

Thursdays in the Kitchen: Summer Entertaining Menu Made Easy

June 20th, 2013

Salsa Cruda

4 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
½ large white onion, finely chopped
2 serrano or jalapeno chiles, minced
¾ cup chopped fresh cilantro
1 cup water
Coarse salt

Stir together the tomatoes, onion, chilies, cilantro, water, and 2 ½ teaspoons salt. Season with more salt to taste.

Roasted-Tomato Salsa

9 plum tomatoes, cut into ½ inch pieces
1 large white onion, quartered
3 jalapeno chiles, plus more if desired
2 garlic cloves, unpeeled
Coarse salt

Preheat broiler. Place tomatoes, onion, jalapenos, and garlic on a rimmed baking sheet. Broil until tomatoes and jalapenos are charred, about 7 minutes. Let stand until cool enough to handle.

Peel the roasted garlic. Transfer to a blender along with the charred tomatoes, onion, jalapenos and 1 tablespoon salt. Puree until smooth. For a thinner consistency, add water as needed. Season with salt to taste.

Makes 4 Cups.

Salsa Verde

14 tomatillos (about 14 ounces) husked and rinsed
½ large white onion, coarsely chopped (about 1 cup)
3 garlic cloves
3 chiles de arbol or other dried red chiles, plus more if desired
Coarse salt

Place tomatillos in a large saucepan, and cover with water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer until tomatillos have softened but not burst, about 5 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Strain tomatillos through a fine sieve.

Puree tomatillos, onion, garlic, chiles, 2 teaspoons salt, and ½ cup reserved cooking liquid in a blender or food processor until smooth. For a thinner consistency, add remaining cooking liquid. Season with salt to taste.

Makes 4 Cups.

Tomato, Cucumber, and Pickled-Onion Salad

1 small red onion, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise (about 1 cup)
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
6 ripe medium tomatoes, cored and cut into wedges
1 English cucumber, partially peeled lengthwise to create strips, then cut crosswise into ½ inch thick slices, larger pieces halved
2 to 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
¼ cup packed fresh basil, larger leaves torn
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper

Toss onion with vinegar in a small nonreactive bowl. Cover, and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

Place onion with vinegar, tomatoes, and cucumber on a platter. Drizzle with oil, and top with basil. Season with salt and pepper, and serve.

Serves 8.

Skirt Steak with Chimichurri Sauce

For the Chimichurri Sauce:

1 cup olive oil
¼ cup white vinegar
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley, leaves removed and chopped
1 small white onion, finely chopped
1 tablespoon smoked Spanish paprika
1 teaspoon dried oregano
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the Steak:

2 ½ pounds skirt steak
1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for grill pan
2 cloves garlic, crushed
3 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
2 large ripe tomatoes, cut into wedges, for serving (optional)
1 small red onion, thinly sliced, for serving (optional)
1 bunch watercress, washed, dried, and coarsely chopped, for serving (optional)
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Prepare chimichurri sauce: Combine all chimichurri ingredients in the bowl of a food processor. Process 1 minute; season with salt and pepper. Chimichurri sauce may be stored in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

Prepare steak: Pound skirt steak flat with a meat pounder. Transfer steaks to a shallow dish. Add 1 tablespoon oil, garlic, and parsley; turn steaks to coat. Marinate in refrigerator at least 2 hours and up to overnight.

Preheat a grill pan. Brush grill pan with oil. Remove steaks from marinade, and season with salt and pepper. Place steaks on grill, and cook 2 to 3 minutes. Turn, and continue cooking to desired degree of doneness. Transfer steaks to a cutting board; let stand for 10 minutes.

Thinly slice steaks crosswise. Divide evenly between 4 plates and drizzle with chimichurri sauce. Serve with tomato wedges, onion, and watercress.

Serves 4.

Watermelon Mojito

4 large mint leaves
½ lime
1 tablespoon superfine sugar
4 ounces seedless watermelon, cut into ½-inch cubes (about ¾ cup)
2 ounces white rum
½ cup ice cubes

In a heavy large glass, combine the mint, lime, and sugar. Using a muddler, mash together mint and lime until sugar is dissolved. Add watermelon, and muddle until broken down. Stir in rum and ice cubes. Pour into an 8-ounce serving glass and garnish with a watermelon wedge. Serve immediately.

Makes 1.

Blueberry Tequila Ice Cream

4 egg yolks
½ cup plus 1/3 cup sugar (for custard base)
1 cup half and half
2 cups fresh blueberries
1/3 cup sugar (for blueberry infusion)
1 cup heavy cream
grated zest of one lime
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 ½ tablespoons blanco (silver) tequila

Whisk together the egg yolks and sugar, then whisk in the half and half. Place in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk the mixture frequently while cooking, scraping down the sides of the pan with a rubber spatula as the mixture thickens, about 5 minutes. The custard is cooked enough when it reaches 180 degrees. For a fine texture, pour the custard through a fine-mesh strainer into a heat-proof bowl. Cool the base by refrigerating overnight, or by placing it in another bowl filled with ice and whisking until cool.

In another small saucepan, combine the blueberries and remaining 1/3 cup sugar. Stir over medium heat until the berries have released their juices, about 3 minutes. Combine the blueberries, cream, lime zest, lime juice and tequila in a blender. Blend until smooth. Cool completely, then add to the cooled custard base. Freeze in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's directions. Makes 1 quart.

Resources

The Fullerton Arboretum - Check out our upcoming programs and classes! Visit our Facebook page for updates and pictures! You can also find us on Pinterest and Instagram @FullArboretum.

www.fullertonarboretum.org & www.facebook.com/TheFullertonArboretum

Our Localtopia – Visit www.OurLocaltopia.com for a digital copy of this recipe packet to share with your friends!

Edible Sunlight – Jonathan Duffy Davis's farm and food blog. www.ediblesunlight.com



Upcoming Thursday Cooking Classes at Fullerton Arboretum

- June 27th, 2013 - 4th of July Backyard BBQ
- July 11th, 2013 - Cooking with Summer Tomatoes
- July 18th 2013 - Vegan Cooking for Good Health with Chef Ken Carlile
- July 25th, 2013 - Succulent Summer Fruit

Arboretum Online Class Registration Now Available

To access the online registration system visit: <http://www.fullertonarboretum.com/>. Select the "Classes" option from the menu on the left, and then look through the list that pops up for "Thursdays in the Kitchen." Click on it, and then select the date of the class you'd like to register for and follow the prompts to "check out."