



Winedog Speaks

Bring on the School Bus

My kids want to know why I'm so mean. It seems that they are having a tough time appreciating how much I am enjoying the final countdown to day #1 of the school year. My reaction is probably easier to understand for other parents out there but I did want to take a moment to explain what led up to this situation for you youngsters baffled by us old people.

First, rethink the word vacation as it applies to an entire summer. It was not a great idea back in June to explain that you shouldn't have to do the same chores during the summer that are expected the rest of the year. Summer isn't really a vacation in that way and most of us parents aren't interested in running a resort operation.

Next, when we are logging hundreds of miles at \$2.95 a gallon for gas to get you to play dates, band camp, cross country practice, dance lessons, theatre rehearsals, cheerleading, and a host of other equally critical appointments be a bit more understanding when we are delayed a few minutes by something as silly as job obligations. We haven't forgotten some of the hissy fits.

Also, the whole phone and instant messaging thing was a little over the top this summer. I think the defining moment was when I came into the computer area and you were talking to three people on the computer while chatting to another on the phone. Adding a bowl of cereal to the situation was impressive.

Finally, to my knowledge not one person was killed or maimed in a dishwasher related industrial accident this past summer. Loading and unloading is a good thing. It makes adults happy people.

Now that having been said let's send them off with a bang. A great breakfast is actually very important for top performance in school and my family lives for that meal above all others. Here's one of my kid's favorites for school mornings.

Fresh Asparagus Omelet & Hollandaise Sauce

(Serves one adult or large child.)

- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- ¼ cup half & half
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 4 stalks fresh asparagus, trim off woody base
- ½ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- Knorr Brand Instant Hollandaise
- Sea Salt
- Fresh Ground Black Pepper



One of the basic requirements of a breakfast plan for school mornings is just how much time it will take to prepare and this recipe is both delicious and quick to make. I'll start out by preparing the Hollandaise according to the package directions and I've always used the microwave with great results. You'll have really good sauce in about 6 minutes.

The secret to a light, fluffy omelet starts with using eggs that are at room temperature and taking the time to beat them properly with a wire whip in a large mixing bowl. If you want to step up your quality a couple notches invest into a copper mixing bowl and you'll be amazed at the improved results you will experience.

I place my asparagus into a microwave safe small casserole dish, cover and seal them with plastic film and punch a few small holes into the film. Put the casserole into the microwave oven for about 4 minutes at high and turn the casserole half way through the cooking cycle if your oven does not have a built in carousel. Ovens do vary in power so you will need to adjust your time according to your oven. I like the asparagus with just a touch of crispness and the microwave is a great way to get that result.

I beat, beat, beat my eggs while the asparagus is cooking and keep at it until the eggs are a rich, fluffy consistency and have increased in volume by about 50 percent. Add the half & half and continue beating until the creamer is well integrated into the eggs.

Melt your butter in a 10-inch nonstick skillet then add your egg mixture over medium heat. Salt and pepper to taste. Allow your eggs to set up to the point that the top is just barely wet and add your asparagus after coarsely chopping it over one half of the omelet surface. Top the asparagus with your shredded Monterey Jack cheese.

Using a small spatula, lift the edge of the omelet to be sure that it has cooked to a firm enough texture to allow you to flip over the side of the omelet opposite the filling to cover your asparagus and cheese. Do not over cook the omelet as your ideal result will be just done without allowing a crust to form.

Slide the omelet onto a large plate and top it with warm Hollandaise Sauce. Serve it immediately with buttered slices of Texas toast or warmed croissants.

I know that it is very tempting to go with the Pop-Tart approach to breakfast when the kids have to roll out and get to the bus by 7 or 7:30 a.m. but please take the time to offer a proper breakfast for your brood as your part in starting their day off in the right way. High sugar processed foods like sweeter cereals, donuts and the like start a sugar roller coaster that experts have pointed out to be a terrible trick on young people's metabolism. It's hard for them to maintain concentration early in the day and when they hit the low after the sugar is used up they are drawn to more sugar to boost their way back up for a short while.

The ideal breakfast has a combination of complex carbohydrates and protein allowing for a steady burn through the morning without all of the peaks and valleys.

I hope all of you are as excited as I am to be getting closer to autumn and enjoying all of the wonderful things coming out of the garden. I don't seem to be able to eat tomatoes fast enough but I'm giving it my very best try.

Remember to give some thought to Labor Day weekend coming up soon and we'll share some ideas next week for that last major outdoor shindig before cooler weather sets in. Be sure to get your questions and comments to me, we love hearing from you. I enjoyed some of your reactions to the dreaded pine squirrel last week. Cheers.

Jerry Allison, a native of Warren County in Southwestern Ohio, has been in the fine wine and fine dining field for 30 years in the South Florida, Chicago and Southwestern Ohio markets. He writes a weekly syndicated column, manages a fine wine business and is the executive chef for Winedog Fine Wines and Catering Services. You can visit his column archive at www.winedog.com and take your comments and questions directly to him at 888-288-0668 or email him at winedog@winedog.com . He has resided with his wife and two sons since 1999 in the country outside of Morrow,

