

TASTE

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MONDAY, MAY 31, 1993

TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Here are answers to your questions

Your cards, letters and Voice Mail messages have been piling up so I thought I'd make some time to respond to your requests. You can drop me a note in care of this paper or you can call my Voice Mail number listed at the end of the column. Either way, rest assured that I do return all my calls and that sooner or later, your questions will be answered.

Laura Montambo called with a hot recipe that called for fresh cranberries. She couldn't find any and called for help.

Sorry Laura, I called three wholesale fruit vendors and they all agreed that fresh cranberries are unheard of this time of year.

I located some frozen cranberries at Erwin Farms in Novi, but your best bet are the dried cranberries which are available at most specialty food markets, including Merchant of Vino, and health food stores.

Soak them in water, wise or cranberry juice to plump, then drain well and use as directed. They might be a bit powerful since once dried, their sugar content goes ballistic. Cranberries freeze well so when October rolls around, you might want to flash freeze some for next summer.

Bernie Zachari, Brigette O'Brien and a host of readers called about my mentioning a few restaurants that are personal favorites. Unfortunately, space does not allow me to go into great detail but I will tell you that DePalma's Restaurant is in Livonia, 81735 Plymouth, 241-2450.

Giovanni's Ristorante is at 330 S. Oakwood Boulevard, Detroit, 841-0122.

Zoska's is now called The Polish Village Cafe, and it's at 2290 Yemens Street in Hamtramck, 874-5726.

Momma's pork chops
Christine LaBelle and a host of other readers called in response to the story of my momma which ran on May 10. Rest assured I give momma a big kiss "everytime" I see her. I've included a smothered pork chop recipe culled from her old recipe box in this column.

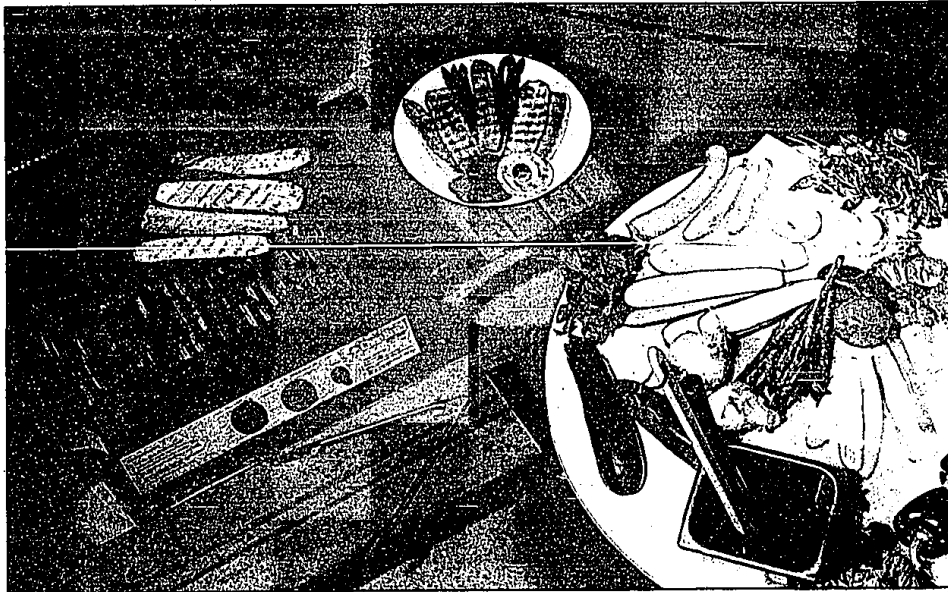
Jeff Williams called to say that he misplaced a recipe that ran three years ago that was a sweet and sour sauce served with Chinese Pot stickers. I found a great source for home-tasting pot stickers at the Oriental market at Newburgh and Six Mile in the Laurel Commons strip mall in Livonia. They come frozen but are nothing short of spectacular when pan fried or steamed.

Last but certainly not least, I really appreciate all the messages received after my somewhat derogatory story on New Orleans cuisine. I had no idea there were so many crawfish and "Louisiana" coffee lovers out there. I'm headed back there in the fall and this time I'll bring my own coffee and cockroach spray. Bon Appetit!

SWEET AND SOUR POT STICKER DIPPING SAUCE
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, chopped fine
1 clove garlic, chopped fine
3 tablespoons light soy sauce
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon hot pepper oil or sesame oil (optional)
Combine all ingredients and mix well. Serve at room temperature with the hot dumplings.

MOMMA'S SMOTHERED PORK CHOPS
6 ½-inch pork chops, trimmed of most of the fat
½ cup all purpose flour
½ cup fine bread crumbs (dry)
½ teaspoon pepper
½ teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
4 tablespoons oil or bacon drippings
2 cups homemade gravy
Rinse and pat dry pork chops. Set aside. In a bowl, combine flour with bread crumbs, pepper, paprika, salt, garlic powder and Parmesan cheese. Mix well.
Roll chops in coating while heating oil or bacon drippings in a heavy skillet. Place coated chops in hot fat and brown on both sides for 4-5 minutes. Remove from skillet and place chops in a shallow oven-proof baking dish.
Cover with gravy. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Cover casserole dish with foil and bake in oven for 1 hour. Serves 4 to 6.

To leave a Voice Mail message for Chef Larry James, dial 953-2947 on a touch-tone phone, then mailbox number 1888. Be sure to tell him what city you live in, and leave a phone number, and time you can be reached for a return call.



