

Wholesome wheat bread made with quality ingredients

Walking across the snow-covered parking lot in the early hours of the morning increases the pleasure I experience coming into the bakery. The heat of the oven provides a wonderful antidote to the bitter cold of winter.

Already, some of the golden loaves are being transferred to the cooling rack. Head baker Noel Black's long-handled peel draws out of the oven masterpieces, crackling hot and smelling indescribably good. Each one has its own charm of shape, color or texture. But none more than a multigrain bread, which is unique to The Give Thanks Bakery. It's called Swiss Multigrain.

The ingredient list reads, "natural whole flour, purified water, sprouted whole wheat, corn, buckwheat, sunflower, sesame and flax seeds, barley malt, sea salt and a Diga starter."

This wonderful bread is more than a sum of its parts. It is wholesome, light yet substantial, and has a full-flavored taste.

Now, it is true that multi-



Give Thanks
Gerald Mathes

grain bread can often taste like bird seed. But not this one. There are some interesting reasons for that. Let's take a closer look at the list of ingredients for part of the answer:

Natural wheat flour - Creamy in color (never bleached or bromated), this flour is the closest, in specifications, to the flour used in France for artisan bread.

Purified water - When the dough is mixed we use water that has run through a reverse-osmosis system to pull out chlorine and all impurities. This allows for natural flavors, not masked by chemicals.

Sprouted Whole Wheat - We take winter wheat berries and soak them overnight. Then, when the sprouting process reaches the perfect moment,

sealing water brings it to a boil. If allowed to sprout too long or too little, the result is inferior. That's why we do it ourselves so that we can determine the ideal moment.

Corn and buckwheat - The former is for texture, the latter is for flavor.

Sunflower, sesame and flax seeds - Are nutritional and add flavor and texture.

Barley malt - This adds a light touch of sweetness and plays an important role during the fermentation stage. Also, it has much to do with the rich, burnt sienna color of the loaves when they come out of the oven.

Sea salt - Even though salt is just two percent of the total weight, it ensures that the taste is all that it should be.

Biga starter - Italian by origin, Biga is a whole-wheat starter that replaces the use of yeast to leaven the dough. It takes 16 hours for the Biga to develop the necessary strength.

The wait is worth it. Then, long fermentation, in a cold environment, gives the bread wonderfully complex flavors and long shelf life without the

use of preservatives or any form of fat.

So, there you have it - a high-nutrition, honest loaf - a great source of fiber and full of delicious flavor. Earlier, I wrote that the ingredients are part of the answer as to why Swiss Multigrain tastes so good. As important as the ingredients are, there is more to it than that.

Each stage of production plays an important part - the mixing of the dough, its shaping, its cold fermentation (another 18 hours) and its baking. All are all crucial.

That's why we're blessed to have Noel Black to see to all those vital steps. He's one of the finest artisan bakers in the country.

Ask him how he does it and he'll tell you, "It's easy. Don't believe him. It's the result of rare skill. And respect for the real craft of artisan bread-baking."

Gerald Mathes is the owner of Give Thanks Bakery in downtown Rochester and a Bloomfield Hills resident. Look for his column on the third Sunday of the month in Taste.

SUPER BOWL

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tillas with simple refried beans and salsa and that's heaven for me," Rodriguez said.

PARTY TIPS FROM PROS

Straying away from the Mexican theme, Rodriguez said an easy party hit is cubes of pineapple wrapped in pre-cooked bacon. The concoction is held together with toothpicks.

"I served that at a very large party recently in West Bloomfield and people

absolutely loved it," he said. "The ingredients are simple but, as with any appetizer, it's labor intensive."

Or he makes Rumaki - chicken liver wrapped in pre-cooked bacon either with or without chestnuts. If serving guests mainly sampler foods, estimate that each guest will eat a minimum of four to six of each type every hour. So if there are three options, the average guest will eat about 12 each hour.

"Unless you have shrimp, then they'll go wild over it and eat more," he said.

Connie Smigielski of Connie's Catering in Plymouth said party hosts should

RECIPES

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FRESH SALSA

4 ripe tomatoes, chopped
2 jalapeño chiles, seeded and chopped
1 red onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup chopped cilantro
1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice
1 teaspoon cumin

Combine all ingredients and let the flavors blend for at least one hour before serving. Keeps well; refrigerate in a covered container.

