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ONE GREAT DISH

If You're Not Taking Mom Out For Mother's Day, Try Whipping Up One Of These

By DEBORAH HORNBLOW

Special to The Courant

May 7, 2009

Kimberly Foster is the mother of four children, but her Mother's Day is spent working. It can't be helped. Her restaurant, the Harvest Cafe and Bakery in Simsbury, is always mobbed.

"We have a line out the door, and we have customers phoning in for takeout orders. They'll call and say, 'I want to pick it up at 10 o'clock,' and they come running in." Dads and kids dash home to present mom with a special breakfast.

In business for 15 years, Foster's Harvest Cafe is nothing short of legendary to breakfast lovers. The restaurant and bakery has more than three dozen items on the menu, plus specials.

"I am always looking for new combinations and different ideas, constantly trying things out," says Foster. "Our entire staff, family and friends also help with ideas."

Foster separates her breakfast offerings into two categories: savory and sweet. Leading the best-selling list on the savory side are Farmer's Benedict (two poached eggs atop shredded potatoes with bacon crumble and cheddar Hollandaise); Lithuanian Benedict (poached eggs over potato pancakes with the same sauce as above); and the Gorgonzola scramble (scrambled eggs with caramelized onions and Gorgonzola cream cheese, "so the Gorgonzola isn't so powerful," Foster says).

For those who rise in the morning craving sweets, the most popular breakfast is Banana Bread Stuffed French Toast, but other French toast faves include versions done with the cafe's cranberry-blueberry Irish soda bread, babka and Italian bread, the latter calling for a flavored coffee creamer added to the base.

Foster, who started in the catering business in 1985, says she wanted to have her own food business, "as far back as I can remember. Most of my memories are wrapped around something with food."

She has worked six days a week since opening the cafe.

"It is very difficult on my family, but they are extremely supportive," says Foster of her husband, who is "Mr. Mom," and the couple's four kids, ages 9 to 18.

"I love my business and would never do anything different for a living. I always tell my children you must do something you love, and you will find success with it."

For home cooks seeking to succeed at making a Mother's Day breakfast, Foster offers two recipe ideas. The first recipe is a simple yogurt and berry parfait that can be made by the smallest cooks. The second is a hot dish that should be made with a bit of help from Dad or another adult. Both dishes "are easy to execute at home, especially with kids involved," says Foster, adding that both have been popular menu items with women.

Although Foster will be working the mother's holiday, she isn't the only one in her family who spends the day creating wonderful memories with food.

"When the kids were smaller, they would often make me crazy breakfasts at 6 a.m. An ice cream sundae was a favorite memory — before I went to work. But my favorite was once after work, I came home to a bubble bath, candles, wine and appetizers!"

The Harvest Cafe & Bakery is at 1390 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury. Phone: 860-658-5000-

MOTHER'S DAY BERRY PARFAIT

This delicious and colorful mix of berries, yogurt and granola can be assembled by pint-size chefs. Foster and her staff make their own granola at the cafe. Home cooks should choose a plain crunchy variety containing nuts but no dried fruit. To serve this parfait to best effect, layer the ingredients in a pretty wine glass.



MOTHER'S DAY BERRY PARFAIT

- 1 quart fresh strawberries, washed and hulled
- 1 pint fresh blueberries
- 1/2 pint fresh red raspberries
- 1/2 pint fresh blackberries
- 1 quart (32-ounces) French vanilla yogurt (regular, low-fat, or fat-free)
- 1 package or box granola
- Fresh mint, for garnish

Slice strawberries and set aside in a small bowl. Put the blueberries, raspberries and blackberries in a colander and gently rinse under cold water. Lay them out on a few paper towels to dry off a bit.

Assembly: Set out three to four wine glasses. Place a few sliced strawberries at the bottom of each glass. Top with some of the berry mixture. Spoon on some of the yogurt. Top with a layer of granola. Repeat layers until glasses are filled; try to end with berries on top. Top with a sprig of mint. Serves 3 to 4.

The Harvest Cafe is known for its scrambles, inventive egg combinations featuring colorful and delicious mixes of seasonal ingredients. Home cooks can buy Boursin cheese at any supermarket, or they can substitute any blend of chives, garlic and cream cheese.

Foster says the trick to cooking eggs in a scramble is to pour the eggs into a preheated pan and let them begin to cook for a minute or two before stirring. The stirring is essential to cook eggs evenly and avoid runny parts.

ASPARAGUS, SMOKED HAM AND BOURSIN SCRAMBLE

- 1 bunch asparagus
- 1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 pound smoked deli ham, sliced thin
- 8 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 package Boursin cheese
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives or 1 scallion, chopped, for garnish

Rinse asparagus and dry on paper towels. Remove tough ends. Chop asparagus into 1-inch pieces. Pour olive oil in a nonstick large skillet. Set over medium heat. Sauté asparagus with a little salt and pepper until asparagus is tender crisp. Remove asparagus and set aside. When skillet has cooled, wipe out with paper towels.

Chop ham into small pieces and set aside. Crack eggs in a large bowl. Add milk and whisk until eggs are well blended. Add a pinch of salt and pepper.

Heat the skillet over medium heat. Add butter. When melted, pour in egg mixture. Let eggs begin to cook without stirring for a minute or two. When you see the eggs start to cook around the edge of the pan, gently stir the eggs with a heatproof spatula or spoon. When eggs are about halfway cooked, stir the ham and asparagus into the pan. When eggs are no longer runny, gently add small chunks of the Boursin cheese. Gently stir once more to melt in the cheese. (It's OK to have some small, unmelted chunks of cheese.) Transfer eggs to a plate. Garnish with chives or scallions. Serve with toast and home fries. Serves 4.