

HOME SENSE



LOIS M. THIELEKE

Choose chicken for quick, easy nutritious meals

Chicken is mild flavored, easy to digest, quick and easy to fix, economical, tastes good, and is good for you. Chicken is served around the world. It is the meat of choice for Mexico, France, Italy, Spain, Russia, Japan, China, India, West Africa, and the United States. There are endless ways to cook and serve chicken. Unfortunately, every once in awhile, the safety of eating chicken makes headline news.

There are two types of bacteria that we usually associate with raw chicken: salmonella and campylobacter. These organisms can be killed by heat or their growth inhibited by refrigeration.

Always cook chicken thoroughly. The juices should run clear, not pink. On a meat thermometer, white meat should register 170°F and dark meat 180°F. If you don't have a meat thermometer, cook the chicken until it's "falling off the bone."

Storage

Chicken is very perishable and should be kept refrigerated or frozen. When buying chicken, choose packages with little or no liquid on bottom. Avoid buying any chicken where the package is torn. If the bird has not been stored airtight, it has probably lost moisture. Just-bought chicken can be stored in the refrigerator for about two days. Always place a plate or tray under refrigerator-stored chicken to stop the possible dripping juices from contaminating other food. If you find that you can't use the chicken in two days, freeze it. Maximum freezer storage time for well-wrapped chicken is one year (for uncooked) and six months for cooked chicken dishes.

Never defrost a chicken on the countertop at room temperature. Place the still-wrapped chicken in the refrigerator to thaw. Whole frozen chicken will require 12 to 16 hours to thaw; Pieces will need four to nine hours. If you have planned ahead when you initially froze the chicken and packaged only what you needed or packaged pieces separately, you can cook the chicken frozen without thawing. Add 15 to 30 minutes additional cooking time for frozen chicken dishes.

If you have to cut up a chicken, wash your hands before and after touching the bird. Wash the cutting board, utensils and work area with hot soapy water. Any of the juices or bacteria from your hands or equipment could be spread to other foods. Be very cautious and very clean when fixing chicken. Never marinate chicken on the kitchen counter. Always marinate in the refrigerator. If you marinate away or, if you plan to serve it, boil it thoroughly. Better yet, make a new batch that does not have any of the raw chicken juices in it. Always rinse the chicken before cooking.

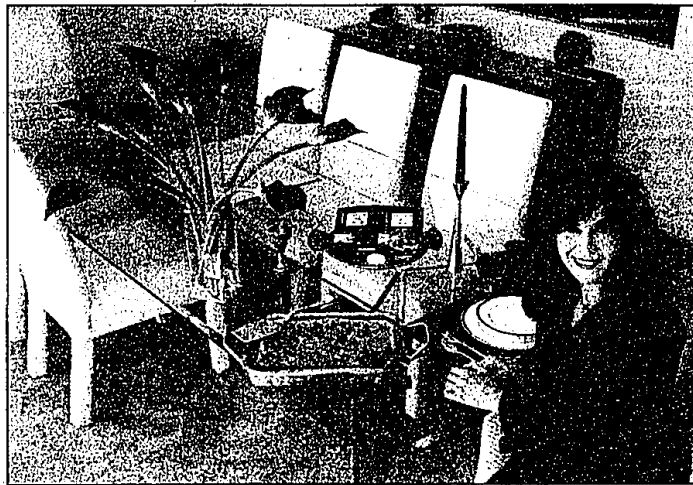
Cooking chicken in the microwave does not kill harmful salmonella and other bacteria. The reason is that microwave ovens heat food through molecular friction. This leaves the surface temperature too uneven to kill bacteria.

Cook the chicken in a regular oven at 350°F until the meat thermometer reads the right temperature or until the juices run clear. When cooking chicken, remember that white meat cooks more quickly than dark.

Fat savings

There is a fat savings if the skin of chicken is removed. Chicken skin is almost pure saturated fat, so removing it cuts the fat almost in half. Poultry is a good source of the B vitamins, zinc, magnesium, and a high-quality protein food. Chicken is a short-fibered meat, and that makes it easy

Please see CHICKEN, B2



Family Favorite: Char Kerman makes this special Pineapple Kugel for Passover.

