

'Beating' the competition: Prize-winning Beet & Bean Salad with Warm Basil-Bacon Dressing is a delicious blend of flavors and textures that's ready to serve in under 30 minutes.



Beet & Bean salad winner

Beet & Bean Salad with Warm Basil-Bacon Dressing took the Grand Prize in Aunt Nellie's "Beet! The Clock" Contest. Liz Barclay of Annapolis, Md. paired pickled beets with Mediterranean-inspired ingredients to create the winning main dish salad.

Cooking with pickled beets comes naturally to Barclay. Her husband grew up in Pennsylvania and ate lots of pickled beets growing up. Plus, the Barclays lived in London for awhile where they also enjoyed pickled beets and pickled eggs.

Barclay, an assistant school principal, put just the right ingredients together when she created this entry. The entire salad can easily be on the table in under 30 minutes, and all it needs is crusty bread to complete the meal. To streamline preparation, Barclay uses several prepared ingredients from the supermarket to make her very flavorful salad.

Of course, the pickled beets are in the jar and ready to use. Aunt Nellie's picks ripe ruby-red beets and pickles them with their own special sweet-salty recipe. With bagged salad greens, canned cannellini beans, prepared pesto and bacon bits, Barclay's beet salad is on target for today's taste buds.

Plus, colorful vegetables like dark leafy greens and ruby-red beets are packed with good-for-you vitamins and minerals.

BEET AND BEAN SALAD WITH WARM BASIL-BACON DRESSING

- 1 jar (16 ounces) Aunt Nellie's Sliced Pickled Beets*
- 1 can (19 ounces) cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 bag (10 ounces) Italian blend salad mix
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup prepared basil pesto
- 1/4 cup real bacon bits or cooked, crumbled bacon

1. Drain beets, reserving 1/2 cup liquid. In large bowl, combine drained beets, beans, salad mix, celery, and onion; mix gently but thoroughly.

2. In small saucepan, combine reserved beet liquid, pesto, bacon and pepper. Heat through, stirring occasionally, without boiling. Pour over salad mixture; mix gently but thoroughly. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

* Aunt Nellie's Sliced Pickled Beets, which are glass-packed, are available in the canned vegetable section in the supermarket.

Cookbooks reflect motherly inspiration

(AP) — A new cookbook, *Lumiere* (Ten Speed Press, \$35), is named for the Vancouver, British Columbia, restaurant of its author, Rob Feenie. It's an elegant publication with a wide selection of stylish recipes carefully set out, and illustrated with color photos.

Before he established his own successful restaurant in 1996, Feenie worked in the United States with several renowned chefs, including Charlie Trotter, Daniel Boulud and Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

Going back to even earlier influences, Feenie dedicates his book to his parents, Laurie and Margaret Feenie, and includes some recipes that derive from his mother's.

About his walnut cake with maple ice cream, for example, he writes: "The cake is another of Mom's recipes. When I was younger, I was known to come home from school and eat an entire cake. The maple ice cream was my own addition, and Mom approves."

WALNUT CAKE WITH MAPLE ICE CREAM

For the ice cream:
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup whole milk
5 large egg yolks
1/3 cup sugar
1/3 cup maple syrup

For the cake:
1 1/2 cups of flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 cup maple syrup
Juice of 1 lemon
3/4 pound unsalted butter, room temperature (11/2 cups)
1 1/4 cup sugar
Pulp of 1/2 vanilla bean
7 large eggs
1 cup walnut pieces, toasted, ground

To prepare ice cream:

In a saucepan over medium-high heat, bring cream and milk almost to boiling point. In a bowl, whisk yolks and sugar to the ribbon stage. Add maple syrup. Temper the yolk mixture with some of the cream and milk. Finish whisking in remaining cream and milk. Place mixture in a double boiler

over simmering water and stir constantly until it reaches 175 F or it coats the back of a spoon. Cool and strain. Freeze in an ice cream maker according to instructions. (The ice cream will be more velvety if the mixture is refrigerated overnight.)

To make the walnut cake:

Line terrine molds or loaf pans with parchment and grease with butter and dust with flour. Preheat oven to 325 F. Sift together flour and baking powder and set aside. Combine maple syrup and lemon juice and set aside. With an electric mixer, cream together butter, sugar and vanilla pulp. Add one egg at a time to the butter mixture until well blended. Add half of the flour mixture and beat to incorporate. Beat in half of maple syrup mixture. Repeat, beating in flour then maple syrup mixture. Scrape down the bowl.

Add ground walnuts; mix until just combined. Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake for 45 to 60 minutes, or until a knife inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Makes 8 servings.

Jennifer Felicia Abadi lives in New York now, where she was born in 1966, but her heritage includes Jewish roots in Palestine, Libya and Syria. It's a heritage from which she has drawn inspiration for a cookbook.

In *A Fistful of Lentils: Syrian-Jewish Recipes From Grandma Fritale's Kitchen* (Harvard Common Press, \$24.95), her recipes are set in a warm context of family history (including the family tree), accompanied by personal anecdotes and period photos.

There is also plenty of technical food lore, information and tips woven into the recipes' presentation. Recipes, which total about 125, include many which, although they sound and taste rather exotic, are perfectly easy for the American home cook to make.

A Syrian grilled cheese sandwich with mint, for example, won't tax anyone's skill or budget for a quick meal. Meatballs and cherries is an unusual version of a favorite main dish, while desserts could include a choice of rolled date cookies or honey cake with sesame glaze.

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The *Heads* are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 1864#.

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