

taste buds

chef Larry Janes



It's peachy memories of cottage

I love harvest time. Giant tomatoes; zucchini that could be considered a lethal weapon; apples with taste sensations of sweetness, tartness and a little in between; and my favorite fall treat, fresh peaches.

While growing up, the Janes gang had a small cottage just off Point Pelee, and the only way to get there was via the tomato and peach growing regions of Ontario.

We would stop for bushels of the beauties on our way in and Momma would spend cloudy, cool, overcast days putting up a batch of preserves or doing some canning so that we could enjoy the succulent flavor of peaches all year round.

Ah, those were the days.

THE PEACH is the fruit of a tree bearing the same name. Botanically, a peach is classified as a drupe — a fruit whose seed is contained in a hard pit or stone surrounded by soft, pulpy flesh with a thin skin.

As the genus name *prunus* suggests, peaches are close relatives of the apricot, almond, cherry and plum.

Peaches are round, with a yellow skin, and are edible fresh, though the skin may have areas of red. The edible flesh is either soft or quite firm.

Peaches are classified as freestone or clingstone, according to how difficult it is to remove the pit from the fruit.

PROBABLY THE best-known freestone variety is the Elberta. Other well-known freestones include the Hale, Redhaven, Hilley, Halehaven and Jubilee. Clingstone peach varieties include the Fortuna, Flauto, Johnson and Sims.

Peaches hailed from China, where they were written about nearly 4,000 years ago. The peach then spread its wings to Persia (now Iran) and eventually throughout Europe. Cortes can be credited for bringing the peach to Mexico, from where the Indians can be credited for bringing it to the Southern states area.

Most people think peaches and nectarines are alike. Hardly. I won a bet in a bar once when another food writer tried to tell me that a nectarine was nothing more than fuzzless peach. That is true. The nectarine is similar to the peach, but it has no fuzz. Close observation will tell anyone that a nectarine is smaller, has a more pronounced aroma and has a flavor all its own.

In all honesty, some peaches have been known to mutate into nectarines (and vice versa), but do you really care?

Peaches are harvested when they are ripe but still very firm. Since peaches mature unevenly, it may be necessary to make two more pickings off a tree, depending on the variety, crop, weather and market.

It is important that the fruit not be picked too soon. Quality increases only while the fruit is on the tree. Both fruit color and firmness are used as guides for picking ripe fruits.

PEACHES ARE picked by hand for sale as fresh fruit. With increased labor costs, mechanical shakers and catching frames have

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The right stuff

Buyer selects holiday gourmet goodies

By Larry Janes
Special writer

DO YOU ENJOY grocery shopping? When it comes down to actual taste differences, can you really tell the difference between Maxwell House coffee compared to Chase and Sanborn?

Now, imagine having the job (more like career) of choosing the right foods at the right price for selling to folks like me. Can you anticipate my buying needs?

Are you aware of the latest trends in foodstuffs? And most importantly, can you make the decision to buy Brand X over Brand Z and have reasons why?

Add to all this the responsibility of attending one of the major buying shows at the McCormick Place Convention Center in Chicago, where you will spend a minimum of three days walking more than 17 miles, visiting different booths and talking with various manufacturers.

DURING THIS TIME you will sample about 4½ pounds of assorted chocolates; approximately 3½ gallons of different ice cream, cones and frozen confections; about 12 different blends of coffees and teas, and enough toothpicks with cheese and meat products to feed the Detroit Lions, not to mention the 400 or so other food retailers who want you to try everything they offer as well. Everything. Have you ever enjoyed chocolate-dipped pretzels at 8:45 a.m.?

One might feel sorry for Pam Kosteva, owner and chief purchasing agent for the Cheese and Wine Barn of Plymouth. I mean, having to try all that food... but Kosteva loves it.

You would never guess by looking at her svelte figure that she recently returned from a whirlwind three-day stint at the Windy City's annual Fancy Food and Confection Show. "This is how my holiday season starts," says Kosteva. "What we order in July and August will be the main staples for the upcoming holiday season."

