



Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Monday, March 2, 1980

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Cooking for one again needn't be dismal

During the 12 years he was married, he occasionally puttered around in the kitchen. On weekends he liked to make big breakfasts. Other times he would help out by making a salad, setting the table or barbecuing the steaks or hamburgers.

In the two years since the divorce he has learned his way around the kitchen in self defense. Constant eating out became a bore (and expensive). At home he could take off his shoes, catch the day's news and sports scores and unwind.

He started with his old repertoire, making fast easy-to-prepare suppers of breakfast foods, bacon, eggs and hash browns. He remembered dishes his ex-wife had made and asked for the recipes. He bought a cookbook on cooking for one or two, and his spice shelf is expanding.

He's not interested in being a gourmet cook; he just wants to be able to make an appetizing dinner for himself, occasionally for a female friend, and something other than hamburgers every time the kids come over.

The onion soup below is his recipe, the others are additional possibilities for his situation. And for all

the other men or women who now find themselves cooking for one after a few years of being part of a household.

ONION SOUP

2 large onions, sliced thin
2 tsp. butter
1 can beef broth
1 can chicken broth
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
½ cup grated Swiss or Gruyere
2 slices toasted French bread
½ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese

Saute onion in butter until soft, not brown. Add beef broth, chicken broth and Worcestershire. Bring to rolling boil, then simmer for 20 minutes. Line bottoms of two ovenproof soup crocks with ½ cup (in each) of the Swiss or Gruyere cheese. Fill with soup, float toasted French bread and top with half of the parmesan in each. Bake at 350-degrees for 15 minutes. Serves two.

FISH FILLETS STEAMED IN MILK AND DILL

1 tsp. butter
2 young leeks, white and some green, sliced
2 5-to-6-ounce firm white fish fillets
¼ cup toasted wheat germ
1 tsp. soy flour, sifted
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. white pepper
1 tsp. each corn or peanut oil and butter, or as needed
¾ cup milk
2 tsp. chopped fresh dill or 1 tsp. dried dill

Saute leeks in butter until soft. Place half the leeks in bottom of a lightly oiled saucepan and set remainder aside. Rinse and pat the fish dry. Coat evenly with a mixture of wheat germ, soy flour, salt and pepper. Sauté three minutes per side in the oil and butter. Place fillets on bed of leeks in saucepan and sprinkle with the reserved leeks, salt and pepper. Combine and pour over the fillets the remainder of the braiding mixture, the milk and dill. Cover and let steam at low heat 10 minutes. Adjust seasonings and transfer to heated platter. Garnish

with butter curls, lemon wedges and dill springs. Serve with cooked spinach and new potatoes.

B.J.'s LEMON GARLIC CHICKEN

2 medium chicken breasts
Salt and pepper
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
2 small garlic cloves, minced
½ tsp. crushed bay leaf
4 pats butter

Sprinkle chicken on both sides with salt and pepper. Place pieces in a bowl and pour lemon juice over them. Sprinkle with garlic and bay leaf. Cover and refrigerate two to three hours. Remove chicken, drain and place in roasting pan. Place two pats of butter on each piece of chicken and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes, or until juices run clear when pierced with a fork or small sharp knife.

Note: Chicken can be marinated in refrigerator overnight, or at room temperature for about one hour.

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Cranberry cheese snow pie will make a sure-fire hit with the after-ski or after-skating crowd.

Warm up with snowy pie

Your creativity in the kitchen will be sparked when you discover this frosty combination. This easy-as-pie recipe combines cream, cheese and whipped topping to line the pie shell. The addition of cranberry-orange relish adds flavor and color. A mug of steaming hot chocolate completes this mouth-watering dessert.

CRANBERRY CHEESE SNOW PIE

1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
2 tsp. sugar
¼ cup milk
1 tsp. vanilla

1 container (8 oz.) frozen whipped topping, thawed
1 baked 9-inch pie shell, cooled
1 cup cranberry-orange relish

Beat cheese until smooth; gradually beat in sugar. Blend in milk and vanilla; then fold in whipped topping. Measure 2½ cups and spread evenly on bottom and sides of pie shell, mounding high around edge to form a 1-inch border. Fold relish into remaining whipped topping mixture. Spoon into lined shell without covering border. Freeze until firm, about 3 hours. Garnish with fresh orange slices, if desired.

State ranks 3rd in mushroom growing

One of the easiest ways to forget about winter is to sit down to some hearty Michigan soups, including cream of mushroom. Mushroom growers produce about nine million pounds each year, making Michigan third in the nation in mushroom production, according to the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Commercially grown mushrooms, those purchased in stores, are not to be confused with wild morels growing in the woods. Commercial mushrooming is an art, practiced by skilled growers who say it's easier to raise orchids than mushrooms.

Mushrooms are one of the paradoxes of agriculture. They grow in total darkness, indifferent to light. They won't grow in acidic soils or improperly ventilated houses and there must be a constant temperature of 55 to 62 degrees.

Sterile conditions are necessary during the entire mushroom growing process. Mushrooms are porous,

making them susceptible to disease, for which there is no cure. Mushroom beds, made of a compost combination, must be pasteurized, cleaned and fumigated after each crop.

Due to this painstaking process, fresh mushrooms never need peeling. They require only wiping with a damp towel.

An eight-ounce can of mushrooms is comparable to a full pound of the fresh product. Canned mushrooms are packed as buttons, sliced and stems and pieces.

Basically three kinds of mushrooms are commercially grown: cream, brown and white. The only difference in the three is the outside coloration. They taste the same and have the same texture.

Mushrooms are rich in vitamin B, protein and other minerals, and should be refrigerated in a container which has holes for ventilation, or in a paper bag. Condensation hastens spoilage.

Macaroni pizza nice for a change

Macaroni pizza is easy and a nice change. Begin by buttering a square 9-inch baking dish.

1 package (7 ounces) elbow macaroni
2 eggs
1½ cups milk

¼ tsp. pepper
1 tsp. oregano
1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce

1½ cups (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella or Provolone cheese

Cook macaroni in salted water according to package directions; drain. In a large bowl beat together eggs, milk and pepper. Add macaroni. Pour into baking dish. Bake in preheated 400 degree oven, 10 minutes or until set. Remove from oven. Meanwhile, mix oregano into tomato sauce. Spread over baked macaroni. Top with cheese. Return to oven for an additional 10 minutes. Cut into serving portions. Yield: 8 servings. VARIATIONS: Sausage Pizza — after adding tomato sauce, top with ½ pound sausage meat, cooked and drained OR ¼ pound summer sausage, cut up. Cover with cheese, and return to oven.

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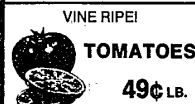
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