

Holiday Supreme

This is sure to be the most “judicial” of Judicial Palates as I feature two of Chief Justice Leo E. Strine, Jr.’s favorite holiday recipes. While many readers look forward to a traditional menu year after year – roasted beef tenderloin, or, for a gamier palate, roasted pheasant – Chief Justice Strine’s holiday tradition is “for each year to be a bit different, with some things that folks love reemerging at times.”

When describing his holiday fare, the Chief Justice said: “The tradition is that I spend about a month every year figuring out what to do. We have had everything from goose to crown roast of pork to a New Orleans seafood fest to Italian-themed meals to Mid-Atlantic seafood to ducks to lamb, and even, one year when my beloved aunt had to spend Thanksgiving in the hospital, a massive Turkey fest.”

One of Chief Justice Strine’s dishes that is in demand every few years is “Crab Maison” – an appetizer served at Galatoire’s restaurant in New Orleans.¹

Crab Maison

Ingredients (recipe serves 4)

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tbsp. high quality olive oil
- 2 tsp. white wine vinegar
- 1 tsp. Creole or Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. small capers, rinsed, drained, and finely chopped
- ½ tsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ⅛ tsp. freshly ground white pepper
- 3 green onions, finely chopped
- 1 lb. jumbo lump crab meat
- 12 large leaves butter lettuce
- 4 slices tomato, halved

Whisk together mayonnaise, oil, vinegar, mustard, capers, parsley, salt, pepper, and scallions; add crab meat and fold gently to combine. Place three leaves lettuce each on four salad plates. Divide crab mixture evenly among plates and garnish with two half slices tomato.

Another of Chief Justice Strine’s traditions comes at the end of Christmas dinner when he and his dad enjoy a traditional egg nog. The Chief Justice recommends Alton Brown’s recipe and suggests that a good rum, brandy, or rye can be used just as well as bourbon.² “Although it may not be good

for the waistline, it’s good for the soul,” says the Chief Justice of the egg nog.

Egg Nog

Ingredients

- 4 egg yolks
- ⅓ cup sugar, plus 1 tablespoon
- 1 pint whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 ounces bourbon
- 1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 4 egg whites

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg yolks until they lighten in color. Gradually add the ⅓ cup sugar and continue to beat until it is completely dissolved. Add the milk, cream, bourbon, and nutmeg and stir to combine.

Place the egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat to soft peaks. With the mixer still running gradually add the 1 tablespoon of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Whisk the egg whites into the mixture. Chill and serve. (For the cooked version, see the recipe in its entirety on foodnetwork.com.)

Although holiday meals involve much planning and forethought, the Chief Justice summarized his cooking philosophy as I would: “...half of what I cook doesn’t involve much of a set recipe...I’ve cooked so long (I am the cook in the house) that what comes out is some result of my scan of the pantry, the vegetables and proteins on hand, etc. As you know, if you have white wine, olive oil, and butter around, and pasta and fresh herbs and some vegetables, you’re basically good to go.”

So, whatever dresses your table for this season of special holidays, some olive oil, butter, and good wine is always a place to start. Thanks, Chief, for sharing your time and traditions!

Recipe References:

1. “Crab Maison.” Recipe. saveur.com. Apr. 4, 2013.
2. Brown, Alton. “Eggnog.” Recipe. foodnetwork.com. 2005. 



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