Santa Fe Sweet Corn Crab Cakes with Brandy Chive Remouláde Sauce & Roasted Tomato Coulís

It's well known that good crabmeat is what makes good crab cakes. This dish proves that good breadcrumbs can play a big part as well. Substituting sweet cornbread crumbs for traditional white or sourdough crumbs imparts a new and scrumptious Southwestern flavor to the traditional crab cake which plays well with the remouláde and coulís accoutrements and makes for a top-notch starter to any meal.

- 8 ounces sweet cornbread
- 2 Tbsp plus 1 tsp unsalted butter
- ¾ cup red bell pepper, finely diced
- ½ cup yellow onion, finely diced
- 1½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- salt and fresh ground pepper
- 1 tsp garlic minced
- ½ cup roasted sweet corn kernels, chopped
- 1 large egg
- ½ pound lump crabmeat
- ¾ cup panko breadcrumbs
- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- ½ cup roasted tomato coulís (recipe on page 48)
- ½ cup brandy chive remouláde (recipe follows)
- ½ Tbsp parsley, finely chopped

YIELD – 4 servings

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Crumble the cornbread into crumbs and place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Place the sheet in the oven and bake until the crumbs are dried through, about 10 minutes. Remove the sheet from the oven and set aside until the breadcrumbs cool completely.

Melt 1 teaspoon of the butter in a cast iron skillet over medium heat. Add ½ a cup of the bell pepper and onion, season with cumin, paprika, thyme, salt and pepper and sauté until the vegetables are soft and tender, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to a bowl to cool.

In a large bowl, fold together the baked breadcrumbs, corn, egg and the cooled vegetable mixture until all of the ingredients are fully incorporated. Gently fold in the crabmeat, being careful not to break up any of the lumps. Remove ½ a cup of the mixture at a time and form into 1-inch round patties. Dredge the patties in the panko breadcrumbs and set aside.

Heat the canola oil and the remaining butter in a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the cakes, 4 at a time, and cook until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes on each side. Remove the patties from the skillet, season with salt and drain on paper towels. Repeat the process with the remaining patties.

To serve, place 3 dollops of coulís in a triangular pattern along the inner edge of a round appetizer plate. Dress the plate with remouláde in a zigzag pattern that separates the coulís dollops from each other. Place a crab cake in the center of the plate. Lean a second cake atop the first cake. Sprinkle with the parsley and the remaining bell pepper on the plate and serve.

Brandy Chive Remouláde

- 1 large egg
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp Cognac brandy
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp lemon juice
- 1 cup grape seed oil
- 2 tsp chives, chopped

YIELD – 1 cup

Place the egg, mustard, brandy, paprika, salt and lemon juice in the bowl of a food processor. Fasten the lid and pulse the machine until all of the ingredients are completely incorporated. Slowly drizzle in the oil until the mixture takes on a mayonnaise consistency. Add the chives and pulse the machine for 10 seconds. Transfer the mixture to a squeeze-top condiment bottle. Serve or store, refrigerated, for up to 10 days.

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