



TAILORED TASTE TIDBITS

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Spring!

It's almost here...longer, warmer days, flowers sprouting up, and the urge to fling open the windows and breathe fresh air. To chefs, it means baby lettuce, asparagus, beets, artichokes, tender peas and all the dishes we can make with them. Risotto laced with freshly grated Parmesan Cheese and Asparagus Tips or Oven-roasted Golden Beets dotted with Goat Cheese & drizzled with Balsamic Vinegar are but two dishes that make us realize winter is over.

Farmers markets will be opening soon. Take a break from your routine and visit a local market to see what's fresh. Experiment with a fruit or vegetable you've never tried. Taste the flavors of locally grown, seasonal items. (And, if that's too much work for you – call Tailored Taste to bring Spring into your kitchen.)



Teaching

When not cooking a multi-meal service, a dinner party or a brunch, I'm **teaching**. Last Fall I began teaching at the Williams-Sonoma Store in Mazza Gallerie. Classes range in size from 8-18 and are held right in the midst of the store. The setting is informal so that students may ask questions throughout or approach the stove to get a closer look. I've demonstrated Thanksgiving Side Dishes and Quick Seasonal Suppers. In February and March of this year, I've taught classes as varied as How to Use a Mandoline (slicing tool) and Fast Frittatas using Farmers Market ingredients. An hour-long free class on sauces such as Hollandaise & Béarnaise is scheduled for April 15 with a delicious Dinner in Provence (2-hour class) the following evening. For info on those and other upcoming classes, call the store at 202.237.1602 and ask to be put on their email list.

If you prefer learning in a more intimate setting, such as your own kitchen, I will create classes for you and your friends (or you alone!) that focus on the precise types of skills or cuisines that interest you. From sharpening your Knife Skills to conquering your Fear of Fish, I can design a tasty evening (or afternoon) of fun and learning.

I am also a guest instructor at Stratford University in Tysons Corner, VA. During a 45-hour, 3-credit elective course, I teach up-and-coming culinary professionals the nuts and bolts of the Personal Chef business. ✂



The “busy-ness” of life takes its toll on all of us. For me, researching & creating menus, daily shopping for ingredients, toting cooking equipment and standing for hours all add up to a tired & stressed chef.

My secret for restoring peace & calm is the time I spend at **Yoga Space**. This studio offers a variety of Yoga styles and levels from Mommy & Baby, Children's Yoga, Beginners/Gentle, to advanced classes & Pilates.

For over 2 years, Yoga Space is the tranquil place I visit to relax and rejuvenate at the start of each new week. The studio is located 3 blocks west of Route 1, nestled in Hyattsville's Historic District at 4206 Gallatin Street.

For more information call **301.699.5440** or e-mail: yoga_space@hotmail.com.

Visit www.yoga-space.org for instructor profiles & class schedules. (My sister is the one on the right in the Home Page photo.) ✂

April – National Pecan Month, Easter, Earth Day

May – National Salsa Month, Kentucky Derby, Mothers Day, Preakness

June – National Dairy Month, Fathers Day, Summer Solstice, the Belmont Stakes

Recipe: Here's a great recipe for pecans that can be a snack eaten out of hand or a topping for a Coffee Cake.

Cinnamon-Sugar Pecans
(from Gourmet Magazine)

2 egg whites
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups sugar
4 teaspoons cinnamon
2 teaspoons nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1/2 pound pecans

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. While it heats, beat egg whites lightly with salt. In another bowl, sift together sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves & allspice and mix well. Add pecans to beaten egg whites, coating completely. Transfer pecans from which excess egg whites have dripped off to the cinnamon sugar mixture. Coat pecans completely and place on parchment lined baking sheet, leaving space between nuts. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until sugar coating on nuts is crisp. Cool and serve or store in an airtight container. 🍴

Brunch

Celebrations this time of year are perfect for entertaining during the day – specifically late morning or early afternoon – with a delicious brunch. Let that overlooked meal take center stage and shine with items we don't enjoy every day. Classic Eggs Benedict drizzled with Decadent Hollandaise Sauce, Sweet & Peppery Smoked Bacon, French Toast stuffed with Bananas and topped with warm Maple Syrup & chopped Pecans are but a few items that will make you smile.



Linger over that perfectly brewed cup of coffee, sip a Pomegranate Mimosa or Spicy Bloody Mary, and catch up with friends and family this spring. Too much work? Just call Tailored Taste to create a customized menu to fit your special occasion. We can either prepare everything the day before so that you have minimal work to do, or we can be there to cook and serve you and your guests. 🍴

Off to the Races!

Gather your friends around the big screen and pour a Mint Julep, Black-eyed Susan or Belmont Breeze. It's time for horseracing and an excuse for a party. You can follow the example of the horse owners and throw an elegant Southern soiree or join the crowd in the infield for barbeque. Here are but a few ideas:

Kentucky Derby

Assorted Tea Sandwiches OR Ham Biscuits
Beef Tenderloin with Henry Bain Sauce OR Barbeque
Cheddar & Garlic Grits OR Macaroni & Cheese
Thoroughbred Pie OR Bourbon Bread Pudding

Preakness

Mini Crab Cakes with Old Bay Aioli
Maryland 'Fried' Chicken
Hushpuppies
Mini Strawberry Shortcakes

Belmont Stakes

Manhattan Clam Chowder
Mini Corned Beef on Rye Snackers
Grilled New York Strip Steaks
New York-style Cheesecake Bites

So sit back and enjoy the races with your friends and let Tailored Taste take care of the details.

Chef Monica Thomas, CPC

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