

# TASTE

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**TASTE BUDS**



**CHEF LARRY JANES**

## Here are answers to your questions

**M**y voice mail box, and postman are taking a much needed breather now that the holidays are past. Your calls and requests were appreciated, and I hope your holidays were filled with delicious treats coupled with a bountiful helping of peace and love.

When you call the voice mail box, please remember to leave your name, phone number and city in which you live for a speedy response.

My daughter Jessie, resplendent in her Girl Scout sash, called the voice mail box twice requesting that you be reminded that this is Girl Scout cookie time. All of your favorites are back. This year marks the introduction of a cookie dubbed "Juliettes" which are a crunchy combination of caramel and pecans covered with a fudge coating.

Cookie proceeds help pay for local troop programs, council facilities and training. Everyone loves Girl Scout cookies, and yours truly has been known to polish off an entire box with a quart of milk while watching the Frugal Gourmet on Channel 50.

Girl Scout cookies freeze well, ship well through the mail and can be used in many recipes. A James Gang family favorite is a cheesecake crust made with Girl Scout Tagalong cookies crushed in the blender of a food processor. If you don't know a Girl Scout, call your local elementary school for the name and number of a troop cookie mom.

Diane Morrison of Westland called about the nut cake recipes that ran a few weeks back. Morrison questioned the amounts of nuts and wanted to know the equivalents of whole nuts to ground.

My sources indicate that different nuts give different equivalences, but as a general rule of thumb, 1 pound of ground nuts equals about 3 cups ground nuts; while 1 pound of whole nuts equate to about 6 cups ground nuts, depending on the nut.

Morrison also questioned the cooking time of the recipes. She said her nut cakes were dry around the edges. I re-tested the recipes and both cakes turned out moist and chewy as per the recipe directions.

Sometimes oven temperatures are off, and a few problems might arise in the type and quality of your bakeware. As a general rule of thumb, we suggest you always check cakes not by the exact time, but when a cake tester of toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

The Turciano family of Livonia called with a recipe request for French Crullers. This sounds too good to be true, but the James Gang took in "The Wizard of Oz" down at the Fox Theatre, and in the beginning of the movie when Dorothy falls into the pig sty and is helped out by Huck and the other two farm hands, Aunt Em comes on the scene with a plate of crullers proclaiming "here, have a cruller, you can't work on an empty stomach." My thoughts exactly.

Crullers are richer than doughnuts, so says "The Joy of Cooking." For best results, they should be made with all the ingredients at room temperature so that the dough can be mixed quickly, which in turn prevents the development of gluten in the flour which in turn makes for a heavy and tough dough.

**FRENCH CRULLERS**

- 4 eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 melted shortening
- 3/4 cups all purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1/2 teaspoon soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg or cardamom, optional

Beat eggs until light. Gradually stir in sugar, blend until creamy. Stir in lemon rind, shortening and milk. Mix well. Set aside. In a separate bowl, sift together the dry ingredients. Gently fold the dry ingredients into the egg mixture.

Gently stir until just incorporated. Cover and chill in freezer for 45 minutes. Roll or pipe dough to a thickness of .5-inch. Cut into strips about 2 inches and fry in a deep fat fryer heated to 365 degrees until lightly golden. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

See more reader requested recipes inside. To leave a message for Chef Larry, dial 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1686.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

- What to watch for in Taste next week:
- People who have lost more than 50 pounds share some of their secrets for losing weight, and keeping it off.
- Think spring, and start planning a garden filled with herbs and vegetables.



STEPHEN CASTRELL/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

**Low-fat feast:** Floreen Halpern of Amaryllis catering in Birmingham cuts ribbon to add color to a table filled with flowers and low-fat treats your guests will love.

## Be a gracious host

# ENTERTAIN YOUR LOW-FAT OPTIONS



Entertain guests with festive fare that's low in fat. Floreen Halpern of Amaryllis Catering & Party Planning in Birmingham shares tips, and a delicious menu that will make guests forget the cold, and warm up to healthier eating.

