

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1992

TASTE

TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JONES

A little stuffing makes hefty vegetables a meal

Oh ye with garden, take heed! The very best summer vegetables are those picked in their infancy, tiny, tender and still glistening with the fresh dew of morning.

But as summer wears on, the garden patch seems to explode, sometimes producing faster than we can harvest.

And when we return from vacations to find the inevitable zucchini that in our absence has grown to the size of a Volkswagen, look upon it as an opportunity to turn a liability into an asset with wonderful stuffed vegetable dishes.

Even those who don't toil to raise their own vegetables will always need to find uses for mature vegetables, since many farmers, choosing left over flavor, wait to pick their crops until they have reached maximum growth.

As a result, by the end of summer, markets and kitchen gardens alike are flooded with vegetables that are perfect for stuffing.

Stuffy vegetables

Vegetables most adapted to stuffing are artichokes, cabbage, tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, onions, eggplant, turnips and mushrooms. Many of these can be filled, cooked and served either hot or cold. Ah, but the most proficient by far is the lowly summer squash, which, because of their delicate flavors, are always ideal for stuffing.

Zucchini, crooked neck, pattypan and acorn squash, beg to be stuffed with the likes of a delicate popovers bread stuffing or, in contrast, a hearty stuffing comprised of chopped sausage, onion, garlic and tomato. Even a subtle mixture of both could only benefit their obscure flavor.

Momma's stuffing

Momma always prepared zucchini stuffed with a mixture of cottage cheese, Parmesan cheese, egg and pepper. Combining the latter, she would wack the giant zucchini lengthwise with a kitchen weapon we, as kids, called "the machete".

Using a wooden spoon that sometimes doubled as a disciplinary tool, she would scoop out the seeds with one firm stroke, something that to this day, she still accomplishes with skill.

Even though the filling was a simple mixture of dairy products, when momma now tries the same dish at my house, only prepared with farmer's cheese, fresh grated Romano cheese, Amish brown eggs and fresh ground pepper, she still secretly proclaims her recipe to still be the best (or so dad says.) But that's OK because momma's taste for the simple will never go out of style.

Momma not only excelled with stuffing a zucchini but also equally impressive was her ability to stuff one mean pepper and an occasional onion. The peppers weren't the typical Hungarian stuffed peppers, baked beyond recognition in canned tomato juice.

Her's were first roasted to remove the bitter skins, then stuffed with a three meat meatloaf-type mixture comprised of ground beef, pork and veal.

I can remember observing her open one of those tiny cans of mushrooms in gravy, a can of French fried onion rings and a can of Campbell's condensed cream of celery soup. Mix it all with a dice of onion (with hands, of course,) then scoop up just enough of the mixture to be stuffed into an awaiting shell.

Topped with just a splash of tomato juice, these stuffed peppers were right up there on the family's list of favorite requests when mealtime came around.

Outstanding onions

Onions are a Jones Gang favorite, especially when hollowed and filled with seasoned breadcrumbs and butter.

These are especially easy to create when wrapped in foil and tossed onto the grill or simply baked in a 350 degree oven. The same can go for pattypan squash.

This year's garden produced some succulent pattypan and a mixture of ground sausage, breadcrumbs, Parmesan cheese and a little red wine turned an otherwise bland and mundane vegetable into a meal-in-itself stuffed vegetable.

So if Mother Nature pulls a fast one on you and your garden, never underestimate what a little stuffing might do.

Don't forget to add "stuff it" to your vegetable repertoire of all it, dice it, chop it, stir fry it, steam it, bake it, shake it, etc. What might have been a reject can become a star — with stuffing.

See Jones family-tested recipes for stuffed vegetables inside.

FIGHT snack attacks WITH CRISP

Apples



If you want to be healthy to the core, reduce the fat in your diet, and reach for an apple the next time you're hungry for a snack.

BY KEELY WYGNON
STAFF WRITER

You've heard the saying — "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." Well, it's true, apples are good for you. The next time you're hungry for something crisp and sweet, reach for an apple.

Think apples when you're planning fall dinner menus, too. Wendy Schwartz of Birmingham, a registered dietitian and volunteer for the American Heart Association of Michigan created a healthy low fat, low cholesterol harvest dinner using apples.

The main course, Autumn Apple Chicken, (see recipe inside) features boneless chicken breasts with apple cider and apple wedges. She got the recipe from the "The Health Club Cooks," published by the Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit.

Autumn Apple Chicken is a variation of a dish in the "Silver Palate Cookbook," by Julie Rosso & Sheila Lukins. It was created by David Robinson, one of the JCC cookbook editors, and contains no added fat.

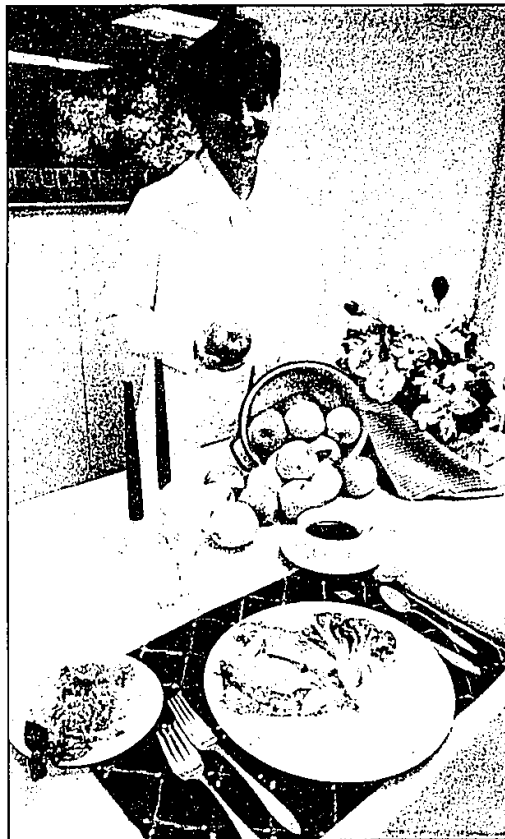
It has become a part of the Robinson Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year) meal. This year Rosh Hashanah begins on Monday, Sept. 28 and apples will be a part of many of those holiday menus.

