

Spring has sprung – flowers are blooming, birds are chirping and the evenings are becoming brighter!

Celebrate spring's seasonal bounty with fresh salads, local asparagus, sweet green peas + ruby red rhubarb.

TASTE THE SWEETNESS OF Spring

rhubarb custard tarts

INGREDIENTS

crust

- 1 ¼ cups all purpose flour
- ¼ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup cold butter
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ tsp salt

filling

- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 5 tbsp all purpose flour
- 2 tsp vanilla
- ¼ cup whipping cream
- 4-5 cups fresh rhubarb, small diced

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°F. Butter the bottom and sides of a 9" x 13" pan.

In a large bowl combine all ingredients. Mix with your fingers until the mixture resembles a fine crumb. Butter should be completely incorporated. You can use a food processor for this step.

Press crumbs (not too firmly, but firm enough) into the bottom of the prepared pan. Press a tiny bit up the sides of the pan as well. Place pan on lower-centre rack of the preheated oven. Bake for about 15 minutes, until golden. Remove from oven and reduce heat to 350°F.

While the crust is baking, mix the topping ingredients together. In a large bowl, mix the sugar, eggs, flour, vanilla, salt, and whipping cream, whisking well to eliminate lumps. Stir in the diced rhubarb. Once the crust comes out of the oven, pour the topping into it (the crust should still be warm). Return to the oven and bake for 30-40 minutes, until custard no longer jiggles & a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out mostly clean. Enjoy with vanilla gelato!

From our friend & local chef,

Heidi Fink

asparagus + leek soup

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup leeks, chopped (white & pale parts)
- 1-2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 lb asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 ¾ cups vegetable broth
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp fresh dill
- fresh grated parmesan cheese to garnish

DIRECTIONS

In a saucepan cook the leek and garlic in the butter over moderately low heat.

Stir until the leek is softened, add asparagus and the broth, then simmer covered for 10-12 minutes, until the asparagus is very tender. Separate ½ cup of asparagus tips & purée remaining mixture in a blender until it is very smooth, return to pan & add lemon, dill, asparagus tips, sour cream, salt + pepper.

Stir to combine & reheat (do not boil). Garnish with fresh parmesan & enjoy!

Tip: The dark green leek part that isn't used can be turned into stock and used for the soup or frozen to be turned into vegetable stock for another day.

ham, spinach + goat cheese quiche

INGREDIENTS

- 1 frozen pie shell (or make your own)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1-2 leeks, sliced (white and pale green parts)
- 6 eggs
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 cup cream
- ½ tsp salt & cracked black pepper
- 2 cups spinach, roughly chopped
- 1 cup swiss chard, roughly chopped
- ¼ cup goat cheese, crumbled
- ½ cup ham, cubed (use leftovers from Easter!)
- ½ tbsp chives/chive flowers, chopped

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°F and have pie shell ready.

In a large saucepan over low heat sauté the leeks with butter, until soft and just starting to colour.

In the meantime, whisk the eggs, milk, cream, salt & pepper until combined.

Add the chopped spinach and swiss chard to the leeks, tossing the greens quickly to gently wilt them. Once wilted, place in a fine-mesh sieve and gently press down with a wooden spoon to remove excess liquid.

Arrange the greens at the bottom of your pie shell. Add half the goat cheese and ham, reserving some for the top. Pour over the egg mixture and arrange the remaining goat cheese and ham.

Bake the quiche for about an hour, until the custard is set and the crust is golden brown. If your crust browns before the custard is set, lower the heat or turn the oven off completely, to allow the custard to gently finish cooking without burning the crust.

Remove it from the oven and let cool to serving temperature before cutting.

Garnish with chopped chives and/or chive flowers.

pasta salad with lemon-basil dressing

INGREDIENTS

salad

- ¾ lb of asparagus tips (use ends in soup)
- 1 cup of green peas (fresh or frozen)
- 1 lb small pasta, cooked (orzo, orecchiette...)
- 1 can of chickpeas, drained
- 3 green onions, sliced thinly
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 6 radishes, sliced thinly
- ½ cup parsley, chopped
- ½ cup pea shoots

dressing

- 1 ½ teaspoons lemon zest
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- ½ shallot, minced
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoons honey
- ¾ teaspoons Dijon mustard
- ¼ cup fresh basil, chopped
- 2-3 sundried tomatoes in oil, chopped
- ¼ cup grapeseed oil
- ¼ cup olive oil
- salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Combine the lemon zest and juice, shallot, garlic, honey, dijon mustard, sundried tomatoes, salt, pepper, and oil. Blend the mixture on high until unified. Stir in the freshly chopped basil and set aside.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and blanch asparagus for 2 minutes and peas for 30 seconds, then add pasta and cook till al dente.

In a big bowl, combine chilled pasta, peas and asparagus along with chickpeas, green onions, radishes, parsley, red pepper, and pea shoots. Add the lemon dressing, toss to combine. Check the salad for seasoning and adjust if necessary.

green pea + wild mushroom risotto

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 4 sprigs of fresh thyme
- ½ lb wild mushrooms
- 5 cups vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 shallot, minced
- 4 strips of bacon, chopped
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 ½ cups arborio rice
- ½ cup white wine
- 2 tbsp chives, chopped
- 1 cup parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ cup peas (can be fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup fava beans (shucked, blanched & peeled)
- 1 lemon, juiced

DIRECTIONS

In a medium pot heat your stock to a simmer.

Heat up a large pan over medium heat. Sauté the wild mushrooms with butter and thyme until caramelized. Set aside.

In a large pot over medium heat add olive oil and cook garlic, onion, bacon and shallots for 5 mins. Add in the risotto rice and cook for a few minutes, stirring frequently until the rice becomes slightly translucent (approx. 10 mins.). Add in the wine and turn the heat down to a gentle simmer.

Add ¼ cup of hot vegetable stock & stir occasionally until most of the liquid has been absorbed. Repeat until all of the stock has been added. When the last of the stock has been added, stir in the peas and fava beans.

Once done, take off the heat – the rice should be tender and not too thick in consistency. Stir in the parmesan cheese, and finish with chives, lemon juice, the sautéed mushrooms and season to taste.