

SUNDAY, JULY 27, 1997

TASTE

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FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD



RICK HALBERG

Slow down, make time to enjoy food

Being a small business owner, I get lots of mail and solicitations from all sorts of organizations, most of it ends up in the circular file. Just the other night as we were hosting our third annual Italian wine dinner at Emily's, my friend Chip Delsner from AHD Vineyarders showed me something very interesting. It was called "The Slow Food Manifesto," a statement of passion from Italy.

There in 1986 on the eve of the opening of a McDonald's at the Spanish Steps, a member of the Italian gastronomic society Arcigola was offended at the thought of McDonald's in Rome. So Arcigola formed the International Movement for the Defense of, and the Right to Pleasure.

Other countries learned of this, and were quick to follow. In 1989, at the Opera Comique in Paris, representatives from each country involved endorsed the Slow Food Manifesto, which reads:

Slow Food Manifesto
International Movement for the Defense of the Right to Pleasure
"Our century, which began, and has developed, under the sign of industrial civilization, first invented the machine, and then took it as its life model.
"We are enslaved by speed, and all have succumbed to the same corrupting virus. Fast Life, which disrupts our habits, pervades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat Fast Foods. To be worthy of the name, Homo Sapiens should rid themselves of speed before it reduces them to a species in danger of extinction. A firm defense of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of Fast Life. May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow enjoyment preserve us from the disease of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency.
"Our defense should begin at the table with Slow Food. Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking, and banish the degrading effects of Fast Food.
"In the name of productivity, Fast Life has changed our way of living and threatens our environment and landscape. Slow Food is now the only true and progressive answer. That is what real culture is about: developing taste rather than demeaning it. And what better way to set about this than an international exchange of experiences, knowledge and projects.
"Slow Food guarantees a better future. Slow Food is an idea that needs many qualified supporters who can help turn this (slow) motion into an international movement, with the little snail as its symbol."

Slowing down
I share this passion, as I'm sure many others do, and am in the process of starting a local chapter of the Slow Food Movement. Here at home we are all guilty of forgetting the pleasure of time, what it means to "slow down."
I suggest we take a few moments each day, and try to bring back to our lives a sense of what this all means.
Go to your local farmers market as a family and plan your evening meal from the bounty of our local harvest. Pick fresh fruits and vegetables right from the field, and go home and prepare them.
Share your family's heritage as it relates to food traditions. Support your local, family-owned restaurants, which prepare food with love and passion. Endorse the Slow Food Manifesto, even if just a little. Take time to prepare meals at home with your family, no matter how simple.
As time goes on I hope to continue writing about out of the ordinary, thought-provoking food issues that I feel strongly about. The Slow Food Movement is at the top of my list.
For more information about Slow Food e-mail me at picgrick@aol.com, or call me at Emily's (248) 349-0505.

Rick Halberg, chef/owner of Emily's Restaurant in Northville lives in Farmington Hills with his family. He has established a reputation as one of Michigan's outstanding chefs. Rick is an extensive traveler, and is known for his fine French inspired Mediterranean and Italian cuisine. Look for his column on the third Sunday of the month in Taste. See recipes inside.

DINNER'S EASY WHEN YOU TOSS OR ROLL

BY KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER

Take a gamble this summer, roll or toss flavorful grilled meats, grains, or beans with fresh picked vegetables and greens to make summer salad and sandwiches we bet your family will enjoy.
"It's the way we like to eat," said Andrea Chesman author of "Salad Suppers: Fresh Inspirations for Satisfying One-Dish Meals," (Chapters Publishing, 1997). "People are eating more vegetables. Salad suppers are easy, quick to make and ideal for when the weather is hot. I really love salad greens, and making a meal around that."

Rollup sandwiches - salads wrapped in tortillas, pita or lavash bread are very popular, and another option for people game to try something new.

Those trendy Californians were the first to wrap meat, grains and vegetables in flat bread, and the trend spread like wildfire. Like salads, the filling can be just about any type of meat such as grilled steak or deli turkey, and/or grain and vegetable combination.

"People think these rollup sandwiches are like health food, but they're not," cautions Juliane Steenkamer a registered dietitian at Garden City Hospital. "The biggest problem is their size, they're huge, some can be 16 ounces. They can also be high in fat and calories. One on the market is 600 calories."

That's a lot for someone watching their weight. Steenkamer says you have to cut 600 calories a day to lose a pound a week.

