

From the innkeeper

We know you're busy, so don't be afraid to borrow other people's ideas to add sparkle to your entertaining. One of our best sources of inspiration for decorating ideas, menu combinations and tabletop presentations this season is Julee Rosso, who owns the Wickwood Inn in Saugatuck, Michigan. The recipes on the next two pages are all from the author of the storied *Silver Palate Cookbook*. (For more of her entertaining ideas, turn to page 113.) One tip: Make a centerpiece using tableware passed down to you from family or friends. It always gets people talking about their holiday traditions.



Vanilla Sablés

These butter cookies are named for the French word for sand because of their crumbly texture. Try both the vanilla and chocolate versions.
 Prep: 40 minutes. Chill: 1 hour.
 Bake: 11 minutes per batch

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup unsalted or salted butter, softened
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- ¼ cup Demerara sugar or coarse raw sugar

1. In a medium bowl, combine flour, salt and baking powder; set aside.
2. In large mixing bowl, beat butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add powdered sugar and vanilla. Beat until smooth, scraping sides of bowl as needed. Beat in as much of the flour mixture as you can with the mixer. Using a wooden spoon, stir in any of the remaining flour mixture.
3. Divide dough in half. On a large piece of waxed paper, shape one portion of dough into a 16-inch log that is about 1 inch in diameter. Cut log in half crosswise. Sprinkle half of the Demerara sugar on the sheet of waxed paper; roll each log in sugar to coat evenly. Wrap each log individually in plastic wrap. Repeat with remaining portion of dough and remaining Demerara sugar. Chill logs of dough for 1 to 24 hours, or until firm enough to slice.

Kitchen gifts

At this time of year, we like to recognize people who make a difference in our lives. Show them you care with a gift from your kitchen, like these

Vanilla and Chocolate Sablés.

4. Reshape logs if needed. With a thin, sharp knife, cut each log into sixteen ½-inch-thick slices. (Rotate logs while cutting them to prevent flattening one side.) Place slices about 1 inch apart on parchment-paper-lined, foil-lined or ungreased cookie sheets. Bake in a 350° oven for 11 to 13 minutes, or until tops are firm and edges are just starting to brown. Transfer cookies to wire racks and let cool. **Makes 64 cookies.**

To store: Place cookies in an airtight container; cover and store at room temperature for up to 3 days or freeze up to 3 months.

Chocolate Sablés: Prepare as above, except reduce flour to 1½ cups. Add 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder to flour and increase powdered sugar to 1½ cups. Bake cookies as directed above, or until tops are just firm (edges will not start to brown).

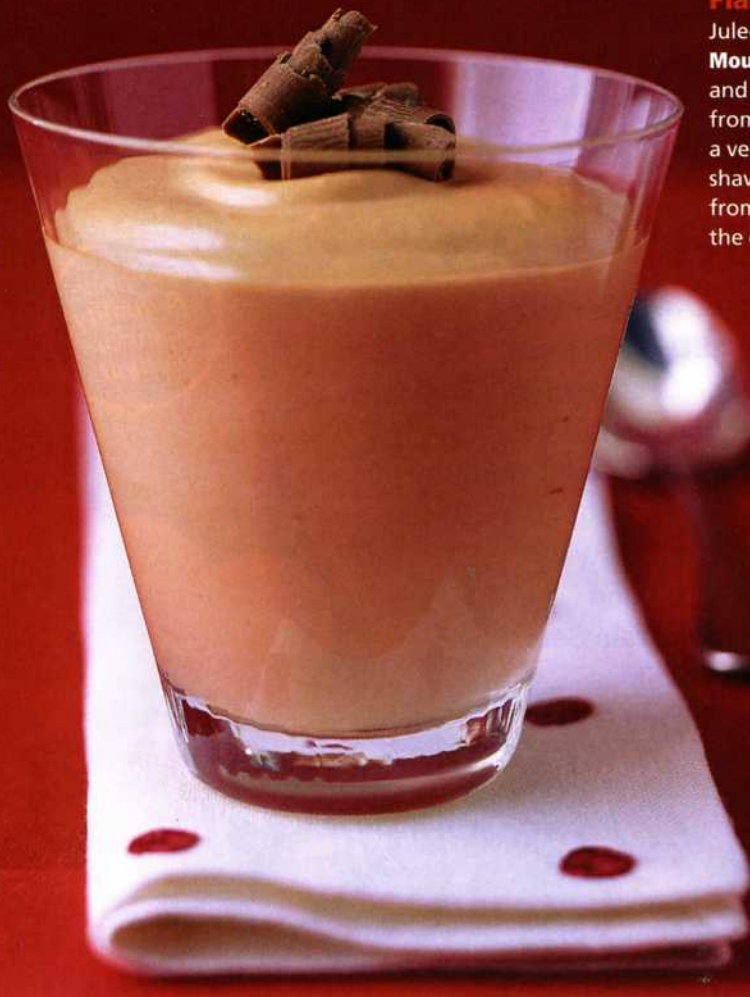
Nutrition facts per vanilla cookie: 47 cal, 3 g fat, 8 mg chol, 11 mg sodium, 5 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