PASSOVER DISHES

PASS
GENERATION
TO GENERATION

When Char Kerman and her family gather to celebrate Passover, which begins at sundown on Friday, April 10, Pineapple Kugel is one of the dishes they'll pass to one another.

"It's a recipe my mother always used when I was younger," said Kerman who recently moved to Clarkston from Bloomfield Hills. "It could be served for dessert, it's very light."

Kerman and her family, husband Brian, and three grown children, Sean, Staci and Jodi, will be together for Passover. "I set a beautiful Seder table," she said. "We have the traditional Seder plate with bitter herbs, shank bone, charosis, parsley, roasted egg, and salt water."

There will be matzah and a cup of wine for Elijah, and they will retell the story of Passover - which commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from Egyptian slavery, and exodus of the Jews of Israel from Egypt.

Seder means "order" of the service. It is a ceremonial dinner marked by the retelling of the story of the Exodus from Egypt through prayers, songs and ceremonial foods.

As a reminder of the lamb eaten by Jewish families on the eve of Passover in biblical times, a roasted lamb bone is placed on the Seder plate. Horsesradish or Maror are the bitter herbs which remind Jews of the bitterness of slavery.

Charosis, a sweet mixture of chopped apples, nuts, cinnamon and wine, symbolizes the mortar made to bind together the bricks the Jews produced while slaves in Egypt. Karpas is a green vegetable, usually parsley or celery used to symbolize spring and renewal. It is dipped in salt water, which symbolizes the tears of the Jews in Egypt. A roasted or hard-boiled egg is placed on the plate as a token of grief for the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. A special cup of wine is placed on the Seder table for the prophet Elijah, the messenger who will foretell the coming of the Messiah. During the service, there is a time when the door of the house is opened and Elijah is invited to enter.

During their Seder, the Kermans will read the Haggadah, which means "the telling" of the story or narrative. The head of the household serves as the leader of the Seder, directing the reading of the Haggadah. Everyone present participates.

No leavened bread is eaten during Passover, and certain other foods containing yeast or other leavening agents are forbidden by Jewish law to be eaten at this time. In their haste to leave Egypt, there was no time for bread to rise.

"Our food has changed over the years," said Kerman. "But once a year we eat what we grew up with. Passover brings everyone together.

Please see PASSOVER, B2

CELEBRATE PASSOVER

Matzah Factory - 1:15-4:30 p.m. Sundays, March 29 and April 5 at the Jewish Community Center, 6500 W. Maple, West Bloomfield. The fast tour is 3:15 p.m. Prepare matzah, and learn about Passover. There will also be Passover crafts. Admission \$3 per child, accompanying adults free, call (248) 661-1000 for information.

Intergenerational Passover Story Time and Charoset Factory - 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, April 8 at the Jewish Community Center, 15410 W. 10 Mile Road, Oak Park. Hear the story of Passover read to children in the library, then join them in making different kinds of Charoset, a traditional fruit and nut mixture eaten for Passover. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the lobby, everyone is invited to try their hand in making Charoset from around the world. Recipes will be provided. No charge. Call Marcy Rand (248) 957-4030 for information.

Michigan Radio presents "A Taste of Passover" - 8 p.m. Thursday, April 9 on WUOM 91.7 FM Ann Arbor and WFUM 91.1 FM Flint. Program will feature the Klemmer Conservatory Band with host Theodore Bikel. The recipe for cooking the perfect matzo ball will be revealed during this program recorded in front of a live audience in New England Conservatory's historic Jordan Hall, Boston. It features Passover music from around the world, providing a taste of the many ways the holiday is celebrated.

Andiamo restaurants

- Andiamo West, 6676 Telegraph Road, Bloomfield Hills (248) 865-9300.
- Andiamo Italia Ristorante, 7098 E. 14 Mile Rd., Warren (810) 268-3200.
- Andiamo Trattoria, 20930 Mack Avenue, Grosse Pointe Woods (313) 888-9933.
- Andiamo Lakefront Distro, 24026 Jefferson, St. Clair Shores (810) 773-7770.

Andiamo chefs wow judges at Extravaganza

Editor's note: With their ability to impress diners, our local chefs are "Kitchen Magicians." Look for "Kitchen Magicians," which features these creative culinary professionals, on the last Sunday of the month in Taste.

