



## taste buds

chef Larry Janes

## New treat is dairy product

First there was milk, a traditional dairy product found on every table in America. Then in the '70s, a French staple was imported for American markets and the yogurt boom began. Last year, puddings began popping up in the dairy case, trying to give yogurt a run for its money.

Wait a minute, America, here comes Pouden Via! Just beginning to hit the dairy case in metro Detroit, this new dairy product imported straight from the Netherlands is trying to find a niche in your shopping cart and refrigerator shelves, and judging from advance tastings, Via may become a household word.

So what is it, you ask? It's not ice cream, it's not yogurt, it's not pudding but it is a low-calorie, light, creamy dairy treat that can be eaten any time of the day over fruit, as a parfait, as a topping over cakes or simply by itself.

You can purchase this real dairy treat in the dairy case somewhere between the milk and the yogurt.

Pouden Via is made with a "secret" compound imported directly from the Netherlands. Seems this stuff is such a hit over there per capita consumption in the Netherlands stands at more than 14 quarts annually, actually out-selling ice cream.

IN ALL HONESTY, however, I can't imagine this product taking the place of my favorite Haagen Dazs, but I will say that it's trendy, has a great taste, is lower in calories than most yogurts and when poured over a bowl of fresh strawberries, so, this food writer's taste buds approve.

The product itself is imported in a dry form because import regulations prohibit dairy product transfers. The product is then mixed with good old-fashioned Michigan milk in Grand Rapids at the Country Fresh Dairy, packaged into pourable quart containers and shipped to local markets with a dated stamp for optimum freshness.

Pouden Via is available in metro Detroit at all Kroger, Great Scott and Shopping Center markets. It is rumored that within the month, Farmer Jack and A&P stores will have the product, but for the time being, if you are looking for an interesting twist to the dairy scene, pick up a quart and try it for yourself.

By the way, Pouden Via can be used in many recipes. It can be heated, served right from the fridge or even frozen as a take-along in your picnic cooler. And if you're curious as to the health benefits of eating Via, it has no preservatives, is low in cholesterol (only 13 mg. per four-ounce serving) and half the fat of ice cream. Coming in at just 100 calories per serving, Pouden Via has far less than yogurt, ice cream or pudding.

Look for Pouden Via in your grocer's dairy case and if you haven't seen it, ask them why. It's new products like this, made in Michigan with high standards and great taste appeal, that make our dairy industry one of the most successful in the country. Try it. You won't be disappointed.

## Don't get in a jam

Michigan's crop of strawberries usually arrives the first week in June.

If you buy or gather more berries than you can consume, you may want to freeze some or make up homemade jam. Strawberries can be frozen for later use in freezer jam, says Sylvia Treilman, home economist of the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service.

# Dish up prize recipes



Troy resident Becky MacIntyre shows off her top-prize-winning recipe for Vegetable Casserole.

JIM RIDER/staff photographer

## Tasting panel agrees on Vegetable Casserole

By Ethel Simmons staff writer

**A** VEGETABLE CASSEROLE recipe, submitted by Becky MacIntyre of Troy, took first prize in the Taste section's contest for a reader's favorite vegetable dish.

Second prize went to Linda Ann Chomlin of Canton for Vegetarian Stuffed Green Peppers. Third place was Artichoke Vegetable Melange, submitted by Marian A. Bliznik of Farmington Hills.

The first-prize winner will receive a \$25 gift certificate, and because she lives in Troy, we have chosen a certificate from Williams-Sonoma cooks' shop at Somerset Mall. The other two winners will receive cookbooks.

After three judges, myself included, chose finalists, Taste Buds chef-columnist Larry Janes prepared each of the three final recipes. The order of winners was arrived at by votes from a taste-testing panel — the newspaper staff at the Observer & Eccentric office in Livonia.

**TASTERS VOTED** overwhelmingly for the Vegetable Casserole as their favorite. "I've had the recipe for some years. It was given to me by a friend," said Becky MacIntyre, of her crunchy casserole.

