The Quilt Inn Country Cookbook

Introduction

The Quilt Inn Country Cookbook was written as an invitation for you to join us at The Quilt Inn, to savor not only the joy of bountiful down-home cooking, but to drink in the pleasures of country inn living. We are itinerant travellers and country inn lovers, and we have selected and savored the best recipes of all the ones that we have tried, to create the essence of “inn-ness” for you. We’ve collected our favorite dishes, and memories, and spread them out for you here on our harvest table for you to sample and enjoy. When you re-create these recipes for yourself, and as the homey smells of country cooking waft through your own kitchen, we hope you will be transported to The Quilt Inn where a warm welcome awaits you.

People often ask us where The Quilt Inn is located, and when then can come visit us. The Quilt Inn is that mythic sort of place, like Camelot, that rises unexpectedly and fortuitously at the end of a long day to give haven to the weary traveller. We’ve all been to The Quilt Inn, if only in our hearts. The Quilt Inn is old and cozy, just like one of Grandma’s beloved and faded quilts it was named for. Whenever we are weary and bleary-eyed we can wrap it around us, and sink into its warmth.

In Spring, we find the Inn in a cozy valley blanketed with snowy white cherry and peach blossoms. In Summer, we find it perched atop a breezy hill where the verdant treetops rustle like yards of crisp taffeta swooshing overhead. In Autumn, we find it at the end of a long narrow lane bordered by rows of trees in riotous colored patchwork. In Winter, we find it etched sharply in delicate filigrees of ice as our footsteps crunch noisily across the big snowy fields toward a wisp of smoke and warmth.

It is everywhere different, and everywhere the same. It is the best of welcoming places.

Welcome to The Quilt Inn.

Everybody's From Somewhere

As Michael and I travelled around the country collecting stories for our memories and recipes for the Inn, we've enjoyed visiting small towns everywhere. I avoid highways whenever possible and go out of my way to find the "grey roads" on the map. They are the old roads, that lead meandering routes from town to town, left behind by the "red" and important superhighways.

I often get us lost, but even that's OK. Getting lost can lead you to some place more interesting than where you were heading. Strange, that. A wise man said, "When you are on a trip and your destination seems to move further and further away, you know that it was the journey you were after, not the destination."

Early on we noticed that almost every town we visited had a sign at the town limits proudly boasting a native son or daughter who had gone on to fame and fortune, supposedly elsewhere. Now we're on the lookout for those wonderful telltale signs. I think we've found the home of every Miss America since 1957. We found football, basketball and baseball stars who made it past local high school hero to world class competitor. We found singers and musicians who probably drove the neighbors crazy, were the ne'r-do-wells at the time, probably now laughing, and strumming, all the way to the bank.

In the "Who's Who" of towns, (or perhaps that should be the "Where's Where"), is there a pecking order of luminaries? If your town can brag only of a Regional Lawn Bowling Champion, are you less of an address than a town strutting a Miss America or a Hall of Famer?

It's a comfortable reminder that everybody is from somewhere. And driving around any somebody's home town lets us see a glimpse of their past and perhaps their burning motivation for achieving success elsewhere. We wonder how those home towns fare in the memories of native sons and daughters. Happy nostalgia of childhood? Or, couldn't wait to leave nightmares.

All those towns are everywhere different and everywhere the same. They are towns without pity, towns from hell, or even towns with no name (Clint Eastwood

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characters live there). It may be twenty-four hours from somewhere or 1,000 miles from nowhere. Or even South of the Border.

And every town has the same sides. Every town has its uptown, downtown Saturday night. Its ever musical east side, west side. Everywhere you find stray cats roaming the alleys. Inevitably some good old boy is headed for the cheating side of town, while someone else is coming back from Heartache Avenue to the lonely side of town. There's the seamy side of town, where Skid Row is, at the end of a dead end street. You may see uptown girls waiting for their downtown men. There are girls from the bad side of town, standing underneath the lamp post, and boys from the wrong side of the tracks, having back street affairs.

That's a lotta sides for one town.

You may have arrived there at the bus stop on the mean streets or at a liveried abode on Easy street. You may have taken the straight and narrow or the long and winding road. Or even the Yellow Brick Road. You may have been lead down the primrose path or taken the road less travelled to the crossroad where fates are decided. If you're street smart, take the streeetcar named "Desire" back to the street where you live on the sunny side of the street.

Wherever we journey away to, there are always blue highways that lead you to the back roads by the rivers of your memories, ever smiling, ever gentle, on your mind.

And now to the stories and recipes.

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Swing Time

On warm lazy afternoons I like to take a cool drink and lie in the hammock. It's located in the middle of the front lawn, so it's far enough away from the porch that no one can easily talk to you and disturb your reveries yet close enough to be summoned if necessary. Michael has learned that it requires a three alarm fire to warrant calling me out of the hammock. It's a place I need to go when I'm mad at him for some reason or other. As Goethe said, "In a good marriage we become the guardians of each other's solitude."

The hammock came to live with us from Mexico. It used to be gaudy Fiesta-colored, but it's toned down somewhat and mellowed a lot since and I believe it's trying to approach a respectable earth-toned appearance in order to fit into our decor. It's slung between two huge century trees, Centurion trees. One willow. The other, oak.

When the trees were originally and symbolically planted in the farmyard they were appealingly close together. Now that they are monster trees they are far too close together and make an odd coupling. The bent over willow symbolizes flexibility and change, with its long, slender, supple leaves that swish softly in the wind, it stands beside the starchy, upright oak with its broad stiff leaves that rustle crisply and irritably, and symbolizes strength and stability. These are trees that speak two different leaf languages. Yet like yin and yang, they are opposites that complement and complete each other into a wholeness.

Their branches intertwine bizarrely. The willow seems to flow into the oak's stiff embrace, like an oddly coupled marriage. An artificially arranged marriage at that. Yet here they are, generations later, still standing side by side, rooted and symbiotic. They've grown around each other, accommodated each other. Given each other space to grow. If one were to be cut down now, there would be spaces among the remaining one's branches, like an empty embrace. Yes, just like a marriage.

And here I lie swinging between the two trees. Sometimes I am a willow. Sometimes I am oak.

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Cool drinks to sit n' sip and put you in the mood. The most famous classic of all, I think...

Mint Julep

1 tsp. granulated sugar

1 tsp. water

4 fresh mint leaves

fine crushed ice

3 oz. Bourbon

1 fresh mint sprig

Combine sugar, water and ice in a tall chilled glass until sugar is dissolved. Add ice to 3/4 full. Add Bourbon and stir gently. Freeze for 15 minutes. Garnish with mint sprig before serving.

Georgia Summer Spritzer

6 fresh peaches, peeled, blanched and sliced

1 oz. water

2 oz. sugar

24 oz. dry white wine

12 oz. club soda

peach and lime slices for garnish

Combine water and sugar in small saucepan and boil lightly until sugar dissolves. Let cool. Combine peaches and sugar syrup in blender. Blend until smooth. Chill until needed.

Combine peach puree, wine and club soda in shaker or pitcher. Shake or stir just enough to blend all ingredients. Pour into chilled cocktail glasses. Garnish with peach slice and lime slice. Delicious, and very elegant.

Summer Punch

16 2–cup tea bags

3 qts. water

1 cup sugar

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1 can frozen lemonade concentrate

1 32 oz. bottle of ginger ale

Bring water to a boil and add tea bags. Remove from heat, cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Discard teabags. Add sugar and lemonade, stirring until sugar dissolves. Chill thoroughly. Stir in chilled ginger ale just before serving.

Banana Daiqairi

1 banada

1 oz. white rum

Dash banana liqueur

Splash each of pineapple juice, orange juice, lemon juice and lime juice

Dash white creme de cacao

crushed ice

grated nutmeg

Combine all ingredients except nutmeg and blend until smooth. Sprinkle with nutmeg and serve.

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Bandits at Four O'Clock

One of the great things about Inn life is you get to rise early in the morning when it's peaceful, cool and dark, to prepare breakfast for the guests. Great if your a robin, not so great if you're an owl. And four o'clock is earlier than anyone who needs to get up. That's the time when the banging and clattering started in the garden shed, behind the "Summer kitchen."

The Summer kitchen is a later wood frame addition to the original stone house. A Summer kitchen was used, as the name implies, during the Summer when it was hot, so that the cooking stoves wouldn't heat up an otherwise cool house. It was also where the women put up preserves and processed all the garden produce for the Winter. I can't imagine how uncomfortable it must have been when they were cooking and canning during the hot, hot days of Summer, before air conditioning or even electric fans. The original small wood door has now been enlarged into an archway that connects it directly to the main kitchen. The shed that is attached to the Summer kitchen is accessible only from the outside, but the hollow wood walls boom loudly with the echoes from the banging within.

Back in the city, night noises like this would have panicked me. But here I know that whatever is making the noise is probably more afraid of me than I am of it. Probably rightly so. Humankind has done more damage to nature than nature has ever done to us. So, I pulled on a sweater and crept quietly to the kitchen and rummaged in the "junk drawer" for a flashlight. The steps were cold and wet beneath my bare feet but I never care about that when I'm hunting out my friends.

As I creaked open the shed door and shone the light around inside, scurried rustlings behind the wheelbarrow revealed my quarry. A small pointy face stared back at me. Then two, three, four more culprits popped into view. Caught red-handed, four black-masked bandits were stuffing themselves with bird seed that Michael forgot to store in a metal storage bin.

Momma raccoon had returned, with three babies this year. She's never quite comfortable with humans, not like city park raccoons and I don't want to tame her.

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That's too dangerous for her and her babies. She's better off wild and fearful of humans. Momma raccoon has only three legs. I often wonder what happened to her. A fight with a farmyard dog maybe or caught in a trap, or whatever. She's a tough old survivor.

I left the shed door open and backed off a dozen feet so that I could watch them. That way, they would continue foraging in comfort.

After a few minutes, Momma ambled unconcerned out the door and the three kits tumbled after her in a panic. She walked off thirty feet or so and sat down, and looked back. All her babies were there behind her. She looked at me, stroked her whiskers as if to say, "Thanks for the breakfast!" and then rubbed her ear in farewell. Off they went back into the darkness.

Back in bed with my ice cold feet, Michael opened his eyes, looked at me and shook his head smiling. He knows that from now on the bird seed will be stored away properly and the shed door will be locked and that I'll leave out some scraps before we go to bed. Maybe even some bacon from this morning's breakfast at the Inn.

Eggs Benedict

1 1/2 tbsp. butter

1 1/2 tbsp. all purpose flour

1 1/4 cups milk

3/4 tsp. dry mustard

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 English muffins, split

2 slices thick cut ham (back bacon or peameal bacon)

4 eggs

2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

To prepare sauce: melt butter in saucepan. Whisk in flour. Cook 2 to 3 minutes on low heat, stirring but not browning. Whisk in milk. Bring to boil. Reduce heat. Simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in mustard, Tabasco, lemon juice, cheese, and salt and

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pepper to taste.

Toast muffins. Butter lightly. Place on cookie sheet. Keep warm in oven. Warm ham in oven.

Poach eggs. To serve, place slice of ham on each muffin, top with egg. Pour on sauce. Sprinkle with parsley.

Apple French Toast with Cinnamon Sauce

4 eggs

1 cup milk

3 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

8 slices day-old French bread, cut thick *(French toast is better made with day-old bread. It will soak up the egg more than fresh bread, and it will "puff up" more.)*

3 tbsp. melted butter

Preheat oven to 375F.

To prepare toast: whisk eggs with milk, sugar, vanilla and cinnamon. Dip bread into mixture, coating both sides, allowing bread to soak up mixture. Place bread in single layer on baking sheets brushed with butter to prevent sticking. Bake for 12 minutes, turn bread over, bake another 12 minutes or until brown and puffy.

Sauce

2 tsp. butter

1/2 cup brown sugar

3/4 cup water

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

3 apples, peeled, cored, and sliced thinly

To prepare sauce: add butter and sugar in saucepan. Cook until melted. Add water, cinnamon, and apples. Cook on low heat for 8 to 10 minutes, until tender.

To serve: arrange toast on plate, top with sauce.

Christmas Toast

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The use of nutmeg in this classic French toast recipe gives it a distinctive Eggnog flavor. It's great any time of the year, but at Christmas, substitute Eggnog for milk.

4 eggs

1 cup milk

3 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

4 tsp. nutmeg

8 slices French bread, sliced thick

3 tbsp. melted butter

Preheat oven to 375F.

To prepare toast: whisk eggs with milk, sugar, vanilla, and nutmeg. Dip bread into mixture, coating both sides, allowing bread to soak up mixture. Place bread in single layer on baking sheets brushed with butter to prevent sticking. Bake for 12 minutes, turn, bake for 12 minutes or until brown and puffy.

Serve with icing sugar "snow" dusted over the toast, mint leaves, and a dollop of red currant jam to resemble Christmas holly.

For a tasty alternative for the bread base, use croissants sliced in half, soaked in egg mixture and baked.

Rice pudding is one of my all time favorite breakfasts and a great way to use up leftover rice from last night's Chinese Food dinner. In fact, whenever I cook steamed rice I always make twice what I need so I know I'll be able to make "rice puddy" for breakfast.

"Leftover" Rice Pudding

2 cups cooked rice

1 cup milk

2 eggs

1/2 cup sugar

1 tsp. cinnamon

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1/2 tsp. nutmeg

1 cup raisins

Preheat oven to 350F. Blend milk, sugar and egg together. Bring to a boil and stir until mixture begins to thicken. Pour over rice in a casserole dish. Mix in raisins and spices. Bake 40 to 50 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking or separating.

From Scratch, Creamy Rice is Nice Pudding

1/3 cup rice

4 cups milk

2 tsp. cornstarch

1/3 cup sugar

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 apples, peeled, cored and chopped

1/2 cup raisins

2 tbsp. butter

1/4 cup brown sugar

1 tbsp. cinnamon

Heat rice and milk in a saucepan until milk comes to a boil. Meanwhile, combine cornstarch and sugar. Whisk in cream until mixture is smooth. Whisk into hot milk/rice mixture. Reduce to low heat. Cover and cook 40 to 55 minutes or until rice is thick and creamy, stirring occasionally.

While rice is cooking, combine apples, raisins, brown sugar, butter and half the cinnamon in saucepan. Cook 20 to 30 minutes on low heat until apples are tender and mixture thickens.

To serve: pour rice into large casserole or individual dishes. Top with apple mixture. Sprinkle with remaining cinnamon. Serve warm or cold.

Corn bread is a dish that goes back to pioneer days when Native Americans first taught the settlers how to prepare the dried cornmeal. This recipe goes equally well with breakfast or as a dinner roll when made in individual muffin pans.

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Spicy Cornbread

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 cup yellow cornmeal

2 tbsp. sugar

4 tsp. baking powder

3/4 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. chili powder

1 1/4 cup milk

4 large eggs

6 tbsp. melter butter

2/3 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels

3 tbsp. chopped green onions

Preheat oven to 350F and grease square baking pan or muffin tins.

Stir together flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, salt and chili powder. Beat milk, eggs and butter into flour mixture until just blended. Fold in corn and green onions. Spoon batter into pan(s) and bake 40 to 50 minutes for one large pan or 20 to 25 minutes for individual muffins, or until center springs back when lightly pressed with fork. Cool in pan before removing. Serve warm with any main dish or on their own.

The smell of cinnamon rolls baking for breakfast is sure to make even the tardiest late sleepers rouse themselves.

Cinnamon Rolls

2 cups all purpose flour

2 tbsp. sugar

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

1/4 cup cold butter

1/2 cup milk

Preheat oven to 400F. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large mixing bowl. Cut butter into mixture with pastry blender or two kitchen knives or your fingertips until mixture forms coarse crumbs. Gradually add milk to make a soft dough while

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mixing with a fork. Turn onto floured surface, knead gently, then roll into a 12x8 inch rectangle. Set aside.

2/3 cup soft butter

2 cups brown sugar, packed

2 tbsp. cinnamon

2/3 cup raisins

Cream together butter, sugar and cinnamon in mixing bowl. Drop spoonful of butter mixture into each of 12 large greased muffin pans. Spread remaining mixture over dough. Sprinkle on raisins. Roll up jelly-roll style. Cut into 12 equal slices. Place each in muffin pan. Bake 20 minutes or until browned. Remove from pans immediately to avoid sticking. Serve warm.

Because pancakes can be so-o-o-oo sweet, we like to serve them with something to cut the sweetness, like spicy sausages or thick cut bacon.

Quilt Inn Pancakes

3 eggs

2 cups buttermilk

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. baking soda

1/4 cup butter

Beat eggs with buttermilk in mixing bowl. Combine flour, sugar and baking powder. Stir together well. Mix dry ingredients into wet ingredients only until blended. Melt butter in skillet and stir into batter. Return skillet to high heat. Spoon 1/4 cup measures of batter into pan or onto griddle. Cook one side until small bubbles appear. Flip and cook other side. Repeat until all batter is used.

Serve with real maple syrup. If you like a strong maple flavor, look for Vermont or Canadian maple syrup which has a thicker consistency and stronger maple taste. You will use less to achieve the same delicious taste, and save calories.

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Muffins are popular breakfast fare at all times of the year. They also make great "pocket breakfasts" to take with you on an early morning walk. Here are some of our favorites.

Extra Bran Muffins

1 cup whole wheat flour

1 cup all purpose flour

1/3 cup wheat bran

1/3 cup oat bran

1/3 cup brown sugar

1 tbsp. baking powder

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 egg

1 cup milk

1/3 cup melted butter

2 tbsp. molasses

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup sesame seeds

1 cup grated carrots

Preheat oven to 400F. Sift together flours, brans, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon. Mix egg, milk, butter and molasses. Stir in raisins, seeds, and carrots. Fold wet ingredients into dry ingredients until just blended. Do not overmix. Spoon mixture into greased muffin pans or paper cups. Bake for 25 minutes. Cool before removing from pan. Serve warm

Banana Bran Cran Muffins

1 egg

1 cup mashed banana

3/4 cup milk

1/3 cup brown sugar

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1 1/2 cups 100% bran cereal

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2 cups all purpose flour

1/2 cup chopped walnuts

1 tbsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

3/4 cups whole berry cranberry sauce

Preheat oven to 400F and grease 12 large muffin pans. Combine egg, banana, milk, brown sugar and oil. Stir in bran cereal and let stand 10 minutes. Mix remaining ingredients, except cranberry sauce, until just moistened. Spoon half the batter into muffin pans, top with cranberry sauce. Spoon remaining batter to cover cranberry sauce. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until brown. Cool before removing from pan.

Halloween Muffins

4 cups all purpose flour

1 tbsp. baking powder

1 tbsp. cinnamon

2 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. ginger

1 tsp. nutmeg

1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. allspice

1/2 tsp. cloves

4 eggs

1 can pumpkin (14 oz.)

1 cup apple juice

3/4 cup melted butter

1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar

1 1/2 cups chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 375F and grease 24 muffin pans. Stir together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, baking soda, and spices. In separate bowl, beat eggs, and mix in pumpkin, apple juice and butter. Blend in brown sugar. Blend wet ingredients into dry

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ingredients until just moistened. Fold in half the pecans. Spoon into greased muffin pans, sprinkle with remaining pecans. Bake 25 minutes or until firm to the touch. Cool before removing from pan.

Cheesey Corn Muffins

These make a great luncheon roll served with soup.

1 2/3 cups all purpose flour

1 1/3 cups cornmeal

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. salt

2 eggs

1 1/2 cups buttermilk

1 can (14oz.) creamed corn

1/4 cup melted butter

1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

paprika to garnish

Preheat oven to 375F and grease 16 muffin pans. Stir together flour, cornmeal, baking powder and soda, and salt. In separate bowl, beat eggs, blend in buttermilk, creamed corn and butter. Blend wet ingredients into dry ingredients. Sprinkle with 1 cup cheese and mix until moistened. Spoon into greased muffin pans. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Dust with paprika. Bake for 25 minutes or until firm. Cool before removing from pans.

High Fiber “Good For You” Muffins

2 cups all purpose flour

1 1/2 cups raisins

1 cup Muesli

1 cup natural bran

1 cup packed brown sugar

2 tsp. baking soda

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1/2 tsp. salt

1 cup plain yogurt

1 cup milk

2/3 cup vegetable oil

1/4 cup molasses

2 tbsp. rolled oats

Preheat oven to 400F and grease 16 muffin pans. Mix together flour, raisins, Muesli, bran, sugar, soda, and salt. In separate bowl, blend yogurt, oil, milk and molasses. Mix wet ingredients into dry until just moistened. Spoon batter into muffin pans, or paper lined cups. Bake for 20 minutes or until firm to the touch. Cool before removing from pans.

Zesty Orange Muffins

2 cups all purpose flour

1/2 cup sugar

2 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 cup currants (or dried chopped apricots)

1 egg

1 cup plain yogurt

1/4 cup melted butter

2 tbsp. orange rind strips, chopped fine

1/4 cup orange juice

Preheat oven to 350F and grease muffin pans.

Stir together flour, baking powder and soda, and salt in large mixing bowl. Mix in currants. In another beat eggs, blend in yogurt, butter, orange rind and juice. Stir into flour mixture and blend only until dry ingredients are moistened. Spoon into muffin pans. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until firm to touch.

Cheesecake Muffins

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Filling:

8 oz. package cream cheese, softened

2 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. orange rind, grated fine

Cream cheese, sugar and orange rind together in bowl until smooth. Set aside.

Batter:

1 1/4 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1/3 cup butter

1/2 cup brown sugar

2 eggs

2 tbsp. orange juice concentrate

1 tsp. orange rind, grated

1/2 cup evaporated milk

1 1/4 cups finely grated carrots

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup chopped walnuts

1 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350F. Cream butter and brown sugar together in mixing bowl. Beat in eggs, orange juice concentrate and milk. Stir in orange rind, carrots, raisins and walnuts. Combine flour, baking powder and cinnamon in large mixing bowl. Add wet mixture. Stir just until moistened. Spoon 2 tablespoons batter into each muffin cup, using only half the batter mix. Spoon one tablespoon filling on top. Cover with remaining batter. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes or until top is firm and springs back when pressed lightly.

A visitor from Louisiana, Bill Parker, brought us this recipe from his favorite restaurant in New Orleans, where it's a popular dish with the locals.

Bread Pudding With Jack Daniel's Sauce

Pudding

3/4 cup sugar

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2 cups milk

2 eggs

1 tsp. vanilla

1/4 cup raisins

6 cups cubed French bread

In large bowl, whisk together sugar, eggs, milk and vanilla until fluffy. Stir in raisins and bread. Let soak for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pack mixture lightly into loaf pan. Place loaf pan in larger pan of hot water to prevent burning. Bake 1¼ hours or until lightly brown and set.

Jack Daniel's Sauce

1/4 lb. butter

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup 10% cream

1 egg

6 tbsp. Jack Daniel's Bourbon

Mix butter, sugar and cream in top of double boiler. Cook over simmering water until sugar dissolves and mixture is hot. Whisk in egg and continue cooking until sauce thickens slightly. Stir in Bourbon.

To serve, slice pudding, pour sauce over it and garnish with berries in season.

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The Nose Remembers When

A warm spring day at the the Inn makes me restless. I've been storing energy all Winter and need to get out and go somewhere. I start to think of foreign trips to take. With all the Spring planting and general clean-up-after-winter work to be done that isn't usually possible.

So instead, when I want a day off, I take my nose for a walk. I cut fresh grass, toss hay in the barn, smell the freesias, dig in the newly-exposed moist earth, or rub my face in the warm fur of a cat. Like a detective or a bloodhound on a hunt, I'm scenting out smells to stimulate me because I know that every odor that comes accidentally or intentionally to my nose will instantly whisk me away to times and places in memory more quickly than a jet could carry me to an exotic locale. It's a vacation in recall that I can return to and from without jetlag and come back refreshed every time.

It's no wonder our noses are right in the middle of our faces, up front and sticking out where we can poke it into things. Neuroanatomists tell us that is it's a very short distance from the receptor cells in the nose to the target cells in the brain, to those bumpy brows and frontal lobes that we worked so hard through the millennia to develop. By contrast, your fingers are a long way from your brain. If your nose was any closer to the brain, it would *be* your brain. (And maybe in some ways it is.) The fact that your nose has this enviable "local call" connection gives the environment an opportunity to wage an upfront and personal attack on our brains, especially on our memories, through our senses.

Smells evoke emotionally charged memories as pungently as an electrical probe surgically applied directly to your grey cells would. (Don't try is at at home!) The other senses are not so directly and uncompromisingly connected to the memory banks. Pinch your arm and you're unlikely to immediately be transported to another time and place where you experienced a similar pinching sensation. Look at water cascading over rocks in a garden. Does it make you recall standing at the foot of a waterfall in the forest? You may know the memory is there and with some mental effort, connect the two but rarely does sight or touch trigger memory of such sensational, fully

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kinesthetic experiences. Television and the movies do everything they can to involve us emotionally by capitalizing on every nuance of our sight and sound senses. They even go so far as to wrap it around us like a cocoon in "virtual reality" games. If anyone ever figures out a way to incorporate smell into the movie-going experience, (the way cologne manufacturers have with magazine inserts), box office sales will go through the roof. They will have our heartstrings.

We have inside us albums of memories just waiting to be opened by smell. The fragrance of fresh cut grass can immediately flood your being with sensation memories, of childhood, of Summer, the heat of sun, the cool of dew. You are magically two feet shorter and engrossed in an inner world of olfactory holograms. Another time, the ephemeral whiff of a familiar cologne instantaneously conjures up the face of a long ago lover, the warmth of a body pressed against you in embrace, or the quiet tranquility of langorous time alone. And on and on through the fragrant canyons of our memories. Smell can trigger paroxisms of emotions, veritable avalanches of emotion.

It's a good thing that our brains also easily habituate to smells. We consciously smell something only when it is newly introduced. Within seconds the brain turns off its sensitivity and we are no longer aware of it. Sit in a smoke-filled room, or beside with a wet dog, or near food cooking. After a few minutes you won't be able to smell it. Go outside and breathe different, new air. Return to the room and you will again sense the "new" smell. It's a protective device our brains evolved to keep us from being overloaded with information. Otherwise we would be walking zombies, adrift in hallucinatory smell-induced reveries.

We also know that the sense of taste that we think is centered in our mouths really only detects four qualities: sweet, sour, salty and bitter. The rest of our "taste" is in our noses. It's the nose that has myriads of specialized receptors to detect the crowded universe of compounds that make up the foods we eat. It's the nose that saved our animal forebears (from being only three-bears) by differentiating what was edible from what was poisonous. By the time it was in the mouth, it would have been too late. Which explains why you can't taste Mom's chicken soup when you have a head cold. The rhino-virus has knocked out the receptor cells.

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As people age they lose their memories. They also lose their sense of smell. Maybe the memories went with the smell.

It's the nose that remembers when.

The best part of my day off nose-walk is returning to the aroma of Michael cooking spring lamb and vegetables, or a fresh-baked rhubarb pie.

The Maxwell Q. Klinger Lamb and Pork Ecstasy

1 1/2 lbs. lean lamb stewing meat, in cubes

1 1/2 lbs. lean pork stewing meat, in cubes

3 stalks celery, chopped

3 carrots, chopped

1 onion, chopped

1/2 lb. baby carrots

1/2 lb. fresh broccoli

1/2 lb. baby onions

1/3 cup cognac

1 2/3 cups dry white wine

Chicken stock

1/2 tsp. ground mace

1/4 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Mix cognac, wine, mace, cinnamon and 1/2 tsp. salt. Pour over meat cubes in shallow bowl. Chill overnight, stirring occasionally. Drain meat. Reserve 3/4 cup marinade.

Mix chopped celery, carrot and onions and layer in bottom of large Dutch oven or ovenproof dish. Pour reserved marinade over top and simmer for 5 minutes. Layer meat cubes and sprinkle with 2 tsp. salt. Cover and bake at 350F for 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until meat is tender.

Steam baby carrots, broccoli and baby onions.

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To serve, remove meat with slotted spoon and transfer to shallow serving dish. Arrange steamed vegetables around meat.

California Lamb Roast

1 lamb leg, boneless (about 4 pounds)

1/2 lb. dried apples

1/2 lb. dried apricots

1/2 cup golden raisins

1/2 cup Bourbon

1 tsp. ginger root, minced fine

1 tbsp. grated orange rind

Juice of 1 orange

3 cups apple cider

Place apples, apricots, raisins, ginger root, orange peel, orange juice and ½ cup Bourbon in medium saucepan. Add apple cider to cover fruit. Simmer uncovered for 20 minutes. Cool.

Trim excess fat from lamb. Place in shallow casserole. Drain fruit. Add 1/2 cup Bourbon to drained juice. Add enough apple cider to make 2 cups. Pour juice mixture over roast. Chill overnight. Reserve drained fruits.

Remove roast from marinade. Salt lightly. Place 1/3 fruit on surface of meat. Roll up and tie with strong string. Place in roasting pan. Roast uncovered at 325F for about 2 hours. Add remaining fruit to roasting pan during last half hour cooking.

To serve, remove roast and transfer to serving platter. Cover to keep warm. Let stand 20 minutes before carving.

Remove fruit from roasting pan. Puree in blender with 2 tbsp. Bourbon and enough apple cider to made pourable sauce. Heat thoroughly and serve with roast.

Lamb Curry

1 lb. boneless stewing lamb

1 onion, minced

2 cloves garlic, minced

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3 tbsp. olive oil

3 tsp. curry powder

1 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. ground ginger

1/4 tsp. chili powder

1/4 tsp. sugar

6 ounce can tomato paste

2 cups apples, peeled and chopped

Cut lamb into 1–inch cubes. Saute onion and garlic in olive oil in deep skillet or Dutch oven until golden. Add curry powder, paprika, ginger, chili powder and sugar. Blend well. Add lamb and brown on all sides. Add tomato paste and enough boiling water to cover. Stir well. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes over low heat. Add apples. Cook another 15 minutes or until meat is tender. Serve with fragrant rice.

Garlic Lovers' Lamb Kabobs

1 1/2 lbs. boneless lamb, cut into 1½ inch cubes

1 cup dry white wine or apple juice

2 tbsp. olive oil

1/4 cup soy sauce

10 cloves garlic, minced

2 tsp. dried rosemary, crushed

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Train fat from lamb and cube. Combine remaining ingredients in shallow dish. Add meat and stir, coating well. Cover and chill overnight. Remove meat from marinade and thread onto skewers (alternating with vegetables such as large mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, sweet peppers, etc. if desired). Grill for 8 to 10 minutes, turning often and basting with remaining marinade.

Stir-Fry Lamb and Asparagus

1 lb. boneless leg of lamb

1 lb. fresh asparagus

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1 onion, sliced

1/4 lb. mushrooms, sliced

1 sweet red pepper, seeded and chopped coarsely

1–inch piece ginger root, sliced thin

1 clove garlic

2 tbsp. soy sauce

1 tbsp. dry sherry

1 tbsp. honey

2 tsp. cornstarch

1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper

4 tbsp. vegetable oil

Trim fat from lamb. Cut into 1/4–inch thick slices; cut slices to 2–inch strips. Trim ends of asparagus and chop into 2–inch pieces. Combine soy sauce, sherry, honey, cornstarch and pepper in small bowl. Set aside.

In large deep skillet or wok, heat 1 tablespoon oil over high heat. Add ginger and stir–fry until crispy. Remove and set aside. Add half the lamb and brown on both sides. Remove and set aside. Add another tablespoon oil and brown remaining lamb. Remove and set aside.

Reduce heat to medium. Add remaining oil to pan. Add asparagus, mushrooms, onion and garlic. Cook 1 minute. Add peppers. Cook 2 more minutes. Stir soy mixture and pour into mushrooms and peppers. Cook until thickened. Return lamb and ginger to skillet. Stir–fry until heated through (about 1 minute). Serve immediately over rice.

Rootin' for Rhubarb Pie

9–inch unbaked pie shell

3 cups rhubard, cut into 1/2–inch pieces

boiling water

1 1/2 cups sugar

2 tbsp. flour

salt to taste

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1/4 tsp. cinnamon

1 tbsp. melted butter

3 egg yolks, beaten

Preheat oven to 425F. Pour boiling water over rhubarb to cover, let stand 5 minutes. Drain. Combine the flour, sugar, salt and cinnamon. Add melted butter and beaten egg yolks. add rhubarb to sugar mixture and combine thoroughly. Spread fruit mixtire in oie shell. Bake 10 minutes in hot oven. reduce temperature to 350F and bake 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Cover cooled pie with meringue (recipe follows) and return to 350F oven. Bake 10 minutes.

Marvelous Meringue

3 egg whites

1/4 tsp. cream of tartar

6 tbsp. sugar

Bat egg whites and cream of tartar until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in sugar, continuing to beat until stiff peaks form.

Rhubarb Radio Pudding

Pudding

1 cup all purpose flour

1/3 cup sugar

1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. salt

1 1/2 cups diced rhubarb

1/4 cup raisins

1/2 cup milk

1 egg

1/2 tsp. vanilla

Sauce

1 cup boiling water

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1/4 cup packed brown sugar

1/4 cup butter

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. grated lemon rind

pinch nutmeg

To make pudding, in bowl mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir in rhubarb and raisins. In separate bowl, beat together milk, egg and vanilla just enough to combine, stir into flour mixture. Turn batter into greased square baking dish.

To make sauce, into boiling water stir in sugar abd butter until sugar dissolves and butter melts. Add lemon juice, rind and nutmeg. Pour gently over batter. Bake in 350F oven for 30 minutes or until pudding is golden brown on top and firm to the touch.

Rah! Rah! Rhubarb Crisp

4 cups coarsely chopped rhubarb

1 1/4 cups all purpose flour

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup strawberry jam

1 1/2 cups granola

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ground ginger

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup pecans, chopped

1/2 cup butter, softened

In bowl, combine rhubarb, 1/4 cup flour and sugar. Stir in jam, set aside.

In separate bowl, combine remaining flour, granola, cinnamon and ginger. Stir in brown sugar and pecans. Blend in butter until crumbly. Press 2 cups of the granola mixture into the bottom of a square baking dish. Spoon rhubarb mixture over top, cover with remaining granola mixture. Bake in 375F oven for 45 minutes or until deep golden brown and filling is tender.

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Adam's Search for the Ultimate Rib

We have traveled all across North America, searching for the ultimate rib. Surprisingly, there are many others who have also embarked on this culinary quest. In fact, if you mention to someone that you are a "rib freak", they are just as likely to tell you about their favorite restaurant, recipe, or sauce. We even have a friend, Gerry, who collects jars of sauces. Some people have wine cellars, but there's our Ger, down in his basement late at night, applying a quarter turn to each dusty bottle, to keep the lid wet, naturally.

Ribs differ wherever you go. Some people prefer pork ribs, the side variety for thinness, baby backs for meaty, sweet flavor, country style for thick pleasure, or sweet and sour cuts. Others swear by beef ribs, from the full bone of the standing rib roast to the short rib type.

And then there's the sauce. Ah, sauce! Ketchup-based, mustard-enhanced, garlicked, honeyed, hickory-smoked, hot, medium, sweet, or even no sauce at all. The varieties are as endless as the rib aficionados who swear by them.

Many of the commercially prepared sauces rely on an ingredient called "liquid smoke" to give a hickory flavor to the sauce. Liquid smoke was first commercially prepared in Nebraska in 1895, originally from the tar of burned wood that was dissolved in water (boy, does that ever sound good!). Nowadays, it is synthetically produced and the unhealthy tars and resins have been removed. Because it is concentrated, a very small amount of this ingredient goes a long, long way and can easily overpower more subtle flavors. For some, hickory smoke is an acquired taste and should never stand in the way of enjoying ribs, your way.

And so once committed to the rib quest, one needs to search out, in every eating establishment, the "rib dinners" on the menu. However, for the true and venturesome, connoisseur, it's simply a matter of saying, "I'll have the ribs, please."

We have eaten ribs in franchise-type restaurants, in smoky beer joints, in specialty places where the ribs are smoked in a pit, or baked in a brick oven for up to 24 hours. Naturally we think those at the Quilt Inn are the best. But the joy of the quest

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is that it is never-ending. Oh, rapture!

The best rib story I can think of, I owe to Alan Alda in his role as "Hawkeye Pierce" on the long-running television series, M*A*S*H. During this memorable episode, Hawkeye has had two weeks of liver and fish, and he's had enough. As he says, "I've eaten a river of liver and an ocean of fish, and I won't take it any longer!" What's the answer? "Ribs," he says to his partner in crime, Trapper John McIntyre. "But not just any ribs. They have to be 'Adam's Ribs'. With sauce. And coleslaw. From Chicago!" Their bounty is shipped all the way to Korea marked "medical supplies", and after a number of comic mishaps, finally arrive. Was it worth it? Any rib-lover watching the episode would say, "Yes!" We couldn't understand why anyone would think it an unreasonable request, or quest, at all. The search for the ultimate rib goes on. It knows no boundaries.

There are as many ways to cook ribs at home as there are sauces to cook them in: boil to tenderize, marinate or not, bake, broil, barbecue. I think we've tried them all and here are the best of the ones we like to prepare.

Hot Dijon Ribs

4 lbs. pork spareribs

1 cup liquid honey

3/4 cup Dijon mustard

2 tbsp. Tabasco sauce

1 tbsp. soy sauce

2 tsp. onion powder

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

Cut ribs into serving-size pieces. Place in large saucepan, cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 1 hour or until meat is tender. Drain ribs. Set aside.

Sauce

Combine all ingredients. Broil or barbecue ribs for 10 minutes, until brown. Baste with sauce on both sides. Cook another 5 minutes per side. Serve with baked beans, coleslaw, and plenty of napkins.

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Michael's Baked Beans

These are traditional in many parts of the country, as the delightful accompaniment for ribs. How are they prepared?

1 large can of commercial baked beans *(make it easy on yourself!)*

1 tbsp. dry mustard

1 handful brown sugar

3 glugs maple syrup

Mix. Heat. Eat.

Honey Garlic Baked Ribs

6 lbs. back or side ribs

3 tbsp. garlic powder

3 tsp. fresh ground pepper

3 tsp. oregano

1 tsp. thyme

salt to taste

Place ribs in large pot. Cover with water and add other ingredients. Bring to boil. Simmer 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and let cool for 1 hour in liquid.

Sauce:

2 cups liquid honey

2 tbsp. molasses

1/2 cup Chinese plum sauce

1/2 cup steak sauce

3 tbsp. white wine

2 tbsp. garlic powder

2 tsp. dry mustard

2 tbsp. fresh ground pepper

2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

2 tbsp. white vinegar

2 tbsp. soy sauce

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Preheat oven to 400F. Mix all sauce ingredients together well. Remove ribs from liquid and place on broiler rack. Brush with sauce and bake until browned on both sides, about 15 minutes. Serve with remaining sauce.

Sweet and Sour Broiled Spareribs

4 lbs. lean spareribs

2 onions, chopped

1/3 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup vinegar

1 tbsp. soy sauce

1/2 cup pineapple juice

1/3 cup water

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 tbsp. cornstarch

Place ribs on broiler pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Broil until deep brown on both sides.

Saute onions in deep pot until softened. Add all other ingredients, except cornstarch. Add ribs. Cover pot and simmer for 2 hours. Remove ribs. Make paste with cornstarch and spoonful of water. Thicken sauce with cornstarch paste. Return ribs to sauce. Transfer to serving dish and serve with Petit Sirah wine.

Very Merry Baked Ribs

5 lbs. pork ribs

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

1 cup sweet red Vermouth

Preheat oven to 350F. Rub salt and pepper into ribs and place in baking pan. Cover loosely with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Turn and bake another 30 minutes.

Pour Vermouth over ribs, and bake uncovered for another hour, basting every 15 minutes.

