

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



Vying for Those Vidalias ...



Every May and June I look forward to the fresh influx of Vidalia onions into the supermarkets. Being a Georgia girl, I took them for granted when I was down South; now that I live far away, I greedily fill up my grocery buggy and usher them into their new home ... aka my pantry. In fact, I've started to hoard them a bit already ? resorting to the old fashioned storage option of hanging in pantyhose legs even though they feasibly will be available through the late fall thanks to advanced storage technology borrowed from the apple growers. But for the benefit of non-Southerners, let me first help out with some general info points & phonetics here. Vidalia is a town in the state of Georgia, about an hour or so due west of Savannah. It is pronounced with three syllables as [vuh-DAL?-ya] or [vy-DAL?-ya], the variance between the two pronunciations being the first syllable and what type of Southern accent you sport ? a soft uptown drawl or a back country twang. For my Yankee friends, this is NOT pronounced as if it were a town in Italy or a botanical flower. Pronunciation here in New England has been bastardized by many into four syllables with the inflection on the wrong part (so, so harsh on my tender Southern ears!). Getting away from the pronunciation thing though, you should know that Vidalia onions are trademarked similar to French champagne, as only certain varieties grown in a specific production area in Southern Georgia can be identified, marketed and distributed as "Vidalia onions." The distinguishing attribute of this onion is that it has a high level of sugar and is thus incredibly sweet tasting ? due largely to the sandy, low sulfur soil it grows in, as well as the mild climate. You can further impress your friends at the next cocktail party with the knowledge that the Vidalia onion is Georgia's official state vegetable.

But let's get to the heart of this edible, as it is so mild that it is multi-purposed. Because of its sweetness, a Vidalia is perfect to eat raw ? without the heinous dragon breath & after affects associated with many other onion varieties. This makes them perfect platter partners with sliced tomatoes, or chopped up and littered over stewed field peas. They are also wonderful to cook as a side dish such as a casserole, or caramelize into a chunky marmalade to serve alongside grilled meats. Vidalia onions pair well with poultry, pork and beef; people even make savory pies out of them. And, they are even made into dainty tea sandwiches and served at ladies luncheons. Heck, the Vidalia is also a great component to marinades and dressings. Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



For me, I've decided to kick off Vidalia season with a new recipe for me, which is a "2 for 1" from a Southern culinary belle, Virginia Willis and her cookbook *Bon Appetit, Y'all*. As is annotated on the cover, this cookbook represents the 'recipes and stories from three generations of southern cooking,' but, with Ms. Willis' classical French training making these Southern basics come off a bit more gentrified. FYI, this is my new favorite cookbook and given how I feel about the recipes of hers that I've been trying out of late, I'm hacked off that I waited so long to purchase it. Ms. Willis is big on the use of Vidalias, specifically requesting them in most of her onion bearing recipes and earning big points with me. And, she has several recipes that are Vidalia focused which I'm posting on today.

The first recipe I want to share with you is for "**Vidalia Onion Confit with Garlic Toasts.**" To quote from the book, "... confit is most often meat, such as duck, that has been cooked and preserved in its own fat but the term also describes a jamlike condiment of cooked seasoned fruit or vegetables. This confit is wonderful as suggested, served on toasts as a nibble, but it also shines served as a condiment with pork or chicken. It is absolutely incredible with blue cheese." The second recipe, "**Vidalia Onion Quiche,**" utilizes some of the onion confit of the first recipe, mixing it with a rich custard base and some herbs to make a great quiche that is perfect for brunch. Or, even a lighter summer supper option ... think crisp, white wine and a mixed greens salad.

So, if you haven't already, please stock up on your Vidalia onions knowing that they are something special to enjoy. And look for the little produce sticker just to make sure!

"Vidalia Onion Confit with Garlic Toasts"

Adapted from "[Bon Appetit, Ya'll](#)" by Virginia Willis

Ingredients

- 1 baguette, sliced diagonally ¼ inch thick
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, halved, for the toasts
- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 6 onions, preferably Vidalia, chopped (about 1½ pounds)
- ½ tsp firmly packed dark brown sugar
- Coarse salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup dry red wine
- 1 Tbsp chopped fresh thyme, plus small sprigs for garnish

Yield: About 2 cups of confit

Position an oven rack 4 inches below the broiler element and preheat the broiler. To make the toasts, arrange the baguette slices on a baking sheet and brush on one side with some of the olive oil. Broil until brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn the toasts and broil the other side. Remove the toasts from the oven and while warm, rub one side of each toast with the cut surfaces of the garlic clove. Transfer to a rack to cool.

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



To make the confit, heat the butter and remaining olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and sugar, and increase the heat to medium high. Add the wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until the wine is reduced and the onions are a deep golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes more. Add the thyme, taste and adjust for seasoning with salt and pepper.

To serve, place the reserved toasts on a large serving platter and top each piece with a spoonful of confit. Garnish each with a spring of thyme.

