



## NEW FLAVORS FOR THE FOURTH

By Deborah S. Hartz Food Editor

FEATURING CHEF DEE LENNOX  
EXECUTIVE CHEF  
INSTRUCTOR  
CERTIFIED SOMMELIER

*In December, Dee Lennox became an American citizen. But that doesn't mean that this year, when she celebrates the All-American Fourth of July, she'll forget her homeland of Trinidad & Tobago.*

*Instead, she celebrates by fusing flavors and adding memories of her childhood to her family's picnic table.*

*"For Dee, food is like a canvas and, here in South Florida, she can paint deeper hues because there is so much from which to choose. She has an adventurous spirit," says her husband, Ron, who is also originally from Trinidad & Tobago.*

*The couple runs Chef Dee **Lennox Catering** in Fort Lauderdale, where Dee, who studied culinary arts at McFatter Technical Center in Davie, does the cooking. Ron does the marketing and finance and is the self-proclaimed "vice president of consumption."*

*Dee got interested in food from her father, who is of Portuguese descent and did all the food preparation for the family. "There are rumors that when I was little, I was so close to the stove my pigtails caught on fire," she says, laughing. She remembers her father preparing lots of seafood with a Caribbean influence.*

*Food runs in her genes as her grandfather was a wine steward in Porto, Portugal. Her mother is an Indian from Trinidad.*

*And those are just some of the influences on her eclectic menus today. Ron explains, "Trinidad culture is a meshing of so many cultures, including Portuguese, Chinese, Spanish and Creole. During its history, whoever the most recent conquerors were left their food and culture."*

*To that tasteful mix, Dee adds her own touches. "I like to celebrate my heritage in what I create for people," she says. She also does research for many of the parties she is charged to create for clients, including a recent Mexican-Brazilian wedding and West African affair.*

*This holiday, her menu might include her Mango Shrimp Salad and grilled chicken with Spicy Peanut Sauce. A fan of comfort food Caribbean-style, she also might whip up a Mango Crisp to serve with homemade toasted Coconut Ice Cream. With Trinidad being close to the equator, coconut is a very popular ingredient there.*

### ENTREE

#### MANGO SHRIMP SALAD

You can reserve the larger outer cabbage leaves and use them as cups to serve the salad. If you want to make this a fruit-and-vegetable salad, you can omit the shrimp.

1 small cabbage, finely shredded (about 3 cups)

1 pound deveined shrimp, cooked and cut into strips

1 cup julienned red and yellow bell peppers

2 teaspoons chopped parsley

1 cup thin-sliced, half-ripened mango

1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill

1/4 cup plain low-fat yogurt

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste

1/2 teaspoon hot pepper sauce, optional

1 teaspoon lime juice

Combine cabbage, shrimp, bell peppers, parsley, mango and dill.

Blend yogurt, mayonnaise, salt, hot pepper sauce and lime juice.

Add dressing to vegetable mixture and toss to combine well. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 9 cups.

Per (1-cup) serving: 121 calories, 42 percent calories from fat, 6 grams total fat, 101 milligrams cholesterol, .88 gram saturated fat, 12 grams protein, 6 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram total fiber, 288 milligrams sodium, 4 grams total sugars, 5 grams net carbs.

## **DESSERT**

### **MANGO CRISP**

Chef Dee suggests serving this with coconut ice cream (recipe given) for that total caribbean experience.

2 pounds slightly firm mangos, peeled and sliced

1 cup brown sugar

2 tablespoons water

2 tablespoons dark or spiced rum, optional

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/3 cup flour

3/4 cup quick-cooking or old-fashioned oats (not instant)

1/2 cup chopped almonds, optional

4 tablespoons butter, softened

Combine mangos with cup brown sugar, water, rum and cinnamon.

Mix together cup brown sugar, flour, oats and nuts, if using; add butter and cut it in with a pastry cutter until it makes a crumbly mixture (or use clean hands).

Place the mango mixture in a greased 8-inch-square or oval dish and top with crumb mixture. Bake in preheated 375-degree oven 35 minutes or until mangoes are cooked. Makes 9 servings.

