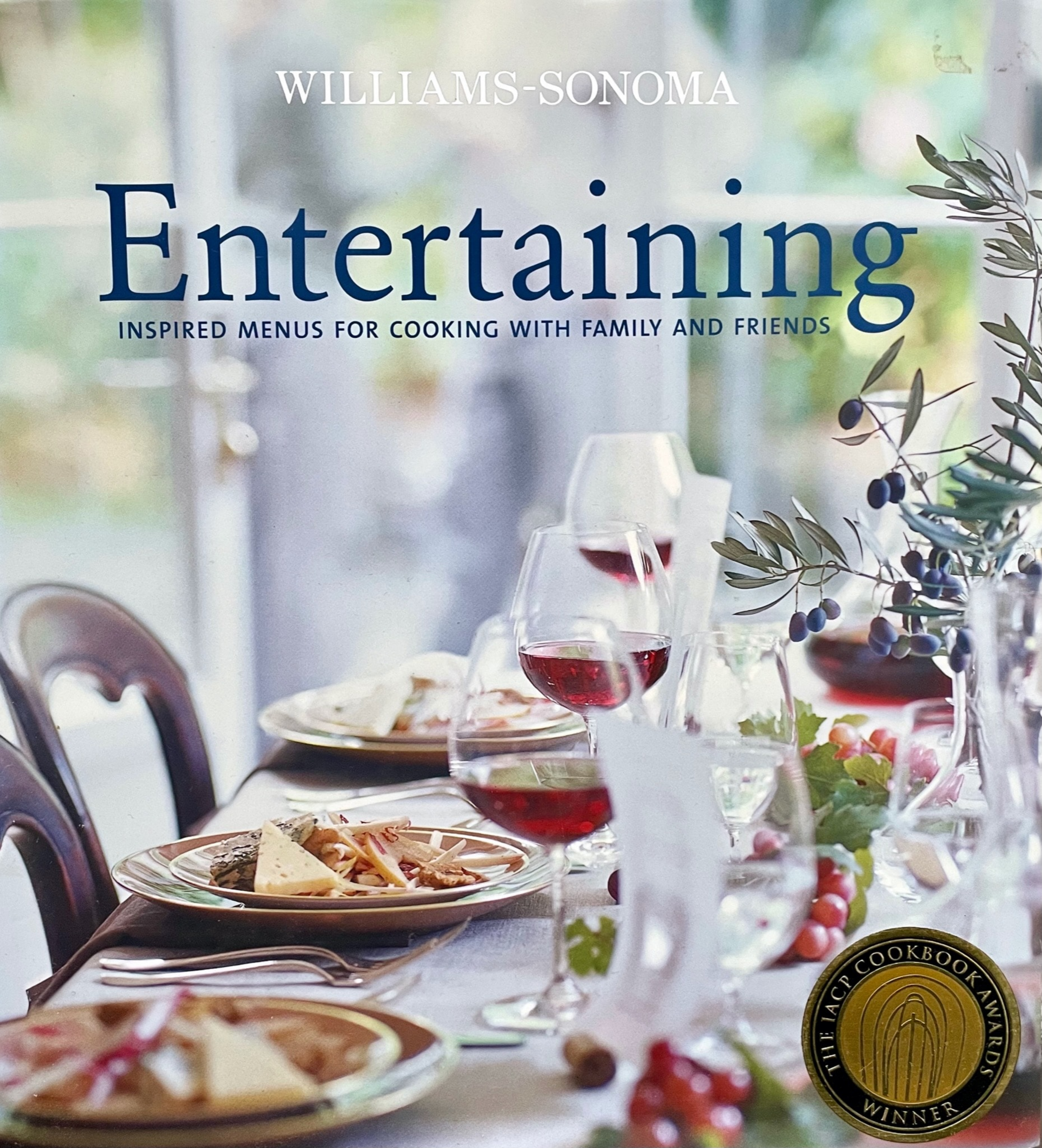


WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Entertaining

INSPIRED MENUS FOR COOKING WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS







BON VOYAGE PARTY

When a friend or family member is about to embark on a trip, a travel-themed send-off lets the guests join in on the fun. The destination—Paris, in this case—sets the tone and inspires the decor, which includes French-style ceramics and flatware, as well as homemade place mats crafted from reproductions of vintage Parisian maps. Purple



hydrangeas and yellow and green accents give the room the feel of Paris in the spring. Guests are invited to bring small wrapped travel gifts, which are presented to the guest of honor in a colorful tote. A dry French rosé lends more color and pairs with the bright flavors of the menu.





