

## taste buds

chef Larry Jones

## Olive oil shining at the deli

Have you been in any good gourmet delis lately?

If you have, one look around and you will surely notice that there seems to be an abundance of shelf space given to something as plain and mundane as olive oil.

When I was growing up, momma always had a small jar of domestic olive oil hidden in the back of the cupboard. I honestly can't say I ever remember her using the oil in a specific recipe but I do remember watching her search out the jar whenever one of the Jones kids had an earache. Call it folklore medicine, but a warm teaspoonful of olive oil poured gently into an aching ear, accompanied with a cuddle and a finger-nail backrub, always got rid of my earaches.

Today, however, olive oil is experiencing a resurgence in the kitchen as the oil. It has no cholesterol, and when used properly, can really bring out the flavor of many dishes.

But getting back to that deli, a recent trip to the deli-de-rigueur of the Jones gang found more than 15 different varieties, some with inexpensive price tags of around \$6 per liter while others towered in the \$30-per-liter range. At 30 bucks per crack, that works out to about 60 cents per tablespoon. Needless to say, you better know and be able to appreciate what this kind of money can buy.

**FIRST OFF**, anyone will notice that there are three basic varieties of olive oil on the market today. The best are the extra virgins, defined by Italian laws as having an acidity content of less than one percent.

Common sense will dictate that the higher the acidity level, the lower the quality. The best extra-virgin olive oils vary in color from a deep green to gold. As a rule of thumb, the greener the oil, the fuller the flavor, but beware of manufacturers bottling lesser-quality oils in bottles with a green hue.

The secret here is the key words extra virgin. Oils of this quality should never be greasy or oily, and upon opening will yield an aroma or bouquet like a fine wine with a fragrance of fresh olives.

The next variety you will notice on the shelves is the first cold-pressed oils. These oils have been around for many years in health stores and are used in herbal body lotions as well as the kitchen. For first cold-pressed oils, the olives are pressed by stone mills using no additives, chemicals or heat. This is a very expensive and time-consuming operation.

All extra-virgin oils are first cold pressed. Again, the buyer should be aware of the key words here being first cold pressed. With today's market taking off faster than a jet at Metro, many large manufacturers are using steel pressed instead of stone, which creates friction when used. This friction causes heat which, in turn, lowers the general quality of the oil.

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST** are the pure olive oil varieties on the market. While the name pure sounds tempting, beware of these products, as most have higher acidity levels accompanied by little or no flavor. Even though the oil says pure, these oils are pressed a second or third time, some enhanced with chemicals that, when heated, can extract all possible liquid from the olive.

All extra-virgin and first cold pressed olive oils should be appreciated when at room temperature. Therefore, these oils should be stored in a cool, dark corner of your cupboard or pantry. Olive oils stored in tin will eventually pick up a "tinny" taste and are best stored in glass jars. Once a bottle of oil has been opened, it should be used within one year.

It is recommended that you never cook with these oils but use them instead on salads, sprinkled over tomatoes, soft cheeses, fresh

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## Yo-yo a no-no

## Why you eat is important to what you eat

By Louise Okrutsky  
special writer

**WITH THE NEW YEAR** still young, many holiday overeaters embark on weight programs with grand expectations of dumping extra pounds faster than you can order a triple fudge chocolate sundae. Many lose determination instead of weight.

Instead of switching to the next fat diet, they need to examine the reasons they eat too much, experts say.

"Some find themselves caught in an unending circle of dieting, overeating and dieting again. After a six-week regimen of low-calorie meals, dieters often fall back into the same poor eating habits that caused them to gain weight."

"I dieted for years," said Lorraine Stefano, founder of the Troy-based Think Trim Program. The social-worker-turned-diet-counselor conducts classes in Birmingham, Farmington and Livonia.

"I WAS A CLASSIC yo-yo person," Stefano said. "I yo-yoed trying to lose the same 60 pounds."

"Statistics have shown that 95 percent of the people on diets regain

their weight. If this is the same 10 pounds you lost last year, maybe you ought to look at why you eat," Stefano said.

Many habitual dieters eat in response to stress, according to Ann Greer, a registered dietitian at Cretton Hospital, Rochester. Greer teaches a six-week weight-loss class sponsored by the hospital.

"They need to identify stress and resolve it in another way instead of

adding to poundage (due) to stress," Greer said.

People associate food with different activities. Watching a football game on television might automatically mean munching on potato chips followed by a beer. Parties, especially holiday celebrations, serve as another excuse to eat for the sake of eating.

**"SOMETIMES, THE TURKEY** isn't the only thing that's stuffed," Stefano said.

Boredom, sadness, depression and, by contrast, happiness may lead to overeating. Snacking serves as a way to procrastinate beginning a task.

"You may not be hungry but you associate food with watching television. You have to know when you're hungry," Greer said.

