

Bring family, friends together for Mexican stew

See related story on Taste front.

Recipe from "The Gathering: Juice: Informal International Menus That Will Bring Family and Friends Back to the Table," by Graham Kerr, (Camano Press, \$27.95/hardcover). Kerr recommends using these dinner parties as windows of opportunity to introduce new flavors to the table.

This is a hearty Mexican stew, inspired by Kerr's visit to Acapulco. Serve with hot corn tortillas.

POSOLE

- 1 1/2 pounds pork spareribs
- 1/8 plus 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 chicken (about 3 1/2 pounds)
- 1/2 teaspoon light olive oil
- 1 medium onion, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled,

- bashed, and chopped
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 can (29 ounces) yellow hominy, rinsed and drained
- 1 bunch fresh kale, heavy stalks removed, thoroughly washed, and torn into 1-inch pieces (8 cups)

Garnish

- 1/2 cup fresh oregano leaves
- 3 limes, halved
- 1/4 cup dried crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup finely diced onion
- 6 corn tortillas

Vegetarian Option

- (per serving)
- 1 cup low-fat vegetable stock
- 1/2 cup hominy
- 1 cup kale, torn into 1-inch pieces
- 3 heaping tablespoons cooked kidney beans
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees

F.

Season the ribs with 1/8 teaspoon of the salt and pepper and place on a rack in a roasting pan. Add 1 cup of water to the pan and roast in the preheated oven for 1 1/4 hours, or until tender.

Rinse the chicken well and pat dry. Warm the oil in a Dutch oven or a large iron casserole over medium-high heat. Sauté the onion and garlic until the onion starts to soften, about 2 minutes. Lay the chicken on top of the onion and pour 1/2 cup of water over the chicken. Cover and continue cooking for an additional 3 minutes. The chicken should be firm and white on the outside.

Turn the chicken over and cover with 10 cups of hot water. Add the bay leaves and remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Bring the liquid to a boil, reduce the heat, and cover the pot. Simmer for 1 hour. Turn off the heat, leave covered, and let sit for 20 minutes.

After the pork ribs have roasted, transfer them to a cutting board to cool. Add a little water to the roasting pan and deglaze with a flat-ended spatula or wooden spoon, then pour the liquid into the pot with the chicken. Cut the meat off the ribs and roughly dice into 1/4-inch pieces, or smaller.

Transfer the chicken to a large plate. Remove the skin and return it to the pot. Separate the legs and wings from the bird and return the wings to the pot. Roughly chop the leg and thigh meat into pieces that can be eaten easily with a soup spoon. Remove the breast meat and cut into neat 1/2-inch cubes.

Return the carcass and any juices from the carving plate to the pot, along with the pork bones. Bring the stock to a vigorous boil for a few minutes to reduce the liquid by 50 percent and concentrate the flavors. Pour into a fat strainer a few cups at a time and allow the fat to rise to the surface. Pour the

de-fatted stock (you should have about 5 cups) into a large pot.

Add the hominy, kale, pork and chicken meat.

Vegetarian option:

Set aside 1/2 cup hominy and 1 cup kale per vegetarian serving. Simmer for 5 minutes.

To serve, divide the posole among six warmed soup bowls. Pass small serving dishes of the fresh oregano leaves, lime halves, red pepper flakes, and diced onion for your guests to add according to their own tastes. Pass a basket of hot tortillas. Serves 6.

Time Estimate: Hands-on, 30 minutes; unsupervised, 1 hour and 20 minutes.

Nutritional Profile per serving: 398 calories; 11 g fat; 3 g saturated fat; 23 percent of calories from fat; 43 g carbohydrates; 8 g dietary fiber.

Vegetarian Option: Posole with Red Kidney Beans

About 10 minutes before serving, bring the vegetable stock to a boil in a medium saucepan. Add the reserved hominy and kale and the kidney beans and simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the grated Parmesan cheese and serve in a warmed bowl. Garnish as you would the posole.

Vegetarian Option Nutritional Profile per Serving: 265 calories; 4 g fat; 1 g saturated fat; 13 percent of calories from fat; 40 g carbohydrate; 9 g dietary fiber.

"Hominy kernels look somewhat like popcorn," writes Kerr in his book, "and have a soft, chewy consistency. Hominy is sold either in canned or dried form. The canned version has a very high salt content so you might want to try to find it dry. One mail order source is: Indian Harvest Specialty Foods, Inc., P.O. Box 428, Bemidji, MN 56619-0428, or call (800) 294-2433.

