

MICHAEL WOLFF ON THE MAKING OF A MEDIA SUPERHERO
AN EXCLUSIVE EXCERPT FROM HIS NEW BOOK 'AUTUMN OF THE MOGULS'

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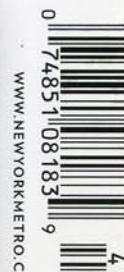
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By Gillian Duffy



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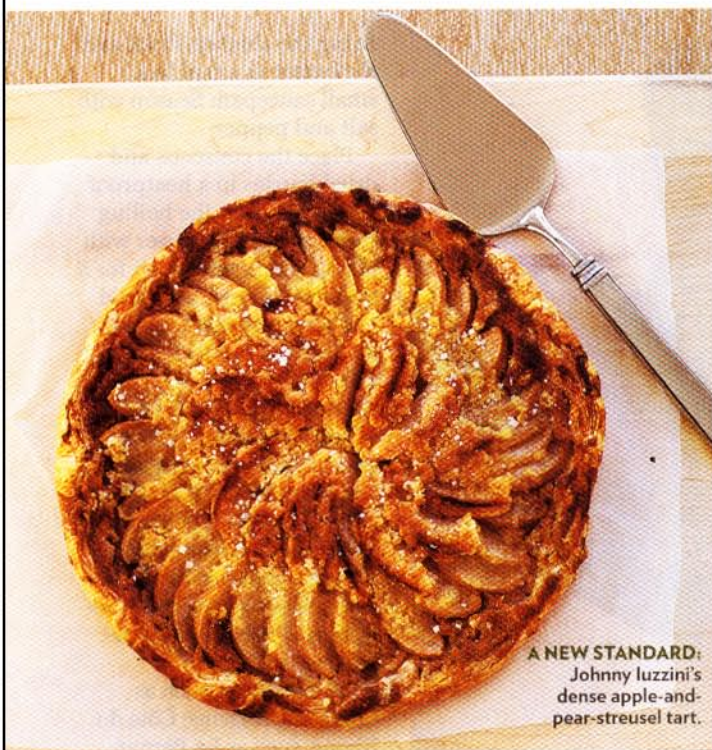
We've often wondered, *What does [insert favorite chef's name here] serve family and friends at the holidays?* Like us, the pros want to enjoy themselves—and at home they don't have armies of sous-chefs to help out. So what they cook up tends to be flavorful yet unfussy (e.g., the world's best roast beef). And, of course, they're full of surprises (Christmas pasta, anyone?). One thing's certain: No one will go home hungry.

BY GILLIAN DUFFY



MEAT AND
POTATOES: Dan
Silverman's hearty
standing rib roast.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY WILLIAM MEPPEN



A NEW STANDARD:
Johnny Iuzzini's
dense apple-and-
pear-streusel tart.

“We set the mood with lots of candles and fun. Then we kill people with desserts. We eat and get drunk and decorate the tree.” —JOHNNY IUZZINI

CHOCOLATE CUSTARD TART

TART DOUGH:

2¼ cups all-purpose flour, plus additional for dusting
½ cup cocoa
Pinch kosher salt
1¼ cups butter
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
1 egg

CUSTARD:

7 ounces Valrhona extra-bitter chocolate, chopped
1 cup cream
½ cup milk
2 tablespoons sugar
1 egg

DOUGH: Sift the flour with the cocoa and salt. Cream the butter and sugar in the bowl of a mixer fitted with a paddle on low speed until fluffy. Add the egg, and mix just until incorporated. Add the dry

ingredients, and mix until a dough forms. Shape into a ball, cut in half, flatten both halves, wrap each in plastic, and chill for at least 1 hour.

Working quickly, roll out one of the dough balls on a large piece of lightly floured parchment paper to form a 13-inch circle about ⅛-inch thick. Place the parchment on a baking sheet, cover the dough with plastic, and chill it for at least 1 hour. Keep the remaining dough in the freezer for another tart.

Carefully fit the dough into a 9½-inch tart shell with a removable bottom, taking care not to stretch or pinch it. Freeze the dough for at least 15 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Bake the crust until it puffs, about 10 to 15 minutes. Flatten the base by pressing it down with a measuring cup, then continue baking

until the crust is crisp, about 10 to 15 minutes more. Set aside to cool.

