

MONDAY, APRIL 12, 1993

TASTE

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TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JANES

Be creative; use up those leftover eggs

Isn't it enough that egg prices mysteriously rise 16 to 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 6-pound pork roast.

Now you're faced with the monumental task of having to incorporate 40 or so of the hard-cooked eggs into the next three days worth of family menus.

You could start by making enough egg salad to serve the 5th Battalion of the National Guard. You could make a surprise meat loaf and insert the hard-cooked devils in the center, then call it a pate and invite all the holy-toity folks you know for "hors d'oeuvres."

If worst comes to worst, toss them all in the food processor, shells and all, and make a \$6-per-pound garden fertilizer!

Creative leftovers

Or, you can read on. First off, rest assured there are many recipes that can be made with leftover hard-cooked Easter eggs.

The secret is creativity. They can be mashed and stirred into cream sauces. Give Swedish meatballs and stroganoff a subtle richness by stirring in 1/4 cup of mashed hard-cooked egg just before serving.

Hard-cooked eggs can easily be 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 1/4 cup of mashed hard-cooked 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 dishheartening news. To be on the safe side, I called Lola Thielke, extension home economist for the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service, and a frequent writer for the Observer & Eccentric.

I needed some info on just how long you and I can safely tolerate the colorful creations before turning them into garden fodder or risk food poisoning.

Safety concerns

Lola quoted the most recent press release from the food service folks at Michigan State University — "Decorated hard-cooked eggs should be consumed within two to three days after cooking, when refrigerated."

"When used for coloring, decorating, hunting and displaying, total time out of refrigeration should not exceed two hours."

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-pressure-salt, according to Michigan State University, 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 Cooperative Extension Food Hotline at 858-0904).

Momma's methods

Momma would always prepare more eggs than necessary for the family Easter baskets. Good Friday was always noted as "egg salad day," when we would chow down on sandwiches made with the eggs that cracked during boiling.

Leftover hard-cooked eggs would be braided into sweetened bread or finely mashed and mixed with bread crumbs to make a tasty coating for salmon cakes.

I remember one year Momma mixed some mashed hard-cooked eggs with a little Miracle Whip and grated cheese and placed it between egg-dipped French toast slices for a hearty, appetizing lunch.

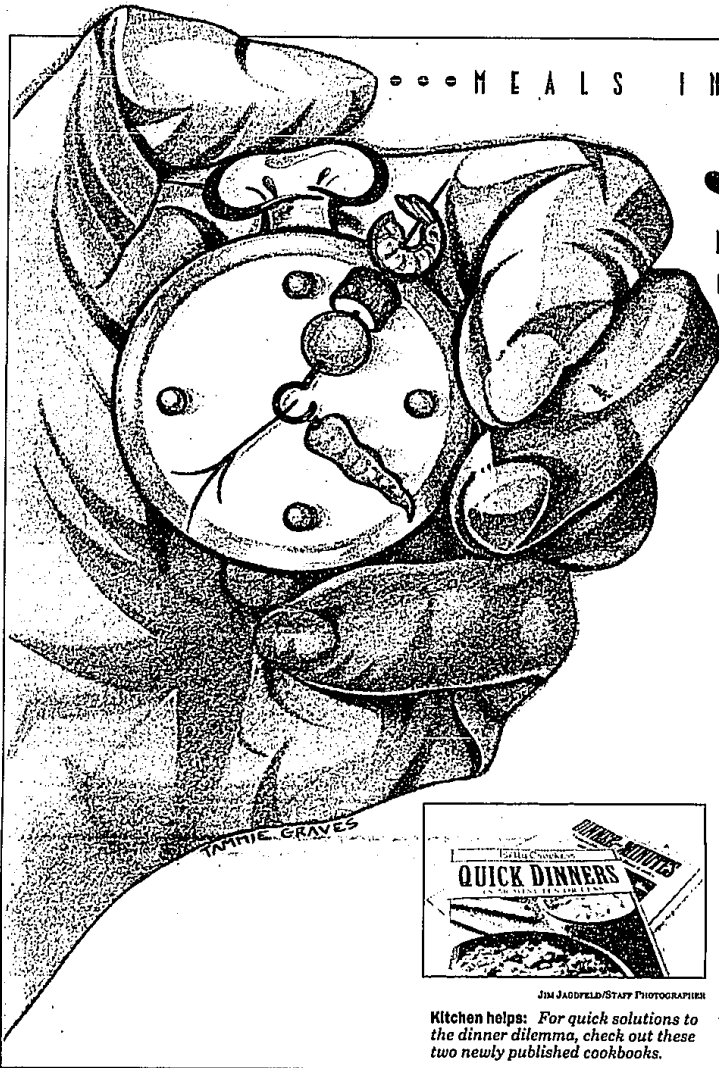
One year, when Dad was temporarily laid-off and money was scarce, mashed hard-cooked eggs were stirred into a chicken broth and rice soup for added protein.

Health conscious consumers can even buy "smart eggs" that are supposedly lower in cholesterol than their regular counterparts, and can be used the same way as regular eggs.

