

The "Read My Lips"
Cookbook:
A Culinary Journey
Of Memorable Meals

By

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Introduction

When children leave their parental home to go out into the world, they are faced with quite a few decisions regarding their new life. A choice they don't have is about eating. Just like you and me, they must eat to live! There are quite a few people who live to eat, but that will not concern us here.

In feeding oneself, you have one of three choices:

You can go to restaurants (anything from fast food to fine dining),

You can have someone cook a meal for you (a relative or friend),

You can cook something for yourself.

Restaurants are a great pleasure, but only if the food is good. Eating fast food on occasion is fine; I have done it more than once in the past. Fine restaurants still don't guarantee healthy dining all the time. Also, if you eat out a lot, you will eventually get tired of it. Unless you live in a large city like Chicago, New York or Los Angeles, the variety of eating establishments will be limited. You will quickly find that your bankroll is limited as well. This is even more so when times are tough, such as the recessions that we experience from time to time.

Another consideration about restaurants is that the food is not always as good as we expected. Oh, the food may have been good, but we may have hoped it would be better, considering the money we spent. Think of all the occasions when you were slightly disappointed with your meal. I won't even mention those times when the service was lousy.

If we let someone else do the cooking all the time, it is a good way to lose friends. It may be a good way to eliminate some unwanted family members, but not

recommended. By the way, a spouse falls within the category of friends and relatives. If your spouse is not that good a cook, it's even more imperative for you to be one. If that person lacks culinary skills, it would behoove you to do some cooking and be good at it. It will only strengthen the relationship. Your mate may then be reluctant to say goodbye to you and your good cooking! There must be some truth to the statement, "the way to a person's heart is through the stomach."

It looks as though the third choice is inevitable. You won't stop going out to restaurants if you can afford it. Besides, it's good to get out of the house. In addition, you can go over to have some of mom's cooking every so often and you shouldn't pass up an opportunity to share a meal at the home of a friend or relative. It's just that learning to cook is a requisite.

If cooking seems like such drudgery, how can we make it more palatable? That pun was intended! Four things will do that, namely the food should taste very good, the cost should be small, the food should be good for you and the preparation should be minimal. I don't think anyone will disagree on these points. Two other minor points are to be made. First, you are not embarking on a diet. Second, food that is good for you doesn't necessarily imply so called "health foods." Regarding this last statement, someone wrote a letter a while ago to a food magazine asking for cookie recipes that were made without egg yolks, sugar, salt, butter and margarine. Didn't she want flour omitted too? Anyway, she can eat those cookies; I certainly won't.

What will it take to be a good cook? First of all, you have to accept the fact that you will not be a good cook overnight. It will take time to develop those skills. So start small and work at it. There will be failures, so you have to be willing to adapt. If something doesn't work out to your satisfaction, there are two things you can do about it; you can figure out what went wrong and make appropriate changes

so that the next time the result will be a masterpiece. The other option is not to try the recipe again! Who needs the aggravation?

Another quality necessary is being able to follow directions. A recipe will tell you to do things in a certain way. There is a reason for it. Someday you will find that there is a better way and that is fine! Adaptability and good judgment are necessary but they will come with time. When you first start out you will follow instructions to the letter. With experience, you will be able to add certain spices and ingredients to make the dish better. You will also be able to leave out and substitute one component of a recipe for the other. But it won't happen overnight.

You had better acquire a good sense of humor if you don't already have one. People will make comments about your food that you may not appreciate at times. Just laugh it off and remember that taste is subjective. Over the years, you will find that you will be getting more praises than insults. Remember that you're only human. How does that saying go? "It is better to have cooked and lost than never to have cooked at all."

You will need organizational skills too. This simply means good planning. If you are having a dinner party with two dishes that each require a crock pot, you better either have 2 crock pots or be able to get a second one on short notice. Little details are more important than you think. If you are cooking a roast of pork in the oven and need the oven for baking chicken wings, you will have to resolve the conflict. The solution may be as simple as using the same oven temperature for both with the roast going on the bottom rack and the wings on the top rack. It may not be that simple, though.

I have been cooking for well over twenty years. Some of the highs and lows are chronicled in this book. I have also taught high school math for eight years. This certainly

doesn't give me the right to be a cooking teacher, but I do feel very strongly about writing a book on cooking. I have never taken a cooking course but I don't really think it is necessary. I know plenty of people who are excellent cooks and have taken no culinary courses whatsoever.

In a sense, my cooking course took place over the last 30 years or so. It was truly field experience. I myself have been my strongest critic, but there have been others too. I have had the best teachers as well, from my mom and grandmother to my many friends in different areas of the country. I have to give credit to GOURMET magazine, whose many recipes I have tried and enjoyed, as well as to the late James Beard. I still have his basic cookbook, the first one I ever bought. It is showing its wear but I cannot recommend it highly enough for the novice as well as the experienced cook. There are many more teachers too numerous to mention.

What makes this cookbook different from all the rest? Certainly you can find books that emphasize the four aforementioned requirements: easy to fix, good, economical and great taste (less filling is not required.) You can also find many cookbooks with plenty of good hints for success in the kitchen. Didn't someone on the Mary Tyler Moore show mention that a good performance in the kitchen would result in being rewarded in the . . . never mind!

This book has all that. It also has humorous anecdotes that should make you smile. It is based on my trips away from my place of birth. It features suggestions for meals (56 in fact) as well as parties. It has my experience in it. It starts out slowly but proceeds to achieve the ultimate growth possible. It is not the ultimate cookbook, but one that you will enjoy as part of your collection. Most important, it will be useful and it will be a good teaching tool. Who could ask for anything more? *Bon appétit!*

‡ Utensils and Tools ‡

If you are going to do any serious cooking, you will need tools. Here are some of the things that I use as well as others that I don't.

Large iron skillet - one of the best ways to satisfy your daily requirement of iron is to cook in an iron skillet

Small saucepan - used to cook vegetables and gravies

Medium saucepan - used to warm up leftovers and also for vegetables

Dutch oven - for the main course

Small skillet - great for sautéing and can be used for reheating

Covers – you may have a cover for every pot and pan but one cover may be used for more than one pan

Blender - I can't see a kitchen without one; you can grind coffee beans, make milkshakes, crush ice cubes, and so on

Spatula - one of the greatest kitchen inventions ever

Wooden spoons - great for stirring; the old ones hold up the best, while the newer ones seem to be of softer wood

Electric mixer - for whipping creams, egg whites, and other uses

Mortar and pestle - the only way to grind spices

Hand grater - good for grating ginger, carrots, and potatoes

Corkscrew - not really necessary if you buy wine without corks

Toaster oven - throw away your toaster as this oven can take its place and do a lot more

Tableware and cutlery setting for 8 - you will need it for those dinner parties; use paper and plastic for larger parties

Potato masher - I mash potatoes and rutabagas with it, while some prefer to use an electric mixer

Oven thermometer - many ovens are inaccurate; it gives you a better idea of the real temperature

Meat thermometer - helps for roasts of pork, beef, or lamb

Ovenproof casserole - for dishes that you cook in the oven

Bread pans - if you plan to bake bread, you will need 2; you can use a cookie sheet to make round loaves

Cookie sheets - for oven baking and roasting

Metal rack - needed for roasts and to cook chicken wings in the oven

Bread bowl - if you are serious about bread baking, this is a must; I received mine as a gift; it is an 8-quart earthenware dough bowl for oven and microwave and I have used it as a punch bowl and for pasta

Other implements: steak knives, rolling pin, paring knife, bread knife, carving knife, knife for chopping and mincing, soup ladle, serving spoons and forks, gravy bowl, serving bowl, basting brush, measuring cup and spoons, can opener, plastic containers for storing leftovers, pot holders, dish towels, vegetable steamer, wine glasses, beer mugs, peppermill, wok, metal skewers, charcoal grill, pancake flipper, coffeepot, colander, chopping block, strainer, ice bucket, waffle iron, ice cream maker

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You will not need all these tools at once. Buy them as you need them, or ask for them as gifts. The following are some kitchen products that I don't own and probably won't ever buy.

Flour sifter - at one time I had one but you really don't have to sift flour

Electric flour sifter - people actually buy these things

Microwave oven - a vastly overrated kitchen tool; you can warm a leftover item in a small pot on the stove, even if it is frozen solid

Food processor - no one actually uses these as they take so much effort to clean and really aren't that good;

anyone who has one has it packed away in its original box

Dough hook - I am content to make bread with my own hands

Ice crusher - you can use your blender to crush ice

Cappuccino machine - I don't own anything I can't spell

Deep fryer - if I want deep fried foods I go to a greasy spoon

Meat slicer - I thought about buying one many years ago, but a good carving knife will do just fine

Fondue set - the cheese industry would go out of business if they depended on me

Egg poachers - anyone who steals eggs should get high cholesterol

Battery powered butter warmer - I use solar power for warming my butter

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Common abbreviations will be used throughout this book. **Teaspoon** will be abbreviated by **tsp** and **tablespoon** by **tbsp**.

The number of people that a recipe will serve will be an approximation since some people eat like birds and others like vultures. You will note that the recipes are indexed alphabetically as well as by the type of dish, such as pork dishes, appetizers, desserts and so on.

Good luck!

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PART I

LEAVING HOME: BEGINNING TO COOK

In the summer of 1968, I left home to venture into the world. My destination was the state of New Jersey. I had found a job, teaching math at Mahwah Jr-Sr High School. Being a teacher meant a minimal salary and very few meals at restaurants. I knew I would have to do most of my own cooking, or else mooch meals from fellow teachers—not exactly my style.

When I think back to those days, I recall that I had a few set meals to get me through. I could cook steak for the first day and a friend's mother had given me her recipe for spaghetti sauce, so that would take care of the second day. The family name of Giordano meant a guaranteed recipe of success for a true Italian effort, even if I was Polish. For the third day, I could cook a chicken or turkey potpie or TV dinner as the center of the meal and my own chili recipe would suffice for the next day. On the fifth day, I could try chicken, probably with the help of “Shake and Bake” and for the sixth day would have beef stew from a can over egg noodles. Day Seven might be something as simple as hot dogs and the leftovers would carry me over for three more days, at least. You will note that my selections did not include that very familiar dinner of macaroni and cheese.

The first cookbook that I ever owned was the June 1968 printing of *The James Beard Cookbook* in paperback, a book that I cannot recommend highly enough for any serious cook. It is probably the cookbook in my collection that is most worn out and certainly the most used of the lot. Getting back to those early days of cooking for me, this is the way my meals ‘occurred’. The recipes that follow are the way I would cook them today.

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† Day One †

The best way to cook steak is outside on a grill. The wintertime may put a damper on this idea but there is an alternative: pan-frying. This means cooking the meat on a hot skillet without the use of butter, oil or fat. No matter how you cook the steak, try not to use any salt. The meat has so much flavor by itself that it is not necessary. As for the type of meat, sirloin and London broil are fine. I find that chuck steak, although it costs less, has too much fat and gristle. Another key point is to keep the flavor in by searing the meat. Charcoal briquettes are fine for cooking or even plain charcoal, if you can find it. Just make sure that the fire is hot so that the flavor is locked inside.

Grilled Steak

Serves 4

3 lbs. sirloin steak freshly ground pepper

Rub each side of the steak with ground pepper and place on the grill. Cook for 5 minutes and then turn over. Allow 5 minutes for the second side also, but you can check for doneness by slicing into the steak. How long you let the steak cook depends on how you like your meat: rare, medium, or well done.

Pan-Fried Steak

Serves 4

3 lbs. sirloin steak non-stick cooking spray
freshly ground pepper

Heat an iron skillet over high heat until it is almost smoking. Trim all the fat from the steak; sprinkle each side with pepper. Spray some non-stick cooking spray on the pan. Place the steak in the pan and let it sear for 1 minute. Turn the steak over and repeat for 1 minute. Lower the heat to medium and cook for 5 minutes and then turn the meat over and cook the other side for 5 minutes. Check for doneness with a knife and serve.

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The note about removing the fat before pan-frying reminds me of the time I came home and on opening the door thought the place was on fire. I was overwhelmed by smoke. As it turned out, my friend Spike was pan-frying a steak and he had left some fat on the meat. That's what will happen if you don't remove all the fat from the steak. Timing your meals with a smoke alarm is not that good an idea!

Baked Potatoes

Serves 4

4 baking potatoes freshly ground pepper
butter or margarine

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Wrap each potato in aluminum foil and place in oven. Cook for 1 hour and 10 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Serve with butter and pepper.

French-Style Beans

Serves 4

10 oz. pkg. frozen French-style green beans	¼ cup sliced almonds 2 tbsp. Dijon or brown mustard
2 tbsp. butter	1 tsp. lemon juice

If you have a vegetable steamer, steam the beans for 5 minutes. If not, cook the beans according to the package directions. Melt the butter in a small saucepan and sauté the almonds until they are golden brown. Add the mustard and lemon juice, blending well. Add the sauce to the beans and serve.

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You can make a salad with spinach, escarole, romaine, leaf or iceberg lettuce and just about any vegetable you desire. Personally, I don't buy tomatoes in the wintertime since they taste like cardboard.

Tossed Salad

Serves 4

8 leaves of romaine or leaf lettuce	3 chopped scallions or 3 onion slices
¼ head iceberg lettuce, shredded	½ green pepper, sliced
½ cucumber, peeled and sliced	salad dressing
1 fresh tomato, cut up	croutons

Mix all the vegetables in a large bowl. If a particular vegetable is not available (such as green pepper or cucumber), it can be omitted. Serve the salad in individual salad bowls; add dressing to each, along with some croutons.

Croutons

6 slices of bread 6 cloves of garlic, minced
3 tbsp. olive oil

Cube the bread into crouton-size pieces and let dry overnight. In an iron skillet, combine the oil and garlic and sauté over medium heat for 2 minutes or until golden brown. Add bread cubes and stir frequently with a wooden spoon until they are browned.

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You can also make croutons by baking them.

Baked Croutons

6 slices of bread, cubed garlic powder

Spread bread cubes on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with plenty of garlic powder. Bake at 375 degrees until they are golden brown, checking now and then to be sure they don't burn.

