

using a food mill fitted with the coarse disc, push 1 cup of the batter at a time over the simmering water. Cook the noodles for 1 minute. Using a slotted spoon or a mesh strainer, transfer the noodles to the ice water. Repeat with the remaining batter. Drain the spaetzle well in a colander with small holes so the noodles do not slide through. The spaetzle may be refrigerated, covered, for up to 4 hours.

Just before serving, in a large nonstick fry pan over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the spaetzle and sauté, stirring frequently, until the noodles are golden brown and crispy, 6 to 8 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and add the remaining 2 Tbs. *each* parsley and chives. Transfer to a warmed large serving bowl and serve immediately. Serves 6.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Crème Brûlée

A classic dessert, vanilla crème brûlée should be experienced in its purest form before embellishing it with additional ingredients. You might try steeping lemon or orange peel with the vanilla bean, or adding a pinch of cinnamon, nutmeg or cardamom. Either way, this simple recipe will produce a smooth, velvety custard with a delicate caramel topping.

Preheat an oven to 300°F. Have a pot of boiling water ready. Line a baking pan that is 2 to 3 inches deep with a small kitchen towel.

Using a paring knife, split the vanilla bean lengthwise down the middle and scrape the seeds into a 2-quart saucepan. Add the cream, stir to mix and set the pan over medium-low heat. Warm the cream until bubbles form around the edges of the pan and steam begins to rise from the surface. Remove from the heat and set aside to steep, about 15 minutes.

In a large bowl, whisk together the egg yolks, salt and the ¼ cup sugar until smooth and blended. Gradually add the cream to the egg mixture, whisking until blended. Pour the custard through a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl. Divide the custard among four 5- or 6-oz. ramekins and place the ramekins in the prepared baking pan. Add boiling water to fill the pan halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Cover the pan loosely with aluminum foil and bake until the custard is just set around the edges, 35 to 40 minutes.

Transfer the ramekins to a wire rack and let cool to room temperature. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to 3 days.

Just before serving, sprinkle 1 Tbs. of the sugar evenly over each custard. Using a kitchen torch, melt the sugar according to the manufacturer's instructions. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Ingredients for Crème Brûlée

½ vanilla bean

2 cups heavy cream

3 egg yolks

Pinch of salt

¼ cup plus 4 Tbs. sugar

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Chuck's Favorite Kitchen Equipment

- Le Creuset Dutch oven
- Paring and chef's knives
- French whisk
- Stainless-steel mixing bowls
- Heavy, 8-inch nonstick omelette pan
- French porcelain for cooking and serving
- Food processor

Savoring Sutter Street

Chuck recalls the early days in San Francisco:

Williams-Sonoma's San Francisco legacy began in 1958, when Chuck Williams moved his original cookware shop from the wine country town of Sonoma to the city's celebrated Sutter Street.

The location proved to be everything Chuck hoped it would. In fact, when you ask him for a favorite example of his customer service, Chuck will take you back to those early days on Sutter Street, when many of his customers were wealthy society matrons who patronized the nearby Elizabeth Arden salon.

Just as he did when he owned his original Sonoma cookware shop, Chuck used to bring his German Shepherd, Bill, to work with him every day. The prestigious San Francisco salon, however, was not as pet-friendly. When customers realized this, instead of leaving their dogs in their cars during beauty treatments, they asked Chuck to take care of them—and he did.

Kids merited the same courteous attention, savoring the delights of Williams-Sonoma with Chuck and Bill while their grateful mothers lunched at their clubs or enjoyed a day at the salon.

Chuck says it was his pleasure—and all in a day's work. "That's just what we've always done at Williams-Sonoma: we make friends with our customers."

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WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Technique Class: Chuck's Classics—Celebrating Founder's Day

Chuck Williams: An American in Paris

Chuck recalls his first trip to Paris and its enduring impact on his life:

"I fell in love with Paris on my first trip in 1953. It was a city full of surprises, with wonderful things to see at every turn." — *Chuck Williams*

Chuck Williams caught his first glimpse of Paris on May 1, 1953, a few weeks after he and two friends had arrived in England aboard the SS Ile de France. Now, the trio was traveling by car, making their first journey to the fabled City of Light.

