



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

Avocados have delicious skin-softening qualities

A very good friend recently treated herself to a professional facial. Knowing that I jog in the winter, she shared a piece of advice gleaned on her visit. Clients of the salon who engage in outdoor winter activities have always been warned to protect their faces with a generous layer of moisturizer when venturing out.

This advice has recently changed, however. A layer of moisturizer is insufficient. The face should be covered with a mask when spending any amount of time in the cold. Winter weather is just too harsh, too drying for the skin.

This set me thinking

about foods which help keep the skin moist — from the inside. What came to mind immediately was avocados for two reasons. They are rich in natural oils (which accounts for their wonderful, full, buttery texture) and they are in peak supply in winter months.

Avocados, long-recognized for their skin-softening qualities, are a major ingredient in many moisturizing creams. The most effective moisturizing, however, takes place from the inside out so include the avocado in winter meals and enjoy its incomparable flavor as well as its skin-softening benefits.

These benefits derive

not just from the oil in this fruit, but also from its high content of Vitamin C, which is essential for youthful skin.

Rose hips, perhaps the best source of Vitamin C, are used by Swedish beauties in an effort to keep their skin young looking. "Rose hips made into a tea is the Swedish fountain of youth," stated Dr. Paavo O. Arola in "Health Secrets from Europe." The scientific basis for his claim probably lies in the fact that Vitamin C is essential in keeping collagen, the cellular cement, healthy. It is collagen which is responsible for the elasticity of the tissues of the

body, including the skin.

I have always found it difficult to work rose hips into a meal plan, however, and would therefore suggest alternate sources of Vitamin C: tomatoes, peppers (sweet or hot), citrus fruits and of course, avocados. All are in abundant supply in the winter months, except for tomatoes. These should probably be purchased canned since the tomatoes available "fresh" at this time of the year are unappealing.

The following dishes, by incorporating these rich sources of Vitamin C, provide delicious first-aid for winter-damaged skin.

EGGS IN HOT SAUCE

2 tbsp. butter
1 green pepper, diced
1 medium onion, diced
¼ cup diced green chili pepper (or other hot peppers)
6 medium tomatoes, diced
Salt and freshly ground pepper
6 ounces Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
8 eggs
1 medium avocado, peeled and sliced

Melt butter in 10- to 12-inch skillet. Add green pepper, onion and chili peppers; cook until softened. Stir in tomatoes, salt and pepper and cook until thickened, about 20 minutes, stirring often.

Sprinkle cheese over sauce and allow to melt. Break eggs onto the melted cheese. Cover the skillet and cook 3 to 4 minutes, or until eggs are just set. Serve immediately, topped with avocado slices. Makes 4 servings.

This makes a superb brunch dish served atop crisp fried tortillas, or with flaky biscuits along side. In either case, it should be accompanied by a pitcher of cold orange juice, especially for those who are unaccustomed to hot peppers.

The hot peppers should be handled with care. If you have a cut or other sore on your hands, let someone else handle the

peppers or wear rubber gloves. Wash your hands immediately after handling the peppers, being careful not to touch your face (especially around the eyes) meanwhile.

AVOCADO SALAD

SANTEFE

2 ripe avocados, peeled and diced (The avocados will probably be slightly underripe when purchased. Allow about two days at room temperature to ripen. This process can be hastened by enclosing the avocados in a paper bag.)
2 large tomatoes, diced
3 hard-cooked eggs, diced
1 small onion, minced
10 pimiento-stuffed olives
2 tsp. red wine vinegar
1 ½ tsp. lemon juice

Combine the avocados, tomatoes, eggs, onion and olives in a bowl. Combine the vinegar, lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper and chili powder in a jar. Shake well; pour over the avocado mixture and stir gently. Serve on the lettuce leaves. Serves 4.

AVOCADO CITRUS BOWL

1 ripe avocado, peeled and sliced
1 large seedless orange, peeled and segmented
1 grapefruit, peeled and segmented
Combination of Romaine and curly endive lettuce

¼ cup olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ tsp. chili powder
Lettuce leaves

Line a large platter with the lettuce leaves. Arrange alternating slices of avocado, orange and grapefruit sections over the lettuce. Combine remaining ingredients in a jar. Shake well. Pour over the salad and serve immediately. Makes about 6 servings.

Address all letters to Hilary Keating Callaghan, c/o O&E Newspapers, 481 S. Main, Plymouth 48170.

Corned Beef

It's not too early to practice up on your corned beef cooking in preparation for St. Patrick's Day. Try this recipe.

MUSTARD GLAZED CORNED BEEF

3- to 5-pound corned beef brisket

Water
2 tbsp. prepared mustard
2 tsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. water.