Salad Dressing

1 pkg. Good Seasons dressing olive oil
dry red or white wine

Follow the instructions on the package but instead of using water, use wine. Credit for this idea goes to Marguerite, who taught with me in New Jersey and knew a few things about good food.

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Menu for Day One

Pan-Fried Steak Baked Potatoes
Tossed Salad French-Style Beans

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† Day Two †

I had the pleasure of sharing an apartment in Buffalo with my friend Spike from the fall of 1969 to early 1970. Spike advocated cooking spaghetti sauce for days on a very low simmer, to blend all the flavors. We made a batch of sauce with ground beef and pork neck bones once and it came out splendid. However, even though the sauce was done, Spike insisted on turning on the heat, to keep it simmering. I would turn off the heat. This went on for a while. Somehow, Spike won out and the sauce kept simmering. Unfortunately, the meat in the sauce disintegrated and the bones turned out as soft as the meat had been. As a result, we had to dump it.

Spaghetti Sauce

Serves 8

1 tbsp. olive oil	2-28 oz. cans tomato puree
2 lbs. pork neck bones	1 stalk celery, minced
6 cloves garlic, minced	1 tbsp. dried thyme
1 large onion, minced	1 tbsp. dried basil
2-six oz. cans tomato paste	½ tsp. freshly ground pepper
1 cup water	1 clove
1 carrot, grated	2 bay leaves
1 tsp. dried oregano	pinch of sugar
1/8 tsp. cinnamon	1 tbsp. dried parsley
1 cup dry red wine	1 lb. Italian sausage
1 tsp. salt	1 lb. meatballs

Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven and add the pork neck bones. Brown on all sides; add minced garlic and onion and cook for 2 minutes. Add tomato paste and water and cook for 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients, except for the sausage and meatballs, and bring the mixture to a boil. Turn heat down to low and simmer for 5 hours. Remove the pork bones, strip remaining meat from bones and add back to the sauce. Add sausage and simmer for another hour. Make the meatballs, add to the sauce, and simmer for 2 more hours. Remove sauce from stove and place in the refrigerator to cool. Reheat the next day and serve over spaghetti cooked as directed on the box.

Meatballs

1 lb. ground round steak	½ cup bread crumbs
1 tsp. dried basil	1 egg, beaten
freshly ground pepper	1 tbsp. olive oil

In a large bowl, mix the first 5 ingredients and form the mixture into approximately 12 meatballs. Heat oil in an iron skillet over medium heat and brown the meatballs on all sides. They are now ready to drop into the sauce.

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Menu for Day Two

Spaghetti And Meatballs Fresh Italian Bread
Tossed Salad Dry Red Wine

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‡ Day Three ‡

A potpie or TV dinner is not that exciting but it can be a meal if you add a tossed salad, a baked potato, and a vegetable. Since the oven was on anyway, for the pie or dinner, why not bake a potato at the same time? Just start the potato ahead of the main entree or else your potato will be slightly crunchy.

Cooked Beets

Serves 4

6 medium beets water

Wash beets and cut off the tops, leaving 1 inch or so. Place beets in a small saucepan with enough water to cover them and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and cook until tender, about 25 minutes. Remove beets from the pan and let cool for 5 minutes. Remove outer skin from the beets, slice and serve.

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Menu for Day Three

Chicken Potpie	Baked Potatoes
Tossed Salad	Cooked Beets

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ƒ Day Four ƒ

By now, you probably think that my friend Spike was a terrible cook, but that's not so. He was a diligent cooking student and he knew what it was all about. I remember some of the extraordinary beers and stouts that he brewed. He could also make an excellent chili. He once visited me in New Jersey and insisted on making a batch of chili. He didn't have all the ingredients that he needed but did a great job of improvising. He started the chili while I was at work and it would have been superb except for one thing—he fell asleep while it cooked. The burner was set too high and the chili burned on the bottom of the pot. Unfortunately, the burnt taste took over the entire flavor of the dish.

Chili Con Carne

Serves 8

2 lbs. ground beef	4 tbsp. chili powder
2 cloves garlic, minced	1 tbsp. paprika
1 tbsp. olive oil	1 tsp. ground turmeric
2 large onions, chopped	1 tsp. dried oregano
1 green pepper, chopped	1 tbsp. ground cumin
1 stalk celery, chopped	1/8 tsp. ground cloves
2-28 oz. cans tomatoes	1 tsp. ground coriander
1-6 oz. can tomato paste	1/8 tsp. ground allspice
pinch of sugar	1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
freshly ground pepper	1 can kidney beans
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper	

Brown beef and garlic in olive oil over moderate heat; add onions, green pepper and celery and cook for 2 minutes, stirring. Add remaining ingredients, except for the kidney beans, and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 45 minutes. Rinse and drain the kidney beans, add to the sauce, and simmer 5 minutes more. Serve over boiled rice or cooked thin spaghetti, if desired, or simply in bowls with fresh bread.

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Note: Ground turkey may be substituted for the beef. To make a vegetarian chili, omit the meat. Any spice that is not available may be omitted. Hot sauce can be substituted for the cayenne; however, the last four spices add a distinctive touch.

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Menu for Day Four

Chili Con Carne	Fresh Bread
Tossed Salad	Beer

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† Day Five †

There are hundreds of recipes for chicken, but baking is one of the easiest and the results are quite good. Chicken is so naturally flavorful that you can bake it without salt or any other seasoning. You can buy chicken parts to your liking or cut up a whole one. The secret to cutting up a chicken is to do the cutting at the joints; don't try cutting the bones, unless they are very thin. You'll get the hang of it after a few tries, but it is well worth the effort since a whole chicken is less expensive than parts. Round out the meal with salad, vegetables, and rice pilaf.

Baked chicken

Serves 4

1 fryer, cut up or 12 chicken pieces

Pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees. Soak chicken in cold water for 10 minutes; remove and pat dry with paper towels. Place the chicken on a rack on top of a cookie sheet or large baking pan. Place in oven and bake for 50 minutes. The chicken should be golden brown. Remove chicken from the oven and serve.

Rice Pilaf

Serves 4

1 small onion, minced	½ tsp. dried oregano
1 tbsp. olive oil	½ tsp. turmeric
1 cup uncooked rice	¼ tsp. dried tarragon
1½ cups chicken broth	1 bay leaf

In an iron skillet, sauté the onion in the oil over moderate heat for 2 minutes. Add rice and continue cooking for 3 minutes to coat it, stirring frequently. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until broth is absorbed, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and serve.

Steamed Vegetables

Serves 4

5 carrots, peeled and sliced	1 tbsp. butter
½ rutabaga, peeled and cut julienne style	1 tsp. lemon juice
2 stalks broccoli, cut up	1 tbsp. brown mustard

Steam the carrots and rutabaga in a vegetable steamer for 10 minutes over low heat. Add the broccoli and steam for 10 more minutes. In a small saucepan, melt butter and blend in the mustard and lemon juice. Pour the sauce over the cooked vegetables and serve.

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Menu for Day Five

Baked Chicken	Steamed Vegetables
Tossed Salad	Rice Pilaf
White Wine	

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† Day Six †

I am not sure how I picked canned beef stew for a meal, but it tasted all right over boiled noodles. Eventually, I learned how to make egg noodles and surprisingly enough, it's simple. Before long, I discovered that making beef stew was also easy. Not only that but it tasted better, was cheaper and healthier. What you can do is buy a lean bottom round roast when it's on sale and cut it into cubes yourself. If you have a meat grinder or food processor, you can grind some of the roast for hamburger and freeze for another occasion.

Beef Stew

Serves 4

3 tbsp. flour	1 bay leaf
3 lbs. lean beef cubes	freshly ground pepper
1 tbsp. olive oil	1½ cups chicken broth
2 cloves garlic, minced	½ cup dry red wine
2 large onions, chopped	½ tsp. summer savory
1 tbsp. dried parsley	

Put the flour into a paper or plastic bag and add the beef cubes. Make sure that the beef is covered with the flour. Doing this results in delicious gravy with no effort on your part. In a large Dutch oven, sauté the beef cubes in the oil over moderate heat for 5 minutes or until brown on all sides; add garlic and onions and cook for 3 more minutes, stirring frequently. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 1½ hours. Remove from heat and serve over rice or egg noodles.

Egg Noodles

Serves 4

2 eggs, beaten flour
pinch of salt

Beat the eggs; add the salt and enough flour to make a stiff dough. The amount of flour will vary depending on the size of eggs. Knead the dough, adding more flour as necessary. Roll out dough with a rolling pin on a board or large surface, adding additional flour to keep it from sticking to the board. Let the dough dry for 1½ hours. Cut the dough into 1½-inch wide strips and stack one on top of the other. Cut the strips into noodles of approximately ¼-inches wide. Bring a large pot of water to boil and add the noodles. Bring back to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer the noodles for 15 minutes. Drain and serve.

Wilted Endive

Serves 4

1 head endive or escarole 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
4 slices of bacon freshly ground pepper

Wash endive thoroughly and drain on paper towels. Break each piece of endive in half. In an iron skillet, sauté bacon until crisp. Set aside bacon and move the skillet off the warm burner to cool for 2 minutes. Add vinegar and pepper and put the skillet back on the warm burner. Bring vinegar to a boil and add endive. Lower heat and cook until endive is wilted, stirring occasionally. This should take about 7 minutes. Remove endive to a serving dish, crumble bacon on top and serve.

Dilled Carrots

Serves 4

6 medium carrots 1 tbsp. butter
water fresh dill or dried dill weed

Peel carrots and cut into ¼-inch slices. Place in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Lower heat and cook for 10 minutes or until carrots are tender. Remove carrots to a small serving dish; add butter and dill, and serve.

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Menu for Day Six

Beef Stew Egg Noodles
Wilted Endive Dilled Carrots
Dry Red Wine

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† Day Seven †

A hot dog for dinner, with a salad and French fries, is not that unusual and only somewhat good for you. I was at my parents' house for lunch one Saturday and we had hot dogs on fresh mini-sub rolls. The wieners were above average and the rolls and sauerkraut made them more delectable. I can't recall too many occasions on which I've had a more enjoyable frankfurter.

When I was growing up, my mother would make us baloney and onions on numerous Saturday afternoons. I also remember a time during my first year away from home when I ordered a baloney and onion sandwich on Italian bread at some small place in South Orange, New Jersey. From those two encounters, I created my own version of the same dish.

Baloney and Onions

Serves 2

2 tbsp. olive oil	4 frankfurters
2 large onions, chopped	freshly ground pepper
1 green pepper, chopped	Italian or rye bread

Heat a heavy iron skillet over medium heat and add the oil, onions and green pepper. Cook until the onions and pepper are almost transparent, about 5 minutes. Cut up the franks into ½-inch pieces and add to the pan along with the ground pepper. Cook for another 5 minutes. Remove from the pan and serve with fresh rye or Italian bread.

Potato Salad

Serves 6

6 large potatoes	1 tbsp. paprika
water	freshly ground pepper
1 cucumber, peeled and chopped	1 cup mayonnaise
1 small onion, minced	3 tbsp. prepared mustard
	½ green pepper, chopped

Wash potatoes thoroughly and cut each in half. Place in a medium-size saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Lower heat and cook for 15 minutes or until potatoes are soft. You can test for doneness with a toothpick or fork. Drain potatoes and let them cool. When they have cooled down, cut them into ½-inch cubes and put them into a large bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and blend. Add more mayo if the salad is too dry. Serve.

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Menu for Day Seven

Baloney And Onions	Dill Pickles
Rye Bread	Potato Salad
Tossed Salad	

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Customer to waitress: Give me a rubber band sandwich and make it snappy!

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II
THE TRIPLE CITIES:
A SOUPER TIME

I didn't stay long in New Jersey, only a year, then I moved to the city of Buffalo to share an apartment with my friend Spike. He soon left to get married and not long after that, I moved to Binghamton, New York, in the fall of 1970. I was set to study computer science at the university while teaching high school math part-time. As you can imagine, my salary was less than in Mahwah and I was to have less free time.

Binghamton is one of the Triple Cities and also home of the "speedie". A speedie is perfectly legal and has nothing to do with drugs. It's a combination of marinated pork and lamb in various proportions. Personally, I prefer the pork without the lamb. The meat is placed on metal skewers and then broiled over a charcoal fire—or gas grill, if you're a yuppie! It is then served on a slice of Italian bread. Various restaurants in that area sell it and you can purchase the marinated meat at butcher shops and grocery stores in most cities. Speedies are currently made out of chicken as well. Either type is well worth trying.

By that time I had some practice in cooking and started collecting a few recipes. The secret to any good recipe, in my opinion, has to do with three basic premises:

- 1) Does it taste good to you?
- 2) Is it easy for you to make?
- 3) Is the cost to make it reasonable?

A recipe won't work if there is an ingredient in it that you don't like. If you don't care for liver, no recipe with liver in it will satisfy the first premise. I don't cook dishes that I would not eat myself. If you prepare a dish for dinner guests that you won't eat and they don't like, who is going to eat it? You may ask how to tell if a recipe in a cookbook will be good. Well, look at the ingredients. Then try it yourself. It will give you a very good idea.

The second consideration has to do with effort. After trying a recipe you will know how much work it takes on your part. If it takes quite a bit of effort but the result is extraordinary, you may still want to keep the recipe. It's your decision. Don't confuse effort with the length of time a dish takes from start to finish. For example, sauerbraten takes from four days to a week to get ready, but the effort needed is minimal. Baking your own bread could take an elapsed time of three hours. If you see a recipe that goes on for columns and columns in a book, chances are it won't be worth the effort.

The last consideration is cost. Some ingredients are outrageous in cost. For example, saffron costs more than some illegal drugs. However, it is a wonderful spice and you won't need that much of it — a little goes a long way. There are other ingredients that are expensive and you may not be able to get by with just a small amount. You will have to decide on the cost issue. You may be able to substitute an ingredient and save money. The results may be even better than the original recipe.

This brings me to another point. You have to be able to use your judgment, common sense, and past experience when cooking. Not too long ago I tried a recipe for pistachio soup. I like pistachios, the soup could be served hot or cold, and it looked like a good recipe. I made it and the opinion was that it was 'all right'. I agreed but since I had spent a great deal of time with preparation (mostly in shelling those little nuts), I decided to forego the recipe in the future.

