

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1994

# TASTE

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## TASTE BUDD



CHEF LARRY JONES

## Curl up with the best new cookbooks

It never ceases to amaze me that there are people who have time to write cookbooks. What amazes me even more is that many of these books get published.

Publishers spend megabucks to make sure foodies like me get a copy, and hope for a positive review. Since the first of the year, I have received well over 400 different cookbooks. I can name the best simply by counting the fingers on one hand.

Even if it was the last cookbook on earth, I would see no reason whatsoever to shell out \$20 for a 155 page cookbook entitled "In the Kitchen with Bob" who is, as he proclaims, "the host of QVC's enormously popular cooking show."

I watch television and I've never heard of QVC, let alone someone by the name of Bob Bowersox.

Then there are respected cookbook authors like James McNair who also penned a 169 page cookbook that sells for \$24.95. His tome, entitled "James McNair Cooks Italian," has a recipe calling for five cups of "fresh young herb leaves or sprigs such as basil, borage, lemon balm, burnet and arugula in addition to one cup of pesticide-free edible flowers such as daisy-like petals."

I ask you dear readers, where in metro Detroit can you find borage and burnet, or a cup of pesticide-free daisy-like petals? Since McNair's cookbook also includes dramatic photographs of the prepared recipes, I figure there are about 100 recipes in his book, so to see James McNair cook Italian, it's costing you a quarter a recipe.

I've gotten much better recipes, from the back of an anonymous P.O. box in the back of "Bon Appetit" magazine. But enough of the negative, there were a few books that did cross my desk that have earned a respected slot on my shelves.

## Homemade treats

If you cook and like to give out homemade delicacies, especially during the holidays, you must pick up "Homemade in the Kitchen" by Barry Bluestein and Kevin Morrissey (Viking Books, \$24.95). This turn-of-the-century cookbook for the 1990s is a source book for rediscovering the kitchen arts of past generations.

With this book you will learn how to bottle Victorian catsups from scratch; how to bottle delectable cordials without a basement distillery; and how to transform a humble bottle of vinegar into a coveted addition to the pantry or gift basket.

When you call or write me with food questions, I have an arsenal of "how to" cookbooks within arm's reach that never go out of style. This year's top informational cookbooks are shared by four writers who leave little to question. Maria Josefa Luria De O'Higgins, "A Taste of Old Cuba" (HarperCollins \$25) contains more than 150 authentic and traditional Cuban dishes. Filled with stories and interesting anecdotes, this topped my list of the best ethnic books. I love paella and the recipe from the book is nothing short of stellar.

## Great reads

Irena Chalmers, culinary humorist and cookbook curmudgeon has a great read with her "Great Food Almanac" (Collins Publishers \$25). This is a book for folks who like to read and enjoy a feast of facts from A to Z all with regards to the world of food. Chock full of hot-lines, informational sources, mail order goodies and the type of information one would share on a bar stool, it's just plain fun to read. The recipe for Tescanade (black olive caviar) is to die for.

The folks at Pillsbury have put together a great book entitled "Healthy Baking" (Viking Press \$22.95) that includes fresh approaches to more than 200 favorite recipes. In addition to an excellent nutritional breakdown of each recipe, I even found a healthy grain bread that you can make in your bread machine, that tastes good to boot!

A little closer to home, the folks at HIP Books have discovered the expertise of Toulia Patsalis from Kitchen Glamour fame and printed up her Pressure Cooker Cookbook (HIP Books \$12) If you own a pressure cooker or anticipate a future purchase this is the authoritative source on everything you can make in a pressure cooker. Try the South of the Border Black Bean Soup, a James Gang favorite recipe, which cooks in 45 minutes from start to finish with a pressure cooker.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Families share favorite Christmas Eve dishes.
- Champagne - pop a cork, let the celebration begin.

Treat yourself to luxurious

# CAVIAR

■ Though often thought of as an expensive food for the wealthy, this delicacy can be found at more affordable prices. An ounce of caviar is enough to give a good sampling to four people.