MacIntyre's two step-children are "grown and gone," and she and husband Bill have two grandchildren. "I make the casserole for special occasions or groups things, or a large family gathering," she said.

Describing herself as a compulsive recipe-clipper, she declared, "At last count I have about 170 cookbooks." She particularly enjoys using a series of Southern Living cookbooks for inspiration. "I like Southern cooking. I'm from Kentucky originally," she said. What makes her Vegetable Casserole unusual? "I think it's the walnuts and the topping," MacIntyre said. The topping combines butter, crumbs, cheese and walnuts. Vegetables inside the casserole include both zucchini and carrots. "I'm not that fond of zucchini," she said. "I think it's tasteless. My husband does like carrots." But the combination of all ingredients is delicious.

When she serves this recipe at potluck suppers and New Year's Eve parties, "Without fail every woman there wants the recipe."

MacIntyre works part time as a commercial artist and a print model, usually cast as "an upscale senior citizen." She is active in community theater and belongs to the Avon Players in Rochester Hills, Stagecrafters in Royal Oak and the Bloomfield Players in Bloomfield Hills.

**THE TASTY** Vegetarian Stuffed Peppers recipe was a natural for Linda Ann Chomlin, who said, "I've been a vegetarian for 17 years. We first started — my mother, sister and I — when my mother had a heart attack and the doctor said to cut out meat. It was my mom's recipe. I got rid of the meat and substituted the protein — the cashews and Parmesan."

She points out that when you are a vegetarian, po-

*'I make the casserole for special occasions or groups things, or a large family gathering.'*

— Becky MacIntyre first-prize winner

ple assume you have a limited menu. "It's not true. Basically, it's the whole world cuisine. They don't eat a lot of meat because they don't have it available."

Chomlin said when she goes shopping, people often are curious about vegetables or grains she has in her grocery cart. "They will ask, 'What is that thing?'" she said, "and they will ask how to cook it."

One of the ingredients in her stuffed peppers recipe is quinoa. She said she usually buys quinoa at the Good Food Company in Livonia (which also has a new location in Troy). "It's a real good, expensive supermarket for grains."

She said even her girlfriends don't know much about cooking with the different grains. "The girls at work will say, 'Can I go shopping with you?'" Chomlin finds it's becoming more common to cook with grains, although actually, "The grains are ancient."

She works as a freelance copywriter for A.R. Brasch in Southfield. By working at home, she was able to care for her mother, who died in March of Alzheimer's. The recipe was her mom's. "It was a little silly, but I just wanted to submit the recipe for her," she said.

**MARIAN BLIZNIK** of Farmington Hills, who offers the third-prize-winning recipe, for Artichoke Vegetable Melange, was also one of four equal prize-winners in the Taste contest held last year for Comfort Foods. She called that recipe "The Best Rice Pudding."

Bliznik teaches third grade in Milford and has been a teacher for 19 years. "I go to Kitchin Glamour a lot and participate there," she said about her abilities as a cook. "I would like to teach cooking and nutrition classes sometime in the future."

Coming up with good vegetable dish recipes is easy for her because, "At least four days a week at our house we have meatless meals. I'm always looking for alternatives to meat."

"I found this recipe on one of my husband's travels, on one of our trips to California. Artichokes are plentiful there," she said her husband liked the recipe because, "It had a combination of vegetables, yet everything was distinct in flavor."

Each cooked artichoke has a colorful filling of zucchini, bell pepper, carrots and tomatoes. "It's light and low-calorie," she said of the dish, which is served with a refreshing dressing that pairs mayonnaise and yogurt, for dipping the leaves.

"It's always a hit when we entertain. A lot of people we not tried fresh artichokes before," Bliznik said.

### VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

Becky MacIntyre

Troy

Dinner guests always ask for this recipe whenever I serve it. It can easily be doubled to serve 12-15 people.

