

Lifestyles

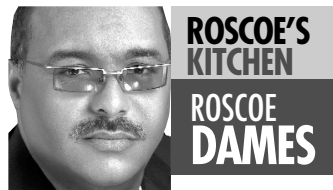
The French and their food

France and Martinique share so many similarities in their cuisine and if you have ever visited both of these countries you will clearly understand. On a trip with some friends to St. Lucia a few years ago we took a short flight to Martinique and spent a few days touring the island and enjoying some of the best Creole cuisine, baked goods and delightful wines.

We went to dinner at a former plantation house which was converted into an upscale gourmet restaurant and we only had one request when the maitre d' came to take our order, it was a simple request and that was that the chef provide us with his favorite dishes.

Mealtimes for the French are sacrosanct, and one thing that you will notice is that at 1 p.m., the traffic in France and Martinique suddenly becomes much lighter, because most of them are enjoying a meal with family and family meals are an occasion. An everyday event becomes a celebration of one of life's most basic pleasures and special occasions, birthdays and holidays are lavishly enjoyed with food and wine.

Soup and salads form two of the cornerstones of French cooking. Soup is the traditional evening meal — in fact, supper comes from the word souper, which means to take soup. However, soups are also eaten at lunch and even at breakfast in some rural homes. If you visit any French market, you will be struck by the abundance of fresh vegetables. The selection will depend on the region and the time of year, but the French cook can always make



the most of what's available. Vegetables are so highly regarded that, except for potatoes, they are very often served on a separate plate, or even as a separate course, so that they can be savored and appreciated for their own sake.

In French households, eggs and cheese form a basic part of everyday meals. They are absolutely essential — not as cooking ingredients, but also as separate courses in their own right. With a coastline bordering two seas and a vast network of rivers, fish and shellfish also play a leading role in French cuisine.

Pastry is a mainstay of French cuisine, although not particularly of home cooking, but, delectable pastries and elegant tarts have always been available in local patisseries and French cooks are much more likely to buy these than labor over them at home.

I encourage you to explore French cuisine for its simplicity, sophistication and quality.

Cooking is about sharing and having fun in the process so allow me to share the great recipes from Roscoe's Kitchen and be sure to listen to Star 106.5 FM every weekday at 6:20 p.m. Make sure and e-mail us at roscoeskitchen@ivory-globalpromotions.com with your comments and recipes so that we could share your experiences and creations with our audience.

COLD LEEK AND POTATO SOUP

1 pound potatoes, peeled and cubed
6 cups chicken broth
4 medium leeks, trimmed
2/3 cup sour cream
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 tbsps chopped fresh chives, to garnish

Put the potatoes and broth in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce and simmer for 15-20 minutes.

Make a slit along the length of the leek, rinse and slice thinly.

When the potatoes are tender, stir in the leeks, season with salt and pepper, simmer until the vegetables are soft, stirring occasionally. If the soup is too thick, thin it down with a little more chicken broth or water.

Puree the soup in a blender. If you like a very smooth soup, pass it through a coarse sieve. Stir in most of the cream, cool and then chill. To serve, ladle into chilled bowls and garnish with a swirl of cream and chopped chives.

Source: Hermes House Publishing

FRENCH SCALLOPED POTATOES

2 and 1/4 pounds potatoes
3 and 2/3 cups milk
Pinch of ground nutmeg
1 bay leaf
1-2 tbsps butter, softened
2 or 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
3-4 tbsps heavy cream
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350F. Cut potatoes into thin slices

Put the potatoes in a large saucepan and pour over the milk to cover. Add the salt and pepper, nutmeg and the bay leaf. Bring slowly to a boil over medium heat and simmer until the potatoes start to soften and the milk has thickened.

Generously butter an oval gratin dish and sprinkle the garlic over the base.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer the potatoes to the gratin dish. Taste the milk and adjust the seasoning, pour enough milk to cover the surface of the potatoes, but not to cover them. Spoon a thin layer of cream over the top.

Bake the potatoes for about an hour until the milk is absorbed and the top is a deep golden brown.

