

ANNA

MAKE EVERYDAY SPECIAL

"In life, the only thing that truly matters, is to love and be loved."



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Handmade truffles, fashioned from the finest and lavishly dipped, in sugar and cocoa and hazelnut bits



SHOW YOUR LOVE

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It all happened on an early morning bike ride, that my friend Pauline announced the happy news. She was marrying her longtime friend Peter and with most of their friends living abroad, they decided a villa in Tuscany would be the perfect place to meet. How exciting, a dream come true. We talked about how they had met and how it all came to be, the dress, the invitations and his perfect proposal.

With our holiday issue in the works, a wedding in Tuscany was a perfect fit. So it took me only moments to come up with a little proposal of my own. And there on that busy highway I told her of my plan and asked could I please come. Pauline promised to discuss it with her fiancé and minutes after our bike ride, she called me. He agreed! We planned a small meeting to discuss the events and how I thought it would go. Peter in his very generous way, helped me book my flight, from Winnipeg to Florence, with a short train ride through the beautiful countryside to my final destination, Villa del Monte, in the heart of Tuscany! A few months later with my five day itinerary in hand, I was on my way.

Tuscany was all I had dreamed it would be. I fell in love over and over and over again. With Cyprus trees and rolling hills, more beautiful than I had ever seen. With cashmere and leather and lovely fried cheese, with vineyards and pasta with butter and sage. With forty special wedding guests who had come from all parts of the world; who felt like family from the moment we met. And in the end I had the pleasure of attending a wedding, just as I had imagined, the most beautiful wedding I have ever been. And there, under the warm Tuscan sun with Pauline and Peter saying I do, it came to me. Just in time for the holidays, an issue called love, for my friend Pauline with something old, something new, something borrowed...



And finally this dream has come true, a perfect part of the plan. It has all come together beautifully with extraordinary photography and simple beautiful recipes. Some of them borrowed and some brand new. From classic eggs wrapped in bacon and cranberry brie, prime rib and turkey and honey baked ham to truffles and shortbread and pistachios and dates. And finally, five glorious days of celebrating with people who made my trip to Italy as perfect as any fairy tale could be.

Thank you to Peter and Pauline and all their lovely friends for not only including me in their plans but for allowing me to share it here with you.

Tuscany helped me create another beautiful magazine, I hope you will agree!

With love,

Mari

P.S. If you would like to subscribe to ANNA Magazine or buy it for a friend, please visit www.annamagazine.ca



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Manners & Etiquette



The party was a joyous affair until they realized there was only one canapé left.



When serving Compliments Sensations Phyllo Canapés it's a good idea to keep plenty in reserve. Once you serve such unique combinations of fine ingredients, they'll want more. Of course, you can also keep your guests happy by serving Compliments Sensations Thai Golden Purse Hors D'oeuvres and Asian Shrimp Crisps.

Compliments
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a little extra effort

Everyday after school, my daughter comes skipping up the walk and before she knocks on the door, I hear the clank of the mailbox as she checks for mail. She's always looking for an envelope with her name on it. If she finds the box empty she always asks, "Any mail for me?"

There is something really special about finding an envelope and seeing your name in a scripty handwriting. We are so lucky to have so many people in our lives who take the time to send them, and they always come at just the right time. Letters, postcards and special little notes; and we keep them forever, in a special box where we can read through them when we wish to, again and again.

The authors of 18th century letter writing used special parchment paper, hand written with a quill; the envelope was sealed with wax and tied with special ribbon. Although these gestures are nice, I think a simple little note will do.

A little extra effort is all you need to make; like a drawer set aside with special notepaper, envelopes, glittery pens and postage stamps... always ready to take a few minutes to address an envelope or write a simple note, to a teacher, a friend, after a dinner party, or for no reason at all. "I'm sorry", "I love you", "I miss you", "I'm so proud of you" or "thank you for the dinner last night." A simple note is like a special gift and the holidays are the perfect time to begin.

I remember many years ago, at my Mother's house for dinner, she told me she had been up all night and couldn't sleep a wink. When I asked her why, she told me she was concerned that her dinner wouldn't meet everyone's approval. I was so surprised! My own Mother? Then, I thought of all the times we forgot to tell her, believing all this time she knew.

Thank you, mom. Dinner is always beautiful, I just wanted you to know.

Make Everyday Special

RECIPES, LINDSAY EVANS AND MARI LOEWEN
 STYLING, MARI LOEWEN
 PHOTOGRAPHY, STUDIO 448

*Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens
 Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens
 Brown paper packages tied up with strings
 These are a few of my favorite things*

Milk chocolate, apricot and pecan bark

32 ounces milk chocolate, chopped
 1 cup pecans, toasted and roughly chopped
 1 cup dried apricots, roughly chopped

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place chocolate in a double boiler at low heat to melt, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly; add pecans and apricots and stir to combine. Pour mixture onto baking sheet and spread in an even layer. Chill until set, about 2 hours. Break into irregular pieces before serving or packaging.

Crispy dark chocolate and cashew bark

32 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
 ½ cup Rice Krispies cereal
 1 cup cashews, toasted, roughly chopped

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place chocolate in a double boiler at low heat to melt, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly; add cereal and cashews and stir to combine. Pour mixture onto baking sheet and spread in an even layer. Chill until set, about 2 hours. Break into irregular pieces before serving or packaging.

Dark chocolate, pistachio and cranberry bark

16 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
 16 ounces milk chocolate, chopped
 1 cup shelled pistachios, toasted, roughly chopped
 1 cup dried cranberries

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place bittersweet chocolate in a double boiler at low heat to melt, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly; add half the pistachios and cranberries and stir to combine. Pour mixture onto baking sheet and spread in an even layer. Chill for 1 hour until set. Using the same method, melt milk chocolate and add remaining pistachios and cranberries. Spread mixture evenly over chilled bittersweet bark. Chill until set, about 2 hours. Break into irregular pieces before serving or packaging.



Chocolate truffles

8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
1 cup whipping cream
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped and melted to coat
cocoa to coat

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine semi-sweet chocolate in a medium bowl and set aside. Pour cream into saucepan and heat over medium high heat. When it comes to a boil, remove and pour over chocolate. Allow to sit for 1 minute, then stir until smooth and set aside to cool. Place cooled chocolate in the bowl of electric mixer and whip until fluffy. Chill in refrigerator for one hour. Using mini ice cream scoops or a melon baller, form chocolate into balls. Place onto baking sheet and freeze for about 30 minutes.

Melt bittersweet chocolate in a saucepan over medium heat. With a toothpick inserted into ball, dip in melted chocolate and place on clean parchment paper. Allow to set and roll in cocoa powder. Makes 24.