Gathering from page B1

Every year, usually in December, the Kerrs get out their new diaries, mark at least 10 Saturdays as "gatherings" and propose these dates to friends. They usually settle on eight or 10 dates that work for everyone.

"Call your friends. Tell them, 'You're the most important people to us after our families. We don't want to miss out on spending time together.'"

Then pick a menu. "You may choose to follow along on your voyage or strike out on your own," said Kerr. "Whatever you choose it makes sense to plan ahead, perhaps as long as a month."

To make the event more fun — and manageable, Kerr suggests letting your guests choose the course they would like to bring. "The host makes the main dish, arranges the table and offers appropriate beverages. The other guests bring the appetizer and dessert."

One rule is — don't test the recipes ahead of time. "It allows for a family or friends to take a risk," said Kerr. "Since we're all going to try something new, it's a level playing field."

Some of his recipes call for unusual ingredients, but Kerr offers information on where to get them. He suggests buying extra for friends to not get building a power pantry of seasonings, which "bring fresh new tastes to some very familiar dishes."

There's no time like the present, and Kerr urges us all to stop making excuses for not getting together with family and friends at the table. "The point is to enjoy each other's company in a casual atmosphere," he said.

With a smile and a wave, Kerr is off to show more people how to rescue the dinner party. It's something he believes is too important to lose.

Wine from page B1

among the first to see the potential of merlot as a stand-alone varietal and he continues to make no-compromise bettings.

It is easy to understand why the 1997 Detroit International Wine Auction is delighted to have Margaret and Dan Duckhorn as Honorary Chairpersons. In accepting their position, they have made a donation of unprecedented proportion. The Honorary Chairpersons Grand Lot includes one bottle of every Duckhorn Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon the winery has bottled, 63 bottles total with a market value of \$9,500. In addition to Three Palms Vineyard Merlot in the lot, there's Vine Hill Ranch Merlot, Merlot Napa Valley, Howell Mountain Merlot, Estate-Grown Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley.

Current release of any of the vineyard-designated merlots are quickly snapped up by Duckhorn loyalists, but you may find some

with diligent search or on an upscale restaurant wine list. Merlot with the Napa Valley designation is more readily available. Current release of this wine is 1995 at \$42.

The 1995 Duckhorn Vineyards Paraduxx is an uncommon blend of zinfandel, merlot and cabernet sauvignon. The label is the second in a series of art and design conditions that change with each vintage, but each depicts a pair of "Duxx" native to the Pacific Flyway. Duckhorn Vineyards and Paraduxx support conservation of the wetlands of the Pacific Flyway. This wine's red and black fruit aromatic melange are complemented by compelling flavors. The Detroit International Wine Auction is not without major leadership of on-the-scene vintners such as Bloomfield Hills residents Cindy and Tim Loutlette who are serving as this year's auction chairs. Tickets for the Nov. 15 auction and dinner are \$200 per person and can be obtained by calling (313) 872-WINE. A Friday, Nov. 14 viewing of student art work and wine tasting at CCS is \$50.

Look for Focus on Wine on the first and third Sunday.

Savory topping made with tomatoes, peppers

See Rick Halberg's column on Taste front.

Here's a great recipe to use up some of those leftover tomatoes and peppers from the garden.

PIPERADE

- 1 red onion, sliced
- 1 each red, green and yellow peppers, cored and diced
- 6 Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 teaspoons each fresh basil, oregano and mint

Pinch of chili flakes

Salt and pepper to taste

Soften the onion in olive oil with chili flakes, add peppers and onion, add tomatoes and herbs and cook down until most of the liquid is absorbed. Season with salt and pepper and cool.

It will keep tightly sealed and refrigerated for about a week. Use as a topping for Crostini, add to a bitter green salad, or as an omelette filling.

COOKING CALENDAR

GOLDEN MUSHROOM

In honor of the Golden Mushroom's anniversary, four special dinners with limited seating are planned, the first is 7 p.m. Wednesday, October 22, Game Birds \$75. Price includes tax and gratuity. Phone restaurant for special menus. The Golden Mushroom is at 18100 W. 10 Mile Road, Southfield, call (248) 659-4230.

COOKING CLASS

Dawn Bause, co-creator of the book "Romance Begins in the Kitchen," Modesta DeVita and Nidal Zaher share secrets of combining Italian dishes and wines 7:30-9:30 p.m. Monday, Oct. 20 at The Community House, 380 S. Bates St. Birmingham. The cost is \$35 per person, you must be at least 21 years old to attend. Call (248) 644-5832.



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