit – Location Virginia - TBA
July 11 – Planning Party – 6:00 – 8:00 pm
August 7 – Dinner Party
August 14 – Alternate Dinner Party
September 11 – Virginia Winery
October 2 – Crab Feast, Paula and Joe host
October 17 – Planning Party, 4:00 – 6:00 pm
October 30 – Halloween Party, Mitzi and Bob, host
November 6 – Dinner Party
November 13 – Alternate Dinner Party
December 5 – Restaurant Brunch – Location DC - TBA
January 8, 2011 – 12th Night Party

Strawberry Champagne Brunch

The annual Strawberry Champagne Brunch is on schedule for June 6, 2010 at 12:30 PM.

The club will provide the strawberries, champagne, orange juice, iced tea, and breads. You bring prepared brunch dishes, such as quiche, casserole, pasta salad, or a dessert (preferably NOT strawberries). Please indicate your choice on the reply coupon.

The party fee this year is \$10 per couple. Please make checks payable to: **GOURMET COUPLES**

Remember to bring a copy of your recipe, as well as any utensils or appliances needed for serving your dish. Also remember to bring lawn chairs or a blanket and plenty of sunscreen.

Guests who are prospective members are welcome. They need to bring a dish but they do not need to pay the party fee. (former members who did not join this year should pay the fee as well).

Please respond by May 28, 2010

There were two great April Dinner Parties Springtime in Paris

This dinner set consisted of five couples who enjoyed a delicious dinner at Barbara and Jerry's new house in Ashburn, Virginia. The menu consisted of :

- Warm Brie with Fujji Apple, Pear and Melba Toasts (prepared by Barbara and Jerry)
 - Crab-Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes (prepared by Sandy and Chuck)
 - Pea Soup (prepared by Lindsay and Dave Gustin)
 - Strawberry Romaine Salad (prepared by Sandy and Chuck Gerber)
 - Green Green Spring Vegetables (prepared by Colleen and Gus)
 - Orzo noodle dish (prepared by Colleen and Gus Platis)
 - Herb-Marinated Pork Tenderloins (prepared by Barbara and Jerry)
 - Apricot Tart with Honey and Almonds (prepared by Jerry and Fran)
- * the pork roast was cooked to 140 degrees internal temperature, which produced a pink interior. This resulted in a tender moist and delicious meat.

Warm Brie with Fujji Apple, Pear and Melba Toasts

(prepared by Barbara and Jerry)
Spring Time in Paris, April 24, 2010

- 1 Large Fuji apple
- 1 Large red or brown skinned pear, slightly under ripe
- A wedge lemon
- 1 Pound individual wheel brie cheese
- 24 Sesame Melba toast rounds, any brand

Quarter apple and pear lengthwise and cut into each quarter on an angle to remove the core. Slice apple and pear into 1/4-inch thick slices. Squeeze a little lemon juice over the fruit to slow browning.

Cut the top rind off the brie and place in the microwave on high for 60 seconds. Depending on the ripeness of the cheese, it will take 60 to 90 seconds on high to heat and melt. If brie is not yet soft and hot after 1 minute, place it back in microwave for another 30 seconds on high.

Serve the softened, warm brie with a platter of fruit and Melba toasts for dipping and spreading. Reheat brie if it tightens up for 20 to 30 seconds at a time on high.

Crab-Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes

(Prepared by Sandy and Chuck)

Springtime in Paris, April 24, 2010

- 1 Can (six ounces) crab meat, drained, flaked and cartilage removed
- 2 Tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 Tablespoon chili sauce or seafood cocktail sauce
- 1/8 Teaspoon salt
- 3 Drops hot pepper sauce
- Dash of pepper
- 16 Cherry tomatoes

In a small bowl, combine the crab, mayonnaise, chili sauce, salt, pepper sauce and pepper. Spoon one tablespoon of crab mixture into each tomato. Refrigerate until serving

Fresh Pea and Mint Soup

(Prepared by Lindsay and David)

Springtime in Paris, April 24, 2010

In this pretty soup, sweet fresh peas are enhanced with a bit of mint.

- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1-2/3 Cups chopped shallots (about 6 very large)
- 2 Garlic cloves, minced
- 8 Cups shelled fresh peas (from about 5 pounds peas in pods) or two 16-ounce bags frozen petite peas, unthawed
- 5-1/2 Cups (or more) low-salt chicken broth (preferably organic)
- 1/4 Cup chopped fresh mint plus additional for garnish

Heat oil in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add shallots and garlic. Sauté until tender, about 7 minutes. Add peas and stir 1 minute. Add 5 1/2 cups broth and bring to simmer. Cook until peas are very tender, about 8 minutes. Cool 15 minutes. Puree soup and 1/4 cup chopped mint in batches in blender until smooth. Return to same pot; thin with more broth by 1/4 cupfuls, if desired. DO AHEAD: Can be made 1 day ahead. Cool, cover, and chill.

Rewarm soup over medium-low heat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls; garnish with additional mint. Serves 10

Strawberry Romaine Salad

(Prepared by Jerry and Barbara)

Springtime in Paris, April 24, 2010

- 1 Cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 Cup sugar
- 1/2 Cup red wine vinegar
- 2 Cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 Teaspoon salt
- 1/2 Teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 Teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1 Large head of Romaine lettuce
- 1 Head of Boston lettuce
- 1 Pint of strawberries
- 1 Cup (four ounces) shredded Monterey Jack Cheese

- 3/4 Cup chopped pecans, toasted

Combine the first seven ingredients in a large jar. Cover tightly and shake vigorously. Store refrigerated up to one week. Usually only need one half of the dressing.

To serve: Tear lettuce into bite size pieces. Combine torn lettuce strawberries, cheese and pecans in large salad bowl. Shake dressing vigorously, pour over salad and toss gently.

Green Green Spring Vegetables

(Prepared by Colleen and Gus)

Springtime in Paris, April 24, 2010

- 1/4 Pound French string beans (haricots verts), ends removed
- Kosher salt
- 1/4 Pound sugar snap peas, ends and strings removed
- 1/4 Pound asparagus, ends removed
- 1/2 Pound broccoli, ends removed
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 Tablespoon good olive oil
- 3 Large shallots, sliced
- 1/2 Teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Blanch the string beans in a large pot of boiling salted water for 1 minute only. Lift the beans from the water with a slotted spoon or sieve and immerse them in a bowl of ice water. Add the snap peas to the same boiling water and cook for 1 minute, until al dente, adding them to the ice water and the beans. Cut the asparagus into 2-inch lengths diagonally and cook in the boiling water for 2 minutes, and add to the ice water. Cut the broccoli in half, boil for 1 minute, and add to the ice water. When all the vegetables in the water are cold, drain well.

When ready to serve, heat the butter and oil in a very large saute pan or large pot. Sauté the shallots over medium heat for 5 minutes, tossing occasionally, until lightly browned. Add the drained vegetables to the shallots with 1/2 teaspoon salt and the pepper and toss. Cook just until the vegetables are heated through. Serve hot. Serves 4 to 6

Herb-Marinated Pork Tenderloins

(Prepared by Barbara and Jerry)

Spring time in Paris, April 24, 2010

- 1 Lemon, zest grated
- 3/4 Cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (4 to 6 lemons)
- Good olive oil
- 2 Tablespoons minced garlic (6 cloves)
- 1-1/2 Tablespoons minced fresh rosemary leaves
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 2 Teaspoons Dijon mustard
- Kosher salt
- 3 Pork tenderloins (about 1 pound each)
- Freshly ground black pepper

Combine the lemon zest, lemon juice, 1/2 cup olive oil, garlic, rosemary, thyme, mustard, and 2 teaspoons salt in a sturdy 1-gallon resealable plastic bag. Add the pork tenderloins and turn to coat with the marinade. Squeeze out the air

and seal the bag. Marinate the pork in the refrigerator for at least 3 hours but preferably overnight.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Remove the tenderloins from the marinade and discard the marinade but leave the herbs that cling to the meat. Sprinkle the tenderloins generously with salt and pepper. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large oven-proof saute pan over medium-high heat. Sear the pork tenderloins on all sides until golden brown. Place the saute pan in the oven and roast the tenderloins for 10 to 15 minutes or until the meat registers 137 degrees F at the thickest part.

