

Passover Palate

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JEWISH EXPONENT

MARCH 11, 2021



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We've Come a Long Way Since Last Passover

LINDA MOREL LIF FOOD COLUMNIST

WHILE VACCINES ARE becoming more widespread, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention still advises spaces, such as dining rooms filled to capacity with family and friends, so we are facing our second Passover on Zoom.

A year ago, most of us didn't know how to mute or turn on the video feature. We certainly couldn't display Haggadah commentary for everyone at our virtual table to see.

At my seder, which to California, sadly one set of out how to connect. A family hardly hear them. Because my grandchildren were attending CEVICHE | PAREVE school virtually, they navigated Serves 8 us through Zoom.

Passover possible. It also brought together loved ones who live so far away, they'd never attended our seders before.

Now that most of us have become proficient with Zoom, order will return to our seders. Because we've adapted to virtual Passover celebrations, I suggest revamping our approach to reflect our modern, tech-savvy state.

Vibrant foods show well on camera. Instead of gefilte fish, why not start with a dazzling ceviche made from red snapper

filets? Try a baby spinach salad bursting with colorful fruit. Consider bypassing brisket in favor of roasted Cornish hens seasoned with herbs.

Select a Zoom-friendly, against gathering in crowded make-ahead menu, so hosts don't disappear from the camera while cooking in the kitchen. Zoom allows you to share visuals of the delicacies you're serving with family who can't be there in person. Present food in attractive tableware. For snap, garnish dishes with parsley.

A lifesaver during the COVID crisis, Zoom has stretched from Connecticut expanded our horizons. Yet most of us long for the past. grandparents couldn't figure Traditionally, seders end with the refrain, "Next year in of five sat too far from their Jerusalem." But let's add, "Next computer. While we could see year gathered in one dining them from a distance, we could room — just like it used to be."



With all its challenges, last The high acidity in fresh lime year Zoom made celebrating juice actually cooks fish during the marinating process.

- 1½ pounds red snapper filets. Ask the fish store to remove the skin and bones.
- 8 ounces fresh lime juice, about 4-6 limes
- 6 tablespoons each, chopped: red onion, yellow pepper and parsley
- 3 tablespoons, minced ainaer
- 4 garlic cloves, squeezed through a garlic press



12 cherry tomatoes, cut in

1 avocado, diced Salt and pepper to taste Sugar to taste, only if needed

▲ Ceviche

half

With a sharp knife, slice the red snapper into thin pieces and place them in a glass or ceramic bowl. Add the remaining ingredients — except sugar. Gently toss. Marinate from 30 minutes to two hours, tossing several times. The snapper will become opaque. If the ceviche tastes too tart, add a little sugar and a few drops of water. Serve in small bowls.

COLORFUL BABY SPINACH SALAD | PAREVE

Serves 8

This salad looks spectacular when served in a glass bowl.

Dressing

½ cup olive oil ½ cup red wine vinegar Kosher salt to taste

1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

Place the ingredients in a clean jar or empty container with a lid. Shake until the ingredients are well combined. The dressing can be made to this point three days in advance. Shake well before pouring it on the salad.

Salad

11/2 cups whole pecans 10-ounce package cherry tomatoes, preferably in various colors

4 clementines

16-ounce box baby spinach

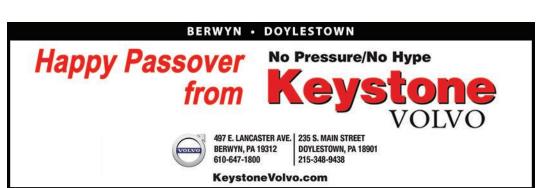
In a toaster oven or oven, roast the pecans at 350F for 2 minutes or until fragrant. Check the pecans after a minute as they burn easily. Cool to room temperature and reserve. These can be made three days ahead if kept in a sealed container.

Fudio / iStock / Getty Images Plus

Cut the cherry tomatoes in half. Peel the clementines, break them into sections and remove the pith. If the spinach is bought triple washed, it doesn't need to washed again. If not, rinse the spinach under cold water and dry it in a salad spinner. These three ingredients can be layered with paper towels and placed in a plastic bag a day in advance.

