

## SEASONAL SENSATIONS



DIANE REYNOLDS

## Stock up and get ready for lunch rush

**S**oon it will be time to get back in the swing of packing lunches.

Inventory supplies and stock up for the nights ahead. Keeping nutrition, food safety, and your family food preferences in mind, let's go!

### Check inventory

Round up last year's lunch boxes, and replace those that are battered and torn with insulated lunch boxes or bags that close tightly. Label with permanent markers.

You'll need paper napkins, hand wipes, plastic spoons, sandwich and snack size plastic bags, at least one ice pack per child, and a stash of individually wrapped snacks.

Several people in one household may have lunches to pack. One approach is to assign one person each week to pack all the lunches, then alternate that duty among household members. To avoid potential problems, keep a list where each family member can jot down a few foods they will not touch. The assigned packer has to abide by the list.

### Keep it clean

Counters and cutting boards need to be washed, sleeves rolled up and hair tied back. Keep furry pet friends

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fresh produce thoroughly. Once foods are prepared, refrigerate all perishable items. Dinner leftovers can be safely used three to five days after they were originally cooked.

We pack my 8-year-old son's thermos lunch container the night before and store it with the lid open in the refrigerator. It is then well-chilled. In the morning, he adds the ice pack just before leaving.

**Make nutrition a priority**

Childhood obesity in this country has reached epidemic proportions.

The best time to impact lifelong eating choices is at an early age.

Lunch should provide about one-third of a child's nutrient needs. Include grains, vegetables, fruit and a meat/protein in each lunch. If your child is not receiving milk at school, include a dairy product from the milk group. Fruited yogurt or cheese cubes are easy to pack.

Introduce health-promoting foods early in life by making them part of lunch. As adults, we are learning about the health benefits of foods like flax, soy, whole grains and dry beans, peas or lentils. Unfortunately, some of these items are still foreign to many people.

We can change this perception in children. Health protective foods are of greatest benefit when consumed all our lives. The tasty recipes inside the Taste section will help and might even bring a lunchtime smile!

Diane Reynolds of Farmington Hills is a registered dietitian for the Kroger Company of Michigan. You can reach her for answers to your food, nutrition and food safety questions at the Kroger Healthy Helpline 1-800-KROGERS (select 3 twice on the automated menu) or by e-mail at [mnutritionist@kroger.com](mailto:mnutritionist@kroger.com). Be sure to request complimentary healthy lunch recipes available by mail.

### LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Barbecue recipes

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# Schoolcraft Salon team strikes gold

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK

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**R**ova Bell told Carlos Bonilla "there's something wrong" with his crayfish sauce.

Bonilla took a deep breath. After all, it was only the sauce for the sautéed lake perch he was making for the Americans Culinary Federation's Junior Hot Food National Competition in Las Vegas on July 23.

Bonilla of Westland and four others—team captain Bell of Southfield, Marna Frankel of Ferndale, Erica Rohnert of Wixom and Bryan Reeves of Livonia—represented Schoolcraft College as the Salon team in the national competition. The five won the Michigan and the Midwest regional competition earlier this year to advance to Las Vegas.

Bonilla turned to look, and the sauce had reached a high boil. But Bonilla hustled over to his pan and exhaled, "It didn't burn, but it was starting to caramelize," he said.

Team members turned on the burners 30 minutes before competition began to pre-heat them. The students practiced for months at Schoolcraft on gas burners.

### Preparation is key

All that preparation helped the team, coached by master chefs and instructors Kevin Gawronski and Joe Decker, win the national ACF award.

Bruce Konowalow, director of Schoolcraft's culinary arts program, called the team "clear winners."

"The three teams that won silver were two- to two-and-a-half points behind them, which is impressive because usually these competitions are decided by only a fraction of a point," Konowalow said.

Not everything went smoothly. All the produce and food items team members used needed to be shipped

from Michigan. Gawronski arrived in Las Vegas two days early to check on it, but when the produce didn't arrive, he had to track it down. Then they discovered the kitchen equipment needed more power.

Salon team members learned they would be the last to cook, which added more pressure.

And at the end of the competition, they had 15 minutes to plate each of the four courses served on four plates to four judges.

