

## TASTE

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## TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Hunt down recipes, tips  
for preparing wild game

**A**h, the thrill of the hunt. For centuries, man hunted all the animals we now eat before he domesticated them. Our tastes for the exotic continue to increase.

With proper connections, the game hunter who ventures into the north woods and emerges with nothing more than a hangover can visit any number of butcher shops and procure anything from fillets of white tail deer to mallard breasts, alligator, venison sausage, ostrich, and even loin of lion.

Unfortunately, it's usually a spouse or significant other who are left with the responsibility of preparing the wild game so that it tastes like it just came from Julia Child's oven. More often than not, it's the camp (or home) cook who shoulders the blame of the "it's too gamey tasting," comments that usually follow a wild game dinner.

If your hunter places the blame for bad-tasting wild game on your shoulders, be sure you hand 'em this article. The flavor of any freshly hunted game depends partly on how it was handled in the woods or field.

Venerable metro area chef Miles Cihelka, who has a four-part video series on the proper dressing, preparing, cooking and storing of wild game, says, "improper field dressing and the transport of wild game can ruin it."

Furthermore, "the animal needs to age and drain properly before butchering, claims Cihelka, who was lucky enough to be leaving for the north woods tomorrow.

Fortunately, in addition to Cihelka's video series (available at all Kitchen Glamour stores for \$19.95) there is a rather aged, but still widely used book on the subject. The "L.L. Bean Game and Fish Cookbook" by Angus Cameron & Judith Jones (copyright 1983 by Random House Publishers, \$25), although not as descriptive and visual as Cihelka's video, suggests various ways to age, store, process, clean, cook and serve a vast assortment of wild game.

If you have to explain to your spouse that the \$600 you spent for four days at deer camp was well spent, you can walk through the door with just about any specially venison cut from Michigan farm-raised white tail deer.

## Farm-raised game

Barb Francis, who along with husband Don owns and operates Butcher Boy Game Meats in Warren, says that they can sell you everything from a \$4.95 per pound leg of venison to a \$7.95 boneless roast of white tail deer. Butcher Boy is metro Detroit largest supplier of exotic game. It's all farm-raised and USDA certified. The Francis' told me that there are more than 300 farms that raise venison for retail sale, and hopefully, that fact helps reduce poaching. Butcher Boy Meats is at 13869 Herbert in Warren, and the Francis' can be reached at (810) 779-0600.

Another major league player in the retail wild game market is Polarica Game Inc., who mail order out of San Francisco and New York City. In addition to exotic wild game such as elk, antelope, wild boar, pheasant, kangaroo and rattlesnake, Polarica also is a major handler of fresh wild and cultivated mushrooms, truffles, exotic fruit, edible blossoms and miniature vegetables. You can call them at (800) GAME-4US to request a product and price list.

## Helpful books

Of course, my idea of hunting is going to a store where there are volumes of books with everything I need to know about preparing wild game. I hunt for cookbooks that include proper cutting techniques, aging qualities and preparation details.

One of the days when all that was necessary was to fry up two pounds of onions in enough grease to warrant chest pains. Nowadays, savvy hunters know that tougher cuts, especially from the legs of the deer, need to be completely removed of all fat (tallow) and slow roasted, preferably with a continual brush of a marinade for optimum results. Leaner, more tender roasts and tenderloins can be baked with a little bacon or salt pork to assist in keeping the meat juicy.

Leaner game birds like pheasant, duck, partridge or wild turkey can be larded the old-fashioned way, wrapped in a little bacon or simply grilled. An all-around basic informational book entitled "The Home Book of Smoke Cooking Meat Fish and Game" by Jack Sleight and Ray Hull, (copyright 1977, Stackpole Books, \$12.95) offers suggestions on home smoking techniques that can be done anywhere from inside a house-hold oven to the largest smokehouse.

• See recipes inside.

## LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

■ Sandra-Dalka Prybyla shares weight loss secrets.

THANKSGIVING  
IS A  
FEAST FOR  
MEMORIES

Thanksgiving at home: Claudia Larson (Holly Hunter) and her mother Adele, (Anne Bancroft) share Thanksgiving dinner in "Home for the Holidays."

BY MARY QUINLEY  
SPECIAL WRITER

**H**olly Dieroff loves to go home to Wausau, Wis., for the holidays. She looks forward to "the big get together with all my relatives." This year, her Michigan-based family is grateful she's staying in Livonia.

Holly is planning a traditional Thanksgiving Day feast, which includes a tasty sausage stuffing recipe handed down from her grandmother.

Holly, who lives in Livonia, doesn't like her turkey stuffing.

"Every year I try it, but I don't like the taste of sage," she said. "I make it because everyone else likes it."

All of her dinner guests give her rave reviews — especially her husband.

"I love stuffing. I loved my mom's when I was growing up. I love Holly's (stuffing). I will eat it hot or cold the next five days in a row," said Tom.

Frequently, Holly's parents and a close family friend visit Michigan during the Thanksgiving holidays.

"If my mom is here, it's more fun to cook. I enjoy making the stuffing and turkey. I love the smell of turkey."