CHOCOLATE CUSTARD: Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Place chocolate in a bowl. Bring the cream, milk, and sugar to a boil in a saucepan. Add the mixture, a third at a time, to the chocolate, stirring each addition until combined. (If it's added all at once, the chocolate will become grainy.) Beat the egg in a large bowl. Whisk in a quarter of the chocolate-milk mixture until just combined, and add to the remaining chocolate. (Do not whisk hard.) Tap the bowl to get rid of any air bubbles. Pour the custard into the baked tart shell, filling it to the top.

Bake for 20 minutes, rotate front-to-back, and bake for another 20 minutes or until the custard is set around the edges but jiggly in the center. Serve with brandy whipped cream (recipe below).

BRANDY WHIPPED CREAM

1¼ cups double cream, chilled
3 tablespoons confectioner's sugar
2 tablespoons brandy, or to taste

Whip the cream and sugar together in a bowl until soft peaks almost form, add the brandy, and continue beating until stiff.

WINE: Moscato, such as Moscato Passito di Pantelleria Bukkuram.

JOHNNY IUZZINI
JEAN GEORGES

JUST LIKE MOM'S.

The dish on the dish: I grew up in the country with my mom, making pies with the apples we pick from special little orchards. While I worked for François Payard, he instilled in me the importance of the classic tart. I haven't forgotten the basics. Sprinkling it with fleur de sel at the end gives an extra flo-

ral aroma and a savory balance—no one wants anything too sweet.

Scene: It's the Christmas-tree-decorating party the weekend before Christmas. We set the mood with lots of candles and fun, upbeat music from our favorite D.J., Ursula 1000. The food is placed all around the apartment; mostly finger food to start with, then we kill people with desserts. We eat and get drunk as we decorate the tree. We definitely don't do the whole sit-down thing.

RUSTIC APPLE-AND-PEAR-STREUSEL TART

CINNAMON-ORANGE ALMOND CREAM

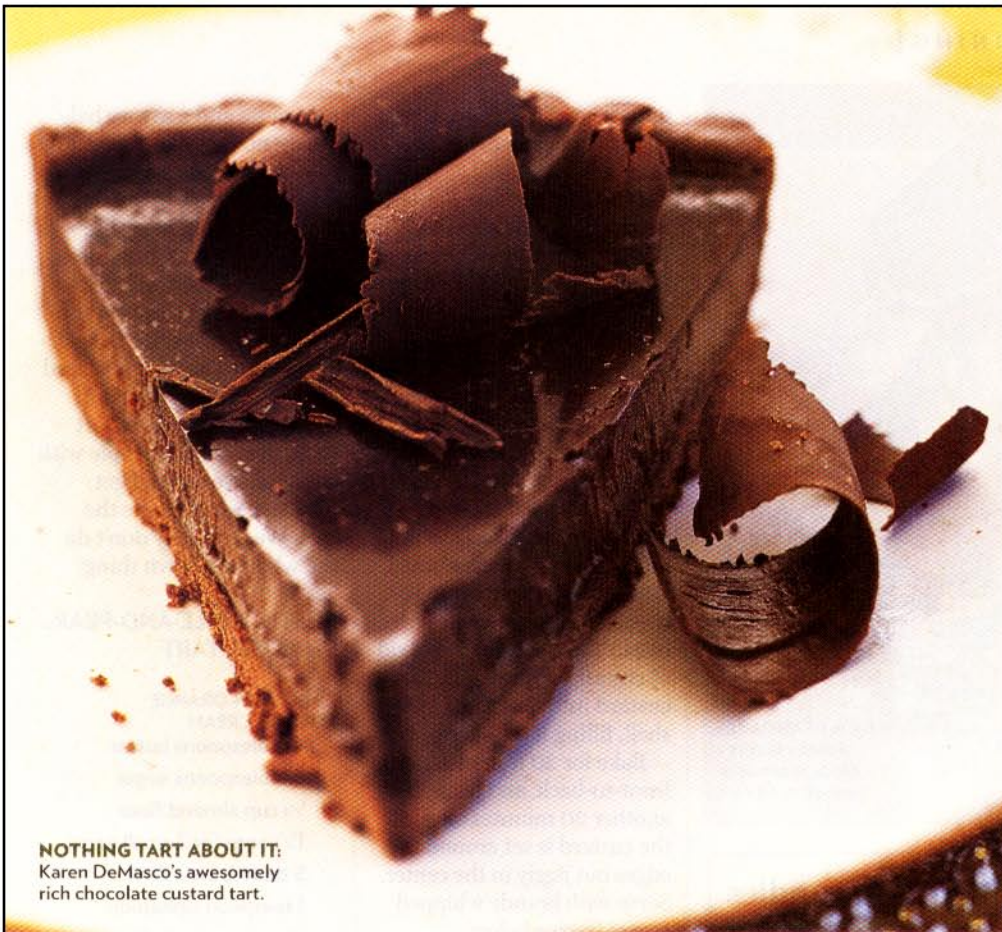
4 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons sugar
½ cup almond flour
1½ eggs (or 2 small eggs)
5 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ orange, zested
1½ teaspoons Grand Marnier or triple sec
Seeds scraped from ½ vanilla bean

