

# Serve a Bastille Day menu with a Texas twist

By **Addie Broyles**

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To understand the deep ties between Texas and France, one doesn't have to look much further than the French Legation.

The historic building that still stands in East Austin was completed in 1841 to house Alphonse Dubois, the newly appointed chargé d'affaires who had been sent to Austin after France became the second country, after the United States, to recognize the Republic of Texas' independence from Mexico.

Now it's our turn to return the favor.

Saturday is Bastille Day, which marks the day in 1789 that a group of revolutionaries stormed the Bastille, a fortress and prison in Paris that held not only a handful of prisoners but the gunpowder they needed to overthrow King Louis XVI.

The event became a flashpoint for the French Revolution, which led to the fall of the absolute monarchy and to King Louis' very public execution; and to this day, le quatorze juillet remains the country's La Fête Nationale, a celebratory holiday akin to Independence Day.

"It's my favorite holiday," says Ellise Pierce, a Denton native who has been living in Paris for the past five-and-a-half years and who recently published a cookbook, "Cowgirl Chef," about her life as a Texan living and working as a caterer in France.

"Everything is a bit more subtle than you'd expect. You will never see people walking around with little French flags in their hands or, God forbid, painting their faces," she says, but with a large military parade in the morning and fireworks and picnics by the Eiffel Tower at night, it's really something special. "It's as close as possible to one of our American-style celebrations."

But Pierce won't be in Paris to celebrate this year; she's in the middle of a U.S. book tour that will bring her back to Austin for a cooking class at Central Market later this month. (See box on back page for details about Austin's largest Bastille Day celebration at the French Legation, as well as other Bastille Day events around Central Texas.)

"I'll probably make some crêpes and drizzle Nutella on top," Pierce says. Since she'll likely be in New Mexico on the holiday, she says she might even throw some blue cornmeal into the batter.

Pierce is making a career of finding new ways to combine two very distinct cuisines, but that idea isn't as foreign as you might think. "If you look at the history of cuisines around the world, it's always been about mixing spices and bringing in new ingredients," she says, pointing to the spice trade and the introduction of once-foreign ingredients, such as peppers and tomatoes. "It's more natural than we think."

Also thinking crêpes on Bastille Day is Sara Moulton, the longtime executive chef behind Gourmet magazine who has hosted a number of television shows on both the Food Network and PBS. Earlier this week, Moulton taught a class at the Lake Austin Spa & Resort, and on Saturday, she'll host a Bastille Day demonstration and book signing at Faraday's Kitchen Store in Lakeway.

The dishes she'll teach at Faraday's were inspired by her many years working with Julia Child, who is credited with popularizing French food in America with her many books and television shows.

"This year would have been her 100th birthday," Moulton said over the phone last week. "I wanted to do French dishes that she would have approved of."

Despite her training in French cooking and her many years cooking with Child, Moulton's recent books, including 2010's "Sara's Everyday Family Dinners," which she'll sign at Faraday's, have focused on helping people get dinner on the table, even if they don't know béchamel from béarnaise.

Moulton says the latter sauce — made with clarified butter and egg yolks and similar to its better known cousin, Hollandaise — will make anything seem French, including the Texas-sized beef short ribs she'll cook on Saturday. "That's very Julia," Moulton says. "She loved her old-fashioned French sauces." If you'd rather give a French twist to dessert on Saturday, put those ramekins to work with Moulton's recipe for apricot soufflé.

Crêpes, which are one of the most popular Bastille Day dishes, are also very French, and Moulton says she's been impressed with the quality of crêpes coming off her Chantal Cookware, a line of enamel-coated copper fusion pans from a Houston-based company that is sponsoring her book tour. (Moulton says she's been on a soapbox for years about the dangers of traditionally coated nonstick pans, which can release toxic fumes when heated too high. Enamel coating doesn't release those chemicals over high heat.)

Moulton likes to serve crêpes for dinner, pairing them with anything from scrambled eggs to smoked salmon. Add a nice French cheese, some Champagne or rosé, and your favorite French flick, and you're set for a fine fête, even if your home is several thousand miles from the City of Light.

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### **Deviled Bones with Béarnaise sauce**

Sara Moulton says this recipe, though not exactly a summer staple in either Texas or France, is a "Frenchified" dish that suits both by combining meaty short ribs with Dijon bread crumbs and a very traditional French béarnaise sauce. She'll teach this dish Saturday at a sold-out class at Faraday's.

