

## taste buds

chef Larry Janes

## Smoking is good for meat

Country people have long known that meat hung in the smoke of hearths and chimneys lasts longer — and often tastes better — than fresh meat. Smoking, drying and salting were the main means of preserving meats in the days before refrigeration.

Of course, in contrast, we feel it good duty to mention that some studies have shown that smoking is regarded as hazardous to your health.

Today, with modern refrigeration, we are not so concerned with smoking as a means of preservation. We don't need to hang hams and sausages for days or weeks to keep them from spoiling over the long winter. Rather, we are looking for the fragrant smoky flavors of hickory, oak, apple wood and mesquite.

WITH VERY little equipment or effort, you can achieve the taste and aroma of traditionally smoked foods with just a covered grill or barbecue and a handful of wood chips.

Venture into any local gourmet shop and you will notice eye-catching grill displays featuring the latest in barbecue apparel, equipment and even wood chips.

I don't care what I wear as long as I'm comfortable. But "You name it and I have it" is the line of gadgets is the motto of some meat smokers, with most gadgets being overrated and under-used.

But when it comes to smoking with wood, the intrigue begins. Hardwoods are best for smoking. Softwoods such as pine, fir, cedar and spruce are not suitable because they are so full of pitch and resin that they impart a turpentine flavor in the food.

Never use backyard clippings that may contain insecticides or poisonous plants such as oleander or poison oak. The most popular woods are hickory, apple, mesquite, oak and fruit woods. Dried corn cobs can even be used.

MY PERSONAL favorite? I think mesquite is overrated. Anything I smoke on the grill is going to have enough flavor of its own. Maybe it's my taste buds, but short of a smoky flavor, I can't tell any difference.

When you price mesquite anywhere other than in Arizona and New Mexico, be prepared to pay the price.

Hickory is fine and most readily available, but everything at the supermarket is smoked in hickory, such as hams and sausages.

I want something different, something sweet. I love fruit woods. I think the best thing about fruit woods are their compatibility with either beef, chicken, pork or fish. Fruit woods make everything taste good.

Most backyard grillers who wish to smoke will most generally use what is called the hot smoke method.

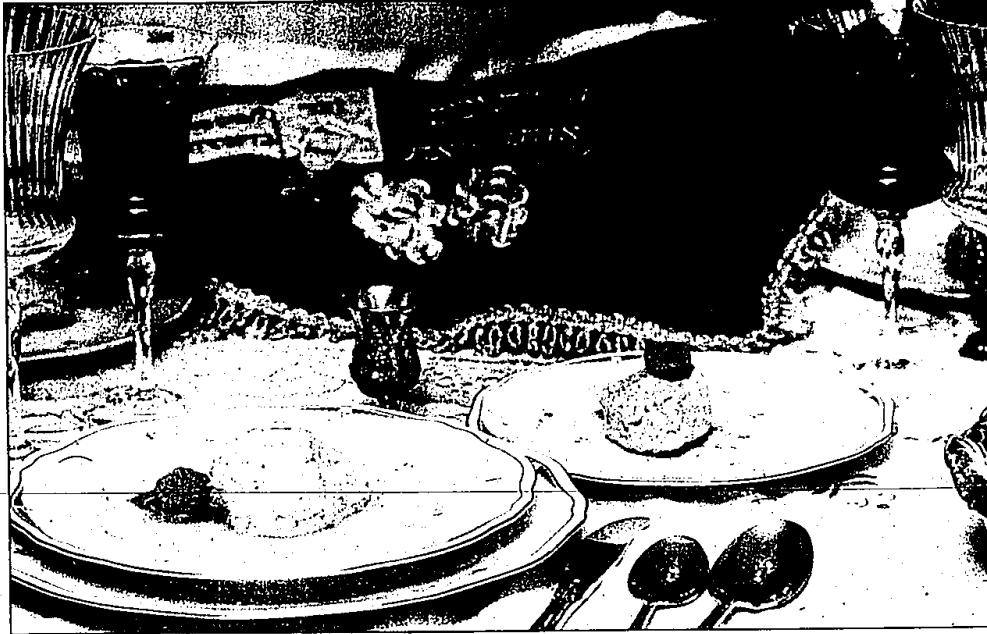
If you've ever eaten Texas-style barbecue, then you've eaten hot-smoked meat. This type of smoking is done at high enough temperatures to cook the food while imparting a mild and pleasantly smoked flavor.

