

# Matthew May's

## TEACHING KITCHEN

BETTER LIVING THROUGH FOOD AND SCIENCE

December 2022

Holiday Time in the Teaching Kitchen

### MERLOT-POACHED PEARS WITH GOAT CHEESE

- 4 bartlet, Anjou or bosc pears, peeled**
- 1 bottle good merlot wine**
- ½-bottle of water (using the same wine bottle)**
- 1 cinnamon stick**
- 1 TBSP. sugar**
- 4-ounces goat cheese, softened**
- 4-ounces cream cheese, softened**

In medium-size saucepan (large enough to fit all 4 pears), add wine, water, sugar, and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil. Add peeled pears and bring wine back to a low simmer. Once the liquid has returned to a boil, turn heat down to medium low. Place a round plate or small bowl on top of the pears to help keep them submerged in the wine. Simmer pears on low heat for 40 minutes, remove from heat, remove plate/bowl, and allow to cool to room temperature on the countertop, about three hours. Cover and refrigerate until cold (about 3-4 hours) until ready to use. The longer the pears remain in the poaching liquid, the darker and more vibrant the color! Pears can be poached up to three days in advance. When ready to serve, remove pears from wine. Cut pears in half, lengthwise through the stem. Using a melon baller or small spoon, remove the seeds/core from all the pear halves, leaving a neat, small cut-out oval hole in the pear. Remove the hard flower-end of the bottom of the pear. In a small mixing bowl, combine goat cheese and cream cheese until smooth. Spoon about 1 TBSP. goat cheese mixture into each pear. Serve immediately. You may prepare the pears ahead of time but spoon the goat cheese mixture into the pears right before serving. (You do not want to refrigerate the pears with the goat cheese already in them, as the goat cheese mixture will become too firm for serving, and the acid from the wine will begin to break down the cheese.) You want the pears cold, and the goat cheese mixture at room temperature. In my cooking classes, I top each pear with my candied pecans, coarsely chopped. Candied pecans can be found at [www.matthewmay.org](http://www.matthewmay.org). Sweet and savory!

## GARLIC & CHIVE LEMON BUTTER POACHED SHRIMP

**1-pound 16/20 shrimp, peeled and deveined**

**½-pound unsalted butter**

**1 lemon, juiced**

**3 cloves garlic, minced**

**1 TBSP. chopped chives**

**Salt and pepper to taste**

In a medium-size skillet or sauté pan, melt butter over medium heat. Add minced garlic, chives, and juice from half of the lemon. Bring poaching liquid to low simmer (light boil). Your pan should be hot enough that you can see steam rising from the pan. Add salt and pepper. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Does it have enough acid from the lemon? If not, add more lemon juice. Taste again. You should taste the chives, salt, and lemon. When steam subsides, and the butter begins to brown, it's time to move on to the next step. (It's important to wait until the water from the butter has evaporated to allow the butter to brown. Add shrimp and poach on this first side about 1.5 minutes, then turn shrimp over and cook on this second side for only 1 minute. Remove shrimp from heat immediately. The shrimp will finish cooking while you complete the sauce. Taste the lemon-garlic butter and adjust salt and pepper if needed. You should taste a flavorful balance of fat (butter), acid (lemon juice), and salt. If you see any more steam evaporation, continue simmering the sauce until you see no more steam. Remove from heat. Spoon this beautiful browned garlic-chive lemon butter over shrimp before serving.

## PAN-SEARED FILET MIGNON W/ WILD MUSHROOMS

**1 beef tenderloin, cleaned and sliced into desired portion sizes**

**½-cup Steaks & Chops Sea Salt (found at [www.eastcoastsaltcompany.com](http://www.eastcoastsaltcompany.com))**

**1 TBSP. vegetable oil**

**1 shallot, minced**

**½-pound assorted wild mushrooms; cleaned**

**¼-cup sherry**

**1-cup heavy cream**

**4 TBSP. unsalted butter, chilled**

**Black pepper to taste**

Season both sides of filet mignon steaks with Steak & Chops Sea Salt, evenly distributed among the steaks. Allow the steaks to rest at room temperature for at least 2-3 hours. Preheat your skillet, sauté pan or cast-iron pan to medium heat. Add oil to hot pan, then add your steaks. Be careful not to overcrowd the pan, as you may need to cook your steaks in two batches. After about 4-5 minutes, turn the steaks over to sear the other side. Cook steaks just until they've **ALMOST** reached your desired "doneness" (medium rare, medium, medium well, etc.). Remove steaks from pan and allow to rest for at least 8-10 minutes. You may cover the steaks with foil to retain their heat. Add mushrooms and shallots to pan and sauté until mushrooms release most of their moisture and they begin to brown. Turn off heat; add sherry and cream. Using a wooden spoon, stir and scrape up any brown bits from the bottom of the pan. After shallots are translucent, add the butter and black pepper; stir. After the steaks have rested for 5-7 minutes, you may serve them with the delicious pan sauce spooned over each one.

# CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT POT DE CREME

**1-cup heavy cream**

**3-ounces dark chocolate chips**

**1-tsp. cocoa powder (unsweetened)**

**4 egg yolks**

**2-tsp. crushed peppermint candy or candy canes (divided)**

**1 TBSP. sugar**

**2 6-ounce ramekins or glass dessert dishes**

(Makes two desserts)

Preheat oven to 300°F, with rack positioned in center of oven. For custard, add cream to saucepan, along with vanilla, chocolate chips and cocoa. Bring to a low boil; stirring to keep the chocolate from settling on the bottom. In a medium sized bowl, whisk egg yolks and 1 TBSP. sugar together. Slowly whisk in hot chocolate cream, a little at a time, until smooth. Add 1-tsp. crushed peppermint candied into each ramekin. Pour hot chocolate cream mixture evenly into the 2 custard cups, on top of the peppermint candies (6–8-ounce custard cups or ramekins). Transfer the filled custard cups to a deep baking dish and pour enough water in baking pan to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake until custards are JUST set, about 40 minutes. (Remember that chocolate is in a liquid state when hot, so it will appear that it is not cooked all the way). Remove from oven and remove ramekins from hot water and allow to cool on the counter about an hour before refrigerating. (May be prepared 2-3 day ahead; cooled, tightly wrapped, and stored in refrigerator.) Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving. Enjoy!