

**A Gracious Plenty**  
**Recipes courtesy of Chef Sydney Meers**  
**Syd's FishPig Café, Norfolk**

**NOTE:** *Virginia Living* is thrilled to share the following **EIGHT** recipes with our readers, thanks to Chef Syd's endless generosity. They're straight from his treasure trove of recipes, so enjoy!

**Cucumber Crème Fraîche Soup**  
**By Chef Sydney Meers**

4 cucumbers, peeled rough chop, then lightly salt  
After 15 or so minutes, drain the cucumbers and rinse the salt off  
2 scallions, whites only, chopped fine  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 cup homemade crème fraiche  
½ cup heavy crème, 40% fat  
½ cup vegetable stock

Mix the above ingredients, set aside.

3 oz. crumbled goat cheese  
About 8 basil leaves, chiffonade cut  
3 oz. fresh blanched fennel  
2 tsp. sea salt  
1 tsp black pepper

Toss the above in a bowl to lightly mix and fluff up just a bit.

Add to the crème fraiche and puree to combine adding veggie stock to get the viscosity you're looking for, either thick or thin, test your flavor, then salt & pepper again if needed.

Refrigerate for at least 12 hours, if u need it because u forgot Dorothy was coming over then place it in an ice bath for 2 hours, and you should be done before the wicked eats Dorothy and lil toetoe, the dog.

To serve, pour in bowl and garnish with saved half of fresh basil chiffonade right in the center followed by a sprinkle or so of cumin seeds, fresh corn off the cob, and voila, it's so pretty and delicious.

**Crème Fraîche:**  
1 pint sour cream  
½ pint heavy cream



2 oz. buttermilk  
1 lemon, juiced

Mix together and squeeze juice of a small lemon, stir well and place in a closed container at room temp for 4 to 5 days, open, and stir to make sure it's thickened and taste. Should have a good sour but smooth flavor.

Use or place in refrigerator for about up to 3 weeks or more

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## **Chocolate NOVA, Beyond Planet Zepnor**

### **By Chef Sydney Meers**

Use a 1 – 9-inch cake pan with a removable bottom.

#### **Ganache:**

6 oz. 65% dark chocolate disk  
1 oz. unsalted butter  
8 oz. 40% heavy cream  
2 teaspoons Syd's vanilla extract, or high-quality extract

Place in a glass bowl and melt for two minutes on medium setting, depending on your microdevice. Just don't burn the chocolate. Once done, use a wire whisk and stir to melt the chocolate, set aside, and let it cool before moving on.

#### **Filling:**

3 large eggs, beaten lightly

2 oz. sugar

Add sugar to eggs and whisk with a rubber spatula making sure eggs and sugar are blended well, scrape down sides.

Add the above-melted chocolate and stir to blend the two.

4 oz. chopped pecans

Sprinkle onto the top of the torte filling and place in a preheated oven at 325°F (convection) or 350°F (conventional). Bake for about 16 minutes, depending on your oven.

Once done, set it on a cooling rack and let cool completely.

#### **Top Ganache**



8 oz. 35-40% white chocolate

1.5 oz. 40% heavy cream

2 teaspoons Syd's Vanilla Extract (or high quality vanilla extract)

Place in a glass bowl and micro for 2 minutes, remove, and whisk with a whisk this time until all the chocolate is melted and smooth.

Once cooled, pour over the ganache torte till coated all over and again let sit at room temperature till set, 'bout an hour or so

Note: Don't refrigerate this as the chocolate will set firm and be hard. Leave at room temperature for up to four days, but you should have eaten it all by then—just saying.

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## **Les Petite Cobblers**

### **By Chef Sydney Meers**

Sugar dough the pans, and save some for a lattice or solid top. You can use a regular casserole dish but I use 3"x 2" cake pans with removable bottoms.

10 peaches or 2 pints strawberries or other fruit. I use what's in season. Fruit amounts can vary a bit here depending on the fruit.

4 oz. butter, melted

4 oz. granulated sugar

Juice of 2 lemons

½ oz. pastry flour or all-purpose flour

Water as per your needs. I don't use a lot, fruit will give plenty

Cut and mix all fruits, and set aside.

