

A CURATED COLLECTION

The Elegant Table

Appetizers & Hors d'Oeuvres



THIRTY-FOUR REFINED RECIPES FOR EVERY OCCASION
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An Invitation to the Art of the First Bite

A word before the first course

There is a moment — brief, luminous, and entirely its own — that arrives just before a meal truly begins. A tray glides past. A morsel is offered. Fingers reach, and in that fraction of a second, expectations are set, conversations are sparked, and an evening quietly declares what kind of night it intends to be.

This book was born from a deep reverence for that moment. Appetizers and hors d'oeuvres are not preludes to the real performance — they are the overture, the first note, the whispered promise of pleasures to come.

Within these pages you will find thirty-five recipes drawn from classical French technique, the vibrant shores of the Mediterranean, the spice markets of the Middle East, and the refined minimalism of Japan.

"To invite people to dinner is to take charge of their happiness for the entire time they are under your roof." — Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Begin anywhere. Follow your season, your mood, your pantry. There is no wrong door into this house. Welcome to the table.

— *The Author*

Thirty-Four Recipes in Seven Chapters

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CHAPTER ONE

Canapés & Bites

*Elegant one-bite morsels that open an evening with grace
and intention.*





◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

Classic Smoked Salmon Blinis

Buckwheat blinis, crème fraîche, dill

PREP TIME 35 min	SERVES 24 pieces	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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These featherlight buckwheat blinis, crowned with silken crème fraîche and jewel-bright smoked salmon, are the apex of the canapé tradition. Mastered once, they become an indispensable staple of your entertaining repertoire.

INGREDIENTS
• 7 oz smoked salmon, thinly sliced
• 1 cup buckwheat flour
• 1 cup all-purpose flour
• 2 tsp active dry yeast
• 1¼ cups warm whole milk
• 2 eggs, separated
• 1 tsp fine salt
• 1 tsp sugar
• ¾ cup crème fraîche
• 1 tbsp fresh dill fronds
• 1 tbsp capers, rinsed
• Zest of 1 lemon
• 2 tbsp unsalted butter, for frying
• Flaky sea salt and white pepper

METHOD
01 Combine flours, yeast, salt and sugar. Add warm milk and egg yolks; whisk to a smooth batter. Cover and rest 45 minutes until bubbly.
02 Whisk egg whites to stiff peaks. Fold into batter in three additions.
03 Melt butter in a non-stick pan. Drop tablespoons of batter into 2-inch rounds. Cook 90 seconds per side until golden.
04 Mix crème fraîche with lemon zest, a pinch of salt and white pepper.
05 Top each blini with crème fraîche, a fold of salmon, a caper, and a dill frond. Finish with flaky salt.

CHEF'S NOTE
<i>Batter can be made the night before at the pre-egg-white stage. Fold in whites just before cooking.</i>



◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

Gougères with Comté

Choux pastry, aged Comté, smoked paprika

PREP TIME
45 min

SERVES
30 pieces

DIFFICULTY
Intermediate

Warm from the oven, these airy Burgundian cheese puffs dissolve on the tongue in a cloud of butter and aged Comté. They are perhaps the most hospitable thing a kitchen can produce.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup water
- 7 tbsp unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 tsp fine salt
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour, sifted
- 4 large eggs
- 5 oz Comté cheese, finely grated
- 1 egg yolk, for glazing
- Extra Comté to scatter on top

METHOD

- 01** Preheat oven to 390°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment.
- 02** Combine water, butter and salt. Bring to a rolling boil. Beat in flour until dough pulls from sides. Dry 2 minutes.
- 03** Add eggs one at a time, beating well. Fold in Comté and paprika.
- 04** Pipe walnut-sized rounds onto trays. Brush with egg yolk, scatter Comté.
- 05** Bake 22-25 minutes until deep golden. Serve immediately.

CHEF'S NOTE

Freeze raw on baking sheets and bake from frozen — add 5 minutes to cooking time.



◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

Fig & Prosciutto Crostini

Grilled bread, fresh figs, buffalo ricotta

PREP TIME
20 min

SERVES
16 pieces

DIFFICULTY
Easy

The marriage of honeyed fresh figs, salty prosciutto, and cloud-soft ricotta on charred sourdough is one of the great simple pleasures of the late-summer table.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1 sourdough baguette, sliced diagonally
- ◆ 4 ripe figs, quartered
- ◆ 8 thin slices prosciutto di Parma
- ◆ 1 cup buffalo ricotta
- ◆ 2 tbsp wildflower honey
- ◆ 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- ◆ 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ Freshly cracked black pepper
- ◆ Flaky sea salt

METHOD

- 01** Brush bread with olive oil and grill until charred lines appear.
- 02** Spread each crostini generously with buffalo ricotta.
- 03** Layer with a half-slice of prosciutto, draped loosely.
- 04** Top with a wedge of fig. Drizzle with honey and scatter thyme.
- 05** Finish with cracked black pepper and flaky salt.

CHEF'S NOTE

If figs are out of season, roast halved black grapes at 350°F with thyme and a splash of balsamic.



◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

Devilled Quail Eggs

Truffle mayo, smoked paprika, chive

PREP TIME 25 min	SERVES 24 pieces	DIFFICULTY Easy
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A miniature masterpiece of the classic cocktail party tradition, elevated here with a whisper of truffle and a filling of exceptional smoothness.

