



SEASONAL RECIPES FROM ESSANAY CAFÉ

Fremont's historic Niles District might be a little out of the way for most of us East Bay urbanites, but that doesn't mean we have to forgo its local, seasonal fare. Essanay Café (named for the pioneering movie studio that operated here in the 'teens) sources as many products as possible from local and organic farms. In addition to offering entertainment several nights a week, the café puts on special weekly dinners, such as the Vintner's Dinner, featuring wines by local winemakers paired with the evening's specials; the Farmers Market Dinner, where the menu is created around the best produce just procured from the local farmers markets; and the Recession Dinner, which is simple fare offered at truly affordable prices (\$12 for adults and \$6 for kids, includes dessert). Call ahead or check the website for the schedule.

Essanay Café
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Essanay chefs Matthew Close (at left) and Dave Benz offer some of their favorite seasonal recipes.



BRAISED KALE WITH CRANBERRIES AND ALMONDS

- 5 strips of bacon, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 8 ounces green or red kale, cut into fine ribbons
- 2 cups dark chicken stock
- ½ cup cranberries
- ¼ cup almonds, finely ground

In a large saucepan, carefully fry the bacon until brown and crispy. Add the kale and toss to coat with the bacon. Add the chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Add cranberries and reduce heat, cooking until the chard is just wilted and still vibrantly colored. Remove kale from pan and let drain. Reduce the remaining chicken stock by half. To serve, ladle the reduced chicken stock into a bowl, topped with the chard and sprinkle with the almonds. Serves 4.

RAINBOW CHARD BRAISED IN A RED CURRY BROTH WITH WHITE BEANS

- 2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 1 can cannellini beans, drained
- 8 ounces rainbow chard, cut into fine ribbons
- Salt and pepper to taste

Combine everything but the chard in a large saucepan and bring to a simmer. Add chard and cook till just wilted. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serves 4.

MATT'S SPANISH CHORIZO SOUP WITH FRIED BREAD AND POACHED EGG

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 11 ounces Spanish-style chorizo, thinly sliced
- 3 bunches spring onion, thinly sliced
- 3 bunches green garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 shallots, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 32 ounces chicken stock (homemade preferred)
- 1 baguette, cut into thin slices on the diagonal
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 4 eggs
- Smoked Spanish-style paprika (pimentón)

Heat oil in a large saucepan over low heat. Add chorizo slices and sweat for 6 to 10 minutes or until the oil is a deep amber color. Using a slotted spoon, remove chorizo to a covered bowl.

Set aside 2 tablespoons of the sliced green onions and green garlic to use as garnish and add the rest to the saucepan along with the sliced shallots and garlic. Sauté 6 to 10 minutes or until tender. Transfer to the bowl with the chorizo.

Pour off most of the remaining oil to a bowl, reserving it for frying the bread. Add a small amount of chicken stock to the pan and deglaze, scraping up all the browned bits. Add chorizo, shallots, garlic, onions, and green garlic as well as the rest of the stock. Simmer on low heat for 30 minutes to 1 hour, skimming off the grease from the top as desired.

Pour reserved oil into a skillet and heat over medium flame. Add the slices of bread and fry until golden on both sides.

Shortly before you are ready to serve, bring a large skillet of salted water to a boil. Add the vinegar. One at a time, crack each egg into a saucer and carefully slip it into the boiling water. Cover skillet, turn off heat, and allow eggs to sit for 4 to 5 minutes to poach. Meanwhile, ladle soup into bowls. When eggs are ready, carefully lift them from the water into the bowls with a slotted spoon. Place a slice of fried bread in each bowl. Garnish with reserved onions and garlic and sprinkle with pimentón.

Serves 4.



TANGERINE CRÈME BRÛLÉE

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| 1 quart heavy cream | 6 large egg yolks |
| 1 vanilla bean, split and scraped | 2 quarts hot water |
| 2 bags tangerine-flavored tea | Candied tangerine peel |
| 1 cup vanilla sugar, divided | |

Preheat oven to 325°.

Place the cream, vanilla bean, and the teabags into a medium saucepan set over medium-high heat and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, cover, and allow to sit for 15 minutes. Remove the vanilla bean and tea bags.

In a medium bowl, whisk together ½ cup sugar and the egg yolks until light and well blended. Add the cream a little at a time, stirring constantly. Pour into six 8-ounce ramekins. Place the ramekins into a large cake pan or roasting pan. Pour enough hot water into the pan to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake just until the crème is set, but still trembling in the center, approximately 40 to 45 minutes. Remove the ramekins from the roasting pan and refrigerate for at least 2 hours and up to 3 days.

Remove ramekins from the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before you are ready to burn the sugar on top. Divide the remaining ½ cup vanilla sugar equally among the 6 dishes and spread evenly over the surface. Using a torch, melt the sugar until it forms a crispy top. Allow to sit for at least 5 minutes before serving. Garnish with a twist of tangerine peel. Serves 6.

