

UConn

UNIVERSITY CATERING

Whet Your Appetite

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Catering Team Wins UConn Dining Boiling Point Competition

Typically the annual UConn Dining Culinary Olympics is held in January in the South Ballroom, buzzing with chefs, judges, and hundreds of attendees. The full-day event consists of a recipe contest amongst chefs in the morning and the Boiling Point competition with teams in the afternoon. Due to COVID, Dining had to rethink the event. For the 21st Annual Culinary Olympics, the event consisted of just the Boiling Point competition and took place on November 17th and 18th in Dining's Innovation Lab. Five teams signed up and each came to the Innovation Lab during their assigned time. Upon arrival, each team was given the same mystery basket of ingredients and 60 minutes to create their dishes. The mystery basket this year consisted of: lamb chops, a Jimmy Dean biscuit sausage egg and cheese sandwich, lentils, mandarin oranges, celery root, and cold brew coffee concentrate. The judges presiding over the event were Cynthia Costanzo, interim director of the UConn Student Union, and Jay Frain, interim executive director of UConn Recreation. Check out a video of the event at dining.uconn.edu.

Catering won with their dish: Orange espresso lamb chop with fall-inspired fresh celery root slaw, cheesy bacon mashed, and home-style honey sriracha baked lentils & pork. Congratulations to our team members Amanda Flynn, Jeremy Quintana, and Kathy Halgren on their creative dish! The Bistro took second place, and chefs from Gelfenbien won third. Other teams included participants from Putnam and McMahon dining halls.



STAFF RECIPES

Our staff share their favorite recipes

VEGAN VANILLA LATTE SNICKERDOODLES

By Alexis Saucier, Catering Chef

8 ¾ tablespoon vegan butter (block, room temp)
¾ cup granulated sugar
¼ cup apple sauce (unsweetened)
1 tablespoon vanilla bean paste
1 ½ cups white flour

1 teaspoon cream of tartar
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
1 tablespoon freeze dried espresso powder
1 teaspoon cocoa powder

For Rolling

4 tablespoons granulated sugar
3 tablespoons cinnamon

Place the vegan butter and granulated sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer and cream them together on medium speed until smooth and fluffy (2-5 minutes).

Add the apple sauce and vanilla bean paste and beat again until smooth.

In a separate small bowl, combine the flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and fine sea salt. Add to the stand mixer bowl and beat on slow until just combined.

Remove the dough from the mixer bowl and weigh it. Divide the dough in half and separate into two bowls. Cover one bowl with reusable plastic wrap and place in the fridge. Add the espresso powder and the cocoa to the other half of the dough and mix until combined. Cover and place in the fridge for 30 minutes.

While the dough cools, preheat the oven to 325 degrees and line two baking sheets with baking parchment. Place granulated sugar for rolling in a shallow bowl and set aside.

Once the dough is cooled, remove both bowls from the fridge. Starting with the vanilla dough, divide it into 12 equal-sized portions and form into rough balls with your hands. Set aside. Wash your hands and repeat the process with the espresso dough.

Gently squeeze together an espresso and vanilla ball together and roll them into one ball in your hands. Drop into the sugar and roll to coat all over. Remove from the sugar and place on the lined baking tray. Repeat the process until you have 12 combined balls of dough spread across the two baking trays.

Place one tray with six balls of dough into the oven and bake for 10-12 minutes. The dough will spread and crisp up around the edges slightly but will still look slightly under-done in the center. Don't worry – this is correct and will help the cookies to stay soft and chewy in the center. Remove the cookies and repeat with the second tray while the others cool.

Allow the cookies to cool for at least 20 minutes before serving.

PASTA E. FAGIOLI

By Charlotte Levasseur, Catering Operations Manager

Serves 8

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound ground Italian turkey sausage
1 medium onion (diced, about 1/2 cup)
1 stalk celery (diced)
1 carrot (peeled and diced)
1 tablespoon fresh garlic (minced)

1 teaspoon dried basil
1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes
1 (10 oz.) package frozen chopped spinach
½ cup grated parmesan cheese
½ cup ricotta (if desired)

In a large saucepan, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. When the oil shimmers, add the sausage. Cook until no longer pink, using a wooden spoon to break up the meat (about 5-7 minutes). Use a slotted spoon to remove the sausage and place it on a plate (leave the fat in the pot).

Add the onion, celery, and carrot to the remaining fat in the pot. Cook and stir over medium-high heat until tender (about 7-8 minutes). Add the garlic and cook for 1 more minute.

Season with salt and pepper; add beans, tomato paste, diced tomatoes, broth, parsley and rosemary. Bring to a boil, then stir in the pasta. Reduce heat to medium; continue cooking for about 10-11 more minutes (or until the pasta is tender). Stir the pasta regularly as it's cooking so that it doesn't stick to the pot.

Stir in the cooked sausage, and season with additional salt and pepper, if necessary. Ladle into bowls and garnish with fresh parsley, and freshly grated Parmesan.

