

## CULINARY ADVENTURES



BRUCE KONOWALOW

## Apples make desserts shine throughout fall

**B**raeburn, Cortland, Crispin, Empire, Fuji, Gala, Ginger Gold, Granny Smith, Macoun, Paula Red, Red Delicious and Rome Beauty are just a few of the 2,500 varieties of apples that are grown in every state.

Commercially, there are about 100 varieties grown in 36 states that are available at markets.

The state of Washington is the largest producer by far. Michigan is the third largest supplier of apples in the country. Apples are the largest cash crop in the state, adding as much as \$80 million to the state's economy. Most of Michigan's apple production is used in commercial production and processing. In fact, Michigan ranks No. 1 of all states in the processing of apples. The state flower appropriately enough is the apple blossom.

### Producing plenty

An average apple tree can produce about 800 pounds of fruit. This year it is expected that the United States will produce over 3 billion pounds of apples.

Apple farming has been drastically hurt over the past five years due to overproduction and what some consider unfair competition from foreign markets that drive the prices down. This year as many as 30 percent of the apple growers may decide to give up the battle and look for new crops or a new occupation. In 1999 U.S. apple growers received an average of 21.2 cents per pound. Typically grocery stores sell the same apples for 69 cents to \$1.50 a pound.

Finances aside, apples have been part of the American diet since colonial times. The English settlers preferred their own cultivated apples to the native wild crabapples. The first American orchard was planted in Boston around 1625. Our first president, George Washington, was a bit of a "pomologist" (pomology is the science of growing apples) who was known to prune his apple trees for fun and relaxation. "I guess that is just about as American as apple pie," is an often-used phrase to describe anything that is purely an American food, activity, or cultural story.

Benjamin Franklin had Newton Pippins sent to him in London, making them the first variety exported from the United States. Typically, Americans will eat about 20 pounds of fresh apples a year, which is less than half of our European counterparts.

Apples have been used a symbol of love and associated with the mythological goddess Aphrodite as well as the sun god Apollo. They represent good health and wholesomeness.

### Good and healthy

The consumption of apples have many health benefits. Studies have shown that apples contain particular antioxidants that reduce the incidence of lung cancer and asthma. Phytonutrients found in apples can reduce the incidence of hypertension, diet-related cancers, and reduce the risk of heart disease. There is sufficient evidence to support the old saying "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

The type of apple you choose depends on how you want to cook or consume it. Red Delicious apples, which are the most popular American variety, are great table apples but should not be used for pies or other cooked apple recipes. Firm, tart or semi-tart apples like Granny Smith, Northern Spy, Jonathan, and Golden Delicious are preferred for pies.

Rome Beauties are great for baked apples and Newton Pippins make excellent applesauce. Fuji and Gala apples are the perfect sweet apples to eat as is. Peeled apples will turn brown quickly when exposed to the air. Store peeled or cut apples in acidulated water (a tablespoon of

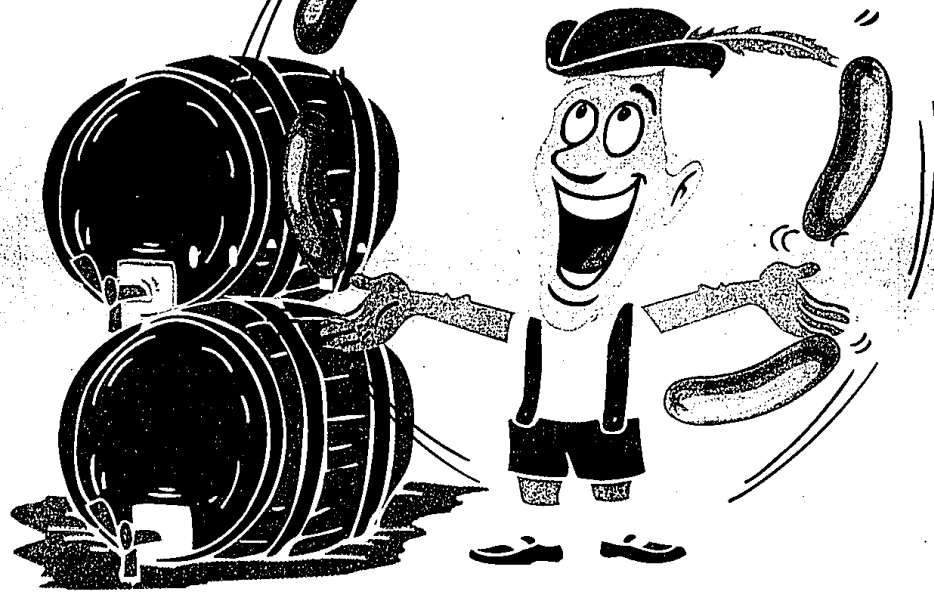
Please see APPLES, D2

### LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Apple pie recipes
- Kitchen Kapers

# Oktoberfest!



## Time for beer and brats

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**E**verybody is German come October, when communities all across the United States celebrate Oktoberfest with festive Bavarian music and hearty feasts of sausage, sauerkraut and beer.

It's a busy music-making time for Tom Leib of Canton, who plays in a German band, "The Beautiful Sounds of Germany." The music played during Oktoberfest is very lively and puts people in a good mood, he said.

"Gemütlichkeit means happiness. The music brings people together. They sway back and forth. Of course, some get a few beers in them and start to polka."

Besides German music, Leib knows a lot about good German food. His mother, Marzella Leib, was a waitress for 32 years at the Old German Restaurant in Ann Arbor, famous for its authentic cooking. The restaurant, founded in 1928, finally closed its doors in 1995.

