

Bite into a holiday brunch

Finding everyone's holiday evenings booked up? Throw a midday cocktail party with the help of restaurateur Sebastien Center



Sebastien has hosted events for Brad Pitt and Bill Clinton.

TIP

Skewer small pancakes with lollipop sticks, miniature forks or floral coneé skewers.



BLUEBERRY PANCAKES

Serves 12 to 14

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1¾ cups milk
- ¼ cup unsalted butter

1. Sift the dry ingredients together and set aside.
2. Whisk together the eggs, vanilla and milk in a mixing bowl until frothy.
3. Add the dry ingredients until just evenly mixed.
4. Melt 1 tbsp of butter in a non-stick skillet over a medium high heat.
5. Using a squeeze bottle, add the batter 1 tsp at a time. Flip when top bubbles and edges are golden. Continue until all the batter is used. Keep warm in an oven set to 200° F.
6. Stack and skewer. Top with blueberry compote.

BLUEBERRY COMPOTE

- 1 cup frozen wild blueberries
- 1 cup maple syrup
 - ¼ tsp cardamom
 - ¼ tsp grated ginger
 - pinch of lime zest

1. Place all ingredients in a small sauce pot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer. Reduce mixture to half the volume, about 10 minutes.
2. Remove from heat and serve over pancakes when ready.

TIP

Serve French toast with pipettes of maple syrup. Pipettes are sold online and in specialty kitchen stores.

'Skewering mini brunch items turns them into single bite-sized dishes. Using a pipette provides for a more interesting look while also including a flavour infusion instead of a traditional dip or sauce'

**EGGS BENEDICT**

Serves 12 to 14

INGREDIENTS

- 6 English muffins
- 3 tbsp butter
- 6 slices cooked peameal bacon
- 12 quail eggs

Hollandaise

- 4 tbsp white wine
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp thyme leaves
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 large egg yolks
- 1½ tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ cup clarified unsalted butter
- kosher salt
- ground black pepper

1. To make the sauce, combine the wine, peppercorns, thyme and bay leaves in a small sauce pot over high heat and reduce

by half. Strain and set aside to cool.

2. In a stainless steel bowl over a pan of simmering water, combine the yolks with the wine reduction and whisk vigorously, until mixture thickens, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice. Slowly whisk in clarified butter until thickened. Season with salt and pepper. Keep warm over very gently simmering water whisking occasionally, until muffins are ready.

3. Preheat oven to 275° F.

4. Toast English muffins until golden and butter immediately.

5. Using a small (about 2-inch) cookie cutter, cut

rounds from the muffins and the peameal bacon. Place the cut bacon on the cut muffins, place on a baking sheet, cover with foil wrap and keep warm in the oven.

6. Using a small scissors, cut the quail eggs and gently empty into a small bowl keeping the yolks intact.

7. Bring a small pot of acidulated water to a simmer. Using a large spoon, stir until the water is spinning. Gently add the quail eggs to the water all at once and poach for 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove eggs to a plate lined with paper towel.

8. Remove muffins from the oven, place a single egg on each and top with hollandaise and any extra bacon.

Serve immediately.

FRENCH TOAST

Serves 12 to 14

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 tbsp pure vanilla extract
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- pinch of ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp orange zest
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- pinch of salt
- 6 slices (1-inch thick) brioche, preferably day old, and miniature, if available
- 4 tbsp clarified unsalted butter
- pure maple syrup

Praline cream

- 2 tbsp ground praline
- 1 cup heavy cream, whipped until stiff

1. Whisk together eggs, cream, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, orange zest, sugar and salt in a medium bowl and set aside.

2. Place bread in a shallow baking dish large enough to hold bread slices in a single layer.

Pour egg mixture over bread; soak 10 minutes. Turn slices over until soaked through.

3. Preheat oven to 275° F.

4. Place a wire rack on a baking sheet and set aside.

5. Heat clarified butter in a non-stick pan over medium heat. Fry half the bread slices until golden brown, about 3 minutes per side.