MAKING AHEAD: The toasts can be made up to 2 days ahead and stored at room temperature in an airtight container. The confit can also be made ahead and will actually improve as the flavors marry. Refrigerate the confit in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Personal Notes: If you're reluctant to serve cooked onions as your appetizer, don't be ... it's delicious. And you should know that not only does this go well with fancy cheeses such as a Maytag blue, it pairs well with sliced fruit too (e.g. apples, grapes & figs). Note the use of thyme here; if you're a little sensitive to this herb, you may want to cut back a bit. The only other call out that I'd make is that the recipe called for "chopping" the onions. I did so: not too chunky, not too-too fine either. In hindsight, I might go the route of slicing into half moon strips, whereby the confit might have a slightly different texture to it. Strictly an opinion based on aesthetics ...

"Vidalia Onion Quiche"

Adapted from "[Bon Appetit, Ya'll!](#)" by Virginia Willis

Ingredients

- French Pie Pastry (recipe follows), blind baked
- 1½ cups Vidalia Onion Confit (recipe above)
- 3 large eggs
- 2 large egg yolks
- 2 cups whole milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- Coarse salt and freshly ground white pepper

Yield: Makes one 10-inch quiche

Prepare the pastry shell and the onion confit; let both cool. Preheat the oven to 350°F. To make the custard, whisk together the eggs, egg yolks, milk, cream, parsley, and cayenne pepper in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside.

Spread the cooled onion confit in the pastry shell. Pour the custard over the onions. Bake until the custard is lightly browned and set, 30 to 35 minutes. Remove to a rack to cool slightly. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



Personal Notes: This custard is rich, but given that there isn't any cheese, you don't feel terribly overwhelmed by dairy fat as the recipe list might suggest. As for me, I thought this custard base needed the kick of cayenne, so I was more generous than a pinch. Last but not least, if you're not a scratch pastry cook, by all means get the pre-made dough or pie shell from your grocery and use that for a quick, no fuss preparation. In the end, I had leftover pie crust that I used to pat out into a small pizzette. Just so you readers know (and Ms. Virg too), you could easily make appetizer pizzettes out of the crust and confit, adding some blue cheese and topping with some oiled, peppery arugula. With all those positives, I did have some execution issues:

- My tart shell pan was not a deep dish one, and hence there wasn't enough depth for the entire custard base. As such, half of it went unused. In hindsight, perhaps my pie crust was a tad thicker than called for, but I still think you need the deeper shell. P.S. Make sure you have the bottomless tart pan too!
- I clumsily spilled a portion of the custard as I was placing the tart pan into the oven. Burned egg & milk on the oven floor was not pleasant. Might I suggest that you place the tart pan into a large jelly roll pan prior to pouring in the custard? It would make for easier entry & exit out of the oven. And, it would also catch any potential spills so that your kitchen doesn't smell as bad as mine did.

"French Pie Pastry"

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp fine sea salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into bits and chilled
- 2 large egg yolks
- 5 to 6 Tbsp cold ice water

Yield: Makes one (10-inch) tart shell

To prepare the dough, combine the flour and salt in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Add the butter. Process until the mixture resembles coarse meal, 8 to 10 seconds. Add the egg yolks and pulse to combine.

With the processor on pulse, add the ice water a tablespoon at a time. Pulse until the mixture holds together as a soft, but not crumbly or sticky, dough. Shape the dough into a disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm and evenly moist, about 30 minutes.

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>

Butter My Biscuit

Food musings of a southern ex-pat



To prepare the dough, lightly flour a clean work surface and rolling pin. Place the dough disk in the center of the floured surface. Roll out the dough, starting in the center and rolling up to, but not over, the top edge of the dough. Return to the center, and roll down to, but not over, the bottom edge. Give the dough a quarter turn, and continue rolling, repeating the quarter turns until you have a disk about 1/8 inch thick.

Drape the dough over the rolling pin and transfer to a 10-inch tart pan with a removable bottom, unrolling over the tin. With one hand lift the pastry and with the other gently tuck it into the pan, being careful not to stretch or pull the dough. Let the pastry settle into the bottom of the pan. Take a small piece of dough and shape it into a ball. Press the ball of dough around the bottom edges of the tart pan, snugly shaping the pastry into the pan without tearing it. Remove any excess pastry by rolling the pin across the top of the pan.

Prick the bottom of the pastry all over with the tines of a fork to help prevent shrinkage during baking. Chill until firm, about 30 minutes.

To blind bake, preheat the oven to 425°F. Crumple a piece of parchment paper, then lay it out flat over the bottom of the pastry. Weight the paper with pie weights, dried beans, or uncooked rice. This will keep the unfilled piecrust from puffing up in the oven.

For a partially baked shell that will be filled and baked further, bake for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and remove the paper and weights. (You can re-use the rice or beans for blind baking a number times.) The shell can now be filled and baked further, according to the recipe directions. For a fully baked shell that will hold an uncooked filling, bake the empty shell until a deep golden brown, about 30 minutes total.

GHTime Code(s): [8f537 47d8e e9e7b 0f7d2](#)

No related posts.

Recipe provided by <http://www.buttermybiscuit.com>