The new year is four weeks old, and you've done a very good job of watching what you eat. Now, the tricky part. It's your turn to have friends over for dinner. Can you serve a festive, memorable dinner everyone will enjoy, and still stay on your low-fat eating plan? Floreen Halpern, owner of Amaryllis Catering & Party Planning

in Birmingham showed me you can. "People love to come to other people's homes. It's the most gracious way to entertain," she said. "Start from a respectful position. Serve your guests a special food that they can enjoy. Don't make them worry about overeating." To prove her point Halpern put together a fuss-free, low-fat menu.

The main course, Shrimp Etouffe consists of shrimp tossed with a tomato based sauce and vegetables served over angel hair pasta or rice. Instead of shrimp, Halpern said the dish could also be served with grilled or broiled boneless, skinless chicken. For a marinade, she likes a mixture of soy sauce, honey and cayenne pepper.

Halpern jazzed up a salad of assorted greens with slices of colorful seedless orange, a strawberry, and rings of red onion. The dressing was a vinaigrette made with blueberry preserves, ginger marmalade and crushed pineapple.

See ENTERTAIN, 2B



## Family works toward improving their diet



**LAURA LETOBAR**

Marnie Britcher of Canton and her husband, Bill, are trying to fulfill their New Year's resolution to eat healthier meals. They have decided to reduce the amount of fat in their diets. To achieve this goal, they have started substituting low-fat and fat-free products in their cooking, and are reducing their intake of red meat. Britcher has two sons - James, 21 and Matthew, a junior at Plymouth Salem High School, are typical young men. Marnie says they have no interest in eating healthy or low-fat foods. We all know this will change once they hit 30!

Britcher has a recipe for Beef Stroganoff that is very popular with her family. "The recipe has been a long-time favorite of our family, but an extremely unhealthy one," wrote Marnie when she submitted the recipe for a make over. "The dish gets served frequently because of the tremendous flavor. The challenge would be to convert it to a heart healthy recipe without losing the flavor."

Because there are so many high fat products in this recipe there are a number of ways to reduce the fat. When I made the recipe I made changes on every high fat item. The ingredients can be replaced a few at a time to adjust for personal preference. I also spoke with Debra DePriest, a meat clerk at the Food Emporium grocery store on Six Mile Road in Livonia. She told me that cube steak is one of the leanest red meats. It is cut from the sirloin tip roast and placed through a tenderizing machine. DePriest said eyes of round roast can also be used. There are only 6.7 grams of fat per 4 ounces of meat. This is very lean. The original recipe calls for Chinese chow mein noodles. At 13.4 grams of fat per 4 ounce serving, these had to be replaced. No Yolk brand wide egg

See FAMILY, 2B



## RECIPE MAKE OVER



**Beef Stroganoff Original Recipe**

- 9 cube steaks (8 ounces each), cut into bite-size pieces
  - 6 tablespoons margarine
  - 3 medium onions, sliced
  - 3 cans (10.75 ounces each) cream of mushroom soup
  - 3 cups sour cream
  - 6 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
  - Garlic salt (to taste)
  - 48 ounces Chinese chow mein noodles
- Brown meat and onions in margarine, add garlic salt to taste, and cook over low heat. Stir occasionally for 10 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Set aside. Combine soup, sour cream, and Worcestershire sauce in a sauce pan. Heat to just before boiling point over low heat. Mix into meat mixture and serve hot over Chinese noodles. Serves 12.

**Beef Stroganoff Reduced-Fat Recipe**

- 9 cube steaks (8 ounces each) cut into bite-size pieces
  - 3 tablespoons Molly McButter imitation powdered butter
  - 3 medium onions, sliced
  - Garlic powder (to taste)
  - 3 cans (10.75 ounces each) Campbell's Healthy Request cream of mushroom soup
  - 3 cups Land O'Lakes fat-free sour cream
  - 3 to 6 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce, low sodium
  - 12 cups cooked No Yolk brand wide egg noodles
- Brown meat and onion in a large non-stick skillet with 1/4 cup water. Add Molly McButter and garlic powder. Cook over low heat. Stir occasionally for 10 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. Set aside. Combine soup, sour cream, and 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce in non-stick sauce pan. Heat to just before boiling point over low heat. Mix into meat mixture. Add more Worcestershire sauce at this point, mixing well. Place one cup of egg noodles on each plate. Serve hot over egg noodles. Serves 12.