Cream the butter and sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until light and fluffy. Add the almond flour, and mix until combined. Add the eggs one at a time until combined. Add the flour, cinnamon, zest, Grand Marnier, and vanilla seeds, beating until light and fluffy. Chill in the refrigerator to set.

ALMOND STREUSEL

5½ tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature
¼ cup plus 1½ tablespoons sugar
Zest of ½ lemon
½ cup plus 1½ tablespoons all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon baking powder
Pinch salt

Cream the butter, sugar, and lemon zest in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a paddle attachment until fluffy. Sift the dry ingredients



NOTHING TART ABOUT IT: Karen DeMasco's awesomely rich chocolate custard tart.

- Fine sea salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon Madras curry powder (optional)
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1 head of garlic, cloves peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger or powder
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped preserved lemon, rind only, flesh discarded (available from Kalustyan's, 123 Lexington Avenue, near 28th Street or Dean & DeLuca, 560 Broadway, at Prince Street)
- 2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 4 prune plums, quartered and stones removed
- 1½ cups chicken stock or water
- 2 tablespoons almond slivers, toasted

Place a tagine (or large heavy-bottomed casserole) at least 10 inches in diameter over high heat, and add the

oil. Season the chicken generously with salt and pepper. When the oil is hot, place the chicken pieces skin-side-down in the pot. When the oil starts to sizzle, reduce the heat to medium. Sprinkle ½ teaspoon each of the coriander, cumin, turmeric, and curry powder (if using) over the chicken. Cook until the chicken is golden brown, about 15 minutes. (Check regularly to make sure that the chicken is not sticking to the pan.)

Spread the onion, garlic, ginger, and tomatoes on a cutting board, and season generously with the salt and pepper. Add them to the tagine, covering the chicken. Sprinkle with the remaining coriander, cumin, turmeric, and curry powder. Add the lemon rind and chicken

stock, cover, and cook for 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. Add the plums and cook for a further 15 minutes or until chicken is tender. (It may take a little longer if you're using a tagine.)

To serve, place about ½ cup of couscous (recipe below) on each plate, top with a few pieces of chicken, and spoon some cooking liquid and vegetables over each plate. Garnish with almond slivers.

COUSCOUS

- 2 cups chicken stock or water
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper
- 2 cups couscous
- 2 tablespoon dried blueberries
- 2 tablespoon dried cranberries

“Keep things simple, don't try to impress in an overspectacular way, and avoid anything last-minute, like a soufflé.”—KAREN DEMASCO

Bring the chicken stock and the butter to a boil in a small saucepan. Season with salt and pepper.

Place the couscous and dried berries in a heatproof bowl, and pour the boiling stock over them. Cover with plastic wrap, and let sit for 5 minutes or until the liquid has been absorbed. Uncover, and toss lightly with a fork.

SUGGESTED MENU: Selection of meze including baba ghanouj, hummus, grape leaves stuffed with rice, tabbouleh, red-pepper confit with capers, Greek salad ♦ Chicken tagine with plum and spices ♦ Couscous ♦ Selection of cheese ♦ Chocolate dessert.

WINE: Bordeaux, such as Château L'Angelus; Côte du Rhône, such as La Bernardine Châteauneuf-du-Pape; or Syrah, such as Araujo.

KAREN DEMASCO
CRAFT, CRAFTBAR,
AND WICHCRAFT
♦
A CHOCOHOLIC'S
DREAM.

The dish on the dish: I wanted something a little lighter than a chocolate ganache, something custardy, so I added eggs, transforming it into a silky, decadent pudding with intensely chocolatey flavor. It's simple and the ultimate chocolate dessert.

Tips: I offered to make desserts for a dinner with all the principals of Craft at Tom Colicchio's house. I decided to make one big chocolate soufflé and baked apples—a bad idea, since, with the pressure of cooking for Tom, the soufflé was completely raw and the apples were as hard as rocks. I thought I was going to lose my job, but it taught me a lesson—to keep things simple, not to try to impress in an overspectacular way, and to avoid anything last-minute, like a soufflé.

together, add to butter mixture, and mix until combined. Form the dough into a block. Wrap in plastic wrap, and freeze.