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Beer and Honey Marinated Ribs

8 lbs. spareribs

3 cups beer

1 cup honey

2 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tsp. chili powder

2 tsp. sage

1 1/2 tsp. dry mustard

1/2 tsp. salt

Place ribs in large pan. Mix all other ingredients and pour over ribs. Let stand overnight in refrigerator, turning occasionally. Remove ribs from marinade, reserving liquid.

Broil or barbecue ribs on mediumlow heat for 1 hour, brushing with marinade. Or, bake in 350F oven for 1 1/2 hours.

We happened to be in Washington, D.C., on a business trip, and you would have thought with all the five-star restaurants in the area, the culinary world would have been at out feet. Well, not for us. We had to travel 50 miles to a place we had heard of called Dirty Pete's Ribs, serving on weekends only. Neither Pete nor his daughter-in-law Carole would reveal the secrets of his sauce, but both agreed that what was required was slo-o-o-o-w cooking. I think the secret to Pete's sauce was Jack Daniel's (whether it was in Pete or the sauce, I'm not too sure). Perhaps you'll have the opportunity to visit. If so, say "Hi" from us, and set a spell at the picnic tables in the back.

Hickory Smoked Barbecue Ribs

2 slabs baby back ribs, or spareribs

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ground cloves

1/4 tsp. pepper

1 cup hickory wood chips

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barbecue sauce

Preheat oven to 400F. Rub cinnamon, cloves and pepper into both sides of ribs. Place ribs on wire rack on baking pan. Bake for 3 hours, until tender.

Wrap hickory wood chips in aluminum foil, pierce foil to allow smoke to escape, and place directly in the center of hot barbecue coals.

Baste ribs and place on grill above wood chips. Cover grill and cook for 10 minutes. Turn ribs, baste again and cook another 10 minutes or until ribs are browned but still moist. Serve with a hearty Beaujolais wine.

Not Pete's Barbecue Sauce:

2–15 oz. cans tomato sauce

1/2 cup molasses

10 cloves garlic

2 tbsp. ground cumin

2 tbsp. dry mustard

fresh ground pepper

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/4 tsp. anise seed

1/4 tsp. hot pepper flakes

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

Combine all ingredients except vinegar in saucepan. Simmer, covered, on low heat for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Ad vinegar to taste and simmer for another 15 minutes. Chill at least 24 hours, or until ready to use.

Grown-Up Ribs

4 to 5 lbs. meaty pork ribs

Sauce

1 onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 tomato, seeded and chopped

1/2 sweet red pepper, chopped

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1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/2 tsp. paprika

1/4 tsp. turmeric

1/3 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup beer *(for Young 'Uns Ribs, substitute Coke or Dr Pepper)*

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/4 tsp. Tabasco

Combine all ingredients in blender and process until smooth. Place ribs in deep dish and pour sauce over ribs. Marinate for 3 hours.

Preheat grill. Transfer ribs to 2 sheets of heavy duty aluminum foil. Fold up edges, pour 1/2 cup marinade over ribs. Seal foil edges together. Place foil-wrapped ribs on grill, cover and cook 2 hours.

10 minutes before serving, remove ribs from foil and grill over medium heat for 5 minutes per side, basting with sauce.

And while you have the barbecue grill on, you might as well cook some vegetables too. For each person, chop one potato and a half and onion into chunks. Place on one foot square of heavy duty aluminum foil, sprinkle with your favorite savory spice mix, or simply grind fresh pepper over the vegetables. Add a dollop of butter, or margarine. Fold over the foil, sealing the ends, and place on cooler part of grill. Cook for 20 minutes, turning frequently to prevent burning. Serve with lots of napkins. Try this with fresh asparagus, or any other combination of "solid" vegetables.

Creole Ribs

2 lbs. pork spareribs

1 onion, chopped

1 green pepper, seeded and chopped

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1/2 cup green onion, chopped

1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped

2 cups rice, uncooked

1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/4 cup vegetable oil *(We know that vegetable oil comes from vegetables and olive oil from olives. So where does baby oil come from?)*

Brown ribs in oil in large deep skillet. Remove and drain well on paper towels. Reserve drippings in pan and saute onion, green pepper and green onion for 2 minutes. Return ribs to pan. Add remaining ingredients and water to cover. Cover and simmer for 1 hour or until ribs are tender and rice is cooked. Try these with a light Gewurtraminer wine.

Mediterranean Short Ribs

6 lbs. beef shortribs

1/4 cup olive oil

1 large can plum tomatoes, drained and chopped

1 onion, sliced

1/2 cup dry red wine

1/2 cup beef stock

6 cloves garlic, minced

4 tsp. fresh parsley, chopped

2 tsp. fresh rosemary, chopped

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Preheat oven to 350F. Mix tomatoes, stock, garlic, parsley, rosemary and cinnamon together in a bowl. Set aside.

Brown short ribs in olive oil over medium heat. Place in roasting pan and sprinkle with pepper. Saute onion in shortrib browning until tender. Add to shortribs. Add wine to skillet and bring to a boil, deglazing pan. Add liquid browning to shortribs.

Pour tomato mixture over shortribs and mix well. Cover and bake for 2 1/2 hours. Uncover pan and cook another 20 minutes to reduce liquid. Skim off any

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grease. Serve with wild rice side dish.

For something completely different, try...

Stuffed Ribs

2 full racks of ribs

Stuffing

1 onion, chopped

1/4 cup celery, chopped

2 tbsp. butter

1 cup cooked mashed potatoes

1/2 cup bread crumbs

1 egg, beaten

1/4 tsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 tsp. marjoram

1/4 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Saute onion and celery in butter until tender. Stir in potatoes, bread crumbs, egg, parsley, marjoram, salt and pepper. Mix well.

Place rack of ribs on greased shallow roasting pan. Spoon stuffing on one rack of ribs. Cover with remaining rack. Tie or secure with string. Rub ribs with fresh ground pepper and sage.

Bake at 475F, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 325F, cover. Bake for 1 hour or until tender. Cut between rib sections for individual servings and serve with Beaujolais wine.

Another Stuffing:

1 cup bread crumbs

1/2 cup onion, chopped fine

1 cup apples, chopped fine

1 tbsp. brown sugar

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

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Combine all ingredients and use as above.

Everyone, and every region, has their own distinctive and unique barbecue sauce recipe. It's great to have a specialty, but we like to prepare different sauces at different times, just to keep the guests interested, trying to identify, "What IS that ingredient I can taste?" Here are some of our favorites.

Southern Style Barbecue Sauce

1 cup peach preserves

1 onion, chopped fine

1 tbsp. tomato sauce

1/3 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup cider vinegar

1 tsp. paprika

2 tsp. dry mustard

1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat. Simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. Chill until ready to use.

Racetrack Barbecue Sauce

Serve on Derby Day with Mint Juleps

1 onion, chopped

1 cup ketchup

1/2 cup vinegar

1 cup water

1 tbsp. horseradish

1 tbsp. prepared mustard

1 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1 tbsp. brown sugar

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

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Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil while stirring well. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Chill until ready to use.

Molasses Sauce:

1/2 cup molasses

1/2 cup cider vinegar

1/2 cup onion, finely chopped

1/2 cup mustard

juice of 2 lemons

zest of 2 lemons

1 tsp. Tabasco sauce

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Refrigerate until ready to use.

To the Manor Born Barbecue Sauce

1/2 cup Sherry

1/4 cup ketchup

1 tbsp. brown sugar

1 tbsp. white wine vinegar

1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/3 tsp. chili pepper

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Yuppie Barbecue Sauce

1/2 cup dried apricots

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water to cover

1 green onion, chopped

3 tbsp. vegetable oil

1/2 cup raspberry vinegar

1/4 cup liquid honey

1 tsp. soy sauce

1/4 cup tomato sauce

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/4 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Cover apricots with water in saucepan. Bring to boil, reduce heat. Simmer until tender, approximately 1/2 hour. Cool.

Place apricots and 1/2 cup of the liquid in a blender. Process until smooth. Add other ingredients and pour into saucepan. Bring to boil, reduce heat. Simmer 5 minutes. Chill until ready to use.

Oriental Baked Ribs

2 racks of spareribs

4 cloves garlic, minced

4 tbsp. ketchup

4 tbsp. soy sauce

4 tbsp. hoisin sauce

4 tbsp. dry Sherry

2 tbsp. fresh ginger, grated

2 tbsp. honey

Preheat oven to 300F and cut ribs into individual serving pieces and arrange in shallow baking pan. Bake for 45 minutes.

Combine remaining ingredients and brush spareribs lightly. Bake additional 30 minutes and turn. Brush with more sauce and bake another 30 minutes or until nicely browned.

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Some people like to marinate their ribs overnight first to tenderize and flavorize them before grilling. The marinade is then used to baste the ribs during cooking.

Ginger Marinade

2 green onions, chopped

2 tbsp. sesame seed, toasted

6 tbsp. soy sauce

6 cloves garlic, minced

2 tsp. fresh ginger root, grated

2 tbsp. sugar

2 tbsp. peanut oil

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Pour over ribs.

Tandoori Marinade

1/2 cup plain yogurt

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 tsp. fresh ginger root, grated

2 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. lime juice

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. cumin seeds

1/2 tsp. ground coriander

1/4 tsp. turmeric

1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon

pinch of cloves

Pour lemon and lime juice over ribs, coating well. Combine all other ingredients in blender and process until smooth. Pour over ribs and let stand for four hours.

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California Marinade

1 cup orange juice

1/4 cup liquid honey

1/4 cup vinegar

2 tsp. zest of orange

Combine all ingredients is a bowl, and brush over ribs, coating thoroughly.

Tex Mex Marinade

2 cups Bloody Mary mix

juice of 1 lemon

2 tbsp. horseradish

2 tbsp. Dijon mustard

5 tbsp. mild chilies, chopped fine

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and pour over ribs.

Lemon Baster

1/2 cup lemon juice

1 cup olive oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

1/3 tsp. oregano, crushed

1 tsp. lemon zest, grated

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and baste ribs while cooking.

And, when you can't think of anything else to do with ribs, you can always make soup.

Shortrib Soup

4 lbs beef shortribs, cut in chunks

1 onion, sliced

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4 cups beef stock

3 celery stalks, chopped

3 carrots, chopped

1 leek, chopped

1 cup mushrooms, sliced

2 tbsp. parsley, chopped

1 tbsp. fresh dill, chopped

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Place ribs and onions in soup pot. Add stock to cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 2 hours or until tender, skimming off fat occasionally.

Remove ribs and remove meat from bones, discard bones. Set meat aside. Chill broth until fat rises to surface and skim off. Strain broth, if desired, and return to pot. Return to heat. Add celery, carrots, mushrooms and leeks. Cook for 2 minutes. Add meat. Stir in parsley, dill, salt and pepper. Heat thoroughly and serve with a full-bodied Chardonnay wine.

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Sittin' Loose

Edna Mae, one of my Grama's oldest friends, worked hard on a farm all day, and in the evening you could find her flopped in a comfortable old rocking chair on the front porch. Her favorite expression for her feeling at that time of day was, "When ah sits, ah sits loose!" Now there's a country Inn attitude for you—learn to sit loose.

The important thing about a country Inn is to have lots of favorite places to sit. Each one needs to be different and inviting yet has to make the sitter feel that they are the first to have found this particular spot, with this special outview of the world or that unusual insight into life. If you need lessons on favorite spots around the Inn, find one of the Inn cats. They know the best places and they usually don't mind a little, if quiet, company. We have several cats and lots of places.

You need to find, however, the cat whose personality matches your sittin' mood. Now Nine Patch, for example, our long hair calico cat, is built for comfort not speed. Michael says that from behind she looks like a hairy bowling ball with a tail. A true "Garfield" of cats, you see her ambling slowly around the place, examining every blade of grass like a reincarnated Sixties hippie on bad drugs and blinking sleepily through half-open eyes. Nine Patch looks for comfort and she usually dozes on a cosy quilt-covered chair on the porch out of the wind, in a sunny window seat or behind the orchard wall on a warm stone slab. Her places are warm and cosy and sleep-inducing. If you're in a mellow mood, follow Nine Patch and take a book but only if you don't intend to read it.

Dixie, on the other hand, is a gadabout cat. A fluffy brainless grey and white furball, she's the kind of a cat that starts to purr as soon as she enters the room as if announcing, "OK, everyone, I'm here and I'm looking for love!" She purrs if you just look at her from across the room. Dixie pays no particular mind to comfort. She'll sleep anywhere, anytime, no matter how lumpy it is so long as there are people about or the potential of people about. Quite foolishly, she'll sleep in doorways, busy doorways at that, waiting to make sure she's there to catch any tidbitd of conversation or food, and often getting stepped on. Follow her to the places where people gather to chat: the

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main room by the fireplace, the stone patio, around the kitchen table. Don't be surprised if she follows you to your room at night for some bedside conversation.

Then there's little Hobbes. A small, sleek, short haired cat with grey stripy pyjamas. She's a little skittish, shy and hard to find. Her places are quiet unobtrusive spots to sit and watch the world, without being seen watching. They're philosophical, often elevated and hard to reach places. Least visited, most treasured. The loft in the barn by the window overlooking the courtyard, top of the bookshelf, behind the lattice under the porch. Awkward, I agree. You may have to find your own Hobbes-like places where you can be alert, watchful, and contemplative. Or, Like Edna Mae, you can just "sit loose" in a wicker or rocking chair on the long porch that runs across the front of the Inn.

Picnic fare goes well with good sittin' places. At the Quilt Inn, many guests like to go off by themselves and enjoy space, quiet contemplation, and alfresco dining. We pack picnic lunches. Tuna fish for Nine Patch, Dixie and Hobbes is optional. Grab a cat and go!

Speaking of cats, commedienne Gracie Allen was once asked by a fellow cat-lover, "How do you raise your cats?"

Gracie shrugged, "Two hands under the belly, and lift!"

Angela's Summer Seafood Salad

1/2 lb. shrimp, shelled and deveined (Angela, one of our cooks, is obsessive about deveining and cleaning shrimp. The "vein" is actually the shrimp's intestine).

1/2 lb. scallops, halved

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 onion, chopped fine

2 cups long grain rice

3 cups chicken stock

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 cup roasted red peppers, chopped fine

4 green onions, chopped fine

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1 1/2 cups green peas

Heat oil for 1 minute in saucepan. Add onion and saute for 2 minutes or until slightly soft. Stir in shrimps, rice, add stock, salt and pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, simmer covered for 10 minutes. Stir in roasted red peppers, green onions and peas. Cover, cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes.

Dressing

1/4 cup olive oil

3 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. red wine vinegar

1/4 cup fresh dill, chopped

1 tsp. Dijon mustard

Whisk lemon juice with vinegar and mustard until smooth. Add oil while whisking vigorously. Stir in dill. Transfer shrimp and scallop mixture to large bowl. Pour dressing over, toss well. Chill and serve. Garnish with slices of Spanish or Vidalia onions. Serve with a chilled Chenin Blanc wine.

Pocket Pita Pooches

6 small pita bread

2 cups cold meat, ham or corned beef

1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped

1/2 cup green onion, chopped fine

4 tbsp. mayonnaise

1/2 cup chili sauce

Preheat oven to 450F or heat barbecue to medium. Mix together meat, cheese, eggs and onions. Stir in mayonnaise and chili sauce. Cut off top edge of pita and open by sliding knife between the two layers of bread. Spoon mixture into pitas. Wrap loosely in foil and bake for 15 minutes. Serve with raw carrots sticks.

Pocket Re-Pita Pooches Encore

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6 pita bread

1 ripe avocado

2 ripe tomatoes

6 strips bacon, cooked crisp

bean sprouts

mayonnaise

Cut off top edge of pita bread, open with knife between the two layers of bread. Dice tomato and avocado, crumble bacon, mix together with bean sprouts. Add enough mayonnaise to moisten. Spoon mixture into pita, wrap in foil. Pack in picnic hamper with crisp apples.

Classic Caesar Salad

1 head Romaine lettuce

4 slices bacon, cooked crisp and diced

1 cup croutons

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Dressing

1/3 cup olive oil

1/3 cup red wine vinegar

1 tsp. anchovy paste

1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 tbsp. dry mustard

3 cloves garlic, crushed

2 tbsp. flour

2 cups milk

2 egg yolks

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine mustard, flour, salt and pepper in top of double boiler. Stir in milk. Beat in egg yolks. Simmer over gently boiling water until mixture thickens. Remove from heat. Stir in Worcestershire, Tabasco, garlic, anchovy paste, vinegar and oil. Mix

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well. Chill until ready to serve.

Wash and dry lettuce. Break into pieces. Toss with dressing to coat leaves. Sprinkle with bacon and croutons and cheese. Toss lightly again. Serve with red Zinfandel wine.

Curried Salad

6 cups mixed garden vegetables (try celery slices, carrot strips, cauliflower, green and red peppers, turnip strips).

Steam vegetables for 5 minutes. Drain and cool.

Dressing:

1/2 cup white vinegar

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup salad oil

1/4 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

2 tsp. curry powder

Mix all ingredients well and pour over vegetables. Let chill overnight in refrigerator.

Rice Salad

3 cups cold cooked rice

1/2 cup cooked peas

1/2 cup cooked corn

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup red and green pepper, chopped

1/3 cup olive oil

6 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Toss with olive oil and chill overnight in refrigerator before serving. Garnish with orange sections.

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If you like to plan your meals in advance, this is a good dish to plan for a picnic the day after you serve fresh cooked corn, peas or rice for dinner.

Chicken Salad

3 lbs. boneless chicken, cut in cubes

1 1/2 cups pecan halves

1 cup celery, diced

1 1/2 cup sour cream (why does a container of sour cream have an expiry date?)

1 1/2 cup mayonnaise

3 cups water

1 chicken bouillon cube

1 lb. seedless green grapes

1 tsp. fresh dill

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350F and place chicken in shallow pan. Bring water to a boil, add bouillon cube. Bring to boil. Pour over chicken to cover. Cover and bake 30 minutes or until cooked thoroughly. Chill in liquid, then drain and discard liquid.

Shred chicken into pieces in large bowl. Add grapes, pecans, celery and dill. Toss well. Mix sour cream and mayonnaise in mixing bowl. Toss with chicken mixture. Season to taste. Cover and chill before serving. Serve on a bed of lettuce, garnish with cherry tomatoes cut in half. Serve with white Vouvray wine.

Northern California Salad

1 head Romaine lettuce

alfalfa sprouts

1 orange, peeled and sectioned

4 green onions, chopped

1/2 green olives with pimiento, sliced

2 cups cauliflower florets

Dressing

1/2 cup olive oil

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1/2 cup wine vinegar

zest of 1 orange

1/4 cup orange juice

1 tsp. fresh basil

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

salt

Combine all ingredients and blend well. Pour over cauliflower, onions, and olives and marinate 4 hours. Before serving, toss with lettuce, sprouts and orange sections. Serve with white Zinfandel wine.

Southern California Salad

1/2 head Romaine lettuce

1/2 head Iceberg lettuce

1/2 lb. spinach

1 tin Mandarin oranges, drained

1/2 cup toasted almond slivers

Wash and dry lettuce. Drain oranges. Toast almonds. Mix in bowl and set aside.

Dressing

1/2 cup salad oil

1/4 cup wine vinegar

1/4 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

dash of Tabasco sauce

1 tbsp. parsley

Combine all ingredients and blend well. Chill until serving. Just before serving toss greens, oranges and almonds with dressing. Serve with chilled white Zinfandel wine.

Practically Perfect Potato Salad

6 to 10 potatoes, boiled, cooled and cut in chunks

3 hard boiled eggs, chopped

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1/2 lb. salami, ham, or other favorite deli meat, cut in chunks

3 dill pickles, chopped

1 onion, chopped

2 apples, cored and chopped

3 tbsp. mayonnaise

3 tbsp. red wine vinegar

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

paprika

Mix potatoes, pickles, eggs, apple and onion in a large bowl. Fry salami lightly and drain off excess fat, cool. Stir salami, mayonnaise and seasoning into potato mixture. Chill for 2 hours before serving. Garnish with slivered red and green sweet peppers. Serve with a robust Bordeaux wine.

Lo-Cal Potato Salad

3 lbs. red potatoes

4 green onions, sliced thin

1 red onion, sliced thin

1/2 cup black olives, drained

salt and pepper to taste

Scrub potatoes, cut into chunks, cook until tender. Drain well. Combine with green onions, red onions and olives. Set aside.

Dressing

2 cups milk

3 egg yolks

3 tbsp. vinegar

1 tsp. salt

2 tsp. dry mustard

2 tbsp. brown sugar

3 tbsp. butter

2 tbsp. all purpose flour

1 tsp. horseradish

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1 tbsp. Dijon mustard

pinch cayenne pepper

Combine salt, mustard, sugar, flour and cayenne in top of double boiler. Add milk and egg yolk. Stir until smooth. Cook over boiling water, or medium heat, until thickened. Stir in butter and vinegar. Chill. Stir horseradish and mustard into dressing. Season to taste. Toss over potato mixture, coating thoroughly. Serve chilled. Garnish with cucumber slices.

Asparagus Salad

1 lb. asparagus, steamed until tender, chilled

1 head lettuce, broken in pieces

2 pimientos, diced

1 green onion, chopped

1/4 cup sesame seeds, toasted

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/4 tsp. Italian herb seasoning

2 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. salad oil

Combine asparagus, lettuce, pimientos, onion ande sesame seeds in salad bowl. Combine pepper, seasoning, lemon juice and oil in shaker and mix well. Toss with greens. Serve immediately.

Crab Salad

1 head Boston lettuce

1 lb. fresh crabmeat

juice of 1/2 lemon

zest of 1/2 lemon

2 stalks celery, diced fine

1/2 cup mayonnaise

2 tbsp. fresh chives, chopped

lemon wedges for garnish

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Gently mix together crabmeat, lemon juice and zest, celery, mayonnaise and chives. Make a bed of lettuce leaves on 4 individual plates. Spoon crab mixture onto lettuce. Garnish with lemon wedges. Serve with chilled white Zinfandel wine.

Memories of Tuscany Salad

2 cups spiral pasta, cooked

1/2 cup salami, julienne cut

1/2 cup pepperoni, cut in small cubes

1 cup cucumber, chopped coarsely

3/4 cup green pepper, chopped coarsely

1/3 cup red onion, sliced thin

2 ripe tomatoes, chopped

1/2 cup Provolone cheese, cubed

1/3 cup black or green olives, sliced

1 tsp. fresh parsely, chopped

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and chill. When ready to serve, toss with Italian-style salad dressing.

Crazy Quilt Fruit Salad

4 seedless oranges, sectioned

1/2 fresh pineapple, diced

2 sweet apples, cored and diced

1 banana, sliced

1 Kiwi fruit, sliced

1 cup fresh strawberries, halved

1/2 pint whipping cream

1 oz. Cointreau or Grand Marnier

1/2 pint mayonnaise

1 head Boston lettuce

Gently mix all fruit together. Whip cream. Mix liqueur into mayonnaise and then

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gently fold into whipped cream. Add cream mixture to fruit.

Arrange lettuce on 4 individual salad plates. Spoon fruit onto lettuce and serve.

Sunny Afternoon Salad

4 sweet red grapefruit

3 medium avocado

8 cups mixed lettuce greens, shredded

1/2 cup olive oil

3/4 cup white wine vinegar

1/4 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Peel grapefruit, section and remove seeds, reserving juice. Peel and slice avocado. Combine juice grapefruit and avacado in bowl. Toss lightly. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. Drain and toss with lettuce in serving bowl.

Combine olive oil, vinegar, salt and pepper in jar. Shake vigorously. Toss over salad. Serve immediately.

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Tomatoware Tomatofare

I've been haunting antique shows shops and flea markets for years. Which is why the Inn is filled with an eclectic mix of antique furniture and bizarre collections. I'm always on the lookout for that fabulous $10 unrecognized treasure. Happily, I've found a couple. Like a gambler convinced a big win is at hand, I'm hooked on bargain hunting. I've also outsmarted myself on occasion, by being part-smart about antiques. *Caveat emptor*. Antique dealers are seldom as dumb as we would like to think they are. If something is that cheap, it's probably a fake. You're the only one who doesn't know it.

The first time I remember seeing "tomatoware", I laughed at the idea of making dishes, teapots, creams and sugars, salts and peppers, and so forth, to look like something so mundane as a tomato. "Who would buy that?" I said to Michael and we scoffed. "I would never buy anything that gaudy!" I said smugly. Well, as my wise old Grandma used to say, "Never say 'never', you just never know!" Check out the front cover of this book. Yes, that's our Chatham cupboard, circa 1900, and part of our tomatoware collection, circa 1907. The Chatham was a contemporary of the Hoosier cupboard and it stands in the Summer kitchen that was converted into an informal family dining room. You see, we kept seeing it everywhere. We kept laughing at it. Until we finally had to buy some because it was, well, bizarre. And after all, it was cheap. That was a few hundred dollars ago!

Once we were committed to ownership, we did some research. We found out there are several nationalities of tomatoware. Surprisingly, the Italians don't make tomatoware—too busy cooking with the original fruit, I suppose. The most expensive is Bayreuth, made of fine china in Germany. Then there is cheap and cheerful American pottery tomatoware. And finally there is knockoff Japanese pottery. Of course, now that we specialize, we only collect the Occupied Japan tomatoware!

At least I stopped laughing at it. In fact, I think it's started to laugh at me. Note the teapot on the cover. And I learned a whole lot more about antiques in the process. The stuff has grown on me. Every year we have a tomato weekend to celebrate the

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lowly vegetable, or fruit to be more exact. We set a completely green and red table with all our tomatoware plates and cups and saucers and serving dishes. Here are some of our favorite tomatofare recipes that we serve on Tomato Weekend at The Quilt Inn.

Cool Tomato Soup

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 onion, chopped

3 cups tomatoes, peeled and seeded

1 cup chicken stock

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 cup plain yogurt

2 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

2 tbsp. fresh basil, chopped

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Heat oil over medium heat in saucepan. Cook onion for 3–4 minutes or until soft. Add tomatoes and cook for 2 minutes. Pour in stock, bring to boil over high heat. Lower heat and simmer, covered for 10 minutes or until tomatoes are tender. Let cool.

In blender, process tomato mixture until smooth. Add lemon juice. Whisk yogurt in mixing bowl until smooth, whisk into tomato mixture. Whisk in parsley, basil, salt and pepper. Serve chilled, garnish with a swirl of yogurt.

Fried Red Tomatoes

3 ripe tomatoes

1/3 cup olive oil

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 tbsp. fresh chopped thyme

1/4 tsp. hot pepper flakes

2 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 tsp. salt

Core tomatoes and cut into 1/2 inch slices. Dry with paper towel. Heat oil over

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low heat in skillet. Cook garlic, thyme and pepper flakes for 2 minutes or until fragrant. Cook tomatoes, one layer at a time, for 3 to 5 minutes per side or until they just start to soften. Drain with slotted spoon. Serve with parsley garnish.

Tomato Pepper Pasta

3 sweet red peppers

4 red potatoes

4 large ripe tomatoes

1/4 cup black olives, pitted

1/4 cup sun-dried tomatoes, sliced

1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped

1 lb. pasta noodles

1 small head radicchio, shredded

Halve the peppers, remove the seeds and membranes. Place in single layer on baking sheet, skin side up. Broil until slightly blackened. Let cool, peel, cut into chunks.

Cook potatoes until tender. Let cool, cut into chunks. Core tomatoes, cut into chunks. Combine tomatoes, peppers, potatoes, olives, sun-dried tomatoes and basil in large mixing bowl.

Dressing:

1/2 cup olive oil

2 tbsp. red wine vinegar

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tsp. anchovy paste

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. hot pepper flakes

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Whisk together oil, vinegar, garlic, anchovy paste, salt, pepper flakes and pepper. Pour over tomato mixture.

Cook pasta until tender. Drain well, toss immediately with tomato mixture. Serve warm on a bed of shredded radicchio, with a Gewurtraminer wine.

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Did you know that tomatoes were thought to be poisonous until Ben Franklin ate one to disprove the theory? I presume while flying the kite in the thunderstorm, he had forgotten to pack a lunch, reached down for the nearest edible, and zap!

Classico Tomato Salad

4 ripe tomatoes

1 can artichoke hearts

1 cup Mozzarella cheese, cubed

1/2 sweet green pepper, diced

1 green onion, chopped

1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped coarsely

1/3 cup black olives, chopped

1/3 cup lemon juice

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Core tomatoes, chop into chunks. Drain artichokes, quarter. Combine tomatoes, artichoke hearts, mozzarella, peppers, basil, olives and onion. Drizzle with oil and lemon juice and toss. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with chilled white Zinfandel wine.

Oriental Tomato Salad

3 large ripe tomatoes

1 cucumber

1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 cup fresh mint, chopped

1/2 cup fresh coriander, chopped

3 green onions, chopped

1 Spanish onion, sliced thin

Core tomatoes, cut into slices. Score cucumber lengthwise with fork, slice thinly. Combine parsley, coriander, mint and green onions.

In serving bowl, layer Spanish onions, cucumber and tomatoes, sprinkling parsley mixture between layers.

Dressing

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3 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. soy sauce

1 tbsp. sugar

1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 cup vegetable oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

dash hot pepper flakes

Whisk together lemon juice, soya sauce, sugar and salt until sugar is dissolved. Whisk in oil, garlic and pepper flakes. Pour over salad, set aside for 30 minutes at room temperature to marinate. Chill before serving.

Stuffed Tomatoes

Preheat oven to 400F and lightly grease a baking sheet.

Slice of top quarter of 6 large meaty tomatoes. Scoop out insides being careful not to cut through skin. Save scrapings from 3 tomatoes in mixing bowl. Turn tomatoes upside down on paper towel to drain.

Stuffing:

1 lb. fresh spinach, washed and chopped

6 slices bacon, chopped into pieces

1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced

3 green onions, chopped fine

3 tbsp. fine breadcrumbs

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

6 tsp. butter

Cook bacon until crisp in small skillet. Remove from skillet and place on paper towels to drain. Pour excess fat from skillet, leaving enough to saute green onions and mushrooms until golden brown. Using slotted spoon, remove from pan and add to tomato pulp in mixing bowl.

Steam spinach until it is wilted. Drain and press out as much moisture as possible. Chop coarsely and add to tomato pulp mixture. Stir 2 tablespoons of

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breadcrumbs into mixture. Toss lightly with salt and pepper.

Pat dry the insides of the tomato shells. Spoon spinach mixture into each tomato and sprinkle with remaining breadcrumbs. Top each with teaspoon of butter.

Place tomatoes on baking sheet with tops. Bake for 25 minutes or until tomatoes are cooked but still firm. Replace tomato tops before serving.

For alternative stuffing, to the tomato pulp add

1 1/2 whole corn kernels

1/3 cup green onions, chopped fine

1/3 cup sweet green pepper, chopped fine

4 tbsp. fresh basil, chopped

1 Jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped fine

2 tbsp. fresh coriander, chopped

1/2 cup sharp old cheese, crumbled

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Toss all ingredients together lightly until well mixed. Fill tomato shells. Sprinkle each tomato with yellow cornmeal and dot with butter. Bake as above.

Mama Lentini's Infamous Pasta Sauce

4 large ripe plum tomatoes

3 tbsp. unsalted butter

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/3 cup chicken stock

1/4 cup dry white wine

4 tsp. fresh basil, chopped fine

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Peel, seed and chop tomatoes. Melt 1 tablespoon butter over medium heat, cook garlic until soft. Pour in stock and wine, simmer uncovered 3 to 5 minutes or until reduced by half. Add tomatoes, basil, and remaining butter. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes or until reduced by half. Add tomatoes, basil and remaining butter. Cook for 2 to 3

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minutes, stirring constantly, until flavors are blended. Add salt and pepper. Serve tossed over angel's hair pasta, garnish with Parmesan cheese. Serve with red Merlot wine.

Chili Sauce

14 cups ripe tomatoes, peeled and chopped
4 cups peeled cucumber, chopped
3 cups onions, chopped
2 tbsp. pickling spice
3 cups sugar
2 cups cider vinegar
2 tsp. celery seed
1/2 tsp. turmeric
1/2 tsp. curry powder
2 tbsp. all purpose flour
4 cups water

Boil water and combine with cucumbers, onions and salt. Let stand 1 hour.

Mix tomatoes, sugar, 1 cup of vinegar, celery seed, turmeric, and curry powder in saucepan. Bring to boil, stirring often. Reduce heat, simmer for 30 minutes while stirring.

Drain cucumber mixture, rinse well with cold water and drain. Add tomato mixture. Simmer for 2 hours or until vegetables are tender and mixture reduces to 11 cups.

Combine flour with remaining vinegar, stir into sauce. Cook 5 to 10 minutes longer bringing to boil and thickening. Pour into sterilized jars. Cover with new lids and seal.

The famous French chef, Brillat-Savarin, once said, "Poultry is for the cook what canvas is for the painter." That may be true, but have you ever tried to paint a chicken?

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Bella Nocce Tomato and Chicken Ecstasy

6 chicken breasts

1/3 cup olive oil

3 tbsp. lime juice

1 tbsp. fresh rosemary

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Remove skin and fat from chicken. Place in shallow glass dish. Combine oil, lime juice, rosemary and pepper, pour over chicken. Cover and marinate for 30 minutes at room temperature or overnight in refrigerator.

Drain chicken and pat dry. Broil or barbecue until chicken is no longer pink inside, basting with marinade.

Serve chicken with Tomato Ecstasy, garnish with parsley. Serve with white Chardonnay wine.

Tomato Ecstasy

5 ripe tomatoes

6 cloves garlic unpeeled

4 anchovy fillets, chopped fine

1 tbsp. fresh thyme

dash hot pepper flakes

2 tbsp. olive oil

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Place tomatoes and garlic in shallow glass baking dish. Scatter anchovies, thyme and pepper flakes on top. Drizzle with olive oil. Bake in 400F oven for 40 to 45 minutes or until tomatoes are soft and garlic is tender. Let cool. Peel, halve, and seed tomatoes. Peel garlic.

Puree tomatoes and garlic until smooth. Transfer puree to saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, for 15 minutes or until thickened and reduced by 1/3 **a**. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve over chicken.

Classic Thick Tomato sauce

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1/4 cup olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

1 cup celery, diced

10 lbs. plum tomatoes, peeled

2 potatoes

2 carrots, peeled

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. dried oregano

2 large sprigs fresh basil

2 large sprigs fresh parsley

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Heat oil over medium heat in large saucepan, cook onion and celery until soft, about 6 minutes. In blender, finely chop tomatoes in batches. Add tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, salt, oregano, basil, and parsley to saucepan. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for three hours or until reduced by **a** and sauce is thick. Remove herb sprigs and discard. Remove potatoes and carrots, mash, and return to sauce to add thickening.

Tomato Bruschetta

15 ripe plum tomatoes

2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped

6 cloves garlic, minced

6 cloves garlic, slivered

1/4 cup green onions, chopped fine

1 tsp. lemon juice

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Thick cut coarse bread.

Chop tomatoes and toss in bowl with garlic and green onions and basil. Add lemon juice, salt and pepper and 1/3 cup olive oil. Satue slivered garlic in 1/3 cup olive oil until golden brown. Discard garlic and reserve oil.

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Toast bread and brush with garlic-flavored oil. Spoon tomato mixture over bread, and serve.

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What Doth Hamlet Read....

Words, Words, Words

There's a pond beyond the barn. I suppose it was originally used for watering cattle on the farmstead. Now it's just a bucolic landing field for migrant ducks and geese. It's late Summer so the birds are gregarious and approachable, within reason. Every evening Geoffie and I take leftover bread to the haggle of ducks at the pond. I don't know what the collective noun for ducks is. I know flock of geese, flock of sheep, herd of cattle. There's probably a proper name for ducks by the dozen. (It's called "dinner" in France!) In the absence of knowledge I invented a *haggle* of ducks. If you've ever fed ducks in a park in the city, you'll know why it's so descriptive. After all, aren't collective nouns *supposed* to be descriptive? Shouldn't the wordsound evoke the picture and be a metaphor for the group consciousness or character of the species in question?

Some are, some aren't.

A *pride* of lions sounds good. It might be a little anthropomorphic but it's a good visual. So is a *swarm* of locusts (even if it does give you yukkie *frissons*). I don't think *barrel* of monkeys is the correct, albeit familiar, term.

I've never much liked litter of kittens. I prefer a *tumble* of kittens. That's the picture. How about a *scurry* of mice. Or a *frisk* of colts? It makes me see them cavort and kick up their heels. A *thundering* of horses. A *circus* of squirrels.

Whoever thought up some of these collective nouns wasn't using their imagination. Why a school of fish? A *platoon* of minnows wheeling in mysterious and synchronous formation would be much more appropriate. So would a *hurdle* of salmon, leaping over obstacles to mate and die. Whenever I hear the term *pack* of wolves, I think "six-pack" and it seems too orderly for such independent creatures. I can't help picture them strung together with pulltabs. Sled-dogs maybe. A pod of peas makes some sort of vegetative sense. It implies a husk-ness. But I don't know what a *pod* of whales would be like. (We don't have any whales, so I suppose I have to leave that one

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alone.) But we shouldn't use the same word twice. A flock of sheep behaves differently than a flock of birds.

There's a certain magic to naming things. Mark Twain wrote an amusing short story about Adam and Eve working their way around Eden naming all the creatures. As I recall, Eve did most of the naming, bagging all the good names, much to the irritation of Adam. Quite so.

It seems mightily appropriate that we are called the race of humans, of course. It's unquestionably a relay race. See the unique upright bipedal stance, arms with opposable thumbs outstretched clutching a baton of tools to be passed from one runner to another in the forward thrust of evolution.

Someone passed me a pen.

I will pass on a computer.

Our Garden of Earthly Delights

A Spike of Roast Asparagus

1 lb. asparagus

2 tbsp. olive oil

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

1 tbsp. lemon juice

Trim 1 inch off bottom of asparagus. Line baking sheet with aluminium foil. Arrange asparagus on pan in single layer. Preheat oven to 425F. Drizzle asparagus with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake 15 minutes. Drizzle with lemon juice. Serve hot.

A Veneration of Vegetables Cheesecake

1 bunch of asparagus or broccoli, trimmed, cut into 1 inch pieces

6 large eggs

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup butter, melted

3 cups cottage cheese

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2 cups grated cheddar cheese

1/4 cup parmesan cheese

1/4 cup dill

3 green onions, chopped

1 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. pepper

Steam asparagus or broccoli about 6 minutes. Drain. Combine eggs with flour, butter, cheeses. Stir in asparagus or broccoli, then dill, green onions, salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 350F. Butter 9"x13" baking dish. Pour in mixture. Bake 50 to 60 minutes.

A Cornucopia of Fall Vegetables

8 potatoes, quartered

2 onions, cut into wedges

6 cloves garlic, crushed

1/4 cup olive oil

1/4 tsp. thyme

1/4 tsp. rosemary

1 medium butternut squash, peeled, cut into 3/4 inch cubes

1 red pepper, cut into 3/4 inch chunks

chopped fresh parsley to garnish

Preheat oven to 375F. In roasting pan, toss potatoes, onions and garlic with 3 tablespoons olive oil. Sprinkle with thyme and rosemary. Roast uncovered 35 minutes, turning once. Toss squash and pepper with remaining oil. Add to pan. Continue roasting 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. To serve, garnish with parsley.

Hamlet's Acorn Squash Mushroom Puree

5 acorn squash

1/3 cup butter, melted

2 tbsp. brown sugar

1/2 tsp. salt

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1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

1/3 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/4 cup butter

1/2 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced

ground nutmeg

Cut squash in half crosswise. Remove seeds. Place squash cut side down on lightly greased baking sheet. Bake at 375F for 45 minutes. Scoop out pulp, leaving a 1/4 inch shell on six halves. Discard remaining shells.

