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Thursday,
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Beat the heat

*TV chef's victory
inspires fresh look at
watermelon salad*

I am really hooked on "Top Chef Masters" on the Bravo channel. When Marcus Samuelson won the chef-upon-chef competition recently, I went back to his "New American Table" cookbook, published last fall by Wiley. Born in Ethiopia and raised in Sweden, Samuelsson, his food and his story are inspirational.



JUDY WALKER

Exchange Alley

This recipe requires no cooking, a boon in the heat we're having right now. Look for harissa, a North African chile paste, in international and gourmet markets.

See **EXCHANGE, C-3**

Cookbook projects benefit local causes

EXCHANGE, from C-1

Tomato-Watermelon Salad with Almond Vinaigrette

Makes 6 Servings

- 2 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 4 garlic cloves thinly sliced
- 2 teaspoons harissa (see above)
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 shallots thinly sliced
- 1 cup watermelon cut in ½-inch cubes
- 1 jalapeño, seeds and ribs removed, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons torn parsley leaves
- 2 tablespoons torn mint leaves
- 1 tablespoon capers, rinsed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 red tomatoes, roughly chopped (about 1½ pounds)
- 3 yellow tomatoes, roughly chopped
- ½ cup crumbled goat cheese

To make the vinaigrette, combine the almonds, garlic and harissa in a small sauté pan over medium heat and sauté for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat.

Combine olive oil, vinegar, lime juice and shallots in a small bowl. Whisk in the almond-harissa mixture.

Toss the watermelon, jalapeño, parsley, mint and capers in a large bowl. Season with the salt and a few grindings of pepper. Add the tomatoes and vinaigrette, and toss to combine. Garnish with the goat cheese, and serve immediately.

LOCAL COOKBOOK NOTES: Two local cookbook projects are helping

good causes.

Cooking teacher Chiqui Collier writes to say she has been asked to help put together a cookbook for the Independence Cultural Museum, which is operated by the Sicilian community in Tangipahoa Parish.

"They are trying to raise money to make repairs and to air-condition the building where they display their Sicilian memorabilia," Collier says. "It is housed in the original Mater Dolorosa church building."

"I know New Orleans has a huge Sicilian community and thought I could ask for their help in gathering some authentic recipes from the 'Motherland' that would help fill our humble book. ... I am asking for original Sicilian recipes that exemplify true Sicilian culture. In other words: no jars of Ragu. LOL!"

"I already have some recipes recorded ... at the Heritage Fair held in Independence many, many years ago. Anything you could do would be so appreciated by these wonderful people!"

If you would like to send Sicilian recipes to Collier, e-mail her at chiqui70131@yahoo.com.

Also, in March, this column had information about "R.H.I.N.O.: Recipes Homemade in New Orleans," a 400-plus-page book of recipes from employees, friends and family of Durr Heavy Construction LLC, which is based in Harahan. The cookbook also has a "New Orleans Chefs" chapter to which many of our big-name chefs contributed recipes.

Thanks largely to readers, Durr met its goal of \$5,000 in cookbook sales for Catholic Charities' Haitian relief efforts. Now, Durr is turning its attention to individuals affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, raising money for United Way.

All proceeds from the sale of the \$20 cookbooks will be donated to the United Way's Oil Spill Assistance efforts. You can order by credit card at www.durrhc.com (click on "Gulf Relief") or visit Durr's corporate headquarters, 817 Hickory Ave. in Harahan, during weekday business hours.

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