TIPS FOR CELEBRATORY DINNERS

- Think of the space as a stage to set a story relating to the occasion or to the guest of honor.
- Decorate the table with trinkets, maps, and tableware evoking the destination.
- Seat the guest of honor to the right of the host or in a central location.
- Adapt this party to other special occasions by substituting appropriate props and gifts.



WORK PLAN

AT LEAST ONE DAY IN ADVANCE

Make the preserved lemons for the skewers

Bake the cake and make the frosting

THE DAY OF THE PARTY

Shell the fava beans for the salad

Marinate the ingredients for the skewers

Assemble the cake

JUST BEFORE SERVING

Toss the salad ingredients

Broil the skewers and make the couscous



MENU

Cherry Tomato and Fava Bean Salad

*North African Chicken Skewers
with Herbed Couscous*

Coconut Layer Cake

Dry French Rosé



VINTAGE MAP PLACE MATS

Vintage maps can be easily fashioned into place mats that bring the guest of honor's destination right to the table. The mats become conversation pieces as guests hunt for locations and discuss the itinerary of the honoree.

gather the materials: reproductions of vintage maps (sometimes sold as gift wrap, or buy one original and make 11-by-17-inch color photocopies); a ruler; a pencil; pinking shears; and one of the dinner plates you will be using.

measure the first place mat by putting a plate on the center of the map. Allowing about 3 inches (7.5 cm) of visible map on all sides of the plate, mark cutting guidelines with a pencil.

trim the map along the pencil lines with pinking shears. Set it on the table with the plate to make sure it looks good before trimming the remaining mats to match.





CHERRY TOMATO AND FAVA BEAN SALAD

In this brightly colored first-course salad, fava beans are combined with pecorino romano, an Italian sheep's-milk cheese, and plump cherry tomatoes. Accompany with ready-made cheese crisps, thin toasted bread slices topped with cheese, available at specialty-food stores.

Remove the fava beans from their pods and discard the pods. (The beans can be shelled up to 8 hours in advance. Refrigerate until needed.)

Fill a large bowl three-fourths full of ice water and set aside. Bring a saucepan three-fourths full of water to a boil over high heat. Add the fava beans and boil until tender, 3–4 minutes. Drain the beans into a colander, then transfer them at once to the ice-water bath. When they are cool, drain them again into the colander. Using a thumb and forefinger, squeeze each bean from its tough skin into a small bowl, using a paring knife to make a tiny break in the skin at the edge of the bean first if necessary.

In a large bowl, toss together the fava beans, tomatoes, celery, and mint. Drizzle the olive oil and lemon juice over the top, season to taste with the salt and pepper, and toss again to coat.

Divide the salad evenly among individual plates. Using a vegetable peeler, shave the pecorino cheese evenly over the top. Garnish each serving with 2 cheese crisps, if using, and serve at once.

Serves 6



- 4 lb (2 kg) fava (broad) beans
- 2 cups (12 oz/375 g) cherry tomatoes in mixed colors and shapes, stems removed and cut in half
- 1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
- 12 fresh mint leaves, finely slivered
- 1/4 cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2-oz (60-g) wedge pecorino romano cheese
- 12 store-bought cheese crisps (see note; optional)

NORTH AFRICAN CHICKEN SKEWERS WITH HERBED COUSCOUS

QUICK PRESERVED LEMONS

- 4 large, thin-skinned organic lemons
- 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds, crushed
- Coarse salt
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup (5 fl oz/160 ml) fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

CHICKEN SKEWERS

- 1 teaspoon *each* ground cumin, ground turmeric, and ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon mild Spanish smoked paprika, *pimentón de La Vera*
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon saffron threads
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz/15 g) fresh cilantro (fresh coriander) leaves, chopped
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (2 oz/60 g) almonds, coarsely chopped
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 lb (1.5 kg) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch (4-cm) cubes
- 32 extra-large green olives, pitted

HERBED COUSCOUS

- 2 cups (12 oz/375 g) instant couscous
- 2 cups (16 fl oz/500 ml) boiling water
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ($\frac{3}{4}$ oz/20 g) chopped mixed fresh herbs of choice
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- Paprika for sprinkling

Inspired by a classic Moroccan dish in which chicken is simmered with preserved lemons and green olives, these brochettes are surprisingly simple to make. An easy side dish of steamed couscous with fresh herbs is a fitting companion.