INGREDIENTS
◆ 12 quail eggs
◆ 3 tbsp good quality mayonnaise
◆ 1 tsp truffle oil
◆ ½ tsp Dijon mustard
◆ 1 tsp white wine vinegar
◆ Pinch of cayenne pepper
◆ Pinch of smoked paprika
◆ Chives, finely snapped, to garnish
◆ Flaky sea salt

METHOD
01 Boil quail eggs exactly 3 minutes. Transfer to ice water 5 minutes. Peel carefully.
02 Slice eggs in half. Pop yolks into a bowl.
03 Mash yolks with mayo, truffle oil, mustard, vinegar and cayenne until smooth.
04 Pipe into each egg white half.
05 Garnish with snapped chives, smoked paprika and flaky salt.
CHEF'S NOTE Quail eggs can be boiled and peeled up to 24 hours ahead. Keep refrigerated in cold water.



◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

◆ CANAPÉS & BITES

Parmesan Tuiles with Whipped Ricotta

Lacy crisps, herbed cheese, sun-dried tomato

PREP TIME
30 min

SERVES
20 pieces

DIFFICULTY
Easy

Molten Parmesan latticed into gossamer wafers, each one bearing a cloud of whipped herb ricotta. Impossibly elegant, impossibly simple.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 5 oz Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated
- ◆ 1 cup ricotta cheese
- ◆ 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ 1 tbsp fresh basil, finely chopped
- ◆ 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- ◆ Zest of ½ lemon
- ◆ 8 pieces sun-dried tomato, finely sliced
- ◆ Freshly cracked black pepper
- ◆ Micro herbs to garnish

METHOD

- 01** Preheat oven to 375°F. Heap tablespoons of Parmesan into circles on a lined baking sheet.
- 02** Bake 6-8 minutes until golden and lacy. Cool completely — they crisp as they cool.
- 03** Beat ricotta with olive oil, herbs, lemon zest and pepper until fluffy.
- 04** Pipe or spoon whipped ricotta onto each tuile.
- 05** Top with sun-dried tomato and micro herbs. Serve within 30 minutes.

CHEF'S NOTE

Once the Parmesan is in the oven, do not walk away — the difference between perfect and burnt is 90 seconds.

CHAPTER TWO

Cold Starters

Composed cold preparations showcasing the finest seasonal ingredients.





◆ COLD STARTERS

◆ COLD STARTERS

Tuna Tartare with Avocado

Sashimi tuna, sesame, citrus ponzu

PREP TIME
20 min

SERVES
6

DIFFICULTY
Intermediate

This gleaming, jewel-red tartare draws from Japanese sensibility — clean, precise, and deeply restrained. The avocado provides a cool, creamy counterpoint to the bright citrus ponzu.

INGREDIENTS

- 14 oz sashimi-grade tuna loin, finely diced
- 2 ripe avocados, diced
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp mirin
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 tsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted
- 2 scallions, finely sliced
- 1 small red chili, finely diced
- Wonton crisps or cucumber to serve

METHOD

- 01** Combine soy, mirin, lime juice, sesame oil and ginger to make the ponzu.
- 02** Toss diced tuna gently in half the ponzu. Season.
- 03** Dress avocado with lime juice and salt.
- 04** Pack avocado in base of a ring mold, then tuna on top. Unmold carefully.
- 05** Spoon remaining ponzu around. Scatter sesame seeds, scallions and chili.

CHEF'S NOTE

Tuna must be sashimi-grade. Keep refrigerated until the last moment.



◆ COLD STARTERS

◆ COLD STARTERS

Burrata with Heirloom Tomatoes

Fresh burrata, aged balsamic, basil oil

PREP TIME	SERVES	DIFFICULTY
15 min	4	Easy

At its finest, this dish demands no cooking at all — only the best possible ingredients arranged with an artist's eye. The burrata must be freshly made, the tomatoes perfectly ripe.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large fresh burrata balls
- 1 lb heirloom tomatoes, various colors
- 2 tbsp aged balsamic vinegar
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Large handful fresh basil leaves
- 1 small garlic clove
- Flaky sea salt and black pepper
- Crusty bread to serve

METHOD

- 01 Blend basil, garlic and olive oil with a pinch of salt until smooth. Strain.
- 02 Slice larger tomatoes, halve smaller ones. Arrange across a platter.
- 03 Tear burrata and nestle among the tomatoes.
- 04 Drizzle generously with basil oil and aged balsamic.
- 05 Finish with flaky salt and cracked black pepper. Serve immediately.

CHEF'S NOTE

If your balsamic is young and sharp, simmer it until syrupy. The sweetness transforms the dish.



◆ COLD STARTERS

◆ COLD STARTERS

Gazpacho Shooter Cups

Iced tomato consommé, cucumber salsa

PREP TIME
30 min

SERVES
12 shooters

DIFFICULTY
Easy

Served ice-cold in shot glasses with a tiny spoonful of cucumber salsa on top, these gazpacho shooters are the most refreshing single sip in the appetizer canon.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1½ lbs ripe plum tomatoes
- ◆ 1 red bell pepper, seeded
- ◆ ½ cucumber
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves
- ◆ 1 slice stale sourdough bread
- ◆ 3 tbsp sherry vinegar
- ◆ ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ Salt, smoked paprika, cayenne to taste
- ◆ Salsa: ½ cucumber diced, 1 tbsp red onion, 1 tbsp mint

METHOD

- 01 Blend tomatoes, pepper, cucumber, garlic and bread until smooth. Add sherry vinegar.
- 02 Drizzle in olive oil until emulsified. Season boldly.
- 03 Pass through a fine strainer. Refrigerate at least 2 hours.
- 04 Mix cucumber, red onion and mint for the salsa.
- 05 Pour into chilled shot glasses. Top with cucumber salsa.

CHEF'S NOTE

For the most elegant result, strain twice through cheesecloth.



