

KITCHEN KAPERS



KEN ABRAMCZYK

Chili cookoff: Hot stuff for a good cause

The sign read "Leo's Nuclear Chili - It's hot when it's cold." Under it, Leo Buk of Trenton stirred his chili.

You couldn't miss his booth, right in the front of the Gathering at Kellogg Park in Plymouth. His props and other cooks' chili paraphernalia were all part of the Great Lakes Regional Chili Cookoff and Motorcycle Show Oct. 7, sponsored by Brooks, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, Farmer Jack, Motor City Harley Davidson, Bank One, Ray's Brand Chili, TDS Metrocom, 99.5 Detroit Country Radio, Miller Lite, Graphic Communications and Screened Images.

Buk and 50 other serious chili cooks simmered and stewed that day over their bowls of beef and pork and green and red chili. The winner advanced to the International Chili Society's 2002 World Championship.

'America's food'

With participants coming from as many states as the chili peppers grown for chili powders, the event took on a national flavor, as residents from several states mixed in the Gathering. It was all about chili.

"It's America's food," Buk said. "It was born on the Great Plains during cattle runs." Wagon trains transported garlic, peppers and other vegetables, so it was convenient for the early chili cooks to mix these ingredients in beef cuts that sat in a stew for hours, Buk said.

Buk, who won a state championship in 1995 and organizes an annual cookoff in Trenton during Walleye Week, arrived in Plymouth, armed with a briefcase filled with about 15 spices and ingredients. The key to good chili, he says, is a hearty broth flavor and a nice blend of chili powders and spices. "It's when you put in what you put in to see how it's going to come out," said Buk. Buk uses chuck steak. "Chuck holds together the best," Buk said.

A few booths down, the "Colonel" from Canton, Jim Sholar, is creating his usual red chili. He's also entering a salsa, and for the first time, his green chili in the chili verde category. For that entry, he and wife Linda looked at about four or five recipes to develop ideas and flavors.

"We tried to find a combination of ingredients and put it together," Sholar said. The meat is pork tenderloin. The green chilis are a little hotter than his red. He's added different chili powders and cumin, and tomatoes give it a little different taste, he says. "It's been a lot of work," he said about his three entries. Linda decorated the booth with Harley flags to commemorate the bike show.

A marriage of spices

Bob Vargo of Commerce Township, who works at Ben's Jacks in Bloomfield Hills, uses a blend of powders from peppers grown in California, Mexico and New Mexico, and even using a blend called San Antonio Red. "You try to get the spices right by adding different spices at different times," Vargo said. Vargo has competed since 1980, winning seven cookoffs.

Keith Matherly, owner of the Butcher Block in Livonia and a Livonia resident, has two chilis at his booth - one a non-competition vegetarian and a red. He uses coarsely ground peppers. "The spices are typically cumin, chili powder, cayenne and a Jamaican jerk seasoning and garlic and onion. Ideally, you want it to cook slowly for at least three hours or cook it one day and eat it the next." (But this is competition chili and contestants don't have that luxury. They have one hour to prepare spices and cut up vegetables and meat and three hours to cook.)

Gene Morelli of Riverview, along with friends Bob and Gail Kyle, set a booth complete with convicts' outfits.

Please see KAPERS, D2

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Taste next week:

- Focus on Wine
- Living Sensibly

Dessert of the nation is a comforting way to socialize with family and friends

BY LANA MINI
STAFF WRITER
lmini@oe.homecomm.net

Displaying the American flag shows patriotism. Wearing red, white and blue ribbons shows support for the attack victims and military troops.

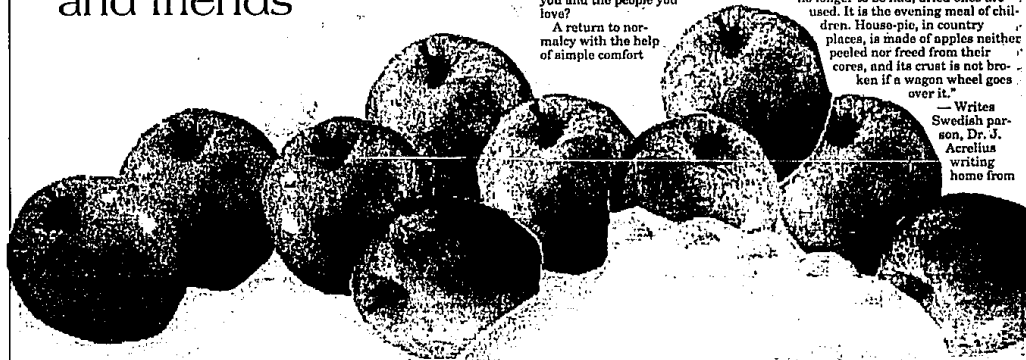
Now, how about something just for you and the people you love?