September, besides being the start of the apple season, is National Cholesterol Awareness Month. It's a good time to start healthy habits like eating more fruits and vegetables and less fat. Some people like David Solomon of Southfield who recently had open heart surgery and angioplasty were forced to change their eating habits.

"I used to be a real nut as far as butter and cheese," said Solomon who is in his middle 60s. "Now I stay away from fat. If I use low fat cheese in a meal, I don't use margarine."

Mary Cabot of Royal Oak is in her 70s and had open heart surgery for a valve replacement in May. Now she bakes and broils foods instead of frying, and she selects low-fat desserts, skim milk and avoids cheeses.

When you're hungry for a snack, reach for an apple said Schwartz. They're a good source of dietary fiber



Apple delicious: Wendy Schwartz presents a heart-healthy dinner of Autumn Apple Chicken with fresh, steamed broccoli and apple crisp.

and high in complex carbohydrates which may lower the risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

A medium apple contains about 80 calories, one gram of fat, and are sodium free. They provide 15 percent of the U.S.D.A., recommended daily requirement for vitamin C — more than a peach, pear or bunch of grapes. Apples are an important source of potassium and contain the trace mineral boron which helps the body use calcium and keep brain function alert.

Bring your apples to the Cranbrook Institute of Science Honey and Apples festival, 1-4:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 26 and Sunday, Sept. 27, and 1-4:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3 and Sunday, Oct. 4. Visitors can blend their own brand of cider, the old-fashioned way by feeding

the hand-operated press as it produces apple juice. It takes about 1/4 bushel of apples to make a gallon of cider.

The activities are included in the regular museum admission of \$5 for adults, \$4 for children ages three to 17, and senior citizens, 65 and older.

Cranbrook Institute of Science is at 500 Lone Pine road in Bloomfield Hills. For information, call 645-3230.

To keep apples from turning brown once you've cut them, just dunk them in a 50/50 mixture of lemon juice and water. Extra apples freeze easily.

Artist turns on creative energy in the kitchen

WINNER DINNER



BETSY BRETHEN

Welcome back to the beginning of the fourth year of Winner Dinners. I hope your summer was restful and enjoyable, and that you are ready for another season of tasty, family-tested meals.

To update you, the very first Winner Dinner cookbook is in the works. It will contain 52 menus with recipes

and shopping lists that were selected from the 116 Winner Dinners that have appeared in the paper. Designed with clarity, practicality and efficiency in mind, the book will be available in the spring of 1993. I'll keep you posted on the progress, and in the meantime, we can celebrate the beginning of another school year, and this week's Winner Dinner.

Submitted by Karen Van Gampier of Troy, this week's menu features recipes for barbecue ribs, potato pancakes topped with curried fruit, corn on the cob, sliced tomatoes and yogurt ice cream for dessert. Van Gampier is an artist who naturally cooks a creative experience. She enjoys using the many different tastes, textures and aromas of food as her medium.

Specializing in oils and water colors, Van Gampier teaches art classes to children and adults at the Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association, the Farmington Community Center, the Southfield Civic Center, and Brewster Ele-



JIM RIDER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Winner Dinner: Karen Van Gampier presents one of her family's favorite dinners featuring barbecued ribs, potato pancakes, corn on the cob and sliced tomatoes.

mentary School in Rochester. She exhibits her paintings in an art gallery in Petoskey, at the Rubiner Gallery in West Bloomfield, and at Our Town, an annual art show at the Birmingham Community House.

Submit recipes to be considered for publication in this column or elsewhere to: Winner Dinner, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham, MI 48012.

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC Winner Dinner Recipes



BARBECUED RIBS

2-4 pounds country-style spare ribs
1 bottle (18 ounces) thick and spicy barbecue sauce with honey
1/2 can (6 ounces) beer
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Rinse spare ribs and pat dry with paper towel.
Place in a shallow baking dish with bone side down. Pour in 1/2 can of beer and follow with enough barbecue sauce to cover the top of the meat.
Cover baking dish with foil and bake for 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
Ten minutes before serving, remove foil, add more barbecue sauce if needed, and place the baking dish under the broiler, leaving several inches between the meat and the heating element. Broil until meat begins to brown and sizzle. Serve on a plate or platter. Serves 4.

POTATO PANCAKES

1 cup mashed potatoes
1 medium raw potato, peeled and shredded
1 cup Bisquick
1/2 cup milk
1 egg
1 Tablespoon sugar
1 small onion, chopped
1-2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
Salt to taste
Combine all ingredients and beat with a fork until all are blended. Lightly coat the bottom of a large frying pan with the vegetable oil or use non-stick spray.
Spoon in batter, making pancakes about 2 to 3 inches in diameter and brown on both sides.
Repeat until all batter is used up. Serve with curried fruit spooned over top. Serves 4.

CURRIED FRUIT BAKE

1 can (16 ounces) pear halves
1 can (16 ounces) peach halves
5 marshmallows
3 Tablespoons butter or margarine
1/2 cup brown sugar
2 teaspoons curry powder
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Drain and dry fruit and cut into bite-sized pieces.
Melt butter or margarine in a small pan. Add brown sugar and curry powder.
Place the fruit in an 8-inch by 8-inch baking dish. Spoon butter mixture over the top of the fruit. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Serve warm over pancakes. Any leftovers of this delicious fruit dish can be frozen.