◆ COLD STARTERS

◆ COLD STARTERS

Scallop Ceviche

Citrus-cured scallops, yuzu, tiger's milk

PREP TIME 25 min	SERVES 6	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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In this Peruvian-Japanese fusion, sweet sea scallops are cured in a bright tiger's milk — a leche de tigre of citrus, ginger and heat.

INGREDIENTS
◆ 12 large sea scallops, side muscle removed
◆ Juice of 3 limes + 1 lemon
◆ 1 tbsp yuzu juice
◆ 2 tbsp fish sauce
◆ 1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
◆ 1 small red chili, finely sliced
◆ 1 shallot, finely sliced
◆ Fresh cilantro leaves
◆ Thinly sliced radish
◆ 2 tbsp yuzu crème fraîche

METHOD
01 Slice scallops horizontally into 3 rounds. Arrange in a cold dish.
02 Whisk lime juice, lemon, yuzu, fish sauce, ginger and chili.
03 Pour over scallops and cure exactly 4 minutes.
04 Arrange on cold plates and spoon tiger's milk over.
05 Garnish with shallot, radish, cilantro and yuzu crème fraîche.
CHEF'S NOTE Use only the freshest sushi-grade scallops. Quality is everything here.



◆ COLD STARTERS

◆ COLD STARTERS

Chicken Liver Parfait Toasts

Smooth parfait, port jelly, pickled cherries

PREP TIME

1 hr 20 min

SERVES

12

DIFFICULTY

Advanced

This triumphant, butter-rich parfait — as smooth as silk, with a garnet port jelly and pickled cherry on top — is the kind of thing that earns a cook a lasting reputation.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 14 oz chicken livers, trimmed
- ◆ 1 cup unsalted butter, cubed
- ◆ 2 shallots, finely diced
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ◆ ½ cup Cognac
- ◆ ½ cup port wine
- ◆ 1 tsp fresh thyme
- ◆ Salt, white pepper, nutmeg
- ◆ Port jelly: ½ cup port + 1 tsp agar agar
- ◆ 12 pickled cherries
- ◆ 12 slices brioche, toasted

METHOD

- 01** Sauté shallots and garlic in butter. Add livers and thyme; cook until just pink. Deglaze with Cognac and port, reduce by half.
- 02** Blend until smooth. Add butter piece by piece. Pass through a fine strainer.
- 03** Pour into ramekins. Refrigerate 4+ hours until set.
- 04** Pour thin port jelly layer over. Refrigerate until set.
- 05** Spread thickly on toasted brioche, top with a pickled cherry.

CHEF'S NOTE

The parfait keeps refrigerated for up to 5 days. Seal with clarified butter if making ahead.

CHAPTER THREE

Warm Bites

*Freshly baked, fried, or grilled morsels that arrive fragrant
and irresistible.*





◆ WARM BITES

◆ WARM BITES

Truffle Arancini

Risotto balls, black truffle, fontina

PREP TIME 1 hr	SERVES 20 pieces	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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Crisp golden spheres that yield — with a satisfying crack — to a core of molten truffle-scented risotto and stretching fontina. These are the hors d'oeuvres of legends.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1½ cups arborio rice
- ◆ 4 cups warm chicken broth
- ◆ 1 shallot, finely diced
- ◆ ½ cup dry white wine
- ◆ ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano, grated
- ◆ 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- ◆ 2 tsp black truffle paste
- ◆ 3½ oz fontina cheese, cubed
- ◆ 2 eggs, beaten
- ◆ 1½ cups fine dry breadcrumbs
- ◆ ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ◆ Vegetable oil for deep frying

METHOD

- 01** Make loose risotto: sweat shallot in butter, toast rice, deglaze with wine. Add broth ladle by ladle. Finish with Parmesan and truffle paste. Spread and cool completely.
- 02** Roll into golf ball-sized portions. Press fontina into center and seal.
- 03** Roll in flour, then egg, then breadcrumbs. Refrigerate 30 minutes.
- 04** Heat oil to 350°F. Fry in batches 3–4 minutes until deep golden.
- 05** Serve immediately — the cheese pull is the entire point.

CHEF'S NOTE

Arancini can be breaded a day ahead. Fry from cold, adding 1 minute to cooking time.



◆ WARM BITES

◆ WARM BITES

Spanakopita Triangles

Crispy phyllo, spinach, feta, pine nuts

PREP TIME 55 min	SERVES 24 pieces	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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Each buttered, shattering triangle holds within it a filling redolent of Greek hillsides: dark spinach, briny feta, dill, and the delightful surprise of toasted pine nuts.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1 lb fresh spinach or 10 oz frozen, squeezed dry
- ◆ 9 oz feta cheese, crumbled
- ◆ 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ◆ 3 scallions, finely chopped
- ◆ 1 tbsp fresh dill
- ◆ 1 tbsp fresh mint
- ◆ ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ◆ 3 tbsp pine nuts, toasted
- ◆ 12 sheets phyllo dough, thawed
- ◆ 6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted

METHOD

- 01 Wilt spinach, cool and squeeze out all water. Chop roughly.
- 02 Mix spinach with feta, eggs, scallions, herbs, nutmeg and pine nuts.
- 03 Brush phyllo sheet with butter, layer second sheet, cut into 4 strips.
- 04 Place filling at base of each strip. Fold in a flag pattern to form triangles.
- 05 Brush with butter. Bake at 375°F for 18–22 minutes until deeply golden.

CHEF'S NOTE

These freeze brilliantly unbaked. Bake from frozen at 350°F for 25 minutes.



