

Cooking with the Insecure Chef

Contents June 2003, Vol. 7, No. 2

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Editor-in-Chief Susan M. Gilbert-Collins * Food Editor Susan Marie “Curse the darkness” Gilbert-Collins * Contributing Editors S. M. “The Trampoline Fiend” G.-Collins and S. Marie Gilbert-C. * “What is so rare as a day in June, when then if ever come perfect days?” * Art Director S. Marie Gilbert-Collins with solicited advice from Timothy James Bradford Collins, formerly “Rental Boy” * Layout Editor T. J. B. “Leave the formatting to me, Ma’am” Collins * Circulation Editor Susan “Czarina of the Universe” Gilbert-Collins

Contributing Artists Tim J. B. “Caesar Salad?!” Collins and Delia “Ask me about the level of professionalism at the UW staff meetings” Ward

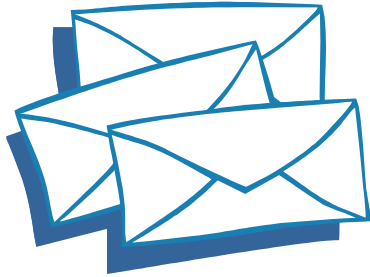
Cartoonist-in-Residence D. “Keep holding that mayo” Ward

Insecure Chef Logo designed by Delia Ward

To subscribe: Send your name, address, and \$3.50/issue or \$15.00/six issues—that’s ISSUES, not MONTHS, because we don’t do one issue per month which would be practically impossible unless I quit my day job so quit HARRASSING me Ruth—to Susan Gilbert-Collins, 137 Edgemont Road., Rochester, NY 14620. *Cooking with the Insecure Chef* was founded in Dec., 1997, as a Christmas present to my sisters. Long live my sisters!

Contact us at: smarie@rochester.rr.com Or don’t. It’s up to you.

Letters from



Readers

Dear Insecure Chef,

Soon I will be having three families over to my house for a social event. All together we are seven adults and eight kids. My guests will come Sunday evening. Friday night, I will be working, possibly late into the evening.

I wondered if you could give me some suggestions for make-ahead dishes that would satisfy this crowd. Other meals we've had were an Italian-style pasta and meat dish, Lasagna, and Shepherd's Pie, each with the appropriate salads and some kind of easy dessert. I'm hoping the weather will be nice and we can picnic on the lawn.

Thanks for your help,
Amy the Insecure

Dear Amy the Insecure,

That's funny. We have the same nickname.

Lasagna is hard to beat for a big-crowd, make-ahead meal. Darn selfish of someone else to snatch that option first, leaving you high and dry. But just about any casserole would also work, in place of lasagna. A huge pot of chili can also work for a casual, make-ahead meal. (I know you have a great chili recipe!)

If you're picnicking, you might consider making Ruth's Super Sandwich, along with a cold salad or two—all of which you can make ahead. See page 6 for a couple of recipes!

What wouldn't I recommend? Stir-frying. I've made huge Chinese meals for about 15 people, and you pretty much have to be in the kitchen until the very last minute.

Dear Insecure Chef,

Thanks for the heads-up that my subscription is waning. Keep those issues coming. I realize I'm just a "lurker"—I don't contribute much (any) in the way of recipes, etc. —at least not yet. You see, I'm really not a cook at all. I just get a kick out of every issue. Especially the illustrations. And the "asides". Who knows—maybe one day I'll become a chef. Maybe even an insecure one. Until that day arrives, I'll settle for cooking vicariously with CoWTIC. Send that next issue soon.

Priscilla M.

Dear Priscilla,

"Asides"? You're finding "asides" in this magazine? Is it just Priscilla, or do the rest of you notice this too? (Note to myself: comb current issue thoroughly for asides; remove anything superfluous or irrelevant or just plain wordy in a blah-blah kind of way...also, pick up milk, get sweaters to dry cleaner, return videos by

"...pick up milk, get sweaters to dry cleaner, return videos by Tues. noon."

Tues. noon. Stupid Blockbuster and their noontime deadlines. "Extra day" my foot. This is how they make their money, on late fees from chumps like us. Another note to myself: spearhead a grassroots movement supporting the local mom-and-pop video stores, who not only have decent midnight deadlines but offer a much better array of Indian and other foreign films, films with soul, films featuring someone other than the usual hackneyed Hollywood—)

Um...oh yes! Priscilla! Thanks for writing in, and I'm so glad you enjoy the magazine. I agree: the illustrations are worth every ounce of energy I spend

begging and pleading with my two star illustrators (Delia W. and Tim C.) to produce them.

Dear IC:

I read with interest your comments concerning the Peach and Berry Trifle you served your guests [a couple of summers ago].

It sounded great, but that's as close as I ever came to it since, when my husband and I visited, we were given such mounds and mounds of a most wonderful chicken and broccoli meal that all we could do was decline any offers of dessert.

I now wonder if this was a very clever ploy perpetrated by our lovely hostess as she wearied of preparing Peach and Berry Trifle. As a summer guest, I felt deprived of THE dessert of the season. (Which, by the way, is



a very good idea—one which I am going to try: one menu per season. Think how proficient a person could become at that one menu!)

BUT, remember the old Confucian saying: “It is unwise to trifle with one’s in-laws.” (Or not trifle, in this case.)

Yours disappointedly,
Guest 8 of “8 & 9”
Columbus, OH

Dear Guest 8:

“...trifle with one’s in-laws...” A pun! Very good, very good. I enjoyed that. The pun, I mean. I would never trifle with my in-laws. I have far, far, far too much respect and love for them. Both of them, even. And I would be most delighted to prepare Peach and Berry Trifle the very next time you’re in town, which will hopefully be this month!

Now, last summer we fell into the same pattern of making the same dessert over and over again, only this time it was Peach and Raspberry Tart. We made it once, found it scrumptious and surprisingly easy, and then used every excuse we could find to make it again.

I just wish I knew which chicken and broccoli dish it was that we served you. A stir-fry? I have no idea...

Dear CoWTIC,

My favorite part of your magazine has always been the Letters from Readers! I don't know why-maybe because it feels like peeking into something I'm not supposed to be reading. Few magazines have Letters from Readers with such an edge. But few magazines have readers with such an edge. Here are my comments from the last batch of letters you published. You may want to get out your February 2003 issue to follow along.

1) D. Ward has no reason to fear me-juliened beans or not. It takes more than a bean disagreement to

cross me and I've always liked Delia! She always seemed like a good influence on you, Susan. Not like those other rowdy Oberlin friends. Sorry, Tim...

2) Next time someone (pregnant or not) insults Bruno's

food at a potluck, he should do what I do. Start weeping. It really makes the insulter feel small. I'm guessing it would be even more effective for a man. (I'm assuming Bruno is male. I hate to think of how bitter a woman named Bruno must be!)

3) To Tightwad in Minneapolis, asking Susan how to save money while making a seafood recipe (in this case, Shrimp Stir-Fry) is like asking Robin Williams for advice on meditation. Susan excels at a tremendous amount of things-I know. I'm her sister and it makes me sick. But skimping on ingredients while cooking is NOT one of them. (Ask Tim but he'll deny it later.)

Thanks for letting me vent,

Ruth

Dear Ruth:

1) *Delia, I hope you sleep well tonight.*

2) *I can't think of the last time I made a man cry, but I'll bet you're right: it would give me pause. Bruno, let us know how this plays out.*

3) *It is not true that I never skimp on ingredients. For example, when buying peanut butter, which I use in Satay Beef and other Asian noodle dishes, I usually buy the store brand. Same with orange juice: store brand. Saltines: store brand. Coca-cola: there I draw the line. You can't expect store brand colas to have the same vim and vigor, the same sharply sweet tang, that the Real Thing offers. Olive oil: again, it's worth it to*

buy the good stuff. Aluminum foil: store brand. Baggies? Store brand. (And I wash the big ones and reuse them! Cost-effective and less wasteful.)

I sense another survey coming on...

Dear Insecure Chef,

I am enclosing a check to subscribe to another 6 issues. The last issue I received was "Cooking with the Insecure Chef's Sister," which I enjoyed a lot. I hope I've not missed any issues following it.