As mentioned earlier, anyone with a garden can benefit from the egg shells being tossed into the soil or compost heap.

If you're looking for tasty ways to use those leftover eggs, try some of the great Janes family-tested recipes inside. Bon Appetit.

To leave a message for Chef Larry Janes, dial 953-2047 on a Touch-Tone phone, then mailbox number 1886.



MEALS IN 30 MINUTES OR LESS

On your mark, get set, go. You can have dinner on the table in 30 minutes or less. Three new cookbooks show you how.

BY KEELY WYGNIK
STAFF WRITER



"Nobody has time to cook after work." Wrong! — with a well-stocked pantry, and a little planning, you can get dinner on the table in 30 minutes or less. Paula Hamilton, Linda Gassenheimer and Mary Bartz, manager of the Betty Crocker Kitchens, made a believer out of me.

I've been following the advice they offer in three newly published cookbooks for the past week with appetizing results. And as an added bonus, I'm saving money and losing weight. Too many carryouts make your budget and belly bulge.

By limiting recipes to five ingredients, not including salt and pepper, and cooking over high heat, Hamilton, author of "The 5 in 10 Cookbook" (Hearst Books, \$16), cut her cooking time to 10 minutes.

Hamilton is the food editor of the Oakland Tribune, and lives in Oakland, Calif. She's also married, and the mother of two children ages 9 and 11.

"Less is more," she said in a telephone interview. "Less ingredients, less pots and pans, less cleaning up. I put more energy into the dinner conversation, instead of dinner preparation. You need to be focused."



JIM JAGIELLO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kitchen helps: For quick solutions to the dinner dilemma, check out these two newly published cookbooks.

See MEALS, 2B

Chicken dish made-to-order for busy days



BETSY BRETHEN

Winner Dinner, submitted by Alice Witt of Troy, will warm and transport your taste buds south of the border, where the sun always shines.

Many chicken recipes have crossed my desk since I began writing this column, but every now and then I receive one that really catches my eye. That was the case with Chicken Mexicana, a one-dish dinner that is covered with a layer of cornbread and bursting with flavor. It is a make-ahead meal that is always a boon, as it seems so often that the pace of life increases in direct proportion to the rising of the outside temperature.

Witt is married to Jim and the mother of three children, two of whom are off at college. She loves to cook and finds great satisfaction in being a homemaker. An active member of Troy Baptist Church, Witt previously served on the church's Mission Board for six years. She is in the third year of a five-year international Bible study program that meets once a week and requires at least 1 1/2 hours



JIM REIDER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Flavorful meal: Alice Witt (left) and her daughter Julie present Chicken Mexicana, Ambrosia and Frosty Strawberry Squares.

of intense Bible study every day. As is the nature with recipes, Chicken Mexicana was given to her by a friend who served it at a Christmas party Witt attended. Everyone loved it, and I think your family will as well.

Thank you, Alice Witt, for sharing 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 Winner, P.O. Box 3803, Birmingham 48012. All winners receive an apron with the words "Winner Dinner Winner" printed on it. To leave a message, dial 953-2047 on a Touch-Tone phone, mailbox number 1851.

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC
Winner Dinner Recipes



CHICKEN MEXICANA

- 2 to 2 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 (1.25-ounce) packets taco seasoning
- 2 (14 1/2-ounce) cans whole tomatoes, diced and drained
- 3 cups (12-ounces) grated sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 (7-ounce) can diced green chilies
- 1 (12-ounce) can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 (8 1/2-ounce) package corn muffin mix

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In medium-size bowl, combine chicken and taco seasoning. Add tomatoes, cheese, chilies and corn and mix well. Place chicken mixture in a 9 by 13 by 2-inch baking dish. The recipe can be made ahead up to this point, covered and refrigerated.

In a small bowl, prepare corn muffin mix according to package directions and spread evenly on top of chicken mixture. Bake for 50 to 60 minutes. Remove casserole from oven and let it rest for 20 minutes before serving. Serves 8 to 10.

AMBROSIA

- 1 (15-ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple tidbits, drained
- 2 cups miniature marshmallows
- 1 (7-ounce) bag flaked coconut
- 1/2 pint sour cream

In a medium-size bowl, combine the ingredients, and for best results, refrigerate for 12 hours before serving.

FROSTY STRAWBERRY SQUARES

- Crust:
- 1 cup flour
 - 1/4 cup brown sugar
 - 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 - 1/2 cup melted margarine
- Filling:
- 2 egg whites
 - 1 cup sugar
 - 2 cups sliced strawberries
 - 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 - 1 cup whipping cream

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. In a medium size bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, nuts and margarine. Bake in a 9 by 13 by 2-inch pan for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In large mixing bowl, combine egg whites, sugar, berries and lemon juice. Beat on high speed for 10 minutes.

In small bowl, whip 1 cup of whipping cream and fold it into the strawberry mixture. Remove one-third of the crumb mixture and set it aside for garnish. Shake the remaining crumbs so that they are evenly distributed in the pan. Spoon the strawberry mixture over the crumbs. Top with the remaining crumbs. Freeze for six hours before serving.