◆ WARM BITES

◆ WARM BITES

Lobster Bisque Espresso Cups

Rich bisque, brandy cream, chive oil

PREP TIME	SERVES	DIFFICULTY
1 hr 30 min	8 cups	Advanced

Served in tiny espresso cups, this deeply reduced lobster bisque — brick-red, blazingly flavored, finished with cream and chive oil — is theater in miniature.

INGREDIENTS	METHOD
• 2 whole lobsters (or 1 lb lobster shells) • 2 tbsp olive oil • 1 onion, 2 carrots, 3 celery stalks • 3 garlic cloves • 1 tbsp tomato paste • ½ cup brandy • 1 cup dry white wine • 2 cups seafood stock • 1 cup heavy cream • 1 tsp smoked paprika, pinch cayenne • Fresh tarragon and chive oil	01 Roast lobster shells at 425°F until bright red, 15 minutes. 02 Sauté vegetables in oil. Add shells and tomato paste. Add brandy and flambé. 03 Add wine and stock. Simmer 40 minutes. Strain well. 04 Reduce by half. Add heavy cream, reduce until glossy. Season. 05 Pour into warm espresso cups. Add cream swirl, chive oil and tarragon.
	CHEF'S NOTE Ask your fishmonger for lobster carcasses — often free and full of flavor.



◆ WARM BITES

◆ WARM BITES

Wild Mushroom Tartlets

Crisp pastry, duxelles, Gruyère

PREP TIME 50 min	SERVES 12 tartlets	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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Buttery shortcrust shells hold within them a concentrated duxelles of wild mushrooms — porcini, chanterelles, cremini — finished with aged Gruyère and fresh thyme.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ Pastry: 1½ cups flour, ½ cup cold butter, 1 egg yolk, pinch salt
- ◆ 1 lb mixed wild mushrooms, finely chopped
- ◆ 2 shallots, finely diced
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ◆ ¼ cup dry sherry
- ◆ 3 tbsp heavy cream
- ◆ 3½ oz Gruyère cheese, grated
- ◆ 1 tbsp fresh thyme
- ◆ Salt, pepper, nutmeg

METHOD

- 01 Make pastry, chill 30 minutes. Line 12 tartlet tins. Blind bake at 350°F for 12 minutes.
- 02 Sauté shallots and garlic until soft. Add mushrooms; cook until completely dry.
- 03 Add sherry; absorb. Add cream and stir until glossy.
- 04 Fill tartlet shells. Top generously with Gruyère.
- 05 Bake at 375°F for 8–10 minutes until golden and bubbling.

CHEF'S NOTE

The mushroom duxelles can be made 2 days ahead — the intensity only improves.

CHAPTER FOUR

On a Spoon

Single-spoon presentations of rare precision — each a complete flavor experience.





◆ ON A SPOON

◆ ON A SPOON

Foie Gras on Brioche Toast

Seared foie gras, peach compote, micro herbs

PREP TIME
25 min

SERVES
8 pieces

DIFFICULTY
Advanced

A single slice of seared foie gras on warm brioche, with a tiny spoonful of fragrant peach compote, is one of the most indulgent bites in the classical French canon.

INGREDIENTS

- 7 oz fresh foie gras, cut into 8 slices
- 8 small rounds of brioche bread, lightly toasted
- 2 ripe peaches, peeled and finely diced
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp sherry vinegar
- 1 star anise, pinch ground ginger
- Flaky sea salt and white pepper
- Micro herbs or watercress to serve

METHOD

- 01 Simmer peaches with sugar, vinegar, star anise and ginger 10 minutes. Cool.
- 02 Season foie gras generously with salt and white pepper.
- 03 Heat a dry heavy skillet until smoking. Sear foie gras 30–45 seconds per side.
- 04 Place each seared slice on a warm brioche round.
- 05 Add a spoonful of peach compote. Garnish with micro herbs and flaky salt.

CHEF'S NOTE

Foie gras should be at room temperature before searing — cold foie gras will not sear properly.



◆ ON A SPOON

◆ ON A SPOON

Oysters with Mignonette Granita

Fresh oysters, frozen shallot vinaigrette

PREP TIME
20 min

SERVES
12 oysters

DIFFICULTY
Easy

The mignonette granita — frozen into icy crystals that melt on contact with the briny oyster — is one of the cleverest ways to serve the classic accompaniment.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oysters, freshly shucked on the half shell
- ½ cup Champagne vinegar
- 2 shallots, very finely minced
- 1 tsp coarsely cracked black pepper
- ½ tsp sugar
- Crushed ice to serve
- Lemon wedges to serve

METHOD

- 01 Combine vinegar, shallots, pepper and sugar. Freeze at least 4 hours, scraping with a fork every 30 minutes.
- 02 Arrange oysters on crushed ice on a serving platter.
- 03 Scrape granita with a fork to refresh the crystals.
- 04 Place a small teaspoon of granita onto each oyster.
- 05 Serve immediately with lemon wedges.

CHEF'S NOTE

The granita can be made up to 3 days ahead. Re-scrape with a fork before serving.



◆ ON A SPOON

◆ ON A SPOON

Pea & Mint Velouté Shots

Silky pea soup, whipped goat cheese

PREP TIME
30 min

SERVES
10 shots

DIFFICULTY
Easy

A spring-green, intensely sweet pea velouté served warm in shot glasses, crowned with a dot of whipped goat cheese and a single mint leaf — vivid, elegant, and seasonal.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups fresh or frozen peas
- 1 shallot, 1 garlic clove
- 2½ cups light vegetable broth
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Large handful fresh mint
- 3½ oz soft fresh goat cheese
- 3 tbsp heavy cream (to whip with cheese)
- Salt, white pepper, pinch of sugar

METHOD

- 01** Sweat shallot and garlic in butter. Add peas and broth. Simmer 5 minutes.
- 02** Blend with fresh mint until very smooth. Strain. Add cream. Season.
- 03** Whip goat cheese with 3 tbsp cream until fluffy. Season.
- 04** Gently warm the velouté. Pour into warm shot glasses.
- 05** Pipe goat cheese on top. Garnish with a single mint leaf.

