

Tips for Hosting an At-Home Easter Brunch: Part II

Written by Interview by Emily Glynn

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Need some pointers for hosting the perfect Easter brunch? Rick Boyer, executive chef at The Phoenician, offers his expert advice – and a holiday-worthy recipe for Il Terrazzo's roasted beet and orange salad.

Arizona Foothills Magazine: Can I prep ahead of time or do I have wake up at the crack of dawn on Easter morning to get everything on the table?

Rick Boyer: Preparation and planning are essential, especially when cooking for a large group. I recommend preparing the day before so that you can enjoy the holiday with friends and family. Pre-prepared items, such as desserts from a local bakery, are also a great way to reduce cooking time.

AFM: How many dishes should I prepare? What must-have Easter favorites would be unforgivable to overlook?

RB: I typically like to offer four to five breakfast/dinner items, along with a few sides and desserts. Must-have Easter dishes include frittata, French toast, crème brulee, artisan breads, fresh fruit and a carved ham or roast. Two items that are a must for me on Easter are glazed ham and carrot cake. This is the one time of year I crave ham glazed with honey and mustard, and although my sweet intake has dwindled with age, I [love] moist carrot cake with cream cheese frosting.

AFM: Which light alcoholic beverages pair best with a festive breakfast?

RB: Prosecco is nice because you can drink it as is, or make bellinis or mimosas.

AFM: When should you opt for buffet style dining over family style?

RB: This depends on how many guests you are preparing for. I like family style for intimate gatherings, but will offer a more extensive spread with more than eight to 10 friends and family members because it allows for grazing and moving around.

AFM: Any suggestions for kid-friendly dishes and/or desserts?

RB: I like bento boxes for kids. You can add macaroni and cheese with a slice of ham or roast, some fruit and other things for them to try. For dessert, it is always fun to have Easter cookies with an area set aside for them to decorate. It allows the kids be creative and have some fun while giving the adults a break.

AFM: Any tips for setting the perfect table without breaking the bank?

RB: Easter is a great time of year because spring is here and flowers are in bloom. For affordable, spring-inspired centerpieces, wrap mason jars with ribbons and fill [them] with spring flowers and colored jellybeans.

AFM: If something goes wrong, how do I keep perspective?

RB: The key is accepting the fact that things don't always go as planned. We should feel fortunate to be able to celebrate the holiday with loved ones – and not worry about little things like burnt [food] and broken china.

Try this signature salad from The Phoenician's Il Terrazzo for a light and colorful starter.

Roasted Beet & Orange Salad

Serves: 4-6 people

Ingredients:

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| 2 ea | Medium sized golden beets |
| 2 ea | Medium sized red beets |

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2 ea	Navel oranges
4 oz	Crow's Dairy butter pecan goat cheese
3 oz	Black Mesa candied pecans
2 tbsp	Rosemary – finely chopped
2 oz	Arizona honey
1 ea	Lemon – zested & juiced
8 oz	Baby arugula
6 oz	Watercress
1 oz	Canola oil
2 oz	Extra virgin olive oil
To taste	Fresh cracked black pepper
To taste	Sea salt

Method of Preparation:

Wash and scrub the beets in water to remove any dirt. Toss the beets in oil and season with salt and pepper. Place in a roasting pan and cover with aluminum foil. Place the pan in a 350°F oven for 90 minutes. Check for doneness by inserting a thermometer or skewer into the center of the beets; the skewer should slide in with relative ease. Using a kitchen towel, rub the skin off the beets while they are still hot, and then set aside to chill. Once chilled, slice into ¼" thick pieces. Stir the minced rosemary into the honey, set it aside to allow it to infuse the honey. Using a paring knife, peel the rind off of the oranges. Then slice on both sides of the segment to remove the flesh. Set aside. Break the goat cheese up into ¼ oz sized pieces. To build the salad, toss the beets, orange supremes, pecans, lemon zest, arugula, watercress, olive oil and lemon juice in a mixing bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Divide evenly between all plates. Top each salad with the goat cheese pieces and drizzle with the rosemary honey.