

Roasted Halibut with Green Olive Pesto

This sprightly flavored dish will remind you of warmer days. Halibut is my favorite springtime fish and the buttery flavor of the fish pairs well with the tasty and easy to prepare pesto.

Serves 6

For the halibut

6 6-ounce skinless halibut filets
Extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 350

1. Place a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Season filets with salt and pepper.
2. Place filets (presentation side down-this is the side that did not have the skin on it. It is the prettier side!) into the pan. Allow filets to brown (about 5 minutes). Transfer filets to a sheet pan and roast in the preheated oven until the filets are firm to the touch (about 10-12 minutes depending upon thickness)
3. Spoon pesto over each filet and garnish with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil and mint leaves.

For the Pesto

½ cup best quality extra virgin olive oil
½ cup almonds, toasted
½ cup golden raisins
2 cups green olives, pitted (I like the product from Israel)
3 tablespoons freshly squeezed orange juice
2 cloves garlic
Zest of 1 orange
Pinch of crushed red chilies, optional
¼ cup fresh mint leaves + additional leaves for garnish
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1. Place all of the ingredients in a food processor or blender and process until the mixture is a very thick paste with some chunks remaining.

2. The pesto can be made up to 3 days ahead of serving and can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator.

Olive Oil Cake

Luscious olive oil, saffron and almonds are the foundation for this fragrant Passover dessert. The cake is light and airy with a moist crumb. The saffron gives the cake an earthy honey flavor that complements the olive oil and almonds. I like to spread Olive Oil Ganache over the cake layer and garnish with toasted almonds for an elegant dessert.

3 eggs
2 ½ cups sugar
1 cup white wine
½ teaspoon saffron threads
½ cup fresh squeezed lemon and/or orange juice
Zest of 3 oranges
1 vanilla bean, scraped
1 ½ cups best quality extra virgin olive oil
1 ½ cups almond flour
½ cup potato starch
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon baking powder
pinch of salt

Preheat oven to 350

Line a 9 inch spring form cake pan with parchment paper.

1. Beat the eggs and sugar to a ribbon stage using the whisk attachment.
2. Combine the wine, saffron, citrus juices and zest, the vanilla bean and the olive oil and set aside.
3. Combine the almond flour, potato starch, baking soda, baking powder and salt and whisk together. Set aside.
4. Alternate the wet ingredients and dry ingredients into the egg mixture. Pour into the prepared cake pan and bake for 30-35 minutes until the top springs back when lightly pressed. Cool the cake on a cooling rack. Invert the cake layer onto a cake board or decorative platter. Garnish with Olive Oil Ganache or Passover powdered sugar.

Olive Oil Ganache

8 ounces bittersweet chocolate (during Passover I Schmerlings)

2/3 cup brewed coffee

½ cup of Passover confectioner's sugar

3 tablespoons best quality extra virgin olive oil

1 vanilla bean, scraped

2 teaspoons good quality sea salt (the sea salt has a sparkly flavor that brings out the best in the chocolate and the olive oil)-optional

1. Melt chocolate with coffee over a double boiler in a bowl suspended over simmering water. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly.

2. Add remaining ingredients and whisk to combine.

3. Pour over cakes while still warm and garnish with a sprinkle of sea salt.