CHEF'S NOTE

Serving the velouté too hot will melt the goat cheese — aim for warm, not steaming.



◆ ON A SPOON

◆ ON A SPOON

Shrimp & Avocado Cocktail Bites

Retro-chic, cocktail sauce, crisp gem lettuce

PREP TIME
20 min

SERVES
12

DIFFICULTY
Easy

A loving reimagination of the classic American shrimp cocktail — presented as a single, pristine mouthful in a little gem lettuce cup with a zesty cocktail sauce.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz cooked large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 3 tbsp mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1 tsp Worcestershire
- 1 tsp horseradish
- Squeeze of lemon juice, dash of Tabasco
- ½ ripe avocado, finely diced
- 12 little gem lettuce leaves
- Smoked paprika and lemon zest to garnish

METHOD

- 01 Make cocktail sauce: whisk mayo, ketchup, Worcestershire, horseradish, lemon and Tabasco.
- 02 Toss shrimp gently in cocktail sauce, reserving a little.
- 03 Arrange little gem cups on a platter. Place diced avocado in each.
- 04 Top with 2-3 dressed shrimp.
- 05 Spoon extra sauce, dust with paprika and add lemon zest.

CHEF'S NOTE

For a modern twist, add a few drops of yuzu juice or a pinch of Old Bay to the cocktail sauce.



◆ ON A SPOON

◆ ON A SPOON

Wagyu Beef Tartare Spoons

Wagyu beef, quail egg yolk, cornichons, capers

PREP TIME 25 min	SERVES 12 spoons	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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The apex of the tartare — wagyu beef, barely seasoned, dressed in the classic style with capers and cornichons, served on a porcelain spoon with a tiny quail yolk on top.

INGREDIENTS

- 9 oz wagyu beef, hand-cut into tiny dice
- 1 shallot, very finely minced
- 1 tbsp capers, rinsed and chopped
- 4 cornichon pickles, finely diced
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp Worcestershire
- 1 tsp Tabasco
- 2 tbsp good quality mayonnaise
- Salt and white pepper
- 6 quail egg yolks (optional)
- Fresh chives, finely snapped

METHOD

- 01 Chill knife and board. Hand-cut wagyu into a very fine, even dice.
- 02 Mix mustard, Worcestershire, Tabasco and mayo. Fold gently into beef. Add shallot, capers and cornichons.
- 03 Keep refrigerated — no longer than 30 minutes after dressing.
- 04 Arrange a small mound on each porcelain spoon.
- 05 Nestle a quail yolk on top. Garnish with chives. Serve immediately.

CHEF'S NOTE

The quality of the beef is everything. Ask your butcher for dry-aged wagyu or well-marbled tenderloin.

CHAPTER FIVE

Elegant Showpieces

Statement preparations that anchor a gathering and elicit admiration.





◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

Lobster Avocado Stack

Poached lobster, avocado, caviar

PREP TIME 45 min	SERVES 6	DIFFICULTY Advanced
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Layered like a miniature tower — cool avocado, chunks of sweet poached lobster, a shimmer of lemon crème fraîche, and a gleaming crown of caviar — this is appetizer as architecture.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium cooked lobster tails, meat diced
- 2 ripe avocados
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ½ cup crème fraîche
- 1 tsp fresh tarragon, finely minced
- Zest of ½ lemon
- 1 oz caviar or sustainable fish roe
- Micro herbs and chive oil to garnish

METHOD

- 01 Dice avocado and toss immediately with lemon juice and salt.
- 02 Mix crème fraîche with tarragon, lemon zest, salt and white pepper.
- 03 Chill all three components separately.
- 04 Using a ring mold, layer avocado, then lobster, then crème fraîche.
- 05 Remove mold. Crown with caviar. Drizzle chive oil and scatter micro herbs.

CHEF'S NOTE

Assemble no more than 15 minutes before service. Keep refrigerated until plating.



◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

Seared Scallops, Pea Purée & Pancetta

Golden scallops, sweet pea purée, crispy pancetta

PREP TIME
30 min

SERVES
6

DIFFICULTY
Intermediate

A triumvirate of textures that never fails: the sweet golden crust of a perfectly seared scallop, a vivid swipe of pea purée, and the salty crunch of crispy pancetta.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 12 large sea scallops, patted completely dry
- ◆ 1½ cups fresh or frozen peas
- ◆ 3 tbsp heavy cream
- ◆ 1½ tbsp unsalted butter
- ◆ 6 thin slices pancetta
- ◆ 1 tbsp olive oil + 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- ◆ Salt, white pepper and nutmeg
- ◆ Pea shoots and chive oil to garnish

METHOD

- 01** Cook pancetta in a dry skillet until crispy. Drain on paper towels.
- 02** Simmer peas until just tender. Blend with cream, butter and nutmeg until very smooth.
- 03** Pat scallops completely dry. Season well. Heat oil until smoking.
- 04** Sear scallops without moving 90 seconds. Add butter, flip, baste 45 seconds. Rest 1 minute.
- 05** Swipe purée across warm plates. Set 2 scallops per portion. Crumble pancetta over.

CHEF'S NOTE

Completely dry scallops are the key to a proper sear. Wet scallops steam rather than crust.



◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

Salmon Rillettes in Cucumber Cups

Smoked & fresh salmon, dill, crème fraîche

PREP TIME 30 min	SERVES 16 cups	DIFFICULTY Easy
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Cool, crisp cucumber rounds filled with a silken rilette of smoked and poached salmon, bound with lemon crème fraîche and fresh dill. Each cup is a lesson in restraint.

INGREDIENTS
◆ 5 oz hot smoked salmon, flaked
◆ 5 oz fresh salmon fillet, poached and cooled
◆ ½ cup crème fraîche
◆ 1 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
◆ 1 tbsp lemon juice
◆ 1 tsp horseradish cream
◆ Zest of 1 lemon
◆ 2 large English cucumbers, cut into ¾-inch rounds
◆ Dill fronds and salmon roe to garnish

METHOD
01 Scoop cucumber rounds to create small cups. Refrigerate until serving.
02 Mix smoked salmon, poached salmon, crème fraîche, dill, lemon juice, horseradish and zest. Season.
03 Fill each cucumber cup generously using a piping bag.
04 Top with a frond of fresh dill and a few pearls of salmon roe.
05 Arrange on a chilled platter. Serve immediately.
CHEF'S NOTE
The rillettes mixture can be made up to 24 hours ahead. Keep tightly covered and refrigerated.



◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

Beet & Goat Cheese Tarts

Crisp pastry, roasted beets, whipped chèvre

PREP TIME 55 min	SERVES 8 tartlets	DIFFICULTY Intermediate
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The earthy sweetness of slow-roasted beets against the sharp creaminess of whipped goat cheese in a buttery tart shell is a color combination as bold as the flavor.

INGREDIENTS

- ♦ Pastry: 1½ cups flour, ½ cup cold butter, 1 egg yolk
- ♦ 3 medium beets (golden, red, Chioggia if available)
- ♦ 7 oz soft fresh goat cheese
- ♦ ¼ cup crème fraîche
- ♦ 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- ♦ 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- ♦ 1 tbsp olive oil
- ♦ 1 tsp honey
- ♦ Toasted walnuts and arugula to garnish

METHOD

- 01 Wrap beets in foil, roast at 350°F for 60–70 minutes. Cool, peel and slice.
- 02 Make and blind bake shortcrust tartlet cases.
- 03 Dress beet slices with olive oil, vinegar, honey and thyme. Marinate 20 minutes.
- 04 Whip goat cheese with crème fraîche until smooth and fluffy.
- 05 Pipe whipped chèvre into cases. Arrange beet on top. Scatter walnuts and arugula.

CHEF'S NOTE

Wear disposable gloves when handling red beets. Mixing varieties creates a spectacular effect.



◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

◆ ELEGANT SHOWPIECES

Duck Confit Wonton Cups

Crispy wonton, pulled duck, hoisin, pickled daikon

PREP TIME
45 min

SERVES
20 cups

DIFFICULTY
Intermediate

Crunchy baked wonton cups hold a mound of tender shredded duck confit, lacquered with hoisin, scattered with pickled daikon and scallions. A fusion that truly works.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 20 wonton wrappers
- ◆ 2 duck confit legs (or 14 oz store-bought)
- ◆ 4 tbsp hoisin sauce
- ◆ 1 tbsp dark soy sauce
- ◆ 1 tsp sesame oil
- ◆ 4 oz daikon radish, julienned
- ◆ 3 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- ◆ 1 tsp sugar
- ◆ 2 scallions, finely sliced
- ◆ Sesame seeds and fresh cilantro to garnish

METHOD

- 01** Press wonton wrappers into mini muffin pan. Brush with oil. Bake at 375°F for 8–10 minutes.
- 02** Quick-pickle daikon: toss with vinegar, sugar and salt. Rest 20 minutes.
- 03** Shred duck confit meat.
- 04** Warm duck in a skillet. Toss with hoisin, soy and sesame oil.
- 05** Fill wonton cups. Top with pickled daikon, scallions, sesame seeds and cilantro.

CHEF'S NOTE

Store-bought duck confit from a specialty grocery makes this recipe dramatically easier.

CHAPTER SIX

Bruschetta & Tartines

The honest art of bread, oil, and superb toppings.





◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

Heirloom Tomato Bruschetta

Charred sourdough, ripe tomatoes, stracciatella

PREP TIME 20 min	SERVES 8 pieces	DIFFICULTY Easy
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The Platonic ideal of bruschetta: sourdough charred over fire, rubbed with garlic, piled with summer tomatoes dressed in nothing but very good oil and flaky salt.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 8 thick slices sourdough bread
- ◆ 1½ lbs heirloom tomatoes, mix of colors
- ◆ 2 garlic cloves, halved
- ◆ 7 oz stracciatella or fresh burrata
- ◆ 1 tsp dried oregano
- ◆ Flaky sea salt and black pepper
- ◆ ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ Small fresh basil leaves

METHOD

- 01 Grill bread until deeply charred on both sides.
- 02 Rub each slice immediately with cut garlic while still hot.
- 03 Dice tomatoes. Season with salt, pepper, oregano and most of the olive oil.
- 04 Spoon or drag stracciatella across each toast.
- 05 Pile tomatoes on top. Drizzle oil. Scatter basil. Serve immediately.

CHEF'S NOTE

This dish lives or dies on the tomatoes. If they are not truly ripe, save it for another day.



◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

Asparagus & Ricotta Tartines

Grilled asparagus, whipped ricotta, lemon

PREP TIME 25 min	SERVES 6 tartines	DIFFICULTY Easy
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Thin sourdough tartines spread with lemon-whipped ricotta and draped with grilled asparagus spears, finished with Parmesan shavings and a glistening drizzle of olive oil.