On another occasion I tried a recipe for soup with celery and walnuts, among other ingredients. My guests didn't vomit over it, but the general consensus was that it was too crunchy. I should have chopped the celery thinner and ground the walnuts rather than chopping them. Another solution may have been to use a blender, even though the recipe just said to chop the ingredients. In any case, the effort was small, so I might try the recipe again.

I had a minor disaster when I tried a recipe for bouillabaisse. The ingredients listed cost a fortune to begin with and I made the mistake of reheating the soup. The mussels in the dish consequently spoiled and I had to toss it before someone started tossing up. First lesson: use less expensive fish. As long as it is fresh it won't matter. Second lesson: never cook mussels in a stew or soup . . . warm only.

Around the same time, I tried to make salmon bisque. The only mistake I made was to use canned salmon. It was a very big mistake. It was edible, but that's about all. My brother Ken said it tasted chalky but it probably could have been used to clean the toilet. You get the idea. The lesson I learned was that I should have used fresh salmon!

Nevertheless, soups and stews are easy to make and almost a meal in themselves. Add a salad and some bread and *voilà!*

fff

† Day Eight †

When you make fish chowder, any kind of fish will do, such as cod, haddock, scrod, pollock, pout or a mix. Just be sure that it is fresh. The chowder will taste better the next day as it seasons and it can be frozen as well.

Fish Chowder

Serves 8

4 slices of bacon	½ tsp. fennel seed, crushed
1 large onion, minced	2 large potatoes, cubed
1 green pepper, minced	freshly ground pepper
3 tbsp. flour	2 tbsp. butter
1 tsp. dried basil	2 lbs. fresh haddock
28 oz. can tomatoes	

In a large Dutch oven, fry the bacon until it is crisp. Remove bacon and set aside. Add the onion and green pepper to the pan and cook over medium heat for three minutes. Add flour and continue cooking for three minutes more, stirring frequently. Add the basil, tomatoes, fennel, potatoes and ground pepper and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer until the potatoes are tender, about thirty minutes. Crumble the bacon. Add butter, bacon and haddock and cook for five minutes more. Turn off the heat and let the chowder stand for ten minutes. Serve.

Ffff

Making beans requires one step before the actual cooking. The beans have to soak for a few hours. This can be done overnight or you can bring the beans to a quick boil, cook for two minutes and let them stand for one hour. One way is as good as the other.

Hickory Baked Beans

Serves 8

1 pound pinto beans	6 slices bacon, cut up
2 cups water	1 can condensed tomato soup
¼ cup molasses	½ cup ketchup
3 tbsp. brown mustard	1 tsp. liquid smoke or natural seasoning
½ cup brown sugar	

Soak the beans overnight or use the quick method as described above. Place soaked beans into a large Dutch oven and add water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and cook for one hour. Add remaining ingredients and bring back to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for two hours. Serve.

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Menu for Day Eight

Fish Chowder	Hickory Baked Beans
Tossed Salad	Russian Brown Bread
Dry White Wine	

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† Day 9 †

Some people consider Gazpacho a cold soup while others consider it a liquid salad. It is actually both. I had my first taste of it in a New York City restaurant. I liked it so much that I decided to try to make it myself. The best part about this recipe is that it is so easy. Just let the blender do all the work.

Gazpacho

Serves 6

4 large tomatoes	1 tsp. ground cumin
1 cucumber	¼ cup olive oil
1 green pepper	¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 large onion	1 tsp. Creole seasoning
3 garlic cloves	1 tsp. chili powder
1 cup tomato juice	garnishes as desired

Slit the tomatoes with a sharp knife and submerge them into a pan of boiling water for one minute. Remove, cool slightly, peel them and cut into quarters. They should peel easily. If not, put them back into the water for another minute. Peel the cucumber (if it's fresh out of the garden, there is no need to peel) and cut into quarters. Remove the insides of the green pepper and quarter. Peel the onion and garlic and quarter them. Put half of these vegetables into a blender as well as half the tomato juice. Puree for thirty seconds and pour into a two-quart pitcher. Repeat with the remainder of the vegetables. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Refrigerate overnight. Ladle into bowls and add any or all of the following as garnishes: chopped cucumber, chopped green pepper, chopped onion and croutons.

Beef and Beer Stew

Serves 4

2 lbs. lean beef cubes	3 large onions, chopped
3 tbsp. flour	12 oz. of beer
freshly ground pepper	1 tsp. summer savory
2 tbsp. olive oil	1 tsp. dried thyme leaves
1 tsp. salt	

Dredge the beef in the flour and the pepper. Heat the oil over moderate heat in a large Dutch oven and add the beef cubes. Brown on all sides; add the salt and onions and cook for three minutes. Add the beer, summer savory and thyme. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for one hour. Serve over steamed rice or egg noodles.

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Menu for Day Nine

Gazpacho	Beer And Beef Stew
Tossed Salad	Egg Noodles
Beer	

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† Day Ten †

You can make your own coating for chicken by combining bread crumbs with an assortment of spices, rather than buying the more popular store brand. This coating can also be used on fish and pork chops.

This reminds me of the time that I lived in Buffalo and we had a party at our apartment. Spike no longer lived with me but another teacher had moved in to help pay the rent. Since I had to work nights, I was going to be late for the party so I had to delegate cooking the chicken to Harry, my housemate. I prepared some chicken coating mix and Harry had to do the rest. The chicken turned out good but a few days after the party I noticed a funny smell in the kitchen. The garbage had been removed so it wasn't that, but I could not figure out what it was. A day or so later the smell was worse. I finally figured out what the rotten smell was: before Harry cut up the poultry, he removed the internal organs and instead of throwing them in the garbage, he put them in the kitchen pantry. Whew!

Tasty Baked Chicken

Serves 4

1 cut up chicken coating mix

Wash the chicken and shake pieces dry. Place some of the coating mix in a plastic or paper bag and add the chicken pieces, a few at a time. Shake the bag to coat thoroughly. Place chicken pieces on a rack on top of a cookie sheet and bake for fifty minutes in a 375-degree oven. Remove from oven and serve.

ff

To make bread crumbs, dry a few pieces of bread overnight. Place the bread slices into a blender, a few at a

time and turn on the blender until you have bread crumbs. It couldn't be easier. Now you have a use for stale bread.

Chicken Coating Mix

For about 3 chickens

2 tbsp. dried minced onion	2 tbsp. paprika
1 tsp. celery seed	1 tbsp. chili powder
4 cups bread crumbs	1/3 tsp. dried mustard
1/2 cup olive oil	freshly ground pepper

Crush the minced onion and celery seed in a mortar and pestle. Put the bread crumbs into a large bowl and stir in the oil, mixing thoroughly. Add the crushed onion, celery seed, and the remaining ingredients and blend well. The coating can be stored in the refrigerator.

fff

Bacon is easier to cut if it is frozen or only slightly thawed. What I do is store it in the freezer, since it keeps longer when frozen. When I need a slice or two, I cut perpendicular to the way the slices run. Thus, I cut an amount of small pieces equivalent to the number of slices that I need. This also eliminates the need to crumble the bacon later, if the recipe calls for it.

Bean with Bacon Soup

Serves 8

1 ½ cups pea beans	3 large onions, chopped
4 slices bacon	½ tsp. sugar
¼ tsp. dried sage	2 quarts of water
½ tsp. dried thyme	1 tsp. Tabasco sauce
1 tbsp. olive oil	freshly ground pepper
2 garlic cloves, minced	3 tbsp. vinegar

Soak the beans overnight or use the 2 minute / 1 hour method described earlier (*see the recipe for hickory baked beans*). Sauté the bacon in a heavy iron skillet until crisp. Remove the bacon, drain on a paper towel; discard the drippings. Crush the sage and thyme in a mortar and pestle. Add oil to frying pan and sauté the garlic, onions, sugar, sage and thyme until the onions are brown. Be careful not to burn them, but the darker they are, the better the flavor will be. The sugar helps to brown them. Place beans into a large Dutch oven and add the browned onions and water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer for 1½ hours. Turn off the heat, crumble the bacon and add it, along with the Tabasco sauce, ground pepper and vinegar. Stir well. Serve with croutons made from dark bread, using the crouton recipe but substituting dark bread.

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Menu for Day Ten

Bean With Bacon Soup	Tasty Baked Chicken
Baked Potatoes	Italian Bread
Tossed Salad	

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† Day Eleven †

I've always wanted an easy recipe for minestrone soup, but it seems all the recipes are so complicated. Here is a recipe that you'll find enjoyable and easy to make. You can use any combination of beans that you have around, such as pinto, green or yellow split peas, lentils, black, pink, Great Northern, navy, or baby lima. Just don't use jellybeans.

Turkey Minestrone Soup

Serves 8

2 tbsp. green split peas	1 large onion, chopped
2 tbsp. yellow split peas	2 stalks celery, chopped
2 tbsp. lentils	4 carrots, sliced
2 tbsp. navy beans	2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp. pinto beans	pinch of sugar
2 tbsp. black beans	1 28-oz. can tomatoes
2 tbsp. Great Northern beans	½ tsp. dried oregano
2 tbsp. pearl barley	1 tsp. dried basil
1 turkey drumstick	freshly ground pepper
1 cup dry red wine	1 cup water
½ tsp. dried thyme	

Soak beans overnight. Drain and place into a soup pot along with all the other ingredients. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer until the turkey is tender, about 2½ hours. Remove turkey and let it cool. Separate the meat from the bone, gristle and tendons. Chop the turkey meat and add back to the minestrone. Serve with any kind of crusty bread.

Fff

One of the dishes that I recall from childhood was hamburgers with onions and tomatoes. It sounds like a simple dish, which it is, and it's also delicious and quite easy to make.

Stewed Hamburgers

Serves 6

3 lbs. lean ground beef	1 tbsp. olive oil
1 egg, beaten	3 large onions, sliced
1 cup bread crumbs	1 28-oz. can tomatoes
1 tsp. dried basil	pinch of sugar

In a large bowl, mix the ground beef with egg, bread crumbs and basil. Heat oil in a heavy iron skillet over moderate heat. Form hamburger mixture into patties and brown on both sides. Remove to a Dutch oven. Repeat until all the hamburgers are browned. Add the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for one hour. Serve the hamburgers on hard rolls dipped in the sauce and covered with the onions.

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Menu for Day Eleven

Turkey Minestrone Soup	Stewed Hamburgers
Corn On The Cob	Tossed Salad
Hard Rolls	

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† Day Twelve †

You can't beat an Easter ham from the Broadway Market in Buffalo. The only other one that comes close is a Virginia baked ham. You may wonder what to do with a ham, other than baking it and making ham sandwiches. Actually, numerous dishes use ham in one way or another. I will include a few throughout this book. One soup you can make with ham or a leftover ham bone is yellow split pea. It's easy and delicious.

Yellow Split Pea Soup

Serves 8

2 cups yellow split peas	½ cup chopped rutabaga
1 smoked ham hock or ham bone	2 quarts of water
1 carrot, finely chopped	freshly ground pepper
1 small onion, chopped	2 or 3 slices of ham, chopped

Place the split peas into a large pot with the ham hock or ham bone, carrot, onion, rutabaga, and water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and simmer for 2½ hours. Remove the ham hock and let it cool. If there is any meat on it, cut it up and add to the soup. Add the ground pepper and ham and simmer for another ½ hour. Serve.

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The next recipe calls for soy sauce and mayo. You can use any brand you like, but my preference is Kikkoman Lite soy sauce and Hellmann's mayonnaise. Kikkoman seems to have a more distinctive flavor. It costs a little bit more than the others, but I think it is worth it. As far as mayonnaise goes, Hellmann's makes a Light and a cholesterol-free variety in addition to the regular.

Tuna macaroni salad

Serves 8

1 lb. elbow macaroni	freshly ground pepper
6 oz. can water-packed tuna	½ cup mayonnaise
1 cucumber, chopped	2 tbsp. soy sauce
1 small onion, chopped	

Cook macaroni according to the package directions. Drain and cool. Drain the tuna. Place the macaroni into a large bowl; add tuna and the remaining ingredients. Mix and, if necessary, add more mayo. Refrigerate. Serve with Basil Tomatoes.

Basil Tomatoes

Serves 4

4 large tomatoes, sliced	2 tbsp. olive oil
1 tbsp. dried basil	

Place the tomatoes in a glass dish. Sprinkle with basil and olive oil. Toss gently and marinate for two hours in a cool place. Do not put in the refrigerator, as the tomatoes will lose their flavor. Serve.

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When I first began to cook, I used powdered ginger. Now I always use gingerroot, which I grate myself. If you use the root instead of the powder, you will need a hand grater. The one I use I've had for years and it has served me well. I also suggest keeping gingerroot in the freezer. It lasts longer and more important, it's easier to grate when frozen.

Chinese Cauliflower

Serves 6

1 head cauliflower	¼ cup orange juice
1 tbsp. butter	2 tbsp. soy sauce
1 green pepper, thinly sliced	½ cup water
1 tbsp. grated gingerroot	1 tbsp. cornstarch

Trim the cauliflower and place into a medium saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for ten minutes. Remove from the stove and drain. In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt the butter. Add green pepper and ginger and sauté for 3 minutes. Add orange juice and soy sauce and cook for 1 more minute. In a small bowl, mix the water and cornstarch, dissolving the cornstarch. Add to the green pepper mixture, stirring. Raise the heat and cook until sauce thickens. Place the cauliflower on a serving plate, pour the sauce over it and serve.

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Menu for Day Twelve

Yellow Split Pea Soup	Tuna Macaroni Salad
Basil Tomatoes	Chinese Cauliflower
French Bread	

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ƒ Day Thirteen ƒ

In Binghamton, I lived on the second floor, above my landlord. You may have seen those little bottles of root beer extract on shelves in the grocery store. I doubt that you could find them today but at the time, I bought one and in the spring of 1971, I started to make my own root beer in a gallon jug. All you have to add is water, sugar and yeast to the extract and let it brew for a few weeks. This I did according to the package directions, but I noticed that not much seemed to be happening. I added some more yeast.