Hazelnut truffles

8 ounces milk chocolate, chopped
1 cup whipping cream
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped and melted to coat
1 cup hazelnuts, finely chopped

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place milk chocolate in a medium bowl and set aside. Pour cream into saucepan and heat over medium high heat. When it comes to a boil, remove and pour over chocolate. Allow to sit for 1 minute, then stir until smooth and set aside to cool. Place cooled chocolate in the bowl of electric mixer and whip until fluffy.

Chill in refrigerator for one hour. Using mini ice cream scoops or a melon baller, form chocolate into balls. Place onto baking sheet and freeze for about 30 minutes.

Melt bittersweet chocolate in a saucepan over medium heat. With a toothpick inserted into ball, dip in melted chocolate and coat with hazelnuts. Place on clean parchment paper. Makes 24.

Champagne truffles

8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped
1 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons champagne
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped and melted to coat
Icing sugar to coat

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place milk chocolate in a medium bowl and set aside. Pour cream into saucepan and heat over medium high heat. When it comes to a boil, remove and pour over chocolate. Allow to sit for 1 minute, then stir until smooth. Add champagne and stir again until smooth. Set aside to cool. Place cooled chocolate in the bowl of electric mixer and whip until fluffy. Chill in refrigerator for one hour. Using mini ice cream scoops or a melon baller, form chocolate into balls. Place onto baking sheet and freeze for about 30 minutes.

Melt bittersweet chocolate in a saucepan over medium heat. With a toothpick inserted into ball, dip in melted chocolate and place on a baking tray. Once set, roll in icing sugar. Makes 24.



Chocolate caramel pecan tart

Makes one 8-inch tart

Pastry

1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1 tablespoon icing sugar
 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
 7 tablespoons cold butter, diced
 1 egg
 1 ounce bittersweet chocolate, melted

Caramel

1 cup granulated sugar
 ⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar
 ¼ cup water
 ¾ cup whipping cream
 1 cup pecan halves, roasted

Chocolate ganache

1 cup whipping cream
 7 ounces semi sweet chocolate, chopped

Preheat oven to 350°. To make pastry, combine flour, salt, icing sugar and cocoa in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse to combine. Add cold butter and pulse for 10 seconds until mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add egg and pulse to combine. Add melted chocolate and process until dough comes together. Form into ball, wrap in plastic and chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes.

On a lightly floured surface, roll dough out to ¼ of an inch. Line an 8-inch tart pan with pastry, using extra dough to patch up any holes. Pierce the base with a fork several times and chill until firm, about 30 minutes. Line pastry with parchment paper and fill shell with pie weights. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove the pie weights and continue to bake for 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

To make caramel, place sugar, cream of tartar and water in a saucepan over high heat. Bring to a rolling boil, whisking frequently, until sugar turns a golden amber colour. Slowly drizzle in cream, stirring constantly until smooth. Remove from heat and pour into a bowl to cool.

To make chocolate ganache, place cream in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, add chocolate and allow to sit for 1 minute. Stir until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and allow to cool.

To assemble tart, layer baked cooled pastry with caramel, pecans and finally the ganache. Chill to set.



Dark chocolate dipped pistachio shortbread crisps

1 cup butter, softened
¼ cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla
2 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup pistachios, shelled, toasted and coarsely ground
6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped and melted

Preheat the oven to 350°. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Cream butter and sugar with electric mixer at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, add vanilla and mix until well combined. Combine flour, salt and pistachios in a separate bowl. Slowly add the flour mixture to the butter mixture and mix just to combine. Gather into ball, wrap with plastic and chill for 30 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll to desired thickness, cut into shapes with cookie cutter and bake for 25-30 minutes or until lightly golden. Remove and transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

Melt bittersweet chocolate in a saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat and dip each cookie halfway into chocolate to coat. Place on clean parchment paper and chill. Makes 24.



Nanaimo square

½ cup butter
¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup cocoa
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 egg, slightly beaten
¼ teaspoon salt
2 cups graham crackers, crushed
1 cup coconut, shredded, unsweetened
½ cup walnuts, chopped
3 ounces semi-sweet chocolate
1 tablespoon butter

Filling

¼ butter, softened
2 cups icing sugar
2 tablespoons Bird's custard powder
2 tablespoons whipping cream

Line 9-inch square pan with parchment paper. In heavy saucepan, melt butter and add sugar, cocoa, vanilla, egg and salt and cook over low heat until mixture coats a spoon. Add graham crackers, coconut and walnuts to heated mixture and stir to combine. Remove from heat and press into pan. Cool.

In a mixing bowl of an electric mixer, combine butter, icing sugar and powder. Gradually add cream and mix until light and fluffy. Spread over first layer. Combine melted chocolate and butter and spread over filling. Chill in refrigerator until serving. Cut into 1-inch squares to serve.



Date square

2 cups dates, chopped
1 cup water
2 cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
2 cups butter
2 cups light brown sugar
4 cups quick oats

Preheat oven to 350°. Break up dates, place in saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Remove from heat, let stand for 10 minutes and mash with a potato masher. Set aside.

In a mixing bowl, combine flour and baking soda and mix well, then add all remaining ingredients and blend by hand until just crumbled. Press half the mixture on bottom of 9 x 13 baking pan, then top first with date filling then with remaining crumbs. Bake for 30-35 minutes or until golden. Remove from heat and cool. Makes 24 2-inch squares.





 **Manitoba
Egg Producers**

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Orange Crème Caramel

½ cup sugar
¼ cup water
5 eggs
½ cup sugar
2 ½ cups hot milk
1 tbsp grated orange rind
1 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350° F (180° C).

In a small heavy saucepan, combine ½ cup (125 mL) sugar and water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sugar is dissolved (do not let mixture boil while stirring). Increase heat to medium-high and boil, **without stirring**, until mixture caramelizes and is golden in colour, 6 to 8 minutes. Pour immediately into an 8-inch (20 cm) round baking pan, tilting pan to cover bottom.

Stir eggs with ½ cup (125 mL) sugar until blended. Stir in hot milk, orange rind and vanilla. Avoid over-mixing. Pour into pan over caramel mixture. Place in a pan of boiling water and bake until mixture is set, 40 to 45 minutes. Remove from hot water. Cool on a rack. Cover with foil or plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight or up to 2 days.

To remove from mould, run a spatula carefully around custard. Invert a rimmed serving plate over custard and turn over. Serve in wedges.

Makes approximately 8 servings.

Tip:

To eliminate air bubbles in the baked custard, let egg mixture rest 5 minutes before pouring over caramel.

