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2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

Cooks relish flavorful new condiments

The word condiment is a combination of Latin and French, meaning to season or pickle. As defined in the "Chef's Companion 1994," a relish or pickled seasoning is highly aromatic, and seasonings are food at the table to stimulate the appetite.

A condiment is added or offered post production, otherwise, its use would be considered an ingredient. I can't imagine life without condiments. Coffee with no cream? Tea without honey? Would it be worth waking up for cereal with no milk?

Where condiments have taken center stage, and have been experiencing fame and fortune, are those that accompany our summer grilling.

Whether you are smoking fish in your Weber Kettle, tossing a New York Strip on to your high glass steel turbo barbecue with side burners, or going hibachi style on the beach, it seems all grillers are searching for the same thing - perfect condiments.

Thanks to our backyard gourmets, our ethnically diverse population, and of course, us hardworking creative chefs and cooks, the classic condiment of yesteryear is breaking the jar, so to speak.

Mustard

Mustard, often referred to as "the spice of Nations," has been cultivated all over the world for centuries. In many European countries during the 1600-1600s, mustard seeds were considered as valuable as gold. Today, mustard includes some New Age ingredients - apricot, wasabi, champagne, chipotle, honey and onion.

These magnificent mustards are used on upscale deli sandwiches, slathered on fish, poultry and meats before and after grilling, and whisked into sauces and dips.

"Ketching-up"

Ketchup is also catching-up from its origins in China where a pickled fish sauce called ketchup was a popular condiment. The sauce traveled through Asia incorporating new ingredients along the way until it was met by an English sailor who shanghaied it home to spice up the dishes of his homeland.

Colonists in America later added tomatoes. What would Mr. Heinz say today to the flirtatious varieties of ketchup gaining speed such as peach, blueberry, cherry, salsa style, smoky and more. Chefs across the nation are bottling their own brands due to the demand for variety from those who want to add a little zip to an old favorite.

Mayonnaise

Mayo madness has also traveled a long journey from its origins in Spain. It was brought to France by an 18th century duke who had been fighting

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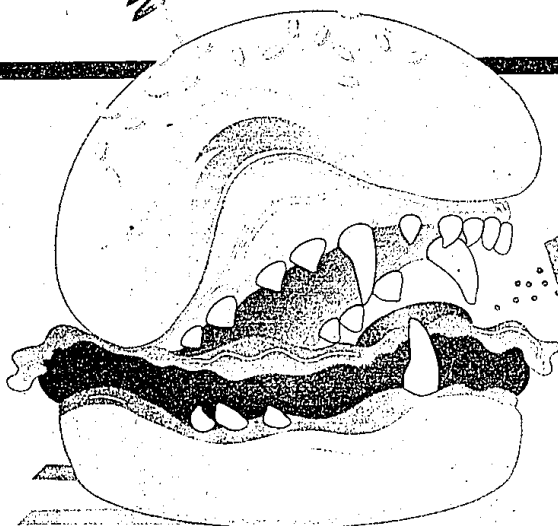
Tips

- A tablespoon of spicy or fruited mustard in a 1/2 cup of yogurt will give you a Heart Healthy sandwich spread with personality.
- To perk-up tired old sandwiches or salads, try adding fresh herbs, diced sundried tomatoes, or olives.
- Add a few tablespoons of mustard, a 1/4 cup of balsamic vinegar, and pinch of fresh black pepper and herbs to your next bottle of Italian salad dressing. You can call it your homemade summer vinaigrette.
- Mix 1/4 cup of your favorite spicy mustard, a pinch of black pepper, and fresh herbs with 1/2 cup of olive oil. Brush on meats, poultry and fish as you would barbecue sauce.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Pasta imports
- Focus on Wine



BACTERIA

Each year, about one in every ten Americans has an illness caused by food.

FOOD SCARE

Don't get a stomach ache

By PEGGY MARTINELLI-EVERTS
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

Boy, it sure seems like every time we turn on the news there is another food scare. First there was hamburger contaminated with E. coli, now a new strain of antibiotic resistant salmonella has made its way into chickens.

Strawberries, alfalfa sprouts and apples are just a few examples of the types of produce that have been shown to harbor contaminants.

Each year, about one in every ten Americans has an illness caused by food. Most of these cases result in simple stomach aches, diarrhea, or the "24 hour flu." Some are more serious, and about 9,000 people die each year because of food borne illness.

But wait, there is no need to fear the food you eat. Americans have the safest food supply in the world. At each step in the food chain, from the farm to your grocery store shelf, there are regulations in place to keep food safe. However, with our global marketplace, we increasingly have available to us foods from countries not so highly regulated. We need to handle food properly, cook it thoroughly, store it safely, and reheat it completely. Thanks to modern technology, and good old-fashioned bleach, keeping food safe is easier than you may think.

How does it happen?

Bacteria are present everywhere around us - on our skin, in the soil, on our animals - so it is normal to have bacteria on our food. However, if food is mishandled, the bacteria can multiply rapidly and cause problems. Bacteria needs time, and the right conditions, to grow. Bacteria love temperatures just about 40°F to around 140°F. This is called the temperature "danger zone." Bacteria can double in number every 20-30 minutes if food is left in the danger zone.

Acids in food can stop bacteria

growth. This is why fruits are generally considered safe. However, fruits can have other pathogens on their surface, which is why it is important to thoroughly scrub all fresh fruits before eating.

