

COCOA CHILI HAZELNUT GANACHE TARTLETS

Makes 1 dozen tartlets or 2 dozen mini tartlets

This is the easiest chocolate dessert I know. A touch of cayenne pepper sets off the dark chocolate flavor of the tartlets perfectly, and the no-roll dough for the crust is a snap. This is a great dessert to make the night before you plan to serve it, and if you're going to a party, the tartlets are easy to transport. The dessert is rich, so I like to make the tartlets in mini muffin tins, but if all you have is a standard tin, it will work fine; just cut each tartlet into quarters to serve. If you make the tartlets in very hot weather, decrease the quantity of maple syrup to 1/2 cup.

CRUST

- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 cup hazelnut flour, or any nut meal
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 4 tablespoons softened coconut butter
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

GANACHE FILLING

- 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 3/4 cup maple syrup (see headnote)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/8 – 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 8 tablespoons coconut butter, melted

For the Crust: Spray a mini muffin tin or a standard 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. In a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment or in a food processor, mix together the cocoa powder, nut flour, maple syrup, coconut butter, and salt until the mixture begins to hold together and form a dough. Use 2 teaspoons dough for each mini muffin cup or 1 heaping tablespoon dough for each standard-sized cup, flattening the dough into a disk and using your fingers to press the dough onto the bottom and up the sides of each cup. Lightly flour your hands if the dough becomes too sticky. Cover the muffin tin with plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 1 hour.

For the Filling: Blend the cocoa powder, maple syrup, cinnamon, cayenne pepper (if using), vanilla, and coconut butter with a whisk in a medium bowl or large measuring cup with a pour spout. Mix until the filling is smooth and no longer grainy. Pour about 2 tablespoons of the filling into the tartlet crust in each of the regular muffin cups or 1 tablespoon into each mini muffin cup. Refrigerate until completely set, at least 3 hours or preferably overnight, & sprinkle a little fleur de sel on the tartlets after they've set and serve.

SPINACH PAELLA

Serves 4 to 6

I like to treat myself to paella even when I'm short on time. This is my California-style version, in which I whip up a lively green puree and stir it into the rice at the last second. If you can find turkey chorizo, it's terrific in this paella. If not, look for Italian turkey sausage or use any sausage you like: raw, smoked, or cooked. Good saffron is key. Buy saffron threads and crush them with the back of a spoon just before you use them.

- 4 cups Rich Chicken Stock or store-bought low-sodium stock
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed saffron threads
- 1 pound chicken tenders or boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/4-by-3-inch strips
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 15-ounce link cooked turkey chorizo (or any sausage you like), sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh jalapeño pepper
- 1 cup drained and chopped canned tomatoes
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon Spanish smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 cup medium-grain rice, preferably Spanish (or substitute Arborio)

SPINACH PUREE

- 1 pound baby spinach leaves, well washed
- About 1/2 cup water
- 2 scallions, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro, plus more for garnish

Heat the stock in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, reduce the heat to low, and keep at a simmer. Place the saffron in a small bowl. Pour about 1/2 cup of the warm stock over the saffron and let it steep. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large skillet over high heat until it shimmers but is not smoking. Add the sausage and the chicken to the pan. Cook, stirring, until golden brown on all sides, 4 to 5 minutes, and transfer the chicken and sausage to a plate. Add the bell pepper, jalapeño, tomatoes, and garlic to the pan and reduce the heat to medium-high. Cook until the peppers begin to caramelize, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the paprika and the cumin. Pour the rice into the pan and stir just until coated. Pour in 2 cups of the warm stock and add the saffron and its steeping liquid. Return the chicken and sausage to the pan along with any juices on the plate, stir to combine, and simmer over medium-low heat, uncovered, until most of the stock has been absorbed, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the spinach puree: In a blender, puree half of the spinach with the water. Add more spinach, a little at a time. If the mixture can't be pureed, add more water, 2 tablespoons at a time; the puree should be very thick. Set aside. (You may not need all the stock.)

