

THE RIVER GOURMAND

Entrees and Desserts



by Bob Hicks

For entrees, I have two favorite options. One is a visit to Tony's Market, which has a store on Dry Creek Road and another near old Littleton. What makes Tony's unique is a wide choice of delicious homemade sauces, soups, and other dishes frozen and sealed in plastic; imagine a collaboration between Julia Child and Stouffer's. Usually available is marinara sauce; a Sicilian meat sauce with mushrooms, green peppers, and wine; Alfredo sauce; meat balls; beef bourginon; beef stew; chicken cacciatore; good Hollandaise and Bearnaise sauces; and several other dishes. The virtues of this stuff are threefold: (1) in your small cooler, it serves as the ice, keeping everything relatively cool for a day or two; (2) to fix it, just plop it into boiling water for a few minutes; and (3) it's really tasty.

My second option is simple recipes which require only a lightweight frying pan, enough ice to cool perhaps some chops and a stick of butter, and a few additional ingredients, for example: lamb chops with dill, butter, lemon juice, and mint jelly; strip steaks with a sauce of port wine, beef stock, and shallots, or with a

buerre rouge sauce; pork chops in a sauce of apples, onions, cream, and Armagnac; and chicken breasts with a sauce of mustard, white wine, and lemon juice. These dishes sound hard, but none requires more than the frying pan, four or five ingredients, and a few minutes on the stove. Seafood needs careful cooling and an airtight garbage bag, but consider the aroma of mussels steamed in a broth of white wine, butter, and herbs; lobster tails (which, if frozen, also serve as your ice for a day) steamed in white wine, lemon juice, and sherry; shrimp simmered in butter, fennel, and lemon juice; albacore tuna steaks sauteed in butter, white wine, and tarragon; or sole in a sauce of white wine, thyme, and crème fraiche—all quick and easy recipes.

Finally, desserts and after-dinner drinks...As the evening grows late, simplicity rules. Consider brownies, cake, or any other baked good you can pack so it doesn't get squished; or a good dessert cheese served with walnuts and fresh fruit; or any other sweet delicacy you can find which will survive a day or two on the river. For something tasty to sip, my

favorites are port and sherry. Try Ficklen's, a remarkably good non-vintage port from California; or treat yourself to a bottle of Argueso "Pedro Jiminez" cream sherry, easily chilled in the river. Each of these prove that a wine should never be judged by how much it costs; at \$12-14 a bottle, these wines are far more subtle and delicious than most of the high-priced, ostentatious cognacs and other dessert liqueurs favored by the Donald Trumps of the world.

Certainly, food is a sybaritic diversion on the water, and not why we go there. But it's a thoroughly enjoyable diversion, don't you think?

If you agree, and want to see any more articles like this, or if you want any of the recipes I've mentioned, or have recipes or ideas to share, please be in touch by mail (349 S. Pennsylvania Street, Denver 80209) or fax (303-282-4542) or email (bobh@idcomm.com).

Meanwhile, keep your paddles wet, and bon appetit!