

taste buds

chef Larry Janes

Rediscover lost art of drying fruit, herbs

I can remember a neighbor on Sycamore Street in Wyandotte whom everyone thought was a little "eccentric."

I came to know "Mrs. Carrie" one day when I noticed her, with hammer in hand, building something in her southern-sun-exposed side yard. The kids on the block thought it was an ominous box probably used to store the bones of curiosity-filled kids who ventured unknowingly into her yard.

I liked Mrs. Carrie, and I wasn't about to fall for that crazy caeket story. One day (and if memory serves me correctly, this would have been around 1959 or the early '60s) I asked her what the strange black box was.

"It's a solar dehydrator," she said. "I need an inexpensive method to dry my summer fruits, vegetables and herbs from my bountiful garden."

HAVING NO idea what a solar dehydrator did or was, I pretended to act cool, and rode off into the sunset reaffirming her eccentricities.

The art of food drying dates back to Cro-Magnon times when hunters probably discarded a chunk of meat next to the fire, only to return months later and find the black and dry meat proved tasty. It was a great way to save food for leaner times.

The art of drying food is a natural alternative to canning and freezing. Drying foods has almost become a lost means of food preservation. Drying however, is a natural method of preserving whereupon only the water in the food is removed. The drying process removes 80-90 percent of the moisture content so that spoilage bacteria can't develop during storage.

Dried food also conserves storage space with a five pound assortment of fresh fruit yielding approximately one pound dried. With the exception of some minimal loss of vitamin A and C, dried fruits and vegetables contain the same amount of vitamins and minerals as fresh produce. Dried fruit is sweeter than fresh, due to the high concentration of fruit sugars.

Unlike canning, drying has no "set" rules. Food can be dried in a number of ways with the important thing being removal of 80-90 percent of the water and then starting in tightly closed containers that continue to keep moisture out.

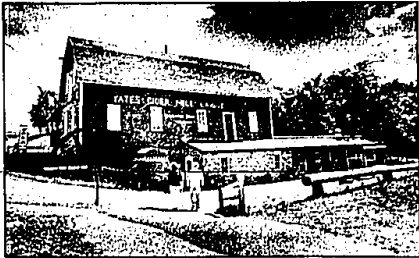
THE EASIEST process involves the purchase of food dehydrators, available at most gourmet shops and natural food stores. Electrical dehydrators start at about \$40 and progress in price and capabilities up to about \$125.

While researching this story, however, a visit to the library located an ample amount of do-it-yourself drying techniques utilizing everything from a tin-foiled box and light bulb up to an electric range. Even Mrs. Carrie's solar dehydrator was expounded upon.

Would I go out and buy a dehydrator tomorrow? Probably not, although the section on drying in your oven using wire mesh proved interesting, especially the way the Janes Gang loves dried-fruit-endowed granola. What I will try, however, is the drying of this year's herbs for winter use.

Momma recalls that Mrs. Carrie passed on about 15 years ago or so. Funny how you preserve memories. I only wish I'd have talked to Mrs. Carrie a little more, a little longer, and with a little more respect. Something tells me she's smiling now, knowing she kindled a spark of interest in food in a nosy 9-year-old on a big black Huffy bike.

See related story inside.



Local mills shine in cider survey

By Keely Wygonik staff writer

FRANKLIN, Plymouth Orchards and Yates were the pick of the crop of Taste readers responding to our In-Cider survey.

"I like the doughnuts and there's a good selection of apples at the Franklin Cider Mill," said Mary Spada of Birmingham.

"I went there as a kid. It's kind of historic thing, a tradition," said Spada, who is passing the tradition on to her children. A certified national historic site, Franklin Cider Mill at 7450 Franklin Road, Franklin, (626-2968), was founded in 1832 on the Franklin River in Oakland County. The mill is open seven days a week, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. until Dec. 1.

THEY BUY apples to make cider from farms in the Grand Rapids and Romeo area.

"We use a blend of apples to make cider," said Susan Tondreau, manager. "Every day it's different. The cider gets sweeter later into the season because we use sweeter apples, it also keeps longer."

Tondreau said the cider is now being made with McIntosh and Paula Red apples; later they'll add some delicious. The apples are about three weeks ahead of season. Franklin Cider Mill has been owned by Jack Palmer for about 30 years.

When the Donohue family goes to the cider mill, they head for Yates.

"Everybody is friendly, and it's a nice atmosphere, no matter how busy it is, everybody maintains a smile," said Bob Donohue of Commerce Township.

Going to the cider mill is an all-day event. Bob, his wife, Debbie, and their three children always package it with a trip to downtown Rochester where they have lunch.

FOUNDED IN 1894, Yates Cider Mill, 1990 E. Avon Road in Rochester Hills, (651-8300) on the Clinton River.

Owned by the Posey family, Yates is open 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. seven days a week until the end of October. In November, the hours are shorter, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"On weekends, we have apples in 20 bushel crates, and people can bag their own. Since we don't have orchards, it's the next best thing," said Linda Paisley, assistant manager.

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Far left photo, built in 1894 on the banks of the Clinton River in Rochester Hills, Yates Cider Mill is considered one of the most interesting mills in the area. Photo at left, Michelle Carpenter, 1, of Rochester Hills enjoys a glass of apple cider. Photo below, Deborah Pickio and her children Sarah, 2, and Scott, 5, walk along the pulp car tracks leading from the cider mill.

JAN RIDER staff photographer



Milling around

A special essay sent in by Bob DeMayer of Livonia

Fall is the perfect time for a trip to the cider mill. My favorite one is the historic Franklin cider mill. While driving through the peaceful little town, I can smell the aroma of just-baked doughnuts and fresh cider floating through the crisp autumn air.

