

The Maine Course

MENU



Pan-Roasted Coombs Island Mussels
with Garlic and Almonds
(Sam Hayward, Fore Street)



Asparagus Salad with Butter-Poached
Pullet Egg, Tempura Fiddleheads,
and Smoked-Dulse Sabayon
(Rob Evans, Hugo's)



Risotto with Fiddleheads and
Morels (Lee Skawinski,
Cinque Terre and Vignola)



Bacon-and-Cornbread-Stuffed
Spring Chicken with Meyer Lemon
and Rosemary (Steve Corry, 555)



Rhubarb Soup with Wild-Strawberry
Beignets and White-Pepper
Crème Fraîche (Krista Kern, Bresca)

IF YOU CAN'T ALWAYS
EAT IN PORTLAND,
YOU CAN MAKE THESE
PORTLAND CHEF-INSPIRED
CREATIONS AT HOME.

by Annie B. Copps



COOKING NOTES

You may not be familiar at first with certain techniques presented in these recipes, and certain ingredients may be hard to find. I've made reasonable substitutions whenever possible, but have largely avoided changing our chefs' recipes—in part so that you can replicate their signature creations in your own home, but also to underscore that they're craftspeople, and each ingredient they use is key to the final product. I think you'll find that these unique dishes are worth the extra effort—bon appétit!



PAN-ROASTED COOMBS ISLAND MUSSELS WITH GARLIC AND ALMONDS

TOTAL TIME: 40 MINUTES;
ACTIVE TIME: 25 MINUTES

During a busy week, Fore Street's cooks will roast more than 800 pounds of mussels. "Those of us who have grown to love mussels had our first experiences ripping them off the rocks at low tide under a wig of rockweed. The magic of that is lost in cultured mussels," says chef/owner Sam Hayward. "Phil Gray hand-harvests these for us. They're clean, but with a strong taste of the northern shore—a kind of 'marine terroir.'" Sam prepares his mussels in a super-hot wood-burning oven, but he's kindly converted his recipe for home cooking.

- 4 pounds fresh, live blue mussels (preferably wild Maine)
- 4 ounces (about 2 cups) whole almonds in their skins
- 6 ounces (12 tablespoons, or 1½ sticks) unsalted butter, divided
- 1 medium shallot, finely minced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely minced
- ⅔ cup dry-style hard cider
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chervil
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh chives
- 1 tablespoon kosher or sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. Prepare the mussels by culling any that are broken, slack, or heavy enough to suggest they're filled with mud. Remove beards and scrape barnacles and limpets. Rinse well and set aside.
2. Heat oven to 400°. On a baking sheet, roast almonds 4 to 5 minutes or until fragrant. Cool, and chop by hand

(or pulse in a food processor) to consistency of coarse meal.

3. In an ovenproof ceramic or metal gratin dish (large enough to hold the mussels in one or two layers, no more) over medium heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Add minced shallot and garlic and cook gently 2 to 3 minutes. Add cider and lemon juice; bring to a boil.
4. Remove from heat. Add herbs, almonds, salt, and a generous pinch of pepper.
5. Raise oven temperature to 450°. Arrange mussels in one or two layers over cider-and-almond mixture. Cut remaining butter into ½-inch pieces and distribute over mussels. Roast 3 to 4 minutes.
6. Stir mussels to baste. Repeat until mussels have opened and butter sauce is creamy and fragrant (don't overcook). Serve mussels directly from pan. Enjoy with slices of coarse-textured, crusty bread. *Yield: 4 servings*

Adapted from Fore Street recipe



ASPARAGUS SALAD WITH BUTTER-POACHED PULLET EGG, TEMPURA FIDDLEHEADS, AND SMOKED-DULSE SABAYON

TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR;
ACTIVE TIME: 50 MINUTES

Rob Evans created this dish using the eggs of young chickens, wild fiddlehead ferns, and dulse—wild algae that "adds a nice brininess and really speaks of place. It also adds depth and an umami element." Umami refers to the Asian concept of a fifth sense, ingredients that draw out the flavor or "deliciousness" of other ingredients.

- 18 asparagus spears, trimmed of tough ends, divided
- Kosher or sea salt

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 8 fresh pullet eggs (or fresh small eggs), divided
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 3 tablespoons Dulse Vinegar (see recipe p. 3)
- ¼ cups extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon Maine dulse flakes
- Canola oil (for frying)
- ⅔ cup cornstarch
- ⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 5 cups flour
- Soda water
- Pickled Fiddleheads (see recipe p. 3)
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Garnish: chervil sprigs

1. Using a vegetable peeler, make ribbons from 6 asparagus spears. Blanch the remaining spears in salted water, then place in ice water. Strain and dry on paper towels. Repeat with asparagus ribbons. Set aside.
2. Lay an 8-by-8-inch sheet of plastic wrap on a flat surface and brush with melted butter. Crack one egg in the center. Pull up all four corners to form a pouch. Grasp plastic wrap close to egg to remove the air; twist the plastic tight. Tie in a knot with the plastic as close to the egg as possible, creating an airtight pouch. Trim excess wrap at the top of the knot. Repeat with remaining eggs.
3. In a saucepan over medium heat, simmer eggs (in pouches) 8 minutes. Remove eggs and let stand, warm, until ready to use.
4. Unwrap two poached eggs and place in blender or food processor. Add Dijon mustard, sugar, and 3 tablespoons Dulse Vinegar. Blend until smooth. Slowly add 1 cup olive oil until completely blended and smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Fold in dulse flakes. Cover and chill.
5. Heat 3 inches canola oil in a large cast-iron frypan or deep-fat fryer to 350°.
6. In a medium bowl, whisk together cornstarch, baking powder, and flour. Pour half of dry ingredients into a second bowl. Whisk enough soda water into one bowl of dry mixture to form a pancake-batter consistency. Let sit 5 minutes.

