Twice Cooked Potatoes with Caviar

Makes 24

28 small red potatoes (about 3/4 pound)
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons milk
1 tablespoon butter, plus 2 tablespoons for brushing
1/4 cup crème fraîche
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon fresh chives, plus more for garnish
3 ounces sevruga, ossetra, or American sturgeon (paddlefish) caviar
   (about 1/4 teaspoon per potato)

1. Place potatoes in a large saucepan, and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, and simmer until just tender but still quite firm when pierced with the tip of a sharp knife, 15 to 20 minutes. Remove all but 4 potatoes; cook these until soft, about 5 minutes.

2. When cool enough to handle, carefully cut off the very tops of potatoes removed in Step 1. Using a melon baller, scoop out as much flesh as possible while leaving at least a 1/4-inch-thick wall remaining. Place flesh in a small metal bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Peel and add remaining 4 potatoes. Cut a small slice off the bottom of each potato shell so it will stand upright.

3. Preheat oven to 375°. Heat milk and butter in a small saucepan until butter melts. Push potato flesh through a ricer, food mill, or wide-mesh sieve into a bowl. Stir in milk and butter a little at a time until creamy. Stir in crème fraîche, salt and pepper to taste, and 1 tablespoon chives.

4. Place potato mixture in a pastry bag fitted with a large plain tip. Arrange potato shells on a baking sheet. Pipe filling into shells, making sure to cover cut edges.

5. Bake for 15 minutes, or until golden brown and slightly puffed. Brush with melted butter, and bake for 15 minutes more. Top each potato with a spoonful of caviar, and sprinkle with chives.
Moroccan Salmon Skewers

Makes 2 1/2 dozen

1 1/2 teaspoons whole cumin seeds  
1 teaspoon whole coriander seeds  
2 teaspoons whole fennel seeds  
1 teaspoon coarse salt  
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper  
1 3/4 pounds salmon fillet, skin removed, cut into 3/4-inch cubes  
Citrus Dipping Sauce (recipe follows)

1. Preheat the oven to 400°. Combine the cumin, coriander, and fennel seeds with a mortar and pestle, or slightly crush the whole seeds in a spice grinder, pulsing just until coriander is just broken; do not overprocess. (The spices can also be crushed using a heavy cast-iron skillet.) Transfer the seeds to a small bowl, and toss with the salt and pepper.

2. Dip one side of the salmon into the spice mixture to coat heavily. Repeat with all of the salmon squares.

3. Heat a large ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Do not add any oil. Place the salmon cubes, spice side down, into the pan. Cook until the spices are dry, golden, and toasted, about 4 minutes. Immediately transfer the pan to the oven; remove when salmon is just cooked through, about 30 seconds. Transfer the salmon bites to a serving platter, and skewer with toothpicks. Serve warm.
Citrus Dipping Sauce

Makes 1 cup

2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup fresh orange juice
Zest of 1 lime, 1 lemon, and 1 orange
1/2 cup kefir or sheep’s-milk yogurt
1/2 cup plain yogurt
Coarse salt

1. In a small saucepan over high heat, combine the lime, lemon, and orange juices with 1/2 teaspoon of the orange zest. Boil to reduce until thick and syrupy, making about 1 tablespoon. Remove from heat, and let cool.

2. In a medium bowl, combine the citrus syrup and the yogurts. Mix with a spoon until well combined. Season with salt to taste. Keep refrigerated until ready to use. Sprinkle the remaining zest over the top before serving.

Sources:

kefir yogurt
   Available at Middle Eastern markets
Chicken and Beef Satay with Peanut Sauce

Makes 40 to 50 pieces

To make satays, you'll need bamboo skewers; soak them in water for two to three hours so they don't burn on the grill.

1 1/2 pounds fillet of beef or 4 whole chicken breasts
1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger
1 onion, cut into chunks
4 cloves garlic
1 cup low-sodium soy sauce
1 teaspoon sambal (Indonesian chile paste) or 1 hot red chile
Juice of 1 lemon
2 tablespoons of sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
Peanut sauce (recipe follows)

1. Trim fat from beef or chicken. Cut into strips about 3 inches long and 1/2 inch thick. Refrigerate until needed.

2. Combine remaining ingredients in blender, and purée until smooth. Pour over meat, and mix to coat evenly. Marinate at least 1 hour or overnight.

3. Preheat grill or grill pan until hot. Thread a piece of meat lengthwise on each skewer, and grill until done, 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Baste occasionally with marinade during cooking. Serve immediately with peanut sauce.
Peanut Sauce

Makes 1 cup

Peanut sauces are common accompaniments to Thai and Indonesian dishes. Use this as a
dipping sauce for Chicken and Beef Satay. Samba is available at Asian markets.

1 cup smooth peanut butter
2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 clove garlic
1 tablespoon sambal (Indonesian chile paste)
1 tablespoon sugar
Fresh lemon juice
Coconut milk or water, to thin
1 scallion, thinly sliced

1. In a blender or food processor, combine peanut butter, oil, soy sauce and sugar until smooth. Add lemon juice to taste.

2. With machine running, add coconut milk or water until sauce reaches desired consistency. Garnish with scallion slices. Serve.
Oysters with Festive Mignonette

Serves 8

1 tablespoon pink peppercorns
1 tablespoon green peppercorns
1 tablespoon fennel seed, lightly toasted
1/2 cup red-wine vinegar
1/2 cup champagne vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 dozen fresh oysters

1. In a small bowl, combine peppercorns, fennel seed, vinegars, and salt.

2. Shuck oysters just before serving; arrange on bed of crushed ice. Drizzle with mignonette, or serve on the side. Serve immediately.

Note: More hors d'oeuvres recipes and presentation tips available in the "Martha Stewart's Hors d'oeuvres Handbook"