**Hot Artichoke-Crab Dip with Garlic Crostini**

Makes about 2 cups

Ingredients:

8 ounces frozen artichoke hearts, thawed

1 garlic clove
1 tablespoon finely diced red onion
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup plain yogurt or sour cream
1 tablespoon grated Parmesan
1 tablespoon white wine or fresh lemon juice
Pinch sea salt
Pinch ground pepper

8 ounces crabmeat

1 tablespoon butter
3 tablespoons sliced almonds or breadcrumbs

1 baguette cut into 1/4-inch slices

1 clove garlic cut in half

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375ºF. Place the thawed artichoke hearts and the peeled garlic clove into the bowl of a food processor and pulse on and off to chop fine. Transfer to a mixing bowl and add the finely diced onion. Add the mayonnaise, yogurt, parmesan, white wine or lemon juice, sea salt, pepper and crabmeat and blend well.

2. Spoon into a small baking dish and set aside.

3. Melt the butter in a small skillet and add the sliced almonds, stirring to coat. Sprinkle over the dip and bake in the center of the preheated oven for about 20 minutes until bubbly around the edges and heated through.

3. Meanwhile, Rub each slice of bread with the cut garlic and arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet. When the dip is done, preheat the broiler and toast the bread on one side. Serve the dip with toasts.

**Grilled Romaine with Pears and Spiced Pecans**

6 servings

Ingredients:

1 cup whole pecans

2 ½ tablespoons vanilla extract

2 ½ teaspoons coffee liqueur

4 teaspoons chili powder

2 ½ tablespoons sugar

2 ripe pears

5 ounces olive oil

5 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

3 head small romaine, sliced in half lengthwise

2-3 tablespoons olive oil

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 300°F. In a bowl, combine the nuts, vanilla, liqueur, chili powder and sugar. Spread the mixture on a cookie sheet lined with non-stick foil, and roast in the oven for 20 minutes. Cool and break apart.
2. Core and thinly slice the pears. Toss the pears gently with the oil and lemon juice and let stand for 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, heat the grill on high. Brush the cut side of the lettuce generously with olive oil. Place the lettuce cut-side down on the grill and cook until browned, 2-3 minutes. Place each lettuce halve, cut side up, on a salad plate. Top each salad with pears and nuts and pour any remaining juice mixture over the salads.

**Blue Cheese Crusted Filet Mignon with Red Wine Glaze**

6 servings

1 ½ cups bread crumbs

6 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature, divided

8 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese

1 tablespoon chopped parsley leaves

1½ teaspoons minced fresh thyme

3 tablespoons canola oil

6 beef filet mignons, 6 ounces each

Salt & Pepper

2 small shallot, minced

3 ounces dry red wine

6 ounces beef stock

Directions:

1. Combine the bread crumbs, 4 tablespoons of butter, cheese, parsley, and thyme in a medium bowl. Transfer to a large piece of parchment paper and top with another piece of parchment paper. With a rolling pin, roll the mixture out to a rectangle about 6 x 12- inches and about 1/8-inch thick. Transfer the parchment-paper-encased crust to a baking sheet and place in the freezer until firm, about 30 minutes.
2. Cut the crust mixture into 3-inch squares (roughly the same size as the filet mignon pieces), cutting through the paper and leaving it intact. Set aside.
3. Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 400°F.
4. Heat a large heavy skillet over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of the canola oil to coat. Season the steaks with salt and pepper, and sear, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, about 3 minutes per side.
5. Transfer the steaks to a baking sheet, reserving the skillet. Set in the oven, and cook for 4 minutes for medium-rare, or a bit longer for a well done steak.
6. Meanwhile, return the steak pan to medium-high burner. Add the remaining tablespoon of canola oil to coat. Lower the heat and add the shallots, cooking and stirring until softened, about 3 minutes. Pour in the wine and deglaze any flavorful bits cooked onto the bottom of the pan. Bring to a simmer and cook until the wine is slightly reduced, about 2 minutes. Stir in the stock, bring to a boil, and simmer until the sauce has thickened enough to coat the back of the spoon about 6 minutes. Swirl in the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and season with salt and pepper. Strain the sauce and keep warm.
7. When the steaks are done, remove the baking sheet from the oven and preheat the broiler. Top each piece of beef with one of the prepared crusts, removing the parchment paper, then return the baking sheet to the oven and broil until the crust is golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Serve with sauce.

**Twice Baked Parmesan-Pancetta Potato**

6 servings

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds small russet potatoes

3 tablespoons canola oil

5 ounces pancetta, chopped and cooked until crisp

4 tablespoons cream cheese

3 tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons sour cream

½ cup grated parmesan, divided

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Pierce the potato skins with a fork and rub with oil. Place in a baking pan and bake until tender, about 45 minutes.
2. When cool enough to handle, cut the potatoes in half and gently scoop out most of the flesh.
3. Combine the potato pulp with cream cheese, butter, sour cream, half of the parmesan and the cooked pancetta. Season with salt and pepper and spoon or pipe back into the skins.
4. Preheat the broiler. Arrange the potatoes on the baking sheet and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Broil until heated and browned.

**Chocolate Lava Cakes**

Makes 6

Ingredients:

8 ounces (2 sticks) unsalted butter

1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon cake flour

8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

½ cup sugar

4 large eggs

4 large egg yolks

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350º F. Butter six 4-ounce ramekins and dust lightly with cake flour.
2. In a double boiler, melt the butter and chocolate until smooth. Remove from the heat and whisk in the sugar, eggs and yolks. Whisk in the flour just until blended and scrape the batter evenly into the buttered ramekins. Bake for about 10 minutes, or until the sides of the cake are set and the middle is still loose.
3. Let the cakes cool for 1-2 minutes, run a knife around the sides and invert onto serving plates. Dust with cocoa and powdered sugar and serve warm with whipped cream and/or ice cream.

**Raspberry Coulis**

Makes 2 cups

Ingredients:

¼ cup water

¼ cup sugar

2 cups fresh or frozen raspberries

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon orange juice

Directions:

1. Combine the sugar and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the fruit and juices and continue cooking until fruit is softened.
2. Place the fruit mixture in a food processor or blender and puree until smooth. If fruit is seeded, it may be strained. Chill until serving.