

TASTE

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TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

No beans about it, legumes are nutritious

Pick up any health-oriented magazine these days, and between stories about getting legendary "ubs," and the importance of exercise, you'll probably read something about the benefits of beans.

European countries have long relied on the fabled legume. In the Middle East, people eat more beans than meat, fish and poultry combined. Even our government is implying the health benefits of more legumes via their updated food pyramid.

But for most of us, cooking beans at home probably evolves around opening a can of kidney beans and stirring them into a beef flavored chili. Let's face it, if we need to increase the amount of beans in our diet repertoire, we should know the basics.

Selecting beans

Let's begin at the market. In order to select good beans, you need to know they come in two varieties: dried and canned. There are some types of frozen beans, but for the most part, they are inferior for use after defrosting.

When purchasing dried beans, inspect the package and look for firm, clean, whole beans of uniform size and color. My only criteria for purchasing dried beans is to know the store I'm buying from and expect a fairly good turnover. Canned beans are always acceptable, and their best attribute is their time-saving characteristics.

Some of the better tasting beans (like black beans) are a little more elusive and you'll only find them at upscale grocers. If you have a problem finding your favorite bean in dry or canned form, it might be because of the lack of demand for it in that store. Check out the bean selection at Papa Joe's, Vie's, Wustborn and Strawberry Hills. Bulk purchases can be made in sizes ranging from a few ounces to a few pounds.

As a general rule of thumb, especially when some recipes call for dry, some cooked, some canned and some soaked, you can roughly bet that a one pound package of dried beans equals about 2 cups dry and 6 cups soaked. Dry beans expand to about 2 1/2 times their original size when soaked. One 16 ounce can (drained) will equal about 1 2/3 cups cooked beans.

Dried beans can be stored for fairly long periods of time, especially when kept dry in a sealed container or canister. You can immediately tell if dried beans are old when you go to clean and soak them. Any bean that "float" after washing are probably old. Although beans go through a series of threshing, sifting and cleaning processes prior to packaging, none of these ordinarily include washing because the moisture could cause the beans to start sprouting. Hence, the need to wash prior to soaking and cooking.

Soaking

Perhaps no other factor in bean cookery is more controversial than whether beans should be soaked, and if so, for how long. Before beans can really cook and tenderize, they need to rehydrate.

Dried beans contain only about 15 percent moisture in the dry form and rehydrate to 60 percent moisture when fully cooked. Another important factor about the soaking of dried beans suggests that by changing the soaking water before cooking, many of the indigestible soluble sugars in beans dissolve in the soak water and go down the drain. If you have a problem with gas, discarding the soaking water should alleviate it. If you are afraid of throwing away some valuable nutrients, don't be because scientists tell me that no significant amount of essential nutrients are lost.

The basic rule of thumb for soaking is 1 pound of dried beans to 10 cups of water. Hot water will do a "quick soak" that can be accomplished in 4 hours. Bringing the water to a boil, boiling water and beans for 3 minutes, then removing from heat can be done in one hour. Yours truly usually places the beans in a big pot with cold water and allows them to soak overnight for optimum results. Just a word of caution, use a big enough pot.

For plain boiled beans to serve as a hot vegetable or for use in a casserole, you can cover one pound of soaked beans with 6 cups of water and boil gently for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Of course, canned beans are always acceptable, but pound for pound and dollar for dollar, expect to pay about double for the convenience of using canned bean products compared to dry.

There's only one real trick that I learned about cooking beans — you should never add salt to the cooking beans until just before they are cooked. Salt added to the water during soaking and early cooking will toughen beans.

• See recipes inside.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

• Pamper mom with kid-friendly recipes.



DAN DEANSTARY PHOTOGRAPHER

"Gas-tronomic" delights: Chefs Kevin Enright, of Oakland Community College (left to right), and Timothy Tout of Peter's Palate Pizzeria present a tasty preview of Cranbrook Schools' Le Gala de Cuisine. Bengt L. Swenson is in the background with his 1948 Rolls Royce, which will be on display at the event.

