



taste buds
chef Larry
Janes



Cracking problem of eggs

Isn't it enough that egg prices mysteriously rise 15-20 percent this time of year? Add to that the cost of Peter Rabbit's trendy Easter Egg dye and coloring kit.

Then consider the grocery store bagger, wearing headphones and a "Party Naked" sweatshirt, who "inadvertently" placed the four dozen delicate ovals underneath the six-pound pork roast. Now you're faced with the monumental task of having to incorporate 40-or-so of the hard-boiled creatures into the next three days' worth of family menus.

You could start by making enough egg salad to serve the 5th Battalion of the Air National Guard.

You could make a surprise meatloaf and insert the hard-boiled devils in the center, then call it a pate and invite all the holly-toity folks you know for "hors d'oeuvres."

IF WORST COMES TO worst, toss them in the food processor, shells and all, and make a \$6 per pound garden fertilizer.

Or, you can read on . . .

First off, rest assured there are many recipes that can be made with leftover Easter eggs. The secret is creativity. They can be mashed and stirred into cream sauces, Swedish meatballs and stroganoff can pick up a subtle richness by stirring in 1/2 cup of mashed hard-boiled eggs just before serving.

Hard-boiled eggs can be easily adapted into salads and salad dressings. The classic Cobb salad is a perfect example. Wake up the flavor of a basic ranch-style dressing with 1/2 cup of mashed hard-boiled eggs.

Even those folks concerned about cholesterol can utilize just the whites in these recipes, placing the hard-cooked yolks outside for the birds and squirrels to enjoy.

Now, for a little disheartening news . . .

To be on the safe side, I made a call to Lois Thieleke, Oakland County Extension home economist and columnist for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. I needed some information on just how long you and I can tolerate the colorful creations before turning them into garden fodder or risk food poisoning.

THIELEKE QUOTED the most recent press release from the Food Service folks at Michigan State University which states: "Decorated hard-cooked eggs should be consumed within two-three days after cooking, when refrigerated. When used for coloring, decorating, hunting and displaying, total time out of refrigeration should not exceed two hours."

. . . and when I think of all those years the eggs sat in the baskets, grabbing an occasional bite, doused with an ample supply of high-blood pressurized salt, it's a wonder I'm still sitting here writing this.

(By the way, if you have questions regarding food safety, you can call Oakland County's Food Hotline at 658-0904.)

