



SAN FRANCISCO



menu

CIOPPINO

LITTLE GEMS WITH RED ONION AND
GREEN GODDESS DRESSING

ITALIAN CHEESY PULL-APART BREAD

LIMONCELLO

FIG COMPOTE WITH
LEMON MASCARPONE MOUSSE

My great-grandmother Marion grew up in the heart of San Francisco. And her parents kept a home there when I was growing up. The city was always a magical place to me—the windy streets, the mix of cultures, and, of course, those amazing Victorian houses (just like theirs) painted in pastel shades and tucked in tightly together.

SAN FRANCISCO IS RIDDLED WITH HILLS, SO THE architecture accommodates the landscape. Inside these houses, everything is built up and have quirky details I love. (I used to think that the stairs went on and on forever.) My love of what I call Victorian grandma chic was born here, and I continue to embrace it to this day.

COZY KITCHEN SUPPER

This menu and table were inspired by my time in my great-great-grandparents' home. Though the layout was vertical, the kitchen in the back was huge! And looking back now, it was a good thing as that space was made for production work and cooking. There was a huge white gas range always topped with pots of simmering water or tomato sauce and one of those deep porcelain work sinks with ribbed sides to catch water and run it right down the drain. Stuff was going down here! Raviolis were being rolled out, tomatoes were being chopped, sauces were bubbling away. There was a rather uncomfortable stool where I would watch the ladies cook, and eventually I would join in to stir sauces or roll out pasta.

The menu and setting is cozy personified. It's the meal you want to have in front of a fireplace with good friends and family. My great-great-grandparents' house—which was later my great-grandmother Marion's home—was the hub of the family. Everyone gathered once a month for a big family dinner. And cioppino was often on the menu.

I call this look Victorian grandma chic because its core comes from the charm of those San Francisco row houses where you find lots of carved wood, floral chintz, and quirky and sentimental pieces (velvet armchairs mixed with lighter rattan furniture, lots of family photos, china passed down from generation to generation) inside.

For the tablecloth, I used an old Victorian chintz pattern in blue and white. It makes me think of my great-grandmother and her family. Living in LA now, where midcentury design is so revered, I realize I am such a traditionalist. Don't get me wrong; I love the mix of the two, but when I can do a straight-up traditional table, I go for it.

As I have said before, Victorian design can be heavy. It helps to add some simple color and lines to break it up. I used a Ralph Lauren Evelyn plate with my great-grandmother's Limoges china. (Try mixing fine china and everyday plates anytime. It really works.) I used some shallow bowls to serve the cioppino.

Since this is a kitchen dinner, I did not want fancy flower arrangements, or even flowers. Again, I used what was available and what would echo the meal. So, figs it is. I think they look beautiful when piled high in a bowl. And since fig leaves are just as beautiful as any flower, I used them on the mantel in a simple cylinder vase. (A farm-to-table menu can translate to your decor too.)

Get cozy (opposite): Using upholstered furniture, like a comfy armchair, tells guests to relax and stay awhile.



These dishes are so personal to me . . . like all the recipes in the book. Each dish is linked to a memory. Maybe none more than this one. I can create this dish anywhere, and I am back in that kitchen or just outside in the back garden, plucking ingredients from the bay tree, fig tree, or lemon tree there. (I was so proud I knew the difference among the three.) I believe that food is social and family history, a common thread from generation to generation; a part of your DNA like anything else. And when I teach my niece to make a dish, it's continuing the story.

Cioppino is a very San Francisco thing. It's like clam chowder in that everyone has their own version. Almost the entire meal can be grown in the garden—except for the seafood. That has its ritual. Because San Francisco is known for their amazing seafood, people here are picky about who has the best. I remember being dragged (willingly) along by my great-grandmother from place to place to get the scallops here, prawns there, crab elsewhere, and so on. It's what I love about food and food culture in San Francisco: Getting the best quality and supporting local growers is a source of pride.

The little gems with red onion and green goddess dressing is a Northern California culinary icon. Green goddess dressing was invented in the city in the 1920s, but it didn't have its big moment until the '70s when companies started bottling it. I guess that's why it always has a kind of hippie reputation.

