

TEAM DANKS 2007

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A TASTE OF HONEY

CORNMEAL ALMOND CAKE FILLED WITH VANILLA BEAN CUSTARD, SERVED WITH THYME-SCENTED CANDIED CITRUS ZEST AND HONEY GELATO

To reflect the country music theme of the 2007 National Pastry Team Championship, Team Danks chose to honor the Chet Atkins song “A Taste of Honey” in their plated dessert. It features a pastry cream–filled Cornmeal Almond Cake, Honey Gelato, Candied Citrus Zest, a delicate Citrus-Thyme Tuile Cookie, and flakes of crushed caramelized honey.

MAKES 12 SERVINGS

Honey Gelato

19 g (0.67 oz/2 Tbsp) glucose powder
5 g (0.17 oz/2½ tsp) ice cream stabilizer
500 g (17.6 oz/2 cups plus 1 Tbsp) whole milk
19 g (0.67 oz/3 Tbsp) nonfat dry milk
77 g (2.7 oz/½ cup) heavy cream (40% butterfat)
175 g (6.17 oz/½ cup) orange blossom honey
60 g (2.1 oz/3 Tbsp plus 2 tsp) pasteurized egg yolks

1. In a bowl, combine the glucose powder and ice cream stabilizer and set aside.
2. In a saucepan, heat the milk and dry milk over low heat to 95°F (34°C). Add the heavy cream. Heat to 99°F (37°C) and whisk in the honey. Heat to 104°F (39°C) and whisk in the egg yolks. Continue to heat to 113°F (45°C) and whisk in the stabilizer mixture. Heat to 170°F (77°C), stirring constantly. Place the saucepan in an ice bath and cool rapidly to 40°F (4°C). Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.
3. Blend the mixture with an immersion blender, and then process in an ice cream machine according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Candied Citrus Zest

1500 g (53 oz/6½ cups) cold water
6 g (0.21 oz/scant 1 tsp) salt
100 g (3.5 oz/1½ cups) blood orange peel
40 g (1.4 oz/⅔ cup) grapefruit peel
200 g (7 oz/1 cup) granulated sugar
150 g (5.3 oz/⅔ cup) freshly squeezed blood orange juice
50 g (1.76 oz/3 Tbsp plus 1 tsp) freshly squeezed grapefruit juice
25 g (0.88 oz/1 Tbsp plus 1 tsp) invert sugar
½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped
4 g (0.14 oz/1 small bunch) fresh thyme
25 g (0.88 oz/1 Tbsp plus ¾ tsp) glucose syrup

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Divide the water and salt among three saucepans. Bring one of the saucepans of water to a boil over high heat with the blood orange and grapefruit peels. Strain and shock the peels in ice water. Repeat the process two more times using the remaining saucepans of salted water.
3. In an ovenproof saucepan, combine the granulated sugar, citrus juices, invert sugar, and vanilla bean seeds and pod to a boil over high heat. Add the blanched citrus peels and thyme. Cover and bake until the mixture thickens and the peels are tender; this can take anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes, depending on the softness of the peels. Strain the peels, reserving the syrup in a saucepan. Leave the oven preheated to 350°F (175°C).
4. Bring the syrup to a boil over medium-high heat and reduce slightly. Stir in the glucose and citrus peel. Cool completely, then cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Bee Sting Mixture

60 g (2.1 oz/½ stick plus 1 tsp) unsalted butter
60 g (2.1 oz/¼ cup plus 2¾ tsp) granulated sugar
48 g (1.7 oz/½ cup plus 1 Tbsp) blanched sliced almonds
48 g (1.7 oz/3 Tbsp plus 1 tsp) heavy cream (40% butterfat)
18 g (0.63 oz/2¾ tsp) honey

1. Combine all of the ingredients in a saucepan and cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until the mixture leaves the sides of the pan. Remove from the heat.
2. When the Cornmeal Almond Cake (see below) is partially baked, place a little of the Bee Sting Mixture on top of the cake and bake until caramelized, as directed below.
3. Spread any extra Bee Sting Mixture onto a silicone baking mat and bake at 350°F (175°C) until caramelized. Allow to cool until hardened, then crush into pieces. This will be placed under the Honey Gelato.