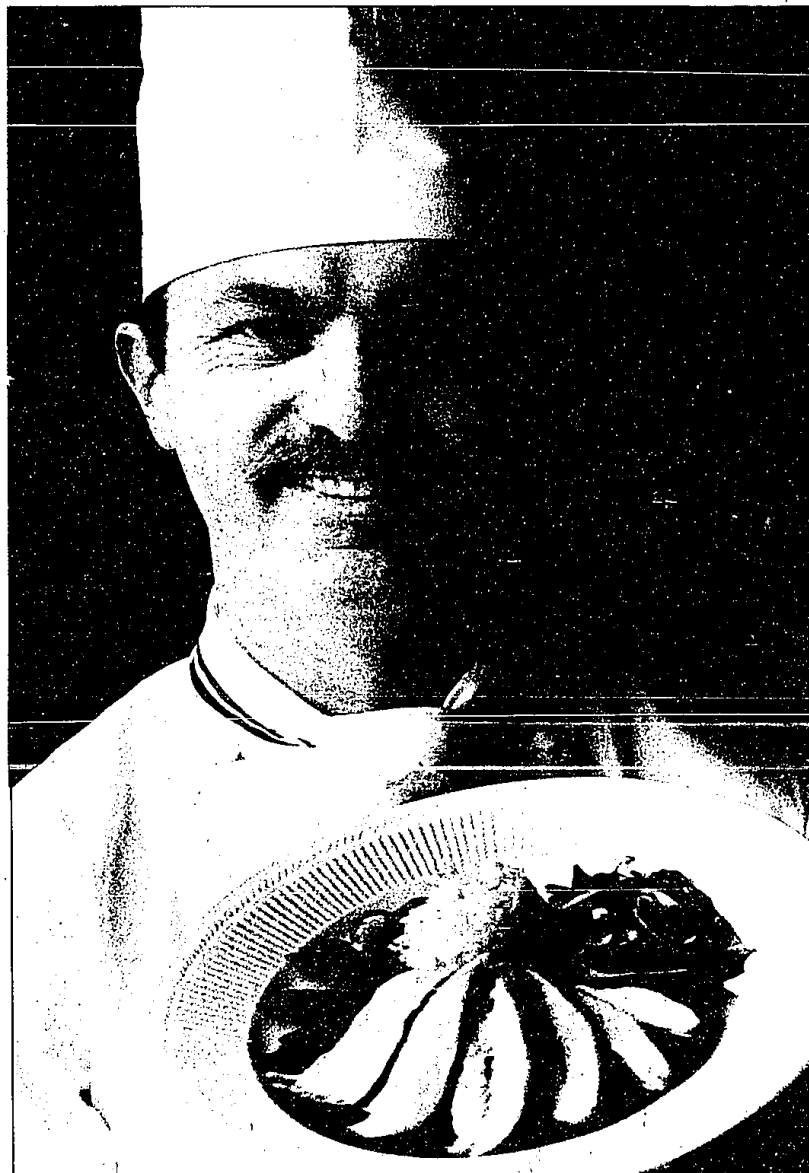
HOME MADE EGGY THOUSAND ISLAND DRESSING

- 1 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish
- 2 tablespoons chili sauce or catsup
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped onion
- dash paprika
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped fine

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Cover and refrigerate. Makes almost 1 1/2 cups.

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EASTER FEAST



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Michael Russell, executive chef at the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills, suggests an eye-and-taste-appealing one of the menu items at the Kingsley's dining room: chicken dish, Herb-Roasted Chicken, Michigan Bounty, as an alternative to the usual ham on Easter Sunday. This is

Chefs offer old, new specialties for holiday

By Michele MacWilliams
special writer

EASTER IS TRADITIONALLY a time when families and friends unite for a large feast.

To many people this means a ham dinner with Easter eggs for the kids. But if you yearn to try something new, come with us now on a tour of some of the area's noted restaurants as their chefs prepare for Sunday's holiday feast.

First stop is the Kingsley Inn on Woodward Avenue in Bloomfield Hills. There Executive Chef Michael Russell is busy supervising the preparation of items for Easter meals.

Chef Russell suggests making an easy, elegant poultry dinner in lieu of the tried-and-true ham. "The key to this meal is in its presentation," says the chef.

For his Herb-Roasted Chicken, Midwest Bounty, Russell takes regular frying chickens and creates a beautiful presentation by fanning the meat on a plate and accompanying it with asparagus, shiitake mushrooms, carrots, and rice with almonds.

HERB-ROASTED CHICKEN, Midwest Bounty is one of the special entrees he will feature in the dining room, which will have a limited menu. Some 400 diners are expected to be served from noon to 8 p.m.

"We'll also have poached salmon with sour cream and dill sauce, fresh Dover sole, swordfish, whitefish, fried shrimp and prime rib," he says. A buffet will be offered in the ballroom, for 1,400-1,500 people. The chefs says there will be salads, pastas, ham, leg of lamb and a "humorous" dessert table. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Next stop is Birmingham, and a visit with Executive Chef Randy Wagner of Machus Sly Fox.

Although Wagner and his team are working hard to make their restaurant's brunch a memorable one, the chef insists that home cooks can create an equally elegant meal with much less fuss.

WAGNER SUGGESTS serving a roasted leg of lamb accompanied by red skin potatoes and summer squash vegetable boats. The meal is easy enough to cook at home, and makes a very colorful presentation.

