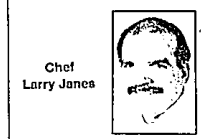


taste buds



Chef Larry Janes

Search for smelt

It will happen soon. The phone will ring. The time and date will be set. We rendezvous at midnight. SHARP! The orgy begins. . . . Before you know it, thousands of folks living in the vicinity of the Great Lakes will again begin their yearly ritual in search of the smelt.

I can still remember the days when we visited my folks' summer cottage just off Pointe Pelee in Ontario. We would descend upon the still frigid beaches complete with our Coleman lanterns, Eddie Bauer waders, Mort Neff seine nets and cases of Labatts Blue. It was a private beach just west of the Pointe but during the smelt run, the bonfires lit up the blackened sky like klieg lights at a Hollywood premier.

We drew straws to see who would be the first to "make a pass." (It was always the guy with the deepest waders while the guy with the high galoshes stood on the shore.) No one really wanted to make the first pass because if a smelt was netted, the catcher would have the ceremonial duty of biting off and swallowing the head of doomed creature. (God, we were so macho then!)

After getting home and beginning the relatively easy cleaning process, only about 5 percent of the catch would make it to the fridge while the remaining 95 percent ended up as garden fertilizer.

For the uninitiated, smelt look like giant minnows. They can be anywhere from five to eight inches long. (However, any cod smelt fisherman will swear that the smaller ones are the best eating.)

Smelt that are found in the Great Lakes region are really immigrants that were originally transplanted here from New England coastal waters. Eastern smelt (as they like to be called) are migrating salt-water fish.

If you're lucky enough to net some of these beauties or if must rely on the local fishmonger, figure on about 10 to a pound if they are dressed and about eight per pound whole. The smaller smelts can be prepared for cooking by pinching off the heads directly behind the gills and exerting light pressure on the belly cavity to expel a relatively small amount of innards. There is no need to bone them because the bones soften when cooked and can be eaten.

Some smelt aficionados swear the removal of the head and innards is a sacrilege and prefer to batter fry them whole. Call me a wimp, I prefer them headless and gutless. However, I do enjoy the crunchiness of the tail.

Try these different smelt recipes and drop me a note in care of this newspaper if you have a favorite recipe or hint to share about our tiny elusive friends. Bon Appetite!

CHEF LARRY JANES SMELT PREPARATIONS

BROILED SMELT

2 lbs. smelt, dressed
1 stick butter/margarine, melted
1/4 cup seasoned bread crumbs
1/4 cup cream

Method of Preparation: Gut and wash the smelts. Remove head directly behind the gill area. Tails can be left intact. Wash under cold water and drain and pat dry as soon as possible.

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Esther Goldenberg (left) of Oak Park and her daughter, Donna Sklar, have been co-producers of Passover Seders as 20 springtimes have come and gone. Anticipating the first Seder on Monday, April 13, the two run through preparation of the Seder table at the Sklars' Farmington Hills home, looking down on the matzah cover (foreground left), a silver wine cup, the Seder plate with ritual items in place, candles and the Haggadah at each place with the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

'Kosher' foods include beef and fruit

By Leonard Pogor staff writer

"That doesn't seem kosher" is a phrase used so often it has become part of the American vocabulary.

And you don't have to be Jewish to know what the phrase means — that something is not right.

Technically, kosher refers to a standard of eating, including which foods can be consumed and how animals are killed to be prepared for eating. The word has its roots in the 4,000-year history of Judaism and the tradition of its followers.

The laws of kashrut, or dietary standards for avoiding certain types of food products, are primarily religious and moral, say Jewish scholars and authors.

THE MAIN value expressed is that Jews should follow the dietary laws to emulate God and be holy, according to the Book of Leviticus, which stipulates the standards of which foods can be consumed and which are forbidden.

Part of the value has to do with the reverence for life and animals who are killed to provide meat for eating.

The first humans in the Biblical Garden of Eden were vegetarians since they were forbidden to eat meat.

The permission to eat meat is seen as a compromise, "a divine concession to human weakness and human need," said author Samuel Dresner in his book, "The Jewish Dietary Laws — Their Meaning for Our Time."

RECOGNIZING that man isn't perfect and that "your world isn't a Garden of Eden nor the Kingdom of God," people will eat meat — with one restriction.

The restriction is that man have a reverence for the life he takes, Dresner said.

That reverence has prompted a series of rules for persons involved in the slaughter of animals whose meat will be later consumed.

For example, animals are to be killed in a way that death is instantaneous, which eliminates any pain or suffering.

FOLLOWING THAT tradition, Jews aren't hunters.

But what is kosher food?

Based on Biblical sources, all vegetables and fruits without restrictions, for a start.

Any fish with fins and scales, such as cod, flounder, herring and bass, is considered kosher.

Forbidden fish, or those considered not kosher, are lobster, oysters, clams and shrimp, among others.

In the meat category, kosher animals are those which both chew their cud and have a split hoof, such as cattle, sheep, goats and deer.

BUT EVEN those animals have to be killed in a humane way and a prescribed set of laws.

Forbidden are pigs and any products from pigs, such as pork and bacon.

To make sure the meat is prepared in the prescribed manner, Jewish families should buy their meat from a kosher butcher shop.

That eliminates McDonald's hamburgers from the diet of observant Jews.

Another Biblical standard is that meat and milk products aren't to be eaten together at the same meal. This is based on a section of Deuteronomy that said, "You shall not boil a kid (or a small goat) in its mother's milk."

