**Raspberry Baked French Toast**

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, at room temperature

10 extra-large eggs

2 3/4 cups half-and-half

1/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

1/3 cup light brown sugar, lightly packed

1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

1 teaspoon grated orange zest, plus extra for serving

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

10 cups (1-inch-diced) day-old challah bread

12 ounces fresh raspberries

Confectioners' sugar, for serving

Pure maple syrup, for serving

Grease a 9 x 13 x 2-inch oval baking dish with the butter and set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, half-and-half, 1/3 cup of granulated sugar, the brown sugar, vanilla, orange zest, and salt. Spread half of the diced bread in the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle on the raspberries in one layer. Top with the rest of the bread and pour on the egg mixture, pressing down lightly to moisten the bread. Sprinkle with the remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the baking dish on a sheet pan and bake it for 60 to 70 minutes, until the custard is set and the top is puffed and browned. Check after 45 minutes; if the top is getting too browned, cover it lightly with aluminum foil. Cool for 10 minutes, sprinkle with confectioners' sugar, dust with extra orange zest, and serve warm with maple syrup.

**Easy Cranberry and Apple Cake**

12 ounces fresh cranberries, rinsed and picked over for stems

1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and diced

1/2 cup light brown sugar, lightly packed

1 tablespoon grated orange zest (2 oranges)

1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice

1-1/8 teaspoons ground cinnamon, divided

2 extra-large eggs, at room temperature

1 cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar

1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and slightly cooled

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1/4 cup sour cream

1 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees.

Combine the cranberries, apple, brown sugar, orange zest, orange juice, and 1 teaspoon of the cinnamon in a medium bowl. Set aside.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the eggs on medium-high speed for 2 minutes. With the mixer on medium, add 1 cup of the granulated sugar, the butter, vanilla, and sour cream and beat just until combined. On low speed, slowly add the flour and salt.

Pour the fruit mixture evenly into a 10-inch glass pie plate. Pour the batter over the fruit, covering it completely. Combine the remaining 1 tablespoon of granulated sugar and ¹⁄8 teaspoon of cinnamon and sprinkle it over the batter. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean and the fruit is bubbling around the edges. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Croissant Bread Pudding**

3 extra-large whole eggs

8 extra-large egg yolks

5 cups half-and-half

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

6 croissants, preferably stale

1 cup raisins

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the whole eggs, egg yolks, half-and-half, sugar, and vanilla. Set the custard mixture aside. Slice the croissants in half horizontally. In a 10 by 15 by 2 1/2-inch oval baking dish, distribute the bottoms of the sliced croissants, then add the raisins, then the tops of the croissants (brown side up), being sure the raisins are between the layers of croissants or they will burn while baking. Pour the custard over the croissants and allow to soak for 10 minutes, pressing down gently.

Place the pan in a larger one filled with 1-inch of hot water. Cover the larger pan with aluminum foil, tenting the foil so it doesn't touch the pudding. Cut a few holes in the foil to allow steam to escape. Bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake for 40 to 45 more minutes or until the pudding puffs up and the custard is set. Remove from the oven and cool slightly. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Pumpkin Roulade with Ginger Buttercream**

FOR THE CAKE

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

3 extra-large eggs, at room temperature

1 cup granulated sugar

3/4 cup canned pumpkin (not pie filling)

1/4 cup confectioners' sugar, plus extra for dusting

FOR THE FILLING

12 ounces Italian mascarpone cheese

1 1/4 cups sifted confectioners' sugar

2 tablespoons heavy cream

1/4 cup minced dried crystallized ginger (not in syrup)

Pinch kosher salt

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Grease a 13 by 18 by 1-inch sheet pan. Line the pan with parchment paper and grease and flour the paper.

In a small bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, and salt and stir to combine. Place the eggs and granulated sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium-high speed for 3 minutes, until light yellow and thickened. With the mixer on low, add the pumpkin, then slowly add the flour mixture, mixing just until incorporated. Finish mixing the batter by hand with a rubber spatula. Pour into the prepared pan and spread evenly. Bake the cake for 10 to 12 minutes, until the top springs back when gently touched.

While the cake is baking, lay out a clean, thin cotton dish towel on a flat surface and sift the entire 1/4 cup of confectioners' sugar evenly over it. (This will prevent the cake from sticking to the towel.) As soon as you remove the cake from the oven, loosen it around the edges and invert it squarely onto the prepared towel. Peel away the parchment paper. With a light touch, roll the warm cake and the towel together (don't press!) starting at the short end of the cake. Allow to cool completely on a wire rack.

Meanwhile, make the filling. In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the mascarpone, confectioners' sugar, and cream together for about a minute, until light and fluffy. Stir in the crystallized ginger, and salt.

To assemble, carefully unroll the cake onto a board with the towel underneath. Spread the cake evenly with the filling. Reroll the cake in a spiral using the towel as a guide. Remove the towel and trim the ends to make a neat edge. Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve sliced.

