



The Judicial Palate

By Susan E. Poppiti, Esquire



Picnic En Plein Air

Whether you will be enjoying a picnic along the banks of the Brandywine or along the shoreline at one of our Delaware beaches, here are some dishes to include in your picnic basket—a mushroom tart, cold roasted quail and a salad of endive, radicchio, mâche, and quail eggs. The tart and quail can be made a day in advance and refrigerated, while the salad can be easily assembled a few minutes before the basket is packed. The below recipes are intended for a picnic of four but can be adjusted accordingly.

Mushroom Tart

For the Crust

Ingredients:

1½ cup flour (Simulate French flour by following Julia Child's suggestion to use 3 parts all-purpose unbleached flour to 1 part bleached cake flour.)

- 1 stick chilled unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 egg
- 3 tablespoons iced water

For the Filling

Ingredients:

1½ pounds cleaned, mixed mushrooms (Use whatever types of mushroom you enjoy – button, shitake, oyster, enoki, etc.)

- ½ sweet onion, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Dijon mustard
- Gruyère cheese
- Fresh thyme
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt
- Fresh ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Mix the flour, salt and sugar in a large mixing

bowl. With a sharp knife, cut the butter into small cubes and add to the dry ingredients. Rub the pieces of butter and the dry ingredients together with your fingers until the butter is broken into tiny pieces. Make a well and add the egg and drizzle in the iced water. Begin to knead the dough quickly into a ball. Add more iced water until the dough is just wet enough to form a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator for several hours.

Place two tablespoons of olive oil and two tablespoons of butter in a large sauté pan on medium heat. When the oil and butter are hot, add the garlic and onion and sauté for about five minutes, or until the onion begins to soften. Then add the mushrooms and season with salt and pepper. The mushrooms will cook down to about half their size. If needed, add more oil while the mushrooms are cooking. While the mushroom mixture is cooking, prepare the crust.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough and add flour to prevent the dough from sticking to the rolling pin and the work surface. Roll the dough until it is about ¼ inch in thickness and large enough to cover the bottom of a 9- or 10-inch tart pan. Prick the crust with a fork in several places to prevent the bottom from bubbling. Pre-bake the crust in the middle level of the oven for 10 minutes.

Remove the crust from the oven and turn down to 400 degrees. Spread a thin layer of mustard on the bottom of the tart shell. Then place slices of Gruyère cheese on top of the mustard. Top with the mushroom mixture and some fresh thyme. Add salt and pepper to taste. Bake for about 40 minutes or until the crust is golden brown and cooked through. Remove from the oven, let cool and slice into wedges.

Roasted Quail

Ingredients:

4 quail (Semi-boned quail is available through the D'Artagnan website.)

½ cup dried cranberries, blueberries and cherries drizzled with olive oil

½ cup Armagnac or Cognac

Sea salt

Fresh ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Place the quail in a baking dish and stuff with the berry mixture. I also enjoy adding nuts to the berry mixture, such as pistachios. Drizzle the quail with the Armagnac or Cognac and more olive oil. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and bake for 25 to 30 minutes. The quail will be golden and crispy when finished.

Salad of Endive, Radicchio, Mache and Quail Eggs

Ingredients:

2 heads of endive

1 head of radicchio

3 handfuls of mâche

1 dozen quail eggs sliced in half (hard-boiled or in a can from an Asian market)

Balsamic vinegar

Extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt

Fresh ground pepper

Arrange the mâche and shredded radicchio on a serving plate and place the endive leaves around the perimeter of the plate with the root side in the other greens. Arrange the quail eggs over the greens. Drizzle balsamic vinegar and olive oil over the salad and add salt and pepper to taste.

Make sure there is room in your picnic basket for a bottle of rosé from the Rhône—a Bandol or Tavel would be best. ☞