



CREATIVE DIRECTOR,
PHOTOGRAPHER,
AND RECIPE CURATOR,
CHRISTIANN KOEPKE,
SHARES WHAT SHE'S
DEVOTED TO DAILY
(Hint: it involves coffee!)

Finding the perfect holiday recipes is anything but easy. Lucky for you, Creative Director, Photographer, and Recipe Curator Christiann Koepke has crafted the sweetest treats and drinks. From menu planning to running a business, Christiann is a woman on the go. But, she makes sure to celebrate every day with coffee, creativity, sweets, and style. From Cranberry Coffee Cake for brunch, to her Rainier Cocktail for ladies night, you'll want to read on for her secret recipes in and out of the kitchen.



Photography, creative direction and recipe curation: Christiann Koepke

MY: What is the process of planning a menu?

Christiann Koepke: My process for planning a menu is always determined by the purpose. I begin with a question: is it work or personal? When a menu is for work, that means it's driven by a client/brand request. This process begins with research, strategy, and concept development, followed by

creative direction, production, and delivery. Any menu that's featured is a result of an extensive process, be it a cake or a cocktail.

I'm blessed to have found an awesome business partner who brings "strategic peace" to any process or project. What we accomplish daily is remarkable. This is the power of female business partnerships.

Now, when a menu is personal, there are two things always top of mind: food allergies and sensitivities. Whether it's lactose intolerance, a nut allergy, or gluten sensitivity, I'm conscious of those decisions. It's not hard to find or create recipe alternatives. And most importantly, your guests appreciate the thoughtful attention.

MY: How would you describe work-life balance?

CK: I describe work-life balance as an aspirational journey. It's something to consistently strive for while understanding that some things in life are not destinations. There have been "moments" in my life when I felt life and work were truly balanced. Then

something comes up that challenges that state of being.

In my drive and passion, I've learned that it's important to take time to breathe and to know your body's capacity. And even more importantly, make room for what — and who — are priorities in my life. No matter what, I've learned to fight for peace.





Bourbon Pecan Caramel Cheesecake

Serves: 8

When bourbon and pecans meet caramel and a crust made with cookies — the flavor is life-changing and a hint of lime adds a subtle brightness.

Filling

16 oz. (2 8 oz. bars) cream cheese, room temperature
8 oz. sour cream
12.5 oz. (1 jar) Stonewall Kitchen Bourbon Pecan Caramel Sauce, warmed, separated
3 Tbsp. brown sugar
1 lime, zested and juiced
2 large eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ tsp. salt

Crust

9 oz. gingersnap cookies (Gluten-free substitute: cinnamon graham crackers)
½ cup chopped pecans
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
¼ tsp. kosher salt
½ cup unsalted butter, melted, slightly cooled
Topping
Caramel sauce, desired amount
½ cup toasted pecans

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Pulse cookies and pecans in a food processor until fine crumbs form. Add sugar and salt and pulse again. Add butter and pulse until mixture starts to stick together.
3. Transfer mixture to a lightly greased 9x11" springform pan. Press crumbs firmly onto bottom and sides of pan. Bake crust 12 to 15 minutes, until lightly browned. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool.
4. Reduce oven temp to 325°F. In an electric mixer (fitted with whipping attachment), add cream cheese, sour cream, and salt. Mix on medium speed for 1 to 3 minutes until smooth. On low speed, slowly pour in ½ cup of lightly-warmed Bourbon Pecan Caramel Sauce.
5. Add eggs one at a time and beat well after each addition.

Add lime juice and zest. Add vanilla and brown sugar. Beat again to combine.

6. Scrape filling into cooled crust and bake cheesecake 35 to 40 minutes, until edges are set. The center should be wobbly. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool. Place cheesecake in the refrigerator and chill until firm (at least 3 hours or overnight).
7. In a cast iron skillet over medium heat, toast pecans lightly for 1 to 3 minutes, stirring often until fragrant and lightly browned. Remove and set aside. Serve cheesecake by removing from pan and place on large plate or platter. Top with toasted pecans and drizzle warmed Bourbon Pecan Caramel Sauce over.
8. Storage: Place leftovers in an airtight container. Enjoy within 3 to 4 days.

MY: What's been the most challenging part of starting your own business?

CK: The most challenging part is accepting the reality that there are only 24 hours in a day. I've learned over time the importance of prioritizing. Everything can't be done at one time, but everything

can get done when to-dos are in order of priority. Every morning I review all that needs to be accomplished and I select what should be tackled that day versus the next day. (Or even the next week if a deadline isn't attached to it). One thing that's been critical to my

success is staying peaceful and not getting overwhelmed during the review process. Staying calm helps you think clearly.