TART:

- 1 pound puff pastry (frozen is okay)
- Flour for rolling out pastry
- 3 Gala apples (or any other baking apples)
- 2 Bosc pears
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- 5 tablespoons light-brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons fleur de sel

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Let the orange-almond cream come to room temperature. Roll out the pastry on a lightly floured board to a thickness of 1/8 inch. Cut the puff pastry into a 14-inch disc and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Working quickly, fold over the outer rim of the dough onto itself all the way around the edge, creating a double thickness of dough. Prick the single layer of

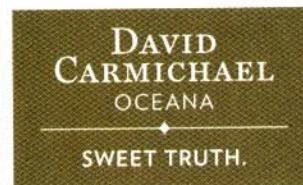
dough all over with a fork. Spread a 1/4-inch layer of the orange-almond cream onto the dough.

Peel, core, and halve the apples and pears, and cut into thin slices. Arrange a layer of apple slices over the almond cream, overlapping them in a circle. Brush the apples with melted butter, and sprinkle with half the brown sugar. Repeat the process with pear slices. Brush with butter, and sprinkle with remaining brown sugar. Remove streusel block from freezer. Using the coarsest side of a box grater, grate the streusel to cover the tart. Place the tart in the fridge to allow the dough to rest for at least 30 minutes.

Bake the tart until the streusel is golden brown, about 45 minutes. Using a spatula, gently lift up the tart to make sure the puff pastry is cooked through and golden brown on the bottom. If the streusel begins to darken and the puff pastry is not cooked, cover the tart with foil, and continue to bake. Remove

from the oven and cool slightly. Sprinkle with fleur de sel, and serve with vanilla ice cream.

SERVE WITH: Fresh-lemon tarts with meringue, sweet-potato pie, pumpkin pie, superrich chocolate brownies, and a selection of cookies.
WINE: Veuve Clicquot champagne, mulled spiced wine, or homemade eggnog.



The dish on the dish: I first tasted this pudding in a simple restaurant in the Lake District in England. I was thrown off guard, because, as a pastry chef, I have a hard time eating dessert in other restaurants—it has to be fabulous. I was amazed at how rich yet light it was. I went into the kitchen, and the chef offered the recipe. The Lake District is where sticky-toffee pudding originated.

Setting: Relaxed, traditional family Thanksgiving or Christmas in the UK with my wife's family—the menu fits both occasions, as an English Christmas is like our Thanksgiving.

Tips: I concentrate on dishes that don't require too many pots and pans by roasting root vegetables all together instead of doing them one by one.

“I was thrown off guard, because, as a pastry chef, I have a hard time eating dessert in other restaurants—it has to be fabulous. I was amazed at how rich yet light it was.” —DAVID CARMICHAEL

ENGLISH ACCENT: David Carmichael's sublime sticky-toffee pudding.



STICKY-TOFFEE PUDDING

Serves 12.

PUDDING:

- 1 cup dates
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 5 tablespoons softened butter, plus additional for molds
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg, beaten

TOFFEE SAUCE:

- 7 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup cream

- 1 1/3 cups dark-brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons Myer's rum, or to taste

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the dates, and boil for 5 minutes. Strain, and place the dates in a bowl of cold water. Working in the water, remove the skins and pits from the dates. Place the dates in a medium saucepan with 1 cup water, vanilla extract, and baking soda. Bring to a boil and allow to simmer for 2 minutes (watch carefully, as it will foam). Set aside to cool.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8-by-12-inch baking dish or 12 6-ounce ramekins very well.

Combine the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in a bowl. Cream the butter briefly in a mixing bowl. Add the date mixture, dry ingredients, and egg, and stir gently to combine. (Do not overmix.) Spoon the mixture into the molds or baking dish until they are a bit less than half full. Set on a cookie sheet, and bake for 25 to 30 minutes.

TOFFEE SAUCE: While the pudding bakes, combine the butter, cream, and brown sugar with 3 tablespoons water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for a few minutes, add rum, and set aside, keeping the sauce warm.

Remove the pudding from the oven when a skewer inserted in the center comes out clean. If using a large baking dish, cut the pudding into 12 squares. Pour the sauce over the pudding, allowing it to seep down around the sides and cover the top. (Use a fork to pull the pudding away from the pan, to get the sauce down the sides.) Bake for 2 to 3 more minutes. Remove and cool to room temperature. Serve with vanilla ice cream, if desired.

WINE: Sonoma County Chardonnay, such as Chalone.