



by chef scotty wagner

TRICK-OR-TREAT I HAVE SOMETHING GOOD TO EAT!

Perhaps an odd name for an article about Autumn eats, yet ever so appropriate with the approaching beloved holiday of masked men, drag-queens and copious amounts of sweets. Stepping into fall cuisine generally stimulates a fond memory of pumpkins, cinnamon and clove, with soft cashmere sweaters. For many of us, it is perhaps the most missed season, from our scattered hometowns across the Mid and Northern U.S. (we love the colors of fall, but hate the frigid winters). This month, I give you a taste from my personal recipe bible, suitable for entertaining throughout the harvest season.

Garden Goodies At Their October Peak:

Pumpkins and squash of all sorts, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, avocado and sweet potatoes, apples, quince, pears, pomegranates, persimmons, tangerines and figs.

Spices of the Season:

Allspice, coriander, cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger, cardamom, cumin, bay leaf, marjoram and thyme, Thai basil, rosemary and aromatic blends such as curries, Southwestern chili rubs and pumpkin spice.



THE TRICK:

Yes, yes—we all know what it means to give and take, then bail before any attachment or accountability sets in. But here, in the kitchen of consciousness, we're talking about food that plays with your soul, rather than with your attachment disorder.

This dish happens to be my signature soup—come together and enjoy!

Coconut-Curried Sweet Potato Soup

Yield: Fifteen 9 oz. portions. I recommend doubling the recipe.



Note: This soup is vegan/dairy free and can be made ahead and frozen.

Ingredients:

- 7 pounds orange-fleshed sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3 onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoon ginger, minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 stalks of lemongrass, chopped, cut against grain
- 2 kaffir lime leaves, whole
- 1/2 cup yellow curry paste (Mae Ploy brand)
- 3 cans unsweetened coconut milk
- 5 cups or 1 1/2 gallon vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoons sea salt
- 4 cups chopped fresh Thai basil

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit (200 degrees Celsius). Place the sweet potatoes directly on the rack and bake until tender enough to easily pierce with a fork, about 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool.

2. Heat oil in a large saucepan or soup pot over medium heat. Add the onion, ginger, garlic, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves; cook and stir until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the curry paste and heat for 1 minute, then whisk in the coconut milk and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for about 5 minutes.

3. Remove the skins from the sweet potatoes and puree adding a little water as needed to achieve a smooth product. Add to the soup and cook for and additional 30 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and season with salt.

4. For plating, ladle soup into bowls and garnish with choice of: lemongrass spear, Thai basil leaves, crème fraiche swirl, broken chunk of fresh coconut and/or fried ginger.

THE TREAT:

Whether you have a lifelong partner, just started dating or enjoy spoiling your friends; this sweet little something can be tossed on salads, crushed into a crust for cheesecake or eaten as an almost-heart-healthy snack. An accomplished cook knows how to seduce the soul—this dish is yet another recipe from my personal foodie vault and is the inspiration behind my “Southern Comfort” Peach n’ Pecan Bread Pudding. Check out my blog dated 10/05/12 for the recipe at chefscotty.com.

Cayenne-Candied Pecans

Yield: Five 6 oz. portions (more or less, taking your munching into account).

Note: You can easily omit the cayenne, add a touch molasses to the corn syrup or substitute any other nut that you fancy.

Ingredients:

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons cayenne pepper
- 5 cups pecan pieces

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325°F and lightly coat baking sheet with nonstick spray. Combine corn syrup and the following 4 ingredients in large bowl, stir to blend. Add pecans; stirring gently to coat and transfer to baking sheet.

Place a large piece of foil on work surface. Bake pecans 5 minutes. Using fork, stir pecans to distribute melted spice mixture. Continue baking until pecans are golden and the coating bubbles, approximately 10 minutes. Remove from oven and transfer to foil. Working quickly and carefully, separate nuts with fork and allow to cool. (Store airtight at room temperature or freeze).