Transfer the tenderloins to a platter and cover tightly with aluminum foil. Allow to rest for 10 minutes. Carve in 1/2-inch-thick diagonal slices. The thickest part of the tenderloin will be quite pink (it's just fine!) and the thinnest part will be well done. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm, or at room temperature with the juices that collect in the platter. Serves 6

TARTE D'ABRICOTS AU MIEL ET AUX AMANDES

(Prepared by Fran Place and Jerry Mann)

Springtime in Paris, April 24, 2010

In early summer, apricots are abundant in Provence; here, we've called for canned apricots, which are always available.

Yield: Serves 12

- 2/3 Cup whole milk
- 1 2-inch piece vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 2 Large egg yolks
- 3 Tablespoons sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- Pastry Crust Dough
- 1/2 Cup blanched whole almonds
- 1/3 Cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 Cup (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 large egg
- 1 Teaspoon almond extract
- Pinch of salt
- 2 15.25-ounce cans unpeeled apricot halves in heavy syrup, well drained
- 3 Tablespoons honey

Pour milk into small saucepan. Scrape in seeds from vanilla bean; add bean. Bring to simmer. Remove from heat. Whisk yolks, 3 tablespoons sugar and cornstarch in bowl to blend. Gradually whisk milk mixture into yolk mixture. Return to pan. Whisk over medium heat until custard thickens and boils, about 2 minutes. Transfer to bowl; cool. Discard vanilla bean. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Cover; chill.)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Roll out pastry on floured surface to 14-inch round. Transfer to 11-inch-diameter tart pan with removable bottom. Press crust into pan. Trim edges to 1/2-inch overhang; fold in and press, forming double-thick sides. Freeze crust until firm, about 20 minutes. Bake until light golden, about 20 minutes. Cool. Maintain oven temperature.

Finely grind almonds and powdered sugar in processor. Add cooled custard; blend using on/off turns. Blend in

butter, then whole egg, extract and salt. Pour into crust; smooth top. Arrange apricot halves, round side up, atop filling.

Bake tart until filling is set and golden, about 45 minutes. Remove from oven. Drizzle honey over. Return to oven for 3 minutes. Cool completely in pan. Serves 12

Spanish Delight

We met at the home of Linda and Shelly on April 17, 2010 for a delightful Spanish dinner.

Our menu included:

Mushrooms Stuffed with Pork and Pine Nuts - Cheryl and Dick

Chorizo and Potato Spanish Tortilla Bites - Linda and Shelly)

Spanish Caesar Salad - Francis and Jim

Spanish Bread - Linda and Shelly

Seafood Stew in Romesco Sauce - Joan and Bob

Almond Tart (Tarta de Almendras) - Jura and Adolfas

The tapas appetizers – prepared by Dick and Cheryl and Shelly and Linda – were excellent. The Spaniards are not known for their desserts and Jura tried several recipes until she came up with a winner.

Joan and Bob's Seafood Stew in Romesco Sauce was unusual. Romesco is a specialty of Tarragona, which is some sixty miles southwest of Barcelona. The new Spanish Table cookbook says that Tarragona has a fine Romanesque-Gothic cathedral, pretty beaches, and a quaint old fishermen's quarter called El Serallo. However, the city's principal attraction is gastronomic. "I'm talking about Romesco, a ruddy, nutty, garlicky sauce that flourishes here as something of an edible life force...Some of Romesco's defining ingredients – mortar-grounded garlic, nuts, and sometimes bread – feature in scores of medieval Catalan recipes... What changed the Romesco forever was the introduction of tomatoes and peppers from the New World" which is a specialty of Tarragona..