A day or two later, I went out to play softball. When I returned, the back door to my place was wide open and the floor was much cleaner than when I had departed. My root beer had exploded and the liquid somehow dripped downstairs into the landlord's apartment. He probably heard the explosion too. I had to do some explaining as well as cleaning up. I noticed some tiny fragments of glass, not much larger than grains of sand. It must have been some explosion! My landlord probably thought the house was being attacked.

The lesson from that episode is simple: follow directions. You can improvise for certain situations but not for others. The root beer directions also said to keep the jug on its side and capped with a cork, if possible. Had I done that, the cork would have shot out and there would have been some liquid on the floor, but certainly no explosion.

Chicken Shadow Soup

Serves 8

3 quarts of water	2 stalks of celery, sliced
1 bay leaf	2 large onions, chopped
¼ tsp. dried sage	1 package chicken soup mix
¼ tsp. dried thyme	freshly ground pepper
4 carrots, sliced	

Put the water, bay leaf, sage, thyme, carrots, celery, and onions into a large soup pot and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until vegetables are soft, about fifteen minutes. Add the soup mix and simmer for ten minutes more. Season with ground pepper and serve with egg noodles.

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Dried beans are reasonably cheap and loaded with protein and numerous vitamins. They are also said to be a fine way to lower your cholesterol. You can make the next recipe with Great Northern, pinto, pink or black beans. Smoked sausage adds a zestful flavor.

Cajun Beans and Rice

Serves 4

1 ½ cups pinto beans	2 tbsp. paprika
2 cups water	8 oz. tomato sauce
1 bay leaf	2 cloves garlic, minced
1 green pepper, chopped	½ tsp. Tabasco sauce
1 large onion, chopped	1 tbsp. chili powder
pinch of cayenne pepper	¼ lb. smoked sausage, sliced
1 celery stalk, minced	

Soak the beans overnight. Drain. Place in a large Dutch oven, add the water and bay leaf and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 1 hour. Add remaining ingredients, except for the sausage, and simmer until the beans are tender, about 1 hour. You may need to add more water as the beans cook. Add the sausage and simmer for fifteen minutes more. Serve over boiled rice.

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Boiled rice can be made quickly and is loaded with carbohydrates. Just remember to use twice the amount of water as of rice.

Boiled Rice

Serves 6

2 cups long grain rice 4 cups water

Place the rice and water in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for twenty minutes or until all the water is absorbed. You can stir occasionally. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirteen

Chicken Shadow Soup	Egg Noodles
Cajun Beans	Tossed Salad
Steamed Rice	

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† Day Fourteen †

During my third year in the Triple Cities of Endicott, Binghamton and Johnson City, I shared an apartment with two college students. I cooked some of the time but John and Tom did some of their own cooking. I mentioned that I was never a big macaroni and cheese dinner aficionado. One day, John made himself some, but it turned out watery. Apparently, he hadn't drained the macaroni before adding the cheese sauce. He didn't follow directions on the box.

On another occasion, I made beef stew for everyone and John cooked some lima beans—not one of my favorites but healthy nonetheless. A day or two later, John warmed up the stew together with the lima beans. I did not have any.

At that time, a store on the outskirts of town sold horsemeat. Thom and Linda, good friends of mine who lived in nearby Pennsylvania, would fix it for me but not tell me that sometimes the meat could be found at the racetrack. I enjoyed whatever they fixed and couldn't tell the difference between cow and horsemeat, even though I felt it could have been the latter.

One day, I made some hamburgers from horsemeat. I believe the recipe was the one for stewed hamburgers in this chapter. John liked it and finished it up, since I couldn't eat it. Somehow, all I could think of was Mr. Ed!

A quick meal for any occasion is fish. You can cook certain types of fish on the grill outside, such as salmon, swordfish, halibut, tuna, monkfish and mahi-mahi. Baking and poaching is easy, too, and quick. Any kind of fish will do, as long as it is fresh. Today even fish in the supermarket is quite fresh. You can use haddock, cod, pollock or scrod for the following recipe.

Baked Fish

Serves 4

nonstick vegetable spray ¼ tsp. garlic powder
2 lbs. haddock ½ tsp. dill weed
1 tbsp. lemon juice ¼ cup rye bread crumbs

Spray a baking pan with the nonstick spray. Place the fish into the pan and sprinkle with lemon juice, garlic powder and dill weed. Cover with bread crumbs and bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes. Serve with rice pilaf and a dry white wine.

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During my teens, my mother used to fix a soup made from cabbage and potatoes. It seemed like a simple soup but was very flavorful. My version of the soup is a little different, but still tasty.

Potato Sprout Soup

Serves 4

1½ lb. Brussels sprouts ½ lb. smoked Polish sausage
3 large potatoes freshly ground pepper
2 cups chicken broth

Clean the Brussels sprouts and trim. Place sprouts in a medium saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat and cook for 10 minutes. Remove and drain. In a blender, coarsely chop sprouts. Cut potatoes into ½-inch cubes and put into saucepan with the broth. Bring to a boil, lower heat and cook for ten minutes. Add Brussels sprouts and sausage and simmer for ten more minutes or until the potatoes are tender. Season with ground pepper and serve.

Chicken Broth

Makes 2 quarts

2 quarts of water chicken necks, wing tips and backs
1 bay leaf 1 celery stalk
2 tbsp. parsley 1 tsp. salt

Put all ingredients into a soup pot and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for two hours. Remove chicken wing tips and celery stalk and discard. Remove chicken backs and necks, separate any meat from the bone, and save for another use. The broth can be frozen.

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Menu for Day Fourteen

Potato Sprout Soup Baked Fish
Rice Pilaf Tossed Salad
Dry White Wine

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The following conversation took place at a restaurant following dinner between my sister Pat and her daughter Elizabeth, who was then 3 years young:

Pat: That was very good. Elizabeth, are you full?

Elizabeth: No, I'm empty.

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III
WESTCHESTER:
WHERE THE BREAD IS

I left the Triple Cities to head across the Hudson River. My new home was to be Wappingers Falls, noted for nothing much until an event a few years ago, which I won't get into. It had nothing to do with cooking. Within a short time, I found myself moving into my first house in the grand old county of Westchester.

Appropriately enough, it was here that I really started to make bread. I don't think that you'll have to think about that one too much. But seriously, this was where I developed my ability for the art of making bread. I don't precisely recall in which town I tried my first recipe for bread. I do remember that it was Cuban bread from the James Beard Cookbook and it was a big flop. The result would have made an excellent paperweight or boat anchor, so I threw it out.

The good thing about this disaster was that I didn't completely give up. It may have taken some time, but nonetheless at some point I tried to bake bread once again. The result was much improved and eventually each new attempt proved to be better than the last. Not only did I like the bread but my guests commented on how good it was. I knew I had done something right. I really believe that anyone can make bread. It is not that difficult. It takes a few hours from start to finish, but your effort is minimal, from 15 to 20 minutes in all. The secret for baking bread includes 3 key points:

1. Patience
2. The yeast mixture
3. The kneading process.

As far as patience goes, most yeast dough breads need to rise twice for approximately 1 hour each. The actual baking will take close to another hour, so the whole process will take about 3 hours. I made some onion bread recently. I mixed the dough together, put it into a warm oven, and went

out for an hour walk. When I returned, the dough was ready for its second rise. You don't have to take a walk between risings, but you can do something else, such as leaving the house. That way, the 3-hour time frame will not even matter. The aroma wafting through your home while the bread is baking will also inspire you to do it again. This brings up the idea of patience on another plane. If your first attempt does not turn out exactly as you would like, don't give up. Try again and again. Your perseverance will pay off.

The second important point is the yeast mixture. This applies to yeast breads as well as to quick breads, as you will see in the next paragraph. I will concentrate on yeast breads for now. Any bread that you try will be a failure without yeast. Burning the yeast has the same effect as no yeast and your effort will be worthless. It is critical NEVER TO BURN THE YEAST! You can avoid burning by using lukewarm water or liquid to proof the yeast. *Proofing* means dissolving in water or milk with a pinch of sugar. Also, remember to cool down any mixture into which you add the yeast mixture. An ice cube or two should do the trick.

For quick breads, the process is similar but easier. You need to have an active catalyst, baking powder in most cases. If the baking powder is old, the bread may not rise. See to it that the ingredient has not expired. If no rising takes place, the result will be a rock rather than bread. That is why my first Cuban bread recipe failed.

As far as type of yeast to use, I used the solid cake yeast in my first few bread attempts. I have not used it since, but rather I use the package yeast, which is easier to find on supermarket shelves. One is as good as the other. Generally speaking, wheat and rye breads will require 2 packages of yeast. You can probably get away with one for bread that uses only white flour.

The last point has to do with kneading the bread. *Kneading* means taking the bread dough into your hands and

working it so that the ingredients are blended together. Most recipes call for 5 to 10 minutes of kneading. I usually knead bread for 1 or 2 minutes. The reason I use less time is because, by the time I put the dough on the board to knead, the ingredients are well blended. That's because I use a huge mixing bowl. It is made of earthenware, 7 inches high and 13 inches wide at the top. I've had it for over 20 years and it cuts down on kneading time. I use a long wooden spoon for mixing to assist in the process. If you can find a bowl like this one, I'd recommend it for use not only in bread baking but also whenever you are mixing something in large quantity. It can even double as a punch bowl.

Here are some other points about baking bread. I usually warm the oven to about 90 degrees to let the dough rise. It is not essential, but using the oven means drafts are eliminated and I've been doing it this way for years with great success. Sugar is necessary to interact with the yeast. It is not necessary to proof the yeast with the sugar, but if you get into the habit of doing it this way, you'll never forget the sugar in a recipe. The amount of flour to use brings up a good point: I never measure the flour in any bread recipe. If a recipe calls for wheat, rye and white flour, I add some rye flour, some wheat flour and then the amount of white flour depends on when the dough is the way I like it. It's a matter of judgment. You'll get the idea. When pouring the dough onto the surface for kneading, if you try to scrape the dough from the wooden spoon it will stick to your fingers. Instead use a jerky shoving motion to get the dough off the spoon. As far as determining when bread is finished baking, tap the loaves with your fingers. A hollow sound indicates the bread is done. Above all, have patience in your bread baking endeavors. Good luck!

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† Day Fifteen †

Bread is always best right out of the oven. Even a day or two later it is still better than any bread you can buy. The darker breads tend to keep their flavor longer than the white breads. If you ever have coffee left over from a meal, put it into a plastic container in the freezer. You can use it in this recipe for brown bread.

Russian Brown Bread

Makes 2 loaves

2 packages dry yeast	2 tbsp. caraway seed
1 tbsp. sugar	1 tbsp. anise seed
½ cup lukewarm water	1 tbsp. fennel seed
2 cups leftover coffee	1½ cups rye flour
½ cup molasses	1½ cups wheat flour
3 tbsp. vinegar	1 cup wheat bran
¼ cup cocoa	6 cups white flour
2 tbsp. olive oil	corn meal

In a small bowl, proof the yeast with the sugar in the water. In a small saucepan over moderate heat, add the leftover coffee (or water), molasses, vinegar, cocoa and olive oil. Stir occasionally and remove when cocoa and molasses are dissolved. Pour mixture into a large mixing bowl and cool to lukewarm. Crush the caraway, anise and fennel seeds in a mortar and pestle and add to the cocoa / molasses mixture. When mixture is cooled down (use an ice cube if necessary), add the yeast mixture. Add in the rye flour, wheat flour and bran; mix, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon. Add white flour gradually and continue mixing until dough is stiff. Turn the dough onto a floured board and knead for about 2 minutes or until dough is smooth and elastic. Wash out mixing bowl, dry out thoroughly and grease with olive oil. Put dough back into the bowl, cover with a damp towel and put into a warm oven to rise until double in bulk, about 1 hour. Divide the dough in half and form each into a ball. Place each on a cookie sheet sprinkled with corn meal, flatten slightly, cover with the damp towel and put back into the oven. Let it rise for about 40 minutes or until nearly double. Remove the towel and bake in a 375-degree oven for 55 minutes. Remove and cool on a wire rack. Serve.

If you like Creole and Cajun foods, you'll find this next recipe to your liking. It has a rich blend of flavors. Jambalaya can be made with seafood as well, but I find this recipe with ham, chicken and pork sausage to be delightful. I think you will too.

Jambalaya

Serves 6

2 cloves garlic, minced	1 28-oz. can tomatoes
2 tbsp. olive oil	pinch of sugar
1 green pepper, chopped	1 tsp. dried thyme
1 large onion, chopped	1 tsp. chili powder
½ lb. Polish or baked Virginia ham	2 cups long grain rice
2 cups cooked chicken	freshly ground pepper
½ lb. pork sausages	4 cups water

Sauté the garlic in olive oil in a large Dutch oven over moderate heat for 2 minutes. Add green pepper and onion and cook for 2 minutes more. Cut ham and chicken into ½-inch cubes and the pork sausages into ¼ inch slices. Add all remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until all liquid is absorbed, about 1 hour. If rice is not thoroughly cooked, add more water and continue simmering. Remove and serve.

Horseradish Broccoli

Serves 4

4 stalks of broccoli	1 tbsp. olive oil
2 cups of water	1 tbsp. mustard seeds
1 tbsp. butter	1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tbsp. olive oil	1 tbsp. horseradish

Trim and cut the broccoli into serving size pieces. Place it into a medium saucepan with water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 8 minutes. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan over moderate heat, melt the butter. Add olive oil and mustard seeds and cook until mustard seeds stop popping, about 2 minutes. Add the lemon juice and horseradish and stir. Drain broccoli, pour sauce over it and serve.

Ffff

Menu for Day Fifteen

Russian Brown Bread	Jambalaya
Tossed Salad	Horseradish Broccoli

fffff

† Day Sixteen †

After my Cuban bread disaster, I eventually tried the recipe again and got it right. I'd go further than that. The recipe is fantastic because it tastes great but also requires little time. The result is a crusty bread that tastes so good that there probably won't be any left over. The only ingredients are water, flour, sugar and yeast. This bread only has to rise once so it's quicker than most bread recipes. Give it a try and you won't be disappointed.