5 lb. beef short ribs, bone-in

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

3 cups chicken stock

1/2 cup dry red wine

4 Tbsp. butter

1 cup panko bread crumbs

2 1/2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

For béarnaise sauce:

1/4 cup dry white wine

1/4 cup white-wine vinegar

1/4 cup finely minced shallots

1 Tbsp. crumbled dried tarragon

3 large egg yolks

1 stick unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces

1 to 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh tarragon

1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice, or to taste

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Season the short ribs on all sides with salt and pepper. Arrange them in one layer in a roasting pan and roast for 30 minutes.

Remove the ribs from the oven; reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees. Drizzle the stock and wine over the ribs, cover the pan very tightly with a lid or aluminum foil, and return it to the oven for 2 1/2 hours to 3 hours until the ribs are very tender. Remove the ribs from the oven. Discard the bones, transfer the ribs to a bowl and cover with aluminum foil. Strain the pan juices into a gravy separator, pour off the fat and reserve pan juices.

To make the béarnaise, combine wine, vinegar, shallots, dried tarragon and a hefty pinch of salt in a small heavy saucepan bring to a boil and simmer gently until liquid is reduced to 2 tablespoons. Transfer the mixture to a medium metal bowl. Whisk yolks into vinegar mixture, then set bowl over a pan of barely simmering water and cook, whisking constantly, until yolks have thickened slightly (do not scramble) and are almost hot to the touch.

Whisk in butter 1 piece at a time, adding each piece before the previous one has melted completely. Remove from heat and whisk in the fresh tarragon, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste.

After the béarnaise has been made and the ribs have finished cooking, melt the butter in a small bowl and combine it with the bread crumbs.

Preheat the broiler to high. Arrange the ribs in one layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Spread each rib with some of the mustard and top liberally with the bread crumb mixture; broil the ribs 1 to 2 minutes, watching carefully, until the crumbs just begin to brown. To serve, plate a portion of the ribs on six plates. Serve the béarnaise on the side. Serves 6.

— Sara Moulton

### **Cheesy Rosemary-Olive Flatbread**

Ellise Pierce says this flatbread was inspired by her favorite fougasse at the Maison Guinon boulangerie in Versailles. Instead of cheddar, you could use Parmesan, Gorgonzola or Roquefort cheeses, and if you aren't in the mood for olives, try bits of ham instead.

2 1/2 cups flour, plus a bit more for dusting the pan and shaping the dough

1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. sea salt

2 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary

1 1/2 cups grated cheddar cheese

2/3 cup water

2 Tbsp. olive oil, plus a bit more for brushing on top of the flatbreads

About 20 pitted kalamata olives, roughly chopped

Position a rack in the lowest part of your oven and preheat it to 450 degrees. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Whisk together flour, baking powder, salt and rosemary. Add the cheese, water and olive oil, and with your hands or a mixer — it'll work either way — mix it all together until it's a nice smooth dough.

Divide the dough into 4 pieces, take out one piece, and cover up the rest with a piece of plastic wrap so it'll

stay moist. Flatten the first piece of dough with your hand, and put about one-quarter of the chopped olives on top. Fold the dough over itself, like you're closing a book, and put it onto your parchment-lined cookie sheet. With your hands or rolling pin — I use both — very gently press out the dough until it's a thin, long, football shape. Repeat with the remaining dough pieces. Brush the tops of the flatbreads with a little more olive oil and pop them in the oven. Cook for 15 minutes or until they're brown and crispy. Serve warm — these are great straight from the oven, although they're fine at room temperature, too.

To reheat your flatbreads: Just pop them back in the oven at 450 degrees for about 10 minutes, or, if you're impatient like me, just tear off pieces and put them in the toaster. Works like a charm. Serves 8.

— From "Cowgirl Chef: Texas Cooking with a French Accent" by Ellise Pierce (Running Press, \$25)

### **Cornbread Madeleines**

Pierce grew up in Denton, and every summer, she and her family would drive to Port Aransas for swimming and beachcombing. When she first moved to Paris, those seashells she found as a kid were on her mind when she bought her first madeleine pan. Instead of baking traditional shell-shaped French cakes in that pan, Pierce likes to make her mom's cornbread recipe instead. If you don't have a madeleine pan, just use your muffin pan. Don't throw away any leftovers. You turn them into croutons by cutting the cornbread pieces into cubes, tossing them on a cookie sheet and popping them into a 400 degree oven for 15-20 minutes, or until crispy.

4 Tbsp. bacon drippings or butter

2 cups cornmeal

1/2 cup flour

2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. sea salt

2 eggs, lightly beaten

2 cups buttermilk

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. When the oven's hot, divide the bacon drippings (or butter, depending on which way you go) among the 24 madeleine molds (you'll need 2 pans with 12 molds each) and slide into the oven so the pan gets nice and hot. Depending on the size of your oven, you may need to do this one pan at a time, and bake your madeleines in batches.

