



Fire up the skillet, boys!

PIER 53 CRAB CAKES

Makes 20 small crab cakes

From Tom Sullivan of Manhattan's Marine Company 1.

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for sautéing
- ¾ cup finely diced red onion
- ¾ cup finely diced celery
- ¾ cup finely diced red bell pepper
- ¼ teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1½ teaspoons Old Bay seasoning
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¾ cup of Japanese breadcrumbs, divided use (unflavored)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ pound fresh lump crab meat (remove any cartilage or shell fragments)
- ½ cup of mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons dry mustard
- 2 eggs

In a sauté pan, place butter, olive oil, onion, celery, red pepper, Tabasco sauce, Worcestershire sauce, Old Bay, salt and pepper. Sauté 15 to 20 minutes, then cool to room temperature.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the above mixture with ½ cup breadcrumbs, lemon juice, crab meat, mayonnaise, dry mustard and eggs. Mix by hand thoroughly, being careful not to break up lump crab meat. Cool in refrigerator 15 minutes.

Using an ice cream scoop, form 20 small cakes and flatten with the palm of your hand. Lightly bread each side with remaining breadcrumbs.

In a frying pan, add olive oil about ¼ of an inch deep and bring to frying temperature. Fry cakes about 3 to 4 minutes on each side, being careful not to burn them. Then remove to paper towels and drain. Serve hot.

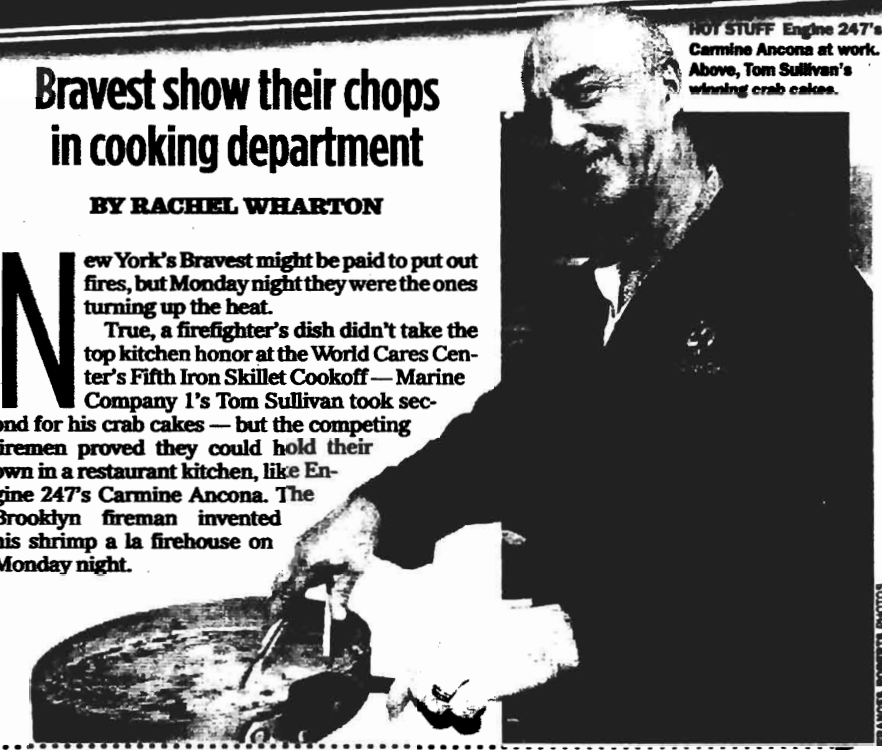
Bravest show their chops in cooking department

BY RACHEL WHARTON

New York's Bravest might be paid to put out fires, but Monday night they were the ones turning up the heat.

True, a firefighter's dish didn't take the top kitchen honor at the World Cares Center's Fifth Iron Skillet Cookoff — Marine Company 1's Tom Sullivan took second for his crab cakes — but the competing firemen proved they could hold their own in a restaurant kitchen, like Engine 247's Carmine Ancona. The Brooklyn fireman invented his shrimp a la firehouse on Monday night.

HOT STUFF Engine 247's Carmine Ancona at work. Above, Tom Sullivan's winning crab cakes.



TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE OF THE FIREFIGHTERS' RECIPES!

