

TASTE

B

TASTE BUDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Pig roast delicious way to feed a crowd

When the James Gang throws a party, watch out! Everyone loves a party, and as we near the traditional end of summer, the James Gang is no different. Momma has a simple guideline that was instilled in all the kids — "when you throw a party, never run out of food!" So as Labor Day weekend fast approaches, and with it thoughts of ending the summer with a party to beat all parties, I thought it might be helpful to offer a few tips on how to roast a pig; kind of a "pig primer."

Folks who might attempt a pig roast have two things in common: They love good pork, and they have a multitude of friends. Roasting a whole pig to serve a large group can be done by several methods. It goes without saying, a pig roast should be well planned.

To achieve tasty results, it's best to keep several points in mind. First off, the party planner should have a good source for whole pigs, should know how to beg, borrow or steal a rotating spit device or have access to a good pit, and lastly and most importantly, should be aware of proper cooking procedures.

When it comes to locating a whole pig for roasting, your best bet is to contact a reputable butcher. Small suckling pigs, varying in weight from 12 to 35 pounds, and can be roasted in a standard oven or large covered grill with minimum fuss.

Larger pigs, escalating in weight to upwards of 125 pounds are fairly common, but need sophisticated equipment, and someone with a fairly good understanding of pig roasts.

There's nothing worse than having 75 of your closest friends stand around for hours waiting for the pig to graduate from rare to medium well done. If your butcher can't offer a good source, contact your local 4-H Club or call a large meat broker in the Eastern Market area of Detroit. (You're truly getting his pigs from Allied Provision in the Eastern Market area.)

Expect to pay about \$1.89 per pound for a whole dressed pig, with head intact. To ensure adequate portions, allow at least 2 pounds of dressed pig (head on) per person. If you don't know anyone with a pig roaster, your best bet is to rent one from an agency.

Motorized pig spits start at \$75 to rent and escalate in price as the pig escalates in weight. If you have a big back yard, and don't mind digging a hole three feet deep, 30 inches wide, and of sufficient length to accommodate the pig (figure on at least 4 feet in length for a larger pig) you can pit roast.

To pit roast, the cook must build up hot coals at least 1 1/2 feet deep, and then cover them with pea gravel about 2 inches deep. The pig is placed on a grate of welded wire and then immediately covered with galvanized roofing and a foot or more of dirt.

Pit roasting is popular with cooks because it certainly while the pig cooks because this method requires about 12 hours of cooking time for an 85-100 pound pig.

Both methods will require about 200 pounds of good hardwood or charcoal.

Lastly, anyone who knows about roasting pigs will tell you that a good chef always has a meat thermometer within arm's reach.

Whole dressed pigs require minimal additives to make the meat succulent and tasty. Speaking from experience, I have rubbed the entire pig, inside and out with grenadine, a sugary syrup available at party stores, that induces a subtle sweetness while the pig cooks.

Stuffing the cavity with bunches of fresh herbs — rosemary and sage — also offers a tasty alternative. Salt and pepper are do rigour and other than that, the most important ingredient is time. Not the herb, but the hours needed to make for a memorable meal.

Having done both a rotating spit and a pit roast, I prefer the rotating spit for cooking simply because the person in charge has more control over timing and doneness.

The only obstacles I can recall from spit roasting a pig include careful observation of the pig, especially during the last few hours. During the last few hours of cooking, the juices begin to run rampant and can turn a pig roast into a pig fire in seconds. Also, as the pig cooks, it must be securely fastened to the spit so that it will not tip around and possibly break.

A drip pan is a must to catch the drippings and after securely attaching the pig to the spit, I then wrap the pig in chicken wire so that it will not break apart.

If you have an oven thermometer, the roasting temperature should stay at a constant 200-250 degrees for optimum results.

A relatively enclosed spit will maintain this temperature and can cook a 125 pound pig in about 6 hours.

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



JIM JAGGFIELD/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tropical treat: The tangy taste of key lime pie is available in Michigan from many area bakeries and restaurants, including the Whistle Stop in Birmingham.

THE PIES HAVE IT: Key limes a slice above



Key lime pie is tangy and sweet at the same time. Most people sample it for the first time in Florida. But you don't have to wait. Whistle Stop, Key Largo and Baker's Loaf are known for their scrumptious Key lime pie. Find out why.

By GERRI RINSCHLER
SPECIAL WRITER

If you travel to the southernmost point of the continental United States, you will surely happen upon a most heavenly dessert. And once you taste this tropical delight, you'll undoubtedly return to Michigan craving more.