Chef Wagner uses a vegetable peeler to cut a stripe around the middle of each red skin potato, exposing the white flesh underneath. While the lamb is roasting, or a day earlier, he boils the potatoes. Then, 30 minutes before the roast is done, he places the potatoes in a casserole with butter and herbs and sets the dish in the oven with the lamb.

For a vegetable, bright squash boats are made by slicing summer squash lengthwise, hollowing out the center and filling them with peas and pearl onions.

"With this menu you have a very colorful plate," says Wagner. "Green peas with white onions, yellow squash, red potatoes and, of course the brown meat."

Final stop is the historic Betsford Inn in Farmington Hills. Chef Ann Galanty is expected to serve Easter Sunday brunch to approximately 600 people and then finish the day with an à la carte Easter dinner from 2-8 p.m.

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French pastries from a Lebanese baker

By Arlene Funke
special writer

Slavishly rich and utterly luxurious. That's the only way to describe the mouth-watering, cream-laced French pastries and cakes served up at the LaGondole Bakery in Livonia. The sweets are worthy of any holiday dinner, party or special occasion.

"We go the French way because it has to be tops," said 28-year-old Abe Saab, the Lebanese-born manager of LaGondole.

LaGondole is on Middlebelt just north of Schoolcraft (I-96 service drive). The shop employs a baker who learned the art of baking French-style pastries in Beirut, Lebanon.

THAT ISN'T as unusual as it may sound. Lebanon once was under French jurisdiction. Beirut, the capital city, became highly influenced by sophisticated-French food and fashion. The baker, 40-year-old Ali Hachem, is well-versed in the rich French pastries characterized by layers of cake or pastry, filled with whipped cream or fruit and garnished with heaps of chocolate or nuts.

"He tells us we haven't seen everything," Saab said. Hachem, who began learning his skills at the age of 12, came to the United States in 1984.

LaGondole, which opened last summer, is owned by Abe Jaafar of Livonia and managed by Saab, who lives in Dearborn. They are members of the same extended family and both were born in Lebanon.

The shop also sells Middle Eastern pastries. Another baker handles that responsibility.

Hachem works from a thick instruction book filled with recipes for such traditional French desserts as savarin, a yeast-baked cake flavored with liqueur and topped with fruit, and genoise, a rich, versatile cake covered with cream or mounds of thick chocolate frosting.

ONE OF HACHEM'S favorite cakes is called tranche coquin. The batter is covered with apricot jam, chopped walnuts and drizzled chocolate.

"I change (the lineup) every six months," said Hachem, a Detroit resident.

The current selection is a feast for the eyes as well as the palate. Display cases bulge with a variety of custard-filled, chocolate eclairs and several wedges of cake swirled with frosting, whipped cream or glistening fruits such as cherry or apricot. Others are layered with coconut, slivered almonds, chunks of pistachio and shaved chocolate.

A fruit tart pairs bright-green kiwi with strawberries or raspberries.

Some concessions have been made to the Americans' preference for soft, airy cakes, according to Saab.

"Some people aren't used to the French way," Saab said. "The French cake is made to be a little firmer. It has more ingredients. If people haven't had it before, they

think it's odd." Cakes, which may be purchased whole, are generally sold by the piece. Generous servings are priced at either 75 cents or \$1.50 a piece, depending on size. Party dessert trays also are available.

HACHEM ENJOYS making up fancy or theme cakes featuring whimsical characters such as Garfield the Cat or elaborate replicas of people and buildings.

For those who prefer traditional Middle Eastern desserts, there is baklava — filo dough filled with chopped nuts and doused with honey — and zalabia — a deep-fried pastry shaped like a giant pretzel and covered with sugar, coconut or pistachios.

The shop, which is open seven days a week, is done in cheerful shades of pink and lavender. Although the bakery caters to mainly carry-out business, several tables are available for patrons who wish to enjoy dessert with a cup of coffee.



JIM JAO DP/EL/staff photographer

Baker Ali Hachem at LaGondole