STAFF RECIPES

SPINACH & MUSHROOM RISOTTO

By Wes Bookstaver, Catering Assistant Operations Manager

6 cups stock <i>(mushroom, chicken or vegetable)</i>	2 cups arborio rice
1 tablespoon olive oil	1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
½ cup unsalted butter	1 cup dry white wine
½ cup chopped shallots	½ teaspoon salt
½ cup chopped red bell pepper	1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
1 teaspoon minced garlic	¾ pound fresh baby spinach leaves*
1 pound thinly sliced mushrooms <i>(an assortment of crimini and mixed wild mushrooms yields best flavor; or just crimini - do not use white button mushrooms)</i>	1 cup freshly grated parmigiano reggiano
	1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley
	Freshly ground nutmeg to taste (optional)

Bring stock to a simmer over medium heat in a large stockpot. Reduce heat to very low and keep stock warm.

In a large heavy saucepot, heat oil and half the unsalted butter over medium-high heat. Add the shallots, red bell pepper, and garlic and cook, stirring until fragrant and just soft.

Add the mushrooms, cook, stirring until lightly browned (all their liquid is cooked off).

Add Arborio rice and stir constantly until the grains are opaque.

Stir in the thyme. Add white wine and stir until nearly all of the liquid is absorbed.

Add about 1 cup warm stock to the pot and stir constantly until nearly all the liquid is absorbed.

Add a half cup of warm stock to the pot and stir constantly until nearly all the liquid is absorbed.

Add salt and pepper and stir.

Repeat the process of adding stock until nearly all of the liquid is absorbed until the rice is just al dente, you have used all the stock and the risotto is creamy.

Add the fresh baby spinach leaves and stir into the pot a little at a time to evenly distribute, until just wilted.

Stir in the rest of the butter, the Parmigiana Reggiano, and the fresh parsley and freshly ground nutmeg (optional). Remove from heat, mix well.

*Note: If using large fresh spinach leaves, coarsely chop the leaves and blanch for 15 seconds. Remove the spinach to an ice bath and wait to add to the risotto.



RISOTTO CAKES

By Wes Bookstaver, Catering Assistant Operations Manager

6 cups chilled risotto	¾ tsp salt
2 cups all-purpose flour	½ tsp fresh black pepper
4 large eggs, lightly beaten	12 tablespoons olive oil
4 cups coarse breadcrumbs -use day old bread	

Divide chilled risotto into 16 even portions and form into 3/4" thick patties. Mix all-purpose flour, 1 / 4 teaspoon salt, and 1 / 4 teaspoon pepper in a shallow bowl. Mix bread crumbs, 1 / 4 teaspoon salt, and 1 / 4 teaspoon pepper in a shallow bowl. Coat each cake with flour, tapping off excess, then dip in egg, letting excess drip off, and then coat with bread crumbs.

Heat 6 tablespoons olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat until hot, but not smoking. Add 8 cakes to the pan and allow first side to brown for 2 ½ -3 minutes. Turn and allow to brown for 2 ½ -3 minutes. Transfer to paper-towel-lined baking sheet and sprinkle with salt. Heat the remaining oil and brown the remaining cakes in the same manner.

STAFF RECIPES

PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY THUMBPRINT COOKIES

By Megan Morley, Catering Coordinator

1 cup almond flour	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup rolled oats	1 teaspoon baking powder
½ cup oat flour	½ teaspoon salt
½ cup peanut butter	¼ cup jelly (or more)
½ cup of honey or maple syrup	

Pre-Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line a large cookie sheet with parchment paper or spray with oil.

Combine the almond flour, oats, oat flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. In a separate bowl combine peanut butter, honey, and vanilla extract. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and stir until dough is formed.

Using your hands or cookie scoop, make tablespoon-sized balls and place them onto the cookie sheet. Use a teaspoon to press down the center down. In the small hole, you created, place roughly one teaspoon of jelly of your choice.

Bake cookies for 10-12 minutes. Makes 16-20 cookies

*What's
Hot!*

HOT COCOA BOMBS

By Alexis Saucier, Catering Chef

8 oz. chocolate, plus extra to seal
6 tablespoons hot cocoa mix
½ cup mini marshmallows
1-2 teaspoons sprinkles or crushed peppermint
Silicone mold for medium semi spheres

Melt chocolate in a double boiler.

Brush about 2 teaspoons of chocolate in spheres to cover the sides.

Let cool and harden, remove from molds.

In half, the chocolate pieces put 1 tsp hot cocoa mix and 5 or 6 mini marshmallows.

Dip the edge of the empty chocolate half in melted chocolate and put on the filled bottom to seal.

Once sealed, brush a little chocolate on the seam and roll in sprinkles or in peppermint for peppermint flavor.

To serve, place in a mug and pour hot milk over it, stir as it melts, and enjoy!

St. Patrick's Day Hot Cocoa Bomb: Use green chocolate melts and fill with Lucky Charms marshmallows and rainbow sprinkles!



What's New!

Catering Curbside

CORNEB BEEF DINNER FOR SIX

Whether it is a weeknight, weekend, or holiday, let Catering do the cooking for your family meals! Our curbside pick-up menu includes appetizers, complete family meals for six, individual hot hors d'oeuvres, and soups/sides. New to our online store is a corned beef dinner for six. This special is only being offered for pick up between March 16th through March 21st and you must **order by March 11th**.



- ✿ Sliced Corned Beef Brisket
- ✿ Boiled Fingerling Potatoes
- ✿ Boiled Green Tipped Baby Carrots
- ✿ Boiled Wedges of Cabbage
- ✿ Irish Soda Bread with Butter

\$90

ORDER: Visit dining.uconn.edu/university-catering & click on the "Marketplace" button.

*Stay Tuned..Easter Specials Coming Soon
to Our Online Store*

