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COMFORT FOOD MAKEOVER

Celebrate grown-up takes on the rich dishes of childhood.

BY MIKE DeSIMONE
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PHOTOS BY NOAH FECKS

Comfort foods typically do more than nourish our bodies—they feed our emotions and fill us with memories of life stages—and eras—decidedly less complicated than today. But as endearing as a culinary walk down memory lane might be, many classic comfort foods fall short in the face of our expanded palates and culinary expectations. These updated versions of homespun classics work to satisfy your inner child and your palate evolution, with upgraded wine choices to accommodate your new crave-worthy dishes.



The Update:

Garganelli with Raclette, Parmesan, Corn Purée and Truffle Butter

The Original: Mac and Cheese

Chef: Danny Grant, Maple & Ash, Chicago

There's no better example of a high-low pairing than macaroni and cheese with a bottle of vintage Champagne. Amy Mundwiler, wine director at Maple & Ash, likes to pair **Taittinger 2006 Comtes de Champagne Blanc de Blancs** with Chef Grant's entrée. "You really need the maturity to stand up to the truffle butter," says Mundwiler. "The acidity of the Champagne cuts through the fattiness of the cheese and allows the nuttiness of the Parmesan and aromatics of the truffle to shine through."

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 shallot, thin sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 ounces corn kernels
- ¾ cup chicken stock
- 12 ounces dry garganelli
- 6 tablespoons truffle butter
- ¼ cup truffle oil
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated
- 8 ounces raclette cheese, grated
- 3 ounces panko breadcrumbs
- 3 chives, chopped (for garnish)

Melt butter in large sauté pan over medium heat, and cook shallot and garlic until translucent. Add corn, and cook for 5 minutes. Add ¼ cup of chicken stock, and simmer for 7 minutes. Let cool, then process in blender until smooth.

Heat oven to 350°F.

Bring pot of well-salted water to boil. Cook pasta according to package directions, until al dente, and strain.

In large sauté pan over medium-low heat, warm corn purée with truffle butter, truffle oil and remaining ½ cup chicken stock. Add Parmesan and 6 ounces raclette, and cook until melted. Add warm pasta, and coat well. Transfer to 8-inch square casserole dish. Top with breadcrumbs and remaining 2 ounces raclette. Bake for 10 minutes. Garnish with chives. *Serves 4.*



The Update:

Root Vegetable Galette

The Original: Vegetable Stew

Chef: Nicholas Bazik, The Good King Tavern, Philadelphia

Chloé Grigri, general manager and wine director at Philadelphia's The Good King Tavern, opened the restaurant with her French-born father in 2013. Alongside Chef Nicholas Bazik's galette—a riff on a classic crustless French potato galette—Grigri recommends **Clos du Tue-Boeuf's 2015 Pineau de la Loire**, the Loire Valley's traditional name for Chenin Blanc. "This stony, ripe, funky-fresh Chenin complements the earthiness of root vegetables," says Grigri. "While its austere soul and dancing acidity slice right through the sweetness of the beets, its slight *pétillance* adds a textural element to the otherwise smooth galette."

- 1½ pounds russet potatoes, thin sliced
- 1½ pounds rutabaga, thin sliced
- 1½ pounds golden beets, thin sliced
- 1½ pounds red beets, thin sliced
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fine sea salt
- 1 tablespoon Madras curry powder
- 1 sprig thyme (optional, for garnish)

Salad (recipe follows)

Heat oven to 375°F. Layer sliced vegetables into 8-inch casserole dish, alternating colors. Season each layer with olive oil, salt and curry. Cover with aluminum foil, and bake for 45 minutes. Remove foil and bake additional 15 minutes, or until toothpick can be inserted without resistance. Let rest for 10 minutes. Carefully turn out galette into center of large serving platter.

Slice galette into 4 portions and divide among plates. Arrange salad around galette. *Serves 4.*



SALAD

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons Madras curry powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 6 ounces salad greens
- 2 tablespoons toasted sunflower seeds (for garnish)

In small bowl, whisk together oil, lemon juice, curry powder and salt. Toss with salad mix. Garnish with sunflower seeds just before serving. *Serves 4.*

The Update:

Grilled Philly Cheese Steak with Roasted Cherry Tomato and Red Pepper Soup

The Original: Grilled Cheese and Tomato Soup

Chef: Scott Andriani, Monarch Rooftop & Indoor Lounge, New York City

Chef Andriani turns out the two dishes and other comforting classics at nightlife impresario Ric Addison's Monarch Rooftop & Indoor Lounge in midtown Manhattan. Together, the sandwich and soup pair well with **MacMurray 2014 Pinot Noir** from

the Russian River Valley. "It boasts romantic lavender and dark cherry notes, which complement the beef," says Genese DeBeaux, head bartender at Monarch Rooftop & Indoor Lounge. "Its acidity works well with the bright notes of the tomato soup."

