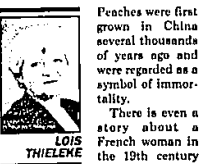


Fresh, juicy, sweet peaches are ancient history



LOIS THIELEKE
Peaches were first grown in China several thousands of years ago and were regarded as a symbol of immortality.

There is even a story about a French woman in the 19th century who was gravely ill and refusing all food. But her life was saved by a dish of peaches in syrup and cream that restored her appetite and will to live.

This is all hard to believe since the first peaches were small, very sour and had a very fuzzy exterior. They were brought to the Americas

by Spanish explorers in the 16th century. Peaches may not be magic, but the numerous modern varieties are certainly larger, sweeter and less fuzzy.

There is nothing like a ripe peach eaten out of hand for breakfast or as a snack. Sliced peaches can be added to salads, sugared for shortcake or soaked in white wine or champagne for an easy summer dessert.

They can be baked in a cobbler, or pureed for sherbet or ice cream. Grilled peaches served with grilled chicken adds an interesting twist to a picnic. To grill, coat all sides of the peaches with lemon juice and grill until brown (six to eight minutes).

There are two categories of peaches, freestone or clingstone. This refers to how the flesh adheres to the pit. Clingstones are not generally sold in markets, they are used for commercial canning.

Michigan peaches are freestone or a semi-freestone. Popular varieties available at the local farmer markets are — Redhaven, Cresthaven, Glohaven, and Red Kint. These are all versatile and can be used for baking, canning or eaten fresh.

One pound of peaches is about three medium or two cups sliced. If you are interested in preserving them, a lug weighs 22 pounds, makes 16-24 pints frozen or seven-11 quarts canned. A bushel of peaches is 48 pounds and will yield

32-48 pints frozen or 16-24 quarts canned.

While eating peaches out of hand, they need no peeling, however, most peaches are peeled for use in cooked dishes. If the peaches do not peel easily, dip them in boiling water for about 30 seconds, then plunge into ice water and the skins will slip right off.

To prevent browning, coat exposed surfaces with lemon juice or ascorbic acid or vitamin C tablets. Use one teaspoon pure powdered ascorbic acid to one gallon water. If you prefer, use 3,000 milligrams of vitamin C tablets crushed and dissolved in a gallon of water. The procedure is easy, slip the skins, dip into one of these solutions, drain

them and continue to use.

Canning or freezing peaches is very simple. Slip the skins, cut into halves or slices, dip into the anti-browning solution, put into jars or freezer containers.

Peaches can be canned or frozen in a syrup (sugar) pack, a water pack, a juice pack or a sugar-free pack. If you're concerned about sugar, do them the sugar-free way. To get the best results for a sugar-free product, put the cut peaches in a saucepan, add water and heat slowly on the burner. Don't cook them, just heat to activate the natural peach sugar.

Doing them this way you won't have a watery taste to the end product, just a light peachy flavor. For

exact canning times, call the Cooperative Extension Service, Food hot line, 858-0904.

Peaches are a source of Vitamin A and potassium and have virtually no sodium. They are fat free, and if you eat the peel, that's extra fiber. A medium size peach has about 60 calories.

Visit your local farmer markets and enjoy fresh Michigan peaches. Bite into a fresh juicy Michigan peach. Let the juices dribble down your hand and chin — enjoy this sweet treat that's good far you.

Lois Thieleke is an extension home economist for the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service.

Peachy salsa, cobbler with whipped cream, delightful

See related story on Taste front.

- PEACH SALSA**
- 1 cup peaches, fresh diced ¼-inch cubes
 - ¼ cup red onion diced ¼-inch
 - 1 teaspoon paprika
 - 1-2 Tablespoons cilantro minced
 - 1 teaspoon granulated sugar

- Combine ingredients and chill for 24 hours.
- From: "The Health Club Cooks," (Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit, 1991) recipe submitted by Peter Loren, Opus One.
- PEACH COBBLER**
- 4 cups peeled and sliced ripe peaches
 - ¾ cup plus 3 Tablespoons

- granulated sugar
- 1 Tablespoon grated lemon zest
- 1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract
- ½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon baking powder
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- ½ cup vegetable shortening
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

- ¼ cup milk
 - 1 cup heavy cream, chilled
 - 3 to 4 Tablespoons peach brandy or cordial
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Butter a 2-quart baking dish. Arrange peaches in baking dish. Sprinkle with ¼ cup sugar, the lemon zest and juice, and almond extract. Bake for 20 minutes. While peaches are baking, sift

- flour, 1 tablespoon of the remaining sugar, the baking powder and salt together into a bowl. Cut in shortening until mixture resembles cornmeal. Combine the beaten egg and milk and mix into dry ingredients until just combined.
- Remove peaches from oven and quickly drop dough by large spoonfuls over surface. Sprinkle with remaining 2 Tablespoons sugar. Return to the oven for 15 to 20 minutes.

