

Refreshing new look at 3 ancient cuisines

"The Frugal Gourmet Cooks Three Ancient Cuisines — China-Greece-Rome" by Jeff Smith, William Morrow & Co., 1989, \$18.95.

I must admit, I've never been a fan of "The Frugal Gourmet." Of course, this was based on reading his first cookbook of the same title when it was introduced in 1984. A year later, "The Frugal Gourmet Cooks with Wine" by Smith crossed my desk, and I was less impressed than I was when I read his first book. Just a year after that, Smith published "The Frugal Gourmet Cooks American," and I thought, "Him, there's hope yet for Jeff Smith." The American cookbook was nicely done, with recipes that were



cook's books
Geri Rinschler

sensible, easy to read and appetizing.

Now, this popular PBS-TV host (seen locally on WTVS, Channel 56) has added another cookbook to his collection, as well as a companion to a new PBS series, "The Frugal Gourmet Cooks Three Ancient Cuisines — China-Greece-Rome."

The text, which is some 500 pages, is an ambitious undertaking, to say

the least. But, why now? Why write about ancient cuisines? Especially when trends continue to be strongly directed at quick-cooking recipes.

THE RECIPES I tested worked out fine. They are straight-forward, easy to follow and simple. Many of them are traditional, such as Peking Duck, Wonton Dumplings and Fried Rice from China, or Cannelloni and Gnocchi from the Eternal City, or

Greek Avgolemono Soup and Pork Souvlaki. Some, as Smith exclaims, "are included simply as nighttime reading material. I doubt that you will want to prepare them."

Jellyfish Salad and Drunken Shrimp are two good examples. After spending a few hours with the book, it's obvious that Smith's purpose was to acquaint the reader with origins of these three cuisines and understand their differences. I must say he does that well.

After the introduction and glossary, the author presents about 200 pages of food history, philosophy of eating, and serving practices of the Chinese, Greek and Roman cuisines. If you are not familiar with the background of these cuisines, you will certainly gain some insight into

them. If you believe you are an accomplished Chinese, Greek or Roman cook, Smith's volume will certainly give you, if not new, provocative ideas, a number of cultural, food history questions to research and recipes to test.

GREEN TUBES WITH MEAT SAUCE (Bologna)
Serves 8-10 as a first course.

This is too rich to believe, but I urge you cook it nevertheless. The use of mortadella in the dish indicates the source of the dish — Bologna. I ate so well in that city that I cannot wait to go back. No tomato in this dish, just heaven.

1 cup basic white sauce
¼ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped or crushed
½ pound pancetta (an Italian

smoked meat, available at deli counters), coarsely chopped
½ pound veal or very lean beef, coarsely ground
½ pound mortadella (an Italian deli meat), coarsely ground
¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
1 pound green penne pasta
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Prepare the white sauce and stir in the nutmeg. Set aside. Bring 4 quarts of salted water to boil for the pasta. Heat a large frying pan and add the olive oil. Sauté the garlic for just a moment and then add the pancetta, cooking it until it is clear. Add the veal and cook until done to your taste. Add the mortadella, cheese, and the white sauce. Keep the sauce warm. Boil the pasta, drain, and toss with the sauce. Check for salt and pepper, though you will probably not need any salt at all, due to the pancetta.



Lois Thieleke
home economist, Cooperative Extension Service

Turkey is a favorite year-round

Turkey is no longer just a favorite for holiday menus. Turkey is delicious, available year round and nutritionally a smart choice.

In a world of low-calorie, high-protein diets, turkey breast is one of the leanest meats. Encouraged by the heart-healthy image, food manufacturers have been producing a wide variety of turkey products.

Turkey is versatile. It can be sautéed, grilled, broiled, steamed, boiled, barbecued, smoked, roasted or fried. It can be substituted in recipes calling for other types of poultry, veal or various red meat cuts.

Turkey easily accepts and blends with a medley of spices, seasonings and sauces. Turkey weighs in at about 157 calories per 3½-ounce serving of cooked, skinless white meat. Turkey is also an excellent source of iron, riboflavin, zinc and vitamins B6 and B12.

GROUND TURKEY is available fresh or frozen and can be a good alternative to high-fat ground beef. Be careful — ground turkey may contain dark meat and skin, so to keep the fat and calories low, ask what it contains or have the butcher grind only the light meat for you. Ground turkey needs lots of seasonings, white tomato juice, egg white and herbs can add moisture and flavor.

Boneless white meat cuts are very popular. Turkey cutlets or slices are perfect for sandwiches, stir fries or roulades. Cutlets usually take about 4-5 minutes to cook. The tenderloin "steaks" of turkey are used for company special entrees. They are super tender and are great for the grill, broiler, stuffed, or served with a glaze. The medallions of tenderloin can be stir-fried, sautéed or pan-fried. Always preheat the pan or oven before adding turkey cuts. This will assure rapid cooking and will prevent seepage of natural juices.

Then there is the family favorite, turkey breast. It is all white meat and lends itself to all kinds of meals. Use a meat thermometer in the thickest part of the meat in the larger cuts. The meat thermometer should register at least 170 degrees. Juices should run clear when meat is pierced in the deepest part with a long, used fork.

Self-basting turkey should probably be avoided since the basting solution is mostly saturated coconut oil, butter or partially hydrogenated soy or corn oil, water and sodium. The water and the sodium help keep the bird juicy; the fat is mostly for flavoring. Baste the turkey yourself to keep it juicy. Remember, nearly half the fat in turkey is in the skin.

Turkey cold cuts are usually high in fat and loaded with sodium, which serves as a preservative. Some are made from high-fat dark meat, and some even contain high-cholesterol organ meats such as heart and gizzard. Choose a brand that has a complete nutrition label.

LOOK FOR COLD CUTS that have one gram or less of fat per ounce (at least 95 percent fat-free by weight). Turkey bologna and salami

cooking calendar

BLANCH, FREEZE
An up-to-date blanching time chart is available from the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. For more information call the Food and Nutrition Hotline at 858-0904.

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