

Special brews have appeal

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"We have Julie's Special Blend and Eddie's Decaf," George said. "My favorite is Julie's Special Blend. It has orange, chocolate and hazelnut. It's great for after dinner."

Premium coffee is characterized by a top-notch coffee bean, proper roasting and freshness, coffee experts say.

According to botanists, there are two main varieties of coffee bean. The less abundant but superior type is the arabica bean, generally used for specialty coffee. The more plentiful but harsher robusta bean goes into instant and less costly brands.

Premium coffee beans are grown at high altitudes — often on the slopes of mountains — and thrive on rich soil and a mild climate. Each coffee tree yields only a few hand-picked berries, whose seeds become coffee beans.

SANDRA BENSON of Bloomfield Hills knows her beans. She's a buyer for the American Bulk Food chain, which has around a dozen stores, including outlets in Livonia, Rochester, Troy and St. Clair Shores. The firm is based in Dearborn.

"People can buy a few ounces and try it out," said Benson. She cited freshness, economy and variety as good advantages in reasons for buying coffee in bulk.

Specialty stores sell coffee in quantities as small as a quarter-pound. Prices for upscale varieties may range from around \$4 per pound for house blends to \$14 and up

per pound for the rare, coveted Manhattan Blue Mountain variety. Many decaffeinated blends also are available.

Steven Saxton, marketing director for a firm which sells a Swedish brand, puts in a plug for proper roasting and grinding.

"Taste doesn't depend on where it's grown," said Saxton of Berge International Group in Berkeley. "It depends on the bean and the roasting."

Luxus brand coffee uses beans grown in the usual coffee-growing nations and shipped to Sweden for very rapid roasting, grinding and packaging. Why Sweden?

"Coffee is the number-one drink in Sweden," said Saxton, a Ferndale resident. "The Swedish buyers are very quality conscious. They have been drinking this kind of high-quality coffee for decades. Over here, we have coffee ranging from gourmet to no-brand, and they all sell."

LUXUS COFFEE is available in either 100 percent Colombian, or a blend of several varieties. Saxton said the coffee is roasted, ground and packaged in foil during a 24-hour period, for maximum freshness. It costs \$5.50 to \$7.50 per pound and is available locally at the Holiday Market in Royal Oak, Alabama and the Long Lake Market in Bloomfield Hills.

Benson, who enjoys drinking Kona coffee on special occasions, recommends that customers grind their beans shortly before use. Ground coffee rapidly becomes stale. Store beans in the freezer until ready to use, Benson said.

"You can take the finest bean, and after it is four weeks old, it has already lost 70 percent of its flavor," Benson said.

IRISH COFFEE

1 oz. Irish Whiskey
2 sugar cubes
Extra strength hot coffee
Top with whipped cream

SOUTH AMERICAN COFFEE

1/2 oz. Kahlua
1/2 oz. creme de cocoa
1/2 oz. Amaretto
Hot coffee
Top with whipped cream and shaved chocolate

CAFE DE BELGIQUE

1 egg white
1/4 tsp. vanilla
1/4 cup heavy cream
Hot coffee

Beat egg white stiff. Add vanilla to cream and whip. Combine with egg white. Fill coffee cups 1/4 full with cream mixture. Fill with hot coffee. Serve at once. Sweeten to taste. Makes 4 servings.

CAFE AU LAIT

This breakfast beverage, popular

AP — Here's an out-of-the-ordinary relish with Oriental overtones from gingerroot, red pepper and sesame oil.

CORN AND CUCUMBER RELISH

1 large cucumber, seeded and chopped
2 tsp. salt
1 cup fresh or frozen corn
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup fresh or frozen corn
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup white wine vinegar
1/2 cup sliced green onion
1 tsp. grated gingerroot
2 tsp. diced pimento

in France, is easy to prepare. Fill one pot with strong hot coffee, and another pot with hot, rich milk. Pour each serving with a chocolate mint wafer. Make 4 servings.

MOCCHA MINT

1 cup prepared coffee
1 pint chocolate ice cream
1/2 cup creme de menthe
Very thin chocolate-mint wafers

Combine coffee, ice cream and creme de menthe in blender container. Blend on low speed. Spoon into sherbet or wine glasses. Garnish each serving with a chocolate mint wafer. Make 4 servings.

SPICED ICED COFFEE

3 oz. coffee (finely ground)
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. orange spice

Brew coffee in coffee maker. Allow to cool. Add cinnamon and spice. Serve over crushed ice with cinnamon stick. Serves 6. (Recipes courtesy of American Bulk Food)

1/2 tsp. sesame oil
1/2 tsp. ground red pepper

In a medium mixing bowl sprinkle cucumber with salt. Let stand for 20 minutes. Rinse cucumber, drain well, pressing out excess liquid. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan combine corn, sugar, vinegar, onion and gingerroot. Bring to boiling, stir occasionally. Reduce heat, simmer, uncovered, for 4 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in drained cucumber and pimento. Toss with sesame oil and red pepper. Transfer corn mixture to nonmetallic container or cover and chill for several hours or overnight. Drain mixture before serving. Makes 2 cups.

Pot roast gets new touches

AP — In Grandma's day, pot roast and vegetables was a favorite Sunday dinner. This super slick microwave version tastes as homey and comforting but takes less than half the time. Be sure and make the gravy too — it's terrific.

MICROWAVE POT ROAST WITH VEGETABLES

2 1/2- to 3-pound beef chuck arm pot roast (cut 1 1/2 inches thick)
1 1/2-cup can beef broth
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
6 small potatoes
2 cups Brussels sprouts (12-14, halved)
2 medium carrots, cut into strips
1 medium onion, sliced
3 tsp. all-purpose flour

Trim fat from beef. In a 3-quart microwave-safe casserole combine broth, Worcestershire, garlic, onion powder, salt and pepper. Add beef; turn to coat. Microwave, covered, on 100 percent power (high) 5 minutes. Cook, covered, on 50 percent power (medium) 40 minutes. Turn beef over. Meanwhile, peel and halve potatoes. Add potatoes, Brussels sprouts, carrots and onion to beef in casserole. Cook, covered, on medium 20-30 minutes or until beef and vegetables are tender. Transfer beef and vegetables to a warm serving platter; cover with foil.

For gravy, pour juices into a 4-cup glass measure. Skim off fat. Return 1/4 cups of juices to casserole; discard remaining juices. Combine 1/4 cup water and flour; stir into juices. Cook, uncovered, on 100 percent power (high) 5-7 minutes or until thickened and bubbly, stirring after every minute. To serve, slice beef and serve with vegetables and gravy. Makes 6-8 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 671 calories, 28 g protein, 18 g carbohydrates, 54 g fat, 100 mg cholesterol, 485 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 142 percent Vitamin A, 73 percent Vitamin C, 13 percent thiamine, 16 percent riboflavin, 28 percent niacin, 25 percent iron, 19 percent phosphorus.

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