

MONDAY, JULY 8, 1996

TASTE

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TASTE BUDDS



CHEF LARRY JAMES

Stockpile staples for no sweat meals

With the volume of cookbooks, press releases, newsletters and other food news that continually crosses my desk, one can get pretty bogged down just trying to locate the ingredients for "Lobster Cakes with a Three Pepper Relish and Papaya Mayonnaise." I don't cook like that, never have; and while there are times when I might have to prepare something fancy, I do it with reluctance. During the summer, the last thing I want to do is shop for exotic ingredients, pull out my good cookware, and slave over a hot stove, timing everything to the "fifth" degree. I want something light, something fresh, something fast. When the temperature is hovering around 90 degrees F, I only want to break a sweat making lemonade or something that can be chilled and eaten two days later. The recipe should include ingredients that I already have on hand either in the refrigerator or pantry. If this sounds like I'm asking for too much, it should also be somewhat healthy. Sounds like too tall a request? Hardly.

When unexpected guests drop by, or I feel like dining on the patio with one bowl and a hunk of bread, I always think of how easy it is to make hummus, tapenade or a simple plate of tomatoes, mozzarella slices, chopped basil, and a drizzle of olive oil.

Sensational staples

A drained can of chick peas from the pantry, a dollop of tahini (sesame seed paste) from the refrigerator and a splash of lemon juice all thrown into the food processor makes a meal that can be dipped with vegetables, spread on flour tortillas, served with crackers or tortilla chips. If there are some roasted red peppers or the remnants of another bean dish in the refrigerator, I might become more creative and combine the flavors and textures. I've made hummus with navy beans, black beans, pinto beans and a combination of those beans, all with great tasting results. Everyone has a can of beans on their shelves, right?

Whenever I shop at those trendy markets like the Merchant of Vino, Vic's, Papa Joe's or the Long Lake Market, I always pick up a jar of pitted black Calamata olives. Again, tossed into a food processor with a handful of capers (buy the bigger jars; it's cheaper and they last forever) and a healthy splash of olive oil and you can feel like a guest in your own kitchen. With the emergence of Italian delis flourishing on all sides of metro Detroit I can hardly wait for the tomatoes to ripen in my garden. Soothsayers say that although everything is three weeks behind, the warm, wet spring should bring forth a bumper crop for backyard gardeners. I've already picked fresh basil and ground it up with pine nuts, imported Parmesan cheese, garlic and olive oil for a pesto that gave a plain box of pasta new meaning.

I always keep a standing supply of burpable containers and tight fitting jars filled with bulgur wheat, couscous, barley and other grains. Cold salads are tossed together in the time it takes the grains to soak, about 15 minutes, they are not only nutritious, but taste good too.

Last week I soaked some bulgur wheat and stirred in a jar of salsa, a handful of parsley from my garden, and some leftover mushrooms. I splashed them with a low-fat bottled Italian salad dressing, and by the time it took to heat a frozen pita in the oven to hot tenderness, the chilled salad was ready.

Baked potatoes

Whenever I bake potatoes, I always bake an extra half dozen or so and they end up in the vegetable crisper just waiting to be used. On days when I decide to grill, I brush an old metal pie tin with oil and fill it with shredded potatoes and a bit of finely chopped onion. This mélange sits on the grill thrice, next to the steak, fish or poultry and turns into a crispy side dish. Looking for something a bit more exotic? I always keep a jar of dried mushrooms handy and after soaking them in some hot water for 15 minutes they usually end up chopped into a burger, steak, or tossed with potatoes.

What's that you say? How about something for kids? Who says frozen chicken tenders can't be grilled? Who says a raw potato can't be sliced with the skin on and grilled, all while being brushed with a low cal vinaigrette and then topped with a sprinkle of Parmesan or cheddar cheese? Ever roast broccoli, cauliflower or asparagus? Spray it with some broth or bouillon during cooking. Your kids will love it, and so will you!

See recipes inside.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

• Hopheads enjoy local microbrews.



THE QUAKER OATS COMPANY

Just for kids: These No-bake Oat Treats, made with your choice of raisins, mixed dried fruit, miniature marshmallows or candy pieces are fast to fix and positively delicious.