Cuban Bread

Makes 2 loaves

1 package dry yeast 7 cups flour
2 cups lukewarm water olive oil or cornmeal
1 tbsp. sugar

Proof the yeast in the water with the sugar in a large mixing bowl. Add flour gradually, stirring vigorously with a wooden spoon. Add enough flour to make a stiff dough. Knead the dough for 1 or 2 minutes. Wash, dry and grease mixing bowl with olive oil and add the dough. Cover with a damp towel and place in a warm oven to rise until double in bulk, about 1 hour. Punch down the dough, cut the dough in half and form 2 long loaves. Place on a greased cookie sheet or one covered with corn meal and let rise for 5 minutes. Turn on the oven to 400 degrees; place a pan of boiling water in the oven under the loaves. Bake the loaves for about 40 minutes or until they are brown and crusty. Serve hot out of the oven.

Chicken Cacciatore

Serves 4

handful of fresh oregano	freshly ground pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced	2 tbsp. chopped parsley
1 tsp. dried basil	1 large onion, chopped
2 tbsp. olive oil	1 green pepper, chopped
1 frying chicken, cut up	1 tsp. sugar
4 tbsp. flour	½ cup dry red wine
1 28-oz. can tomatoes	1 cup sliced green olives

Mince the oregano. Use 1 tsp. of dried oregano if fresh is not available. Sauté garlic, oregano and basil in oil in a large Dutch oven over moderate heat for 2 minutes. Dredge chicken parts in flour and brown each piece in the Dutch oven. Add all remaining ingredients, except for the olives and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 25 minutes. Add olives and simmer for 15 more minutes or until chicken is done. Serve over thin spaghetti or boiled rice.

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Menu for Day Sixteen

Chicken Cacciatore	Spaghetti
Tossed Salad	Cuban Bread
Dry Red Wine	

ffff

† Day Seventeen †

Quick breads are easy to make and take less time than yeast dough because you only have to let it rise once. Irish soda bread can be made with buttermilk or you can sour ordinary milk by adding vinegar with the same results. The following recipe is especially tasty and needs no butter, as it is in the dough.

Irish Soda Bread

Makes 1 loaf

2 cups milk	2 tbsp. butter, cut into
2 tbsp. vinegar	bits and softened
4 cups flour	1 tsp. baking soda
½ cup sugar	2 tsp. baking powder
2 tbsp. caraway seed	1 tbsp. butter, melted
½ cup raisins	1 tbsp. sugar

In a large mixing bowl, combine milk and vinegar. In another bowl, combine remaining ingredients except for the melted butter and 1 tablespoon of sugar. Mix thoroughly, add the milk mixture, and stir until all ingredients are blended. Grease a heavy iron skillet with olive oil and pour the batter into the skillet and even it out with a spatula. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Sprinkle butter over the top of the batter. Do the same with the sugar. Put skillet into the oven and bake for 45 minutes or until bread is done. A toothpick inserted into the dough should come out clean when it is done. Remove from oven and cool in skillet for 15 minutes. Turn bread onto a rack and cool completely. Serve.

Green Split Pea Soup

Serves 8

2½ cups green split peas	1 smoked ham hock
2½ quarts of water	1 large onion, chopped
2 tbsp. parsley	freshly ground pepper
1 stalk celery, chopped	¼ lb. Polish sausage
1 bay leaf	

Put all the ingredients into a large Dutch oven, except for the Polish sausage and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 2 hours. Remove bay leaf and ham hock and put any meat on the ham hock back into the Dutch oven. Cut the Polish sausage into 1/4 inch slices and add to the soup. Simmer for 10 minutes more. Serve.

Escarole Orange Salad

Serves 6

1 head of escarole	½ tbsp. sugar
½ cup chopped pecans	1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 oranges	¼ cup olive oil
¼ cup lemon juice	freshly ground pepper

Thoroughly wash escarole and drain. Separate leaves and break each into bite-size pieces. Put escarole into a large salad bowl and add pecans. Peel oranges and cut lengthwise into quarters and then cut each into 1/4 inch slices. Add to the escarole. Mix the lemon juice, sugar and mustard until they are thoroughly blended. Add oil in a stream and blend in completely. Add to salad with the ground pepper and toss. Serve.

Fff

Rutabagas are almost peasant food insofar as they are plain and cheap. They have a taste that stands by itself and are also easy to prepare.

Mashed Rutabagas

Serves 4

1 rutabaga freshly ground pepper
water 1 tbsp. butter

Peel, slice and cut the rutabaga into French fry pieces. If you have a French fry cutter, use it. Put rutabaga into a medium saucepan and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer until tender, about 10 minutes. Remove the pot and drain. Mash rutabaga, add pepper and butter and serve.

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Menu for Day Seventeen

Irish Soda Bread Green Split Pea Soup
Escarole Orange Salad Mashed Rutabagas

fffff

† Day Eighteen †

There is nothing like a good rye bread. An important ingredient in any rye bread is caraway seed. If you don't like caraway seed, do not despair. You can make rye bread without the caraway. Dill adds flavor as well.

Dill Rye Bread

Makes 2 loaves

2 packages dry yeast	2 tbsp. caraway seed
2 cups lukewarm water	1 tbsp. dill seed
1 tsp. sugar	1 tsp. salt
1½ cups milk	2 cups rye flour
olive oil	4 cups white flour

Proof yeast in the water with the sugar. Pour the mixture into a large mixing bowl and add milk, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, the caraway, dill and salt. Add rye flour and stir vigorously. Add white flour gradually, stirring to blend in ingredients. Add enough white flour to make a stiff dough. Roll dough onto a floured board and knead for about 2 minutes. Wash and dry the mixing bowl and grease with olive oil. Put dough into the bowl and cover with a damp towel. Put bowl into a warm oven and let dough rise for about 1 hour or until double in bulk. Remove dough, divide in half and form into 2 loaves. Put loaves into 2 greased bread loaf pans, cover with a damp towel and let rise until doubled, about 40 minutes. Remove the towel and bake at 375 degrees until loaves are golden brown, about 45 minutes. Remove from the pans, cool and serve.

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While bread is baking, you can prepare the main course: poached fish. Don't start it too early since the fish will only take about 15 minutes to cook.

Poached Cod

Serves 4

3 tbsp. flour	½ cup dry red wine
2 lbs. of cod	1 tsp. dried dill weed
1 tbsp. olive oil	2 tbsp. dried minced onion
4 oz. tomato sauce	

Put flour into a plastic bag and add fish, a piece at a time. Shake the bag to coat each piece with flour. Heat oil in a large iron skillet over moderate heat. Add the pieces of cod, skin side up and cook for 1 minute. Turn pieces over and cook the second side for 1 minute. Mix tomato sauce, wine, dill and dried onion and add to skillet. Bring liquid to a boil and lower heat. Simmer for 10 minutes or until cod is done. It will flake when done. Serve with wine sauce over boiled rice.

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Menu for Day Eighteen

Dill Rye Bread Boiled Rice
Poached Cod Tossed Salad

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† Day Nineteen †

One of the best vegetables for you is the onion. As you can tell, I use it in all types of recipes. You can use onions to make tasty bread. The fragrance of the vegetable from this recipe will overwhelm your home.

Onion Bread

Makes 2 loaves

2 large onions, sliced	2 packages dry yeast
thin and chopped	2 cups lukewarm water
olive oil	1 tbsp. dried dill weed
1 tbsp. sugar	5 cups white flour

In a heavy iron skillet, sauté the onions in 2 tablespoons of olive oil for 10 minutes, over moderate heat. Raise the heat, add 1 teaspoon of sugar and continue cooking onions until they are golden brown. Cool. Meanwhile proof yeast in water with the remaining sugar. Pour mixture into a large mixing bowl and add dill weed and cooked onions. Make sure the onions have cooled down. Add white flour gradually, stirring vigorously to blend in ingredients. Add enough flour to make a stiff dough. Roll dough onto a floured board and knead for about 2 minutes. Wash and dry the mixing bowl and grease with olive oil. Put dough into bowl and cover with a damp towel. Put bowl into a warm oven and let dough rise until double in bulk, about 1 hour. Remove dough, divide in half and form into 2 loaves. Put loaves into 2 greased bread pans, cover with damp towel and let rise for about 45 minutes or until doubled. Remove towel and bake at 375 degrees until loaves are golden brown, about 40 minutes. Remove from the pans, cool and serve.

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Most seafood can be prepared in an instant. In fact, it will take you no longer to cook fresh fish than to warm a prepared entree from the sea. The only exception to this

would be if you use a microwave oven. Even then, the time difference is minimal. Shrimp is especially delectable and quick to cook. Don't overcook it, as it will turn out rubbery. Here is my recipe for scampi. It is loaded with garlic!

Shrimp scampi

Serves 4

2 lbs. of medium shrimp 3 tbsp. olive oil
6 cloves garlic, minced 2 tbsp. butter

Peel shrimp and wash thoroughly. Sauté garlic in olive oil and butter in a heavy iron skillet over medium heat for 5 minutes. The garlic should change color but do not burn it. Add shrimp and cook until it turns pink, about 2 minutes. Remove and serve over rice pilaf.

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Menu for Day Nineteen

Shrimp Scampi Onion Bread
Rice Pilaf Tossed Salad
Dry White Wine

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† Day Twenty †

One meal which stands out in my mind from numerous occasions is a roast of pork. A boneless pork roast is quite expensive, but a cheaper roast such as a loin is also good. I don't cook pork that often, but when I do, it becomes a feast. Pork must be cooked thoroughly, and it takes about 35 minutes per pound to cook at 375 degrees. Use a meat thermometer to determine when the roast is done. Insert the thermometer into the fleshiest part of roast and make sure it does not touch the bone. The pork will be done when the thermometer registers 175 degrees.

The good thing about cooking a pork roast is that you can use the oven to cook vegetables such as carrots and potatoes simultaneously. One of the first pork roasts I cooked was when friends visited me in Binghamton. The meal included carrots and potatoes cooked with the roast, as well as salad and wine. I even captured the complete spread on film. It was quite a meal, even while a record snowstorm was burying the city outside.

Roast Loin of Pork

Serves 6

2 tbsp. dried rosemary	6 large carrots, peeled
1 tsp. dried thyme	4 large potatoes, washed and quartered
4 lb. loin of pork	4 medium onions, peeled
1 tsp. garlic powder	freshly ground pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Crush rosemary and thyme in a mortar and pestle and rub the roast with it, along with garlic powder and ground pepper. Insert a meat thermometer into roast without touching the bone and place in the oven. Cook until thermometer registers 175, about 2 ½ hours. While the roast is cooking, cut carrots in half and then cut them in half lengthwise. Add potatoes, carrots and onions to the roast during the last 90 minutes of cooking. Remove roast and vegetables from the oven and let stand a few minutes before carving. The pork drippings can be used to make gravy, if you desire. Serve the pork and vegetables with applesauce.

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Horseradish and applesauce may sound like a strange combination but it is delicious. Over one weekend I fixed it for my friends Thom and Linda, and their sons, Karl and Ben. The latter was not even 6 years old but he loved the combination and remembers it fondly even today. If you can please a youngster, you must have made something good!

Spicy Applesauce

Serves 4

6 large apples	¼ tsp. ground cloves
¼ cup water	¼ tsp. ground cardamom
¼ cup sugar	2 tbsp. horseradish
1 tsp. ground cinnamon	

Peel and core apples. Cut into quarters and cut each quarter into 1/4-inch pieces or smaller. Put apples into a medium pan with the water, sugar, cinnamon, cloves and cardamom and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Put apples into a serving dish and blend in the horseradish. Serve.

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The following bread should go nicely with the roast of pork. For that matter it will probably go well with just about anything. The people I made it for were impressed with its taste.

Cinnamon Raisin Bread

Makes 2 loaves

1½ cups milk	3 tsp. cinnamon
4 tbs. margarine	½ cup raisins
¼ cup sugar	8 cups white flour
2 packages dry yeast	2 eggs
1 cup lukewarm water	olive oil

In a small saucepan on medium heat put milk, margarine and all but 1 teaspoon of the sugar. Stir occasionally and remove from heat when the sugar is dissolved and margarine melted. Pour into a large mixing bowl and let cool. Proof the yeast in water with the remaining sugar. Add cinnamon and raisins to milk mixture and when the mixture is lukewarm, add the yeast mixture. Add 2 cups of flour and stir vigorously. Add eggs and beat them into the dough. Add as much more flour as necessary to make a stiff dough. Roll dough onto a floured board and knead for about 2 minutes. Wash and dry the mixing bowl and grease with olive oil. Put dough into the bowl, cover with a damp towel and place in a warm oven to rise until double in bulk, about 1 hour. Turn dough onto a floured board, cut in half and shape each into a loaf. Put each loaf into a greased bread pan, cover with a damp towel and return to the oven to rise until doubled, about 40 minutes. Bake loaves in a 350-degree oven for about 45 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove and cool on a wire rack. Serve.

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Gravy can be made from the drippings of a pork roast, turkey, chicken or roast of beef. You can use flour or cornstarch to thicken the gravy. If gravy is left over, don't

throw it away. Save it to put over egg noodles or plain rice or into soups, casseroles or stews. It is a good addition to any of these.

Pork Gravy

Serves 4

pork drippings 3 tbsp. cornstarch
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water freshly ground pepper

Skim fat from the top of the drippings. If you put drippings into the refrigerator overnight, the fat will rise to the top and solidify and be easy to separate. Put the drippings and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water into a small pan. Bring to a boil. Mix cornstarch thoroughly in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water and add to drippings in the pan, while stirring. Bring to a second boil, lower heat and simmer until gravy is thickened. Season with ground pepper. Serve.

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The following recipe can be cooked in a wok or in an iron skillet on the stove if you don't have a wok. You can substitute sweet vermouth if you are out of sherry.

