

TURMERIC LASAGNA WITH TALEGGIO CHEESE AND HEIRLOOM TOMATO COMPOTE

SHARI GOURMET DINING,
AUBURN



PASTA INGREDIENTS

- 3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour, plus 1/2 cup for dusting your work surface
- 4 eggs
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon ground turmeric
- 1 tablespoon sea salt

DIRECTIONS

Make a mountain of the flour in the center of a large wooden cutting board. Make a well in the middle of the flour (should look like a volcano) and add the eggs, oil, turmeric and salt. Using a fork, beat together the eggs, oil, turmeric, salt, and very, very slowly begin to incorporate the flour—starting with the inner rim of the well working outward. The dough will come together when about half of the flour is incorporated.

Start kneading the dough with both hands, using the palms of your hands. Once you have a cohesive mass, remove the dough from the board and scrape off any leftover dough bits. Discard these bits. Lightly flour the board and continue kneading for 10 more minutes. The dough should be elastic and a little sticky. Continue to knead for another five minutes, remembering to dust your board as necessary. Wrap the dough in plastic and allow to rest for at least 20 minutes at room temperature. Use a pasta machine to create the desired thickness and shape. Un-cooked pasta noodles can be frozen for up to 6 month if in a sealed container.

HEIRLOOM TOMATO COMPOTE

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3-4 large heirloom tomatoes (the best come from your local farmer)
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 6 large basil leaves
- 3 stems fresh thyme leaves

Heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and sweat for several minutes until the onion is translucent, stirring occasionally so the onions don't burn. In a separate pot, blanch the tomatoes in a pot of boiling, salted water for 15 to 20 seconds and place in an ice bath. Blanch just long enough so that you will be able to peel the skin. Drain the tomatoes, and peel their skins. Chop with the garlic, basil and thyme. Add the chopped tomatoes, Balsamic, garlic, basil and thyme to the saucepan. Stir to combine, adjust heat to a simmer, and let reduce until thick, about 15 minutes. Add a pinch of sugar, to taste if needed.

ASSEMBLING THE LASAGNA

Slice the Taleggio cheese into 1/8 inch thick slices and allow to rest, out until room temperature. Blanch the pasta in salted, boiling water for 3-5 minutes or until tender, drain. When the pasta is still warm, alternate layer of pasta and Taleggio for 3 layers each. Drizzle with olive oil if desired and spoon over warm compote.

MOREL MUSHROOM ICE CREAM



- 8 ounces fresh Michigan morel mushrooms (cleaned and chopped)
- 3 ounces vanilla liquor
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 cups whole cream
- 12 egg yolks

In a non-stick pan, sauté the cleaned morels and vanilla liquor over medium heat (be careful it will FLAME up!). Reduce the liquid by half, let cool until mixture reaches room temperature. In a thick bottom pot, heat milk and sugar to a low simmer, remove from heat and pour over the yolks very, very slowly, whisking constantly. Finish with cold cream and morels, and chill overnight. Add to the ice cream machine and freeze, or if you do not have an ice cream maker, pour into a shallow dish and place in the freezer, you must still vigorously stir every 8 to 10 minutes till thick—this will take a long time but the wait is worth it!



CHEF AARON GAERTNER

Aaron began his career in the culinary arts with a degree from Bay Arenac Career Complex in 1996. By 1999, he earned his certification as a sous chef through the American Culinary Federation.

Although he has worked at several jobs, including the extensive cheese counter at Eastman Party Store and a wine distributor for Viviano, he has spent the majority of his career at Shari Gourmet Dining. He began working there while still in high school as a Garde Manger and worked his way up to executive chef and general manager in 2008.

In his spare time, Aaron coaches the Culinary team at the Saginaw Career Complex for the Pro-Start Culinary Competition. He was the team's coach in 2009, and is currently working with the 2010 students for their upcoming competition. Aaron also enjoys photography, painting, home brewing beer and traveling. He is currently planning a culinary tasting trip to Paris in the spring with his better half, Katy.

CHEF SHARI SMITH

After graduating at the top of her class from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, and spending several years in Lake Tahoe, California, studying under a Belgian master chef, Shari Smith moved back home to mid-Michigan to open her own restaurant. On Valentine's Day 1990, Shari opened a fully-remodeled Willard Hillton just outside of Auburn. Her goal was simple, to provide the tri-cities with the ultimate dining experience. Highlighting fine food, wine and exceptional service. Since the fall of 2008, Shari has been the head culinary instructor at the Saginaw Career Complex. It has been a lifelong dream of hers to help educate and prepare the next generation of culinary professionals.

In her spare time, Shari enjoys writing and speaking to groups about her life experiences, exercising, eating and living healthy. Shari also makes plenty of time to spend with her two daughters, Timmi and Samantha, and her two basset hounds.



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