INGREDIENTS
◆ 6 thin slices sourdough
◆ 1 bunch asparagus, tough ends snapped
◆ 1 cup whole milk ricotta
◆ Zest and juice of 1 lemon
◆ 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
◆ 1 oz Parmigiano-Reggiano, shaved
◆ Fresh mint leaves or pea shoots
◆ Flaky sea salt and cracked black pepper

METHOD
01 Whip ricotta with lemon zest, lemon juice, and olive oil until fluffy. Season well.
02 Toss asparagus with oil and grill 3–4 minutes, turning, until charred.
03 Toast or grill sourdough slices.
04 Spread each tartine thickly with whipped ricotta.
05 Lay asparagus across each. Scatter Parmesan shavings and mint.
CHEF'S NOTE
The ricotta must be well-seasoned — taste it multiple times before spreading.



◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

Smashed Pea & Mint Crostini

Crusty crostini, bright peas, Pecorino, lemon

PREP TIME
15 min

SERVES
12 pieces

DIFFICULTY
Easy

Vivid, springlike and requiring barely ten minutes of effort, these pea and mint crostini are among the most reliably crowd-pleasing bites in the entire repertoire.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 1 sourdough baguette, sliced into rounds
- ◆ 2½ cups frozen peas, thawed
- ◆ Juice of 1 lemon
- ◆ 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- ◆ 1 garlic clove, halved
- ◆ Large handful fresh mint leaves
- ◆ 1 oz Pecorino Romano, finely grated
- ◆ Pinch of dried red pepper flakes
- ◆ Flaky sea salt and black pepper

METHOD

- 01 Toast baguette slices until golden and crisp. Rub each with cut garlic.
- 02 Pulse peas, lemon, olive oil, mint and Pecorino to a rough textured smash.
- 03 Season with red pepper flakes, salt and pepper.
- 04 Spread pea mixture thickly onto each crostini.
- 05 Top with Pecorino shavings, red pepper flakes and olive oil.

CHEF'S NOTE

These work wonderfully as a self-assembly platter for larger gatherings.



◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

'Nduja & Honey Flatbreads

Spicy 'nduja, ricotta, wildflower honey, crispy sage

PREP TIME 20 min	SERVES 8 pieces	DIFFICULTY Easy
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Calabrian 'nduja — that fiery, spreadable cured pork — meets fresh ricotta and wildflower honey on warm flatbread. The combination of heat, creaminess and sweetness makes you reach immediately for a second piece.

INGREDIENTS
• 4 flatbreads or flour tortillas
• 5 oz 'nduja sausage
• 1 cup fresh ricotta cheese
• 3 tbsp wildflower honey
• 10–12 fresh sage leaves
• 2 tbsp olive oil
• Salt and black pepper
• ¼ cup walnuts, roughly crushed (optional)

METHOD
01 Warm flatbreads in oven at 350°F for 5 minutes.
02 Fry sage leaves in olive oil until crisp, 30 seconds. Drain on paper.
03 Spread each flatbread generously with ricotta. Season.
04 Dot 'nduja generously across the ricotta.
05 Drizzle honey over top. Scatter crispy sage and walnuts. Cut into pieces.
CHEF'S NOTE
'Nduja varies enormously in heat level — taste a small piece before using.



◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

◆ BRUSCHETTA & TARTINES

Anchovy & Butter Toasts

Salt-packed anchovies, cultured butter, radish

PREP TIME
15 min

SERVES
8 pieces

DIFFICULTY
Easy

The great French snack of radishes and cultured butter reimaged with the addition of fine anchovies. This is the appetizer of those who truly understand salt, acid and fat.

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 8 slices very good sourdough or country white bread
- ◆ 7 tbsp high-quality cultured butter, at room temperature
- ◆ 16 anchovy fillets packed in olive oil, drained
- ◆ 8 radishes, very thinly sliced
- ◆ Flaky sea salt and black pepper
- ◆ Fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
- ◆ Juice of ½ lemon

METHOD

- 01** Toast bread until golden and crisp.
- 02** Spread each slice very generously with softened cultured butter.
- 03** Lay radish slices over the butter in an overlapping layer.
- 04** Drape 2 anchovy fillets over each toast.
- 05** Squeeze fresh lemon juice over, scatter parsley, finish with flaky salt and pepper.

CHEF'S NOTE

The butter is the star — use a high-quality cultured European-style butter with at least 84% butterfat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Dips & Mezze

*Communal bowls of the Mediterranean tradition, as ancient
as hospitality itself.*





◆ DIPS & MEZZE

◆ DIPS & MEZZE

Whipped Feta with Roasted Peppers

Smooth feta, charred peppers, toasted walnuts

PREP TIME
30 min

SERVES
6-8

DIFFICULTY
Easy

Feta whipped until cloud-soft, spread into a bowl, and crowned with sweetly charred roasted peppers, walnuts and a generous pour of fruity olive oil. The Aegean on your table.

INGREDIENTS

- 10 oz good-quality feta cheese, in brine
- 3½ oz cream cheese, softened
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil (plus more to finish)
- Zest of ½ lemon
- 2 red bell peppers
- 2 tbsp walnuts, toasted and roughly chopped
- 1 tsp Aleppo pepper flakes
- Fresh oregano or thyme leaves
- Warm pita bread or crackers to serve

METHOD

- 01** Char bell peppers directly over a gas burner or under a hot broiler until blackened. Peel, seed and slice into strips.
- 02** Blend feta and cream cheese until very smooth. Add lemon zest and olive oil. Season.
- 03** Spread whipped feta across a serving bowl, creating a swirl.
- 04** Arrange roasted pepper strips across the top.
- 05** Scatter walnuts, Aleppo pepper and fresh herbs. Drizzle with olive oil.