Holly enjoys her Thanksgiving gatherings. Yet, some families experience major stress during this time of year, as seen in Paramount Pictures' recently released comedy "Home for the Holidays."

Readers recently shared some of their funny holiday memories in exchange for tickets to a preview screening of the movie, which opened Friday, Nov. 3 at metro Detroit movie theaters.

The movie stars Holly Hunter as a single mother who returns home to spend Thanksgiving with her family, even if she can't get her 15-

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year-old daughter to follow.

Diane Vidovic of Canton saw the movie and remarked, "there were a lot of things that I could relate to — like brothers and sisters fighting. I'm sure (most) people can relate to the movie. Everyone has an aunt or someone eccentric."

Vidovic recalls her family's "silliest after Thanksgiving dinner time."

Her sister-in-law made Jell-O Jigglers for the kids. They lay untouched on the table until "my brother picked up (an orange) one ... (using his tongue) with a Jell-O Jiggler." Everyone tried to outdo the other person, says Vidovic, as "grandma right down to the youngest child" were

laughing hysterically.

She cautions readers: this (behavior) takes some tolerance of poor table manners.

Vidovic remembers Thanksgiving dinners "around the television set with the football game as he focus."

She and her husband have succeeded in "shifting the focus from football to the celebration." Sometimes her dinner is served after the game, but the TV is off while her family (including three teenage sons and other relatives) enjoy the turkey and trimmings.

Vidovic feels that "the key to enjoying the holidays is to keep a one-on-one relationship throughout the year."

Like Holly Dieroff, Vidovic prepares a stuffing that was used by two prior generations. The combination of shredded cabbage, carrots, celery, onions and cooked rice is a favorite with her family and it helps "baste the turkey."

So — why not invite the family over for Thanksgiving dinner? Go see "Home for the Holidays," which is directed by Jodie Foster and also stars Robert Downey, Jr., Anne Bancroft, and Charles Durning.

There's even a "Home for the Holidays Cookbook," (hardcover, \$14.95) that includes 75 kitchen tested holiday recipes — many of them from the film.

"Honestly, my favorite part of the holidays," writes Jodie Foster in the cookbook, "is the week that follows. After I've either been loaded down (or done some loading down) with serious leftovers, my friends, and sometimes returning family, start dropping by for spontaneous dinners. There's a lot of laughing and microwave beeps. Some people only go for the stuffing. Others opt for the whole nine yards."

• See recipes inside.

## Green Bean Bake a holiday tradition



CAMPBELL SOUP COMPANY

Crisco dish: Campbell's Green Bean Bake celebrates its 40th birthday this Thanksgiving.

BY KEELY WYGONIK  
STAFF WRITER

**F**amily traditions are a part of Thanksgiving dinner, and one often repeated is "Campbell's Green Bean Bake."

This "quintessential American recipe" celebrates its 40th anniversary this Thanksgiving. According to a recent national opinion survey, an amazing 50 of Americans have enjoyed this recipe — a combination of green beans, condensed cream of mushroom soup and French fried onions.

The survey, conducted by Opinion Research Corporation, also showed that 38 percent of Americans think the best time to serve this recipe is at Thanksgiving or throughout the holidays.

There have only been three changes to this recipe since it was created by Campbell in 1955. It now allows for the use of canned, frozen or fresh green beans; variations use Campbell's Healthy Request and Reduced Fat Cream Soups; and it has evolved from a simple meal idea into one of the most popular recipes of all-time.

With Thanksgiving, comes often-asked questions about thawing and preparing the "Big Bird," and "ready prepared holiday turkey dinners."

"Remember the safe way to defrost a turkey is in the refrigerator," said Sylvia Trelliman, home economist for the Michigan State University Extension Service — Oakland County. "Room temperature is not safe. The outer area may warm up to a dangerous temperature to cause the growth of bacteria, even if the inside remains frozen. There's still hope if you forget to defrost your turkey in time."

The bigger the turkey, the longer it takes to defrost. A 20-24 pound turkey will defrost in 4-5 days in the refrigerator. A 12-16 pound turkey in 2-3 days.

"You have a safe easy option," said Trelliman. "Use the cold water method which hastens thawing safely. The rule of thumb for fastest defrosting of a turkey safely in water is to plan on 30 minutes per pound. Place the bird in its unopened bag in the sink and cover it completely with cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes to insure safe effective thawing. Rotate turkey occasionally. Do not use this procedure if wrapping has been torn. Thawing time ranges from 11-12 hours for a 20-24 pound turkey to 4-6 hours for an eight to 12 pound turkey."

If you're buying a prepared turkey dinner, pick up the food hot and keep it hot, not just warm.

Set the oven temperature high enough to keep the turkey at 140 degrees F. or above. Use a meat thermometer to check.

Stuffing and side dishes must also stay hot. Cover dishes with foil to keep food moist.

If you're not eating until later — more than two hours after food is ready — remove all stuffing from the turkey immediately and refrigerate. Cut turkey off bone, slice and refrigerate with side dishes. Reheat thoroughly to 165 degrees F.

If you have other questions on safe turkey handling or other food safety questions, call the Food and Nutrition Hotline (810) 858-0904 or the Butterball Turkey Hotline, (800) 323-4848.

• See recipes inside.