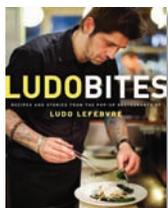




Ludo Lefebvre
 Chef, restaurateur,
 and TV personality
 Los Angeles, California
 ludolefebvre.com



Trois Mec

Chameleon chef **Ludovic “Ludo” Lefebvre** and his fine cuisine have been popping up all over Los Angeles, first at LudoBites and now in his mobile dining “Ludotruck.” “The LudoBites model is the epitome of the 21st-century marketplace,” lauds *Time* Magazine, “where the chef, not the restaurant, is the name of the game.” Deemed “Chef of the Future” by *Time*, Lefebvre has found that his fans will flock wherever he goes. Among Lefebvre’s legion of admirers are Ruth Reichl, Sam Sifton of the *New York Times*, and Pulitzer Prize–winning *LA Weekly* critic Jonathan Gold, who included LudoBites on his “99 Most Essential Restaurants” list, and gave his work a spot on the “Top Ten Dishes of 2007, 2009, and 2010,” as well.

Originally from Auxerre, France, Lefebvre began his career in a professional French kitchen at age 13. During his lengthy apprenticeship, Lefebvre worked with some of France’s greats: Marc Meneau at Restaurant L’Esperance; Pierre Gagnaire at his eponymous boîte; Alain Passard at Arpège; and Guy Martin at Le Grande Véfour. But America beckoned, and he moved to Los Angeles to work at L’Orangerie. Here, he was promoted to head chef at age 25, and saw the restaurant earn the Mobil Five Star Award. Lefebvre went from there to Bastide with the same glowing accolades. He was a finalist for the James Beard Foundation “Rising Chef Award” in 2001, and was named by Relais & Chateaux one of the “World’s 50 Greatest Chefs.”

Appearances on two seasons of Bravo’s *Top Chef Masters*, as well as on *Hell’s Kitchen*; *Iron Chef America*; *Top Chef*; and *The Today Show*, not to mention a feature in *GQ* magazine and a 2011 gig cooking for the Elton John Aids Foundation Oscar-viewing party have thrust Lefebvre and his mad-genius cuisine into the international spotlight. Most recently, the buzzworthy chef has released a cookbook entitled *LudoBites, Stories and Recipes from the Pop-up Restaurants of Ludo Lefebvre* and is judging a cooking competition series on ABC called “*The Taste*.” His highly anticipated new restaurant, Trois Mec—a collaboration with chefs Jon Shook and Vinny Dotolo—opened in the Hancock Park area in the spring. ✨

Oriental mussel velouté

SERVES 4

- 2 cups Chardonnay**
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced**
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, divided**
- 2 lbs. black mussels in shells, scrubbed and beards pulled off**
- ½ tsp. saffron threads**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 1 tbsp. ras el hanout***
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper**
- 1 large heirloom tomato (about 10 oz.), cut into ½-inch pieces**
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 tbsp. sherry vinegar**
- 12 fresh purple basil leaves**
- 1 orange**

1. Combine wine, shallots, and 1 tbsp. butter in a large cocotte (i.e. a Dutch oven or heavy fireproof pan) and bring to a boil over high heat. Stir mussels into wine mixture then cover and cook until shells open, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let it stand for 5 minutes.

2. Remove mussel meat from shells; reserve meat and discard shells. Strain cooking liquid through a fine-meshed sieve and into a bowl. Return cooking liquid to pan and bring to a boil. Crumble saffron into strained cooking liquid and add cream. Simmer to allow flavors to blend and until liquid reduces slightly, about 5 minutes. Stir in *ras el hanout* and half the mussel meat. Using a hand-held immersion blender, blend mixture until smooth. Blend in remaining 1 tbsp. butter. Season mussel broth to taste with salt and white pepper.

3. Place tomatoes, oil, vinegar, basil, and remaining mussel meat in a large heated bowl. Using a Microplane grater, zest half the orange over tomato mixture. Stir in steaming hot mussel broth. Season soup to taste with salt and white pepper.

4. Divide soup among 4 small soup bowls. Mound small fries (see recipe below) on a plate and serve with a small bowl of olive oil.

Small fries

SERVES 4

- 2 big russet potatoes (about 1 lb. each)**
- About 8 cups grape seed oil**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper**

1. Peel potatoes then cut lengthwise with a mandolin into shoestring-size strips (known as *pomme paille*). Place potatoes in a large bowl of ice water and stir to release some of the starch (water will look cloudy when starch is released), then transfer potatoes to a colander and rinse under cold running water. Drain well. Line a large baking sheet with paper towels then scatter potatoes over towels. Pat potatoes dry with more paper towels.

2. Add enough oil to fill a large deep stockpot one-third full, then heat oil over medium-high heat to 375°. Working in small batches, fry potatoes in hot oil until crisp and golden, about 3 minutes. Be careful not to add too many potatoes at one time, otherwise oil may bubble up too much and overflow. Return oil to 375° before each batch of potatoes is added. Using a spider (or stainless steel mesh skimmer), remove potatoes from oil and transfer to a second baking sheet lined with paper towels. Immediately sprinkle hot, fried potatoes with salt and white pepper. ✨

*Ras el hanout is a blend of up to 60 varying spices that originated in Morocco and is used widely throughout North Africa. You can find it at specialty spice shops or online.