My contribution to this family menu is cheesy Italian pull-apart bread. Sourdough bread with cioppino is typical in San Francisco, but this takes it to another level. I slit the top with a crosscut design and stuff it with cheese, sautéed onions, and fresh herbs. It's wrapped tightly before being put in the oven so when it bakes, everything melts together (without oozing out).

The fig compote with lemon mascarpone mousse is something I whipped up on the fly. I've been lucky to live in many houses that have old fig trees that produce lots of fruit. I had to figure out a way to preserve it all. Here, I mixed it with a creamy, lemon mascarpone, which is an Italian cream cheese. The smooth texture goes well with the fig compote, and the lemon brightens it up a bit. ★



Above: I propped some photos on a picture rail to keep family members close to us during dinner. Opposite: Who says vintage china doesn't work with an old rough-hewn table? I love the way the two juxtapose.





cioppino

SERVES 6

Where I grew up, every family has their own version of cioppino. And everyone has strong opinions on where to get the best seafood. My advice is to get the best you can find as it's the main event in this dish.

- ¼ CUP (60 ML) OLIVE OIL
- 1½ CUPS (165 G) CHOPPED ONION
- 6 CLOVES GARLIC, MINCED
- ¼ CUP (60 ML) TOMATO PASTE
- 2 TEASPOONS SALT
- 2 TEASPOONS GROUND BLACK PEPPER
- 1 TEASPOON RED PEPPER FLAKES
- 1½ CUPS (360 ML) DRY WHITE WINE
- 1 (28-OUNCE/795-G) CAN CHOPPED SAN MARZANO TOMATOES
- 2 (8-OUNCE/236-ML) BOTTLES CLAM JUICE
- 2 BAY LEAVES
- 12 MUSSELS, RINSED AND SCRUBBED WELL
- 12 CLAMS, RINSED AND SCRUBBED WELL
- 1 POUND (455 G) LARGE SHRIMP, SHELLS ON
- ½ POUND (225 G) LARGE SCALLOPS
- 1 POUND (455 G) HALIBUT, CUT INTO 1-INCH (2.5-CM) CUBES
- 1 (8-OUNCE/225-G) CAN LUMP CRABMEAT, DRAINED
- 1 CUP (50 G) FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY, CHOPPED

In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Sauté onion for 8 minutes, until softened. Add garlic and sauté for 2 minutes more. Add tomato paste, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes and sauté for 1 minute, until fragrant. Deglaze with white wine and cook for 5 minutes until slightly evaporated. Add tomatoes, clam juice, and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes, until liquid reduces by half. Increase heat to medium-high, add mussels and clams, and cook for 5 minutes, until they start to open. Add shrimp, scallops, and halibut and cook for 8 minutes, until shrimp turns pink. Stir in crabmeat and parsley and heat for 5 minutes.

Divide between bowls and serve immediately.

little gems with red onion and green goddess dressing

SERVES 8

People always associate green goddess dressing with the '60s or '70s, but it was actually created at San Francisco's Palace Hotel in 1923. Mine deviates from the classic in that I use crème fraîche and avocado. Sometimes I add more avocado and serve it as a dip.

¼ CUP (60 ML) SOUR CREAM
¼ CUP (13 G) FRESH TARRAGON, CHOPPED
1 MEDIUM AVOCADO, DICED
3 ANCHOVIES
2 GREEN ONIONS, CHOPPED
1 TABLESPOON DIJON MUSTARD
2 CLOVES GARLIC, MINCED
JUICE OF 1 LEMON
1 TEASPOON WORCESTERSHIRE SAUCE
1 TEASPOON HOT PEPPER SAUCE
½ TEASPOON SALT
½ TEASPOON GROUND BLACK PEPPER
¼ CUP (60 ML) OLIVE OIL
14 HEADS LITTLE GEM LETTUCE,
LEAVES SEPARATED, WASHED, AND DRIED WELL
1 SMALL RED ONION, THINLY SLICED

In a blender, combine sour cream, tarragon, avocado, anchovies, green onions, mustard, garlic, lemon juice, Worcestershire, hot pepper sauce, salt, and pepper. Pulse to chop and combine ingredients. With blender running, add olive oil in a steady stream and blend until smooth. Continue blending and add ¼ cup (60 ml) to ½ cup (120 ml) water to reach desired consistency.