Blend pulp, melted butter, brown sugar, salt, nutmeg and pepper until smooth. Melt 1/4 cup butter in skillet. Add mushrooms. Saute over low heat 5 to 8 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain. Combine mushrooms and squash mixture. Spoon into reserved shells. Place on baking sheet. Sprinkle with nutmeg. Bake at 350F for 15 minutes.

A Gaggle of Green Beans

1 lb. fresh green beans

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 large onion, chopped coarsely

5 cloves garlic, chopped

4 large tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped

1/2 cup dry white wine

1/2 cup pitted olives

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1/2 tbsp. fresh ground pepper

Steam green beans until crisp tender (about 5 minutes). Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic. Saute for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and wine. Cook for 20 minutes. Add olives and beans and heat through. Sprinkle with lemon juice and pepper.

A Blush of Baked Beets

2 lbs. beets

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3 tbsp. butter

2 tsp. raspberry vinegar

grated zest of 1 orange

1 tsp. caraway seeds

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

chives to garnish

Preheat oven to 350F. Trim beets, rinse, do not peel. Place beets in baking dish. Fill pan with 1/4 inch water, cover with aluminium foil. Bake 1 hour. Remove foil. Bake 30 minutes. Peel beets and slice into 1/4 inch thick rounds. Set aside.

Melt butter in skillet over low heat. Add beets. Sprinkle with vinegar, orange zest, caraway seeds, salt and pepper. Cook, tossing gently, 3 to 4 minutes. To serve, sprinkle with chives.

A Herd of Thundering Carrots

5 carrots, peeled and sliced ¼ inch thick

2 tsp. sugar

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

4 tbsp. butter

2 tbsp. orange juice

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

10 dried apricots, slivered

1/3 cup sliced almonds, toasted

Steam carrots for 12 minutes. Stir sugar and cinnamon together until well mixed. Set aside. Melt butter in skillet. Stir in carrots, orange juice, sprinkle with sugar cinnamon mixture. Cook over medium heat until carrots are glazed and sauce is slightly thickened. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in apricots and almonds. Cook 3 minutes.

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Hunka Hunka Burning Love

We had a special guest drop by the other day. Bill Parker was passing through town and needing a place to stay, was recommended to The Quilt Inn by Horace the pump jockey down at the Service Station across from the Cheese Shoppe. We're always delighted to learn new and interesting things from our visitors but Bill's comments on sitting down to one of our home-cooked meals, set us back a bit.

"Not very spicy," he said, adding more pepper from the pepper mill. "Do you have any Tabasco Sauce or better yet, Sauce From Hell?" The latter, I learned, is a local specialty in his town. It's prime ingredient is chiles and of course this led to a conversation about these fiery little devils.

Bill travels out of his native State a great deal and was well prepared for the relatively bland tastebuds of "foreigners". He had some Habenero peppers in his carry bag which he generously offered to share with me. One taste and the heat was so intense I nearly fainted. With a gasp, I asked Michael for three things. "Water! 911! Last rites!"

Most people would avoid such incendiary peppers. Not Bill and his asbestos-lined fellow gastronomes. Some crave the wave. They crave the heat.

Once I had recovered, Bill explained that a true pepper fiend wouldn't even flinch at the ordinary Jalapeno, considering it child's play.

"Myself, I particularly like the Scotch Bonnet," said Bill, a native of Louisiana where his mother had introduced him to the taste of spicy food. I'm rather fond of an occasional drink,and the image of a "Scotch bonnet" produced a vision of Bushmill's neat in a glass with a paper hat on it. It turns out that the Scotch Bonnet is a pepper, a close cousin to the Habanero, related in the same way as the Hatfields and the McCoys, who incidentally at this very time were having a war of their own in my stomach. These two peppers are kings of the Scoville Scale, a system that rates peppers based on capsaicin content, the compound that makes chiles hot.

At the bottom of the Scoville is the green bell pepper, with 0 Scoville Heat Units, or "H.U." The Jalapeno, Bill said, smokes in around 2500 to 5000 H.U.'s. The

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Habenero and Scotch Bonnet fall into the 100,000 to 300,000 H.U. range. Other hot chiles include the Thai, at 50,000 to 100,000 H.U., and the Pequin, Cayenne, and Tabasco peppers at 30,000 to 50,000 H.U., and the Arbol, 15,000 to 30,000 H.U.

So, if you want to take the chile plunge, what do you do with them? Here's what Bill suggests. Chiles will grow mould in a few short days. Store them in a dry place for up to a week, or preserve them by roasting. Cover with a bit of olive oil.

A warning: handle the exotic chiles with care. Some can blister the skin, so wear rubber gloves and do not touch your eyes with hands still contaminated.

Insidentally, chile peppers have less nutritional value than sweet peppers but still contain vitamins A,C and E. Roast them, and vitamin levels decrease.

Roast Chiles If You Dare

Cut a small slit in the chile close to the end to let the steam escape. Place the chile on a baking sheet directly under the broiler and turn with tongs. Or, bake them in a 375F oven for 30 minutes. When the chile darkens and blisters, remove from heat and place in a plastic bag or damp paper towels for 10 or 15 minutes. Remove from bag and peel away skin. Chilies can be frozen in freezer bags for convenient use.

When do you use chiles and where? "Anytime, anyplace," Bill informed us. "Anything you make or eat can be spiced up with a liberal, or conservative, sprinkling of fresh or roasted chiles."

After a breakfast of spicy Heuvos Rancheros, Bill drove away, leaving us to ponder this new information and whether or not our guests could handle the heat. But as my Grandma would say, "If you can't handle the heat, get out of the kitchen!"

Or was that someone else? Never mind.

Heuvos Rancheros

2 eggs

2 tbsp. onion, chopped

2 tbsp. red pepper, chopped

2 tbsp. cooked sausage, sliced thin

2 tsp. butter

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2 tbsp. salsa

l soft flour tortilla (recipe follows)

salt and pepper to taste

Saute onion, red pepper and sausage in butter in small frying pan until tender. Beat eggs, salt and pepper together. Pour over sausage mixture. Cook on medium heat; turn once and cook other side.

To serve: spread salsa on warmed tortilla, top with cooked egg mixture and roll.

Tortilla

4 cups flour

1 tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. baking powder

1 1/2 tsp. salt

warm water

Combine dry ingredients in mixing bowl with olive oil. Mix with hands. Pour in water gradually until you can gather dough into ball. Knead for 3 to 5 minutes. (Rub hands with olive oil to keep outside of dough from drying out.)

Heat griddle or skillet to medium. Cut dough into 20 portions. Flatten with hands until 6 inches in diameter. Cook on griddle or skillet until slightly puffed and browned. Turn over and cook other side. Do not overcook. Remove and cool slightly. If not using immediately, store in air–tight container.

Pasta Peppers Please

1 sweet red pepper, roasted, peeled and seeded

1 clove garlic, chopped

1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 tbsp. ground almonds

1 tbsp. olive oil

1 tbsp. cream cheese

dash Tabasco sauce

salt and pepper to taste

1/2 lb. cooked pasta

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fresh basil

In blender or food processor, puree garlic. Blend in red pepper, half the cheese, the almonds, oils, cream cheese and hot pepper sauce. Season with salt and pepper. Toss with pasta. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan cheese. Garnish with basil and serve with white Zinfandel wine.

Harvest Vegetables With Chili

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

1 large red onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 zucchini, cubed

2 sweet red or yellow peppers, cubed

1 large eggplant, cubed

1 tsp. chopped hot pepper

4 tsp. chili powder

1 tsp. cumin

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. oregano

3 cups chopped tomatoes

2 1/2 cups water or chicken stock

1 1/2 cups green lentils

2 tbsp. lemon juice

In large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. cook onion and garlic, stirring occasionally, for 4 minutes or until soft. Add zucchini, sweet peppers, eggplant and hot pepper. Cook, stirring for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes, water and lentils. Bring to boil. Reduce to low heat and cook for 40 to 45 minutes or until lentils are tender. For thicker chili, uncover and cook to desired consistency. Stir in lemon juice and salt to taste. Serve with crusty bread or cornbread.

From the Believe It Or Else file: a Carolina paint company is producing a line of marine paints from Bill's beloved Jalapeno peppers that keeps barnacles off boat

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bottoms without polluting harbors. If barnacles won't touch the stuff...

And, apparently they're working with the even hotter Habaneros. I'm glad to see a non-chemical environmental answer to the barnacle problem. Now if you told me they were making a paint remover...!

Fresh Salsa

1 1/2 cups diced, seeded and peeled tomatoes

1/4 cup chopped red onion

1/4 cup chopped sweet yellow pepper

2 tbsp. chopped celery

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 tbsp. red wine or cider vinegar

1 1/2 tsp. fresh hot pepper

1/4 cup chopped parsley

Combine tomatoes, onion, yellow pepper, celery, oil, vinegar, and hot pepper. Cover and let stand for 20 minutes for flavors to blend. Stir in parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste and more hot pepper if desired. Serve as a condiment on hamburgers, with grilled chicken, tacos or omelettes.

Hot Pepper Salsa Jalapeno

4 cups chopped peeled tomatoes

1 cup chopped sweet red peppers

1 cup chopped sweet green peppers

1 cup hot Jalapeno peppers

1 cup chopped onion

1/3 cup sugar

1 clove garlic, minced

1 tsp. salt

1 1/2 cups cider vinegar

In large saucepan, combine tomatoes, sweet peppers, hot peppers, onion,

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sugar, garlic and salt. Pour in vinegar. Bring to boil and reduce to low heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 45 minutes or until thickened slightly. Let cool. Refrigerate for up to one month. Serve as a condiment.

Salsa and Cheese

2 cups medium cheddar cheese, grated

8 oz. cream cheese

1 tbsp. Dijon mustard

1/2 tsp. Tabasco sauce

1 cup crushed nachos

Preheat oven to 400F and grease baking sheet.

Cream together cheddar and cream cheese, mustard, pepper and Tabasco sauce. Shape into ½ inch thick rounds (makes 8 to 10). Press into nacho crumbs until well coated. Place on greased baking sheet. Set aside. (May be made ahead and refrigerated).

Salsa:

6 ripe tomatoes

1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 cup fresh coriander, chopped

4 green onions, chopped

2 Jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 tsp. salt

Core, seed and dice tomatoes. Drain well in sieve. Combine tomatoes, parsley, coriander, onions, peppers, garlic, and salt. Transfer mixture to serving bowl or individual plates with slotted spoon.

Before serving, bake cheese round for 3 to 5 minutes or until cheese is warm but not too runny. Remove from baking sheet with spatula and serve on top of salsa. Serve with crusty bread and Sauvignon Blanc wine.

Creamy Salsa Dip

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1 cup tomatoes, seeded and chopped

1/4 onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, crushed

1 tsp. chili powder

1 cup cream cheese

2 tbsp. mayonnaise

dash salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Stir in remaining ingredients. Cover and chill. Serve with crudBlend cream cheese and mayonnaise. ities (those are badly behaved vegetables) and nachos.

Seafood Salsa

1/2 lb. bay scallops

1/2 lb. crabmeat, flaked

1/2 cup fresh lime juice

1 tsp. grated tangerine rind

2/3 cup tangerine, chopped

1/2 cup tomato, seeded and chopped

2 tbsp. purple onion, finely chopped

1 tbsp. cilantro (parsley), chopped

1 tbsp. fresh jalapeno pepper, minced

1/3 tsp. salt

Cook scallops in skillet over medium heat for 3 minutes or until done. Drain. Combine scallops and crabmeat, lime juice and tangerine rind. Cover and chill 1 hour.

Combine chopped tangerine, tomato, onion, cilantro, jalapeno and salt. Cover and chill 1 hour.

To serve, combine scallop and tangerine mixtures in serving bowl. Serve with baked tortillas or nachos..

Hot and Sweet Pepper Relish

4 cups prepared sweet peppers (3 green, 3 red, and 5 Jalapeno)

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3/4 cup apple cider vinegar

1 box fruit pectin crystals

Halve peppers, discard seeds, chop fine. Measure 4 cups, including juice, into saucepan. Add vinegar. Mix fruit pectin crystals with 1/4 cup sugar. Blend well.

Slowly add pectin mixture to peppers in saucepan. Cook over high heat, stirring constantly until mixture comes to a boil. Stir in remaining sugar. Return to boil while stirring and stir for 1 minute. Remove from heat. Skim off foam with a spoon. Pour into sterilized jars, cover with new lids or paraffin wax. Store opened relish in refrigerator.

Green Chile Stew With Pork

3 lbs. boneless pork, cubed

3 tbsp. peanut oil

3 stalks celery, chopped

2 medium tomatoes, diced

7 green chiles, roasted, peeled and chopped

4 cloves garlic, crushed

chicken stock

salt to taste

Brown pork in oil in small batches. Place seared meat in large ovenproof (fireproof!) casserole. Add celery, tomatoes, chiles and garlic. Deglaze frying pan with chicken stock and add to pot. Cover ingredients with stock. Cover and simmer until stew is thick and the meat is tender, about 1 1/2 hours. Add salt to taste.

Add a bit of Hot Pepper Salsa Jalapeno for more heat, if you dare. Serve with potatoes, or cornbread.

Chile Slaw for the Brave

1 each sweet red, green, orange and yellow pepper

1 red onion

Core, seed and slice all peppers in a salad bowl. Peel and cut onion into slices, separate rings. Toss together and set aside.

Dressing

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1 Jalapeno pepper, cored, seeded and minced

2 tbsp. tarragon vinegar

1 tbsp. Dijon mustard

2 tsp. sugar

1/4 cup olive oil

2 tbsp. sesame oil

1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

1 tbsp. caraway seeds, toasted

3 tsp. lemon or lime zest, grated

Combine all ingredients, except oils, zest and caraway seeds, in mixing bowl. Slowly pour in oils while whisking briskly, until dressing is smooth and thick. Toss with peppers. Sprinkle with caraway seeds and zest until well coated. Cover and chill for 2 hours before serving.

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Who Will Pick Up My Stitches When I'm Gone?

We went to a funeral today. A woman in the Quilt Guild passed away from cancer. She left a grief-stricken husband and a bereft teenage daughter. She had been an active quilter for many years and an important member of the Guild. Her death was so sudden it caught everyone by surprise, including her, I think. Her last quilt was still in the frame in a corner of the living room. Where the quilt extended past the area held by the frame, there were many lengths of thread hanging loose, ready to be rethreaded and continued along the pencilled quilt lines. I was filled with eerie tingles as I looked at the now-unfinished quilt. Surely Carol would return at any time now and sit down at the frame.

Carol's daughter left the frame standing and as the Guild members came by the house, she welcomed them in and softly asked each of us if we would put a few stitches in her Mom's last quilt. Each of us in turn picked up Carol's needles and thread and carefully matched our stitches to hers. It felt somehow like an intrusion into somebody else's work and at the same time felt like a connection, a final communion with Carol.

Carol's daughter, a modern teenager, had never bothered to learn how to quilt. She didn't need to. Her mother would make her anything she wanted. Today, however, she asked us to show her how and she sat with us for a long time struggling with the unfamiliar stitching technique. She is determined now to finish her mother's quilt. The members offered to help. We are going to take over a full size quilt frame next week and put Carol's quilt in it. That will allow several women to sit and quilt at the same time, instead of just one. Quilting should be a communal activity. Every Tuesday evening, whoever is available will go over and quilt with her. There is a teenage daughter who needs to find her mother, and we, her mother's friends, will sit by her as she does so.

When I think about picking up the stitches that Carol left unsown, I wonder who will pick up my own unfinished stitches when I'm gone.

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Hostess Dishes

It's a tradition in most country communities that a wake follows a funeral. Because the grief-stricken family is usually in no state of mind or preparation to entertain large numbers of guests, it's also tradition that everyone brings one of their own family dishes for the guests at the wake and for the family to use in the days thereafter until life goes back to a semblance of being normal.

These easy-to-prepare hostess dishes are just as handy for happier occasions, such as "Welcome to the neighborhood" get-togethers, "Congratulations on the new baby" events, quilting parties, or just pot luck suppers, whenever family and friends get together to share food and love. These dishes can often be made at a moment's notice from what ever is in the refrigerator and are also good for "second day" meals, using leftovers from the dinner the day before, making them economical. Don't be afraid to substitute ingredients. These recipes are not written in stone, or even on a crusty roll!

Turkey Tracks Casserole

2 cups cooked turkey

1/2 lb. fresh mushrooms

1/4 cup onion, chopped

1 cup wild rice

1 1/2 cups cream

2 1/2 cups turkey or chicken stock

1/2 cup Cheddar cheese, grated

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Wash wild rice in water several times to remove starch and soak in cold water 1 hour. Preheat oven to 350F. Drain rice and place in mixing bowl with turkey, mushrooms, cream, onion, salt and pepper. Mix well. Add stock and pour into ovenproof casserole. Bake for 1 1/2 hours. Sprinkle with grated cheese and bake additional 20 minutes until cheese melts.

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Carol's ABC Casserole

A–2 lbs. fresh or frozen Asparagus

B–6 strips Bacon, cooked crisp and chopped

C–1 lb. cooked Chicken

2 cans condensed cream of mushroom soup

1/2 cup cream

1/4tsp. curry powder

dash Tabasco sauce

1/4 cup pimientos, chopped

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 400F. Layer asparagus, chicken and bacon crumbles in lightly greased casserole dish. Mix soup, cream, curry powder, Tabasco sauce, and pimientos in saucepan and cook on medium heat, stirring, until blended and smooth. Pour over chicken mixture. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake for 20 minutes or until heated thoroughly. Place under broiler briefly to brown cheese.

Storm At Sea Shrimp Casserole

1/2 lb. shrimp, cleaned and deveined

1/4 cup green pepper, chopped

1/4 cup onion, chopped

2 cups cooked wild rice

2 tbsp. butter

1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup

1/2 tsp. dry mustard

1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 cup cheddar cheese, cubed

Preheat oven to 375F. Saute onion and green pepper in butter. Add wild rice, mushroom soup, mustard powder, Worcestershire sauce, shrimp and cheese. Pour into casserole and bake for 30 to 40 minutes.

Almandine Rice

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2 cups wild rice

3/4 cups almonds, chopped lengthwise

1/2 cup olive oil

1/4 cup onion, chopped

1/4 cup chives, chopped

1/4 cup green onions, chopped

1/4 cup green pepper, chopped

4 1/2 cups chicken stock

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Wash rice several times to remove starch. Soak in cold water for 1 hour. Drain rice.

Preheat oven to 325F. Saute onion, chives, green onion and green pepper until tender. Add rice and cook, while stirring, over low heat until rice begins to turn clear. Add stock, salt and pepper. Mix in almonds. Bake for 1 1/2 hours, stirring occasionally, or until rice is cooked and liquid is absorbed.

Delectable Mountains Broccoli and Cauliflower Casserole

1 1/2 cups broccoli florets, steamed but still crisp

1 1/2 cups cauliflower florets, steamed but still crisp

1/4 cup butter

1/4 cup all purpose flour

2 1/2 cups milk

1 tsp. curry powder

1 tbsp. apricot chutney or marmalade (for recipe, see index)

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

1 cup Swiss cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 350F. Melt butter in saucepan. Whisk in flour. Cook 2 to 3 minutes, stirring, but do not brown. Whisk in milk. Bring to a full boil. Stir in curry and chutney. Reduce heat. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add salt and pepper. Stir in cheese. Cook until cheese melts.

Place broccoli and cauliflower in buttered casserole. Pour sauce over top.

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Topping:

1/4 cup melted butter

1 1/2 cups bread crumbs

1/2 cup sliced almonds, toasted

Mix all ingredients together and sprinkle over vegetables and sauce. Bake for 20 minutes or until bubbling.

Waldorf Pasta Casserole

1 1/2 cups elbow macaroni, cooked

1 lb. spinach, steamed and chopped

2 cups bean sprouts

1 lb. Feta cheese

2 onions, chopped and sauteed

1/2 cup walnuts, chopped

2 eggs

1/3 cup milk

fresh ground pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350F and lightly grease casserole. Combine macaroni, spinach, sprouts, cheese, walnuts, and onion in lightly greased ovenproof dish. Beat egg and milk together and pour over casserole. Sprinkle with pepper. Bake for 20 minutes or until bubbly.

Ohio Star Pork and Potato Casserole

1 pork tenderloin, cut into medallions

3 cups potatoes, sliced thin

1 cup onion, sliced thin

1 clove garlic, minced

4 tbsp. Dijon mustard

2 tsp. dried thyme

2 cups heavy cream

1/4 cup dry white wine

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fresh ground pepper to taste

In a saucepan, bring cream and garlic to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 6 to 8 minutes or until reduced by 1/3. Add mustard, thyme and mix well. Set aside.

Steam potatoes for 30 seconds so potatoes are still crisp. Drain and rinse in cold water. Pat dry on paper towels. Brown pork medallions in skillet over medium–high heat. Remove chops and set aside. Use wine to deglaze skillet.

Preheat oven to 350F. In ovenproof casserole dish, layer half the potatoes and onions, lay pork on top and pour pan juices over. Top with remaining potatoes and onions. Pour reduced cream over top. Sprinkle with pepper. Bake for 1½ hours.

Dinah's Humdinger Spinach Casserole Sidedish

1 10–ounce package frozen spinach, thawed, drained, chopped

1/2 cup plain yogurt

2 tbsp. onion, minced

1 egg

2 cups Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

1/4 cup milk

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

4 ounces spaghetti, cooked

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Mix egg, milk, onion, half the Parmesan, yogurt, salt and pepper. Stir in cheese, spinach and spaghetti. Spoon into small ovenproof casserole dish or four individual ramekins. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan. Bake at 350F for 30 minutes.

See also:

Blue Cheese Cassserole

Pasta and Feta Casserole

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The Wrong Arm of the Law

Early this morning, Jeff Bob Burnet, the town sheriff, dropped by to return our post-hole digger. We sat for a spell in rocking chairs on the porch. There are strings that run from the garden to the carved wood “gingerbread” trim that runs under the eaves where morning glories and string beans grow up. It makes a cool dappled shade on the porch on a late August morning as the day begins to get too hot. We had fresh blueberries at the Inn so we tucked into some blueberry oatmeal squares. Despite being careful not to have the luscious purple fruit stain our fingers, we left unmistakable incriminating fingerprints on our napkins.

As we enjoyed our morning cup of coffee, we shared some local gossip and I was reminded of the story about how Jeff Bob got to be sheriff. Jeff Bob’s always been something of a loose cannon as a sheriff but you would have a hard time replacing him now. His notoriety and popularity came as a result of his unbridled and perhaps unwise enthusiasm in running for the job of sheriff.

County elections are usually low key and uninteresting events around here, and in most other places for that matter. There’s the usual flutter of hand-made support signs that litter lawns and shop windows for several weeks. The local newspaper carries each nominee’s election ad, which is usually not much more than conservative resumes and *raison de vote*. The strength of most nominees’ credentials seem to lie on their stable home life (wife, 3 kids, dog Spot), and number of years in the community. Knowledge of law is never much of a factor. Not much remarkable happens and then the keys to the two cell jail building change hands quietly. And life goes on.

Until the year Jeff Bob decided to run. Which is tough to do when you have your foot in your mouth. Jeff Bob was decidedly at a disadvantage since he’s a forty-plus bachelor and only moved here five years previously after being laid off from a steelworker’s job. He came, temporarily, to help his brother-in-law and ended up staying. It often happens that way.

But Jeff Bob brought some dark clouds with him. It seems there was a great deal of rancor and hard feelings at the steel plant between the management and the

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workers. He was one of the many caught in a political and financial crossfire, and he deeply resented the predictable outcome, “out you go”. I guess he was still stinging from the surprise and earnestly felt it was such an important issue, and, since he had no sterling family and background to tout, that he unwisely assured the townsfolk in his brief campaign ad that if elected he would always maintain an “open door policy” with regards to his job as sheriff. He meant there would be no surprises.

It was a deadly phrase. The small ad never did explain his intention behind the expression. Brevity led to levity. What sort of town has an “open door” jail? The morning the newspaper hit the sidewalk there was mixed hilarity and consternation around town. He meant, of course, open door to the community, not to offenders but that’s not how it sounded and the local wags razzed him mercilessly for weeks before the election. It as hard to tell if the red face JB stomped around town in was from embarrassment, or anger.

The surprise came on election day and none was more surprised than Jeff Bob when he won. Perhaps the wags felt they owed him their vote, to give him back his face. Perhaps there were enough people around town, like myself, who think you just gotta vote for a guy with either the silliness or the earnestness to profess an open door policy for a jail.

So now it’s passed into being a gentle joke. Even Jeff Bob wears it lightly. Although we’re still a town divided. There are those who want to put up a sign proclaiming our status as a town with an open door policy jail, and those who are definitely not amused at all.

Jeff Bob’s Open Door Butter Tarts

Preheat oven to 425F.

1 double pie crust (recipe below)

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 cup corn syrup

1/4 cup shortening

1 egg, lightly beaten

1 tsp. vanilla

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1/4 tsp. salt

3/4 cup raisins

Roll out dough. Cut into 4 inch rounds. Fit into tart pans. Combine all ingredients, mixing well. Sprinkle raisins in pastry shells. Fill each shell 2/3 full with syrup mixture. Bake on bottom of oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until set. Don't overbake. Cool on wire rack, then remove from pans.

Doing Time Chocolate Chip Cookies

1/2 cup butter

1/2 cup shortening

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup brown sugar

2 tsp. vanilla

2 eggs

2 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp. baking soda

2 cups chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350F, grease cookie sheets. Cream together butter and shortening. Gradually add sugars, creaming well. Beat in eggs and vanilla. In separate bowl, combine flour and baking soda. Blend into cream mixture. Stir in chocolate chips. Chill dough for several minutes.

Drop by tablespoonfuls onto baking sheets. Flatten slightly. (*If you drop high enough, no need to flatten!)* Bake for 8 to 9 minutes or until golden brown around the edges. Let cool on sheet before removing. Set on wire racks to finish cooling.

Sweet 'N Sour Key Lime Pie Worth Stealing

Serve in small, small pieces. You may not look generous, until your family and guests taste how rich this is!

Crust

1 cup Graham cracker crumbs

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1 1/2 tsp. icing sugar

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

5 tbsp. melted butter

Combine crumbs, icing sugar, and cinnamon in 9 inch pie plate. Pour in butter and blend well. Pat mixture firmly to form crust. Chill 30 minutes or until firm.

Preheat oven to 350F.

Filling:

3 egg yolks

1 can sweetened condensed milk

rind of 1 lime, finely grated

1/2 cup fresh lime juice (about 3 limes)

Beat egg yolks. Slowly beat in milk, mixing well. Stir in rind and juice. Pour into prepared shell. Bake for 12 minutes or until barely set. Remove and cool. Serve at room temperature for the best flavor. Garnish with whipped cream and thinly sliced fresh lime.

Aunt Ivy's Three Fruit Cobbler

8 cups mixed fruit, peaches, plums, apricots, chopped

1/2 cup sugar

1 1/2 tsp. all purpose flour

zest of 1 orange

1 tsp. cinnamon

Preheat oven to 400F, and lightly grease 12 inch square glass baking dish.

Cut fruit into chunks, mix with sugar, flour, cinnamon and zest. Spoon into baking dish.

Topping:

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. salt

1/2 cup sugar

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6 tbsp. cold butter

2 eggs

1 cup buttermilk

1 tsp. vanilla extract

2 drops almond extract

1/4 cup blanched almonds, sliced

Sift dry ingredients together. Cut in butter with pastry cutter, two knives or your fingertips until coarse lumps are formed. Blend in eggs, buttermilk, vanilla and almond extracts. Spoon over fruit and spread evenly. Sprinkle with almonds. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown and firm to the touch. Cool on wire rack. Serve warm or chilled.

Date, Nut and Oatmeal Loaf

1/2 cup all purpose flour

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. cloves

3/4 cup butter

2 cups dark brown sugar

2 eggs

1 1/2 cups dates, chopped fine

1 cup walnuts, chopped coarsely

2 cups rolled oats

Preheat oven to 350F and grease loaf pan.

Sift flour, soda, cinnamon and cloves together in mixing bowl. Pour 1 cup boiling water over rolled oats, mix well. Cool, then blend in butter, sugar, eggs, dates and walnuts. Blend into dry ingredients and mix well. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes or until done.

Wholesome Folsom Pound Cake

4 1/2 cups cake and pastry flour

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3 cups sugar

8 egg whites

1 1/2 cups low–fat sour cream

1 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. salt

2 tsp. vanilla extract

Cream sugar and margarine until smooth. Gradually add egg whites. Beat well.

Combine sour cream and baking soda. Stir well and set aside. Combine flour and salt. Add to creamed sugar mixture alternating with sour cream mixture. Stir in vanilla. Spoon into 10–inch non–stick baking pan. Bake at 325F for 1 1/2 hours or until wooden toothpick comes out clean when inserted into center. Cool in pan before removing.

For variations: instead of vanilla (or in addition to it) add 1 tsp grated lemon rind; 1 tsp almond extract; 1 tsp rum flavoring.

Jailhouse Molasses Bars

1/3 cup margarine or shortening

1 cup sugar

1 egg, well beaten

1/2 cup molasses

1 tsp. baking soda

2 tsp. hot water

2 1/2 cups cake and pastry flour

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ginger

Preheat oven to 350F. Cream margarine and sugar. Add egg and molasses. Dissolve baking soda in hot water and add to mixture. Add dry ingredients. Batter should be quite stiff. Smooth into baking pan. Dust top with sugar and pat with fingers. Bake 25 minutes or until done.

Pumpkin Cookies

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1/2 cup margarine

2 eggs

2 to 2 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 cup rolled oats

1 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. nutmeg

3/4 cup brown sugar

3/4 cup pumpkin pie filling cup raisins

3 tsp. baking powder

dash salt

Preheat oven to 350F and grease baking sheets.

Sift dry ingredients together in mixing bowl. Gradually blend in margarine, eggs and pumpkin. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto baking sheets. Bake 20 minutes or until done.

Burden of Proof Blueberry Squares

2 cups blueberries

1/2 cup sugar

2 tbsp. cornstarch

1/4 cup water

1 tbsp. lemon juice

Stir together blueberries, sugar and cornstarch in saucepan. Mix in lemon juice and water. Bring to boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer until mixture thickens (about 3 minutes). Let cool.

Crust and Topping:

1 1/2 cups rolled oats

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 1/2 tsp. baking pwder

pinch salt

3/4 cup butter, melted

Combine oats, flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in large mixing bowl. Drizzle with butter and stir until well blended. Spread half the mixture into wellgreased 8–inch

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baking pan. Pat firmly. Cover with blueberry filled. Sprinkle remaining oat mixture over top. Bake at 350F for 40 to 45 minutes or until golden brown. Cool before cutting squares.

Contempt of Court Rhubarb Squares

4 cups strawberries

2 cups rhubarb, chopped

1 cup sugar

2 packages unflavored gelatin

2 egg yolks

1 cup light cream

2 tsp. vanilla

1 tsp. grated lemon rind

1/2 lb. cream cheese

2 egg whites

1/2 tsp. lemon juice

Set aside half the strawberries for garnish. In small saucepan, crush remaining berries. Add rhubarb. Bring to slow simmer over medium for 6 to 7 minutes or until rhubarb is tender. In mixing bowl, combine half the sugar with 1 envelope gelatin. Sprinkle over hot fruit mixture. Stir until dissolved. Chill, stirring occasionally until mixture is partially set (about 30 minutes).

Prepare Vanilla Pecan Crust:

1 cup vanilla wafer crumbs

1/2 cup ground pecans

2 tbsp. sugar

1/4 cup butter, melted

Preheat oven to 350F. Combine crumbs, pecans and sugar in small bowl. Blend melted butter into mixture until crumbly. Press mixture into 8–inch baking dish. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until firm and deep golden brown. Cool.

Spread rhubarb mixture over crust. Set aside.

In heavy saucepan, combine 1/4 cup of remaining sugar, remaining gelatin,

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yolks and cream. Cook over medium heat for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring constantly, until thick enough to coat spoon. Pour into separate bowl. Stir in vanilla and rind. Chill, stirring often, until partially set and cooled.

In separate bowl, beat cream cheese. Gradually beat in custard until smooth. In separate bowl, beat egg whites with lemon juice until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in remaining sugar until stiff peaks form. Stir in 2 tablespoons of egg white mixture into cream cheese mixture. Fold in remainder. Pour over rhubarb layer, smoothing top. Cover and chill 1 hour. To serve, slice reserved strawberries and arrange on top.

Gingersnaps

4 1/2 cups all purpose flour

2 1/2 cups dark brown sugar

2 cups butter, softened

3 eggs

3/4 cup molasses

1/4 cup ground ginger

1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

1 1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 325F and grease baking sheets.

Cream butter and sugar in large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and then molasses. Sift together flour, ginger, cinnamon, soda and salt. Stir dry ingredients into butter mixture until thoroughly mixed. Cover for 30 minutes and set aside.

Drop batter by tablespoonfuls onto baking sheets. Flatten cookies. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until browned. Let cookies cool slightly, then place on wire racks to cool.

Mayor “Uncle Al” Brown’s Apple Pie

9 inch pastry shell, unbaked (recipe below)

5 cups apples, peeled, cored and sliced *(Our favorites are Granny Smith,*

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which are tart and juicy, and are usually imported from Australia, New Zealand or Canada; we also grow Ida Red and Northern Spy for fabulous pies and tarts. If you want great cider, use Jonathans; for wonderful apple sauce, try Gravensteins)

2/3 cup sugar

1 tbsp. cornstarch

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/3 tsp. cloves

1/3 tsp. allspice

3 tbsp. butter, softened

1 cup cheddar cheese grated

Preheat oven to 425F and line pie plate with pastry.

In large mixing bowl, pour melted butter over apples and toss gently, coating apples thoroughly.

In small mixing bowl combine sugar, cornstarch and spices. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon of this mixture over pie shell. Add remaining spice mixture to apples, toss gently. Spoon apples into pie shell and bake for 30 minutes or until tender. Remove from oven and sprinkle cheese over apples. Return to oven for 3 minutes or until cheese melts. Serve warm.

The Quilt Inn Pie Crust

You can use this crust for fruit pies and tarts, both sweet and savory. When you want sweet, add sugar. When you want savory, add herbs. If you have a custard or fruit pie or tart, partially bake the crust before adding the filling.

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp. salt

2 tsp. sugar or 1 tsp. fresh herb or 1 to 2 tsp. dried herb or spice

8 tbsp. unsalted butter, cold, cut into pieces

6 tbsp. vegetable shortening, cold

5 to 6 tbsp. ice water

The key to great pastry is to have all the ingredients cold. Work in a cool kitchen

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if you can, and, ideally, do your preparation on marble. Always prepare your pastry and *then* turn on the oven. And don't overwork the dough—it will be tough if you do. (The crust, that is.)

Combine flour and salt in mixing bowl. Add sugar or herbs. Add butter and shortening, and working quickly, use a pastry blender, 2 knives, or your fingertips to cut in the ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle ice water over the mixture 1 or 2 tbsp. at a time, and toss after each addition. When you can gather the dough into a ball, you've added enough water. Transfer the dough to a cool surface, and using the heel of your hand, push the dough away 1/4 cup at a time. Repeat until all dough is "smeared". This will make a flaky crust. Gather the dough into a ball, divide in half. Flatten each half slightly, wrap in wax paper and refrigerate 30 minutes to 1 hour.

When you're ready to bake, roll out the dough, again on a cool table (Formica, wood or marble are best). Lightly flour the surface and the top of the dough. Rub a bit of flour on your rolling pin. Flatten the dough into a disk shape and then roll from the center to the edge. Lift and turn the dough while rolling, sprinkling lightly with flour to prevent sticking. Rolll the dough until it is about 1/3 inch thick and extends about 1 1/2 to 2 inches beyond the edge of the pie plate. If you need to "patch up" the dough, moisten the edges with water first so that they will stick together.

When you're making a two-crust pie, seal the upper and lower crust with water, and "flute" the edges with a fork. Cut slits in the upper crust to allow steam to escape. The top crust can be either plain, or try one of the following glazes for a special effect: brush lightly with milk or cream; sprinkle the crust with sugar; brush with a beaten egg and water (just a bit) mixture.

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Follow-wing The Leader

Michael and I were sitting on the porch the other day, enjoying some early warm Spring weather. High overhead a flock of Canadian Geese were circling, preparing to land in the pond, to pause and refresh, before continuing their long journey North. The famous V-formation is a familiar and welcome sight, albeit a curious one. Although a lot of birds flock and fly together, geese seem to be the only birds with such an organized flight path.

Scientists and aerodynamic experts discovered that the geese fly in this pattern for a very good reason: as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately behind. By flying in V-formation, the whole flock adds at least 70% greater flying range than if each bird flew alone. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels increased drag and air resistance, so it quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the other birds in the flock.

This is really good news for heavy birds with a long way to go, like geese. I wonder why they don't teach other birds to do likewise. And how about us—the unlikeliest flyers of all? If we work together, and share a common direction and a sense of purpose, we will all get to where we are going quicker, and easier, because we will be travelling on the trust, and the thrust, of each other.

One of the wonderful sounds of Spring is the inimitable honking of the returning geese as they travel along together. The geese in the rear are honking encouragement to those up front, as if to say, "Don't give up, keep up your speed, our goal is just around the corner!"

When one of the geese is sick or wounded or simply too tired to fly today, two other geese will fall out of the flock, and watch over it until it recovers or dies. Then they will rejoin the original flock, or start one of their own. We, too, must look after others through the bonds of humanity and common sense. We must help those who are wounded, which sometimes includes ourselves, and then start again with renewed purpose.

Being lead bird is a tough job and takes the most amount of energy. When the

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leader tires, it falls back. There is always another in the flock to take up the lead. Every bird in turn takes the lead.

It occurs to me that if we have at least as much sense as geese, we will stay in formation with others who are also going in the same direction as we are, and take advantage of the momentum that others have created for us. Take the lead when called on, and let others take the lead when we tire.

Light cooking trends today call for less red meat in the diet. Those "heavy" birds like turkey, goose and chicken make healthy alternatives.

Zydeco Turkey

1 lb. cooked turkey, cut in bite size pieces

4 strips bacon

1 medium onion, chopped coarsely

1 clove garlic, minced

2 stalks celery, chopped

5 tomatoes, chopped coarsely

1 cup mushrooms, quartered

1 green pepper, chopped coarsely

2 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 cup white wine

1/2 tsp. dried thyme

1 bay leaf

1/2 tsp. sugar

pinch cayenne to taste

1 1/2 tbsp. cornstarch

Fry bacon in saucepan until crisp. Remove, drain on paper towels, chop coarsely and set aside. Saute onion, garlic and celery in bacon drippings. Add tomatoes, mushrooms, green pepper, parsley, wine, thyme, bay leaf, sugar, cayenne and salt. Bring to boil. Simmer 15 minutes. Stir in turkey and bacon and bring to boil. Remove bay leaf. Reduce heat.

Combine cornstarch will just enough cool water to make thin paste. Stir

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cornstarch into turkey mixture. Simmer for 2 minutes or until thickened. Serve over rice.

Slow-Cooked Chicken and Cabbage

1 chicken, cut into pieces (remove skin optional)

5 medium onions, sliced thinly

1 head cabbage, cut in chunks

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. thyme

pepper to taste

1 cup water

1/2 lb. piece of salt pork or 6 strips of bacon

flour to coat chicken pieces

Melt pork, or fry bacon, in frying pan. Dip chicken in flour and brown in pork fat. Remove from pan. Sauteonions in pork or bacon drippings.

Place all ingredients in large saucepan or fireproof casserole. Simmer for 2 hours. Remove remaining piece of salt pork before serving.