Source: Hermes House Publishing

SALMON STEAKS WITH SORREL SAUCE

2 salmon steaks (8 oz each)
1 tsp olive oil
1 tbsp butter
2 shallots, finely chopped
3 tbsps heavy cream
3 1/2 ounces fresh sorrel leaves, washed and patted dry
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Fresh sage, to garnish

Season the salmon steaks with salt and pepper. Brush a non-stick frying pan with the oil.

In a small saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat and fry the shallots, stirring frequently,

until softened. Add the cream and the sorrel to the shallots and cook until the sorrel is completely wilted, stirring constantly.

Meanwhile, heat the frying pan over medium heat until hot. Add the salmon steaks and cook until the flesh is opaque turning once, juices should run clear.

Arrange the salmon steaks on two warmed plates, garnish with sage and serve with the sorrel sauce

Source: Hermes House Publishing

GARLICKY SCALLOPS AND SHRIMP

6 large sea scallops
8 large shrimp, peeled
Flour, for dusting
2-3 tbsps olive oil
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 tbsp chopped fresh basil
2-3 tbsps lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Rinse the scallops under cold running water to remove any sand or grit. Pat them dry using a paper towel and cut in half crosswise. Season the scallops and shrimp with salt and pepper and dust lightly with flour, shaking off the excess.

Heat the oil in a large frying pan over high heat and add the scallops and shrimp.

Reduce the heat to medium-high and cook for about 2 minutes then turn the scallops and shrimp and add the garlic and basil, shaking the pan to distribute them evenly. Cook until golden and just firm to the touch. Sprinkle over the lemon juice and toss to blend.

Source: Hermes House Publishing

LAMB CHOPS WITH MINT

8 loin lamb chops or 4 double

loin chops
Coarse ground black pepper
Fresh mint, to garnish
Sautéed potatoes, to serve
For the mint vinaigrette
2 tbsps white wine vinegar
1/2 tsp honey
1 small garlic clove, very finely chopped
4 tbsps extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup (packed) fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
1 ripe plum tomato, peeled, seeded and finely diced
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

To make the vinaigrette, put the vinegar, honey, garlic, salt and pepper in a small bowl and whisk together to combine.

Slowly whisk in the oil, then stir in the mint and tomatoes and set aside for up to an hour.

Trim any excess fat from the chops. Sprinkle with the pepper and press onto both sides of the meat, coating it evenly.

Lightly oil a heavy cast iron griddle and set over a high heat until very hot but not smoking. Place the chops on the griddle and reduce the heat to medium. Cook the chops to your desired doneness.

Serve the chops with the vinaigrette and the sautéed potatoes, garnished with mint.

Source: Hermes House Publishing

SPICE OF THE WEEK: FRENCH TARRAGON

French tarragon, an anise-scented herb, is especially popular in French seafood dishes and it pairs nicely with mustard, too. A cousin of the sunflower plant, tarragon grows best in warm, bright sunlight and a slightly rocky soil.

CHEESECAKE LOVERS DELIGHT

■ From L12

boiled fish, which wasn't on the steakhouse menu, but he made it for him. "Seeing as it was the prime minister ordering, I gave him what he wanted," he said.

He's also worked alongside a number of other notable chefs, both local and foreign, including under Chef Michael Pataran at the fabulous Shogun Revolver restaurant (now closed), in New Providence, and in a number of restaurants in foreign countries, where he says he picked up new dishes and styles of cooking.

But his first cheesecake-making foray he recalls was from one of his mother's cookbooks. He says he remembers making it straight from the recipe the first time, then tweaking the flavor to make it his own. His early baking days were all done as gifts, until he started getting requests. Those requests made being free-handed too expensive to sustain. He then had to place a price tag on his goodies and people were happy to pay.

But if there's one thing with the culinary-minded, they get bored quick and are eager to shake things up. To continue baking cheesecakes he decided he didn't want to do the same old vanilla cheesecake and wanted to take things up a notch. He started experimenting with flavors and flavor combinations. People liked them so much that they started telling friends and the orders began pouring in again.

"Normal doesn't cut it anymore. You can find normal anywhere and on every corner and I had to do something to stand out," he said after making up his mind to officially start his company that has a cherub as its mascot, and Cheesecake Heaven took off.