I do enjoy the magazine very much. But I confess that, as a foreigner, I have a double obstacle; of course it's written in English and also one has to understand very sophisticated sarcasm in English. (Still, I have double the joy when I get it!)

Last year I had a baby and now I am struggling with him. In a few months to come, he is going to eat baby food. So if you can tell me what kind of baby food, especially during the weaning period, you cook in the U.S., I'd like to try some recipes from the U.S.

Chika
Tokyo, Japan

Dear Chika,

I have never personally known anyone (that I'm aware of) who cooked their own baby food. Do people really do that in Japan?! I guess you love your babies more than we do...Does anyone out there make their own baby food? Let us know. We'll be duly impressed.

As for your remark about our "sophisticated sarcasm"...most of our readers are not aware, Chika, of your own advanced sense of sarcasm, which could (if one were suspicious) render your remark ambiguous: that is, do you really think our sarcasm is sophisticated? Or do you think it is "sophisticated" (wagging my fingers in the "air quotation marks" so in vogue these days)—i.e. not sophisticated at all, but sophomoric?

But I know just how advanced your ironic wit is (as well as your English skills), so it is guardedly that I reply, Thank you, Chika, for your compliment. Or "compliment," as the case may be.

Do people in Japan use "air quotation marks" too?
P.S. I miss you so much!



Bonus Trendy Tip Involving Goat Cheese...



Artist's rendition of a trendy goat

Toasted goat cheese rounds showed up everywhere in the past year or so—by everywhere, I mean all the big food magazines. Turns out it's a great way to jazz up your favorite pasta recipe. Here's my easy version: buy a 4-oz. log of goat cheese and cut it into four wheels. (If it gets misshapen, just press it into shape.) Dredge each goat cheese wheel (or "round") in a pile of seasoned bread crumbs. Chill until firm (I stick it in the freezer while I'm preparing the rest of the meal.) Then toast in an oven or toaster oven for about 10 minutes at around 350° F. Place one goat cheese round on each of four servings of pasta (works well with a shrimp-and-tomatoes kind of pasta, but try with other pasta dishes too). Then, as you eat the pasta, sort of blend the goat cheese in as you go.



Good Summer Meals

Ruth's Super Sandwich!

- 1 med. Cucumber, peeled, seeded, chopped**
- 1 med. tomato, chopped**
- 1 small chopped onion**
- ½ cup chopped black olives**
- ¼ cup Italian dressing**
- 1 unsliced round loaf of bread (try sourdough or white or whole wheat)**
- ½ pound sliced fully-cooked ham**
- ¼ pound sliced salami**
- ¼ pound sliced roast beef (or cooked pork or whatever sliced meat you want, such as turkey)**
- ½ pound sliced Swiss cheese**
- ½ pound Muenster, if desired**

In a bowl, combine, cucumbers, tomatoes, onion, olives, and dressing. Set aside.

Cut the top off the bread and set aside. Carefully hollow out bread, leaving a half-inch shell. (You can use your fingers to scoop out the bread. Save for another use if desired, or eat it while making the rest of the sandwich, as Ruth recommends.)

Layer ¼ of the meats and cheeses inside the shell, top with 1/3 of the vegetable mixture. Repeat layers, ending with meats and cheeses. NOTE: It's important to begin and end with a meat layer to keep the vegetable/dressing mixture from making the bread soggy. Flatten if necessary to fit the lid on top.

Wrap tightly in plastic wrap and refrigerate until serving time. Cut into wedges and serve.

Can be made 1 day ahead. Serves 8.

Orzo-Chickpea Salad

Adapted from *Cooking Light*

This salad also makes a delicious main dish—in fact, we just had it for supper tonight. The chickpeas absorb so much flavor from the feta cheese and lemon juice and dill and green onions...and the orzo (rice-shaped pasta) has a very pleasing texture. *I love* this salad. I would *marry* it if I could.

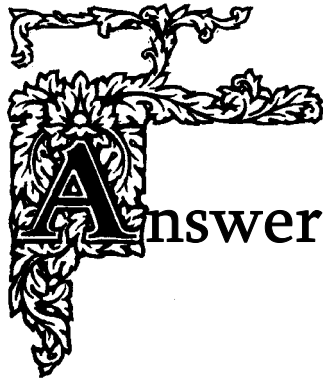
It's also light, healthy, cheap, and meatless. Everything you could want. Go. Make it now. *Now*.

- 1 cup uncooked orzo**
- a heaping ½ cup sliced green onions**
- ½ cup (2 oz.) crumbled feta cheese**
- about 1 tsp. dried dill (or ¼ cup chopped fresh dill)**
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
- 3 tbs. fresh lemon juice (or bottled – I'm not going to nag you about it this time)**
- 1 ½ tbs. olive oil**
- 1 tbs. cold water**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- ½ - 1 tsp. chopped garlic (can use bottled minced garlic)**

Adjust seasonings to your taste. (You should know this, people.) I'll admit I like to go a little heavy on the garlic.

1. Cook pasta according to package instructions; drain, rinse with cold water, and drain again.
2. Combine pasta, onions, feta cheese, dill, and chickpeas in a medium bowl. Stir gently.
3. Combine lemon juice, olive oil, water, salt, and garlic in a small bowl with a whisk. Pour over pasta mixture; toss gently.

Makes about 4 servings (1¼ cups each)



Answers to Real Reader Questions

READER CHALLENGE: can you spot the one *fake* “reader question” below?

CAN BAKING SODA EXPIRE?

According to Robert L. Wolke in *What Einstein Told His Cook*, there’s not much danger that baking soda (i.e. sodium bicarbonate) will expire—although it does pick up odors and flavors easily. But baking powder, composed of baking soda plus one or more acid salts, can actually expire in just a few months. Wolke recommends adding a little of your baking powder to water and seeing if it fizzes. If it doesn’t, it’s time to buy a new can.

IS MY GARLIC SPROUTING BECAUSE IT KNOWS IT’S SPRING?

Sadly, no. Your garlic is sprouting because it is not long for this world. But as Linda and Fred Griffith say in *Garlic Garlic Garlic: More Than 200 Exceptional Recipes for the World’s Most Indispensable Ingredient*, you can still use garlic at this point: “Just remove that sprout and you’ll still have a decent-tasting clove.”

Interesting garlic fact for the day: types of garlic can be divided into two categories, softneck and hardneck. Hardneck garlic has a hard stick in the center at the top of the garlic head, and is harder to grow than softneck garlic. According to the Griffiths, it comes in a wider range of flavors and often has very large cloves and more colorful skin. Softneck garlic is what you usually find in supermarkets.

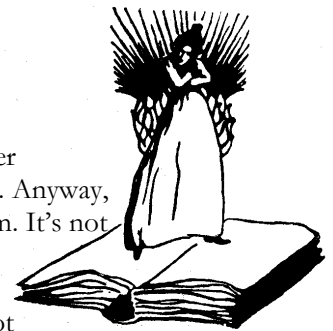
IS THIS A GOOD TIME TO REFINANCE OUR MORTGAGE?

Yes—but no matter when you lock into a rate, you will run into someone the next day who found a rate 0.05% lower. I know this because it happened to my sister. When she called me. (Update: And then it happened to me, when *her* rate dropped even locked even after they’d locked into a rate. Life is not fair.)

Send your question to the *Insecure Chef* at 137 Edgemont Road, Rochester, NY 14620 or email us at: smarie@rochester.rr.com

Retractions & Apologies

- I would like to apologize for my layout editor’s unauthorized use of old Betty Crocker illustrations. Actually what I would really like is to make him apologize, but he won’t. Anyway, when the copyright police show up, they can go right ahead and slap the cuffs on him. It’s not like he wasn’t warned.
- OBSEQUIOUS apologies to my brother-in-law Stuart for accusing him recently of not having read the fine print in the last issue, when in fact he did. I just forgot.



Welcome to New Readers: I don’t believe we have any new readers this month; please correct me if I’m wrong.

