

taste buds

chef Larry Janes



Going wild although it isn't rice

I like to live on the wild side. I go crazy on the Wild Mouse ride at Boblo. I have a large bed of wildflowers. And I love wild rice.

"Wild" rice has no resemblance to ordinary white or brown rice in either taste, appearance or the methods by which it is grown.

It is actually "annual grass" which grows in single stems, five to 10 feet tall, with panicles some two feet long. The husks are an inch long, containing long slender grains, which are a dark slate color when ripe.

The plants are adaptable to quiet water two to eight feet deep, preferably the edges of ponds, lakes or flood river plains of rivers with mud bottoms.

Early in June, the shoots appear above the water. They mature about August and the grain is ready for gathering in August and September.

ALTHOUGH WILD rice can be found in many parts of North America, it is produced in greatest quantities in the lake regions of northern Minnesota and southern Canada. The cold northern winters are a necessary part of the reproductive cycle of wild rice.

After the seeds have ripened in the fall and dropped into the mud at the bottom of the lake, they must lay dormant through the cold winter before they can germinate again in the spring.

Less than 20 percent of the ripened seeds are obtained for food. The unharvested rice drops into the water and re-seeds the area for next year.

EVEN THOUGH wild rice is abundant and readily available on supermarket shelves, it is estimated that less than 3 percent of the American public has tried wild rice.

It has a distinct recognition as a "gourmet" product. Many consumers are shocked at what seems to be a high price tag.

Wildly fluctuating retail prices that have existed because of poor crops tend to give the product an expensive status.

It is a known marketing fact that the public looks at wild rice as if it is buying steak. When one pound of steak is purchased, one pound is consumed.

This is not the case with wild rice, as it cooks up to produce almost four times its dry weight. What this means in household terms is that one pound of wild rice will cook up to serve more than 10 people.

The best thing yours truly likes about any kind of rice is that there is never any waste. You cook up what you need, and if you end up with more left over than anticipated, it can be easily utilized in different dishes.

Add some meat and a chopped onion and an egg, mix and you have meatloaf, add a few beaten eggs and some bean sprouts and fry up an egg foo yung.

One half cup of uncooked wild rice has more than 11 grams of protein, less than 1/4 gram of fat and more than 62 grams of carbohydrates. It's loaded with phosphorus, potassium calcium and niacin.

So don't just throw it at weddings this summer. Cook up some wild rice and say, "Hey, that's nice." Bon appetit!

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JOHN STORMZAND

Judy Bodner bastes shish kebab on a backyard grill at her home in Plymouth Township.

Shish kebab mealtime recipes

JUDY BODNER'S MARINADE

1 cup soy sauce
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
1/4 cup pineapple juice
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder

Mix ingredients and bring to a boil.

Marinate meat or fish in glass dish at least four hours.

BILL BRESLER'S MARINADE

1/4 cup soy sauce

1 clove garlic, crushed
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons vermouth

All-purpose marinade for fish, pork and chicken. Especially good for dense fish, such as shark. Marinate in glass dish for at least two hours.

JUDY BODNER'S SHISH KEBAB

1 pound sirloin steak, cut into cubes
1 butterfly pork chop, cubed
1 boneless chicken breast, cubed

9 unlabelled raw shrimp

Marinate overnight in Bodner's marinade (see above). Alternate on skewers steak, pork, chicken and shrimp with green pepper, cherry tomatoes, red onion and mushroom cap. Barbecue 8 minutes on each side, basting periodically. Makes 4 kebabs.

ED FARHAT'S TABBOULEH SALAD

1/4 cup medium bulgur wheat (available

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Old ways, new ideas both good for kebabs

By Arlene Funke
special writer

ED FARHAT OF LIVONIA is a shish kebab traditionalist.

Just chunks of young lamb, threaded onto a skewer with onions and mild peppers and seared quickly over an outside grill.

Judy Bodner of Plymouth Township likes variety in her kebabs. She combines beef, chicken, shrimp and pork chops with veggies.

Shish kebab — meat cooked on a skewer — is tailor-made for summer menus. Paired with vegetables or fruits, the meal has endless possibilities.

Marinating the meat is optional, depending on personal choice and tenderness of the meat.

"I NEVER DO marinate it," said Farhat, 62, a retired engineer of Lebanese extraction. "Just salt and pepper. The real purist doesn't marinate."

Shish kebab is a highly popular Middle Eastern dish traditionally prepared with young lamb. It can be the delicious star of a meal that is completed with rice, salad and, perhaps, a slab of flat, chewy Arabic pita bread.

Farhat's father, who came to the United States from Lebanon in 1914, was a chef at the old Fort Shelby Hotel in Detroit. He passed along many of his secrets to his son.