By ELEANOR AND RAY HEALD  
SPECIAL WRITERS

If you have the idea that caviar is always an expensive food for the wealthy, associated with status and luxury celebrations or trendy restaurants, read on. Here's everything you need to know about this delicacy that has its special niche in the world of gastronomy. You may find prices more affordable than you thought. An ounce of caviar gives four people a good sampling.

Worldwide, caviar is garnering more advocates. This interest is occurring at a time when the traditional source, the prized eggs of the Caspian Sea sturgeon may be endangered. Only 15 years ago, the Soviet Union was exporting 2,000 tons of fish roe annually. Last year, it dropped to 190 tons of Caspian Sea caviar.

The Soviet Union's collapse gave rise to poachers in the Caspian Sea, home to 90 percent of the world's sturgeon and 95 percent of the world's supply of black caviar. Under governance by the former Soviet Union, strict fishing quotas during sturgeon spawning season were enforced. Netting was forbidden.

Without controls, widespread poaching and netting by newly independent fishermen from Zerbajjan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan became commonplace. Sturgeon, which mature between 5 and 20 years old, were caught before they returned to spawning rivers. It was not a good time to be a sturgeon because it seemed that new, weak governments were doing little to stop abuses until rules were again enforced about six months ago.

Poachers lacked skills to process caviar properly. It was imported after poor handling and some was inedible. Immature roe that

See CAVIAR, 2B



CAROLYN COLLINS CAVIAR COMPANY

American caviar: Carolyn Collins with a sampling of her Great Lakes fresh water caviars. Collins started her company in 1983.

## HOW TO SERVE CAVIAR

Place caviar in a small glass bowl set inside a larger bowl filled with crushed ice and serve from a non-metal spoon. Any metal, including silver, will impart a metallic flavor to the berries.

Serve with a glass of delicate style Brut champagne such as Taittinger Brut La Francaise or a 1.5 oz. pour of ice-chilled premium vodka such as Stolichnaya or Tanqueray Sterling. The best Russian caviar should be eaten without any accompaniment of sour cream, chopped eggs or onions. Dressing up less-prized caviars can enhance enjoyment. The following are only a few suggestions:

- Create shaped toasts and place golden-colored salmon caviar on one half and black caviar on the other.
- Carve out small baby red potatoes with a melon baller. Fill with sour cream and top with caviar.
- Top mini-size potato pancakes with sour cream and caviar.
- Top broiled oysters or clams with caviar before serving.

## Lucky parents can count on kids to cook



JIM SANDERSON/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Breading chops: Kathy Day, 11 (left to right), and her sisters, Margaret, 13, and Stephanie, 8, bread pork chops for dinner.

By MARY QUINLEY  
SPECIAL WRITER

There's a whole lot of giggling going on in this Livonia kitchen. But don't be fooled. Some serious dinner preparations are in the making: one dozen breaded pork chops, a tossed salad, mashed potatoes (the real ones), corn and applesauce.

Thirteen-year-old Margaret Day, an honors student, takes charge when mom and dad, Pat and Bob Day, are working. Her two sisters, Kathy, 11 year-old and also an honor roll student and 8-year-old Stephanie provide important roles as assistant chefs. The three girls attend St. Michael's School in Livonia.

"I usually brown the pork chops and Kathy and Stephanie do the breading," said Margaret.

The three-step assembly line breading process begins on the kitchen table. Stephanie, with streaks of powder-white through her bangs and sticky flour-caked fingers enjoys her "fun" assignment. She shakes the plastic bag with the pork chop in it until the flour coat-

ing smothers the meat.

"I help because it would take Margaret a really long time. Besides it's fun and (the pork chops) taste good," said Stephanie.

Step number two, dipping the floured pork chop into an egg and milk mixture is meticulously done by Kathy. Next the chops are coated with cracker crumbs. Kathy also peels the potatoes.

Margaret adds oil to the frying pan, heats it and browns the chops before baking them in the oven.

Other favorite meals the family prepares?

"I like to make tuna burgers," said Margaret.

Everyone enjoys the combination of tuna, American cheese, boiled eggs, celery, mayonnaise and pickled relish baked on a bun.

Who appreciates the dinner the most?

"Probably mom," says Margaret. "The girls have helped in the kitchen since first or second grade."

See SUPPERS, 2B