

TASTE

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SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 1997

MASTER CHEF



CHEF MILOS

Simple, fresh foods grace our table

People always ask me: "Who does the cooking at home?" Well, my wife does, with minor exceptions. We eat simple, healthful food, which could be deemed too Spartan for some. Two to three dinners per week are meatless. My wife does not spend much time on preparation, but we never eat canned vegetables, frozen pizza or TV dinners. The only frozen vegetables we use are corn and peas, when fresh are not available.

We have wine with every dinner, even if it is just boiled potatoes with cottage cheese and green beans. I bake my own sour dough rye bread more as a hobby, as good bread is now available in better stores. To keep it fresh we quarter and freeze it.

Preserving quality

There are many ways to save time preparing dinner without losing quality. It takes just about the same time to cook fresh vegetables as it does to warm canned ones. You can make your own salad dressing in bulk, which beats any commercial one, and is a lot cheaper. We buy olive oil in one gallon cans.

Canned mushrooms taste as good as rubber balls. If you like rubber balls, that's fine. Or you can use great tasting fresh mushrooms, which do not take but a couple of minutes longer to prepare. Frozen vegetables are also far more expensive than fresh ones.

There are many dishes which you can prepare in large amounts in advance, package in usable amounts, and freeze. I don't mean casseroles—I'm not crazy about them, except perhaps lasagna. Stuffed peppers, baked pork chops, stews of all kinds, meat balls, Swiss steak, and Chicken Paprikash are examples of dishes that can be made in advance and frozen to be enjoyed later. Main course soups can also be very satisfying. We serve them with good bread.

Meat fish can be prepared quickly. Do not eat fish with anything. Sauté seasoned filets in a non-stick pan in just a small amount of peanut or canola oil. If you are concerned about fish odor in your house, then poach or steam fish, such as salmon, cod, halibut, and scallops. Serve the fish with boiled new potatoes, which you put on the stove first, then drop vegetables in another pot. The whole meal should not take more than 25 minutes to prepare.

Boneless chicken is another fast item. Choose either thighs or breasts. If you are boning the breasts yourself, save the bones and skin for soup. Freeze them until you have enough, and have the time to cook the broth.

Boneless chicken can be either broiled, grilled, or sautéed. It's best to flatten the chicken to a uniform thickness so it cooks fast and evenly.

Stir-fry

Stir-fry dishes can also be prepared in 25 minutes or less. You can make stir-fry dishes with poultry, beef, game, fish, shellfish, or vegetables. If you plan to serve rice with your stir-fry, put it on the stove first. I prefer Basmati or regular long grain rice.

For a change of pace, try a Chinese-style stir-fry. Imported soy sauce will give you better flavor than a domestic product. For less salt use Tamari sauce instead of soy. Be sure to use the freshest ingredients including garlic and ginger root.

A non-stick wok or skillet works best for stir-frying. The meat, poultry or fish must not be wet. The pan must be clean and smoking hot for meat, a little less hot for fish and poultry, before you add the oil.

Add no more meat than to cover the bottom of your pan in one layer. Do not stir. Over high heat brown the meat in seconds on one side, turn over, leave a few seconds longer, then lift out with a perforated spoon to another dish. Red meat should remain rare at this point. Do not brown poultry too dark and fish hardly at all. Cook fish and poultry to slightly underdone, as it will finish cooking with the vegetables. Be very careful handling the fish not to break it up.

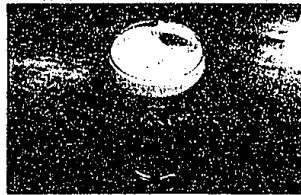
If you care about the appearance of the food, cut vegetables on an angle into neat, not too small pieces. Some Chinese groceries sell fresh water chestnuts, just peel and slice them.

Chef Milos Cihelka is a Certified Master Chef and Bloomfield Hills resident. Formerly executive chef of the Golden Mushroom, Cihelka enjoys sharing his knowledge of cooking with others. He recently produced a series of video tapes on cooking wild game and fish, which are sold at Borders Books and Kitchen Glamour stores. See recipes inside.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Egg casseroles
- Ham it up



Leapin' leprechauns,



It's Irish food and Guinness!