Grilled vegetables: Colorful and flavorful grilled balsamic vegetables are a delicious side dish. Take your pick of vegetables — squash, zucchini, mushrooms and pepper. Cook directly on the grill, or assemble cut vegetables on skewers for easier handling.

Rekindle flame safely

Keep it simple, hold the sauces, choose leaner cuts of meat and try to prevent that "charred look" by avoiding prolonged exposure to flames for healthier barbecuing. Remy Berdy of the Kingsley Inn and other area chefs offer tips for safe grilling.

By ROBERT STRIJS
SPECIAL WRITER
Healthy barbecuing is a contradiction in terms. At least that's what doctors and researchers would have you believe.
"How barbecue has become at least as important as what to barbecue," said Chef Remy Berdy of the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills.
"People are much more conscious than ever before about what they eat and how their foods are cooked. Today, when we barbecue, we need to pull back from the flames a bit and lighten up."
For healthier barbecuing, gas grills

Experts offer grilling tips

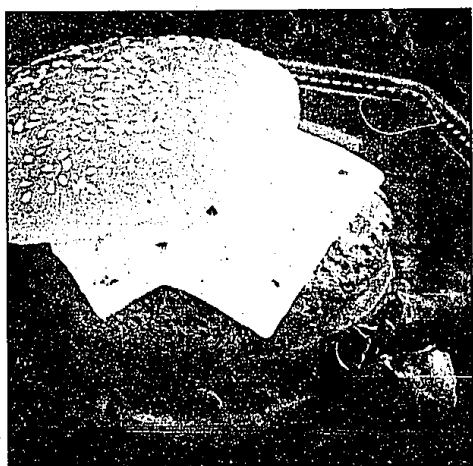
are preferred. There are basically two styles. The less-expensive type features visible gas jets with lava rocks to conduct and diffuse heat.
The other style features gas jets hidden under burners that allow fats and oils to fall through into a collector. The popular grills in this category come from the Weber "Genesis" collection. Retailing for around \$600, they're considered among the best and safest when it comes to healthy cooking.
But what is "safe?" And what is it that we are trying to avoid when we



Healthier barbecuing: Chef Remy Berdy of the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills, grills yellow squash, and zucchini marinated in a blend of sesame oil, vinegar and herbs.

Burgers — don't beef about same old grind

By KELLY WYGONIK
STAFF WRITER
Burgers on the grill are everyone's favorite, and we're not just talking "hamburgers."
"Shopping for ground meat used to mean one thing: hamburger," writes Rick Rodgers, in "955 Ways to Cook Hamburger and Other Ground Meats" (HarperCollins Publishers, \$16.95).
"But America's love affair with new flavors and a healthy, vital interest in good nutrition has given rise to a variety of ground meats never before available."
"Twenty years ago if you made a burger from hamburger people would say it was tasteful and good," said Jack Trabue of Word of Mouth Foods and The Porterhouse Meats in Plymouth. "Hamburger is fatty, there's a lot of flavor, but tastes have changed, and people aren't accustomed to eating it."
"Technically, hamburger is ground meat blended with additional fat, seasonings, and flavorings. These additives can supply up to 30 percent of the hamburger's weight," writes Rodgers in his book.
For better burgers, Trabue recommends using either ground round, which averages 88 percent lean, 16 percent fat. Or ground chuck, which averages 80 percent lean, 20 percent fat.
His "ultimate" burger is made with 50 percent ground chuck and 50 percent ground sweet Italian sausage.
"Just buy a pound of ground chuck, and a link of sausage. Take the sausage out of the casing and mix it with the ground chuck. The taste is unbelievable," said Trabue. "I like to taste my burgers with barbecue sauce. Brown both sides of the burger,



American classic: The ever-loved cheeseburger is a winner for serving family and friends. When grilling burgers, top with the cheese of your choice during the last minute of cooking.

then add barbecue sauce."
If you're counting calories, try burgers made with ground turkey. But read the labels, some ground turkey products are high in fat.
"Make sure you buy ground turkey made with boneless, skinless turkey breast," said Trabue. "You might want to add a little water to keep them moist."
Cook ground turkey over medium heat to retain moisture. Because of the low fat content, sometimes as low as 7 percent, ground turkey tends to dry out. Your burger is done when the meat is white, not pink, through to the center.

Grill beef burgers on a rack 4 to 5 inches above medium coals. It takes 30 to 45 minutes for coals to reach medium heat (they appear to glow through a layer of gray ash). For gas grills, check the owner's manual for cooking instructions for medium temperature.
Turn burgers just once during cooking, and use a long-handled spatula. This is to avoid piercing the burgers and losing natural juices. Patties or flattening burgers while cooking can also make them dry.
Trabue puts his burgers on foil to help prevent them from sticking to the grill.
Take care when handling and cooking ground beef to avoid the risk of illness. Here are some tips from the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service and American Dairy Association.
■ Use refrigerated hamburger and poultry patties in one to two days.
■ Cook burgers to medium doneness (160 degrees F) until no longer pink and juices run clear. Total cooking time on an open grill for ½-inch thick burgers (3 to 4 from a pound of ground beef) is about 7 to 9 minutes over medium coals for medium doneness. In a covered cooker, grill over medium coals for 8 to 7 minutes.
■ When grilling, remember burgers or other patties which look cooked on the outside may be still underdone inside. Check for doneness by slicing to the center.
■ For best quality, store frozen raw ground meats no longer than 3 to 4 months; cooked ground meat and ground poultry (hamburgers, meat loaf and dishes containing ground meats), 2 to 3 months. Defrost frozen ground meat in the refrigerator. It can