

taste buds



chef Larry Janes

## Berries add zing to menu

I'm not one to rush the seasons, but in a few short weeks, we'll be heading into the holiday season.

I have friends who have already completed their Christmas shopping, have their greeting cards written, addressed and stamped, and who can't wait for the malls to begin putting up their decorations. It is to these off-season weeks that I dedicate this column on cranberries.

Why? Because I'm about five weeks ahead of myself for a change, and with the arrival of the fall season, when we start talking of pumpkins, cranberries and leaves, of Saint Nick can't be that far behind.

For the nostalgia buffs out there, cranberries have been popping around kitchens for hundreds of years. Originally called the mossberry (because it is usually grown in boggy areas of North America and Europe), cranberries look like small cherries, the color of which varies from a clear pink to a deep red.

USED EXTENSIVELY in the Middle Ages as a medicinal product, cranberries have an acid flavor, taste very astringent and are bitter when eaten in their raw state. It is because of these "bitter" powers that the cranberry was used to "draw out" certain ailments. The Indians used cranberries not only medicinally and for cooking purposes. They also used the coloring as warpaint and colorful makeup for tribal rituals.

When cooked, cranberries produce a compote and jelly with a delicious taste traditionally used with fowl and wild game. Cranberries are mostly used in these areas for processing in making canned cranberry sauce and that omnipotent cure-all for the kidneys, cranberry juice.

Beginning now, you will see cranberries brimming in polysealed bags all over grocery stores, gearing up for their big show, which is the holidays. It is during these times that the cranberry is used in muffins, breads, fruitcakes, candies, sauces and stuffings.

Of course, when you have kids, you will also find cranberries being used in slingshots. The berries can be thrown with force because of their solid weight and tendency for explosion on impact. These smashed cranberries cannot be removed from couches, curtains and carpets unless you are lucky enough to own something made with that new material that won't absorb stains.

It is highly suggested that you not place a string of cranberries outdoors for "the birds," especially if you have a light-colored automobile nearby.

WHILE RESEARCHING this article, I called upon Momma, who agreed to part with her all-time smash hit for homemade cranberry sauce. Pencil in hand, I anxiously awaited the formula I was sure would be passed down to yet another generation of Janices. Needless to say, I felt like the air was let out of my soufflé when told that all you need is one pound of cranberries to 1 1/2 cups water and 2 cups sugar (1 plus 1/2 plus 2). Easy to remember? Sure. But I was looking for something with a little more oomph that included various amounts of spices and about 14 hours or so on the stove.

"Pour it all in a stainless saucepan, cover and cook till berries pop," she said. "I was told. Was there more to this secret concoction? I guess I'll have to wait another year (or longer) and maybe after a few hot-buttered rums, I'll loosen Momma's tongue and find out the real secret. Till then, enjoy these great recipes. Clip and save (don't put them in a place you'll never remember), and try these recipes during the holidays. Bon Appetit!"

**CRANBERRY APPLE RELISH**  
2 lbs. (8 cups) cranberries, chopped  
4 cups peeled and quartered apples, chopped  
3 1/2 cups sugar  
2 cups orange marmalade  
2 cups walnuts, coarsely chopped  
1/2 cup lemon juice

Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Serve in hollowed-out orange halves. Great with game, fowl. Makes 9 cups.

**GLAZED CRANBERRIES**  
Great in your next fruitcake  
2 cups whole cranberries  
1 cup sugar



Illustration by Barney Judge

## Vegetarianism has long history

By Louise Okrutsky  
special writer

Benjamin Franklin followed the practice sporadically. Percy Bysshe Shelley, a poet who made passion his stock in trade, wrote an impassioned plea in its favor.

Vegetarianism was around long before another of its advocates, Socrates, started asking questions. It's both dismissed as a fad and latched onto as the key to peaceful behavior between nations.

Eschewing meat isn't something to be done lightly, according to Jim Dannunzio, a 13-year veteran of meatless meals. "Most people have to gradually go off meat. Very few people can go cold turkey," said Dannunzio, who manages Pure and Simple, a vegetarian restaurant in Troy.

"Each metabolism is different. It may take anywhere from a week to a month," he said. Many turn to vegetarianism out of religious or philosophical convictions. Others want to avoid additives introduced into foods through commercial meat processing.

Dannunzio's religious beliefs, and his strong reservations about the quality of commercial meat processing, compel him to continue avoiding meat and fish.

"IF YOU'RE GOING to eat meat — with the way meat is processed today — it's not like 20 years ago. Each year, it's worse," he said.

