

2 UNIQUE



KELLI LEWTON

Americans are having a love affair with food

Americans have been having a love affair with food for the last century. Meals were simple in the late 1800s, and 90 percent of Americans never traveled more than five to 10 miles from their homes. With the dawn of the 20th century, new technology emerged that made travel and food storage possible and affordable.

In the early 1900s people began traveling like never before, and experienced new things and foods. Lavish 12- to 18-course dinner parties were thrown. Hersey's milk chocolate was introduced, and hamburgers and ice cream cones made their debut at the St. Louis World's Fair. Mr. Kellogg came along and changed our whole idea of morning food.

During the Roaring '20s, speakeasies and cocktail parties were the rage, along with soft drinks and ice cream. Betty Crocker was born, the first Coney Island was served in New York, Stouffer's and White Castle restaurants opened. The 1920s also brought the most immigrants in our history, and we became a melting pot of food histories.

In 1929, Mr. Birdseye developed a technique to flash freeze vegetables. Refrigerators with freezer compartments were introduced, and refrigerator sales jumped from about 10,000 in 1920 to 800,000 by 1929. Self-service grocery stores created competition for food sales.

One-pot meals were popular

Americans experienced hard times in the 1930s, but still found ways to love food, even when it was not plentiful.

One-pot meals were served, and casseroles — which still survive as "comfort food" today — evolved to nourish our families. Hostess Twinkies debuted along with Spam and Skippy peanut butter. During the 1930s standardization of recipes and food measures became a science.

The 1940s started with short ration cards but ended with people eating a lot of meat. Mom couldn't buy enough frozen and canned foodstuffs. Foreign food was the chic food to serve when entertaining or eating out. Bouillabaisse, crepes and Lobster Thermidor were also hot.

In the 1950s we loved "I Love Lucy" and the TV dinner was born. Food "revolutions" occurred in the 1960s. Vegetarianism was en vogue, and there was a rebirth of "natural" foods and whole grains.

Food was 'cool'

Food was cool in the 1970s. Chefs became celebrities, gourmet foods grew in popularity along with salad bars. Real men didn't eat quiche, but everyone else did.

Baby boomers became yuppies in the 1980s. Everyone had microwave ovens. Southwest cuisine and restaurants were popular.

The 1990s would prove to be the decade of health. We counted calories and fat grams, strayed from beef, ate soluble fiber and worried about antibiotics in milk, pesticides, nitrates and E. coli. We adored Mediterranean and Pacific Rim cooking, but didn't quite understand Fusion cooking.

As we enter the 21st century we are informed consumers who demand more from the food industry. We want foods that taste good but are also good for us.

Thinking about new food dishes for this century, I believe food, like fashion, comes in and out of style. I always smirk when I hear someone say "so and so invented this great dish. I don't know if we chefs are really inventors of food, I think we are more like managers of it. So many dishes you see today aren't really new, but are dishes from the past, revisited and dressed up a bit.

Chef Kelli L. Lewton is owner of *2 Unique Caterers and Event Planners* in Bloomfield Hills. A graduate of Schoolcraft College's culinary arts program, Kelli is a part-time instructor at the college. Her column runs on the second Sunday of the month. See recipes inside.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Cooking with Chef Aldo Ottaviani

Are you a snack animal?

STORIES BY PEGGY MARTINELLI-EVERTS • SPECIAL WRITER

• What kind of animal do you eating habits mimic?

Do you like to "graze" all day long like horses and cows? Or eat like a lion, enjoy a large meal and then a nice, long nap? Perhaps you're like my neighbor's dog, which is given a bowl of food each morning and eats only when he is hungry.

Mice are always in a feeding frenzy, and no human can top the shrew, which eats three times its body weight each day.

Even if your eating habits mimic these creatures, you still can learn how to be a smart snacker.

The time-honored tradition of "three square meals" a day is slowly giving way to a new trend — scattered mini-meals.

Snacking may contribute significantly to your daily calorie and nutrient intake. Potato chips, cookies and crackers are high in fat and calories. If you don't adjust the size of your regular meals to account for snacks, you could be eating more calories than you

need. If you substitute poor quality snacks for meals, you may miss out on some vital nutrients.

Smart snacks

Choose snacks that are high in vitamins, minerals and fiber such as fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Stock your refrigerator or pantry with plain popcorn, whole-grain crackers, fruit juice, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese, low-fat granola bars, dried fruits, bread sticks, baby carrots, vegetables, fruits and other healthy snacks. Researchers believe that eating smaller meals more frequently may help regulate blood sugar, cholesterol and body weight.

Since little tummies hold only small amounts of food, children need snacks to help them meet daily calorie and nutrient quotas — as long as the snacks are healthy. Teenagers also need afternoon snacks to meet their needs. If you don't plan, foraging kids may

Please see SNACKS, D2

Do you eat like a horse, a lion or a mouse?

Are you curious about how others snack? We asked a few people to reveal their favorite snack, and the animal they most identify with:

LISA ASQUIN OF LYVONA

• **Snack animal:** "I'm a lion. I don't snack much, love to eat meat and boy, a nap sounds good right now."

• **Favorite snack:** Leftovers — meat, cheese, lunch meats. "I don't crave doughnuts or popcorn. Give me protein."

SUE ANN SCHILLER OF BLOOMFIELD HILLS

• **Snack animal:** "I'm an owl. I snack at night, when I'm reading."

• **Favorite snack:** "Joy's Wavy Potato Chips in the red bag. I like the dip I make from the cheese and the pickles. But my secret pleasure, which all my students know at Upton Elementary School in Royal Oak is chocolate covered raisins."

FLORINE MARX OF PLEASANT HILLS

• **Snack animal:** "I eat like an owl. Horses graze on grasses and hay during the day and then get most of their protein at meal time when they eat their oats. Like a horse, I love to graze on veggies and then enjoy my meal to the max."

ROB ASHMAN OF BEVERLY HILLS

• **Snack animal:** "I guess I'm most like the dog, although because I don't snack much, perhaps the lion is more my eating style."

CHRISTIE MCGOWAN OF CLARKSTON

• **Snack animal:** "Oh, definitely the mouse. I'm always looking for food."

• **Favorite snack:**

"I love cheese and fresh baby spinach together. I'll take a piece of cheese and wrap spinach leaves around it. Right now, in the winter, Habanero cheese tastes great."

When the TV weatherman issues a "cuddle alert," I begin thinking of foods that, according to my mother, "warm the cockles of your heart." Of course, they must be healthy as well.

One such recipe is my Onion Smothered Steak, which is an "Eating Younger" make-over of Swiss Steak. It satisfies my meat-loving taste buds, yet it can be a smart eating choice if the meat portion is small (3 ounces or less), and the cut and cooking method are lean.

Rump, flank and round are all lean cuts of beef, but they need to be slow-cooked with liquid to be tender.

You'll find this dish full of flavor, particularly when it's served with the Alpine Instant Mashed Potato

teeth. If you serve the potatoes liberally doused with the steak recipe gravy, your family may think that you've found a 1950s cookbook that will become a recipe resource for a lot of flavorful eating. They'll never realize that they're "eating younger."

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