Before the seder begins, place the bagged ingredients in a large salad bowl. When ready to serve, add the pecans and the salad dressing. Toss until well combined.

See Long Way, Page 6





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Long Way

HERB-ROASTED CORNISH **HENS WITH VEGETABLES** | MFΔT

Serves 8

This bright and lively entrée is the essence of spring.

4 Cornish hens, 1½ pounds each

Olive oil for coating pan, plus 2 tablespoons to drizzle on vegetables, plus 1-2 tablespoons for the Cornish hens

1½ pounds fingerling potatoes, halved lengthwise

10 carrots, peeled and cut into thin carrot sticks

Kosher salt to taste ½ teaspoon each: dried

rosemary, thyme and basil Paprika for dusting

1 medium-sized onion,

peeled and cut into 4 chunks

Equipment: roasting pan and rack, preferably nonstick; and poultry shears

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees F. Coat the roasting pan and rack with olive oil.

Rinse the hens under cold water, including inside their cavities. Turn the hens upside down, and let water run out of their cavities into the sink. Drain them on paper towels. Reserve.

Place the potatoes and carrots in a plastic bag. Drizzle in 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Seal the bag and shake until every piece is coated with oil. Scatter the pieces around the edges of the roasting pan. Some pieces may go under the rack. Sprinkle the vegetables with salt.

Place the herbs in a bowl and 350 degrees F. crush them into small pieces and mix together. Rub a little olive bles in separate ovenproof pans.

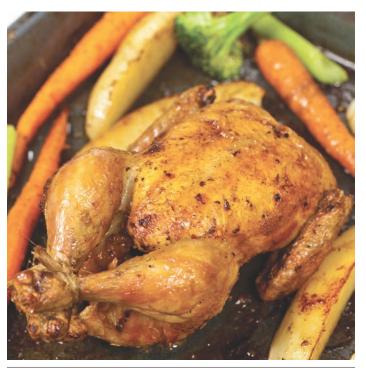
oil on the hens to coat. Arrange the hens on the rack with the underside facing up. Sprinkle the underside with half of the herb mixture and salt. Dust with the paprika. Press the seasonings into the skins of the hens. Turn the hens over and repeat with the remaining herbs, salt and paprika. Sprinkle the onion chunks with salt and place them in the cavities of the hens.

Roast for an hour, or until a meat thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the breast reads 165 degrees F. Serve immediately.

The recipe can be made to this point 2 days ahead.

To eat the meal later, cool it to room temperature and refrigerate. Return it to room temperature 2½ hours before serving. Thirty minutes before serving, preheat your oven to

Place the hens and vegeta-



▲ Herb-roasted cornish hens with vegetables

alisafarov / iStock / Getty Images Plus

for 20 minutes, or until slowly onion. Move the vegetables sizzling. Cut the hens in half to an attractive bowl. Serve with poultry shears and serve immediately. •

Heat the hens and vegetables them on a platter. Discard the



Passover Menu Tradition and Twists

KERI WHITE | JE FOOD COLUMNIST

A ROAST CHICKEN is a quintessential holiday meal. But just because it is traditional and typical does not mean that it isn't wonderful, or that it RAPTUROUS ROAST can't be really special.

Even a meh roast chicken is pretty good, but when it is brined properly, seasoned well and roasted with care and precision, well, it can be pretty darn transcendent. Ditto roasted veggies.

Sure, we've been doing them for years, but have you done them with a lemoncaper dressing? And mashed potatoes are rather common, but how about gussying them up with mashed garlic and pan drippings from the chicken? Now we're talking!

The following menu forms the basis for a small-group

seder. Cooks can fill in with their "must-haves," but this cleaves pretty well to tradition while giving each dish a bit of a refresh.

CHICKEN

Serves 4

Many brining instructions require heating the water to dissolve the spices, then cooling the brine before adding the chicken. Pshaw, I say. I have in the pot. Fill the pot the rest always just chucked it all in of the way with water to cover cold and it's worked just fine.