I quickly drive into the crowded parking lot and stand in the long, winding line. I decide to buy a dozen warm plain brown doughnuts and a half gallon of spiced cold cider.

While enjoying my treat, I walk along the mill's picturesque surroundings. There is a giant old steel water wheel on the premises which is nestled under beautiful towering trees.

The leaves are now changing from an icy green to shiny gold and copper. Before heading home, I stroll along the quaint town's streets which are dotted with many diverse shops selling everything from antiques to Christmas ornaments.

The temperature is just right for a nice leisurely walk. As the sun starts to set a little earlier these days, I decide it's time for my journey back home - already looking forward to a memorable return engagement.

This week's catch

Angler shares secret recipe

This week's column is a fish story. No, it's not about the Winner Dinner that got away, but rather about a man who loves, and lives, to catch and cook fish.

When I asked John Wineman, of Birmingham, what his favorite hobbies were, he quickly responded, "Baseball, fishing and fishing." He also likes to cook, and finds improving and creating in the kitchen more his style than following a recipe in a cookbook.

HE RECENTLY submitted a menu and recipes for a "Charlevoix Dinner" that I promise your family will fall for, hook, line and sinker.

His recipes for preparing salmon on the grill, served with a "secret" sauce, and somewhat curious, but undeniably delicious Potato "It" dish, have earned him a new apron, and the honor of being selected Winner Dinner Winner of the week. Married to Duffy, and the father of three sons, Wineman is a partner in the Wineman and Kenner Building Co. which has been building homes and condominiums in the Oakland County area since 1976.

He made his first trip to Charlevoix in a laundry basket when he was six weeks old, and has since graduated to a Ford Explorer, which can frequently be seen headed north

on I-75 for a weekend of fishing, and lots of high hopes. His sons, and their friends, often join him.

EVEN WINTER doesn't keep Wineman away as he will make trips up north to "pat the boat, visit old friends and just make sure the town is still there."

A former director of the Paul Young chapter of Michigan Trout Unlimited, Wineman is a firm believer in protecting and respecting the environment, and teaching the next generation to leave it better than they found it.

He has spent hours with his sons fishing, just as his parents did with him. With three generations of Winemans in Charlevoix, it is no wonder that it is a very special place, near and dear to his heart.

Although Wineman was willing to



family-tested winner dinner Betsy Brethen

share his delicious recipes with us, he wouldn't reveal any of his fish-catching secrets.

Submit recipes to be considered for publication to Winner Dinner, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham, MI 48012.

All submissions become the property of the Observer and Eccentric newspapers. Each winner receives an apron with the words "Winner Dinner Winner" on it.

John Wineman cooks this week's catch on his backyard grill in Birmingham.

JERRY SANDREY staff photographer



Observer & Eccentric Winner Dinner

Recipes

GRILLED OR STEAMED SALMON

WITH WINEMAN'S SAUCE

Quick, delicious and easy to make, this tasty sauce enhances the flavor of the salmon, or any other type of fish you choose to prepare.

WINEMAN'S SECRET SAUCE

Combine the following ingredients together and mix well. For a shortcut version, mix Salt-Free Mrs. Dash Table Blend of Fine Ground Herbs and Spices with the Lite Wishbone Russian salad dressing and the last three ingredients.

1 bottle Wishbone Lite Russian salad dressing, 8 fluid ounce size

1 good handful fresh parsley, chopped finely

1 bay leaf

1 tablespoon onions, minced

dash of pepper

dash of celery seed

dash of rosemary

1-2 cloves of fresh garlic,

chopped finely

dash of lemon pepper

dash of Accent

1 tablespoon olive oil

3 tablespoons slightly sweetened coarse mustard

1/2 stick butter or margarine

GRILLED OR STEAMED SALMON

This recipe works for either salmon steaks or salmon filets.

Brush some of the sauce on a piece of foil if using a salmon filet, place it so that the skin side is on top of the foil. Brush with more of the sauce and squeeze half of a lemon over the fish.

Throw the lemon half or wedges on top of the salmon and then pinch the two sides of the foil together. Baste with the sauce every 3-8 minutes and cook the salmon for about 20 minutes with the grill cover down, noting that the time can vary depending on the

grill and the thickness of the fish.

POTATO "IT"

When family friend and neighbor, Debby Sloan, first tasted this interesting concoction, she asked the obvious question, "What is it?" Somehow the name "It" stuck and a new dish was born.

1 pound (dry) red skin potatoes, the smaller the better,

1/2 stick butter or margarine

1 medium size box of mushrooms, washed and quartered

1 can hearts of palm, 15 ounce size, drained and cut into bite-sized pieces

1 can artichoke hearts, 15 ounce size, drained and cut up

1/2 onion, preferable Vidalia, if available, chopped coarsely

dash of garlic powder, salt and pepper to taste

Melt the butter in a large frying pan. Combine the whole potatoes (if you are unable to find small ones, halve or quarter the ones you can find), the cut-up hearts of palm and the artichokes. Cook over a medium-low heat for about 20 minutes or until

the potatoes soften.

In another pan, saute the cut-up mushrooms in a little butter or margarine and a dash of garlic powder for about 15 minutes.

Add the mushrooms to the potato mixture and cook for an additional 10 minutes.

CORN ON THE COB

OR FRESH ASPARAGUS

Depending on the season, take your pick and prepare whatever is freshest.

SPINACH SALAD

Make up a spinach salad and toss with your choice of dressing.

DESSERT

Head off with your family or invite a friend to go with you to your favorite ice cream or yogurt shop. Or, do as John Wineman does, and swap a piece of salmon for one of Nancy Grant's homemade peach or blueberry pies.