



SWEET & SAVORY. Pictured is an image of Miso-Spiced Rum Bananas Foster. Using miso, a Japanese fermented soy paste, may sound odd in a dessert, but adding a touch of it in the sauce balances the sweetness with a delicious savoriness. (Milk Street via AP)

Recipe: Savory miso balances one-note bananas Foster

By Christopher Kimball
Christopher Kimball's Milk Street

This year, start the New Year with a bang — or how about a flambé? The appropriately festive bananas Foster was invented in 1951 at Brennan's on Bourbon Street in New Orleans, where fortunes were made importing the tropical fruit. Torching a mixture of brown sugar, rum, and liqueurs creates a delicious caramel on this American classic, usually served with vanilla ice cream melting into the warm sauce.

The trouble is, it can be exceedingly sweet. So we went in search of balance for a big-flavor update. For this recipe from our book *COOKish*, which limits recipes to just

six ingredients without sacrificing flavor, the solution was miso. The Japanese fermented soy paste may sound odd in a dessert, but using a touch of it in the sauce balances the sweetness with a delicious savoriness.

Honey instead of sugar adds floral nuance that complements the miso. We use spiced rum as a one-ingredient way to infuse the buttery sauce with peppery flavor and aroma.

Cooking the fruit in a skillet may not offer the flash of setting it on fire tableside, but doing so concentrates the flavors in the banana.

Editor's note: To view additional recipes, visit 177milkstreet.com/ap.

Miso-Spiced Rum Bananas Foster

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

- 3 tablespoons salted butter, cut into 3 pieces
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon white miso
- 2 bananas, peeled, halved lengthwise then crosswise
- 1/2 cup spiced rum
- Vanilla ice cream, to serve

In a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Stir in the honey and miso. Add the bananas and cook, stirring carefully so as not to bruise the bananas, until the sauce is slightly darker in color, about 2 minutes. Off heat, pour in the rum. Return to medium and cook, stirring carefully, until the alcohol no longer smells raw, about 2 minutes. Divide the bananas and sauce among 4 serving bowls, then top with ice cream.

Optional garnish: Chinese five-spice powder

Outlets hurt by dwindling public interest in news in 2021

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streaming service. Arguably Fox's most attention-getting programming of the year was a documentary on the January 6 Capitol riot by Tucker Carlson, that asserted it was an effort to silence Trump supporters.

Both CNN and MSNBC face key programming decisions in the new year. CNN must replace its most popular host, Chris Cuomo, who was fired after it was revealed how he helped his brother through a political scandal. MSNBC must replace Brian Williams in its lineup and will most likely see its most popular personality, Rachel Maddow, cut back on her hours.

Although usage of the *Times'* digital site is down, the company passed 8 million subscriptions and is on pace to grow further. Doctor said the *Times* has done an effective job of diversifying beyond politics, most notably with its Wirecutter service of consumer recommendations.

Leaders at the *Post* have wrestled with how to deal their readers' dependence on political fare, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The company is looking internationally for growth opportunities, Doctor said, a focus that plays to the strength of its new executive editor, Sally Buzbee.

"People to some degree have focused inward," Rosenstiel said. "They're getting the news that they need but it's not as much news as it was a year ago."

Particularly for the national news outlets, Rosenstiel said 2021 may best be remembered as a transitional year away from the frenzied news pace of the Trump years.

He sees the effect of those years in the intensity with which the media has covered every twist and turn of legislative negotiations over President Joe Biden's "Build Back Better" bill. Like most work in congress, it's slow-moving and filled with incremental developments.

He's concerned that concentration on this story has distracted from other priorities, including focusing on local efforts to restrict voting rights, ultimately a more important story.

Some 100 to 120 local newspapers shut down in 2021, a number that is on pace with the declines of the past two decades, said Penelope Muse Abernathy, a professor at Northwestern University.

Yet local news outlets are also expected to have their smallest number of job cuts in 14 years, according to the research firm Challenger Gray & Christmas. That comes after 2020 saw the biggest number of lost newsroom jobs since 2008.

"What we're seeing this year is kind of a watershed moment in the pivot from a print business model that is diminishing to a digital model that is beginning to take shape," said Timothy Franklin, Abernathy's colleague at Northwestern.

He cited the *Boston Globe* and *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* as two newspapers that are succeeding in the transition.

Local news outlets saw a boost in digital subscriptions as people sought information in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. While interest in pandemic news has waned, Abernathy said she believes the outlets have done well in keeping many of those new subscribers.

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