

TASTE

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MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 1993

TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Scour pantry to make soup full of warmth

As I look outside my window, the thermometer is just touching 20 degrees. There's a slight wind blowing, making for what I estimate to be about an 8 degree wind chill.

There's an icicle hanging from the garage that could double for a weapon in a Terminator movie.

Pantry soup

My deck could easily accommodate a hockey team, and I'm hosed up in the house because our street is nothing but a sheet of ice. I can't think of a better time than now to make a pot of soup.

You don't have to be a professional chef to be able to make a pot of good soup. No doubt some soup bones and heavy cream, necessitating a trip to the grocer's, would prove suitable, but it's far too cold and slippery to even venture outdoors.

Getting started

This will be a soup full of warmth, redolent of every last scrap of meat and vegetables long forgotten in the bowels of the refrigerator.

Fortunately, the pantry is pretty well stocked and I can start with the two large cans of chicken broth. In the event they weren't there, I would have sufficed by using some granulated bouillon.

I check the base cupboard and find the three-quart heavy saucepan with little effort. While down on my knees, I crawl to the refrigerator and way in the back, find half a stick of butter left over from the holidays complete with brown toast crust crumbs imbedded within.

Leftover veggies

Luckily, I also find a half head of garlic, just beginning to take root. What more could I ask for?

I crawl back on all fours to find what's left of a bag of potatoes under the kitchen sink. They too have also begun to sprout.

I am tempted, while down on my knees, to wet a dishtowel in the kitty's water and wash away the crud build-up under the fridge, but relegate myself to the task at hand. I will rejuvenate myself with a warm potato and will consider cleaning after I create.

Time to cook

With a flick of the right front burner knob to "high," I position the pot and begin unwrapping the cloves of garlic from the skin-like shells. I simply "whomp" with the French knife, which blasts them into tiny bits as the butter sizzles.

I reduce the temperature to what my stove calls "5" and notice the remnants of a forgotten thyme plant, dried to preservation state because of lack of water.

I rub a seam with my thumb and forefinger and get just about a quarter teaspoon of the sizzling butter and garlic. Just enough to fill the kitchen with one of those "ahhhhh" smells.

The potatoes are peeled with rusty spots carefully removed and then cut into a dice that resembles the unfinished Lego car pieces sitting haphazardly next to the coffee pot. The potatoes splutter slightly as they too are thrown into the sizzling pot.

A wooden spoon plucked clean from the dishwasher offers its services, just enough to coat and stir and again, fill the air with the smell of goodness.

The electric can opener makes the sound of a car repair garage as it forces open the lid of the chicken broth cans. Had I thought to chill the broth first, I could abide by one of my New Year's resolutions — to cut down on the fat — but instead they fill the pot to within an inch of the rim.

I'm lucky enough to find two pitiful carrots lingering in the vegetable keeper of the fridge, and I toss them into the Cuisinart for a 15-second trip into chopped oblivion. They too make their way into the pot for added goodness.

Finishing touches

While the pot simmers with barely a break in the top waters, I immortalize four slices of whole wheat bread, sprinkle them with a blend of Kraft Parmesan and jarred garlic powder, wrap tightly in foil and toss them into an oven an SOS pad would freak over.

This gives me just enough time to dissolve a half a cup of flour into a cup of half percent milk with the battery powered whisk I received for Christmas. I whisk the milk mix into the soup with a smile, knowing that in four minutes, I will be warmed again and ready to conquer the day.

Soup warms. Soup nurtures. Soup inspires. Bon Appetit!

See recipes for easy potato and tomato soup inside. To leave a message for Chef Larry, dial 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox number, 1856.

MEALS Without MEAT simply delicious

Natalie Weaver raised six children on a meatless diet. She and other vegetarians are helping people discover a meal without meat can be delicious.

BY KEELY WYGNIK
STAFF WRITER



Being a vegetarian never hurt anyone. Natalie Weaver is proof of that. She and her husband Dr. Arthur Weaver, have six grown children, and 17 grandchildren — all vegetarians. Her mother is 101, living alone, and independent.

Dr. Weaver is head professor of surgery in the head and neck department at Wayne State University in Detroit; son, Donald is chief of surgery at Harper Hospital in Detroit, and also teaches at Wayne State University. Another son, Robert, is an oral surgeon at St. Mary's Hospital in Livonia.

Her daughters also work in the medical field. Karen McFadden is a nurse, Sharon Pittman has a doctorate in social work, Ellen Higgins is a registered dietitian, and Susan Hurt is a dental hygienist.

"A lot of mothers get excited when their kids say they want to be vegetarians. There's nothing to worry about," said Weaver who with her husband operate the "Better Living Seminars," a non-profit organization. They are Seventh-day Adventists, and their religion promotes vegetarianism.

In "Creative Cooking Without Meat," which she teaches with her daughter, Ellen Higgins, participants learn how to lower cholesterol by reducing or eliminating meat in their diets.

"We take people where they are and move slowly. If you're too radical, you'll lose them. We give them

See MEALS, 2B



Vegetarian fiesta: Natalie Weaver's family and friends shout "ole!" whenever she serves these delicious vegetarian entrees — lentil tostada with Spanish rice and enchiladas.

