

Healthy Indulgences

What if you could savor every bite of a hearty pasta or silken cheesecake, knowing that it's nourishing your body instead of weighing you down? Believe it or not, a decadent-tasting meal can also be good for you. To prove it, we teamed up with Rouge Tomate, the healthiest fine-dining restaurant in New York City, to deliver a feast you'll feel great about eating.

By Sarah Bruning Photography by Jennifer Causey



How we eat directly impacts our well-being, and few people understand that better than the culinary team at Rouge Tomate, a Michelin-starred restaurant in New York City. “We operate under the principles of *Sanitas Per Escam*, or health through food,” explains Kristy Del Coro, R.D., the senior culinary nutritionist who works with founding chef Jeremy Bearman and pastry chef James Distefano to create virtuous dishes that taste downright sinful. “We break down every dish, considering what ingredients we’re using, where we source them from and how they’re prepared to maximize their nutritional benefits and minimize the formation of harmful compounds.” Del Coro and the chefs also take into account how ingredients are enhanced by what they’re paired with.

We asked them to share a few crave-worthy fall recipes from the eatery’s repertoire, and walk us through the smart tweaks they made to amplify the nutritional benefits without sacrificing one bit of deliciousness.

→ SPICE-ROASTED CARROT SALAD with citrus, avocado, lemon yogurt, watercress and sunflower seeds

ACTIVE 10 MINUTES \ TOTAL 60 MINUTES \ SERVES 4

- 3 cups roasted carrots (recipe follows)
- ½ avocado, diced into 1-inch pieces
- 12 pieces navel orange, membrane removed, halved (about 1½ oranges)
- 12 pieces satsuma or clementine, membranes removed (about 1 whole mandarin)
- 4 cups watercress
- 4 baby carrots, shaved with vegetable peeler
- 2 tablespoons sunflower seeds, toasted
- Fleur de sel to taste
- 6 tablespoons lemon yogurt (recipe follows)

ROASTED CARROTS

- 1½ pounds peeled carrots, cut in 2-inch pieces
- ¾ tablespoon olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon sea salt
- 1¼ teaspoons coarsely ground cumin
- 1½ teaspoons coarsely ground coriander
- 1½ teaspoons chili flakes
- ⅓ cup fresh orange juice, strained
- 1½ tablespoons honey

LEMON YOGURT

- 1 cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- Pinch of salt



- 1 tablespoon water
- 1½ tablespoons lemon juice

1. Toss the large carrots together with the olive oil, salt, cumin, coriander and chili flakes. Roast in the oven on a baking tray at 400° F until nicely browned and just tender, about 5 minutes. They should still have a bit of a bite left as they will be cooked slightly more.
2. Transfer the carrots to a sauté pan and add the orange juice and honey. Cook on high until carrots are nicely glazed and honey begins to caramelize, about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove and let cool slightly until just warm.
3. Mix all ingredients for yogurt dressing together and let sit for about 10 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh strainer.
4. Assemble salad: Swirl 1½ tablespoons lemon yogurt onto each plate. Evenly divide roasted carrots, avocado and citrus among 4 plates. Garnish each plate with watercress, shaved baby carrots and sunflower seeds. Lightly sprinkle fleur de sel on top of avocado pieces.

NUTRITION SCORE PER SERVING

220 calories, 7g fat (1g saturated), 6g protein, 40g carbohydrates, 9g fiber, 500mg sodium

WHAT MAKES THIS DISH NUTRISH

***A BALANCE OF FATS** Chef Bearman wanted to use a yogurt sauce as dressing, and since there was already plenty of healthy fat from avocados and olive oil, he and Del Coro agreed that a nonfat, strained Greek yogurt would be the best option.

***SUPERPOWERED SPICES** The team at Rouge Tomate favors myriad spices for their anti-inflammatory benefits. Here, Bearman opts for diabetes-fighting cumin and cancer-preventing coriander.

