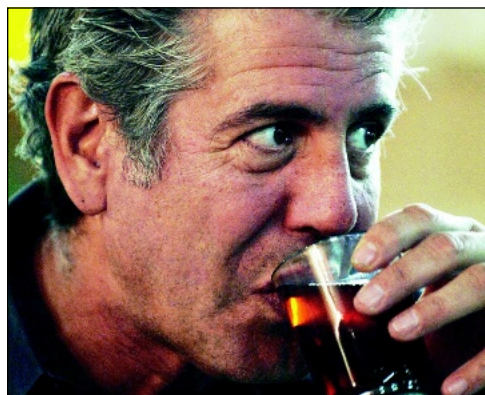


FOOD & LIFE

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2010 ■ SECTION D

BESH BET 'Inedible to Incredible' chef John Besh on the oil spill and his new TLC show ■ austin360.com/relishaustin

TACOS Y MAS A First Impressions report on the new TNT/Tacos and Tequila ■ **Thursday in Austin360**


Chef/author Anthony Bourdain has become more of the insider he's spent years blasting.

MEMOIR ■ REVIEW

Confidentially, Bourdain takes aim at fame and more foodies

By Addie Broyles

AMERICAN-STATESMAN FOOD WRITER

Anthony Bourdain knows he's a mediocre chef who got lucky.

Sure, he spent 28 years cooking in restaurants before publishing "Kitchen Confidential," the culinary tell-all that exposed the industry's dirty secrets and catapulted him into the national spotlight 10 years ago, but he admits in the first few pages of his new book, "Medium Raw" (Ecco, \$27), that he doesn't deserve the title

of chef anymore, much less could he complete a Friday night shift as a line cook at Les Halles, his old Park Avenue bistro, where diners still ask if he's cooking.

His timing was perfect. In 2000, American foodies were starting to tire of the Food Network's suspiciously glowing approach to food and cooking. Even though Bourdain, 53, wrote "Confidential" for fellow kitchen deviants, millions of everyday eaters latched on to his snarky observations about the world of fine dining and the hoodlums that populate it. He skewered

pampered Food Network hosts like Emeril Lagasse and Bobby Flay, who were so far removed from the food culture Bourdain was immersed in that they were merely talking heads with sharp knives. But the book thrust Bourdain out of the kitchen and into the spotlight, where he quickly became what he was against: a jet-setting host of a Food Network show who made a living by being a well-known personality. He didn't conform entirely, so the Food Network dropped him, but

See **BOOK**, D4

'KNIGHT AND DAY' GRADE: B

Cruise action film works best when reality is suspended

By John DeFore

SPECIAL TO THE AMERICAN-STATESMAN

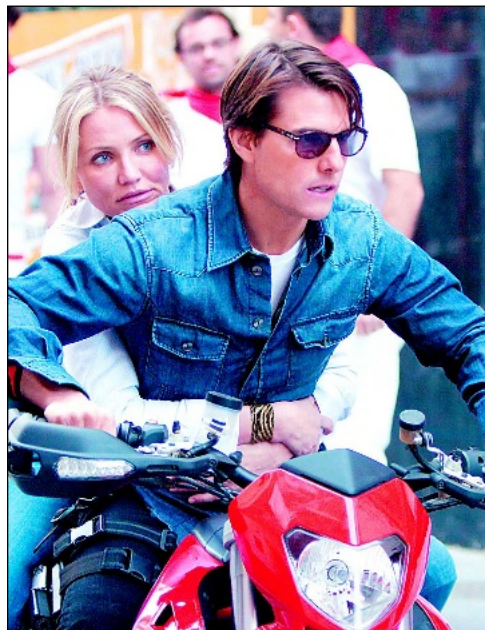
Continuing the loosening-up agenda he embarked on in "Tropic Thunder," Tom Cruise lightly spoofs his "Mission Impossible" persona in "Knight and Day," an action romance that more or less openly admits its pleasures are best enjoyed by those willing to turn their brains off for a bit.

Tactical unconsciousness is a major theme here, in fact. The only way our heroes can make it out of a few scrapes is for superspy Roy Miller (Cruise) to drug his reluctant accomplice June Havens (Cameron Diaz), knocking her out lest her gunfire-induced panic bog them down. (Fear not: Though the civilian Havens is passive and bumbling at first — getting tangled up in Miller's spy-vs.-spy intrigue only after he hides a priceless new invention in her suitcase — she comes into her own by the story's end.)

It's amusingly perverse the way Patrick O'Neill's screenplay uses this knockout device to withhold daring feats from the audience. Just when a situation looks inescapable, we're put to sleep along with Diaz. Our eyes open briefly hours later, and we groggily glimpse Cruise behind the wheel of a car — still being pursued, but assuring us we'll be safe soon. By the time the drugs wear off, the action is over.

This isn't to say there aren't plenty of other full-bore chase scenes during which Diaz and the audience remain fully conscious. Squeezed into the aisles of airliners, leaping between roofs of speeding cars, and winding through a herd of racing bulls, the movie delivers its share of summer movie action sequences — most of them preposterous, which is the point.