Guest Chefs Jan and Laurel Decher

I met Jan and Laurel Decher back in graduate school, where I found myself drawn to the spirit of health and wholeness that seemed to characterize every aspect of their lives: the spiritual, the intellectual, the physical. There was something unutterably heartening about entering Jan and Laurel's apartment on yet another cold winter's day and finding a row of seedlings sprouting beneath warming bulbs. On one occasion, thoroughly beaten down by yet another snowstorm and not too shy to complain about it, I found myself bundled into the car by Laurel and taken to the conservatory in St. Paul, where we wandered blissfully through the tropical plants and remembered that green things existed and that spring *would* come. I've learned a lot from Laurel. I curse the darkness; she lights a candle.

The Dechers' gift for wholeness extended (blessedly) to the table. An abundance of homegrown veggies, homemade pesto, whole healthy ingredients, creative menu plans...all of these things drew me (and I'm sure many others) to the Dechers many times. Jan and Laurel are equally at home in the kitchen, splitting their cooking duties fifty-fifty, so I was thrilled when they agreed to be guest chefs for this issue.

The Dechers met on Jan's home turf when Laurel went to Philipps University in Marburg an der Lhand to study German literature for a year. After they had both completed master's degrees in the States, they married in Summit, NJ. No traditional wedding cake for them; they ordered Italian pastries from a local bakery. When they called the bakery to confirm the arrangements, they learned that it had burned down. (Fortunately, they found another bakery that could fill the bill.) Then it was on to the University of Minnesota, where Jan

pursued his Ph.D. in zoology and Laurel her Ph.D. in epidemiology.

Now living in Burlington, Vermont, Jan holds an adjunct appointment at the University of Vermont and travels to West Africa to conduct research on bats and small mammals, while Laurel is the Chronic Disease Epidemiology Chief for the Vermont Department of Health. (If your beloved pet bat develops asthma, this is definitely the couple to contact.) Daughters Sophie (aged 9) and Isabelle (aged 2) keep them busy as well.

And gardening continues to play an important role in the family's life. This year's garden includes a cold frame, where they've planted Winter Marvel lettuce, mesclun, radish mix, arugula, collard greens, and garlic chives to use in stir-fries. "We tried sweet peas," Laurel added, "but they were sort of a failure." In the rest of the garden, they've planted jingle bell peppers, parsley, carrots, tomatoes, basil, dill, some "sad-looking cucumbers," Tom Thumb lettuce, raddichio, zucchini, kohlrabi, beets, fennel bulb, spinach, garlic, ruby chard, leeks ("plundered by the darn squirrel," Laurel says), celery root, green onions, parsnips.

Whew! But there's still the herb garden, which contains rhubarb (okay, not an herb, but it happens to be planted there), tarragon, thyme, lavender, sage (which Laurel says has mysteriously disappeared), breadbox poppies, and salad burnet. (The rosemary is inside by the kitchen sink, not being hardy enough to survive outdoors.)

And they use everything. When I was visiting Laurel a couple of years ago, I watched her prepare for a pasta supper by wandering out to the garden and picking whatever looked good to her, then tossing it in with some Italian sausage and pasta. It was scrumptious, and when I asked for the recipe, she just laughed. With such variety in the garden, it's never the same thing twice! (I

did wangle a sort of recipe out of her, finally; see below.)

I asked Laurel how they learned so much about gardening. “My parents gardened,” she said. “The first garden that [Jan and I] had together was the community garden at Gibbs Farm near the St. Paul campus. There’s a little demonstration farm there and they had animals and chickens. They had community plots. They’d plow it up for you and you’d plant it. We got one square and then we watched everybody else making their gardens... You do learn a lot that way.” But she added, “We’re firm library people. Go get a book and read all about it. And that’s how the chickens got killed by the skunk!” Chickens? I had no memory of

their ever owning chickens... Laurel laughed and explained that they once built a special kind of chicken coop with no bottom; it was supposed to allow you to move the coop around every day, giving the chickens fresh ground to scratch. But local skunks got in and killed the chickens. “There are some things the book doesn’t tell you,” she said.

The Dechers have also sustained another creative tradition that I’d love to emulate: recording and keeping their menu plans. But Laurel can tell you about it much better than I... after which, enjoy the many wonderful recipes from the Dechers, written in their own words!

HOW THE MENU PLAN CAME TO BE

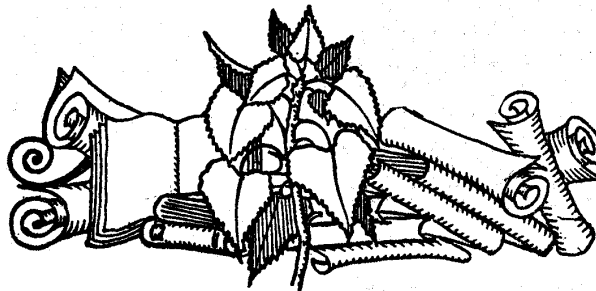
By Laurel Decher

It all began when Jan and Laurel were married and lived in a tent as nomads until their apartment was almost ready to be vacated by their friends who lived there. Laurel, being a newly minted wife, had been advised by many more experienced women that the difficulty of cooking every day was coming up with the idea of what to make. Once you know what to cook, you know what to buy. If you have both an idea and the ingredients, then you have supper. Experienced cooks had also mentioned that people who are new to taking a turn in every day cooking can be completely un-done by other people (particularly newly minted wives who want to show off how competent they are) meddling in their projects. Hence the menu plan.

The original goal was to develop re-usable menu plans, i.e. just pick up the photocopied menu plan from a few weeks previous and take it to the store to shop. So far this hasn't worked. We keep them all in a squashy notebook and find that they are a funny kind of record of the past. (“Oh, look we had spinach salad the last time your parents came to visit from Germany...”) When we are expecting visitors, it helps us to plan around any special requests/food allergies/planned trips, if we write those things on the menu plans. When Sophie (now 9 years old) was learning to use a pencil, she made some “entries” and suggestions for menu plans herself. Isabelle (soon to be 2 years old) likes to “decorate” them.

FEATURES OF THE MENU PLAN

- Chef of the day (circle appropriate initials)
- Grocery shopping list on the back
- Write in planned menu and where to find recipe (e.g., *Joy of Gardening Cookbook*, pg. XX)
- Good for two weeks (+ leftovers until you get around to shopping again)
- Can add comments about how the dinner was received by all parties
- Keeps people from snitching your ingredients because they didn't know they were needed



SAMPLE MENU PLAN 26 SEPT - OCT. 19

<u>Sunday Oct 31. (LD/ JD)</u> Lunch: SNG: Richard Rohr Tape	<u>Monday (JD)</u> Dessert: Ice Cream	<u>Tuesday (LD)</u> Pot roast & Red Cabbage & Noodles Dessert: Apple Crisp
<u>Monday 27 Sept. (SD)</u> Breakfast: Waffles (Return R. Rohr tape) Rosemary Chicken & Brown Rice	<u>Tuesday (LD)</u> Groundnut Soup /Jollof?	<u>Wednesday (SD)</u>
<u>Tuesday (LD)</u> Breakfast: Pumpkin Muffins Impossible Lasagna Pie	<u>Wednesday (JD)</u> Cauliflower Paprikash	<u>Thursday (LD)</u> Sophie's Choir Africa Night: Plantains and Bean Stew
<u>Wednesday (SD)</u> Breakfast: Pancakes Pesto	<u>Thursday (LD)</u> Sophie's Choir	<u>Friday (SD)</u> get R. Rohr tape -German Oven Pancakes
<u>Thursday (LD)</u> Sophie's Choir	<u>Friday (JD)</u> get R. Rohr tape Spaghetti Bolognese (w/ Ital. Saus.) & Merlot S'mores at fireplace	<u>Saturday (LD)</u> Make Cheesecake Pizza & Movie Night
<u>Friday (JD)</u> Cabbage Kielbasa Pie	<u>Saturday (SD)</u> Pancake Breakfast Lunch: Hummus& other dips Turkey & Pumpkin Pie Dessert: Peach Cobbler w/ Whip. Cream	<u>Sunday (SD)</u> Sunday Night Group: Cheesecake
<u>Saturday (SD)</u> Make Coffee Cake	<u>Sunday (JD/LD)</u> Lunch: Leftovers SNG: Barley Soup ETT 90 Richard Rohr Tape	<u>Monday (JD)</u> Breakfast: Pancakes or Waffles
<u>Sunday (LD)</u> Sunday Night Group: Coffee Cake Richard Rohr Tape	<u>Monday (SD)</u> Return R. Rohr tape Crêpes with mushrooms etc.	<u>Tuesday (LD)</u>