7. Remove fiddleheads from pickling liquid. Add to dry mixture and toss gently but thoroughly to coat. Gently shake excess dry mixture from fiddleheads; then place in batter to coat. Gently shake off excess and place in hot oil; fry until golden. Using a slotted spoon, remove to paper towels.

8. In a large bowl, combine asparagus spears and ribbons, lemon juice, and remaining olive oil. Divide and arrange asparagus on 6 serving plates.

9. Remove eggs from plastic and place one egg on top of each asparagus serving. Place 4 fried fiddleheads around asparagus.

10. Spoon a dollop of chilled dulse “sabayon” over each egg. Season with salt and pepper. Garnish with chervil sprigs.

Yield: 6 servings

DULSE VINEGAR

- 1 cup white wine vinegar
- 1 8-inch piece smoked Maine dulse

In a small saucepan, bring vinegar to a simmer; don’t boil it. Place dulse in a small bowl and pour hot vinegar over it. Let cool to room temperature; then cover and refrigerate overnight. Strain and discard dulse.

PICKLED FIDDLEHEADS

- 5 cups water, divided
- 1 cup vinegar
- 2 tablespoons coriander
- 2 tablespoons allspice
- 1 teaspoon crushed red-pepper flakes
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ½ cup sugar
- Kosher or sea salt
- 24 fiddlehead ferns, tightly closed and well rinsed

In a medium saucepan over high heat, boil 2 cups water, vinegar, coriander, allspice, red-pepper flakes, cinnamon stick, and sugar. Chill and strain. Discard solids. Wipe pan clean and bring 3 cups salted water to boil. Blanch fiddleheads until tender, about 5 minutes. Strain and add to pickling liquid while still hot. Cover and chill overnight.

Adapted from Hugo’s recipe



RISOTTO WITH FIDDLEHEADS AND MORELS

TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR;
ACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR

Risotto is a slow-cooked dish made with starchy, short-grain rice. It’s a perfect example of what Lee Skawinski does so well: taking traditional foods and refining them with his own flourishes, in this case, the addition of bright and nutty spring fiddlehead ferns and earthy morel mushrooms. This dish is beautiful and deeply satisfying. Be sure to use Arborio, Carnaroli, or other rice appropriate for risotto.

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 1 cup small fiddleheads, tightly curled, rinsed, blanched, and cooled
- Kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups fresh morel mushrooms
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot (1 small shallot)
- 4 cups vegetable stock, divided
- 1 large red onion, finely diced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1½ cups Arborio or Carnaroli rice
- 3 ounces vermouth or crisp white wine (Lee prefers Orvieto from Umbria)
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme, leaves removed, stems discarded
- 4 tablespoons freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- Garnish: shaved Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1. In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter and cook fiddleheads until wilted. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

2. In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter and

cook morels and shallot until shallot is translucent. Add ¼ cup vegetable stock and cook until most of liquid has cooked down. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside and keep warm.

3. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium-high heat, sauté red onion and garlic in 1 tablespoon olive oil until translucent. Remove from heat and stir in rice. Continue stirring 45 seconds. Lower heat to medium, add wine, and cook until liquid has just evaporated.

4. Add ⅔ cup vegetable stock, stirring occasionally until most of the liquid is absorbed. Add remaining stock ½ cup at a time, stirring well, until rice is al dente: slightly firm when bitten, but not mushy.

5. Fold in fiddleheads, remaining butter, thyme, and cheese. Stir to combine. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide risotto into six warm bowls, and spoon morel/shallot mixture and shaved cheese on top.

Yield: 6 servings

Adapted from Cinque Terre/Vignola recipe



BACON-AND-CORNBREAD-STUFFED SPRING CHICKEN WITH MEYER LEMON AND ROSEMARY

TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR 45 MINUTES;
ACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR 15 MINUTES

Steve Corry cures his own bacon, but says good commercial bacon such as Niman Ranch or Nueske’s is fine. He also wraps the chicken in caul fat (which can be purchased from a butcher) to hold the bird together, flavor it, and keep it moist. If you can’t find caul fat, he suggests tying it with butcher’s string and basting it several times as it cooks. He also prefers young spring chickens: “They have a very delicate flavor and a tenderness that’s unrivaled.” He buys his from a local farm in Maine.

