



A Question of Taste

By Hilary Keating Callaghan

Good news!

You can make your own lox

Caviar, truffles, lox — all are expensive, luxury foods, all said to be "acquired" tastes. I never bothered to acquire those tastes. If they're all that good and all that expensive, I'd rather not know about it. Satisfying a craving for peanut-butter just about exhausts my luxury-foods budget.

For those who already have a craving for at least one of these items — lox — there is good news. A kit is now available for making your own lox from fresh (the best) or frozen (also delicious — just a slight difference in texture) salmon fillets (fillets — not steaks).

The process is absurdly simple. It involves sprinkling the salmon with the spice mixture provided in the kit and refrigerating it for a week, turning once and pouring off some accumulated liquid after 3½ days. At that point you need only slice paper-thin and serve. Any lox not immediately eaten may be frozen or stored in the refrigerator for up to a month.

This relatively long shelf life is due to the salt in the spice mixture, which acts as a preservative.

AT ONE TIME the smoking process also functioned to preserve the fish. The salmon was hung in a smoke house in which sawdust was burned over an open flame. Sawdust from different kinds of wood produced characteristically different flavors. Today, however, only the flavor of the smoke remains. Atomized smoke-extract rather than burning sawdust imparts the distinctive smoky flavor to lox.

Lox, however, is still not a homogenous product. Its relative saltiness, for example, will vary from one part of the country to another, reflecting regional preferences. New Yorkers are said to prefer Nova Scotia lox, which is not as heavily salted as other varieties. Connoisseurs in other parts of the country claim the Nova Scotia lox lacks flavor.

An advantage of making your own lox is that the degree of saltiness, or "lox" flavor, can be easily adjusted to suit your own preferences.

Personally, I found the sample of Penny-Luxury lox I tasted to be delicious — I had no problem "acquiring" a taste, even a craving, for lox. In fact, I plan to buy a salmon this week and cure my own, using the lox making kit. As the name implies, the kit makes lox an affordable luxury. Each kit provides enough spices to cure up to five pounds of salmon and costs \$5 plus \$1 for postage and handling. With salmon prices running between \$3 and \$5 a pound, the average price per pound for home-cured lox comes to about \$6 a pound — in contrast to commercial lox, which commands prices between \$12 and \$20 per pound!

IF ANY FURTHER incentive is needed, the total labor time you will invest in making the lox comes to three or four minutes — not even the usual time/money trade-off. Your home-cured lox also will be free of the nitrates and preservatives found in commercial lox.

A lox-making kit or some of your own homemade lox would make an unusual gift for anyone fond of this delicacy. Those for whom fondness verges on fanaticism, in fact, would be eternally grateful for such a supply. For many New Yorkers, I understand, it is a weekend ritual to stand in line for an hour and a half to wait for lox and cream cheese on a bagel in Zabar's.

This classic combination was the way I first enjoyed lox, having been presented with bagels and cream cheese by Peter Nagourney of Penny-Luxury along with the sample of lox he had cured at home.

I don't know if I would wait an hour and a half in a crowded New York delicatessen for it but it was addictive. The best part is that this craving can be so easily and inexpensively satisfied.

(Lox-making kits may be ordered by mail by sending a check or money order for \$5 plus \$1 postage for each kit to: Penny-Luxury P.O. Box 2519 Detroit, MI 48202. Be sure to include your name and address on a slip of paper.)

LOX DEVILED SALAD Serves 4

- ½ cup flaked lox
- 1 stalk celery, minced
- 1 tsp. green pepper, minced
- 1 tsp. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. dry mustard
- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- Pinch cayenne
- 2 large tomatoes, quartered
- 1 green pepper, cut in rings
- Crisp lettuce leaves

Mix lemon juice and mustard in a bowl; add mayonnaise; blend well. Cut eggs in half lengthwise; remove yolks; mash and mix with seasoned mayonnaise; add salt and cayenne to taste; add flaked lox. Fill whites of eggs with fish mixture. Arrange crisp lettuce leaves on pre-chilled oval platter; place flaked eggs in center; border platter with tomato quarters and green pepper rings. Serve very cool with extra mayonnaise if desired. (from Mila Miloradovich's "The Art of Fish Cooking")

SMOKED SALMON QUICHE

- 1 quiche shell
- ¼ cup smoked salmon bits
- 3 large eggs
- Pinch nutmeg
- Pinch pepper
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- Fresh parsley or dill
- Butter

Beat together the eggs, nutmeg, pepper, and heavy cream. Strew the salmon bits in the bottom of the quiche shell. Pour the egg mixture over the salmon. Sprinkle with the parsley or dill. Dot with butter. Bake at 375-degrees for 30 to 35 minutes (from "Julia's Kitchen" by Julia Child)

HORSERADISH SAUCE WITH WALNUTS

- 1 cup sour cream
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup grated horseradish
- 4 oz. shelled walnuts

1 tbsp. sugar

Combine sour cream, heavy cream, and horseradish. Blend walnuts until fine but not a paste.

Add walnuts and sugar to sauce. Stir well. Serve cold with lox. (from "Craig Claiborne's Favorites")

Summer salad tossup tip

Here's an unusual departure from the ordinary chicken salad. It's a crunchy combo with a Bavarian flavor.

- CHICKEN SLAW**
- 2 cups cabbage cut in long, thin shreds
- ½ cup thinly sliced onion
- ¼ cup creamy Russian dressing
- 2 tsp. real bacon bits
- 1 tsp. caraway seeds
- 1 cup diced cooked chicken
- Shredded mild cheese

In bowl, lightly toss all ingredients except cheese; chill. Garnish with cheese. Makes 2 servings.

U.S.D.A. CHOICE

SIDES OF BEEF \$1.49 lb.

Ready to Eat

Bar-B-Q Chicken

Made on Premises

Piping Hot

Feldbro's Own Fresh Home Made

Chicken Salad \$2.29 lb. No Limit!

Ready to Eat

Chicken Wings 59¢ lb.

Fresh or Frozen

IGA PIGNIC PICKIN'S

Let's Get MIC-RO GEN Moving Again

Holly Farms Grade 'A'

Whole Fryers 65¢ lb.

IGA TABLETITE

BOSTON BUTT Pork Steak \$1.18 lb.

SOUTHERN, JUICY, GOLDEN

Peaches 49¢ lb.

IGA TABLETITE

Beef Boneless Chuck Steaks \$1.89 lb.

ARMOUR GOLDEN STAR GRADE A

Hen Turkeys 79¢ lb.

WASHINGTON RED or GOLDEN DELICIOUS

Apples 49¢

HYGRADE

Ball Park Franks \$1.39 1 lb. Pkg.

Mr. Turkey Pure

Ground Turkey \$1.29 lb.

Fresh from the Dairy

FAME Orange Juice \$1.29 64 oz. Jug

WASHINGTON RED or GOLDEN DELICIOUS

Apples 49¢

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FAME Beet Sugar \$1.19

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FAME Corn 3/99¢

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