

Books offers taste of the 'Big Apple'



SALLY GERAN

SUBURBAN ACCENTS
 food brings people together, and breaks down barriers that divide them. It is the great healer and comforter, even in a big city like New York.

While researching "New York Cookbook" (cover, \$17.95), Molly O'Neill, food writer for the New York Times, discovered the small towns within the big town by visiting restaurants, church suppers, street fairs, and kitchens of ordinary folks like Izzetta Leonard of Brooklyn.

O'Neill's book contains 450 kitchen-tested recipes by neighborhood gourmets and great chefs, 500 photographs, essays, mail order sources, shopping tips, and lots of advice. There's plenty of information for trivia buffs too, like deli-speak, where "Waldorf Salad" was first tossed, and who made the first Reuben.

"Every time you turn a page in the book it's like turning a corner in New York," said O'Neill during a phone interview. She was in

Detroit March 2 and 3 to promote her new cookbook. "People reading it will get a sense of the liveliness and energy of New York." She said she was surprised to learn during her promotion tour that people planned to use the book as a guidebook to New York restaurants, and food specialty shops.

The New York she presents in her book is glibly and glamorous, but comfortable and familiar too. A native of Columbus, Ohio, O'Neill took up cooking to pay the rent. As her interest in food grew she became a professional cook and chef, and worked at several small restaurants in New England before becoming a food writer.

She moved to New York with her husband, Stanley eight years ago, and spent five years gathering information for the book. She was also a restaurant critic for New York Newsday, and has worked at the New York Times since 1989.

Even if you never plan to go to New York, you'll enjoy reading this interesting book.

Here are some recipes from O'Neill's book.

KATHARINE HEPBURN'S BROWNIES

- 2 ounces (2 squares) unsweetened chocolate
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Butter and flour an 8-inch square baking pan.

Melt the chocolate with the butter in a saucepan over low heat. Remove from the heat and stir in the sugar. Stir in the eggs and vanilla and mix until smooth. Add the flour, salt, and nuts and stir until smooth. Pour into the prepared pan. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the brownies comes out clean, 40 minutes. Makes 16 brownies.

BILL THOMAS' TUNA ROCKEFELLER

- 1 pound fresh spinach, well rinsed
- 1/2 pound sliced bacon

- 1/2 cup fine, dried bread crumbs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 cans (7 ounces each) white tuna, drained and flaked
- 4 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Butter an 8-inch square baking dish or ovenproof casserole.

Steam the spinach until wilted, 2 minutes. Drain and puree in a food processor or blender. Set aside.

Fry the bacon in a large skillet until crisp. Drain and crumble.

In a bowl, combine the spinach puree, bacon bread crumbs, sour cream, salt, pepper, lemon juice, tuna and 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan. Stir until well mixed. Place the mixture in the buttered baking dish; sprinkle with the remaining 2 tablespoons Parmesan. Bake until the bread crumbs are lightly browned, 20 minutes. Serves 6.

Bill Thomas is president of the New York City Emerald Society. He makes this dish for fellow fire fighters.



Cookbook author: You don't have to be a New Yorker to enjoy Molly O'Neill's "New York Cookbook." The book is a celebration of New York's diverse cuisine.

Celebrate nutrition month, make some healthy changes



FLORINE MARK

LITE SUCCESS
 It's National Nutrition Month, and a change to healthy eating may be easier than you think. Many people think making changes in their eating habits is complicated or time consuming. That does not have to be true.

One important step toward healthier eating means eating less fat.

Leading health organizations, like the National Cancer Institute and the American Heart Association, recommend limiting fat in the diet as an important step to take for healthy eating. Excess fat has been linked to the development of some forms of cancer and obesity. Also, a diet high in saturated fat is often associated with heart disease. Eating less fat is one of the

changes to make if you're concerned about your weight. Once for ounce, fat has about twice as many calories as proteins or carbohydrates, so limiting fat can result in fewer calories consumed and benefit a weight loss effort.

Here are some fat fighting tips:

- Fat-control starts in the supermarket. Shop smart by reading food labels and checking on the fat content of any product you buy. Choose lower-in-fat versions of traditionally high fat foods, like

margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, snack foods, cheese and dairy products.

