

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 1992

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CHEF LARRY JANES

Sail away with all the comforts of home

Still haven't made plans for that great summer vacation? Michigan has lots to offer and this summer you'll find me fishing on the Manistee, enjoying the arts and shopping in Saugatuck and Traversa City, eating chicken in Frankenmuth and admiring the natural splendor of the UP.

But if you're looking for something a little different, yours truly just returned from a long weekend of fishing and enjoying the views from a 66-foot houseboat on the absolutely gorgeous Dale Hollow Lake in Tennessee.

Houseboating in the "finger lake" regions of Kentucky and Tennessee is one of the fastest growing vacation destinations sweeping the nation. After spending four days aboard in what was nothing short of a fully-equipped floating condominium, I'm hooked.

This impromptu weekend with seven guys was hastily organized by Mick Livorno, a longtime friend. When the invitation was initially proposed, I had visions of an old tugboat equipped with the basics.

The 10-hour drive was the beginning of what I thought would be the bust of a weekend. I stand corrected.

Comfortable quarters

For starters, our 66-foot houseboat had all the amenities of home. In addition to a fully-stocked kitchen, complete with cookware, cutlery and basic gadgets, our houseboat comfortably slept 10 and included air conditioning, color TV, VCR, stereo and deck furniture.

Knowing that I was assuming the duties of galley chef, I packed a duffel with all the mandatory staples like condiments, basic spices and herbs, a favorite selection of non-stick cookware, and my favorite knife.

Items from a prearranged shopping list with dinner for three days were solidly frozen and carefully packed in insulated coolers for the trip. Relying on a basic camp list organized from past fishing and vacation trips, I packed the necessary kitchen supplies.

Anyone who has ever camped or spent time in a trailer knows the importance of having everything you need, when you need it. Marina and local party stores have a tendency to take advantage of someone in need of a corkscrew or salt and pepper shakers.

Assistant chef

Fortunately, I had the assistance of Mike Onoskie, a graduate of the Johnny Kolakowski School of Culinary Arts in Wyandotte and experienced houseboater who served as co-chef.

With duffels and coolers packed to the gills, we loaded our houseboat and were off for a great weekend of sun, fun and fishing.

In all honesty, I couldn't tell you what was better, the weather or the surrounding beauty of the finger lakes region. With all the conveniences of home tucked away in our galley, we ate like kings. Not wanting to feel chained to a kitchen for hours on end, the first night featured grilled steaks (on the supplied gas grill) with baked potatoes and stir-fried broccoli.

Simple dinners

No muss, no fuss, and the only dishes in need of washing were a load of silverware and a non-stick fry pan used to cook the broccoli. Subsequent breakfasts and lunches were self-made because in this case, the chef was either busy playing cards or fishing for the next night's dinner.

Although the fishing wasn't as productive as what I'm used to, dinner numbers two consisted of some fried potatoes (left over from the previous night's bakery), a few pans of cornbread and some sautéed shrimps.

Since we were in a dry county and white wine was about as plentiful as the fish, the frozen shrimps were defrosted and tossed with a seasoned flour and then pan-fried in butter that was made into a sauce with the addition of a can of cold beer.

The leftover cornbread was crumbled and used as a coating for the singular five-pound catfish which was brought aboard by a lone fisherman, dipped in an egg wash and rolled in crumbled cornbread, pan-fried and served as an appetizer. Our last dinner was barbecued chicken and a Fettucine Alfredo that was tossed simply and seductively with boiled noodles, some cream, fresh grated Parmesan cheese and a crackling of fresh ground pepper. My shipmates were duly impressed.

If you would like more information about houseboating on Dale Hollow Lake, we contacted with the Holly Creek Marina in Colton, Tenn. They can be reached at 1-800-531-1780 and will gladly send you a descriptive brochure and price list. Bon Appetit!

See Larry Janes' family-tested recipes inside. To leave a message for Chef Larry, dial 953-2047 on a Touch-Tone phone, then mailbox number 1886.

Springtime delicacy



SHARON LAMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

• TAKE A CRACK AT SOFT-SHELL CRABS •



You don't have to crack claws or pick through a hard outer shell to enjoy soft-shell crabs. These seasonal delicacies are almost completely edible. Take a crack at cooking soft-shell crabs, they're flavorful and low in fat and calories.

By KEELY WYONIK
STAFF WRITER

Like caviar and champagne, soft-shell crabs are an acquired taste. These seasonal delicacies, available mid-May to September, are completely edible except for the face and gills. You don't have to crack claws or pick through a hard outer shell to get to the sweet meat.

"They're just good eating," said Vince Clark, operating partner with Bill Kruse at the Rochester Chop House and Oyster Bar in Rochester.

"They're crispy, you get the flavor of fresh crab meat, and there's almost a caramelization of the outer shell that makes for great eating."

This has been a good season for soft-shell crab. "We brought in 20 dozen and ran out," said Clark. "I hope to have them all summer. I love soft-shell crab. I figured if we didn't sell them, I'd eat them."

Soft-shell crabs are blue crabs that have just molted or backed out of their hard shells. Blue crabs shed their shells a couple times a year. "They have to be caught fairly quickly because the shell stays paper soft for only a day or so," said Clark.