Per serving (with almonds, without ice cream): 229 calories, 34 percent calories from fat, 9 grams total fat, 13 milligrams cholesterol, 3 grams saturated fat, 3 grams protein, 38 grams carbohydrates, 3 grams total fiber, 8 milligrams sodium, 27 grams total sugars, 35 grams net carbs.

Per serving (without almonds or ice cream): 194 calories, 26 percent calories from fat, 6 grams total fat, 13 milligrams cholesterol, 3 grams saturated fat, 2 grams protein, 36 grams carbohydrates, 2 grams total fiber, 8 milligrams sodium, 27 grams total sugars, 34 grams net carbs.

## **DESSERT**

### **COCONUT ICE CREAM**

2 cups coconut milk

2 (14-ounce) cans evaporated milk

2 teaspoons corn flour or custard powder\*

1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1/3 cup sweetened coconut flakes, toasted\*\*

Combine coconut milk, evaporated milk and corn flour or custard powder and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened and smooth. (You may need to strain mixture to remove any cooked corn flour).

Remove from heat and add condensed milk and vanilla. Once mixture has cooled, add toasted coconut flakes.

Pour mixture into ice cream maker and follow manufacturers' instructions. Makes about 6 cups.

Per (1/2-cup) serving: 300 calories, 51 percent calories from fat, 17 grams total fat, 30 milligrams cholesterol, 14 grams saturated fat, 8 grams protein, 29 grams carbohydrates, .97 gram total fiber, 109 milligrams sodium, 27 grams total sugars, 28 grams net carbs.

\*We used Bird's Custard Powder available at English import stores such as The British Depot, 1322 E. Commercial Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, 954-491-4920.

\*\*To toast coconut: Spread in a single layer in a baking pan and toast in a 400-degree oven about 10 minutes, stirring frequently.

## **ENTREE**

### **CARIBBEAN CHICKEN SKEWERS WITH SPICY PEANUT SAUCE**

This recipe makes about 1 cup peanut sauce. It's a rich, heady sauce that is also tasty on pork, cooked vegetables and pasta. It also makes a good dip for crudite. Don't hesitate to double the recipe and keep some in the refrigerator.

Curry Marinade:

1/4 cup coconut milk

1 teaspoon red curry paste

1 teaspoon brown sugar

1 tablespoon chopped cilantro

1/2 tablespoon curry powder

Salt and fresh-ground black pepper, to taste

2 pounds boneless chicken breasts

Peanut Sauce:

1/2 cup coconut milk

1 tablespoon red curry paste, or to taste

1/4 cup chunky peanut butter (for a nice texture contrast)

1/4 cup chicken broth

1/4 cup brown sugar

1 tablespoon fresh lime juice

1/2 teaspoon salt

To make marinade: In a bowl, combine all the marinade ingredients except the chicken. Slice the chicken into 3-inch-by-1-inch strips and add to the marinade. Turn chicken to coat, cover and refrigerate up to 4 hours. Soak bamboo skewers in water at least 20 minutes before preparing to cook meat.

To make sauce: Bring the coconut milk to a simmer in a nonreactive saucepan. Whisk in the curry paste 1 to 2 minutes until dissolved. Whisk in peanut butter, broth and sugar. Reduce heat and cook, stirring, about 5 minutes, until smooth. Remove from heat and add lime juice and salt. Set aside to cool to room temperature.

Prepare grill and thread marinated chicken strips onto soaked bamboo skewers. Place on grill and cook 5 to 7 minutes, or until cooked through, turning once. This should give you nice grill marks. Serve with peanut sauce. Makes 8 servings.

Per serving with Peanut Sauce: 270 calories, 49 percent calories from fat, 15 grams total fat, 69 milligrams cholesterol, 6 grams saturated fat, 27 grams protein, 8 grams carbohydrates, 1 gram total fiber, 284 milligrams sodium, 6 grams total sugars, 7 grams net carbs.

Per (1-tablespoon) Peanut Sauce: 50 calories, 69 percent calories from fat, 4 grams total fat, .08 milligram cholesterol, 2 grams saturated fat, 1 gram protein, 4 grams carbohydrates, .49 gram total fiber, 112 milligrams sodium, 3 grams total sugars, 3 grams net carbs.