



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

Winter's eve supper for 2 — with atmosphere

Restaurants of all sorts will probably be doing turn-away business this Thursday as couples seek suitable settings for romantic dalliances. I suppose this is all well and good except that restaurants seem to me to be less than ideal for the aforementioned purpose.

Presumably, the two lovers wish to be alone, a desire thwarted by even the most discreet waiters and sedate fellow patrons. A more logical choice for true intimacy is one's home, a bastion against the rude intrusions of the world.

Having decided in favor of remaining at home, the lovers are faced with the crucial problem of sustenance. Poets would have you believe that true love robs the afflicted of any appetite for food; one hungers only for the be-

loved. Personally, it's never hurt my appetite a whit.

For others who do not find their various appetites mutually exclusive, I would like to offer a suitable menu for a winter's eve supper for two.

A little atmosphere would not be amiss here: a checkered tablecloth spread on the floor before a roaring fire, a few throw pillows scattered about for purposes of lounging in the fashion of decadent Romans at a feast, Ed singing "My Funny Valentine" in the background and a recording of Ravel's "Bolero" in the wings.

But back to the menu.

BEER AND ONION SOUP
or
FRENCH ONION SOUP
FRENCH BREAD

SPANISH MARINATED SALAD

The first soup listed is an intriguing change from conventional onion soup. It is taken from "The Vegetarian Epicure, Book Two," by Anna Thomas, one of the best, most creative cookbooks I have ever seen.

The beer I use for this is Velvet Cream Porter, a rich, heavy brew which is, unfortunately, available only in Canada. Any dark beer which suits your taste could be substituted. The same beer used in the soup should accompany the meal, served in frosted beer mugs.

Although the Beer and Onion Soup is superb, those with more conservative palates might prefer the French Onion Soup. It is more traditional, but equally delicious and would be enhanced by the

accompaniment of a good cold ale or chilled white wine.

Whichever soup you choose, the cheese used in the preparation should be freshly grated Parmesan. Please, never use pre-grated Parmesan. I'm not sure what they put in those packages and would hate to guess, but it bears no resemblance to the real thing. Buy it in chunk form and either grate it by hand or dice into 1/2-inch cubes and whirl these in a blender. Blender manufacturers don't recommend this use for their machines but I have been doing it for years with no dire consequences.

BEER AND ONION SOUP

3 lb. onions (8 to 10 medium-sized)
2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup butter
2 cups vegetable broth

2 1/2 cups dark beer or stout
1 1/4 cups cream
2 tsp. salt

2 tsp. paprika
Dash of Tabasco sauce
Fresh-ground black pepper to taste
2 to 4 tsp. sugar (depending on the bitterness of beer used)
2 tsp. cider vinegar
4 egg yolks
Optional garnish:
Hot paprika
Toasted croutons and
grated Parmesan cheese

Peel the onions, halve them cross-wise and slice them. Cook them slowly with the garlic in the butter until all the onions are transparent and soft — about 1 hour. Add the vegetable broth and, in batches of 2 or 3 cups, puree the mixture in a blender or food processor. Pour the puree into a large pot together with the beer and cream. Add the salt, paprika, Tabasco, pepper, sugar and vinegar and simmer the mixture, stirring often, for about 20 minutes.

Beat the egg yolks with a whisk. Continue to beat them as you add a small amount of the hot soup, then pour the egg yolk mixture into the pot with the rest of the soup and whisk it all together quickly. Cook the soup a few minutes more over very low heat, stirring constantly. It should be slightly thickened.

Serve the soup very hot and sprinkle a little hot paprika on top if you like, or garnish it with the croutons and Parmesan cheese. Serves 6 to 8.

Tamari, used in the French Onion soup below, is a natural soy sauce available in health food stores. It's infinitely better than the leading brand of soy sauce sold in grocery stores.

This recipe, as well as the one that follows, can easily be divided to serve two.

FRENCH ONION SOUP

5 cups thinly sliced onions
1 tsp. tamar
3 tbsp. dry white wine
1/2 tsp. dry mustard

Dash of thyme
Few dashes of white pepper
Salt to taste (1 to 2 tsp.)