Cal & Pauline Dirks
Egg Producers,
Steinbach, Manitoba



Everyday Easy

*a return to baking cakes and making dinner,
sitting down with family and reconnecting with friends
a return to giving back and being thankful*

LUSCIOUS AND UNFORGETTABLE

CARDAMOM STREUSEL COFFEE CAKE

CLASSIC BUTTER TART

CHOCOLATE COOKIE TORTE

LEMON GINGER CAKE WITH LEMON CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

BERRY CHEESECAKE

CHAMPAGNE TRUFFLE PIE

CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

RED VELVET CAKE

•

SIMPLE AND SPECTACULAR

CRANBERRY BRIE

GRUYÈRE CHEESE STRAWS

CHICKEN DRUMETTES

PORCINI MUSHROOM DELIGHTS

SEAFOOD STUFFED SPRING ROLLS

•

BEAUTIFUL AND DELICIOUS

PANCAKES

HONEY BAKED HAM

BAKED EGGS

POTATO PANCAKES

•

EXQUISITE AND MEMORABLE

PRIME RIB

GARLIC MASHED POTATOES

CREAMED SPINACH

TURKEY AND STUFFING

GRAVY



luscious and unforgettable

CARDAMOM STREUSEL COFFEE CAKE

CLASSIC BUTTER TART

CHOCOLATE COOKIE TORTE

LEMON GINGER CAKE

CRANBERRY CHEESECAKE

CHOCOLATE CREAM PIE

RED VELVET CAKE



Cardamom streusel coffee cake

vegetable oil cooking spray
¾ teaspoon ground cardamom
¾ cup butter, softened
1 ¼ cups sugar
3 eggs
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
¾ teaspoon salt
1 ¼ cups sour cream
1 teaspoon vanilla

Streusel

2 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup packed light-brown sugar
¾ teaspoon ground cardamom
¾ teaspoon salt
1 cup butter, chilled

Preheat oven to 350°. Coat a 10-inch angel-food cake pan with cooking spray; set aside. Bake cardamom pods, with shells on a baking sheet until fragrant, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool completely. Grind pods in a spice grinder or clean coffee grinder, then pass through a sieve, set aside. (Should be finely ground)

To make the streusel: In a large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, ¾ teaspoon ground cardamom and salt. Cut chilled butter into small cubes and with a pastry blender (or your finger tips) blend until mixture resembles course crumbs. Set aside.

Cream butter and sugar with electric mixer at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, then add eggs, one at a time. Mix until well combined. Sift flour, baking powder, baking soda, ¾ teaspoon ground cardamom, cinnamon and salt into a medium bowl. Add to butter mixture in 2 batches, alternating with the sour cream. Add vanilla and mix until well combined.

Spoon half of the batter into the prepared pan. Layer with 2 cups streusel, then remaining batter. Squeeze remaining streusel into large and small clumps; sprinkle on top of batter. Bake until golden brown and a cake tester inserted into centre comes out clean, 60-75 minutes. Let cool 10-15 minutes. Remove cake from pan and transfer onto wire rack to cool completely. Serves up to 16.

When preparing pans, use cooking spray to prevent cake from sticking to the pan. Butter, unless it is clarified, contains milk solids that actually encourage sticking

Red velvet cake

makes three 9-inch cakes

1/2 cup vegetable shortening
 1 1/2 cups white sugar
 2 eggs
 2 ounces red food coloring
 2 tablespoons cocoa
 1 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 cup buttermilk
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 tablespoon vinegar
 2 1/2 cups cake flour

Preheat oven to 350°. Coat three 9-inch baking pans with cooking spray, then line bottoms with parchment paper. Place shortening and sugar into the bowl of an electric mixer and mix on medium-high speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Make a paste of food coloring, cocoa and salt. Add to shortening mixture. Mix vanilla with buttermilk. Dissolve baking soda in vinegar; add to buttermilk.

Sift and measure flour; add to creamed shortening alternating with buttermilk mixture ending with flour. Mix until smooth, then pour into pans. Bake until tester inserted into centre of cakes comes out clean, about 35-40 minutes. Transfer pans to racks. Cool 10 minutes. Using small sharp knife, cut around sides of pans to loosen cakes. Turn out cakes onto racks and cool completely. Remove paper.

Frosting

5 tablespoons flour
 1 cup milk
 1 cup butter
 1 cup icing sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla

Make a paste with flour and small amount of milk. Add remaining milk gradually, mixing until smooth. Cook in double boiler over medium heat until thick. Let cool. Place butter, icing sugar and vanilla into the bowl of an electric mixer and mix on medium-high speed until light and fluffy. Add cooled flour mixture one spoon at a time, beating well between additions.





Lemon ginger cake with lemon cream cheese frosting

¾ cup butter, softened
 2 cups sugar
 4 eggs
 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 1 teaspoon lemon zest
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 3 cups cake flour
 1 tablespoon ginger, ground
 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ground
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 ½ teaspoon salt
 1 ¼ cups buttermilk

Preheat oven to 350°. Coat two 9-inch cake pans with cooking spray. Line bottom with parchment paper. Place butter and sugar into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; mix on medium-high speed until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time. Mix well to combine. Add lemon juice, lemon zest and vanilla (mixture may look curdled).

Sift flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda and salt into medium bowl; add to butter mixture alternating with buttermilk in three additions each, beginning with dry ingredients. Divide batter equally between prepared pans. Bake until golden brown and tester inserted into centre of cakes comes out clean, about 45 minutes. Transfer pans to racks. Cool 10 minutes. Using small sharp knife, cut around sides of pans to loosen cakes. Turn out cakes onto racks and cool completely. Remove paper.

Frosting

11 ounces cream cheese, softened
 1 cup butter, softened
 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 3 teaspoons lemon zest
 1 ¼ teaspoons vanilla
 4 ¾ cups icing sugar, sifted

Using electric mixer, beat cream cheese, butter, lemon juice, 2 teaspoons lemon zest and vanilla in large bowl until smooth. Add sifted powdered sugar and beat until frosting is smooth.

Using icing spatula, spread frosting over sides and top of cake in decorative swirls. Can be prepared two days ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Allow cake to stand at room temperature 30 minutes before serving. Serves 16



Cranberry cheesecake

16 ounces cream cheese, softened
 ½ cup sugar
 3 eggs, separated
 ⅔ cup light cream
 ½ teaspoon vanilla
 1 teaspoon lemon zest
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ¼ cup sugar

Crust

½ cup butter, melted
 1 ½ cups graham cracker crumbs
 ¼ cup sugar

Compote

2 cups cranberries
 ¼ cup water
 1 cup sugar
 2 tablespoons cornstarch
 water to add to cornstarch

Preheat oven to 350°. Coat a 9-inch spring form pan with cooking spray. Melt butter, add crumbs and sugar; mix until mixture is moist and crumbly. Press against bottom and sides of pan. Bake 10-12 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside.