- utes, until top is firm and golden brown.
- Whip cream to soft peaks. Flavor with peach brandy to taste. Serve cobbler warm, accompanied by whipped cream. (Four to six portions).
- From: "The Silver Palate Cookbook," Jules Rossa & Sheila Lukins with Michael McLaughlin (Workman Publishing, New York, 1982, \$12.95)

Featured chefs lay their card recipes on the table

See Larry Janes' column on Taste front.

- CHEF BRIAN POLCYN'S WILD MUSHROOM TORTE**
- ½ cup each of lobster, morel, chanterelles and shiitake mushrooms
 - 3 Tablespoons butter
 - ¼ cup shallots
 - 1 cup dry sherry
 - flour
 - cream

- salt and pepper
- phylo dough
- melted butter
- Cut mushrooms into uniform size. Melt 3 Tablespoons butter and add shallots and mushrooms and cook over medium heat until all moisture has evaporated. Add sherry and cook until all moisture evaporates. Dust with flour and cook for one minute.
- Add just a pinch of cream to thicken and season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove from stove

- and allow to cool. Lay one sheet of phyllo dough out on a towel. Brush with melted butter. Lay another sheet on top and repeat three times. Lengthwise, place mushrooms on dough and roll up. Seal ends and brush top with melted butter. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 20-30 minutes or until hot in the center and dough is brown. Slice and serve.
- Serves 10.
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- CHEF MARY BRADY'S SHRIMP AND SALMON CAKES**
- ½ pound raw shrimp
 - ½ pound raw salmon
 - 3 egg whites
 - 1½ cups heavy cream
 - salt and pepper to taste
 - 3 Tablespoons chopped mixed fresh herbs
 - 1 pound poached medium chopped shrimp
- Place raw ingredients in the freezer for 15 minutes before beginning.

- ning. In a food processor, process until smooth, scraping the bowl often.
- Rechill. Add egg whites and process. Add cream and process with seasonings. Cook a small amount to test taste. Add chopped poached shrimp, mix well. Form into cakes and saute in a hot skillet over medium heat. Serve with corn salsa.

- 1 teaspoon chopped garlic
 - ¼ cup red wine vinegar
 - ½ bunch cilantro, chopped
 - 2 tomatoes, diced
 - 1 red onion, diced small
 - ¼ cup olive oil
 - salt and pepper to taste
- Combine all ingredients and mix well.
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- CORN SALSA**
- 3 cups fresh blanched corn

Pastry problems easy as pie to fix

AP — Tender, flaky pastry makes a perfect partner to any pie filling. Yet, the truth be known, even the best pie crust makers can run into a snag now and then. Fortunately, these problems are easily fixed, with a few tips from our test kitchen.

To make crumbly pastry easier to roll: Add more water. 1 teaspoon at a time. Toss the flour mixture and water together a few more times or just until evenly moistened.

To prevent tough pastry: Use a pastry blender to cut in the shortening or lard until well mixed. All of the mixture should resemble small peas. Use as little cold water as possible to moisten the flour mixture. Toss the flour mixture and water only until all of the flour mixture is moistened. Use less flour when rolling out the pastry.

To keep the crust from shrinking away from the sides: Roll the pastry to an even thickness. Mix in water only until evenly moistened. Don't stretch the pastry when transferring it to the pie plate.

To prevent the bottom crust from

becoming soggy: Use a dull metal or glass pie plate, not a shiny metal pan that reflects heat. Patch any cracks in the pastry with a scrap of the pastry before adding the filling. Be sure the oven temperature is accurate. If the temperature is too low, the bottom crust will not bake quickly enough to seal out the moisture of the filling.

To keep the top crust from getting soggy: Make several cuts in the top before baking to allow the steam to escape.

To prevent the pastry from blistering excessively: Lightly press a single-crust pastry into the pie plate so there are no air pockets underneath. Prick it with a fork. Make several cuts in the top crust.

To keep the crust from over-browning: Cover the edge of the unbaked pie with a 12-inch square of foil at the beginning of baking. Fold the foil in quarters and cut a quarter-circle off the folded corner (about 3 inches from the lip). Unfold the piece of foil and place it over the pie, slightly mulling the foil over the edge. Remove the foil about halfway through the baking time.

To prevent the pie from bubbling over: Add less filling to the pie shell. Place a pizza pan or baking sheet under a double-crust pie pie

to catch any filling that does bubble over.

Handy tips make kitchen chores easier

Here's a couple of handy tips. To keep fruits and vegetables fresher longer in your refrigerator, line the vegetable bin with paper towels or dry sponges to absorb excess moisture.

Corn silk can be removed more easily with the aid of a damp toothbrush.

Hard boiled eggs can be easier to peel if you plunge them into cold water, crack the shell and then roll the egg lightly between the palms of your hands.

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