



DRAKE

UPTOWN DOWN SOUTH CUISINE

MAGNOLIAS RESTAURANT



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DON DRAKE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN D. SMOAK III



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# CONTENTS

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Acknowledgments	4
Foreword	5
Introduction	7
From the Southern Pantry	8
Sauces, Spices, Rubs & Marinades	20
Bread, Biscuits & Gravies	25
Appetizers	38
Salads and Dressings	59
Soups	71
Sandwiches & Southwest	87
Pasta, Eggs & Grits	102
Fish & Shellfish	118
Meat & Poultry	139
Sides	162
Desserts	181
Index	206

## Cheese Straws

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Makes 7½ dozen

*When it comes to cheese straws, we have a variety of recipes that float around the bakeshop— from blue cheese and bacon, Pepper Jack for a spicy variation, or pimiento cheese with pork crackling dust, to more traditional recipes like this one. This particular recipe has been around since the early '90s. When making cheese straws, it works better to let the butter come to room temperature before starting. Use block cheese and grate it yourself while the cheese is cold. However, let it come to room temperature after grating—it will cream together quicker.*

4 ounces sharp white cheddar, shredded	1 cup all-purpose flour
4 ounces sharp yellow cheddar, shredded	1 egg, beaten
½ cup salted butter, room temperature	Benne seeds
1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning	

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In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, mix the two cheeses, butter and Old Bay seasoning until creamy. Add in the flour and mix until just incorporated. Remove the dough from the bowl and roll into two small balls. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator to chill until firm, about 1½ hours.

While the dough is chilling, line 2 baking trays with parchment paper and preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Remove the dough from the refrigerator, place on a floured surface and pat out to ⅛ to ¼ inch thick. Cut the dough into strips 3 to 4 inches long and 1 inch wide. You can also place the dough in a pastry bag with a star tip or cookie extruder and pipe onto a prepared baking sheet. Take your beaten egg and lightly coat the top of the straws with a brush, then sprinkle with benne seeds. Bake in the middle rack of the oven for 10 to 15 minutes, until golden brown. Make sure to rotate the trays to ensure even cooking. Remove from the trays and allow to cool.



# Oyster Stew with Spinach and Wild Mushroom Cakes

Serves 4

*Carolina Cups are locally harvested oysters in the Beaufort/May River area. If you can't find these, substitute your favorite local oyster.*

1 1/2 tablespoons of unsalted butter, divided	2/3 cups heavy cream
1 tablespoon chopped garlic	1/2 pint Carolina Cup oysters with juice
1 medium shallot, diced	Sea salt and cracked black pepper
1 tablespoon finely chopped chives	4 wild mushroom and spinach cakes (recipe follows)
3/4 cup licorice-flavored liqueur or Pernod	Fried spinach (optional, recipe follows)



Place a medium-sized saucepan over medium-high heat until hot. Add 1 tablespoon of butter and melt. Add the garlic and shallot and cook for about 45 seconds, or until golden brown. Add the chives and cook for about 30 seconds. Carefully add the liqueur or Pernod. The pan will briefly flame. Continue cooking until the flame dies out. Add the heavy cream and reduce the mixture by half, cooking for about 2 minutes.

Add the oysters and cook just until the edges begin to curl. Remove the pan from heat and swirl in the remaining 1/2 tablespoon butter. Set the pan off to the side and season with salt and pepper. Keep warm.

Place equal amounts of the oyster stew into 4 bowls, then place the wild mushroom and spinach cake in the middle of the bowl. Garnish with fried spinach if desired.

## Wild Mushroom and Spinach Cakes

Serves 4

*This flavorful recipe calls for wild mushrooms, but go ahead and substitute a mix of domestic mushrooms if you can't find wild ones. Be sure to wash and clean them thoroughly.*

2 tablespoons unsalted butter	1/2 pint of Carolina Cup oysters with juice
1 medium shallot, diced	1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
2 tablespoons minced garlic	1 large egg, beaten
1 1/2 cups wild mushrooms (such as lobster, morels or chanterelles), cleaned and sliced	1/2 cup White Lily Self-Rising flour
1 (10-ounce) package frozen spinach, thawed, drained and chopped	2 tablespoons canola oil

Place a medium skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add the butter and sauté the shallot and garlic until golden brown. Add the mushrooms and sauté until cooked through. Add the chopped spinach and cook for about 1 minute, then add the oysters and cook until the edges start to curl. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and chill for about 45 minutes. After the mixture chills, stir in the bread crumbs and egg.