Simmer cranberries in ¼ cup water until tender, about 10 minutes. Add sugar and simmer another five minutes. Mix cornstarch with enough water to form a paste, add to mixture and continue stirring until thickened and smooth.

Reduce oven temperature to 325°. Place cream cheese and ½ cup sugar into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment; mix on medium-high speed until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks, one at a time. Beat well. Add cream, vanilla, lemon zest and juice. Sift flour and salt into medium bowl then add to cream cheese mixture and mix until free of lumps.

In another bowl, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Add ¼ cup sugar and continue beating until whites are stiff but not dry. Fold egg whites into cream cheese mixture gently. Pour batter into prepared crust and bake for 40-60 minutes or until set. The cake will flutter slightly when removed from the oven, but will set as it cools. Remove from oven and cool. Pour compote over cake top and chill. Serves 16



Chocolate cookie torte

Makes ten 9-inch cookie layers

1 cup butter, softened
2 cups white sugar
2 eggs
½ cup cocoa
3 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 ¾ cups flour, sifted
1 ½ teaspoon salt
1 cup walnuts, ground

Filling

2 cups whipping cream, chilled
1 teaspoon vanilla
¼ cup icing sugar, sifted
3 tablespoons cocoa, sifted
dash of salt

Preheat oven to 375°. Place butter and sugar into the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment; mix on medium-high speed until light and fluffy. Reduce speed to medium. Add eggs, one at a time. Mix until well combined. Melt 3 tablespoons butter, add the cocoa and add to the butter mixture. Add vanilla.

Sift flour and salt into another bowl and slowly add to butter mixture; beat at a low speed for one minute. Add the ground walnuts and beat for another minute to combine. To make the cookie layers, use about a cup sized measuring cup or ice cream scoop and form the dough into balls.

Cut 20 sheets of wax paper into approximately 12-inch by 12-inch squares. Place a dough ball between two of the wax paper sheets, then roll out into round layers (use a nine-inch pan bottom as a guide for size). Continue with all the layers, then transfer one by one onto a cookie sheet lined with a silpat mat or parchment paper and bake for 6-8 minutes. Remove from oven, transfer to cooling rack. Continue with each cookie until all are baked. Cool.

Place the cream, vanilla, icing sugar, cocoa, and salt in the bowl of the electric mixer and with the whisk attachment beat until thick but still smooth, about 3-5 minutes. Be careful not to over beat. Assemble the torte with ½ cup of filling for each layer, make sure to spread it to the outer edge of each layer, keep layering until all cookies are used. Place in refrigerator overnight. Serve chilled. Serves 20.



Chocolate cream pie

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 2 cups milk
 3 egg yolks, slightly beaten
 6 tablespoons cocoa
 2 tablespoon butter, melted
 2 teaspoons vanilla

Pastry

1 cup all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegetable shortening, chilled
 1 tablespoon butter, chilled
 2 tablespoons water

Cream

2 cups heavy whipping cream
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup icing sugar, sifted

Preheat oven to 450°. Coat a 9-inch spring form pan with cooking spray. Sift flour and salt into a mixing bowl. Cut shortening into flour mixture with pastry blender (or your finger tips) and blend until it is grainy

and pea size. Blend water lightly into the dough. Lift ingredients with a fork, allowing the moisture to incorporate. If needed, add one additional teaspoon water. Gather dough into tidy ball and stop handling. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 30 minutes. Remove and roll out to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thickness and press into pan. Bake for 10–12 minutes or until golden. Remove and set aside.

In a double boiler over medium to high heat, combine sugar, flour and salt, gradually whisk in small amounts of the milk until incorporated, stir and cook for about 10 minutes until boiling point. Remove from heat. Slowly whisk in slightly beaten egg yolks and continue to cook until thickened. Remove from heat. In a small bowl mix cocoa, melted butter and vanilla. Whisk well until all is incorporated. Cool slightly before pouring into the baked crust. Chill completely.

Place 2 cups heavy whipping cream into bowl and mix on high until thickened. Add vanilla and sifted icing sugar and incorporate with a spatula, then continue to beat on high until thick peaks begin to form. Be careful not to over beat. Spoon cream over pie, or pipe with a pastry tip. Serves 8.

When pressing pastry into the pan, the sides should not evenly reach the top. The irregularity gives this pie a special look.



Classic butter tart

1 cup brown sugar
 1/3 cup butter, melted
 1 egg
 2 tablespoons milk
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1/2 cup raisins

Pastry

1 cup all-purpose flour
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/3 cup vegetable shortening
 1 tablespoon butter, chilled
 2 tablespoons water

Preheat oven to 375°. In a bowl, combine brown sugar and melted butter, then add egg and stir until incorporated. Add milk and vanilla and stir in raisins. Set aside.

Sift flour and salt into a mixing bowl. Cut shortening into flour mixture with pastry blender (or your finger tips) and blend until it is grainy and pea size. Blend water lightly into the dough. Lift ingredients with a fork, allowing the moisture to incorporate. If needed, add one additional teaspoon water. Gather dough into tidy ball and stop handling. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 1/2 hour. Remove and roll out to 1/4-inch thickness, cut into large circles with cookie cutter and fit into muffin tin. Fill 3/4 of each tart with the filling and bake for 20 minutes. Makes 12.



simple and spectacular

CRANBERRY BRIE
GRUYÈRE CHEESE STRAWS
CHICKEN DRUMETTES
PORCINI MUSHROOM DELIGHTS
SEAFOOD STUFFED SPRING ROLLS

EVERYDAY EASY

Cranberry brie

1 package phyllo pastry
½ cup butter, melted
16 ounces brie
¼ cup water
½ cup dried cranberries
3 tablespoons dark brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons dried currants
¼ teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
¼ teaspoon dry mustard
⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
2 tablespoons pecans, chopped

Pre-heat oven to 350°. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Remove phyllo layers from package and cover with damp cloth. Place one square on surface of table and brush with melted butter. Begin layering each piece over the other, alternating corners to form a circular area; brush each layer with melted butter. Place whole Brie on phyllo and bring each layer up and over the brie, brushing each layer with melted butter to hold in place. Work quickly to prevent phyllo from drying. Place onto baking sheet and bake about 25-30 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from heat and set aside.