SHOPPING LIST DATE: _____

<p>Vegetables/Fruits</p> <p>___ apples ___ asparagus ___ bananas ___ blueberries ___ broccoli ___ cabbage ___ cauliflower ___ carrots ___ celery ___ cucumbers ___ eggplant ___ garlic ___ ginger ___ other herb _____ ___ fennel ___ green beans ___ green onions ___ leeks ___ lettuce ___ mushrooms ___ onions ___ oranges ___ pears ___ peppers, green / red ___ potatoes ___ red peppers ___ summer squash ___ tomatoes ___ zucchini ___ other _____</p> <p>Beans, rice & pasta</p> <p>___ beans, pinto / black ___ beans, _____ ___ lentils ___ noodles _____ ___ rice, white ___ rice, brown ___ tofu</p>	<p>Canned foods</p> <p>___ applesauce ___ crab/ salmon ___ green chiles ___ jam ___ mandarin orange ___ peanut butter ___ pears ___ pineapple ___ tomatoes whole ___ tomato paste ___ tomato sauce ___ tuna ___ other canned _____</p> <p>Dairy & eggs</p> <p>___ butter ___ cheddar cheese ___ cottage cheese ___ eggs ___ milk ___ mozzarella ___ sour cream ___ Swiss cheese ___ whipping cream ___ yogurt ___ other _____</p> <p>Frozen food</p> <p>___ blackberries ___ fish ___ ice cream ___ orange juice ___ other _____</p>	<p>Baking</p> <p>___ baking soda ___ baking powder ___ bread crumbs ___ brown sugar ___ choc. chips ___ cocoa ___ coconut ___ cornmeal ___ cornstarch ___ flour, white ___ flour, whole wheat ___ granola ___ honey ___ nuts _____ ___ oatmeal ___ raisins ___ salt ___ sugar ___ vanilla ___ yeast</p> <p>Oils and mayonnaise</p> <p>___ mayonnaise ___ oil, canola ___ oil, olive ___ balsamic vinegar ___ wine vinegar</p> <p>Bread</p> <p>___ muffins ___ pita ___ sandwich ___ tortillas ___ other _____</p> <p>Cleaning</p> <p>___ Ajax /Cascade/Joy ___ laundry ___ sponges</p>
<p>Spices</p> <p>___ ___ ___</p>	<p>Meat</p> <p>___ chicken (whole) ___ chicken (_____) ___ hamburger ___ pot roast ___ other _____</p>	<p>Paper</p> <p>___ aluminum foil ___ napkins ___ paper towels ___ plastic wrap ___ tissues ___ toilet paper</p>

A FEW THOUGHTS FROM THE INSECURE CHEF ON JAN AND LAUREL'S SHOPPING LIST...

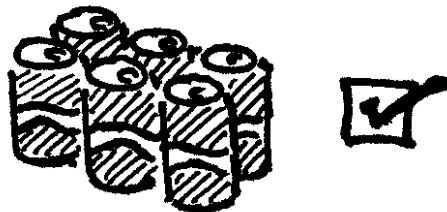
While working on this article I needed to make a shopping list of my own, so I thought I'd take Jan and Laurel's shopping list out for a spin—see how she handles, so to speak. I was scanning the list and marking the items I needed when it dawned on me that *within each category, the items were listed alphabetically*. I don't know why this struck with the force of a full-blown epiphany, but it did. Brilliant! The alphabet is probably the single most useful thing you ever learn in your life, and I for one am glad for every opportunity to employ this knowledge.

The second thing I noticed, while getting ready to mark "tortilla chips", was that tortilla chips weren't listed. Genuine tortillas, yes, but no tortilla chips. Hmm. In fact, there was no category for "junk food." Hmm. Also, curiously, there were no sodas listed *at all*. I checked under "Dairy & eggs," in case the term "mother's milk" had been used for "Coca-cola," but found nothing. More brain-wracking ensued. Then it came to me: the Dechers do not buy junk food. The Dechers do not buy soda. My respect for—and fear of—the Dechers rose significantly. (Who doesn't fear that which they do not comprehend?!)

Having survived the bout of self-examination and rigorous rationalization that naturally followed on the heels of this second revelation ("I *do* try to eat a healthy diet; surely one measly Coke a day, and caffeine-free at that, can't hurt anybody..."), I sort of got a weird kick out of noticing other things that the Dechers do buy and I don't, and vice versa. For example, they list "pears" but not "peaches." Are they peach-haters? I'm not a pear-hater, yet I rarely buy pears. Hmm, they list "pears" under both "Vegetables/Fruits" and "Canned Foods"—yet black olives, capers, water chestnuts, and bamboo shoots are conspicuously absent from their canned goods list. (Could it be that those items are junk food, and I'm only just now realizing it?) They have "fennel" on their list. I'm not allowed to buy fennel. Certain people in this house do not appreciate fennel. I also note that oils and mayonnaise are categorized together—this makes perfect sense, yet I know I would never have thought of it.

All in all, an enriching, enlightening experience, providing much food for thought. (Ha.) I love this pre-fab shopping list idea and plan to use it (with minor additions/subtractions—pears are out, peaches are in) for all my future shopping trips! Thanks, Jan and Laurel!

NOTE: If you would like a copy of Jan and Laurel's shopping list, email me at smarie@rochester.rr.com and I'll email you a copy as an attachment (Word document).

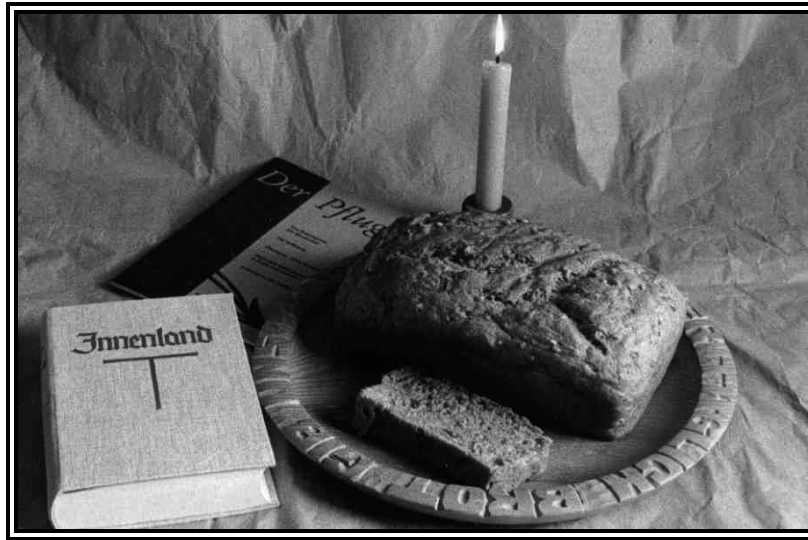


BRUDERHOF BREAD

1 T yeast
1 T sugar
2 T salt
water
1 cup wheat berries
1/2 cup pearl barley (boil 1 hour)
10 cups whole wheat flour
2 cups white flour

Start yeast with some warm water, sugar and salt. Add dry ingredients. Add enough water to make a sticky dough. We mix it in a large soup pot. Let rise for approximately one and a half hours. Divide into four greased and floured bread pans each about three quarters full. Put in cold oven. Set oven to 345° F (170°C) and bake for one hour. When done remove from pans and cool on wire racks. Yields four loaves.