CRANBROOK REVS UP FOR

Le Gala

BY KEELY WYGONIK • STAFF WRITER

Le Gala de Cuisine

When: 3-6 p.m.

Sunday, May 5

Where: In the Eliel Saarinen-designed Quadrangle, Cranbrook Schools, 550 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills.

Cost: \$125 (friend), \$150 (patron) and \$200 (benefactor).

For ticket information, call (810) 540-3356. For general information, call (810) 645-3000.

totalled \$64,000. This year's goal is \$80,000 to \$100,000.

Guests will be invited to sample hors d'oeuvres, entrees and desserts, and a variety of coffees and fine wines from over 60 metropolitan Detroit restaurants and food providers in the Eliel Saarinen-designed Quadrangle.

"Some of the area's best restaurants participate, and it's a beautiful setting," said Annette Mueller of Bloomfield Township who is co-chairing the event with Annette Arrington of Bloomfield Hills, and has been on the committee for four years. "We provide the cooking equipment, and the restaurants donate the food and staff. This year we're having a table decor contest that will be a feast for our guests' eyes. It will be judged by three Oakland County Judges — Edward Sosnick, David Breck, and Joan Young. The prize plaque is being underwritten by Marriott Education Services."

This year's Le Gala de Cuisine is also marking the 100th year of the automobile. Five vintage cars bearing a historical tie to the Cranbrook-founding Deeth family will be on display including a 1948 Rolls Royce owned by Bengt and Elaine Swenson of Franklin, a 1908 Winton, 1929 Pierce-Arrow and a Duesenberg. The Swensons were happy to show their cars. "Anything for Cranbrook. It's a great institution," said Bengt Swenson who happily volunteered his car for the photo. It was raining that day, and I was concerned the photo might have to be moved indoors. "The show must go on," he told me. Lucky for us, the rain on Monday stopped when it was time to take the photo. The Swenson's 1948 Rolls Royce Silver Wraith five

passenger Saloon Body by Hooper is a one-of-a-kind body design developed for the Maharaj of Mysore, India. The car has won national awards in shows across the country.

In between bites you can place bids in an automotive-related silent auction for the chance to win a variety of great prizes including a Goodyear Blimp ride; driving school tickets; original automotive art, tickets to a Mendon Brook Concours d'Elegance black-tie dinner; auto memorabilia; and an Olympic package valued at \$14,000 to the summer games in Atlanta, Ga.

"The winner of the Olympic package will spend five days at the Olympics," said Mueller, whose son Jay is a senior at Cranbrook. "The package includes airfare for two, accommodations, and tickets to the events."

Continuous entertainment will be provided by Cranbrook Kingswood musicians and dancers under the direction of Sorkis Hagman and Jessica Sinclair. Posters featuring student photo work juried by internationally acclaimed photographer Balthus Karah will be on display.

"It adds a lovely accent to the day," said Annette Arrington whose daughter, Charlotte is a sophomore at Cranbrook's upper school. "Approximately 25 percent of the students at Cranbrook receive scholarships," said Arrington. "Horizons-Upward Bound supports 200 inner city high school kids. They make a commitment to work with a tutor on Saturdays, and attend Cranbrook each summer. Over 95 percent of the students who participate in the program go on to college."

Besides memories, guests will take home a cookbook featuring recipes from well-known metro Detroit chefs. "We started the event with them 18 years ago when they were looking for someone to partner with," said Certified Executive Chef Kevin Enright of Troy, president of the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine Association, and a culinary arts instructor at Oakland Community College in Farmington Hills. "We help them organize chefs, and make recommendations. Cranbrook is a high quality school, and they have a following. It's a classy event that's held in a nice setting at a good time of year. It gives local chefs more exposure, and they do it for the Michigan Chefs de Cuisine Association because a portion of the proceeds is for scholarships."

Cranbrook students will also be a driving force behind the event's success. Besides entertaining guests, they will help set up, and provide helping hands where needed.

• See recipes inside.