Cornmeal Almond Cake

50 g (1.76 oz/¼ cup plus 1½ tsp) finely ground cornmeal

42 g (1.48 oz/⅓ cup plus 2¾ tsp) cake flour

3 g (0.1 oz/rounded ½ tsp) baking powder

90 g (3.17 oz/¾ stick plus ⅓ tsp) unsalted butter

100 g (3.5 oz/¾ cup plus 2 Tbsp) confectioners' sugar

5 g (0.17 oz/2½ tsp) orange zest

48 g (1.7 oz/½ cup plus 2¼ tsp) almond flour

75 g (2.6 oz/1½ large) whole eggs

68 g (2.4 oz/3½ large) egg yolks

45 g (1.58 oz/3 Tbsp) sour cream

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Sift together the cornmeal, cake flour, and baking powder.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and orange zest on high speed until light, about 3 minutes. Add the almond flour and mix until blended. Add the whole eggs and egg yolks, mixing well after each addition. Reduce the speed to low, add the dry ingredients, and mix until blended. Add the sour cream and mix until blended. Scrape the batter into twelve 3-in (7.6-cm) ring molds that are placed on a form to create a hollow center in the bottom. Bake until just beginning to set. Top each mold off with the Bee Sting Mixture and bake until it caramelizes, about 5 minutes longer. Cool and unmold.

Citrus-Thyme Tuile Cookie

25 g (0.88 oz/2 Tbsp) granulated sugar
25 g (0.88 oz/1 Tbsp plus 2¼ tsp packed) light brown sugar
18 g (0.63 oz/2 Tbsp plus ¾ tsp) high-gluten flour
25 g (0.88 oz/1 Tbsp plus 1½ tsp) freshly squeezed orange juice
25 g (0.88 oz/1 Tbsp plus 2¼ tsp) unsalted butter, melted
1 g (0.03 oz/1 tsp) fresh thyme leaves

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. In a bowl, combine the granulated and light brown sugars and flour. Stir in the orange juice, then the melted butter. Stir in the thyme leaves. Cover the bowl and chill until firm, about 2 hours.
3. Spread the batter thinly over a 4-in (10.16-cm) round stencil, placed on a silicone baking mat-lined sheet pan, to make 12 tuiles. Bake until golden and set, about 4 minutes. Cool completely.

Pastry Cream

180 g (6.3 oz/¾ cup) whole milk
1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise and seeds scraped
50 g (1.76 oz/¼ cup) granulated sugar
12 g (0.42 oz/1 Tbsp plus 1½ tsp) cake flour
35 g (1.2 oz/2 Tbsp plus ½ tsp) pasteurized egg yolks
15 g (0.53 oz/1 Tbsp plus ¾ tsp) unsalted butter

1. In a saucepan, bring the milk and vanilla bean seeds and pod to a gentle boil over medium-high heat. Remove from the heat.
2. In a bowl, combine the sugar, flour, and egg yolks. Add some of the hot milk to the egg yolk-sugar mixture to temper the eggs, and return the mixture to the saucepan. Bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Remove from the heat and whisk in the butter. Strain into a bowl, cover, and chill.

ASSEMBLY

Pulled sugar rings (see page 308)

1. Fill the hollow at the bottom of each Cornmeal Almond Cake with the Pastry Cream and place each on a dessert plate. Arrange a small amount of Candied Citrus Zest beside the cake and drizzle some of the cooking syrup around the front of the plate. Spoon some of the crushed Bee Sting Mixture on the plate and top with a quenelle of Honey Gelato. Place a Citrus-Thyme Tuile Cookie, upright and leaning against the cake, between the gelato and the cake. Garnish with a pulled sugar “ring of fire.”