Today, Farhat and his wife Betty enjoy preparing shish kebabs for family gatherings. They serve the kebabs with tabbouleh, an Arabic salad made with cracked bulgur wheat and flavored with parsley, tomatoes, onions and mint.

"The best is spring lamb," Farhat said. "You don't have to marinate that because it is very tender."

Farhat, who buys his lamb from International Market in Livonia, prefers the leg portion from a yearling — a year-old lamb — because it is a little redder meat. He allows one-third pound of meat per serving. A marinade of olive oil and spices will enhance older cuts of meat, Farhat said.

"SHISH KEBAB cooks fast," he warned. "I cook lamb approximately seven minutes. You have to watch it. Turn after five minutes. You can eat (lamb) on the rare-to-medium-rare side and it is very juicy and tender."

Although lamb is the traditional shish kebab meat, there are many devotees of chicken, beef and fish kebabs.

Bodner likes to make up her own kebabs from chunks of sirloin, peeled raw shrimp, boneless chicken breast and boneless butterfly pork chops.

"I cut them into bite-sized pieces and marinate overnight," said Bodner, 29, an X-ray technician supervisor at Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn.

Bodner's marinade is adapted from a Good Housekeeping cookbook. It blends soy sauce, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and spices. She alternates the meats with green pepper, onions and cherry tomatoes and grills the kebabs for seven minutes on each side.

AT BOB'S FARM Market of Westland, which specializes in fresh meats, fish and produce, most customers buy precut, marinated kebabs, owner Bob Harding said.

Sirloin of beef, soaked in Italian salad dressing, or boneless breast of chicken marinated in teriyaki sauce, are the kebab choices. Few customers request lamb, Harding said.

"The marinade breaks down the fat tissue," said Harding, 39, a Westland resident. "It ensures that you get real tender meat and it gives it a good flavor."

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Partners' skills, product complement each other



DAN DEAN/Staff photographer

Julie Stumbaugh (left) and Barb Klesner head Jakers Complements, a new business in

Walled Lake that specializes in all-natural vinaigrettes they created.

By Anne R. Lehmann
special writer

Julie Stumbaugh and Barbara Klesner represent a unique breed of women making a difference in the business world today — displaced homemakers turned creative and successful entrepreneurs.

The pair are co-owners and co-presidents of Jakers Complements, a small gourmet food company that produces uniquely flavored hand-bottled vinegars. Based in Walled Lake, this growing company opened its doors in November and has been a steady supplier to Jacobson's and Nino Salvaggio's Strawberry Hills Farms of Farmington Hills ever since.

After years spent raising kids and helping with family businesses, these women found themselves alone and unskilled for any particular type of work. Like many women of their generation, career took a back seat to family. When circumstances threw them into sink-or-swim situations, swim they did.

Independently, they each enrolled in a state-funded class designed to help displaced homemakers identify their skills and needs. Both agree, however, that the best thing that came out of taking the class was meeting each other. "Our eyes met

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and it was instant friendship," says Klesner.

THESE WARM, animated and chatty women make you think more of down-home than gourmet, but gourmet is what their products are.

The robust vinegars are made with the finest ingredients including fruits, berries, wine and herbs and are poured into wide-mouth clear glass bottles with a simple elegant gold neckband.

Vinegar flavors include peach, raspberry, cherry and blackberry wine, as well as cranberry and lemon/lime. Cost is around \$4.75 to \$7 per bottle. They are marketed as all-natural, made without preservatives and low in calories (16 per one-ounce serving).

"With our vinegars," says Stumbaugh, "you first taste the fruit, then the wine and the vinegar." The products are distinctive, full bodied and, as Stumbaugh adds, "really to be used as a flavoring device, to complement and bring out the best in food."

Barbecue aficionados will revel in these tasty discoveries as the vinegars make wonderful meat and fish marinades and enhance any barbe-

cue accompaniment, either in salad or, better yet, in a side dish of peach rice.

SO HOW DID two nice women decide to start a business built on vinegar? "We were inspired by a relative's creativity with food and decided to experiment on our own," says Stumbaugh. "We recognized that there is a market for gourmet specialty items, and by putting our heads together, we were able to come up with what we thought were pretty terrific vinegar recipes."

Still, besides developing recipes, these women do everything from marketing to scrubbing the mixing bowls and pots. "If it needs doing, we 'do' it," says Klesner.

Experimenting resulted in a line of vinegars as well as a name for the company. "Jakers is a combination of Julie Anne and Barbara, and the complement part came in because we felt that is what our products do," Klesner said.

So how's business? They agree it's going great and is expanding. As a matter of fact, on the office floor is a sample box headed for Bloomington in New York. "People have been very enthusiastic about our products and have encouraged us to try marketing it nationally," says Stumbaugh.