In pot over medium heat, combine water and all ingredients, except pecans. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to low. Simmer until cranberries are plump and liquid thickens slightly, about 8-10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in pecans. Transfer baked brie to a platter, pour cranberry compote over the top, and serve immediately. Serves 8.



Cheese straws

1 package puff pastry
1 egg
1 tablespoon water
½ cup Gruyère cheese, grated
2–3 sprigs thyme, chopped
Coarse salt

Preheat oven to 375°. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. On a lightly floured surface, roll each sheet of puff pastry to approximately ¼-inch thickness. Whisk egg with 1 tablespoon of water and brush the surface of the pastry. Sprinkle each sheet evenly with the Gruyère, thyme and salt. With the rolling pin, lightly press the flavorings into the pastry. Cut into desired lengths with a floured knife or pizza wheel. Twist each strip and lay on baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake for 10-15 minutes, until browned and puffed, turn over and bake another minute. Cool and serve at room temperature. Makes 24.



Chicken drumettes

¼ cup vegetable oil for sautéing
2 pounds of chicken drumettes
2 eggs
2 cups flour or cornstarch
¾ tablespoon soy sauce
¾ tablespoon water
1 cup sugar
½ cup vinegar
1 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 375°. Preheat vegetable oil in frying pan to medium high heat. Rinse chicken with water and pat dry. Place eggs and flour in 2 separate plates. Whisk eggs gently. Dip chicken piece by piece into the egg mixture then the flour and sauté until golden brown, about 2 minutes each side. Drain on paper and place in glass baking dish. In a mixing bowl combine all remaining ingredients and pour over drumettes. Bake uncovered for about 25 minutes. Serve immediately. Serves 10-15.

*A drizzle of
extravagance*

For an instant appetizer, slice a baguette and serve with good olive oil for dipping



De Luca's 
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950 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
204 774 7617
www.deluca.ca



Porcini mushroom delights

1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms
 1 cup boiling water
 2 tablespoons butter
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 medium shallots, finely chopped
 2 sprigs fresh thyme, chopped
 6 cups white mushrooms, coarsely chopped
 2 tablespoons Marsala wine
 ½ cup whipping cream
 Coarse salt and cracked black pepper

Pastry

8 ounces cream cheese
 ½ cup butter
 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour

Preheat oven to 375°. Place dry porcini mushrooms and boiling water in medium bowl and soak until soft, about 10 minutes. Strain mushrooms through a fine sieve to reserve 3 tablespoons liquid. Finely chop the strained mushrooms and set aside. Melt butter and oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add shallots, strained mushrooms and thyme and cook until shallots are translucent, about 2 minutes. Now add white mushrooms and sprinkle with salt. Stir occasionally until mushrooms first release their liquid and then dry out, about 5 minutes. Add reserved mushroom liquid and wine. Cook 1 minute to evaporate. Add heavy cream and reduce until slightly thickened about 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and season. Set aside to cool.

Combine pastry ingredients and form into ball, handling as little as possible. Roll out to ¼-inch thickness, then pipe rows of filling onto the dough, leaving enough room between rows to fold the dough over filling. Use a pastry cutter, round cookie cutter or tart form to cut into shapes. Brush with egg whites and bake until light golden brown. 12-15 minutes. Makes 3 dozen.



Seafood stuffed spring rolls

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound fresh crabmeat
 $\frac{1}{2}$ pound fresh Alaskan Halibut, chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ pound shrimp, peeled, de-veined, and chopped
2 teaspoons cornstarch
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Japanese breadcrumbs
3 egg whites
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon ginger, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon lemongrass, finely chopped
2 teaspoons fish sauce
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper
6 tablespoons red onion, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup green onion, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cilantro leaves, lightly chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup basil leaves, lightly chopped

1 package (25 sheets) spring roll wrappers
2 egg whites, lightly beaten
1 cup vegetable oil for frying

Dipping sauce

1 tablespoon ginger
1 tablespoon garlic, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light soy sauce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup rice wine vinegar or sherry
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon sesame oil

Place all ingredients for dipping sauce into medium bowl and whisk together. Set aside.

Break crabmeat up lightly and set it aside. Place halibut, shrimp in all remaining ingredients in a mixing bowl and fold together with your fingertips to just combine. Fold in the crabmeat carefully. Set aside.

To make rolls, place one wrapper in front of you with the bottom edge parallel to your surface edge. Scoop about 3 tablespoons of the crabmeat mixture and spread it in a tube like fashion across the entire length of the spring roll wrapper, about 1-inch from the bottom. Brush side and top edges of the wrapper with egg white. Fold wrapper over filling tightly and roll into tube. Repeat with remaining wrappers and filling.

Place oil in heavy skillet and fry spring rolls $1\frac{1}{2}$ minutes each side or until golden brown. Remove and drain on paper towels. Cut each roll on the bias into 3 pieces. Serve with the dipping sauce. Makes 25.



Blueberry pancakes

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
3 cups buttermilk
4 tablespoons butter, melted
1 cup fresh blueberries

Heat griddle to 375° or cast iron pan to medium heat. Combine flour, baking powder, salt and sugar in a mixing bowl. In another bowl, add eggs, buttermilk, melted butter and whisk to combine. Gradually add to flour mixture and mix just to combine. Batter should have little lumps.

Lightly grease griddle or pan with butter and pour about ½ cup of batter in rounds about 2-inches apart. Drop 10 to 12 blueberries onto each pancake. When the pancakes bubble on top and are slightly dry around the edges they are ready to flip. Flip and cook on other side for another minute. Keep prepared pancakes warm in oven preheated to about 175°.

Stack them high and serve with butter and real maple syrup. Serves 4.

beautiful and delicious

PANCAKES

HONEY BAKED HAM

BAKED EGGS

POTATO PANCAKES



Orange honey baked ham

1 whole smoked ham bone in, rind on
½ cup honey
⅓ cup orange juice, freshly squeezed
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon dijon mustard
1 large onion, cut into wedges
1 large orange, cut into wedges
4 sprigs rosemary

Preheat oven to 300°. Rinse ham with cool water and pat dry with a paper towel. Let stand, uncovered, at room temperature for about 1 hour. Whisk together honey, orange juice, balsamic vinegar, mustard and set aside.

Using the lowest rack setting in your oven, place ham, with rind on top into a roasting pan and arrange onion, orange and rosemary around ham and bake for 1 hour.

Remove from oven, and allow ham to cool slightly. Increase oven temperature to 350°. Trim rind from ham leaving a layer of fat about ¼-inch thick. Score fat into a diamond pattern, cutting about ½ to 1-inch through into the meat and baste with the honey mixture. Add enough water to pan to fill bottom ¼-inch and return ham to oven to cook 1 more hour, basting often with remaining marinade. If necessary add a little water to pan to keep juices from burning. Remove from oven and let stand 30 minutes before carving ham and serving. Serves 8 to 10.