Instead of taking chances with

your health, she recommends making rollup sandwiches at home, or cutting them in half to share with a friend, or for lunch the next day.

"For the person who eats lunch out occasionally they're fine," she said. "But some people eat out every day!"

Lavash is a nutritious wrapper. "It's very low in fat, only 2.5 grams of fat per slice, and if you cut it in half, you're getting even less fat," said Steenkamer. It's easy to ruin a perfectly healthy salad or sandwich with cheese, meat, and dressing.

"Use low-fat cheese, low-fat or fat-free dressings and dips," suggests Steenkamer.

"Load up on extra vegetables for color and texture. Use lean meats such as turkey. A little crumbled feta or sharp cheese goes a long way. It adds a lot of flavor. Shredded cheese disperses the flavor throughout."

Thinly slice vegetables for rollups, try cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, chopped green onion, alfalfa and bean sprouts. "Don't put dressing on your sandwich, use it like a dip, and that way you can control the amount," said Steenkamer. "Try adding garbanzo and kidney beans to salads and sandwiches for protein and fiber. Fruits aren't just for fruit salads. Add plums, mandarin oranges, white raisins and dried cranberries and cherries to green salads. Serve dressing on the side. Thin ranch dressing with skim milk. Use low-fat dressing. One of my favorites is three parts balsamic vinegar to one part extra virgin olive oil."

Go easy on nuts, sunflower seeds, chow mein noodles, croutons, and other salad toppers, which can add extra calories. Sprinkle All Bran cereal on salads for extra crunch.

John Muster owner of Mr. Muster's Chicken & Ribs on Five Mile Road and Newburgh Road in Livonia began selling main dish salads and rollup sandwiches in 1991 before they were popular.

"Rollups use less bread, they're convenient, and easy to eat," said Muster a Livonia resident who also caters parties, business lunches and other special events. "They're perceived as healthier for you."

Muster recommends using anything you like - chicken, fish, vegetables, cheese, and a variety of meats. Rollups like salads can be served hot or cold.

"We use fresh Romaine lettuce in our main dish salads," said Muster. "It has more flavor and crunch."

When you're considering choices for main dish salads, Muster recommends marinating steak or pork loin, grill, and slice thinly. Toss the greens and vegetables lightly with dressing before topping with meat. "You can always add more dressing, but it's hard to take it away," said Muster. "Put the grilled meat on top of the greens and vegetables. It's visually appealing, and something people enjoy. The juices from the meat blend with the greens."

In the summer Muster enjoys preparing salads with vegetables and greens harvested from her



KERREKIM WISAT/CEM

It's a wrap: Toasted Chicken Salad Wraps, chicken salad flavored with toasted sunflower seeds and wheat germ, wrapped in a soft tortilla, is a cool supper for hot nights.

garden. "Once you start tasting really fresh lettuce, you'll taste a lot of flavor," she said.

Her "Salad Suppers" range from "Simply Vegetables" to "Hearty Salads with Meat." She also offers suggestions for buying and storing greens, and making dressings.

"I watch what I eat," she said. "You don't want the dressing to overwhelm everything. I use a light hand. I prefer to start with a high-quality, high-olive oil, such as extra virgin olive oil, and extend it with chicken broth or white wine, adding moisture but not fat. Creamy dressing can be made with nonfat buttermilk or yogurt."

Be sure to serve crusty bread with your main dish salad to sop up those flavorful juices. For those who hate to do dishes, Saint Louis Bread Executive Chef Michael O'Donovan has a tasty solution - "slice the top off of a freshly baked sourdough round and hollow out the center. Prepare or purchase a medley of summertime salads and serve in the bread bowl. Guests will have fun scooping out their favorite salads and piling them high on slices of freshly-baked sourdough and French breads or croissants."

Saint Louis Bread Co., a bakery-cafe, just opened at 27661 Southfield Road between 11 Mile Road and 12 Mile Road. Another is scheduled to open soon in Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield.

See recipes inside.

Salad Smarts

The simpler the food the more important its quality," notes Andrea Chesman, author of "Salad Suppers: Fresh Inspirations for Satisfying One-Dish Meals" (Chapters Publishing). "This is especially true of salads, which don't get the benefit of cooking to enhance taste."