2 cups small carrot sticks  
2 cups zucchini, sliced 1/4-inch thick  
6 tablespoons butter, divided  
2 tablespoons flour  
1 1/4 cups half and half  
2 chicken bouillon cubes, crumbled  
1/4 teaspoon prepared mustard  
1/4 teaspoon dill weed, divided  
Dash of nutmeg and pepper  
1 jar tiny onions, drained  
1 cup soft bread crumbs  
1/2 cup grated Cheddar cheese

1/2 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped

Steam cook carrots and zucchini until almost tender. Set aside. Melt 2 tablespoons butter, stir in flour. Stir in half and half. Add bouillon, mustard, 1/4 teaspoon dill, nutmeg and pepper. Cook, stirring, until it comes to a boil. Remove from heat. Add carrots, zucchini and drained onions. Turn mixture into shallow baking dish. Melt remaining butter, toss with crumbs, cheese, walnuts and 1/4 teaspoon dill. Heap over vegetables. Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 25-30 minutes — until topping is browned and sauce is bubbling.

### VEGETARIAN STUFFED GREEN PEPPERS

Linda Ann Chomlin

Canton

4-6 large green peppers  
2 cups brown rice, cooked  
1 cup quinoa, cooked (available at specialty markets; also see Note below)  
1 medium onion, chopped and sautéed  
10-12 mushrooms, sliced and sautéed  
1/2 cup currants  
1 cup cashews, chopped  
1 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated  
Twist of freshly ground black peppercorns

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place green peppers in a large pot and cover with cold water. Slowly, bring to a boil. Turn off heat. Remove peppers and place them in a strainer to drain. Mix together the brown rice, quinoa, sautéed onion and mushrooms, currants, cashews, Parmesan and black pepper for stuffing the peppers. Cut off the tops of the peppers or if you prefer you can slice the peppers lengthwise into halves. Stuff peppers with the filling. Stand peppers upright in 3-quart casserole.

Make tomato sauce by heating together: one 12-ounce can tomato paste and enough water to thin, approximately 4 cups. Then add 1/4 teaspoon crushed red peppers and 1 tablespoon honey. Simmer sauce for 5 minutes. Cover the stuffed peppers with tops, then ladle the entire amount of tomato sauce over the peppers. The peppers should be swimming in about 3 inches of tomato sauce. Cover casserole. Bake till steaming hot, about 45 minutes. Enjoy.

**NOTE:** Quinoa (keen-wa) is an ancient whole grain that dates back to the Incas. The Incas called it the mother grain. Quinoa was one of the three staple foods of the Inca civilization, along with corn and potatoes. It is grown 9,500 feet high in the Andes mountains of South America. Quinoa contains more high-quality protein than any other grain. It is light and delicious.

### ARTICHOKE VEGETABLE MELANGE

Marian A. Bliznik

Farmington Hills

Dressing:  
1 cup mayonnaise  
1 cup plain yogurt  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
1 teaspoon chopped onion  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
3 teaspoons dried thyme

Combine dressing ingredients and chill

### Artichoke Vegetable Melange

2 tablespoons oil  
1/4 cup chopped onion  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
1/4 cup sliced zucchini  
1/4 cup sliced green bell pepper  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
1 cup chopped carrots  
1/4 cup cubed tomatoes

4 cooked artichokes

Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onions and garlic. Sauté onions until tender, approximately 2 minutes. Add zucchini, bell pepper, carrots, salt and pepper. Sauté for 2 minutes more. Remove from heat. Add tomatoes. Cover and chill.

To cook artichokes: Put whole artichokes in pot of boiling water. Simmer approximately 40 minutes. Drain and cool. Pull out centers of artichokes gently. Scoop out all "choke" (fuzzy center) until clean.

Spoon chilled vegetables into center of artichokes. Chill. Serve artichokes with dressing on the side. Serves 4.