***THOUGHTFUL PREP** “Nutrients in the carotenoid family, such as vitamin A, are better absorbed when the ingredient is roasted with a little fat, so it’s an ideal way to prepare carrots,” Del Coro says. “Other nutrients, like vitamin C, deteriorate slightly when carotenoids are cooked, so we add in a bit of raw, shaved carrots, too.”

→ FARRO LINGUINE with roasted cauliflower, Parmesan cheese, lemon and chili flakes

ACTIVE 10 MINUTES \ TOTAL 2 HOURS 10 MINUTES \ SERVES 4

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cups cauliflower florets (about 1 head)
- 8 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Pinch hot chili flakes
- Pinch sea salt
- Ground black pepper to taste
- 4 cups cooked farro linguine (about 10 ounces dry)
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan
- ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest (from ½ small lemon)
- 2⅔ cup cauliflower Parmesan sauce (recipe follows)
- ¼ cup toasted herbed breadcrumbs (1 tablespoon parsley, ¼ teaspoon chili flakes, 2 teaspoons lemon zest and ¼ cup plain breadcrumbs)

1. In a large sauté pan, heat the olive oil just until smoking.
2. Add the cauliflower and sauté florets on high heat until nicely caramelized, about 3 minutes.
3. Add the garlic, chili flakes, salt and black pepper. Quickly add the Parmesan sauce and cook on high until reduced by about a third, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the pasta and cook until the sauce coats the pasta but is still moist.
5. Add the Parmesan, parsley and lemon zest and toss to combine.
6. Divide between four bowls and top with breadcrumbs.

CAULIFLOWER PARMESAN SAUCE (yields 5¼ cups)

- 8 cups water
- 13 cups cauliflower (about 4 heads), chopped and divided
- A few pieces of Parmesan rind
- ½ teaspoon xanthan gum (available at most grocery stores)
- 3 cups whole milk

- 1 tablespoon lemon oil
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1¼ teaspoons sea salt, divided

1. Make cauliflower-Parmesan stock by cooking water with 5 cups cauliflower and Parmesan rind for about 1 hour or until the stock flavor is strong. Strain out the cauliflower and rinds and reduce the stock by about half.
2. Make cauliflower purée by cooking 8 cups cauliflower with milk in a large pot on high until cauliflower is tender and milk is reduced (the result should look a bit like porridge). Pour into blender and purée until smooth; season with ¼ teaspoon salt and cool in the fridge.
3. Add 1 cup of purée and xanthan gum to stock and blend well with an immersion stick blender. (The remaining purée can be stored in the fridge for up to 3 days.)
4. Once xanthan gum is incorporated (no dry bits should remain), pour both oils into mixture, stirring vigorously to emulsify, and then season with salt.

NUTRITION SCORE PER SERVING

380 calories, 15g fat (3g saturated), 14g protein, 52g carbohydrates, 9g fiber, 620mg sodium

WHAT MAKES THIS DISH NUTRISH

***USING CHEESE WISELY** Instead of deploying a mound of Parmesan, Chef Bearman flavors his cauliflower “alfredo” sauce with just the rinds, which lend a subtle richness, especially once the liquid reduces and becomes concentrated.

***INGREDIENT HARMONY** “Whole-grain pasta gives this dish a good amount of iron, and pairing that with the vitamin C from the cauliflower is an important synergy,” Del Coro says. “In vegetarian dishes, you need that vitamin C to absorb plant-based iron.”

***CREATIVE OMISSIONS** It’s hard to believe there’s no cream in the decadent-tasting sauce, but the chefs actually refrain from using it—along with butter—in any savory dish on the restaurant’s menu. “It helps limit the intake of saturated fat consumed over the course of the meal,” Del Coro says.