Source: *Hela Ehrlich, Woodcrest Bruderhof, Rifton, New York.*



Still life of freshly baked Bruderhof Bread with a copy of the main work, *Innenland* (Inner Land), by Bruderhof founder Eberhard Arnold. Photo by Jan Decher

YOGHURT COFFEE CAKE

1/2 cup brown sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup chopped nuts
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup butter, softened
1 cup yoghurt
1 teaspoon vanilla
3 eggs
lemon peel (optional)

This is essentially the “sour cream coffee cake” from the KitchenAid cookbook, which we use substituting yoghurt for the sour cream. Combine brown sugar, cinnamon, and nuts in small bowl. Set aside.

Sift flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt into bowl. Add butter, sour cream, and vanilla. Attach bowl and flat beater. Turn to Stir Speed and mix until ingredients are combined, about 30 seconds. Stop and scrape bowl. Turn to speed 4 and beat for 1 1/2 minutes. Stop and scrape bowl.

Turn to Stir Speed and add eggs, one at a time, beating 15 seconds after each addition. Increase to speed 2 and beat 30 seconds.

Spread half of batter in greased and floured 9 x 13 x 2-inch oblong pan or 10-inch tube pan. Sprinkle with half of cinnamon-sugar mixture. Spread remaining

batter in pan and top with remaining cinnamon and sugar. Bake at 350 degree Fahrenheit for 50 to 60 minutes.

Yield: One 9 x 13-inch or 10-inch cake.

[Source: KitchenAid Mixer book, page 37]

SPAGHETTI SAUCE À LA LAUREL'S GARDEN

Quantity: Depends on your garden, but the quantity below fed 11 people for dinner when we served it with a huge bag of Ziti and freshly grated parmesan (of course) and left some sauce for the next day.

SAUCE:

tomatoes, all varieties: the more paste or sauce type you have, the thicker the sauce
4 or 5 fresh garlic cloves (right out of the garden, when they are still translucent, use fewer if yours are from the store)
red and green sweet peppers
basil stems
oregano stems and leaves
thyme stems and leaves
bay leaf
rosemary
fennel tops
onions, quartered

Cook everything together until the tomatoes have fallen apart. Fish out the big pieces of fennel stalk and the stems of the herbs and then run the whole thing through a Victorio strainer or Foley food mill. (You can do it without a strainer, but then you have to be neater to begin with and peel the tomatoes and peppers first.)

Set aside for another day. (You're tired, aren't you? You've been working in the garden and the kitchen all day. If there's nobody to take you out for Chinese food, you can eat the "plain" sauce just as it is over noodles. Paul Newman, eat your heart out :))

ITALIAN SAUSAGE:

Brown 1-2 lbs of Italian sausage (preferably "hot") in a huge stockpot.

VEGGIES:

1 eggplant, sliced
2 green zucchini, cut in half and sliced to make half-moons
2 yellow squash, sliced as above

2 green peppers, diced
2 red peppers, diced
1 lb mushrooms sliced
2 onions, chopped
3-4 garlic cloves
1 fennel bulb, diced

If you have a food processor, it is easy to quarter the peppers and slice them (and everything else). I do chop the fennel bulb by hand because I don't like strings. (I only use the stalks in the plain sauce or when I make chicken stock.) Sauté the veggies with the browned Italian sausage.

When the veggies are translucent, add the tomato sauce from the other day, and add herbs.

HERBS:

basil – really, you should add fresh chopped basil leaves at the very, very end. If you simmer them forever in an open pot, the volatile oils will vanish by the time you want to eat it and you will wonder why it doesn't taste basil-y enough.
oregano – I sometimes used dried if I don't have any in the garden.
thyme – if you hold the stems upside down and pull your fingers along the stems, the leaves will all "unzip" nicely.
rosemary – fresh is best. Dried will do if you have absolutely nothing else.
fennel seed
 (maybe a **hot pepper** of some kind if sausage isn't hot)
bay leaf

Simmer sauce until vegetables are tender. Cook pasta and serve. (How about an arugula salad with balsamic vinegar and olive oil and a few leftover peppers and mushrooms and tomatoes from the food processor...)

SWISS CHARD AND TOMATOES

3 T olive oil
1 medium onion
1 c peeled & chopped tomatoes
¼ t basil
1 t oregano
salt & pepper to taste
2 pounds Swiss Chard, coarsely chopped
 (or kale or collard greens)
1/3 c grated Parmesan cheese

Heat oil in large skillet. Add onion and sauté until soft. Add tomatoes and seasoning; cook 5 minutes. Add Chard; (or kale or collard greens) simmer 15 minutes until tender. Stir and add water if greens are sticking to skillet. Sprinkle with cheese while hot. Makes about 6 servings.

NUTS ABOUT NUTS

The following two cakes are best with hazelnuts (filberts) and/or almonds. These may be less expensive bought in bulk in your local food coop or health food store. A hand-cranked nut mill (or grinding attachment to your mixer) is essential to obtain fresh and moist ground nuts. In the first recipe the nuts replace the flour, which makes this an excellent cake for people who can't eat wheat. One more tip: Use a hand grater for the lemon peel and brush off the grated peel with a dry pastry brush.

OMA ELLA'S NUSSKUCHEN

(Grandma Ella's nut cake)

5 eggs
250 g (2 cups) powdered sugar
250 g (~8.8 oz.) freshly ground hazelnuts or almonds
1 pinch of salt
one handful of chocolate chips (or crumbled block chocolate) if desired

Beat eggs and add sugar and salt, then ground nuts. Add chocolate if desired. Preheat oven to 325° F. Pour batter in greased (and paper-lined, if possible) 3" x 3" x 12" pan (9 5/8" x 5 1/2" x 2 3/4" will work just as well...). Bake 50 to 60 minutes (values for gas oven). Done when toothpick or knife inserted comes out clean.

Cool on rack, then in refrigerator before sprinkling cake with powdered sugar. A great cake with a cup of fine fine Darjeeling or Ceylon tea. Yummy!

* * * * *

LINZER TORTE

200 g (~2 cups) Flour
125 g (5/8 cup) Sugar
175 g (1 1/2 sticks) Butter
5 eggs
250 g (2 cups) powdered sugar
125 g (~5 oz.) freshly ground almonds or hazelnuts

peel of 1/2 lemon
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 pinch ground cloves
1 egg, 1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon flour
10 g (~2 heaping T, enough for a thin covering) cranberry or cranberry jam (or raspberry, black currant jam etc.)
1 egg yolk for glazing

Combine 200 g flour, sugar, butter, almond, spices, one and one half egg yolk, knead into a smooth dough and cool for 30 minutes. With two thirds of the dough cover the bottom of a buttered springform pan and form a one-inch high edge. Cover dough with cranberry (or other) jam. Knead remaining 1 tablespoon of flour into remaining dough and cool again for 15 minutes. Then roll out dough into a circular disk the size of the springform bottom. Use knife or cutting wheel to cut rolled out dough into 10-12 strips. Lift first the even, then the odd strips ("every other one") with a knife and make a crisscross grid pattern on the jam-covered bottom (sounds harder than it is! You don't have to weave like a basket ;-). Use pastry brush to brush grid with the remaining half egg yolk (for nice glaze). Bake in preheated oven for about 60 minutes.

OAT & MIXED FLOUR BREAD

1 package of yeast
3 cups of warm water
1/4 cup molasses (I used blackstrap m.)
2 cups wheat flour
2 cups whole wheat flour
1 T salt
2 cups rye flour
2 cups oats
1 cup butter, softened
more wheat flour as needed
some oil (for greasing)

In a large dish (mixing bowl) dissolve yeast in warm water. Add molasses and stir until it has dissolved. Sift wheat and whole wheat flour gradually into the bowl and mix. When all four cups of flour have been used, beat the mixture thoroughly until it is smooth and very soft. Cover dish with a cloth and place in a warm spot for 45 minutes or 1 hour.

Sprinkle with salt and knead. Gradually add rye flour and oats. The dough should be rather stiff. If it is not firm enough add some more wheat flour. If it can be picked up without tearing, take it out of the dish onto a

floured board and start to knead. Only use as much flour as is needed to give the dough the right firmness. If the dough is shiny and smooth and comes off your hands after 20 minutes of kneading, without sticking, form a ball and put it in a large greased bowl, turning it until it is greased on all sides. Cover with a cloth and place in a warm spot to rise for 1 hour. The dough should double in volume.