Mushrooms Stuffed with Pork and Pine Nuts

(Prepared by Cheryl and Dick)

Spanish Delight, April 17, 2010

- 3/4 Pound medium mushrooms, brushed clean
- Fresh lemon juice
- 5 Tablespoons butter
- 3 Tablespoons minced onion
- 1 Clove garlic, mashed to a paste or put through a garlic press
- 1/4 Pound lean ground pork
- Salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 3 Tablespoons bread crumbs
- 1/2 Teaspoon brandy, preferably Spanish brandy or Cognac
- 1 Tablespoon minced parsley
- 1 Tablespoon chopped pine nuts

Separate the mushroom stems and chop finely. Sprinkle the caps with lemon juice. Heat 4 tablespoons of the butter in a medium skillet and sauté the onion and garlic slowly until the onion is wilted. Add the meat, salt, and pepper and cook until the meat loses its color. Add 1/3 cup chopped stems (save the rest for future use) and cook 3 minutes more. Turn off the heat and stir in the bread crumbs, brandy, parsley, pine nuts, and more seasoning if necessary (it should be very well seasoned).

Pile this mixture into the mushroom caps, forming a smooth dome with the cupped side of a teaspoon. Dot the remaining butter. (May be prepared ahead.) Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Chorizo and Potato Spanish Tortilla Bites

(Prepared by Linda and Shelly)
Spanish Delight, April 17, 2010

- 1 Bunch scallions
- 2 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Medium onions, chopped (1 1/2 cups)
- 4 Garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1-1/4 Teaspoons salt
- 1/2 Teaspoon black pepper
- 6 Ounces Spanish chorizo (cured spiced pork sausage), cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 1-1/2 Pounds yellow-fleshed potatoes such as Yukon Gold (about 4 medium), peeled and cut into 1/4-inch dice
- 9 Large eggs
- 3/4 Cup sour cream
- 5 Ounces Manchego or white Cheddar, coarsely grated (2 cups)

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly oil a 13- by 9-inch baking pan or dish. Finely chop white and green parts of scallions and reserve separately.

Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then cook onions, garlic, white parts of scallions, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper, stirring occasionally, until onions are golden, about 6 minutes. Add chorizo and cook, stirring occasionally, until just beginning to brown and release oil, about 4 minutes. Reduce heat to moderate, then stir in potatoes and cover skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Transfer mixture to a large bowl and cool slightly.

Whisk together eggs, sour cream, cheese, scallion greens, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in a bowl, then pour into baking pan. Sprinkle potato mixture over eggs (some potatoes will stick out). Bake until custard is set, about 20 minutes. Cool in pan on a rack to warm or room temperature. Trim 1/2 inch off each side, then cut tortilla into 1 1/2- by 1-inch rectangles.

Cooks' note:

Tortilla can be baked 1 day ahead and cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled, covered. Cut into squares, then bring to room temperature before serving or reheat to warm in a preheated 325 degrees F. oven.

SPANISH CAESAR SALAD

(Prepared by Francis and Jim)
Spanish Delight, April 17, 2010

- 2 Bunches fresh spinach
- 1 Cove crushed garlic
- 5 Anchovies
- 1 Tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 Tablespoon Chili Rojo (olive oil with chili peppers)
- 2 Tablespoons plain olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 Cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 Cup croutons

Remove stems from spinach. Wash, dry and tear into bite size pieces.

Rub a large wooden salad bowl with crushed garlic, leave in bowl.

Mince anchovies and place in bowl with mustard, Chili Rojo, olive oil and vinegar.

Whisk to emulsify.

Add spinach and toss.

Add freshly grated Parmesan cheese and croutons.

Toss again and serve.

Spanish Bread

(Prepared by Linda and Shelly)
Spanish Delight, April 17, 2010

- 1-1/2 Tablespoons of bread yeast
- 2 - 3 Cups warm water
- 7 Cups of white flour
- t2 Teaspoons of salt
- 1/3 Cup extra virgin olive oil (plus a little for oiling bowl)

Mix the yeast in the warm water let sit in a warm place for 10 minutes. Mix the salt with the flour and run through a fine mesh, allowing it to fall into a large bowl. Using your fingers, mix in the oil. Slowly pour in the raised yeast while working the dough with your hands so as to produce a firm but moist dough. Place the dough on a flat surface with some flour sprinkled on it. Knead the dough until it becomes elastic.

Oil the bowl and place the dough in it. Cover the bowl with a moist sheet and set in a warm place until the dough has doubled in volume (45 minutes).

Once again, remove the dough and knead it again over a floured tabletop, to remove air pockets and until the dough feels smooth. Return the dough to a covered bowl and let it rest for 15 minutes.