"It was unreal the amount of orders I was getting," said Lightbourn who produces bite sized, regular-nine-inch pie sized cheesecakes and a deep-dish nine-inch cake which he describes as a real taste of heaven. He has also had requests for cupcake-sized cheesecakes and it's on his agenda to produce them as well.

His top selling flavors he says has been guava, Baileys 'n' cream, Pina Colada (with fresh pineapple and jelly coconut), sweet potato, chocolate lovers, cookies 'n' cream, Kahlua 'n' cof-



ALL HAIL

■ Chef Jameel Lightbourn, owner of Cheesecake Heaven with a selection of flavors and sizes that he can produce.

fee and his seagrape flavored cheesecakes.

Flavors like guinep, tamarind, sour sop, pumpkin spice, gin 'n' coconut water and Campari have stumped quite a few people — until they actually tried the cheesecake. And the flavors are incorporated in the cake as well as in the topping.

Besides the flavors he offers, Lightbourn says what also sets him apart is that his cheesecakes are made with love. "I take my time and do everything, and everything is fresh. No cheesecake is ever frozen for weeks, thawed and sold to customers. I try to ask for at least two days notice for orders to ensure a good quality cake, but if someone comes last minute like the day before, I do my best to have it ready."

He says the name Cheesecake Heaven came to him because his patrons are liable to hear angels singing and clouds floating as they indulge in one of his cakes.

With Bahamian flavors like cassava, mango, dilly, guinep, sugar apple, custard apple, sour sop, scarlet plum, hog plum, sea grape, tamarind, sweet potato (red and white), pineapple tart, gully wash, coconut tart, pumpkin spice, sugar cane, banana bread, Junkanoo, guava duff, pina colada and fried plantain on offer, Lightbourn has a supplier in Andros who provides him with fresh fruits during the peak season which he cleans, peels, cuts up, bags and freezes so that he can have the fruits available

after the season is finished to offer his customers the cheesecake of choice that they're craving.

With classic native flavors, combined with other flavors like blueberry muffin, peach cobbler, apple pie, red velvet, peaches 'n' cream, coconut meringue, lemon biscotti, green tea, passion fruit, ginger cream, mango 'n' basil, chocolate cranberry, chocolate raspberry swirl, bacon chocolate, Snickers, Almond Joy, Bounty, Oh Henry, Root Beer Float, avocado 'n' coconut milk, rum raisin, dulce de leche, pumpkin pecan, Greek baklava, honey and candied thyme, cookies 'n' cream (Oreo), wasabi cream, lemonade, carrot cake to name a few, Lightbourn has a flavor to suit every person's palate.

And you don't have to get just one single flavor. In what he calls his Platinum line, Lightbourn says you can customize your cheesecake from the crust straight up to the topping.

"You can combine just about any flavor, or you can get half and half, which is two sides, or you can get layers of flavor. You can also get different flavored crusts like ginger, vanilla wafer . . . whatever cookie you like, you can get your cake made with that kind of cookie."

Chef Lightbourn his cheesecakes can be used for birthday cakes and weddings. And with the extravagant cakes he's had to produce in the last few weeks for people he says they probably have been using them for just such occasions, but he wouldn't know.

CHEESECAKE HEAVEN FLAVOR LIST

Kahlua
Kahlua-n-Coffee
Kahlua-n-Cream
Kahlua-n-chocolate
Baileys
Baileys-n-Coffee
Baileys-n-Mint
Baileys-n-Chocolate
Grand Marnier
Gin-n-Coconut Water
Egg Nog
Amaretto Crunch
Frangelico-n-nut
Chambord-n- Chocolate
Cabernet-n-Almonds
Guinness
Chamomile
Green Tea
Coconut Cream
Grape
Pear
Watermelon
Passion Fruit
Pomegranate
Blueberry Muffin
Peach Cobbler
Apple Pie
Key Lime
Lemon Ginger
Coconut Ginger
Orange Ginger
Ginger cream
Red Velvet
Peaches-n-Cream
Orange Cranberry
Berries-n-Cream
Mango-n-Basil
Rosemary-n-Peach
Mango Chili
Gooseberry
Coconut Meringue
Lemon Meringue
Coconut Macaroon
Coconut Banaroo
Sweet Potato-n-Coconut
Lemon Biscotti
Classic New-York Style
Classic Ricotta
Chocolate Cranberry
Chocolate Raspberry Swirl
Chocolate Marble
Mint Chocolate
White Chocolate
Chocolate Lovers
Bacon Chocolate
Spicy Chocolate
Snickers

