



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

Cookbook is fund-raiser for Sacred Heart

I was recently looking over a book entitled "Children are Children are Children" (CACAC from now on, if you don't mind), subtitled "An Activity Approach to Exploring Brazil, France, Iran, Japan, Nigeria and the USSR." In flipping through the pages I found myself making an angry mental resolve to skip the section on Iran. On reflection, I was ashamed of this knee-jerk reaction of hostility.

I recalled studying John Hersey's book, "Hiroshima," with a group of junior high students. We had marveled together that the United States could have treated its own Japanese-American citizens as badly as it did during and after World War II, repudiating anything Japanese — art, literature, architecture, language and foods. The folly of such a broadside attack — aimed at an entire culture rather than at a government or regime — is easy to identify in retrospect. It is much more difficult to distinguish during a political crisis.

It is vital, however, that we not only maintain this perspective in difficult times, but that we somehow communicate this to our children. Accomplishing the first goal helps bring about the second since children largely pick up the attitudes of their parents.

Since children, however, respond so well to anything concrete and immediate, an activities approach to appreciating foreign cultures can also be valuable (as well as entertaining).

IT IS SECOND best to first-hand experience, which is usually impractical. (When a Japanese family moved in down the block, my 6-year-old went

from advocating bombing Japan off the face of the globe in retaliation for Pearl Harbor to insisting that the Japanese are the cleverest people in the world. If I don't understand any appliance, I should just run down and ask the Japanese since they probably made it in the first place.)

CACAC, by concentrating on only six countries, manages to explore these cultures in much greater depth than is the norm in such books for children. It includes discussions of each country's contribution to the world community, clothing, festivals, art forms, sports, games and, of course, foods. A genuine understanding of local foods can be a valuable tool for understanding other aspects of a culture — climate, religious structures, economic structure, and social customs.

The book includes all of these considerations in discussing the cuisine of each country. Several recipes are included for each country, and an obvious attempt has been made to have these be representative of the foods actually eaten in those countries rather than Americanized stereotypes.

IN A SEASON especially dedicated to peace, this book would make an appropriate gift for a child, or for anyone dealing with children.

An appropriate companion volume for anyone who enjoys cooking and experimenting would be the newly published "International Sacred Heart Cookbook." The book contains more than 600 recipes culled from the countries in which are located Convents of the Sacred Heart.

Divided according to country, each section opens with a photograph and brief description of the local academy, followed by a collection of recipes for dishes indigenous to that culture. Pleasantly, there are few pseudo-ethnic recipes. Most are authentic and intriguing, ranging from New England Clam Chowder to the Philippine White Roast Stuffed Pig to Egyptian Baked Kibbeh.

A few of the recipes are esoteric and only for the most adventurous cooks but make for fascinating reading. Most, however, are not only intriguing but eminently practical and delicious.

An enormous amount of work has obviously gone into this collection, and the result is one of the most polished and enjoyable of the fund-raising books I have encountered.

Even the buff-colored paper and brown ink add a distinctive dimension. The photographs come out looking like old tin-types, in keeping with the character of these old buildings. The pen and ink sketches by Barbara Peters also add to the handsome appearance of this book.

The book may be obtained for \$10 from either The Convent of the Sacred Heart in Bloomfield Hills, or from St. Mary's Orthodox Church, 18100 Merriam Road, Livonia 48152. It also may be ordered by mail by sending a check or money order payable to "Sacred Heart Cookbook," 1250 Kensington Road, Bloomfield Hills, 48013. For mail orders, please add \$1.50 per book for postage and handling.

This handsome volume is ideal for holiday gift-giving, or for expanding

one's own cookbooks collection. To whet your appetite, here are a few sample recipes.

PHILIPPINE PANSIT BIHON

1/4 lb. bihon (rich sticks) (available in health-food stores)

3 eggs

1/4 tsp. salt

2 1/4 tsp. monosodium glutamate, divided

2 tsp. oil, divided

1 tsp. garlic, crushed

1/2 cup oil

1 onion, sliced

1 cup chicken, shrimp, beef or pork, cooked and diced

1 tsp. black dried mushrooms, soaked and drained

1 cup warm water

1 1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. garlic powder

Dash pepper

1 1/4 cups carrots, cut in 1-inch strips

2 cups mushrooms, sliced

1 cup Chinese pea pods

1 cup celery, sliced

2 cups cabbage, shredded

1 tsp. soy sauce

1 lemon, cut in small wedges

Soak rice sticks in warm water for 5 minutes. Drain. Beat eggs with 1/4 tsp. monosodium glutamate. Heat 1 tsp. oil in frying pan. Pour 1/2 of the egg mixture, rotating quickly to cover bottom of pan. Cook until golden brown. Repeat for the remaining 1/2 of the egg mixture. Cut into strips and set aside. Brown garlic and set aside. Heat oil in a big wok or skillet. Sauté onion, chicken or meat of your choice, and black

mushrooms for 2 minutes. Add water, salt, 1 tsp. monosodium glutamate, garlic powder and pepper. Simmer 2 more minutes. Add carrots, mushrooms and pea pods. When vegetables are half done, reduce heat to medium and mix in cabbage and celery.