Cut the dough and form into desired shapes. Place on greased pans. Cut slits in top of bread as desired.

Let bread raise on pans 30 more minutes or until the tops of the loaves begin to flatten.

Place in a very hot oven (450 degrees F) for 30 minutes, or until the tops of the loaves become toasted and they sound hollow when knocked on the bottom. If a harder crust is desired, spray some water into the oven during baking.

Remove the bread from the pans and let cool.

Note: For breakfast, cut lengthwise, toast, and serve with olive oil and salt, and/or fresh tomato sauce (ripe tomato, peeled, seeded and pureed with some salt and garlic).

Seafood Stew in Romesco Sauce

(Prepared by Joan and Bob)

Spanish Delight, April 17, 2010

FOR THE ROMESCO SAUCE:

- 3 Medium-size ripe tomatoes, cut in half
- 12 Large garlic cloves
- Coarse salt (kosher or sea)
- 7 Tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling over the tomatoes
- 2 Dried ancho chilies, stemmed, seeded, and torn into small pieces 2 slices (1/2 inch thick) baguette
- 2/3 Cup blanched almonds
- 2/3 Cup dry white wine
- 1/4 Cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus more for garnish
- 2 Teaspoons sweet (not smoked) paprika
- 1 Small pinch of crushed red pepper flakes, or more to taste
- 2 Cups fish stock
- Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE SEAFOOD:

- 1-1/2 Pounds monkfish, cut into 2-inch chunks
- Coarse salt (kosher or sea)
- 1/3 Cup dry white wine
- 3 Dozen mussels
- 3/4 Pound cleaned squid, bodies cut into 1/3-inch rings tentacles cut in half if large
- 12 to 15 Ounces large shrimp, preferably in their shells

Preparation

Make the romesco sauce: Preheat the oven to 400F.

Place the tomatoes and 6 of the garlic cloves in a roasting pan, sprinkle them with salt, and drizzle olive oil over them. Bake until soft and lightly charred, about 40 minutes. Let the tomatoes and garlic cool slightly, reserving any juices in the pan

While the tomatoes are baking, place the peppers in a small bowl. Add 1 cup very hot water and let soak until soft, about 30 minutes. Transfer the peppers and their soaking liquid to a blender and finely puree them, then set aside.

Heat 5 tablespoons of the olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat until almost smoking. Add the bread and the remaining 6 garlic cloves and cook until deep golden and crisp, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bread and garlic to a bowl. Add the almonds to the skillet and cook until golden, 2 to 3 minutes, adjusting the heat so the oil doesn't burn. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the almonds to the bowl with the bread and garlic. Set the skillet aside; you'll use some of the cooking oil in the romesco sauce.

5 Break the fried bread into pieces and place them in a food processor, along with the fried garlic and almonds, and process until finely ground. Add the roasted tomatoes and garlic and any juices from the roasting pan, the pureed peppers, 2 tablespoons of the garlic frying oil, the remaining 1/3 cup of wine, the 1/4 cup parsley, the paprika, and red pepper flakes (start with a small pinch and add more if you'd like your sauce a little hotter) to the processor bowl. Puree until completely smooth. You can finish making the romesco sauce

right away, but it is best when prepared 1 day ahead up to this stage so that the flavors can develop. Store, covered, in the refrigerator. Discard the remaining garlicky oil in the skillet.

6 Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a heavy, 4 to 5-quart casserole over medium heat. Add the romesco sauce and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to medium-low, and cook, stirring, until the sauce is fragrant and turns a shade or two darker, 2 to 3 minutes. Add another 1/3 cup wine and 1 1/2 cups of the fish stock, reduce the heat to low, and simmer, uncovered, to blend the flavors, about 10 minutes. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and black pepper as necessary.

7 Prepare the seafood: Season the monkfish generously with salt and add it to the simmering romesco sauce, adding a little more fish stock if the sauce doesn't seem liquid enough. Simmer the fish until almost cooked through, about 5 minutes.

8 While the fish is simmering, heat the wine in a wide pot over medium heat. Add the mussels, cover the pot, and cook the mussels until they open, 5 to 7 minutes.