Be a cool cookie this summer

If the summer heat has wilted your interest in baking, think cool. Quick and easy recipes for hot weather treats will refresh summertime menus, and entertain your children.

Making cookies is fun, and a good solution to the "I don't have anything to do" of summer.

For nearly effortless desserts that are sure to refresh, don't overlook a favorite summertime duo, ice cream and cookies.

Peanut Butter Chipper Ice Cream Sandwiches pair an easy pat-in-the-pan peanut butter chocolate chip cookie with vanilla ice cream. Or bake your favorite cookie dough in a pizza pan, cut into wedges and top with scoops of ice cream and all the sundae shop fixings.

Here are some cool desserts to try:

NO-BAKE OAT TREATS
1 cup peanut butter
1 cup powdered sugar
1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups oatmeal (quick or old-fashioned, uncooked)
2 cups (any combination of) raisins, mixed dried dried fruit, coconut, miniature marshmallows, chopped peanuts, semisweet chocolate or peanut butter pieces, or mini candy-coated chocolate pieces.

Mix together first four ingredients. Stir in oats and remaining ingredients. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto waxed paper. Store covered at room temperature. Yield about 4 dozen.

Recipe from the Quaker Oats Company.

PEANUT BUTTER CHIPPER ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup peanut butter
1/3 cup (5 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon) margarine or butter, softened.
1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup oatmeal (quick or old-fashioned, uncooked)
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 cup miniature semisweet chocolate pieces
1 pint vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Beat together sugar, peanut butter, margarine, egg and vanilla until creamy. Add combined oats, flour and baking soda; mix well. Stir in chocolate pieces. Spread evenly into ungreased 13 by 9-inch baking pan. Bake 14 to 16 minutes or until edges pull away from sides of pan. Cool completely. Cut into 24 bars.

Place 2 tablespoons ice cream on top of one bar. Top with second bar; gently press together. Repeat with remaining bars and ice cream. Wrap individual sandwiches in aluminum foil or plastic wrap; freeze. Remove from freezer a few minutes before serving. Yield 12 ice cream sandwiches.

Recipe from the Quaker Oats Company.

NO-BAKE GRANOLA BARS

1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
2/3 cup raspberry jam
2 cups granola
1/2 cup toasted slivered almonds
1/2 teaspoon almond extract

Grease an 8-inch square pan. In a small saucepan, cook chocolate and raspberry jam over low heat, stirring constantly, until melted and smooth, 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in granola, almonds, and almond extract.

Spread mixture evenly over bottom of prepared pan. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour, then cut into 9 bars.

Recipe from "365 Great Cookies & Brownies" by Joanne Lamb Hayes and Bonnie Tandy LeBlanc (HarperCollins Publishers, 1993)

See more cool cookie recipes inside.

Videos will get you hooked on fish

BY KIRBY WYONIK
STAFF WRITER

A lot of people, myself included, will order fish in a restaurant, but hesitate to prepare it at home. It's hard to tell if it's done. How many times have you poked and prodded fish cooking under the broiler or on the grill asking yourself — "Is this opaque throughout?"

Who better to learn from than a certified master chef? The popularity of fish has never been greater," said Certified Master Chef Milos Cihelka of Bloomfield Hills, who has produced a series of video tapes "From the Hook to the Cook," with Wild Harvest Video Co. of Orchard Lake. "Of course, preparing these foods in a healthier,

tastier fashion will also make eating fish and seafood much more pleasant and beneficial."

Follow along step-by-step with Chef Milos, it's like having him alongside you in the kitchen. In his videos — "Cooking Freshwater Fish," "Cooking Saltwater Fish," and "Cooking Seafood," Chef Milos explains how to buy and prepare fish and seafood. Each video contains its own set of printed recipes. Individual tapes are \$24.95 each, or \$69.95 per set of three. Call 1-(800) 819-3799.

Besides the fishy stuff, Chef Milos explains basic things cooks need to know like how to make clarified butter. After watching his videos,

See Videos, 2B



Go Fish: Certified Master Chef Milos Cihelka shares tips for preparing fish and seafood in a new video series.