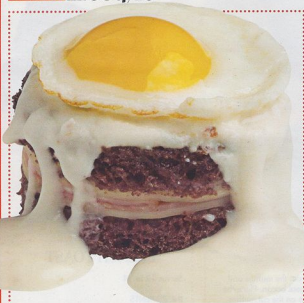
6. Transfer to wire rack and place in oven while cooking the remaining bread. Repeat process until all the bread is cooked.

7. Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter (if not using miniature loaves), cut rounds from larger pieces.

8. Warm in pan and serve with maple syrup and praline cream. (To make the cream, blend ground praline and whipped cream.) ▶

**TIP**

Berrys can get messy, so serve on square side plates or espresso saucers. They're the perfect size.



CROQUE MADAME

Serves 12 to 14

INGREDIENTS

- 6 thin slices pumpernickel bread
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 3 pieces thinly sliced Black Forest ham
- 12 quail eggs
- ground black pepper
- Béchamel sauce**
- 5 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp flour
- 1 cup cold milk
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- pinch ground nutmeg
- 1 cup grated Gruyère

1. For the sauce, in a small saucepan, melt 2 tbsp butter over high heat. Whisk in flour and cook until lightly golden. Add the milk, salt and pepper and whisk constantly until mixture thickens, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir the nutmeg and half the cheese into the milk mixture. Now you have your béchamel sauce.

2. Preheat oven broiler.
3. Lay out bread slices and spread the Dijon evenly between three slices and top with ham.
4. Divide and spread half of the béchamel sauce between the remaining 3 bread slices and top with remaining cheese.
5. Close the sandwiches.
6. Melt 2 tbsp butter in a non-stick pan over medium heat. Add sandwiches and cook both sides until bread is golden brown and the cheese is melted, about 3 to 4 minutes.
7. Cut 4 small sandwiches out of each larger one using a round cookie cutter and place on baking sheet. Top each with remaining béchamel, and place under the broiler until bubbly.
8. Meanwhile, melt remaining butter in the same skillet over high heat. Fry quail eggs, sunny side up, about 1 minute.
9. Top sandwiches with fried egg, season with black pepper, and serve immediately.

TIP

You can add another waffle to the top to create a mini fried chicken brunch sandwich.

'The whole point of entertaining is to spend time celebrating with your guests, so plan and get as much done as possible in advance, and don't bite off more than you can chew'

TIP

Not sure about timing? Between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. is the perfect window for a brunch party, says Sebastian.

CHICKEN & WAFFLES

Serves 12 to 14

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp sriracha
- 1 tbsp lemon zest
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 boneless chicken breasts, sliced crossways into 6 to 8 medallions
- ¼ cup flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 tsp cajun spice
- salt and pepper
- 4 cups vegetable oil
- 4 tbsp honey
- 1 jalapeno pepper, finely diced

Waffle

- ¾ cup flour
- ½ cup cornmeal
- 1 ½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp each salt and pepper
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

1. Blend the sriracha and lemon zest with buttermilk. Marinate chicken in mixture at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Blend the flour, cornstarch, cajun spice, salt and pepper.
3. Heat the oil in a non-reactive saucepan to 350° F.
4. Dredge the chicken in the flour, shaking off excess. Fry in heated oil, about 5 minutes or until done.
5. Heat honey over medium heat with jalapenos in another pan and allow to steep for 10 minutes.
6. Preheat waffle iron.
7. Combine the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, baking soda, salt, pepper, paprika and sugar in a large bowl.
8. Beat together the egg, buttermilk, butter and vanilla and pour into the dry ingredients. Stir until just barely combined and allow to sit for 10 minutes.
9. Spoon batter onto the seasoned waffle iron and cook until evenly browned.
10. Serve chicken on waffles (cut to size, if necessary) and drizzle with the jalapeno honey. **M**

