



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

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Breakfast

I consider myself a morning person, accomplishing my best work early in the day. But those who know me well will find the term ‘morning person’ amusing since I don’t like to speak (or be spoken to) for at least 30 minutes after arising. In that 30 minute stretch I generally consume, in quick succession, two cups of very strong, dark-roast, French-press coffee and complete the daily crossword puzzle. THEN I’m ready to converse.



Breakfast comes a bit later and varies from day to day. Sometimes it’s Greek-style yogurt with two tablespoons of oat bran stirred in for texture. Other days it’s a sunny-side-up egg liberally sprinkled with Peppered BaconSalt™ on top of multi-grain toast. A cinnamon pear smoothie had me enamored earlier this year, but was too labor-intensive for workdays.

At the moment I have a stash of Anzac Biscuits in the freezer – handmade by a New Zealander no less! These are fabulous cookie-like sweet biscuits made with rolled oats, desiccated coconut, golden syrup and no eggs. During WWI, these were made for the Australian & New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) because they traveled well and filled a belly. They have a perfect ratio of crust to soft middle and only take 15 minutes to bake from frozen. They pair nicely with tea or my third cup of coffee.



On non-working weekends I take more time with breakfast. One of my favorite treats is Asian Hash with Steamed Eggs. Essentially I sauté the filling of my Thai Chicken Pot-stickers in a pan until no pink remains. Then crack an egg (or two) on top and slap on a lid to steam the egg. Oh yum!

Sunday breakfast is Joe’s Almond-Cinnamon Waffles at my sister & brother-in-law’s house. After several years of tinkering with ingredients, Joe has reached perfection with his waffles. I like mine sans syrup with just a smear of butter.

Apparently I’ve just scratched the surface of breakfast as I haven’t even mentioned BACON which requires an article all to itself!

French 75

It seems this has become my cocktail column. My latest fascination is with a cocktail that sports two of my favorite liquids – gin and champagne. Dubbed a French 75 after a heavy artillery weapon used during World War I, it does have a sneaky kick.

Surrounding almost every classic cocktail are arguments as to who created it, where it was created and what it should/did contain. The French 75 is no exception.

Did it come from WWI British troops topping off their daily ration of gin with the locally available champagne? Or was cognac, not gin, the base? New Orleans restaurant *Arnaud’s* takes credit for originating the cognac version and the *New York Bar* in Paris boasts a 1915 recipe featuring gin. It appears in the 1930 *Savoy Cocktail* (the mixologist’s ‘bible’ of classic cocktails) with gin as the base.

I’m a gin girl so I’m squarely in that camp – a bit of gin plus lemon juice and simple syrup, topped off with champagne – that’s it!

It’s mentioned as a lovely brunch beverage as are most champagne cocktails, but that kick might keep you from accomplishing much of anything post-brunch.



Sweet Breakfast Quinoa

Quinoa is an “ancient grain” that’s loaded with protein making it a great choice for breakfast.

Some quinoa is rinsed before it is dried and boxed; some is not. If you purchased quinoa that is NOT pre-rinsed, be sure to rinse thoroughly before you begin the recipe. If not, you may find bitterness in the finished dish.

Note that you can substitute whatever nuts and/or dried fruit you have on hand making this recipe quite versatile as well as tasty! Dried cherries and walnuts are great substitutions.

1 cup quinoa
2 cups water
1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ cup slivered almonds
½ cup dried apricots, chopped
2 tablespoon maple syrup
½ teaspoon grated orange zest
½ teaspoon cinnamon

In small saucepan, bring quinoa & water to a boil. Lower the heat, cover the pot and cook about 10-15 minutes until the quinoa has ‘bloomed’ and absorbed most of the water.

In a small skillet, heat the olive oil and add the almonds, toasting for about 1-2 minutes. Add the apricots, maple syrup, orange zest and cinnamon. Toss with nuts until everything is warmed.

Add the quinoa and stir to incorporate the nuts and the apricots.

Enjoy!

This can be made several days in advance. Cool completely and store in the fridge. Microwave on half-power before serving. If it appears dry, add a little bit of water before heating.

Adapted from a recipe by Jill Donenfeld, Food & Wine magazine.

Icelandic Fare

I’m not sure what a typical Icelandic breakfast would be, but if a recent Icelandic **dinner** is any indication, I’ll bet it would be fabulous.

As part of A Taste of Iceland in Washington, RIS restaurant hosted a dinner by Chef Thrain Freyr from Iceland and RIS Sous Chef Sarah Biglan. Under their stewardship, Icelandic ingredients such as Arctic Char, Icelandic seaweed, Geysir rye bread (baked in a geothermal hot spring no less!) and Skyr (Iceland’s version of yogurt) came together in amazing ways.

The char was slow-cooked resulting in a gravlax-like texture. Paired with tarragon aioli and pickled cucumber, it melted in the mouth and set the bar very high for the remaining courses.



Wild-caught cod was up next, pan-fried and accompanied by citrus-glazed carrots. The twist in this dish was the sprinkling of Geysir rye bread crumbs over the plate which added a pleasant contrasting crunch to the smooth cod. Lamb shoulder and loin roasted with Jerusalem artichokes, garnished with roasted almonds and dried grapes with a touch of dill was the third delicious course. Viking Tiramisu starring Skyr paired with spice cake doused in coffee and served with ice cream ended the meal. Oh my!

My Take on a French 75

2 oz gin*
1 oz limoncella
4 oz champagne
garnish - fresh raspberry or twist of lemon

Combine gin and limoncella in a cocktail shaker. Add a scoop of ice and shake to chill the mixture. Strain into a chilled champagne flute and top with champagne. Garnish with a raspberry or other fruit that will float (looks better and easier to retrieve from the glass).

A votre santé!

*– a straightforward gin such as New Amsterdam or Plymouth (avoid the heavy herbal/flavored gins such as Rangpur or Hendricks for this drink)

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