

TWIST ON TRADITION



CHIEF RANDY EMERT

Be worldly, try hearty German fare

Each year, my family and I sit down and create a list of potential goals for the new year. My wife has vowed to clean and organize the linen closet, my son wants to stop drooling (I know he's only six months old, but it could happen), and I want to try some new "worldly" recipes.

In the past I have made New Year's resolutions that were impossible, and I always felt defeated by the end of the year. But not this year — 1999 is the year for me!

I'm a real fan of German food, especially the way Germans use rich meats, flavorful spices and unique mixes. To help make my New Year's resolution come true, my staff and I are preparing an authentic German meal on Monday, Feb. 1. Seven courses, complete with the proper accompaniments, the German dinner will be a sure hit so stop by! Call the restaurant for information and reservations.

If you cannot make it to our dinner, try this recipe at home for your own "German night," and thanks for helping me check that resolution off my list.

HONEY GLAZED ROAST PORK LOIN

WITH BACON BUTTERMILK MASHED POTATOES

AND BRAISED CARROTS AND LEEKS

Serves 4

For Pork Loin:

2 pounds Pork loin (almost three pounds if still on the bone)

1/4 cup honey

1/4 cup pineapple juice

1 large shallot, minced

2 cloves garlic, minced

Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients except pork in a small bowl and set aside. Make sure all fat and sinew is removed from the pork loin.

It is best to cook the loin on the bone because it retains more moisture, but it is not absolutely necessary, as long as you don't overcook the meat. Preheat oven to 400°F.

Start out by seasoning the loin on all sides then sear until golden brown color. Cook in the oven uncovered for about 25 minutes with the bone or about 15 minutes without.

Always use a meat thermometer to check the internal temperature. It should be at least 160°F, at the thickest spot, when fully cooked.

Once the loin is about 3/4 of the way through the cooking process, brush an even coat of the honey mixture on the loin. Let finish cooking.

When loin comes out of the oven let it set for 5 minutes to rest. Slice the loin into 1/4 inch slices and serve immediately.

BACON BUTTERMILK MASHED POTATOES

4 large potatoes peeled and large diced

1/2 stick of butter

1/4 cup buttermilk

2 tablespoons sour cream

8 strips of bacon cooked and chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

Boil potatoes until fork tender (fork comes out easily). Strain.

Mash the potatoes until no lumps remain. Then add all other ingredients and mix well. Serve immediately.

BRAISED CARROTS AND LEEKS

2 small carrots cut on the bias

1 large leek cut on the bias, (the white to the pale green part of the leek only)

1 stick butter

1 clove garlic, minced

1 shallot, minced

Salt and pepper to taste

Please see TRADITION, B3

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

■ Cheers for Beer

■ Recipe to Share

Wine Revolution

TAKING PLACE IN

THE SHADOW OF THE ANDES

BY ELEANOR & RAY HEALD
SPECIAL WRITERS

There's a wine revolution in progress in the shadow of the Andes. At the forefront is American-owned Mariposa and its reserve-level wine Tapiz.

Jess Jackson, the man behind the Kendall-Jackson brand and Artisan & Estates wineries such as Edmeades, Lokoya and Cardinale, has added Argentina to his growing wine portfolio.

"Jess knows that good coastal land for grapegrowing in California is limited and getting more expensive to purchase," said Lynda Hanson, Mariposa's winemaker. "He set his sights on Argentina because its geography and climate compare well to the best regions of California."

Hanson explained what she called the "Andean foothill benefits" to growing fine wine grapes. The glacier-covered peaks of the Andes Mountain range reach elevations of 24,000 feet. The foothills and benchlands have outstanding vineyard potential. Well-drained soils are sandy, decomposed Andean rock.

"Grapes for red wines grow well there because vegetation is reduced," Hanson continued. "Cabernet sauvignon and malbec do especially well at elevations between 2,000 and 4,000 feet."

"In the Argentine province of Mendoza, located just north of midway along the Andean chain, the weather is continental. In summer, days are hot, but cold nights, colder than California, keep acid levels in the grapes high. There's adequate water created by Andean snowmelt."

New winery

Some California wineries are buying bulk wines from South America to cope with current shortages. Unlike them, Jess Jackson bought land in Argentina, and has planted 70 acres of vineyards with 430 acres more to be planted. A modern winery with a 200,000-case potential is targeted for construction in the year 2000.

To implement plans, Jackson leased a winery and bought grapes to launch the Mariposa and Tapiz brands. He chose Lynda Hanson, who has not only worked in California wineries, but Chateau Lafite in the Pauillac region of Bordeaux, to make the wine.

"We've introduced the latest viticulture and winemaking techniques to Argentina," Hanson said.

"Until our vineyards come into production, we're sourcing the best fruit and paying top grape prices to growers willing to practice our techniques, proven to grow high-quality grapes."

Readily available in the Mariposa brand are the fruit-driven 1997 Chardonnay \$9; 1997 Merlot \$9 with bright cherry characters and mellow finish; and the just-released 1997 Cabernet Sauvignon \$9. The explosive fruit and big structure of this wine are nearly unparalleled at this price.

