

# Old-fashioned gingerbread brings back memories

See related Taste Buds column on front.

## OLD-FASHIONED GINGERBREAD

1/2 cup cane syrup or black treacle  
6 tablespoons butter  
1 egg  
4 tablespoons buttermilk  
2 cups flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
2 heaping teaspoons fresh

ground ginger  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar  
pinch salt  
3/4 cup dried currants or raisins (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. and line the bottom of a buttered 8-inch round cake pan (2 inches deep) with parchment paper. Melt cane syrup with butter. Beat in egg and buttermilk.

Set aside.

In a large bowl, sift together the flour, soda, ginger, cinnamon, brown sugar and salt. Stir in currants or raisins, if desired. Add the egg mixture to the flour mixture and mix well.

Bake for 10 minutes in a preheated 375 degree F. oven, then turn the oven down to 325 degrees F. and bake for 35 to 40 more minutes or until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean.

Here's a recipe that makes a more moist gingerbread. The name describes it perfectly.

## DAMP GINGERBREAD

9 tablespoons butter  
1 1/2 cups (12 ounces) pure cane syrup  
2 cups plus 2 tablespoons flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 3/4 teaspoons baking soda

1 tablespoon ground ginger  
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves  
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 egg, beaten  
1 cup whole milk

Preheat the oven to 360 degrees F. Butter a nine inch round cake pan (2 inches deep) and line the bottom with parchment paper. Melt butter with syrup. Mix well. Set aside. In a separate large bowl, sift together the dry

ingredients. Pour the syrup mixture onto the dry ingredients and mix well. Mix in beaten egg and milk. The batter will be very liquid.

Pour into prepared tin and bake at 350 degrees F. for 60-65 minutes. The middle will be set and the edges should have begun pulling away from the sides.

Cool the cake in the tin for 10 minutes before turning out on a wired rack.

## Details

from page B1

staff is 95 percent," Hickton said. "This has enhanced the professional feeling of staff and made them wine credible. Last month our wine sales exceeded projection by 100 percent. Our waiters know the wines and can recommend the best choices for the menu item chosen."

And you won't find waitstaff without floor support during peak dinner hours. Hickton (the only person in full tuxedo) is working hand-in-hand with them to maximize the wine and food experience.

This new attention to wine augments a successful spirits

program at Morton's which "sells an experience." Whether its Ports, cognacs, the 25 single malts available or small-batch bourbons, the Southfield Morton's excels at brands and matching them with cigars (\$10,000 sales per month) in its smoke-friendly environment. Both Hickton and public relations/catering manager Andrea Aretakis are cigar buffs. We took two newly-released cognacs to them for matching.

The name Davidoff is synonymous with the world's finest cigars. They recently extended their expertise beyond tobacco

and introduced two cognacs—Davidoff Classic \$63.25 and Davidoff Extra \$206.48, made by Hennessy especially for Davidoff. Both cognacs were crafted to complement Davidoff cigars. Unfortunately, an August Davidoff plant fire sent 800,000 cigars up in smoke and Davidoff cigars are now hard to find. But experts Hickton and Aretakis came to the rescue suggesting cigar alternatives. With cognac Davidoff Classic, the preferred cigars had spicy elements such as a darker maduro wrapper that stood up to the full oak character of the cognac.

"Basically, any robusto will fill the bill," Aretakis said. And the Zino Robusto did just that. It was a perfect complement to the more robust nature of Davidoff Classic. La Tradition, a double corona and rich, full-bodied smoke with spicy maduro wrapper also harmonized well. Felipe Gregorio Nino is a spicy, peppery cigar with medium body. It displayed the same medium intensity of the cognac and proved a good match.