Yield: About 2 cups
Source: www.drinkin.com

FAST TOUCHDOWN BROWNIES

1 package Pillsbury Rich & Moist Lodge Brownie Mix
1/4 cup vanilla frosting
football-shaped cookie cutter (found at Michael's Crafts stores) or one empty 2-pound coffee can
1 small resealable food storage plastic bag

If using the coffee can method: clean can thoroughly. Remove label. Make sure all sharp edges are removed from edges of can. Bend rim of cleaned can easily and shape into football.

For small brownies, use empty tomato sauce can bent into shape of football. You can shape can with force of hands by rolling it. Heat oven to 350°F. Bake brownie mix according to package directions. Cool. Cut football shapes from brownie using cookie cutter or coffee can cutter. Spoon frosting into small resealable food storage plastic bags. Cut small hole in bottom corner of each bag. Squeeze frosting on brownie to resemble football sticking as in photo. Refrigerate until serving time.

Source: Pillsbury

SAUTÉED MUSHROOMS WITH CHIPOTLE AND GARLIC TACOS

1 pound medium cumin or white mushrooms, halved, sliced
3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
1 sweet onion, quartered, sliced
2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 tablespoon chopped chipotle chile in adobo (canned) or to taste
1/4 cup chopped parsley
12 corn tortillas, warmed

Over high heat in large frying pan, sauté mushrooms in two tablespoons hot oil, stirring constantly until lightly browned, about three minutes. Remove from pan; reserve. In the same pan, sauté onion in remaining oil until soft, about five minutes. Stir in garlic and chipotle; cook one minute, stirring constantly. Stir in mushroom pieces. Stir in parsley. Serve in tortillas. Makes about 3 cups

CHICKEN WITH TOMATILLO SAUCE TACOS

8 ounces fresh tomatillos or 1 can (13 ounces) tomatillos, drained (found at produce markets like Nino Salvaggio's or Randazzo's)

1 teaspoon salt
1/2 tablespoon finely chopped jalapeño pepper
1 sweet onion, coarsely chopped
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 boneless chicken breast halves, about 1 pound, cut in 1/2-inch dice
1/3 cup chicken broth
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
12 corn tortillas, warmed

For fresh tomatillos, cover with water; bring to boil, add one teaspoon salt. Reduce heat; simmer until tender, about 10 minutes, then drain. Puree cooked or canned tomatillos and jalapeño in food processor or blender; reserve. Over medium heat, sauté onion in oil until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic; sauté one minute. Raise heat to medium-high; stir in chicken. Cook, stirring constantly, until chicken is opaque, about two minutes. Stir in reserved tomatillo puree and broth. Cook, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens, about five minutes. Add more salt to taste, if desired. Stir in cilantro. Serve in tortillas. Makes about 3 cups

Source: OSO Sweet Onions

SHRIMP AND SWEET ONION WITH CHILIES AND LIME

3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 tablespoon finely chopped jalapeño pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 pounds small raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 lemon, sliced
1 large, firm-ripe avocado, about 8 ounces
1 sweet onion, diced
3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
tortilla chips

For dressing, whisk together lemon juice, jalapeño, cumin and salt. Whisk in oil; reserve. In a saucepan, cover shrimp and onion with water. Bring to boil; turn off heat. Let shrimp stand three minutes. Drain, then cool quickly in ice water; drain immediately. (Do not let shrimp soak; they will absorb water.) Cool to room temperature.

Cut avocado into one-quarter-inch dice; fold into shrimp with reserved dressing and onion. Shrimp may be cooked up to the day before; dish may be assembled and refrigerated several hours before serving.

Just before serving, fold in cilantro.

Accompany with tortilla chips. Makes 8 appetizer servings
Source: OSO Sweet Onions

Legs help to take the chill out of winter

January is prime soup season. A steaming pot of soup on a cold winter's day warms the soul and nourishes the body. It will fill you up and fill your home with appealing fragrance.

Putting together a pot of soup doesn't have to be an all-day project, and some of the most healthful soups take the least time to prepare.

The place to start is with lentils. Unlike many dried beans and legumes, lentils cook quickly because they don't require soaking. Health experts love lentils because they are rich in vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber and the phytochemicals that help protect your body from cancer and other chronic diseases. A standard, one-half cup serving of lentils contains six to eight grams of fiber and so much protein that they can be used as a meat substitute.