- 4 ounces bacon (about 5 pieces),
diced small
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 Spanish onion, diced small
- 2 shallots, minced
- ½ cup hot chicken stock
- 1 bunch chives (about 20),
finely chopped
- 2 cups cornbread, diced small
Kosher or sea salt
- 3 spring chickens, 1–1½ pounds
each, divided
Freshly ground black pepper
- 6 6-by-6-inch pieces of caul fat
Rosemary–Meyer-Lemon Jus
(see recipe below)

1. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, gently sauté bacon until well browned. With a slotted spoon, remove and reserve bacon. Discard all but one tablespoon of bacon fat.
2. Add olive oil and butter and sauté onion and shallots until tender. Add chicken stock and chives and heat through. Fold in cornbread and reserved bacon. Season with salt and set aside to cool.
3. Heat oven to 425°.
4. Split chickens in half along backbone. Leaving skin intact, remove rib cages, wings, and thigh bones; keep drum bones attached. Reserve removed bones for chicken stock.
5. Lay one half of the first chicken skin side down. Season the thigh cavity with salt and pepper. Stuff with cornbread mixture. Wrap breast around leg to create a tightly stuffed parcel. Place caul fat on top and tuck under. Repeat with remaining chicken halves.
6. Place chicken halves, bone up, in a roasting pan and cook in oven about 8 minutes. Lower temperature to 350° and cook about 15 minutes, or to an internal temperature of 160°. Remove from oven and let rest 3 to 5 minutes.
7. Place chicken halves on serving plates and drizzle Rosemary–Meyer-Lemon Jus over them. *Yield: 6 servings*

ROSEMARY–MEYER-LEMON JUS

- Leftover chicken wing, thigh,
and rib bones
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
- 1 carrot, roughly chopped
- 2 ribs celery, roughly chopped
- 1 large Spanish onion,
roughly chopped
- 2 shallots, roughly chopped

- 1 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup Meyer lemon juice
(substitute equal parts lemon
and mandarin orange juice),
plus extra for seasoning
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 5 sprigs fresh rosemary
Kosher or sea salt

Heat oven to 400°. In a small roasting pan or ovenproof skillet, toss chicken bones with about 1 tablespoon oil. Place in oven until golden brown, about 30 minutes. In a medium saucepan or stockpot, add remaining oil and sauté carrot, celery, onion, and shallots until onion is translucent. Add wine, lemon juice, and chicken bones. Lower heat to simmer and reduce until almost dry. Add chicken stock and reduce liquid by half. Strain through a cheesecloth-lined sieve and return to heat. Reduce liquid by half again and strain again. Return to low heat and add rosemary. Steep 1 minute. Remove rosemary and discard. Season to taste with salt and lemon juice. *Adapted from 555 recipe*



RHUBARB SOUP WITH WILD- STRAWBERRY BEIGNETS AND WHITE-PEPPER CRÈME FRAÎCHE

TOTAL TIME: 1½ HOURS; ACTIVE TIME: 1 HOUR

- 1 vanilla beanpod
- 1 pound rhubarb, cleaned
and roughly chopped
- 6 cups sugar, divided
- 3 cups water
- 1 cup red wine
- 1 cinnamon stick
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 pound wild strawberries, hulled,
cut into ½-inch pieces
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup water
- Vegetable oil for frying
- ½ cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 8 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 1 cup ricotta cheese

- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- White-Pepper Crème Fraîche
(see recipe below), divided
- Powdered sugar, divided
- Garnish: 20 fresh mint leaves

1. Scrape seeds from vanilla bean into a medium saucepan; add the pod. Add rhubarb, 2 cups sugar, water, wine, cinnamon, and lemon juice. Bring to a simmer and cook 10 minutes.
2. Remove from heat and adjust sugar to taste. Strain and discard solids. Cover and chill liquid.
3. In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, combine strawberries, 4 cups sugar, lemon juice, and water. Simmer about 20 minutes, or until thickened. Remove from direct heat, but keep warm.
4. Heat 3 inches oil in a large cast-iron frypan or deep-fat fryer to 350°.
5. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and 5 tablespoons sugar. In a separate bowl, whisk together ricotta, honey, vanilla, and eggs. Fold ricotta mixture into flour mixture just until well incorporated; don't overmix.
6. Place warm strawberry mixture into a pastry bag.
7. In a small bowl, combine cinnamon and 3 tablespoons sugar.
8. Gently slide heaping tablespoons of batter into hot oil; don't crowd the pan. Fry until golden brown. Remove from oil with a slotted spoon, to paper towels.
9. When beignets are cool enough to handle but still warm, roll in cinnamon sugar. Then poke the pastry bag into them and fill with strawberry mixture. Repeat with remaining batter.
10. Ladle chilled rhubarb soup into 8 chilled soup bowls. Place 1 heaping tablespoon White-Pepper Crème Fraîche into center of each soup serving. Place warm beignet on top. Dust with powdered sugar and tear fresh mint leaves on top. *Yield: 8 servings*

WHITE-PEPPER CRÈME FRAÎCHE

- ½ cup crème fraîche
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ⅛ teaspoon white pepper

In a small bowl, whisk ingredients together. Cover and chill until ready to use.

Adapted from Bresca recipe