



Variations on a French-toast theme

When I was a youngster I made French toast many a Sunday. It was simple: white bread dipped in a mixture of egg and milk, then fried in butter.

That was when I enjoyed eating more than cooking. Times have changed. Today I find more satisfaction in preparing a dish enjoyed by others.

If there ever was an original French toast, it probably was born in New Orleans. Pain perdu (lost bread) is economical as well as elegant. It's a tasty way to dispose of French bread left over from dinner.

The batter can be spiked with brandy, but a little vanilla extract will suffice. Shortening and bacon drippings replace butter. But I used the

drippings from link sausage I prepared one morning to go with the French toast, then melted the shortening in the already hot skillet. I humbly accepted the sitting applause.

I tried a Puerto Rican recipe that received rave notices at the breakfast table, too.

The batter is composed of egg and orange juice. Instead of using vanilla, I crushed about 30 vanilla wafers and dredged the batter-coated bread in them. I used raisin bread and added a little margarine to the skillet each time I fried a batch.

French toast, whether it's made the New Orleans style or the Puerto Rican way, is a mouth-watering treat.

NEW ORLEANS FRENCH TOAST

1 1/2 cup milk
1/4 tsp vanilla
2 tbsp sugar
1/4 tsp salt
6 slices day-or-two-old French bread,
1-inch thick
1 tbsp link sausage or bacon drippings
2 tbsp shortening

Slightly beat eggs in soup bowl, gradually add milk, then vanilla, sugar and salt and beat to combine. Soak bread on both sides in egg mixture. Heat drippings and let shortening melt in large non-stick skillet and fry bread on both sides on medium heat until golden brown. Sprinkle on confectioners sugar and serve with syrup or honey. Serves 3.

PUERTO RICAN ORANGE FRENCH TOAST
2 eggs
1 cup orange juice
1 1/4 cups finely crushed vanilla wafers
10 slices raisin bread
Margarine

Slightly beat eggs in soup bowl, gradually add orange juice and beat to combine. Place crushed wafers in another soup bowl. Dip bread on both sides in egg mixture, then dredge in wafers. Melt 1 tablespoon margarine in large non-stick skillet and fry bread on both sides on medium heat until golden brown. Use 1 tablespoon margarine each time bread is added to skillet. Serve with syrup. Serves 5.

Pork chops are quick and easy way to provide nutrition and taste

Pork chops are among the most popular cuts of pork, probably because they offer automatic portion control and can be cooked in a short time. Another nice feature is that you can vary pork chops with different seasonings and accompaniments. For example, one night serve pork chops with Michigan mushrooms; another time, fix them with sliced Michigan onions; and next time, prepare a pork chop with potato scallop.

Here's a favorite recipe for pork chops with mushrooms: brown 6 one-inch thick pork chops in a mixture of butter and oil, add one-half cup dry

white Michigan wine, season with salt and pepper, cover and simmer about 10 minutes. In another skillet, saute 1 pound small whole (or large quartered) mushrooms in 4 tablespoons butter, season lightly with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons flour, add

1/2 cup heavy cream and 1 tablespoon Worcestershire, stir until slightly thickened. Transfer chops to heated platter, pour off grease from skillet, transfer mushroom mixture to pork skillet and stir to incorporate the fla-

vor of the pan juices, then pour over the chops.

SERVE with a Michigan apple salad and baked or hash browned Michigan potatoes for a delicious all-Michigan meal.

Cooking classes in Farmington

Elegance and tradition are the trademarks of the Farmington Community Center's Annual Easter Brunch, as Barb Dermody and Judy Antish combine their culinary expertise to prepare this buffet-style meal for the holiday season.

Brunch will be served Friday 10 a.m. to noon at the Community Center. Students will learn during the lecture/demonstration how to prepare a traditional Easter brunch for family and friends using a combination of eggs and ham, with accompanying fruits and vegetable dishes and nut bread.

"This menu can be adapted to any size group and served buffet-style for any festive occasion freeing the hostess to enjoy her guests," Dermody said.

"And buffet-style service adds a touch of elegance as your table may be attractively arranged with chafing dishes and trays of tastefully displayed foods," added Antish.

STUDENTS should come ready to enjoy the traditional dishes and return home, recipes in hand, to plan their own holiday gathering with ease.

Early registration is advised as this is always a popular event at the Center. Tables may be reserved to seat four to eight. Brunch, including lecture/demonstration and recipes, is \$9.

Time-saving techniques of food processing will be taught in a four-session class at the Community Center beginning Tuesday 7-9 p.m.

Students will master the important techniques of slicing, shredding, chopping and blending ingredients. Pates, dressings, sauces, dips, breads, desserts and canapes will be demonstrated.

Teaching the class will be Vince McCallum and his staff from McCallum Associates.

Class registration is \$36 and may be made at the Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road. Call 477-8404 for information.

Plan to have lots of rice

The 1982 rice crop was second only to the 1981 all-time record for the U.S. rice industry. Less favorable weather conditions than 1981 combined with voluntary acreage reduction resulted in a total of 158,000,000 hundredweight (one hundredweight equals 100 pounds), or over 15 billion pounds of rice harvested.

Approximately 3.32 million acres of U.S. farm land was planted in 1982. Production was approximately 15 percent less than 1981. However, when the carryover from last year's record harvest is included, the supply of rice is likely to reach 207,000,000 hundredweight — up 11.2 percent from 1981.

Both production and acreage in 1982 are second only to the record highs of 1981. The average yield for the 1982 crop was 4,805 pounds per acre, down 72 pounds from 1981.

Rice is grown in Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Texas. Arkansas and California were the two leading rice-producing states in 1982.

Both the milling and cooking quality of U.S. rice are at an all-time high. U.S. rice is in demand world-wide because of its superior quality. South Korea, Nigeria and other African nations; the Middle East and European countries are some of the buyers of U.S. rice.

Domestically, rice supplies are always stable and plentiful and rice continues to be an economical food.

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