Participants

Auburn Hills: The Palace Grill
Beverly Hills: 2 Unique Caterers
Birmingham: Allyn's Brite and Bakes
La Petite Fleur; Mochus Restaurants and Pastry Shop;
Many's Cookies and Bakery;
Men-ham of Vito Marketplaces;
Mary's Meats and the Great Sealed Co.; Midtown Cafe,
Ocean Grill

Bloomfield Hills: The Palate Pizzeria;
Peter's Palate Pizzeria;
Restaurants at the Kingsley
Detroit: Detroit Athletic Club;
Oven One

Dexter: Cosmos Heritage Inn
Farmington Hills: The Peppers
Ridgewood Cafe and Bakery
Oakland Community College
Harrison Township: Mar and Ray's Restaurant and Banquet Center

Lake Orion: Indianapolis Country Club
Livonia: Five Lakes Golf
Novi: Tom Chaz

Pontiac: Bistro Allegro, Colangelo's, Pike Street
Rochester: Ye Old Wine Shoppe
Royal Oak: Ray's Ice Cream

Southfield: Golden Mushroom
Westland: Tom's Tavern Bar
Sterling Heights: Evan River Cafe

Troy: Joan's Gourmet
Coke, Chaz's Cafe, The Double Tap Inn
Tulsa: Cafe Avenue Cafe

Westland: Michigan Star
Clippers Dimes Train
Warren: Adamo's Italian Restaurant

West Bloomfield: Envy; Savino
Frozen Desserts, Trinite
And...

The Coffee Company; Coca Cola
Bottling Company of Michigan;
Marion's Cafe; Guild Michigan
Culinary Teams and Powers Distributing Company.

Easy entrees add fiesta flavor to Cinco de Mayo celebrations

Cinco de Mayo, the fifth of May, is a great time to gather friends for a fiesta. One of Mexico's most enthusiastically celebrated holidays, it commemorates a day-long battle in 1862 in which a poorly equipped Mexican army, outnumbered three to one, triumphed over Napoleon's toughest troops as they tried to take over the country. The day is celebrated much like our Fourth of July, with parades and parties, fun and feasting.

Cinco de Mayo falls on Sunday this year. Why not join in the spirit of the holiday with a week-end fiesta? These two recipes from San Antonio's pace Picante Sauce Test Kitchens will make party preparations fuss-free. Each recipe can be prepared pronto, without exotic ingredients or hard-to-handle chiles.

Camarones al Mojo de Ajo (Spicy Shrimp in Garlic Sauce) is a boldly seasoned mix of shrimp and tomatoes with garlic and a splash of lime juice. Serve it over rice.

In a single-skillet Arroz con Pollo Pronto (Quick Chicken and Rice), golden brown, boneless chicken breasts are topped with a saucy mix of rice, black beans and corn seasoned with picante sauce and ground cumin, one of Mexico's favorite seasonings. A sprinkling of Cheddar cheese completes the dish.

Team either entree with a salad of tossed greens, avocado, ripe olives and red onions, add a favorite dessert and your dinner is ready in no time.

CAMARONES AL MOJO DE AJO
(SPICY SHRIMP IN GARLIC SAUCE)

- 1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) whole peeled tomatoes, cut up
- 1/2 cup picante sauce
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 4 cups hot cooked rice

Place shrimp in shallow nonmetallic dish. Pour lime juice over shrimp. Toss to coat. Set aside. In medium skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add garlic and cook until tender. Add tomatoes, picante sauce and chili powder. Heat to a boil. Reduce heat to low. Cover and cook 10 minutes.

Add shrimp mixture. Cook 5 minutes or until shrimp turn pink. Serve over rice. Serves 4.
Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes.

• See chicken recipe inside.



PACE PICANTE SAUCE TEST KITCHENS

Festive fare: On Cinco de Mayo, the fifth of May, or any day you're feeling festive, look to Camarones al Mojo de Ajo (Spicy Shrimp in Garlic Sauce) to provide fast fiesta flavor.