To finish the paella: Taste the rice and add salt to taste. If the rice is still hard, add another 1/2 cup warm stock and stir. Simmer until the broth is absorbed, 10 to 15 minutes. Taste the rice again and add another 1/2 cup broth if it is still too hard. Add more salt if necessary. The paella is done when the rice still has a hint of firmness. Turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid or a large sheet of foil, letting it rest for 5 to 10 minutes. Stir the spinach puree into the paella. Taste and add more salt and pepper if you like. Transfer to a large platter, sprinkle with the scallions and cilantro, and serve family-style.

MY CRAZY CHICKEN-RICE NOODLE STIR FRY

Serves 4

- 8 ounces transparent rice noodles (rice sticks)
- 2 tablespoons Wanjashan Gluten Free Tamari
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon sambal
- 3 tablespoons grapeseed or canola oil
- 3 shallots, sliced 1/8 inch thick
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1 cup packed baby spinach
- 1/2 cup scallions, green and white parts, sliced 1/8 inch thick
- 1/4 cup Thai or sweet basil leaves cut into 1/8-inch ribbons
- 1 lime, quartered, for garnish
- 4 sprigs of Thai or sweet basil for garnish

1. Fill a large bowl with warm water. Add the noodles and soak until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain and set aside.

2. Meanwhile, in a small bowl combine the tamari, lime juice, sugar, and sambal, and stir until the sugar is dissolved.

3. Heat a wok or large, heavy sauté pan over high heat. Add the oil and swirl to coat the pan. Add the shallots and stir-fry until brown, about 1 minute. Add the chicken and stir-fry, breaking up the meat, until cooked through, about 3 minutes. Add the noodles and sauce mixture and heat through, stirring. Add the spinach, scallions and basil ribbons and toss well. Garnish with the lime wedges and basil sprigs and serve

RED GRITS & GRILLADES (PORK, BEEF, OR CHICKEN)

RED GRITS (recipe courtesy of www.foodrepublic.com)

4 Servings

- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika powder
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 cup Gluten-free grits (Bob's Red Mill)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup canned crushed tomatoes (make sure the brand is gluten-free)
- 1 cup corn
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 3 cups water

Add onion, garlic, dry spices and the olive oil in a pan. Add the grits and bay leaf, sauté for 30 seconds. Add canned tomato. Add corn. Add half the white wine and water. Let simmer for 25 minutes.

GRILLADES (recipe courtesy of www.foodrepublic.com)

4 Servings

- 2-pound pork shoulder, cut into 2 inch pieces OR 4 chicken thighs OR 2lbs round steak, cubed or cut into strips.
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup rice flour
- 8 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 large yellow onions, peeled and chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 bell pepper, cored and chopped
- 1 bottle red wine
- 3 tbsp. tomato paste

1. Generously season the meat of choice with salt and pepper, lightly dredge in rice flour, and set aside.
2. Heat 5 tbsp. of the oil in a large cast-iron or heavy pot over medium-high heat. Working in batches, brown meat well, 6–8 minutes per batch.
3. Transfer meat to a bowl and set aside. Add the remaining oil to pot, add onions, garlic, and peppers and cook 10 minutes. Return meat and any accumulated juices to pot.
4. Add wine and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and let simmer for about 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Stir in tomato paste and cook until meat is tender: 2 hours for pork, 1/2-hour for the chicken or steak.

Serve meat over grits.

BLACK RICE PUDDING WITH GINGERED RHUBARB TOPPING

BLACK RICE PUDDING (recipe courtesy of www.foodrepublic.com)

- 1/2 cup black rice
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- 1/4 cup sugar

1. In a medium saucepan, bring the black rice and water to a boil.
2. Cover and simmer over low heat for about 40 minutes, until the water has been absorbed.
3. Add the coconut milk and simmer, stirring occasionally about 12-15 minutes.

4. Stir in the sugar and let cool to room temperature.

GINGERED RHUBARB TOPPING (recipe courtesy of www.foodrepublic.com)

- 15 stalks of rhubarb
- 3-inch piece of ginger, peeled and grated
- 3 heaping tablespoons of sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wash the rhubarb and cut into 1-inch chunks. Place rhubarb into an ovenproof dish and sprinkle with the ginger and sugar. Cook for 30-40 minutes until tende