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beef dinners, as well as carrot trimmings, and potato kugel.

A year-round caterer whose operation is based in Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Kohn triples his staff and works around the clock for about 10 days prior to the beginning of the holiday.

"We take about a week to clean the kitchen and change over all the kitchenware. Then the food is brought in and we begin the cooking and packaging processes which go on 24 hours a day, for three days. The day before the holiday begins, the food is picked up or delivered."

At the end of the 10 days, Kohn's staff has produced about 6,000 matzo balls, one ton of gefilte fish and 1,000 pounds of carrot trimmings.

The real challenge Kohn maintains is generating the food so that it is both delicious and fresh. "We literally meet the fish at the Mackinac Bridge," he says about his Lake Superior whitefish and pickled he uses for his gefilte fish, one of the most popular menu items.

"I depend on Paul," said Libby Sklar. A West Bloomfield homemaker, "I keep a strictly kosher home, so I am busy changing my kitchen over and getting my dishes in order. That in itself takes a lot of time and work. Then I leave the cooking and baking to Paul."

Sklar hosts a large crowd for her Seder, including the families of her three grown children, nieces, nephews and friends.

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Libby Sklar

Paul. Not everyone can cook and bring a dish into your home when you keep a strictly kosher home. Paul's standard of kashruth is reliable and this way everyone at the table can feel comfortable eating the food."

Kohn tailors his role to meet the needs of his clients. For some he is a full service caterer, dispatching service as well as edible. For others he provides complete meals, everything from soup to nuts. Still others choose to use Kohn for fill-in items like soup, side dishes or cakes.

"Often families want grandma to make the chicken soup, or mom to cook the turkey. They are family staples and favorites. My job is to do whatever is needed," he says.

Helen Chait of West Bloomfield is a relocation specialist and mother of two grown sons. This busy professional looks forward to hosting a Seder each year with Kohn's help.

"I know my strengths and I don't bake. I come from a long line of women who don't know how to cook. But what's really dangerous is that some think they can. Paul bakes wonderful cakes that are strictly kosher for Passover. We all look forward to eating his desserts."

His roster of eye and palate pleasing confections include chocolate oblivion; mocha torte, and lemon chiffon meringue torte.

"Paul's desserts certainly go a long way and start the holiday off on a high note," said Sklar.

Besides desserts, Kohn offers full course dinners for as little as \$11.90 per person, "the same as last year's prices," he is quick to add. "If you were to go out, and shop for the items we include in the complete dinners, take the time to prepare the meal yourself, you couldn't do it for less."

Kohn says he is proudest of how smoothly the whole pick-up system works. "It's an assembly line operation that has taken years to perfect. People have a lot of last minute things to do before the holiday. No one wants to spend time waiting in line."

Buyers move from station to station collecting their orders, and are usually done within a half hour. Flowers, wine, cookie trays, and other impulse buys are usually available at the pickup area as well.

Although Kohn will deliver for a \$15 fee, there are those who look forward to picking up their orders at Congregation Shaarey Zedek. "I count on meeting half the Jewish world there," Chait says. "It marks the beginning of the holiday for me."

To that she adds, "I take joy in my family being together. I love to eat good food. I take no joy in collapsing at the dinner table. I'll stick to my line of work and let Paul do the cooking."

Quality Kosher Catering is at 27375 Bell Road, Southfield, (810) 352-7758, f-x (810) 352-9118. See recipes inside.

Passover cookbook features new and traditional recipes

Passover, the Jewish celebration of freedom and springtime renewal, has for thousands of years been a festival of wonderful food. Susan Friedland's "The Passover Table: New and Traditional Recipes for Your Seder and the Entire Passover Week" (Harper Perennial, \$17), presents this rich cooking tradition as it has flourished in Jewish homes around the world.

Amid full-color photographs, more than 40 delicious recipes for Passover classics and tempting new dishes made practical and easy for the Passover cook.

Passover recalls the central event in Jewish history — the Exodus from Egypt. While the essence of the holiday is a sense of liberation and the appreciation of freedom, its primary expression is in the eating of special foods and following the order of the traditional Seder Feast, as specified in the "Haggadah," the Passover book of readings and commentaries.