This dish can be easily prepared in a slow cooker ("crock pot"). Reduce water to 1/2 *cup and cook on low.*

Roast Chicken

2 whole broiler chickens (3 1/2 lbs. each)

1/2 cup butter or margarine

1/3 dry white wine (or chicken broth)

2 tbsp. rosemary leaves, crushed

2 tbsp. tarragon leaves, crushed

1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

2 cups cooked rice (or wild rice mix)

1 fresh pear, washed, cored and chopped

Combine rosemary and tarragon with wine in small bowl. Let stand 1 hour. Strain and reserve liquid. Blend butter into herbs.

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Sprinkle cavity of each chicken with some of the salt and pepper. Add tablespoon of herbed butter. Loosen skin over breast and press in tablespoon of herbed butter.

Saute pear in half of remaining butter. Blend with cooked rice. Stuff chickens with rice and truss.

Melt remaining butter. Brush over chickens. Sprinkle with remaining salt and pepper. Place chickens in roasting pan. Combine remaining butter with wine. Roast at 350F for 1 3/4 hours, basting frquently with herb wine mixture.

Drunkard's Path Turkey

Our friend Gail makes it through the one meal of the year that she cooks this way: she gets up at ten o'clock (her children are grown-ups, or pretend to be); she does her face and hair and heads for the kitchen; she opens a bottle of her favorite wine and sips it while she makes Christmas dinner. By the time the turkey is cooked, so is Gail! This isn't her recipe, but it reminds us of her.

1 turkey, cut in pieces

Marinade:

1 cup dry red wine

1/2 cup Bourbon

1/2 cup dry sherry

1/3 cup soy sauce

3 tbsp. vegetable oil

2 tbsp. sugar

5 whole anise seeds

1 tbsp. fresh ginger, minced

fresh ground pepper to taste

Mix all the marinade ingredients in a large bowl. Add turkey pieces and coat thoroughly. Cover and let sit 3 hours.

Preheat oven to 325F.

Remove turkey from marinade and place in roasting pan. Pour 1/2 cup of

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marinade over turkey. Bake 1 hour, turning and basting as necessary. Increase oven to 450F.

Glaze:

1 cup Bourbon

2/3 cups honey

2/3 cups ketchup

1/4 cup brown sugar

Mix glaze ingredients thoroughly in bowl. Brush turkey with glaze. Bake 30 minutes, basting and turning every 5 minutes.

Chicken Jambalaya

1 6–lb. baking chicken, cut up

2 pounds smoked sausage, cut in 1–inch pieces

4 cups rice, uncooked

1 large onion, chopped

3 quarts water

1 cup vegetable oil

3 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup green pepper, chopped

1 1/2 tbsp. red pepper

1 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

2 tbsp. fresh chopped parsley

Combine salt and pepper. Sprinkle over chicken. Heat oil in large Dutch oven. Add chicken pieces. Brown on all sides. Remove from pan, drain on paper towels and set aside.

Add onion and garlic to oil in Dutch oven. Saute until tender. Remove, drain and set aside. Add sausage to pan. Cook over medium heat until browned. Remove, drain and set aside. Discard pan drippings.

Return chicken, onion, garlic, sausage and water to Dutch oven. Bring to boil. Reduce heat, cover and and simmer 2 1/2 hours or until chicken is tender. Add green

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pepper, parsley and rice. Stir well. Cover and cook over low for 45 minutes or until liquid is absorbed.

Grilled Chicken and Mustard

4 chicken breasts, boned

2 tbsp. green onion, minced

2 tbsp. Dijon mustard

1 tsp. grainy mustard

1 tbsp. vegetable oil

2 tsp. lemon rind, coarsely grated

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

salt and pepper to taste

Stir together all ingredients and coat breasts all over. Marinate in refrigerator for 2 hours.

Heat grill to medium–high and grill breasts for 4 minutes. Turn and grill until chicken is throughly cooked.

Turkey Wellington Boots

2 turkey tenderloins

2 1/2 oz. ham-flavored turkey, sliced thin

1 egg, beaten

1/4 cup butter or margarine

1/2 cup onion, chopped fine

1/2 lb. fresh mushrooms, chopped fine

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 tsp. marjoram leaves, crumbled

2 tbsp. brandy

1 sheet puff pastry (if using frozen, thawed)

Melt butter in small saucepan. Add onions and mushrooms. Saute until tender. Add parsley and marjoram. Stir in brandy. Simmer until mixture is almost dry. Remove

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from heat and chill.

Heat skilled to high. Sear tenderloins on all sides until browned. Remove and cool.

Roll pastry on lightly floured board to 15"x40" sheet. Cut in half. Spread 1/2 of chilled mushroom mixture on each piece to within 1/2–inch of edges. Cover with half of sliced ham–flavored turkey. Place seared tenderloin in center of pastry. Carefully wrap pastry around tenderloin, sealing edges with water. May be refrigerated at this point for cooking later.

Preheat over to 400F. Place pastries in baking pan. Prick pastry top with toothpick. Brush with beaten egg. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until pastry is golden brown. Remove and let sit for 5 minutes before slicing to serve.

Guests were saddened to note the absence of Myrtle from our pond this year. She was a cantankerous old bird and ultimatelyshe succumbed to a bad habit: pecked a sleeping dog once too often. She made a fine dinner and a good lesson: better left alone than become a dinner bone...

Oriental Glazed Duck

1–5 pound duck, rinsed, patted dry

2 lemons, halved

salt and ground pepper to taste

3/4 cup soy sauce

3/4 cup ketchen

1/3 cup liquid honey

1/4 cup corn oil

4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 tbsp. rosemary

2 green onions, thinly sliced for garnish

Preheat oven to 400F. Rub the duck inside and out with juice of 1 lemon. Pat dry. Prick skin with fork. Sprinkle inside and outside with salt and pepper. Place second lemon in cavity. Place duck, breast side up on rack in shallow roasting pan. Bake for 30 minutes.

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While duck is roasting, make glaze. Combine soy sauce, ketchen, honey, oil, garlic and rosemary in small mixing bowl. Mix well. Reduce oven temperature to 350F. Pour off fat. Pour glaze over duck. Baste frequently and cook 1 hour and 15 minutes. Remove duck from oven. Let stand 15 minutes. Skim off fat from roasting pan. Reheat glaze, pour over duck and garnish with green onions.

Wild Goose Chase

1 cup dried apricots, halved

2 cup. dried prunes, halved

1/2 cup Madeira wine

1 goose (12 pounds)

juice of 1 orange

2 tart apples

grated zest of 1 orange

salt and pepper to taste

dash paprika

8 slices bacon

1 1/4 cups Wild Goose Sauce (recipe below)

Place apricots and prunes in mixing bowl. Add Madeira. Mix and set aside.

Preheat oven to 325F. Rinse goose and pat dry. Prick all over with fork. Rub inside and out with orange juice. Add apples and orange zest to apricots and prunes. Sprinkle goose inside and out with salt, pepper and paprika. Stuff cavity with fruit. Skewer opening closed. Lay bacon slices across breast. Place goose, breast side up, in shallow roasting pan. Roast for 1½ hours, removing accumulated fat every 30 minutes. Remove bacon and roast for 1 hour more, removing fat after 30 minutes. Remove from oven. Let stand 20 minutes before carving.

Make sauce:

pan drippings from roasted goose

2 green onions, chopped

3/4 cup chicken stock

1/2 cup Madeira wine

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1 tbsp. peppercorns, slightly crushed

1 tsp. cornstarch

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Scrape brown pan drippings into saucepan. Add green onions, 1/2 cup stock, Madeira and peppercorns. Simmer 5 minutes. Mix cornstarch with remaining 1/4 cup stock until smooth. Slowly drizzle into sauce, stirring rapidly. Add salt and pepper. Stir, simmer 5 minutes. Serve over duck.

Send the Servants to the Cellar

If you rise early enough you may see a dusty old pickup truck parked in our front yard. It belongs to one of the many invisible people who help make an Inn run smoothly. In this case it's Clareville's only resident Russian emigre, Tamara Shostokovitch. ("Not *that* one, da'link, he vas *much too bourgeois*!" she would always explain.) Tamara is anywhere upwards of seventy—it's your guess. And although she wears grubby old American blue jeans, her frazzled grey hair is still held back in place by a colorful *Babushka*, the ubiquitous Russian kerchief.

Tamara runs a small market garden and supplies us with fresh vegetables such as potatoes, cabbage and squash, common vegetables to be sure, but staples that are familiar and comfortable for her because they recall her childhood in a Russia very different than today. She even delivers to us once a fortnight because she comes from the "old school" when a fortnight meant something. What it means is, *we never know when* she will arrive. She's always welcome.

This morning, after we helped her unload her produce into the root cellar, we all went to the kitchen for a cup of coffee because today Tamara brought with her a treasure from her homeland to share with us. It was a copy of *A Gift To Young Housewives* by Elena Molokhovets. This wonderful book was a serious work at the time, but is now both hilarious and nostalgic, and I'd like to share some of it with you.

Gift first appeared in Russia in 1861, the year of the emancipation of the serfs ("Serfs up!" was thereby introduced into the local lexicon). This huge volume of over

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4,200 recipes provides us with a window from which to view a lost and somewhat forgotten age, where a well run household, serfless (see above) yet with servants, was equal only to running a major corporation today. The typical young Russian bride needed all the organizational capabilities of a major-general.

In fact, the author, Elena Molokhovets, was from a military family, and her meal preparations came by her honestly. She had ten children, nine boys and a girl, as well as many grandchildren, either too numerous to count or missing from the Russian census. *Gift* was an instant and utter success, and Elena continued to revise, edit (although clearly with a light hand) and add to the book for another 50 years, when she disappeared without a trace, presumably a victim of the Revolution, or indigestion.

After the Revolution, she was quoted widely, albeit sarcastically, in Soviet circles, such as her answer to the problem of unexpected guests. “Send the servant into the cold cellar for hazel grouse or a ham.” But of course! Many of Lenin’s followers held her responsible for representing the excesses of bygone days. Is Julia Child’s fate to be the same?

Anyway, after a few years, the acerbic humor became more wistful, and turned eventually into disbelief. Could a time of such foodstuffs *ever* have existed in the Motherland? Had family members *ever* sat down to huge meat pies, sturgeon in aspic, mounds of crayfish, souffles and *babas*? Had there *ever* been a time when there was so much caviar that it was used to clarify beef bouillon and then *thrown away*?

Even though the servants certainly weren’t eating these delicacies, they did have access to abundance. There were *pirogi* (a kind of pie), *kasha* (grains), *shchi* (cabbage soup), *kvass* (a beverage fermented from black bread), beets, potatoes, roast goose, duck, pork, and beef, many varieties of fresh, dried and marinated fish, sauerkraut, sausage and pickles. These staples became harder and harder to find after the Revolution, even with the exalted “progress” advertised on a yearly basis by Lenin, Stalin, *et seq*. Twentieth Century modernism that never quite made it from revolutionary tome to actuality.

Tamara, our Russian expatriate, urged us to incorporate many of the recipes as regular fare at The Quilt Inn. I think not. Not because we are not adventurous but

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rather because the cookbook presupposes a completely different way of life than we are used to now. Molokhovets assures us that we, too, can have fresh pears from our orchard in the middle of Winter. How? According to *Gift*, each pear, carefully culled, was placed in its own small individual copper saucepan with a lid and laid in the ice house. (We don't have one of those, either). Every two weeks a servant wiped off each and every pear, and the saucepan it rested in. (You can understand a people who rose up and demanded a revolution, if only to be taken off pear detail!)

And even more, close to the house was a store room of vast size, used to hold food for the almost-always large family, guests, and hangers-on. Mushrooms were grown in the basement. Lemons were lined up on the shelves, none touching a sister, each to be wiped dry every fortnight. Kegs of sauerkraut had to be poked once a week with a pole to allow the dangerous build up of methane gases to escape. (Horrors! If you missed a week of keg-poking...BOOM! Death by sauerkraut!) Cauliflowers strung from the ceiling needed constant attention, and the windows were opened each morning and closed each night. Even bacon had to be constantly rotated. And the cook slept in the kitchen, on a foldout bed covered with a seaweed mattress. This was necessary because cook was always preparing for the next repast. A simple dinner took 24 hours to prepare, and who knew when the Cossack hordes would descend upon the house (or your brother-in-law and his family!)

You may disagree, but our feeling is that a cookbook like *A Gift To Young Housewives* is to be enjoyed as armchair travelling to the past, not as a "how to" for the present. Thank you, Tamara, for sharing this wonderful nostalgic vision that is exotic, thought provoking, unsettling and for forcing us to remember what was and why it isn't that way anymore.

Cabbage Pilaf

1 onion, chopped

1 cup long grain rice

3 cups cabbage, chopped

3 tbsp. tomato paste

3 tbsp. olive oil

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2 cups water

1/2 tsp. caraway seeds

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

Heat oil in saucepan. Saute onions and rice on medium heat, until onions are soft. Add cabbage. Stir until cabbage wilts. Stir in tomato paste, water, parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Bring to boil, cover and simmer 30 minutes or until liquid is absorbed.

Cabbagepatch Pork Chops

8 thick cut pork chops

1 medium cabbage, shredded

2 tbsp. butter

2 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup onions, chopped fine

1/2 cup white wine (or use red wine and red cabbage)

1 cup heavy cream

2 bay leaves

2 tbsp. bread crumbs

4 tbsp. Parmesan cheese

2 tbsp. melted butter

Shred cabbage and blanch in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain well. Saute garlic and onions in butter until soft. Add cabbage and seasoning. Cook 5 minutes. set aside.

Season pork chops. Saute meat until brown on both sides. Set aside. Discard fat from pan and deglaze with wine. Reduce liquid to 4 cups (of course, we're not sure how you measure this, but we suggest you get a serf from pear-cleaning duty) and mix with the cabbage. The liquid, not the serf!

Preheat oven to 350F. Spread **a** of the cabbage mixture in casserole or deep glass baking dish. Layer 4 chops on top, **a** more cabbage, 4 more chops and remaining cabbage.

Warm cream in saucepan. Add to casserole. Place bay leaf on top. Bake,

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covered, for 1 1/2 hours. Remove bay leaf and discard. Mix bread crumbs, cheese and butter and sprinkle over casserole. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes until brown and crusty.

Stuffed Cabbage

1 head cabbage

1 lb. lean ground beef

1/2 lb. lean ground pork

3/4 cup cooked wild rice

1 can tomatoes

1/2 cup tomato sauce

1/2 cup green onions, chopped

1 cup water

1/4 cup brown sugar

1 1/2 cups sauerkraut, rinsed and drained

1/3 cup raisins

1/2 tsp. thyme

1 tsp. caraway seeds

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. ground ginger

1 tbsp. lemon juice

fresh ground pepper to taste

Core cabbage and cut in strips. Steam cabbage leaves until tender, about 5 minutes. Rinse in cold water, drain, and set aside.

Combine beef, pork, rice, green onions, caraway seeds, thyme and pepper in large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly.

Stir tomatoes, water, tomato sauce, raisins, brown sugar, lemon juice and ginger together in another mixing bowl.

Place cabbage leaves one at a time on work surface. Spoon 1/2 cup meat filling into center of leaf. Fold up bottom edge to cover filling. Fold in sides, then roll the filled part on to the top. Repeat with remaining leaves and filling.

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Spoon 1 cup of sauerkraut into ovenproof casserole or shallow dish. Arrange cabbage rolls on top, with “seams” down. Top with remaining sauerkraut. Pour tomato mixture over cabbage. cover and bake at 350F for 2 hours.

Better “Red” Than Dead Cabbage

1 red cabbage

1 onion

4 tbsp. lard or shortening

4 sour apples, cored and diced

6 cloves

1/2 cup water

2 tbsp. vinegar

1 bay leaf

Slice cabbage and onion. Saute onion in lard until slightly brown. Add cabbage and cook for 5 minutes. Add apples and other ingredients. Simmer for 1 1/2 hours.

Cabbage and ‘Shrooms

1 cabbage, chopped

1 onion, chopped fine

2 cups fresh mushrooms

2 tbsp. sour cream

butter

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Steam cabbage for 5 minutes. Satue onion in butter, add mushrooms and saute another 5 minutes. Add cabbage and continue cooking until flavors blend. Just before serving stir in sour cream.

Bullwinkle and Boris’ Borscht

2 lbs. beets

3 cups red cabbage, shredded

2 cups Navy beans

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2 carrots, peeled and diced

2 leeks, sliced

1 parsnip, peeled and diced

1 onion, chopped

2 lbs. beef shortribs

2 cups plum tomatoes, chopped

6 cups beef stock

3 cups water

6 cloves garlic

1 tbsp. fresh dill

2 tbsp. tomato paste

4 cups chicken broth

2 tsp. caraway seeds

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

4 tbsp. olive oil

1/4 cup lemon juice

sour cream for garnish

Place beets in soup pot, cover with water and bring to a boil. Simmer 40 minutes or until tender. Remove beets with slotted spoon, reserve liquid. Remove beet skins, grate beets coarsely and set aside.

Sear shortribs in oil for 15 minutes or until brown. Pour off grease. Add ribs to soup pot and add beef stock, water, onion, garlic and dill. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and cover. Simmer 1 hour. Add cabbage, beans, carrots, leeks, parsnip, tomato paste, chicken stock and 2 cups of reserved beet liquid. Cover and bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Add caraway seeds, salt and pepper, tomatoes and reserved grated beets. Simmer another 15 minutes.

Remove ribs from broth. Remove meat from bones, discard bones. Return meat to broth. Add lemon juice. Return to heat, heat thoroughly. Serve with dollop of sour cream.

Rainbow Salad

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1 medium head RED cabbage, sliced thin

1 GREEN Granny Smith apple, cored, shopped

1 small YELLOW onion, slivered

1/3 cup crumbled BLUE cheese

1/3 cup chopped walnuts

1 tbsp. honey

1 tbsp. grainy mustard

1/3 cup vegetable oil

3 tbsp. raspberry vinegar

salt and pepper to taste

Combine cabbage, apple and onion in large bowl. Toast walnuts until browned. Add to cabbage mixture.

Cook honey in saucepan. Stir in mustard, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Heat to boil. Pour over cabbage and toss well. Mix in cheese just before serving.

Pasta Cabbage Please

1/2 head cabbage

4 oz. pasta

1/3 cup green onions, chopped

4 tbsp. butter

1/2 cup chicken stock

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Cut cabbage into strips. Break pasta into short lengths and cook in boiling water until tender. Rinse in cold water, drain well.

Melt butter in saucepan. Add cabbage. Cover and cook over medium heat until tender but still crisp. Add the pasta and stock. Stir over low heat until heated through. Season to taste and add green onions. Serve immediately.

Cabbage in the Bac Room

1 lb. bacon, cut in pieces

2 cups onion, chopped

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1 head red cabbage, chopped fine

2 tart apples, cored and cubed

1 cup raisins

3/4 cup red wine

3/4 cup red wine vinegar

2 tsp. caraway seeds

1 tsp. thyme

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Cook bacon in large pan over low heat for 15 minutes. Add onions and cook until softened. Add remaining ingredients and stir well. Cover and cook over medium heat for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Adjust seasonings and serve hot.

Tamara's Mother's Savory Cabbage Strudel

Strudel dough

1 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1/4 tsp. salt

1 egg

1/4 to 1/2 cups warm water or milk

2 tsp. vinegar

Sift flour and salt together in bowl. Beat egg with water or milk and vinegar. Work liquid into flour mixture by hand to form dough. Knead on floured board until dough is no longer sticky. Place in bowl, cover and let stand 30 minutes.

Roll dough as thin as possible. Stretch the dough gently from the center. this should make about 2 yards square of very thin dough. Brush with melted butter.

Filling

4 lbs. cabbage, shredded

1 1/2 cups heavy sour cream

1 tsp. caraway seed

4 eggs, hard cooked and chopped

Steam cabbage for 5 minutes, and blanch. Press out excess moisture on paper towels. Mix with sour cream, caraway and eggs.

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Preheat oven to 400F. Sprinkle filling over dough and roll loosely as the dough will expand. Slide onto greased baking sheet. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with water. Bake for 20 minutes at 400F, then reduce heat to 350F. Brush strudel again with butter and bake ten minutes more or until golden brown. Remove from oven and dust with confectioners' sugar.

Cabbage Casserole

3 cups cabbage, shredded fine

1 1/2 cups stewed tomatoes

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. paprika

2 tsp. brown sugar

bread crumbs, fine

Parmesan cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 325F.

Steam cabbage for 5 minutes. Drain well and pat dry with paper towels. Cook tomatoes, salt, paprika and sugar in saucepan. Butter a casserole dish. Layer with cabbage and tomato mixture alternately. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese mixed with bread crumbs. Bake for 30 minutes or until top is golden brown.

Cordon Bleu Cabbage

1 large head cabbage

Trim loose outer leaves from cabbage. Cut out stem and enough cabbage to make a dep well.

Filling

2 cups cooked ground ham

1 cup bread crumbs

3/4 cups hard cheese, grated

1/2 tsp. dry mustard

salt to taste

1/2 tsp. paprika

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dash cayenne

Mix all ingredients in mixing bowl. Fill center of cabbage with filling. Steam for 1 hour or until tender, making sure pot does not boil dry. Wrap cabbage in heavy foil and bake at 325F for 2 hours.

Cheese sauce

3 tbsp. butter

3 tbsp. flour

1 1/2 cups milk

1 cup cheese, grated

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. dry mustard

dash cayenne pepper

Melt butter in saucepan. Stir in flour and blend. Slowly stir in milk and bring almost to a boil. When sauce is smooth and hot, reduce heat and stir in cheese and seasonings. Stir until smooth.

To serve: cut cabbage into four servings (eight, if this is for lunch). Pour cheese sauce over cabbage, dust with paprika for color.

Number One (Sharp) Coleslaw

8 cups cabbage, shredded

1/2 cup vinegar

1/2 cup sugar

2 tbsp. onion, chopped fine

1 tsp. salt

2/3 cup vegetable oil

paprika

Combine all ingredients and toss to coat cabbage. Cover and chill overnight. Garnish with parsley before serving.

Number Two (Creamy) coleslaw

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8 cups cabbage, shredded

1/4 cup celery, chopped fine

2 eggs, beaten

2 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. dry mustard

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

2 tbsp. butter

1/2 cup vinegar

1/2 cup whipping cream

Combine cabbage and celery. Set aside.

Mix eggs and sugar in saucepan, blending well. Combine mustard, salt and pepper to egg mixture. Add butter and slowly stir in vinegar. Cook over low heat until mixture thickens. Remove from heat and chill.

Add whipping cream to the chilled mixture, stirring well. Pour sauce over cabbage, toss well. Chill and serve.

Number Three (Vinaigrette) Coleslaw

1 cabbage, shredded

2 green peppers, sliced in rings

1 onion, sliced thin and separated

2 cups vinegar

1 cup vegetable oil

1 cup water

1 cup sugar

1/4 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Combine cabbage, green pepper and onion in large bowl. Mix well and set aside.

Combine all remaining ingredients. Stir into cabbage mixture. Cover and chill overnight.

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Red Cabbage and Sausage

1 head red cabbage, cored and shredded

2 lbs. smoked sausage, diced

2 onions, sliced thin

2 green apples, peeled, cored and diced

2 tbsp. butter

1/3 cup vinegar

1/2 cup chicken stock

1 tsp. curry powder

1/2 tsp. marjoram

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Brown sausage in butter in deep saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Stir in cabbage, apples, vinegar, stock, curry powder, marjoram, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes.

We can't leave this chapter without a great recipe for...

Non-Exploding Sauerkraut

9 cups cabbage, shredded

1/4 cup pickling salt

Wash and shred cabbage. Measure 9 cups into mixing bowl. Mix with pickling salt. Let stand for 2 hours. Rinse, drain, and rinse again. Pack wet cabbage into sterilized jars. Pack firmly so that liquid rises and covers cabbage. Leave 1 inch space at top of jar. Fit a piece of plastic wrap on to top of cabbage so air does not reach it. Seal jar with lid, but do not tighten—this allows fermentation gases to escape—eliminates need to "keg poke", and unnecessary explosions!

Store at 68–72F to enhance fermentation process. Check occasionally and remove any scum that appears on the surface of the cabbage. (Scum won't form if plastic wrap is tight enough). Fermentation will stop after 2 to 6 weeks.

Sauerkraut is ready when no bubbles appear on the surface and jar does not hiss when opened. If kraut is too salty for your taste, rinse it before serving. Store sauerkraut in refrigerator.

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See also: SlowCooked Chicken and Cabbage

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September Fair

Once a month on a Saturday from early Spring until late Autumn, we engage in a ritual of going into downtown Clareville to visit the Farmer's Market that takes place in the Town Square. There, midst the tall oaks and maples, between the bandshell and the fountain, citizens of the area arrive at dawn to exhibit and sell their wares. Tents and tables litter the greenspace in orderly confusion.

I like to be first and early at the Market. In the near dark morning, Michael and I sip coffee seated in a window booth at Ivy's Restaurant while the vendors set up. The dawn chorus of birds vie with a portable radio and good humored neighborly chatter echoes in the still and frosty air. Chickens cackle in their cages and an irritable rooster is barking at the morning. The few early birds come to the Market for the fattest worms: the pick of the best produce—the plumpest peppers, the unblemished tomatoes, bread still warm from the oven to be sniffed and savored and carried home as prizes. We are still hunters and gatherers who return triumphant and satisfied from a good forage.

The rest of the flock descends by late morning. By then the Square is full and frantic. Hands dart here and there, quickly picking goods, making change, filling bags. Shoulders jostle to the stalls and tables, and jostle away again. Friends meet and chat, some hug, balancing parcels, blocking the way of others trying to gain access to the vendor's attention—a pleasant communal irritation.

Some swoop in—if they find a lucky parking spot—raid the essential stalls, list in hand, and swoop away again. Some come to roost all day. Making their way systematically from vendor to familiar vendor, chatting, sampling, buying. Stopping to lunch on thick cut peameal bacon on a kaiser as a special not-on-the-diet treat; or on quiche and wine at the trendy Stone House Inn; or on toasted club sandwiches at Ivy's cafe in the park, a temporary fair weather *al fresco* extension served from her restaurant across the street. The black-brown and black-blue grackles have landed en masse on the green and are having their own lively disagreement.

By late afternoon, the hustle and hurry has slowed to a tired and langorous saunter. Vendors rearrange the last of the unsold wares to show to their best

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advantage, hoping for the last sales to finish the day. Sparrows glean crumbs near the park benches. Bargains are offered to clear stock that won't keep fresh until next Market. The late bird may not get the fattest worm, but does get the slimmest prices.

Around dinnertime, on a silent and mysterious signal, everyone heads home like the starlings who have begun to wheel in unison around the tall oaks and maples. Trucks pull up to the now-empty curbside to be loaded and the vendor gypsies steal away into early nightfall with sunburned faces and money in their pockets. There is hardly any energy left to talk. Good day, someone asks? A smile and nod in reply. Farewells are just weary waves or nods, and they are gone into the twilight. The green is empty again. The starlings roost noisily in the tall maples and oaks. Streetlights come on. As if the whole flighty community had not even been there today.

Pasta and Feta Casserole

1/2 lb. pasta shells

1/2 lb. feta cheese, cubed

1/2 cup grate Parmesan cheese

1/2 cup sliced green olives

1/4 cup diced pimiento

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped fine

1 green pepper, chopped coarsely

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

2 1/2 cups milk

2 tbsp. tomato paste

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp fresh ground pepper

2 tbsp. fresh dill

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/4 cup butter

Cook pasta in boiling water. Rinse and drain well.

Melt butter in saucepan. Saute onion, garlic and green pepper until tender. Stir

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in flour. Cook 2 minutes. Add milk, tomato paste, salt and pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring often. Combine pasta with sauce. Add feta, 1/4 cup Parmesan, olives, pimiento, dill and oregano. Transfer to 9"x13" casserole dish. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan. Bake in preheated oven at 350F for 30 minutes.

Serve with crusty bread and green salad.

Brie en Croute

1 small whole Brie (about 3 pounds)

pastry for 2 crust pie

1 egg white

1 egg yolk beaten with 1 tbsp water.

Preheat oven to 400F.

Roll out bottom crust to fit 9–inch pie pan. Peel thin white paper from Brie. Place on bottom crust. Cover with top crust. Seal edges. Brush with egg white. Bake 20 minutes. Remove and brush with egg yolk. Bake 15 minutes long until crust is golden. Serve warm.

Cheese Pastry for Quiche

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp salt

1 cup grated medium or sharp cheddar cheese

2/3 cup lard or vegetable shortening

5 tbsp. cold water

Sift flour and salt together in bowl. Mix cheese into flour mixture. Cut lard or shortening in with pastry blender or two knives until soft crumbles form. Sprinkle water over mixture, one teaspoon at a time. Mix lightly with fork. Add only enough water to keep dough together. Do not over handle. Divide dough in half. Flatten dough on lightly floured surface and roll out and line 8–9" pieplate. Prick bottom and sides of pastry with fork. Bake at 450F for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire rack.

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Blue Cheese Casserole

1 1/2 lb. zucchini (There they are again!)

1 large onion, chopped

1 cup dry bread crumbs

1/2 cup blue cheese, crumbled

1 egg, well beaten

1/3 tsp. marjoram

3 tbsp. butter

Preheat oven to 350F. Grease casserole dish.

Wash and dice zucchini. Combine with chopped onion in saucepan. Cook 7 to 10 minutes or until tender. Drain.

In mixing bowl, toss together zucchini and onions with 3/4 cup bread crumbs, cheese, egg and marjoram. Spoon into casserole. Top with remaining breadcrumbs and dot with butter. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes.

Cheese Stuffed Tomatos

6 large, firm tomatoes

1 cup cooked rice

1/2 lb. swiss cheese (2 cups shredded)

2 tbsp. butter

1/2 cup onion, chopped

1/4 cup celery, chopped

1/2 cup mushrooms, sliced

1 tsp salt

1/4 tsp. marjoram

1/3 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Preheat oven to 350F. Grease shallow baking dish.

Cut off top 1/4–inch from each tomato and set tops aside. Scoop out pulp from tomatoes. Drain excess liquid from pulp and set aside.

Heat butter in skillet. Add onion and celery and cook over medium heat until tender.

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In mixing bowl combine onion and celery with rice, cheese, tomato pulp, mushrooms, salt, marjoram and pepper. Spoon mixture into tomato shells. Replace tops. Place in baking dish. Bake for 15 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Serve immediately.

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It's All Greek To Me

One of our favorite quotes from the movie Zorba the Greek goes, "What I eat I turn into work and good humor." Whether it's in song, dance or food, Greeks love to share the joyful spirit. This would be called a *joie de vivre* but of course that's an entirely different language, so instead. that phrase having already been taken, it's called *philoxenia*.

A friend from the old neighborhood, where we lived before the Quilt Inn days, came by to stay with us. George Spirodopolous brought Christina, his wife, and little Georgio (who was at this time, five years older, a foot and a half taller and more worried about girls since we had last seen him!) It wasn't long before they had commandeered the Inn kitchen, and several volunteers, to prepare some Greek specialties for our lucky guests.

The emphasis of Greek food is simple preparation and wholesome ingredients which make it perfect "country cooking" for The Quilt Inn. And, it is relatively unchanged since Archestratus wrote the very first cookbook over 2000 years ago. Unfortunately, it was not a best seller. Since every recipe had to be chiselled on pieces of slate, ("carved in stone" we refer to it today), the book not only took many decades to complete but weighed more than the average Greek cupboard could hold. Can you imagine checking it out of the Romus Librarius? "Two days overdue, eh, Spiros? Get your hernia fixed—you have a date with the lions!")

Two things we discovered about Greek food from George and his family. First, much of the food is prepared with olive oil, which in today's health conscious eating is very good because it holds cholesterol levels down. Second, the food keeps extremely well, not only providing great leftovers but often tasting better the second time around.

Legend has it that Greek food is so aromatically delicious that one can swoon in ecstasy. Me, I thought it was the amount of garlic in many dishes!

So, George, Christina, and little Georgio wish you *bon appetit*...no,no, there we go again...they wish you *Kali Orexi*!

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Appetizers (mezethes) are meant to be sampled sparingly, with ouzo as an accompaniment. Michael and I, in the early days of our marriage, used to go to our favorite Greek restaurant and eat a whole meal just from the appetizer list!

Tzatziki

2 cups plain yogurt

1 cucumber, peeled, chopped fine and drained

5 cloves garlic, crushed

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a non–metallic bowl. Mix well and chill. If you like Tzatziki thick, drain the yogurt overnight through a cheesecloth. Serve with chunky bread or rolls.

Saganaki

This is a very rich cheese appetizer. Small quantities go a long way. Cut chunks of goat cheese or any solid white cheese. There are several excellent Greek cheese that are best for this dish. Try Kasseri which is a mild Cheddar-like cheese, or Kefalograviera, which is like Gruyere, or Manouri, an unsalted table cheese.

Dust cheese lightly with flour. Heat a cast iron skillet or griddle to medium heat. Add butter and fry the cheese until golden brown. Remove pan from heat.

Warm ½ oz. Brandy, pour it over the cheese and light it carefully. Serve with a flourish! Yell “Opa!”, “To your health!”

You can also add slices of black Amphissa olives or sausage just before you flambe the Saganaki.

Keftedakia

(Our loose translation: meatballs for the gods!)

1/2 lb. ground beef

1/2 lb. ground lamb

1/2 lb. ground pork

1 onion, chopped fine

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4 cloves garlic, crushed

1/2 cup fine bread crumbs

1 egg, lightly beaten

4 tbsp. fresh mint, chopped fine

1/2 tsp. oregano

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

flour

3 tbsp. olive oil

Combine meat, onion, garlic, bread crumbs, egg, mint, oregano, salt and pepper in bowl. Mix well. Shape into 1 inch balls. Dust lightly with flour. Fry in olive oil until evenly brown. Serve with toothpicks for party finger food, or with Tzatziki and bread as an appetizer.

To serve as a main course, form meatballs into large oval sausage-shapes on skewers. Grill on medium heat until cooked through, about 20 minutes. Serve on a bed of shredded lettuce, with tomato salsa and thinly sliced onion.

George tells me that the white chef's hat that is customarily worn in most kitchens of many fine restaurants (including ours), had its origins in Greece. It seems that the shape is based on Greek monk's hats. Chefs used to seek refuge in the monasteries to avoid persecution (when one of their recipes really went bad!) In any event, the different colors made it easy to tell who was a monk and who was a chef, so that there was no monk-eying around.

Classic Greek Salad

1 cup Feta cheese, crumbled

3 large ripe tomatoes, cut in chunks

1 large cucumber, peeled, cut in chunks

1 small red onion, sliced thin

24 black Amphissa olives, pitted

3 tbsp. olive oil

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1 tsp. oregano

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine tomatoes, cucumber, onion, and olives in bowl. Sprinkle with oregano, salt and pepper. Drizzle with oil and toss. Place in serving bowl or on individual plates. Sprinkle with Feta cheese.

There are many fine olive oils now available in grocery stores. The important thing to look for on the label is "extra virgin". This term means the oil was pressed out of the olives in the original way, manually. This is the best olive oil. You may also see "pure" olive oil, which means the oil was pressed mechanically or processed with heat, used to obtain maximum yields, a good oil, but not the best. This is OK, but the heat erodes the fine subtle flavor and quality of the oil and ideally should not be used in processing olives.

Try different brands of olive oil, because, unlike plain vegetable oils, they vary greatly in taste, depending on the kind of olives used, and like wine, also on the type of soil they grew in. Weather also changes the moisture and ripeness of olives. Many well-stocked Greek or Italian kitchens will have several different grades and flavors of olive oil each to be used for specific purposes.

Opa Okra!

2 cups ripe tomatoes, blanched and peeled

1 lb. okra

2 medium onions, chopped fine

3 tbsp. olive oil

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 tsp. sugar

juice of 1 lemon

1/2 cup red wine

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Wash and dry okra. Cut off stems, not exposing seeds. Heat oil in pan. Add

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onion and garlic, saute until lightly brown and fragrant. Stir in okra, tomatoes, parsley, sugar, lemon juice, wine, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer on low for 30 minutes or until tender. Transfer to serving dish.

As every gardener knows you can never have too many zucchini recipes, because you can never get rid of all the zucchini that you grow! The Green Thumb Rule is, "If you grow zucchini, no one leaves the property with less than one basket-full"!

Zorba's Zucchini

5 large zucchini *(give away another 5 immediately)*

5 large ripe tomatoes, sliced

1/2 cup olive oil

1 1/2 cups Feta cheese, crumbled

1/2 cup fresh parsley

1/2 cup white wine

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preheat broiler.

Wash and dry zucchini, slice lengthwise. Brush with oil and place on baking sheet. Broil until golden brown. Set aside.

Grease shallow casserole. Layer zucchini, tomatoes, onion, Feta, parsley, salt and pepper, ending with Feta on top. Add wine. Bake at 375F for 30 minutes or until top is brown and bubbly.

Feta cheese is excellent with almost any green vegetable. The salty, nutty flavor brings out the best of even commonplace garden vegetables.

Rice Pilaf

1 lb. fresh spinach

1 onion, chopped fine

1 cup long grain rice

1 1/2 cups water

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2 tbsp. olive oil

1 tbsp. dillweed or oregano

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Wash and dry spinach, tear into pieces. Set aside. Heat oil in saucepan. Add onions, saute until soft. Add rice, saute for 3 minutes. Stir in water, dillweed, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, add spinach and stir. Bring to boil, cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Transfer to serving dish.

If you went to an arts and crafts show in ancient Greece, you would be wiser to take along your favorite recipes instead of your rendition of "Alexander's Mother". Cookery was considered the greater of the fine arts because it brought more consistent pleasure. Sophocles, Aristotle, and the rest were indeed famous philosophers and teachers, but in ancient Greece, what was the profession of highest prestige? You're right. The cook. Perhaps if Archimedes, when he said, "Eureka, I have found it!" while sitting in his bathtub, had invented a decent recipe for Tzatziki, instead of finding his rubber duckie, he would be even more famous today.

Roast Lamb

6 lb. leg of lamb

6 potatoes, peeled and cut in chunks

6 cloves garlic, chopped

6 tbsp. olive oil

juice of 1 lemon

1 tbsp. oregano

2 cups red wine

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400F.

Remove excess fat from lamb, wash and dry thoroughly. Score top and bottom, rub in garlic. Rum lamb with olive oil and place in roasting pan. Squeeze lemon juice over meat, sprinkle oregano, salt and pepper. Bake for 45 minutes. Reduce heat to

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325F, add wine. Continue roasting 30 minutes per pound. Baste frequently during roasting.

Add potatoes during last 1½ hours. Transfer to platter for serving. Serve with Opa Okra, and a full-bodied wine like Castel Danielis or Mount Ambelos.

Gerry Lamb's Soup

3 lbs. lamb, cubed, fat removed

1 large onion, quartered

3 bay leaves

1/2 cup barley

1½ cups onion, chopped fine

1 cup carrots, chopped

1 cup celery, chopped

1 cup potatoes or turnips, chopped

1/3 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/4 tsp. caraway seeds

Place meat in soup pot, cover with water, bring to a boil, skimming off froth as it rises. Add onion, bay leaves, salt and pepper, and barley. Bring to boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 1 hour. Add onion, carrots, celery, potatoes, and caraway. Simmer another hour. Serve with crusty bread and a fine chilled Rose wine like Rosella.

Lamb Stew With Greek Egg-Lemon Sauce

Because lamb is such a rich meat, the acidity of the spinach in this dish adds an excellent counterbalance.

3 lbs. lean lamb, cut in cubes

2 large onions, chopped

5 cloves garlic, minced

large bunch fresh spinach

1/4 cup long grain rice

1 cup white wine

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1 cup water

3 tbsp. olive oil

3 tbsp. dillweed

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Trim fat from meat. Heat oil and sear meat until browned. Add onions and garlic. Saute until tender. Stir in water, wine, dillweed, salt and pepper. Bring to boil. Simmer, partly covered, for 2 hours, or until meat is tender.