Whisk together the cornmeal, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Combine the lightly beaten eggs with the buttermilk and mix this into the dry ingredients. Pull your hot pans out of the oven, pour the bacon grease or butter into the batter, give it a quick stir, and divide the batter among the madeleine molds. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until lightly browned. Pull them from the oven and remove immediately by giving the pan a bang on your countertop — they'll pop right out. Makes 24.

— From "Cowgirl Chef: Texas Cooking with a French Accent" by Ellise Pierce (Running Press, \$25)

### **Apricot Souffles**

6 oz. dried apricots (about 1 1/2 cups)

1 1/2 cups water

3/4 cup sugar, divided, plus additional for coating ramekins

1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

1 Tbsp. dark rum, if desired

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Pinch salt

5 large egg whites

1/4 tsp. cream of tartar

Lightly sweetened whipped cream as an accompaniment

In a heavy saucepan, simmer apricots, water and 1/2 cup sugar, covered, for 20 minutes. Transfer hot mixture to a food processor and purée until very smooth. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and stir in lemon juice, rum, vanilla and a pinch salt. Cool purée completely. Purée may be made 2 days ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature before proceeding. Transfer purée to a large bowl.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Generously butter six 7-ounce (3 1/2-inch-by-1 3/4-inch) ramekins and coat with additional sugar, knocking out excess.

In another large bowl with an electric mixer, beat whites with pinch of salt until foamy. Beat in cream of tartar and beat whites until they hold soft peaks. Beat in remaining 1/4 cup sugar, a little at a time, and beat meringue until it just holds stiff peaks. Whisk about one fourth meringue into purée to lighten and fold in remaining meringue gently but thoroughly. Ladle batter into ramekins and bake soufflés on a baking sheet in middle of oven 20 to 25 minutes, or until puffed, golden brown, and just set in center.

Remove ramekins from oven. With 2 forks, pull open center of each soufflé and spoon some whipped cream into each opening. Serve soufflés immediately. Serves 6.

— Sara Moulton

## Celebrate Bastille Day

Whether you're a Francophile or merely looking for an excuse to eat crêpes, you have several Bastille Day events to choose from this weekend.

- The largest is the Alliance Française D'Austin's 17th annual Bastille Day Celebration from 7 to 11 p.m. Saturday on the grounds of the historic French Legation Museum, 809 San Marcos St. Guests can listen to live music from Christine Albert, watch jugglers and a puppet show, play pétanque and enjoy an array of French food and drinks. Tickets cost \$8 online (if you buy them at [afaustin.org/bastilleday.html](http://afaustin.org/bastilleday.html) by Thursday) and \$10 at the door. Children 12 and younger are free.
- Artisan Bistro, a French restaurant at 900 RM 620 S. in Lakeway, is hosting a Bastille Day party from 5 to 10 p.m. Saturday. Many of the activities are free, but it costs \$15 a person to enjoy food from the "French country" buffet. Children under 12 are free. 263-8728, [artisanbistroaustin.com](http://artisanbistroaustin.com).
- On Saturday, Chez Nous, 510 Neches St., will offer a special Bastille Day menu with celebratory dishes, which will be available a la carte. Details and reservations at 473-2413.
- Dai Due Supper Club has been hosting Bastille Day dinners for the past five years, and though this weekend's dinners are sold out, you can sign up for the newsletter to be notified of next year's dinners at [daidueaustin.com](http://daidueaustin.com).
- At 6:30 p.m. Friday, Savory Spice Shop downtown, 1201 W. Sixth St., is hosting a Bastille Day dinner (\$40) featuring dishes made with some of the unique ingredients available in the store, such as fennel pollen and Piment d'Espelette, and wines from Austin Wine Merchant. Reservations at 524-1093 or [austin6thstreet@svaoryspiceshop.com](mailto:austin6thstreet@svaoryspiceshop.com).

■ Justine's, the French restaurant at 4710 E. Fifth St., is going all out for its Paris is Burning Bastille Day party on Saturday night. From the look of the Facebook event page (search "Paris is Burning" to find it), a drag queen performance by Acid Betty will be just one of the highlights — don't show up expecting a quiet sit-down dinner. (They've even created a Tumblr page — [justinesparisisburning.tumblr.com](http://justinesparisisburning.tumblr.com) — to offer ideas for dressing up.) \$20 in advance, \$30 at the door.

■ On July 29, "Cowgirl Chef" author Ellise Pierce will teach a number of her Texified French — as well as a few Frenchified Tex-Mex — dishes at a cooking class at Central Market North, 4001 N. Lamar Blvd. The class costs \$65, and you can register online at [centralmarket.com/Cooking-School.aspx](http://centralmarket.com/Cooking-School.aspx).

— A.B.

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