

## Couscous and pears are sweet and spicy

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

From time to time, there comes an urge to give winter dishes a lift.

One to try is this sweet and spicy couscous recipe that takes little more than a quarter of an hour to make.

**Pear Almond Couscous**, based on the Moroccan equivalent to pasta, cooks up in about 10 minutes and is a good accompaniment to meat or poultry.

It uses pantry-shelf items, canned broth and canned pears, with a dash of cumin and cilantro.

The addition of sautéed strips of chicken breast would make it a one-dish meal. If wished, pine nuts may be substituted for the almonds.

### PEAR ALMOND COUSCOUS

(Preparation 5 minutes, cooking and standing time 12 minutes)

1 1/2-ounce can ready-to-serve chicken broth  
1/4 cup raisins  
3/4 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

16-ounce can pears, drained and chopped

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 cup couscous

1/3 cup sliced almonds

2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

1 tablespoon butter or margarine

In medium saucepan, combine

broth, raisins, salt, cumin and

pepper; bring to a boil. Remove

from heat; stir in pears, lemon

juice, couscous, almonds, cilantro

and butter. Cover; let stand 10

minutes. Stir before serving.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Nutrition information per

serving (1/4 of recipe): 359

cal., 10 g fat (2 g saturated fat), 8

mg chol., 803 mg sodium, 68 g

carbo., 6 g dietary fiber, 11 g pro.

Recipe from Pacific Northwest

Canned Pears.

## Irish culinary history evolved from one-pot cookery

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK  
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Ireland's culinary history was never impacted by other nationalities, and as an island nation, it remained relatively isolated for centuries, according to Noel Cullen, a certified master chef and president of the American Culinary Federation.

Historically emigration has been the norm in Ireland, and the only immigration or colonization was through invasion by the Vikings, English and Scots, Cullen writes in his cookbook, "Elegant Irish Cooking."

"As a primarily agrarian nation, Irish cuisine has grown from the rich bounty of its land and waters," Cullen writes.

"There was a period called the Golden Age (between the seventh and ninth centuries, when Ireland was known as the land

of Saints and Scholars), which the monks traveled a lot and they brought back a lot of things. They brought back writings and a lot of recipes."

Irish cooking evolved from one-pot cookery, as peasants looked to create meals easily and with ingredients readily available, created with a single source of heat.

"One early tradition was peasant cooking, which was often quite frugal, with potatoes and bread," said Gerald Maloney of Southfield. "Meat was infrequently eaten and fish was not a common food."

Grand House-style cooking was another early tradition of Irish cooking served to the wealthy.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Europeans visited Ireland on vacation. Their vacations differed from Americans in that they enjoyed staying in one location

■ 'One early tradition was peasant cooking, which was often quite frugal, with potatoes and bread.'

Gerald Maloney  
Southfield resident

and dining, consuming fish, vegetables and dishes with cream sauces.

Ireland recently attained a new level of prosperity with many high tech companies and tourism.

"They call Ireland 'the Celtic Tiger,'" Cullen said. "The economy is booming."

That prosperity brought a wave of immigrants with different cultures blending foreign foodways with the Irish, also contributing to the newest trends in Irish cooking, mixing cooking influences, similar to American methods, Cullen said.

In the 1800s potatoes grew as a major crop. It provided good nutrition and was not labor intensive. In 1845, the potato blight, later known as the Great Potato Famine, reduced blossoming potato plants to withered black stalks. More than one million died of starvation.

The farmland was later redistributed. Diets eventually evolved into more variation to include more beef and vegetables. Today's Irish citizen enjoys dairy products, beef, lamb and potatoes, along with cabbage and root vegetables of carrots and turnips.

## Irish from page D1

Dorey (a fish), Dover sole and black sole. "The salmon is the best in the world," Maloney said.

### Culinary influences

Today's Irish chefs aren't afraid to mix culinary influences and styles though they still emphasize simplicity. "They are classically French trained and they are very similar to Americans," Cullen said.

Examples of the innovations of Irish chefs, Cullen discovered include a leek pilaf, served with the Arbutus Lodge Chicken Hibernia. When Cullen was a chef at the Classebawn Castle in County Sligo for the Mountbatten family, he sometimes

served another one of his favorites, Lobster Soufflé.

Gerald Maloney and his wife, Pamela, attended the Ballymaloe Cookery School in County Cork where they learned about soda bread, the "mainstay of Irish cuisine." "You mix it together, but you do not knead it like you do the yeast breads here," Jerry Maloney said. "It's a gritty, rough bread."

Soups also are popular, Maloney said.

"Even during the worst times, they had soup," Maloney said. He learned a basic formula for soup not too different from American soups. "It's great fun and an easy soup to do," Mal-

oney said.

Often beef isn't boiled, it is mainly sautéed or seared, Cullen said.

"There's a lot of searing and sautéing because you're doing something simple to the food and you want to retain the goodness in the food," Cullen said. "Some of the dishes are very delicate and there's a lot of skill in working with the flavors."

For the Maloneys and Demery, they enjoy the food's simplicity. They turn pot roast on its literal head — of stout — as the beef is cooked with Guinness.

"It was wonderful," Demery said.

For recipes, see D3.

## Wine from page D1

Tasting of selected Mayo Family Wines available in Michigan.

■ 1999 Mayo Barrel Select Chardonnay \$18 showcases delicate fruit with well-integrated oak, layered complexity, and a nice acid balance that makes it seafood food-friendly.

■ 1998 Mayo Pinot Noir, Kunde Vineyard \$19 is medium-bodied with perky red fruit. Very nice for an under \$20

pinot. It's getting more difficult to find real pinot values in this price range. Here's one!

■ 1998 Mayo Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley \$24 shows pleasant Napa Valley character in a year when this appellation was not California's shining star. Nice wine to enjoy near term.

■ 1999 Mayo Zinfandel, Ricci Vineyard \$24 offers delicious

bramble-bush berry fruit aromas and flavors. Full and rich with a lengthy finish, it is a show stopper.

The Healds are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and dining for the Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 18644.

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