FOR HOT smoking, good cooks first will buy chunks of wood instead of slivers or sawdust (both of which make for good-coal smoking). The chunks of wood should be soaked in water for at least 30 minutes. (You can use the wood chips, but you will have to replace them more often).

Drain, and when the coals are red hot and covered with a little gray ash, drop a healthy handful, get ready to add the food and the up to keep those smoky flavors inside. Yours truly likes to keep the bottom vents open and the top vents closed for a more intense flavor.

Cook the foods as you normally would for their required amount of time — but watch out — the flavors of smoke might make you a regular smoker!

See recipes inside.



## Sweetness ushers in the Jewish New Year

By Keely Wygonik  
staff writer

A NEW YEAR, a new start — "May you be inspired for a good year" is a greeting frequently exchanged by Jews all around the world when guests arrive for the celebration of the days of Rosh Hashana.

"We bring in the new year on a sweet note," said Leslie Miller of West Bloomfield. "All of the dishes we serve are sweet, there's nothing bitter."

Rosh Hashana means "Head of the Year" in Hebrew, and coincides with the first day of Tishri on the Hebrew calendar, which is the lunar calendar. This year Rosh Hashana begins at sundown Sept. 8 and ends at sundown Sept. 10.

From Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur, which is the day of atonement, are 10 days of penitence. One of the most important symbols of the Rosh Hashana observance is the blowing of the shofar, or ram's horn, which is sounded in synagogues as a call to worship.

For Jews, it is a time of reflection and thinking about the year past, making atonement for any mistakes, and promising to do better in the year ahead.

THE DISTINCTIVE theme of the Rosh Hashana dinner is joy in the year ahead, the dominant, culinary symbol of which is sweetness.

Food frequently served includes honey, apples, dates, quinces, pomegranates, leeks, Swiss chard, green beans, carrots, turnips, zucchini, lamb and fish.

Common desserts are honey cakes, plum pie, baked apples and apple strudel.

Miller's Rosh Hashana menu consists of: fruit compote, gefilte fish, chicken soup with matzo balls, turkey with stuffing, roast beef brisket, noodle kugel, carrot simmers, green bean casserole, salad topped with homemade dressing, and cake for dessert.



In the photo above, howls of chicken soup with matzo balls, gefilte fish and fruit compote are served during the Rosh Hashana dinner. At left, Sarah, 5, helps her mom, Leslie Miller in the kitchen.

DAN DEAN  
staff photographer

Traditionally, the new year dinner is served before sundown on the night the holiday starts.

"The holiday is for celebration of the new year, and reflection of the past year, and not for mundane tasks like work, so observant Jews will prepare all of their food before sundown on Sept. 8," said Lissa Hurwitz of the Jewish-Community Council of Metropolitan Detroit in West Bloomfield.

ORTHODOX JEWS, Miller and her husband, Ron, a Reformer, belong to Bais Chabad of West Bloomfield.

For the past couple of weeks, she has been busy shopping, cooking and freezing desserts and side dishes to serve to friends and relatives who will celebrate the holiday with them.

"It's a really good time to get back in touch with friends

and family we haven't seen in a while," Miller said. "I start by de-cluttering the house. I keep almost nothing on the kitchen counters. It makes it a lot easier to work. We'll have a lot of company, so I de-clutter the living room too. I keep out toys that are easy to clean up."

SUNDAY, SHE'LL make chicken soup, a turkey, beef brisket and the dinner salad. She makes chicken salad with the chicken from the soup to serve for lunch the next day.

For the new year dinner, she'll serve the gefilte fish, soup and fruit compote. Guests will eat in the dining room, and help themselves to other foods at a buffet in the kitchen. The fruit compote will be served cold.