Punch down and form two loaves. Place the 2 loaves in two rectangular bread baking pans and cover again for 50 minutes to rise. Bake in preheated oven at 350° F (175°C). If they are done cool on wire rack. Yields two loaves.

[Source: Anna Thomas, *The Vegetarian Epicure*]

Note: 3 cups wheat and 3 cups rye flour instead of whole wheat flour work too.

PARSLEY RISOTTO

from Harris, Valentina. Risotto! Risotto! 80 recipes and all the know-how you need to make Italy's famous rice dish, pg. 86

Serves 3

1 onion, minced
1 ½ quarts chicken stock, kept simmering
3 oz (¾ stick) butter
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 c Arborio rice
bunch of fresh Italian parsley, stalks discarded and leaves finely chopped
1 glass dry white wine Pinot Grigio
1 c freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Method

Sauté the onion gently in half the butter until soft and transparent. Add the rice and stir the grains in the butter and onion until coated and shiny. Add the wine and stir thoroughly. After 1 minute, add the first ladleful of hot stock. Stir and allow the liquid to vanish, then add the next ladleful. Wait for the grains to absorb the stock, stirring gently, then add more stock. Continue in this way for about 20 minutes until the rice is soft, tender, and creamy. The grains must remain firm in the center. Season with salt and pepper and remove from the heat. Stir in the rest of the butter, the parsley, and the Parmesan. Stir thoroughly and cover. Let the risotto rest for 2 minutes, then spoon into a warmed platter and serve at once.

We made fresh chicken stock with celery, carrot, parsnip, 1 garlic clove, chopped onion, bay leaf, peppercorns and maybe parsley. We used Italian parsley from the cold frame; curly parsley is not supposed to work in this recipe.

PUMPKIN SHEET CAKE

From Debbie Clark

1 can (16 oz.) pumpkin
2 cups sugar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs lightly beaten
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp salt

Beat pumpkin, sugar and oil. Add eggs and mix well. Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt, add to pumpkin mixture and beat until well blended.

Pour into greased 15"x10"x1" baking pan (jelly roll pan). Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes.

FROSTING:

1 pkg. (3 oz.) cream cheese, softened
5 T. butter or margarine, softened
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 ¾ cup confectioner's sugar
3 to 4 tsp. milk
chopped nuts (optional)

Beat the cream cheese, butter and vanilla until smooth. Gradually add sugar, mix well. Add milk until frosting reaches desired spreading consistency. Frost cake. Sprinkle with nuts. Makes 20-24 servings.

DECHER FAMILY SANDKUCHEN

(Yellow "sand" cake – from Jan's mother)

250 g (2 sticks) butter
250 g (1 ¼ cups) sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
peel of one organic lemon
4 eggs
125 g (1 cup) corn starch
125 g (1 2/3 cups) flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

Combine ingredients, spoon into buttered round tube pan or “Gugelhupf” pan and bake at 350° F (175°C) for 50+ minutes until knife inserted comes out clean.. Slice and serve fresh.

Great cake for Sunday afternoons, served with or without vanilla ice cream. Also great cake base for layered butter creme tortes and birthday cakes with candles.

CSIRKE PAPRIKAS

(*Whole Foods From the Whole World, LLL, pg. 107*)

Hungary

- 1 3-4 lb roasting chicken (or boneless)**
- 2 large onions, chopped**
- ¼ c oil**
- 2 T sweet Hungarian paprika**
- 2 T red wine vinegar**
- ¼ c whole wheat flour**
- 3 c chicken stock**
- ½ c plain yogurt**

Cut chicken into pieces, discarding skin and bones; rinse chicken and pat dry. Sauté onions in hot oil in large deep skillet until tender. Add paprika and wine vinegar; mix to moisten paprika, adding a small amount of water if necessary. Add chicken. Cook until chicken is brown; remove to baking dish. Blend flour with enough water to make a smooth paste in bowl. Add chicken stock gradually, mixing until smooth. Stir into skillet.

Cook over medium-high heat until thickened, stirring constantly. Spoon over chicken. Bake, covered, at 350 F (180 C) for 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Fold in yogurt just before serving. Serve with Galuska (small Hungarian dumplings, pg. 162) or brown rice and salad. May omit yogurt. May substitute margarine for oil. Yield: 6 servings.

GALUSKA

(*Whole Foods From the Whole World, LLL, pg. 162*)

Hungary

- 3 eggs**
- 2 T oil**
- 2/3 c water**
- Salt to taste**
- 2½ c soft whole wheat flour**
- 2 T margarine**

☞ Jan says this is the best sauce he has tasted outside of home in Germany.

Combine eggs, oil, water and salt in bowl. Add flour gradually, mixing just until moistened. Let rest for 10 minutes. Cut off small pieces of dough with spoon, dropping into deep saucepan of boiling water. Cook until dumplings rise to surface; remove with slotted spoon. Stir into margarine in covered dish. Serve with sauce if desired. May press through colander with 1/4 inch holes. May substitute butter for margarine. Yield: 10 servings.

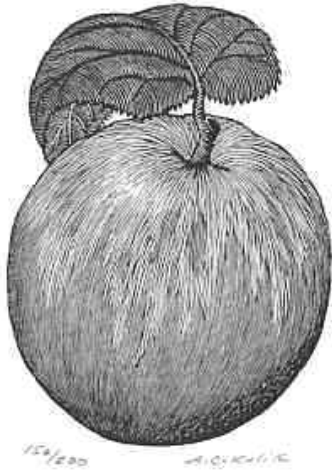
Bonus Travel Tip!

If you ever find yourself near Boulder, CO, drop in on my brother Tim and his wife Marlene. It turns out that they have a neighbor with an in-ground trampoline, and get this: they can go over any time they want and play on it. I know, because they took me there. Twice. It's beyond me how they ever get any work done. You just can't have more fun than that.ⁱ

So stop on by—they love unannounced visitors, because they have nothing to do but chase after three little kids and play on the trampoline—and tell them Susan sent you. Wait, scratch that: tell them Ruth sent you.

ⁱ If you ask nicely, you can probably get my brother and my nephew Joseph to bounce *with* you and show you how to “pop the corn.” If you ask even more nicely, you can probably have a few bounces all to yourself—but it appears to be awfully hard for onlookers to resist the impulse to jump on. It's also hard for onlooking physicists to resist the impulse to give a little lesson about the fundamental oscillation mode of a trampoline but if you smile and nod they won't know whether you're paying attention or not, and before you know it, it's YOUR TURN AGAIN, and that's the important thing.

NOTE: No physicists were harmed in the writing of this footnote. He knows I'm kidding.



A Culinary Natural History: Apples

By Guest Chef Jan Decher

*Surely the apple is the noblest of the fruit.
Let the most beautiful or the swiftest have it.*
(from *Wild Apples* by Henry D. Thoreau)

Apple trees and the many varieties of apples have always fascinated me. Many years ago, in Germany, I even succeeded in grafting a late ripening variety on an early August apple tree, coached by my uncle Siegwand, who provided the dormant scions, which had to be seasoned in a bucket of sand in the basement before I could make the slanted cuts and tie the foreign branch to a matching cut on the stock tree. There is something inherently special about seeing the “foreign” grafts “adopted” by the stock tree and their buds opening with new life in spring.

Working in the old orchard of my parents-in-law in Peacham, Vermont, and reading about the many apples varieties that once existed in America re-awakened my interest in apples, and we are trying to work on the old trees and add some new ones to the orchard in Peacham.

In the two-volume classic *The Apples of New York* (1905), S. A. Beach described and illustrated 700 apple varieties for that state alone, with creative names such as Winter Banana, Payne's Late Keeper, Rhode Island Greening or Walker's Beauty, referring to their characteristics, place of origin or discoverer. Many of these are now extinct or endangered in favor of the few commercially viable varieties we can buy in the grocery store.