Firehouse chefs turn on the sizzle

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The event, which pits a firefighter from each borough against a city pro, was won by chef Marc Murphy of the Manhattan restaurant Ditch Plains, for his crab cakes.

Runnerup Sullivan spent the past few months working the kinks out of his own version of the seafood dish, Pier 53 crab cakes with a creamy sauce. Colleagues Dan Mayott and Paul Ruckdeschel served as his kitchen crew.

Thanks to feedback from the seafaring firefighting team based on Pier 53, it looks like Sullivan's preparation paid off — a sold-out sign on their serving station.

Coming in second is a coup for Sullivan, who jokes that with an Irish heritage, "My cooking experience was nonexistent before I joined the firehouse."

"Irish cooks like to boil or burn things," he says, noting that in the 14 years since he has had to cook for a multiethnic crew, he has learned plenty about techniques and other cuisines.

Another talented cook out to smash Irish stereotypes was Keith Devenish of Engine 315 in Queens, who took third place with his Mediterranean Chicken and Herb Stuffed Tomatoes.

He was cheered by two brothers, his wife, Wendy, several firemen and his mother, Peg, who noted that she prefers Keith's crab cakes, usually made from crabs he catches himself.

Like Devenish, firehouse cooks have long been



PENNE-MANSHIP Paramedic Andrew Enderes (l.) and assistant Kevin LaRoy are pleased with the results.

lauded for their skills, and this is just the second time a chef has taken the event — a fund-raiser for the center's programs, which support emergency workers and disaster-stricken communities.

And while Murphy's cheers were nowhere near as loud as his jeers, he did eventually earn the firefighter's mark of respect: "You did good," said a member of the crowd.



FRANCES ROBERT PHOTOS

JACK'D-UP PENNE AND GRILLED CHICKEN

Serves 5

From Andrew J. Enderes, a paramedic with Staten Island's Engine 168/EMS Station 23

- 1 pound chicken cutlets
- ¼ cup Cajun seasoning
- 1 pound penne pasta
- ½ pound prosciutto
- 2 tomatoes diced, or 1 small can diced tomatoes
- 2 fresh habañero or Scotch bonnet peppers
- 1 clove garlic
- ¾ pound butter, divided use
- 2 pints heavy cream
- 1 pound pepper-Jack cheese, cut into cubes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 dozen fresh basil leaves, chopped

Place chicken cutlets in a large bowl and slowly add Cajun seasoning while mixing well with hands. Let stand for about 30 to 45 minutes. When ready, grill chicken over medium heat until cooked through, then cut into thin strips.

Cook pasta in large pot of lightly salted boiling water until al dente, about 7 minutes. Drain and set aside. Meanwhile, cut prosciutto into small strips. Dice tomatoes, or have ready diced canned tomatoes. Dice garlic and peppers, combine in a small sauté pan with 1 tablespoon of butter. Sauté over

low heat for about 5 minutes. Then combine chicken strips with penne, prosciutto, tomatoes, garlic and peppers in a large serving bowl, gently mix and set aside.

In medium-size pot over low heat, or in a double boiler, melt remaining butter and then slowly stir in heavy cream, alternating with cubed cheese. Continue stirring until all the cheese is melted.

Pour cheese sauce over pasta and chicken, add salt and pepper to taste. Mix slowly, while adding freshly chopped basil leaves.



THIGH MASTER Firefighter Devenish's Mediterranean chicken

MEDITERRANEAN CHICKEN

Serves 8

From Keith Devenish of Queens' Engine 315

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| 1 head of garlic, chopped fine | ¼ cup Spanish olives |
| ¼ cup dried Greek oregano | ¼ cup capers |
| ¼ cup dried cilantro | ½ cup brown sugar |
| ½ cup red wine vinegar | 6 bay leaves |
| ½ cup olive oil | Salt and pepper to taste |
| 1 cup dry white wine | 8 pounds skinless chicken thighs (can use boneless if desired) |

Combine all of the above ingredients, except chicken, and mix well. Add the chicken and marinate at least 2 hours. Pour chicken and marinade into a baking pan and arrange thighs in a single layer (they can touch but don't overlap). Sprinkle some extra brown sugar on top and bake uncovered at 350 degrees for a little more than an hour, basting every 20 minutes. If using boneless thighs, bake for approximately 50 minutes.

