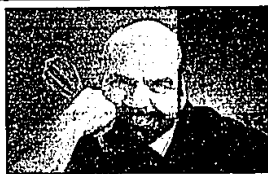


MONDAY, JULY 27, 1992

# TASTE

## TASTE BUDD



CHEF LARRY JONES

## Be brave: Experiment with exotic fresh fruit

Mamma was never one to try something a little different. In all honesty though, 30 years ago Cinnamom's Produce Market in Wyandotte never really offered the more trendy upscale fruits and vegetables that are commonplace in many of today's markets.

Mangoes, carambolas and Crenshaw melons were just beginning to be imported on the west coast. Their prices, as well as availability, were out of reach, especially to a family whose dad worked two jobs just to keep it afloat.

This is the season for fresh fruits, jams and jellies. To many, fresh fruit can be as simple as strawberries, blueberries and cantaloupe. But when it comes to enjoying a wide assortment, local produce markets are brimming with a multitude of selections.

In her book "Uncommon Fruits and Vegetables," Elizabeth Schneider offers a compendium of information on more exotic alternatives. From Atemoyas to Ugli fruit, unusual fruit selections abound and they taste equally as good sliced and eaten straight or made into delectable jams, jellies and sauces that could easily win an entry into an gourmet's cookbook.

### Blood oranges

Blood oranges are gaining in popularity in the United States. Having long been a popular favorite in Europe, this huge, sweet orange with a scarlet interior makes for an inventive marmalade and can be interchanged with regular oranges with minor effort.

The membrane is a little tougher than a normal orange, but the blood orange is sure to enliven any fruit salad with shards of colorful beauty.

Another personal favorite is the gooseberry. Uncle Earl relished sister Rosie's homemade gooseberry pie. Resembling a small cherry tomato in size, its flesh is the same color and tastes somewhat like a cross between a tomato, strawberry and a grape. Gooseberries are sweet with a slightly bitter aftertaste and, in addition to making a great pie, also make for an outstanding jam or jelly.

### Aromatic guava

The guava is gaining in popularity, probably because of its juice, which frequently ends up in a blend of health food juice selections. The guava is very aromatic and its smell has been said to rival either the aroma of a sports locker or something from the Garden of Eden. The secret to choosing a good guava is to smell it.

The unripe versions will smell downright zesty, while the ripe ones accumulate almost a floral aroma. The flavor is that of tutti-fruity, with the texture being pleasantly gritty.

Kumquats have been around for a while, but still, most of us have yet to acquire a liking for their taste. Serve kumquats like you would grapes. The rind is deliciously sweet while the pulp is puckery sour. Tossed in a simple fruit salad, or made into jam, kumquats are very versatile and absolutely delicious when pureed and rubbed over a crown roast or served with roast duck.

One of the most revered Chinese fruits is the simple lychee. Having been enjoyed for over 2,000 years, the fruit is about the size of a ping-pong ball wrapped in a shell that resembles a burr without prickles.

The consistency and taste is similar to peeled grapes, but if there's one thing the lychee has in its favor, it's the aroma that makes for fine eating, whether tossed in a salad, made into jam, or smoothed into a velvety reduction sauce.

### Magnificent mangoes

Mangoes are considerably better known than apples in more places around the globe, second only to the banana and coconut. There are many different varieties with the little Asian ones being tops in flavor and Kelt, and Palmera being more readily available. Their skins are smooth and the meat tastes like a silky custard when perfectly ripe.

The ripe mango will have the feel of a ripe avocado with the stem end emitting a mild, sweet aroma. Hearty enough to stand up to smoked or grilled foods, chunks of mango are wonderful additions to chicken salads.

I would be remiss in my duties if I failed to mention the papaya. Probably the most readily available of all the fruits listed above, the papaya can be green, orange, rose or yellow skinned and encompasses a smooth meat similar to a melon. But in all honesty, it's the black cavity like seeds that add the true flavor, crossing between nasturtium blossoms and peppers. Papaya can be eaten raw, pan-fried, pureed into a velvety sauce or cubed and tossed into a salad. It makes a great salad dressing, in addition to an aromatic chilled soup.

These are just a few of the exotic fruits to be found markets today. It's just the tip of the iceberg, so to speak, and there are many other fruits available. Ask your grocer for more information and start experimenting!

See recipes inside.

# JAMMIN'

Homemade preserves make peachy gifts



Fire up the canning kettle to preserve fresh, juicy Michigan fruits. Making preserves is rewarding, and doesn't take a lot of time.

BY JOAN BORAM  
SPECIAL WRITER

"Fess up! How many of us are closet jar savers, hoarding against the day when we're going to make jam, jelly or preserves? Who doesn't have a box of jars tucked under the sink, or boxes of jars in the garage, behind the bikes waiting to be filled with plum conserve or strawberry jam?"

There's no time like the present. Stores and farmer's markets are loaded with Michigan fruits, fresh and juicy. Peaches and plums are ripening as we speak. Sugar is selling for half price at many area supermarkets. This is the Christmas to amaze and delight your friends with gifts of your very own preserves.

"Jam making really isn't a lot of work, and it doesn't take a lot of time," said Jean Noth of Redford. "I really enjoy the process of preserve-making. It's relaxing, and there's such a great feeling of accomplishment when you have six or eight jars of sparkling strawberry jam or currant jelly."