Mix sugar and flour, toss with the above fruit, then add the juice of 2 lemons, 4 oz. melted butter, and a little water if needed to make slurry

Toss all together and spoon into tart pans or petite cake pans (3" pans with removable bottoms are my preference) and dab butter on top.

Add lattice or solid top to tart, spray with water, sprinkle with coarse sea-salt or just sugar if you want, and bake at 325°F (convection) or 350°F (conventional) oven till brown—18 minutes. in convection, a little more in a standard oven.

Take leftover fruit if you have any and purée to use for coulis for the dessert.

Yields 6

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## **Pork Belly Meat Loaf**

### **By Chef Sydney Meers**

Yields one 3x9 terrine mold

Double batch

1 oz. roasted garlic  
4 stalks of garden scallions  
4 oz. smoked tomato, chopped fine

2 oz.  
6 stalks  
6 oz.

Sauté these together for about 2 to 5 minutes till soft and the onions sweat. Set aside to cool before mixing with the egg ingredients.

1 extra large egg, beaten light  
3 slices of my dinner bread, crust removed\*  
4 basil leaves, any type is good, tear gently

2 eggs  
5 slices  
8 leaves

Mix the bread and basil in the eggs to get a good blend and soften the bread crumbs a bit.

1 lb. 8 oz. homemade sausage  
8 oz. pork belly, pre-roasted and chopped  
2 oz. ketchup vinaigrette

3 lb.  
1 lb.  
5oz.

Mix meat and pour all the vinaigrette into a bowl, using your hands to mix in well to blend all the vinaigrette and meat.

Next, add the tomato-onion mixture till blended. but don't overmix ingredients.

Now, add the egg mixture till a good blend is achieved.

Season to taste with sea salt first, taste, then pepper, taste, and when satisfied, set aside.

1 terrine mold  
Cornmeal, for dusting

2 molds

Take butter and rub pan on sides and bottom, dust in corn meal

Take the meatloaf and place it in a pan making sure you get in the bottom and corners well.

Bake at 325°F (convection) or 350°F in a still oven till you reach 145°F to 150°F degrees internal temperature. This will keep it moist but not overcook it, and it takes about 40 minutes to reach the temperature

Carryover cooking will be about 20 minutes, and you can serve cold or hot from the oven. Be careful—it may break up a little because it hasn't set up all the way. If you give it the carryover cooking time it should work.

This can be eaten like any meatloaf but I like to make brioche, slice it into sandwich slices, then build it with pimento cheese on top, place it in a small iron skillet, roast to brown, then pour a little thyme and smoked tomato gravy over it—damn good, and I call it the Neo-Monte Cristo



## **Pork Pie Hat**

### **By Chef Sydney Meers**

I use 3"x2" cake pans with removable bottoms. I pat out my sugar dough for this savory treat, and I make a simple and delicious thyme gravy with it sided with some of my pickle relish, or yours if you make it.

1 lb. homemade sausage (store-bought at your own risk)  
4 oz. slow-roasted pork belly (if you can't find pork belly, roast off bacon)  
3 oz. smoochie bear ham (you can use store-bought tasso)  
3 oz. my country 'PoNo' ham (you can use local country hams, they are saltier)  
3 oz. catsup vinaigrette  
1 oz. house-made lard gelee (the congealed liquid separated from lard)  
1 oz. lard  
2 large eggs

Cut the two hams into strips, then rough chop them. Set in a mixing bowl.

Cut the pork belly the same way, and toss with the others above.

Break up sausage with your hands into chunks, mix with others above, add the last ingredients, and use your hands to mix well.

Break and whisk till eggs are ready to incorporate into the meat. Using your hands, mash all together until you get the egg mixed into the meat and you don't see the egg.

#### **Pan Prep:**

Pat pan with sugar dough and then place the meat into the pan. Spread smooth, and cut a lid for the top of the pie.

Secure edges and bake for 25 minutes at 325°F (convection) or 350°F (conventional) oven or till golden to light dark brown.

Remove from oven and let carry over for about 15 to 20 minutes. I like my pie at room temperature but you can eat it right out of the oven

#### **Catsup vinaigrette**

This is a good little sub for nasty catsup that is full of sugar. Here I break it down to take the sweetness out.