Dannunzio isn't alone in that opinion. "Just from reading, I became concerned about the things I was getting with the food I was eating," said Dale Silverberg of Southfield. "I've always been health conscious, so I asked myself, why am I doing this to myself?"

Seventeen years ago, he embarked upon the diet he still follows. Although he eats fish, he avoids meat, dairy products, fowl, desserts and sweets.

Vegetarianism is sweeter the second time around for Fred Howitt of Southfield. A third-generation vegetarian, Hewitt rebelled after college. "I ate everything that didn't eat me first," he said.

Hewitt, a food consultant, conducts low-cholesterol cooking classes and works for the American Lung Association's smoking cessation program.

"By the time I reached my late 30s I decided I didn't want to spend the rest of my life on a downhill course. I was starting to get pudgy. I decided to take a look at some of the old values I was raised with," he said.

Within six months of returning to vegetarianism, he lost 20 pounds without dieting.

Vegetarians can be divided into three main groups. Lac-

to-ovo vegetarians include dairy products and eggs in their diets. Lacto vegetarians avoid eggs but include dairy products. Vegan diets, one of the stricter forms of vegetarianism, exclude all animal and dairy products — even eggs.

ANOTHER VEGETARIAN group, pesco-vegetarian, eats fish but no animal products, according to Linda Cornell of the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Lastly, there are fruitarians, who eat only fruits, nuts, honey and olive oil. "It's more of a spiritual thing. They want to cleanse the body," Cornell said.

Varying upon the plateau of vegetarianism that's reached, practitioners need to calculate the nutritional value of their daily meals, according to Cornell.

"They should plan their menus carefully. They can replace meat with nuts, whole grains, beans, peas and meat analogues (substitutes), such as soybeans," she said.

Meatless regimes are often prescribed to reduce high

levels of serum cholesterol. However, such advice can make a dedicated steak and potato lover feel doomed to a diet of lettuce and brussels sprouts.

They need to consider the soybean. It's used to mimic just about any dish in taste if not appearance. Hot dogs, hamburgers, tuna and even submarine sandwiches have their counterpart concoctions from soy and wheat gluten.

To cook in the vegetarian manner takes imagination and resourcefulness. "I use some tofu, beans, lentils, rice, pasta and barley," Silverberg said. "I use a lot of grains and things like that."

"MY SON CALLS the way I eat 'grazing,'" he said. Mainstream restaurants don't pose too many problems for most vegetarians. "We go to the best restaurants," Hewitt said. "We just order off the hors d'oeuvres menu."

"I'm limited," Silverberg said. "But it's my own choice. I order a salad or a fish without butter. Or when I go to ethnic restaurants, I have more of a choice."

Eating a balanced diet becomes slightly more complicated when dairy products are avoided, too. Broccoli, spinach and turnips should be eaten daily to provide sufficient quantities of calcium.

"Watch for too much fiber, because it'll cause discomfort and swelling," Cornell said.

Besides taking care to consume enough calories, they should maintain an adequate level of vitamins, especially B-12 in their diets, she said.

B-12 isn't synthesized in the human body. It's obtained through eating meat or consuming oils, nuts and fat-rich seeds. Nutritionists regard B-12 as essential for the functioning of the nervous system, the bone marrow and the gastrointestinal tract.

Some vegetarians, like Silverberg, take B-12 and vitamin supplements. Others consider it unnecessary.

"SUCH MINUTE amounts of B-12 are needed. There's never been a problem with B-12 deficiency," Hewitt said. "The problem is B-12 uptake. If you're not absorbing it, it leads to pernicious anemia."

Amounts of vitamin B-12 in the diet are the special concern in the diets of children, babies and pregnant women. Raising a child as a vegetarian can be accompanied by more concerns than how to deal with the peer pressure to eat fast-food hamburgers.

"Children need milk, two or more servings a day," Cornell said. "They need B-12, they need calories, proteins, carbohydrates and fats to grow. It should be done only with a parent who knows what they're doing."

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## Meatless mealtime pleasing

By Louise Okrutsky  
special writer

Inviting a vegetarian to dinner precipitates a kitchen crisis for many cooks who regard the situation in the same light as inviting a teetotaler to a cocktail party.

Many Americans, notorious for relying on meat as the mainstay of their diet, slip out of the quandary by concocting a larger salad and hoping the dinner guest doesn't mind nibbling on that while everyone else attacks the roast.

"Rabbit food" is the way Jim Dannunzio's meat-eating relatives occasionally describe his diet. But as manager of Pure and Simple, a Troy vegetarian restaurant, Dannunzio has learned how to accommodate all types of vegetarians as well as the meat eater who might consider vegetarian fare an adventure.

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