MY: What keeps you creative?

CK: I find inspiration all around me. Sometimes my next big idea is found

in recognizing the simplest forms of beauty. I pull from the present, the past, and my faith, which grounds me. All are powerful sources of creativity.

Drawing inspiration from the past is deeply personal for me. My father was extremely creative and passionate about photography. He was a tireless entrepreneur with an innate ability to capture the beauty in everything, from wildlife to a simple bowl of pears. He's now passed but I'm thankful for inheriting his talents. Seeing his old Hasselblad camera every morning, that I display prominently on a shelf near my desk, is a reminder that creativity is calling for all visual artists.

The Rainier Cocktail

Serves: 1

Holiday parties and seasonal cocktails go hand-in-hand. This hot mulled cider has a pear base that provides a refreshing and unexpected twist.

- 3 oz. hot mulled pear cider, warmed with cinnamon sticks and star anise
- 1 oz. Freeland Spirits Bourbon
- 1 oz. Escubac Sweetdram
- ¼ oz. allspice dram
- 1 tsp. orange anise simple syrup
- 3-5 dashes orange bitters
- 1 apple slice, for garnish

1. Place all ingredients in a saucepan on low heat.
2. Let simmer on low for 10 minutes. Do not boil.
3. Serve in a hot toddy glass, adding an orange slice and cinnamon stick for garnish.



MY: How do you "celebrate every day"?

CK: Coffee and gratitude are how I celebrate life! There's love and then there is being in love. I am in love with coffee! The flavors and variance of one origin to the next; the way the color slowly swirls and changes when milk is poured into a clear mug of black coffee; it's just gorgeous. Making my first cup

of coffee is a daily ritual. I enjoy every moment from pouring the beans into a grinder, to pouring the coffee grounds into my coffee maker while the smell fills the kitchen as it brews. And that wonderful smell changes based on which roaster and variety I have at that time — this my own daily slice of heaven.

At the end of each day I celebrate

with gratitude. No woman is an island, so I take time to say "thank you" out loud. Recognizing the blessings and beauty in my life, no matter the challenge, keeps me grounded, happy, and free. I'm so thankful for the people in my life who love and support me and I wouldn't be who I am, or where I am, without them.

Festive Cranberry Coffee Cake

Serves: 8

Enjoy this nutty, sweet coffee cake with your morning cup of coffee or with a dollop of whipped cream after a long day. This cake is gluten/nut-free, but for a dairy-free option simply replace the sour cream with dairy-free yogurt (Suggestion: OOOO Vanilla Bean) and a dairy-free butter substitute.

Cake

- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, cubed
- 1 ½ cups coconut sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 egg yolk
- ½ cup organic, full-fat sour cream
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 ¾ cup and 1 Tbsp. gluten-free 1-to-1 flour (Suggest: King Arthur)
- ¾ tsp. sea salt
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ¾ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. ginger
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- 1 cup fresh cranberries, rinsed and dried
- Sugar (optional for pan coating)

Crumble

- 2 Tbsp. buckwheat flour
- ½ cup brown sugar
- Pinch sea salt
- ¾ tsp. cinnamon
- ¾ tsp. cloves
- ½ cup gluten free oats
- ½ cup (1 stick) butter, cubed

Cake

1. Preheat oven to 360°F. Grease bundt cake pan.
2. To make browned butter, start by melting butter over medium heat in a small saucepan. Swirl the pan occasionally to be sure the butter is cooking evenly. Once it begins foaming after 2-3 minutes, you'll begin to smell a nutty aroma. Keep a close eye on the color, you're looking for a golden tone.



Once this is reached, remove from heat and transfer butter to a small bowl. Place in freezer to cool and firm up while you move through the next few steps.

3. In a medium bowl, whisk 1-to-1 flour, sea salt, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg. Set aside.

4. Using an electric mixer, beat browned, cooled butter in large bowl with coconut sugar until creamy: 2-3 minutes. Scrape sides of bowl and whip again.

5. Beat in eggs and yolk, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. On low speed, slowly add flour mixture, alternating with sour cream. Add batter to cake pan. Top with cranberries.

Crumble

1. In a food processor, add all ingredients. Lightly pulse until it begins to stick together in a crumble-like fashion. Be careful to not over pulse, or it won't separate when sprinkled on the cake.
2. Add topping to cake as a layer over cranberries. Use a knife to push the topping lightly into the cake to create a marbled effect.
3. Bake cake until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 60-70 minutes. Cool in pan for 10-15 minutes. Loosen edges carefully with a knife to ensure a clean removal. Turn out onto rack and enjoy.