The basic premise is that there is a cruelty involved in combining the life-giving element of an animal, its milk, with the death element, its flesh, Biblical scholars said.

Chefs, students show works of art at recent culinary salon

By Rebecca Haynes staff writer

"Look, but don't eat."

This phrase probably doesn't come to mind when you think of food, but at the 14th Annual Hospitality Industry Culinary Arts Salon, held recently at the Cobo Conference/Exhibition Center, it was the name of the game.

The salon, which is the largest in the Midwest, is a competition for chefs and culinary arts students. Entries are artfully displayed and are judged on creativity, appearance and the skill involved in making them. The food is never tasted.

Paul Burnash, a 21-year-old culinary arts student at Oakland Community College, took top honors in the student division. Judges picked his display of a chocolate candy box and its intended contents — petits fours, raspberry butter cream cakes, marzipan walnuts with mocha candy coffee bean centers, dark chocolate logs with hazelnut fillings and white chocolate barquettes — for the Augie Award, given for "best of show."

BURNASH, WHO also works as a pastry chef at the Knollwood Country Club in West Bloomfield, won a gold medal for his Australian wedding cake in the shape of a grand piano.

"I have a music background and I've always seen instruments as a kind of art," he said. "I wanted to do the piano for last year's show, but it was my first time entering so I kept it in the back of my mind."

Complete list of culinary salon's local medal winners, 2B

The cake, once baked, had to be cut into its piano shape. The rolled fondant icing is mixed and rolled as if it were a dough and placed over



Christine Mayesky, a student at OCC, took a silver medal for her Easter bunny display in the marzipan decoration category.

Matzah

Unleavened bread is Passover meal focus

By Shirlee Rose Iden staff writer

ALTHOUGH years ago, when man couldn't have imagined the fast foods of today, the daddy of them all was already the focus of Jewish tables at Passover.

Some things never change, and the eating of matzah, unleavened bread, is the heart of the springtime festival that marks the oldest continuous celebration of a successful liberation movement.

Matzah is the central symbol of Passover. It is eaten for the eight days of the holiday and throughout the Seder dinners, to recall the hasty flight from Egypt when Moses took the Israelites out of bondage by the Pharaoh around 1280 BCE (before the common era).

Since there was no time to allow the bread dough to rise, flat cakes of matzah were baked, an early version of fast food.

The Haggadah, a book that tells the Old Testament story relates that they wandered in the desert for 40 years before reaching the promised land.

NO TRACE of bread or leavened foods, called chametz, can be found in observant Jewish homes during the holiday. Instead, the flat, crisp unleavened matzah, once baked in haste on flat rocks of the desert, is used as bread and in preparing other foods.

A visiting rabbi once remarked that Passover's flavor and texture have become too bland. "For a week we should eat the bread of Auschwitz as well as the bread of Passover," Rabbi Irving Greenberg contends. "To be really living, we must know the pain of suffering."

Passover this year begins at sundown on Monday, April 13, when the first Seder or ritual dinner takes place in Jewish homes. The traditional four questions, preceded with: Why is this night different from all other nights? will be asked just six days before the 44th anniversary of the 1944 Passover when the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto rose up against Nazi oppressors.

Reform Jews and Israelis celebrate at only one Seder, while Conservative and Orthodox Jews will repeat the Seder on Tuesday.

For the homemaker, the Seder night is a culmination of preparation and cleaning that begin weeks before. All forbidden chametz is used up or banished from the home before the holiday.

PART OF the Passover preparation is the packing up of everyday dishes and flatware, pots and pans, and the unpacking of utensils used only these eight days each year.

For the Seder table, special dishes, wine cups and goblets are used along with other ritual items. A ceremonial Seder plate is a large platter with five small dishes. Often the plates, of glass, metal, porcelain, silver and other materials are antiques and works of art in themselves.

Foodstuffs, part of tradition at the Seder table for centuries, are carefully prepared and arranged in designated places in the five dishes.

● A hard-boiled egg in the shell representing life's cyclical nature is roasted in memory of grief over the destruction of the first temple in ancient Israel.

● Charoset, a sweet mixture of apples, nuts, wine and spices, represents the mortar the Jewish people made under the whips of their Egyptian taskmasters.

● The roasted shankbone signifies the Paschal lamb, whose blood marked Jewish doorposts, when the Angel of death was sent to destroy the Egyptian first born.

● Grated horseradish, called orzar recalls the tears and bitterness of slavery.

● Green vegetables called karpas, which may be parsley, onion, celery, or other greens, are offered for dipping into salt water to recall the bitter tears of slavery.

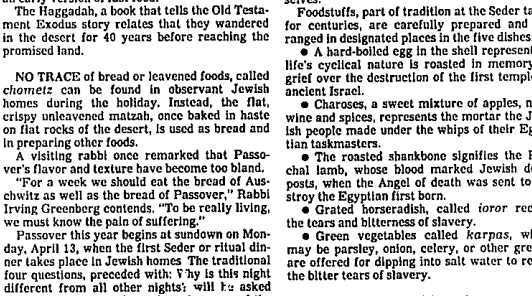
EACH PASSOVER celebrant in turn partakes of the five tastes and textures, which the matzah, symbolize the Passover, as the Haggadah is read. Only then is the holiday meal served.

Four glasses of Passover wine are drunk ritually during the service and Seder dinner. Wine is also used in baking and cooking for the holiday. Special meals and recipes not used during the year are customarily used at this time. Matzah is made into cakes and cookies, dumplings for

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photos by LAURA CASTLE/staff photographer

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