

# LIFE | FOOD

THE HOLIDAY DINNER ROAST IS GROWING IN POPULARITY.

## Primed FOR CHRISTMAS

By CATHY THOMAS  
ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

It seems that more and more families are making rib roast the star of their Christmas feasts. Here's how the chefs at The Resort at Pelican Hill turn out moist and luscious boneless beef with all the trimmings.

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Prime rib with creamed spinach and parsnip and potato puree is a holiday favorite.

LEONARD ORTIZ,  
ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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A prime rib roast should be served rare, with the meat red and juicy. A creamy horseradish sauce is the perfect accompaniment.

## FOLLOW THE PELICAN HILL CHEFS AND START A NEW TRADITION WITH A PRIME RIB ROAST. IT'S EASIER THAN YOU THINK.

The menu that makes up a traditional American Christmas dinner is hard to pin down. At my cousin Grace's home, her husband is Italian, so four-cheese ravioli accompany their barbecued turkey every year. Rita Wattson, a German-born culinary enthusiast, wouldn't think of celebrating without roast goose and red cabbage.

Chef Haley Nguyen, who spends Christmas at her parents' home, feasts on pot roast as well as turkey. The pot roast is a tribute to Indiana, the state where the family settled after they fled Vietnam.



**CATHY THOMAS**  
REGISTER COLUMNIST

In my childhood home, the Christmas meal was a repeat of the Thanksgiving menu of roast turkey with all the trimmings. As a young bride, I took over the holiday culinary responsibilities and did the whole shebang in November, with reruns in December. Years later, it was my sister-in-law Sue who clued me into how much easier it is to prepare an English Christmas dinner.

Indeed, a prime rib repast is much simpler, and I've noticed that more folks have switched their Christmas tables to focus on behemoth rib roasts. With a desire to freshen up my beef-centric menu after all these years, I signed up for the Christmas Dinner Class at The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast.

Taught in one of the resort's elegant 3,581-square-foot, four-bedroom villas, part of the private enclaves that showcase gourmet kitchens with Sub-Zero refrigerators and granite countertops, two Pelican Hill chefs made holiday cooking look easy, which is understandable, considering that about 1,000 brunch and dinner meals are served in the resort's ballroom on Christmas Day.



The meat should be 110 degrees when it comes out of the oven. It should then sit at least 15 to 20 minutes before carving.

### MORE FOLKS HAVE SWITCHED THEIR CHRISTMAS TABLES TO FOCUS ON BEHEMOTH RIB ROASTS.

Marc Osier, chef de cuisine at the Coliseum Pool & Grill, took the lead. Monir William, the villas' chef de cuisine, backed him up. Osier joked that William was his sous-chef, a comment that made William smirk.

Resting on the counter stood an 8-pound boneless rib roast, a trimmed rib-eye tied at 3/4-inch

intervals with butcher string to keep it pristine during roasting. It was USDA prime, a grade that denotes a high degree of marbling.

Osier topped the roast with a mixture of Dijon mustard, minced garlic and rosemary before placing it in a preheated 450-degree oven. After 15 minutes, he said, he would reduce the temperature to 325 and let it roast until it reached, a couple of hours later, an internal temperature of 110 for very rare.

He explained that roasts need to sit at least 15 to 20 minutes before carving, and due to carryover heat, the meat's temperature increases during the resting period, from 110 degrees to around 120. He said he prefers it very rare and wants the meat red and juicy when it leaves his kitchen.

While the meat roasted, Osier whipped up scrumptious creamed spinach, a parsnip-potato puree and a salad that highlighted Fuyu persimmons, pomegranate seeds, toasted pecans and goat cheese.

To ensure that the puree wasn't "baby-foodie" (Osier's term to describe an unwanted silk-slick texture), William riced the mixture of roasted parsnips and russet potato in a giant food mill. Cream, reduced with shallots, garlic and butter, was folded into the mix along with salt and white pepper.

Meanwhile, Osier made the creamed spinach, offering a tip that could save holiday home cooks a lot of time. Instead of using fresh spinach, he said frozen chopped spinach is a perfectly acceptable alternative in the dish. Simply defrost it and squeeze out all the liquid, then add it to the thickened cream mixture.

Next, William whipped cream by hand using a balloon whisk; it took a while, and after several minutes he quietly acknowledged that he wished he'd brought his electric KitchenAid mixer to the class. Adding prepared horseradish, sour cream and Worcestershire sauce, the mixture was a frisky yet cloudlike condiment for the beef.

