Baking bread through the ages

riend of mine, Susan awrence, came by the bak-ry the other day, excitedly anticipating traveling to Minnesota to take a three-day



Property in the Upper Peninsula to bake artisan bread.
I told her how professor David James of Oakland Mathes

one on her property in the

Oakland University has achieved that, in a dome-shaped oven he built in the woods next to his home. (In times of power fail-ure and ice storms there is

ure and ice storms there is something to be said for that enterprise!)
Anyway, as I write this arti-cle during the recent snow-storm, I am warmed a little by remembering the amazing variety of bread ovens I've seen in different places around the

OVENS OF THE WORLD

EASTER

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A few years ago, I was in Egypt on business and I went to the Cairo Museum. My time was short there, so I hired a guide to speed me through the

The edible candy bunny was first used as a symbol of Easter in 18th century Germany, where it was made of pastry and sugar. Also in Germany, children made nests of grass and placed them in their yards. They believed the Easter Bunny would fill these baskets with brightly decorated eggs during the night.

large building. You can imag-ine how baffled he was when I spent only minutes at the King Int exhibit, but stood fixated in front of a 5,000-year-old loaf of bread! Next to it, were molds which were once filled with dough, sealed and then set over fire to bake. (Breads, discovered in the pyramids, scaled in bowls and buried for the deceased; journey to the next world, were baked in this way.)

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way.)
The Egyptians are credited with inventing leavened bread.
On the tomb of Ramses III On the tomb of Ramses III there is a painting of a cylindrical oven - made of hardened clay. It looks like a truncated cone set on the groundopen at the top and with an air-intake hole at the base. A fire was lit at the bottom of the oven and once the sides were hot the fire was entinguished, leaving the embers to retain

teaving the embers to retain the heat.

The dough was shaped and then slapped against the inner walls. At just the right moment, the bread was speared by the baker with an iron implement before it fell down to the bottom of the cone

oven.

In Dubai, a year after my visit to Cairo, I watched flat bread baked in much the same fashion as the early Egyptians did. The difference was that the oven was set into the ground. Two bakers shaped the

ROTHI SALAD

ALFREDO

We don't have to suggest

what to do with extra Easter chocolate ... but here's a recipe for the left-over eggs that goes beyond the traditional egg salad.

13 ounces ratini (corkscrew-

% cup chopped green onion 3 cups plain nonfat yogurt 3 cups reduced fat mayon-naise

In teaspoons dried basil or

A con graled Parmesan

1's cups chopped red bell

15 cups blanched beas

dough into discs. A third buker loaded the oven and then used two iron spears to remove the breads baked on the oven walls. It took a lot of desteriey. I suspect I would have been unable to stop most of the loaves falling into the bottom of the oven!

In North Africa, breads are still baked in a covered terra cotta platter which is placed below hot sabes. This method was used widely in ancient Greece and Rome.

was used widely in ancient
Greece and Rome.
I grew up in England and I
heard that the Romany gypsies
in freland use a covered castiron kettle to contain the
dough. They then bury it under
embers created by burning
blocks of peat moss from nearby fields. The Bible mentions
bread baked in camel dung
embers. No kettle was used:
The embers were piled up to
cover the dough. Certainly,
that bread couldn't have been
called bland.

AS THE ROMANS DO

It was the Romans who first developed the dome-shaped oven, set above a horizontal surface or floor, upon which breads were placed after the embers (which heated the oven) were swept away. Today, you can see a modern interpretation of this ancient idea at Cucina Leone, the wonderful new take-out restaurant in

dill weed, crushed I tablespoon garlic salt I/teaspoon white pepper IO to 12 hard cooked eggs, shelled and chopped

shelted and chopped
Cook peats until all dente;
drain. In a large bowl, combine the pepper, peas and
green onions, gently stir in
pasta. In a separate bowl
blend the remaining ingredients, except for the eggs.
Stir the dressing into the
pasta. Gently combine the
eggs into the salad. Cover
and chill until serving.
Serves 12.

Source: The Global Gourmet

Birmingham.
In 1986, I interned at Daniel
Leader's "Bread Alone" bakery
in the Catskill Mountains in
New York. There, Dan had an
oven-huilder from France

New York. There, Dan had an oven-huilder from France install two huge brick ovens, each of which had a hearth under the floor. The hearth is connected to the oven through an opening which involves a moveable device, allowing the baker to direct the flames towards various areas of the oven. The ovens were built with refractory bricks and with thick iron doors. Dan used lumber cut from the nearby forest for fuel.

Today, at the Give Thanks Bakery in Rochester, we have a modern oven from France which incorporates many of the old principles and marries them with new techniques. So the three decks are made of stone to ensure hear teention—as did bricks in early days—but at a touch of a button, we can release steam into the baking chambers. This helps to achieve the beautiful golden color and erisp crusts. And just as important—consistently wonderful bread, day by day.

That's something the early Egyptians would have found difficult to achieve.

Gerald Mathes is the owner of Give Thanks Bakery in Rochester, Visif the bakery's Web site at www.givethanks-bakery.com or call (248) 601-1542.