Using lentils in dishes is also an inexpensive way to provide healthy, healthful bulk. In addition to soups, lentils are used in salads, dips, stews, and as

toppings for whole grains like rice or couscous.

Lentils are ethnically diverse, popular in many parts of Europe, India and the Middle East. Brown lentils are used in hearty, warming stews, and green lentils are a French delicacy.

Before cooking, pick through them and remove debris and any broken or discolored lentils. Rinse them under cold water and place them in a pan along with a bay leaf and enough water or broth to cover by one inch. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer 10 to 20 minutes, adding more liquid as necessary, until they are just tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

When cooked right, lentils are chewy yet tender, with the kind of mouth-feel and flavor we expect from comfort foods. If overcooked, they may become mushy.

In this Italian-inspired recipe, lentils, fresh vegetables and some olive oil are cooked

with pasta to make a satisfying, nutritious soup that will warm any January day.

ITALIAN LENTIL STEW

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 medium carrot, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
1 small onion, finely chopped (about 1 cup)
1 cup diced fennel
1 1/2 cups green or small brown lentils
1/2 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/2 1/2 cup lentil soup
1/2 1/2 cup marjoram
1/2 1/2 cup chopped dried chives
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1/3 cup small pasta
6 cups water

In a small Dutch oven or 3-quart saucepan, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Stir in the carrot, onion and fennel and cook 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Just to soften the vegetables slightly. Add the lentils and 6 cups water. Stir in parsley, basil,

marjoram and chives. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes, uncovered.

Stir in the salt, pepper and pasta. Cook until the pasta is done and the lentils are soft, 10 to 15 minutes. Add more water, stirring it in gradually until mixture is desired consistency. Adjust seasonings and add more herbs if desired.

This dish can also be served as a soup, depending on the amount of water used.

At this point, the stew (or soup) can be served, or stored in the refrigerator or freezer. Makes 8 servings if served as a stew, more if thinned to a soup.

Per serving: 163 calories, 2 g. total fat (less than 1 g. saturated fat), 26 g. carbohydrate, 11 g. protein, 12 g. dietary fiber, 17 mg. sodium.

Information for this column is from the American Institute for Cancer Research. Call their Nutrition Hotline (800) 843-8114, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to ask a registered dietitian questions about diet, nutrition and cancer. AICR's Web address is www.aicr.org.

THIELENE

FROM PAGE B1

fat fryer. There are many risk factors that also need to be considered.

■ You need a large pot to accommodate a turkey so that it is completely submerged and covered by at least two inches of the fat.

■ You need a thermometer to monitor the oil temperature and the turkey temperature.

■ Select a safe place to do this type of cooking. The high temperature could start a fire. ■ What is Vitamin B-6 and what does it do?

A: Vitamin B-6 is a water-soluble vitamin and helps use protein to build body tissue and helps in the metabolism of fat. Vitamin B-6 can be lost in preparation, cooking or storage. To retain this vitamin, serve fruits raw, cook in a minimal amount of water for the shortest time and roast or broil meat and poultry.

Bananas, dried prunes, watermelon, potatoes, spinach, chicken, turkey, ground beef, cod and canned salmon are all good sources of Vitamin B-6. Ready-to-eat and instant prepared cereals are generally fortified with Vitamin B-6. ■ Does mustard less its intensity (flavor) over time?

A: It is possible for the flavor of mustard to change, especially if it dries out. To rectify this, add a little vinegar, wine or water, stir and refrigerate. If it is fresh mustard, it may lose its "bite" after a couple of days. Ground mustard seeds or mustard powder has very little aroma; when added to a liquid and allowed to stand, though, it becomes quite hot so both of these can be added to give mustard a better flavor.

■ How do you ripen a pineapple?

A: You can't ripen a pineapple at home, so it's important to choose one in prime condition. When a pineapple is ripe, they are golden yellow, orange yellow or reddish brown depending on the variety. Check out how easy the spikes or leaves can be pulled out from the top. Choose one that is heavy for its size, avoid one with a dull, yellowish green color that is bruised, moldy or has an unpleasant smell. A "too green" pineapple will be fibrous and not very sweet. Take your time to check on the freshness of the pineapple to make sure you get a perfect one. Call (248) 858-

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