Almond-Pistachio Crisps

"This recipe was given to us by a great pal, after much cajoling. Then we embellished it to make it even more indulgent. Great munching!" says Julee Rosso, owner of the Wickwood Inn.
 Prep: 20 minutes. Bake: 10 minutes

- 44 rich rectangular crackers
- ½ cup unsalted butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1½ cups slivered almonds
- 1½ cups pistachio nuts, coarsely chopped

1. Line a 15x10x1-inch baking pan with foil. Arrange crackers, side by side, in a single layer in prepared pan.
 2. In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add sugar; cook and stir until sugar dissolves. Bring to boiling, stirring constantly; boil gently, uncovered, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Immediately drizzle mixture evenly over crackers. Sprinkle the crackers with the almonds and pistachio nuts.
 3. Bake in a 350° oven for 10 to 15 minutes, or until very lightly browned. Remove from oven. Immediately cut between crackers with a sharp, narrow knife. Transfer crackers to wire racks; cool. **Makes 44 crackers.**
- To store:** Place crackers in an airtight container; cover and store at room temperature for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 1 month.
- Nutrition facts per cracker:** 90 cal, 7 g fat, 6 mg chol, 38 mg sodium, 6 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 2 g pro.



Plan ahead

Julee's **Cappuccino Mousse** can be mixed and chilled to serve from the fridge. Use a vegetable peeler to shave the chocolate from a bar to make the chocolate curls.

Cappuccino Mousse

"This is a creamy, cool and spoonable version of our favorite cappuccino," Julee Rosso says. "We think it's a perfect brunch treat."

Prep: 35 minutes. Chill: 4 hours

- 2 tablespoons instant espresso coffee powder or regular instant coffee crystals
- ¼ cup water
- 1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin
- 6 egg yolks
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 cups whipping cream or heavy cream
- Bittersweet chocolate shavings or curls

1. In a small bowl, dissolve coffee powder in water. Sprinkle gelatin over coffee; let stand for 10 minutes.
2. In a large metal bowl or the top of a double boiler, beat egg yolks and sugar with a wire whisk until combined. Place over gently boiling water (metal bowl or upper pan should not touch water). Cook, stirring rapidly with a whisk, about 10 minutes, or until egg mixture begins to thicken and coats a metal spoon (160°). Remove from heat.
3. Add coffee-gelatin mixture to warm egg mixture; whisk until combined. Beat egg-gelatin mixture with an electric mixer on medium speed about 5 minutes, or until mixture is cool; set aside.
4. Thoroughly wash beaters. In a chilled mixing bowl, beat cream with an electric mixer on medium speed until stiff peaks form. Gently fold whipped cream, one-third at a time, into egg-gelatin mixture.
5. Divide mixture evenly among 8 chilled wine or parfait glasses (or place in a large

glass bowl). Cover and chill at least 4 hours. To serve, garnish with chocolate shavings or curls. **Makes 8 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 319 cal, 27 g fat, 240 mg chol, 31 mg sodium, 18 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Rustic Potato Skins with Basil Cream Dip

Prep: 35 minutes. Bake: 70 minutes

- 15 small round red potatoes (2 pounds)
- 1½ 8-ounce packages (12 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 3 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano or Grana Padano cheese, grated (¾ cup)
- ¾ cup shredded mozzarella cheese (3 ounces)
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup purchased or homemade basil pesto
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh rosemary
- ½ teaspoon sea salt, kosher salt or ¼ teaspoon salt

1. Scrub potatoes thoroughly with a brush; pat dry. Place on a large shallow baking pan. Bake, uncovered, in a 400° oven for 40 to 60 minutes, or until tender. Remove baking pan from oven; cool potatoes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°.
2. For dip: In a medium mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, Parmigiano-Reggiano, mozzarella, mayonnaise and pesto with an electric mixer until combined. Evenly spread mixture in 9-inch pie plate. Bake, uncovered, in 350° oven 30 minutes, or until bubbly.
3. For potato skins: When potatoes are cool enough to handle, use the tines of a fork and your thumbs to break each potato into 3 or 4 irregular (rustic-looking) pieces. Use a teaspoon to carefully scoop out the inside of each potato piece, leaving a shell about ¼ inch thick. (Cover and chill the leftover white portion for another use.)
4. Place potatoes, skin side down, in a single layer on a large shallow baking pan. Drizzle with oil; sprinkle with rosemary. Return to oven (time them to be finished with dip coming out of the oven) and bake 20 to 25 minutes more, or until crispy and heated.
5. Place dip in bowl in the center of a serving platter. Surround with potato skins. Serve immediately. **Makes 8 to 10 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 458 cal, 36 g fat, 69 mg chol, 566 mg sodium, 22 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 13 g pro.