Dairy products such as yogurt and buttermilk are also acidic, but can still be unsafe if they become moldy. Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, dried beans and nuts have nutrients to support rapid bacteria growth. It is probably best to assume that they, in fact, do contain contaminants, and to treat them carefully. Breads, cereals and grains - when dried - are usually safe. However, once hydrated, items like pasta and rice can harbor bacteria. Vegetables, especially cooked vegetables, also contain nutrients that bacteria and molds need to grow.

Oils flavored with raw garlic, ginger or other herbs can support the botulin toxin. Don't make your own flavored oil unless you plan to use it all immediately.

Don't worry, the beans in your pantry, and chicken in your freezer, won't make you sick if you learn how to fight "bac" (bacteria).

Safety guidelines

- Clean food starts with clean hands. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after touching raw meat, fish, poultry or eggs, and before handling any other foods. Be sure to wash the handles on your faucet, refrigerator, and any cabinets that you may have touched with hands that also handled raw meat.

- Don't use the same knife or cutting board for fresh food that you used for raw meat.

- Read food labels for storage, cooking or heating and handling instructions.

- Avoid eating raw meat, raw fish, poultry or eggs. Do not eat the internal organs of animals since this is where

toxins are stored.

- Purchase meats, poultry and fish only from reliable markets.

- Always buy food in good condition. Avoid produce with cuts or bruises, cans with dents, partially melted ice cream or frozen foods, or other foods that have packaging that is not intact.

- Remember F.I.F.O., "First In, First Out." Always rotate your foods and eat the oldest things first. Another adage from the food service business, "When in doubt, throw it out," also makes good food safety sense.

- Use a food thermometer to determine the doneness of foods. Hamburger should be cooked to a minimal internal temperature of 160°F, pork to 160°F, and poultry to 165°F ground, 180°F whole.

- Don't thaw food on the kitchen counter, or in the sink. Raw meat drippings can contain bacteria that can contaminate any other food to be prepared on the counter. It is best to thaw meat in the refrigerator, tightly wrapped, so drippings won't spill onto shelves or other food.

- Never leave perishable food out for more than two hours.

- Reheat foods thoroughly to at least 165°F.

- Freeze or refrigerate leftovers completely. If you are cooling soups, stew, chowder or sauces, transfer them to shallow pans for rapid cooling in the refrigerator. The temperature should drop to 70°F in two hours, and 40°F in another four hours.

- Sterilize your kitchen sponges every day in your dishwasher, and change dishcloths and towels daily. You can also sanitize a wet sponge easily in the microwave on high for 45 seconds.

- Inexpensive household bleach (1-2 teaspoons in 1 quart of water), can be an effective household sanitizer. Put it in a spray bottle to make it easy to use.

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People who are at greater risk for food-borne illness

- Person's with HIV and AIDS
- Persons with cancer, especially those undergoing drug or radiation treatment
- Persons with liver, diabetes, kidney, inflammatory bowel or stomach diseases
- Persons who are taking steroid medication
- Pregnant women
- Infants and children
- The elderly

Want to learn more about fighting food borne illnesses? The Associated Food Dealers of Michigan provides a free brochure that explains four simple steps to food safety in easy-to-understand and simple-to-remember terms. It is a handy guide that can be posted on your kitchen bulletin board or stuck on your refrigerator for all family members to read and remember. To get yours, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: AFD Fight BAC, 19470 W. 10 Mile Road, Southfield, MI 48075.

Treat dad to meaty halibut with fruity salsa



MURIEL WAGNER

Summer is usually synonymous with vacation - from the kitchen for the family chef. The outdoor grill attracts not only the cook, but hopefully, the culinary interests of other family members. If you're lucky, the man of the house will take over some food preparation chores. I suspect barbecuing appeals to a latent masculine fascination with cooking.

Speculation aside, steaks, chops, ribs and chicken are not the only foods that benefit from grilling. Fish can also become a popular "smart eating" addition to a barbecue repertoire, particularly when it is a "meaty" fish that stands up well to the heat of the grill.

The steak-like quality made swordfish my choice last year for Father's Day, and the grilling season. Unfortunately, this quality has also led to the over-fishing of North Atlantic swordfish. Therefore, I tried several other fishes before settling on this recipe for

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GRILLED HALIBUT WITH SUMMER SALSA

- 1 1/4 pounds Halibut steaks, cut into four pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive or canola oil
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

Brush fish with Worcestershire sauce and lime juice, and then oil. Place fish on hot grill that has been brushed with oil or use an oiled grill basket about 4-6 inches above the heat. Grill 1-inch steaks 2-4 minutes on each side.

Fish is done when it turns opaque and is firm to the touch. You can use a paring knife to probe the center of the thickest part of the fish to make sure the flesh is solid white, but translucent.

Serves 4. Serve immediately with the Summer Salsa.

Food Values: Calories, 140; Fat 7.1g; Saturated Fat, 1.0g; Cholesterol, 44mg; Sodium, 131mg; Food Exchange: 3 lean meat

SUMMER SALSA

- 1/2 cantaloupe, washed, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1/2 honeydew melon, washed, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 mango, washed, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh mint
- 1/2 jalapeno pepper, washed and diced
- 1/4 red onion, peeled and diced

Combine the ingredients in a medium sized bowl. Cover and chill for an hour. Salsa can also be prepared up to one day ahead. Serves 4.

Food Values: Calories, 64; Fat, 0g; Saturated Fat, 0g; Cholesterol, 0mg; Sodium, 6mg; Food Exchange: 1 Fruit

