



Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

New twists to traditional

Many vegetables available today for favorite holiday dishes probably would have appeared quite strange to the first Thanksgiving diners.

Certainly the bounty would have, for the colonists almost starved during that first year.

The main reason for the celebration was that they were alive—that they had survived a winter of hunger and disease in a strange new land.

Another reason was to thank the Indians for their assistance, a kind of early wilderness survival course.

But unlike present-day participants in survival training, the colonists could not go home after two weeks and entertain their friends with stories of hunting berries and snaring rabbits. They had to live through a long New England winter.

Many of those first immigrants didn't make it. The ones who did survive breathed a long sigh of relief and threw a party.

Wild turkey from the forest and fresh cranberries from a local bog topped their menu. That same menu, using domesticated birds and cultivated berries, continues to centerpiece holiday dinner tables.

The colonists surrounded themselves with squash and pumpkin. Our vegetable choices are much more varied, though their choices remain on our menus.

Some vegetable dishes that serve as a reminder of that first Thanksgiving, are mashed yellow turnips and potatoes, or brussels sprouts with pecans. Also sweet potatoes in orange baskets and creamed onions and peas.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut off and discard a 1-inch deep slice from stem end of each orange. Squeeze and use juice for other purposes. Scrape and cut away pulp and membranes from orange shells, keeping them intact and as regular in shape as possible. Set shells side by side in baking dish just large enough to hold them.

In a large mixing bowl, beat the softened butter into the mashed sweet potatoes, then beat in the egg, salt, white pepper and lemon rind. Taste for seasoning. Fill each orange basket with the mixture, swirling the tops decoratively. Sprinkle the filling with the walnuts, and dot with the butter bits. Bake in the center of the oven for 45 minutes, until tops are lightly browned. Serve at once.

CREAMED ONIONS AND PEAS

24 to 28 peeled white onions, about 1-in. in diameter
3 pkgs. frozen green peas, thoroughly defrosted

4 tbsp. flour
4 tbsp. butter
1 1/4 cups milk
1/4 cup cream
1 tsp. salt
Pinch of white pepper
1/4 tsp. nutmeg

Simmer onions partially covered in 3-qt. saucepan with water to cover for 20 minutes. Drain and set aside. Reserve cooking water for sauce.

Melt butter in heavy saucepan, stir in flour. Remove pan from heat. Pour in 2 cups of reserved onion cooking liquid. Beat with a wire whisk until flour-butter mixture is partially dissolved. Add milk and cream, return pan to heat and cook, whisking constantly, until sauce is smooth and thick.

Simmer three or four minutes. Season with salt, white pepper and nutmeg, add onions and defrosted peas. Simmer 5 minutes. Taste for seasoning. Serve 8.

Comments, questions and recipes you wish to share should be mailed to Vivian Byrd, The Eccentric Newspapers, 1225 Bowers Street, Birmingham, MI 48012. Please include name, address and telephone number.

MASHED YELLOW TURNIPS AND POTATOES

1 large or 2 medium yellow turnips (rutabagas)
2 large potatoes
1/4 stick (8 tbsp.) butter or margarine
Salt and pepper to taste
Pinch of sugar

Heavy cream, approx. 1/2 cup
Peel the turnips and potatoes and cut into chunks. Cook in a saucepan with boiling salted water to cover until tender when tested with a fork.

Drain thoroughly and work through a ricer or mash until smooth. Return to pan. Add butter, salt, pepper, sugar and enough warm heavy cream to give the mixture the consistency of mashed potatoes. Reheat, beating vigorously until very light and smooth.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH PECANS

1 lb. brussels sprouts
6 tbsp. butter or margarine
1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 cup pecan quarters (halves cut in half)

Cut off stem end of sprouts. Remove the outer leaves plus any yellow or ugly leaves. Soak the sprouts in water 15 to 20 minutes before cooking to dislodge any dirt particles. Drain.

Boil uncovered over medium high heat in ample amount of salted water 5 to 15 minutes, depending on crispness preferred. Drain. Add pecans to sprouts in pan.

In separate small pan, melt butter. Add pepper and nutmeg. Pour over vegetables and shake pan gently until well tossed. Serves 4 to 6.

SWEET POTATOES IN ORANGE BASKETS

4 large navel oranges
2 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened, plus 2 tsp. unsalted butter, cut into bits
4 large sweet potatoes, boiled, peeled and mashed (1 1/2 cups), or equal amount canned

1 egg
4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. grated lemon rind
1/2 tsp. white pepper
2 tsp. finely chopped walnuts

Creation In The Vineyards

The creation of Sebastiani wines begins with vines which start the beautiful complicated process of forming grapes in

Spring. Fuzzy little buds push forth from a European vine that has been grafted to hearty American rootstock. The buds unfold into canes with luxuriant leaves that shade the tender grapes. form sugar for each grape cluster and nourish the vines. In May the first bright green clusters (or flower buds) appear.

Each bud pops off its cap or "calyptra" in June and a flower blooms. Then the flower pollinates itself and the grape berry is the ripened ovary of a single flower.

Baby grapes grow rapidly and their final push to maturity starts in August. Maturing grapes such as those that give birth to the noble "Pinot Noir" Sebastiani Pinot Noir, are carefully monitored for sugar to determine exactly when each varietal is to be picked for ultimate quality.

Harvest begins in September, peaks in early October and usually ends in early November. Throughout this creative evolution, each vine that bears the essence of a fine Sebastiani wine is carefully trained, nurtured, and protected to help it yield grapes of great character. Only these are then transformed into the wines of Sebastiani.

