



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

New vertical roaster enhances flavors

The world seems to be divided into two distinct groups of gift recipients. The first group can tell you exactly what they want — the size, color, quantity and where to buy it. The second group tells you not to buy anything for them. There's nothing particular they want or need and, besides, you shouldn't be spending your money on them.

The first group should, theoretically, be easier to buy for. They often present one problem, however. They are so definite about what they want that they are apt to go out and buy it before you get the chance.

My father is a member of this group. Recently he read about the new upright

poultry roasters that are currently available in local kitchen supply stores. These roasters (the brand name is Spanek) are cone-shaped devices formed of metal rods. They come in three sizes: one for turkeys up to about 15 pounds, one for chickens, which includes a basting tray and shishkebab skewers, and one for Cornish game hens (this last is a set of four racks).

THE METAL CONE is inserted into the cavity of the bird, holding it above a meat drip pan so that any grease can be discarded rather than being absorbed as the meat cooks. This, of course, is a boon to those watching their weight or attempting to minimize

fat intake for a variety of health-related reasons.

In fact, one of the reasons I found these to be appealing gift ideas is that they encourage consumption of poultry, a much less expensive and healthier source of protein than the red meats that our country dotes on. Dire warnings about the high cholesterol content of red meats clogging up the veins and somber recommendations that poultry replace these meats in our diets are all well and good. A more positive approach, however, is to make poultry more appealing aesthetically, and this is exactly what is done by cooking it in an upright position — a secret European cooks have known for years.

Rather than being dry as a result of having the fat dripped away, poultry cooked in this fashion is much juicier than that cooked in a conventional position. This is because the metal rods conduct heat to the interior of the bird and sear this surface, trapping the juices inside the flesh.

I happened to be in Kitchen Stuff in Birmingham last week just as owner Vince Hayes was removing a Cornish hen from the oven.

His store oven cannot achieve a temperature over 300 degrees. Even in this oven, however, the hen had cooked in just 40 minutes. He carved the meat while I was there, and each insertion of the knife revealed the juiciest meat I

have ever seen on a game hen.

A carving knife was really superfluous. The hen was so tender it was ready to fall apart. In fact, at a demonstration in San Francisco, a chicken cooked on the Spanek roaster was carved with a carrot!

VINCE EVEN suggested that the upright roaster be used for a chicken or hen that will go on the barbecue. By starting the cooking in a roaster in the oven, the inside will be seared, trapping the juices, and cooking time on the grill will be reduced.

This last point will be appreciated by anyone who has ever waited interminably for a chicken to finish roasting outdoors or, worse, eaten an undercooked chicken. After a brief stint in the oven, the chicken or hen can be transferred to the barbecue to pick up the wonderful flavor that only comes that way — the best of both worlds.

Vince's wife, Fran Hayes, also had a lovely suggestion for a dinner party using the vertical roaster: Serve Cornish game hens, still suspended on the roasters on individual wooden cutting boards — one to each guest or to each couple to carve at the table. Accompanied by hot bread or steamed new potatoes and a salad, this would make a simple, elegant meal. You could even walk in from work and have this on the table in less than an hour.

INSPIRED by all these ideas, I decided that this would be the perfect Father's Day gift for my Dad (at about \$21, even the price wasn't too bad). Unfortunately, he beat me to it and has been enjoying his roaster for a few weeks now. He even plans to send one as a birthday gift to his brother, a priest who often cooks for himself.

The vertical roaster would, in fact, be the perfect gift solution for all kinds of people — those who enjoy cooking and entertaining, those who like neither but are forced to do both on occasion and like to do so with as little fuss as possible, working cooks, dieters, newlyweds, etc.

low, and cook the carrots, covered, for five minutes. Cook the carrots, uncovered, stirring, for 3 minutes more, or until they are just tender. Transfer them to a heated serving dish and keep them warm. Toss with pistachio nuts and Coltrane and serve immediately. (from "Gourmet," March 1978)

GREEN BEAN SALAD
Serves 4-6

1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 lb. fresh green beans
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar
1/4 tsp. dry mustard
Freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup olive oil
12 firm, ripe cherry tomatoes
1 large red onion, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch-thick slices and separated into rings

Bring 3 quarts water and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt to a boil in a large pan. Drop in the beans and boil briskly, uncovered, about 10 minutes, or until tender but still resistant to the bite. Drain beans.

With a wire whisk, beat the vinegar, remaining salt, mustard and pepper together in a small bowl. Slowly pour in oil, continue to whisk until the mixture is smooth. Pour over the beans and add the tomatoes and onions. Toss together with a wooden spoon, then cover bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least two hours.

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CARROTS WITH PISTACHIOS AND COINTREAU
Serves 6

1 lb. carrots, peeled
3 tbsp. butter
3 tsp. water
1 1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 cup pistachio nuts
4 tbsp. Cointreau

Cut the carrots diagonally into 1/4-inch slices. In a large, heavy saucepan, combine the carrots with the water, butter and salt. Bring the water to a boil over moderately high heat, stirring, reduce the heat to moderately

Add dash to burgers

If hamburgers are your family's barbecue favorite, unusual seasonings can help take them beyond the same old grind. Try your burgers with a dash of soy sauce mixed in before shaping, or make a batch of chestnut cheeseburgers.

CHESTNUT CHEESEBURGERS
6 servings

1 lb. ground round or chuck steak
1/4 cup chopped water chestnuts
1/4 cup cubed cheddar cheese
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 tbsp. chili sauce
1 tsp. prepared horseradish
1/4 tsp. dry mustard
2 tsp. soy sauce
6 hamburger buns, toasted and buttered

Combine all ingredients except buns; mix lightly. Shape into 6 patties. Grill over medium heat for 5 minutes on a side for rare, 10 minutes for medium and 15 minutes for well-done. Serve on buns.

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