ELEANOR HEALD SPECIAL WRITER

You've read it before - the sauce makes the dish. It can even create a prize-winning recipe!

Andiamo Italia Ristorante's Executive Chef Larry Fanale learned his sauce lessons well as he trained under Master Chef Aldo Ottaviani, Andiamo's corporate executive chef. Rigatoni with superb homemade



Award-winning chefs: Chefs Larry Fanale (left) and Lee Sharkas present Tiramisù in Chocolate Cups, recipe compliments of Chef Lee Sharkas, in the kitchen at Andiamo West.

Bolognese Sauce paired with 1991 Luigi Righetti Amaroni \$27, won Chef Larry and Andiamo Italia top prize in the competitive Michigan Culinary Food & Wine Extravaganza on Feb. 24.

Fanale didn't stop with one food and wine pairing. With the same Amaroni wine, he showed that it matched with his preparation of Roasted Peppers with Sausage in Marsala Wine Sauce. This versatile dish can be made without the sausage in a meatless preparation. Dressed up in a potato basket, it will wow your friends as it did the competition judges.

Actually, Andiamo swept the competition. The best table display award went to Andiamo West and Executive Chef Lee Sharkas for his creative presentation of "Tiramisù in Chocolate Cups." It was paired with the dessert wine 1996 Domaine de Coyeux Muscat Beaumes de Venise, \$12 for a 376mL bottle.

Wine pairing for all three winning culinary creations was made by John Marasco, vice-president of sales for Vintage Wine Co. in Rosselle, a 28-year veteran of the wine industry.

"The higher acidity of the Amaroni balanced the higher acid of the Bolognese sauce," he said. "In this case, two negatives made a positive and created a smooth and velvety impression when the food and wine were tasted together. The char flavor of the roasted red peppers

Please see CHEFS, B2

Cafe Cortina offers their fresh tomato sauce to go



Family secret: Adrian Tonon (left to right), Executive Chef Jeffrey Hoffman and Sous Chef Jeffrey Blinder show the best way to serve Cafe Cortina's Venetian style garden fresh tomato sauce, Pomodoro Veneziana - over pasta with fresh basil.

Simplicity is the beauty of "Pomodoro Veneziana," Ristorante Cafe Cortina's Venetian style, garden fresh tomato sauce now available at the restaurant, and local specialty markets.

"This is the sauce I remember waking up to Sunday mornings," said Rina Tonon who owns Cafe Cortina, an elegant Northern Italian restaurant in Farmington Hills. "It's so Italian. My mother would begin making it early in the morning."

Customers have been asking the Tonos to bottle and sell their tomato sauce for years.

Adrian, Rina's son, got interested in the concept of bottling and marketing the family's tomato sauce, and did some research. One of the people he talked to was Jim Hiller of Hiller's Market, who encouraged him to develop the product.

On Feb. 1 they began manufac-

Ristorante Cafe Cortina

Where: 30715 W. 10 Mile Road, Farmington Hills, (248) 474-3033.

Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 11:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. Friday, 5-11 p.m. Saturday. Open for private parties only on Sunday.

Cafe Cortina's Venetian style garden fresh tomato sauce "Pomodoro Veneziana," is available for purchase at the restaurant, Shopping Center Markets, Merchant of Wine, Nina Salvaggio International Marketplace in Farmington Hills, Market Square in Birmingham, and other specialty markets. Call the restaurant for information.

ture "Pomodoro Veneziana," and one of the first places to offer it was Hiller's Shopping Center Markets. A 16-ounce jar of "Pomodoro Veneziana," sells for \$4.99. The house on the label is the Tonon fam-

ily home in Italy, where Adrian's father, the late Adriano Tonon, was born.

"This was Adrian's project," said Rina who is well pleased with the result. "Adriano is probably smiling on him."

The sauce is made with plum tomatoes and basil, not dried basil, onions, celery, carrots, sugar and salt. "It's a sauce for the new millennium," said Adrian "The freshness and quality is there, it's low-fat and simple."

Adrian is a graduate of the Michigan State University Hotel and Restaurant Management program, and completed a six month apprenticeship at Hotel Cipriani in Venice, Italy.

"I always had a passion for cooking," said Adrian. "I grew up in the business, but I wasn't sure that's

Please see SAUCE, B2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

■ Celebrate Easter

■ Focus on Wine