

# This year's crop is a healthy one

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The many varieties of apples differ widely in appearance, flesh characteristics, seasonal availability and suitability for different uses. For good eating as a fresh fruit, the commonly available varieties are Delicious, McIntosh, Stayman, Golden Delicious, Jonathans and Winesaps. Tart or slightly acid varieties include Gravenstein, Jonathans and Newtons that can make the world's best pies and apple sauce. For baking, the firmer-fleshed varieties including Spy, Rome Beauties, Greengold and York Imperials are widely used.

EACH APPLE contains about 85 percent water, and each three-and-a-half-ounce apple contains about 60

calories. Calories in fresh apples are derived mainly from the naturally occurring sugars which, in turn, give the apple its sweet taste.

There are many apple orchards in our area that offer everything from baskets of the delicious beauties to homemade cider, doughnuts and hayrides, and many include homemade provisions packed with love and care. A few of the James Gang favorite orchards stock ample supplies of apple jelly, apple butter, apple pies, apple strudel, candy apples and this writer's favorite, caramel apples.

Don't let the fall season pass by without a visit to one of the state's best naturally occurring resources. Bon appetit!

# 'Family-tested' dinners wanted

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"All three boys are on the swim team at Orchard Lake Country Club and they also play junior golf," Brethen added.

Brethen plays tennis and is the vice-president/treasurer of the Mothers Council at Cranbrook Middle School.

"Our lives are busy today," Brethen said. "I don't have time to cook fancy dinners that take an hour-and-a-half to prepare."

Brethen decided to launch her column after hearing a motivational speaker urge his listeners to fulfill their "natural aptitude." One of Brethen's talents, determined after an intensive series of tests, is "creative problem-solving." She decided to focus that problem-solving strength on meal-planning ideas.

"WE'RE ALL GROPING for new

ideas," Brethen said. "When I do plan meals for a week I find I save so much time and money. I feel like I'm more in control of the kitchen. And I feel better about myself because I'm organized."

Eventually she hopes to write a cookbook or two featuring easy, practical, family-tested menus.

Brethen said her sons enjoy simple dishes. They aren't particularly fond of casseroles.

"One of my sons, especially, doesn't like his food mixed up," Brethen said.

What the family does go for in a big way is boneless chicken breast, which has been sauteed with herbed rice, steamed broccoli and fruit salad.

The chicken breast menu will be featured in an upcoming column. Brethen has a passion for pasta, and one of her easy, tasty favorites is a dish called spaghetti à la carbonara.

It is cooked noodles bathed in a rich, creamy sauce of cooked and diced bacon, parsley, eggs and parmesan cheese.

Chip Brethen has contributed a pizza variation, which uses pizza bread, covered with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese. Family members can select their own meat and vegetable toppings.

The pizza pie is placed under the broiler until the cheese melts.

"It is so simple and delicious," Betsy Brethen said. "When kids get involved with their toppings, they seem to eat better because they have a choice."

ADVANCE PLANNING allows for a calmer dinner hour and sidetracks costly trips to the deli or fast-food restaurant.

"With the advent of fast food, people are eating things that are not good for them," Brethen said.

Brethen is looking forward to testing the menus submitted and has recruited some friends to be tasters. In a playful spirit, each will be provided with a bell and a kazoo. Delicious, "winning" dishes will be saluted with a resounding ring of the bell, while not-so-great ones will get a blast from the kazoo.

Brethen's philosophy is summed up in a line she attributes to the famous Broadway play, "Auntie Mame": "Life is a banquet and we should enjoy every course."

"It's something fun to try," Brethen said. "I have to cook anyway. If all else fails, I will have a good source of recipes. I feel, hopefully, this column will facilitate feeding families and children."

Readers should submit their recipes for meals to: Winner Dinners, Observer & Eccentric, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham 48012.

**APPLE BUTTER**  
5 pounds apples, pared and cored  
3 quarts apple cider  
2 1/2 pounds sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt

Cook apples with cider until the fruit is soft, stirring frequently. Pass through a colander, then through a fine sieve to remove all fibrous material and to give a smooth consistency. Return apple mixture to a heavy saucepan and add sugar and salt. Boil rapidly, stirring constantly to prevent burning until thick, at least for 30-45 minutes. When butter is thick, test by pouring a small quantity on a cold plate. Cook apple mixture until no rim of liquid separates around the edge of the butter. If desired, stir in 2 teaspoons of cinnamon. To preserve, pour into hot, sterilized jars and seal. Use as a sandwich spread or as a dessert sauce.