Wash spinach and pat dry with paper towels. Remove stalks. Add spinach and rice to stew. Stir gently occasionally. Cook for 20 minutes, or until rice is cooked and liquid is reduced. Reduce heat, but keep stew hot.

Egg–Lemon Sauce

3 eggs

1 tbsp. all purpose flour

juice of 1 lemon

hot stock from stew

Beat eggs lightly in bowl. Sprinkle with flour and continue beating. Add lemon juice and beat until well blended. Continue beating while slowly pouring in about one cup hot stock from stew pot until sauce thickens. When completely blended, pour sauce back into meat and vegetables. Stir gently and heat over low for several minutes, without boiling (or sauce will curdle). Serve immediately.

Another delicious traditional Greek sauce is this rich sauce, made without cream, that is excellent on fish or vegetables.

Skordalia

6 cloves garlic, minced

6 slices white bread without crusts

1/2 cup blanched almonds

1/3 cup lemon juice

2/3 cup olive oil

2/3 cup water

Tear bread into large chunks. Place in mixing bowl and sprinkle with water. Set

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aside. Combine garlic and onions in blender until smooth. Add bread, lemon juice, olive oil and dash salt. Blend until mixture has thick, creamy consistency, thin with water or thicken with more bread, if necessary. Chill before serving.

To ensure that their fish was fresh, superstitious ancient Greek cooks often set out in boats lit with lanterns which attracted the fish. These lanterns were also believed to ward off monsters of the deep, and therefore I suppose we can safely assume that Greeks invented the first nightlight!

For lighter Greek fare, try these delicious seafood recipes.

Hearty Fish Soup

2 lbs. fish pieces *(cod, halibut or red snapper)*

1 large onion, chopped

5 cloves garlic, minced

1 ripe sweet green pepper

1/4 cup olive oil

1 cup tomato sauce

3/4 cup water

1 cup white wine

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 tsp. thyme

1 tsp. oregano, crushed

2 bay leaves

fresh ground pepper

Saute onion, garlic and sweet pepper in oil until tender. Add tomato sauce, water, wine, parsley, oregano, thyme, bay leaves and pepper. Cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Add fish and simmer another 15 minutes. Serve in bowls with crusty bread, and a light dry table wine like Hymettus or St. Helena.

Baked Fish Casserole

2 lbs. fish chunks *(cod or snapper will do just for the halibut)*

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1 large onion, chopped

6 green onions, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

1 sweet green pepper, cut in chunks

3 medium potatoes, scrubbed and cut in chunks

3 zucchini, sliced

3/4 cup olive oil

2 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1 bay leaf

1 tbsp. oregano

1 cup water

1/2 cup white wine

2 tbsp. butter

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Saute onions, garlic, green pepper, potatoes and zucchini for 3 minutes, in small batches. Place vegetables in baking dish or casserole. Sprinkle on parsley, bay leaf, oregano, salt and pepper. Add water and wine. Bake for 45 minutes uncovered.

Wash fish and pat dry thoroughly with paper towels. Dust with salt and pepper. Place on top of vegetables. Brush with butter, turn to oven for another 45 minutes, uncovered. Serve with a full-bodied red wine such as Robola.

Baked Shrimp Au Gratin

1 1/2 lbs. large shrimp

2 tbsp. lemon juice

3 cups tomato sauce

1 1/2 cups feta cheese

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400F.

Peel and devein shrimp. Wash and dry thoroughly. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Place shrimp in casserole. Cover with tomato sauce. Sprinkle Feta and Parmesan cheese on top. Bake for 25 minutes or until cheese is bubbly.

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This makes a great appetizer when served in individual ramekins. Serve with Domestica white wine.

George says that if you visit Greece, you will often see men sitting at outdoor cafes, sipping quantities of ouzo and playing with their Komboli, or worry beads. I'd be worried about going home too, with a snootful of ouzo under my chef's hat!

Many Greek pastries are legendary for their rich, honey-drenched sweetness. So instead, after a hearty Greek meal, we find these light spicy cookies to be an ideal ending along with fine coffee, and perhaps a little Sambuca.

Greek Spice Cookies

5 cups flour
1 cup butter
1/2 cup icing sugar
1 egg yolk
zest of 1 orange
1 cup orange juice
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. ground cloves
1/2 tsp. grated nutmeg
1 cup walnuts, chopped fine

Preheat oven to 350F. Combine 3 cups flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg. Cream butter in mixing bowl until fluffy. Gradually add sugar and egg yolk. Beat in orange zest and juice. Beat in dry ingredients gradually until stiff dough is formed. Add more flour if dough is sticky. Knead on floured surface.

Drop spoonfuls of dough on ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire racks.

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Syrup

2 cups liquid honey

1 cup water

1 lemon, sliced

Combine honey, water and lemon in saucepan. Bring to boil. Lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Dip cookies in syrup, remove and place on wire racks. Sprinkle with chopped walnuts. Cool.

Dr. Galne, a physician in 131 A.D., recommended that honey be used to stimulate the affairs of the heart. I think this is why baklava is so rich—your heart goes into overdrive when you bite into this delicious Greek dessert! So, if you have the time and want to indulge, here you go.

Baklava

Pastry

1 lb. phyllo pastry *(available in the frozen dessert section of most supermarkets)*

1 lb. melted butter

Butter a shallow baking pan, or cookie sheet that has 1 inch deep lip all around. Place one sheet of phyllo on the pan. Brush with melted butter. Add another sheet of phyllo and brush with butter. Repeat until 6 sheets have been layered and buttered.

Syrup

1 cup liquid honey *(for a different flavor, try* 1/2 *and* 1/2 *with Buckwheat honey)*

2 cups corn syrup

2 thick orange slices

2 thick lemon slices

1 tsp. vanilla

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Simmer for 15 minutes or until mixture becomes thin and runny. Do not boil. Squeeze lemon and orange juice into mixture and discard slices. Let cool before stirring in vanilla. Set aside.

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Filling

1 cup pistachios, chopped

1 cup pecans, chopped

1 cup walnuts, chopped

1 cup almonds, chopped

3 tsp. cinnamon

Mix all nuts in a bowl with cinnamon.

Assemble the Baklava

Preheat oven to 375F. Sprinkle half the nut mixture on the prepared phyllo. Add six more phyllo layers, brushing each with melted butter. Sprinkle remaining nut mixture on top layer. Add six more phyllo layers, repeating procedure. Cut into bite-sized squares or diamonds. Brush top with butter. Bake for 30 minutes. Lower heat to 325F and bake another 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Remove from oven and pour syrup over pastry slowly, allowing it to sink in. Set aside at rom temperature for several hours before serving.

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Lionhearts

Orphans are left on doorsteps. In baskets. In secrecy and embarrassment, and with sad entreaties to take care of the precious bundle inside. Here was another orphan to look after. At least, that's how it felt when I went to the firehall last night to pick up a parcel. I wish the firemen would be more open about it and own up to it. There's certainly nothing to be ashamed about. Not any more. Not these days. A lot of men have been caught doing it.

When I returned to the Inn, Michael and I carefully opened the plainly wrapped package and gently lifted out our treasure. A beautiful applique quilt! Yes, our firemen quilt. On the "q.t." Seven volunteer firemen get together every two weeks to eat pizza, drink beer, watch a ball game, and...quilt. You just never know what goes on behind closed doors, do you?

It all started five years ago after the terrible MacPherson fire. Three young children who should have never been left alone were trapped in the back bedroom of a rapidly collapsing house. By that strange power of coincidence or Divine intention that places the right people at the right place when they are needed, Dan, one of the volunteers, heard the call go out over his car radio. He'd been out that evening to The Rib House bar and remembered seeing Sam and Jessie MacPherson partying it up late. He knew that meant the kids were home unattended as usual. Fortunately, he was only eight blocks away at the time. Unfortunately, he had no equipment with him and the firehall was on the other side of town. He also knew that the poor wood frame houses on this side of town were just tinderboxes waiting to go up.

Dan was the first on the scene and without even hesitating, he charged straight into the burning house. To this day, no one knows, not even Dan, how he found the children. The house was literally collapsing behind him as he went towards the bedrooms. Smashing the back window, he pushed two unconscious children to safety. Although neighbors saw him go in the front, no one was watching the back of the building. By the time he got the third child to the window and out, both he and the baby were on fore themselves. Holding the child, and dragging him away from the house, he

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rolled on the ground to put out the fire, and then staggered to the front yard where help finally saw him.

The burns and glass lacerations put him in the hospital for weeks. His hands were the most severely damaged. He underwent several more weeks of rehabilitation therapy. And another person was in the right place at the right time. His therapist nurse happened to be a quilter and as a part of his hand therapy, she started him quilting to regain strength in his wrists and mobility in his fingers. He found it to be a soothing form of necessary exercise and just kept doing it when he returned to work. No one was going to impugn this hero's masculinity, so it became an accepted, if peculiar, thing around the firehall.

Slowly, a couple of other guys became curious, then interested and finally hesitatingly, joined in. Now it's a regular clandestine part of their routine. Burly, gnarled, scarred, big-knuckled hands around the frame. Add I'm sure their talk must sometimes make the quilt blush.

Their quilts are usually appliques. Not flowers or gentle little things like ladies might produce, but strong and bold like you would expect from men with hearts like lions who face terrible, sudden, and terrifying dangers. Their quilts are full of movement and life.

The problem became what to do with the finished quilts. Michael and I are honored to be able to help. You see, when you visit The Quilt Inn, after you pass through the front door the first thing you see is a quilt hanging from the railing of the landing at the top of the stairs in the front hall. At the bottom of the stairs, Bruno, an antique wooden carousel dog picked up at an auction, stands guard. The quilt is on display so that guests from all around the country can see it and are able to purchase raffle tickets. Each year, on the anniversary of the fire, Dan draws the winner, who receives this wonderful gift by special delivery. All the funds are given to the local hospital. Firemen, perhaps more than anyone in town, know the value of the care for human life that a community hospital gives.

By the way, the children are fine now. The older boy wants to be a fireman too, just like the hero who saved his life. And Sam and Jessie MacPherson are much chastened and at least more attentive parents.

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And, except for the scars, Dan's hands are just fine. So's his heart.

It's tradition around fire halls that the men take turns preparing their 'specialty' meals for the other men. Because they could be called to an emergency at any minute, their recipes tend to be easy to start, and stop, at any time. The fellas use convenience items like frozen or canned ingredients. We like to use fresh wherever possible. The food also keeps well on low heat for prolonged periods of time and can be quickly reheated. They are hearty and scrumptious too!

Turkey Pot Pie With Fire Captain Herb's Fresh Crust

1/3 cup butter

1/2 lb. mushrooms. chopped

1 cup chicken stock

1/4 cup flour

2 cups milk

1/2 tsp. dried thyme

1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

4 cups diced cooked turkey

1/4 cup diced pimiento

2 1/2 cups peas and carrots

Melt butter in large saucepan. Add mushrooms. Cook several minutes. Sprinkle with flour. Cook 5 minutes but do not brown. Whisk in chicken stock and milk. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Add seasonings, salt and pepper. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Add turkey, carrots and peas to sauce. Spoon turkey mixture into a 3 quart buttered casserole dish.

Preheat oven to 400F.

Herb's Crust:

1 cup all purpose flour

2 tsp. baking powder

1 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

1 tbsp. chopped fresh dill

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1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 cup butter

1/2 cup milk

Sift together flour and baking powder, parsley, dill and salt. Cut in 1/3 cup butter until it forms small lumps. Sprinkle mixture with remaining milk. Roll dough into a ball. Roll out dough on floured surface to fit top of casserole. Place dough directly on top of turkey mixture in casserole. Bake 30 to 35 minutes.

Sean's Irish Stew

6 medium potatoes, peeled and cut thick

3 large onions, peeled and cut thick

3 lbs. lean boneless lamb, cubed

3 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley

1 tsp. dried thyme

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

water to cover ingredients

Preheat oven to 400F.

Sear lamb cubes in pan to seal juices, remove from pan. Brown onions and deglaze browning with a little water.

Arrange layers of potatoes, onions and lamb in a large ovenproof casserole, sprinkling layers with seasonings. Add water to cover. Bake for 2 to 3 hours or until meat is tender.

Serve with Irish Soda Bread

Irish Soda Bread

1 cup all purpose flour

2 tsp. baking soda

1 1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 cup butter, softened

3 cups whole wheat flour

1 2/3 cups buttermilk

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Preheat oven to 400F and grease loaf pan.

Sift all purpose flour together with baking soda and salt in a large mixing bowl. Cut in butter with pastry blender, two knives or your fingertips until mixture forms coarse crumbles. Stir in whole wheat flour, mixing well. Add buttermilk, stirring until ingredients are thoroughly moistened.

Place dough on floured surface and knead for 5 minutes. Shape dough into round and place on baking pan. Cut ½ inch deep cross on top of loaf with a sharp knife. Dust cross with flour. Bake for 40 minutes or until bread sounds hollow when tapped. Remove and cool on wire rack.

Backdraft Chili

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

2 large onions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tbsp. chili powder

1 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. oregano

pinch of hot red chili flakes

1/2 lb. lean ground beef

1/2 lb. lean ground pork

1 sweet red pepper, diced

1 sweet green pepper, diced

2 stalks celery, diced

2 tbsp. all purpose flour

1 cup milk

1 tin plum tomatoes, drained

1/4 cup tomato paste

1 tin diced mild green chilies

1 tin red kidney beans, drained

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Heat oil in large skillet. Cook onions and garlic until tender. Add chili powder,

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paprika, oregano, and hot red chili flakes. Cook 1 minute. Add pork and beef. Cook until meat loses its raw appearance. Drain off excess fat. Stir in red and green pepper, celery and flour. Cook 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in milk. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and cook over low heat for 20 minutes. Add tomatoes, stir in tomato paste, mild chilies and beans. Cook 10 minutes longer, uncovered, until thick. Season with salt and pepper.

Serve over rice with sour cream or unflavored yogurt. Garnish with grated cheese and diced avocado.

Firefighter Chicken Stew

2 medium onions, sliced
1/2 cup carrots, sliced
1/2 cup celery, sliced
3 tbsp. butter
4 lbs. chicken, cut up
1 cup yogurt
1 tbsp. curry powder
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. turmeric
2 tsp. salt
2 qts. water

In large saucepan, saute onions, carrots and celery in butter until soft. Add chicken and cook 20 minutes, turning pieces until brown. Stir in yogurt, curry powder, garlic, turmeric and salt. Cook another 20 minutes on lower heat so as not to burn the yogurt. Add water, cover and simmer 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Uncover to thicken stew. Serve over rice.

Dan’s Beef Stew

1/2 cup corn starch
2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

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1/2 tsp. paprika

1 1/2 lbs. lean stewing beef, cubed

3 tbsp. vegetable oil

1 1/2 cups carrots, cubed

5 small potatoes, cubed

4 small onions, quartered

3 stalks celery, sliced

2 cups green beans, sliced

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 pouch dry onion soup mix

1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

1/2 tsp. gravy browning

1 3/4 cups milk

Preheat oven to 450F.

Combine cornstarch, salt, pepper and paprika. Dust meat cubes with mixture, reserve remaining mixture. Toss meat cubes with oil in ovenproof casserole. Bake uncovered 30 minutes, stir occasionally. Add carrots, potatoes, celery, onions and green beans to meat.

Combine reserved cornstarch mixture with mushroom soup, onion soup mix, Worcestershire sauce and gravy browning. Gradually stir in milk. Pour over meat and vegetables. Reduce oven to 350F. Bake, covered, for 1 hour. Remove cover and stir to combine ingredients. Return to oven, bake covered for 45 minutes or until meat and vegetables are tender.

Southern Chicken Stew

3 lbs. chicken, cut up

1 tsp. salt

6 potatoes, peeled and quartered

2 cans tomatoes, chopped, with juice

1 onion, chopped

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1 tsp. sugar

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 lb. lima beans *(frozen will do)*

1 lb. whole kernel corn *(frozen will do)*

Place cutup chicken pieces and salt (*) in large pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 45 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Remove chicken from broth. Remove meat from bones, cut into small pieces and set aside.

Add potatoes to broth and cook for 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Mash potatoes in broth for thickening. Re-add chicken, tomatoes, onion, sugar and pepper. Cook uncovered over medium heat for 45 minutes. Add lima beans and corn and cook additional 15 minutes or until lima beans are tender.

(*) A Rule of Thumb for cooking meat with or without salt. Salt will draw the flabor out of the meat and into the broth, so if you want a tasty broth, add salt in cooking the meat. But if you want tasty meat, do not add salt during the cooking; add any required salt afterward.

Stovetop Stew

3 lbs. beef, cubed

2 1/2 cup onions, sliced

4 oz. green chilies

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tbsp. fresh ginger, minced

1/4 tsp. curry powder

1 tsp. salt

1 can tomatoes

1 tbsp. cider vinegar

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 tbsp. chili powder

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1–12 oz. can vegetable juice

2 tbsp. olive oil

Combine vinegar, lemon juice, chili powder and vegetable juice on bowl. Add meat and marinade up to 1 hour. Stir occasionally.

Heat oil. Saute onions, chilies and garlic over low heat until tender. Add ginger, curry and salt. Mix well and add tomatoes. Add meat and marinade to pan and simmer for 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Add water if liquid is necessary.

Serve with steamed rice or in bowls with crusty bread.

Hungry Hungarian Goulash

2 lbs. stewing beef, cubed

1 cup onions, sliced

1 cup celery, sliced

1 cup carrots, sliced

1 cup green peppers, cut in strips

2 cloves garlic, minced

4 tbsp. paprika

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 bay leaf

3 tbsp. tomato paste

2 cups bouillon or canned beef stock

1/2 cup sour cream

Sear meat in oil in large cast iron pot. Remove meat. In pan juices, saute onion, garlic, green pepper and celery until tender. Stir in paprika, salt, pepper, bay leaf and tomato paste. Add bouillon and carrots. Return meat to pan. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 2 hours or until meat is tender and liquid is thickened.

Traditionally served with buttered noodles. Just before serving, stir in sour cream.

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Dream Again

It's cold, October, Hallowe'en. In the long field the corn stalks are gold and crispy. The supple green whooshing of Summer corn has given way to the dry rustlings of Autumn. The hand of cold wind leaves a moving caress across the field. From the house I hear children's laughter as they toss and scuffle piles of leaves.

Beyond the vegetable garden we planted a field of corn. For its golden salt and butter taste, and for the movie *Field of Dreams*. I walk through the field every Summer with the tall green stalks brushing against my shoulders and imagine, I, too, hear voices in the rustling. The voice of my grandmother telling me to remember my dreams.

It's easy to feel lost in the high corn. Ten feet into the field could be a hundred. The noise of the up close and crowded green myopia obliterates your sense of direction. You lose your perspective, your vision of distant horizons, in the immediacy.

The first time I wandered into a cornfield I was disoriented. My brother, Bob, and I were playing tag, crashing around in the obscurring greenery. I suddenly realized I had lost his voice and noise. He had sneaked away. He was trying to scare me, as older brothers will do. It worked. I ran in every direction. I yelled. I jumped futilely toward the blue dome sky for bearings. I cursed Bob. The sun was high and hot overhead. A buzzing of insects surrounded me. My heart pounded in my ears. Then in the tumult I heard Grandma's still voice. "Don't be scared," she said. "Think."

"Corn is planted in straight rows, silly," I said to myself. "Follow the row to the edge of the field."

The panic left me. I didn't know where I was or where the row would lead me but I knew how to get home. When I emerged I was dusty and a half mile from home. I could see Grandma standing on the porch waiting. Bob was sitting dejectedly on the step, in trouble for having abandoned me.

In the end I had walked the long way through the field, but I could finally see where I was.

Staying on a straight path will ultimately end up somewhere familiar.

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Grandma's Fluffy Cornmeal Muffins

1 1/2 cups flour

1/2 cup cornmeal

2/3 cup sugar

1/2 cup margarine

1 egg

1 1/4 cup milk

1/3 tsp. salt

3 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. nutmeg

1 tsp. vanilla

Combine sugar, margaine, egg, vanilla and milk in large mixing bowl. Sift flour, salt, baking powder, cornmeal, nutmeg together. Blend dry ingredients into wet and mix well. Spoon into large muffin pans. Bake at 350F for 25 minutes or until well done.

Serve with maple syrup, which reminds me....

Here's my best cornmeal story. One year in University a bunch of us students decided to drive to Florida for spring break. We were six to a car and drove nonstop to warmer weather. It was early bleary-eyed dawn when we reached Georgia and stopped for breakfast. One of the fellas saw Cornbread on the recipe and, never having had it before, decided to try it. "It's delicious," I assured him. "How do you eat it?" he enquired, as the steaming plate arrived before him. Glancing at the assortment of condiments on the table, I suggested, "You could put honey or maple syrup on it." He picked up a glass serving pitcher with amber liquid in it. You know the kind with the plastic handle and slide back spout. He doused the cornbread and eagerly picked up his fork. The thought had just crossed my idle mind that the syrup looked a little watery, but figured they were being cheesey with the tourists, when Charlie started to gag and spit his mouthful all over. "Blah," he cried to our surprise. "Don't you like it?" I asked with my mouth full of peaches, as he gulped a glass of ice water. "That's vinegar!" he exclaimed. "I thought it looked a bit thin," I mumbled. I wonder if he ever tried cornbread again.

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Grandma's Easy Corn Relish

2 small onions, sliced paper thin

1 cup vinegar

8 tbsp. sugar

2 tbsp. mustard seed

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. celery seed

1/2 tsp. dry mustard

12–ounce can kernel corn mixed with red and green peppers, drained

1 cup cucumber, diced

1 stalk celery, chopped fine

In medium saucepan, combine onion, vinegar, sugar, mustard seed, salt, celery seed, and dry mustard. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in canned corn and peppers. Cool. Spoon into jars. Seal and store in refrigerator or cold cellar.

Corn Fritters

1 cup fresh corn kernels

1/4 cupflour

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

1 tsp. baking powder

1 egg

Combine corn and egg. Add to dry ingredients in bowl. Drop by spoonfuls in to bacon fat or nonstick frypan. Fry on medium until golden brown, flip and brown other side.

Southern Star Hush Puppies

1 cup cornmeal

2 tsp. sugar

1 tsp salt

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1 1/3 cup water

2 tsp. baking powder

1 tbsp. margarine

2 tbsp. onion, chopped fine

corn oil

Combine cornmeal, sugar and salt in sacepan. Add water. Cook on low heat until mixture leaves sides of pan. Remove from heat and add remaining ingredients (except oil). Cover and chill.

Form into small finger-shaped rolls and fry in hot oil until golden brown. Turn during cooking. Drain on paper towels before serving hot with fish or seafood.

Colache

3 zucchini

4 ears fresh corn

4 peeled tomatoes

1 large onion, sliced

2 green peppers, cored, seeded and chopped coarsely

2 tbsp. butter

2 tbsp. olive oil

2 drops Tabasco sauce

Cut zucchini into rounds and saute in butter and olive oil until slightly browned. Add onion and green peppers to pan. Saute briefly. Add tomatoes. Cut corn from cob and add to pan. Add salt and pepper and Tabasco. Cover and cook for ½ hour. Uncover and simmer another 15 minutes.

Log Cabin Corn Flan

l whole large head garlic

1 tbsp olive oil

1 cup half-and-half cream

2 large eggs

2 large egg yolks

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1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 1/2 cups fresh whole corn kernels

dash Tobasco sauce

Preheat oven to 375F. Remove outer layer of garlic skin. Slice of 1/2–inch of top stem to expose cloves. Place head, cut side up on baking sheet. Drizzle with oil. Turn over and roast 30 to 40 minutes or until cloves are soft and golden. Remove and cool garlic. Remove garlic cloves from head by squeezing bottom and using knifetip to pull them out. Place cloves in blender. Add eggs, egg yolks, cream, salt, pepper and dash of Tobasco sauce. Process until blended. Add corn and mix lightly.

Butter baking dish or individual ramekins. Spoon corn mixture into pans and place in water in roasting pan. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until set. Remove and cool. Serve by inverting onto serving plate with green salad.

Lorraine's Summer Corn Tart

l cooked pie crust

2 cups fresh corn kernels

1/2 lb. spicey Italian sausage

1 red pepper, diced

1 green pepper, diced

1 onion, sliced

3 large eggs

1 cup milk

1/4 cup flour

1/4 to 1/2 tsp. Tabasco to taste

1/2 tsp dry mustard

1/2 tsp. salt

Steam corn until tender. Drain and set aside. Remove casing from sausage. In skillet cook sausage until browned, stirring to break meat into crumbles. Remove sausage from pan. Saute peppers and onion in sausage dripping until tender. Remove and set aside.

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Preheat oven to 350F. In large bowl beat eggs, milk, flour, Tobasco, mustard and salt until well blended. Stir in corn, sausage meat, peppers and onions. Pour mixture into prepared pie crust. Bake 40 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Kansas Troubles Two-Corn Pancakes

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour

3/4 cup cornmeal

1 cup fresh corn kernels

2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

1 cup milk

2 tbsp. sugar

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1 large egg

2 large egg whites

oil for frying

Combine flour, cornmeal, corn, baking poweder and salt in mixing bowl. Set aside.

Beat milk, sugar, oil, vanilla and egg yolk until blended. Stir in flour mixture until batter is combined. Do not overmix.

Beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Fold egg whites into batter. Lightly oil griddle or large skillet and heat over medium. Spoon scant 1/4 cup batter onto griddle, spreading it evenly to 4–inch round. Cook 2 minutes or until bubble form. Lift edge carefully to check if bottom is golden brown. Flip and cook other side until golden brown. Remove pancakes. Serve immediately or place on baking sheet in 200F oven to keep warm until serving.

For breakfast or brunch serve with butter and maple syrup. For dinner, make pancakes 3–inch round and serve with pats of savory herb butter as side dish.

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Loose Change

One of the things I love about the Inn kitchen is the stone floor. It's awfully cold, yes. On Winter morning you don't dare set foot on it for fear of frostbite. But it's great in the Summer because it keeps the kitchen cool even on the hottest days. The floor is made of large grey stone slabs that are still uneven and rough in places. But a hundred years of feet working for hours in the kitchen had worn a noticeably smooth path around the room. We put a big old rough hewn pine harvest table in the middle and surrounded it with an eclectic mix of old mismatched wood chairs because the room looked empty without it. I grew up in a family that always gathered around the kitchen table to talk, and to laugh, and to make decisions, and sometimes even to eat. So, it's here we gather for "important" talk.

When couples visit the inn, the men will often ramble off doing "guy stuff", leaving the women to gather informally around the harvest table and gab. Frequently the talk will turn to quilting and we share our "how I made my first quilt" stories. As I listen, it sometimes seems as if the spirits of the women who used to live here are shuffling around the old worn stones, waiting their turn to tell their stories too.

Sally Marie and Cal were a couple who visited the Inn a number of times. Cal passed away last year. He had a wonderful sense of humor and great comic timing. We're going to miss him. So, for the first time, Sal is here by herself. She told us her story.

When Sally Marie got married, a long time ago, she was very young and there was little money to spend on any "extras" in life. Yet she was proud of the fine young man she had married. He worked hard and cared for her so completely. And when the young ones came along he was a strong and patient father no matter how tired he was at the end of the day. So how could she dare want for more?

Every morning she rose early, long before Calvin woke up and she crept quietly out of the bedroom to start his breakfast. But one morning, she happened to stop briefly at the bureau, looked back at the sleeping Cal, and in a moment's inspiration, she silently scooped up half the pocket change that Cal had left there the night before.

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It was all of fifteen cents. A lot of money in those meagre days. She knew she couldn't take it all but surely he wouldn't miss just half the change.

Cal said nothing that day, or evening. Sally felt a smug satisfaction that she was right. He hadn't noticed. So, the next morning she did the same thing again. And the next. Pretty soon, pennies at a time, she had collected the dollar that she needed. She bought some fabric and needles and made her first quilt. So that was Sally's "first quilt" story.

But that was almost fifty years ago. And yet every morning since then, Sally helped herself to Cal's loose change. Some days there was a lot of change. Sometimes, when times were tough, there was not. Over the years Sally was able to provide many little extras for the family—a special dress for the girls or a baseball glove for the boys. Cal often bragged on Sally to their friends about what a wonderful housekeeper she was! She could stretch her housekeeping allowance further than anyone!

Sally's "penny larceny" just became a habit, even after they were comfortably off financially and she had emancipated access to all their money. There was something special about taking half of Cal's change every day.

Many years ago, for their twenty fifth wedding anniversary, Sally had her heart set on a trip to Arizona to see the Grand Canyon. Even though Cal had been laid off for several months, somehow there always seemed to be lots of change at the end of the day, to go into Sally's secret fund. Despite the lean times, they were able to make the once-in-a-lifetime trip.

"You know Cal died last Spring," she said finally, quietly. "I was right there at the end. He was holding my hand. He looked me right in the eye and said 'Sal Gal'. He always called me 'Sal Gal'. He said, 'Sal Gal, keep the change!' And he smiled that big stupid grin of his. That old fox! He knew all along. And he never said a word. Imagine that!" She shook her head. "All those years, and he never said a word."

Somehow it seems that great love is not in the big important things you say but in the little things you never say.

Like in a marriage, a little sauce goes a long way. And, it can add a bit of extra

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zip to those otherwise humdrum meals.

Having a number of good sauces up your culinary sleeve enhances your reputation as a gourmet cook in a very simple and easy way.

White Garlic Sauce

12 cloves garlic, minced

2 lbs. Ricotta or cottage cheese

1/2 cup Parmesan Cheese

1 cup milk

4 tbsp. butter

fresh ground pepper to taste

Heat milk and butter in saucepan. Add garlic and simmer but do not boil for 5 minutes. Add Ricotta cheese and cook over low heat until cheese has melted. Remove from heat, stir in pepper. Serve over spinach pasta.

Red Garlic Sauce

6 cups plum tomatoes

1 small can tomato paste

16 cloves garlic, minced

4 tbsp. olive oil

2 onions, chopped

4 tbsp. basil, chopped

3 tbsp. oregano, chopped

1/4 cup parsley, chopped

fresh ground pepper to taste

Saute onion and garlic in oil until tender. Add basil, oregano, and parsley. Cook for 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, tomato paste and pepper. Simmer partly covered for 1 hour. Serve over pasta, plain rice or fish fillets.

Green Garlic Sauce

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1 lb. spinach. chopped fine

1 cup Ricotta or cottage cheese

1/4 cup Parmesan cheese

8 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 cup milk

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Melt butter in saucepan. Saute garlic until golden. Add spinach and cook for 5 minutes or until limp. Reduce heat, stir in cheeses and milk. Stir while cooking until cheese melts and mixture is cooked through. Serve over pasta or broiled chicken breasts.

And to prove that you can do ANYTHING with zucchini...

Zucchini Garlic Sauce

6 zucchini, diced

12–15 cloves garlic, minced

5 tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. basil

1 tsp. oregano

1 tsp. thyme

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Heat oil in saucepan. Add garlic and zucchini. Cook on low heat for 5 minutes. Sprinkle with herbs and continue to cook until zucchini is pulpy. To serve, leave sauce slightly lumpy or mash it to form paste. Serve over grilled fish.

Horseradish and Sausage Sauce

3/4 lb. Italian sausage, chopped, sauteed and drained

1/3 cup fresh horseradish, grated

1/2 onion, chopped fine

4 tbsp. flour

2 cups chicken stock

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4 tbsp. butter

4 cloves garlic, minced

1/3 tsp. nutmeg

1 cup whipping cream

dash cayenne pepper

fresh ground pepper to taste

Melt butter and saute onion and garlic until golden. Add flour and mix well. Add stock and stir until thickened. Add pepper, cayenne, nutmeg and cream and bring just to a boil. Reduce heat and add horseradish and sausage. Heat through before serving. Serve over mashed potatoes or steamed vegetables.

Peppery Orange Sauce

1 hot red pepper, chopped

3 green onions, chopped

1/2 cup onion, chopped

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 strip orange peel

1 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. flour

1 cup dry red wine

Saute green onions in saucepan. Add orange peel, garlic, lemon juice, and red pepper. Stir in flour. Stir in wine. Add 1 cup water and simmer, covered for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour over roast lamb 1/2 hour before end of cooking time, or use as a gravy with broiled lamb chops.

Mustard sauce

1/3 cup Dijon mustard

2 cups heavy cream

1/3 cup vinegar

1/2 cup onion, chopped

10 peppercorns

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1/4 tsp. thyme

2 tbsp. olive oil

Saute onions in saucepan in oil until tender. Stir in peppercorns, vinegar and thyme and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in cream. Return to heat and cook until thickened. Remove from heat and discard peppercorns. Stir in mustard, butter and salt to taste. Serve over pork medallions.

Curry Sauce

1 onion, chopped fine

1 cup tomato sauce

2 cups water

4 tbsp. olive oil

3 tbsp. curry powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 tsp. coriander

1/3 tsp. cumin seed

1/3 tsp. dry mustard

1/3 tsp. ground ginger

1/3 tsp. ground mace

1/3 tsp. ground cloves

In mixing bowl, mix all spices, and add 1/4 cup water, stirring to make thin paste. In saucepan, saute onions in oil. Add spices to saucepan. Stir constantly to prevent burning, but allow mixture to turn brown. Add tomato sauce and remaining water. Blend until smooth. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. Add extra water to thin sauce if necessary. Serve over plain steamed rice to accompany pork chops.

Hot Wine Sauce

1/2 cup Port wine

1/2 cup red currant jelly

juice of ½ lemon

3 whole cloves

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1 tbsp. butter

1 tbsp. cornstarch

dash cayenne pepper

Combine all ingredients, except Port and cornstarch, in saucepan and simmer 5 minutes. If desired, strain sauce. Add Port and stir 3 or 4 tablespoons of the hot liquid into the cornstarch to form paste. Gradually add paste back to hot liquid, stirring constantly, to thicken.

Open Sesame Nutty Butter

2 sticks unsalted butter, softened

1/4 cup sesame seeds, toasted

1/4 cup green onions, chopped fine

2 tbsp. sesame oil

2 tbsp. soya sauce

fresh ground pepper to taste

Blend all ingredients together until smooth. Spoon into individual ramekins or butter mould and chill until serving. Serve with grilled fish steaks.

Savory Fresh Herb Butter

1 stick unsalted butter, softened

1 tsp. fresh tarragon

1 tsp. fresh thyme

1 tsp. fresh oregano

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

3 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped fine

Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until well blended. Place in individual ramekins and chill before using as a table butter for warm home made bread or rolls. Let butter pats melt over steamed vegetables, when serving them “family style” (one large bowl).

Tangy Orange Butter

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2 sticks unsalted butter, softened

2 tbsp. orange zest, grated

2 tbsp. Cointreau or Grand Marnier

2 tbsp. orange juice

2 tbsp. confectioners' sugar

1/4 tsp. vanilla extract

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

Blend butter, sugar and orange zest in mixing bowl. Slowly beat in liqueur, juice, vanilla and nutmeg until smooth. Spoon into individual ramekins or butter mould and chill until serving. Serve with hot breakfast muffins or on pancakes.

English Custard Sauce

(This is an exception to sauces adding flavor. The English have an interesting custom of adding a bland custard sauce to tasty desserts...?)

1 cup heavy cream

4 egg yolks

1/3 cup sugar

2 tsp. vanilla

Scald cream in saucepan over low heat. Beat egg yolks with sugar until lemon yellow colored. Add cream to eggs, stirring constantly. Transfer to saucepan and cook, but do not boil, over medium heat, stirring until thickened. Add vanilla. Serve hot or at room temperature. (Sauce will form crust as it cools, so cover it tightly with plastic wrap.) Very nice over strong—flavored berry desserts.

Hot Toddy Rum Sauce

1/4 cup dark rum

1/2 cup butter

1 cup water

1 cup sugar

Heat sugar and water in saucepan until sugar dissolves completely and syrup thickens slightly. Remove from heat and add butter. Stir in rum. Return to heat briefly

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to heat through. Serve over plum pudding, spumoni ice cream or sliced bananas and cream.

See also:

Chocolate Fudge Sauce

Orange Butter Sauce

Cranberry Sauce

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Sunday, Sunday

In the town that lies close to the Inn, Sunday always arrives the same way. Regardless of the weather, the first light of dawn softens the everyday sharp contours of the empty town streets. If you sleep with your window open and wake early enough, you can hear the bells ringing from the Church a mile away. There is a different feel to Sunday mornings, an almost ethereal stillness that allows itself to fold over the area only once a week. Even the news of the day, whether international, national, or the homegrown gossip variety, slows to a trickle and people become more reflective.

Sunday is often called the “Sabbath” which derives from the Hebrew word “shabbat”, which means “cessation” or “rest”. A lot of people use Sunday to catch up on their sleep and therefore employ, and enjoy, the literal meaning of the word. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, Genesis records the first Sabbath as a moment of Divine inspiration: “So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it because on it God rested from all the work He had done in Creation.” This is not fatigue but rather the restful satisfaction of completion.

Yet, the true Sabbath transcends religious differences, and in fact may only be symbolic of the Sunday frame of mind: Jews and Seventh Day Adventists celebrate and repose between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday; Muslims on Friday; Buddhists on Sunday. Even those who don’t consider themselves religious have rituals they observe. Some read the Sunday paper, poring over each item and feature with an unhurried thoughtfulness. Others go for a stroll in the park and feed the wildlife. Others visit with family and friends.

At the Inn, we welcome all the diversities, as well as the similarities. One need only to be seeking good food, pleasant company and respite from one’s normal day-to-day activities to enjoy brunch at The Quilt Inn. It’s time they put aside for repose and renewal. As one of the locals said, “Coming to the Inn every Sunday is like a mental health day for me!” We’re always glad that they do.

Sunday brunch should be a leisurely, special meal. Unlike everyday

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breakfasts where one is hurrying on to other activities, and unlike lunch that is often, literally, "sandwiched" between appointments, brunch is an in-between sort of time of day, and should be a time to prepare slightly more elegant dishes, with time given to savor them.

Brunch should always start with fresh juice. It takes extra time to prepare but tastes so much better than any pre-packaged kind. If you don't like citrus juices like orange or grapefruit, try a vegetable juice like spicy tomato, or carrot.

I don't know why all the great, and famous, coffees, seem to originate in Europe. Perhaps they've learned the art of relaxing and truly savoring their food and drink. Here are some morning coffee recipes to sip while you read the newspaper or think about what you're going to do today...

Viennese Coffee

For every cup of coffee, melt 1 oz. semisweet chocolate with 1 tablespoon heavy cream in the top of a double boiler. Gradually whisk in coffee until frothy. Pour into large coffee cups. Top with whipped cream and sprinkle with cinnamon or grated orange zest.

Belgian Coffee

For each cup of coffee fold 1 beaten egg white into 1 tablespoon whipped cream and put into bottom of coffee cup. Pour in hot coffee until cream floats to surface. Garnish with cocoa powder.

Cafe Brulot

Combine 5 cinnamon sticks, 3 strips of orange peel and 2 stirps of lemon peel, with 1 teaspoon allspice and 8 cubes sugar in a chafing dish or skillet. Pour in 1 cup of Cognac and heat without stirring until the liquid is warm. Light the liquor with a match and stir until the flames go out. Pour in 6 cups strong hot coffee and stir. Strain and ladle into coffee cups.

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But for those of you who prefer tea, the English are renowned for their fussiness when it comes to preparing a "proper cup of char". I lived in England for a number of years, perhaps long enough for them to convince me that it really does make a difference in the taste.