■ Plan more meals around carbohydrates, like pasta, potatoes and rice, instead of meat.

■ Fill your grocery cart with foods naturally low in fat, like fruits and vegetables, pasta, rice, potatoes, legumes, lean meats, fish, and poultry.

■ In a restaurant, order simple foods prepared plainly, by broiling, roasting, steaming or poaching. Ask for any sauces on the side. Ask about preparation and ingredients and choose foods prepared without extra butter, cream or heavy cheeses.

■ Make smart fast-food choices. Go for pizza, light on the cheese without any meat toppings. Order a plain, grilled burger topped with lettuce and tomato. Choose a

baked potato topped with veggies (light on the cheese sauce). Go for the salad bar, but select a low-fat dressing.

Making a switch to a low-fat diet does not have to be done overnight. A few simple changes made on a day-to-day basis will go a long way toward permanent healthful eating.

Florine Mark is president and CEO of the WW Group, Inc. the largest franchise of Weight Watchers International.

Skillet pork chop dinner perfect for wintry afternoons

AP — This skillet dinner is made for lazy, wintry afternoons. After browning the chops and adding the vegetables, set your kitchen timer and let it all simmer untended. When the timer rings, finish your hearty dinner with a flavorful nutmeg-accented gravy.

WITH VEGETABLES

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 4 pork chops (about 8 ounces each), cut 1 inch thick and trimmed of excess fat
- 1 tablespoon olive oil or cooking oil

- 2 cups apple cider or juice
- 1/4 cup dry sherry
- 2 medium onions, quartered
- 8 new potatoes, quartered, or 2 medium potatoes, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
- 2 large carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 turnip or rutabaga, peeled and cut into 3/4-inch cubes

1/4 cup half-and-half or light cream

- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

In a small bowl combine salt, thyme and pepper. Rub thyme mixture onto both sides of chops. In a 12-inch skillet brown chops in hot oil over medium heat for 4 to 5 minutes on each side. Remove chops from skillet.

Add cider and sherry to skillet, scraping up any browned bits. Re-

turn chops to skillet; add onions, potatoes, carrots and turnip or rutabaga. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 45 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally. With a slotted spoon, transfer chops and vegetables to a serving platter, reserving the liquid in the skillet. Cover and keep warm.

For gravy, boil remaining liquid, uncovered, over medium-high heat until reduced to 1/4 cup (about 8 minutes). In a small bowl slowly stir cream into flour and nutmeg;

add to reduced liquid, stirring constantly. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 1 minute more. Pass gravy with chops and vegetables. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 487 cal., 19 g fat, 106 mg chol., 33 g pro., 42 g carbo., 4 g fiber, 399 mg sodium. RDA: 12 percent calcium, 33 percent iron, 168 percent vit. A, 35 percent vit. C, 124 percent thiamine, 37 percent riboflavin, 52 percent niacin.

Easy-to-make pudding comforting

AP — Comforting, easy-to-make bread pudding is healthier than ever, and just as delicious as always. This recipe uses skim milk, nonstick coating and a combination of eggs and egg whites for custardy smoothness. Whole-wheat bread adds a little extra fiber.

HEAD PUDDING

- Nonstick spray coating
- 2 slices whole-wheat bread, cubed (1 1/2 cups)
- 1/4 cup currants or raisins
- 1 egg
- 2 egg whites
- 1 cup skim milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

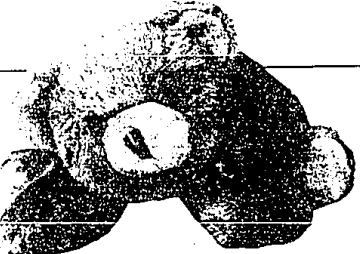
Spray a 1-quart casserole with nonstick coating. Place bread cubes in the casserole. Sprinkle with currants or raisins. Set aside.

Get egg, egg whites, skim milk, vanilla and nutmeg; pour over bread and currants.

Bake in a 325-degree F oven about 40 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool slightly. Serve warm. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition information per serving: 118 cal., 2 g fat, 64 mg chol., 7 g pro., 17 g carbo., 2 g fiber, 164 mg sodium. RDA: 13 percent calcium.

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