

Recipes include ethnic mixes

Twelve years ago, Mimi Sheraton published "From My Mother's Kitchen: Recipes & Reminiscences" of her loving family and the times and foods they shared.

This memoir of family recipes includes traditional Jewish, Italian, English, Hungarian, baking and a wide array of seafood and shellfish dishes. Now, the cookbook has been expanded, revised and re-released with additional salad recipes and a new chapter on Jewish-Chinese food.

In Sheraton's second edition of "From My Mother's Kitchen" (HarperCollins Publishers, May 10, 1991; \$22.50, hardcover), she adds recipes that satisfied her family's yearnings for Jewish-Chinese food. The new dishes including descriptions of how her mother prepared them as a creative use of leftovers. Although it is impossible to find Egg-Roll Blenders and Chinese-Romulan Tenderloin Pepper Steak served at your average Chinese take-out or in a traditional Jewish home, you will find them in this revised edition.

Sheraton combines the tastes of two cultures by adding a Jewish twist to East Asian recipes of Subung Chicken, Chicken and Shrimp with Lobster Sauce. It seems like an unusual mix, except that both cuisines share the common use of chicken broth, celery and onions, and dishes seasoned with garlic.

"Crossing culinary cultures may be the hottest food trend of the moment."

But for me," writes Sheraton, "such ethnic mixes are old stuff."

SHERATON COMES from an Austro-Polish-Rumanian-Jewish family of food lovers and cooks. "From My Mother's Kitchen" is not a kosher cookbook but includes recipes for traditional Jewish dishes as well as those that are strictly American. Each recipe is linked to a family gathering, where the talk of food was as plentiful as the feast that was offered.

Formerly restaurant and food critic for The New York Times, Sheraton is the food editor and restaurant critic for Cosmo Next Year magazine and has for the last 30 years written about food, travel and design. Sheraton has been trained in



"Mimi Sheraton's new cookbook is a revised edition of 'From My Mother's Kitchen.'"

cooking at Cordon Bleu in Paris, China Institute in New York and privately in Bangkok, Istanbul and Beirut.

HALIBUT SALAD WITH DILL
My mother liked to serve this as a main course at luncheons. "They all thought it was crab

meat," she would boast if it had been particularly successful. While no one could quite make that mistake, if the fish is firm, and not finely minced it does have a meaty texture that can let it pass as mock crab meat for those who are kosher and cannot eat shellfish. Generally it was

prepared as it is described here, but sometimes my mother added shrimp for a touch of additional flavor. The same recipe works well for a salad made only of shrimp, crab meat, or lobster meat. It is also a favorite sandwich filling on toast or thinly sliced pumpernickel.

- 1 quart water
- Large stalk celery with a few leaves
- 1 thick slice lemon
- 5 or 6 peppercorns
- Salt
- 3 pounds halibut, preferably cut in a thick steak or chunk with center bone in
- 2 or 3 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise, as needed
- Boston or romaine lettuce

Bring 1 quart of water to boil with the celery, lemon slice, peppercorns and 2 tablespoons salt. Gently lower the fish into the boiling water, then cover the pan and reduce the heat until the water is at a barely perceptible simmer. Poach the halibut for 10 to 12 minutes, depending on thickness, until firm and white through to the bone, do not let it fall apart, but be sure there are no traces of blood close to the bone. Remove from the liquid and drain. Let stand until cool.

Trim off the skin and break the fish away from the bone. Remove all small bones from the edges if there are any. Working with the forks or your fingers, break the cooked fish into small clumps or pieces. Try not to shred or mash it. Sprinkle with 2 teaspoons lemon juice, a pinch of salt, and white pepper. Add the dill and toss lightly with a fork to distribute the seasonings. Add the mayonnaise and fold it in gently with a wooden spoon, being careful not to break the fish any more than you have to. There should be enough mayonnaise to bind the mixture, but it should not be a creamy excess. Check the seasoning. Chill thoroughly, preferably 5 to 7 hours. Serve on cold, crisp, washed leaves of Boston or romaine lettuce. Yield: 6 servings.

Bread bakers go for whole grains

AP — Bread may well be the perfect food. Bread has no waste, comes in nearly endless varieties, is high in nutritional value and fiber, and contains only 60 to 70 calories per slice.

Bread is filling, satisfies cravings for more fattening foods and provides an excellent carbohydrate energy source. It can be made without fat or sugar.

Bread often starts a meal, but it is also capable of finishing it — in the form of bread pudding.

New trends in bread baking are toward whole-grain varieties like multigrains, pumpernickel and rye which are rich in dietary fiber and delicious. The use of organic flours is becoming increasingly popular. These flours taste great, and offer the added health benefit of being grown in pesticide-free environments.

Often, at-home cooks are afraid to make their own breads. They are not sure how to mix the dough, how long it should ferment and whether their oven is hot enough for bread baking. However, bread baking isn't complicated. You just need to follow a few simple procedures.

