Montana Chef Competition 2005
Culinary Excellence Award
Bronze Class: Appetizer

Recipe Name: Montana "Mah-Zeh"

Chef: Chef Jim Gray

Restaurant: Kitchen Guy Enterprises

Chef Profile:
Jim Gray, Chef of Kitchen Guy Enterprises, 2719 Pinnacle Place, Missoula, received a Bronze Class award in the Culinary Excellence Award program held recently at Buck's T-4 Lodge in Big Sky.

Gray has been at Kitchen Guy Enterprises for two and a half years. His Bronze Class award was in the Appetizer category for a creation titled *Montana "Mah-Zeh"*. (See recipe.)

His advice to aspiring cooks: "MahZeh or Mezze is a traditional Middle Eastern style appetizer plate. My take on the dish is to give the diner a mulit-faceted taste experience that whets the appetite in anticipation of the entrée."

Throughout the Middle East, "Mah-Zeh" is a familiar beginning to many a restaurant meal. From the Hebrew and Arabic for "What's this?" the dish traditionally has as many as 12 different tastes. As the quantity for this competition is limited, three "tastes" will be presented.

Yield: 4 portions

Montana Products: Big Timber Meats – lamb; Rattlesnake Creek Vineyard and Winery – Sauvignon Blanc, Montana Legend Natural Angus Beef– ground beef

Lamb	
Ingredients:	*Amount:*
Big Timber Meats Rack of Lamb	1 whole with 8 rib chops
Seasoned bread crumbs	1 cup
Italian parsley, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Shallots, minced	2 Tbsp.
Garlic, minced	2 cloves
Dijon mustard	¼ cup
Olive oil	2 Tbsp.

Method:

1. Trim lamb of excess fat. Cut lamb into 4 double chops.
2. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Sear over high heat on stovetop until nicely browned on all sides (including ends).
4. Set aside to cool slightly.
5. In another pan, heat olive oil and add garlic and shallots, sautéing briefly.
6. Add breadcrumbs and toast.
7. When golden, mix in chopped parsley and set aside.
8. "Paint" seared lamb with Dijon mustard and coat with toasted breadcrumbs.
9. Return to searing pan and roast in a 450-degree oven for 12 to 14 minutes for medium rare.

Provençal Tomato Compote	
Ingredients:	*Amount:*
Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced	2 each
Garlic, minced	2 cloves
Shallots, minced	2 Tbsp.
Italian parsley, minced	2 Tbsp.
Black olives, chopped	3 Tbsp.
Olive oil	¼ cup

Method:

1. Mix tomatoes, shallots, garlic, parsley, olives and olive oil.
2. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Meatballs	
Ingredients:	*Amount:*
Montana Legend Natural Angus Beef Ground beef (80/20 mix)	½ lb.
Onion, small, small dice	½ each
Pine nuts, toasted	¼ cup
Currants	¼ cup
Seasoned breadcrumbs	1/3 cup
Half and Half	¼ cup
Large egg, lightly beaten	1 each
Cinnamon, ground	¼ tsp
Cloves, ground	¼ tsp
Vegetable oil	¼ cup

Method:

1. Soak breadcrumbs in half and half.
2. In a hot dry pan, toast pine nuts, taking care not to burn.
3. In a bowl, mix ground beef, currants, spices, toasted pine nuts, beaten egg and soaked breadcrumbs.
4. Form one-inch meatballs.
5. Brown in vegetable oil; cover and keep warm in a low oven.

Minted Yogurt Sauce	
Ingredients:	*Amount:*
Plain yogurt	1 cup
Gingerroot, grated	1 Tbsp.
Garlic, finely minced	1 clove
Green onions, thinly sliced	4 each

Method:

1. Mix yogurt, green onions, garlic and ginger.
2. Cover and set aside for flavors to blend in refrigerator.

Seared Scallops	
Ingredients:	*Amount:*
Sea scallops, abductor muscle removed	8 each
Rattlesnake Creek Vineyard and Winery Sauvignon Blanc	2 cups
Shallots, finely minced	2 each
Unsalted butter	5 Tbsp., divided use
Heavy cream	½ cup
Cayenne pepper	¼ tsp

Method:

1. In a large skillet, combine the shallots and the wine, 2 Tbsp. of butter, a large pinch of salt and the cayenne.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat and reduce the mixture, stirring occasionally, until the pan is near dry *(au sec)* – about 10 minutes.

3. In a separate pan, sauté scallops in butter until nicely browned on each side.
4. Add to shallot-wine mixture and stir in remaining butter and the cream.
5. Adjust seasonings accordingly.

Presentation / Plating Notes:

Garnishes: The plate will be dusted with finely minced parsley and curled fruit twists.