

TRADITIONS

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homemade, including the sausage used in the stuffing.

"Earlier in the year, my husband and I make our own sausage, which we freeze or hang in the fruit cellar to dry for hard sausage, such as pepperoni," said Angelanto.

Other foods served on this special holiday, which are also homemade, include *ciambella* (twisted bread), 12 dozen garlic rolls, and *pizzelle fritta e baccala*, which is bread dough balls with a piece of salt cod fish in the center and then deep fried.

There's also chicken and pasta soup, meatballs and sausage, roasted stuffed turkey (Angelanto makes two kinds of stuffing), sweet and mashed potatoes, rapini (Italian greens) with homemade Italian dressing, *baccala* (salt cod fish

with olive oil, garlic and parsley), corn for the kids, and lapini beans, which have a bitter flavor and look like yellow lima beans.

"You eat these beans by squeezing out the soft center and discarding the hard shell. My family gets rid of the shells by shooting them at each other," said Angelanto. Also, throughout the meal, wine, made by Angelanto's husband, is served.

Once the main meal is over, the desserts, including the cookies and fruit cakes, are brought out.

But it is the *Zuppa Engelse* that everyone's taste buds want to savor.

"We call this layered sponge cake dessert 'Happy Cake,' because of the generous amount of rum sprinkled on this custard (both vanilla and chocolate) creation," Angelanto said. "Also, my family says it makes them happy because of the message I always

decorate it with: *Buono Natale Cara Famiglia - Merry Christmas Dear Family.*"

When the meal ends, the women clean up, the men play *scopa*, a card game, and her nephew, Joe Merrell, plays the accordion, while everyone sings Christmas and Italian songs.

"My mother, who died 15 years ago, played this instrument. My nephew learned to play the accordion in memory of her and to keep this tradition going," said Angelanto.

Then there's more food. It's time for the roasted chestnuts (another Italian tradition) and a big bowl of fresh fruit.

Angelanto, whose last name translates "angel saint," never lets any of her family members bring a dish to share.

"I just ask my guests to bring themselves and hungry tummies."

Dig into a stack of hearty buckwheat pancakes

BY DANA JACOBI
CORRESPONDENT

Buckwheat has an assertive, earthy flavor you either like or avoid.

Fortunately, I grew to love their rich color, intense flavor and substantial yet light body, especially when my mother's warm orange-juice syrup was poured over them.

Buckwheat is used as toasted groats (also called kasha), or ground into flour. Called a grain, it is actually the fruit of a grass and a cousin of rhubarb. Its warming, soulful quality is perfect in winter dishes.

Successful results require understanding that buckwheat contains no gluten.

That's a boon for people allergic to wheat but can be a bother for cooks and bakers. To get a workable batter or dough, buckwheat must be combined with wheat flour.

This is even true of Japanese soba noodles, except for the mostly ones, made by artisans, which require years of practice because the dough breaks easily without gluten to hold it together.

Buckwheat flour is heavy and slightly gritty.

To compensate for its texture, some pancake recipes call for yeast, and require hours for the batter to ferment.

Instead, I add yogurt. Its density and acidity make lofty buckwheat cakes that are tender, moist and light inside, and almost crusty outside.

When cold, these Blueberry Buckwheat Cakes are good to munch on like cookies, so save the leftovers.

They also freeze well, tucked individually into plastic sandwich bags, and can be reheated in the toaster, where these pancakes pop up perfectly.



AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Warm or cold, these Blueberry Buckwheat Cakes are good to munch on like cookies.

BLUEBERRY BUCKWHEAT PANCAKES
WITH ORANGE SAUCE

2 cups orange juice
2 tablespoons maple syrup, or to taste
1 navel orange (pith and peel removed), chopped coarsely
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 cup buckwheat flour
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
8 oz. (1 cup) fat-free vanilla yogurt
1 large egg
1 tablespoon melted butter
1 cup frozen blueberries
Canola oil spray

To make the sauce, boil orange juice in deep saucepan until reduced by half, about 20 minutes. Mix in maple syrup to taste. Add chopped orange. Dissolve cornstarch in 1 tablespoon cold water. Mix into hot juice. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. When sauce thickens and looks translucent, remove from heat and set aside.

For pancakes, whisk together in a medium bowl both flours, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and

salt. In a small bowl, whisk yogurt with egg, butter and 1/4 cup water. Add wet ingredients to dry. Whisk until well blended. Mix in blueberries.

Lightly coat a large non-stick skillet with oil spray. Heat pan over medium-high heat until hot. Using a scant 1/4 cup of batter, pour mixture into pan, making 3 pancakes at a time. (Batter spreads as it cooks.) When bubbles start to form, about 4 minutes, turn pancakes. Cook until almost firm to the touch in the center. (Pancakes will be fairly dark.) Transfer to a serving plate and repeat, meanwhile keeping finished pancakes warm. Serve with orange sauce. Makes 8 pancakes or 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 345 calories, 5 g. total fat (2 g. saturated fat), 67 g. carbohydrate, 10 g. protein, 4 g. dietary fiber, 692 mg. sodium.

"Something Different" is written for the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) by Dana Jacobi, author of *The Joy of Soy*, and recipe creator for AICR's Stopping Cancer Before It Starts. AICR offers a Nutrition Hotline (1-800-843-8141). Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Monday-Friday, this free service allows you to ask a registered dietitian questions about diet, nutrition and cancer. AICR's Web address is www.aicr.org.

