



Rhubarb, orange and vanilla are a bracing alternative to pie.

Rhubarb Spritzer

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| 1/2 cup sugar | Soda water |
| 3/4 pound rhubarb, chopped | 4 basil leaves, for garnish. |
| 1 stalk lemongrass, chopped | |

1. In a medium saucepan, bring 1/2 cup water, sugar, rhubarb and lemongrass to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook until the rhubarb is tender, about 10 minutes. Push through a fine-mesh sieve. Let cool.
2. Fill 4 small glasses halfway with ice. Pour into each glass a scant 1/4 cup rhubarb juice, then top with soda water to taste. Garnish with a basil leaf. Makes about 1 1/3 cups rhubarb juice; serves 4 to 5.

Black Bass With Silky Rhubarb Sauce

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| 4 6-ounce fillets black bass | 4 thin slices (the size of a quarter) peeled ginger |
| 7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil | 1 1/2 cups diced (1/4-inch) rhubarb |
| Sea salt | 2 teaspoons sugar |
| 8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, trimmed and cut into 1/4-inch slices (4 cups) | 2 tablespoons butter |
| 1/4 cup thinly sliced shallots | 1 tablespoon heavy cream |
| | 1 teaspoon balsamic vinegar. |

1. Preheat the oven to 275 degrees. Lay the fish skin side down in a baking dish just large enough to fit the fillets. Sprinkle with 3 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt. Roast until just cooked through, 15 to 25 minutes.
2. In a large sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the shiitakes, season with salt and sauté until lightly browned and just softened. Scrape into a bowl, adjust seasoning and keep warm.
3. Return the pan to the heat and pour in the remaining 2 tablespoons oil. Add the shallots, ginger and rhubarb. Cook, stirring to scrape up any bits, until the rhubarb softens, about 4 minutes. Add 1/4 cup water and the sugar. Season with salt. Cook until reduced by half. Whisk in the butter and cream and then the vinegar. Press the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl.
4. To serve, divide the sauce among 4 shallow bowls. Lay a piece of fish in each and top with a spoonful of mushrooms. Serves 4.

Pork Tenderloin With Rhubarb, Pear, Rosemary and Honey

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| 1 1/2 pounds pork tenderloin, brought to room temperature | 1 Bosc pear, diced (1/4-inch) |
| Sea salt | 1/2 cup wheat beer |
| Freshly ground black pepper | 1/2 cup chicken or beef broth |
| 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil | 1 1/2 tablespoons acacia or other light honey |
| 3 sprigs rosemary | 1 tablespoon butter. |
| 1 clove garlic, smashed | |
| 1 cup diced (1/4-inch) rhubarb | |

1. Preheat the oven to 275 degrees. Place an ovenproof sauté pan, just large enough to fit the tenderloin, over medium-high heat. Season the pork with salt and pepper. Add the olive oil to the hot pan, followed by the pork. Brown on all sides, then tuck 2 rosemary sprigs underneath the meat, transfer to the oven and continue cooking until the internal temperature of the pork at its thickest point reaches 130 degrees, 10 to 20 minutes.
2. Remove the pork from the oven, transfer to a serving plate and tent with foil. Discard the rosemary. Place the sauté pan over medium heat and add the garlic, rhubarb, pear and remaining rosemary sprig. Sauté until the rhubarb begins to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Season lightly. Pour in the beer and broth and reduce by half, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the honey and butter; then press the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve set over a serving bowl.
3. Slice the pork and serve, passing the rhubarb sauce at the table. Serves 4.

Rhubarb Orange

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| 14 ounces rhubarb | 3 tablespoons Demerara sugar |
| 1 blood or navel orange | 2/3 cup crème fraîche. |
| 2 vanilla beans | |

1. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees. Cut the rhubarb into 2-to-2 1/2-inch pieces and place in a medium bowl. Finely grate the zest of half the orange over the rhubarb and then squeeze the juice of the whole orange into the bowl. Split the vanilla beans and scrape out the seeds and place both in the bowl. Add the sugar and stir to combine.
2. Pour the rhubarb into a baking dish and arrange the pieces so that they lie flat. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the vanilla pods. Serve with crème fraîche. Serves 4. Adapted from "Italian Two Easy: Simple Recipes From the London River Café," by Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers.

Crisp Rhubarb in a Sweet Broth

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| 1/2 pound rhubarb, very thinly sliced | mortar and pestle |
| 1/2 cup white wine | 1 bag Earl Grey tea |
| 1 cup sugar, more if needed | 1 pint strawberries, washed, hulled and cut into wedges |
| 1 cardamom pod, crushed in a mortar and pestle | Vanilla ice cream (optional). |

1. Place the rhubarb in a large, heatproof bowl. Bring 1 cup water, wine and sugar to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Turn off the heat. Add the cardamom and tea bag and infuse for 15 minutes. Return to a boil and strain over the rhubarb. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap. Let cool and then refrigerate for at least 8 hours.
 2. Before serving, taste the broth — adding more sugar if desired — and stir in the strawberries. Ladle into parfait glasses or small shallow bowls. If serving with ice cream, place one scoop in each glass and ladle the rhubarb over it. Serves 4. Adapted from Anne Willan, the owner of École de Cuisine La Varenne.
- NOTE: If local strawberries are not yet available, either omit them or substitute with another fruit. ■