8 oz. catsup. Hunt's is less sweet but either will work  
½ cup cold pressed olive oil  
½ cup red balsamic vinegar  
½ cup white distilled vinegar  
1 oz. black pepper, fine ground  
2 teaspoons sea salt  
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce  
1 tablespoon hot sauce, (I make my own and use cayenne, tabasco's that I grow and red jalapeño, puréed with a touch of sugar and ½ cup vinegar)

Mix all ingredients and whisk for a couple of minutes to blend well.



This is now ready for endless use. I use it in BBQ sauce, I use it like it is, I mix it in vinaigrettes and dressing, dips—you name it.

## **Savory Cheesecake**

**By Chef Sydney Meers**

1 pan lined with sugar dough 1 inch up the sides, trim to be level.

1 scallion, chopped  
1 oz. chopped basil, chopped  
1 tsp. spicy pepper mix

Sauté scallion and basil, cool, and add the spice, set aside till ready for this to be added.

9 oz. mixed cheese  
10 oz. crème fraîche  
1/2 lb. cream cheese  
8 oz. heavy cream  
4 oz. crawfish tail meat

Cream the cream cheese to soften, scrape down the sides, and add the cheese to soften it as well, scrape down again, and stir in the crème fraîche, scrape down the bowl and add the cream stirring to blend.

3 eggs, extra large

Beat eggs in one at a time till incorporated, scrape down sides, and stir to blend again, then add the crawfish tail meat with fat.

Pour mixture into baking pan and bake at 350°F for about 40 min., check at 30 min.

Continue to cook till done if needed. The center should be just set but still spring back. Don't overcook. It should feel set in the middle while still being soft, it will carry over cook, and set.

Note: if you're rushed you can go into the refrigerator right after the oven, just have it in a place so it can get good air circulation but try to let it set at room temperature for 2 hours.

The major heat should be gone in about 40 minutes but you don't want this to be a cold savory dish if going with food. If you want it to be a starter then you can do it as cold, room temp or warm but for this class, we will do a quick chill in the fridge so we can eat it.



## **Stove's Sugar Dough**

### **By Chef Sydney Meers**

*Chef's notes: This is not dough for rolling; you have to pat this dough out into the pan you're using for dessert. It's rich and wonderful and can also be made into a shortbread. I have even used it for the bottoms of pans mixed with pecans and then a cake batter over that for a crunch factor. Just don't over-mix it or you will have some good rubber dough.*

1 cup white sugar, baker's sugar if you can find it  
1 lb. unsalted AA butter  
6 cups, all-purpose flour (unbleached and without chemicals if possible, King Arthur is good stuff and easy to find)

In the mixer bowl of a 4 to 6 qt. mixer, cream the sugar and butter until light and somewhat fluffy.

Stop the machine, scrape down the sides, and add all at once 6 cups of flour  
Raise the bowl and on the lowest speed, blend the dough until it pulls together. If it's winter and your environment isn't warm with moisture, you may need to spray water from a mister a little at a time till the dough starts to combine.

Pinch a bit of dough to see if it will hold together, if so it's ready for use.

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## **Summer flounder with a Compound Crème**

### **By Chef Sydney Meers**

1 filet of flounder

Cut flounder into as many pieces as you need. For large numbers, I cut down the middle of the fish, then I cut the half into sizes I need for the dish.

Dust in flour, then pat it off, and place in a preheated pan with a little oil and sauté until done to your liking.

Meanwhile, do the veggie pan roast. You can use any combination of veggies you want as long as they complement and go with the fish being used. We'll use tomatoes, cucumbers, and basil.

Sauté till done, place on the plate, put fish on top, and then the olive goat crème fraîche.

### **Compound Olive Goat Crème Fraîche**

4 oz. crème fraîche



2 oz. kalamata olives, pitted  
1 oz. goat cheese  
1 tsp sea salt  
1 lemon, zest, and juice

Mix all together, then use it and if any is left over you'll be able to keep it for a couple of weeks

Note: I use the dark side of this fish, as it's thicker and better meat than the light side which is the bottom and doesn't cook the same, it's good for frying in my opinion.