Place the flour in a shallow bowl. Form the chilled mushroom and oyster mixture into 4 separate balls and shape like you would a crab cake, about 1 inch thick. Dredge the cakes in the flour.

Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the canola oil and heat until hot but not smoking. Sauté the cakes for about 2 minutes per side, or until cooked through and golden brown.

## Fried Spinach

Makes 4 portions

4 ounces spinach
Vegetable or canola oil for frying

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat oil in a fryer to 325 degrees. Fry the spinach until crispy. Remove the spinach from the

fryer and place on paper towels to absorb any excess oil. Season with salt and pepper.

# Red Velvet Cake

Serves 10 to 12

Over the years we've made many different varieties of red velvet cakes, from Twinkies and red velvet whoopie pies to bread pudding and cookies. Originally, I think, shredded beets and cocoa powder were used to produce the deep ruby-chocolate color, but we use red food coloring. Traditional and time-honored frostings can vary just as much as the cake recipes, with some using a buttercream or cream cheese, while some call for an old-fashioned boiled milk recipe with flour, butter, sugar and vanilla extract. Here we combine the best of all worlds.

2 1/2 cups sifted cake flour	2 large eggs
2 tablespoons cocoa powder	2 tablespoons red liquid food coloring
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt	1 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup unsalted butter	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 cups vanilla sugar (see page 19) or granulated sugar	1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon real vanilla extract	Frosting (recipe follows)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and butter two 9-inch cake pans and line with circles of parchment paper.

Over a medium-sized bowl, sift together the cake flour, cocoa powder and salt; set aside. In a stand mixer fitted with a metal blade, cream the butter. Add the sugar and vanilla and beat for 3 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, scraping down the bowl after each addition.

In a measuring cup add the 2 tablespoons of red food coloring and buttermilk and mix well to combine, exercising caution to prevent spillage. Turn mixer to low speed and add one-third of the flour mixture. Then add half of the buttermilk, another third of the flour mixture, the rest of the buttermilk and the remainder of the flour mixture, in that order.

Place the soda in a small cup or bowl and add the red wine vinegar. Mix it quickly and add to the cake batter. Quickly pour the batter into the prepared cake pans, dividing equally between pans. Place on the center rack of the oven and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean. Cool the pans for 10 minutes and then invert onto a cake rack or plate to cool. When cooled, wrap in plastic and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.

**TO ASSEMBLE:** Halve each cake layer with a serrated knife to make four layers. Place one layer on a cake stand or plate and spread about 1/4 inch of icing on top. Repeat with the remaining layers. Ice the top and sprinkle with candied chopped pecans.

## Vanilla Bean Frosting

Enough for 1 cake

2 vanilla beans split in half	4 cups sugar
4 cups whole milk	2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
12 tablespoons all-purpose flour	2 teaspoons almond extract
2 pounds (8 sticks) unsalted butter (Plugra brand)	2 cups chopped candied pecans for garnish (see page 77)

In a medium-sized saucepan over medium-low heat, steep the vanilla beans in warm milk for 5 minutes. Scrape the inside of the beans into the milk and discard the pods. Before adding the flour, it's best to make a slurry using 1/4 cup of the warm milk and all the flour, to prevent clumping. Gradually whisk in the flour mixture over medium heat, whisking constantly until thickened and smooth. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes to remove the raw flour taste. Strain to remove any lumps, place in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap directly on the surface to

prevent a film from forming. Set aside and let cool to room temperature for about 45 minutes. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium-high for 4 minutes, until smooth and creamy. Slowly add the sugar and beat for 4 minutes. Add the vanilla and almond extracts and beat 1 minute more. Add the cooled milk-and-flour mixture slowly into the bowl, mixing on moderately high speed for 5 minutes. The frosting will get progressively whiter. Cover and refrigerate immediately. Let sit for 15 minutes, then use right away.