**Tomato Crostini with Whipped Feta**

6 ounces good feta, crumbled

2 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature

2/3 cup good olive oil, divided

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons minced shallots (2 shallots)

2 teaspoons minced garlic (2 cloves)

2 tablespoons good red wine vinegar

2 pounds ripe heirloom or cherry tomatoes, ½-inch-diced

3 tablespoons julienned fresh basil leaves, plus extra for serving

20 to 25 (½-inch-thick) diagonal baguette slices, toasted

2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts

For the whipped feta, place the feta and cream cheese in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Pulse until the cheeses are mixed. Add 1/3 cup of the olive oil, the lemon juice, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and process until smooth.

For the tomatoes, up to an hour before you’re serving, combine the shallots, garlic, and vinegar in a medium bowl. Set aside for 5 minutes. Whisk in the remaining 1/3 cup olive oil, 1 teaspoon salt, and - teaspoon pepper. Add the tomatoes, stir gently, and set aside for 10 minutes. Stir in the basil and taste for seasonings.

To assemble the crostini, spread each slice of bread with a generous amount of whipped feta. With a slotted spoon, place the tomatoes on top. Put the crostini on plates and scatter with the pine nuts. Sprinkle with extra basil and serve.

**Winter Minestrone & Garlic Bruschetta**

Good olive oil

4 ounces pancetta, ½-inch-diced

1½ cups chopped yellow onions

2 cups (½-inch) diced carrots (3 carrots)

2 cups (½-inch) diced celery (3 stalks)

2½ cups (½-inch) diced peeled butternut squash

1½ tablespoons minced garlic (4 cloves)

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves

26 ounces canned or boxed chopped tomatoes, such as Pomi

6 to 8 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade

1 bay leaf

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

2 cups cooked small pasta, such as tubetti

8 to 10 ounces fresh baby spinach leaves

1/2 cup good dry white wine

2 tablespoons store-bought pesto

Garlic Bruschetta (see recipe)

Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for serving

Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat in a large, heavy pot or Dutch oven. Add the pancetta and cook over medium-low heat for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned. Add the onions, carrots, celery, squash, garlic, and thyme and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 8 to 10 minutes, until the vegetables begin to soften.

Add the tomatoes, 6 cups of the chicken stock, the bay leaf, 1 tablespoon salt, and 1-1/2 teaspoons pepper to the pot. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, until the vegetables are tender.

Discard the bay leaf. Add the beans and cooked pasta and heat through. The soup should be quite thick but if it’s too thick, add more chicken stock. Just before serving, reheat the soup, add the spinach, and toss with 2 big spoons (like tossing a salad). Cook just until the leaves are wilted. Stir in the white wine and pesto. Depending on the saltiness of the chicken stock, add another teaspoon or two of salt to taste. Serve large shallow bowls of soup with a bruschetta on top. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, drizzle with olive oil, and serve hot.

Garlic Bruschetta

1 baguette

Good olive oil

1 garlic clove, cut in half lengthwise

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

Slice the baguette at a 45-degree angle in 1/2-inch-thick slices. Brush both sides of the bread with olive oil and bake for 6 minutes, until lightly toasted. Take the slices out of the oven and rub the surface of each one with the cut clove of garlic.

**Rosemary Cashews**

1 pound roasted unsalted cashews

2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary leaves

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 teaspoons light brown sugar

2 teaspoons kosher salt, or to taste

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted

 Preheat the oven to 350 °F (175°C).

Spread the cashews out on a sheet pan. Toast in the oven until warm, about 5 minutes.

In a large bowl, combine the rosemary, cayenne, sugar, salt, and butter. Thoroughly toss the warm cashews with the spiced butter and serve warm.

**Shortbread Cookies**

3/4 pound unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 cup sugar, plus extra for sprinkling

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

6 to 7 ounces very good semisweet chocolate, finely chopped

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, mix together the butter and 1 cup of sugar until they are just combined. Add the vanilla. In a medium bowl, sift together the flour and salt, then add them to the butter-and-sugar mixture. Mix on low speed until the dough starts to come together. Dump onto a surface dusted with flour and shape into a flat disk. Wrap in plastic and chill for 30 minutes.

Roll the dough 1/2-inch thick and cut with a 3 by 1-inch finger-shaped cutter. Place the cookies on an ungreased baking sheet and sprinkle with sugar. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the edges begin to brown. Allow to cool to room temperature.

When the cookies are cool, place them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Put 3 ounces of the chocolate in a glass bowl and microwave on high power for 30 seconds. (Don't trust your microwave timer; time it with your watch.) Stir with a wooden spoon. Continue to heat and stir in 30-second increments until the chocolate is just melted. Add the remaining chocolate and allow it to sit at room temperature, stirring often, until it's completely smooth. Stir vigorously until the chocolate is smooth and slightly cooled; stirring makes it glossier.

Drizzle 1/2 of each cookie with just enough chocolate to coat it.