In those days, Chuck says, many Americans were drawn to the delights of Europe. In the preceding decades, pleasure travel had been curtailed by severe economic depression and world war. Now, postwar America was experiencing a peace and prosperity that inspired a fresh wave of European tourism.

"The dollar was strong, so it was cheap to go to Europe in those years," he recalls. "You could buy a second-class passage on a ship for maybe \$250, round-trip. And it didn't cost you much to travel once you got there. So Europe was becoming attractive for Americans." And Chuck Williams was among them.

Chuck has always described himself as someone who likes to eat—and Paris lived up to his every expectation. "Early on my first morning, near my hotel, I found a small bakery, where I purchased two croissants—the first I had ever tasted—and took them to the bar next door to enjoy with a café au lait. Sitting at a table outside in the sunshine, I savored my debut breakfast in Paris. I was in heaven."

Chuck's strolls through the neighborhoods of Paris also revealed the city's celebrated bistros, where locals and visitors alike would gather to enjoy hearty, home-style food and friendly conversation. Known for their warm, welcoming atmosphere and comforting cuisine, these small, cozy restaurants had originally become popular during the 19th century, when many Parisians regarded bistros as an extension of the family home.

Generations later, Chuck became enamored of these small eateries, where handwritten menus featured the plats du jour (daily specials) and the bustling kitchens provided an impromptu lesson in using the tools he had seen displayed in nearby stores. One of the things that impressed Chuck most was the extraordinary quality of French cooking, which was evidenced in even the most humble fare.

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Savoring Sutter Street (cont.)

“Back then, we had a lot of steamship travelers who were stopping in San Francisco, staying at hotels in the Union Square area. People came from all over: Europe, the Pacific Islands—even Japan. San Francisco was a sophisticated city that everyone wanted to visit—and they all knew about Williams-Sonoma.”

The cruise ships—and the city of San Francisco—also brought Williams-Sonoma a professional clientele. “The chefs from the big ocean liners would often come to our shop to see what was new,” Chuck recounts. “Naturally, the chefs from the city’s fine restaurants also came to investigate the professional French cookware I was selling. And many of them shared their recipes with me.”

Some of the chefs and authors who visited the Sutter Street store were among the best known in the culinary world. “James Beard started coming by the shop that first year, and we became good friends,” Chuck notes fondly. “There were others, too, like Helen Evans Brown and the food writer, Elizabeth David. And, of course, there was Julia.”

Every time an episode of Julia Child’s “The French Chef” aired on television, customers would flock to Williams-Sonoma wanting to buy the equipment needed to prepare the intricate French recipes that were featured on the show.

“I didn’t even need to watch her show to know what she’d cooked on any given night,” Chuck recalls. “Because the next morning, countless customers would come into the shop asking for the exact size of sauté pan or soufflé dish that Julia had used.”

Chuck goes on to observe: “You see, it was all new and different back then. I was offering Americans all sorts of things they’d never seen in the way of cooking and entertaining, so it was a learning experience for all of us. And you know what? I’m still learning!”

One day, after hours of exploring the city, Chuck found himself in the bar of a crowded café, when he ordered a “stand-up meal” of a ham sandwich and a beer. “The sandwich consisted of a generous segment of a crisp baguette, sliced in half horizontally, with a few curls of chilled sweet butter and two thin slices of jambon de Paris in between. To this day, I remember how delicious that simple combination was.”

In the following days, Chuck says, “I had many other firsts, all of them memorable.” In addition to his first crepe, first soufflé and first quiche, he savored his first explorations of the Parisian food markets. Chuck pored over the delicacies at Fauchon and the bounty of fresh foods at Les Halles, the eight-acre open-air marketplace that was the city’s main market until its demolition in 1971.

As a dedicated home cook, Chuck was fascinated by E. Dehillerin, the legendary Parisian kitchenware emporium. Founded in 1820, it continues to offer one of the most extensive culinary collections in the world. Wandering through its aisles was a revelation, as Chuck discovered the vast array of specialized equipment that was readily available to professional chefs and home cooks alike.

Custom-designed for a number of specific tasks, some of the esoteric tools were unfamiliar to even the most knowledgeable American cooks—including Chuck. “On that first trip, I knew a little about French cooking, but not much,” he admits. “That trip was when I learned what French cooking was all about.”