Director James Mangold winks at the audience just enough to let us know he doesn't

See **KNIGHT**, D4

Frank Masi TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX
Roy (Tom Cruise) and June (Cameron Diaz) get to know each other while fleeing assassins.

Food writer Claudia Alarcón's goal is to serve mouth-watering dishes that match the respective competitors



Thao Nguyen AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Austin food writer Claudia Alarcón holds a banner given to her by Australians Derek Chan and wife Rebecca Knaggs.



A culinary passport to the WORLD CUP

At Claudia Alarcón's World Cup parties, there are two rules: Soccer games are shown only on Univision. ("American announcers are horrible," says Alarcón's husband, Will Larson, who is also obsessed with the sport.)

Second, any food and drink consumed during the 90 minutes of play must be representative of the countries that are competing, with two exceptions: "South African wine is allowed at all times, as is tequila, because I'm Mexican," Alarcón says during one of the first World Cup games two weekends ago.

As she pours glasses of Indaba chenin blanc for guests who've just arrived, she has to shout over the staccato calls of the announcers and the chatter of the guests packed in the living room of her South Austin home. It's only the first weekend of the monthlong World Cup, and by Monday, she'll have prepared dishes from almost a dozen

See **BROYLES**, D5

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See photos of Tom Cruise through the years at austin360.com/movies.

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See more photos from Claudia Alarcón's parties with this story at austin360.com/food.

SPEC'S WINE OF THE WEEK

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Very good. Spec's Score: 86 VHR (Very Highly Recommended).



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BROYLES: Much planning goes into menu for World Cup fêtes

Continued from D1

nations and already lost her voice. There are few things as important to Alarcón as food, and soccer is one of them. So for the 2002 and 2006 World Cup, the freelance food writer, blogger and culinary tour guide started hosting daylong watch parties where the menu is as diverse as the teams that are playing.

The Mexico City native was just 6 years old in 1970 when her country hosted the world's biggest sporting event, and every four years since, she's been among the billions of fans who tune in to watch as the world's best teams face off.

Up until this year, there weren't many places in Austin to watch the games.

"In 2002, no one knew about it or cared that it was going on," Alarcón says. She and her friends tried to find bars or restaurants to watch the games but had a hard time finding the big matches, much less the smaller ones. "I thought it would be fun to cook the food and have the drinks of the countries and have people over to share the food and watch the games," she says.

Every weekend during the tournament, breakfast, lunch and dinner revolve around the indigenous dishes of the teams on the field. "It's not super representational of the country but rather what people would be eating during the game," she says.

She spends weeks preparing for the match-ups, digging through ethnic cookbooks, searching online, hunting down ingredients and calling up friends who were born or lived abroad to ask for suggestions. After all, what do Ghanans eat for breakfast and what's a typical Serbian finger food? (Stuffed avocados and cigar-shaped meatballs called cevapcici, respectively, it turns out.)

Guests often bring dishes of the teams they are rooting for. Rae Wilson fried her grandmother's potato pancakes just before kick-off of the Germany-Australia game. Australian expatriates whom Alarcón met over sushi just a few weeks ago showed up with — what else? — shrimp kebabs in tow.

Martine and Eric Pelegrin, who met while cooking at Chez Nous and once owned a charcuterie and supper club company called Bistro Le Marseillais, practically move in with Alarcón and Larson during the World Cup. "We go home to sleep," says Pelegrin, as she assembles abend-brot, a German cheese and charcuterie tray of liverwurst and paper thin-slices of salami.

Everybody waits until halftime to dig in to the buffet inspired by countries a half a world apart: shrimp with mango cilantro sauce and apricot-glazed chicken squeezed onto plates next to cold cuts, potato pancakes and rye bread. Before long, talk shifts from Germany's momentum in the game (they went on to wallop the Aussies 4-0) to why cilantro is called fresh coriander abroad and how liverwurst is really just poor man's pâté. Pretty soon, the second half has started, but Germany is so far ahead, many of the guests, especially those rooting against the polemic powerhouse, linger around the island in the middle of Alarcón's cobalt blue kitchen to spin stories from their own experiences abroad.

"Even if you're not a soccer fan, it's the World Cup," Alarcón says when asked why the camaraderie is greater during the soccer tournament other international sports events like the Olympics. "It's about the unity and bringing everyone together," she says. "The Olympics just aren't the same."

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Cape Malay Bobotie

This savory-sweet, minced-meat casserole with an egg-based topping is considered one of the national dishes of South Africa.

- 1 Tbsp. butter, plus enough to grease pan
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 onions, chopped
- ½ tsp. garlic, crushed
- 1 Tbsp. curry powder
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 2 lbs. beef and/or lamb, minced
- 2 slices bread, crumbled
- ¼ cup milk
- Finely grated rind and juice of ½ lemon



Thao Nguyen photos AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Rae Wilson, foreground, with Martine Pelegrin, prepares a family recipe for potato pancakes to serve during the World Cup match between Australia and Germany. Throughout the World Cup tournament, Claudia Alarcón is hosting viewing parties featuring foods from the competing countries.

- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. ground black pepper
- 3 oz. dried apricots, chopped
- ¼ cup golden raisins
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and chopped
- 2 oz. slivered almonds, roasted
- Pinch ground clove, cumin and coriander (optional)
- 6 lemon, orange or bay leaves (kaffir lime leaves work as well)

- For topping:
- 4 eggs
 - 2 cups milk
 - 1 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Butter a 9-inch-by-13-inch casserole dish. Heat butter and oil in a large pan and fry the onion and garlic until translucent. Stir in the curry powder and turmeric, and cook briefly until fragrant. Remove pot from the heat. Add the meat, crumbled bread, milk, lemon juice and rind, egg, salt, pepper, apricots, raisins, apples and almonds. Mix in clove, cumin and coriander, if using. Put the mixture in the prepared casserole and level the top. Roll up the leaves and bury them in the meat mixture at regular intervals. Cover with foil and bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Increase the oven temperature to 400 degrees. Mix together the topping ingredients, pour over the meat and bake uncovered for 15 minutes or until cooked and lightly browned.

— Adapted by Claudia Alarcón from 'Rainbow Cuisine' by Lannice Snyman (Konemann, 2001)



Addie Broyles AMERICAN-STATESMAN

Tomato coulis can be used to brighten up scrambled eggs.

Coulis de Tomates

Fresh tomato sauce, or coulis de tomates, is a staple of the Provençal pantry. To add a French flair to grilled fish, roasted meats, soft-scrambled eggs or a number of other dishes, just serve with a spoonful of coulis on top.

- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. garlic, crushed and minced
- 1 Tbsp. sea salt

360

Find out what's in Central Texas fridges in Addie Broyles' blog at austin360.com/relishaustin.

- 2 tsp. herbes de Provence
- 1 tsp. finely ground black pepper
- 3 lb. very ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. raw sugar
- 1 Tbsp. sherry vinegar

Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, garlic and salt. Raise heat to high and sauté until onions are transparent. Add herbes de Provence, pepper and tomatoes and their juice. Combine well, reduce heat to medium and simmer until tomatoes have given off most of their liquid. Stir in the sugar and vinegar and lower heat slightly. Cook uncovered at a slow simmer until reduced by half. Allow to cool slightly; purée in a food processor. Strain in a sieve or fine colander. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Transfer to a storage container and allow to cool fully before storing in the refrigerator. Keeps up to three weeks.

— Martine Pèlegrin

Avocado With Smoked Fish

- ½ lb. smoked fish, such as trout
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, with yolks separated from whites
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ tsp. sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. lime juice
- ½ cup light vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 large, ripe avocados
- 1 large red bell pepper, cut into slices (or a few tablespoons of pimentos in a jar)

Remove skin and bones from fish and flake the flesh with a fork. In food processor, blend hard-boiled egg yolks with milk until they form a smooth paste. Add sugar, salt and lime juice. Process in the vegetable oil, a teaspoon or so at a time. Add olive oil in the same gradual manner. Add egg whites and fish, pulsing to combine thoroughly but gently. Just before serving, cut the avocados in half, remove pits, and fill cavities with the fish mixture. Garnish with pepper or pimento and lime wedges to sprinkle on individual servings. Serves 6.

— Claudia Alarcón

Marcia's Moqueca

Alarcón says this recipe was given to her by a hostess at the place where she and her husband stayed in Praia de Jauá, Bahia, in northeastern Brazil, where this dish is one of the flagships of the local cuisine. Dendê is a strongly flavored palm oil that can be found in ethnic markets. You may use olive oil instead, but dendê is traditional and



Some of Alarcón's guests bring foods that convey their allegiance in terms of soccer.

provides its characteristic flavor.

- 1 lb. firm-fleshed fish fillets or steaks, such as snapper, mahi mahi or halibut
- 2 limes
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 small bunch cilantro
- Salt, to taste
- 2 small onions, sliced
- 2 tomatoes, sliced
- 2 small green bell peppers, sliced
- ¾ cup coconut milk
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil or dendê (see note above)
- 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 tsp. salt

Squeeze lime juice over fish. Mash garlic and one stalk cilantro in mortar with a heavy pinch of salt and rub the fish with mashed mixture. Layer half of the onions, tomatoes and green bell peppers in a heavy pot. Place the fish on top. Add remaining tomato, bell pepper and onion and to a blender with the remaining cilantro, a splash of water and another heavy pinch of salt. Blend and pour mixture over fish. Bring to a boil, then add coconut milk, tomato paste and oil and mix carefully.

Cover and cook for about 20 minutes or until fish is done and sauce thickens. Serve with white rice.

— Claudia Alarcón



An array of German cheeses was served at one party. Guests usually wait until halftime to start eating, and if the score becomes lopsided, some fans migrate back to the kitchen to mingle.

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