

# Nine desserts later, and the pumpkin pie was perfect

There are few foods I could imagine eating everyday, but pumpkin pie is one of them.

While I appreciate more complicated recipes like sautéed cherries with fig and mascarpone, a hearty pumpkin pie with fluffy white topping is just as satisfying.

A couple autumns ago, on a strange quest to make the perfect pumpkin pie, I made pumpkin pie every evening for nearly two weeks, sometimes trying two different recipes simultaneously. The quest kept me awake and active through the wee hours.

I became obsessed with sweeteners, crusts and pumpkin filling textures. My recipes came from friends, the Internet and cooking shows.

Each night, after a silver size sampling was taken from each pie, I'd pass the rest to friends, co-workers and neighbors who were baffled by my obsession but happy to try the goods.

Everyone shared comments such as: too light, too dense, too gritty.

Two days before Thanksgiving, on the ninth attempt, I made a pie that was sweet, dense, rich and smooth. Everyone who sampled it, loved it. Victory was mine!

Ironically, the perfect pumpkin pie recipe came from one of my most-used cookbooks, "The Compassionate Cook" by Ingrid Newkirk, (July 1993 Warner Books). I should've trusted that book from the start.

This recipe with whipped topping is quite easy. It calls for an unbaked pie shell which meant I had time to make two for Thanksgiving dessert. The



In the kitchen with Lana Mini

tofu and syrup make it incredibly creamy. You can not overblend this dessert more is better. Blend, blend and blend some more!

### PUMPKIN PIE WITH TOFU WHIPPED CREAM

1 1/4 pounds soft (silken) tofu  
3/4 cup pure Michigan maple syrup  
3/4 cup sugar  
1/3 cup unbleached all-purpose flour  
1 (16-oz) can pumpkin puree  
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
1 tablespoon ground ginger  
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
1 (9-inch) unbaked pie shell

Preheat oven to 400°F. Blend all the ingredients for the filling in a blender or food processor until smooth. (A good rule: Make certain its smooth as possible; blend tofu first until completely and thoroughly smooth and creamy. Then add the ingredients in order and blend in between adding each one.)

Pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake for 30 minutes at 400°F, turn oven down to 350°F and bake for another 30-45 minutes, or until the filling is set.

Serve warm or cold. Garnish with tofu whipped cream.

### TOFU WHIPPED "CREAM"

1 pound soft tofu  
1 tablespoon vanilla extract  
1/4 cup sugar  
1/4 cup soy milk

Combine tofu, vanilla and sugar in a blender or a food processor and process until smooth - again, more is better. With the machine running, gradually add the soy milk through the feeder cap. Refrigerate until serving time. It will keep for a week, but can also be frozen.

Lana Mini is a staff writer for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. She can be reached at (248) 901-2572 or by e-mail [mini@oe.com](mailto:mini@oe.com). She welcomes your calls and comments, and would appreciate a copy of your favorite pumpkin pie recipe.

# A perfect cup of coffee is more than just grinding beans

(AP) - As the weather cools, a rich cup of coffee can be just the thing to warm a chilly autumn day.

Krispy Kreme, introducing a new line of coffee to go along with its signature doughnuts, offers a few tips for making a perfect pot.

The first mistake most people make is that they store coffee in the refrigerator or freezer, says D.J. McKie, senior vice president and general manager of Krispy Kreme Coffee and Beverages.

"Coffee is porous," he says. "Therefore, if you store it in the refrigerator it may start to smell like whatever it is next to."

Also, in the freezer, beans or grounds can become freezer burned, even if you don't see it.

Instead, McKie suggests storing coffee in an airtight container or bag and keeping it away from light, perhaps in a pantry or cupboard.

McKie says coffee tastes best right after it has been ground.

Home brewers should therefore grind their coffee beans just before they are going to be used.

A burr grinder will grind even particles of coffee, and is preferable to a chopper or blade grinder.

If one buys fresh ground



# HEALDS

FROM PAGE B1

Thanks are used only once each vintage, which allows slower fermentation and extended maceration, which favorably impact both the flavor and structure of red wine. Again, the workers in this winery are focused on red wines and do not need to split their work day between tending both red and whites.

What are the wines like?

Is the two winery concept expensive? Yes. Worth it? That's for you to judge. We think the following Cakebread Napa Valley wines prove the point of excellence.

■ 2001 Sauvignon Blanc \$23 is fresh and brimming with bright juicy fruit.

■ 2000 Chardonnay \$38 expresses harmony between crisp, citrusy fruit and oak. It's perfectly balanced to accompany food, although you'll like it

as a quaff on its own.

■ 1999 Reserve Chardonnay \$55 is a tantalizing interplay between citrus, baked apple and tropical fruit characters, topped off with hints of brown spice and vanilla.

■ 1999 Merlot \$64. Only a very limited quantity of this Pomerol-like wine will be available, but a search will be rewarded.

■ 1999 Cabernet Sauvignon \$68 is a solid Bordeaux knock-off with dusty notes over blackberry and cassis flavors, spiced with anise-like spice. This and the merlot are exceptional wines.

If you're into matching food and wine, recipes to match each of these wines can be found on the Cakebread Cellars Web site [www.cakebread.com](http://www.cakebread.com).

The Healds 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.

