



Recipes From Storm King, Inspired by the Artists Lynda Benglis and Luke Stettner

June 18, 2015

For this year's Storm King Summer Solstice event, a starlit dinner in the fields of the Hudson Valley art center, the chefs Peter Hoffman, of the restaurant Back Forty West in New York City, and Shelley Boris, of Fresh Company in Garrison, New York, sought inspiration right on-site. This summer's exhibitions at Storm King include "Lynda Benglis: Water Sources," which features large-scale sculptures and fountains, including the joyful, voluminous "Pink Lady" sculptures that gave rise to the chefs' chilled borscht with lavender cream and beet crystals; as well as an indoor/outdoor exhibition of Luke Stettner's work, including a "charcoal" installation that inspired their stewed and grilled octopus with tarragon, lemon and olive oil. Ahead of the celebration this Saturday, chefs Hoffman and Boris shared recipes for the two dishes exclusively with T.

Stewed & Grilled Octopus With Tarragon, Lemon and Olive Oil

Yield: 8 - 10 servings as a main course

"The important thing to know is that there are many ways to cook octopus. While it might take a while for you to 'perfect' your way, experimenting will be worth a try," Boris says. "Beautiful to look at, tasty to eat, this recipe is also convenient: you can do your stewing in advance, up to a couple days, and finish the octopus legs on the grill the night you plan to serve."

For stewing octopus:

1 bottle dry sake or white wine
2 carrots, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
4 stalks celery, cut into 2-inch pieces
8 cloves garlic, peeled
6 sprigs thyme
1 tablespoon fennel seeds, optional
3 bay leaves
1 Spanish onion, peeled and cut into quarters
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sea salt (kosher salt is fine)
1 six-pound octopus - ours came frozen from Spain, whole (head on), but completely clean.
We defrosted it over night in the refrigerator.

For grilling octopus:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup grapeseed oil for brushing octopus before grilling, substitute any natural cooking oil
Charcoal or wood for your grill (and whatever you use to start a fire)

For serving octopus:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruity, high-quality finishing extra-virgin olive oil
Juice of 1-2 lemons
Sea salt (we use Maldon or fleur de sel, but any salt will do)
Freshly ground black pepper
4 tablespoons fresh tarragon leaves, picked from stem (or substitute, parsley, dill, chervil,

cilantro, basil, etc.)

1. Set a pot large enough to comfortably hold the whole octopus on the stove. Add a bottle of sake (or white wine), the carrots, celery, garlic, thyme, optional fennel seeds, bay leaves, onion and salt.
2. Add the whole octopus and enough water to cover. Bring the liquid to almost boiling and simmer for up to two hours.
3. You can use a thin knife or skewer to test the flesh. When the octopus is easy to pierce, but there is still some resistance, it is ready. We picked one leg to be our "test" leg, cut it off, and took slices to taste it until we thought it was right. The layer just below the skin should be pleasantly gelatinous and the meat inside tender but not mushy.
4. Remove the octopus to a sheet pan or large bowl to cool and set aside until you are ready to grill. We use natural lump charcoal at Storm King to grill, but wood would be great and briquettes work if that's what you have. Wait for the coals to be hot and have a spray bottle of water handy to douse the flames.
5. Cut the legs from the octopus up high into the head to get the longest pieces possible. (The head is totally edible, just not so pretty to serve; eat it in the kitchen with a glass of wine while you work.) Brush the eight (or seven if you used one as a test) legs with olive oil and place on the grill.



Grilled and stewed octopus (left) inspired by Luke Stettner's "charcoal" installation (above and below right).
Courtesy of Storm King Art Center.

6. Turn the legs often, spraying away the flames as you go, until the skin turns a nice medium golden brown, about 5-7 minutes. As you remove the legs from the grill set them on a platter until they are all done.
7. On a serving platter large enough to hold all the legs, scatter the tarragon leaves, and pour on the finishing olive oil and the juice of two lemons so that it covers the platter.
8. On a cutting board, slice the octopus while maintaining the legs for presentation purposes. Place the legs on the platter on top of the herbs, lemon juice and oil and season with a generous amount of sea salt and freshly ground pepper.
9. The octopus is great served hot from the grill, room temperature or cold. Serve it by itself or with grilled bread or rice and a sauce on the side, such as carrot-coconut or beet as in our menu, or with green sauce, romesco, aioli or simple lemon wedges.