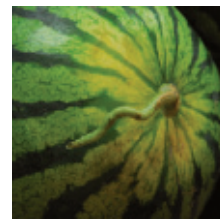


COOKING FRESH



POSSIBILITIES

CARAMELIZED APRICOT FRENCH TOAST WITH PRICKLY PEAR OR MESQUITE BEAN SYRUP

- 8 ripe but firm apricots
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 whole egg
- ⅛ teaspoon nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 slices of brioche bread (egg bread is a good substitute)
- ¼ cup melted clarified butter (or 2 tablespoons butter)
- Powdered sugar to decorate the plate
- Whipped cream (1 cup heavy cream whipped with ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract)
- 8 ounces prickly pear or mesquite bean syrup*

Heat a broiler on high for 10 minutes.

Split the apricots into halves, remove the pits and toss with the brown sugar. Place them cut side down on a cookie rack and put them under the broiler for 3 to 4 minutes, then turn the apricots and broil for 3 to 4 minutes more or until the sugar turns brown and caramelizes. Remove and keep warm. Do not leave the apricots in the oven.

Mix the heavy cream, egg, sugar and spices till smooth. Heat a nonstick skillet to medium hot and add the clarified butter (if using regular butter, turn down the heat to medium). Dip the bread into the batter and sauté in the butter for 3 to 4 minutes on each side until golden brown.

Place a piece of the toast in the center of a warm plate and top with four of the apricot halves. Drizzle with the syrup, dust with powdered sugar and serve with a dollop of whipped cream to the side of the toast. If you want to give your plate an extra flair, garnish with a sprig of fresh mint.

Recipe compliments of John Sharpe, The Turquoise Room. This recipe will be included in Chef Sharpe's upcoming book, La Posada—The Turquoise Room Cookbook: Where Tradition and Innovation Come to the Table. Advance orders for the book may be placed at www.theturquoiseroom.net.

*Note: Prickly pear syrup is available from Cotton Country Jams (602-243-5338); prickly pear and mesquite syrups may be obtained from Cheri's Desert Harvest (www.cheridesertharvest.com).

NOW IN SEASON

- Apples (Annas are first to ripen)
- Apricots
- Artichokes
- Basil (many varieties)
- Black-eyed peas
- Chiles
- Corn
- Cucumbers (slicers, Armenian, lemon)
- Eggplant
- Figs (early crop)
- Garlic
- Grapes
- Green beans
- Leeks
- Melons (cantaloupe, Honeydew, etc.)
- Nectarines
- Okra
- Onions (red, yellow, grilling and Arizona Sweet)
- Peaches
- Peppers
- Pinto beans
- Plums
- Potatoes
- Rosemary
- Squash blossoms
- Summer squash
- Sunflowers
- Tomatoes
- Watermelon
- Winter squash
- Zucchini