A "Proper" Cup of Tea

A really good cup of tea always starts with tea leaves. This has the added advantage of allowing you a wider choice in the kind of tea you use. Just like wine, there are mild teas, mellow teas, and really sharp, strong teas, and there are marvellous flavored teas. Just be sure you always warm the teapot first. Place your tea leaves loose in the pot—one for each cup of tea, and "one for the pot."

Fill a kettle with fresh water. Never re-boil water for tea. Bring the water to a full rolling boil and pour into the teapot. Cover for 5 minutes and let it steep.

Pour the tea through a fine mesh strainer into china cups. Tea should always be served in china cups, serving it in anything else is like serving beer in Styrofoam cups. Don't worry, china nowadays isn't those delicate flowery little cups your grandmother had a collection of. There are many modern, and manly, patterns and styles to choose from.

Tea purists will demand their tea black, with perhaps a pinch of sugar to bring out the aromatic flavors. But for those who prefer a little milk in their tea, the "rule" is to pour the milk into the cup first, then add the hot tea. The tea then mixes itself, and believe me, it tastes different, although their is no scientific reason why this should be so, that I know of. Just try it. It does improve the taste.

Puff the Magic Pastry and Devilish Crab Puffs

<u>The Pastry</u>

2 cups all purpose flour

1 tsp. salt

1 1/2 cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, very cold, cut in pieces

6 tbsp. ice water

1/2 tsp. lemon juice

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Combine flour and salt in mixing bowl. Blend in butter with pastry blender, two knives, or your fingertips, until mixture is crumbly. Add 4 tablespoons water and the lemon juice, and mix until just blended. Gather the dough into a loose ball, and turn onto cool floured surface. Push dough away with heel of hand 1/4 cup at a time. Repeat until all dough has been smeared. Gather into ball and add more ice water if necessary, just to make dough that barely holds together. Roll out dough to form 14x7 inch rectangle. Fold the top third down and the bottom third up with edges touching in the center—your dough is now 14x3 1/2 inches. Fold in half for a 7x3 1/2 inch rectangle and lightly seal the fold. Turn the pastry so the folded edges are on your right, and roll out again to form 14x7 inch rectangle. Fold top third down and bottom third up, again, fold in half (you now have a 7x3 1/2½ rectangle again) and seal. Cover with plastic wrap and place in freezer for 20 minutes. Fold down top third, fold up bottom third, fold in half, seal, and return pastry to freezer for additional 20 minutes. (It is the folding and chilling that gives the pastry a light, puffy texture.)

When ready to use, roll pastry to desired thickness, cut “rounds” with cookie cutter or knife and use to line small muffin pans.

If you’re not using the pastry immediately, store in refrigerator tightly wrapped, or freeze.

The Crab Puffs

24 small baked puff pastry shells
8 oz. Snow crabmeat
2 tbsp. butter
1 onion, chopped fine
1/2 green pepper, chopped fine
1 stalk celery, chopped fine
1 tsp. curry powder
1 tbsp. dry or Dijon mustard
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. salt
dash cayenne pepper

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2 tbsp. flour

1/2 cup cream

fresh ground pepper and paprika to taste

Preheat oven to 350F.

Melt butter and saute onion, pepper and celery until tender. Mix in curry powder, mustard, salt, pepper, and cayenne. Cook gently for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add flour and sour cream. Heat while stirring, bringing to a boil and thickening. Add crab, Worcestershire sauce and paprika. Stir and bring to boil again. Mixture should have consistency of thick paste.

Spoon mixture into pastry shell and bake until heated through and golden brown. Serve with fresh garden salad and Russian dressing.

Basic Crepes

3/4 cup all purpose flour

dash salt

3 eggs, beaten

2 tbsp. melted butter

3/4 cup milk or buttermilk

Sift flour and salt together. Add eggs and beat with wire whisk until smooth. Add butter and mix thoroughly. Add enough milk until batter has consistency of heavy cream. Let stand 30 minutes, then beat again.

Heat nonstick pan or griddle to medium and brush with butter. Pour in tablespoon of batter to thinly cover the pan. When crepe browns, loosen and flip.

To serve as a dessert, stuff with fresh fruit and roll up. Add dollops of whipped cream, a spoonful of fruit preserves, or fresh fruit puree.

To serve as a light lunch, make crepes slightly larger and fill with favorite stuffing, such as crabmeat or cheese and mushrooms. Serve with chutney and fresh garden salad.

For savory variations, add **a** cup fresh parsley, dillweed, or finely chopped green onion to the basic crepe batter and blend thoroughly.

To serve as a hearty cold weather meal, make 12 crepes dinner plate size.

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Stuffing:

1/2 cup ripe olives, pitted and chopped

1/2 lb. spicy sausage, sliced thin

2 lbs. plum tomatoes, peeled

2 green peppers, seeded and diced fine

1 clove garlic, minced

2 tbsp. olive oil

1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 cup fresh parsley, chopped

dash hot pepper flakes

3/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Saute garlic, onions and peppers until tender. Add tomatoes and cook 5 minutes, until most of the liquid has evaporated. Add remaining ingredients except parsley and cheese. Simmer 20 minutes or until thick. Stir in parsley.

Spoon 1/4 cup of mixture and spoonful of cheese onto each crepe. Roll and transfer to baking sheet. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Cover with foil and bake at 325F for 10 minutes until cheese is melted and crepes are hot. Uncover and broil until cheese is golden brown.

Swiss Quiche with Seafood Sauce

1 unbaked pie shell (for recipe, see index) (for variation use Cheese Pastry for Quiche)

4 egg yolks, lightly beaten

1 1/2 cups light cream

1/4 tsp. salt

1/3 tsp. nutmeg

4 egg whites

1 1/2 cups Swiss cheese, shredded

Preheat oven to 450F.

Bake pie shell until golden brown. Reduce heat to 350F.

Combine egg yolks, cream, salt and nutmeg. Beat egg whites until stiff, fold into

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yolk mixture. Fold in cheese, pour into pie shell. Bake for 45 minutes or until tester inserted into center of pie comes out clean. Let stand 5 minutes.

Seafood Sauce:

Drain and flake 1 tin crabmeat. Saute in butter. Blend in 2 tablespoons of all purpose flour and a pinch of salt. Add 1 cup light cream. Cook while stirring until thickened.

To serve, pour sauce over slices of quiche and garnish with cheery tomatoes sliced in two. Serve with a smooth and spicy Pinot Noir wine.

Ratatouille

1/2 lbs. fresh mushrooms, sliced

1 eggplant, cut in cubes

2 stalks celery, sliced

1 red pepper, chopped

2 zucchini, sliced

3 green onions, chopped (for garnish)

2 tbsp. sesame seeds, toasted (for garnish)

1/2 tsp. salt

6 tsp. sesame oil

3/4 cup chicken stock

2 tbsp. soy sauce

1 tbsp. dry sherry

1 tsp. cornstarch

2 tsp. garlic, minced

1 tsp. fresh ginger, minced

1 tbsp. fresh coriander, chopped

Preheat oven to 350F.

Sprinkle eggplant with salt and let stand 30 minutes.

Saute celery, onion, and pepper in sesame oil in casserole until tender. Remove vegetables and set aside. Saute zucchini, mushrooms and eggplant for 5 minutes or until soft. Add the celery, onion and pepper and remove from heat.

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Combine stock, soy sauce, sherry and cornstarch in mixing bowl and blend well. Stir into vegetable mixture. Cover and bake 40 minutes.

Stir in garlic and ginger. Cover and bake an additional 10 minutes. Stir in coriander and garnish with green onions and sesame seeds before serving. Serve with a red Zinfandel wine.

Kedgeree

This is a dish that originated with the the soldiers returning from India in the days of the Raj and is an exciting brunch specialty.

2 tbsp. butter

1 small onion, chopped fine

2 cups white or mixed wild rice

1/2 tbsp curry powder (or to taste for spiciness)

2 cups water

1/2 tsp. salt

tsp. fresh ground pepper

3 hard cooked eggs, chopped

1/2lb. sliced smoked salmon, cut in strips

1/4 cup lemond juice

1/4 cup chopped parlsey

In large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion, rice and curry. Saute 5 minutes.

Stir in water, salt and pepper and heat to boiling. Reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes or until water is absorbed and rice is tender.

Stir in eggs, half the salmon. lemon juice and parsley. Spoon onto warmed serving platter and top with remaining salmon.

Sunshine Stir Fry Salad

1 lb. boneless sirloin

2 tbsp. olive oil

3 cloves garlic, minced

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4 cups mixed fresh salad greens

2 oranges, peeled and segmented

1 red onion, peeled and sliced thin

1/2 cup walnut pieces

Cut beef into thin strips. Heat oil and stir fry beef and garlic for 2 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon.

Arrange greens on 4 plates. Sprinkle with walnuts, onions and orange segments. Add beef at the last minute and drizzle with dressing to serve.

Vinaigrette Dressing:

1/2 cup red wine vinegar

4 tbsp. olive oil

4 tbsp. Dijon mustard

4 tbsp. orange or lemon juice

Combine all ingredients and chill until ready to use. Whisk briskly before serving.

Hearty Quilt Inn Salad

1 lb. spicy smoked farmer's sausage, chopped

1 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced

1 cup fresh radishes, sliced

1/2 lb. Provolone cheese, cut in strips

1 lb. mixed fresh greens (about 10 cups)

Fry sausage in skillet on high for 5 minutes or until browned. Remove sausage and drain on paper towels to remove excess fat. Combine sausage, mushrooms, radishes, cheese and toss with greens.

Quilt Inn Dressing

2 tbsp. Dijon mustard

3 tbsp. red wine vinegar

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tbsp. *Herbes de Provence* (for recipe, see below) or any combination of fresh savory herbs

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1/3 cup olive oil

1/3 cup sour cream

Whisk all ingredients together until smooth. Toss with salad just before serving.

Herbes de Provence is a blend of equal parts thyme, rosemary, lavender and Summer savory. Make it yourself or it may be available in specialty food shops or some supermarkets.

Asparagus Stir Fry

1 lb. asparagus, trimmed and sliced on diagonal

1/2 cup fresh peas

1/2 lb. snow peas

1 sweet red pepper, seeded and sliced

1 sweet yellow pepper, seeded and sliced

1/4 lb. green beans, trimmed and sliced on diagonal

1 carrot, peeled and sliced thin on diagonal

3 green onions, chopped

1/3 cup fresh coriander

2 cups wild rice

2 tbsp. olive oil

3 cloves garlic, minced

2 tbsp. fresh ginger root, chopped

1/3 cup vinegar

1 tsp. honey

1/2 tsp. salt

3 tbsp. orange juice

1 tsp. sesame oil

Rinse rice and place in saucepan with 2 3/4 cups water. Bring to boil, reduce heat and cook uncovered until rice is cooked and water is absorbed. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat oil in large skillet, or wok. Add carrots, cook 2 minutes. Add green beans, red pepper, yellow pepper and asparagus. Cook 2 minutes. Add peas. Add snow

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peas. Remove from heat briefly.

Combine vinegar, honey, salt, orange juice and sesame oil. Stir into vegetables and return to heat. Stir in rice, green onions, and coriander.

Serve immediately, as a side dish with lamb or fish or with pita bread as main dish. Goes well with a Beaujolais wine.

Sunday Salmon Souffle

4 eggs, separated

1/2 cup heavy cream

4 tbsp. smoked salmon, slivered fine

1 tbsp. fresh chives, chopped fine

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

1 tsp. lemon zest

1 tsp. cornstarch

pinch salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350F and lightly butter 6 individual ramekins. Coat inside of ramekin with grated Parmesan cheese and set aside.

Stir together egg yolks, cream, salmon, chives, zest, cornstarch, salt and pepper in mixing bowl.

In separate bowl, beat egg whites with a few drops of lemon juice until form but not dry. Fold egg whites into yolk mixture.

Fill ramekins with souffle mixture and place on baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes or until fluffy and golden. Serve immediately with a salad and Merlot wine.

For a decadent ending to Sunday Brunch or for an afternoon High Tea try these delicious English scones (or American tea biscuits) with tangy lemon sauce.

Sunday Scones and Lemon Curd

Traditional English Scones:

4 cups all-purpose flour

2 tbsp. sugar

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4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. cream of tartar

2/3 cup butter

1 1/3 cups half-and-half cream

1/4 cup golden raisins

Preheat oven to 425F. Grease large baking sheet.

In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cream of tartar. Using pastry blender or two knives, cut the butter into the dry ingredients until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

In small mixing bowl, beat cream and egg together. Measure out 2 tbsp. of mixture and set aside. Add remaining mixture to dry ingredients along with raisins. Mix with fork until a soft dough forms. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface and knead gently 5 or 6 times. Divide dough in half. Lightly flour rolling pin and roll dough to 6–inch diameter round. Cut into 4 wedges. Repeat with remaining dough.

Place scones on baking sheet. Brush tops with reserved egg mixture. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes or until golden brown.

Scottish Scones

1 1/4 cups rolled oats

3 cups all-purpose flour

4 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. baking soda

1 tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. salt

2/3 cup vegetable shortening

1/3 cup currants

1 1/3 cups buttermilk

1 tbsp. melted butter

Preheat oven to 425F. Grease large baking sheet. Set aside 2 tbsp. rolled oats.

In large bowl, combine flour, remaining rolled oats, baking powder, sugar, salt

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and baking soda. With pastry blender or 2 knives, cut the shortening in until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in currants.

Add buttermilk and mix lightly with fork until soft dough forms. Turn dough onto lightly floured surface and knead 5 or 6 times. Divide dough in half. With lightly floured rolling pin, roll dough into 6–inch round. Cut into quarters. Repeat with remaining dough.

Place scones on baking sheet. Brush tops with melted butter and sprinkle with reserved rolled oats. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until golden brown.

These contain half the fat and calories as traditional scones but are just as delicious.

Moist and Healthy Apple Scones

3 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup oat-bran flake cereal

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp. salt

3/4 cup milk

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar

1 large egg

1 large apple, cored and coarsely chopped

1 tbsp. melted butter

Preheat oven to 425F. Grease large baking sheet.

Combine flour, cereal, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in large mixing bowl. In another bowl beat together milk, oil, sugar and egg. Add to dry ingredients along with apple. Mix lightly until soft dough forms.

Prepare dough as above. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with additional cinnamon if desired. Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until golden brown.

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Lemon Curd:

3 large eggs

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup butter

1 tbsp finely grated lemon rind

1/2 cup lemon juice

In top of double boiler, beat eggs until frothy. Stir in sugar until well mixed. Add butter and lemon rind and juice.

Place double boiler over simmering water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until mixture thickens enough to coat spoon (15 to 20 minutes). Pour into jars. Cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Keeps up to 1 month.

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Grandma's Quilt Lies on Grandpa's Bed

One of the favorite bedrooms at the Inn is on the third floor. It's one of two large rooms converted from the attic and has three dormer windows on the East wall. There are soft white lace curtains and pink-and-green floral chintz-covered pillows resting in the windowseats. Despite low ceilings with a gambreled roofline, it's a light and airy spot to sit in the sunlight, sip a morning coffee and watch the world below. Nesting mourning doves coo sadly in the eaves outside.

I call it the "Granny Room" although by rights it should be the Grandpa and Grandma room. There's an antique quilt whose white background has yellowed to light amber, dark green has paled to the color of new grass and "turkey red" has faded to soft pink. It's been repaired many times, by different hands. Sometimes well and neatly done, sometimes poorly and unevenly done. It's not a fashionable quilt but it's a comforting one. It's a quilt your Grandma would have thrown on the back of her rocking chair or on a daybed on the porch, used but mostly ignored. It lies on an early rustic bed made with thick ropes that groan as you sink into the deep mattress. The bed is over a hundred years old and could tell many stories of sleepers and lovers, of births and deaths and tears, and of the dreams from pioneer homesteaders to present day homebuilders. It is massive and crude and slightly crooked. The unfinished wood has been rubbed smooth and dark by years of continued use.

Our pioneer grandfathers, as sturdy young men, carved out homesteads in the wilderness across the country. They hewed and hauled logs to build homes. They built barns, drove cattle and ploughshares, and dug wells for life-giving water. They provided the basic necessities of survival—the "hardware" of walls and roofs and tables—taken from a land that was hard and sinewy as their own bodies. Grandpa carved the wooden bed.

The women, as courageous and capable young women, bore and raised the children that ensured life would continue on the wide land. They made mere food into a meal, mere fat and lye into soap and candles, mere fabric into curtains, clothes and quilts that gave warmth and comfort to the family—all by her soft and civilizing hands.

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Grandma stitched the quilt.

The men often worked cooperatively in communal barn-raising. The women cooperated in quilting bees. We inherited a tradition of working together for the betterment of all, to provide both the survival and the nurture of every new generation. Men and women together. Communities together.

Grandma's quilt lies on Grandpa's bed.

Grandma's quilt should always lie on Grandpa's bed.

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A Lifestyle in Provence

We have these wonderful friends, Gail and Gerry, whose goal is to also own an Inn. Their's will be in the South of France. We hope their dream comes true and in their honor, we include this set of recipes. It is largely on their tales of France and its beauty that we draw this inspiration. There is clearly, to those in love with this area, nothing quite like the country, the people, the smells, and the food of Provence.

When Charles de Montesquieu said, "If I were King I would close all the cafes, for those who frequent them are dangerous hotheads!" we cannot believe that he was talking about the gentle people of this area, for they are far too sated (and sotted with wine) to become hotheads about anything, except perhaps defending the honneur of French chefs.

Fresh herbs are an important part of Provencal cooking, which also makes it ideal country Inn fare. It is here that we learned not to cut herbs, but to tear them when using in recipes. It brings out more flavor and makes your fingers smell great! When herbs are out of season, use the freshest and the best dried herbs you can find. A distinctive Herbes de Provence mixture can be created by combining ½ cup each of thyme, bay leaf, rosemary, summer savory, lavender, cloves and orange zest. Mix them well and store in an air tight container. And when you serve any of these dishes, try a chilled rose.

Whatever you serve, remember the words of Jean Anouilh who said, "Everything in France is a pretext for a good dinner."

Salade Nicoise

4 new potatoes, baked

1 cup green beans, cut lengthwise, cooked and dried

2 ripe plum tomatoes

1/4 cup black and green olives

1 hard boiled egg

1 can tuna fish

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2 tbsp. red onion, chopped

1 tbsp. capers, drained

2 tbsp. fresh lemon juice

2 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil

fresh ground pepper to taste

2 tsp. fresh rosemary, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

3 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

salt to taste

lemon wedges

Place tuna in mixing bowl, breaking into chunks. Add onion, capers, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 2 teaspoons olive oil, and pepper. Toss gently with a fork until well mixed. Set aside.

Cut potatoes into chunks and place in mixing bowl. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1½ teaspoons lemon juice, rosemary, garlic, pepper and salt. Toss and set aside.

Cut tomatoes into slices and place in bowl. Sprinkle with pepper, salt, and 2 tablespoons parsley. Toss beans with 1 tablespoon lemon juice and 1 teaspoon olive oil.

To serve, place all ingredients in large shallow bowl or on large platter and serve with lemon wedges.

Salade Provencale

12 small new potatoes

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/2 tsp. salt

2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 duckling

1 orange, halved

1/2 lb. garlic Farmers sausage

1 whole garlic head

3/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

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1/2 cup red onion, chopped fine

1/2 cup black and green olives

1 1/4 cups vinaigrette

1 medium Savoy cabbage

Preheat oven to 400F.

Prick potatoes with fork. Place olive oil in bowl and roll potatoes in oil. Sprinkle with salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Bake for 1 hour uncovered, turning occasionally. Remove from heat. Let cool. Cut into chunks. Set aside.

Clean duck, rinse well and pat dry. Prick skin with fork. Rub duck with orange halves and sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper. Place duck in roasting pan, breast side up. Roast for 1 hour.

While duck roasts, cook sausages in 2 quarts water in saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 40 minutes. Remove from water and let cool. Remove skin and cut into thick rounds. Cut rounds into quarters. Set aside.

Separate garlic cloves. Do not peel. Place in saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Drain, allow to cool, and peel.

After duck has cooked, turn it over. Add garlic cloves to pan, cook an additional 10 minutes. Transfer to platter and allow to cool. Remove skin and shred meat into chunks. Remove garlic cloves from pan and set aside.

Combine potatoes, parsley, red onions and vinaigrette and toss gently. Add 1 teaspoon ground pepper. Add sausages, duck and garlic cloves. Fold all ingredients together gently. Serve on a bed of cabbage leaves.

Barley Pilaf

1 onion, chopped coarse

2 zucchini, diced coarse

6 cloves garlic, chopped

6 ripe plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped

1 cup cooked pearl barley

1 cup pine nuts, toasted

1/3 cup olive oil

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1 cup fresh basil, chopped

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1/2 cup chicken stock

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Heat oil in skillet and saute onion, zucchini and garlic until tender. Add stock and cook 2 minutes more. Add tomatoes, salt and pepper. Cook 1 minute, stirring frequently.

Add barley, pine nuts, basil and parsley. Stir well and cook until heated through. Serve immediately.

Nicoise Shrimp

1 lb. shrimp, cleaned and deveined

1/2 cup olives, pitted

1 leek, washed and chopped

1 stalk celery, chopped

3 tbsp. olive oil

1 cup dry white wine

1 tbsp. tomato paste

1/2 cup sun dried tomatoes, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

2 tsp. Herbes de Provence

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Saute leek and celery in oil over low heat until tender. Stir in wine and tomato paste and bring to a boil. Stir in shrimp, olives, sun dried tomatoes, garlic and herbs. Increase heat to medium and cook until shrimp are cooked through. Serve immediately. Try it with a Pinot Blanc wine.

If you think plain old garden variety green beans are boring, try this...

Haricots Verts Provencal

1 lb. fresh green beans

1 onion, chopped coarsely

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6 cloves garlic, chopped fine

4 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped

2 tbsp. olive oil

1/2 cup dry white wine

1/2 cup pitted olives

1 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. fresh ground pepper

Wash beans and cut ends off. Steam until tender but still crisp. Drain, rinse under cold water and set aside.

Saute onion and garlic in olive oil for 5 minutes. Add tomatoes and wine and cook for 20 minutes over medium heat. Toss in the beans and olives and heat thoroughly. Sprinkle with lemon juice and fresh ground pepper. Serve on a platter with parsley garnish.

Waldorf Beans

1 lb. fresh green beans

6 strips bacon, cut in chunks

1/2 cup Roquefort cheese, crumbled

1 1/2 cups walnuts, toasted

fresh ground pepper to taste

Steam beans until tender but still crisp. Drain, rinse under cold water and set aside.

Cook bacon chunks in skillet over medium heat for 5 minutes or until well cooked. Remove from skillet and drain on paper towels. Remove excess fat from pan and add green beans to skillet and heat through. Add Roquefort and toss lightly for 1 minute or until cheese just begins to melt. Add walnuts and bacon and sprinkle with pepper. Serve immediately.

Nicoise Ratatouille

1 lb. zucchini, cubed

3 tomatoes, diced

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2 leeks, washed, dried and cubed

1/2 cup pitted olives

1 eggplant, cubed

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. salt

5 cloves garlic, minced

1/3 cup Pesto (for recipe, see below)

fresh ground pepper to taste

Sprinkle eggplant with salt and set aside 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350F. Rinse, drain and pat dry with paper towels. Saute leeks and garlic in olive oil for 5 minutes. Add zucchini and cook another 3 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, olives, pesto, pepper and eggplant. Transfer to ovenproof dish. Cover and bake for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Here is a basic all purpose pesto. However, you can substitute the basil with just about any other herb, even sun dried tomatoes or beans.

Zesto Pesto

4 cloved garlic, minced

2 cups fresh basil, rinsed and dried

1/3 cup olive oil

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

Put garlic and basil in blender. Add oil slowly and puree. Put pesto, salt and pepper in small mixing bowl and refrigerate.

Quiche de Nice, Sans Oeufs *(Without Eggs!)*

1 pastry pie shell

2 tbsp. Dijon mustard

Brush mustard on pie shell, set aside.

Filling:

4 sweet red peppers, cut into slices

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2 tbsp. olive oil

2 onions, chopped

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

In a large skillet, heat the oil and stir in all the other ingredients. Cook over low heat for 30 minutes or until soft and thick. Remove with a slotted spoon into pieshell.

Topping:

5 ripe plum tomatoes

1 cup black olives, pitted and sliced

6 cloves garlic, chopped

19 anchovy fillets, rinsed and drained

1 tbsp. olive oil

fresh ground pepper to taste

1 tbsp. thyme leaves

Preheat oven to 375F. Halve tomatoes lengthwise Remove core and seeds. Cut lengthwise again. Arrange in layers in pieshell, alternating with anchovy fillets. Sprinkle olives on top. Combine garlic and oil and sprinkle on top. Sprinkle with pepper and thyme. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving. Serve with a white Zinfandel wine.

Chicken Provencale

1 4–pound chicken, cut into pieces

1 red onion, sliced thin

2 plum tomatoes, chopped

1/2 cup pitted prunes, chopped

6 cloves garlic, chopped fine

1 tbsp. brown sugar

1 tbsp. oregano

3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

1 tbsp. olive oil

1/2 tsp. paprika

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1/4 tsp. salt

parsley to garnish

Combine chicken, onion, tomatoes and prunes in shallow dish. Whisk together garlic, brown sugar, oregano, vinegar, olive oil, paprika and salt to make marinade. Pour over chicken and stir, coating well. Chill overnight.

Transfer to ovenproof dish. Cover and cook in 350F oven for 40 minutes or until chicken is thoroughly cooked. Serve over rice or with steamed green beans and carrots.

South of France Fish Soup

4 cups fish stock (recipe follows)

2 tbsp. tomato paste

1 large can plum tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1/2 tbsp. Pernod

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup fresh fennel bulb, chopped

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Combine the stock, tomatoes, tomato paste, liqueur and garlic in a saucepan and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes.

Strain the soup and return the liquid to the saucepan. Stir in the fennel and simmer for 5 minutes or until the fennel is tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve with croutons.

Fish Stock:

2 tbsp. butter

1 1/2 lbs. fish pieces

3 cups water

2 cups white wine

1/2 tsp. salt

2 leeks, washed well and chopped

3 celery stalks, chopped coarse

3 strips orange rind

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3 strips lemon rind

3 bay leaves

2 tsp. fresh basil, chopped

2 tsp. fresh rosemary, chopped

1 tsp. thyme

1 tsp. fennel seeds

1 tbsp. all purpose flour

Melt butter in saucepan and add leeks, fennel, orange and lemon slices, bay leaves, herbs and spices. Cook on medium low heat for 1 minute.

Add water, wine, fish and salt and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain stock and chill.

And to serve with any Provencal meal...

Olive Bread from Provence

3 to 3 1/2 cups unsifted bread flour

1 package active dry yeast

2 tbsp. sugar

1 cup warm water

1/3 cup pitted, chopped oil–cured ripe olives (black or green)

2 tbsp. olive oil

1 tsp. salt

boiling water

Combine 1/2 cup flour, yeast and sugar in large bowl. Add warm water and stir to blend. Let stand 10 minutes. Add olives, oil, salt, and 2 cups remaining flour. Stir until well blended.

Turn dough onto lightly floured surface. Knead dough adding remaining flour as needed until dough is smooth and elastic, (approximately 10 minutes). Place dough in lightly oiled mixing bowl. Cover with clean cloth. Let rise in warm place until double in size (about 1 hour).

Lightly oil large baking sheet. Roll dough into 8"x12" oval. Roll edges over 1" and pinch to seal. Continue all around. Place on baking sheet. Cover with cloth and let

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rise in warm place until double in size. (40 minutes). Preheat oven to 400F. Half fill roasting pan with water and place on bottom rack in oven. Brush top of bread with water. Bake on top rack of oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until lightly browned and bread sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on wire rack.

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Midnight Stars

Most of us these days don't know anything about the natural world around us. Unlike our pioneer forefathers who knew all the trees and plants, all the animal tracks and could "dead reckon" by the stars, we are sadly bereft of native, natural wisdom. And we're intimidated by it. Yet it's easy to recapture our connection to nature.

I started watching the stars long before I knew what any of the constellations were. Particularly on cold, clear Winter nights. I used to walk along a country road at midnight and listen to the different crunching noises the frozen snow would make. My footsteps echoed back from the woods until I would stop, dead still, and listen to the awesome silence. With no town lights around, I watched the deep black sky and felt overwhelmed by the millions of points of light whirling in the heavens above. More stars than grains of sand on a beach. Countless stars. Einstein said, "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts." He could have been talking about stars, for all I know.

When I finally started to study the stars and learn their names and the names of their constellations, I had a problem. I could never "see" or remember the constellations as they were outlined in the backyard astronomy books I read. But then I realized I didn't have to. The constellations are really arbitrarily defined groups of stars that only *appear* to be related to each other, named thousands of years ago by Greeks and Romans who are long gone. They named them after what they knew in their lives—bears, dragons, birds, and the gods they believed were literally in the heavens.

But this is the twentieth century and we have a new sky to live under. So I started my own constellation naming. When I looked at the Winter night sky years ago and saw what looked like a big bowtie, I didn't know that it was "really" Orion. And now I don't care because for me it is the Bowtie Constellation. And as I watched what looked like two mountain peaks circle the Pole star in the Summer sky, I didn't know it was Cassiopiea. I called them Cleopatra's bosom. I have a whole catalog of constellations now. And it's wonderfully comforting to watch "my" stars whirling around the heavens with the same predictability that reassured the ancient Greeks.

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So, come to the Inn in Winter and bundle up. On cold clear Saturday nights we brush the snow off the stone patio, set up a telescope, turn off all the lights, and rediscover the stars, again for the first time! There's something extraordinary and magical that happens as everyone snuggles into deck chairs to stargaze. Voices drop instinctively to hushed whispers. As if we were in a hallowed space, and perhaps we are. Muffled giggles and guffaws come from under sleeping bags and quilts as people discover and share their own personal cosmology and humor.

We start by rounding up all the star-pattern quilts in the Inn to keep warm in. There's quite a few because they've always been one of my favorite traditional quilt themes. Next, everyone receives a pad of paper, a pocket flashlight and black felt pen. You can make your own star map if you like. Find and name your own constellations. Reclaim the night sky. Reclaim your connection to nature. All you have to do is be able to "see" a picture in the "dots" the stars outline, write it down and know its relative position to the Pole star. Your constellations will circle around the sky during the night if you stay up late enough, and around the sky as the seasons change. But you can always find it.

Last year someone renamed my "Cleopatra's Bosom" to "Madonna's Bosom". After all, it's a new generation! Someone else "found" a '57 Chevy. A chemist found a molecular structure in Draco. A gardener thought Sagittarius looked more like a watering can than a teapot.

A psychiatrist would probably have a field day with this, analyzing all the subliminal transferences and projections we make when we create our own stars. But who cares? When we name something we make it ours. The poets tell us, "It's written in the stars." When we write our own stars, do we not write our own destiny as well?

If you want to have your own star naming party, here are some ideas.

Clear the snow away from whatever area you are using. Dig out all the Summer deck chairs. Line each chair with a sleeping bag or a quilt to keep the cold from everyone's back. It's really important to keep warm. Sitting outside at night in Winter can be unpleasantly cold and dampen the party spirits unless you prepare well in advance. Make sure everyone has a warm hat and mitts to wear. Keep feet warm too.

Provide everyone with a pad of paper to draw on, black felt pens and pocket

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flashlight. Too much light around will obscure the stars. Turn out as many lights as possible.

Have a telescope or binoculars handy if possible. The moon is extraordinary in Winter and if someone has never seen it "up close and personal" it can be a moving experience.

Play theme music, such as "2001: A Space Odyssey", "Star Wars", "The Night Has a Thousand Eyes", "Moonglow", or others you can think of.

Serve lots of warm food, especially if anyone is planning to watch the stars until the Morning Star appears! Make the food simple. Finger food is best, that can be eaten with mitts on, or with mitts removed briefly.

Use your discretion with alcohol. Alcohol shrinks the capillaries and restricts blood flow so people will feel colder faster when they consume alcohol, even though the first feeling is of temporary warmth, which could shorten your party. If you serve alcohol, avoid cold drinks. Serve coffee, or cocoa, lightly "laced" with alcohol, for taste. Or, use artificial extracts, such as rum, for flavor. It's up to you.

Galileo Punch

3 qts. apple cider

3 cups orange juice

1/2 cup lemon juice

1/2 cup sugar

10 cinnamon sticks

1 tbsp. whole cloves

1 tbsp. ground nutmeg

Combine orange and lemon juices, sugar, cinnamon sticks, and nutmeg in large pot. Cook over medium heat until sugar dissolves and mixture is completely blended and hot. Add cider and sit well. Strain liquid into warm punch bowl before serving.

Copernicus Crudities

1 lb. green beans

1 cauliflower head, cut into florets

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1 broccoli head, cut into florets

1 lb. carrots, peeled and sliced lengthwise

1 lb. parsnips, peeled and sliced lengthwise

You can vary the quantities depending on the number of guests. Allow approximately 1/2 pound per person.

Steam vegetables in batches until tender but still crisp. Serve in warmed casserole or basket lined with towel to keep them warm. Serve with Milky Way Dip (recipe below) which can be prepared in advance.

Milky Way Dip

First Layer:

6 oz. red kidney beans

3 garlic cloves, chopped

1 Jalapeno pepper, cored and seeded

2 tsp. sugar

1/4 cup water

1/2 cup vegetable oil

1 tsp. paprika

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1/4 tsp. chili powder

dash Tabasco sauce

Soak beans overnight in cold water. Drain beans, place in saucepan with new cold water and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes or until tender. Drain and cool.

Process garlic and Jalapeno in blender. Add beans. Continue to process while adding water, vinegar, oil and spices. Blend until smooth.

Line bottom of shallow casserole with bean paste.

Second Layer:

Cover paste with 1 1/2 cups guacamole and set aside. (recipe follows)

A*vocados have a rich and buttery texture that makes guacamole a very popular dip. Any crunchy chip, like nachos or tostados, crisp or soft tortillas, as well*

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as bread and vegetables, make this a perfect snack. So, here's our recipe for

Guacamole! Ole!

2 ripe avocados, halved and pitted

4 tsp. lemon juice

1 large ripe plum tomato, seeded and chopped

1 tbsp. red onion, chopped

salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

dash of Tabasco

Scoop out avocados and mix im bowl with lemon juice. mix in tomato, onion, salt, pepper, and Tobasco. Serve immediately.

Third Layer:

1 1/2 cups sour cream

1/2 cup cheddar cheese, grated

1/2 cup plum tomatoes, seeded and diced fine

1/4 cup black olives, chopped fine

1 tsp. garlic powder

1/4 tsp. chili powder

1/4 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

salt to taste

Preheat oven to 425F.

Combine sour cream, garlic and chili powders, cumin, salt, and pepper. Blend well and spread on guacamole. Sprinkle with cheese, tomatoes and olives. Bake for 15 minutes.

Variation: instead of vegetable crudites, serve Milky Way Dip with nachos, or for a low-sodium healthy alternative serve with...

Big Dippers

8 pita bread or 8 tortilla rounds

1 tbsp. olive oil

Preheat oven to 300F.

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Cut pita or tortillas into 8 wedges. (Split pita triangles along curved edge.) Brush with oil. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 10 to 20 minutes or until golden and crispy.

Stellar Cheese Puffs

Puffs:

1 3/4 cups all–purpose flour

1 1/2 cups water

1/2 cup butter

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. ground red pepper

6 large eggs

1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

In large saucepan heat water and butter to boiling. Add flour, salt and red pepper, stirring continuously until thick batter forms. Reduce heat to low and cook 5 minutes or until batter begins to pull away from side of pan. Transfer to blender. Add eggs and cheese. Process until well blended. Set aside 10 minutes to cool.

Preheat oven to 350F. Lightly grease baking sheets. Drop batter by tablespoon on greased sheets. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. Cool on baking sheet on wire racks.

Filling:

1 onion, chopped

2 tbsp. pine nuts

1 10–ounce package spinach, washed and shredded.

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup milk

3/4 cup water

4 tbsp. butter

3/4 cup dried tomatoes, blanched and chopped

1 1/4 cups provolone cheese, shredded

1/2 tsp. fresh ground pepper

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1/2 tsp. salt

In large skillet, melt 1 tbsp. butter. Add onion and pine nuts. Saute 5 minutes. Add spinach. Cover and cook until spinach is wilted (about 2 minutes). Transfer to mixing bowl and set aside.

Melt remaining butter in skillet. Stir in flour and cook 1 minute. Whisk in milk and water. Cook, stirring constantly, until mixture forms thick roux. Remove from heat and stir in tomatoes, 1 cup provolone cheese, pepper, salt and onion mixture.

Just before serving, heat oven to 350F. Cut each pastry in half horizontally. Spoon filling into bottoms. Replace tops. Sprinkle with remaining provolone. Bake 12 minutes. Serve hot.

Lunar Craters

puff pastry (for recipe, see index) (if using frozen, thawed and rolled into sheet)

1 onion, chopped

2 cloves garlic, chopped

1 1/2 tsp. curry powder

1 tsp. ground cummin

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ground cardamon

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 cup walnut

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

1 carrot, grated fine

raisins to garnish

Preheat oven to 400F. Lightly grease 2–inch muffin pans. On lightly floured surface, roll out pastry. Using 2–inch round cookie cutter, cut rounds of pastry. Press one pastry round into each muffin pan cup. Pierce with fork.

To prepare filling: heat oil in large skillet. Add onion and saute 5 minutes. Reduce to low heat. Add garlic, curry powder, cumin, cinnamon, cardamon and salt. Cover and cook 5 minutes. Add spinach and stir until well blended. Cook 2 minutes. Transfer to blender, add walnuts and process until puree forms.

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Spoon rounded teaspoon of mixture into pastry tarts. Bake 18 ro 20 minutes or until pastry is golden brown. Cool and remove from pans. Top with grated carrots and raisins and serve immediately.

Hubble's Heavenly Hot Chocolate

Melt 3 ounces for of a good quality chocolate in top of double boiler. Whisk in 1 cup milk. Bring just to a boil and whisk in 1 beaten egg yolk. Heat thoroughly. Serves one.

For other easy finger–food party fare, see:

Salsa dishes

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What's My Wine?

It's been a beautiful Summer here at the Inn. This afternoon I was lazing on the porch reflecting on the abundance of joy and happiness that we have shared with our guests, friends and general wellwishers, when, much to my delight, I spied an ancient Citroen huffing it's way up the driveway. The banging of steel on steel accompanied by noxious exhaust fumes announced the arrival of our local grape-grower and vintner, Pierre LaBouche, of LaBouche Freres Winery. What a delight to see him!

Pierre brought our order of wine. If you find the Inn temporarily out of your favorite dinner wine blame it in the vagaries of Pierre's visits. He turns up whenever the spirit(s) move him.

We carried cases of wine to the cellar where Pierre made his routine inspection of our wine cellar. We've never made it past a "B-minus" in his rating. Perhaps because we don't stock enough of his wines! The wine cellar was never intended as such. In fact, the cellar is only under part of the house, and is really only a root cellar dug under one side of the Inn. Perhaps it was an afterthought. The rough dirt walls and massive wood ceiling beams make it an ideal wine cellar, though, with only the addition of some simple racks.

After opening and sampling a robust red wine ("From the cellars directly to you, *mon ami*," Pierre said), he asked if I would like to play a little parlor game with him.

"Let's test your knowledge of wine trivia, my budding *sommelier*," he said. "And perhaps the guests of the beautiful Quilt Inn and readers of your upcoming cookbook, will benefit from this knowledge."

I readily agreed, but not before fortifying myself with some more red. "Let the game begin!" I exclaimed.

1. True or false? Wines made from grapes have to be aged whereas wines made from raisins do not.

False. In Italy, vintners dry the harvested grapes until they are raisin–like to make Vin Santo or Recioto della Amarone. These wines need aging just as wines from freshly picked grapes do.