Edward Bradley, a chef-instructor at the Culinary Institute of America's School of Baking and Pastry in Hyde Park, N.Y., says there are only two things to remember when mixing dough: first, when using a mixer, stop when the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the bowl. Second, when mixing by hand, begin with a surface sprinkled with flour and mix until the dough forms a ball that feels somewhat dry.

FERMENTATION IS important when baking bread. Fermentation is the process by which yeast feeds on the sugar present in dough, pro-

ducing carbon dioxide. The release of carbon dioxide causes the dough to increase in size and develop in flavor. How long this takes depends on the temperature of the room and the type of dough being used.

Most doughs take time to let their dough ferment too long, Bradley says, and this results in bread that is dry and lacking in color. To avoid this, allow the dough to rise in an oiled bowl until it doubles in size and recedes when pressed with a finger. At this point, the dough is ready to be shaped.

With leaves shaped appropriately, the dough must be allowed to rise again. This is called proofing, and it can be done in any warm corner of a room. Again, the mark to look for is when the leaves have doubled in size and a finger touch leaves a slight depression.

To ensure that a crisp crust is created, bread should be baked in a 425- to 450-degree oven. Continue baking until each loaf has an evenly browned, well-developed crust. Timing varies on the size and shape of the loaves being baked. To test for doneness, tap the underside of the bread and listen for a hollow sound.

STEAM IS what gives bread a crisp crust. Bradley says home bakers can mimic the action of a commercial steam oven by brushing the tops of loaves with a mixture made of cornstarch and water.

For those who plan to bake bread regularly, Bradley suggests purchasing flat stoneware tiles. Bread can be baked directly on these tiles, creating a crispier bottom crust, he says. If using this technique, sear proofed loaves in some plain cornmeal to reduce the likelihood of bread sticking to the tiles.

Rice Pilaf Supreme has specialty rice

AP — This flavorful, low-fat side dish shows off the nutty flavors of specialty rice such as basmati and popcorn rice. You will find these rice in specialty food shops and gourmet mail-order catalogs. In a pinch, you can make this pilaf with regular long-grain rice. To make up for the missing nut flavor, sprinkle each serving lightly with toasted chopped pecans or walnuts, but remember that nuts add fat as well as flavor.

RICE PILAF SUPREME

- 1/4 cup dried mushrooms
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons margarine or butter
- 1 cup basmati, texmati, wild pecan or popcorn rice
- 1 1/2 cups chicken broth
- 1/4 cup dry white wine or apple juice
- 1/4 cup sliced celery
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- One 2-ounce jar dried pimiento, drained

Soak the dried mushrooms in enough hot water to cover for 30 minutes. Drain, remove and discard stems. Chop the mushrooms.

In a 2-quart saucepan cook the shallot in hot margarine or butter until tender but not brown. Add the rice; cook and stir over medium heat about 2 minutes or until rice is light brown.

Carefully pour in the chicken broth and the wine or juice; add the chopped mushrooms and celery. Bring the mixture to boiling, reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes or until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed. Stir in the torn spinach and pimiento. Serve immediately. Makes 6 to 8 side-dish servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 187 cal. (19 percent calories from fat), 4 g fat, 0 mg chol., 4 g pro, 25 g carb., 1 g dietary fiber, 263 mg sodium. U.S. RDA: 10 percent iron, 30 percent vit. A, 11 percent vit. C, 11 percent thiamine, 12 percent niacin.

This cheesecake dessert is coffee rich

AP — For some folks, a meal isn't over until freshly brewed coffee splashes into their cup. If you are one of those java lovers, then this dessert is for you. Stir a whisper of your favorite instant coffee into both the filling and the sauce for a double-rich and creamy coffee-flavored dessert. And, yes, to make even more delightful, serve it with a pot of steaming coffee.

CHEESECAKE AND COFFEE-PRALINE SAUCE

- 1 1/4 cups fine graham cracker crumbs
- 1/4 cup finely chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup margarine or butter, melted
- Two 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 eggs
- Three 8-ounce cartons dairy sour cream
- 2 1/2 teaspoons instant coffee crystals
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 tablespoon margarine or butter

For crust, in a mixing bowl combine crumbs and 1/4 cup of the pecans; stir in the 1/4 cup melted margarine or butter. Reserve 1/4 cup of the crumb mixture.

Press remaining crumb mixture onto bottom and 2 1/4 inches up the sides of an 8-inch springform pan or 2 inches up the sides of a 9-inch springform pan. Set aside.

In a medium mixing bowl combine cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and salt; beat with an electric mixer on low speed until smooth. Add eggs; beat just until combined; do not overbeat. In a separate bowl, stir together sour cream and 1 teaspoon of the coffee crystals; stir into the cheese mixture.

Turn the mixture into the prepared pan. Sprinkle reserved crumb mixture on top. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 50 to 55 minutes or until

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