

Foodtime

IF CHEF SAM MCGANN COULD BE A FOOD, IT WOULD BE BLUE FIN TUNA

"They have incredible speed and strength and all chefs enjoy preparing them," says McGann, who participates in the food preparation and management of three restaurants. But, when it comes time to do some outdoor grilling and entertaining, he turns to one of his tried-and-true favorite recipes – grilled brined pork chops with marinated red onions and sour mash mustard which you can check out on hrmytime.com. For a simpler warm-weather meal, try his crab-stuffed tomatoes – hopefully with tomatoes you pluck from your own garden!



CRAB STUFFED TOMATOES

- 4 ripe tomatoes, of equal sizes, big enough to stuff
- 1 pound jumbo lump crabmeat, local, picked of shells
- 1 tablespoon parsley, chopped
- 1 tablespoon tarragon, chopped
- 1 tablespoon dill, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest, chopped
- 1 teaspoon lime zest, chopped
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 drops Tabasco sauce
- 2 tablespoon mayonnaise, optional
- Salt & fresh-ground black pepper, as needed

SALAD INGREDIENTS

- 2 ounces spring greens, arugula, mache, mesclun, baby romaine, watercress or dandelion
- 1 cucumber, large peeled and parisienne (melon ball) cut

TOMATO DRESSING

- 1 1/2 cups tomato pulp, chopped
- 2 tablespoons sherry or balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 cup virgin olive oil

Wash hands thoroughly. Pick shells from crabmeat (maintaining the integrity of the lumps). Gently mix crab with herbs, zests, olive oil, Tabasco (and mayonnaise if desired). Season with salt and pepper. Keep chilled.

TOMATOES FOR STUFFING

Remove the top 1/4 of the tomato and core out enough pulp to sufficiently stuff each tomato. Save the pulp. Cover and keep tomatoes at room temperature if serving for that day's meal.

TOMATO DRESSING

Whisk together all ingredients. Taste.

TO FINISH

Stuff each tomato with equal parts crab salad. Be generous! Arrange spring greens on 4 plates. Dress with tomato dressing and cucumbers. Finish with crab stuffed tomato in the center of each plate. Serves four.



CHEF SAM MCGANN

Southern Shores in North Carolina and downtown Norfolk

Age: "Timeless"

Profession: Chef and partner in River Stone Chophouse

and Vintage Tavern, both in Suffolk; also chef and co-owner of the Blue Point in Duck, N.C.

Info: www.VintageTavernVirginia.com or 757-238-8808; www.riverstonechophouse.com or 888-638-7990.

Background: Norfolk native; graduate of Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I., with a degree in culinary arts.

Favorite kitchen tools: Cast-iron pan because it's good for many purposes. Microplane instead of a grater because it gives a sharp, fine powder that's perfect for nutmeg, lemon zest and cheese. Classic wooden spoon for everyday use.

Best spices: Nutmeg for finishing purées such as potatoes, cauliflower or creamed spinach. Mild Indian curry is perfect when used subtly in squash soup, couscous salad or with tomatoes. I'm using a lot of Spanish smoked paprika lately; I use La Chinata, but McCormick makes an at-home version.