Total preparation, cooking and resting time is 3 ½ hours



Baked eggs

6 eggs
6 strips of bacon, uncooked
Parmesan cheese, grated
coarse salt & pepper

Butter muffin tins and break one egg into each tin. Place uncooked bacon around outer edge of egg in the tin. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese, coarse salt and pepper. Place under broiler in oven for 5-7 minutes. To remove, slide knife around the outer edge tin and remove. Serve at once.



Potato pancakes

2 eggs
4 medium russet potatoes
¼ cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup onion, grated
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
¼ cup vegetable oil

Peel potatoes and shred using the largest hole of a hand grater. Place grated potatoes in large bowl and rinse with cold water; then using your hands squeeze liquid from potatoes and drain on paper towel. In another bowl, whisk together eggs, flour, onion, salt and pepper. Add potatoes to the egg mixture to combine. In a large, heavy skillet, heat some of the oil over medium-high heat. Spoon the batter by ¼-cupfuls onto the hot skillet, flattening them with the back of a spoon. Fry until the bottom of the pancakes are nicely browned—between 3-5 minutes; flip the pancakes and cook 3 minutes longer. Repeat for the remaining pancakes, adding oil to the skillet as needed. Drain on paper towels and serve immediately. Serves 4 to 6.





PRIME RIB
GARLIC MASHED POTATOES
CREAMED SPINACH
TURKEY AND STUFFING
GRAVY

exquisite and memorable



Prime rib

1 three-rib prime-rib roast, tied
Coarse salt and cracked black pepper
1 ½ cups dry red wine

Let roast stand at room temperature for about 2 hours. Preheat oven to 450°. Place roast, fat side up, in a heavy roasting pan without a rack. Season the entire roast with salt and black pepper. Transfer roast to the lowest rack, and bake 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 325°, and without opening the door, bake another 1 ½ hours. A thermometer inserted into the roast should read 115° when done; if not, return roast to oven, and check temperature every 10 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to rest. Do not cover the roast, or the crisp exterior will get soggy.

Place roasting pan directly on the stove over medium-high heat and pour wine into the pan. Bring to a boil, and use a heavy whisk to incorporate all of the caramelized, crispy bits stuck to the pan. Reduce heat to medium and cook until liquid is reduced to half about 5-8 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Cut twine from roast and remove bones by sliding a sharpened knife straight down between the meat and the bones, separating the two as you cut down. Carve roast into thick slices and serve with the prepared wine infused juices. Serves 4.



Garlic mashed potatoes

1 whole head garlic
5 or 6 Yukon gold or russet potatoes
¼ cup butter
¼ cup heavy cream
Coarse salt and cracked black pepper

Preheat oven to 400°. Cut off top of garlic head and drizzle with olive oil; wrap in foil and bake until the garlic becomes fragrant, about ½ hour or more. Place potatoes into a large pot of cold salted water; bring to a rolling boil until tender, about 15-20 minutes. Drain potatoes, remove garlic from oven and squeeze cloves into potatoes. Add butter and cream and mash to desired texture. Salt and pepper to taste. Serves 4.



Creamed spinach

2 ½ pounds fresh spinach, well washed
3 tablespoons butter
¼ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
Coarse salt and cracked black pepper
1 teaspoon sugar
Nutmeg, freshly grated
Sour cream for serving

Place spinach in a large pot over high heat. Cook, covered, with just the water clinging to leaves, stirring occasionally, until wilted, 2 to 4 minutes. Transfer to a colander to drain, reserving excess liquid. Roughly chop spinach and set aside. In a medium skillet at medium heat, melt butter, add flour and cook for about 1-2 minutes then gradually whisk in milk. Season with salt, pepper and sugar. Thin with reserved spinach liquid. Stir in spinach, sprinkle with nutmeg and serve with sour cream. Serves 4.

Turkey

Prep time 2 ½ hours, cooking time 4 hours

1 20-pound turkey, giblets and neck removed and reserved
1 ½ cups butter, melted, plus 4 tablespoons at room temperature
Cheesecloth
1 bottle 750-ml dry white wine (reserve 1 cup for gravy)
Coarse salt and cracked black pepper

Gravy

Pan juices
1 cup dry white wine
3 cups giblet stock

Rinse turkey with cool water, pat dry with paper towel and let stand 2 hours at room temperature.

Preheat oven to 450° and place rack on lowest level in oven. Combine melted butter and white wine in a large bowl and cut cheesecloth into four large squares, big enough to cover the turkey. Immerse cheesecloth in the wine mixture and let soak. Place turkey, breast side up, in a metal roasting pan, with a rack. Fold wing tips under the turkey and sprinkle the entire inside with ½ teaspoon salt and pepper. Fill cavity loosely with as much stuffing as it can hold. Do not pack tightly. Tie legs together loosely with kitchen string and fold neck flap under. Rub turkey with the softened butter, and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Lift cheesecloth out of liquid, squeeze it slightly and spread it evenly over the entire turkey pushing sides in around the turkey into the pan. Place turkey, legs first, in oven and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and using a pastry brush baste cheesecloth with butter and wine. Reduce oven temperature to 350° and cook for 2 ½ more hours, basting every 30 minutes. Remove from oven and discard cheesecloth, removing carefully so as not to remove skin from turkey. Baste turkey with pan juices and return to the oven, now breast first. Cook 1 more hour, basting again after 30 minutes.

Remove from oven, insert a thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, careful not to poke into a bone. The temperature should reach 180° and the turkey should be golden brown. If not yet fully cooked, baste again and return to oven to cook another 20-30 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest for about 30 minutes. Serves 10 to 12.

To make the gravy, place roasting pan with pan juices over medium-high heat and add the wine. Using a wooden spoon, scrape the pan until liquid boils and all the crisp bits are unstuck from the pan.

Add giblet stock, stir well, bring back to a rolling boil and cook until liquid has reduced by half, about 10-15 minutes. You will have about 2 ½ cups of gravy. Season to taste and serve immediately.



Giblet stock

Heart, gizzard and neck (not liver), reserved from turkey
 4 tablespoons butter
 1 onion, chopped
 1 celery stalk with leaves, chopped
 1 small leek, chopped
 ½ teaspoon coarse salt
 ¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper
 1 bay leaf

Rinse heart, gizzard and neck and pat dry. In a medium saucepan, melt 3 tablespoons butter over medium heat and add onion, celery and leek. Cook about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until onions are translucent. Add salt and pepper, and cook another 5 minutes.

