

Royal tribute to a friend

Mrs Geok-Kee Koeneman remembers a friend who died of cancer with this profiterole recipe

Singapore Cooks
Eunice Quek



For Mrs Geok-Kee Koeneman, this durian pate a choux (profiterole) recipe is not merely a celebration of the king of fruits, but is also a tribute to fellow Raffles Girls' School alumna Abby Tan who died of breast cancer last year.

Mrs Koeneman says: "When Abby was very ill, I wanted to make a cake to honour her. She's an avid durian fan and even though she never had the chance to try this recipe, she approved it."

This recipe, together with 75 other recipes, is published in *Consuming Passion: Memories From The Rafflesian Table*, a 192-page cookbook of recipes contributed by various alumni of the school in commemoration of the school's 130th anniversary.

Mrs Koeneman, 60, honed her culinary skills in a two-year programme at The Culinary Institute of America in New York and graduated in 2005.

Upon returning to Singapore, she founded artisan pastry business Pastry Atelier. The bakery is now defunct, as in 2009, she put it on hold to work on the publication of *Consuming Passion*.

Now, she bakes in her condominium in Toh Tuck Road for friends. Of her passion, she says: "I bake at least twice a week. If not, I will get antsy and feel that something is missing from my life."

The durian pate a choux recipe has always been a "work in progress", she says, and recommends using other pastry creams flavoured with chocolate or sesame.

Her extensive repertoire of desserts include making pies, nougats and hand-crafting sugar flowers for cake decoration.

Her German-American husband, John Koeneman, is the biggest fan of her pies. For his recent birthday this year, she prepared a "pie meal" that included a chicken pot pie for dinner and lemon meringue pie for dessert.

When asked if her husband cooks, she laughs and says: "No, he doesn't. If I ask him to, he says he's my driver. So I'm fine being his chef."

The couple, who have no children, eat at home frequently and enjoy dining at Michelin-starred

restaurants such as Guy Savoy in Marina Bay Sands.

Currently, the former investment banker is developing her portfolio of cakes to focus on Asian ingredients such as gula melaka (palm sugar), durian and coconut. For her latest cake adventure, she went to Malacca to do research on gula melaka to ensure she creates the best gula melaka and coconut crunch cake.

She says: "My vision is to eat local and think global. We should eat with attitude and not just eat for the sake of eating. That would give real meaning to cooking."

euniceq@sph.com.sg

Consuming Passion: Memories From The Rafflesian Table (\$60) is available at Raffles Girls' School (Secondary). Go to www.rgs.edu.sg/newsite/rgsalumni for more information.



ST PHOTOS: ASHLEIGH SIM

For Mrs Geok-Kee Koeneman (left), her recipe for durian pate a choux (above) is a work in progress.

MAKE IT YOURSELF: DURIAN PATE A CHOUX

DURIAN PASTRY CREAM

INGREDIENTS

165g durian pulp
1/2 vanilla pod
240ml milk
30g sugar
15g corn starch
30g egg yolks
53g chilled unsalted butter, cut into pieces

METHOD

1. Push durian pulp through a sieve to remove any tough membrane. Prepare an ice bath and set aside.
2. Split the vanilla pod length-wise and scrape the seeds out. In a saucepan, combine the vanilla seeds, vanilla pod, 180ml of the milk and 15g of sugar. Heat the mixture over medium heat and stir constantly to dissolve the sugar.
3. In a bowl, mix the remaining 15g of sugar with corn starch. In another bowl, whisk the egg yolks with the remaining 60ml of milk and add to corn starch and sugar mixture.
4. With a spatula, combine egg yolk mixture with durian pulp and ensure there are no lumps in the mix.
5. When the milk mixture in step 2 reaches boiling point, lower the heat and pour a third of it into the durian pulp, whisking continuously as the hot milk streams in. Add the durian mixture to the rest of the

boiled milk in the saucepan.

6. Over medium-low heat, stir the mixture with a whisk and use a wooden spoon to scrape the edges down occasionally to prevent the egg yolks from scrambling.
7. When the pastry cream comes to a boil and thickens, remove from the heat. It should leave a trail when the whisk is lifted.
8. Whisk the butter in, a few cubes at a time. Discard the vanilla pod.
9. Pour pastry cream into a stainless steel bowl. Place a sheet of plastic wrap on the surface of the cream to prevent a layer of skin from forming. Cool in ice bath.
10. When completely cool, refrigerate till ready to use.

PATE A CHOUX

INGREDIENTS

165ml milk
83g butter
1/4 tsp caster sugar
1/4 tsp salt
83g strong bread flour, sifted
165g eggs, lightly beaten
Snow powder sugar
100g almond slivers, toasted



METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 220 deg C.
2. Combine the milk, butter, caster sugar and salt in a saucepan. Bring to a rolling boil.
3. Add the flour and work it in by stirring vigorously. Stir until the mixture thickens, comes together in a lump and pulls away from sides of the saucepan.
4. Transfer to a mixing bowl and beat with a paddle on low speed. Add the eggs in three or four batches, letting each addition be incorporated completely before adding the next. The mixture is ready when it develops a pearly sheen and can hold its shape when piped.
5. When cool, transfer to a piping bag fitted with a No. 8 plain tip.
6. Line baking tray with baking paper. Pipe 12 round discs of about 3.8cm in diameter and ensure enough space for each pate a choux as it rises during baking.
7. Lightly moisten your fingers with water and tamp down piped tails.
8. Bake for 10 minutes, then lower heat to 175 deg C. Bake for another 30 minutes or till pastry is golden brown. Let the pate a choux cool completely before filling with durian pastry cream (left).
9. Sift snow powder sugar over the pate a choux and stud the pastry cream with almond slivers that have been pre-moistened with rum and toasted till light-golden brown.

Serves 12