"We all squirmed a little watching when the time was winding down and dessert was served with 30 seconds left," Konowalow said.

He believes the team won because its members adjusted dishes for seasonality. "What also helped was the compatibility and complexity of the dishes' components," Konowalow said. "The dishes were really sophisticated in their techniques—making sausages, and that whole variety of techniques in that dish, and then, making an ice cream dessert and spraying it with white chocolate. Those are things you don't typically see in these competitions."

**Up another level**

Konowalow said the ACF gold medal adds validation to what people already know is a good program.

"It's another step and another level. We've always been about 100th of a

Please see SALON, D2



Big and red: Marna Frankel peels a tomato in preparing her tomato tartare.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH BONITTA

### Winning menu

- Sautéed lake perch with a crayfish mousse and a crayfish cream sauce by Carlos Bonilla
- Tomato tartar with a balsamic oil dressing with micro-arugula greens and grilled red onions with fried green tomatoes and savory garlic cookie by Marna Frankel
- Seared duck breast with a smoked duck sausage and duck epigramme with corn Cheyenne in a corn crepe and puree of summer lettuce by Reva Bell
- Strawberry sorbet with a strawberry and rhubarb caramel sauce, and a pistachio tuile cookie with a caramelized sugar cage and fresh berries with a lemon pound cake by Erica Rohnert

(As an alternate, Bryan Reeves actively assisted all his teammates in food preparation, communicated with them and knew all the recipes for the competition)



Get it right: Marna Frankel, left, and Reva Bell, right, share a laugh with Erica Rohnert while tasting Rohnert's sorbet.



Simply the best: Reva Bell works on her duck dish at a practice in late June at Schoolcraft College. Bell of Southfield was the captain of Schoolcraft's Salon team.

# Tart or sweet, cherries are delicious gems

### CULINARY ADVENTURES



BRUCE KONOWALOW

### Eat a variety

Michigan produces nearly 75 percent of the nation's sour variety and 20 percent of the sweet. Cherries are a favored flavor and ingredient in everything from Italian lies to classical sauce preparations.

Where would the jubilee be without the mighty cherry? Black Forest cake would be nothing more than a dressed-

up version of a Hostess cupcake if not for the cherry. Even the father of our country was fictitiously associated with this humble, yet magnificent stone fruit.

### Variety

Cherries have been cultivated since the Middle Ages. There are many sweet, sour and bitter varieties. The sour or tart cherry, which is the dominant type grown in Michigan, is the Montmorency type. The sweet varieties grown in the state are the Napoleon, Schmidt, and Emperor Francis. The most well known sweet variety in the U.S. is the Bing which is not grown in Michigan. The Schmidt variety is very similar to the Bing and can be used interchangeably in recipes.

Most Michigan cherry orchards are concentrated along the shores of Lake Michigan. The Traverse City region is the heart of the tart cherry industry. In fact, 500,000 visitors from around the nation gathered in Traverse City

### See recipes inside

this year to celebrate the eight-day National Cherry Festival, proving that cherries are a fun fruit. Next year's event is July 6-13.

The month of July and first two weeks of August are the prime time to enjoy the harvest. Most of the cherry crop is processed for commercial use such as frozen and canned cherries for pies and tarts, dried cherries, and maraschino cherries.

### Good for you

Cherries contain a variety of antioxidants that are believed to help fight cancer and heart disease.

Tart cherries contain anthocyanins, which are the chemical pigments that give red fruits and vegetables their color. Michigan State University has done research, which suggests that anthocyanins are natural "pain-killers" that act much like aspirin. Daily consumption of tart cherries or extracts made from them may help relieve arthritis pain. Cherries also contain significant amounts of melatonin, an antioxidant known to help people sleep better.

Research conducted at the University of Iowa shows that tart cherries also contain an ingredient called perillyl alcohol, which initial studies indicate may be the most potent weapon in fighting all types of cancer known today. Twelve cherries a day could keep the doctor away.

Whether used in a dessert, pickled as a condiment, or served as a sweet and sour counterpart in a Sauce aux Cerises (Cherry Sauce) with roasted duck, cherries are uncommonly delicious.

Bruce Konowalow is the director of the Culinary Arts Department at Schoolcraft College and a former director of the New York Restaurant School in New York City.