

COMFORT FOOD



KEELY WYGONIK

Families share "A Slice of Life" to help children

Imagine what it feels like to be 6 years old, and always get tagged because you run slower than every one else in your class. Or to not be able to carry your school books because it's too painful.

Having juvenile rheumatoid arthritis is like "taking the will and spirit of a child and imprisoning it in the body of someone who is 60 or 70 years old," said Wendy Nicholls of Sterling Heights, who with Lori Lipshaw of West Bloomfield wrote "Slice of Life," a cook-book to benefit children with arthritis.

EVENTS

"Slice of Life" book signing

7:30 p.m. Borders Books, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills, with Chef Keith Suplan from the Van Dyke Place restaurant in Detroit.

Arthritis Foundation 5K Jingle Bell Run

10 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 6 at Burns Park School, Ann Arbor and The Community House, downtown Birmingham. Entry fee \$25 per person, registration 8 a.m. to just before the race. Call (800) 958-3030 for information. "Slice of Life" will be offered for sale at both runs.

year-old daughter, Leah. Both children were diagnosed at age 3, and are the motivation for this project.

Moms go to work

The moms wanted to do something to help their children, and other children like them. All proceeds from "Slice of Life," which sells for \$12.95, will be used to benefit the quality of life for these children through family support groups, weekend family camp, and assisting families who wish to attend regional and national conferences.

Lipshaw and Nicholls also want to increase awareness of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, a disease that affects 250,000 children in the United States.

"What Leah goes through is devastating," said Nicholls. "She accepts pain every day. The disease can really

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Book cover

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Living Better Sensibly

Pomegranates

CREATE A FESTIVE MOOD FOR THE HOLIDAYS

BY ELEANOR HEALD
SPECIAL WRITER

Pomegranates come just once a year - in time to add holiday cheer!

Need some festive new ideas to brighten your holiday cooking? Both pomegranate seeds and juice make tasty, colorful additions to many preparations.

"Pomegranates are in peak season and this year, due to weather conditions, have deeper-colored red seeds with above normal sugar levels," said Kosal Elsamawi, produce manager for Vic's Quality Fruit Market in Beverly Hills.

Joe Azar, produce manager for Nino Salvaggio in Troy, noted that "the best way to choose a good pomegranate is by color. It should be deep red, feel firm to the touch and have no bruises. When a pomegranate begins to turn yellow, it's over-ripe."

Pomegranate derives from the French pomme granette or "seeded apple" and is sometimes called a Chinese apple. It originated in tropical Asia, but has been cultivated throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East. Over 200 years ago, the Spanish mission fathers brought the fruit to California, the principal source of pomegranates sold in the U.S. market.

A translucent scarlet pulp surrounds 800 arils (seeds), compartmentalized between shiny, tough membranes. Pure pomegranate pleasure comes from the seeds. Removing seeds and releasing juice are simple techniques. While working with pomegranates, wear an apron to protect clothing from juice stains.

Removing seeds

Cut the crown end of a pomegranate, removing with it some of the white pith, taking care not to pierce seeds within. Lightly score skin in quarters, from stem to crown. Following score lines, firmly, yet gently, break sections apart. Bend skin back and gently scoop seed clusters into a bowl. Remove any pith.

Refrigerate seeds up to three days or freeze on trays in single layers; then pack in airtight containers to freeze for up to 6 months.

Releasing juice

To obtain 1 cup of juice, place 1-1/2 to 2 cups of

seeds in a blender. Blend until liquefied. Pour through a cheesecloth-lined strainer or sieve.

Pomegranate juice, which can be refrigerated for up to 3 days, lends special qualities to seasonal preparations. It can be frozen for up to 6 months to add unique properties to recipes, from beverages to desserts, throughout the winter months.

Fill one-cup airtight containers with juice, allowing some room for expansion as the liquid freezes. Seal and freeze at zero degrees or below. To have available smaller amounts of juice, freeze cubes in an ice tray and store in resealable plastic bags.