# Garden gives you basil, then make some chili

AP - By the time autumn rolls around, basil has had all summer to grow and thrive. With such an abundance of this sweet herb available, it is only natural to make fresh pesto, a classic Italian sauce.

This recipe from the October issue of Cooking Light magazine takes the basic sauce and turns it into a quick chili, proving pesto isn't only for pasta.

### CHICKEN CHILI WITH PESTO

2 teaspoons vegetable oil  
3/4 cup finely chopped onion  
3/4 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces  
1/2 cup finely chopped carrot  
3/4 cup finely chopped red bell pepper  
3/4 cup finely chopped celery  
1/4 cup canned chopped green chilies  
3/4 cup teaspoon dried oregano  
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
1 (16-ounce) can cannellini beans or other white beans, rinsed and drained  
1 (4 1/2-ounce) can fat-free less sodium chicken broth  
3 tablespoons classic pesto (recipe follows)

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium high heat. Add onion and chicken, sauté 5 minutes. Add carrot, bell pepper and celery; sauté 4 minutes. Add chilies and the herbs and spices, beans and broth; bring to a boil.

Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 25 minutes. Stir in pesto.

Makes 4 servings.

### CLASSIC PESTO

2 tablespoons coarsely chopped walnuts or pine nuts  
2 garlic cloves, peeled  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
4 cups basil leaves (about 4 ounces)  
1/2 cup (2 ounces) grated fresh Parmesan cheese  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Drop nuts and garlic through food chute with food processor on, process until minced. Add oil, pulse 3 times. Add basil, cheese and salt; process until finely minced, scraping sides of bowl once.

Makes 3/4 cup.

Nutrition information per serving: 327 cal., 30.3 g pro., 30.7 g carb., 8.5 g total fat (1.8 g saturated fat), 52 mg chol., 769 mg sodium

# Culinary school is cookin' at Orchard Ridge campus

See what's cooking in the culinary arts department at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus in Farmington Hills. The student-run Ridgewood Cafe and Bakery are open 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday and Wednesday through Dec. 4. Lunch features sandwiches, salads and main courses. Stop by the bakery for made-from-scratch breads, cookies, pies and cakes. Luncheon buffets 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 31 and Nov. 14, feature a plentiful array of fresh salads, fruits, three to four meat dishes, potatoes, vegetables, lots of desserts, and beverage of your choice. The cost is \$8.95 per person.

The students are also busy planning the 14th annual Vassal feast 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 5. Tickets are \$50 per person, including entertainment. All culinary events are on the third floor of Building 7, 27055 Orchard Lake Road.

### THIS WEEK'S WINE PICKS

Our recent Cabernet Sauvignon taste-off produced these winners.

- **Awesome:** 1997 Dry Creek Vineyard Endeavour Cabernet Sauvignon \$50. First release of this label from a stellar vintage.
- **Outstanding:** 1999 Geyser Peak Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon \$40 and 1999 Sequoia Grove, Napa Valley \$29.
- **Exceptional for the price:** 1999 Frei Brothers Reserve \$24 and 1999 Rodney Strong Vineyards \$18.
- **Top vineyard designate:** 1999 Louis Martini Monte Rosso Vineyard \$50.
- **Best wine to cellar:** 1998 Shafer Hillside Select \$150. One of the very best cabs from a difficult vintage.
- **Best buys under \$15:** 1999 Gallo of Sonoma \$13; 2000 Wolf Blass Yellow Label \$12; and 2001 McManis Family Vineyards \$9.

E-mail the Farmington Observer with taste stories, photos and taste news tips to: [kkaleski@oe.homecomm.net](mailto:kkaleski@oe.homecomm.net)

### HENRI MARC RESERVE

CAB/MERLOT/STRAW

**\$5.99** 750 ml

### COCKATOO RIDGE AUSTRALIAN CHARD, SHIRAZ

**\$6.99** 750 ml

### WESTBORN MARKET SPECIALS

### Indian River PINK GRAPEFRUITS

**3/\$1**

### Vine Ripe ROMA TOMATOES

**69¢** lb.

### HY'S of Romeo, MI PASTEURIZED APPLE CIDER

**\$2.49** gal

### California JUMBO HEAD LETTUCE

**69¢** each

### Colorful HARDY MUMS

**3/\$15.99** each

### Fall Harvest Decorations

- Haybales
- Cornstalks
- Pumpkins

### Fresh Cut ROSES

**\$6.99** DOZEN

USDA Choice

### LEG of LAMB

**\$4.99** lb.

USDA Choice

### STANDING RIB ROAST

**\$4.99** lb.

USDA Choice

### RIB STEAKS

**\$4.99** lb.

### Baremans GALLON MILK

Except Chocolate **\$1.99**

### Jumbo P&D COOKED SHRIMP

**\$10.99**

### Boneless TUNA STEAKS

**\$6.99** lb.

### Healthy Choice Honey & Oven Roasted TURKEY BREAST

**\$4.99** lb.

### Sahlens SMOKEHOUSE HAM

**\$4.99** lb.

### Dietz & Watson ROAST BEEF

**\$6.99** lb.

### Lorraine SWISS CHEESE

**\$4.99** lb.

### Butterball TURKEY FRANKS

**2/\$3.00**

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