Brining:

- 1 roaster, 5-7 pounds
- 3 tablespoons salt
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon each finely ground pepper, garlic powder, dried thyme and dried rosemary

- 1 gallon water (approximately)
- 1/3 cup white vinegar

Roasting:

- 3 tablespoons minced garlic
- ½ cup water or broth

Brine the chicken: Fill a large pot halfway with water, and add all remaining ingredients except the chicken; stir to dissolve. Rinse the chicken, remove the giblets and place it the chicken. Cover the pot and place it in the refrigerator for 12-24 hours.

Roast the chicken: When the brining is complete, heat your oven to 350 degrees F. Remove the chicken from the brine, rinse well, pat dry and place it

See Twists, Page 8



▲ Rapturous roast chicken

Photo by Keri White



Twists

Continued from Page 7

in the roasting pan. Place garlic inside the chicken cavity and pour the broth or water into the bottom of the pan.

Roast the chicken in the oven for 20 minutes per pound, until a meat thermometer inserted in the thigh registers 170 degrees F. Tent the chicken with foil for about 10 minutes. Scoop about ¾ cup of pan drippings to mash into the potatoes (see below). Carve, plate and, just before serving, pour some of the remaining pan drippings onto the sliced meat.

MASHED POTATOES WITH **GARLIC AND PAN DRIPPINGS** Serves 4

I do not peel potatoes, but if you and your crew must have the skins removed, be my guest. The preparation is

the same. Yukon Golds and pot and mash the garlic cloves red bliss potatoes have thin skins so they might be a good compromise for the peel/ non-peel contingents.

- 6 large potatoes, cut in uniform chunks
- 8 cloves garlic, peeled
- ½ to ¾ cup pan drippings from roasted chicken

Salt and pepper to taste

In a large pot, place the AND BROCCOLI WITH potatoes, garlic and a generous pinch of salt. Cover, bring it to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes, This dressing brought the dish until a knife inserted into a potato goes through easily and the potatoes are soft.

Drain the potatoes and garlic well and return them to the pot. Leave them on the turned off but still warm burner for a minute, uncovered, to allow them to dry.

Using a fork, poke around the

before you mash the potatoes — you want to be sure to mash the garlic well — it will be much milder than raw garlic, but it needs to be spread throughout the dish, not left as whole cloves. Pour the pan drippings over the potatoes and garlic and mash well. Season with salt and pepper, and serve hot.

ROASTED CAULIFLOWER LEMON CAPER DRESSING Serves 4 generously

to another level and could be used on any vegetables, roasted or steamed.

The vegetables:

- 1 head cauliflower, cut in pieces
- 1 head of broccoli, cut in pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil



Generous sprinkling of salt and pepper

The dressing:

1½ teaspoons capers, chopped

- ½ teaspoon caper juice Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 2 tablespoons olive oil Salt and pepper to taste

Heat your oven to 400 degrees F. On a rimmed baking tray lined with parchment, or at room temperature. •

place the broccoli and cauliflower pieces and toss them with olive oil, salt and pepper. Roast for about 35 minutes until the vegetables are starting to brown at the edges.

While the vegetables roast, make the dressing: Mix all ingredients in a measuring cup or small bowl.

When the vegetables are done, place them in a serving bowl and toss with the dressing. Serve hot

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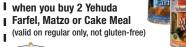
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Passover Foods for Kids

LINDA MOREL | JE FOOD COLUMNIST

MY GRANDCHILDREN get excited by the Passover story.

There are good guys — our ancestors, the Hebrew slaves; and bad guys - the ancient Egyptians. There's a cruel king called Pharaoh, who refuses to free the slaves. There's our Moses, who says, "Let my people go." Next, plagues are hurled down to punish Pharaoh for being obstinate.

Finally, there is salvation when Pharaoh relents and frees our ancestors. There is plenty of drama — and lessons to be learned.

This remarkable story fuels their imaginations. All goes well at seders until the brisket. tzimmes and matzah kugels it crushes me to see disappointcome to the table.



and cheese, pasta, chicken for foods they will eat: pecans, fingers and French fries. They eat hamburgers, too, but only inside buns. Loaded with flour, none of these foods are appropriate Passover fare.

As the main course is served. ment on their faces. Worse yet, Like typical American this is followed by a sudden

apples, raw carrots, even slices of cheese. None of these nibbles qualify as a main course.