A return to normalcy with the help of simple comfort

food. Is there anything more warming than the sweet taste of all American apple pie? The fruity dessert is equated so highly with America that for centuries writers have felt compelled to use it as a topic when discussing the country.

"Apple-pie is used through the whole year, and when fresh apples are no longer to be had, dried ones are used. It is the evening meal of children. House-pie, in country places, is made of apples neither peeled nor freed from their cores, and its crust is not broken if a wagon wheel goes over it."

—Writes Swedish parson, Dr. J. Acrelius writing home from



Perfect Apple Pie

FROM WWW.VEGWEB.COM

- 6 cups of thinly sliced apples
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 3/4 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 pie crusts
- 9-inch pie pan

Heat oven to 425°F. In large bowl combine all filling ingredients; mix lightly. Prepare pie pan by placing one crust into the bottom on the pan. Fill pie pan with apples and place pie crust on top. Press edges of crust together and cut 3-4 slits in the top. Bake in oven at 425°F for 40-45 minutes or until apples are tender and crust is golden brown. Serves: 8

Preparation time: 20 minutes to prepare, 40 minutes to cook.



America in 1768. Others asked the Lord to bless them with pie.

"But I, when I undress me Each night, upon my knees Will ask the Lord to bless me

With apple-pie and cheese." —Writes author Eugene Field. Consider hosting a Sunday afternoon pie party.

Start the process the day before with a family apple picking trip at the cider mill. Then bake a several varieties and invite family and friends over for an autumn afternoon of pie and coffee — the following recipes are easy and would be acceptable for those with diet restrictions... diabetics, vegans, calorie-counters and the finicky palates.

"Perfect Apple Pie" and "Apple Crumb Pie" are great for calorie-counters, vegans and tasty enough for everyone to enjoy.

Please see APPLE PIE, D2

Extravaganza highlights vegetarian foods

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK
STAFF WRITER
kabranczyk@oe.homecomm.net

Jeanie Weaver works as a fitness trainer and sees plenty of people who are conscientious about their weight. And when they hear she is a vegetarian, they always ask what she ate during the holidays. Well, she figured, why not just show them and let them taste vegetarian dishes for themselves.

That's when the Annual Vegetarian Holiday Tasting Extravaganza was born.

"Now they have a chance to sample tastes, to get a visual of what the dish looks like and what complements

other vegetarian dishes," Weaver said.

For the 14th year, the Annual Vegetarian Holiday Tasting Extravaganza provides a chance to try new vegetarian dishes. While the event's food is geared to total vegetarians, lacto-ovo vegetarians (who eat eggs and milk products), and lacto vegetarians (who eat milk products but no eggs), even meat eaters who want to incorporate more vegetarian dishes in their meals are welcome.

Weaver coordinates the event with her father-in-law, Dr. Arthur Weaver, a head and neck cancer surgeon and professor emeritus at Wayne State University.

Sponsored by Better Living Seminars and the Metro Seventh Day Adventist Church, the event helps educate people, said Jeanie Weaver. "It's a real good introduction to vegetarian for those who are meat eaters and thinking about whether they should become vegetarians."

For Weaver, vegetarianism began when she was 17. "The boarding school (a Seventh Day Adventist Academy) didn't serve meat at all," Weaver said. "And back home, my grandfather was a beef cattle rancher." (About 50 to 60 percent of Seventh Day Adventists are vegetarians.)

Please see VEGETARIAN, D2

A taste for the holidays

What: The 14th Annual Vegetarian Holiday Tasting Extravaganza

When: Noon-4 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 11, with three sessions scheduled at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. Please arrive at least 10-15 minutes early.

Where: Metropolitan Seventh Day Adventist Junior Academy, 15585 Haggerty (one block north of Five Mile Road), Plymouth

Tickets: \$10 adults, \$4 children 4-12. (Ticket allows admission to choice of session, but sessions are first-come, first-served.) Call (734) 495-0472.