

Party of six was a real gift

Gerry is writing today

Well, here it is, early March and my last Christmas gift was just delivered! Actually, it was a gift certificate and it was just redeemed in February. Dave and I had given a great friend of ours a gift certificate for a dinner in our home, including his wife and two guests of his choice. He was to pick a date, invite the guests and fill in the blanks on the menu—totally his choice!

We spent several phone conversations and many e-mails back and forth discussing the menu and the beverages. What great fun that part was!

Our guests arrived at 7 p.m. that Saturday and we began the evening with champagne and some little cheese crisps. We were going to be enjoying a several course meal, so we couldn't eat too much too early. During this time, everyone brought us flowers, wine and gifts, much to my delight and surprise!

The table was set with a crisp white Battenberg lace

**Lori Gysel
&
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cloth, candles and several mini vases of fresh yellow-toned flowers.

We sat for a most enjoyable four hours of good food, conversation and friends—not necessarily in that order.

I actually spent a lot of time at the dinner table with everyone, despite the busy menu preparation, but I had spent lots of time early in the day preparing, so that I could enjoy everyone and everything as well.

When it came time for dessert, the guest of honour was invited into the kitchen to do the

final preparation on the crème brulee with a torch!

We enjoyed a fabulous white wine with dinner, a merlot with the cheese course and a 1999 vidal ice wine with dessert, all brought by our guests. I had so much fun planning and preparing this gift. And my husband was a huge help as official taster and busboy and printer of the menus.

So give a gift of yourself, your talents, your time and everyone receives a treat that makes a lasting impression!

Have fun and keep cooking!

Pesto Crusted Salmon

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 4 salmon filets, centre cut (approximately 5 oz each)
- 1/2 cup pesto sauce
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/3 loaf white bread, crusts cut off, bread pulsed in food processor



Method

1. Sear salmon in a sauté pan over medium high heat in a bit of olive oil. Just sear until both sides are crusted with golden brown—do not cook all the way through.
2. Remove from pan and place on baking sheet.
3. In a bowl, mix together pesto, olive oil, bread crumbs, salt and pepper. Mix until crumb mixture holds together.
4. Brush a bit more olive oil and pesto onto salmon.
5. Adhere crust to salmon.
6. Bake in hot oven (400 degrees F) from 5-7 minutes.
7. Serve with a wedge of lemon for each plate.

Oops! Here's the rest of the Baked Beans recipe

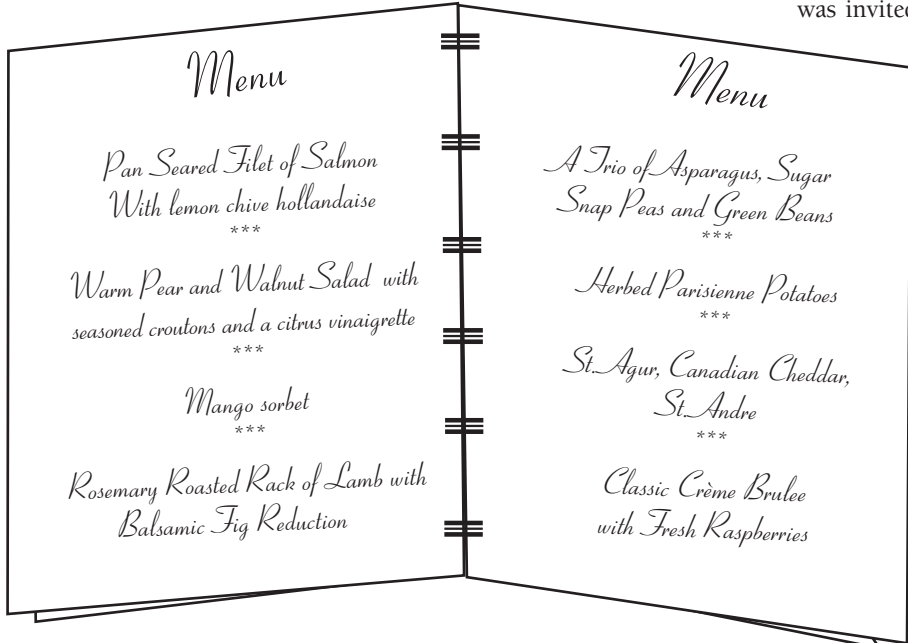
Due to oversight in submission, the complete recipe of Baked Beans was not published last week. The following is the remainder of the recipe.

Cut pork into large cubes or chunks. Pour drained beans into a large earthenware casserole dish and throw in the pork cubes. Make a sauce by combining the bean liquid, chili sauce or ketchup and onion over low heat. Add seasonings, tasting carefully as you go along. When it tastes pungent and hot, stir in the molasses and brown sugar. (Remember that the pungency will be cut by the beans).

Pour hot sauce over the pot of pork and beans. Put a lid on the pot and bake in a 250 degree F oven for at least six hours, preferably longer. The longer they bake, the better they taste.

About halfway through the baking, take the pot out of the oven and taste the beans. Check for sweetness and don't let them get too dry. Add more bean liquid or water if necessary. Keep covered and return to the oven to continue baking.

One hour before the beans are done, remove from the oven, remove 1 cup of beans, mash and then stir back into the remaining beans. Cover and continue to bake.



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