

## Chef John Varanese's winning recipe

From Chef John Varanese of Varanese Restaurant in Louisville.

### **Kentucky-grown paddlefish stuffed with Kentucky freshwater prawn, served over roasted pablano**

#### **Serves 4**

4 6-ounce. paddlefish filets  
½ pound Kentucky shrimp, chopped  
¼ c. onion, diced  
¼ c. celery, diced  
¼ c. chicken stock  
2 ounces white queso, shredded  
2 c. French baguette, diced  
salt and pepper to taste  
Garnish  
Cilantro sprigs  
Fried tortilla strips

In a skillet add 2 ounces oil and heat, add the onion and celery, and cook until translucent. Then add the shrimp and cook until cooked through. Add the bread and enough chicken stock until moist. Mix in the cheese and season to taste. Let cool. Place about 2 ounces of stuffing on each paddlefish filet. Roll the fish into a log shape and truss with butcher's twine. Dredge with seasoned flour and sauté in skillet until browned on all sides. Place in 400-degree oven for about 10 minutes or until the center is warm. Cut the string and slice. Serve over risotto and top with cilantro and chipotle sour cream. Garnish with fried tortilla strips

### **Tomato risotto topped with cilantro and chipotle sour cream**

2 c. Arborio rice  
3 c. water  
1 c. tomato sauce  
½ c. onion, diced  
1 Pablano pepper, roasted, seeded and diced  
1 tomato, diced

Cumin, chili powder salt and pepper to taste

Bring the liquid to a simmer. In a large pan, heat 2 ounces. of oil, sauté the onion, then add rice and slightly brown. Add 1/3 of liquid, pepper and tomato, and simmer until liquid is dissolved. Repeat two more times until the liquid is dissolved. Season with cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper.

#### **Cilantro sour cream**

½ c. sour cream  
1 lime, squeezed  
1tbspn. cilantro, chopped  
Blend ingredients together. Salt and pepper to taste.

#### **Chipotle sour cream**

½ c. sour cream  
½ lime, squeezed  
½ tsp. chipotle, minced  
Blend ingredients together. Salt and pepper to taste.

## Bourbon Kentucky Prawns

Over Sweet Corn, Tabasco and Kenny's White Cheddar Grits with Kentucky Sorghum Barbeque Sauce and topped with Baby Spinach, Sweet Onions, and a Country Ham Hushpuppy

### BOURBON SHRIMP

Kentucky fresh water prawns - 20 each  
shallots, finely minced - 1 teaspoon  
garlic, finely mince - 1/2 teaspoon  
Woodford Reserve bourbon - 4 oz  
sea salt - to taste  
pepper - to taste  
light olive oil - approx 1/2 cup

1. Peel and devein shrimp. Reserve shells
2. Place shrimp into a small bowl. Season with shallots, garlic, and 1 Tablespoon of bourbon and 1 teaspoon of light olive oil.
3. When ready for service heat a 10 sauté pan. Add olive oil. Add shrimp and sauté until almost cooked. Add remaining bourbon, toss and remove shrimp. Reserve warm
4. Add approximately 1 1/2 cups of barbeque sauce to pan. Add butter to sauce if desired. To plate: place approximately 1/4 cup of grits on the bottom of a plate. Carefully arrange shrimp atop grits. Place sautéed spinach and sweet onions on top of shrimp and finish with the hushpuppy over the spinach. Spoon sauce around the base of the grits and serve immediately. Garnish with fresh herbs or micro greens.

## Sorghum Barbeque Sauce

shallots - 2 teaspoon  
garlic - 1 teaspoon  
light olive oil - 1 teaspoon  
ketchup - 2 cups  
worcestershire - 1/4-1/2 cup  
stone ground mustard - 1 teaspoon  
dry mustard - 1/2 teaspoon  
sorghum - 1 1/2 cups  
chili powder - 1/2 teaspoon  
cumin - 1/2 teaspoon  
dried thyme - 1/2 teaspoon  
smoked paprika - 1 teaspoon  
cider vinegar - 1/2 cup  
ground corriander - 1/2 teaspoon  
light chicken broth - 1-1 1/2 cups  
black pepper - 1 teaspoon  
kosher salt - to taste  
unsalted butter, chilled - 1 tablespoon ( optional)

In a 2 qt. sauce pot, add olive oil and heat. Add shallot and garlic and cook until soft. Add ketchup and all dry ingredients. Mix well. Add all remaining ingredients, except the butter. Mix well. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a low simmer and cook approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Reserve for service. Butter is optional, and if being used should be blended into the sauce just before service and only to the amount of sauce needed.

