

Beyond buying bargain bubbly

Continued from Page 1

So the next time you visit the liquor store and see fine champagne selling for \$40 and more on the shelf, remember, it is to be enjoyed with dignity and spirit. Think of all those people working in the moldy old ones, boiling, turning, disgorging the likes of all that sparkling matter. Personally speaking, after drinking my share of those \$3, \$4, \$5, \$6 and \$7 bottles of the stuff, I found the imported French variety definitely less bubbly and somewhat drier. But even more important, I shuddered at the thought of paying about \$9 per flute (that's the fancy name for the glass that it should be poured in) (yes, you got it, per glass).

Whatever your choice for the holidays, whether it be Dom Perignon, Tattinger (James Bond's favorite) or Moët Chandon (this writer's favorite) raise your glasses high with a shout of praise for Brother Dom, who, if not for his invention, would have us drinking all this bubbly injected stuff from the East and West coasts.

CHAMPAGNE ICE
 3 cups water
 1/2 cup lemon juice
 1/2 cup champagne
 1 1/4 cups sugar
 1/2 cup pineapple juice

Bring water and sugar to a boil and boil until sugar is dissolved (about 3 minutes), let cool. Stir in the rest of the ingredients, pour into a container and freeze. For a fine, snowy texture, stir every 30 minutes until frozen.

FROZEN CHAMPAGNE CREAM IN CUCUCCIOLI CUPS

I purchase those small chocolate cups from the gourmet store and fill them with this exciting cream and serve as a light dessert after a holiday dinner party.

1/2 cup brut champagne
 1/2 cup sugar
 5 egg yolks
 1 1/2 cups whipping cream

Combine 1/2 cup of champagne with the sugar in a small saucepan

How to prepare spaghetti squash

AP — To cook spaghetti squash in your microwave oven instead of on the rangtop, prick the squash with a sharp knife. Place the squash in a 10-by-6-by-2-inch microwave-safe baking dish. Cook, uncovered, on 100 percent power (high) 7 to 11 minutes or until squash is tender, turning squash over after 5 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes. Then cut the squash in half, scoop out and discard seeds, and shred strands with a fork.

SPAGHETTI SQUASH WITH VEGETABLE SAUCE

One 2- to 2 1/2-pound spaghetti squash
 2 cups of 20-ounce package frozen loose-pack broccoli, cauliflower and carrots
 2 teaspoons cornstarch
 3/4 teaspoon dried oregano, crushed
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 1/2-ounce can sliced tomatoes, cut up
 1/4 cup pitted sliced green olives
 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

Cut the squash into quarters; remove seeds. Place squash in a large saucepan or Dutch oven; add about 2 inches water. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat; cover and simmer about 20 minutes or until tender.
 Cook the frozen vegetables according to package directions; drain. In a saucepan combine cornstarch, oregano and salt. Stir in undrained tomatoes and olives. Cook and stir until mixture is thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Stir in cooked vegetables; keep warm.

Use 2 forks to shred and separate the squash pulp into strands. Pile squash onto a serving platter. Toss with melted margarine. Spoon vegetable mixture over squash. Makes 6 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 89 cal., 3 g pro., 12 g carb., 5 g fat, 10 mg chol., 356 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 55 percent vit. A, 57 percent vit. C, 64 percent thiamine, 57 percent riboflavin.

They knead to make bread

Continued from Page 1

Baking bread is a lengthy process. The most time-consuming portion is when the dough is rising.

Guyer gets her dough mixed and kneaded, then goes on with her chores while the dough rises. Once you get the knack, "it isn't necessary to babysit the dough," she said.

Slesak makes white, whole wheat, raisin and rye breads. Stepping into her home is a treat for the nose. The yeasty fragrance of baking bread fills the air. Tasting the warm, buttered bread is the reward.

WHILE ONE batch bakes to a crusty, golden hue, Slesak busy kneads dough in a huge bowl. She works at an oversized kitchen counter with plenty of working space.

Slesak measures her ingredients. She kneads the dough for 5-10 minutes, until it is pliable and not sticky. She covers the dough with plastic and a damp towel and carries the bowl to her family room where a wood-burning stove emits warmth.

The dough sits near the stove, and heat causes it to rise (approximately one hour). When the dough has doubled in volume, Slesak punches it down and returns the bowl to the

warm spot to double again. She then divides the dough into three equal pieces and places them on a floured surface to rest for 15 minutes. Next, she shapes the dough into three loaves and puts them into greased baking pans to rise for one hour. The bread is baked at 375 degrees for 45 minutes.

Guyer squeezes her baking into an active volunteer schedule with the Jewish National Fund and Meals on Wheels for homebound senior citizens. The Guyers' three children range in age from 15 to 23.

"We're going to visit our daughter at Brandeis University outside Bos-

Bread bakers offer special recipes

WILMA SLESAK'S WHITE BREAD
 7 3/4-cups bread flour, divided
 1/2 cup sugar
 1 tsp salt
 1 pkg. (1/4 oz.) dry yeast
 3 cups warm tap water
 1/2 cup vegetable oil

Knead 5-10 minutes, until dough is pliable, easily handled and not sticky.