Enjoy ham and cheese in braid HAM AND SWISS CRESCENT BRAID

// pound cooked ham, chopped (2-2 cups)

1 cup frazen broccoli flarets, thawed 4 ounces (I cup) shredded Swiss

1(4.5 ounce) jar sliced mush-

is cup mayonnaise or salad dress-1 tablespoon honey mustard

2 (8 ounce) cans Pillsbury Refrig-erated Crescent Dinner Roits 1 egg white, beaten 2 tablespoons stivered almonds

Heat oven to 375° F. Spray cookie sheet with nonstick cook-ing spray. In large bowl, combine ham, broccoli, cheese, mush-

Unroll both cans of dough, Place dough with long sides together on spray cookie sheet, forming 15- by 12-inch rectangle. Press edges and perforations to

seal.

Spoon and spread ham mixture in 6-inch strip lengthwise
down center of dough. With seissors or sharp kinfe, make cuts 1';
inches apart on long sides of
dough to within', inch of filling.
Twisting each strip once, alternately cross strips over filling.
Tuck short ends, under; press to
seal. Brush dough with beaten
egg with: sprinkle with
almonds.

Bake 28 to 33 minutes or until deep golden brown. Cut into crosswise slices. Makes 8 serv-

cups short-grain brown rice, rinsed and drained for 1's cups long-grain brown rice) 6 small green bell peopers 6 small tomatoes 1 medium onion, finely chopped, about Ecop

cup spicced fresh dill scup finely chopped flat-leal

cup feta cheese, crumbled I tablespoon fresh temon juice Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1 cup fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth

Cook rice according to package directions. Turn rice into mixing bowl and let sit 15 minutes to cool slightly. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

to 350 degrees.

Slice tops off peppers and tomatoes and set tops aside. Remove seeds and membranes from peppers. Using a melon baller or small spoon, secon out tomato flesh and reserve. Discard seeds from tomato flesh and chop the meat into '-inch pieces.

chop the meat into since pieces.
Add tomato, onion, dill, parsley and cheese to rice. Use a fork
to mix together, taking care not
to mush rice or cheese. Mix
lemon juire into rice, and season
to taste with salt and pepper.

to taste with salt and pepper.
Stuff peppers and tumato
shells loosely with rice mixture,
using about ".cup each. Arrange
stuffed vegetables in a baking
dish just large enough to hold
them (9- by 13-inch or bigger).
Replace tops on stuffed tomatoes and peppers. Pour chicken
broth into pan. Bake about 1'.
hours, until vegetables are soft
but still hold their shape.

Same lekwarm or at poon

Serve lukewarm or at room temperature. Vegetables are best when made the day they are served, as rice turns hard when refrigerated. Makes 6 main-course or 12 side-dish servings.

Nutritional information per serving: 152 calories, 2 g, total fat (1 g, saturated fat), 30 g, carbohydrate, 5 g, protein, 4 g, dictary fiber, 178 mg, sodi-um.

Dana Jacobi writes for the American is author of The Joy of Soy, and recipe creator for AICR's Stopping Cancer Before It Starts.

Mediterranean-style takeout, at home GREEK STUFFED VEGETABLES

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in Greece and Italy, stuffed vegetables are a popular fakeout meals.

Take-out has many defini-tions. To us, it usually means pizza or fast food like burgers and fries.

But despite the globalization

of our culture across the Atlantic, Europeans still enjoy takeout that includes local dishes as well as American fast oog. Parisians can still pick

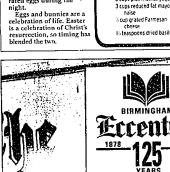
up a complete dinner at the local traiteur, neighborhood shops that sell a whole roasted chicken, or the tradi-tional stew called Beef tional stew called Beef Bourguignon, or crisp green beans almandine. Most American supermarkets offer equally honest, prepared food, but you have to be careful of high-fat items and supersized portions.

high-fat items and supersized portions.
Some Freach cities have creperies that serve paper-thin, filled pancakes.
The way they fill, fold and package them for takeout is as skillful as the centuries-old art of making a tender crèpe. Here in America, some specialty markets sell plain crèpes, vacu-um-packed, ready to heat and fill.
Warm them like a tortilla,

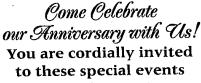
um-packed, ready to neat and
Warm them like a tortilla,
in a dry pan, and fill,
perhaps with a slice of low-fat
ham and lefthour cooked
spinach, a combination that is
res Frauquis.
Further south, in Greece and
tudy, stuffed vegetables are a
popular takeout.
They include whole tomatoes
and onions as well as peppers.
Usually filled with rice seasoned with fresh herbs, they
may also contain chopped
tomatoes, raisins, or chopped
meat.

tomatoes, raisms, or enopied meat.
Here in America, food shops featuring Mediterranean cook-ing offer these colorful, stuffed vegetables.
Or you can make them at home, ahead of time, so they are waiting to be reheated for dinner, as delicious as if they were

renented for dinner, as delicious as if they were delivered from the Greek taverna you wish was around the corner.







Thursday • May 1

Special Anniversary Edition of the Birmingham Eccentric, highlighting the history of the newspaper in Birmingham,

Saturday • May 3 • 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Birmingham Historical Museum presents an exhibit

"125 Years of Your Hometown Newspapers " The Eccentric is the oldest continuous business in Birmingham. The exhibit will reproduce selected articles, advertising copy and photos.
FREE Edy's frozen fruit bar /while supplies last.

Wednesday • May 7 • 7:30 p.m. In partnership with the allies i Jewish Community Center je reif "The Power of the , Bup't' Newspaper Worldwide"

A lecture by Thomas A Rose
Publisher and CEO of the Jerusalem Post
at the JCC • Handelman Hall
6600 W. Maple Rd. West Bloomfield.
Donations may be made to the Israel Emergency Fund



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