9 When the monkfish has cooked for 5 minutes, add the squid to the romesco sauce and cook for 2 minutes. Add the shrimp and cook until they turn pink, 3 to 5 minutes. Check the fish; if it hasn't completely cooked, simmer it for a few more minutes.

10 Discard any mussels that haven't opened, then gently stir the mussels and their cooking liquid into the romesco sauce. If you'd like the sauce to be soupier, add a little more fish stock. Sprinkle parsley on top and serve with bread for dunking. Don't forget to set out finger bowls and empty bowls for the shells.

Almond Tart (Tarta de Almendras)

(Prepared by Jura and Adolfas)

Spanish Dinner, April 17, 2010

- 1 Cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1/2 Pound shelled almonds (see note below)
- 3 Large eggs
- 4 Large egg yolks
- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 Cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 Teaspoons baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- Sweet Basque Cream
- Confectioners' sugar

Preparation:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F, Lightly butter a 10-inch pie plate.

In a blender, blend the sugar and lemon zest until they are well mixed. Add the almonds, and blend again until the almonds are ground fine. Add the eggs, egg yolks, and butter, and blend until all the contents are well mixed. Transfer the mixture to a bowl.

Add the flour, baking powder, and salt, and stir with a spatula or wooden spoon until the dry ingredients are incorporated. Scrape the batter into the pan, and smooth the top.

Bake the tart on the center rack of the oven for about 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean but the tart is still moist. Let it cool on a wire rack.

Spoon Sweet Basque Cream onto each plate, and set a tart wedge on top. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar, and serve.

Note: Almonds, easy to find in any supermarket, are most commonly sold raw or blanched. Buy raw almonds, if possible. Because you will be grinding the nuts, it doesn't matter whether they're whole or sliced when you buy them.

Sweet Basque Cream (Natillas)

- 1 Quart heavy cream
- 2 Cinnamon sticks
- 6 Large eggs
- 3/4 Cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla extract
- Ground cinnamon

Preparation:

In a saucepan, combine the cream and cinnamon sticks, and bring them to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low, and cook gently for about 10 minutes, until the cream is well infused with the cinnamon. Set the pan aside so the cream can cool.

In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, sugar, and vanilla until they are well mixed. Add the cream and cinnamon sticks, and whisk well.

Heat 1 to 2 inches of water in the bottom pan of a double boiler, and transfer custard mixture to the top pan, or set the bowl over a saucepan containing 1 to 2 inches of hot water. Bring the water to a boil, and cook the sauce, stirring constantly, for about 30 minutes or until it thickens, adding more hot water to the bottom pan if necessary. Remove the top pan or the bowl from over the hot water, and let the custard cool.

Strain the cooled custard through a fine-mesh sieve into a glass or ceramic container, and refrigerate the natillas for at least 4 hours, until it is cool. Stir before serving, adding a little more heavy cream if necessary to smooth the natillas. Divide it among six custard cups or transfer it to a pitcher to use as a sauce. Serve the natillas sprinkled with cinnamon.

Kentucky Derby Party

It was a beautiful day in Boyds, Maryland as we enjoyed a Kentucky Derby party at Dorothy and Dick's horse farm. We watched the race with interest this year because we had placed \$5 wagers on the outcome. Mark was the lucky winner of the \$35 prize. Back by popular demand was Bob's Ham with Bourbon, Molasses and Pecan Glaze. Thanks to Dorothy and Dick for once again hosting this fun event.

Deviled Eggs with Tarragon and Capers

(prepared by Paula and Joe)

Kentucky Derby Dinner Party, Mar 1, 2010

- 6 Hard-boiled eggs peeled halved lengthwise
- 3 Tablespoons sour cream
- 2 Tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 Teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 Teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 Tablespoons minced green onion
- 4 Teaspoons drained capers
- 1 Teaspoon minced fresh tarragon

Spoon yolks from egg halves into small bowl; mash yolks to smooth paste. Add sour cream, mayonnaise, lemon juice and mustard; blend well. Mix in green onion, capers and tarragon. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon yolk mixture back into whites, mounding in center. (Can be made 8 hours ahead. Cover; refrigerate.)