Add 4 cups water, bay leaf, heart, gizzard, neck and bring to a boil, then reduce to a high simmer. Cook for 45 minutes to an hour until liquid has reduced to about 3 cups. Strain and use the liquid as stock for gravy when needed.

Stuffing

½ cup butter
 4 onions, peeled and finely chopped
 16 celery stalks, finely chopped
 10 large fresh sage leaves, chopped
 6 cups chicken stock
 2 loaves stale white bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
 2 teaspoons coarse salt
 4 teaspoons cracked black pepper

Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat, add onions and celery and cook until onions are translucent, about 10 minutes. Add sage, stir to combine, and cook 3-4 more minutes. Add ½ cup stock, stir well and cook for another 5 minutes until liquid has reduced by half. Transfer onion mixture to a large mixing bowl and add all remaining ingredients, including the remaining stock and mix to combine. Stuff turkey and cook remaining stuffing in a glass dish. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes. Serve with turkey. Serves 10 to 12.

These crepes have been in my family for as long as I can remember. They were the cover of our very first magazine and I cooked them at so many promotions and events, I could have made them with my eyes closed; they really became somewhat of a tradition. Although the original recipe calls for white flour and a final polish of cinnamon and sugar, I decided on a healthier choice. So I switched half the flour to include whole wheat and it really adds a lovely flavour and texture. You can still sprinkle them with sugar and cinnamon if you wish, but I enjoy them simply on their own or served with fresh fruit and scrambled eggs. Which ever way you choose, they are always wonderful.

Crepes

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 3 cups milk
- 5 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Combine flours, sugar and salt in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the milk, eggs and vanilla, then slowly whisk into the flour mixture until smooth. Cover and let stand for 20 minutes. Heat a small lightly greased non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Pour a ½-cup of mixture into the pan, gently tip the pan to spread out the mixture. Cook for 2 minutes each side or until golden. Repeat with the remaining mixture. Serves 6 to 8.





Friends Over



RÉCIPES, SUZANNE FROMM,
PHOTOGRAPHY, MARI LOEWEN

*I awaken to a soft purring sound. I have arrived.
I can feel it. There is a breathtaking calm.*

*It seems even the aircraft knows the magnificence
of what lies beneath as it descends ever so gently
through a mass of billowy clouds.*

*It is peaceful and beautiful. With lush, emerald
green rolling hills, as far as the eye can see.
Welcome to Tuscany, they seem to say.*



I have come to attend the wedding of Pauline Lord and Peter Neagle, along with their family and very special friends. We are all meeting at a villa, situated high in the Tuscan hills.

After an hour long drive, we make our final turn onto a long winding drive of giant towering trees. At the end of it I see, the enchanting Villa del Monte, with a magnificent wrought-iron gate and 18th-century walls; with perfectly manicured gardens and a breathtaking view.

Then I hear chatter and laughter and under a concrete pergola, larger than I have ever seen, forty friends have gathered and our week has begun.

I knew Tuscany would change my life forever. But this is more perfect than I ever imagined it would be...





Our week begins with a day tour of Siena, a magical medieval town in the heart of Tuscany, with narrow winding streets and magnificent buildings, with beautiful churches and a bustling piazza with glamorous shops and fabulous food...







We enjoy casual lunches and beautiful dinners with so many courses I forget the count. We travel to world famous vineyards, where rose bushes line the fields and vines have been placed like a patchwork quilt, vertically and horizontally, to attract the sun to the grape at just the right place. Where grapes are selected by hand to ensure a most favorable crop. We taste wine after wine and on the way home, "I've made reservations at Latini" I hear someone say. Oh well, wining and dining, it's what we came here for after all.




The wedding day morning begins in a relaxed and casual sort of way, with guests sipping coffee and enjoying the view.

Then the moment arrives, the wedding begins with beautiful words spoken by dear friends and family for two special people...



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*Let us be grateful
to be gathered in this beautiful place,
with friends from around the world,
to celebrate this very special occasion,
for this amazing meal and this incredible experience,
let us believe in love that lasts forever.*

Lamb with tomato and fennel

4 lamb shanks
 3 tablespoons butter
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 large red onions, coarsely chopped
 2 large carrots, coarsely chopped
 6 whole garlic cloves
 1 cup red wine
 2 cups beef (or lamb) stock
 1 can whole tomatoes
 8 large fresh thyme sprigs
 2 sprigs of fresh rosemary
 1 bay leaf
 1 large fennel bulb, trimmed, cored, sliced very thinly
 8 plum tomatoes

Preheat oven to 350°. Generously sprinkle lamb with salt and pepper. In a large ovenproof pot over high heat, sear the lamb shanks with 2 tablespoons olive oil, until browned on all sides. Transfer lamb to a platter and set aside.

In the same pot, with butter and remaining oil, sauté onions, carrots and whole garlic cloves about 8-10 minutes. Add red wine and scrap bits off bottom of pot, about 2 minutes. Add stock, canned tomatoes, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf and fennel and bring to a boil. Return lamb and any accumulated juices to the pot and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover pot with lid or foil and transfer to the oven, bake until lamb is very tender, about 2 ½ hours.

Cut plum tomatoes in half lengthwise and place on baking sheet cut side up. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake in oven for 1 hour then add to lamb pot during the last half hour of cooking. Serves 4.

Suzanne Fromm lives in Tuscany where she provides catering and cooking classes for several villas, including Villa del Monte.

toskanaseminarhaus.com



Menu

Antiquato Toscano
Crostini misti, affettate miste
(small tuscan roasted bread, top, ham, salami.)

Primo
First course

Risotto ai Funghi
(rice dish with mushrooms)

Farfalle tonno capperi
(pasta with tuna-cream-capers-sauce)

Secondo
Second course

Cangia con la noci e olive
(rabbit with nuts and green olives)

Agnello con Finocchio
(lamb in tomato sauce with fennel)
Insalata verde/ green salad

Dolce
Dessert

Tiramisu
Cantucci in Vin Santo
Panna cotta ai Frutti di bosca

Espresso



Wild mushroom risotto

2 cups risotto, rinsed
 ½ cup dried shitake mushrooms
 2 or 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1 white onion, coarsely chopped
 2 Portobello mushrooms, coarsely chopped
 ¾ cup chicken stock
 3 tablespoons olive oil
 2 tablespoons butter
 ¼ cup mix of fresh basil, tarragon and thyme
 ¼ cup parmesan cheese
 ½ cup white wine
 coarse salt and cracked pepper

Place dry porcini mushrooms in a bowl with 1 cup boiling water; soak until soft, about 10 minutes. Strain mushrooms through a sieve, chop and set aside.

