

The Windmill Market is preparing a delicious Christmas brunch using fresh, local ingredients. This meal works for a casual breakfast around the fire, or a formal brunch for the entire family. Plus most of it can be prepared ahead of time and reheated and plated that morning!

Creamed Collard Greens

Bon Appétit | November 2011 by John Currence

2 large bunches collard greens (about 1 1/2 pounds), center stems removed and leaves cut into 1/2" strips

Kosher salt

2 teaspoons vegetable oil

1 cup 1/3" pieces (about 6 ounces) thick-cut smoked bacon

Unsalted butter (if needed)

2 large shallots, finely chopped

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 1/2 teaspoons sweet paprika

2 cups whole milk

2 cups heavy cream

Freshly ground black pepper

Blanch greens in a large pot of boiling salted water until bright green and beginning to soften, 3-4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl of ice water to cool. Squeeze dry.

Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add bacon and cook until fat is rendered and bacon is crisp, 5-7 minutes.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towels to drain; set aside.

Drain all but 3 tablespoons bacon drippings from pot, adding butter if needed to measure 3 tablespoons. Add shallots; cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 5 minutes. Add flour and paprika; stir constantly for 2 minutes. Whisk in milk and cream; bring to a boil, whisking often. Stir in greens; reduce heat to low. Simmer, stirring often, until greens are tender and sauce thickens, about 30 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Garnish with reserved bacon.

The Best Grits

4 cups water

1 Cup McEwen & Sons Grits

1 tsp salt

1/2 pint creole cream cheese

Bring water and salt to a boil. Whisk in grits, reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 20 - 25 minutes, stirring often. Remove from heat. Stir in creole cream cheese.

Easy Poached Eggs

Fresh eggs will be easier to poach (they'll hold together better) than older eggs. Vinegar is optional, it will help the eggs hold together, but if you don't like the taste, omit.

4 Fresh eggs

1 to 2 teaspoons vinegar (rice vinegar works well) (optional)

Shallow saucepan with cover

Slotted spoon

Bring water in a saucepan to almost boiling. If the water is already boiling, lower the heat until it is no longer boiling. Add

one or two teaspoons of vinegar to the water.

Working with the eggs one by one, crack an egg into a small cup, then place the cup near the surface of the hot water and gently drop the egg into the water. With a spoon, nudge the eggwhites closer to their yolks. This will help the egg whites hold together.

Turn off the heat. Cover. Let sit for 4 minutes, until the egg whites are cooked.

Lift eggs out of pan with a slotted spoon.

One trick to make the eggs stay somewhat contained is to take a ring from a mason jar and place it in the pan. Drop the egg over the mason jar ring and let it settle in the ring, then turn off the heat and cover.

Alternatively, the truly easiest way to make poached eggs is with an egg poacher.

Remove the cups you plan to use. Fill the bottom of the pan with 1/2 an inch of water. Bring to a boil. Crack an egg into one of the stick-free egg cups. Place in the cup holder in the pan. Cover. Wait 3-4 minutes and remove from heat. Lift up the handle of the egg cup and slide the poached egg out onto a plate. Sometimes we add a little dab of butter to the bottom of the egg cup before putting the raw egg into it to make it easier for the egg to slide out.

Christmas Brunch Assembly:

Spoon the grits onto the bottom of a shallow soup plate or small dinner plate, one for each person. Top with a generous spoon of the collard greens. Then finish each bowl with one poached egg and garnish with crumbled bacon leftover from creamed collard greens. Sprinkle egg with salt and pepper to taste and paprika for color.

Honey Pecan Biscuits

**We serve this with kumquat preserves and homemade butter.*

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

3 teaspoons baking powder

2/3 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar

1/2 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup shortening or lard

1 cup crushed or finely chopped pecans

1 cup milk

1/2 cup butter, melted

1/4 cup honey

several more tablespoons of sugar (for dusting the tops)

Note: To use a baking mix, replace first 5 ingredients with 2 3/4 cups baking mix, adding 1/4 cup sugar.

