

Your Food

Easy Chinese New Year

Because the Chinese New Year also falls on Feb. 14 this year, you can celebrate the Year of the Tiger if not the arrows of Cupid.

Plenty of party ideas flow from Martin Yan, the Chinese chef and cookbook author whose pioneering TV cooking program *Yan Can Cook* launched him into the Julia Child realm of food celebrities years ago. In the companion cookbook (\$24.95, Chronicle Books) to his current PBS show, *Martin Yan's China*, Yan offers goodies your guests will enjoy.



STAR-TELEGRAM/STEVE WILSON

On his most recent Fort Worth stop to teach a Central Market cooking class, we chatted about Chinese New Year entertaining. He recommended offering small plates. Things to serve would include:

- Dumplings, spring rolls and wontons with dipping sauces that offer sweet, tangy, spicy and tart flavors
- Grilled marinated beef, lamb and chicken on skewers
- Stir-fried chicken or duck breast with finely chopped vegetables, served in endive leaves
- Easy stir-fry mixtures served atop wedges of pan-fried noodle cake (see below)
- A choice of beverages such as iced lemon or passion fruit green tea and a fizzy combination of pomegranate juice, Thai lime juice, green tea and sparkling water

Yan's pan-fried noodle cake recipe: Boil water in a large pot. Add 8 ounces fresh Chinese egg noodles and cook according to package directions. Turn off heat. Drain, rinse with cold water and drain again. Return noodles to the pot and toss with 1 tablespoon vegetable oil. Place a wide, nonstick pan over medium heat until hot. Add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, coating the pan; spread noodles evenly in the pan. Add broth and cook until liquid is evaporated and noodles are golden brown, about 5 minutes. Flip pancake and cook 5 minutes more, until golden brown. Cut into wedges.

— June Naylor

Think pink for V-Day wines

Sparkling wine is an essential pour on Valentine's Day, especially when there are expectations of a sensual, one-on-one dinner. Heighten the sense of the moment by pouring a rosé sparkling wine. Tips:

- Sparkling wines are served cold but not too cold, especially for finer quality brands. *The New Wine Lover's Companion* suggests three different serving temperature ranges: 40 to 44 degrees for inexpensive versions; 42 to 47 degrees for better nonvintage brands, 45 to 50 degrees for the best vintages.
- If you have a nice wine bucket, chill the sparkling wine in a mix of water and ice for about 20 minutes. Wrap a napkin neatly around the neck of the bottle to catch any drips when pouring.
- Open the bottle slowly and carefully. Do not point the bottle at anyone or anything. Twist the bottle away from the cork, not vice-versa, keeping one of your hands palm-side down on top of the cork. As you twist, you'll feel the pressure building up behind the cork, and it should let go with, at most, the faintest pop and a whiff of vapor.
- Drink up! There's nothing drearier than flat bubbly. Sparkling wines come in various sizes; buy the one you think you and your guests will finish in one seating.

— Chicago Tribune

THE COWGIRL CHEF



ELLISE PIERCE

Use individual ramekins to bake your soufflés — and top them with a heavenly white chocolate sauce.

White chocolate sauce

I wanted to make something different from a crème anglaise for chocolate soufflés, so I tried out this recipe from David Lebovitz's *The Great Book of Chocolate*. It's easy and fabulous.

Makes enough to drizzle on 6 soufflés

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 2/3 cup white chocolate, chopped (see note)

Pour the cream into a heavy saucepan, and turn on the heat to medium-low. When the cream simmers, remove from heat and whisk in the chopped pieces of white chocolate.

Note: Use the best white chocolate you can find, such as Valrhona or El Rey.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 211 calories, 14 grams fat, 17 grams carbohydrates, 2 grams protein, 27 milligrams cholesterol, 43 milligrams sodium, no dietary fiber, 63 percent of calories from fat.

Higher love

Want to make valentine sweets for your sweetheart? Impress with a soufflé

By **ELLISE PIERCE**

Special to the Star-Telegram

It's so old-school, yet still one of the most impressive desserts that you can serve. So for Valentine's, the annual I-heart-you day, why not go all the way — and make a chocolate soufflé?

From the French verb *souffler*, which means “to blow” or “to puff,” this simple mixture of egg yolks and egg whites is simpler than you might imagine (but you don't need to tell anyone this). The ingredients are similar to what you'd find in a chocolate mousse, but cooked.

One afternoon a couple of years ago, I had lunch at Bistro Paul Bert in Paris, one of the city's best old-timely spots, and for dessert, I had the most incredible chocolate soufflé — with its crunchy, sugary crust, it was a perfect contrast to the cloudlike middle.

I vowed to make one just like theirs, but first, I consulted with my friend David Lebovitz, a former pastry chef for Chez Panisse, who lives in Paris, too.

The secret to a successful soufflé?

“There's really no secret,” says Lebovitz. “It's

just melted chocolate, stirring in a few ingredients, then folding in egg whites. The first thing I ever baked was a chocolate soufflé, when I was 15. I used a Pyrex measuring cup to bake it in.”

Pyrex? 15? I could do this.

So I did. First try.

I used Lebovitz's recipe for double chocolate soufflé from his book *The Great Book of Chocolate* (Ten Speed Press, \$16.99), which calls for a sprinkling of chopped chocolate between the layers of the soufflé batter, giving the soufflé an even more chocolaty taste. If that's not enough — because there never can be enough chocolate — I opted to use his white chocolate sauce instead of a crème anglaise to top it with. The appeal of this classic French dessert, he says, is simple: “I think they're both dramatic and at the same time, warm and cozy.”

Triple chocolate soufflé

Serves 6

- Sugar (for dusting insides)
- Butter
- 5 ounces (2/3 cup) bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 6 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 large egg yolks
- 4 large egg whites
- 1/3 cup bittersweet or semisweet chocolate (see note), chopped
- White chocolate sauce (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Butter and dust with sugar six 4- or 6-ounce custard cups. In a bowl over simmering water, melt the 5 ounces chocolate with the milk. Remove from heat, and whisk in 3 tablespoons of sugar, vanilla and the egg yolks. Set aside.

2. In a very clean, dry bowl, whip the egg whites on medium speed until they begin to hold their shape. Now add the other 3 tablespoons of the sugar, and whip until soft peaks form.

3. Fold the egg whites into the chocolate mixture. To do this, first add a

small bit and incorporate (this will make it easier to incorporate the rest of the egg whites). Now carefully fold in the remaining egg whites.

4. Fill the ramekins halfway with the soufflé batter. Sprinkle in the chopped bits of chocolate. Now add the rest of the batter, filling almost to the top.

5. Bake for 14 minutes, or until the soufflés are firm, yet jiggle when nudged. Drizzle with white chocolate sauce and serve warm.

Note: You might want to add white chocolate chips, or (gasp!) peanut butter chips to this, for a different twist.

Nutritional analysis per serving, soufflé only: 260 calories, 20 grams fat, 22 grams carbohydrates, 7 grams protein, 108 milligrams cholesterol, 50 milligrams sodium, 5 grams dietary fiber, 60 percent of calories from fat.

— Adapted from “*The Great Book of Chocolate*” by David Lebovitz

ELLISE PIERCE IS THE COWGIRL CHEF. READ HER BLOG AND WATCH HER COOKING VIDEOS ON WWW.COWGIRLCHIEF.COM. YOU CAN ALSO FOLLOW HER ON TWITTER: TWITTER.COM/COWGIRLCHIEF.

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