The essence of Davidoff Extra cognac called for a medium-light cigar with a Connecticut shade wrapper and lighter tobacco

blend. Two Zino cigars (made by Davidoff) did exceptionally well. Zino Veritas with its nutmeg and chocolate-vanilla characters matched the elegance of the Davidoff Extra cognac. Indicating the importance of matching a cognac (or any spirit) with a cigar was the experience of smoking Zino Veritas with the Davidoff Classic. The cigar came off weedy and neither cigar nor cognac were complemented. Zino La Tradition with its mild yet full rich character paired with the smooth, rich, caramel nature of the cognac. "It's long draw makes you want to savor the

cognac," Hickton said. "Its mildness was overpowered by the bigger, oakier Davidoff Classic."

While some may say, "Big deal," to all the matching, wine and food or cigars with after-dinner pours, when done correctly they not only enhance a dining experience, but allow one to savor the moment. In our hurried lives, we don't get enough of this.

Look for Focus on Wine on the first and third Monday of the month in Taste. To leave a voice mail message for the Herald, dial (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1861.

## Deck the Halls

from page B1

berry things, and of course, traditional plum pudding — although we always do a Bûche de Noël (Yule log) for Michael's December 25th birthday, as well as a sweet table."

Sharon Reiner knew she wanted to be a farmer since first grade. Seven years ago, Sharon bought a 10 acre farm (Victorian farm house and all) when she

was single. Now married to André, and mother to Gunnar (age 5), what started out as a hobby of raising chickens, Black Sheep Poultry and Woolen Co. Inc. was born, or in this case, hatched.

Located in Grass Lake, (outside of Ann Arbor) Sharon's dream has almost been fulfilled. Chicken farming is not new,

although by talking to Sharon you would think it is. Her enthusiasm is brimming as she talks about her "first in, first out" rotation system.

She's not just cleaning out coops, and feeding her flock, she mixes grain (they mill all of their own grain), does all of the sales, marketing, and distribution.

How does Sharon Reiner, owner of chicken farm extraordinaire, see herself entertaining for the holidays? The yearly tradition of chopping down the family Christmas tree with family and friends, is an event they all look forward to every year.

Going out into the fields and looking for the perfect Christmas tree is hard work. Nothing is better than bringing the tree

into the house and smelling fresh pine" says Sharon, her face all aglow.

Their festivity includes lighting a fire in the hearth and having everyone gather around the newly cut tree for trimming. Fragrant cups of hot cocoa and shortbread cookies — made in the brown bag cookie sheep mold, but of course — is the reward for all the hard work. Sharon's cookies and hot chocolate are all made from organic ingredients — after all, it's a way of life!

Constantina, owner of Constantina Public Relations, in Southfield, does media representation here in the Detroit Metropolitan area. Formerly a fashion model, this dramatically-

striking, single woman, does not appear to be a gourmet cook — she willingly admits to her lack of finesse in the kitchen — but she does entertain, and with the flair and style one would expect.

In her beautiful high-rise apartment, Constantina has a yearly Christmas Eve gathering, with her closest friends. This party has always been a traditional small, intimate buffet — fat-free of course. Constantina may not cook, but she knows where to order her favorite holiday gourmet items. "I do research" says Constantina candidly, "I know who prepares the very best food."

Victorian invitations sent, cocktail attire required to fit the festive atmosphere — decorations

will include: a big tree decorated with antique and elaborate ornaments, crystal, scented bay berry candles burning, and a beautifully decorated table to accompany her catered buffet meal.

To start, a pitcher of Champagne and Crème de Cassis (Kir Royal) — followed by a spit-roasted turkey, asparagus, sweet potato puree and, for dessert, a chocolate concoction Constantina swears by. Entenmann's Chocolate no-fat loaf cake with cream cheese and fat free chocolate sauce, garnished with raspberries.

As guests leave that evening, each is presented with a Christmas gift — one that has been specifically chosen and beautifully wrapped.

