

MENU FOR 8

Kale and Pecorino
Crostini

Chicken Liver
Crostini with
Pickled Eggs

Prosecco

Onion Soup
with Sage Brown
Butter, Croutons,
and Grated
Lemon Peel

Braised Pork
Shoulder with
Potato-Fennel
Puree

Sangiovese

Swiss Chard with
Olives and Lemon

Roasted Baby
Carrots with
Chile, Mint, and
Orange Glaze

Buttermilk Spice
Cake with Pear
Compote and
Crème Fraîche

KALE AND PECORINO CROSTINI

MAKES 12 Just a couple of chopped anchovy fillets deepen the flavor of this simple starter.

- 1 14-ounce bunch black kale*
- 12 ½-inch-thick diagonal baguette slices
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 oil-packed anchovy fillets, chopped
- 1 ounce Pecorino Romano cheese, shaved with vegetable peeler into strips

Cut stems from center of each kale leaf; discard stems. Bring large pot of salted water to boil. Add kale leaves and cook just until kale is tender but still bright green, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain well. Coarsely chop kale.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Arrange baguette slices in single layer on rimmed baking sheet; brush slices on top side with 2 tablespoons oil. Sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper. Toast in oven until pale golden, about 12 minutes. Cool toasts on baking sheet. **DO AHEAD** Kale and baguette toasts can be made 4 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Heat remaining 3 tablespoons oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic and anchovies; stir 1 minute. Add chopped kale and sauté until heated through, 3 to 4 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Mound kale mixture atop toasted baguette slices, dividing equally. Top kale with cheese shavings. Arrange crostini on platter and serve.

WHAT TO DRINK The bold flavors of this and the chicken liver crostini would be great with Prosecco, the Italian sparkler. We like the light, crisp—and affordable—Zardetto NV Prosecco Brut (Italy, \$15).

*Also called Tuscan kale, dinosaur kale, *lacinato* kale, or *cavolo nero*, black kale has long, narrow, very dark green bumpy leaves; available at some supermarkets and farmers' markets.

CHICKEN LIVER CROSTINI WITH PICKLED EGGS

MAKES 12 The tanginess of the homemade pickled eggs (they're easy!) balances the richness of the chicken liver. Timing note: Begin making the eggs at least one day ahead.

- pickled eggs*
- 1½ cups red wine vinegar
- ½ cup water
- 2 large shallots, sliced into rounds
- 4 fresh thyme sprigs
- 4 whole cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1½ teaspoons sugar
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, peeled

- chicken liver topping*
- ½ cup olive oil plus additional for brushing bread
- 4 fresh thyme sprigs plus 1½ tablespoons chopped fresh thyme, divided
- 4 garlic cloves; 3 peeled, 1 minced
- 2 bay leaves, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 chicken heart and 1 chicken gizzard, trimmed
- 6 ounces chicken livers, deveined
- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 3 tablespoons ruby Port
- 12 ½-inch-thick diagonal baguette slices

PICKLED EGGS Combine vinegar, ½ cup water, shallots, thyme sprigs, cloves, bay leaf, salt, and sugar in medium saucepan; bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer pickling mixture 15 minutes to allow flavors to blend. Remove mixture from heat and cool to room temperature.

Pierce hard-boiled eggs all over with thin skewer or fork to depth of ½ inch. Place eggs in 1-quart glass jar or medium bowl. Pour pickling mixture over eggs; cover and refrigerate overnight. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 2 days ahead. Keep chilled.

CHICKEN LIVER TOPPING Combine ½ cup olive oil, thyme sprigs, peeled garlic cloves, 1 bay leaf, and ½ teaspoon salt in medium skillet; heat over medium-low heat. Add chicken heart and gizzard to skillet and cook gently until tender, turning occasionally, about 30 minutes (do not allow oil mixture to boil). Transfer heart and gizzard to cutting board and cool completely, then chop finely. Reserve skillet with oil mixture.

Add chicken livers to oil mixture in same skillet and cook gently over medium heat until brown on outside but still pink in center, about 10 minutes. Transfer chicken livers and garlic cloves from skillet to cutting board and cool, then chop finely.

