



Chef Richard Bailey's holiday cooking class in the kitchen of Club members Jennifer and Charlie Hays

WELCOMING WINTER TO THE TABLE

by Amanda C. Mitchell / photos by Thomas Roshkind

SAVORY CHEESES, FRESH-BAKED PASTRIES, rich red meats, and hearty sauces — ah, the tantalizing tastes and aromas of winter comfort food. During the season of celebration, when friends and family gather around the warmth of hearth or kitchen, these familiar scents can be as much a defining feature of winter as the snow outside.

As we celebrate the frosty season here in the Rocky Mountains, food is often the center of attention. It could be around a formal dinner table, at a casual après-ski cocktail party, or simply warming and filling loved ones each evening after a day recreating in the outdoors.

In honor of winter's many delicacies, 12 Club at Cordillera members gathered one afternoon this fall for a cooking class in the kitchen of Jennifer and Charlie Hays. Richard Bailey, executive chef of Timber Hearth Grille and Chaparral, led this first in a series of classes scheduled for the 2001-2002 winter season. Member participants learned how to use phyllo dough to create several holiday favorites.

Although working with the paper-thin leaves of phyllo pastry may be frustrating at first, it is well worth the time and energy. Phyllo dough is as versatile as it is tasty and attractive. Bailey repeatedly emphasized to the group that the flaky dough dries out quickly once unpackaged, particularly at 8,500 feet above sea level. It should be defrosted in its packaging in the refrigerator 24 hours before use. Once opened, the dough should remain covered with a damp cloth at all times; otherwise, it will become brittle and unusable.

Working with phyllo dough requires some patience and skill, but Bailey assured the group there is no reason to be intimidated. Hosts who heed the advice of the experts will soon be plattering these crispy golden holiday delights for guests.



*Apple berry crisp –
the elegance of "an apple a day"*



Cooking student Lainie Edinburg

PHYLLO TRIANGLES WITH FETA AND SPINACH

Makes 6 dozen (You can substitute two 10-ounce packages of frozen chopped spinach for the fresh spinach. Defrost it and squeeze it in a colander to press out the excess liquid.)

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup olive oil
 - 1 bunch of scallions, white and green parts, finely chopped
 - 3 1/2 pounds spinach, well-washed
 - 1 bunch of fresh flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
 - 1 bunch of dill, roughly chopped
 - 3/4 pound feta cheese, drained and crumbled
 - 3 large eggs, slightly beaten
 - kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
 - 1 pound phyllo pastry
 - 1 pound (4 sticks) unsalted butter, melted
1. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat and cook the scallions until soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the spinach and cook until wilted, stirring frequently. Transfer the mixture to a colander placed over a bowl and press out the liquid. Transfer the liquid to a skillet and boil it down until it measures two tablespoons. Roughly chop the pressed spinach. Mix the spinach, spinach liquid, parsley, dill, feta cheese, and eggs until well blended. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Allow the mixture to cool completely.
 2. To prepare the triangles: Most brands of phyllo come in sheets measuring 15 1/2 x 11 inches. Trim the edges of the pile of phyllo dough so that it is easier to work with. To assemble, place one sheet of phyllo on a flat surface and brush with melted butter. Top with two more sheets, buttering each. Cut the combined sheets in half crosswise. Then cut each half lengthwise into 2 1/2-inch-wide strips. Spoon the filling onto the center of the end of each strip and form a triangle by folding the lower right-hand corner to the opposite side, as you would a flag. Continue folding to the end of the strip. Repeat with the remaining phyllo and filling.
 3. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F with two racks. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Working in batches, place the phyllo triangles on the baking sheets. Brush them with melted butter and bake until golden brown, 7 to 10 minutes.

(courtesy of *Martha Stewart's Hors D'oeuvres Handbook*)

BEEF WELLINGTON *Serves 4 people*

For mushroom duxelles:

- 1 pound mushrooms finely chopped in food processor
- 2 chopped shallots
- 5 cloves chopped garlic
- fresh herbs

Place all ingredients in a thick-bottom pan. Cook on low heat until mushroom paste is dry.

4-8 oz. filet mignon

1. Salt and pepper filet, and sear meat on all sides. Let cool.
2. Take a piece of puff pastry. Place 1/4 of the mushroom paste on pastry, then place the filet on top of the paste and wrap, using an egg wash to seal the dough.
3. Cook at 350 degrees until crust is golden brown for medium-rare meat. For more well-done beef, cook the meat at 350 degrees for 15-20 minutes first, then cover it with the pastry before baking again.

SAVORY PALMIERS

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. pine nuts
 - 1 garlic clove
 - 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
 - 1/8 tsp. ground black pepper
 - 1 cup basil, blanched, drained, and dried
 - 1/4 cup grated Asiago cheese
 - 1/4 cup grated Romano cheese
 - approximately 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 pkg. pesto (optional)
 - 1 pkg. phyllo dough
1. Combine all ingredients (except pesto and phyllo), using only half of the oil. Blend. Add more oil as needed in a slow and steady stream until smooth and creamy.
 2. Roll out pastry approximately 8 inches long and no less than 1/8-inch thick. Cut edges until the dough is even. Sprinkle the cheese evenly over the dough and press it in with a rolling pin. Spread the pesto over the cheese.
 3. Roll the dough from the sides to the center of the rectangle, making sure the pastry is tight and even.
 4. Cut the log crosswise into 3/8-inch slices and place them on parchment paper. Chill for at least 1 hour.
 5. Preheat oven at 450 degrees F.
 6. Bake the palmiers until puffed and lightly golden, 6-7 minutes. Remove from oven quickly. Turn them over and put back in the oven for about 4-5 minutes. Let cool on wire rack.

APPLE BERRY CRISP

Ingredients

- 4 cups sliced apples
- 1 cup berries (raspberry, blackberry, blueberry)
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1/2 Tbsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 Tbsp. ginger
- pinch of nutmeg
- 1 lemon (juice and zest)

Mix all dry ingredients together with lemon juice and zest. Then add to fruit.

CRISP TOPPING

Ingredients

- 1 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/3 tsp. baking powder
- 1/3 tsp. baking soda
- 1/3 tsp. salt

Combine ingredients and sprinkle over fruit. Bake at 350 degrees F for 20-25 minutes.