Here are some recipes from the cookbook to try.

MATZO CHICKEN PIE

6 to 7 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cups chopped onions
2 tablespoons minced garlic
1½ cups thinly sliced mushrooms (about ½ pound)
3 cups bite-sized pieces cooked chicken (about 14 ounces)
Salt to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste
1 cup chopped parsley
5 eggs, lightly beaten
5 to 6 matzos
1 cup chicken stock

Heat 5 tablespoons of the oil in a large skillet. Slowly sauté the onion and garlic until softened and translucent, about 10 minutes. Add the mushrooms and sauté until soft, an

additional 5 minutes. Let cool. Stir in the chicken, salt, pepper, parsley, and eggs.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Lightly oil a shallow 6-to-8-cup baking dish.

Dip 2 of the matzos into the stock until well moistened but not falling apart. Lay them in the baking dish, breaking pieces to fit. Spoon half the chicken mixture on top, and cover with 1 more moistened matzo, the remaining chicken, and the 2 remaining matzos.

Four 2 teaspoons oil over the top and bake for 15 minutes. Sprinkle with the remaining oil and bake an additional 15 minutes, or until the top is a rich, crisp brown. Let cool for 10 minutes, then serve. Serves 6 to 8.

COCONUT MACAROONS

Vegetable oil
3 egg whites
½ cup sugar
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
2 cups (6 ounces) finely grated unseasoned coconut

Preheat the oven to 275 degrees F. Line 2 cookie sheets with wax paper and grease the paper lightly with vegetable oil.

Beat the egg whites until foamy. Gradually add the sugar and beat until the eggs are stiff and shiny. Add the lemon juice and peel. Gently fold the coconut into the whites, mixing just to combine.

Put the batter in a pastry bag fitted with a 7B or 8 star tip and pipe cookies onto the cookie sheets.

Alternately, form the macaroons with 2 teaspoons and place on the sheet.

Bake 45 to 60 minutes, or until the macaroons are lightly colored.

Halfway through the baking, switch the cookie sheets, top to bottom, front to back. Let the macaroons cool on a wire rack before

storing them in an airtight container, or where they'll keep for several days. These cookies may also be frozen. Makes about 40 macaroons.

VEGETABLE CUTLETS

1½ to 2 cups minced red or yellow peppers or a mixture of both
2 tablespoons olive oil
1½ cups grated carrots (4 carrot) (1 cup)
½ pound raw spinach, cleaned, trimmed of coarse stems, and chopped (2 tightly packed cups)
1 pound (3 medium) potatoes, boiled and mashed (2 cups)
6 tablespoons grated raw onion (1 large)
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1½ teaspoons salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 cup matzo meal
Vegetable oil

Saute the peppers in the olive oil until soft, about 15 or 20 minutes. Add all of the remaining ingredients except the vegetable oil and let the mixture stand for 30 minutes or overnight, refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before continuing.

You can either fry or bake the cutlets. To fry them, heat about ¼ inch of vegetable oil in a large skillet. Form each patty with about ¼ cup of the mixture. Flatten the patties slightly and fry them in batches for about 6 minutes on the first side, then turn and fry for 3 or 4 minutes on the second side. Drain on paper towels and serve immediately.

To bake the cutlets, put the patties on a lightly greased baking sheet and place in a preheated 350 degree F oven for about 10 minutes; turn the patties and bake for another 7 to 10 minutes.

Makes about 40 patties; serves 6 to 8.

Caterer shares chicken soup recipe

See related story on Taste front.

CHICKEN SOUP

4 pounds chicken bones, necks, etc.
1 gallon water
1½ carrots peeled, cut in 2-inch pieces
½ bunch celery peeled, cut in 2-inch pieces
1 large onion, chopped
½ bunch garlic cut in quarters
5 stems parsley
1 sprig fresh thyme
½ sprig rosemary

3 slices — whole
1 bay leaf
5 whole, white peppercorns
Salt to taste
Add enough water to cover chicken bones and bring to a boil. Drain water, rinse thoroughly. Add cold water and rest of ingredients. Bring to boil. Skim off fat, simmer for 3 hours. Strain and season to taste.