In the 1950s, Chuck says, most American kitchens were outfitted with a few basic pots and pans. But in Paris, Chuck found everything from brioche, tart and soufflé molds to customized tools and copper cookware of every shape and size. “Knowing how to cook myself, I loved looking at all the pots and pans and was amazed that everything was available there for everyone.”

Looking back, Chuck describes that first trip to Paris as one of the great turning points of his life.

“I really never got over that trip,” he reminisces. “I loved the food in the bistros and I loved looking at the department stores and shops stocked with all the baking equipment and pots and pans. Back then, I knew the French had already developed the most extensive variety of cooking tools that the world had ever known. No matter what the individual dish was, a pot or pan had been devised for it. Today, the French are still adding to the kitchen. And all these years later, I know that every trip I have ever taken looking for merchandise has been an extension of that first trip to Paris in 1953.”

Coq au Vin

In this iconic dish, long, slow cooking in red wine with herbs produces tender chicken and vegetables deeply imbued with flavor.

In a large, wide, heavy saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-low heat, melt 3 Tbs. of the butter. Add the bacon and onions and cook, stirring, until lightly browned, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon and onions to a plate. Add the chicken to the pan, increase the heat to medium-high and cook, turning as needed, until the chicken starts to brown, about 8 minutes. Sprinkle the chicken with the flour and cook, turning occasionally, until golden brown all over, about 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and pour the brandy over the chicken. Using a long match, ignite the brandy and let the flames subside. Return the bacon and onions to the pan and place over medium heat. Add 1 cup of the wine and deglaze the pan, scraping the bottom with a wooden spoon to dislodge any browned bits. Add the remaining ³/₄ cup wine, the thyme, parsley, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is opaque throughout, 45 to 60 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a fry pan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining 1 Tbs. butter. Add the mushrooms and sauté until just lightly golden, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from the heat. About 15 minutes before the chicken is done, add the mushrooms to the pan with the chicken.

Using a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken, onions, mushrooms and bacon to a bowl. Using a spoon, skim off the fat from the surface of the pan juices. Increase the heat to high, bring to a boil and cook until the liquid has thickened and reduced by nearly half, about 5 minutes. Return the chicken, onions, mushrooms and bacon to the pan, reduce the heat to low and cook, stirring, until heated through, 3 to 4 minutes. Serve the coq au vin directly from the pan or transfer to a warmed serving dish. Serves 4 to 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *The World Kitchen*, by Rick Rodgers (Weldon Owen, 2010).

Spaetzle

Spaetzle, a dish of tiny noodles or dumplings, means “little sparrow” in German. Enhanced with fresh herbs, our spaetzle make a delicious accompaniment to coq au vin.

In a large bowl, combine the milk, eggs, flour, the 2 tsp. salt, the ¹/₈ tsp. pepper, the nutmeg, and 1 Tbs. *each* of the parsley and chives. Whisk until smooth.

Fill a large pot two-thirds full of lightly salted water and bring to a brisk simmer over medium-high heat. Set a large bowl of ice water near the stove.

Put the batter in a spaetzle maker according to the manufacturer’s instructions, slide the hopper and drop the spaetzle directly into the simmering water. Alternatively,

Ingredients for Coq au Vin

4 Tbs. (¹/₂ stick) unsalted butter

6 thick-cut bacon slices, cut into 1-inch pieces

12 thawed frozen pearl onions

1 chicken, 4 to 5 lb., cut into 8 serving pieces

1 Tbs. all-purpose flour

2 Tbs. brandy

1³/₄ cups Burgundy or other medium-bodied red wine

3 fresh thyme sprigs

3 fresh flat-leaf parsley sprigs

1 bay leaf

¹/₂ tsp. salt

1 tsp. freshly ground pepper

¹/₂ lb. button mushrooms, halved

Ingredients for Spaetzle

1 cup milk

3 eggs

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. salt, plus more, to taste

¹/₈ tsp. freshly ground pepper, plus more, to taste

¹/₄ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

3 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

3 Tbs. chopped fresh chives

4 Tbs. (¹/₂ stick) unsalted butter

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