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FOOD

Caviar – A (Northern) Divine Way to Start a Meal!

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Posted by:
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One of my favourite ways to start a meal is with Champagne and caviar! As kid growing up by the Caspian Sea, I can say that we had lots of caviar at home, but it was served with bootlegged vodka and cucumber yogurt dip. I watched the grown-ups eat the caviar and thought, "What is so special about those little black eggs?" When I asked my uncle, he told me that I would understand when I got older.

The first time I tried caviar was at a little summer cottage on a stormy night. We went to this small restaurant that maybe had 10 tables at most, and there was no power for the night. The owner of the restaurant told my dad about their special stone oven-baked sturgeon with dill and caviar. The chef had stuffed the sturgeon with caviar

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and baked it on herbs, then finished it with olive oil and fresh lemon juice. That is my first great memory of caviar. I can still remember the pop of the eggs and juiciness of sturgeon.

At Diva at the Met, one of our "snacks" that we serve before a tasting menu is a dollop of caviar with homemade crème fraiche and crispy brioche. It's simple but special, and shows off a range of textures and sensations all in one bite. We use local, sustainably-raised white sturgeon caviar from B.C.'s Sunshine Coast. It is called Northern Divine, and while I have tried a few different sustainably-raised sturgeon caviars, this is my favourite. It's available to home cooks through Northern Divine's own [website](#), through Mkuni Wild Harvest's [online store](#), or at Whole Foods.

NORTHERN DIVINE CAVIAR WITH CRÈME FRAICHE AND BRIOCHE

Makes 8 canapes

Ingredients

30 grams of Northern Divine caviar

1 cup of crème fraiche (*you can make your own, but when I don't want to, I always buy it from Alice at [Les Amis du Fromage](#)*)

¼ cup of fresh dill, picked from stems

4 slices of brioche

Method

- With a round cookie cutter (about the one inch round) stamp out two circles from each slice of brioche bread.
- Place the circles of bread on a sheet pan in pre-heated oven at 250°F for 30 minutes, until dry and crisp.
- Place a spoonful of crème fraiche in the middle of bread then spoon some caviar on top, and garnish with dill.
- Place the canapés on a tray and serve with some bubbles!

For the more adventurous home chefs who would like to try making the aerated crisp brioche that we serve at Diva, here is the recipe for it.



AERATED CRISP BRIOCHE

Makes about 20 pieces

Ingredients

116g of whole eggs

50g of whole milk

60g of bread flour or all purposes

55g of unsalted butter (room temperature)

30g of dextrose

4g of salt

Tools

Paper cups, ISI whipped cream gun, whipped cream chargers, microwave, oven, resting rack, blender.

Method

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- Place all the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
- Place the mixture in the ISI gun and charge it with 3 whipped cream chargers.
- With a paring knife, cut a few slits in the sides of the paper cups.
- Let the charged ISI gun containing the brioche mixture sit at room temperature for one hour.
- After one hour, fill a paper cup 1/4 way up with the brioche mixture, then place the cup in microwave and cook on "high" for 45 seconds.
- Take the cup out of the microwave and place it on a cooling rack.
- Continue this method until all of the bread is made.
- After one hour take out the bread out of the cups, using your hands, rip off the bread into pieces the size of a small egg and place on baking sheet. Place the baking sheet in the oven at 150°F until bread is crisp (about 90 minutes).

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