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Asparagus and Arugula Frittata

"We love this frittata because it's more moist than most and is loaded with flavor in every bite," says Julee Rosso of the Wickwood Inn in Saugatuck, Michigan. You'll find truffle oil at specialty food stores.

Prep: 40 minutes. Bake: 25 minutes.

Stand: 15 minutes

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 tiny new potatoes or 3 medium red potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 1/2 cups)
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt or 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 12 ounces fresh asparagus, sliced into 1-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1 cup arugula, baby arugula or baby spinach, slivered or coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup chopped cherry tomatoes or chopped tomato
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese (4 ounces)
- 12 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 ounce fresh Parmesan cheese, cut into shards
- 2 tablespoons white truffle oil, sesame oil or walnut oil (optional)

1. In a very large oven-going skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Carefully add potatoes, onion, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes, or until potatoes are just tender. Remove from heat.
 2. Top the cooked potatoes with asparagus, arugula, tomatoes and mozzarella. Pour eggs over mixture.
 3. Bake, uncovered, in a 350° oven for 25 to 30 minutes, or until center is just set.
 4. Place skillet on cooling rack; immediately sprinkle frittata with the Parmesan cheese. Let stand 15 minutes.
 5. To serve, cut into 8 wedges. Serve immediately with a light drizzle of white truffle oil over each serving, if you like.
- Makes 8 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 247 cal, 15 g fat, 328 mg chol, 381 mg sodium, 13 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 16 g pro.

The Taste of Christmas Cranberry Cake

Our Taste Panel loved the intense flavors created by spices, cranberries and lemon in this holiday cake from the Wickwood Inn. "This is the star of any holiday brunch or dessert buffet," owner Julee Rosso says. It's a cranberry lover's dream. Julee serves it warm with a dollop of whipped cream.

Prep: 45 minutes. Bake: 65 minutes.

Cool: 30 minutes

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons finely shredded lemon peel
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 4 cups cranberries (16 ounces) Butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour or all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 cup dairy sour cream
- Sweetened Whipped Cream (recipe follows)

1. In a large saucepan, melt 1/2 cup butter over medium heat. Add 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar, the shredded lemon peel and juice, the cinnamon and cloves. Cook and stir the mixture about 2 minutes, or until the sugar dissolves. Add cranberries, stirring to coat. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 to 20 minutes, or until berries have popped and liquid is syrupy, stirring occasionally. Cool the cranberry mixture completely.
2. Generously butter a 9-inch springform pan. Wrap outside of the springform pan securely with heavy foil. Spread cranberry mixture into prepared pan; set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda and salt; set aside.
4. In a large mixing bowl, beat 6 tablespoons butter with an electric mixer on medium to high speed for 30 seconds. Add 1/2 cup granulated sugar, brown sugar and vanilla, beating until well-combined. Add eggs, one at a time, beating

well after each addition. Alternately add flour mixture and sour cream to butter mixture, beating on low speed after each addition just until combined. Spread batter over cranberry mixture in pan.

5. Bake the cake in a 350° oven for 65 to 75 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. If necessary, toward the end of baking, cover with foil to prevent overbrowning. Cool cake in pan on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Remove foil from top of springform pan. Using a knife, loosen cake from sides of pan. Invert the warm cake onto a serving plate. Remove the sides and bottom of the pan. Serve immediately with Sweetened Whipped Cream. Or, serve within 6 hours at room temperature. **Makes 12 to 16 servings.**

Sweetened Whipped Cream: In a chilled medium mixing bowl, beat 1 cup whipping cream and 2 tablespoons granulated sugar with a whisk or electric mixer until soft peaks form (tips curl over). Makes 2 cups whipped cream.

Nutrition facts per serving: 480 cal, 24 g fat, 104 mg chol, 182 mg sodium, 64 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Pomegranate Spritzers

Toast the holiday with a crimson drink, courtesy of Julee Rosso at the Wickwood Inn in Saugatuck, Michigan.

Start to finish: 5 minutes

- 1 cup 100% pomegranate juice or cranberry juice, chilled
- 1 750 ml bottle dry white wine (about 3 cups), chilled
- 24 whole cranberries
- Ice cubes (optional)

1. Add 2 tablespoons pomegranate juice to 8 balloon wine glasses, champagne flutes or small tumblers. Pour wine into each glass. Garnish each with 3 cranberries. If you wish, add ice to the glasses.

Makes 8 servings.

Note: For sparkly spritzers, substitute chilled champagne for the dry white wine. For a nonalcoholic version, use chilled ginger ale or chilled sparkling water instead of the dry white wine.

Nutrition facts per serving: 104 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 6 mg sodium, 9 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro. ■

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