Why is it that most of us have to travel to the Florida Keys to discover a treat that's been here all along? I can't answer that question, but after sampling a few slices of Key lime pie from three local experts, I can say, there's no need to travel to the Keys for Key lime pie.

When John and Frank Camileri

took over ownership of the Whistle Stop restaurant in Birmingham a few months ago, they didn't think Key lime pie would become one of their signature desserts. Whistle Stop provided the pie that was photographed in our Livonia studio for this story.

"Key lime pie was on the menu when we assumed ownership and has been on the menu for many years," said John Camileri.

"Many of the recipes we're following were established by the restaurant's founder Kathryn Griffith, and we're dedicated to maintaining the integrity she established, and the cel-

lection of her original recipes." It's hard to say what the original Key lime pie recipe looked like when Floridians discovered the Key lime. If you travel throughout the Keys today, you'll encounter pies made mostly with a graham cracker crust, and a few made with a butter pastry crust.

Most recipes for the filling incorporate sweetened condensed milk, egg yolks or whole eggs, and lime juice. Some fillings are baked, others are thickened with gelatin and refrigerated. Some are topped with meringue.

See Key LIME, 2B

Couple battles high cholesterol



LAURA LETOBAR

High fat diets have a definite relationship to certain kinds of cancer. One is breast cancer. This is what led Marie Schiote of Livonia to switch to low-fat cooking. Schiote, who is recovering from breast cancer surgery, is "cleaning up her act."

Both she and her husband Richard are also battling high cholesterol.

They are keeping a careful watch on their daily fat intake by following low-fat diet recommendations by the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association. They've also begun walking daily.

Schiote said she believes that "life goes on" even after a bout with breast cancer. That is why she is taking an active role in modifying her family's diet.

She submitted a recipe she obtained from her daughter's mother-in-law for Lentil Sausage Casserole and asked for a "makeover."

Marie and Richard said they enjoy the casserole because it is comfort food. But due to the pork sausage, it was extremely high in fat.

I replaced the pork sausage with ground turkey. If you notice, I also increased the amount of tomato sauce from 8 ounces to 16 ounces. This is due to the low moisture in ground turkey breast.

The pork sausage adds quite a large amount of liquid to this recipe. This is due to the fat from the sausage liquefying, and mixing with the other ingredients.

A rule of thumb is to increase the liquids when replacing a high fat meat with a low-fat one. Otherwise, your recipe will be very dry.

The amount of liquid will be something you must adjust per recipe. Just remember that the lower the fat content of the replacement meat, the more liquid you will need to add. I usually choose a liquid that will also add flavor to the recipe. This is



RECIPE MAKE OVER



Lentil-Sausage Casserole ORIGINAL RECIPE

- 1/2 pound dried lentils, washed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound ground pork sausage
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese

Put lentils in a large saucepan with 2 1/2 cups water and salt. Bring to a boil and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes or until tender. Do not drain lentils. Brown meat and drain on paper toweling. Reserve one tablespoon meat drippings. Place sausage in a 2-quart casserole dish. Sauté chopped onion and green pepper in reserved drippings. Add tomato sauce, molasses, Worcestershire sauce and dry mustard to cooked lentils and mix thoroughly. Add 'lentil mixture to casserole dish and mix thoroughly with meat. Bake, uncovered, in 350 degree oven on center rack for 1 hour. Sprinkle with cheese and bake, uncovered until cheese is melted (about 3 minutes). Makes 6 servings.

Lentil-Turkey Casserole REDUCED FAT RECIPE

- 1/2 pound dried lentils, washed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound Turkey Store brand 100 percent ground breast meat
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup green pepper, chopped
- 1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1/2 cup (2 ounces) Kraft brand Healthy Favorites shredded cheddar cheese

Put lentils in a large saucepan with 2 1/2 cups water and salt. Bring to a boil and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes or until tender. Do not drain lentils. Brown the turkey and drain on paper toweling. Reserve one tablespoon meat drippings. Place turkey in a 2-quart casserole dish. Sauté chopped onion and green pepper in reserved drippings. Add tomato sauce, molasses, Worcestershire sauce and dry mustard to cooked lentils and mix thoroughly. Add lentil mixture to casserole dish and mix thoroughly with meat. Bake uncovered in 350 degree oven on center rack for 1 hour. Sprinkle with cheese and bake, uncovered, until cheese is melted (about 3 minutes). Makes 6 servings.

See COUPLE, 2B