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2. Is red wine more fattening than white?

I was prepared to put down my now almost empty glass, but Pierre hastened to assure me that the calorie content of a wine depends on its alcohol and residual sugar. A California Chardonnay, for example, at 12.5% alcohol will have more calories than a Beaujolais at 11%.

"Well, Pierre. Just a touch more. Not as fattening, you know," I said with anticipation, and no guilt.

3. Michael's birthday arrives soon. How do you open Champagne do avoid the "pop" and a fountain?

Hold the cork firmly and twist the bottle away from the cork. The cork should not move. "Here, I'll show you," Pierre said, having retrieved a bottle of Moet from the Inn's racks. Sure enough, when opened the way he suggested, no pop, no foam, just a light expression of air, like the sigh you make after tasting your first sip. Which we did.

4. Are all pink wines sweet?

No. Many pink wines, such as rose, are dry, especially those from the Rhone Valley, such as Tavel and Lirac.

5. The vintage date on a bottle tells you: (a) the birth year of the winemaker's first child; (b) the winemaker's wedding anniversary, so he won't forget; (c) the year the grapes were picked and crushed; (d) the year the bottle was made; (e) the year the wine was bottled.

The answer is (c), although (b) would not be a bad idea!

6. How should you hold a wine glass?

Oh, oh. I could hear another demonstration coming from Pierre, and of course the glasses needed to be refilled.

"It's just educational, *mon ami*," he said with a glow (it might have been the champagne). "Hold a wine glass by the stem or base, not by the bowl. Otherwise, you will warm a chilled white or cover up the bouquet of a red."

7. True or false? Fill your wine glasses as full as possible, not only to demonstrate your generosity, but to give a better appreciation of the color of the wine.

False. A wine glass should be filled only to the **b** level, to allow you to swirl the wine to produce a concentrated bouquet. (Also, if the glass is too full your nose will get

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wet. I think Jimmy Durante started this tradition.)

8. Pierre swore on his mother's grave that if you sucked a warm Sauterne through a straw (Sauterne is the sweet white dessert wine from Bordeaux) you could cure your hiccups. True or false?

Absolutely false. (But if you suck enough wine this way you won't care if you have the hiccups or not!) And, Pierre's mother is still alive, too!

9. Are dry wines with a sugar count of "0" really dry?

No wine is completely dry. There will always be some unfermented sugar in it.

10. True or false. Alsace is a German wine region.

Well, this question started Pierre and I reminiscing about "The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show", (thereby disclosing our ages), the episode where our heroes attempted to save the French wine growing region of "Applesauce Lorraine", so it took a while to come back to the question. (Boris: "I hate moose!" Natasha: "I know you do, dollink!")

In any event, for those of you who are still with us, the answer is false. Alsace is a wine region in Northeastern France, bordering on Germany's Baden region. It's distinctive green, long-necked bottles resemble those of the German Mosel wines.

11. True or false. Champagne glasses should be placed wet into the freezer, to frost them so that the wine will remain as cold as possible.

Oh, oh, again. Another champagne question. Sure enough, out came another bottle, accompanied by frosted glasses. What happened? The wetness kills the bubbles and makes the champagne go flat.

Which brought us to the discussion of the shape a champagne glass should be. Pierre asserted that, Hollywood movies aside, champagne should always be served in a tall slim fluted glass, in order to preserve the bubbles. *Mon Dieu*, whoever started serving champagne in those flat-bowled stem glasses should be flogged, he tells me. The flat bowl lets the bubbles come out faster, which explains why the champagne served at most wedding receptions is flat by the time it's served to you.

(The tipsiest I remember ever being happened one New Year's Eve, drinking champagne floats, champagne with vanilla ice cream. If you think cola fizzes when it hits ice cream, wait until you see champagne fizz!)

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Back to the quiz, albeit unsteadily.

12. How do you pronounce “Reisling”?

Well, I think it has to do with how much you have consumed, but the correct answer is to say, “Reez-ling”.

13. True or false. The longer the cork, the more expensive the wine?

Strangely, true. Longer corks are more expensive and of better quality.

14. Vinho Verde is (a) the color of paint that your wife wants matched exactly at True Value; (b) a greeting used in Spanish wine bars; (c) one of the Canary Islands; (d) any Portuguese wine made from green grapes; (e) a light zingy white wine grown in the Minho region of Portugal; (f) the color of your Dad’s ‘53 Nash Rambler.

The answer is (e), though (f) is probably true, too.

15. What is a Buzbag? (a) slang for too many wine samplings with good friends; (b) a Spanish wine skin; (c) a Turkish wine made from Okuzgozu grapes; (d) a parasite that attacks vine roots.

(c). ‘Nuff said.

16. What are wine diamonds?

Not, as one might expect, a Michelin Guide rating at a restaurant, but rather potassium bitartrate crystals that precipitate in a wine that has been chilled too quickly. They are harmless, tasteless and odorless, and in fact are a sign of quality. They show the wine has not been pasteurized and cold-stabilized, as are less expensive wines.

You can stay at a country inn for your health, or you can stay at an inn to get away from your healthy regime for a while. Here are some special occasion recipes with extra spirit! Let’s tell it like it is; none of them are particularly good for you. Which is why we are starting with dessert first. But as Oscar Wilde said, “The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it!”

Amaretto Cheesecake

Crust:

1 cup Graham cracker crumbs

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1/2 cup toasted almonds, chopped fine

2 tbsp. sugar

1/4 cup melted butter

Preheat oven to 450F.

Mix ingredients and press into bottom of 9 inch pie pan. Set aside.

Filling:

4 packages cream cheese

1 cup sugar

3 tbsp. flour

4 eggs

1 cup sour cream

1/4 cup Amaretto di Saronno

Combine cream cheese, sugar and flour, mixing well until blended. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing until combined. Blend in sour cream and Amaretto.

Pour over crust. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 250F and bake 1 hour. Remove from oven, cool on wire rack. Chill.

Glaze:

1/2 cup apricot marmalade (recipe follows)

1 tbsp. Amaretto di Saronno

Combine marmalade and liqueur in saucepan. Heat until warm and smooth. Strain mixture and pour over cheesecake before serving. Garnish with toasted flaked almonds.

W*e love marmalades and jams at the Inn, and our guests do too. In fact, the next cookbook may be half devoted to preserves and half to desserts! Anyway, here's a marmalade that is great on the cheescake, but also wonderful on raisin or orange bread.*

Gotta Have Apricot Marmalade

6 oz. dried apricots

1/4 cup plus 2 tbsp. sugar

zest of 1 lemon

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1 cup water

1 tbsp. lemon juice

Put apricots and 1/4 cup sugar in blender, puree until coarse. In saucepan, stir in puree, 2 tbsp. sugar, zest, water and lemon juice. Heat to boiling, and stir constantly for 10 minutes. Cool to room temperature, cover and refrigerate.

Creme Brulee

1 can undiluted Condensed milk

3/4 cup fresh brewed coffee

1/4 cup Cognac

2/3 cup sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

1/3 tsp. salt

4 eggs

1/4 cup brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350F.

Combine milk, Cognac, and coffee in saucepan. Heat until bubbles form around edge. Add granulated sugar, vanilla and salt, stirring until sugar dissolves. Beat eggs well in mixing bowl. Gradually stir in hot milk mixture into eggs. Pour into 4 cup souffle dish or ovenproof casserole, or individual ramekins. Place dish(es) in pan of hot water and bake 50 to 60 minutes or until center is set and knifetip inserted in center comes out clean. Chill until cool.

To serve, sprinkle brown sugar over custard. Place as close as possible under preheated broiler and broil until sugar melts and browns.

Raspberries in Love Sauce

2 cups raspberries

1/2 cup confectioners' sugar

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1/4 cup Amaretto di Saronno

Puree raspberries in blender. Add sugar, lemon juice, and Amaretto. Process

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until smooth. Strain to remove seeds if desired. Pour over sponge cake, ice cream or any other would-be plain and plebian dessert.

Grand Marnier Sauce

1/3 cup Grand Marnier or Cointreau

1 cup whipping cream

3/4 cup sugar

5 egg yolks

1 tbsp. sugar

Beat eggs yolks in double boiler until light and frothy. Beat in sugar and place in simmering water for 20 minutes, stirring constantly until thickened. Remove from heat and continue beating until cool. Stir in Grand Marnier and chill.

Whip cream until it begins to thicken. Add 1 tablespoon sugar and beat until thick but pourable. Fold in egg mixture and chill until ready to serve.

This is a dessert we reserve for extra special guests on extra special occasions, and is one eagerly awaited.

Over The Top Tiramisu

2 8–oz. packages cream cheese

2 pkg frozen raspberries

1/2 cup sugar

2 egg yolks

1/4 cup brandy

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 1/2 tsp. vanilla

1 1/2 cups whipping cream

20 ladyfingers or pound cake sliced thinly

1 tbsp. cocoa powder

1/3 cup fresh raspberries

Thaw raspberries in colander, reserving juice. In large mixing bowl beat cream cheese and sugar. In top of double boiler over hot water, beat egg yolks for 5 minutes

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or until pale and thickened. Beat eggs into cheese mixture. Stir in brandy, lemon juice and vanilla. Whip 1/2 cup of cream and fold into cheese mixture. Set aside.

Line bottom of trifle dish with ladyfinger halves. Brush with raspberry juice. Spread with cheese mixture. Sift 1 teaspoon of cocoa powder over top. Sprinkle with raspberries. Repeat cheese, cocoa and raspberry layers twice more. Circle top of bowl with ladyfinger halves standing upright over top of bowl. Brush with raspberry juice. Top with remaining cheese mixture. Sift cocoa powder on top. Cover lightly and chill overnight.

Whip 1 cup whipped cream. Spoon over tiramisu. Dust with cocoa and garnish with fresh raspberries and shaved chocolate.

My Dear Madeira Spinach

4 lbs. spinach

1/2 lb. mushrooms, sliced

1/2 cup cream

1/4 cup water

1/4 cup Madeira wine

3 tbsp. butter

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Steam spinach until soft. Drain thoroughly, pat with paper towels until dry. Process in blender for 1 minute, or chop fine. Drain liquid again. Add butter, nutmeg, salt, pepper and cream. Set aside, but keep warm.

Saute mushrooms lightly. Add to spinach mixture. Stir in Madeira. Reheat and serve.

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Fare Weather Friends

More than occasionally we have friends over to the Inn for dinner. This may seem like bringing coals to Newcastle but our entertaining is easily divided into those who pay us, and those who repast for free. After all, who can resist a free meal (unless, of course, it happens to be followed by a time-share pitch or the latest scheme in multilevel marketing). All we ask is that they bring cheerful conversation, a good appetite and that they leave behind empty plates (and the good silver).

Dinner guests are strange anomalies of the human spirit. You would expect them to be charming, appreciative and at least on time. Usually they are the first two, particularly if you are not trying to impress with a culinary *coup de grace:* the latest all-vinegar meal, or a mono-maniacal masterpiece from Southern California. People are so polite. They won't say to your face that a *tarte de seaweed* is hardly their idea of an appetizer, let alone appetizing,or that for the fourth time, the smell of red wine vinegar precedes you into the dining room. No, they simply won't eat.

Guests do expect your menus to be sensible. We know that if you are particularly proud of your navigation skills around the kitchen, this may seem like an imposition. We've all been there. Lemon with everything, (it smells so fresh!), cream with everything, (it adds a *je ne sais quoi*), garlic with everything, (at least everyone is on equal footing thereafter), and the fabulous dessert that is trotted out meal after meal because everyone thought it was great the first time.

Guests should be met at least halfway. You will not impress with your ability to turn zucchini into a five-course banquet, or that you know how to recycle the shrimp from the appetizer into a soup, main course, dessert and sherbet. Nor will it help if you present them with a theme dinner, (say, an all blue brunch: grape juice, blueberry cassis, blueberry pancakes, blue ice cream and a blueberry flan).

When you think about your menu, ask yourself these questions: *What is in season*? Then don't serve it. Fresh corn is one vegetable I can thick of that everyone has had their fill of long before they make it to your table, even if you have invented a

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new *souffle a la cob*. *How much time do I have*? Then double it or be prepared to surreptitiously offer the local gourmet store's version of *foie gras* as your own. *What is the purpose of the dinner*—the meal itself, background to a meeting of volunteers for a community project, romance? *Is anyone allergic to anything*? Be secure in the fact that the guest will probably announce their problem well in advance. That way, you can be sure that it is indeed an allergy and not an aversion to your style of cooking.

Plan a three course meal that is easy to serve with minimal last minute attention—unless you want to spend the time in the kitchen rather than visiting. (You did invite these people, remember.) My experience is that down-home country cooking—soup or salad, meat with vegetables, and dessert—will satisfy and win over even the most critical guest. In fact, the more pretentious your meal, the more people feel they must comment on it, (often negatively behind your back). Unless you are a chef of fame and notoriety, gracefully accept the fact that the meal in all likelihood will merely be the backdrop to a sensational evening of mirth and conversation. Unless you serve everything flambed, people will rarely stop talking to stand and salute your culinary masterpiece. (They may be standing, nervously, to fetch a fire extinguisher.)

Strike a balance in your meals and don't expect your guests to eat as if they've plowed "the back forty" before sitting down. You can lighten the load by offering a clear soup or a small salad as an appetizer, avoiding fatty or deep-fried foods and if the main course does have heft, offer sherbet instead of tiramisu for dessert. Otherwise, your guests will have to ask for small portions, (insulting to them—like you're implying they *should* be on a diet), leave some of the meal hidden under the lettuce or piled in a small lump in the corner, (insulting to you), feed the dog, (....), or deposit their London Broil in their neighbor's purse, (insulting, and surprising, to the neighbor). If you're going over the top on dessert, announce your intention at the beginning of the meal so guests can adjust their intake (and belts) accordingly.

Don't be to light in your servings, though, because small portions will invariably demand requests for second helpings (thereby denying the benefits of "light" cooking). No one wants to be first for seconds. And they cause you as the host to continually jump up and down out of your chair as if you had a hot seat. Small servings are usually gazed upon with silence, while the guest asks herself: is this it? Or wonders whether

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such a cuisine meuniere/misere creation should be disturbed.

Serving family-style is best, (all food in bowls on the table, everyone helps themself). This allows each guest to eye the vittles, estimate the quantity available, divide by the number of eaters, and take their portion accordingly. It saves face. And, let's face it, you haven't had your food doled out to you since you left the highchair.

The best conversation comes, in my experience, when there is plenty of food on the table, being passed around and shared by all.

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When The Spirit Moves

I bought the chest at an auction, much to Michael's surprise. When we attend an auction, we normally tour the goods first and decide what we want to bid on, set a price and (try to) stick to it.

So call it a whim or an insubordination, or whatever. Michael just shrugged as I started to bid. (Yeah, like he's never come home with something we didn't agree on. I have photos. One time he brought back and entire phonebooth! He swears it was a car phone...but that's another story.)

The chest was an eighteenth century European dowry chest. Probably French by construction, with Spanish lock and oil portraits on guache, and leather hinges. OK, so its provenance is questionable. But I'm convinced it was a steal. And if it's a fake I don't want to know. I've been close to taking it to be appraised several times. I want to find out that it's worth thousands, just to rub it in. But I don't dare. I call it "Lovejoy", (named for the British television art seuth.) Michael calls it the "hope-less chest".

It's been living precariously in the second floor hallway opposite the stairs, beneath an antique quilt. I say precariously because it seems to be trying to move downstairs. I several times had to shift it back against the wall when I found it stuck out a foot or so from the wall. At the time I thought nothing of it, assuming someone had bumped it, or it had been moved in the cleaning. Until it kept happening and one day I found it clear across the hall at the top of the stairs.

"I know you don't like Lovejoy, but you don't have to push it down the stairs," I joked to Michael.

"What?"" He looked askance and dubious when I explained.

The next time it moved, it was one quarter over the edge of the stair. "That's it," I told Michael. "It's going into one of the guest rooms." I rearranged furniture.

At dinner, Michael said, "I think I heard your ghost thumping around upstairs this afternoon."

"You could have helped," I pointed out archly.

A week later I was showing guests to their room. The door wouldn't open at first.

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A strong push and Lovejoy slowly inched along the carpet against the back of the door where it had wandered toward the exit. As the guests viewed the room, I excused myself and yelled with slight hysteria for Michael. "This has to go downstairs," I explained to them as Michael came upstairs.

Lovejoy is now living in the *downstairs* hall and hasn't moved a corpuscle in months.

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One Man's Feast

Several years ago when I was living in England, a friend very kindly took me on a countryside tour out of London along the Thames of Wolsey, Moore and Beckett, on a search for olde worlde pubs. There are still some original centuries-old buildings with five foot doorways, white-washed wattle and daub walls with foot-thick solid oak beams (not veneers), and dark smokey interiors. They are pubs of good cheer, crackling fireplaces, warm beer, and deep ales. Ah, what a time we had.

On that lovely Summer day, we careened merrily along narrow country roads in his beat up Citroen. Curious that. The English hate the French, except for their cars, bread and cheeses. As I found out later, the French also hate the English, except for their woollens. The Channel is much wider than the mere 100 miles across. It's a wonder they ever got the "Chunnel" to meet in the middle.

We sang encores of pub songs as I tried to catch glimpses of the countryside over thick hedgerows and stone walls. All of a sudden, I lurched forward against the dash as the car came to a screeching halt amid a hail of gravel and dust. Dave backed up a hundred feet and pulled into a farmyard.

"Look," he said. "Bunnies Five Pounds. I'll cook you a delicious rabbit stew for dinner." And out he leaped and jogged up the farmhouse steps before I could speak. I sat there converting Pounds into real money (dollars), wondering how much meat there was on a rabbit anyway and what that worked out to per pound per Pound.

David was involved in an animated and jovial conversation with a woman on the porch. I saw them smiling as he reached into his pocket for cash. Suddenly the woman made a loud exclamation of disgust, turned back into the house and slammed the door in his face. Dave looked both bemused and peeved.

"What on Earth happened?" I asked as he climbed back into the car.

"No. Worse," he laughed. "Apparently she thought I wanted the damn rabbit for a pet. She was prepared to sell me one. When I asked her if she knew the best way to skin it, she realized I wanted to eat it and she slammed the door in my face." He shrugged as we backed slowly out the driveway.

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It would seem that the lesson is: if the sign says, “Rabbits For Sale” you can eat it, but if it says, “Bunnies For Sale”, you can’t. *Caveat vendor*.

Rabbit Reduxed

1 rabbit (2 to 3 lbs.), cut in pieces

1 cup flour

vegetable oil for frying

1 cup onion, chopped fine

1/2 cup celery, chopped

3 tsp. onion powder

3 tsp. paprika

1½ tsp. garlic powder

1 tbsp. fresh ground pepper

1/2 tsp. basil

1/2 tsp. gumbo file powder (optional)

In small bowl combine seasonings together mix with flour in plastic bag. Dredge rabbit pieces in seasoned flour. Cook rabbit in skillet in hot hoil until golden brown (2 minutes per side). Remove from skillet, drain on paper towels and set aside.

Pour off all but 1/2 cup of hot oil from skillet. Return to heat. Whisk in remaining flour mixtureand cook to form roux (2 to 3 minutes). When thickened, stir in onions and celery and cook until tender. Set aside.

In large saucepan or Dutch oven, bring 6 cups of stock to boil. Add roux to the stock until completely blended. Add rabbit to pot and cook on high for 5 minutes. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 hour or until rabbit is tender. Serve over rice or mashed potatoes.

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The Orchard

Workmen arrived this morning and started cutting down trees in the orchard. The orchard is over a hundred years old and is surrounded in three sides by a neat stone wall. The wall is three feet high and a foot and a half wide. It is completely free standing and made without mortar and yet every the stone fits neatly into place. The wall was made by an itinerant stone mason who traveled around the county building walls to pay for his supper.

This Spring, we are losing seven trees to old age and blight. They are along the East wall which is the oldest part of the orchard. It's hard to lose one tree, much less seven. They are like grandparents, or old members of the community. They were here before we arrived and we assumed that they would be here forever.

Sometimes, I guess, we ignore their steadfastness until it is threatened, or gone. But we looked after our trees. Why us? Why are they gone? It feels like ponderous mortality. Seems like the tree just reaches its full productive maturity, and then it is gone. Like people. We work and grow and learn all we can to be productive mature members of our community, then we too, are gone and others take our place.

Tree sentimentality seems to be an attitude I brought from a city childhood. Perhaps because in the city there are so few trees, and we are so removed from them and green, growing life. We long for trees like missing relatives and desperately hold on to the pathetic concrete shrouded survivors on downtown streets. Here in the country where trees and green life abound there is a different perspective. Rather than a maudlin sentimentality, there is a simple respect for life, and its ebb and flowing nature. In the nursery, saplings are thinned to make room for healthy full sized plants. Not every plant will survive, if they all try to. A fruit tree must be pruned to make healthier growth next year. In the orchard, an old diseased tree is removed so that it doesn't infect the others. In the light and space it leaves behind, a new young and vigorous tree is planted, ensuring another generation will grow up and continue to be a productive orchard. And the remaining old trees shade the young trees from the heat of Summer and the cold winds of Winter until they are strong enough to stand alone. The myriad

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leaves fall and rot and refertilize the ground the saplings will grow in. That's the nature of the orchard. We are all part of that reassuring cycle of nature.

One day, President John Kennedy was conferring with his gardener about a new tree that was to be planted. Wanting to produce quicker results for the President, the gardener explained to Kennedy that the species of tree he had chosen was a very slow growing variety that would not reach maturity for one hundred years. Perhaps he would like to choose another? But Kennedy's inimitable answer was, "Then we have no time to lose. The tree must be planted today!"

Michael and I were going to drive into Clareville tomorrow, to Johnson's Nursery. But I think we'll go this afternoon, instead.

We often think of orchard fruits, like peaches, only as dessert fare. But these versatile peaches can be delicious ingredients in entire meals, from aperitif to dessert. Here are some unusual, peachy dishes.

Peach Cocktail

Place a slice of peach in the bottom of a champagne flute. Splash in peach schnapps and fill with chilled champagne.

"Champagne has the taste of an apple peeled with a steel knife." Aldous Huxley

"Burgundy makes you think of silly things, Bordeaux makes you talk about them, and Champagne makes you do them!" Brillat-Savarin

Peach Antipasto

juice of fresh lime

1/2 lb. Prosciutto ham, sliced thin

4 ripe peaches

Peel and pit peaches, cut into slices. Toss with lime juice. Serve on individual dishes, alternating slices of ham and peach, garnish with parsley.

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Peach Blue Cheese Salad

3 ripe peaches

3 oz. blue cheese*

1/4 cup toasted walnuts, chopped

1/3 cup lime juice

1/4 cup walnut oil

2 tsp. white wine vinegar

1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard

salt and fresh pepper to taste

watercress or shredded lettuce

Whisk lime juice, oil, vinegar, mustard, salt and pepper together in bowl. Peel, pit, and slice peaches. Add to dressing, toss to coat. Marinate 1 hour.

Arrange watercress or lettuce bed on serving platter or individual plates. Place peach slices on top, drizzle remaining dressing. Crumble cheese over peaches and sprinkle with walnuts. serve chilled.

**There are many wonderful blue cheeses on the market these days. Try different ones until you find the one to your taste, and to suit the purpose. Although they all have a distinctive flavor, I find French and German blues, such as Bleu de Bresse, to be milder, creamier and more spreadable, English Stilton is milder and crumbly, Danish bleu is the saltiest and moderately crumbly. And of course, you can never go wrong with Italy's Gorgonzola.*

Peach Salsa

3 peaches, pitted and diced

1 tbsp. lime juice

1/4 cup sweet red pepper, diced

1 green onion, chopped fine

4 tsp. fresh coriander, chopped fine

1 tbsp. Jalapeno pepper, minced

2 tsp. brown sugar

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1 tsp. vinegar

salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Peel, pit and dice peaches and toss with lime juice in bowl. Add red pepper, green onion, coriander and Jalapeno. Stir sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper together until sugar is dissolved. Pour over peach mixture and toss. Serve with nachos.

Peach Chutney

25 large ripe peaches, peeled, pitted and diced

6 cups sugar

4 cups cider vinegar

3 tbsp. preserved ginger, chopped

3/4 cups candied citron, chopped

1/4 cup candied lemon, chopped

3 cinnamon sticks

30 whole cloves

3/4 tsp. coriander seed

Prepare fruit and mix with ginger, citron and lemon peel. Tie cinnamon, cloves and coriander in cloth bag. Make a syrup of the sugar and vinegar. Bring syrup to a boil. Add fruit and spice bag. Simmer for 10 minutes. Remove spice bag. Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Tender Peach Tenderloins

1 1/2 lbs. pork tenderloin

4 fresh peaches, peeled, pitted and halved

1 cup dry white wine

1 cup orange juice

3 tbsp. soy sauce

1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped

2 tsp. fresh ginger, minced

2 tsp. brown sugar

Stir together wine, orange juice, soy sauce, basil and ginger. Add pork, turning

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to coat, cover and marinate 1 hour, turning occasionally. reserve marinade.

Transfer pork to grill and sear for 2 minutes each side. Cover grill and lower heat (or raise grill). Cook 15 minutes, basting several times with marinade. Turn and cook thoroughly. Let stand 10 minutes covered with foil before serving.

Brush peach halves with marinade and 10 minutes before tenderloin is cooked, place on cooler part of grill. Baste 2 or 3 times and turn once. Bring remaining marinade to boil. Reduce heat, simmer until slightly thickened. Add brown sugar, simmer 5 minutes. Use as hot sauce with pork.

To serve, place pork on bed of greens and garnish with peach halves.

Peach Pie

1 pie crust

1 lb. peaches, peeled and sliced

1 egg

2 tbsp. flour

1/2 cup sugar

1/3 cup melted butter

Preheat oven to 400F.

Place peach slices in layers around pie crust.

Combine egg, flour, butter and sugar. Pour mixture over peaches. Bake for 15 minutes at 400F, then reduce to 300F and bake 50 minutes. Serve hot or cold. Garnish with whipped cream and fresh peach slice.

Stuffed Peaches

6 Freestone peaches, peeled, pitted and halved

2 cups mixed berries (raspberries, blackberries, currants)

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup raisins

2 tbsp. walnuts, chopped

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1/2 cup corn syrup

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cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350F.

Mix berries, walnuts, sugars and lemon juice. Fill each peach half with berry mixture. Place each peach half in large muffin pan to keep from rolling over, or in shallow baking dish. Pour corn syrup over peaches. Bake for 1 hour.

Remove from oven. Dust with granulated sugar and cinnamon. Place under broiler until golden brown. Serve immediately.

See also: Georgia Summer Spritzer
Aunt Ivy's Peach Chutney
Sweet Georgia Jam
Southern Style Barbecue Sauce

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The Storytellers

Inevitably everyone who comes to The Quilt Inn comments on the name and talk will turn to quilting. I can't think of any other name that would have evoked such feeling and storytelling as quilting has. Even for those who have never picked up a needle. Everyone, it seems, has a quilting story to tell. Many are eagerly and proudly told. Some are reluctant and sadly shared. All are precious memories.

A neatly dressed middle-aged woman recalled quilting with her grandmother at a local church bee. Grandma was such a perfectionist that after her friends went home, she would pull out any less-than-perfect stitches and redo them. She never told her friends she did so. She loved them too much. And she quilted for the companionship. The woman learned lessons of love from her Grandma.

A young woman with long unruly hair remembered her spinster aunt teaching her to quilt as a young girl. The little girl accidentally left a knot on the top of the quilt and wanted to take it out so not to ruin the aunt's quilt. No, the aunt said, leave it in. That way when I run my fingers over the top and feel the knot, it will remind me of you. The young woman learned about loving acceptance and the poignancy of memory from her aunt.

An older woman recalled that her mother worked in a cotton mill during the Depression. Each night she was given a half yard of new cloth to clean down the machines. Instead of using the new piece, she kept it and took it home. She used another old cloth and washed it over and over again, secretly taking it back in to work with her every day. From all the new pieces of cloth she made clothes for the family, and wonderful scrap quilts for the less fortunate—at least she had a job to feed her family. The woman learned about resourcefulness from her mother, and has committed her life to helping others.

A teacher of remedial reading classes for children took a quilting class at a local quilt shop. She had never done anything like this before. All the other women in class seemed better and faster at learning than she was. "This is how my students feel in normal classrooms," she realized. The teacher learned heartfelt compassion and

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patience from her own awkwardness.

"I don't remember ever seeing my Grandma quilting but I know she did," another woman looks inward for memories. "I remember her baking though and smelling brownies coming from the oven. I'd be in a rocking chair on the porch, reading Nancy Drew novels, wrapped in a quilt. She would bring out cookies and milk just when there was not enough daylight left to read and say, 'Don't strain your eyes, dear.' That was our signal. I'd close the book and we'd sit and talk, eat brownies and rock. I don't know what we talked about. Anything and everything, I guess."

Every story is told the same way, with far off distant looks as the teller relives the tale. Every story is of women, irrepressible creativity, and love.

Two of the most comforting things in life: a quilt and chocolate. I suppose if you're on a diet you have to forgo this chapter. Go wrap yourself in a quilt and you'll feel better....

We have to thank the Aztecs for discovering the coco bean and all its intoxicating glory. It was considered to be food fit only for the gods and consumed only by the pivileged, and was tantamount to religious ecstasy. It is also puported to be an aphrodisiac. Montezuma apparently drank up to 50 cups of it a day. (Unfortunately the Aztecs also sacrificed virgins by throwing them into deep wells. What a waste.) The Belgians took chcolate to its decadent heights by moulding it into decorative shapes. The Swiss, in an effort to keep warm on long snowy nights, melted it into milk and drank it, or melted in a fondue and dipped everything in the kitchen into it. The English invented the chocolate candybar itself, and finally the Americans packaged and marketed it to the masses. Chocolate is now a ten billion dollar industry annually. Every year, the average per capita consumption of chocolate is ten pounds! Well, I know I don't eat ten pounds of chocolate every year. In fact, no one I know does. At least none of us will admit it. So, somewhere there are a lot of people eating more than their share....

Today we are inundated with cheap and easily available chocolate—in everything from enticing television ads, to grab-handy candycounters at the grocery

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checkout... everywhere. Chocolate is great (but my all-time favorite flavor is raspberry) so I only make chocolate for special occasions that way I continue to appreciate its flavor. When Michael wants to really send me into paroxyms of delight, he brings me raspberry-filled dark chocolate and I'm putty in his arms.

When I serve chocolate for guests, I want them to stand up and salute it. So the recipes I look for and use need to be different and unusual and special, like the ones that follow:

In any of these recipes, here is a handy substitution you can use:

1 square (1 ounce) semisweet chocolate = 3 tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder plus 1 tbsp. vegetable shortening or oil

2 squares (2 ounces) semisweet chocolate = **a** cup semisweet chocolate chips

This is for sentiment only. I grew up with this magic upside-down cake that starts with the batter on the bottom but ends up as a cake on top with a velvety gooey sauce underneath.

Denver Chocolate Pudding

3/4 cup sugar

l cup flour

2 tsp. baking powder

1/3 tsp salt

3 tbsp. butter

1 tbsp. cocoa

1/2 cup milk

1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Sift flour, sugar, baking powder and salt together. Add cocoa and butter. Mix in milk and vanilla. Pour into buttered baking dish (9'x9"). Over batter scatter, without mixing: 1/2 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup white sugar, 3 tbsp. cocoa. Pour 1 cup cold water over top. Preheat oven to 350F. Bake for 40 minute. Remove and let stand before

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serving.

Decorative Chocolate Mousse Cups

6 square semisweet chocolate

l tbsp. vegetable shortening

Melt chcolate and shortening in top of double boiler over hot water. Removed from heat but keep warm and liquid. Spread thin layer of chocolate over insides of pleated foil cupcake liners. Chill until firm. Repeat layer of chocolate un desired thickness. Chill again. Remove outer foil cups carefully. Keep refrigerated until ready to fill.

For an interesting alternative, instead of foil cupcake liners, use small (clean) brown paper bags as a "mold" for the chocolate. Brush inside of each bag with light oil. Use pastry brush to "paint" chocolate to inside of bag. Chill. Repeat until chocolate is desired thickness. Chill again. Peel away paper bag. And if you are feeling really adventurous, collect some small sturdy green leaves from the yard, wash them thoroughly and brush with vegetable oil. Using a pastry brush, brush chocolate onto each leaf. Chill until firm. Peel off real leaves. Keep chilled until ready to use as decoration.

Strawberry Mousse Filling:

1–10 oz. package frozen strawberries

l 1/2 envelopes unflavored gelatim

1/4 cup sugar

2 egg whites

1 cup heavy cream

Puree strawberries in blender. Transfer to saucepan. Sprinkle gelatin and 2 tbsp sugar over top. Heat on low, stirring to dissolve gelatin and sugar. Transfer to chilled bowl. Stir until mixture thickens.

Beat egg whites until foaming. Beat in remaining 2 tbsp sugar until meringue

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forms soft peaks. Beat cream in another bowl until stiff.

Fold whipped cream then meringue into strawberry mixture. Spoon into chocolate cups. Garnish with shaved chocolate. Chill until serving.

Raspberry Mousse:

1 pint fresh raspberries

1 cup sugar

1 package unflavored gelatin

3 tbsp. cold water

3 tbsp. boiling water

1 tbsp. lemon juice

1 cup whipping cream, whipped

Wash raspberries. Set aside 24 for garnish. Place remaining raspberries and sugar in blender. Process until smooth. Press mixture through sieve to remove seeds. Set aside.

Sprinkle gelatin over 3 tbsp. cold water. Stir and let stand 1 minute. Add boiling water, stirring until gelatin dissolves. Stir in lemon juice. Stir into raspberry mixture. Chill until slightly thickened. Fold in whipped cream and chill until set. Spoon into chocolate cups. Garnish with reserved raspberries.

Blueberry Mousse

4 cups blueberries (2 pints)

3/4 cups sugar

2 tbsp. unflavored gelatin

1/3 cup boiling water

3 tbsp. lemon juice

2 cups whipping cream

Puree blueberries in blender until smooth. Place puree in saucepan. Stir in sugar and cook over low heat for 5 minutes.

Sprinkle gelatin over boiling water and stir to dissolve. Add gelatin and lemon juice to blueberry mixture. Bring to boil. Remove from heat and transfer cups.

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bought". The natural flavors, especially of jams and sweet preserves, are usually more satisfying, so a little goes a long way.

At The Quilt Inn, in the orchard, you see peach, plum, and pear trees, a single nectarine and an apricot. Apple trees with many varieties are there too. There is also a farm garden, which produces abundant quantities of beans, cucumbers, fresh herbs, tomatoes, the ubiquitous zucchini, corn, squashes, and more. We have raspberries, strawberries and blackberries. And we can pick wild blueberries down the path by the barn.

Here are some of our favorite "canned sunshine" recipes.

Michael's Fuzzy Navel Jam

5 cups ripe peaches

2 tbsp. lemon juice

2 tbsp. grated orange rind

3 1/2 cups sugar

1 box fruit pectin

1/3 tsp. butter

1/4 cup peach Schnapps

Peel and pit peaches. Grind or finely chop. Place 5 cups prepared fruit in saucepan. Add lemon juice and orange rind. Mix pectin crystal with 1/4 cup of sugar. Blend well. Slowly add fruit pectin mixture to prepared fruit in saucepan.

Place over high heat and stir constantly until mixture comes to a boil. Add remaining sugar. Continue to stir and boil hard for 1 minute. Mixture should thicken. Remove from heat, stir in peach Schnapps. Skim off foam. Pour into sterilized jars and cover with new lids. Store opened jam in refrigerator.

Aunt Ivy's Peach Chutney

4 lbs. Freestone peaches, peeled and chopped

1 cup seedless raisins

2 cloves garlic, minced

3/4 cup onion, chopped

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1/3 cup drained chopped ginger

1 tbsp. chili powder

1 tbsp. mustard seed

1 tsp. salt

4 tbsp. mixed pickling spice

2 1/2 cups cider vinegar

1 1/2 lbs. brown sugar

Tie pickling spice in cheesecloth bag. Place in large bowl or crock with other ingredients. Cover, let stand 24 hours.

Turn mixture into heavy kettle, bring to boil and simmer uncovered for 45 minutes or until chutney is thick, stirring occasionally. Remove spice bag. Ladle mixture into sterilized jars and seal. Store in a cool, dark place.

Strawberry Daiquiri Jam

1 cup prepared ripe strawberries

2/3 cup unsweetened pineapple juice

1/3 cup lime juice

3 cups sugar

1 pouch liquid fruit pectin (½ bottle)

4 tbsp. dark rum

Clean and hull strawberries. Crush. Place 1 cup berries in glass bowl. Add pineapple, lime and sugar. Bring mixture to a full boil for 1 minute. Add liquid fruit pectin and rum. Stir and skim for 5 minutes. Let cool slightly to prevent fruit from floating to the top. Pour into sterilized jars. Cover with new lids or hot paraffin.

Raspberry Orange Jam

2 cups fresh raspberries

1 orange

4 cups sugar

2 tbsp. lemon juice

1 (3 ounches) pouch liquid Certo

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Crush berries lightly with fork and place in mixing bowl. Grate peel from orange. Chop orange segment to yield 1/4 cup. Stir into berries along with grated peel and sugar. Let stand 10 minutes.

Stir in lemon juice and Certo. Stir until sugar is dissolved (about 3 minutes). Pour into sterilized jars and seal. Let stand at room temperature for 24 hours Store in refrigerator. Keeps up to one month.

Peach Relish

2 cups finely chopped fresh peaches

3 3/4 cups sugar

1/2 cup white vinegar

2 tbsp. dry mustard

2 tbsp. onion, grated

1 pouch liquid fruit pectin (1/2 bottle)

Combine fruit sugar, vinegar, mustard and onion in large saucepan. Cook and stir over high heat until mixture comes to a boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in liquid pectin. Skim off foam. Stir and skim for 5 minutes while cooling slightly. Pour into sterilized jars, deal with new lids or hot paraffin.

Sweet Georgia Jam

5 lbs. peaches

1/4 cup lemon juice

1 cup pure maple syrup

2 tsp. cinnamon

Blanch peaches in boiling water to loosen skins. Drain, cool and peel. Pit and chop finely.

Combine peaches, lemon juice, maple syrup and cinnamon in non-aluminum pot. Bring to a boil and gently cook for 10 minutes or until thick. Test by dropping onto cool plate—jam should hold its shape if cooked.

Remove from heat. Skim off foam. Ladle into sterilized jars and seal. This is delicious served with pancakes or crepes.

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Easy Anyberry Jam

The great thing about his jam is that it tastes different every time depending on the quantities of the berries you have on hand, so from one recipe comes several delicious flavors...

4 qts. fresh raspberries, blackberries, strawberries or any combination

3 tart apples, finely chopped

1 cup honey

2 tbsp. lemon juice

Crush some of the berries in a large kettle. Add remaining berries and other ingredients. Bring to a boil and cook for 30 minutes or until mixture thickens, stirring frequently. Remove from heat, skim off any foam. Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Apricot Brandy Conserve

2 1/2 cups apricots, pitted and chopped

2 tbsp. lemon juice

3 1/2 cups sugar

1/2 box fruit pectin

1/4 cup brandy

Pit but do not peel apricots. Add lemon juice. Mix fruit with pectin in saucepan. Bring to boil. Stir in sugar and continue boiling for 30 minutes. Skim off any foam. Stir in brandy. Remove from heat. Stir and skim for 5 minutes as jam cools. Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Strawberries in Love

5 1/2 cups strawberries, washed and hulled

4 cups sugar

1/4 cup lemon juice

1 pouch liquid fruit pectin (1/2 bottle)

2/3 cup Amaretto di Saronna liqueur

Wash berries and mix with sugar and lemon juice in large kettle. Bring to boil,

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stir in pectin. Continue boiling 25 to 30 minutes. Test for setting by dropping on a cool plate. Jam should keep its shape if cooked. Remove from heat, skim foam from top while cooling to prevent fruit from floating to the surface. Stir in liqueur. Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Savory Jelly

This is excellent served with turkey or baked ham.