Chinese Cabbage

Serves 4

1 lb. of cabbage 2 tbsp. brown sugar
3 tbsp. olive oil $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sherry
2 tbsp. soy sauce 4 tbsp. vinegar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. cornstarch

Cut cabbage into inch squares. Heat oil in the wok over high heat. Add cabbage and cook for 2 minutes. Mix remaining ingredients in a measuring cup and add to the cabbage. Cook for 5 more minutes. Remove and serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty

Roast Loin Of Pork With Gravy

Cinnamon Raisin Bread

Roast Potatoes, Carrots And Onions

Chinese Cabbage

Dry White Wine

Horseradish Applesauce

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† Day Twenty-One †

Over the years, I have run across some unusual barbeque sauce recipes. One has pitted prunes in it and another I made myself at a friend's house. The sauce with the prunes is very good and the sauce I made was improvised. It seems that the ingredients were limited so I used what I could find. Even so, the chicken we used this barbeque sauce on came out quite good. The fire must have magical powers for transforming anyone into a good cook!

You can put just about anything you like into your barbeque sauce and it will be good. You will note that I said "just about anything" not anything you want. You still need to use good judgment. The recipe that I have included here is quite simple. One note of caution: just make as much as you will use because the sauce may spoil in the refrigerator since it has no preservatives.

Barbequed Chicken

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut up barbeque sauce

Start a fire in the grill using charcoal briquettes. When the coals are ready, place chicken pieces on the grill. Cook chicken on each side for 20 minutes. Apply sauce to each side and cook 10 minutes more per side. Serve.

Barbeque Sauce

For 1 chicken

½ cup catsup	3 tbsp. brown mustard
1 tbsp. liquid smoke	1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper	1 tbsp. brown sugar
2 tbsp. olive oil	

Bring all ingredients to a boil in an iron skillet. Lower heat and simmer for ½ hour. Remove and use.

Raisin Rye Bread

Makes 3 loaves

1 bottle dark beer	3 tbsp. caraway seeds
½ cup molasses	½ cup raisins, soaked in olive oil hot water and drained
2 packages dry yeast	2 cups rye flour
½ cup lukewarm water	4 cups white flour
1 tbsp. sugar	

In a small saucepan on medium heat put the beer, molasses and 1/4 cup of the olive oil. Stir occasionally and remove after 5 minutes. Pour into a large mixing bowl and cool. Proof yeast in water with sugar. When beer mixture is lukewarm, add the yeast mixture, caraway seeds and raisins. Add rye flour and stir vigorously. Add as much white flour as necessary to make a stiff dough. Roll the dough onto a floured board and knead for about 2 minutes. Wash and dry the mixing bowl and grease with olive oil. Put dough into the bowl, cover with a damp towel and place in a warm oven to rise until double in bulk, about 1 hour. Turn dough onto a floured board and cut the dough in half. Form 2 round loaves and put on a greased cookie sheet. Cover with a damp towel and put into oven and let rise for about 40 minutes or until double in size. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 45 minutes. Remove to a wire rack and cool. Serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty-One

Barbequed Chicken Raisin Rye Bread
Potato Salad Tossed Salad

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A man was arrested in Washington, D.C. for trying to mail a watermelon using food stamps.

—George Carlin

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IV
NEW ENGLAND:
PARTIES AND DINNER PARTIES

I resided in the Hudson Valley and Westchester area for 7 ½ years. That's why the last chapter was so long. From there, I moved to New England, specifically Derry, New Hampshire. My job was that of a computer consultant, with contracts in nearby Massachusetts. When you think of New England, the first thing that comes to mind is people who talk funny. They say certain words and leave out the letter "r", such as chowda (chowder) and pahk the cahh (park the car.) The reason they do that is because they need that letter for other words that don't have the "r", such as dater (data to us normal folks.)

To say that New England was the first place I had a dinner party would be incorrect. If you consider a dinner party to be any event in which you cook for friends, then my first dinner party was in the first few months after I left home. I have had a dinner party in every place I have lived. As far as parties go, I consider every party that I have thrown to be a dinner party, since each has had plenty of food. The real difference is that one is a sit-down dinner and the other a buffet. Another difference is the number of guests. A party which is not a dinner party is one in which there are plenty of people, drinks, pretzels, potato chips, popcorn and not much else. I've been to those parties and I'm sure you have too.

Clearly, you can see that when I use the term party, I mean dinner party. As it turns out, it won't matter whether there are 2 or 200 guests; only the amount of food cooked will vary. The basic rules remain the same and can be summed up as follows:

Try to plan items that can be prepared ahead of time

Try to plan items that can be frozen

No more than 40% of the menu should consist of new recipes.

Since you would like to have time with your guests, any work that you can do ahead of time will be to your

advantage. For example, you can make meatballs and certain soups weeks ahead of time and freeze. Just don't forget to thaw the item on time. You can also prepare ingredients beforehand. For example, the cabbage in the Chinese cabbage recipe in the last chapter could be chopped and its corresponding sauce could be prepared ahead of time. This would minimize your time in the kitchen since all you have to do is sauté the cabbage, add the sauce and simmer. Many dishes taste better the next day anyway, so why not do the entree the day before. All that is left is to warm the dish. A salad and its dressing can be made ahead of time, so that all you must do is add the dressing and toss. You get the idea. From a psychological point of view, if you use this approach you won't be inundated with work. There is still plenty to do but you have control of everything.

If you are expecting a good crowd of people (you may not even have the foggiest idea of how many), plan some items that can be frozen in case there are plenty of leftovers. It is only common sense. For one New Years Eve party in the Triple Cities, I cooked and cooked, expecting a large number of people. As it turned out, less than 10 people made the scene. Fortunately, I was living with two college students and I froze some of the items, so leftovers weren't a problem. In addition, the advantage to using this method is peace of mind.

Last but not least, do not be afraid to try new recipes on your guests. Just don't try too many new things at one time. My friend Jesse was commenting on my bouillabaisse disaster not long ago. He mentioned that I had so many different items on that occasion that the failure was hardly noticed. There's nothing like a good cover-up. If 60% of your items are ones that you have cooked before, you can't go wrong.

If you follow these three bits of advice, you'll have a good party. All you are really doing is planning in advance.

That is the secret to eliminating worry and concern. Bottoms up!

When I invite a few people for dinner, say six or less, I start with some kind of appetizer and homemade bread and butter. Some of the new butter substitutes are quite good and may be better for you than the real thing, so I use them as well. The appetizer may be some kind of chicken wing recipe, shrimp if I have a little extra money that week, stuffed mushrooms or sausage, which I make from time to time. On occasion, I have had corn chips and store-bought salsa. You can even make your own salsa. There are quite a few good appetizer recipes around which are easy to make.

The next course is soup of some kind, which I probably made the day before. Then comes the main course with salad, some vegetable and rice pilaf, potatoes or noodles. The finishing touch is dessert and coffee. This will be a very nice dinner party for a small number of people.

If you increase the number of people, you have a buffet dinner party. What I do is add an appetizer or two and make another type of bread and another type of soup. If it's relatively warm outside, I may have one cold soup as well as one hot one. I add another main dish or two, plus a few more vegetable dishes, such as baked beans and salads. I really don't make that many desserts, but sometimes people bring them so I am not lacking in that area. As far as running out of food, don't worry about it. If one dish is gone quickly, the others will take up the slack. No one will starve. I have yet to have a party where all the food was consumed. Throughout the final 5 chapters, I have included some menu ideas for parties.

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ƒ Day Twenty-Two ƒ

One of the best parties I gave was an impromptu event between Christmas and New Years Eve. I didn't really plan it; I just asked around if people were interested in a party and enough said yes. I quickly planned some food that would be good, but easy. The result was about 15 people with plenty of good food, drink and music.

Precisely what the full menu was is unclear to me now, but I do remember cooking a roast of beef. Someone even took a picture of me carving the roast. You can do an eye of round, but it is expensive. A simple bottom round is just as good. The most difficult part is carving the beef, but you can even get around that by having someone else do it for you. People feel important if you ask them to carve. Another possibility is to carve some of the roast and leave the knife around for others to do their own hacking. This is not a good idea if you have people from the Bates Motel at your party.

Roast Round of Beef

Serves 6

3 lb. bottom round roast freshly ground pepper

Rub the roast with the ground pepper. Insert a meat thermometer into the roast and place on a wire rack in a baking pan. Heat the oven to 325 degrees and place the pan in the oven. Cook the beef until the roast is done to your liking. Rare will take about 21 minutes per pound, medium rare about 24, medium about 28 and well-done about 33. You can also use the thermometer method: 120° for rare, 130° for medium rare, 140° for medium and 150° for well done. I like beef medium rare, so even if I have a thermometer, I time the meat depending on the weight rather than have the meat reach a certain temperature. You can always cook the roast more if you think it is too pink; if the meat is well done, there's nothing you can do to recover to medium. If you cook the roast medium, the end pieces will be close to well done anyway, so that you can please everyone.

Garlic Cauliflower

Serves 6

1 head cauliflower 3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp. butter ¼ cup bread crumbs

Wash cauliflower, separate into pieces and place into a medium size pan. Add enough water to cover and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. In a small pan melt butter and sauté garlic over medium heat for 2 minutes. Stir in the bread crumbs and cook for 1 minute. Drain cauliflower and put into a serving dish, add the crumb mixture and toss lightly. Serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Two

Roast Round Of Beef Baked Potatoes

Garlic Cauliflower Tossed Salad

Dry Red Wine

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† Day Twenty-Three †

A party without chicken in one form or another is no party. Compared to other meats it is quite cheap and there are so many ways to fix it. In addition, it's hard to mess up chicken. I suppose if you cook it too long or not long enough there will be problems. You can buy it on sale, store it in the freezer and you'll be ready for your next party. You don't have to wait for a party to serve this next dish.

Oriental Chicken Stew

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut up	2 stalks of celery, chopped
2 tbsp. olive oil	2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup soy sauce	¼ cup sweet vermouth
¼ cup sherry	¼ cup water
1 large onion, chopped	2 tbsp. cornstarch
freshly ground pepper	

Soak chicken in water for 10 minutes, drain and pat dry. Brown both sides of chicken pieces in the oil in a large Dutch oven on medium heat. Add remaining ingredients, except for water and cornstarch, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until chicken is tender, about 40 minutes. Remove chicken to a serving dish and bring sauce to a boil. Mix cornstarch with water and stir into the stock. Cook until sauce is thickened. Return chicken to the pot and warm in the sauce. Serve over boiled rice.

In my opinion, the squash with the best flavor is acorn. Because of its shape, about the only thing you can do with acorn squash is to bake it. Fortunately, there are various ways to do so and the effort is minimal. Here is one way.

Baked Acorn Squash

Serves 2

1 acorn squash 2 tbsp. brown sugar
2 tbsp. butter

Cut the squash in half and remove the seeds and pith. Put 1 tablespoon of butter and 1 tablespoon of brown sugar in each cavity and bake in a preheated 400 degree oven for 1 hour or until the squash is tender. Remove from the oven and serve.

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Menu Day Twenty-Three

Oriental Chicken Stew Boiled Rice
Baked Acorn Squash Tossed Salad

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† Day Twenty-Four †

During my stay in New Hampshire, my sister Pat and her husband, Rick, visited from western New York. We took off for some deep-sea fishing and caught 8 fish in all: cod, cusk and haddock. I invited my brother Ken and his wife Laurie to join the three of us in a fish feast. They resided nearby just outside Boston. I cooked some of the fish using the recipe for poached cod from chapter 3, except that I used white wine instead of red. Everyone thought the meal was delicious. Fish doesn't come any fresher.

I froze the remainder of the fish and my sister took it back home for my parents. I did keep one small cod for myself in the freezer. I remember it was too small to fillet. About a month later, I cooked it in a little butter in a frying pan. I'll never forget how delicious it tasted; it was almost as good as fresh!

Poached Haddock

Serves 4

2 tbsp. olive oil 2 tbsp. Dijon mustard
3 tbsp. flour 3 tbsp. lemon juice
2 lbs. haddock ¼ cup dry white wine

In a heavy iron skillet, heat the oil over moderate heat. Put flour into a paper bag and dredge each piece of haddock in flour. Put haddock into the skillet, skin side up and brown each piece. Turn each piece over and cook for 1 more minute. Mix mustard and lemon juice in a small bowl and add wine. Stir to mix. Pour wine mixture onto haddock and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until haddock is done, about 10 minutes. Serve.

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Besides doing your own cooking, you can also make your own salad dressing. A blender makes this process very easy indeed. The following recipe for Russian dressing can

be made with chili sauce, instead of ketchup. Just about every summer my mother makes at least one batch of chili sauce. Not too long ago I used some of her sauce in place of the ketchup. You can't compare chili sauce from the supermarket with the kind my mother makes. I have also used this dressing as a dip for vegetables at a party or two.

Russian Dressing

Makes 1 ½ cups

1 cup mayonnaise ½ cup ketchup
2 tbsp. horseradish 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Put all the ingredients into a blender and mix until completely blended. Refrigerate.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Four

Poached Haddock Rice Pilaf
French Style Beans Tossed Salad With Russian Dressing
Dry White Wine

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‡ Day Twenty-Five ‡

Many people eat meat every day of the week. On the other side of the coin, some people never eat meat. I remember one party when the husband of one of the women I worked with admitted to being a strict vegetarian. To illustrate, he wouldn't even eat Jell-O. I was thankful that I had prepared quite a few different dishes so that there were at least some he could eat. Fortunately, he is an exceptional case.

I fall somewhere in between these two extremes. There are days when I don't eat meat, but I am certainly not a vegetarian. Meat is a very important part of everyone's diet. You need protein. Besides, if you don't eat meat, how can you enjoy a delicious steak or a mouthwatering roast of pork or a pizza with sausage, peppers and onions?

When I first left home, one of my early meals had Spanish rice as the heart of it. Unfortunately, it was from a can and not homemade. Spanish rice is relatively easy to make, costs pennies and you can make it as hot as you like. I recall seeing a cookbook (though I can't remember which one) that said to use 1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper in a recipe, more if you're Spanish. Does that mean that people who are not Spanish can't take the heat or maybe that Spanish people are immune to hot spices?