It's just as important to know when to push away from the table. "You have to learn to leave things on your plate. Stop when you're satis-

fied," Stefano said.

Typical holiday weight gain of seven to 10 pounds can slowly be dropped by eating when physically hungry and avoiding desserts and alcohol, experts suggest.

Some programs, such as Weight Watchers, recommend dieters sweep through their kitchen cupboards and discard cakes, cookies, breads and other calorie-packed goodies. Don't buy favorite snack items. If you must, Greer recommends, buy small packages. Instead of a one-half gallon of ice cream, buy small Dixie cups of ice cream.

Don't eat anything out of the bag. It's easy to lose track of how much has been consumed. Portion out all foods on a plate.

**FOR THE GROWING** number of people who don't eat at home regularly, there are strategies to guide them through restaurant menus.

Order baked potatoes with the sour cream on the side. Ask about daily specials that are broiled or grilled steak, request that it be prepared without butter sauce. That alone saves 100-200 calories, Greer said.

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## Recipes for a tasteful diet

## MINTED PEACHES

Makes four servings

¼ cup frozen nondairy whipped topping, thawed  
2 teaspoons mint-flavored liqueur  
8 canned peach halves, drained  
1 tablespoon finely chopped shelled pistachios

In small bowl, combine whipped topping and liqueur. Fill each peach half with one tablespoon mixture; sprinkle evenly with nuts.

Each serving provides: one

fruit exchange, 40 calories optional exchange.

Per serving: 116 calories, three grams protein, two grams fat, 22 grams carbohydrates, nine milligrams sodium, 0 milligrams cholesterol.

Source: Weight Watchers magazine.

## CHICKEN AND VEGETABLES IN LEMON-MUSTARD SAUCE

1½ teaspoons olive or vegetable oil

2 chicken cutlets (¼ pound each)

1½ teaspoons margarine

½ cup each sliced onion, carrot,

celery, and red or green bell pepper

1 small garlic clove, sliced

2 tablespoons dry sherry

¼ cup water

2 teaspoons spicy brown mustard

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1 packet instant chicken broth

and seasoning mix

6 ounces pared potato, cut into cubes

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## Scientist on alert against pesticides

By Sherry Kahan  
special writer

Laurie Mott believes that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are doing a poor job protecting Americans from food containing pesticides.

In a recent talk in Ann Arbor's Rackham Building, she gave both agencies a tongue lashing. Senior scientist with the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental organization, Mott is co-author of the book "Pesticide Alert."

As she covered the pesticide picture, Mott also laid out specific hazards involved in eating foods containing residues of pesticides, an umbrella word used today to include

insecticides, herbicides, fungicides and rodenticides. In addition, she warned that foreign produce can be more dangerous than domestic. Her suggestions for solving the problem called for consumer pressure to turn the EPA and FDA into better watchdogs, and buying food grown without these chemicals.

It is ironic that just as consumers began to warm up to fresh produce for the sake of their health, word filtered out that they might be unsafe. To many the first news that pesticides could actually penetrate a fruit or vegetable came in 1985 when California recalled its entire watermelon crop. Some of the melons had been treated with the herbicide, Temik.

**"WITHIN TWO** to 12 hours after eating the contaminated watermelons, people experienced nausea, vomiting, blurred vision, muscle weakness and other symptoms," Mott told an audience of about 200. "Fortunately no one died, though some of the victims were gravely ill. Reports included grand mal seizures, cardiac irregularities, a number of hospitalizations, and at least two stillbirths following maternal illness."

About 2.6 billion pounds of pesticides are used every year in this country, and not just on food products, the speaker continued. "They are sprayed on forests, lakes, lawns, city parks and playing fields, and in hospitals, schools, offices and homes. They are also used in shampoo,

shower curtains, shelf paper and mattresses."

Some of the chemicals used on food are applied solely for cosmetic purposes. Mott mentioned a study indicating that from 60-80 percent of pesticides applied to citrus are used only to make the fruit look good. The risks in pesticides are considerable, according to Mott. She referred to a National Academy of Sciences report in 1987 that noted the potential risks posed by cancer-causing pesticides in food may lead to more than one million additional cancer cases in the United States over the next 70 years. The EPA has identified 66 out of 350 chemicals as being carcinogenic, and a 1987 report by the agency ranked pesticides in food as one of the nation's most

serious health problems.

Mott added that pesticides can also cause birth defects, miscarriages, sterility, impaired fertility, nerve damage and changes in genetic material.

**MOTT ALSO WANTED** her listeners to be aware of the greater hazards in imported food. "Imported fresh fruits account for 25 percent of the total U.S. supply, foreign vegetables for six percent," she said.

"The use of pesticides on food grown in other countries is not governed by U.S. regulations. Furthermore, pesticides banned for use here may still be used overseas. DDT, banned here in 1972 due to its car-

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