Sweet recipes are family favorites

See related story on Taste front.

Recipes compliments of Louise Angelanto.

PIGNOLI (PINE NUT) COOKIES

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar
1/3 cup flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 can (8 oz.) almond paste
1 large egg white, slightly beaten
3-4 ounces pignoli nuts

Preheat oven to 300°F and lightly grease two cookie sheets.

In a bowl, sift together sugars, flour and salt. Set aside. In medium bowl, break up almond paste. Add egg white and mix thoroughly. Stir in flour mixture, a little at a time. Mix a teaspoon of dough in hand and roll in nuts. Gently press nuts into dough. Bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

Makes about 3 dozen cookies

ZUPPA ENGESE ("HAPPY" CAKE)

Cake:
5 egg yolks
1 cup sugar, divided
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
5 egg whites
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup sifted flour

In a bowl, combine yolks, 1/2 cup sugar, lemon juice and vanilla extract. Beat slightly and set aside.

In a large bowl, beat egg whites until frothy. Add salt and gradually add remaining sugar and beat until mixture forms peaks. Fold in egg yolk mixture. Gently fold in flour.

Pour equal portions of batter into three ungreased 11-by-7-by-1-1/2-inch cake pans. Place pans in preheated 325°F oven. Bake 20 minutes or until lightly golden brown. Remove from oven and invert pans (place on coffee cups) to cool.

Vanilla custard filling:
3 tablespoons corn starch

1/8 cup sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup cold milk
1 1/2 cups scalded milk
2 egg yolks lightly beaten with 2 teaspoons milk
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Mix corn starch, sugar, salt and cold milk together in small bowl. Scald 1-1/2 cups of milk in top of double boiler. Add corn starch mixture to scalded milk and stir together thoroughly. Cover and stir occasionally until mixture thickens, about 10-12 minutes. Rapidly pour egg yolk mixture into custard. Cook for a minute or two, stirring and scraping sides. When slightly cool, stir in vanilla.

Chocolate custard filling:
All the ingredients for vanilla filling, except increase sugar to 2/3 cup.

1 1/2 squares unsweetened chocolate
Follow the directions

for vanilla custard, except melt chocolate in scalded milk.

Topping:
1/3 cup rum
1 tablespoon water
2 (2 pint) containers of whipping cream
Sugar to taste

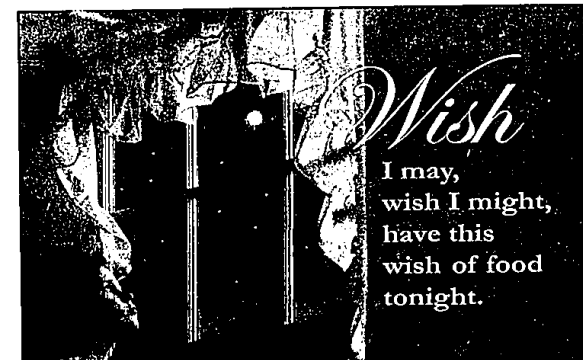
Mix rum and water together and put into a spritzler bottle. In a cold bowl, whip/beat cream, adding sugar, until peaks are formed.

Assembling Cake: Gently remove cake layers from pan using knife around sides. Place one layer of cake on plate. Sprinkle with half of remaining rum mixture. Top with chocolate filling. Add second cake layer.

Sprinkle with half of remaining rum mixture. Top with vanilla custard. Add third cake layer. Sprinkle with remaining rum mixture.

Frost cake with whipped cream mixture. Decorate if desired. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serves 12-15



Wish
I may,
wish I might,
have this
wish of food
tonight.

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Thank you!

The Food Bank of Oakland County serves 200 communities and will distribute 4 million pounds of food this year.

HEADS

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wine devotees.

One of the western European companies investing in the Hungarian wine industry is the renowned Spanish producer, Bodegas Vega Sicilia. They bought vineyard property northeast of Budapest in 1993 and have since invested \$10 million in an effort to produce the once-great Hungarian wines under the Oremus label.

These wines are now available in Michigan. 2001 Oremus Tokaji Furmint (indigenous grape variety) single vineyard "Mandolas" S12 is a dry white wine with floral aromas and

flavors of pear, apricot and anise spice. These attractive characteristics match it to white fish, scallops and even pheasant.

The sweet white wines of Hungary are made from grapes infected with the noble rot known as *botrytis cinerea* and referred to as "aszu" on the label.

The humid climate of the growing region encourages *botrytis cinerea*, which shrivels grapes and concentrates the flavor and sugar. The 1998 Oremus Late Harvest Tokaji Furmint S15/375 ml is fermented with 40-50-percent botrytized grapes. The result is a pleasantly sweet wine with refreshing acidity. It boasts a honey nose that complements

soie gras, blue cheese or salted almonds.

The 1993 Oremus Tokaji Aszu 5 Puttonyos S36 has aromas of dried apricots and honey with balanced sweetness and amazing richness.

Puttonyos on the label refers to the degree of sweetness in the wine.

A Tokaji with 3 puttonyos contains 8-percent residual sugar, 4 puttonyos, 10-percent, 5 puttonyos, 12.5-percent and 6 puttonyos has 15-percent residual sugar.

The Heads are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave them voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 1564.

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