



Early American chowder — the original one-dish meal

Early American settlers landing in Plymouth found their small food supply almost depleted by their long journey.

Thanks to friendly Indians, who introduced them to new and unfamiliar foods, they were able to survive. They were taught how to prepare pumpkins, sweet potatoes, squash, cranberries and corn.

However, their main food supply came directly from the sea with its unlimited fish and shellfish. Clams, oysters, mussels, lobsters (some weighing as much as 25 pounds) and more than 200 varieties of fish were the mainstay of the Early American diet.

Fish soups and chowders were the favorite meals of using these "gifts from the sea."

Today, chowder has become an American tradition and is probably the original one-dish meal. The big, black, cast iron stewing pot, set on coals or hung over a fire, has been replaced by modern kitchen appliances. In most homes, ranges and ovens, refrigerators and freezers are the rule rather than the exception.

Consequently, we are not interested in emulating the colonial cook's methodical preparation and serving. It is obvious that our needs are not remotely related.

Nevertheless, as our lifestyles become more mechanized and complicated, we are finding ourselves drawn toward the simple, honest sustenance from which early civilization flourished. Many of us are turning away from synthetically prepared, artificially preserved plastic packaged meals on aluminum plates. We are learning to preserve some of yesterday and are blending it with the best of today.

While we still enjoy preparing large quantities of items such as chowder, we no longer serve it several days in succession as the colonial homemaker did. We remove the desired amount from the soup kettle and freeze the remainder for future meals.

Try today's hearty and satisfying recipes. While savoring your repast, let us give a special thanks to the generous bounty of our land, the natural contributions and the fascinating ingenuity of early American cuisine which has endured to the present.

Last, but not least . . . a debt of gratitude to Chef Larry Pagliara, who is the executive corporate chef of the C.A. Muer Corp. Known as "Chef Larry," he

has presided over all of the firm's 13 restaurant kitchens since 1964. A three-time winner in national salad contests, this master deserves a major portion of the credit for the success of the Muer restaurants in Ohio, Colorado, Pennsylvania, and, of course, right here in Michigan.

The recipe for Charley's Chowder, which Chef Larry has generously agreed to share with column readers, is served in all of the Muer restaurants. So, if you have enjoyed this taste treat as a diner at any of the Muer eateries, here is your chance to prepare it yourself.

CHARLEY'S CHOWDER SOUP

2 oz. of olive oil (by volume)
3 medium size cloves of garlic (smashed)
2 oz. onions, chopped fine (by weight)
3 oz. celery, chopped fine (by weight)
A pinch each of basil, oregano and thyme
6 oz. stewed tomatoes, chopped very fine (by volume)
6 pts. water (by volume)
1 lb. boneless fish (pollack or turbot) (by weight)
2 oz. clam base (by weight)
Salt to taste
1 oz. parsley, chopped fine (by weight)

Place olive oil in large pot, heat on stove until very hot. Drop into the hot oil the smashed garlic cloves. Cook cloves until golden in color. It is important that you do not burn the garlic as this will ruin the taste. Remove the cloves from the oil. While oil is still hot, add the onions and cook for a minute or two. Add basil, oregano and thyme and cook for a minute. Add celery and cook until translucent. Add finely chopped tomatoes and cook for about 20-25 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking. Add water, fish, clam base and cook for an additional 15 minutes, uncovered, at full heat. **REASON:** To remove moisture and concentrated fish bacteria and to extract oils for flavoring the chowder. Add salt, cover the pot and keep cooking for another 20 minutes at low heat. Stir often to break up the fish and blend flavors. When served, add the chopped parsley. Serves 6.

NOTE: If clam base is not available, change liquid

content from 6 pints water to 3 pints water and 3 pints clam or Clamato juice.