Place the bihon noodles on top of the hot vegetable mixture. Sprinkle soy sauce and 1 tsp. monosodium glutamate on the cold bihon. Gently work the soy sauce into the noodles until noodles are uniformly colored by the soy sauce. Mix the noodles with the hot mixture. Reduce to low heat, cover and cook 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add browned crushed garlic and egg strips. Serve with lemon. Serves 10-15. Note: Substitute spaghetti or vermicelli if bihon is not available.

(I made a few changes in this recipe when I prepared it, according to my own peculiar prejudices. First, I eliminated the monosodium glutamate entirely out of a healthy respect for the "Chinese restaurant syndrome." I also eliminated the garlic powder entirely. The dish is already laced with a hefty amount of fresh garlic which is far preferable to the powdered. I also found this to serve only half as many people as the recipe indicated it would serve. Perhaps it would go farther if served with other substantial dishes. Finally, I substituted slices of fried tofu for the chicken, etc., called for in the recipe. Even with all these alterations, the result was a delicious dish.)

ONION BREAD

1 pkg. yeast

1/4 cup warm water

4 cups flour

1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp. salt
1/2 cup hot water
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 egg
1 cup finely chopped onions
1 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese
1 tsp. sesame or poppy seeds
1 tsp. garlic salt
1 tsp. paprika

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water, milk, 2 cups flour, 1/4 cup of butter and egg. Blend at low speed until moistened, beat 2 minutes at medium speed. By hand, stir in remaining 2 cups flour to form a soft dough. Cover, let rise in warm place until light and doubled in size, 45-60 minutes. Stir down dough. Toss on lightly floured surface until no longer sticky. Roll out to form an 18x12 inch rectangle. Melt remaining 1/2 cup butter, add onion, Parmesan cheese, poppy seeds, garlic salt and paprika. Mix well. Spread on rolled dough. Cut lengthwise into 14x14 inch strips. Cut 3 strips. Starting with 18 inch side, roll up each strip, seal edges and ends. Place on greased cookie sheet and braid the 3 rolls together. Cover. Let rise in warm place until light and double in size, 45-60 minutes. Bake in a preheated oven 350 degree oven for 30-35 minutes until golden brown. Serve warm or cold.

(I made a few changes here, also. I omitted the sugar and substituted a fresh clove of garlic, minced and sautéed in the melted butter for the garlic salt.)



Byrd's Kitchen

by Vivian Byrd

Christmas ...and for each ornament, a memory

The Christmas season for many families is a time for visiting, for spending time together that stretches beyond the Christmas afternoon and dinner get-togethers of other families.

Relatives fly or drive in from distant parts of the country to take part in those kinds of celebrations. It becomes a time for family reunion, a time for catching up on the details of events which had previously been conveyed only sketchily. It is a time and opportunity for seeing how much the kids have grown, for getting to know each other all over again.

Long holiday weekends which center on food and relaxing and, for some, church services, are ideal for reacquainting oneself with one's family.

In this situation, the host family finds itself in the position of providing a number of other meals in addition to the "big one."

All this usually means more planning and cooking for the hostess. While there are many kinds of family units in evidence these days, most often that responsibility still falls on the woman of the house.

While those other dinners need not be gourmet banquets (save that extra effort for the Christmas dinner), the company and the season call for something that indicates a little more effort than usual, something to make the guests feel they are special to you.

For instance, dessert.

A VENEZUELAN version of that Spanish desert favorite, flan, which I had come across some time ago and intended to try, makes a light, tasty ending for a meal during a week that will probably include some heavy eating.

This pineapple-flavored custard is baked in a mold that has been lined with caramel. Making the caramel requires full attention and concentration. It is not an operation one should attempt while other work is in process in the kitchen. It must be stirred almost constantly for approximately 10 minutes.

A tubed mold with straight sides will work handily for this dish, much better than one with decoratively designed sides or edges, as the custard will be released for the sides of the mold by inserting a small sharp knife around the edges, a maneuver which is more effectively accomplished with a straight sided mold.

There probably will be enough liquid caramel to fill the center opening of the unmolded custard. That rich caramel coating adds color and flavor to a light, smooth textured dessert.

Serves 6 to 8
The Caramel

1 cup sugar
1/2 cup water

The Custard

3 whole eggs plus 2 egg yolks

1 1/4-cup sweetened condensed milk

1 1/4-cup can pineapple juice

1/4 cup sugar

To line a 6-cup metal or porcelain mold with caramel, it will be necessary to work quickly. Remember in handling the caramel that its temperature will be over 300 degrees, so be extremely careful with it.