They're a very clean seafood because the crab stops eating about three days before it molts. Its digestive system is cleaned and it is just like a cleaned fish.

Nick Tringali of Jack's Seafood

Market in Farmington Hills describes the taste of softshell crab as "just as sweet as blue crab, but crunchier."

"The traditional way to prepare them is to season them with flour, pan fry, and give them a squeeze of lemon at the end of cooking," said Tringali. "You can also make a sauce, sautee the crabs, and serve them on top of flavored pasta like tomato basil."

"You can also bake them with garlic butter or barbecue sauce and broil or grill about 5 minutes per side. Or bake them at 350 degrees for about 5 minutes." They are either sold live or dressed and cleaned, ready to cook. Call ahead to see if your favorite seafood market has them, or will order them for you.

Anna Georgiou will order, and even cook them for you at her market - Anna's Fresh Seafood Market, Inc. in Redford.

"They're very good," she said.

"You can fry them and make a sandwich with lettuce, tomato and onion."

Use soft-shell crabs within two days of buying, or freeze now while they're available, to enjoy later. They thaw quickly in the refrigerator.

"Figure two to three crabs per person for a main meal," said Tringali. "One per sandwich. The cost ranges from \$1.49 to \$1.99 for small crabs - 3 1/2 inches to \$2.49 to \$3.49 for the larger crabs, about 5 inches."

To fry crabs, cook five minutes per side or 8 minutes in a deep fryer. Dry crabs before breading and allow the breading to dry before frying.

Soft-shell crabs are low in fat, calories and cholesterol, only 81 per 3 1/2 ounce serving, 1.0 gram of fat, 41 mg. cholesterol. They're also an excellent source of zinc.

See recipes inside.

CHEF'S SECRETS

Short order creativity piece of cake for chef

By JOAN BORJAN
SPECIAL WRITER

Eric Haggerty is a lucky man. In 1984, 13-year-old Eric went to Atlanta as assistant to a Swiss chef, a friend of his parents, Kathy and Mike Haggerty.

At an age when other boys have paper routes, Eric discovered his affinity for cooking and baking. He returned to Atlanta the following summer.

So, in 1986, when the Haggertys began offering English teas at their popular shop in downtown Birmingham, Eric's talent and enthusiasm were put to good use. After school, and during the summer, Eric created light-as-air tortes, Black Forest cake, and classic French broche and chocolate croissants. For discerning American palates, he made blueberry muffins and carrot cake.

In 1990, the family moved their business to the elegant Bloomfield Hills restaurant, Monchelle Lamour (don't run to your Larousse; they just like the sound of the words), Kathy ran the front of the popular restaurant, Mike did the cooking, and Eric was assistant.

"We provide a selection of pastries on the dessert menu in the restaurants," said Eric. "But we also offer a more elaborate special order menu. With 24 hours notice, we'll create lemon hazelnut, Italian rum, cappuccino, or several other tortes, all with a minimum amount of sugar."

A second establishment, Cafe Lamour, joined the family later in 1992. Located in Southfield, the light-filled room is decorated in a warm French country style. "Dad began cooking at Cafe Lamour," said Eric, "and I took over all the cooking chores in Bloomfield Hills."

Each restaurant is in an office building, and therefore closed on weekends. But don't think the Haggertys get weekends off; they often provide delicacies for weddings, teas or hors d'oeuvre parties. Eric's most popular creation is the white

Alaskan mousse torte. "We bake the white chocolate-flavored tortes for weddings almost every weekend during the summer," said Eric. "The average wedding requires about 20 tortes, and by late fall, I'll have made at least 600 wedding tortes."

"They're very light, and perfect after a heavy meal." Creativity on short order is one of the 20-year-old pastry chef's specialties. Recently, a customer requested an outstanding dessert for a Kentucky Derby Party only three days away.

"He provided us with tiny horses, and jockeys and split-rail fences," said Eric. "I made a track out of chocolate shavings around the perimeter of a 12-inch torte. The inner circle was green frosting, and we had a florist friend make us a tiny wreath of rose buds. It was so pretty that nobody wanted to eat it - they just kept taking videos."

For a recent hors d'oeuvre party at the Bloomfield Hills location, the dessert menu featured tortes with fresh fruit and custard; mousse tarts flooded in raspberry puree; raspberry Bavarian cakes; espresso tortes and lemon hazelnut tortes. Each of these morsels were about 1 1/2 inches in diameter.

"Small size breaks down willpower real good," said Eric, with a knowing smile. "Even people on diets will eat dessert, if it's small enough." Monchelle Lamour is in the atrium of the Bloomfield Center, 1533 North Woodward, Bloomfield Hills. Hours are: 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. - 647-4140. Cafe Lamour is in One Northwestern Plaza, 18411 Northwestern Highway, Southfield. Hours are: 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Americans are increasingly diet conscious. Given that, why do you suppose these elaborate desserts are so popular?

"The Swiss pastry approach is to make light and airy batters. It's unlike traditional heavy and very

See SHORT, 2B



JOAN ZOLNERSKI/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pastry chef, Eric Haggerty, 20, glazes a colorful fresh fruit cheesecake at Cafe Lamour in Southfield. Creativity on short order is one of his specialties.