Once the meat came out of the oven, the two made the salad and gently heated up the spinach and parsnip-potato puree. Popovers accompanied our cooking class, as well as a snazzy yule log filled with brandied cherries and mascarpone-cream mixture, then frosted with chocolate butter cream.

Ho, ho, ho! Merry Christmas to all and to all a delicious holiday feast.

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Monir William, left, jokes with fellow chef Marc Osier during a recent Christmas dinner cooking class in one of the villas at The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Coast.



Popovers are one dessert option for finishing your holiday meal.

**CREAMED SPINACH**

Yield: 4 servings

**2 cups cooked spinach, chopped, see cook's notes**  
**1 tablespoon butter**  
**2 teaspoons minced onion**  
**1 teaspoon minced garlic**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**Dash of nutmeg**  
**2 cups heavy cream**  
**2 tablespoons dry white wine**  
**Salt and pepper to taste**

**Cook's notes:** If desired, use (defrosted) frozen chopped spinach; you don't need to cook it, but you will need to vigorously squeeze out all the watery liquid.

**Procedure:**

1. Squeeze out as much liquid from spinach as possible, working in small handfuls and pat dry with paper towels.
2. In a large saucepan, melt butter on medium heat. Add onion, garlic, salt and nutmeg; cook until onion softens. Add white wine and cook until pan is almost dry. Add heavy cream (it may splatter) and increase heat to medium-high. Cook until reduced by half in volume and thick enough to coat the back of a spoon (that means that when wooden spoon is removed from the mixture you can run your finger across the back of the spoon and it will leave a trail). Mixture should be thick enough so that when spinach is added it will be creamy, not runny. Once the spinach is added the mixture should be thick and creamy; if cream mixture is runny before the spinach is added, long additional cooking to thicken it will turn the spinach a less than desirable color. Fold in the spinach and heat it until hot. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

**Nutrition information (per serving):** 207 calories, 51 percent of calories from fat, 12 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 53 mg cholesterol, 21 g carbohydrates, 5 g protein, 486 mg sodium, 4.1 g fiber

**Source:** Marc Osier, chef de cuisine Coliseum Pool & Grill, The Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast



Parsnip and potato purée and creamed spinach complement the flavor of rib roast.

**PARSNIP AND POTATO PURÉE**

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

**1 very large russet potato, unpeeled, scrubbed, dried**  
**About 1 teaspoon vegetable oil or olive oil, for rubbing potato**  
**4 large parsnips, quartered and peeled, see cook's notes**  
**2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**  
**Coarse salt and white pepper to taste**  
**3 tablespoons butter, divided use**  
**1 tablespoon minced garlic**  
**2 tablespoons minced shallots**  
**2 cups heavy whipping cream**  
**Salt and white pepper to taste**

**Cook's notes:** Chef Osier used large parsnips and cored them. He said that the cores are fibrous.

**Procedure:**

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Rub potato with a little olive oil and wrap in aluminum foil and place in oven. Potato will take longer to cook than parsnips, so bake about 40 minutes before putting parsnips in the oven.
2. Meanwhile, prepare the flavored cream. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in saucepan on medium-high heat. Add garlic and shallots and cook until softened (do not brown). Add cream; increase heat to high and reduce in volume by a fourth, turning heat down as needed to prevent it boiling over.
2. In a bowl, toss parsnip quarters with olive oil, salt and pepper. Place on rimmed baking sheet and place in preheated oven. Roast until fork tender, about 15 minutes. Test potato, inserting tines of fork; if it is tender, remove from oven, if not continue to bake until it is fork tender. Remove potato from oven and open foil. Cut potato into quarters. When cool enough to handle, peel off skin and place in a food mill along with the parsnips. Process potato and parsnips in food mill while still warm. Stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Gently fold in enough cream mixture to make a creamy consistency. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Nutrition information (per serving):** 323 calories, 50 percent of calories from fat, 18 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 27 g carbohydrates, 12 g protein, 875 mg sodium, 4.4 g fiber

**Source:** Marc Osier, chef de cuisine Coliseum Pool & Grill, The Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast

**HORSERADISH CREAM**

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

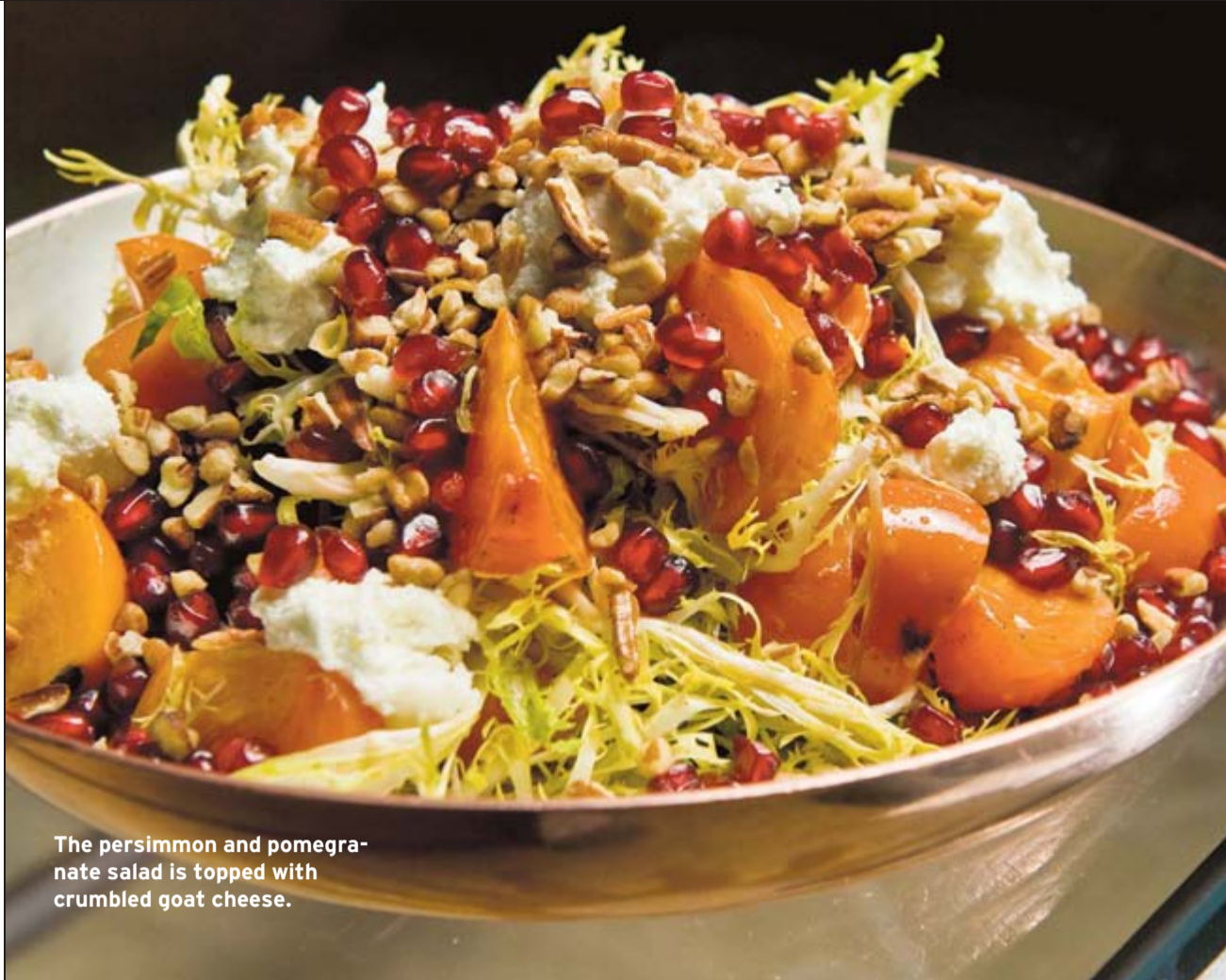
**1 1/2 cups chilled heavy whipping cream**  
**2 tablespoons sour cream**  
**2 tablespoons prepared minced horseradish, or more to taste (sold in small, refrigerated jars)**  
**2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce**  
**Salt and white pepper to taste**

**Procedure:**

1. In a large bowl of electric mixer, beat cream until stiff. Add sour cream, horseradish and Worcestershire sauce; gently stir together with whisk. Add salt and white pepper to taste. If needed, add more horseradish.

**Nutrition information (per serving):** 102 calories, 88 percent of calories from fat, 10 g fat, 6 g saturated fat, 42 mg cholesterol, 2 g carbohydrates, 1 g protein, 16 mg sodium, 0.1 g fiber

**Source:** Marc Osier, chef de cuisine Coliseum Pool & Grill, The Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast



The persimmon and pomegranate salad is topped with crumbled goat cheese.