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## Entertain guests with festive holiday fare

### See related story on Taste front POLYNESIAN HOLIDAY SHRIMP KEBABS

Yield: 4 main course/8-12 appetizer servings

1/2 cup bottled Italian dressing  
1 teaspoon curry powder  
1/2 teaspoon cardamom (optional)  
1/4 teaspoon dried hot pepper flakes  
1 teaspoon pound peeled and deveined large shrimp  
1 large red bell pepper, seeded and cut into 8 slices  
8 thick scallions, trimmed to leave 2 inches of green tops  
1/2 small pineapple, cut into 4-inch chunks (about 1 1/2 cups)  
1/2 small cantaloupe or small honeydew melon, cut into 1-inch chunks or scooped into balls (about 1 1/2 cups)

Directions:

In a shallow dish, combine the Italian dressing, curry powder, cardamom, and hot pepper flakes. Add the shrimp, turning to coat completely. Cover and refrigerate for 15-30 minutes. Add the bell pepper, scallions, pineapple and melon to the shrimp, tossing to coat the vegetables with the marinade.

Thread the shrimp, fruit, and vegetables onto 4 large (about 12") metal skewers (placing some of each onto each skewer, beginning and ending with fruit), or thread

onto small bamboo skewers that have been soaked 30 minutes in water (placing one each of the shrimp, vegetables, and fruit on each skewer).

Grill over medium coals, turning the skewers once, until the shrimp are opaque and the vegetables and fruits are softened, 4-6 minutes.

Note: If you don't want to use the melon, just add more pineapple. The fruit should be on the ends of the skewers because the heat of the grill will be less there.

For a main course, the kebabs should be served over rice, which can be part of the recipe if you wish. For appetizers, the bamboo skewers should be arranged on a platter and served.

Recipe: Compliments of Wish-Bone Dressing:

Informational note — Tourtiere means pie dish in which to make tortes

### PAULA DORE-DUFFY'S FAMILY LE TOURTIÈRE MEAT PIE

Yield: one pie

1/2 pound ground beef  
1 1/2 pounds ground pork  
2 cups water  
1 medium-large onion — chopped or minced  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1 medium potato, cooked, then mashed dry  
1 1/2 teaspoons ground cloves  
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon allspice

Favorite pie crust recipe

OPTIONS:

Increase all spices. For parties, make this dish for hors d'oeuvres by making it in a rectangular pan — cut in squares. Add Chinese or Italian hot or mild seasonings for a different taste.

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. In a sauce pan mix pork, beef, water, onion, salt and pepper. Cover and cook for 40 minutes — don't let the meat catch on the bottom of the pan. Add additional water if necessary. Cook until meat is tender.

Bottom of pan should be moist, but meat should not be floating in water. Remove fat as meat cools and rises to top of water.

Add cloves, garlic powder, allspice and potato to defatted meat. Mix well.

Pour into pastry into shell and cover with pastry dough. (I usually put a little pastry decoration on top).

Bake in preheated oven until brown (approximately 40-50 minutes) until

golden brown. Serve hot or cold — with or without ketchup or a favorite sauce.

Pies can be precooked and frozen — if doing it that way — bake at 350 degrees F. for 30 minutes — then reheated to finish.

Informational note: this recipe is close in design to the recipe for Rillettes.

### PAULA DORE-DUFFY'S FAMILY GRATON RECIPE

Yield: big batch

6 pounds of lean ground pork (shoulder is best, but you can also use butt)  
4 large onions, peeled and chopped  
5-6 teaspoons allspice  
2 teaspoons nutmeg  
1 rounded teaspoon ginger  
1 rounded teaspoon cloves  
Salt and pepper  
Dill (optional) (My mother never added this but I like the flavor)

Directions:

Mix the meat and onions into a large French Oven or kettle with enough water to cover the meat by one inch.

Cook over medium-high heat until the mixture comes to a boil — reduce the heat to simmer (approximately 40 minutes) — stirring frequently until the meat begins to stick to the bottom of the pan.

At this point, the mixture will appear thick as if the meat will set. Watch constantly! Add the seasonings and cook for another 5 minutes.

Remove the pot from your cook top. Pour or scoop into decorative molds, crocks, or storage containers. Let the meat mixture cool — remove any fat from the surface and serve with crackers, water biscuits, toast, baguettes, etc.

Note: "We eat this for breakfast on toast!" You can also make a patty out of this and fry.

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