SMART FOOD SHOPPING

- Shop for bargains but be sure the foods are good quality and foods you can use.
- Inexpensive foods bought at the grocery store are just as nutritious as expensive ones found in specialty stores.
- Buy fresh, frozen, dried or canned foods when the price is best.
- Buy sparingly of "empty calorie" foods, such as soft drinks, candy, cookies, cakes and pies.
- Ready-to-eat foods, such as packaged meals, are generally more expensive because the price includes the preparation and packaging.
- Food loses nutrients by exposure to air, water, heat and light.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

- Meals should be planned several days ahead to insure an evenly proportioned and well-balanced diet.
- Start the day with a good breakfast. Have meals at regular times with sufficient intervals between them.
- Avoid in-between snacks or nibbling.
- Keep the meals simple but have a variety from meal to meal.
- Serve meals in an attractive manner. Have a variety in the textures of the foods served; this adds interest to the meals.
- It is desirable to keep the fat calories restricted. Vegetable oils are preferable to animal fats.

NUTRITIONAL COOKING CLASSES

- Creative Cooking Without Meat**
2 p.m. to 6 p.m.,
Sunday, Jan. 31 (one class)
Livonia Civic Center Senior
Citizens Building,
16123 Farmington Rd., Livonia
Suggested donation \$15 single,
\$20 per couple
To register call 651-2179/949-6663
- Vegetarian Gourmet**
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.,
Tuesday, March 2 (six weeks)
Garden City High School,
6500 Middlebelt, Garden City
Course fee \$23
To register call 422-7198
- Veggie Ventures**
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.,
Monday, March 22 (two weeks)
Garden City High School,
6500 Middlebelt, Garden City
Course fee \$17
To register call 422-7198
- Maintaining High Energy Through Better Food Choices & Daily Habits**
7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.,
Tuesday, Jan. 28 (one class)
Orchard Lake Middle School,
6000 Orchard Lake Rd., W. Bloom.
Course fee \$8
To register call 851-7600
- Weight Loss the Natural Way**
7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.,
Monday, Feb. 22 (one class)
Orchard Lake Middle School,
6000 Orchard Lake Rd., W. Bloom.
Course fee \$8
To register call 851-7600
- Introduction to Macrobiotics - the art of prolonging life through diet**
7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.,
Monday, March 8 (one class)
Orchard Lake Middle School,
6000 Orchard Lake Rd., W. Bloom.
Course fee \$8
To register call 851-7600
- Vegetarian Cooking**
7 p.m. to 10 p.m.,
Tuesday, Feb. 23 (one class)
Troy High School,
4777 Northfield Parkway, Troy
Course fee \$14
To register call 879-7682

Don't get stirred up over dinner, stir-fry



Got the mid-winter blues? Don't go stir-crazy, go stir-frying! This week's Winner Dinner Winner, Wendy Kuhn of Livonia, submitted a delicious recipe for stir-fried lemon chicken with peppers that Stan De prepared and cooked and ready to eat in 30 minutes.

Kuhn, originally from Virginia, learned how to cook from her mother, Elinor Kuhn, at an early age. Her mother, who was a business in Richmond, Va.

Wendy Kuhn's interest in cooking led to a not altogether surprising segue from the kitchen to the science lab. She received her bachelor of science degree from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and Ph.D. from the Medical College of Virginia. She is now a toxicologist for the Drug Corporation in Farmington Hills, and does lab work, testing and risk assessments at contamination sites.

She and her husband, Larry, enjoy gardening — she tends the flowers, and he takes care of the vegetables. Together they share an interest in the performing arts and often go to plays and concerts.

Thank you, Wendy Kuhn, for shar-



ART ISMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Winner Dinner: Wendy Kuhn dishes up Lemon Chicken with Peppers, a delicious stir-fry dinner that's ready to serve in 30 minutes.

ing your recipes with us and congratulations on being selected this week's Winner Dinner Winner.

Submit recipes to be considered for publication in this column or elsewhere to: Winner Dinner, P.O. Box 3503, Birmingham, AL 35202. All winners receive an apron with the words "Winner Dinner Winner" printed on it. To leave a message for Betsy Brethen, dial 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox number 1851.

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC

Winner Dinner Recipes

LEMON CHICKEN WITH PEPPERS

- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sesame seed oil
- 1 large clove garlic, minced
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 large green pepper, cut into bite-sized half-inch strips
- 1 large red pepper, cut into bite-sized half-inch strips
- 1 small chili pepper, minced (optional)
- 1 cup onion, coarsely chopped
- 4 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 3-4 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1/4 cup white rice, cooked

Using a wok or large skillet, heat cooking oil with sesame seed oil so that a drop of water sputters when added. Carefully add minced garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the chicken pieces, stirring the meat so that all surfaces are coated with oil. Reduce heat to medium and continue stirring chicken until all surfaces have been cooked and have turned white.

Add the peppers, onions and mushrooms to the chicken and mix. Pour the lemon juice, wine and soy sauce over the meat and vegetables

and stir. Cover the wok and simmer until the vegetables are softened, stirring occasionally.

Mix the cornstarch and water. Add to the wok slowly, stirring the mixture to get even thickening. Bring the mixture to a simmer. Serve over rice. Serves four people. Try one of these fruit dishes.

BAKED APPLES

- 4 medium-sized Empire apples
 - 1/2 cup raisins
 - 4 tablespoons honey
- Core apples and place them in a microwave safe casserole dish. Stuff apples with raisins. Spoon 1 tablespoon of honey over each apple, making sure the raisins are coated. Add 1/2 cup of water to the bottom of the baking dish, cover and microwave on high for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the apples are tender, but not mushy. When serving, spoon the liquid over the apples.

If using a conventional oven, bake apples at 375 degrees for 40 to 60 minutes, or until they are tender but not mushy.

MARINATED STRAWBERRIES

- 1 pint fresh strawberries, sliced
 - 1/4 cup orange juice
- Four orange juice over the strawberries and stir to mix well. Allow the strawberries to come to room temperature before serving.