In a large bowl, toss lettuce with dressing to coat the leaves well. Sprinkle with red onion and serve immediately.



italian cheesy pull-apart bread

SERVES 8

This is my pumped-up version of the sourdough bread that everyone in San Francisco serves with cioppino. It could basically be a meal in itself, but when you dip pieces into the spicy tomato broth? Heaven.

3 TABLESPOONS OLIVE OIL
2 TABLESPOONS BUTTER
½ CUP (65 G) FINELY CHOPPED RED ONION
2 CLOVES GARLIC, MINCED
1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH ROSEMARY
1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH THYME
1 TABLESPOON CHOPPED FRESH FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY
1 CUP (110 G) SHREDED GRUYÈRE CHEESE
1 CUP (115 G) SHREDED CHEDDAR CHEESE
¼ CUP (25 G) GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE
1 (1-POUND) LOAF SOURDOUGH BREAD

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).

In a skillet, heat olive oil and butter over medium heat. Sauté onion for 4 minutes. Add garlic and cook for 2 minutes more. Add rosemary, thyme, and parsley. Remove from heat, and stir well.

In a medium bowl, mix Gruyère, Cheddar, and Parmesan and set aside.

Make a crosshatch of cuts all over the loaf, stopping ½ inch (12 mm) from the bottom (not cutting all the way through).

Spoon herb oil mixture all over the loaf and in between the cuts. Sprinkle cheese all over the loaf, pushing it down in between the cuts, really packing tightly to keep the cheese inside the loaf. Wrap in foil and bake for 30 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.





limoncello

MAKES ABOUT 34 OUNCES/1 LITER

This is another one to make in batches and store away for dinners or to give as a hostess or birthday gift.

9 ORGANIC LEMONS,
WASHED WELL AND LIGHTLY SCRUBBED
1 LITER 95 PERCENT GRAIN ALCOHOL,
SUCH AS EVERCLEAR
¾ CUP (150 G) GRANULATED SUGAR

Peel the lemons, making sure to remove just the peel and not the white pith. In a large lidded jar, combine lemon peels with the alcohol. Shake well. Let sit for 20 days in a cool dark place, shaking every few days.

In a small saucepan, combine sugar with 1 cup (240 ml) water and bring to a boil over high heat. Boil about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until sugar has dissolved. Let cool completely.

Strain lemon peels from alcohol and add cooled simple syrup. Store in a 34-ounce/1-L glass bottle in the freezer and serve chilled.

fig compote with lemon mascarpone mousse

SERVES 8

I make this compote in big batches after a fig harvest. That way I can enjoy it and share with others all winter. It's also great over vanilla ice cream or dolloped on a cracker with manchego or goat cheese.

2 POUNDS (910 G) BLACK MISSION FIGS,
STEMMED AND CUT IN HALF
½ CUP (120 ML) DRY RED WINE
½ CUP (110 G) LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
½ CUP (120 ML) LEMON JUICE, DIVIDED
4 TABLESPOONS (60 ML) LEMON ZEST, DIVIDED
1 CUP (240 ML) HEAVY CREAM
¼ CUP (30 G) PLUS 2 TEASPOONS
CONFECTIONERS' SUGAR, DIVIDED
1 TEASPOON VANILLA EXTRACT
8 OUNCES (225 G) MASCARPONE CHEESE,
AT ROOM TEMPERATURE
1 TABLESPOON LIMONCELLO
8 SHORTBREAD COOKIES

In a medium saucepan, combine figs, red wine, sugar, ¼ cup (60 ml) of the lemon juice, and 2 tablespoons of the lemon zest and bring to a boil. Reduce to low and simmer for 15 minutes, until figs are tender and juice is slightly thickened. Let cool completely.

In a large bowl, combine cream, 2 teaspoons of the confectioners' sugar, and vanilla and whip until stiff peaks form; set aside. In another large bowl, combine mascarpone, remaining 2 tablespoons lemon zest, ¼ cup (60 ml) lemon juice, ¼ cup (30 g) confectioners' sugar, and the limoncello. Whip together until light and fluffy. Gently fold whipped cream into mascarpone mixture.

To serve, divide cooled fig compote between eight bowls and top with a generous dollop of mascarpone mousse.