Noth also likes that she controls the ingredients when she makes the jam, and knows everything is natural and pure.

Strawberries have no natural pectin so preserves made without added pectin are likely to be thin. "But, if you add pectin, you need a lot more sugar. A thinner jam is versatile," said Noth. "It can be used over ice cream, as well as on toast or buttered toast."

A neighbor gave her some red currants a few years ago, and Noth made currant jelly out of necessity. "Taking all the little green things off the ends is rather time consuming. But the good thing is you can save the juice and make the jelly whenever you feel



JIM JACOBEL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

like it. I like to make it in the wintertime. It's such a cozy thing to do then."

For Jan Winship, making her famous plum conserve and peach marmalade means Christmas in July. She's not even deterred by an imminent move from Novi to Farmington Hills. "Everything's packed but my jars, my canning kettle, and my wooden spoon," she said.

"Preserving keeps me out of the malls in December. While other people are fighting the crowds and making decisions, I'm putting together festive little ribbon-trimmed baskets of 'Jan's Jams.'"

"If I feel like it, I might add a few homemade cookies. For one friend, I buy a special British 'shelley' magazine and box of salt-free crackers."

Winship always tries to buy Michigan fruit to make jam. "Maybe it's just my imagination, but it seems to have more flavor and juice, possibly because it's closer to home than California fruit."

When it's jam making time, Winship buys two or

three kinds of plums — Italian plums, red plums, and a round charreuse tart Japanese plum. Unlike peaches, plums don't have to be mashed. Just cut them off of the pits into pieces about the size of a nickel.

"An interesting side of recycling jars donated by your friends is that you find out a lot about their eating habits," said Winship. "Turns out I have one friend who devours jars of olives while she watches TV. I never would have known that if she hadn't given me a big box of empty olive jars."

Winship's philosophy of cooking is never read a recipe that begins with the word "mince," but, for her peach marmalade, she'll go through the trouble of peeling peaches.

When I open one of those jars in January, and the fresh peach aroma fills the kitchen, the little bit of effort is all worthwhile.

See recipes inside.

## Serve hot chicken salad for special occasions

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

### Winner Dinner Recipes



#### HOT CHICKEN SALAD

- 4 whole chicken breasts, cooked
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- 1/2 can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 2 cups celery, finely chopped
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 can water chestnuts, 8 ounce size, drained and chopped
- 1 can mushroom pieces, 4 ounce size, drained
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons onions, minced
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 can fried onion rings, 3 1/2 ounce size, slightly crushed

Discard skin and bones from chicken; cut into 1-inch pieces. In a large bowl, combine all the ingredients except for the cheese and onion rings. Pour the mixture into a 9 by 13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle with the cheese and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Sprinkle the onion rings over the casserole and bake for another 15 minutes. Serves 6-8.

#### EASY RICE PILAF

- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 stalk celery, diced
- 1/4 cup long grain rice, uncooked
- 2 cups chicken broth

salt  
pepper

Saute the onion, garlic and celery in a small amount of butter or margarine until the onion is limp. Add the rice, stirring often until the rice is golden. Add the chicken broth, cover and simmer until the rice is tender, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

#### DELICIOUS RASPBERRY PIE

- 1 package raspberry gelatin, 3 ounce size
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cups boiling water
- 1 package frozen raspberries, 10 ounce size
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 package cream cheese, softened, 3 ounce size
- 1/2 cup confectioner's sugar, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- dash salt
- 1 cup heavy cream, whipped
- 9-inch baked pastry shell, cooled

Dissolve gelatin and granulated sugar in boiling water; add frozen berries and lemon juice. Stir until berries thaw, chill until partially set.

Blend the cream cheese, confectioner's sugar, vanilla and salt. Fold in small amount of whipped cream, then fold in remainder. Spread half of the white cream cheese mixture over the bottom of the pastry shell. Cover with half of the red gelatin mixture. Repeat the layers. Chill until set.



BETSY BRETHEN

easy rice pilaf and raspberry pie. She loves this tasty menu and first served it when she hosted a baby shower.

Bills and her husband, Jim, are the proud parents of two young Korean children whom they adopted when each of the children was four months old. Delighted and thrilled, Bills exclaimed that adopting them was the best thing they have ever done.

Because she has worked as an executive secretary for 14 years at AAA Michigan, Bills considers herself fortunate indeed to have her mother, Catherine

Vella, come to their home and take care of their children. A tremendous help to her daughter and son-in-law, Vella is much loved by her grandchildren.

Although Bills enjoys cooking, she makes an effort to plan and prepare her family's meals for the coming week on the weekend so that when she comes home from work she can spend time with her family. After all, she considers taking care of the three very special people in her life — her husband and two children her most important and rewarding job.

Thank you Gloria Bills, for sharing your recipes with us and congratulations on being selected this week's Winner dinner Winner. All the best to you, and until next time, I encourage all of you to please join down your family's favorite slimmer Winner Dinner and send it my way.

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

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



BILL BRESEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Winner dinner: Stephanie and Kevin help their mom slice raspberry pie, one of the delicious recipes featured in this week's Winner Dinner.