## Country Ham Hushpuppy

white cornmeal - 1 cup  
yellow cornmeal - 1 cup  
baking soda - 1/2 teaspoon  
baking powder - 1 teaspoon  
flour - 1/4 cup  
eggs, whole large - 1 each  
buttermilk - 1 cup  
country ham, diced - 1 cup  
chopped parsley - 2 tablespoons  
water - 1/2 cup

salt - 1 teaspoon

black pepper - 1/4 teaspoon

In a medium bowl combine all dry ingredients. Add chopped parsley and country ham and mix well. Add egg, buttermilk and water. Mix thoroughly. When ready for service pre-heat fryer or oil to approximately 325 degrees. With a small spoon carefully spoon a small amount of batter into the hot oil. Allow to cook approximately 2-3 minutes, flip them over and allow to cook another 2 minutes. Remove from oil and drain on a towel. Keep warm until needed.

## Corn, Tabasco, and White Cheddar Grits

yellow onion, diced - 2 teaspoon

light olive oil - 1 teaspoon

white stone ground grits - 3/4 cup

heavy whipping cream - 1 cup

light chicken broth - 1 cup

fresh corn kernels - 1/2 cup

Tabasco sauce - 1 teaspoon

salt - to taste

pepper - to taste

Kenny's white cheddar cheese - 1/2 cup

In a small pot add olive oil and heat. Add yellow onion and cook until soft. Add heavy cream and chicken broth. Bring to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. Add grits. Bring back to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Simmer approximately 15 minutes stirring often. Add corn kernels and Tabasco sauce. Simmer for 5 for minutes. Add white cheddar cheese. Allow grits to set about 5 minutes before use. Season with salt and pepper just before serving.

## Sauteed Spinach and Sweet Onions

fresh baby spinach - 1/2 lb

sweet onion (Vidalia, candy, etc) julienne cut - 1 each ( medium)

light olive oil - 1 teaspoon

whole butter - 1 tablespoon

kosher salt - to taste

pepper - to taste

In a large sauté pan add olive oil and butter. Heat until butter is melted. Add julienne onions and cook on medium heat until lightly caramelized. Add spinach and cook until spinach is just wilted Remove, season and serve immediately.

## KY Paddlefish stuffed with KY shrimp served over roasted pablano and tomato risotto topped with cilantro and chipotle sour cream.

### Serves 4

4 ea. 6oz. paddle fish filets  
1/2 c Ky shrimp, chopped  
1/4 c. Onion, diced  
1/4c. Celery, diced  
1/4 c. Chicken stock  
2 oz. White queso, shredded  
2 c. French Baguette, diced  
S&P to taste

### Garnish

Cilantro sprigs  
Fried tortilla strips

In a skillet add 2oz. oil and heat, add the onion and celery and cook until translucent. Then add the shrimp until cooked through. Add the bread and enough chicken stock until moist. Mix in the cheese and season to taste. Let cool. Place about 2 oz. of stuffing on each paddle fish filet. Roll the fish into a log shape and truss with butcher's twine. Dredge with seasoned flour and sauté in skillet until browned on all sides. Place in 400-degree oven for about 10 minutes or until the center is warm. Cut the string and slice. Serve over risotto and top with cilantro and chipotle sour cream. Garnish with fried tortilla strips.

## Risotto

2c. Arborio rice  
3c. Water  
1c. Tomato sauce  
1/2 c. Onion, diced  
1ea. Pablano pepper, roasted, seeded and diced  
1ea. Tomato diced

Cumin, chili powder salt and pepper to taste

Bring the liquid to a simmer. In a large pan heat 2oz. of oil sauté the onion, then add rice and slightly brown. Add 1/3 of liquid, pepper, tomato, and simmer until liquid is dissolved. Repeat 2 more times until the liquid is dissolved. Season with cumin, chili powder, salt and pepper.

## Cilantro sour cream

1/2 c. Sour cream  
1ea. Lime, squeezed  
1tbls. Cilantro, chopped  
Blend ingredients together S&P to taste

## Chipotle sour cream

1/2 c. Sour cream  
1/2 ea. Lime, squeezed  
1/2 tsp. Chipotle, minced  
Blend ingredients together S&P to taste