"It was real close to the way the restaurants cook in Germany. That made it very popular," said Marzella Leib, who was born in northern Bavaria. "I knew how sad everybody was when it closed, so I said I'll put the recipes on paper to preserve them."

Marzella Leib and longtime chef Bill Dettling wrote a cookbook, "Recipes of the Old German Restaurant," that features many of the customer's favorite recipes, such as sauerbraten, rouladen, bread dumplings and meat patties.

Tom Leib recalls the homemade noodle dish, spätzle, his mother made when he was a child. "She always made it with a roast and covered it with a good brown gravy. I can still taste it."

### Brats

The aroma of smoked sausage hits you before you walk through the doors of Alexander & Polen, an old-style German meat market on Michigan Avenue and

Outer Drive in Dearborn.

There's knockwurst, bratwurst and weisswurst, and everything in between. There's good German bread and an assortment of German mustards and beers. And should you stop by on a Friday or Saturday, there's a roaster full of knockwurst and sauerkraut just waiting to be tucked into a roll too big for one hand. It's the best \$3 lunch in town.

"I like a place like that where people talk about what they're getting. You get the little old ladies who have ordered the same thing for hundreds of years. And I like the tremendous variety of things crammed into one little space," said first-time customer Alyce Humphrey of Plymouth Township, who was munching on a knockwurst.

"It has that kind of authentic, old-world taste," she said about the sausage. "It reminds me of the sausage my dad would buy when he would go to the market."

It all began in 1945 when butchers Erich and Willie Alexander opened a sausage shop with Otto Hornung on Gratiot Avenue in Detroit. The Alexanders cut the meat and Hornung made the sausage in the back room. The company is still at its original location, making a variety of sausage, lunchmeat and ham.

Bernie Polen, president of Alexander & Hornung and grand-nephew of Willie, represents the third generation in the family-owned business.

"You could say sausage is my life," he said. "The most traditional German sausage is the fresh bratwurst, said Polen. Alexander & Hornung includes whole, fresh lemons in their recipe for the fresh and smoked all-pork brats. Lemons provide a real "flavor burst" and eliminate any greasy taste.

"It's interesting. The lemon provides a real clean mouth feel," said Polen.

Each sausage has a distinctive taste. The smoked knockwurst is made with beef and pork and tastes

Please see OKTOBERFEST, D2

### Long live the King!

Thanks to King Maximilian of Bavaria, who gave a wedding reception in 1810 for his son and daughter-in-law, Prince Ludwig and Princess Theresia of Sachsen-Hildburghausen, we have Oktoberfest.

The celebration, held in a meadow, was so successful, King Maximilian decided to hold one every year. He named the meadow Theresienwiese after Ludwig's bride. Theresienwiese remains an open field in the city of Munich, about five football fields long.

Oktoberfest evolved into 16 days of drinking, eating, singing and dancing. By 1880, the starting date was changed to September to avoid the unpredictable bad weather of October.

Today, the Oktoberfest in Munich draws millions of people from all over the world. Teams of horses pulling the colorful

*Bierwagen* head the opening parade. Marching to the beat of the Bavarian brass bands are the famous Oktoberfest *Kellnerinnen*, the strong-armed waitresses

who carry the trays of one-liter beer mugs.

Source:  
www.serve.com/  
shea/german/oktober.htm  
See related recipes inside Taste.



## Want a change of pace? Try a vegetarian meal

### SEASONAL SENSATIONS



DIANE REYNOLDS

If you're not vegetarian, but you know vegetarian meals are good for you, you're on the right track to eating healthier. As October is National Vegetarian Month, you may want to consider eating more vegetarian meals.

Vegetarian diets often are selected for religious, ethnic and ecological reasons, but today, more and more people select vegetarian foods for health reasons.

More than 12 million Americans say they are vegetarians. A well-chosen and varied vegetarian diet

is preferred for heart health, disease prevention and control of blood sugar levels.

### All about balance

Personally, I practice part-time vegetarianism. I choose vegetarian meals often when I dine out and try to experiment with them at home.

I still include meat and dairy products in my diet.

In addition to continuing to enjoy animal foods, I also know that dairy foods are a preferred food source of calcium and fatty fish like salmon are a top choice for heart health. I find that a balance of both types of foods is best, with more emphasis on plant foods.

The key is portion control, something increasingly overweight Americans seem to have lost sight of. When super-size portions abound in steakhouse restaurants and bagel shops, it's no wonder we can't identify the amounts that we should be eating. Getting back into our home kitchens to prepare simple meals is not difficult and helps us control our food choices.

### Ease the transition

When planning vegetarian meals, include plenty of whole grains, legumes, vegetables and fruits. Add moderate amounts of nuts and seeds. Revising or substituting familiar foods can make the transition easier, whether you eat more cereals, potatoes, peanut butter sandwiches or revise old favorites, such as bean soups (made with vegetable broth or

broth), instead of meat, as a base), meatless spaghetti sauce or even grilled cheese sandwiches, made with soy cheese slices. Some foods made from soybeans, wheat protein and vegetables mimic the shape and taste of meat and dairy foods.

Soy milk in all its various flavors is an easy choice. You're sure to find one you'll like. I drink a 12-ounce glass of vanilla or chocolate flavored soy milk every morning when I take my vitamin and mineral supplements. It's an effortless addition to my day that's good for me.

Try the vegetarian diet tips and recipes that follow for some fresh ideas you can use in planning healthier meals for you and your family.

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