NEW ENGLAND FISH CHOWDER

1 1/2 lbs. fresh cod
3 cups water
1/4 cup dry white wine
1 tsp. salt
4 slices fat salt pork, diced
3-4 potatoes, peeled and sliced thin
2-3 medium onions, peeled and diced
4 cups half and half
2 tbsp. butter or margarine
Salt and pepper to taste (use white pepper if available)
1 tbsp. paprika

Put fish in large soup kettle; add water, wine and salt. Simmer, uncovered, until fish flakes easily with a fork. Do not allow it to become mushy. Remove from liquid and set aside, reserving all liquid. Fry salt pork until lightly browned. Add onions and cook over low heat for 10 minutes. While onions cook, place potatoes in soup kettle with reserved liquid and cook until soft but not mushy. Remove skin and bones from fish and discard. Add fish, in pieces, to kettle of undrained cooked potatoes. Add cooked pork and onions with all fat from frying pan. Add half and half and heat just to boiling point. Add butter, salt, pepper and paprika. Serves 6-8.

BUSY DAY CLAM SOUP

Place 1/2 cup canned minced clams in blender. Add 1 cup chicken broth (homemade or canned), 1 1/2 tsp. dry white wine, 2 tbsp. lemon juice and 1/4 cup heavy cream. Whirl in blender. Pour into saucepan; add 1 1/2 tsp. butter or margarine and heat through. Serve with sprinkling of paprika and a few sprigs of fresh parsley. Serves 2-3.

LOBSTER CHOWDER

1 1/2 onions, sliced
2 lbs. uncooked lobster tails
2 cups half and half
6 tsp. butter or margarine
Salt and pepper to taste
Sprinkling of paprika

Bring 3 1/2 qts. of water to a boil in a large kettle. Add onions and lobster tails. Reduce heat and cook for 10 minutes or until lobster shell is bright red. Remove lobster and reserve. Strain liquid and return to kettle. Shell lobster, reserving meat. Add shells to liquid and bring to boil. Cook until liquid is reduced to 2 1/2 cups. Strain liquid and dice lobster meat. Discard shells. Heat half and half in large saucepan. Blend in butter, reduced liquid, lobster pieces, salt, pepper and paprika, and heat through. Do not boil. Serves 6-8.

OYSTER STEW

2 qts. shucked fresh oysters, cleaned
8 tbsp. butter or margarine
8 cups half and half, heated
Salt and pepper to taste
Oyster crackers
Parsley sprigs

Place oysters in a large saucepan. Add butter and cook until edges of oysters curl. Gradually add warmed half and half, salt and pepper and heat through. Do not boil. Sprinkle with oyster crackers and garnish with parsley. Serves 8.

NOTE: This is a thin soup. If thicker consistency is desired, make a roux with 3 tbsp. butter; blend in 3 tbsp. flour over very low heat and then add the 8 cups half and half, blending until smooth. Cook 5-10 minutes until thick and smooth and gradually add to the saucepan with oysters and butter.

NEXT WEEK: DRESSED-UP GROUND BEEF

Mrs. Stulberg, a West Bloomfield resident, is a food writer, lecturer and author of the cookbook for dieters, "The Happy Cooker." Letters, requests and recipes are welcomed. Recipes selected for column sharing will give complete donor credit and must be accompanied by name, address and telephone number. All column communications must be made by writing "The Happy Cooker," c/o The Plymouth Observer, 461 S. Main, Plymouth 48170.

Creamy Mallow Cheesecake

1/4 cup margarine
1 cup vanilla wafer crumbs
4 cups Kraft miniature marshmallows
1/3 cup milk

2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

Microcook margarine in small bowl 45 seconds or until melted. Blend in crumbs; reserve 1/4 cup for topping. Press remaining crumb mixture onto bottom of 9-inch springform pan.

Combine marshmallows and milk in large bowl; toss to coat marshmallows with milk. Microcook 1 to 1-1/2 minutes or until smooth when stirred, stirring every 30 seconds. Chill until slightly thickened. Mix until well blended. Microcook cream cheese in bowl 30 to 45 seconds or until soft. Add lemon juice, rind and vanilla, mixing at medium speed on electric mixer until well blended. Beat in marshmallow mixture; fold in whipped cream. Pour over crust; sprinkle with reserved crumb mixture. Chill. Garnish with mandarin orange segments, strawberry halves or peach slices, if desired.