GRILLED PHILLY CHEESE STEAK

- 1 crusty baguette
- 8 slices American cheese
- 8 ounces oven-roasted beef, thin sliced
- 1 green bell pepper, thin sliced and sautéed until soft
- 1 medium onion, thin sliced and sautéed until translucent
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter

Slice baguette horizontally, and cut into 4 sandwich-sized sections. Place cheese on both sides of each section, and layer meat, peppers and onions in between. Close sandwich and rub mayonnaise on outside. Melt butter in frying pan over medium heat. Add sandwiches, and weigh down with sandwich press or another heavy pan. After 2 minutes, flip and repeat. *Serves 4.*

ROASTED CHERRY TOMATO AND RED PEPPER SOUP

- 2 pints cherry tomatoes
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and sliced thin
- 7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon flaky salt, preferably Maldon, plus more for garnish
- 6 leaves Thai basil, thin sliced
- 1 teaspoon chives, thin sliced (for garnish)

Heat oven to 400°F. Toss tomatoes, thyme, garlic and red pepper with 2 tablespoons olive oil and salt. Spread evenly on baking sheet and bake for 45 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest for 10 minutes. Add to blender, and process with remaining 4 tablespoons olive oil until smooth. Keep warm until ready to serve.

Stir in basil just before serving. Divide into 4 bowls. Drizzle with remaining olive oil. Garnish with chives and salt. *Serves 4.*

See page 84 for the Maple Slab Bacon and Coq au Vin Chicken Pot Pie recipe.



The Update:

Maple Slab Bacon and Coq au Vin Chicken Pot Pie

The Original: Chicken Pot Pie

Chef: Scott Cochran, director of food and beverage, Stowe Mountain Lodge, Stowe, VT

Chef Scott Cochran, who is also Stowe Mountain Lodge's beverage director, suggests **Alain Jaume & Fils 2012 Grand Veneur Réserve** red wine with his Frenchified version of chicken pot pie. "The fruitiness of this medium-bodied wine tends to act as almost an additional sauce, while the earthiness meets the sweetness of the brushed maple bacon," he says. "The butter in the crust is pierced by the wine's acidity, truly bringing balance to the dish."

- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- ½ teaspoon fine-ground black pepper
- 4 slices applewood-smoked bacon, cut in ½-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons plus ⅓ cup butter
- 1 medium onion, medium diced
- ½ cup red pearl onions
- 8 ounces mushrooms, sliced
- 1 medium carrot, medium diced
- 1 celery stalk, thin sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, fine chopped
- 1 cup Cognac
- 1¾ cups flour, plus more for surface
- 2 cups red wine
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 thyme sprigs, leaves stripped and chopped
- 2 sage leaves, thin sliced
- ½ tablespoon sugar

Season chicken with ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Set aside. In large skillet, cook bacon. Remove bacon from pan, brush with maple syrup and set aside. Add 2 tablespoons butter to same pan. Add chicken, brown on all sides over medium heat, then set aside. Add onion, mushrooms, carrots, celery and garlic, and sauté about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, and transfer to large bowl. While pan is still hot, deglaze with Cognac.

Turn heat back on low. Whisk in 2 tablespoons flour, and cook until slightly brown. Add red wine a little at a time, whisking constantly, until sauce bubbles and thickens. Return chicken to pan, and add parsley, thyme, sage and sugar. Cover and simmer about 30 minutes, or until chicken is tender. Remove from heat. Stir in bacon, and set aside.

Heat oven to 450°F.

In bowl of stand mixer, combine remaining 1¼ cups flour and ½ teaspoon salt. Add remaining ⅓ cup butter, and mix until crumbly. Add ¼ cup cold water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until smooth ball of dough forms. On floured surface, roll out to make a 10-by-12-inch piecrust.

Pour chicken mixture into large baking dish or individual baking dishes, and top with pie dough. Crimp edges and cut slits to vent. Bake until crust is golden brown, about 20 minutes. *Serves 4–6.*

The Update:

White and Dark Chocolate Cherry Bread Pudding

The Original: Bread Pudding

Chef: Raphael Lunetta, Lunetta Dining Room and Bar, Santa Monica, CA

Chef Raphael Lunetta hits all the right notes with his twist on tradition at his namesake restaurant in Santa Monica, California. Alex Weil, the beverage manager, likes to pair it with **Elio Perrone 2016 Bigarò Rosé**, a blend of Brachetto and Moscato. "The Brachetto in the blend gives the wine a fresh, red-berry fruitiness and its rosé color that classically pairs well with chocolate, while the effervescence of the wine refreshes the palate with each sip," says Weil. "I chose the wine to balance the inherent richness of bread pudding, rather than trying to match it."

- 3 eggs
- 12 egg yolks
- 1¼ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 6 cups cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- 3 cups white chocolate chips
- 1 cup dark chocolate chips
- 1 cup dried cherries
- 1 pound ciabatta, sliced and toasted

Heat oven to 350°F.

In large, heat-proof bowl, whisk eggs, egg yolks, sugar and cinnamon. In medium pot, bring cream and milk to boil. Remove from heat, and add 2 cups of white chocolate chips. Whisk warm cream mixture into egg mixture very gradually to avoid cooking eggs. Place ciabatta in large round pan, and pour mixture over bread. Add dried cherries, dark chocolate chips and remaining 1 cup white chocolate chips. Mix well, and soak for at least 1 hour. Cover with aluminum foil. Set round pan in larger baking dish, and add enough water to larger dish to reach halfway up sides of circular dish. Bake for 50 minutes, or until set. Let cool and serve. *Serves 4–6.*