→ **QUARK CHEESECAKE** with Concord grape marmalade and graham crumble

ACTIVE 30 MINUTES \ TOTAL 1 HOUR \ SERVES 10

- ¾ cup plain cream cheese, softened
- ¾ cup cottage cheese
- ½ cup quark cheese
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- Pinch of ground white pepper
- ⅙ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 whole egg
- ½ large egg white
- ½ cup whole milk
- Graham Crumble (recipe follows)
- Concord Grape Marmalade (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 300° F. Combine softened cream cheese, cottage cheese, quark, sugar, spices and salt in the bowl of an electric mixer. Beat on low until evenly combined.
2. Increase speed to medium and continue mixing until mixture starts to become fluffy. Turn machine off, scrape down the sides of the mixing bowl and reattach the bowl.
3. Turn machine back on and slowly add the egg, egg white and milk in succession.
4. Lightly spray 2-ounce round silicone molds with nonstick spray. Pour batter in, leaving ⅛-inch space at the top.



5. Place molds on a rimmed baking pan. Pour warm water onto the tray (not into the molds) to create a water bath that stops slightly below the pan’s rim.
6. Cover pan with tin foil and place tray in preheated oven. Bake for about 20 to 35 minutes or until set.
7. Remove cheesecakes (in their molds) from the oven and transfer them from the water bath onto a clean tray. Place tray in the refrigerator to slow the cooking process and eventually cool the cheesecakes. Store baked cheesecakes in the refrigerator (covered) for up to 3 days.
8. To assemble: For each serving, place 1 cheesecake base on a plate, spoon on 1 tablespoon marmalade and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon graham crumble and ½ cup fresh Concord grapes.

GRAHAM CRUMBLE

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ⅓ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup whole-wheat graham flour
- 2 tablespoons pastry flour
- ⅓ teaspoon fine sea salt

1. In a small saucepan, combine the butter, honey and vanilla extract. Place over low heat.
2. While that melts, combine the dark brown sugar, whole-wheat graham flour, pastry flour and salt in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Turn machine on low and begin to mix the ingredients.
3. Once melted butter begins to bubble, increase the speed on the electric mixer and pour hot butter into flour mixture. You should see the dry ingredients start to clump up into small clusters.
4. Once all of the butter has been whisked into the base, spread the graham crumble onto a baking sheet lined with wax paper.
5. Bake graham crumble in the oven at 330° F until golden brown, about 20 to 30 minutes. The finished crumble should have a sweet, toasted aroma and dark, golden-brown color.
6. Allow the crumble to cool on a wire rack. Crumble can be stored in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

CONCORD MARMALADE

- 1 pound skin-on Concord grapes, stems and seeds removed, 2 cups reserved
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1½ tablespoons apple pectin (available at gourmet food stores)
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- Pinch of citric acid (available at gourmet food stores)
- ½ lemon, juiced (about 1 tablespoon)

1. Place seeded Concord grapes in a medium saucepan with a lid over low heat. In a small bowl, mix one tablespoon white sugar with apple pectin, salt and citric acid; set aside.
2. Once grapes are warmed through, add the lemon juice and remaining sugar and continue to cook until the sugar has dissolved completely.
3. Stir in apple pectin mixture and cook over low heat as the marmalade thickens.
4. Continue to cook for 2 to 3 minutes, stirring occasionally; the texture should be slightly runny. Place finished marmalade in a shallow dish with a sheet of plastic wrap touching the top of the marmalade so a skin doesn’t form. Cool thoroughly in the refrigerator. Marmalade can be stored in the fridge in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

NUTRITION SCORE PER SERVING

200 calories, 9g fat (5g saturated), 4g protein, 29g carbohydrates, 0g fiber, 170mg sodium

WHAT MAKES THIS DISH NUTRISH

***CUTTING DOWN THE CREAM** To create a cheesecake that’s equal parts hedonistic and healthy, Distefano replaced a portion of the cream cheese, which is high in saturated fat, with cottage cheese and quark, a German farmers’ cheese. “Both of these options contain less fat and sodium because of how they’re made,” Del Coro explains.

***LOCAL, IN-SEASON FRUIT** “Concord grapes originated in the Northeast and are at their peak in fall,” Distefano says. Leaving the skins on boosts their antioxidant and fiber content, Del Coro adds.