MATZOX BALLS

6 whole eggs
1 pinch white pepper

½ tablespoon salt
1 cup cottonseed oil
1 cup water
1½ cup matzo meal or 10½ ounces
Mix all liquids, eggs and seasonings well. Add matzo and mix until smooth. Let rest 45 minutes. Bring stockpot full of water to boil. Roll batter into 20 balls. Drop into boiling water. Cook for 45 minutes. Serve in chicken soup.

Recipes from Quality Kosher Catering.

Crunchy celery is guilt-free treat



LOIS THEILKE

There's a lot more to celery than crunch. Take the low-calorie count, ease of preparation, compatibility with other foods, adaptability to various cooking styles and, of course, its delicious, refreshing flavor, and you can see why it's one of the most popular items at the produce counter.

The celery we enjoy today is the result of more than 200 years of cultivation. Originally native to the Mediterranean area, wild celery was a fibrous, bitter-tasting plant, practically inedible. Woven garlands of wild celery have been found in Egyptian tombs, and the ancient Greeks and Romans prized celery for its alleged medicinal qualities. In the early 1800s, a gardener in Italy transplanted wild celery seedlings into the rich, fertile soil of his backyard, to his surprise, the plants developed a sweet taste. France was the first nation to appreciate celery's culinary potential, and its cooks used the plants extensively as a seasoning for stews, soups and meats.

Today, celery is in excellent supply at the produce counter. In the green Pascal variety, preferred for its mild, distinctive flavor and

string-free quality.

When buying celery select stalks that are rigid and firm with a glossy surface of light to medium green. The leaves should be bright green and fresh. Ribs should be crisp, of medium thickness and snap easily. Store wrapped celery hearts and packaged celery in the refrigerator immediately after purchase. Remove and discard any discolored tips, leaves and damaged ribs. If you're not going to use it immediately, trim a thin slice from the ribs and wash it thoroughly, drain well and dry. For best results, place it in a plastic bag in the vegetable drawer of the refrigerator. If you are going to use the whole root and end, trim the leaves from the stalks. Reserve the root and leaves for use in stocks, soups, stews, sauces, etc. Separate and wash ribs thoroughly in cold water, rinse, drain and prepare as desired.

When properly cared for, celery should remain fresh and usable for at least two weeks. To freshen celery, trim the root end and tops and place it in very cold (iced) water for several minutes until it's crisp again. Celery may be cut up to three days before using. Refrigerate it in a tightly sealed plastic bag or container without water.

Don't overcook celery. Add it to soups and stews 20 minutes before cooking time is up. To keep it at its crunchiest, add it to

sandwich fillings as close to serving time as possible. One medium bunch (about 1½ pounds) yields 4 to 5 cups sliced or diced raw celery, or 3 to 4 cups sliced or diced, cooked celery. One large rib (2½ ounces) equals ½ cup diced celery.

For extra crunch, add diced celery to your favorite jarred salsa. For a homemade touch, add some thinly sliced celery to canned soups when heating and as a garnish immediately before serving. Celery adds moisture, flavor and texture to turkey meatballs and meat loaves. Cut-up celery adds a crunchy contrast to the beans in vegetarian chilis. For a cool accompaniment to spicy Indian dishes, mix thinly sliced celery and cucumbers with plain yogurt. Place a bed of celery and carrot sticks under fish fillets. Bake until fish flakes easily. For a perfect party appetizer, stuff celery with a mixture of curry powder and cottage cheese or cream cheese studded with diced dried apricots. Add celery leaves to salad for a burst of freshness. Before roasting, stuff chicken with sliced celery and onions mixed with herbs such as thyme, sage, dill or poultry seasoning. Celery lends itself readily to a wide variety of ethnic seasonings.

Lois Theilke of Birmingham is an extension home economist for the Cooperative Extension Service, Oakland County office.

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DOUBLE COUPONS 50¢

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