Discard thyme sprigs and all but 2 tablespoons oil from skillet. Add butter, onion, 1 tablespoon chopped thyme, minced garlic, and remaining bay leaf to same skillet; sauté over medium heat until onion is soft, about 10 minutes. Add wine and Port and cook until almost evaporated, about 2 minutes. Add chopped gizzards and chicken livers and simmer 1 minute. Season to taste with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cool slightly. Cover and chill. Rewarm over medium heat just until warm before using.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Arrange baguette slices in single layer on baking sheet; brush tops lightly with olive oil. Toast in oven until pale golden, about 12 minutes. Cool. **DO AHEAD** Baguette toasts can be made 4 hours ahead. Let stand at room temperature.

Divide chicken liver mixture among crostini. Slice 2 to 3 pickled eggs into rounds. Top liver mixture on each baguette with 1 egg round and a few shallot rounds from pickling liquid. Sprinkle lightly with remaining ½ tablespoon chopped fresh thyme and serve.

TEST-KITCHEN TIP Chop up leftover pickled eggs and mix them into your favorite tuna salad or Cobb salad recipe.

ONION SOUP WITH SAGE BROWN BUTTER, CROUTONS, AND GRATED LEMON PEEL

8 SERVINGS Pureeing the caramelized onions gives this soup a thick, creamy texture.

- 12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) butter, divided
- 24 cups thinly sliced onions (about 5¼ pounds)
- 8 cups (or more) low-salt chicken broth
- 1½ cups ½-inch pieces torn crustless country-style bread
- 16 fresh sage leaves
- 1½ tablespoons (or more) Sherry wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon peel

Melt 6 tablespoons butter in heavy extra-large pot over medium-high heat. Add onions; sprinkle with salt and pepper and sauté until onions begin to soften, 15 to 18 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and sauté until onions are very tender and deep golden brown, stirring often and adjusting heat as needed, 25 to 30 minutes longer. Transfer 1½ cups caramelized onions to small bowl and reserve for garnish.

Add 8 cups broth to remaining onions in pot and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 25 minutes to blend flavors. Cool slightly. Working in batches, puree soup in blender until smooth. Return to same pot and add more broth by ¼ cupfuls to thin soup to desired consistency. Season soup to taste with salt and pepper. **DO AHEAD** Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill reserved caramelized onions. Cool soup slightly. Chill soup uncovered until cold, then cover and keep chilled. Rewarm caramelized onions and soup separately before continuing.

Melt 2 tablespoons butter in medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add torn bread pieces and sauté until bread pieces are crisp and golden, 5 to 6 minutes. Remove from heat and reserve.

Cook remaining 4 tablespoons butter in small saucepan over medium heat until golden brown, stirring occasionally, 3 to 4 minutes. Add sage leaves and cook until slightly crisp, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Transfer leaves to small plate; reserve brown butter in saucepan.

Stir 1½ tablespoons vinegar into reserved caramelized onions, adding more vinegar by ½ teaspoonfuls, if desired.

Divide warm soup among 8 bowls. Spoon vinegar-seasoned caramelized onions atop soup in each bowl. Sprinkle each serving with croutons and fried sage leaves. Drizzle sage brown butter over each; sprinkle lightly with grated lemon peel and freshly ground black pepper and serve.

BRAISED PORK SHOULDER WITH POTATO-FENNEL PUREE

8 SERVINGS Because the roast needs to marinate overnight, be sure to start this impressive entrée one day ahead.

- 3 medium fresh fennel bulbs with fronds attached, all fronds trimmed and reserved, each bulb cut through root end into 8 wedges
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice
- 1 tablespoon finely grated orange peel
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- ½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
- 1 4- to 4½-pound boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt)
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1½ teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- ½ cup low-salt chicken broth
- 1½ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, quartered
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Chop enough reserved fennel fronds to measure 1 cup; set aside remaining fronds for garnish. Place chopped fronds in blender. Add olive oil, orange juice, orange peel, fennel seeds, and crushed red pepper; blend to paste, scraping down sides of jar occasionally. Sprinkle pork roast on all sides with 1 tablespoon salt and 1½ teaspoons pepper. Spread fennel paste on all sides of pork to coat. Place pork on plate; chill uncovered overnight.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Arrange pork, fat side up, in large roasting pan. Cover pan with foil. Roast pork 1 hour. Add broth to pan. Arrange potatoes and fennel wedges around pork. Cover pan again and roast until thermometer inserted into thickest part of pork registers 190°F to 200°F, about 2½ hours longer.

Using slotted spoon, transfer fennel wedges to processor; blend to almost-smooth puree. Transfer potatoes to large microwave-safe bowl; mash until smooth.