Please write for our free monthly newsletter.

Sam J. Sebastiani

Sebastiani VINEYARDS

EST. 1825

P.O. Box AA Sonoma CA 95476

Traditional Holiday Menu

Roast Turkey
Old-fashioned Stuffing
Mashed Potatoes
Bacon and Tomato Seasoned Green Beans
Pumpkin Pie Spiced Peaches
Relish Tray
Butter
Cranberry Gingercake with Sparkling Cranberry Sauce

Old-Fashioned Bread Stuffing

Yield: 8 cups (enough for 12 pound turkey)

1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
1 1/2 cups finely chopped celery
1 stick (1/2 cup) butter or margarine
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon poultry seasoning
1/2 teaspoon ground sage
Pepper
8 cups dry unseasoned bread cubes
1/4 cup water or broth

Cook onion and celery in butter until tender. Mix seasonings together and sprinkle over bread cubes. Add onion mixture and water. Combine. Stuff thawed, mixed turkey and roast immediately.

Casserole Stuffing: Prepare Old-Fashioned Stuffing increasing water or broth to 1/2 cup. Place mixture in 1-1/2 quart casserole. Cover and bake in 325° F. oven for 45 minutes.

Slow Cooker Stuffing: Prepare Old-Fashioned Stuffing decreasing onion to 1 cup, salt and sage to 1/4 teaspoon each, and increasing water or broth to 1/2 cup. Cook mixture in slow cooker on HIGH setting for 1 hour, then turn to LOW setting for 1 to 1-1/2 hours.

Note: 10 cups fresh bread cubes, dried overnight, yield 8 to 9 cups dry bread cubes.

Pumpkin Pie Spiced Peaches

Yield: 6 servings

1 can (20 ounce) cling peach halves
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon grated orange peel
1 cinnamon stick
5 whole cloves

Drain peaches and reserve syrup. Combine syrup, lemon juice, honey, spices and orange peel in 2 quart saucepan. Bring to boil, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Cover and simmer about 10 minutes. Pour hot syrup over peach halves in bowl. Cover and let stand 1 hour, turning occasionally.

Cranberry Gingercake

Yield: 12 to 16 servings

2-1/2 cups sifted flour
1/3 cup sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
3/8 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1 tablespoon grated orange peel
3/4 cup shortening
3/4 cup orange juice
3/4 cup light molasses
2 eggs
1-1/2 cups whole cranberries
3/4 cup chopped nuts

Thoroughly combine flour, sugar, baking powder, soda, salt, spices and orange peel in large mixing bowl. Add shortening, orange juice and molasses. Beat 2 minutes at medium speed on electric mixer, or 300 strokes by hand. Scrape sides and bottom of bowl. Add eggs. Beat 2 minutes longer. Stir in cranberries and nuts. Pour into 12 cup greased and floured teflon Bundt pan. Bake in a 325° F. oven for 45 minutes or until cake is done. Let cake cool in pan 10 minutes before turning out on serving plate. Serve warm with Sparkling Cranberry Dessert Sauce spooned over cake.

HELPFUL HINTS:

- To bake in a non-terron pan, increase oven temperature to 350° F. To use a smaller mold than recommended, fill mold 3/4 full and bake extra batter in muffin tin.
- Bake cake in advance, wrap in foil and freeze.
- To reheat in conventional oven: Let cake stand at room temperature about 2 hours to thaw. Heat foil-wrapped cake in 325° F. oven until warm through, about 45 minutes. Open foil during last 10 minutes.
- To reheat in microwave oven: Remove foil and place frozen cake on microwave-safe plate. Microwave on DEFROST setting 5 to 7 minutes or until thawed. Heat on HIGH setting (full power) for 4 minutes or until warm through, rotating cake 1/2 turn after 5 minutes.

Sparkling Cranberry Dessert Sauce

Yield: 2-3/4 cups

2 cups cranberries
1-1/2 cups water
1 cup sugar
1-1/2 teaspoons grated orange peel
2-1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
3 tablespoons water

Mix together cranberries, water, sugar and orange peel in medium saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, about 5 minutes or until half the berry skins have popped. Combine cornstarch and water and stir into cranberry mixture. Bring to a full boil; cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Serve warm over Cranberry Gingercake.



The Recipes Are Here!

ORANGE HONEY LOAF

3/4 cup orange juice
1/2 cup honey
1/4 cup oil
1 egg, slightly beaten
1 1/2 cups flour
1 cup whole bran cereal
1 tablespoon baking powder
1/2 cup chopped pitted dates (optional)
1/4 cup chopped walnuts
Creamy Orange Filling**

Preheat oven to 350° F. In small bowl, blend juice, honey, oil and egg. In large bowl, combine flour, cereal, baking powder, dates

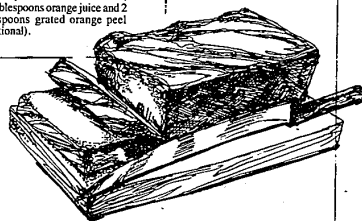
and walnuts; gradually add liquids, stirring just until moistened.

Turn half batter into greased 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan. Spoon on Creamy Orange Filling, spreading evenly across top; top with remaining batter.

Bake 1 hour or until bread tests done. On wire rack, cool 10 minutes; remove from pan and cool completely before slicing.

Makes about 8 servings.

**Creamy Orange Filling: In small bowl, blend 2 packages (3 oz. ea.) softened cream cheese, 3 tablespoons orange juice and 2 teaspoons grated orange peel (optional).



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