Kosteva hopes these orders she's making now will lead into orders for the many thousands of gift baskets her shop will fill in the next few months. "Imagine buying for 2,500 gift baskets and stocking the shelves of the shop," she adds.

So what can we, the consumer, look for in this gourmet food section?

Kosteva thinks the chocolate trend has pretty much followed its course for 1988. This year the emphasis was definitely on the "upgrading of junk food," says Kosteva. Look for more of a healthy twist in snack items like real "cheese straws," blue corn chips and natural-flavored popcorns and other "bag-in-hand" related items.

ANOTHER TREND for '88 will be the growing importance of breakfast items. Forget the prepackaging. These will be gourmet-all-the-way box mixes that will have today's yuppies preparing the likes of Swedish pancakes, Belgian waffles, old-fashioned baking powder biscuits and healthy-type muffins.

The trend to produce "homemade comfort foods" will stay away from using individually purchased ingredients, and you will notice a definite influx of prepared "gourmet box-mixes" that have the preparer simply adding eggs and milk.

The Cheese and Wine Barn will offer a larger selection of private-label items such as salad dressings, jams, preserves, desserts and cakes. Look for beautiful



gift-boxed liqueur cakes with mouth-watering descriptions like "chocolate rum dazie" and "Amaretto/black Russian."

These "impulse boxed" items will be the perfect host/hostess gift and could easily fit comfortably into a basket filled with assorted cheeses and wine.

While at the food show, Kosteva noticed a big push to "Santa Fe labeling." This year, anything and everything from the Southwest will be a big seller, says Kosteva. "If it has a cactus on it and heralds from west of the Rockies and south of

Denver, it will be on store shelves this winter."

AND IF ALL of this isn't enough to juggle the change loose from your wallets, just wait till you see what's in store for the coffee and tea industry come 1989.

Kosteva claims the emphasis will focus more on coffee and how to make it and make it quick. Look for individual bags of coffee, similar to teabags so that you can brew yourself just one great cup at a time. In addition, coffee will be processed in fil-

vor-sealed packets that have just the right amount measured out and hermetically sealed for freshness.

For tea lovers, look for finer, pricey tea selections, similar to vineyard wines. Finer teas will not only hail from specific countries, now you will be able to choose from which tea-growing field and hill the tea was grown. Add to this different "pickings," which will serve as vintage. Ah, I can see the price rising faster than the credit limit on my plastic money.

Baskets hold bread, pastry of old country

By Nechama Bakst
Special writer

To their suppliers, they're the "picky packers," particular to the nth degree about the quality of the merchandise they use. To their customers, they're a pair of astute businesswomen who make up customized gift baskets and deliver the goods.

But if you ask Delphine Kryza and Rosemarie Fabian, co-owners of deRos Delicatessen in Redford, they're just two comers who are doing something they enjoy and making a go of it.

Five years ago, Kryza was a bookkeeper and "hated it." The idea of working with gift baskets was born after she met a sympathy basket. Allied with breads and pastries to a friend and realized that this was something people really appreciated.

"When you bite into the bread," Kryza said, "you reminisce: 'We had this when Mama was around.'"

Actually the memories of Kryza's childhood are filled with images of her grandmother, a gentle, caring woman who came from Poland and made European breads and coffee cakes "in high roasting pans."

"WHEN PEOPLE CAME, she always shared with them," Kryza said. "It's ironic that here I am working with bread again."

Kryza started the business by herself in her own home and was joined about two and a half years later by Fabian. They moved into the store on Five Mile Road last November.

The breads are not baked in the store. At 6:30 each morning, freshly-baked breads and pastries are deli-



Rosemarie Fabian (left) and Delphine Kryza are cousins who decided to become business partners. Their shop, deRos Delicatessen, offers pretty gift baskets they fill with oven-fresh baked goods prepared by European bakers.

STEVE PECHT/staff photographer

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