

Seedless Clemis are ideal stuffers

Feeling good about giving is the real trick to holiday gifts. Without the wisdom of Santa, however, this can be a very tricky task.

Food-related gifts are always a good bet, and a creation from your own kitchen is a sure way of adding a bit of yourself to the warmth and spirit of the season.

Happily, there's a wonderful fruit called a "Clemi" clementine, relatively new to North America, that's sure to add a very special touch to fruit baskets, cheese trays and, of course, to your holiday baking.

Clemi clementines arrive from Spain at this time of year and can be enjoyed right through March. A clementine is a type of mandarin orange or tangerine, but it's much sweeter and juicier and, best of all, the Clemi clementine is completely seedless.

Slip clementines into Christmas stockings — they'll add a new twist to traditional Christmas give-away treats. Add a little grated zest and juice and a special note to chocolate rum balls —

and why not serve chocolate-dipped clementine segments with coffee?

Make it clementine bread instead of lemon bread this year. Perk up fruit or carrot cake with a creamy icing made by whipping clementine juice and zest into cream cheese. Or simmer dried fruits in clementine juice then add a dash of orange liqueur and clementine sections for a festive fruit concoction.

Clementines make original hostess gifts. Consider a jar of cheery Clementine Conserve with touches of festive red and green cherries, gaily ribboned — or present an attractive container of Clementine Eggnog.

FESTIVE CLEMENTINE CONSERVE

6 clementines
1 lemon
6 oz. dried apricots, quartered
½ cup water
2½ cups sugar
2 Tbsp. lemon juice

2 whole cloves
¼ cup green and red maraschino cherries, halved
¼ cup silvered almonds

Remove peel from 2 clementines and lemon. Cut into slivers, enough to yield ¼ cup. Peel remaining 4 clementines and section all. Remove white membrane from lemon. Chop clementine sections and lemon pulp coarsely in food processor. Pour into large saucepan. Add silvered peel, apricots and water. Cover, bring to a boil and simmer gently 20 to 30 minutes, until tender. Stir in sugar, lemon juice, cloves and again bring to a boil. Simmer, uncovered stirring frequently until thickened, about 15 minutes. Stir in cherries, almonds, and cook 5 minutes longer. Remove cloves. Pour into hot sterilized jars and seal with melted paraffin wax.

CLEMENTINE EGGNOG

2 cups dairy eggnog

Juice of 4 clementines
¼ cup Grand Marnier
Freshly grated nutmeg

Stir together eggnog, clementine juice and Grand Marnier. Pour into glasses and garnish each with freshly grated nutmeg and a clementine section.

CLEMENTINE CHRISTMAS TREE

Pine boughs
Clementines
Whole Cloves
Icing Sugar
Ribbon

On flat plate, arrange a base of pine boughs. Build a clementine tree, securing clementines. If necessary, with toothpicks or pins in a pyramid. Stud clementines with cloves for decoration and a pleasant odor. Sprinkle with icing sugar and decorate with red or green ribbons or bows.



pilot light

Greg Melikov

Nut cracking is art

Cracking nuts is an art, not a shell game. If you develop a technique, it has taken years to shed my heavy-handed manner.

Instead, I apply middle-of-the-road pressure to my nutcracker, which doubles as a garlic press, to achieve almost perfect results. I say "almost" because it is impossible to remove the nuts whole every crack.

Placement of the nut is important, too. The almond, for instance, must stand long ends to cracker before squeezing. Again, you must watch the pressure, but the whole nut should come out more often than not. I like to use almonds with vegetables. But when the recipe calls for silvered or halved almonds, I buy them already packaged.

The most difficult to crack — not counting the chestnut, which must be slit and boiled — is the Brazil nut. The three-sided brown nut, which resembles a section of orange, requires heavy pressure, plus a pick, to free the solid, oily white meat. It goes great in rice stuffing.

THE EASIEST nut to crack is the filbert. That's because the small nut is round and in one piece. I can crack a half dozen and digest the sweet meat in a minute. I just may squirrel some away to try in stuffing.

English walnuts, probably most everyone's favorite next to the pecan, is tricky. At best, it's a crack-or-miss proposition. But if you place the seams where the cracker meets the nut and apply a quick squeeze, the nut is yours at least in two halves. Walnuts are great in salads or stew.