In large mixing bowl, put 3 cups flour, sugar, salt and yeast. Add water and oil. Beat with electric mixer for two minutes. Using wooden spoon stir in 4 more cups of flour — enough to make a soft dough. Add more flour a little at a time and knead. Knead 5-10 minutes, until dough is pliable, easily handled and not sticky. Grease bowl with solid shortening, margarine or bacon drippings for added flavor. Turn dough over so top is also greased. Cover with piece of plastic and a damp towel. Set in warm place to

rise. After dough has doubled in volume (1 hour), punch down. Allow to rise until double again. Divide dough into 3 equal pieces. Place on floured surface and let rest 15 minutes. Shape into three loaves and place into baking pans. Let rise in pans for 1 hour in warm place. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes. Yield: 3 loaves.

Variations:
 For whole wheat, use 3 cups whole wheat flour and the remainder white. Use brown sugar instead of white.

For rye, use 3 cups dry flour and substitute brown sugar for white. Add 1 tablespoon caraway seeds. For raisin bread, use the same amount of white flour. Double the sugar and oil, and add 12 oz. raisins.

SHEILA GUYER'S CHALLAH
 1 cup vegetable oil
 3/4 cup sugar
 3-4 tsp salt
 1 1/2 cups hot tap water
 4 eggs
 3 pkg. dry yeast, dissolved in additional 1 1/2 cups hot water

10-11 cups flour
 Dissolve oil, sugar and salt in hot water. Add eggs. Dissolve yeast in 1 1/2 cups water and add to oil and sugar. Mix well. Add flour, kneading until dough is no longer sticky. Put dough in greased bowl and flip so oily side is up. Cover with wet towel. Let rise 1-1 1/2 hours. Have 6 loaf-panels sprayed with nonstick oil. Put 3 balls of dough into each loaf pan. Brush with egg yolk or water and sprinkle with poppy seeds. Cover with the same damp towel and let rise 30 minutes. Bake 10 minutes in preheated 400 degree oven. Turn pans. Lower heat to 350 degrees and bake 20 minutes longer until golden brown. Yield: 6 small loaves. Note: As bakers become more proficient, they may experiment with different shapes, such as braids, or twisted into a circle.

1 1/2 pounds miscellaneous candied fruits, citrus and citrus peel, tart apples or nuts

Measurements need not be exact. Mix dry ingredients, set aside.

Mix liquids, set aside. Mix fruits in large bowl. Add dry ingredients to fruits and mix well (with hands, if needed).

Then add liquids and mix thoroughly.

Fill greased molds 3/4 full. Cover loosely with aluminum foil to keep tops dry.

Set molds in a large, deep pan. Add water to halfway up the molds. Cover pan and boil gently until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

If water boils away, add more. (Put two marbles in pan. They rattle if water is too low.)

Allow to ripen several weeks or months.

Refrigeration is not necessary. Serve with hot lemon sauce.

OLD-FASHIONED LEMON SAUCE
 Combine in saucepan 1/2 cup butter, 1 cup sugar, 1/4 cup water, 1 egg, well beaten, 3 tbsp. lemon juice (1 lemon) and grated rind of 1 lemon (optional).
 Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, just until mixture comes to a boil.
 Amount: 1 1/2 cups.

Rhyming recipe family tradition

Continued from Page 1

Ethel tried again, and succeeded, and the plum pudding recipe survived another generation.

Today, Kotcher places the ingredients in molds, puts them in a pressure cooker and cooks them for about 45 minutes.

Her recipe makes four round molds.

If you are not using a pressure cooker, Kotcher said that a large pan can be used.

Instead of molds, tin cans, ranging from the 1-pound pork and bean size to a soup can, can be used.

The cans should be greased before filling two-thirds full with the mixture.

Aluminum foil should cover each can and a large lid should cover the pot.

Served with a special lemon sauce

PLUM PUDDING

Dry Ingredients
 1 1/2 cups flour
 1 cup sugar
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/2 teaspoon ginger.
 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
 3 teaspoons baking powder
 1/4 teaspoons each mace, ground cloves.
 allspice (optional)

LIQUIDS
 1/2 cup molasses
 1/4 cup milk
 3 eggs

FRUITS
 1 1/2 pounds dried fruits: raisins, currants, or muscat raisins
 8 slices bread, torn or cut into one-inch pieces
 1 1/2 pounds suet (grind or chop fine)

When the pudding is served, the time is an especially poignant one for Kotcher.

Not only is she serving an 85-year-old recipe but the cake rests on the silver tray used for the first plum pudding.

An adage she discovered in 1956 still guides her: In as many homes as you eat plum pudding in the 12 days following Christmas, so many happy months will you have during the year.

A drink for non-drinkers

There are those who drink, and there are those who refrain.

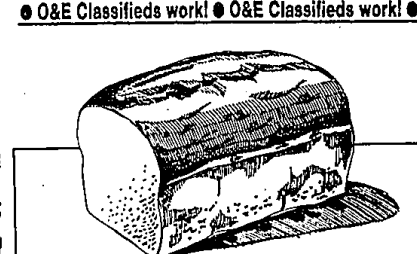
Here's a special holiday drink without alcohol. It's called Holiday Magic and was created by Karen McMahon of Foxy's in Rochester, who was awarded fourth place for her concoction in the Great Pretenders 1987 drink recipe contest.

HOLIDAY MAGIC

1 scoop vanilla ice cream
 1 scoop cinnamon ice cream
 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
 1/2 ripe banana
 1/2 egg nog

Mix all ingredients in blender until smooth. Garnish with cinnamon stick. (*1/2 cup of milk may be substituted if egg nog is unavailable.)

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