

Bacon-Wrapped Crab & Shiitake-Stuffed Filet Mignon with Scallops in Purple Potato Nets & Champagne Béarnaise Sauce

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
1½ cups shiitake mushrooms,
stemmed and sliced
½ cup shallot, finely diced
2 Tbsp carrot, peeled and finely diced
salt and fresh ground pepper to taste
2 tsp marjoram, finely chopped
1 tsp garlic, minced
½ tsp oregano, finely chopped
½ tsp parsley, finely chopped
¼ pound crabmeat
4 6-ounce 2-inch thick filet mignon
steaks
8 strips apple wood-smoked bacon
¼ cup butter
4 diver scallops
canola oil for frying
4 purple potatoes, peeled
1 cup champagne béarnaise sauce
(recipe follows)
1 Tbsp chives, finely chopped

This was the first gourmet dish I ever conceived. I prepared it for a big Christmas dinner with family and friends. It was quite an introduction to the culinary arts. All the preparation, planning and hard work were quite overwhelming, but when it came time to sit down and enjoy the fruits of my labor, it was all worth it. This is a dish that I am still extremely proud of and it has found its way back to my family's table on several occasions.

YIELD – 4 servings

Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a sauté pan over medium heat. Add the mushrooms, shallot and carrot, season with salt and pepper and sauté until soft and tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Add the marjoram, garlic, oregano and parsley and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Remove the mixture from the heat and transfer to the bowl of an electric food processor. Once the mixture has cooled, add the crabmeat and pulse the machine until all of the ingredients are fully incorporated, about 30 seconds. Set aside.

Heat oven to 400 degrees.

Cut a 2-inch horizontal incision in the center of each steak to form a pocket for stuffing, being careful not to slice the steaks in half. Stuff equal parts of the mushroom dressing into each steak. Wrap two slices of bacon around each steak so that all sides are covered. Using toothpicks, fasten the bacon to the steaks to prevent them from slipping during cooking.

Add the butter and the remaining olive oil to a skillet over high heat. When the butter is completely melted, place the steaks in the skillet and sear until browned, about 2 minutes on each side. Transfer the skillet to the oven and cook until the steaks are medium-rare, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the steaks from the skillet and let stand for 10 minutes.

Heat the canola oil to 350 degrees in an electric fryer or a large pot. Use a roto-slicer to cut the potatoes into 4 continuous noodle-like strands. Wrap a scallop in a strand of potatoes and place in the oil. Fry until crispy, 1 to 2 minutes, using a spider to keep the strands in a bunch. Remove the potato net from the fryer and drain on paper towels. Repeat the process with the remaining scallops and potato strands.

To serve, spoon 2 tablespoons of the béarnaise sauce in the center of a round service plate. Place a steak in the center of the plate and nappé with 2 more tablespoons of the sauce. Place a potato net atop the steak, sprinkle with chives and serve immediately.

Champagne Béarnaise Sauce

YIELD – 1 cup

Combine the champagne, shallot, dried tarragon, 1 tablespoon of the fresh tarragon, vinegar, salt and pepper in a small saucepan over high heat. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat to medium and cook until the liquid reduces by 50 percent. Remove from the heat and let cool.

Whisk the egg yolks together in the bowl of a double boiler over medium heat until they become pale and double in volume, 3 to 4 minutes. Whisk in the butter, 1 tablespoon at a time, until all of the butter is incorporated. Strain the liquid from the champagne mixture into the sauce and whisk until all of the ingredients are fully incorporated. Whisk in the remaining tarragon. Serve immediately.

½ cup dry champagne
¼ cup shallot, diced
2 Tbsp dried tarragon
2 Tbsp fresh tarragon, chopped
1 Tbsp champagne vinegar
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp fresh ground white pepper
3 egg yolks
¼ cup unsalted butter