To make the preserved lemons, preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Cut a thin slice off both ends of each lemon. Cut each lemon into 8 wedges, and place the wedges in a nonreactive baking dish just large enough to hold them in a single layer. Add the garlic, sugar, coriander seeds, 3 tablespoons salt, the lemon juice, and olive oil and toss to coat evenly. Cover the dish loosely with aluminum foil. Bake the lemon wedges for 10 minutes, then turn off the oven and leave them in the oven overnight. In the morning, transfer the contents of the dish to an airtight container and refrigerate until ready to use; they will keep for up to 2 weeks.

To make the skewers, in a shallow glass bowl, stir together the cumin, turmeric, cinnamon, paprika, saffron, garlic, cilantro, almonds, and olive oil until well mixed. Add the chicken, olives, and 16 of the lemon wedges (reserve the rest for another use) and toss to coat with the spice mixture. Cover and refrigerate for 4–8 hours.

Preheat the broiler (grill). Have ready 8 metal skewers. Remove the chicken, olives, and lemon wedges from the marinade; discard the marinade. Thread the ingredients onto each skewer, arranging them in your desired pattern and dividing them evenly. Do not crowd the pieces too tightly, or the chicken will not cook evenly. Place the skewers on a rimmed baking sheet and place under the broiler about 6 inches (15 cm) from the heat source. Broil (grill) until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Turn the skewers and continue to broil until the chicken is golden and opaque throughout, about 5 minutes longer.

Meanwhile, make the couscous: Put the couscous in a heatproof bowl. Add the boiling water, cover, and let stand until absorbed, about 5 minutes. Fluff the couscous with a fork, then stir in the butter and herbs. Season with salt and pepper.

Divide the couscous among warmed individual plates and sprinkle with paprika. Slide the contents off the skewers onto each plate, dividing evenly. Serve at once.

Serves 6





COCONUT LAYER CAKE

This luscious dessert is for anyone who likes coconut: coconut-flavored cake layers are topped with a light and fluffy coconut frosting. A generous amount of shredded coconut is then showered over the top.

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Line the bottom of a straight-sided 9-by-13-inch (23-by-33-cm) pan with parchment (baking) paper. Lightly butter the parchment and the sides of the pan. Dust with flour, and tap out the excess.

In a bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, and salt. In a separate bowl, stir together the milk and coconut and vanilla extracts. In a large bowl, using a mixer on medium-high speed, beat together the butter and granulated sugar until fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Reduce the speed to low. Add the flour mixture in 3 batches alternately with the milk mixture, beginning and ending with the flour mixture and stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed. Using a rubber spatula, fold in the coconut.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan. Bake the cake until the top is golden and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 40 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let the cake cool completely in the pan, about 1 hour. (The cake can be baked the night before serving, loosely covered, and refrigerated.)

Meanwhile, make the frosting: In a bowl, using the mixer on medium-high speed, whip together the cream and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 oz/60 g) of the confectioners' sugar until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. In a separate bowl, beat together the cream cheese and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Using a rubber spatula, fold the cream cheese mixture into the whipped cream. Fold in the coconut extract. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

To assemble, run a knife blade around the inside edge of the pan to loosen the cake, then invert it onto a work surface. Lift off the pan and parchment. Cut the cake in half lengthwise. Transfer one-half to a serving platter. Spread one-third of the frosting over the top and sprinkle with one-third of the coconut. Carefully place the second rectangle on top of the first. Spread the remaining frosting over the top and sides of the cake. Press the remaining two-thirds of the coconut evenly over the top and sides of the cake, covering completely. Cut into thick slices to serve.

Serves 6



$2\frac{1}{2}$ cups (10 oz/315 g) cake (soft-wheat) flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt

1 cup (8 fl oz/250 ml) whole milk

1 teaspoon coconut extract (essence)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (essence)

1 cup (8 oz/250 g) unsalted butter, at room temperature

$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups (12 oz/375 g) granulated sugar

4 large eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (2 oz/60 g) sweetened shredded dried coconut

COCONUT FROSTING

2 cups (16 fl oz/500 ml) heavy (double) cream

1 cup (4 oz/120 g) confectioners' (icing) sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb (250 g) cream cheese, at room temperature

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon coconut extract (essence)

3 cups (12 oz/375 g) sweetened shredded dried coconut