In a heavy (non-stick) saucepan over low to medium heat, sauté onions and garlic with olive oil for about ten minutes; add a pat of butter and sauté for another five minutes. Add Portobello and porcini mushrooms and continue to sauté. Add risotto and another tablespoon of olive oil and sauté for a few seconds stirring constantly. Add a ladle of stock into the pan; when the pan gets dry, add another ¼ cup, stirring constantly. Do not allow the pan to get dry. Continue this process, with remaining stock and white wine, for about 25 minutes. Add fresh herbs and cook for another 2 minutes. Remove from heat, add parmesan cheese and stir well. Salt and pepper to taste.
 Serves 4 to 6.


panna cotta with lemon and wild berries

2 ¼ cups whipping cream
 ½ cup milk
 4 sheets gelatin
 1 piece lemon peel
 2 tablespoons honey
 2 cups mixed berries
 ¼ cup sugar

In double boiler bring cream, milk and lemon peel to a rolling boil for a few minutes, then add the honey. Place gelatin in cold water as per package instructions and add to the cream mixture. Remove lemon peel. Remove from heat and stir well. Divide mixture equally into dessert bowls and allow to cool completely before placing in refrigerator.

Simmer berries and sugar in ¼ cup water for about 3-5 minutes. Remove from heat and cool. Pour over set custard to serve.





*You should not marry the one
you can live with, rather the
one you can't live without.*

What I have learned

Oh how I have longed for this day. A leisurely train ride through the beautiful European countryside, just like Meg Ryan in French Kiss. I am taking the train from Tuscany to Florence, to spend my final day. I have rented a perfect little room, Locanda Pitti, next to Hotel Enza at Via San Zanobi 43. Friendly and homey, just a few simple turns from the station, the travel guide said.

Florence is Europe's cultural capital; the birthplace of the modern world, with more artistic masterpieces per square mile than any other place on earth. Where the great poet Dante first saw the beautiful Beatrice and spent the rest of his life writing poems for her. Where the great Michelangelo, Leonardo and Botticelli walked. Where Michelangelo sculpted *David*, the biblical shepherd boy, ready to take on the giant. I read, he would work tirelessly through the night, believing he was a tool of God, responsible only for chipping away the stone until the intended sculpture emerged. I can't wait.

After the calm of Tuscany and a train ride not quite as I had imagined, I arrive to a bustling Florence and feel suddenly overwhelmed at the frantic energy that greets me. My map, that made perfect sense just moments before, now seems a blur. With travel bags much wider than the cobblestone streets, I make my way to San Zanobi 43. I ask for directions several times but nobody seems to have heard of this address, let alone my hotel.

To love and be loved.

After what seems like an eternity, I find it. A garage door with one small button just off to the right. As I ring the bell, I turn to my left and I see at the end of the street... the grandest dome, the most incredible structure

I have ever seen. It seems to tower over the entire city. How ironic; that I have finally come to the most romantic city in the world, where Michelangelo's *David* is just a few blocks away and I am standing in a dark alleyway, exhausted and alone.

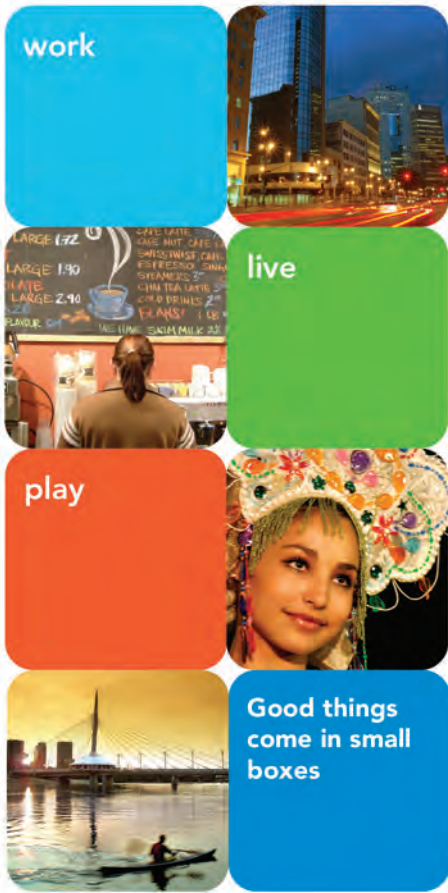
The buzzer to the door sounds several times, but the door will not open. I pull frantically and finally the large door, swings open. Inside I see only darkness, with some stairs at the very back. The woman greets me from the top of the stairs and gestures for me to come up. Finally, I get to my room and collapse on my bed. I am so tired, I guess the jet lag has finally gotten to me. After a short nap, I take a deep breath, there is still so much to see. I wander through markets and beautiful shops, there is so much of everything. Leather and cashmere, *Gucci* and *Prada*, scooters and pigeons, art galleries and paintings, so many things grand.

So how can it be, that it's not really doing much for me?

I have just come from peaceful Tuscany, with manicured fields and rustic farms, little towns and wine soaked villages, each with their own appeal. I have just left forty beautiful people who became my friends. I have a daughter at home desperately waiting for me. So it makes perfect sense that I'm feeling this way. Five glorious days, ones I will never forget, but it's now time to go home.

Good-bye Italy, I've seen enough. Michelangelo, I have not seen your best work, but I promise to come back.

I'm so excited, I have a 5am flight waiting for me. As I'm about to leave, a few simple words flash across my cell phone display, *Mommy I love you, I can't wait for you to come home.* And I'm reminded of what I already know. There is only one true happiness for me, and that is to love and be loved. *Hey sweetie, I'm eating my last croissant and then I'll be home.*



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love, love changes everything
hands and faces, earth and sky
love, love changes everything
how you live and how you die

love, can make the summer fly
Or a night, seem like a lifetime

yes, love, love changes everything
now I tremble at your name
nothing in the world will ever be the same

love, love changes everything
days are longer, words mean more
love, love changes everything
pain is deeper than before

love, will turn your world around
and that world will last a lifetime

yes, love, love changes everything
brings you glory, brings you shame
nothing in the world will ever be the same

off, into the world we go
planning futures, shaping years
love, bursts in, and suddenly
all our wisdom disappears

love, makes fools of everyone
all the rules we make are broken

yes, love, love changes everyone
live or perish in its flame
love will never never let you be the same

Michael Ball
Premier Collection Encore: Andrew Lloyd Webber



After more than 20 years in this business, I know that for most, the complexities of investing can be intimidating. The thing I tell people is that it is just not that hard. Really.

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Call us.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leigh Cunningham'.

Leigh Cunningham
Vice President, Investment Advisor
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