

Valentine's Day Dinner Menu 1

French Onion Soup

Duck with Port Stilton Cheese Sauce

Saffron-Scented Rice

Roast Asparagus with Romano Cheese

Chocolate Decadence Pots de Crème



Wine: SPANISH RIOJA, SUCH AS MARQUES DE CACERES CRIANZA

Rioja is simply one of the best companions for duck. These recipes have some sweet, savory and delicate elements, and rioja will compliment all facets of these recipes.



~ Romantic Dinner for Two ~

French Onion Soup

2 tablespoons duck drippings or butter
2 large Vidalia or sweet onions, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons dry sherry
2-1/2 cups duck stock*
Salt and freshly ground black pepper (optional)
2 slices Italian or French bread, toasted
2 slices or 1/2 cup shredded Jarlsberg or Swiss cheese

Heat drippings in a large heavy saucepan over high heat. Add onion; cover and cook until onions are wilted, about 5 minutes stirring once. Uncover; reduce heat and continue to cook until onions are softened and golden brown, 18 to 20 minutes, stirring frequently. Add sherry; cook 3 minutes, stirring once. Add duck stock; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat; simmer 20 minutes.

Heat broiler. If desired, season soup with salt and pepper to taste; ladle into two 12-ounce oven-proof serving bowls. Place one slice of toast in each bowl; top with cheese. Broil 3 to 4 inches from heat source until cheese is melted and golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Makes 2 servings.

**A combination of one 10-3/4 ounce can beef consommé or 1-1/4 cups rich beef stock and 1-1/4 cups chicken stock or broth may be substituted.*

Duck with Port Wine Stilton Cheese Sauce

2 (12-ounce) Maple Leaf Farms Fully Cooked Rotisserie Duck Halves, thawed if frozen
1/2 cup good quality port wine
3 tablespoons butter, cut into 6 pieces
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons crumbled Stilton or Gorgonzola cheese, divided
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Remove duck from packaging and place in a shallow roasting pan. Bake 25 minutes or until heated through.

Meanwhile, bring wine to a boil in a medium saucepan. Boil gently until wine is reduced to 1/4 cup, 4 to 5 minutes. To enrich and thicken the sauce, turn heat under saucepan to low; add 1 piece of butter at a time, stirring until each piece melts before adding another. Remove from heat; stir in 1/4 cup of the cheese.

Transfer duck to two serving plates. Spoon sauce over duck and top with remaining 2 tablespoons cheese and thyme. Makes 2 servings.

Roast Asparagus with Romano Cheese

1 bunch(8- to 10-ounce) asparagus spears, ends trimmed
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup grated Romano cheese, preferably imported Pecorino Romano

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Place asparagus in a shallow baking dish or casserole. Drizzle butter and sprinkle salt and pepper over asparagus. Roast in oven until asparagus is crisp-tender, 10 to 12 minutes depending on thickness of asparagus. Sprinkle cheese over asparagus; return to oven for 1 minute or until cheese is melted. Makes 2 servings.

Saffron-Scented Rice

1/4 teaspoon saffron threads
1 cup chicken or vegetable broth
2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup chopped shallots or sweet onion
1/2 cup jasmine or long grain white rice
1 tablespoon sliced unblanched almonds, toasted

Crush saffron threads and stir into broth; set aside. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallots; cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in rice; cook 1 minute. Add saffron broth; bring to a simmer. Cover; reduce heat and simmer until liquid is absorbed, about 18 minutes. Turn off heat; let stand covered 5 minutes before serving. Season to taste with salt and garnish with almonds. Makes 2 servings.

Chocolate Decadence Pots de Crème

2 large	egg yolks	2 ounces	bittersweet chocolate candy bar, finely chopped
3 tablespoons	sugar	2 tablespoons	sweetened whipped cream
1/2 teaspoon	vanilla	2 teaspoons	shaved bittersweet chocolate
1/8 teaspoon	salt	2	strawberries, halved
2/3 cup	heavy whipping cream		

Heat oven to 325 degrees. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, sugar, vanilla and salt. In a small saucepan, bring cream just to a simmer. Remove from heat; add chopped chocolate stirring until chocolate is completely melted. Stir a small amount of egg mixture into chocolate mixture; gradually pour chocolate mixture into egg mixture in bowl whisking constantly.

Pour mixture into two pots de crème cups or 3-1/2 ounce ramekins about 3 inches in diameter. Place cups in a small baking pan. Pour enough hot tap water into baking pan to come half way up sides of cups. Bake until center is barely set and jiggles slightly when shaken, 35 to 40 minutes. Remove cups from water bath; let stand at room temperature until cool. Cover; refrigerate at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours before serving. Transfer cups to small serving plates; top with whipped cream and shaved chocolate. Garnish with halved strawberries Makes 2 servings.