2 cups dry white wine

3 cups sugar

2 tbsp. tarragon flavored vinegar

2 tsp. dried tarragon leaves, chopped fine

1 pouch liquid fruit pectin (1/2 bottle)

Combine wine, sugar and vinegar in saucepan. Add tarragon leaves. Bring to full boil and boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Stir in pectin. Strain mixture through a fine sieve to remove leaves, if desired. Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Watermelon Pickles

half a medium watermelon

5 cups sugar

2 cups vinegar

1 cup water

1 lemon, sliced

1 tbsp. whole cloves

1 tbsp. whole allspice

1 tbsp. ginger

l cinnamon stick

Discard (eat) pink flesh of watermelon. Remove outer green skin. Cut fleshy rind into 1–inch pieces. Should make 5 cups rind. Soak overnight in salt water (2 tbsp. salt to 1 quart water). Drain.

Cover with water and simmer until tender (about 30 minutes). Drain.

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Combine sugar, vinegar, water and lemon. Tie cloves, allspice, ginger and cinnamon stick in cloth bag. Add to liquid, boil and stir 5 minutes. Add rind, cook and stir until transparent (about 45 minutes). Ladle into sterilized jars and seal.

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Songs From the Hearth

I have a copy of *The Woman's Exchange Cook Book* by Mrs. Minnie Palmer, published in 1901 by the W.B. Conkey Company of Chicago. It's been in our family for a long time. I think it was my great-grandmother's. Now, before you think it is valuable or something let me tell you this is a very beat up copy. In fact, the original cover was lost years ago and as long as I can remember it's been held together by the very beaten up cover of another (lost) book called, *Heart Songs*. As a little girl I misread the tile and always thought it said "Hearth Songs". Somehow that seemed appropriate. A cookbook *would* contain songs from the hearth. Isn't that what Shakespeare was alluding to when he wrote, "If music be the food of love..."?

Unlike Elena Molokhovets' book about pre-Revolutionary aristocratic excesses, Mrs. Palmer's book is a plain, down-to-earth anthology of everything a North American homemaker at the turn of the century needed to know. It included everything from dressing game, to preserving food, to baking pies and making ice cream delicacies. For extra value in the over 500 pages, there are chapters on cooking for an invalid, how to run a nursery, how to make soap, perfumes and cosmetics, and remedies for common ailments, my favorite. So, before we become too nostalgic for the good old days, here are some of the invaluable (and sometimes unbelievable) cures you might want to try.

To Stop Bleeding

"Apply wet tea leaves, or scrapings of sole leather to a fresh cut and it will stop bleeding, or apply a paste of flour and vinegar."

To Stop Bleeding at the Nose

"Bathe the feet in very hot water, drinking at the same time a pint of cayenne pepper tea, or hold both hands above the head."

Toothache

"The worst toothache, or neuralgia coming from the teeth, may be speedily and delightfully ended by the application of a bit of clean cotton saturated in a solution of

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ammonia to the defective tooth. Sometimes the late sufferer is prompted to momentary laughter by the application, but the pain will disappear." *(Try suggesting this to your dentist!)*

Relief From Asthma

"Sufferers from asthma should get a muskrat skin and wear it over their lungs with the fur side next to the body. Or, soak blotting paper in saltpeter water, then dry, burning at night in the patient's bedroom."

Earache

"Take a bit of cotton batting, put it upon a pinch of black pepper, gather it up and tie it, dip in sweet oil and insert into the heat, put a flannel bandage over the head to keep it warm. It will give immediate relief."

Cough Syrup

"Syrup of squills 4 ounces, syrup of tolu 4 ounces, tincture of bloodroot 1½ ounces, camphorated tincture of opium 4 ounces. Mix." *(I wonder where you can find squills these days?)*

When I think of a hearth I always think of the smell of warm loaves of bread baking. But don't be intimidated, thinking you can't make bread. You can!

It's important to refrigerate your yeast to keep it fresh, and use before the expiation date on the package. It must be dissolved in water before it is added to the flour. A key element in making a yeast bread is the gluten. This is achieved by mixing and kneading the dough (and who doesn't knead more dough?) You knead, sorry, need to feel some elasticity in the dough and it should shine a bit, too. Some of our recipes have different flours in them for flavor sensation, but you cannot use these special flours alone. They have very little gluten to contribute to the bread (No thanks, I gave at the flour mill). Anyway, that's why all yeast breads use a greater proportion of all purpose flour or bread flour in relation to any other ingredients.

Another point. Your relationship with bread dough is not very fulfilling. It needs time but doesn't need you. Mix the dough and go shopping. Come back and punch it down and visit a neighbor. If it's rising too fast, put it in the refrigerator and it will slow

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down. (Wouldn't you?) Take it out later and it will continue to rise. Heat kills yeast, not cold. And that's why the ingredients are cold and the kitchen should be cool.

Country Inn Brown Oat Bread

4 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 1/2 cups rolled oats

2 cups boiling water

3/4 cup molasses

1 tsp. sugar

2 tsp. salt

1 tbsp. shortening

1 package granulated yeast

1/2 cup warm water

Lightly grease two loaf pans. Stir oats and salt into boiling water. Add shortening. Combine yeast, sugar and warm water. Let stand 10 minutes. Add molasses to oatmeal mixture, then enough flout to make stiff dough. Add yeast mixture and mix well. Let rise until light and double in size. Punch down and split into 2 loaf pans. Let rise again.

Preheat oven to 350F. Bake for 45 minutes. Remove from oven and brush with butter. Cool on wire rack.

Fresh Herb Bread

2 1/2 cups all purpose flour

1 cup cottage cheese, creamed

1 egg, beaten

2 tbsp. sugar

1/4 cup warm water

1 tbsp. onion, minced

2 tsp. caraway, dill or rosemary seeds

1 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. soda

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1 tbsp. butter

1 package granulated yeast

Lightly grease an ovenproof casserole dish.

Heat cottage cheese in saucepan until lukewarm. Soften yeast in warm water. In large mixing bowl, combine in order cheese, sugar, onion, butter, caraway, salt, soda, egg and yeast. Add enough flour to make stiff dough. Cover and let rise until double in size. Punch down and turn into casserole. Let rise again.

Preheat oven to 350F. Bake for 40 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven, brush with butter and serve warm.

Fresh Herb Soda Bread

2 cups whole wheat flour

2 cups all purpose flour

2 cups buttermilk

2 tsp. sugar

1 tsp. baking soda

1 tsp. baking powder

1 tbsp. salt

3 tbsp. butter

1/2 tsp. sage

1/2 tsp. basil

1/2 tsp. thyme

1/2 tsp. chives

1/2 tsp. marjoram

Lightly grease a baking sheet.

Sift dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Cut in butter until mixture forms crumbles. Stir in herbs. Stir in buttermilk and form the dough into a ball. Knead dough lightly on floured surface until smooth.

Preheat oven to 375F. Transfer dough to baking sheet and form a rough loaf. Bake 40 minutes or until loaf sounds hollow when tapped. Cool on wire rack and serve warm.

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English Ale Bread

3 cups self-rising flour

1/4 cup sugar

12 oz. strong English ale

1 tsp. grated orange rind

Preheat oven to 350F and lightly grease loafpan.

Mix flour and sugar together thoroughly. Add orange rind. Stir in ale until batter is formed. Place in loaf pan and bake for 1 hour or until golden brown.

Greek Braid Bread

3 1/2 cups sifted all purpose flour

3 tbsp. sugar

2 eggs, beaten

3/4 cup milk, at room temperature

1/4 cup warm water

1/4 cup butter, softened

1/4 tsp. salt

1 package dry yeast

sesame seeds for topping

Lightly grease baking sheet. Dissolve yeast in warm water and 1 teaspoon of the sugar in large mixing bowl. Set aside for 15 minutes. Yeast mixture should triple in size.

Heat milk in saucepan but do not boil. Dissolve remaining sugar and salt in milk. Add butter. Blend thoroughly. Stir milk mixture into yeast. Add half the beaten egg and blend well. Add flour until stiff dough is formed. Mix with hands and knead thoroughly. Form into ball and place in bowl. Set in warm place for 1 hour or until dough doubles in size. Punch down and roll to 1/2 inch thickness. Cut into 1 inch strips. Take 3 strips and pinch ends together. For variation, form into ring by bringing both pinched ends together and tucking together. Place on baking sheet, leaving room between loaves for expansion. Cover with tea towel and set in warm place to rise. Loaves should double in size.

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Preheat oven to 350F. Brush gently with remaining egg. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake for 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Catcher in the Rye Bread

2 cups all purpose flour

1 cup rye flour

2 tbsp. cornmeal

1 tbsp. caraway seeds

1/4 tsp. sugar

1 tsp. salt

3/4 cups warm water

2 tbsp. warm water

1 egg

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

1 tbsp. honey

1 package dry yeast

fresh ground pepper to taste

Lightly grease baking sheet or loaf pan.

Combine yeast, 3/4 cups of water and sugar in small bowl. Set aside for 10 minutes.

Combine flours, caraway seeds and salt in large mixing bowl. Add yeast mixture, honey, oil and 2 tablespoons warm water. Mix thoroughly until dough forms. Place on floured surface and knead 10 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Form into ball. Lightly oil clean bowl and roll dough in bowl to coat with oil. Cover and let dough rise for 1 hour or until double in size. Punch down. Form ball and let rise again.

Preheat oven to 375F. Form loaf and place on baking sheet or in loaf pan. Beat egg with 1 tablespoon water. Brush loaf with egg mixture. Sprinkle with caraway seeds and pepper, if desired. Bake for 35 minutes or until golden brown and loaf sounds hollow when tapped lightly.

Graham Bread

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4 cups graham flour

2 cups all purpose flour

4 tsp. baking soda

4 cups buttermilk

1 cup sugar

1 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350F and lightly grease 2 loaf pans.

Mix buttermilk and soda until frothy. Combine dry ingredients and add to buttermilk mixture. Pour into loaf pan and bake for 1 hour or until golden brown. Cool on wire rack before storing.

Egg Bread

6 cups all purpose flour

2 packages dry yeast

1 1/2 cups milk

1/3 cup butter

1/2 cup sugar

1 tsp. salt

3 eggs

1 egg yolk, beaten lightly

sesame seeds

Lightly grease baking sheet to hold three loaves.

Sift together 2 cups of flour with yeast. In a saucepan heat milk, butter, sugar and salt until warm. Mix 3 eggs into dry ingredients and beat at low speed for 1 minute, then at high speed for 3 minutes. Beat in milk mixture. Stir in as much flour by hand as possible.

Turn onto floured surface and knead in enough flour to make a smooth and elastic dough. Shape into 3 balls and place in a greased bowl. Cover and let rise for 1½ hours or until dough has doubled in size. Punch down, cover and let rest for 15 minutes. Divide dough into three portions. Divide each portion into 3 ropes. Pinch together ends of 3 ropes and braid, pinching other ends together. Place each loaf on

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baking sheet. Cover and let rise until double, about 45 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375F. Combine egg yolk and 1 tablespoon water. Brush on loaves. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and bake 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Casserole Cornbread

2 cups self rising cornmeal

1/2 cup self rising all purpose flour

2 eggs

1 cup buttermilk

1/4 to 1/2 cup water

Preheat oven to 425F and lightly grease a round shallow ovenproof casserole, or small cast iron skillet.

Mix all ingredients until batter has the consistency of cake batter. Pour into casserole and bake for 30 minutes or until puffy and a cake tester inserted into the center come out clean.

Cut into wedges and serve with Herb Butter (for recipe, see index)

See also:

Olive Bread from Provence

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Giving Thanks

My all time favorite time of the year is the Autumn. There is no time that feels healthier or more invigorating to me. I love the feel of warm, sunny Fall days when the air is crisp and clean. The faint smell of leaves burning somewhere and the sight of squirrels hustling, bustling and burying frantically, reminds me that the cold Winter is coming and I should relish these last warm days. Walking through the woods, kicking multitudes of splendid-colored leaves, takes me back to a carefree childhood. It's the best time of year to fall in love, walking hand in hand through the woods.

Having already given up their bounty, the fruit trees are almost bare of leaves. The last few survivors rattle forlornly in the breeze blowing through the orchard but if you cross the orchard diagonally from the Inn you'll come to a break in the stone wall where there's a gate into the still leafy woods and meadow beyond. In the Fall, when the sun lies slantwise across the sky, the woods seem to glow with a special dappled light especially in the late afternoon.

A half a mile up the path, if you stop at the lightning blasted old oak tree stump and look to your left, you can see the ruins of a tiny stone shack. I often wonder about the pioneer who made the one room shelter. Was he an early homesteader blazing the trail into an unknown countryside? Was he a lonely "mountain man", or was there a woman and a family there keeping him company and enduring the hardships? I can imagine Thanksgiving must have been especially meaningful to them, giving thanks for an abundant harvest that would see them through a long Winter.

When you return to the Inn, check out the quilt hanging in the dining room. It's called Autumn Splendor and is a bargello pattern design in a riot of green, gold and rust colors to capture the look of the hills and the valley around the Inn. It hangs opposite the window wall, so that it reflects the colors outside like a mirror in fabric. In Autumn, colors, smells and food come together in a glorious patchwork of all the senses. Below the quilt we set a long narrow serving table decorated with rustic baskets full of orange and yellow gourds, along with juicy red apples and toasty brown nuts. A bottle of tawny Sherry and glasses stand warming by a crisp fire. Help yourself.

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As the sun goes down, friends and family gather together and we serve our Thanksgiving feast at an antique rectory table that seats fourteen at a squeeze. Two hundred years later, we give thanks for our abundance and give thanks to the long gone pioneers who built the little one room stone cabin in the woods.

Autumn is the time when I really enjoy making and eating soups. They make light meals yet are warm and hearty fillers after a long brisk walk. Soups usually "age" well and are even better the next day.

Never worry about not having stock or broth to make a soup. Many soups taste just as good with water. You can make up for the richness that stock adds by slightly decreasing the amount of water called for, or by adding a splash of wine.

I think country soups are best served in rustic crockery bowls. Always warm the soup bowls before serving so the soup does not cool off too fast, and you can take time to savor the flavor.

New England Clam Chowder

2 onions, chopped fine
3 potatoes, peeled and diced
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups milk
1/4 cup butter
1 tsp. fresh thyme
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper
2 tins clams, with juice
6 slices bacon, cooked crisp and chopped
3 green onions, chopped
croutons to garnish

Melt butter in saucepan. Add onions, cook until fragrant but not brown. Add flour, cook over low heat for 5 minutes. Cool slightly. Whisk in milk. Bring to a boil. Add

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potatoes, bacon, thyme, salt and pepper. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 20 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Add clams and juice and reheat but do not boil. Add seasoning. Garnish with croutons and chopped green onion. Serve with light Reisling white or Muscadet wine.

Lighthouse Pork and Clam Chowder

2 lb. boneless pork, cut in 1/2–inch cubes

1 cup white wine

1 tbsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. salt

3 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 tsp. fresh–ground pepper

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But we had a tree. Our first tree. It had only one set of lights, a few ornaments and I made popcorn "snow" for the branches. But on Christmas Eve, we lit the fire and put our sleeping bag and blankets on the floor beneath the tree and slept on the floor that night. We kept the fire going all night and the tree lights on. We lay there watching the shadows flicker around the bare walls and wondered how we would ever fill up the big empty house. Four years later, the house was so full we started having "yard sales" to eliminate the obsessive clutter!

In the morning we drank eggnog for breakfast and opened our presents. Michael gave me a bird feeder and some Classical music tapes to replace the ones I had lost. I gave him warm gloves and underwear. He's the romantic, obviously!

We've slept on the floor in front of a fireplace every Christmas Eve since then. Even the year we were 9½ months pregnant and had just hosted a Christmas Eve dinner party. The guests went home, the furniture was pushed back and down went the quilts...and the three cats...and the dog...and us, Michael, me, and what was to become our son, Geoffrey.

Christmas Eve is also when I decide what to add to my Christmas quilt. I have a quilt that will take me twenty-five years to complete. It has twenty-five Christmas wreaths on it and in the center of each wreath I embroider something that represents a significant event for the year. The first was the year we married, so naturally our wedding rings are entwined with the date. I've also added decals and embellishments that are mementos of meaningful events, like teddy bears and baby blocks on the wreath for the year Geoffie was born.

Christmas Eve is the time when we talk over the past year, and remember. It's when we look forward to the coming year and a shiny new future.

Quilt Inn Country Style Stuffing

2 cups onions, chopped

2 cups celery, chopped

1 apple or pear

1 clove garlic, minced

3/4 cup butter

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4 tsp. sage

1 tsp. marjoram

1 tsp. thyme

1 tsp. savory

1/2 tsp. ginger

14 cups torn bread pieces

1/2 cup walnuts

1/2 cup currants, raisins, dates, prunes or dried apricots

1 cup fresh parsley, chopped

1 cup chicken stock or apple cider

Heat butter over medium heat. Add onion, celery, garlic, apple, marjoram, thyme, savory and ginger. Cook for 15 minutes, stirring frequently until tender. Combine bread, nuts, dried fruit, parsley and onion mixture. Season with salt and fresh ground pepper to taste. Toss with chicken stock to slightly moisten if necessary.

Normally a turkey will hold around 1/2 *cup of stuffing per pound of bird. Don't pack it in too tightly or the stuffing will come out dense and soggy.*

No matter what you do, you always seem to be left with too much stuffing for the turkey. Place the rest in a lightly greased casserole, sprinkle with water (or wine) and cover. Place in oven along with turkey for the last 45 minutes cooking time and you will have extra stuffing for dinner or for adding to turkey sandwiches the next day.

Spinach and Rice Stuffing

If you find traditional bread stuffings too heavy try this instead.

1 10–ounce package frozen spinach, thawed and chopped

1 cup minced onion

1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced

3 cups cooked rice (or mixed wild rice)

2 tbspfine breadcrumbs

3 cloves garlic, minced

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1 tsp. basil

1/4 tsp. summer savory

1/4 tsp paprika

1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg

1/4 tsp. salt

1/4 tsp. fresh ground pepper

2 egg whites, slightly beaten

Saute onions and mushrooms until tender. Remove from heat. Add rice, spinach and all seasonings. Stir well. Stuff turkey and cook.

Variation:

Remove bone from 5 pound turkey breast. Flatten turkey meat to even thickness. Spread spinach-rice mixture over turkey meat and roll up, jellyroll fashion. Tie with heavy string. Brush with margarine. Bake uncovered at 325F for 2 hours, basting occasionally. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes before slicing. Cut turkey roll into slices.

Cranberry Sauce

1 lb. cranberries

1 orange, minced

1 stick cinnamon

1/2 cup water

2 cups sugar

1/4 cup brandy

1/4 cup almonds, slivered

Simmer orange, cinnamon, cloves and water for 10 minutes. Add sugar and berries. Simmer until berries split. Remove from heat. Add brandy and almonds. Chill before serving.

Holiday Sprouts

2 lbs. Brussels sprouts

1 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced

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1/4 cup onion, chopped

1 cup walnuts, chopped coarsely

3 tbsp. butter

1 tsp. nutmeg

Remove outer leaves of sprouts and cut an ‘x’ into stem to speed cooking. Steam sprouts 15 minutes or until tender.

Saute mushrooms in butter for 5 minutes or until golden. Add walnuts and nutmeg and cook for 1 minute. Toss with sprouts just before serving.

Boxing Day Turkey

What to do with left-overs!

2 1/2 cups cooked turkey, chopped coarsely

3 slices whole wheat bread

1/4 cup milk

1 onion, chopped coarsely

3 eggs, beaten lightly

1 tsp. thyme

3 tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

2 tbsp. paprika

2 tbsp. melted butter

1 cup corn oil

2 cups bread crumbs, seasoned and dried

Soak bread in milk 10 minutes. Remove and squeeze excess milk. Shred and set aside.

Combine turkey, bread, onion, eggs, thyme, and salt and pepper to taste in mixing bowl. Place in blender and process until chopped finely. Cover and chill 1 hour.

Combine bread crumbs, parsley, paprika and butter. Shape chilled turkey mixture into large patties. Coat with bread crumb mixture. Cover and chill again 1 hour.

Heat corn oil and 1 tablespoon butter in skillet. Cook turkey patties over medium heat until golden on both sides. Serve with reheated leftover gravy.

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Turkey Hash

3 cups cooked turkey, chopped coarsely

3 cup potatoes, cooked and chopped coarsely

1/2 cup onion, chopped

1/2 cup red and green sweet peppers

1/2 cup mushrooms

1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped fine

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 eggs, beaten lightly

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 tsp. paprika

1/2 tsp. salt

fresh ground pepper to taste

2 tbsp. olive oil

Combine turkey, potato, pepper, mushrooms, onions and parsley in mixing bowl. Combine cream, egg, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, salt and pepper in another bowl, mixing well. Stir cream mixture into turkey, coating well, and let stand 5 minutes.

Heat oil in skillet over medium heat. Add turkey mixture, cover and cook for 5 minutes or until bottom is set. Transfer to broiler and cook another 5 minutes or until top is set and golden brown. Serve with a side salad and hot cider.

When I was growing up there was a French Canadian family living across the street from us. Their Gaulic tradition was to celebrate Christmas on Christmas Eve by going to midnight Mass, then returning home to open their presents and eat their customary festive dinner. Gil served wonderful tourtiere meat pies and home made pickles. We always teased her, calling them "tortured pies". The really great thing, though, was visiting with them on Christmas Eve, and opening presents. Then they shared our Anglo traditions the next day, and opened presents. Their children were

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younger than my brother and I so we all had lots of toys to play with on Christmas day!

Tourtiere

2 pastry shells

2 lbs. ground beef

1 1/2 lbs. ground veal

1 lb. ground pork

3 cups mushrooms, chopped

1 package onion soup mix

1 celery stalk, chopped fine

4 cloves garlic, minced

1/2 tsp. oregano

1/2 tsp. tarragon

1 1/2 cups dry red wine

cornstarch

salt and fresh ground pepper

Brown meat in large skillet. Add mushrooms, celery, spices, onion soup mix and wine. Cook 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Make paste of 3 tbsp. cornstarch and 1/4 cup water. Thicken meat mixture. Coll slightly. Fill pie shell and cover with pastry.

Preheat oven to 425F. Cut vents in top pastry with sharp knife Bake for 25 to 30 minutes. Pastry should be golden brown. Serve with crisp dill pickles, mashed potatoes and vegetable of choice. Serve with a robust Burgundy wine.

Tourtiere can be made ahead and frozen, either cooked or uncooked. Wrap pies in heavy aluminum foil and freeze. To reheat cooked tortiere, leave in foil but pierce with knife to allow steam to escape. Heat frozen pie in 350F oven for 1 hour. Uncover and cook additional 5 minutes.

Pesto Potatoes Please

2 lbs. potatoes, peeled, halved, steamed until cooked

Pesto

1 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped

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4 cloves garlic, chopped

1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted

1/3 cup olive oil

1 tsp. fresh ground pepper

1 tsp. salt

Place all ingredients in blender and puree. Mash potatoes by hand (like the lumpy bits, it seems more home-made that way) with pesto sauce and serve.

My Mom has been making these delicious cookies since 1950. The original recipe was German or Swiss but has been changed down through the years. Mom uses Buckwheat honey and makes her own orange and lemon peel. (Recipe follows)

Basler Leckerli

1 cup ground mixed peel (recipe follows)

1 1/2 cups whole unblanched almonds

3/4 cups honey *(try a flavored honey like Buckwheat or orangeblossom)*

1 1/4 cups sugar

juice and zest of 1 lemon

1 1/2 tbsp. Kirsch or Brandy

4 cups all purpose flour

dash salt

1 tsp. cinnamon

1/4 tsp. cloves

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

1 tsp. baking soda

Grind almonds and fruit peel. Set aside.

Mix dry ingredients and place in mound on pastry board.

Heat honey and sugar to boiling point. Add lemon juice and zest. Remove from heat. Add ground almonds, peel, Kirsch and stir until well blended.

Make a small well in center of dry ingredients and pour in honey mixture. Lightly fold all ingredients together making soft crumbles. Do not make into a firm ball. When

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evenly mixed and still warm, sprinkle crumbles onto ungreased jelly roll pan or shallow baking sheet with rim. Use rolling pin to flatten mixture in pan. Bake 15 to 20 minutes. Cut into diamond or square shapes while still warm. Brush with a thin mixture of 1 cup icing sugar and 3 tablespoons water. Allow to cool. Remove from pan and store. *(These will keep up to three months, if they last that long.)*

Unbeatable Home-Made Candied Peel

12 oranges (or lemons)

sugar

Remove peel from fruit. Scrape soft pulp from inside of peels. Place peel in saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a hard boil. Drain. Repeat two more times with fresh water. This removes the bitter quinine taste from the peel. Drain, cool on racks. Chop peel into strips or cubes suitable for specific use. Place peel in large saucepan. Add 2 to 3 cups sugar to peel and stir well. Cover and set aside for two days. Taste. Stir in up to 1 cup additional sugar if necessary to reach desired sweetness.

Ladle into containers, cover and store in refrigerator. Will keep up to 6 months or can be frozen.

Along with popcorn "snow", I like to make gingerbread "snowmen" to decorate the Christmas tree. One year, friends with a three year old son were visiting us. A week before Christmas I noticed many of the little brown men on the lower branches had lost their feet. A couple of days later they had lost various arms and legs. By the time Christmas morning rolled around, many had been reduced to dangling heads on strings. Kyle had been surreptiously nibbling on them every time he passed the tree.

Gingerbread "Snowmen" Ornaments

1/2 cup butter, softened

3/4 cu brown sugar

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1/4 cup molasses

1 egg

1 tbsp. grated orange rind

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. ginger

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. ground allspice

1/2 tsp. cloves

1/4 tsp. cardamon

pinch salt

Cream butter and sugar in mixing bowl until fluffy. Beat in molasses, egg and orange rind. Combine flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, allspice, cloves, cardamon and salt together. Gradually stir into sugar mixture until forms stiff dough. Gather dough into ball. Knead slightly. Wrap and chill for 1 hour.

Let dough soften and roll between floured waxed paper sheets to 1/4–inch thickness. Remove top paper. Use floured cookie cutters to make shapes. Use plastic straw to poke hole near top, (for string to be inserted). Lift dough and paper onto baking sheet and chill for 15 minutes, until firm.

Preheat oven to 35F. Transfer cookies to lightly greased, or nonstick, baking sheet.Bake for 12 to 12 minutes or until slightly darkened around edges. Cook on racks. Decorate as desired. Thread onto strings and hand on tree.

My Favorite Almond Fruitcake

2 cups raisins

1/2 cup citron peel

1 1/2 cups candied red cherries, halved

3/4 cups candied green cherries, halved

1 cup candied pineapple, in chunks

1/4 cup brandy

1/4 cup Amaretto di Saronna

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Place fruit in large bowl. Add brandy and Amaretto, mixing well. Cover and let soak overnight.

Batter

3 cups all purpose flour

1/2 cup soft butter

1/2 cup shortening

3/4 cups sugar

4 eggs

1 tsp. almond extract

1/4 cup Brandy

1/4 cup Amaretto di Soronna

1/4 cup milk

1/3 cup ground almonds

3/4 cup whole almonds

Preheat oven to 275F and grease 6 small loaf pans. Line pans with heavy brown paper and grease.

Mix whole almonds into fruit mixture. Dredge fruit in 1/2 cup of flour until all fruit is coated. This prevents fruit from sinking to bottom of cake.

Beat butter and shortening in large mixing bowl until creamy. Gradually beat in sugar, then add eggs one at a time and almond extract. Add 1 cup flour until just combined. Beat in Brandy and Amaretto. Beat in 1 cup flour, then milk. Stir in ground almonds. Fold batter into fruit mixture until fruit is evenly distributed.

Spoon into baking pans. Bake 50 to 60 minutes for small pans or up to 2 1/2 hours for larger pans. Test cake for doneness by inserting toothpick into center. It should come out clean if properly cooked. Remove and cool on wire racks before removing from pans.

If storing cake for a month or so before using, brush with additional Amaretto or Brandy, wrap in cheesecloth and foil. Age for at least 2 weeks to allow flavors to mellow.

Michael's Favorite Chocolate Fruitcake

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1 1/2 cups raisins

3/4 cup candied red cherries, halved

3/4 cup candied green cherries, halved

1/3 cup mixed fruit peel, chopped

3/4 cup dark rum

2 cups all purpose flour

1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

7 oz. bittersweet chocolate

3/4 cups butter, softened

1 1/2 cups sugar

4 eggs

1/2 cup milk

1 1/2 tsp. vanilla

3/4 cups whole blanched almonds

Preheat oven to 325F and grease 6 small loaf pans.

Combine raisins, cherries, and peel in large mixing bowl. Stir in rum. Set aside to marinate.

Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside. Melt chocolate in double boiler over gently boiling water. Beat butter and sugar together in mixing bowl until creamy. Beat in eggs one at a time. Gradually beat in milk and vanilla, followed by melted chocolate.

Drain fruit, adding rum to batter. Gradually beat in dry ingredients. Fold in fruit and almonds. Spoon into pans, distributing evenly. Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until cake tester inserted into center comes out clean.

Cool on wire racks before removing from pans. Brush with additional rum. Wrap in cheesecloth, then foil. Age for two weeks to allow the flavors to mature.

There are as many ways to make shortbread as there are cooks to prepare it. Here are four you should try.

Shortbread Number One

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2 cups cake and pastry flour

2/3 cup firmly packed dark brown sugar

1 cup butter, soft

Preheat oven to 300F.

Sift flour and sugar together. Add butter by rubbing into the flour mixture by hand until mixture forms coarse crumbles. Gather into ball. Knead gently to form dough. Do not overknead or dough becomes too sticky. Add a little more flour if necessary. Gently roll dough on floured surface to desired thickness.

Cut into shapes. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Prick with a fork. Bake 1 hour or until golden brown around edges.

Shortbread Number Two

1 lb. softened butter

2 cups all purpose flour

1 cup icing sugar

1 cup cornstarch

1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 300F.

Cream butter until fluffy. Sift dry ingredients together. Fold into butter until smooth. Stir in vanilla. Refrigerate dough until easy to handle. Roll dough into 1 inch balls. Place on ungreased baking sheet. Flatten slightly with a fork. Bake 20 to 30 minutes or until edges turn slightly brown.

Shortbread Number Three

3 sticks butter, softened

1 cup confectioners' sugar

3 cups all purpose flour

1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. vanilla extract

a cup lemon zest, grated

Cream butter and sugar in large mixing bowl. Sift flour and salt together and add

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to butter mixture. Add vanilla and lemon zest. Blend thoroughly. Make ball of dough and chill several hours.

Preheat oven to 325F. Remove dough from refrigerator and let come to room temperature. Press into round cake pan. Sprinkle with granulated sugar. Using a sharp knife, cut outline of wedges into batter. Bake for 20 minutes or until shortbread is slightly browned. Cool for 5 minutes. Cut wedges along pre-marked lines and remove from pan. Cool on wire racks.

Shortbread Number Four

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

2 cups butter, softened

l cup fruit sugar

l cup sifted rice flour

l 1/2 cups coarsely chopped belgian milk chocolate

Spread flour evenly on baking sheet. Broil for 2 minutes or until flour turns golden, (watch carefully). Turn flour using spatula and continue to broil until golden throughout.

In large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar. Stir in rice flour. Stir in browned flour. Blend well by hand. Dough will be stiff. Do not overblend. Mix in chopped chocolate chunks. Chill dough 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 300F. Drop dough by tablespoonfuls onto ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes or until golden on bottom and edges. Cool on racks.

Extravagant Party Shortbread

Dip half of each shortbread piece in

Dipping Chocolate

8 oz. semisweet Chocolate squares

1/4 bar paraffin wax

Melt wax in top of double boiler. Add chocolate squares. Stir and mix well until chocolate melts. Remove from heat and briefly dip shortbread in sauce. Work quickly.

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Place on wire rack or wax paper to cool. If chocolate sauce thickens, reheat.

Green Tomato Mincemeat

12 cups green tomatoes, peeled and chopped

12 cups tart apples, peeled and chopped

2 cups currants

4 cups raisins

3 tbsp. salt

3 tbsp. cloves

3 tbsp. nutmeg

4 tbsp. cinnamon

5 lbs. brown sugar

1/2 lb. suet, finely chopped (optional)

2 cups vinegar

Combine all ingredients (except suet) and cook over medium heat until liquid is reduced. (Add suet). Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Rhubarb Mincemeat

2 cups apples, diced

2 cups rhubarb, diced

zest of 1 orange

juice of 1 lemon

1 cup raisins

1/2 cup currants

1/4 cup citron peel

2 1/2 cups brown sugar

1/2 cup water

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/2 tsp. ground cloves

1/2 tsp. allspice

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

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Combine all ingredients in large pot. Bring to a boil and cook for 30 minutes or until mincemeat is thick and clear. Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Cheater's Mincemeat

Don't worry, Grandma would have probably done this herself if commercial mincemeat was available in her day.

There are a number of good commercial mincement mixes available. But to enhance their flavor and add some easy home-made-ness to them, to every l½ cup of commercial mincement try adding:

10 oz. applesauce, or 5 green apples, chopped,

or add:

1/4 cup maple syrup or brown sugar and

2 tbsp. butter and

2 tbsp. Rum or Sherry

Candy Cane Shooter

A delicious holiday cocktail to sip slowly as you do your baking or decorating. Tastes like a candy cane!

1/4 oz. green Creme de Menthe

1/2 oz. peppermint Schnapps

1/4 oz. cherry Brandy

Gently pour liqueurs, in order, over back of spoon into a clear liqueur glass. Try this with other combinations of liqueurs. The key is to have each layer lighter than the one below so they don't mix. The higher the alcohol content, the lighter the liqueur.

Hot Rum Punch

4 cups light Rum

2 cups Cognac

2 cups Cointreau

1 lemon, sliced thin

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1 orange, sliced thin

8 cups boiling water

Combine Rum, Cognac, Cointreau, sugar, orange and lemon in heat–proof punch bowl. Add boiling water, stir well. Serve hot.

Eggnog With a Bite

2 dozen eggs, separated

2 cups sugar

2 cups Bourbon

2 cups milk

1 quart whipping cream, whipped

dash ground nutmeg

Beat egg yolks in mixing bowl until thick and lemon colored. Gradually add sugar, beating continuously. Stir in milk and Bourbon, blending well.

Beat egg whites until stiff. Gently fold whites into milk mixture. Fold in whipped cream. Sprinkle with nutmeg before serving.

Spiced Tea

2 lemons

1 1/2 tsp. whole cloves

8–2 cup teabags

2 tsp. whole cloves

2 tsp. whole allspice

10 cups boiling water

2 cups sugar

1 1/2 cups orange juice

1/2 cup lemon juice

Cut lemon into thick slices, stud with whole cloves and set aside.

Combine teabags and remaining spices in large pot. Pour in boiling water. Cover and let steep for 15 minutes. Remove tebags and spices. Add orange and lemon juices and sugar, stirring until dissolved. Served in a warmed punch bowl, float

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lemon slices on top.

Old-Fashioned Wassail Updated

2 quarts apple cider

2 cups ginger ale

1 tbsp. liquid honey

3 whole cloves

4 cinnamon sticks

1 orange, sliced

1 lemon, sliced

Combine ingredients in large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 1 hour. Strain mixture, discarding spices. Serve in warmed punch bowl.

Christmas Punch

2 cups raspberries

1 pint raspberry sherbet

1 1/2 quarts cranberry juice

1 1/2 quarts ginger ale, chilled

Combine cranberry juice, ginger ale and raspberries in a chilled punch bowl. Drop sherbet by scoops into punch. Serve immediately.

Icy Christmas Coffee

6 oz. strong coffee

2 tsp. sugar

2 tsp. Creme de Menthe

1/4 tsp. mint extract

1 scoop vanilla ice cream

ice cubes

Combine ice, coffe and sugar in tall glass. Stir to dissolve sugar. Add Creme de Menthe, mint extract and ice cream. Serve with candy cane hooked over edge of glass.

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Christmas Carolers' Chocolate

For each person

Melt 2 oz. semisweet chocolate in top of double boiler, then whisk in 1 cup milk and heat thoroughly.

Snowballs in the Mud

Prepare hot chocolate as above, and to each mug add 1/4 tsp. mint extract or 1/2 tsp. Creme de Menthe. Float marshmallow snowballs on top and serve with chocolate mint stick.

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The Quilters

We didn't have much money growing up. I never really noticed its lack. Every Summer I went to a cool small town where Grandma lived while my Dad sweated it out in the city.

When I was five, I thought my Grandma was the only woman in the world who quilted. She was a magician. I watched her cut scraps of fabric and arrange the multi-colored shapes like fabric tiles in a giant jigsaw puzzle. She'd let me help sometimes if I wasn't too fidgety. Then she would start to sew them all together. Piece by piece. It took too long so I went out to play.

When I was ten, Grandma took me to the church basement where a dozen of her friends gathered around a creaky wood frame. I was surprised that Grandma had taught all these other women to play her colorful game. They sat and quickly stitched the quilt with fine straight stitches. They let me make iced tea and bring them cookies and thread their needles until my eyes were too tired and cross-eyed to see. As they talked and laughed, I went to sleep on a pile of musty smelling pillows. Grandma would wake me and I'd stumble sleepily home in the dark with her.

When I was fifteen, going with Grandma was more of a duty than anything. It's not that I didn't love her, you know. It was just that I wanted to be out doing other things. And besides they had this real annoying habit. By then I had my own place at the quilting frame. They would just get into talking about something really interesting and juicy, when someone would clear their throat and tilt their head ever-so-slightly in my direction. Like deft jugglers they would briskly turn the conversation to something else. Walking home in the dark, pestered with my questions, Grandma never could seem to recall what they had been talking about.

When I was eighteen, I was lucky to get a night job at Miller's Dairybar to help out with college tuition. When I was sorry I couldn't go quilting with Grandma, she said, "Don't worry. Your education is more important. You've spent enough time hanging around with us old ladies." Two days before I left for college, Mr Miller said, "Take tomorrow off. You worked hard all Summer," and he gave me my last paycheque.

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Grandma didn't seem surprised. She just said, "Good. You can come to the church with me."

We spent my last Summer evening machine quilting crib quilts for the children's ward at the community hospital. Moving with the times, for some of the ladies, sewing machines had taken over where arthritic fingers could no longer go. That evening we talked of everything with no taboos. They listened with grace and affection to my talk of the bright future. They shared town gossip and laughed wickedly at things genteel little old ladies shouldn't know anything about. I was appalled and tickled and pleased that I was finally included in the circle of women.

As I absent-mindedly made iced tea in the worn and badly-painted church kitchen, I wondered if I would ever see these scandalous ladies ever again. I didn't know how to say goodbye to them. I had a sense and secret hope that life was going to take me off in new and exciting, and far away directions. There were whisperings and rustlings from the other room as I returned with the tray of ice-tinkling glasses. The bumpy linoleum floor was cool under my bare feet, on the late Summer eve.

"We never could decide what to give you for graduation or for going away to college. So here. This is for you," Grandma said. "From all of us." She handed me a wrinkled brown paper grocery bag that was soft and limp with use. In it was a quilt. A beautiful quilt. An amazing quilt. A quilt for me. It was a friendship quilt with a block signed by every one of them. They had worked on it all Summer. I cried and hugged them all.

They, too, were saying goodbye. Goodbye, and we'll always be here for you.

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