Pomegranate juice gives flavor and color to a variety of preparations. It can be made into jelly

or used in marinades, salad dressings, cake, homemade ice cream or sorbet. If you enjoy Chicken Dijon, freshen up flavors with pomegranates. Make a pomegranate margarita or pomegranate pink lemonade. Homemade grenadine (pomegranate syrup) adds distinctive flavor and festive holiday color to drinks, fruit mixtures, sauces and desserts.

For a festive aperitif, add 1 or 2 tablespoons of homemade grenadine to sparkling wine. Drop a few fresh or frozen pomegranate seeds into each glass before serving.

See recipes inside.



POMEGRANATE COUNCIL

Festive treat: Pomegranate juice adds fresh sweet-tart flavors and delicate color to sumptuous Pomegranate Parfait.

Chubby baby bear breads fun to make and give

Few things express the spirit of the holiday season better than a homemade gift, and what better way to directly involve children in the gift-giving process than to let them bake a homemade treat? While baking something special for grandma and grandpa, a favorite teacher or scout leader, they'll also be creating long-remembered holiday traditions.

Baby Bear Breads with Honey Butter are as fun to make as they are to receive and eat. It's a recipe the entire family can lend a hand with. Older children can measure the quick or old-fashioned oats and other ingredients and put them in the correct order into the bread machine.

If the bread is prepared by hand, younger bakers can help stir together the ingredients. Then everyone, no matter what their age, can help knead the dough and roll it into the balls used to create the adorable chubby bears.

One taste of these whole grain breads and you'll appreciate that this recipe makes four bears - three bears to give away and one to enjoy at home. After cooling, give each baby bear gift a festive ribbon "tie," and wrap individually in clear cellophane or plastic wrap. For an extra-special touch, present the bread on a cutting board with a spreader or small knife and a little crock of honey butter.

When time is limited, or your child

has a lengthy list of special people, bake several batches of Maple-Nut Granola. Each takes just minutes to assemble, then requires just 30 minutes in the oven. Again, young and old can help measure ingredients and stir everything together.

People on your gift list will enjoy the granola as a breakfast cereal, a delicious, nutritious snack or sprinkled over frozen yogurt for dessert.

For gift giving, pour the granola into a clear glass container with a tight-fitting lid. Or spoon into cellophane bags that can be closed with a twist tie or ribbon. And don't forget, a copy of the recipe is a nice touch.

BEAR BREADS WITH HONEY BUTTER

- 3 teaspoons quick-rising yeast
- 2 cups bread flour
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 cup oats (quick or old-fashioned, uncooked)
- 1/3 cup sunflower seed kernels (optional)
- 1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cups low-fat milk
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 5 tablespoons stick butter or margarine, melted
- Raisins and chopped dried fruits

Honey butter (recipe follows)

Bring all ingredients to room temperature by letting them stand on the counter about 30 minutes.

Place yeast in bread machine according to directions in manual. In medium bowl, combine both flours, oats, sunflower seeds, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt. In separate bowl, combine milk, egg and butter.

Place dry and liquid ingredients in bread machine according to manual. Use machine's dough setting to mix and knead. (Bread will not bake in machine).

Lightly grease 2 cookie sheets. Turn dough out of bread machine onto lightly floured surface. Knead 6 to 8 times.

To make bears, roll pieces of dough into four 2-1/2-inch balls for bodies, four 1-1/2-inch balls for heads, sixteen 1-inch balls for hands and feet and eight 3/4-inch balls for ears.

On cookie sheets, gently place balls together to form 2 bears on each sheet. Use raisins to make eyes, nose and other decorations. Cover; let rise in warm place 15 to 20 minutes or until nearly double in size.

Heat oven to 375°F. Bake bear breads 12 to 15 minutes or until light golden brown. Carefully remove bears from cook-

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QUAKER OATS

Tasty gift: Baby Bear Breads with Honey Butter are as fun to make as they are to receive. These chubby bears are a fun family baking project.