Ratatouille Pyrenees

2 medium zucchini, sliced
1 medium eggplant, peeled, cubed
1 medium onion, sliced

1 green pepper, cut into strips
3/4 cup French dressing
1 pt. cherry tomatoes, halved

Combine ingredients except tomatoes in 3-quart casserole; mix lightly. Cover; microcook 12 to 14 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender, stirring after 5 minutes. Add tomatoes. Cover; microcook 2 to 3 minutes or until hot. Serve hot or cold. 10 to 12 servings

Ratatouille will keep in the refrigerator, covered, for several days and is delicious served cold.

Herb Sauced Fish

1/4 cup celery slices
1/4 cup chopped onion
3 tablespoons margarine
3 tablespoons flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon tarragon leaves, crushed

Dash of pepper
1-1/4 cups milk
1 cup (4 oz.) shredded natural monterey jack cheese
1 lb. fish fillets

Microcook vegetables and margarine in 2-quart casserole 4 to 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender, stirring after 2 minutes. Blend in flour and seasonings. Gradually add milk, stirring constantly. Cover; microcook 4 to 5 minutes or until sauce boils and thickens, stirring once each minute. Add cheese; stir until melted. Arrange fillets in 11-3/4 x 7-1/2-inch baking dish; top with cheese sauce. Cover; microcook 4-1/2 minutes, turning after 2 minutes. Let stand, covered, 2 to 3 minutes before serving or until fish flakes easily with fork. 4 servings

Variation: Add 1 tablespoon sherry to cheese sauce.

CANAPE TARTLETS

(Makes about 2 dozen)
2 sticks pastry mix (enough for a double crust pie)
7-ounce can chicken, or tuna, or 4-ounce can Vienna sausage, thinly sliced
1 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 egg slightly beaten
1/4 tsp. dry mustard
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup milk
Garnish

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Prepare pastry mix according to package directions. Roll out to one-eighth inch thickness on lightly floured board. Cut into scalloped rounds with a 2 1/2-inch cookie cutter. Fit into small, shallow cupcake pans.

Combine chicken (or tuna or sausage), cheese, egg, mustard, salt and milk. Blend thoroughly. Spoon mixture into pastry-lined pans. Bake in moderate oven 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Wrap and freeze.

To serve as hot canape, heat in moderate oven for 20 minutes.

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Surprise burgers are easy to make

As food prices continue to rise, ground beef may play an even greater role in many family menu plans. When you want to add a little fun and variety to your burger, try a surprise. Place a filling of sliced sweet or dill pickles, sliced olives, shredded cheese or chopped onion between two thin

ground beef patties and seal the edges. Perk up the flavor of patties by mixing the ground beef with a favorite herb such as basil, oregano, marjoram or fennel. Or instead of seasoning with salt after the patty is browned, sprinkle with garlic, onion or seasoned salt and lemon pepper.



The Recipes Are Here!

Lemon Curd

(Makes about 3 cups)

3/4 cup butter or margarine
2/3 cup RealLemon Reconstituted Lemon Juice
2 cups sugar
6 eggs

In medium saucepan, combine butter, RealLemon and sugar. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until sugar is dissolved and butter is melted. In small bowl, beat eggs until light and lemon-colored. Gradually stir about 1/4 cup hot mixture into eggs; stir into remaining hot mixture.

Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thick and creamy (about 5 to 12 minutes). Chill thoroughly. Use to fill cake layers, layer in parfaits with yogurt, or serve over ice cream or cake. Refrigerate leftovers. **Tip:** Lemon Curd can be stored 3 to 5 days in covered container in refrigerator. May be served chilled; or, for warm sauce, heat in double boiler.

Layer the smooth, rich Lemon Curd with plain yogurt in a pretty parfait glass, then top it with a dollop of yogurt and a bit of toasted coconut. Serve it over ice cream or cake, or in individual tart shells.



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