**HOMEMADE TAFFY APPLES**  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 cup boiling water  
1 cfb brown sugar  
1/2 cup cream  
2 tablespoons butter  
6 apples  
6 wooden skewers

Melt 1/2 cup of the sugar over a direct flame. Add the boiling water and cook to a smooth syrup. In a separate pan, cook the cream with remaining sugar and butter to a soft ball stage or to 235 degrees Fahrenheit. Combine the two syrups

**Pass through a colander, then through a fine sieve to remove all fibrous material and to give a smooth consistency.**

and cook until drops of syrup will form a hard ball when dropped into cold water or to a temperature of 250 degrees Fahrenheit. Cool syrup to lukewarm. Place apples on the skewers and twirl them in the syrup. Dip immediately in ice water to harden the caramel.

**APPLE CRISP**  
4 cups sliced apples  
1/2 cup hot water  
1/2 cup butter  
1/2 cup flour  
1/2 cup sugar

Arrange apples in a buttered baking dish. Pour water over the apples. Cream the butter, add flour and sugar and blend to form crumbs. Sprinkle this mixture over the apples. Bake in a 400-degree oven for 40 minutes or until apples are tender and top is browned. Serves 4.

**Chef's note:** This is one of Momma's old hand-me-down recipes but I think it's even better with a little cinnamon and nutmeg sprinkled over the apples before the crumb topping is added.

## clarification

Sheila Foley's recipe for Miniature Pecan Tarts with Cookie Crust

## cooking calendar

**CAKE DECORATING**  
A "Decorate and Celebrate" cake contest, marking the 20th anniversary of the Community Center Farmington-Farmington Hills, is being sponsored by the center.

The contest is open to non-professional bakers. Cakes must be prepared and decorated prior to the contest event. Cakes will be judged on originality, adaptation of the 20th anniversary theme and overall appearance.

Grand prize will be a cake that serves up to 25 guests, decorated by the Mrs. Madox Cake Shop.

First prize will be a ticket to the Merchant of Vino's "Champagnes & Holiday Hors d'Oeuvres" sampling workshop at the center. Second prize will be a seasonal centerpiece from Kitchen Creations of Farmington. Third prize will be a ticket to "Holiday Buffet" workshop at the center.

All entrants must register for the contest by Thursday, Sept. 7. There is no registration fee.

To register for the contest or for complete contest rules, call the center at 477-8404.

that appeared in the Monday, Aug. 23, edition was incorrect. The correct recipe follows.

**MINIATURE PECAN TARTS WITH COOKIE CRUST**  
Cookie crust  
1/4 cup margarine  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 egg yolks  
1 teaspoon almond extract  
2 cups flour

Blend margarine and sugar and beat well. Blend in egg yolks one at a time. Blend in almond extract and flour. Press dough into miniature tart pans. Bake at 400 degrees 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned. Set aside.

Filling  
1/2 cup margarine  
1/4 cup dark Karo syrup  
1 cup confectioner's sugar  
1 cup chopped pecans

Combine margarine, Karo syrup and confectioner's sugar in a saucepan and bring to a gentle boil. Stir in pecans. Spoon into baked miniature tarts and top with half a pecan. Bake again for 5 minutes at 350 degrees.

Bob Mounsey's recipe for Gaspacho Aspice, which ran in the Monday, Aug. 23, edition, did not specify the exact amount of gelatin to use. Here

is the complete recipe.

**GAZPACHO ASPICE**  
Combine 4 packages unflavored gelatin with 1 cup V-8 juice, 1 green pepper, 3 celery stalks, 1 red onion, 2 cups cucumber and 2 tomatoes, all chopped fine; 2 cloves garlic, crushed; 1 cup hot salsa; Juice of 2 limes; 1/4 cup olive oil and 1 teaspoon salt.

Dissolve gelatin in 1 cup V-8, bring to boil. Add the other 3 cups of V-8 and mix with all other ingredients. Put in a mold and chill overnight. Unmold and decorate.

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