



Champagne Sabayon with Roasted Strawberries and Honey Pecan Twists

Strawberries and champagne are a famously decadent pairing, and what better way to savor them than as a refreshing, ultra-light yet sinful dessert? Champagne is the perfect way to give a sophisticated lift to this classic custard, as it accentuates the sweet alcohol flavor and gives it a light, foamy texture. To add an extra touch of decadence, the satiny strawberries are roasted for additional flavor.

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the Champagne sabayon:

4 egg yolks
¼ cup sugar
½ cup champagne
1/3 cup heavy cream, whipped to medium peaks

For the honey pecan twists:

½ cup pecans, toasted
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
2 sheets phyllo pastry, thawed (wrap the rest of the box tightly in plastic wrap and refreeze)
4 tablespoons honey
2 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon sugar

For the roasted strawberries:

1 quart (16 oz) strawberries
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons pink peppercorns, coarsely crushed
2 tablespoons sugar

Preparation

For the Champagne sabayon:

Prepare an ice bath large enough to accommodate the bowl you will use to cook the sabayon.

Combine the yolks, sugar and Champagne in a double boiler or a large shallow bowl set over a pot of simmering water, making sure the bottom of the bowl does not touch the water. Cook, whisking constantly until mixture thickens and appears fluffy and glossy, about 10-12 minutes.

Remove from heat and set bowl into the prepared ice bath. Continue whisking sabayon until cool.

Once cooled, gently fold the whipped cream into the sabayon. See serving instructions if serving sabayon immediately, or cover tightly with plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator until ready. Can be prepared up to 1 day in advance.

For honey pecan twists:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Place pecans and brown sugar in the work bowl of a food processor and pulse until finely ground. Set aside.

Melt honey and butter together in the microwave for 10 seconds. Lay one sheet of phyllo dough in front of you. With a pastry brush, spread honey butter mixture on the layer of phyllo and sprinkle with pecans.

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Fold sheet in half lengthwise, then brush the new top of dough with honey butter mixture and sprinkle with pecans again. Fold in half one more time, so it has been folded into a sheet with four layers.

Cut phyllo in half lengthwise, making 2 evenly-sized strips about 1 ½ inches thick. One strip at a time, start with one end and roll around a dowel rod (the kind used for making cannoli shells) and twist to form a nice spiral. Squeeze both ends of the pastry and slide off the rod, keeping the spiral shape intact. Carefully lay spirals on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Repeat entire process with remaining sheet of phyllo. Once you have 4 spirals, sprinkle all with sugar and bake in preheated oven for 7 minutes until golden.

For the roasted strawberries:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Remove stems from strawberries and place in a large bowl. Toss with olive oil, peppercorns and sugar.

Arrange strawberries side by side on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 8-10 minutes, until the berries are soft and syrup begins to form. Serve immediately.

[Chef's Note: If using large strawberries, you may want to cut them in half, but small to medium berries present better if kept whole.]

Service

Evenly spoon about 1-2 tablespoons of sabayon into the bottom of four dessert glasses. Arrange an equal amount of strawberries, about ½ cup per glass, on top of the sabayon. Divide the remaining sabayon between the four glasses. Drizzle strawberry syrup over sabayon and garnish each glass with a honey pecan twist.

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