While the delicacies for the adults were prepared in advance, the food children eat is slapdash. It doesn't make them feel special.

children, they live on macaroni dash to the kitchen to scrounge frustrated as my grandchildren, just for them.

I've created an alternate child- VEGETARIAN CHARCUTERIE friendly menu calling for foods kids like to eat.

For fun, I serve a vegetarian charcuterie tray, loaded with child-pleasing fruits and veggies. Chicken fingers made with potato starch and oven fried potatoes are such big hits, that the adults eat them, too. At dessert, no one can resist matzah dipped in chocolate and tossed with colorful sprinkles.

Passover is as much for children as it is for adults. Where would seders be without children? Who would answer the Four Questions or find the afikomen? Call me a grandmother who spoils her grandchildren, but when dinner is served, it's worth it to see smiles on their faces as Because I've been as they relish the foods I've made

TRAY | PAREVE

Serves 4-6

Strawberries, cut in half Grapes, red or green Cucumbers, cut in circles Carrots, cut in circles Apples, cut in slices Clementine sections Bananas, cut in circles Cherry tomatoes, cut in half Walnuts or pecans, toasted at 350 degrees F, and cooled

Start with an oblong tray or platter with these dimensions or close to them: 13 inches by 6 inches. Arrange the foods above, in lines parallel to the tray's shorter side. For eye appeal, arrange foods in lines of opposing colors. For

See Kids, Page 12



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Kids

Continued from Page 10

to a green one.

OVEN-FRIED POTATOES | **PARFVE**

Serves 6

Equipment: 10-inch-by-15inch ovenproof pan, such as Pyrex

Olive oil for coating the pan, plus ½ cup

6 large russet potatoes

Kosher salt to taste

Preheat the oven to 425 example, place a red food next degrees F. Coat the bottom and sides of the pan with olive oil.

> Peel the potatoes. Cut them into 1-inch chunks. Move them CHICKEN FINGERS | MEAT to the prepared pan. Drizzle ½ cup of olive oil over the fingers, serves 4-6 potatoes. Gently toss to coat. Sprinkle on salt.

the oven. Turn the potatoes have them every few minutes. Bake for 70 minutes, or until the potatoes are brown and crisp. Serve immediately. The recipe can

be made two days ahead, if refrigerated, brought to room temperature and reheated at 350 degrees F for 15-20 minutes or until sizzling.

Yield about 16-20 chicken

Equipment: 3 frying pans Move the baking pan to make things go faster, if you

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
- 3 cups potato starch
- 3 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1½ teaspoons garlic powder
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup olive oil, or more if needed

Rinse the chicken under cold water. Dry it completely on paper towels. With a sharp knife, cut off and discard as much fat as you can. It's impossible to remove all of the fat without cutting your fingers, so please don't do that.

Cut the chicken thighs into strips about 1-inch wide. The oven until sizzling, about 10-15 strips won't look identical. There may some short, stumpy pieces. Use them, too. Even CHOCOLATE-DIPPED frozen chicken fingers vary in size and shape.

Place two layers of paper towels onto two platters.

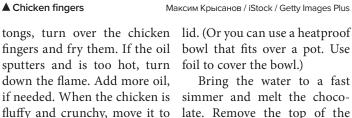
In a bowl, preferably with a flat bottom, place the potato starch, salt and garlic powder. Mix it together well with a

Crack the eggs into another bowl. Whisk to blend.

One at a time, roll the pieces of chicken into the potato starch mixture to coat, then submerge them in the eggs, and roll them again in potato starch, until completely covered. Place the chicken pieces on a dinner plate.

Pour enough olive oil into the first frying pan to cover the entire bottom, 1/8-inch deep. Heat on a medium flame.

Move the chicken fingers into the oil. Sizzle them in the oil until golden brown. Using



This recipe can be made 2 days in advance and refrigerated, or it can be frozen. When ready to serve, bring the chicken fingers to room temperature, and warm them in a preheated 350 degree F minutes.

the paper towel-lined platters.

Repeat with remaining pieces

of chicken. Serve immediately.