Place first 5 ingredients (or baking mix plus sugar) in a large bowl and work in the lard or shortening with a pastry cutter.

Add the pecans next, before adding the milk, to be sure to get them well blended into the mixture.

Pour in the milk and stir. Knead the dough lightly, adding a little extra flour if needed to keep it from sticking too much, but this is a moister biscuit dough than usual. Roll dough out onto a floured surface and cut out your biscuits. For me, it made 12.

Lightly grease a medium-size cast iron skillet or other baking pan (with sides). Melt butter in a small bowl and stir in the honey. Pour half of the butter-honey mixture into the skillet and load in the biscuits. Poke a hole halfway down into the middle of each biscuit. (I used the handle of a spoon.)

Pour the other half of the butter-honey mixture over the tops of the biscuits, making sure to get some into each hole.

Dust the tops of the biscuits with more sugar. Just because. Now you can either put the pan in the fridge, covered, and bake in the morning, or bake them right away.

Bake at 450 degrees for 15-20 minutes. These biscuits are so moist with the butter and honey, they take a little longer to bake. (If you have refrigerated the biscuits overnight, they will also take a little longer to bake.)

You may want to just drizzle some more honey on top and eat this baby with a fork.

Cafe Brulot

Recipe courtesy Emeril Lagasse, 2001

Cafe Brulot has long been a favorite New Orleans treat, served as a festive after-dinner digestive at old line New Orleans restaurants, such as Antoine's, Arnaud's and Galatoire's. Emeril's Delmonico Restaurant is among the new generation of New Orleans eateries keeping up the tradition and features Cafe Brulot on its menu.

Ingredients

1 orange peel, cut into 1 by 1/8-inch strips, plus 1 orange, peel cut into 1 long, intact spiral

1 lemon peel, cut into 1 by 1/8-inch strips

4 sugar cubes

6 whole cloves

1 (2-inch) cinnamon stick

1/2 cup orange flavored liqueur

2 cups hot, freshly brewed, strong black coffee

Directions

Light the burner under a brulot bowl or chafing dish and adjust the flame to low. Into the bowl place the orange and lemon peels, sugar, cloves, cinnamon stick and orange liqueur. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring constantly with a long-handled ladle, to dissolve the sugar and warm the ingredients.

When the mixture is warm, stir in the hot coffee, and ignite with a match.

Quickly, while the mixture is still flaming, hold the spiraled orange peel with the prongs of a fork over the bowl, and ladle the flaming coffee mixture down the peel several times into the bowl for a spectacular presentation.

Ladle the Cafe Brulot into brulot or demi-tasse cups, being careful to leave the flavorings (peels, cloves, cinnamon) in the bowl. Serve immediately while hot.

The coffee is prepared in and served from a special decorative bowl positioned over a flame, and the finale consists of the flaming coffee being ladled down a long spiral of orange peel back into the bowl. A Brulot ladle is specially designed with a small strainer at the end so that the bits of peel, cloves and cinnamon do not get served to guests. The finished beverage is served in tall, thin, footed mugs, often decorated with a full-length portrait of the devil, reference to the drink's other name, "Cafe Diabolique" or "Devil's Coffee," perhaps so named for the punch it packs!

Kumquat Marmalade

adapted from Chez Panisse Fruits, makes a couple of cups

1/2 pound kumquats

1 cup sugar

2 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice

cut off the stem end of the fruit, then split each lengthwise. slice each half into 1/8-inch moons, removing and discarding the seeds as you slice. place the kumquats into a small saucepan and just cover with water. add sugar and bring to a boil over high heat for 15 minutes, skimming off any foam that comes to the top. reduce heat and continue simmering until the marmalade thickens to the consistency you like. add the lemon juice and stir. let cool, then put in a pretty jar and refrigerate.