

March • April 2007

# plate

Creative chefs. Better menus. Real solutions.



fanciful fruits  
& nuts

**CARIBBEAN island treasures**

**Going nuts WITH SAUCES AND SPREADS**

**A FRESH EYE FOR apple pie**

**Granola: FROM HIPPIE TO HAUTE**



from the cumin," Chauhan says. "It's basically a punch of flavor in a small bite."

When the British ruled India they took the concept of chutneys back home. At Kildare's Irish Pub, Goldberg makes a traditional Irish chutney with apples, raisins, onions, a bit of apple cider vinegar and some

mustard seed that is served with the signature Dubliner burger (\$7.95). "Servers explain to diners that they should put it on the burger," Goldberg says. "I think it tastes good on the french fries, too."

Chutneys have crossed over to accent many other types of cuisines. For the Coyote Café, Miller created a Southwestern-style chutney with New Mexican apples, fresh red chiles, apple cider, marjoram and roasted pine nuts. It accompanies a pork tenderloin marinated with herbs and spices such as chile caribe, Mexican oregano, cloves, cinnamon and cumin (\$22). "The fruit complements the sweetness of the pork and the acidity cuts the richness and the fattiness of it."

Duane Keller, the regional corporate chef for Western Golf Properties, which includes the Heritage Hunt and Golf Country Club, a retirement community in Gainesville, Va., says chutneys are now perfectly at home as an accompaniment for American dishes. He created a port-infused fig and apricot chutney flavored with cinnamon, allspice and cloves to pair with a single frenched American rib lamb chop on the appetizer menu (\$9.50).

"The apricots are a little sweeter and the figs are earthier and the reduction of port adds underlying fruity tones," he explains. "The Virginia lamb is not very

## CHEF'S TIP

When making his pineapple mango habanero jam, Brad Farmerie, chef at New York's Public, tests to see if it's thick enough by putting a small spoonful of the liquid on a plate and refrigerates it for 10 minutes. At that point, if it separates when you run your finger through it and it stays that way, the jam is done, he says.

gamey, so the mild chutney doesn't overpower it." He adds, "Years ago a chutney would have been considered exotic, but now they are like other accompaniments that make little tastes on the plate. The lamb chop could be perfectly fine by itself, but the chutney gives it the 'wow' factor."

Chutneys are also turning up in unexpected

places on the menu. Coco Pazzo's Masuda creates a persimmon tarte tatin with a cookie dough made with preserves, nuts and raisins paired with a chutney of dried apricots and cranberries and goji berries, popular in her native Japan and now popping up in countless health food stores in the United States. Aleppo peppers and a pinch of black pepper add a touch of heat. "The chutney is very visually pleasing," Masuda says. "The red and orange and pink fruit glisten like jewels and the chutney hits all the taste notes. It makes the small ending to a meal into something more complex."

Vermilion's Chauhan finds that diners' tastes are evolving and they are more open to salsas and chutneys. "When we opened, we tamed down the flavors to see how people would react, but we found they wanted more and more spice, not only in terms of heat but in terms of bolder flavors. Now we have a heat section of the menu and some of the items on it are our largest sellers." ♦

Nancy Maes is Chicago-based food writer and the author of "Around Chicago with Kids," (Fodor's 2002).



# personality PLAY

Fruit jams, chutneys and salsas offer vibrant, fresh voices to modern menus

By Nancy Maes

Fruit jams, chutneys and salsas are like scripted characters that lend their own distinctive personalities to a dish. Salsas are the sassy femme fatale; jams are the sweet ingénue; and chutneys are intense, even professorial. But while these condiments have traditional and distinctive traits, chefs are giving them makeovers and casting new roles for them to play.

## SALSA DANCING

The popularity of Latin cuisine has given the south-of-the-border salsas a prominent place in the culinary spotlight. "I define salsas as uncooked, partially cooked or cooked ingredients that are combined but never cooked together," says Mark Miller, executive chef-owner of Coyote Cafe in Santa Fe, N.M., and the author of "The Great

Salsa Book" (Ten Speed Press, 1994), who is credited with launching modern Southwestern cuisine. "Salsas layer ingredients and give you flavor pockets, but they are fragile in terms of timeline because they're not cooked."

Spicy salsas are thought to have originated with the Aztecs, who were the first to blend tomatoes and chiles. But today, salsas have crossed over from their origins and been welcomed into the global culinary community. At Kildare's Irish Pub in Philadelphia, Executive Chef Stephanie Goldberg pairs a red pepper-pineapple salsa with grilled chicken breasts and a pearl barley pilaf (\$13.95). "The pearl barley is indigenous to Ireland, but you want something refreshing with it because it has a mild, earthy taste and the chicken





## American lambshanks with port-infused fig and apricot chutney

Regional Corporate Chef Duane Keller,  
Heritage Hunt and Golf Country Club,  
Gainesville, Va.

Yield: about 8 appetizer servings

Menu price: \$9.50;  
food cost/serving: 45%

Port wine	2 C
Light brown sugar	1/2 Lb
Shallots, chopped	4 each
Lemon, zest of	1 each
Cinnamon stick	1 each
Kosher salt	1 tsp
Ground allspice	1/4 tsp
Ground cloves	1/8 tsp

Dried apricot halves	1/2 Lb
Fresh figs, firm, stemmed, halved	1 Lb
American lamb rack, frenched, roasted to medium-rare	1 each

1. In a large saucepan combine port, brown sugar, shallots, lemon zest, cinnamon stick, salt, allspice and cloves and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until mixture is thickened and reduced by 2/3, forming a thick syrup.

2. Add apricots and figs and cook gently until figs are very soft and beginning to fall apart and most of liquid has evaporated, about 30 minutes.

3. Serve chutney with a single frenched lamb chop.



breasts are mild, too," she explains. "With the salsa you have the tanginess of the peppers, the sweetness of the pineapple, and lemon and lime juice add a subtle bit of acidity. Olive oil adds a bit of shine and body, as well."

Salsas are not even out of place at the Oak Steakhouse, an Italian steakhouse in Charleston, S.C. Mango salsa accompanies sesame-encrusted yellowfin tuna with a wasabi and ginger-soy glaze (\$26). "You have the sweetness of the mangoes and peppers that give a bit of bite—and there is a touch of Champagne vinegar and honey," Chef Brett McKee says. "The sweet and savory flavors