MATZAH | DAIRY OR PAREVE Yield: 24 pieces

- 1 pound semisweet chocolate, (two 8-ounce packages)
- 2 pieces of matzah
- 2 pieces of parchment
- 1 cup, or more, of multi-colored sprinkles

Note: Many brands of semisweet chocolate contain some dairy products. OH! NUTS (ohnuts.com) carries pareve kosher for Passover chocolate and sprinkles. Depending on which Passover chocolate you select, you may need to add a little sugar to it.

Fill the bottom pot of a double boiler with 2 inches of water. Fit the top pot in position and place the chocolate inside. Cover it with the ready to serve. •

bowl that fits over a pot. Use foil to cover the bowl.)

Bring the water to a fast simmer and melt the chocolate. Remove the top of the double boiler from the boiling water. Bring the chocolate to room temperature, while still

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Break each piece of matzah into four equal strips along the perforation lines. Break each strip into 3 rectangles. Move the rectangles to a rimmed baking pan. Place rectangles in a single layer without overlapping.

Bake for 5 minutes, or until the matzah is warm but not browning. Remove it from the oven and cool it to room temperature.

Cover 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

Give the melted chocolate a stir. Submerge the matzah rectangles in chocolate on both sides, letting the excess chocolate drip back into the pot. Place the rectangles on parchment paper. While the chocolate is still warm, decorate it with colorful sprinkles.

Refrigerate the sheets for 2 hours, or until the chocolate is firm. (If you have a screened porch and the temperature is 40 degrees or below, you can cool the rectangles outdoors.) Move the rectangles to a platter, cover them with plastic wrap and keep them refrigerated for a day or two, until





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Fondue, Fun-do!

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PASSOVER IS A joyous holiday and, in addition to the important rituals it involves, it delivers festivity and fun. With that in mind, we offer a dessert idea that brings with it a casual joviality, while remaining kosher for Passover.

COVID-19 is still among us, so the gathering this year may be another small one. And with that consideration, fondue in its traditional form is far too communal for the world we now live in, but that is easily addressed with an individual serving for each guest.

The other great benefit of fondue is that once you create the "wow" of a sauce, the rest takes care of itself with minimal effort — store bought kosher for Passover sponge cake cut in to bite-sized squares, Passover cookies, macaroons, cut-up any of these fondues. Both the chocolate and the caramel can be made as pareve versions, anglaise and would keep to the traditional version using cream.

CHOCOLATE FONDUE

Serves 4 generously

The recipe below calls for milk;

I generally use regular whole milk when I make it. You can also use water, coconut milk or any non-dairy milk of your choosing if a pareve dish is desired. The resulting texture will vary; the more fat in the liquid, the thicker the fondue will be — water will deliver the thinnest sauce, while heavy cream or coconut cream will make a thicker, richer version.

This is definitely a bittersweet fondue; if a sweeter, less-intense version preferred, you can add ¼ cup of sugar with the cocoa, or use some or all milk chocolate.

- 1 cup milk (or an alternative version, cook's choice)
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 12 ounces chocolate (chips or a bar coarsely chopped)

In a medium saucepan, mix fruit, nuts, matzah, et cetera, the milk and cocoa powder are all wonderful dipped in with a whisk. Scald the mixture until small bubbles appear around the edges — do not boil, but bring it just short but I'm a purist with the crème of that point. Remove it from the heat, and pour the chocolate into the pan. Shake it a bit to make sure all chocolate is submerged, and cover the pot for about 3 minutes.

Remove the cover and use

See Fondue, Page 14





DINNERS

Kosher Style* Brisket Dinner Serves 8

4 lbs. Slow-cooked Beef Brisket & Gravy

4 lbs. Potato Kugel

2 lbs. Applesauce

2 lbs. Tri-color Roasted Baby Carrots

Matzo Ball Soup for 8

1 lb. Seven Fruit Charoset

Flourless Chocolate Cake

\$129.99

Vew 1/2 Kosher Style* Brisket Dinner Serves 4

2 lbs. Slow-cooked Beef Brisket & Gravy

2 lbs. Potato Kugel

1 lb. Applesauce

1 lb. Tri-color Roasted Baby Carrots

Matzo Ball Soup for 4

1 lb. Seven Fruit Charoset

Flourless Chocolate Cake

\$64.99

Kosher Style* Brisket Dinner for One

Slow-cooked Beef Brisket & Gravy

Applesauce

Potato Kugel

Tri-color Roasted Baby Carrots

\$12.99/ea.

