



Techniques

APPLE STRUDEL DEMO BY STEPHEN DURFEE. JIM PORIS REPORTS. PHOTOS BY JENNIFER MARTINÉ.

Like an inside-out sushi roll—rice wrapped around savory ingredients—**Stephen Durfee** bucks convention by reversing apple strudel, encasing the pastry in an apple wrapper. In a matter of speaking, two “mothers” conceived this one dish: first, **The French Laundry’s** obsessive use of the Japanese turning slicer during Durfee’s 5 1/2 years covering various stations (mostly pastry) at **Thomas Keller’s** restaurant in Yountville, California, and second, a creative way to illustrate the so-called pastry flip during the *Food Arts* partnered, healthy themed 2006 Worlds of Flavor Baking & Pastry Arts Invitational Retreat at The Culinary Institute of America’s Greystone campus in St. Helena, California, where Durfee teaches in the baking and pastry program.

“This dish found its initial inspiration from the tool, which, in the TFL kitchen, was called the ‘Jenny Machine’ after a CIA intern,” Durfee explains. “Everyone loved that machine! Thomas used it to slice a ribbon of potato, which was then wrapped around a fish fillet before it was sautéed. In the spirit of one-upmanship, I started wrapping everything in sight in apple ribbons—cakes, French toast, etc. Not surprisingly, some of the best dishes from my dessert repertoire were blatantly ripped off from other stations in the TFL kitchen. I’ve always said that the most important training I had for my pastry career was the year and a half that I spent on the garde-manger station in that kitchen, where I started when **The French Laundry** opened in July 1994. I spent another year on fish [partnered with **Jonathan Benno**, now of **Per Se**] and six embarrassing weeks on meat before the pastry position opened up.

“For that conference on health and wellness I had to illustrate the ‘pastry flip,’ which turns a dessert’s indulgent part into the garnish and its fruit into the main event. Around here, this is often explained using cheesecake as the metaphor: rather than serve a hunk of rich cheesecake with strawberries as the garnish you serve a bowl of delicious local, seasonal, organic, bio-dynamic, fair wage—this is California, you know—strawberries with a small slice of cheesecake, just enough to satisfy the craving but not enough to overwhelm an already full diner. Under pressure to come up with something a little more interesting than that for a conference of my fellow chefs, I pulled the apple ribbon out of my bag of tricks, “flipped” the role of the strudel dough, and came up with the version that I demo here. The rest of the dish is fleshed out with raisins, dry white wine, and an oil made from fresh bay laurel leaves from our garden.”

INSIDE-OUT APPLE STRUDEL

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Yield: 1 strudel (requires advance preparation)

Bay leaf oil:

30 fresh bay leaves, stemmed, blanched, and shocked

1 bunch parsley, leaves only, blanched and shocked

1 cup canola oil

1. Dry bay leaves and parsley very well; place in a blender; add oil;





2 fresh bay leaves
2 Tbsps. golden raisins
crème fraîche, whipped
(for garnish)

1. Peel 2 apples; core; cut into medium dice (yield should be 2 cups). 2. Place diced apples, 1/3 cup raisins, brown sugar, 1/4 cup water, 1 tsp. butter, 1 tsp. oil, sugar, cinnamon, salt, and nutmeg in nonreactive saucepan set over medium heat; bring to a simmer; cover; cook until apples soften (about 20 minutes); remove from heat; cool to room temperature. 3. Heat oven to 400°F. 4. Brush 1 sheet phyllo dough with a mixture of 2 tsps. butter and 2 tsps. oil; sprinkle with confectioners' sugar; top with remaining sheet phyllo dough; brush with butter/oil mixture; sprinkle with confectioners' sugar; dust with bread crumbs and almonds; roll into a tight cylinder; brush outside of cylinder with butter/oil mixture; sprinkle with confectioners' sugar; place on baking sheet;

puree; place in nonreactive bowl; cover with plastic wrap; let infuse overnight. 2. Place herb mixture in chinois lined with cheesecloth set over bowl; strain oil into the bowl; reserve; discard herbs.

Assembly:

- 6 Golden Delicious or Fuji apples
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 3/4 cup water
- 3 Tbsps. unsalted butter, melted
- 3 Tbsps. canola oil
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1/8 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg, freshly grated
- 2 sheets phyllo dough
- confectioners' sugar (for dusting)
- 2 tsps. bread crumbs, toasted
- 2 tsps. almonds, roasted and finely chopped
- 1/2 cup white wine

bake until golden brown (about 15 minutes); remove from oven; reserve. 5. Reduce oven to 350°F. 6. Peel apples; using a Japanese turning slicer, cut remaining 4 apples into 12" long ribbons (A); arrange apple ribbons so they barely overlap on parchment lined sheet pan (B); mix 2 Tbsps. butter and 2 Tbsps. oil; brush apple ribbons with butter/oil mixture; spread apple/raisin filling in a line down one edge of the apple sheet (C); center phyllo cylinder in the center of apple/raisin filling (D); roll the apple sheet as you would a strudel or sushi roll, using parchment paper as a guide (E); brush with butter/oil blend; sprinkle with confectioners' sugar; bake until lightly browned (about 15 minutes); remove from oven; reserve (F). 7. Bring wine to a boil in nonreactive saucepan; ignite to burn off the alcohol; add 1/2 cup water, bay leaves, and golden raisins; simmer 15 minutes; remove bay leaves; place mixture in a blender; puree; reserve. 8. To serve, cut into portions; place 1 portion on each dessert plate; garnish plate with golden raisin puree and bay leaf oil; top each slice of strudel with crème fraîche.

What to drink: Late harvest Riesling

FOOD ARTS (ISSN 1042-9123) is published monthly except combined issues in January and February, and July and August by Food Arts Publishing Company Inc., a subsidiary of M. Shanken Communications, Inc., 387 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Food Arts, P.O. Box 5152, Brentwood, TN 37024. Subscription rates are: United States, \$40 per year; Canada, \$48 per year; all other countries, \$60 per year. Foreign subscriptions are payable in advance in U.S. funds. SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES: Please write to Food Arts, P.O. Box 5152, Brentwood, TN 37024 or call (800) 848-7113. ATTENTION, RETAILERS: For information on selling FOOD ARTS in your store, call: (800) 344-0763. © 2008 Food Arts Publishing Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Volume 11, Number 3. Printed in the U.S.A.