A recent “national bestseller,” *The Botany of Desire* (2001) by Michael Pollan tells the story of the spread of the apple tree in America. Several European cultivars were probably brought to America but they had to be grafted onto the American wild crab apple *Malus coronaria* before they could tolerate the harsher climate of North America. “The apple, like the settlers themselves, had to forsake its former domestic life and return to the wild before it could

be reborn as an American...” romanticizes Pollan. In his research on the origins of the all-American legend of Johnny Appleseed (a.k.a. John Chapman), Pollan questions the wholesomeness of one man's dedication to bring the healthy apple to the American frontier, at a time when apples in America were mainly used for making cider, a beverage that before the widespread use of refrigeration quickly turned into hard cider.

Pollan also got me interested in another book that recounts the search for the wild ancestor of the domestic apple tree. In *Apples* (1998) Frank Browning tells how he came across the dramatic story of Russian plant geneticist Nicholai Vavilov, who in 1929 had “devoted his life to studying the vast apple forests of Kazakhstan” including the Kazakh wild apple, *Malus sieversii*, which, unlike other wild apples, has very big fruit and is the most likely candidate for the ancestor of all cultivated apples. But Vavilov's genetic work on the origin of apples was denounced under the “socialist genetics” of T. D. Lysenko. In 1943 Vavilov himself became a victim of Stalin's terror and died of starvation in Saratov Prison during the German siege of Leningrad. Fortunately, a student, Aimak Djangaliev, who met Vavilov as a teenager, dedicated himself to continuing the study of the origin of apples. Writer Frank Browning visited Djangaliev and his wife Tatiana, then in their eighties, in Alma-Ata to learn more about the “Vavilov affair” and see for himself as he describes it “the sun-dappled, grove like forest” of Kazakhstan that is “almost like a journey back into an unkempt primordial garden.”

Returning to our own American varieties, I hope to learn more about the many rare breeds we may still have in overgrown and untended orchards and whose names we may be able to find out with the help of local experts or Beach's superb color plates and descriptions. In the article *Where are the Apples of Yesteryear?* (*Natural History Magazine* 3/1988), food writer Richard Sokolov relates the following

recipe (adapted from the Breakfast Book by Marion Cunningham, Knopf):

BAKED APPLES

4 firm, ripe apples (Pippins or Granny Smith)
1/3 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
Zest (peel) of 1 organic lemon, cut into large strips

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Peel the top third of the apples and core.
3. Put the sugar salt and lemon zest in a small pan with 1/2 cup water. Bring to a boil, stir, and remove the heat.
4. Set the apples upright in a baking dish and pour the syrup over. Cover (use foil if there is no lid that fits) and bake for thirty minutes or until the apples are easily pierced with the tip of a knife. Spoon some of the syrup over the apples and sprinkle a little sugar over the top. You may put them under the broiler for two to three minutes to brown. Serve warm with cream. This recipe yields four servings.

The following recipe is from a German baking book: *So macht Backen richtig Spaß (How to have fun with baking)*. I like this recipe because it leaves the apple halves intact and doesn't turn them into thin slices or "apple sauce." I again recommend using firm apples like the tart green *Granny Smith* (a variety discovered in 1868 in Australia by a Mrs. Smith).

LEIPZIGER APFELKUCHEN

1 7/8 stick (= 15 Tablespoons or 200 g) Butter softened
1 cup (= 200 g) Granulated Sugar
4 Eggs
1 pinch of salt
1 1/2 cups (= 200 g) white flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
6 large apples
12 tsps. black currant (or other) jelly powdered sugar for decoration

Beat butter and sugar until creamy. Add lemon peel salt and gradually the eggs. Mix flour and baking powder and add slowly, while mixing dough. Spoon dough into buttered springform and distribute to smooth surface. Peel apples, cut them in half and remove cores (a standard apple peeler is helpful for this). Make several parallel superficial cuts into the outside of each apple half. Fill the cavities that contained the apple cores each with a spoonful of currant (or other) jelly and arrange apples face- (jelly-) side down on top of dough until the entire surface is covered with apple halves. Bake cake in center of preheated oven at 350°F (180°C) for 60-80 minutes until golden brown. Check with knife inserted in dough part if baked all the way through. The book says 45 minutes, but it almost always took at least 70 minutes in (gas) ovens.

Cool on rack and sprinkle with powdered sugar. We like this cake fresh with some *real* whipping cream.

On an unrelated note...

Peach & Raspberry Tart

4 oz. butter, softened
1 cup superfine sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 eggs
1 1/2 cups self-raising flour, sifted
2 peaches, halved and thinly sliced (or replace with the berries of your choice)
5 oz. fresh raspberries (or unthawed frozen raspberries)
2 Tbls. powdered sugar

This is now one of the Insecure Chef's favorite summer desserts.

It's delicious, especially when served warm, and the self-rising flour really comes into its own: the cake sort of rises up and envelopes all the fruit.

By the way, check out the cookbook this is from. It's worth it for the pasta photographs alone, in which pasta is all swirled together in attractive birds-nesty piles...

Preheat the oven to 325 F (160 C). Line a 9-in. (22 cm) round cake pan with a removable base with baking paper (a cheesecake pan works well). Beat the butter, sugar, and vanilla well, until mixture is light and creamy. Add the eggs and beat well. Fold in the flour and pour the mixture into the cake pan. (It will be very thick; you may need to spread it with your spoon.) Top with the berries and peaches (or whatever fruit you're using). Bake for 1 hour or until the cake passes the toothpick test. Remove from the pan, sprinkle with the powdered sugar, and serve warm. Serves 8 – 10 (ha).

*From **Off the Shelf: Cooking from the Pantry** by Donna Hay.*

trifle recipes

Some time ago, J. Collins of the great eastern state of Ohio requested trifle recipes so she could play with her trifle bowl. My great-aunt Betty Waynfilete of San Jose, California—a western state, in contrast to Ohio, which as stated above is known for its easternly qualities—rose to the occasion and provided a number of recipes, as did R. Manson of South Dakota, a state smack in the middle of the U.S., thus rendering it a *midwestern* state—i.e., God's country, or The Heartland.

Whatever state *you're* from, it's the perfect time of year to break out your own trifle bowl and make salads and desserts as beautiful as they are delicious!

LEMON TRIFLE

- 1 can (14 oz.)**
sweetened condensed
milk
- 1 carton (8 oz.) lemon**
yoghurt
- 1/3 c. lemon juice**
- 2 tsp. grated lemon**
peel
- 2 c. whipped topping**
- 1 angel food cake (10"), cut into 1" cubes**
- 2 c. fresh raspberries**
- 1/2 c. flaked coconut, toasted**
- fresh mint, optional**

In a bowl, combine the first four ingredient. Fold in whipped topping. Place half of the cake cubes in a trifle bowl of 2-qt. serving bowl. Top with half of the lemon mixture. Repeat layers. Top with raspberries. Garnish with coconut and mint if desired. Yield: 14 servings.
Attributed to Pat Stevens from Granbury, Texas

ADELE'S LAYERED DESSERT

- 1 Pillsbury Moist Fudge chocolate cake mix**
(baked as directed)
- 12 oz. cool whip**
- 1/2 c. strong coffee**
- 6 oz. chocolate instant pudding – mix**
according to package directions
- Heath bits of bars, crushed**



Crumble 1/3 of cake in stemmed glass bowl or trifle bowl. Drizzle 1/4 c. strong coffee over the cake. Then add 1/2 of the pudding and 1/2 of the cool whip and Heath bits. Repeat the layers. Finally, sprinkle on top with Heath bits and cake crumbs. Make at least 5 hours and up to a day ahead. *Sent in by R. Manson. Thanks, Adele!*

THE ALL-AMERICAN DESSERT

- 4 c. boiling water**
- 1 pkg. (8-serving size) or 2 pkgs. (4-serving size) jello-brand gelatin, any red flavor**
- 1 pkg. (8-serving size) or 2 pkgs. (4-serving size) jello-brand gelatin, berry blue flavor gelatin**
- 2 c. cold water**
- 1 tub (8 oz.) cool whip non-dairy whipped topping, thawed**
- 4 c. Entenmann's all butter pound loaf cubes**
- 2 c. slice strawberries**

Stir 2 c. boiling water into each flavor of gelatin in separate bowls 2 min., or until completely dissolved. Stir 1 c. cold water into each bowl. Pour into separated 13"x9" pans. Refrigerate at least 3 hours of until firm. Cut into 1/2" cubes.