Place the mold on a large strip of wax paper. Then, in a small, heavy saucepan or skillet, bring the sugar and water to a boil over high heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Boil the syrup over moderate heat, gripping a pot holder in each hand and gently tipping the pan back and forth almost constantly, until the syrup turns a rich, golden, tea-like brown. This may take 10 minutes or more. As soon as the syrup reaches the right color, remove the pan from the heat and carefully pour the caramel syrup all at once into the mold. Still using the pot holders, tip and swirl the mold to coat the bottom and sides as evenly as possible. When the syrup stops moving, turn the mold upside down on the wax paper to drain and cool for a minute or two.

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs and egg yolks with a whisk or a rotary or electric beater until they thicken and turn a light yellow. Gradually pour in the condensed milk, pineapple juice and sugar, and beat until the all the ingredients are well combined. Strain through a fine sieve into the caramel-lined mold, and place the mold in a large pan on the middle shelf of the oven. Pour enough boiling water into the pan to come halfway up the sides of the mold. Bake the custard for about one hour, or until a knife inserted in the center of the custard comes out clean.

Remove the mold from the water, let it cool to room temperature, then refrigerate the custard for at least three hours, or until it is thoroughly chilled.

To unmold and serve the large custard, run a sharp knife around the sides, and dip the bottom of the mold briefly in hot water. Then wipe the outside of the mold dry, place a chilled serving plate upside down over the mold and, grasping mold and plate together firmly, quickly turn them over. Rap the plate on a table and the custard should slide easily out of the mold. Pour any extra caramel remaining in the mold over the custard. Serve cold.

Our Christmas tree is up. Its lights twinkle merrily through the front window, welcoming all of us home at the end of each day of the holiday season.

Decorating the tree at our house takes a full afternoon or evening. There are memories attached to most of the ornaments, so, as the ornaments come out of their boxes, their stories are also brought out and relived. All the stories take longer than the actual decorating but, to us, they are at least as important.

A small fabric wreath, stitched for us by an old neighbor, just size to hang as an ornament, reminds us of another house and another time, the times shared with that family. It also generates a discussion of where they are now and the circumstances of our last visit with them.

There are dough figures which the kids painted when they were very young; smartly uniformed toy soldiers we found at a craft show at the kids' old school, and a tiny train engine made from mirrors and bought on impulse because it reminded us of an aunt who is especially fond of trains.

WE HAVE NEVER had an elegant or sophisticated tree, magnificently done all in one color, copied perhaps from a home decorating magazine.

Our tree decorating style might charitably be called eclectic, as it is a mixture of elements from all the years that have gone before, all the trees we have decorated before.

When the decorations are all hanging from the tree and the inevitable broken silver ball swept into the trash, we sit around and sing Christmas carols. The overgreen fragrance from the tree begins to spread through the house.

Not only does it look and sound like Christmas, it smells like Christmas. So, it must be.

However, the aroma that finally and unquestionably spells Christmas is still to come. It is the aroma of the turkey and stuffing emanating from the kitchen on Christmas day.

There is a sausage and cornbread stuffing, moistened with sherry and heavy cream, that is particularly good, so good that we will be having it again this year.

Whatever you make for Christmas dinner, or even if you choose not to cook and to eat out, I wish you the best holiday dinner and the happiest Christmas ever.

SAUSAGE AND CORNBREAD STUFFING

To serve 8 to 10, or to stuff a 10 to 12 lb. turkey

10 tbsp. butter

1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion

1 lb. well seasoned sausage

the turkey liver

6 cups coarsely crumbled cornbread made from the recipe below

1/2 tsp. salt

freshly ground black pepper

2 tsp. thyme

1/4 cup finely chopped fresh parsley

1/4 cup sherry

1/4 cup heavy cream

Melt 8 tbsp. of the butter in a large, heavy skillet, add the chopped onions and cook over moderate heat for 6 to 8 minutes, or until they color lightly. Scrape them into a large mixing bowl. Add the sausage to the skillet, now set over medium heat, and break the meat up with a fork as it cooks. When the meat is lightly browned, transfer it to a sieve set over a small bowl and let the fat drain through. Meanwhile, again in the same pan, melt the remaining 2 tsp. of butter and, when the foam subsides, add the turkey liver. Brown it over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes, then chop it coarsely and combine with the onions in the bowl. Add the drained sausage meat, cornbread crumbs, salt, a

few grindings of black pepper, the thyme and parsley. With a large spoon, gently stir the ingredients together, then moisten the stuffing with the sherry and cream. Taste for seasoning.

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. baking powder

2 eggs

6 tbsp. melted and cooled butter

8 tbsp. melted and cooled vegetable shortening

1 1/2 cups milk

CORNBREAD

To make one 9-inch loaf

1 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal

1 cup all-purpose flour

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Sift into a mixing bowl the cornmeal, flour, salt and baking powder. Beat the eggs lightly, add the melted butter and shortening, and stir in the 1 1/2 cups of milk. Pour into the bowl of dry ingredients and beat together for about a minute, or until smooth. Do not overbeat. Lightly butter a 9-by-5-by-3 inch loaf pan or 8-by-12 inch shallow baking pan and pour in the batter. Bake in the center of the oven for about 30 minutes, or until the bread comes slightly away from the edge of the pan and is golden brown.

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