I left the pecan off my list because it seems the only time I buy them is on vacation — from roadside stands or gift stores. My wife loves them. I don't. She has failed, however, to devise a fool-proof way to get them out perfectly halved. I may give it a try in a weak moment.

Here are some other nutty ideas:

- Garnish baked squash or sweet potatoes with chopped pecans.
- Top fresh vegetables with silvered almonds.
- Use walnut halves or quarters in salads other than Waldorf.
- Stir-fry almonds in chicken-vegetable dishes.
- Try peanuts in tuna casserole.
- Roll chopped walnuts or pecans into vegetable cakes.
- Put chopped chestnuts in turkey stuffing.
- Ground any variety of nuts in a blender or food processor and mix with softened cream cheese for appetizers — bread spread, celery filling or dip.

Holiday foods tempting for diabetics

Pumpkin pies, candy canes, fudge, eggnog — these and other traditional holiday treats can pose special problems for the 10 to 12 million people in the United States who are struggling with diabetes.

Diabetes is a condition in which the body does not produce enough insulin to help utilize the sugars that are eaten. Diabetic patients must monitor and adjust their diets, daily exercise and activities and insulin intake vigorously. But the holiday season can be a prime time for non-compliance. Peer pressure and the temptation of traditional foods make it difficult for the diabetic patient, who must eat specific foods at specific times.

Doctors recommend that the diabetic consult his doctor or dietitian to learn how to exchange special holiday foods for other foods. By enlisting the aid of one's family for cooking and for cleaning up after holiday meals, the diabetic can reduce the temptation to snack and sample.

Some diabetics who are well-controlled are able to work an occasional alcoholic drink into their diets. As these drinks can account for 10 percent of daily caloric intake and offer no nutritional value, the diabetic should consult

his physician for advice on how to fit drinks into his meal plan. The diabetic should avoid very sugary drinks totally.

With the advent of colder weather and the excitement of the holidays, it is easy for the diabetic to slip out of his exercise program. Diabetics should work exercise into the busiest of days by walking instead of riding, taking the stairs rather than the elevator, performing regular chores more quickly

and doing light exercises while watching TV.

Attending a late dinner party can pose a problem for the diabetic. Doctors may recommend a light snack at the regular meal time.

If holiday plans include travel, there are a few tips for the diabetic. Be sure to have a medical check-up before departure and stock up on all prescriptions. If you are flying, carry your medication in your hand luggage. Your

dietitian or physician can help you adjust your meal schedules if you will be traveling across time zones. If you are visiting a foreign country, a letter from your doctor might be helpful if you will be carrying needles and syringes. Always carry roll candy or peanut butter crackers in case meals are delayed or an emergency arises.

By keeping these few precautions in mind, you will keep healthy, trim and fit, and enjoy the holidays to the fullest.

News that's closer to home

HOLL cracked but not broken decorative dishware in a pan of milk. Boil for forty-five minutes. Crack seals and dish looks like new. Your telephone will ring when you run an Observer & Eccentric Classified Ad.

WE CAN'T GUARANTEE YOU'LL NEVER HAVE A HEART ATTACK. BUT A FEW FACTS CAN IMPROVE YOUR ODDS.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE. It often has no symptoms! So have your blood pressure checked regularly, no matter how well you feel. If it's high, take your doctor's advice. Then stick with your treatment program.

OVERWEIGHT OVERBURDENS. Stay at a healthy weight. If you need to lose, do it sensibly. By following a low-fat, nutritious meal plan. The American Heart Association can suggest good reducing diets; consult your doctor, too.

SMOKING? STOP! No cigarette is safe. And the sooner you quit the better. But take heart: within just a few years of stopping, your risk of death from cardiovascular disease will be almost the same as if you had never smoked.

EXERCISE GOOD SENSE. It's smart to have a physical before beginning any new exercise program. And choose activities to build cardiovascular endurance. The American Heart Association has information to get you started.

EAT TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT. Because a high-fat diet can contribute to your risk of coronary artery disease, choose foods that are low in saturated (animal) fats and cholesterol. And stay on your best behavior: the good die die.

LEARN TO LIVE. For medical advice, your physician is a good source of information on your individual risk of heart disease and stroke. For helpful ideas on helping to prevent these health problems, contact the American Heart Association.

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