Spanish Rice

Serves 6

3 slices of bacon	2 cups uncooked rice
1 clove garlic, minced	1 tbsp. paprika
1 large onion, chopped	8 oz. tomato sauce
1 green pepper, chopped	4 cups chicken broth
pinch of cayenne pepper	2 cups uncooked rice
1 tbsp. chili powder	pinch of saffron (optional)

Sauté bacon with garlic in a heavy iron skillet until bacon is crisp. Add onion and green pepper and continue cooking for 2 more minutes. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until all liquid is absorbed, about 25 minutes. Serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Five

Spanish Rice Dilled Carrots
Tossed Salad Italian Bread

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† Day Twenty-Six †

They say the worst kind of food is cafeteria food. There were a few meals in high school that I thought weren't so bad. One in particular was American chop suey or what I call noodles and ground beef. You don't even need beef to make this. You can use ground pork or better yet, ground turkey. The flavor is completely different if you use turkey instead of beef, but delicious nonetheless. The dish is cheap, loaded with carbohydrates and easy to fix. You can use tomato sauce or tomato puree and change the spices to your liking.

Atlantic Chop Suey

Serves 8

1 tbsp. olive oil	pinch of sugar
2 cloves garlic, minced	½ tsp. dried oregano
1½ lbs. ground turkey	freshly ground pepper
1 green pepper, chopped	1 tbsp. paprika
1 large onion, chopped	1 lb. cooked macaroni
28 oz. tomato puree	

In a large Dutch oven heat oil over moderate heat and sauté garlic. Add ground turkey and cook until browned. Add green pepper and onion and cook for 2 minutes. Add tomato puree, sugar, oregano, ground pepper and paprika and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 35 minutes. Cook macaroni according to directions on the package and drain. Pour meat sauce over cooked macaroni, stir thoroughly and serve.

Sweet and Sour Red Cabbage

Serves 6

4 slices of bacon ¼ cup molasses
1 onion, chopped 2 tbsp. brown mustard
2 stalks celery, chopped 8 cups shredded red cabbage
¾ cup cider vinegar

Fry bacon in a heavy iron skillet until crisp. Remove bacon, crumble and set aside. Add onion and celery and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in vinegar, molasses and mustard and bring to a boil. Add cabbage, stir and cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Stir in bacon and serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Six

Atlantic Chop Suey Sweet And Sour Red Cabbage
Tossed Salad Fresh Bread

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ƒ Day Twenty-Seven ƒ

I remember a meal from the high school cafeteria called mock chicken legs. It wasn't chicken and I wasn't that crazy about it. I'm not sure what went into it. Maybe it's better that I don't know! This is true about much of the food we eat, especially at Chinese restaurants. I really don't want to know what goes into some of those dishes.

One dish that reminds me of mock chicken legs is "city chicken." As you might guess, it's not chicken at all, but a delight nonetheless. It is a mix of pork and veal, skewered on wooden sticks, breaded and simmered. My mother has the recipe and my Aunt Esther prepared it on numerous occasions for our family. This is my version of the recipe.

City Chicken

Serves 4

3 lbs. lean pork cubes	½ cup bread crumbs
1 lb. veal stew	freshly ground pepper
wooden skewers	2 tbsp. olive oil
2 eggs	1 onion, finely minced
½ cup water	½ cup dry white wine

Put pork and veal on skewers in ratio of 3 to 1. It should take about 6 pieces of meat per skewer. Scramble eggs in a small bowl, add water and stir to blend. Dip skewered meat in egg mixture and then roll around in the bread crumbs. Season with ground pepper. Heat oil in a heavy iron skillet and brown meat on all sides. Add onion and wine and simmer until meat is tender, about 1 hour. Serve with rice pilaf.

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Jell-O molds are great for parties. You can make them with fruit, vegetables, or a combination of both. You are limited only by your imagination. Besides, they are healthy, easy to make and everyone will love them.

Vegetable Jell-O Mold

Serves 6

1 package lime Jell-O 8 oz. crushed pineapple
¼ head cabbage 2 carrots, grated

Make Jell-O according to package directions and refrigerate. Meanwhile, chop and grate cabbage in a blender. Drain pineapple. When Jell-O is starting to set (about thirty minutes), add the cabbage, pineapple and carrots and stir to blend. Pour mixture into a Jell-O mold or plastic bowl and return to refrigerator. To un-mold the Jell-O, dip the mold in lukewarm water and turn the Jell-O onto a serving plate.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Seven

City Chicken Rice Pilaf
Tossed Salad Vegetable Jell-O Mold

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† Day Twenty-Eight †

Pilafs can be made with regular rice, brown rice or cracked wheat. Brown rice will take about twice as long to cook as regular rice. Bulghur or cracked wheat will take as long to cook as brown rice unless it is pre-cooked, in which case the time will be about the same as regular rice. Bulghur is rich in fiber and can be used in breads as well. If bulghur pilaf is leftover, you'll find that it is good even without reheating. Instead of having a sandwich for lunch, have a serving of leftover cracked wheat pilaf.

Bulghur Pilaf

Serves 4

1 onion, minced	1 bay leaf
¼ green pepper, minced	4 cups chicken broth
2 tbsp. olive oil	1 tsp. dried basil
2 cups bulghur	1 tbsp. parsley
¼ cup chopped walnuts	1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce

Sauté onion and green pepper in oil in a heavy iron skillet over moderate heat. Add bulghur and cook 1 minute more. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer about 30 minutes or until all the broth is absorbed. Serve.

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Another famous Polish dish is Golabki (pronounced gah-wum-key) or stuffed cabbage leaves. I tried to make it on one occasion but ran into some difficulties. Not wanting to throw away the ingredients, I came up with the following dish.

Lazy Golabki

Serves 6

3 cups cabbage, shredded	2 cups cooked rice
1 large onion, minced	28-oz. tomato puree
1 tbsp. olive oil	½ cup water
1 cup sauerkraut	1 tsp. dried thyme
2 lbs. ground turkey	freshly ground pepper
1 tbsp. butter	

Steam cabbage for 10 minutes. Sauté onion in olive oil for 3 minutes in an iron skillet over moderate heat. Add sauerkraut and cook for 5 minutes more, stirring occasionally. Remove to a small bowl. Cook ground turkey in butter in the skillet until completely browned. In a deep baking pan or casserole dish, layer half of the cabbage followed by half of the sauerkraut. Sprinkle meat on top and do the same with the rice. Spread remaining sauerkraut on top followed by the rest of the cabbage. Mix remaining ingredients and pour over the top. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 1 hour. Serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Eight

Bulghur Pilaf Lazy Golabki

Tossed Salad Fresh Bread

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The food at my first party was stuff I knew I could cook and tasted good. The recipe suggestions that follow are simple and also some of my early successes. The vegetable tray can have carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, cucumber and cherry tomatoes. The Russian dressing can be used for the dip.

The Russian dressing, the chowder and the baked beans can be made 2 days ahead. The bulghur pilaf, stewed hamburgers and Jell-O mold can be made the day before a party. Make one bread in the morning and the other in the afternoon along with the potato salad. The rest can be made just before the guests arrive. Once the party begins, turn on the oven and bake the chicken.

Party Number One

Fish Chowder	Tasty Baked Chicken
Stewed Hamburgers	Onion Bread
Russian Brown Bread	Mixed Vegetable Tray With Dip
Hickory Baked Beans	Potato Salad
Vegetable Jell-O Mold	Chinese Cauliflower
Bulghur Pilaf	Fresh Strawberries

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One of the people I taught with in Binghamton became a good friend of mine. Fran taught business and was strict but fair and had a good sense of humor. One of his students named Maria was absent from school one day. As you may have guessed, she was Italian and it was not uncommon 20 years ago for Italian families to share in the chores of winemaking. Everyone had to do his or her part, no matter what age. Fran asked Maria where she had been the day before and her reply was that she had to stay home to help with making wine. To this Fran responded: "OK, let me see your feet!"

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V

UPSTATE NEW YORK:
GROW IT AND KEEP IT

My stay in New England was almost 3 years. In November 1983, I moved to Liverpool, New York and shortly thereafter, I bought a house in Plainville, the home of the turkey farm by the same name and not far from Syracuse. It was there that I grew corn for the first time. I had grown a few vegetables in the back yard of my first house, but that was a small area, with little sun. My new garden was to be 4 times as large with a greater variety of vegetables.

Some say that gardens are a lot of work and that may be true. However, the rewards are great. To begin with, gardening is very good for the mind as well as the body; it doesn't matter if your garden has vegetables or flowers in it. Over and above that, the resulting harvest of fruits and vegetables will be healthy (unless you load up on pesticides.) In addition to being healthy, the taste of your own produce will be unbelievable...you can't beat it!

You can have a garden no matter where you live. In some areas you just won't be able to grow oranges, but don't feel bad. The places that grow the citrus can't grow other crops as well as you can grow in your area. Be resigned to growing what you can. There are an almost unlimited amount of things that you can harvest. Corn is not that hard to grow, but you need room and a great deal of sun. Tomatoes grow like weeds and there's nothing like a fresh tomato from the garden. Beans, cucumbers, peas, onions, lettuce and cabbage don't require that much effort. Beets, carrots and turnips are root vegetables that like sandy soil, but they are not that tough to grow.

My dad gave me some asparagus roots and plenty of seeds which I promptly planted in the fall of the first year. The roots give you asparagus the very next year, whereas it will take about 3 years to get asparagus from seeds.

However, once the crop starts to come in, it keeps on coming year after year. Twenty years is not unusual for one bed. As the asparagus shoots out of the ground in the spring,

all you have to do is cut it, cook it and enjoy. You can harvest it every other day or so.

You can grow tomatoes from your own seeds if you start them indoors in March or April. You can also buy plants at the nursery since they are not that expensive. There you can buy three or more varieties of plants, such as beefsteak, cherry and plum. Beefsteak tomatoes take longer to grow but they store well; this means that you can have tomatoes long after the frost hits. There are quite a few varieties of cherry tomatoes, some very flavorful. Plum tomatoes are good for making spaghetti sauce since they are not very juicy. There are other kinds as well that are great tasting, too numerous to mention here. Just check a seed catalog and you can see the long list of varieties that are on the market today.

I have even grown okra, that necessary ingredient in Creole cooking, especially gumbos. I wound up with a good harvest not long ago whereas my first try in Plainville wasn't so plentiful. They do need a very hot climate in which to grow, hence the limited harvest. I also attempted to grow green peppers but with no luck for the same reason as the okra. What you can do is try vegetables and eliminate those that are not successful. That's what I did.

You can even grow herbs and spices. Chives, oregano and parsley are simple to grow and so are dill and mint. For other spices you will have to experiment on your own. At first, I never grew too many herbs, but with each season I try different ones. Spices in the store are not that cheap, so it is a good idea to grow your own, if you can. They don't take up much space.

If you have a good-sized garden, you'll probably want to buy a freezer to keep what you can't eat right away.

Besides freezing stews and sauces, you can freeze vegetables right out of the garden. I had an abundant crop of tomatoes for a few years, so what I couldn't eat or give away,

I froze. You can wash the tomatoes and put them in plastic bags into the freezer. When you're ready to use the tomatoes, thaw and the skins will come off quite easily (or so I've been told). I usually peel the tomatoes first and then freeze; this saves me the trouble of peeling them later. I also recommend not doing this with plum or cherry tomatoes. Since they are so small, you'll have a lot of work peeling them. The frozen tomatoes can be thawed and used in any recipe that calls for canned tomatoes, such as sauce, cacciatore, or jambalaya.

You can freeze just about any vegetable and fruit you like, even some herbs. Of course, some do better than others. Other vegetables store well so there is no need to freeze. This applies to bulbs, such as onions and garlic, roots such as potatoes, beets, carrots and turnips and squashes with hard shells, such as acorn and Hubbard.

To get started on your garden, you need to turn over the soil. I moved to Plainville in June so I had a tiny garden that first year. I turned over the soil by hand, or foot to be more precise. I used a long-handled shovel and though it took time, it was great exercise and it wasn't that bad. The year after that I decided on a much bigger enterprise and tried to find someone to plow the land. My neighbor Bob said he would do it. He did a nice job, but when I tried to pay him, he refused my offering and said a beer would do as payment. Now this was a good neighbor!

If you don't want to spade your garden by hand, you can find someone to plow your land. You could also buy or rent a Roto-tiller. That is probably the best way to do it. A hand cultivator can come in quite handy, not only for keeping the weeds down but also for loosening the soil in the early spring (once it has been plowed the year before). I spent a good deal of money for a hand cultivator that turned out to be a piece of junk. It just didn't work. My dad bought one many years ago and he still has it today and it works! That's the type to get. Unfortunately, they probably don't make that kind anymore.

As far as keeping the weeds down, there are different things you can do. My land in Plainville was surrounded by swamp on 3 sides and it seems the weeds kept seeding themselves in my garden. This can be a problem but keep it in perspective. After a time the crops will be so big that the weeds won't be a factor. You can use plastic to keep the weeds down as well as keep moisture in. Besides this, there are many methods used and being thought up to make your work in the garden easier. If you are creative, you will even come up with some.

You may have to worry about animals such as deer and raccoons. I had rabbits and raccoons but a fence took care of most of these little creatures. I even used the fence for cucumber vines to crawl onto, thus freeing up more space in the garden for other vegetables. It is amazing how one apparent problem turns into an advantage in another area. Above all, use manure and avoid poisons. After all, you are the one who will be eating the food. It's not like Uncle Ralph will be the only one to eat the stuff!

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† Day Twenty-Nine †

You may wonder if I ever poisoned anyone or if anyone got sick from my cooking. The answer is no...well, let me say that on one occasion something that ate my cooking died a short while after. It seems that if you live in the country, your home will either have a cat or there will be field mice in your house. I had one or two of the latter! In fact, I made some bread and this mouse (maybe it was a rat or Uncle Ernie) nibbled away at the bread. I didn't see the mouse at first, just the effect of his nibbling. I set a mousetrap with a little bait and before long I got him. Therefore, you could say that some creature partook of my cooking and eventually died.

