

Sunshine and caviar

BY DAVID CAMPICHE

Steve Romero is a clever man, preparing food with fervor and skill. He called on a bright, windless day to announce that he'd scored on some caviar, inviting my wife, Laurie, and I to come by and make caviar omelets.

He whipped the eggs with a splash of cream in a food processor until they swelled in size, then salted the liquid. An immersion blender is also perfect for this job.

The dish was seasoned with finely chopped fresh chives and minced shallots, some set aside for the filling and others for a sprinkle of garnish. A crème fraiche served as topping, made from a mixture of sour cream, buttermilk and lemon juice.

The dish was cooked in a buttered 12-inch pan. It's a simple preparation, but a simple meal that stands alone in flavor and delight. Yes, caviar is expensive, but this meal cost no more than a restaurant visit. We consumed it with voracious delight.

Ingredients

Serves four

- 12 eggs, heavily beaten
- 1/4 cup heavy cream

- 1/2 cup caviar, sturgeon, salmon or white fish
- 1/4 cup chives, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup shallots or red onions, finely chopped

- 1/2 cup crème fraiche

Preparation

An omelet, in my humble opinion, should remain a pale yellow, that is, with little to no browning. Layer the egg mixture into a non-stick pan, and as the liquid thickens, pull the eggs to the center.

When the eggs are mostly set, soft but not runny, fold the two corners to the center of the pan, leaving a pocket for the caviar. Slide the omelet onto a warm plate. Add the caviar or fish of choice and the shallots, chives and crème fraiche. This can also be done in the hot pan, or by enclosing the omelet, but be careful not to brown the egg crust or cook the caviar. Sprinkle some additional shallots and chives on top and serve immediately. Steve added a few sausages to the brunch. One could happily include sautéed potatoes in olive oil with garlic and fresh herbs and a serving of fresh fruit.



If the opportunity comes along to save salmon eggs, think about substituting a homemade caviar. Drop the fish eggs into a pan of near-boiling water for just seconds, then cool in cold water, strain and pull away the delicate skeins. Later, rub the eggs gently over a 1/4-inch screen until they fall out into a bowl. Add soy sauce and a few table-spoons of whiskey to the eggs. I let this sit overnight before serving. The homemade caviar works well over crisp crackers layered with sour cream and chives. Remember, the world is your omelet.

Need I say that a glass of champagne might just enhance the meal. Or a mimosa, or fresh squeezed orange juice?

David Campiche is a potter, poet, writer and lifelong resident of the Long Beach Peninsula with a keen interest in adventure, fine and culinary arts. Find more about his work at davidcampiche.com.



David Campiche

Steve Romero puts the finishing touches on a caviar omelet.

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