For a special touch, spoon the mashed egg yolk mixture into a pastry bag and pipe it into the hardboiled egg whites. The light versions of mayonnaise and sour cream would also work in this recipe.

Baked Garlic Cheese Grits

(Prepared by Cheryl and Dick)

Kentucky Derby Dinner Party, Mar 1, 2010

- 6 Cups chicken broth
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- 1/4 Teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 Teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 Cups regular grits
- 16 Ounces Cheddar, cubed
- 1/2 Cup milk
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 Cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 8 Ounces grated sharp white Cheddar

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 4-quart casserole dish.

Bring the broth, salt, pepper, and garlic powder to a boil in a 2-quart saucepan. Stir in the grits and whisk until completely combined. Reduce the heat to low and simmer until the grits are thick, about 8 to 10 minutes. Add the cubed Cheddar and milk and stir. Gradually stir in the eggs and butter, stirring until all are combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared casserole dish. Sprinkle with the white Cheddar and bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until set. 12 servings

Ham with Bourbon, Molasses, and Pecan Glaze

Prepared by Joan and Bob)

Kentucky Derby Dinner Party, May 2, 2009

- 1/2 Cup apple juice (preferably fresh unfiltered)
- 1/4 Cup bourbon
- 1-3/4 Cups (packed) dark brown sugar
- 1 Cup pecans, toasted, cooled, finely ground
- 1/4 Cup mild-flavored (light) molasses
- 3 Tablespoons dry mustard
- 1 Whole bone-in 16- to 18-pound ham

Tangerine Chutney

Buttermilk Spoon Bread

Boil juice and bourbon in small saucepan until reduced to scant 1/3 cup, about 6 minutes. Combine sugar, pecans, molasses, and mustard in bowl. Add bourbon mixture; stir to form thick paste. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Cover; chill. Bring to room temperature before using.)

Position rack in bottom third of oven and preheat to 325 degrees F. Line large roasting pan with heavy-duty foil, leaving overhang on all sides. Trim off skin and all but 1/4 inch fat from ham. Place ham, fat side up, in prepared pan. Roast ham until thermometer inserted into thickest part registers 130 degrees F to 135 degrees F., about 10 minutes per pound or 2 hours 40 minutes for 16-pound ham.

Remove ham from oven; increase oven temperature to 425 degrees F. Lightly score fat on ham in diamond pattern. Rub glaze thickly over top and sides of ham. Return ham to oven and roast until glaze is deep brown and bubbling, about 25 minutes. Let ham stand at least 20 minutes and up to 45 minutes. Serve with chutney and spoon bread.

Meat tip:

Choose a bone-in ham or a boneless ham that has the natural shape of a leg. Don't use a pre-formed ham (known as deli ham), which is best sliced cold for sandwiches.

This is the only recipe from the Planning Party:

Chocolate Toffee Diamonds

(Prepared by Linda and Shelly)

Planning Party, March 28.2010

- 2 sticks (1 cup) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 large egg yolk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 12 Ounces fine-quality semisweet chocolate, finely chopped

1-1/4 cups walnuts (5 ounces), toasted and coarsely chopped

Special equipment: a metal offset spatula

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Beat together butter and brown sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes in a standing mixer (preferably fitted with paddle attachment) or 6 minutes with a handheld. Beat in yolk and vanilla, then add flour and salt and mix at low speed until just combined.

Spread batter evenly with offset spatula in a greased 15-1/2- by 10-1/2- by 1-inch baking pan and bake in middle of oven until top puffs slightly and is firm to the touch and edges pull away from sides of pan, 20 to 25 minutes (watch carefully toward end of baking; cookie base can burn easily).

While cookie base is baking, melt chocolate in a double boiler or a metal bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water, stirring occasionally, until smooth, then remove top of double boiler or bowl from heat.

Spread chocolate over warm cookie base and immediately sprinkle with walnuts. Cool completely in pan on a rack, then cut into 2-inch diamonds or squares. Chill in pan until chocolate is firm, about 15 minutes. Makes about four dozen

Cooks' note:

Cookies keep, layered between sheets of wax paper or parchment paper, chilled in an airtight container 2 weeks.