**Corn Chowder**

8 ounces bacon, chopped

1/4 cup good olive oil

6 cups chopped yellow onions (4 large onions)

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric

12 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade

6 cups medium-diced white boiling potatoes, unpeeled (2 pounds)

10 cups corn kernels, fresh (10 ears) or frozen (3 pounds)

2 cups half-and-half

1/2 pound sharp white Cheddar cheese, grated

In a large stockpot on medium-high heat, cook the bacon and olive oil until the bacon is crisp, about 5 minutes. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve. Reduce the heat to medium, add the onions and butter to the fat, and cook for 10 minutes, until the onions are translucent.

Stir in the flour, salt, pepper, and turmeric and cook for 3 minutes. Add the chicken stock and potatoes, bring to a boil, and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes, until the potatoes are tender. If using fresh corn, cut the kernels off the cobs and blanch the kernels for 3 minutes in boiling salted water. Drain. (If using frozen corn, you can skip this step.) Add the corn to the soup, then add the half-and-half and Cheddar. Cook for 5 more minutes, until the cheese is melted. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot with a garnish of bacon.

**Cauliflower Gratin**

1 (3-pound) head of cauliflower, cut into large florets

Kosher salt

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, divided

3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 cups hot milk

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg

3/4 cup grated Gruyère cheese, divided

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 cup fresh bread crumbs

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Cook the cauliflower florets in a large pot of boiling salted water for 5 to 6 minutes, until tender but still firm. Drain.

Meanwhile, melt 2 tablespoons of the butter in a medium saucepan over low heat. Add the flour, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon for 2 minutes. Pour the hot milk into the butter-flour mixture and stir until it comes to a boil. Boil, whisking constantly, for 1 minute, or until thickened. Off the heat, add 1 teaspoon of salt, the pepper, nutmeg, 1⁄2 cup of the Gruyère, and the Parmesan cheese.

Pour one third of the sauce on the bottom of an 8 x 11 x 2-inch baking dish. Place the drained cauliflower on top and then spread the rest of the sauce evenly on top. Combine the bread crumbs with the remaining 1⁄4 cup of Gruyère and sprinkle on top. Melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and drizzle over the gratin. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the top is browned. Serve hot or at room temperature.

**Rum Raisin Tiramisu**

3/4 cup raisins

1 cup Mount Gay dark rum, divided, plus 2 tablespoons

6 extra-large egg yolks, at room temperature

1/2 cup sugar

16 to 18 ounces Italian mascarpone cheese

3/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice, divided (2 oranges)

1 1/2 teaspoons good vanilla extract Seeds scraped from 1 vanilla bean

24 to 30 Italian ladyfingers, or savoiardi

Semisweet chocolate, shaved

Place the raisins and 2 tablespoons of rum in a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and place in the microwave on high for 1 minute. Uncover and set aside to cool.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on high speed for 5 minutes, until very thick and light yellow. Lower the speed to low and mix in the mascarpone until smooth. With the mixer still on low, add 1/2 cup of rum, 1/4 cup of orange juice, the vanilla extract, and the seeds from the vanilla bean. Stir until combined.

Pour the remaining 1/2 cup of rum and remaining 1/2 cup of orange juice in a shallow bowl. Dip one side of each ladyfinger quickly in the rum mixture and place them in one layer in a 9 by 11 by 2-inch rectangular or oval dish. Break the ladyfingers in smaller pieces and dip them in the rum mixture to fill the spaces. Sprinkle half the rum-soaked raisins evenly on top. Pour half the mascarpone mixture over and spread evenly. Repeat the layers of dipped ladyfingers, rum-soaked raisins, and mascarpone mixture. Smooth the top, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 6 hours, but preferably overnight.

Before serving, sprinkle the top with the shaved chocolate and serve cold.

**Spicy Hermit Bars**

1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature

1 cup light or dark brown sugar, lightly packed

1 extra-large egg, at room temperature

1/4 cup unsulphured molasses

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking soda

2 teaspoons ground ginger

1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 cup golden raisins

1/3 cup minced crystallized ginger (not in syrup)

1 cup sifted confectioners' sugar Dark rum, such as Mount Gay

Grated lemon zest

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

Place the butter and brown sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment and beat on medium speed for 2 minutes, until light and fluffy. With the mixer on low, add the egg, scrape down the bowl, then mix in the molasses.

Sift together the flour, baking soda, ground ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. With the mixer on low, slowly add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture, mixing just until combined. Mix in the raisins and crystallized ginger. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Turn the dough out onto a very lightly floured board, form it into a disk with lightly floured hands, and cut it in half. Roll each half into a log 12 inches long and place them 3 inches apart on the prepared sheet pan. Bake for 20 minutes; the logs will still be soft in the center.

Meanwhile, whisk the confectioners' sugar with 5 to 6 teaspoons rum to make a pourable glaze. While the logs are still warm, drizzle the glaze back and forth across the logs with a teaspoon and sprinkle them with the lemon zest. Allow to cool. Cut each log crosswise into 1 1/2-inch-wide bars.