Melt the butter or margarine in a large pot. Add the onions and garlic, salting lightly. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, at least one hour. Stir in mustard and thyme.

Add remaining ingredients. Cook over low heat, covered, at least 30 minutes. Serve topped with croutons and grated Parmesan or Swiss cheese. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

To make croutons, dice some good firm bread. Sauté in garlic butter. Spread on a baking sheet and bake in a preheated 325 degree oven for 15 minutes. If your soup bowls are oven-proof, ladle the soup into the bowls, sprinkle the croutons on top and cover the croutons with a thick layer of grated cheese. Run briefly under the broiler until just golden brown.

If your bowls are not oven-proof, this last step can be accomplished on the baking sheet. Lightly butter a small area of the sheet and cluster the croutons over the buttered area. Sprinkle with cheese, broil and transfer chunks of this mixture to the bowls.

SPANISH MARINATED SALAD

1/2 cup olive oil
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1 small onion, diced
1/4 tsp. oregano
1/4 tsp. basil
1 clove garlic, minced
Dash salt
1/2 cup sliced stuffed green olives
1 pkg. (9 oz.) frozen artichoke hearts, cooked and drained
1 cup small cauliflowerettes
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1/2 cup thinly sliced carrots

In a medium bowl, stir together the first seven ingredients. Add the olives and vegetables; stir gently to mix well. Cover and refrigerate several hours, stirring occasionally. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Address all letters to Hilary Keating Callaghan, c/o O&E Newspapers, 461 S. Main, Plymouth 48167.

Fresh, frozen vegetables

Ruth McDaniel's common sense cooking

Let's talk about fixing frozen and fresh vegetables. You know how expensive those good frozen-in-butter vegetables are. Make your own instead of buying them.

Cook frozen or fresh vegetables in 1/2

cup water. Don't overcook; vegetables taste and look better if they are not cooked to death. You will have about 1/4 cup of liquid when the vegetables are done. Don't throw this vitamin-filled liquid out. Instead, stir 1 or 2 tbsp. of

the following into the vegetables and cook until slightly thickened:

MIRACLE SAUCE

1 stick margarine or butter
1 tsp. Beau Monde seasoning (optional)
Heaping 1/2 cup flour

Mix together to a paste, put in covered jar and keep in refrigerator. You can experiment using different herbs with this sauce. I like to add the herb I want when I add the Miracle Sauce to the vegetables. Start with just 1 tbsp. of sauce; add more if necessary.

I buy the large economy bags of frozen vegetables and just take out the amount I need. Fixing your own vegetables costs less than half what the frozen-in-butter kinds do.

Another delicious, but expensive, way to buy frozen vegetables is in a white or cheese sauce. Make your own instead.

Make a simple white sauce and add a little cheese, tomato sauce, ketchup, mustard, bouillon cubes, etc. You'll have as good or better a sauce for a prepared kind.

If you'd like to ask the author any questions, please write to: Ruth McDaniel, c/o O&E Newspapers, 461 S. Main, Plymouth 48170.

Art Association

Pat Mayhew paintings exhibited

Pat Mayhew, local artist, will be featured as the artist of the month through February in the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association's sales and rental gallery.

Having begun her art studies in early childhood at the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburgh, Mrs. Mayhew completed her degree in painting and design at Carnegie Mellon University. A professional artist for 12 years, she has had 14 one-woman shows and is on the BBAA faculty. Her work hangs in the

corporate offices of Ford Motor Co., General Motors, Kmart, Detroit Bank and Trust, Detroit Children's Hospital, and Chrysler.

IN DESCRIBING how she feels about painting, she said, "Painting is an integral part of my life and it grows and changes as I do. I paint almost every day and my studio is my favorite place because there I can indulge myself in the pleasure of painting, release my feelings and reflect upon my world."

"An artist is so lucky to have a place where she is the decision maker. There is so much beauty in color, texture and line, and such pleasure to be gained from involvement with the medium that my personal struggle is not to overindulge in the piece I am creating."

Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association is at 1516 S. Cranbrook between 14 Mile and Lincoln. Gallery hours are 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays. For information, call 644-0866.

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recipes were great,
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