BY ELEANOR & RAY HEZALD
SPECIAL WRITERS

In James Joyce's "Ulysses," as Leopold Bloom strolls toward Dublin's O'Connell Bridge his sense of smell is assailed by the wafting airborne evidence that meaty "gammon steaks" and spinach are being enjoyed nearby. This ham preparation, sweetened with brown sugar and spiked with whole cloves, remains a tradition, but today's Irish cooking has gone upscale. Paired with Guinness, St. Patrick's Day is complete.

Because Eleanor grew up in a family with Irish roots, preparations such as Irish stew and Irish boiled dinner were commonplace. A recent visit to Dublin revealed that modern-day Ireland has awakened to food consciousness beyond farm-style dishes.

Traditional Dublin Coddie takes on new meaning with premium sausages and cured bacon. Down uncharted roads in County Cork to the village of Shanagarry, we discovered a culinary mecca at Ballymaloe House. Fresh fish, no more than two hours from the sea, was turned into a fritto misto di mare, served with a garlicky maitre d'hotel butter and house-made tartar sauce. But cook with cream and bay, a more traditional regional dish from County Cork, is a reminder of Ireland's bounty from its southern sea coast.

Afficionados of specialty brews in the U.S. have started to match microbrews to foods, but Guinness, the famous name in Irish brewing, has been promoting food connections and modern Irish cooking for some time. Guinness is as much about a brew as it is about Irishness and

the whole lifestyle enhancement of connecting food with Irish culture. At Guinness, they say that when it comes to drinking Guinness with food, the only limit is your imagination.

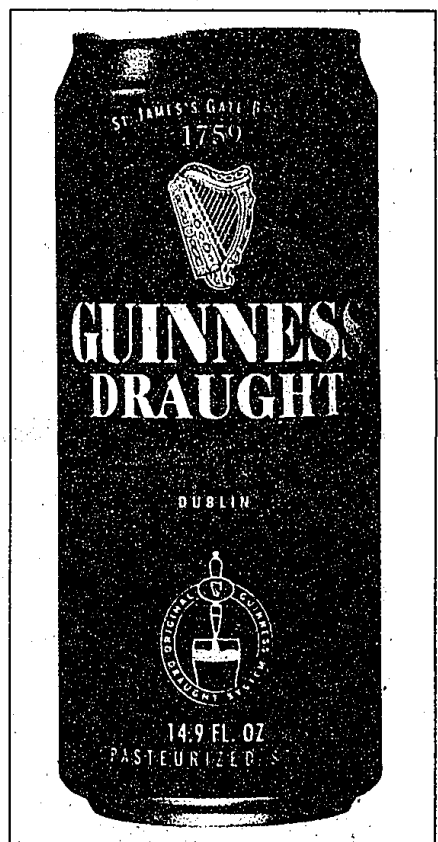
During a visit to St. James's Gate Dublin Brewery, command central of Guinness, we thought we were in California when the phrase "al fresco magic" was used in connection with the world-famous brew and Irish food. But the reference was for Fried Mussels Galway style with Dunloe Sauce. Then came barbecue bliss. Next time you make burgers, hide a little nugget of blue cheese right in the middle. As the burger cooks, the cheese melts and if you're into an alcoholic treat for St. Patrick's Day, you won't find anything better to complement the flavor of Guinness and its tight-knit creamy head. You'll be joined by people around the globe who enjoy 10 million pintos not only on this special day for the Irish, but every day of the year!

The folks at Guinness also suggested stirring some chopped fresh coriander into meatballs for added spiciness. "Add a torchy chili that pasta sauce," we were told. "Go crazy with the galangal (related to ginger root, it can be found dried and ground in Asian markets) and lemon grass in a chicken stew. Enjoy the saline succulence of oysters.

