



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE I WINTER 2013 FOOD NEWS FROM TAILORED TASTE PERSONAL CHEF SERVICE

Year of the Break(s)

According to the Chinese calendar, this year is the Year of the Snake. Apparently I misheard that and thought it was the year of the “break”!



On the last Sunday in January, as I exited an apartment building where I had just cooked a special dinner, my tote bag caught on the door handle projecting me face-first into a strategically placed concrete trashcan. The resulting broken nose led to a rainbow of a face for several weeks.

Not quite three weeks later while walking my dog I ended up on the ground with a fractured arm. I write this with one hand as that heals. Oh my! I have been forced by this last event to take a break after several very full months.

December was a wonderfully busy blur and I thank all of you who helped make it so. I cooked for many parties this season as well as keeping my Monday-Friday clients’ freezers full.

I did take a short break immediately after Christmas. My eldest great niece became an official teen-ager the day after Christmas. As a birthday surprise I presented her with a luggage tag and her first plane trip. We (just the two of us) headed off less than 20 hours later for St. Louis where I lived for a few years in the late 1990s. We stayed with a dear friend who was my boss during my time there. She lives in a former billiard table factory about 50 yards from the Mississippi River. Our accommodations were not typical to say the least. We were entertained by friends each night. During the day we rode to the top of the Arch at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial and spent hours exploring City Museum where I used to handle events for the exclusive caterer. It was four very special days that I’ll never forget.



Winter Sun

I ran across this fabulously-named cocktail on a blog called Two-Tarts. The original recipe is made using vodka as the base alcohol. As you know, I’m a gin girl so I made the swap.

If you prefer vodka, try the original version (just substitute vodka for the gin listed below).

It’s a pretty drink that will brighten up a grey winter’s day or someone with a broken nose or limb.

Winter Sun, Monica-style

¼ cup freshly squeezed clementine juice (about 2-3 clementines)
½ oz triple sec
½ oz fresh lemon juice
1-1/2 oz gin
sprig of fresh rosemary

Place all liquids in a cocktail shaker. Add ice. Shake. Strain into a chilled glass. Garnish with the rosemary sprig.

Note: I’m thinking of testing this with blood orange juice vs. clementine juice during my enforced confinement! I think that has potential of brightening things up.



Foolproof Savory Prosciutto & Cheddar Muffins

Here's a recipe I made with the kids in my Chef's Club. I call these foolproof because despite the variations and interpretations of a fairly straightforward recipe, the kids all produced very yummy muffins. I'm not positive, but I believe one group used ¼ cup of flour vs. 1-1/4 cup and I witnessed another group assembling ingredients in random order with no regard to whether something was a wet or dry ingredient. All versions were more than edible!

1-1/4 cup flour
¾ cup fine yellow cornmeal
¼ cup sugar
2 tsps baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 cup milk
2 large eggs
1/3 cup corn oil
½ cup diced prosciutto
½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
¼ cup snipped chives
Cooking spray

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Spray muffin tins with cooking spray. Set aside.

In large bowl whisk together: flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In a separate bowl whisk together milk, eggs and oil.

Pour wet mixture into the dry mixture and stir until blended. Fold in prosciutto, cheese and chives.

Spoon batter into prepared muffin pans filling ¾ full. Bake 20 minutes. Let muffins cool in the pan for about 10 minutes before enjoying.

These can be wrapped when cooled and frozen for later. Just remove from freezer and pop in microwave or low oven. Great for a quick breakfast or snack.

Modified from a recipe on www.spoonful.com

Pizza & the Kids

As most of my readers know, I run a volunteer "Chef's Club" at Holy Redeemer School in College Park, MD for 4th-8th graders. Back in November, we hosted a guest chef from my favorite Neapolitan pizza restaurant, Menomale, located in the Brookland section of DC. Chef Ettore came to teach the budding chefs how to make a perfect pizza.



Chef Ettore, along with his assistant Ranieri, arrived with 50 beautiful balls of freshly made dough which each child stretched, topped with San Marzano crushed tomatoes, fresh buffalo mozzarella and torn leaves of bright green basil. Chef Ettore explained to the kids that those red, white and green ingredients represented the colors of the Italian flag.

After much stretching, smearing, sprinkling and arranging, the little masterpieces went onto sheet pans and into our ovens. As

an FYI, our ovens are NOT as hot as those at Menomale. After what seemed like centuries to the kids (and some of the adults), out came beautiful, crusty and piping hot pizzas for all.



At the end of every club, I ask the kids for a show of thumbs (up or down) for the dish we created. All thumbs reached skyward that week. One

child asked if we could do this at EVERY Chef's Club. Chef Ettore is a tough act to follow!

For other recipes and previous Tailored Taste Tidbits, visit

www.tailoredtaste.net

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