CHEF'S NOTE

This dip is at its best at room temperature — remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before serving.



◆ DIPS & MEZZE

◆ DIPS & MEZZE

Baba Ganoush with Pomegranate

Flame-charred eggplant, tahini, lemon

PREP TIME	SERVES	DIFFICULTY
40 min	6-8	Easy

Eggplant charred directly on the gas flame until completely collapsed develops a deep smokiness that no oven can replicate. This baba ganoush — silky, smoky, jeweled with pomegranate — is perhaps the finest dip in existence.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 large eggplants
- 3 garlic cloves, minced to a paste with salt
- ¼ cup good quality tahini
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Seeds of ½ pomegranate
- 2 tbsp fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- Warm pita bread or flatbread to serve

METHOD

- 01** Place eggplants directly on a gas burner. Char, turning regularly, until completely collapsed — 15-20 minutes.
- 02** Transfer to a colander and cool 10 minutes.
- 03** Scoop flesh away from the charred skin. Chop roughly.
- 04** Mix with garlic paste, tahini, lemon juice, cumin and olive oil. Season.
- 05** Spread in a bowl. Drizzle oil, scatter pomegranate seeds and parsley.

CHEF'S NOTE

A food processor creates a smooth texture; chopping by hand creates a more rustic one. Both are delicious.



◆ DIPS & MEZZE

◆ DIPS & MEZZE

Hummus Bil Tahini

The master hummus, slow-cooked chickpeas

PREP TIME

8 hr + 20 min

SERVES

6-8

DIFFICULTY

Easy

Making hummus from dried chickpeas — soaked overnight, simmered for hours, blended with great quantities of tahini and lemon — produces something so far beyond the store-bought version that it barely seems the same dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups dried chickpeas, soaked overnight
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ¾ cup good quality tahini
- Juice of 2-3 lemons
- 2 garlic cloves, minced to paste with salt
- ½ cup ice-cold water
- Salt to taste
- Olive oil, smoked paprika, warm chickpeas, parsley to serve
- Warm pita bread

METHOD

- 01** Drain soaked chickpeas. Cover with fresh water and baking soda. Boil, skim. Simmer 1-1½ hours until very soft.
- 02** Blend chickpeas alone first until a paste forms.
- 03** Add tahini, lemon juice and garlic. Blend until combined.
- 04** With motor running, add ice-cold water. Blend 3+ minutes until pale and silky. Season.
- 05** Plate with a swirl, olive oil, paprika, warm chickpeas and parsley. Serve with warm pita.

CHEF'S NOTE

Three secrets: dried chickpeas, excellent tahini, and blending with ice-cold water for at least 3 minutes.



◆ DIPS & MEZZE

◆ DIPS & MEZZE

Tzatziki with Grilled Flatbreads

Greek yogurt, cucumber, garlic, fresh dill

PREP TIME 20 min	SERVES 6-8	DIFFICULTY Easy
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A proper tzatziki is thick, cold, and laced with the sharp heat of raw garlic. Made with full-fat strained Greek yogurt and given time to rest, it is one of those preparations that is somehow greater than the sum of its parts.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups full-fat Greek yogurt, strained overnight
- 1 large English cucumber
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed to paste with salt
- 2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp fresh mint, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
- Salt and white pepper
- Warm grilled flatbreads or pita to serve

METHOD

- 01** Grate cucumber. Add 1 tsp salt; rest in strainer 20 minutes. Squeeze out every drop of liquid.
- 02** Combine yogurt, cucumber, garlic paste, dill, mint, olive oil and vinegar. Stir well.
- 03** Season carefully. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour.
- 04** Serve cold, drizzled with olive oil, scattered with dill and a pinch of paprika.
- 05** Grill pita directly over a gas flame 30 seconds per side. Serve warm.

CHEF'S NOTE

Made the day before it is needed, tzatziki improves in flavor and consistency significantly.



◆ DIPS & MEZZE

◆ DIPS & MEZZE

Muhammara

Smoky peppers, toasted walnuts, pomegranate molasses

PREP TIME 35 min	SERVES 6-8	DIFFICULTY Easy
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This deep-garnet Syrian dip — warm with Aleppo chili, thickened with walnuts, sharpened with pomegranate molasses — is one of the most complex-tasting things that requires so little effort to produce.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 red bell peppers, roasted, peeled and seeded (or 12 oz jar roasted red peppers)
- ¾ cup walnuts, toasted
- 2 tbsp pomegranate molasses
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp Aleppo pepper flakes
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 slice stale bread, soaked then squeezed dry
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Salt to taste
- Extra walnuts, olive oil and pomegranate seeds to garnish

METHOD

- 01** If roasting fresh peppers, char under broiler until blackened all over. Peel and deseed.
- 02** Squeeze all excess water from soaked bread.
- 03** Blend peppers, walnuts, bread, garlic, pomegranate molasses, lemon, Aleppo pepper and cumin.
- 04** With motor running, drizzle in olive oil. Blend to preferred texture.
- 05** Season generously. Plate with a swirl, olive oil, walnuts and pomegranate seeds.

CHEF'S NOTE

Muhammara keeps refrigerated for 4 days and freezes well for up to 1 month.

A FINAL WORD

The Last Bite & A Warm Farewell

You have arrived at the final pages of this book, and if you have cooked even a handful of these recipes, you will know by now something that no culinary school can fully teach: that feeding people is an act of love dressed in technique.

Improvise freely. Substitute boldly. Trust your palate. The recipes in this book are invitations, not commandments. The table is set. The candles are lit. Go forth and feed the people you love.

"The secret of good cooking is, first, having a love of it." — James Beard

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