PHOTOS: LEONARD ORTIZ, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

**PERSIMMON AND POMEGRANATE SALAD**

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

**Orange and Honey Vinaigrette:**

**1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**  
**2 tablespoons white wine vinegar**  
**1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley**  
**1/4 cup fresh orange juice**  
**1 tablespoon raw honey**  
**1/2 teaspoon grated orange zest (colored portion of peel)**  
**1/4 teaspoon salt**  
**Pinch of cayenne pepper**  
**1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil**

**Salad:**

**Seeds of 1 pomegranate**  
**1 large or 2 small heads frisée, torn into bite-size pieces, see cook's notes**  
**1 cup pecan halves, toasted, see cook's notes**  
**5 Fuyu persimmons, cored, cut into wedges, see cook's notes**  
**Salt and pepper to taste**  
**1/2 cup goat cheese**

**Cook's notes:** Frisée is a sub-variety of curly endive with delicate ragged edges. It is sold in supermarkets

with large produce sections. To toast pecans, place in single layer on rimmed baking sheet; place in 350-degree oven until lightly browned, about 6 minutes. Watch carefully because nuts burn easily. Cool before using. Fuyu persimmons are the tomato-shaped persimmons rather than the Hachiya, which are an elongated heart shape.

**Procedure:**

1. Place mustard and vinegar in a bowl and whisk until combined; add all remaining vinaigrette ingredients except oil and whisk to combine. Whisk in oil in a thin stream. Refrigerate, well-sealed, at least 4 hours or up to 2 days.
2. In a large bowl, place pomegranate seeds, frisée, pecans and persimmons. Stir dressing and add enough to generously coat. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed. Crumble goat cheese on top.

**Nutrition information (per serving):** 358 calories, 48 percent of calories from fat, 20g fat, 4g saturated fat, 70 mg cholesterol, 28g carbohydrates, 7 g protein, 920 mg sodium, 3g fiber

**Source:** Marc Osier, chef de cuisine Coliseum Pool & Grill, The Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast



Prime rib just out of the oven needs to rest before slicing.

**BONELESS PRIME RIB ROAST WITH DIJON, GARLIC AND ROSEMARY**

Yield: 8 generous servings

**1 (8- to 9-pound) boneless prime rib roast, trimmed of excess fat, tied with butcher string at 3/4-inch intervals**  
**Coarse salt, such as kosher salt**  
**2 tablespoons black pepper, coarsely ground**  
**3 tablespoons Dijon mustard**  
**3 garlic cloves, minced**  
**1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary leaves**  
**Jus:**  
**1 tablespoon butter**  
**2 shallots, minced**  
**2 (14.5 ounce) cans sodium-reduced beef broth**  
**1/3 cup dry red wine**  
**3 sprigs fresh rosemary**  
**Salt to taste**

**Cook's notes:** An accurate thermometer is essential to assure that the meat has reached the correct internal temperature. An instant-read thermometer is dandy; it's not the kind that remains in the oven; instead you insert it into the center of the roast to get an almost-instant reading. At the class, the chef made a makeshift rack out of quartered, peeled parsnips under the roast, saying it was an optional addition. Chef Osier said that prime beef is preferred, but that choice is good, too, as long as it is the highest grade of choice (there are three grades of choice).

**Procedure:**

1. Thirty to 45 minutes before roasting, remove roast

from refrigerator. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place roast fat-side-up in roasting pan. Season with salt and pepper on all parts of the roast. In small bowl, stir together mustard, garlic and rosemary. Spread mixture on top of beef. Roast in preheated oven for 15 minutes.
- 2. Reduce oven temperature to 325 degrees and tent the beef very loosely with aluminum foil. Roast until a meat thermometer inserted into the center of the beef registers 110 degrees for very rare (about 2 hours 45 minutes), or longer if you wish to obtain a more well done roast (for medium rare remove from oven at 120 degrees). Transfer beef to a platter. Allow it to rest 15 to 20 minutes. Meanwhile, pour remaining pan juices into a bowl, scraping up browned bits from pan and set aside.

3. Melt 1 tablespoon of butter in a skillet on medium-high heat. Add shallots and sauté until softened. Add beef broth, wine and rosemary sprigs; increase heat to high and boil until liquid is reduced by half, about 15 minutes. Add reserved pan juices and warm through. Remove rosemary sprigs. Serve roast with sauce on the side.

**Nutrition information (per serving):** 548 calories, 65 percent of calories from fat, 40 g fat, 12 g saturated fat, 101 mg cholesterol, 7 g carbohydrates, 40 g protein, 254 mg sodium, 0.2 g fiber

**Source:** Marc Osier, chef de cuisine Coliseum Pool & Grill, The Resort at Pelican Hill, Newport Coast