Jewel of Argentina

But malbec is the jewel of Argentina. In other red wine regions of the world, malbec has either been dismissed, or if grown, is found in a blend with Bordeaux varietals such as cabernet sauvignon, merlot and cabernet franc.

The newly-released 1997 Tapiz Reserve Malbec \$15 is reminiscent of zinfandel from California with deep, dark color and rich, dark fruit flavors. Peppery spice edges in the finish make this a spunky wine, standing up to full-flavored, savory dishes. If you favor red wines, you've got to try it.

Look for Focus on Wine on the first and third Sunday of the month in Taste. To leave a voice mail message for the Healds, dial (734) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1864.



Revolutionary: Mariposa specializes in Argentine malbec from choice vineyards along the eastern flank of the Andes Mountains.

WINE FACTOIDS

■ If you like Chianti Classico, two outstanding vineyards now available are 1997 Chianti Classico DOCG and 1995 Chianti Classico Riserva DOCG. Italian wine, at 34 percent, is the top imported table wine in the U.S. It's followed by French wine at 32 percent and Chilean wine at 15 percent. While that's true, domestic wine accounts for 83 percent of all wine sales in the U.S.

■ Over the last 10 years, the wine consuming age group has grown by 27 percent (about 17

million people) and is expected to increase another 23 percent by the year 2008.

■ Women dominate consumption of white table wine (53 percent) while men rule red wine consumption at 68 percent. But more women (54 percent) consume wine than men (at 46 percent).

■ Most wine (50 percent) is consumed at home. Does this indicate that people think restaurant wine is over-priced? Could be!

Get a pot and start stewing, it's good for you

BY LINDA SPARKMAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Stick-to-your-ribs, and warm to the bones — that's the essence of Midwestern winter cookery, and nothing accomplishes that better than a hearty stew. Stews are among the easiest dishes to prepare, and they accommodate less tender, less expensive cuts of meat. These one-dish wonders are flavorful, nutritious meals you can feel good about serving.

Stews can be made ahead of time and refrigerated or frozen to serve on another day. Stew recipes can be easily doubled or tripled as your needs require with no undesirable consequences. The flavor of stew often improves with each reheating.

Pat Atkinson, a volunteer cook for the women's group at Garden City Presbyterian Church, makes a popular French-Oven Beef Stew annually for 40 to 60 needy people. A tossed salad, rolls and volunteered desserts complete the meal.

served each April at the Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church in Detroit by about 25 volunteers from the Garden City Church.

"I was making meatballs for this dinner, until Sharon Garcia (also a member at Garden City Presbyterian Church) suggested this stew recipe be used instead," explained Atkinson. "It's very simple."

Atkinson's stew has a rich flavor, and "leftovers freeze well," she said. "The people are always very appreciative," she said. "The best comment is when they come back for seconds, and some of the men ask for thirds!"

If you're new at this stew thing, you might be surprised to hear you can make stew in an oven, but it works wonderfully. A hearty stew, simmering on the stovetop, or baking in the oven, will fill your home with that it's great-to-be-in-a-nice-warm home smell.

Many stew recipes begin with a good

stock — a flavorful broth made by slowly simmering a combination of vegetables such as onions, celery, and carrots with your choice of meat, and spices. Once you've made the stock, it can be stored in the refrigerator, or frozen until needed.

Beginning a stew with this wholesome broth, you'll only need to add meat, vegetables and spices to turn it into a full-fledged stew. Ready-made stock is available at the grocery store, but making your own gives you the flexibility of controlling spice selections, and the amount of salt and fat your stock will contain.

It's no wonder stew has survived America's changing food preferences for more than 150 years. Stews are easy to prepare, economical, tasty, and nutritious. Although the cooking time is lengthy, there's nothing more comforting than a hearty bowl of stew.

Linda Sparkman of Garden City is a free-lance writer.

■ See recipes inside

TIPS

■ Use the cooking liquid from vegetables or meats as a nutritious base for soups or stews. The liquid can be frozen until you need it.

■ Browning meats and vegetables gives soups and stews a richer flavor. Try adding 1 teaspoon sugar to the fat, then heat stirring until the fat is hot, before browning the meat and vegetables. The sugar caramelizes and gives everything a beautiful color and flavor with negligible sweetness.

■ Try cooking stew, covered, in a 350°F oven instead of on the stovetop. There's not as much pot-watching because the heat surrounds and cooks the stew evenly.

■ Soup or stew too garlicky? Place a handful of parsley in a tea infuser or a cheesecloth bag tied with string and simmer in the soup or stew for 10 minutes.

■ Add an intriguing nuance to hearty soups and stews by stirring in 1/2 to 1 cup crushed ginger snap cookies (for 4 to 6 servings) 30 to 60 minutes before the dish is done. The cookies will also slightly thicken the soup.

Information from "The Food Lover's Table" by Sharon Tyler Herbst, (Heard Books, New York, 1994).

■ See recipes inside