Chesman offers these tips for spectacular salads:

- When putting together a blend of greens, look for a balance of tastes and textures and a variety of colors. Choose a base of mild greens like butterhead and loose-leaf lettuces, against which you can play peppery greens (arugula, dandelion greens and watercress), cabbagey greens (cabbages, bok choy, mustard greens) and bitter cholerics (Belgian endive, radicchio).
- The worst way to store greens is just stick them in the refrigerator, twist ties and all. Instead, wash the greens, dry them well, wrap them loosely in dry paper towels and store them in a plastic bag in the crisper drawer.
- Because greens are 90 percent water, they are prone to wilting. To restore homegrown greens picked in the heat of day, try this trick: Place the stems in a jar of water to which you have added a tablespoon of lemon juice. Refrigerate for one hour. If you aren't going to use the greens immediately, wrap in paper towels and store in plastic bags or above.
- Always store tomatoes at room temperature - never in the refrigerator. Below 50 degrees F, tomatoes lose their flavor and never recapture it.
- For potato salads, Red Bliss and new potatoes hold their shape well and have the best flavor.

Jams, spreads preserve raspberries

BY KEELY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER

Our raspberry bushes are flourishing, and every morning I pick some for my cereal. Oh, I'm planning to go to a u-pick farm this weekend. Raspberries are delicate, and expensive, except in July when they're in season.

Making jam seems like a lot of trouble, but it's not nearly as difficult as you might think. Freezer jams are easy. Low- and no-sugar fruit spreads are other flavorful options.

"Jam is one of the simpler things you can make," said Sylvia Treitman of West Bloomfield, a home economist for the Michigan State University Extension, Oakland County. The flavor is superior to store bought jam, and there's the satisfaction of making something yourself. Pick up a Ball Blue Book for the latest up to date canning information.
It's important to follow directions to achieve good results. "Don't cut down on sugar. Don't double the recipe, measure accurately, and cook for the prescribed amount of time," said Treitman.

With the exception of freezer jam, all jams, jellies and spreads need to be processed in a boiling water bath.

"The old time methods of using paraffin and the inversion method are no longer recommended," said Treitman. "The problem with using paraffin is that mold can easily grow and the inversion method does nothing to destroy

bacteria. The jars may seal - but the jam may still become moldy. If jams are processed in a boiling water bath then the molds are destroyed. Jams, jellies and spreads can be made ahead for Christmas gifts. They can remain safe on the shelf for about 1 to 2 years with relatively good quality. They start to lose flavor after a year."

Here are some tips for making jam, jelly and spreads safe and mold free:

- Buy fresh lids each year.
- Use canning jars, not mayonnaise or commercial food jars.
- Sterilize all jars 10 minutes in boiling water after washing well.
- Use U.S.D.A. recommended processing times and methods.
- Start timing processing once water returns to a boil.
- Store jars with bands removed in a cool area. Wipe jars clean before storing.

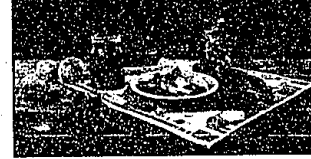
Here are some helpful numbers if you find yourself in a jam:

- MSU Food and Nutrition Hot Line, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday - (810) 858-0904.
- Ball Home Canning Products - (800) 240-3340
- Kerr Home Canning Line - (800) 344-5377

U-Pick Update

Raspberries, tart cherries, and blueberries are in season, and ready for picking. Peaches won't be ready for another week or so. We'll keep you posted. Always call ahead to check availability of produce and picking times before heading out to the farm.

- Livingston County
 - Driver's Berry Farm, west of South Lyon, (248) 437-1600 or (248) 437-8401 - U-pick raspberries, blueberries, limited supply black raspberries.
- Macomb County
 - Blake's Orchard and Cider Mill, (810) 784-5343, Amade - U-pick raspberries, tart cherries, blueberries, beans, broccoli and cabbage.
- Oakland County
 - Long Family Orchard & Farm, (810) 360-3774, Commerce Township - U-pick sour cherries, bring your own containers.
 - Midkinton Berry Farm, (810) 693-6018 or (810) 693-6124, Lake Orion - U-pick raspberries, green beans, corn starts in August.
- Washtenaw County
 - Glenn Rowe Produce, (313) 482-8538, Ypsilanti - U-pick beans, oars, Crowder peas, peppers, raspberries start soon call Aug. 1.
 - Viard's Orchards, Inc., (313) 452-7744, Ypsilanti - Peaches expected to start Aug. 13.
- Wayne County
 - Green's Produce Farm, (313) 697-1685, Belleville - U-pick beans, tomatoes, okra, Crowder peas.



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LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Camping vegetarian style