Chicken and ock stew served in a champ (mashed potato) nest. Believe it; you're talking Irish! Because Ireland's dairy products, particularly its cream, are renowned on the European continent, many upscale Irish recipes use cream. While we're all trying to reduce fat in our diet, we view the issue as one of moderation. Cream in a recipe now and then can be enjoyed without guilt. In Ireland, chefs also use Irish Whiskey as we might use wine. Remember that all alcohol evaporates in cooking and only the excellent taste remains. In most cases, where recommended, Irish Whiskey makes the sauce. We suggest using Bushmills.

To add mood music, check out the just-released "Legenda" of Celtic music by James Galway and Phil Coulter together for the first time on RCA Victor CD 09026-68776-2 or Cassette 09026-68776-4. Galway and Coulter are backed on "Legenda" by a six-piece band, string section and the Celtic Voices of Trinity College, Dublin.

Look for Focus on Wine on the first and third Monday of the month in Taste. To leave a voice mail message for the Hezalds, dial (313) 953-2047 on a touch-tone phone, mailbox 1804. Recipes inside.



Irish toast: Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with creamy-headed Guinness, a perfect complement to traditional or upscale Irish foods.

COMFORT FOODS

Seasonings take macaroni & cheese south of the border

Comfort foods, those comfy, cozy foods we grow up with, aren't going away as we continue to embrace a healthier lifestyle. In fact, they're as popular as ever, but with a difference—they've lightened up, too.

The reason is simple. We don't want to give up our favorite comfort foods, but we also don't want or need the calories and fat many of these classics contain. The solution is simple, too, by redefining classic recipes with contemporary ingredients that are lower in fat yet full of flavor, we can have our cake and eat it, too.

Take macaroni and cheese, for example. This American classic has been comforting us with its creamy sauce and tender pasta for generations—and so will Tex-Mex Macaroni and Cheese.

Easier, healthier and just as delicious, this contemporary dish features a "creamy" no-cook sauce made with fat-free sour cream, skim milk and zesty southwestern seasonings, along with a variety of peppers and low-fat Monterey Jack cheese. A golden-brown wheat germ topping flavored with ground cumin adds crunch and extra nutrition.

Wheat germ's nutty flavor and crunch make it a terrific substitute for bread crumbs in recipes for crumb toppings, meatloaf, burgers and meatballs.

Here's the recipe compliments of Krotzschmer Wheat Germ.

TEX-MEX MACARONI AND CHEESE

- 8 ounces uncooked mostaccioli or other tubeshaped pasta, prepared according to package directions without salt
 - 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded low-fat Monterey Jack cheese
 - 1/2 cup finely chopped red or green bell pepper
 - 1 or 2 jalapeno peppers, finely chopped
 - 1/2 cup fat-free sour cream
 - 1/2 cup skim milk
 - 1 teaspoon onion powder
 - 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin, divided
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup chopped, seeded, plum tomatoes
 - 1/2 cup toasted wheat germ
 - 2 tablespoons dry bread crumbs
 - 2 tablespoons 60 percent vegetable oil spread, melted
- Heat oven to 350°F. Lightly spray a 9-inch square baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. In large bowl, combine drained cooked pasta, cheese and peppers; spoon into baking dish.
- In another bowl, combine sour cream, milk, onion



American classic: Tex-Mex Macaroni and Cheese features a "creamy" no-cook sauce.

powder, 1/2 teaspoon cumin and salt; mix well. Pour sauce over pasta mixture. Spoon chopped tomatoes evenly over top. In small bowl, combine wheat germ, bread crumbs, remaining 1/4 teaspoon cumin and vegetable oil spread; mix well. Sprinkle over tomatoes. Bake 30 minutes or until heated through.

Serves 6.

Nutrition information: 1/5 of recipe, Calories 330, Calories from fat 60, Total fat 7g, Saturated fat 2g, Cholesterol 10mg, Sodium 470mg, Carbohydrate 50g, Dietary fiber 3g, Protein 18g.