Almond Joy
Bounty
Oh Henry
Cadbury Fruit-n-Nut
Reeces Peanut Butter Cup
Peanut Butter
Peanut Butter-n-Jelly
Pralines-n-Cream
Root Beer Float
Maple Cream
Red Bean
Pistachio Nut
Avocado-n-Coconut Milk
Vanilla Ice Cream
Rum Raisin
Dulce De Leche
Almond Lovers
Coffee-n-Cream
Pumpkin Pecan
Greek Baklava
Pacific Islander
Honey and Candied Thyme
Tiramisu
Caramel
Nut Melody
Milk-n-Cookies
Cookies-n-Cream (Oreo)
Wasabi Cream
Pecan Pie
Cappuccino
Espresso
Peppermint
Lemonade
Peppermint
Granola
Date
Carrot Cake
Carrot Cream

Bahamian Flavors (when available)
Cassava
Mango
Dilly
Guinep
Sugar apple
Custard apple
Sour sop
Scarlet plum
Hog plum
Seagrape
Tamarind
Sweet potato (white)
Sweet potato (Red)
Pineapple tart
Gully wash
Coconut tart
Pumpkin spice
Sugar cane
Banana bread
Junkanoo
Guava duff
Pina colada

2 tbsps flour
1/2 cup butter
1 pint sour cream
1/4 cup cocoa powder
Strawberry glaze
1 tbsp cornstarch
1/4 cup water
1/3 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup crushed strawberries
1 tsp lemon juice
1 dash red food coloring (if

STRAWBERRIES 'N' CREAM AND CHOCOLATE SUPREME

Recipe: Chef Jameel Lightbourn

1 and 1/4 cups Graham Cracker crumbs (fine)
32 oz softened cream cheese
1 and 1/2 cups sugar
4 eggs

desired)

Grease 9 inch springform pan; sprinkle with graham cracker crumbs, tilting pan to coat the sides.

Into a large bowl add cream cheese. Beat on high setting with electric mixer until well blended. Beat in sugar, then eggs. Reduce speed to slow. Beat in flour, and vanilla, then butter and sour cream until smooth. Divide the mixture into half, and mix cocoa into one half, and small portion of strawberry glaze in the other. Pour into prepared pan the chocolate half first, then the strawberry half of the mixture. Bake in 325 degree F oven for 70 minutes or until firm around the edge. Turn oven off. Let cake stand in oven for 2 hours. Take out and chill. Remove side of pan. If desired, cover with strawberry glaze. Freezes well.

For strawberry glaze: Mix cornstarch, water and light corn syrup until smooth. Add strawberries. Bring to a boil for 1 minute. Strain. Stir in lemon juice and, if desired, a drop of red food coloring. Cool slightly, then cover top with glaze.

APPLE SPICE CHEESECAKE

Recipe: Chef Jameel Lightbourn

1 cup Graham cracker crumbs
1 and 1/3 cups sugar
1 teaspoon cinnamon, divided
3 tbsps butter, melted
32 oz cream cheese, softened
3 eggs
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
4 cups (about 1 pound) apples, peeled and thinly sliced

Preheat oven to 350F. Combine crumbs, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon and butter in small bowl; mix well.

Press onto bottom and up sides of 9-inch pie plate. Bake crust for 10 minutes. Beat together cream cheese and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl until well blended. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Blend in vanilla; pour into crust. Combine remaining 1/3 cup sugar and remaining 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon in a large bowl.

Add apples; toss gently to coat. Spoon apple mixture over cream cheese mixture.

Bake 1 hour and 10 minutes or until set.

Loosen cake from rim of pan; cool before removing rim of pan. Refrigerate.