Place corned beef brisket in Dutch oven; add water to cover. Cover tightly and simmer 3 to 4 hours or until meat is tender. Remove meat from cooking liquid and place, fat side up, on rack in open roasting pan. Combine mustard, brown sugar and water; spread glaze over top of meat. Bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) 20 minutes. Carve meat diagonally across the grain into thin slices.

Curried chicken easy company dish

This dish is fine with rice and a spinach or cucumber salad. It's good enough for company, yet it's easy to make.

CURRIED CHICKEN AND TOMATOES

2 tbsp. salad oil
3 lbs. chicken parts
2 tsp. curry powder
2 cans (16 oz. each) whole tomatoes, crushed
¼ cup onion flakes

1 ½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. ground black pepper

In a large skillet, heat oil until hot. Add chicken; brown on all sides. Drain and discard fat. Sprinkle curry powder over chicken; sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, onion, salt and black pepper; spoon mixture over chicken. Simmer, covered, until chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Yield: 4 portions.

Use up chicken in this casserole

Chicken Casserole Chop Chop is an easy way to use up leftover chicken.

1 can (10½ ounce) condensed cream of mushroom soup
¼ cup milk
1 tsp. salt
3 cups chopped cooked chicken
2 packages (9 ounces each) frozen French style green beans, thawed and drained
One 1-pound can chop suey vegetables drained
1 ½ cups (6 ounces) shredded Cheddar

cheese
½ cup chopped onion
1 can (3½ ounces) French fried onions

In a large bowl combine, soup, milk and salt, stirring until blended. Fold in chicken, beans, chop suey, vegetables, cheese and onion. Turn into baking dish. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes or until beans are tender. Top with french fried onions. Return to oven for 10 additional minutes. Yield: 8 servings.

ITALIAN MEAT LOAF

Combine: 2 eggs
½ cup Italian style bread crumbs
16 oz. can tomato paste
¼ cup chopped onion
¼ cup finely chopped green pepper
¾ tsp. salt
Dash pepper
Add: 1 ½ lbs. ground beef

Mix well and pat ½ mixture into an 8x8-inch baking pan. Combine ¼ cup Italian style bread crumbs, one 12-ounce carton ricotta cheese, 3-ounce can chopped mushrooms, drained; one tsp. parsley, sautéed; and ¼ tsp. oregano, crushed. Spread evenly over meat mixture in pan.

Top with remaining meat, patting smooth. Bake at 350 degrees in oven for one hour.

Remove from oven; arrange three slices Mozzarella cheese, cut diagonally into halves, in overlapping pattern on top of meat loaf. Return to oven for approximately one minute or until cheese begins to melt. Let stand for 10 minutes. Serves eight.

Mushrooms are perfect party fare

Mushrooms are a perfect party food. They're so neat to eat, raw with dips or stuffed and baked. In this recipe for Surprise Stuffed Mushrooms, you'll be surprised at how good they taste. The second surprise comes when nobody can guess what's inside.

1 lb. large-sized mushrooms (15 to 19)
1 can (4½ oz.) deviled ham
¾ cup fresh bread crumbs
4 tbsp. finely chopped walnuts, divided
1 tsp. dry sherry
1 ½ tsp. prepared horseradish

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Rinse and pat dry mushrooms; remove stems

(use in soups, stews, etc.). In a small bowl, combine ham, bread crumbs, 2 tbsp. of walnuts, sherry and horseradish. Set aside. Place mushroom caps, upside down, on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake, uncovered, until mushrooms are partially cooked, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven; invert and fill with remaining ham mixture. Top with remaining 2 tbsp. walnuts. Bake, uncovered, until mushrooms are tender and filling is hot, about 5 minutes. Serve as an appetizer. The mushrooms can be partially baked and stuffed early in the day, refrigerated and baked until hot just before serving. Yield: 15 to 19 mushroom caps.

Cooking hints help save

Today food is so expensive your supermarket bills probably read more like a stock portfolio than a food budget. So, just as a broker protects his investments, you should take steps to guarantee a good return on your grocery dollars.

1. "Secure" more juices from citrus fruits; roll them around on a flat surface in a circular motion for a few minutes before peeling or squeezing.

2. Avoid "damages" when baking stuffed peppers; coat them with salad oil before stuffing to keep them bright and green.

3. "Issue" fluffy mashed potatoes; add a pinch of baking powder.

4. "Insure" tender meat and poultry; use meat tenderizer.

5. It's a "liability" to burn onions; add a small amount of water when sautéing them.

6. Make the "claim" of always having rich, dark gravy; add a teaspoon of instant coffee while heating it.

7. Don't "waiver" when time is short; broil meats to speed serving time.

8. Make it a "policy" to serve great tasting salad dressings; mix in a pinch of sugar to cut vinegar's acid taste and to blend the seasonings.

9. Exercise your "options;" serve fruits and vegetables that are in season. Produce is most economical when in greatest supply.

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