"It's refreshing, almost like a sorbet. I serve the fruit compote in wine glasses because it looks pretty, and I decorate the table with African violets so people can talk without having to look over flowers."

DINNER BEGINS with a prayer, and the breaking of bread — a sweet bread, crown challah, made with raisins. An extra cup of raisins is sometimes added to the dough to make it more festive for the new year celebration.

"A lot of people dip it in honey,"

Some families also say a blessing over apples and honey and pass the dish around the dinner table. Each person dips his apple in honey before eating it. This symbolizes hopes for a sweet new year.

AT TEMPLE Kol Ami in West Bloomfield, everyone is handed a trash bag to take home with them. They bring it back 10 days later, on Yom Kippur, filled with food for the needy.

"While we're reflecting on our own deeds for the new year, we also think about making the rest of the world a better place," Hurwitz said.

Last year they collected 3,000 tons of food.

See recipes inside.

## Brush up your culinary skills

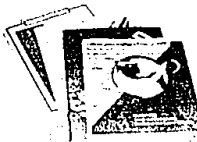
By Keely Wygonik  
staff writer

Have your cooking skills gone to pot? Do you get stirred up when someone asks "what's for dinner?" You're in potluck — area schools are serving up an appetizing menu of low-cost cooking classes sure to get you out of hot water when meal time rolls around.

In Birmingham, at the Community House, the cuisines of China, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Middle East and Morocco, and France are featured in a series of classes offered 7:30-9:30 p.m., beginning Oct. 1. Call 644-5832 for information.

In Garden City, Polish cuisine is prominent with course offerings in Angel Wings, 7-9 p.m., Monday, Oct. 28. Pierogi, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 12 and Nov. 19, and Polish Cooking, a four-week class beginning 6:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 22. Other course offerings include: Chinese cooking, microwave cooking, meals in sixty minutes or less, and vegetarian gourmet. Call 422-7198 for more information.

Bread makers might want to look into the culinary arts program offered by the Southfield Public Schools. A class in yeast bread making is offered 6:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 24 and Oct. 1. Grain to Bread in 90 minutes meets 6:30-9:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 24 and Pizza Delight is 6:15-10 p.m.



Wednesday, Oct. 24. New this year are, Eating Healthy on the Run, Vegetable Carving, Gingerbread House, Low Calorie Gourmet, Strudel, Strudel, Strudel, and Wok Gourmet. For information, call 745-8703.

Ladle up the soup and dish up the salad is being offered by the Farmington Farmington Hills Community Center, 7-9 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 17.

Learn to prepare a wide range of recipes featuring beef, fowl and fish, 7-9 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 19. Call 477-5708 for information.

The Wayne-Westland Schools are offering a three-week class in candy making starting 6:30-9 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 3, and a one-night class in garnishing, 6:30-9 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 14. Call 728-0100 for information.

Get Sauced, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 28 in Birmingham. Class will help you learn how to

make fresh, easy and quick sauces. • Learn how to make a breast of chicken with raspberry vinegar sauce, 7-9 p.m., Monday, Oct. 7. Call 433-8444 for more information.

Italian is just one of the cuisines featured in the Livonia Public Schools community education schedule. Italian Vegetable Cuisine meets for four weeks, beginning 6:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 17. Italian Vegetable Dishes meets four weeks beginning 6:30-9:30 p.m., Oct. 22.

Other offerings include — Meatless Meals, Phyllo Fixings, Puff Pastry Delights, and Seasonal Soups.

Learn how to prepare Chinese dishes in Redford at a four week class in Chinese cooking that begins 7-9:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 23. A 15-week class in nutrition and cooking healthy foods begins 6-10 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 24 and Thursday, Sept. 26. Call 592-3374 for registration information.

You can also learn Chinese cooking in a six-week course offered by the Plymouth-Canton Schools. The class begins 7-10 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 15. Classes in cake decorating are also being offered. Call 451-6860 for information.

Learn how to Cook for the Health of It in Troy at a class offered by Beaumont Hospital registered dietitians, 7-9 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 3. Call 878-7382 for information.