New All-Natural Roasted Turkey Breast Dinner Serves 8

5-6 lb. Boneless Turkey Breast

4 lbs. Potato Kugel

2 lbs. Applesauce

2 lbs. Tri-color Roasted Baby Carrots

Matzo Ball Soup for 8

1 lb. Seven Fruit Charoset

3 - 24 oz. containers of Home-Style Turkey Gravy

Flourless Chocolate Cake

\$129.99

View All-Natural Roasted Turkey Breast Dinner Serves 4

21/2-3 lb. Boneless Turkey Breast

2 lbs. Potato Kugel

1 lb. Applesauce

1 lb. Tri-color Roasted Baby Carrots

Matzo Ball Soup for 4

1 lb. Seven Fruit Charoset

2 - 24 oz. containers of Home-Style Turkey Gravy

\$64.99

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Look for additional items in your stores service case located in Prepared Foods!

Fondue

Continued from Page 13

a whisk to mix the chocolate until it is melted. If the chocolate does not fully melt, return to very low heat and stir constantly until smooth.

Serve immediately, or set it aside and, when ready to serve, heat the fondue on the stove over very low flame (a double boiler is great for this step) or heat it in a microwave on 30% power until warm. Take great care with this step to avoid burning the chocolate. Divide the chocolate into dessert bowls or cups and serve with dippers.

CARAMEL FONDUE

Serves 4 generously

Caramel is one of those things that is so much more than the sum of its parts — it's nothing short of edible liquid gold. Traditionally, it is made with cream and butter, but I have also created a coconut version, which is vegan/pareve. The recipe below provides both options.

11/4 cups sugar

- ½ cup water
- 1 cup heavy cream or 1 cup coconut cream
- 2 tablespoons butter or 2 tablespoons of coconut oil



In a medium saucepan, the cream or coconut cream. CRÈME ANGLAISE

This creamy, custardy, vanilla-tinged sauce is lovely on just about anything.

Vanilla beans, which are called it will go from liquid gold or coconut oil, and stir again for in traditional crème anglaise, can be hard to find, expensive and challenging to work with.

Vanilla paste is a good mixture has reached a golden gently and carefully heat the alternative and, if you can't get either, good quality vanilla extract will do the trick. The

end result will lack the signature flecks of vanilla beans that are common in the most traditional versions, but the taste will not suffer much.

nargouillatphotos / iStock / Getty Images Plus

- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 vanilla bean or ½ teaspoon vanilla paste or 11/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 eggs
- ⅓ cup sugar

Place the milk and cream in a medium saucepan. Scrape in seeds from the vanilla bean, if using, or add the vanilla paste/ extract. Bring it to a simmer and remove it from the heat.

In a bowl, whisk the eggs with the sugar until blended well. Slowly add the hot milk mixture to the eggs, whisking constantly.

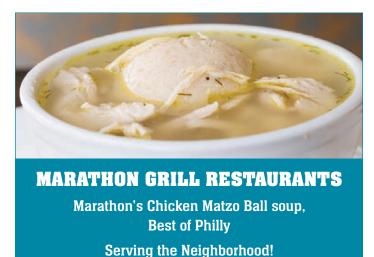
Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and heat over low until slightly thickened, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes. Doneness test: Dip a spoon into the sauce, then scrape a finger down the back of the spoon; if it leaves a trail, the custard is done. Pour the sauce through a strainer and serve warm or chilled.

melt the sugar and water over Stir and allow it to blend to a medium heat and let it boil smooth texture. If the sugar until caramelized; this will crystalizes, don't worry; just take about 10 minutes. It must keep stirring and put it back be watched carefully because on the burner over a low heat once it begins to caramelize until it melts again. Add butter to scorched black tar very until the caramel is golden and quickly.

When the sugar and water color and a syrup-like texture, caramel fondue over low, and remove it from the heat and add divide it into dessert bowls.

thick.

When you're ready to serve,



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