Layer gelatin cubes, whipped topping, cake and strawberries in 3-qt. serving bowl. Garnish with remaining whipped topping and jello star jigglers (optional).

Refrigerate at least 1 hr. or until ready to serve. Store leftover dessert in refrigerator. *From B. Waynefflete in San Jose, CA*

***Or try Aunt Betty's variation of the above!
She says:***

"Our senior group had a July party & potluck last year. We were told not to bring desserts. I had expected to bring this. I decided to make a jello salad out of it. I followed this recipe but left out the cake.

"A nice layer of blue jello (cubed), cool whip, and red jello (cubed), topped again with cool whip. (I use dream whip. I like it better and one envelope makes plenty.)

"I saved out a little of the dry jello and made tiny sprinkles and spread them on top of the cream. It was a beautiful trifle. It has only jello, but everyone was impressed and ate it all."

PUMPKIN TRIFLE

**2-3 c. leftover crumbled unfrosted spice
cake, muffins or gingerbread**
1 can (16 oz.) pumpkin (about 2 c.)
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
¼ tsp. ground ginger
¼ tsp. ground allspice
2½ c. cold milk
**4 packages (3.4 oz. ea.) instant butterscotch
pudding mix**
2 c. whipping cream
Maraschino cherries, optional

Set aside ¼ c. of cake crumbs for top. Divide remaining crumbs into four portions; sprinkle one portion into the bottom of a trifle bowl or 3-qt. serving bowl. In a large mixing bowl, combine pumpkin, spices, milk and pudding mixes; mix until smooth. Spoon half into the serving bowl. Sprinkle with a second portion of crumbs. Whip cream until stiff; spoon half into bowl. Sprinkle with a third portion of crumbs. Top with

remaining pumpkin mixture, then last portion of crumbs and remaining whipped cream. Sprinkle the reserved crumbs on top, around the edge of the bowl. Place cherries in the center if desired. Cover and chill at least 2 hours before serving. Yield: 12-15 servings.
Melody Hurlbut, St. Agatha, Ontario

LAYERED WALNUT SALAD

Jill Collins tried this recipe (sent in by Betty Waynefflete) for a potluck. "Everybody said good things about it, and it was very attractive," says Jill. She recommends doubling the recipe to fill a large trifle bowl and saving any extra dressing for something else. Comments at the potluck ranged from, "This is really really good!" to "It's certainly not a mere trifle!"

Adds Jill (moved to profundity by the whole experience), "I have but one recipe to give for my potluck."

1 c. walnuts
1 tsp. salad oil
¼ tsp. garlic salt
¼ tsp. dill weed
4 c. finely shredded iceberg lettuce
6-8 cherry tomatoes, halved
1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
**1 package (10 oz.) frozen peas, cooked and
cooled**
creamy dressing

Turn walnuts into saucepan of rapidly boiling water. Boil for three minutes. Drain well. Toss with oil, garlic salt and dill weed on shallow baking pan. Toast at 350° F for 10-12 minutes, stirring once. Cool. Arrange in order in straight-sided glass bowl (6½ in. diameter, 3½ in. deep), 2 c. lettuce, a row of cherry tomatoes, cut sides against glass, cheese, cooked peas, ¾ c. walnuts and remaining lettuce. Top with 1 c. creamy dressing, spreading in an even layer completely to edge of bowl. Cover, chill several hours or overnight. At serving time, add remaining dressing a sprinkle with reserved walnuts. Makes 5 servings.

Creamy dressing: Stir together ¾ c. mayonnaise, ½ c. dairy sour cream, 1 Tbsp. lemon juice, 1 tsp.

prepared mustard, 1/2 tsp. salt, 2 Tbsp. chopped green

onion and 2 tsp. chopped parsley. Makes 1 1/2 cups.

TIME to DIGEST

I have a secret fear which I am now going to divulge for the first time in the hopes that thus baring my soul will have a therapeutic effect, and also in the hopes that some of you will write in to show your solidarity: what if all of the family members, friends, loved ones, and passing acquaintances in my life eventually become followers of the Atkins Diet, and I am the only person I know who continues to ingest carbohydrates in all of the glorious forms available? What if everyone I know turns from vermicelli and orzo, spurns ziti and egg noodles, swears off good old honest spaghetti *forever*? What if I'm the only one left eating potatoes, beans, rice, and all the lovely *bread*s—homemade pizza crust, buttermilk muffins with raisins, crusty French bread, onion rolls? What of dumplings? What of mac and cheese? *French toast?! SCONES?!!*

Oh the humanity.

I used to have a similar fear about vegetarianism. Not that I minded vegetarianism in general; I frequently cook meatless meals. Eat them, even. With relish. But I worried that one particular friend, with whom I shared a great many culinary experiences, would some day go vegetarian on me, and then where would we be? Would she come to be repulsed by the scent of bacon emanating from my pores? (Okay, that's a bad example. I buy bacon rarely. But it sticks *with* you; you cook up a few slices of bacon and the house smells heavenly for the next month.)

My concerns (as they frequently do) came to nothing. The last time I checked, this friend was still willing to pack away a side of beef with the best of them. (I tested her by leaving a side of beef out in the living room, and then casually leaving her alone with it...) Thus proving that, once again, I averted disaster by worrying about it enough. (You have me to thank for the fact that the earth has not yet been destroyed by a meteor.)

But this particular fear, limited as it was to one person (I didn't give a rip if anyone else became a vegetarian) and to the issue of *meat*, was nothing compared to the shakes I get thinking about the swath

that the Atkins Diet could cut in my life. There are loads of interesting vegetarian meals out there, when you think about it; but once you cut the carbohydrates (which even includes a lot of *fruits*, for crying out loud), and rely so heavily on meats, you're practically eliminating whole ethnic categories of culinary experience. Not to mention the expense; carbohydrates are the mainstay of many of our favorite cheap meals. And nutritionally—well, I definitely need to do some research, but my mama raised me to believe in the value of potatoes, God bless 'em.

I once had to plan a dinner party including (besides myself and my spousal unit) two guests who were strict vegetarians (no meat or fish of any kind) and a third guest who didn't like cheese. Piece of cake:

we had an entrée of rice-stuffed vegetables, Mediterranean style. What would I have stuffed the vegetables with if a follower of the Atkins Diet had been present? M&Ms, maybe. I understand you can eat all the chocolate you want on the Atkins Diet. Chocolate, meat, and fat. And so good *for* you.

Lest I offend any readers who may be on the Atkins Diet, let me here acknowledge that according to a New York Times article I recently read, the jury is still out on whether the Atkins Diet (or some variation thereof) can actually work, in a healthy way. Probably the old nutritional maxim holds here, as it does in most gastronomic arenas: moderation is key. Over-doing carbo's definitely has its downside, just as (I suspect) cutting them out cold turkey (ha) does too.

I'm feeling better, though, for having gotten this off my chest. And I'd love to hear from any of you who have strong opinions on this subject, one way or the other.

Let me close by sharing a favorite recipe recently added to our regular rotation (and an excellent way to use up chicken leftover from making stock—something I'm always on the lookout for). It's simple and so delicious. Enjoy!

Sesame Noodles with Chicken

adapted from Bon Appetit

Cook 1 pound

vermicelli (or the pasta of your choice) according to package instructions. Drain. If desired, rinse with hot water and drain again.

In a large bowl, whisk together **6 Tbls. rice vinegar**, **5 Tbls. soy sauce**, **¼ cup canola oil**, **1 – 2 Tbls. grated fresh ginger** (or use powdered, to taste), **½ tsp. – 2 Tbls. chili-garlic sauce** (or other hot sauce, to taste), and **2 Tbls. sesame oil** (yum!).

To this mixture add the pasta from above, **1 – 2 cups sliced green onions** (this will be about 1 – 2 bunches), and **2 cups shredded cooked chicken**. Toss well to coat.

In the next issue of the Insecure Chef:

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