Hong Kong Chicken

Serves 4

2 tbsp. olive oil	¼ cup Sherry
2 stalks celery, sliced	¼ cup soy sauce
1 large onion, sliced	1 tbsp. freshly grated ginger
1 green pepper, sliced	2 tbsp. brown sugar
1 can drained bamboo shoots	2 tbsp. cornstarch
2 cups cooked chicken	8 oz. tomato sauce

Heat the oil in a wok over high heat. Add celery, onion and green pepper and cook for 2 minutes. Add bamboo shoots and chicken and cook for 1 minute. Mix remaining ingredients in a small bowl and place in wok. Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Serve over boiled rice.

Stuffed Mushrooms

Serves 6

3 slices of bacon	¼ cup walnuts, chopped
24 medium mushrooms	¼ cup sweet vermouth
1 small onion, minced	¼ tsp. marjoram
¼ cup bread crumbs	freshly ground pepper

Sauté bacon in a large iron skillet over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon to a paper towel to drain. Cut the stems off the mushrooms, chop finely and add with onion to the skillet. Cook until onion is transparent. Crumble bacon and add to the skillet along with bread crumbs, walnuts, vermouth, marjoram and pepper. Mix thoroughly and cook for 1 minute. Set mixture aside. Place mushroom caps open side down onto a cookie sheet and put under a warm broiler for 2 minutes. Turn mushrooms over and put back under broiler for 2 more minutes. Remove cookie sheet from the oven and stuff each mushroom with stuffing mixture. Place under broiler for 3 more minutes. Remove and serve.

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Menu for Day Twenty-Nine

Stuffed Mushrooms	Hong Kong Chicken
Tossed Salad	Boiled Rice
Basil Tomatoes	

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f Day Thirty f

One of the great things about the seasons of the year is that each brings certain fruits and vegetables to eat. Late spring means fresh Bing cherries while August means fresh corn on the cob and homegrown tomatoes. I remember eating one tomato after another from the garden when I was a teenager. The taste was wonderful and my parents didn't mind; it would cost less to feed me that day! Who needs candy or ice cream anyway? I still feel the same way about fresh tomatoes today.

When tomatoes, corn or any other vegetable is fresh from the garden, it needs no adornment. It is good just the way it is. If you pick corn yourself and cook it right away (now that is really fresh), it doesn't need butter or salt; it's perfection just as is, if it is cooked right. This is true of so many fruits and vegetables. Did you ever eat sweet peas out of the pod fresh from the garden? There is nothing like it!

If you have a few fresh juicy tomatoes and the summer heat is wearing you down, why make a hot meal when you can fix this spaghetti dish and the only thing you have to cook is the macaroni. Who said spaghetti sauce had to be hot to be good?

Summer Spaghetti

Serves 4

6 large tomatoes	3 tbsp. dried basil
4 tbsp. olive oil	freshly ground pepper
½ cup green olives, chopped	1 lb. thin spaghetti
4 cloves garlic, minced	

Quarter each tomato and slice as thinly as possible. Put into a glass bowl and add remaining ingredients, except for spaghetti. Toss well and store in a cool place for 24 hours. Avoid the refrigerator as the tomatoes will lose flavor there. Cook spaghetti according to package directions. Drain and put into a large bowl. Pour tomato sauce over spaghetti and toss. Serve.

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You can cook corn inside on the stove with fine results, if the corn is fresh. But you can also roast the corn on a fire in its own husk. That's the way we did it as kids and it tasted so good. The corn has to soak but the cooking process actually involves steaming the corn. A wood fire is best and it takes a big fire. Pick the corn and soak it in a bucket of water for half an hour or so.

Once the fire is hot, remove the silk from the corn and place the ears (without shucking) on the fire. You will have to turn it every so often. The outer layer will be getting brown and before long the corn will be ready to eat. Just make sure you don't burn it.

Corn on the Cob

Serves 6

water 12 ears of corn

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Shuck the corn and once water is boiling, place corn into the pot and return to a boil. Lower the heat and cook for 3 more minutes. Remove corn and serve.

Cole Slaw

Serves 6

1 small onion, thinly sliced ½ cup olive oil
6 cups cabbage, shredded 2 tbsp. caraway seeds
2 carrots, grated 1 tbsp. mustard seeds
3 tbsp. red wine vinegar

Put onion, cabbage, carrots, and vinegar into a large bowl and toss well. Meanwhile heat olive oil in a small saucepan over moderate heat until oil is almost smoking. Add caraway seeds and mustard seeds and cook until mustard seeds are finished popping, about 2 minutes. Pour mustard mixture over cabbage and stir well. Refrigerate overnight. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty

Corn On The Cob	Summer Spaghetti
Tossed Salad	Cole Slaw
Onion Bread	

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† Day Thirty-One †

The last garden I had in Plainville was quite prolific. I bought some inexpensive seeds from the department store when they were on sale. Just because something is cheap doesn't mean it isn't good. I got green beans, carrots, beets and a few packets of cucumbers among others. I planted all the cucumbers and they really produced. I had more pickles than Heinz! There was a time when I was picking two 8-quart baskets every third day. They were quite good, but what do you do with all those cucumbers? I ate as much as I could, made some gazpacho, gave some to my family, froze some and made a few crocks of dills. My neighbor was the beneficiary of this abundance of cucumbers. That's what he gets for plowing my garden!

Polish Dill Pickles

6 sprigs of dill	1 bay leaf
2 dozen cucumbers, washed	¼ cup sea salt
12 cloves garlic, chopped	2 cups cider vinegar
10 peppercorns	boiling water
4 whole cloves	

Place dill, cucumbers, garlic, peppercorns, cloves, bay leaf and sea salt into a crock or large jar. Pour vinegar over the mixture. Fill jar to the top with boiling water and set aside. The pickles should be ready in 1 or 2 weeks. Once they are ready, remove pickles and put in a container in the refrigerator.

Beef and Onions

Serves 4

2 lbs. London broil	water
¼ cup soy sauce	¼ cup dry sherry
2 tbsp. olive oil	3 tbsp. cornstarch
2 large onions, sliced thin	egg noodles

Slice London broil into thin slivers and sprinkle 3 tablespoons of soy sauce on the meat. Marinate for 15 minutes. Heat oil in a wok over high heat and add the beef. Cook for 3 minutes. Add onions and cook 3 minutes more. Add the rest of the soy sauce, ½ cup of water and sherry and cook for 5 minutes. Mix cornstarch in ¼ cup of water and place in wok, while stirring. Cook until sauce thickens. Serve over boiled egg noodles.

Steamed Green Beans

Serves 4

1 lb. green beans 1 tbsp. butter or margarine

Snap ends off the beans and wash. Place beans in a vegetable steamer and cook until they are tender, about 10 minutes. Place beans in a serving dish and add butter or margarine. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-One

Beef And Onions	Egg Noodles
Polish Dill Pickles	Steamed Green Beans
Corn On The Cob	Basil Tomatoes

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† Day Thirty-Two †

You can make creamy mustard dressing for salads by mixing mustard, mayonnaise and olive oil in a blender. I also throw in 1 or 2 tablespoons of my mother's chili sauce for some added flavor. You can try different spices and seasonings in your recipe.

Creamy Mustard Dressing

Makes 1 cup

3 tbsp. Dijon mustard ½ cup mayonnaise
¼ cup olive oil

Put ingredients into a blender and mix until smooth, about 30 seconds. Refrigerate.

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This next recipe combines the flavor of Polish sausage with the sauerkraut, wine and mustard of German cooking.

Viennese Rice

Serves 4

1 small onion, minced ½ cup dry white wine
2 tbsp. olive oil 3 cups water
2 cups long grain rice ¼ lb. smoked Polish sausage, sliced
½ cup sauerkraut 3 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tbsp. caraway seeds freshly ground pepper

Sauté onion in oil in a large iron skillet over medium heat. Add rice and cook for 1 minute. Add sauerkraut and cook for 2 minutes. Add caraway, wine, water, sausage and mustard and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until rice is cooked and water is absorbed, about 25 minutes. Add more water if necessary. Season with pepper and serve.

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Menu Day Thirty-Two

Viennese Rice Tossed Salad With Mustard Dressing
Cooked Broccoli Fresh Bread

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‡ Day Thirty-Three ‡

I mentioned that you can freeze cucumbers, particularly those referred to as "bread and butter" pickles. You can even use glass jars for freezing; just make sure that you don't fill the jar all the way to the top. Plastic containers are fine too.

Bread And Butter Pickles

2 quarts of cucumbers	½ cup vinegar
1 onion, thinly sliced	¼ tsp. turmeric
1 tbsp. sea salt	1 tbsp. mustard seeds
1 cup sugar	

Slice the cucumbers very thin, 1/8 of an inch or less. Combine with the onion and salt and let stand overnight. The next day rinse the mixture and drain in a colander. Put remaining ingredients into a Dutch oven and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and continue stirring until sugar is completely dissolved. Add cucumber mixture to the Dutch oven and stir to blend. Let stand for 15 minutes. Put cucumbers into containers and freeze. The pickles can be thawed and eaten whenever you desire.

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When I was young, I didn't care for mushrooms at all. Over the years, I have gotten to like them. I still am not a big fan of raw mushrooms in salads or on vegetable trays. This next recipe shows off that famous fungus in fine fashion.

Chicken with Mushrooms

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut up	1 cup dry white wine
5 tbsp. of flour	½ tsp. dried thyme
2 tbsp. olive oil	1 cup chicken broth
2 cloves garlic, minced	½ lb. mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, chopped	freshly ground pepper
¼ tsp. dried tarragon	

Dredge the chicken in flour. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven and brown the chicken a few pieces at a time. Add garlic and onion and cook for 2 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until chicken is tender, about 40 minutes. Serve over rice.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Three

Chicken With Mushrooms	Rice Pilaf
Basil Tomatoes	Corn On The Cob
Cooked Beets	Bread And Butter Pickles

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† Day Thirty-Four †

I mentioned in chapter 1 that you can use ground turkey in place of ground beef in the recipe for chili. You could also use ground pork, or a combination of pork, beef and turkey. If you leave out the ground meat, you will have meatless chili and will hardly miss the meat.

Three Bean Salad

1 can cut wax beans	½ cup sugar
1 can cut green beans	⅔ cup vinegar
1 can red kidney beans	½ cup olive oil
1 onion, thinly sliced	freshly ground pepper
1 green pepper, thinly sliced	

Drain the wax and green beans and put into a large glass bowl. Thoroughly wash the juice off the kidney beans and drain. Add kidney beans, onion and green pepper to the wax and green beans. In a small bowl, mix sugar and vinegar until sugar is dissolved. Add oil and stir in thoroughly. Add liquid and ground pepper to the beans and stir. Marinate for 24 hours. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Four

Meatless Chili	Cuban Bread
Tossed Salad	Three Bean Salad
Beer	Boiled Rice

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† Day Thirty-Five †

There are many types of fish that fall into different classes of taste and texture. Haddock and cod are similar in composition and similar in taste. So are mussels and clams. Some fish are unique, such as tuna and salmon. Another fish in the same category as salmon and tuna is smelt. Despite the horrible sounding name (you could imply the same about scrod), smelts are delicious and easy to fix.

I recall a spring night when I was on the shore of Lake Erie with friends and the smelts were in season. The fish came out of the lake, onto the fire, and from there, into our mouths and stomachs. Add a beer or two and a little sauce, and it was quite a treat. I have bought frozen smelts and cooked them under the broiler and although you know they couldn't be quite as good as fresh out of the lake, they weren't bad. The bones are tiny so you can eat them or else the fish comes off the bones easily enough. Cooking time under the broiler is short indeed. Don't be turned off by the name "smelts."

Broiled Smelts

Serves 2

1 lb. smelts freshly ground pepper
1 tbsp. butter, melted

Turn the oven broiler on. Place smelts in a shallow pan and brush with melted butter. Season with fresh ground pepper. Place the pan under the broiler until smelts are done, about 5 minutes. Make sure that they don't burn. Remove from the oven and serve.

German Potato Salad

Serves 6

3 lbs. potatoes 1 cup cider vinegar
¼ lb. bacon, sliced sea salt to taste
2 large onions, chopped freshly ground pepper

Wash potatoes and cut into quarters. Place them into a large Dutch oven, cover with water and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and cook until potatoes are 80% cooked, about 10 minutes or so. Drain potatoes and cool. Fry bacon and onions in a large iron skillet until onions are slightly soft and brown. Add vinegar to the skillet and simmer for 5 minutes. When the potatoes have cooled down, slice them. In an ovenproof dish layer the potatoes, season with salt and pepper and put a layer of bacon and onion on top. Continue the layering process until the potatoes and onion/bacon mixture are gone. Cover with aluminum foil and bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour. Remove foil and bake 15 minutes longer. Remove from oven and serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Five

Broiled Smelts German Potato Salad
Basil Tomatoes Corn On The Cob
Raisin Rye Bread

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A few years ago I had my annual corn roast in Plainville. Early in the morning on the day before the roast, I went out to check on the corn. From all indications, it seemed that it would be perfect and there would be plenty for everyone.

The next morning I went out to the garden and noticed many corn stalks sprawled out on the ground. The raccoons knew when the corn was to be ready and they had a feast. The year before I didn't have a problem because the farmer

had planted corn behind my property and the raccoons had plenty and didn't have to attack my corn. This year he didn't plant corn as he let the land rest. I figure the raccoons were on the land before me so there wasn't too much I could do about it. Fortunately, I was able to pick enough corn for everyone to get a taste.

Now that we have some more new recipes and all those vegetables from the garden, we're ready for our second party: a corn roast!

Party Number Two

(Corn roast)

Gazpacho	Stuffed Mushrooms
Corn On The Cob	Grilled Italian Sausage
Hot Dogs And Hamburgers	Raisin Rye Bread
Basil Tomatoes	Three-Bean Salad
German Potato Salad	Summer Spaghetti
Tossed Salad	Hong Kong Chicken
Cajun Beans And Rice	Bread And Butter Pickles
Polish Dill Pickles	

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During the last week of Lent, one of the songs that they use in the church is the Latin "Pange Lingua," which literally means, "Sing my tongue." During one such time, I attended the Holy Thursday celebration in New Canaan, Connecticut.

Just before the procession, the lector said, "our song will be found on page 343. It is 'Pange Linguini!'" I thought to myself that that wasn't right. Then I realized it was. After all, it was the "Last Supper!"

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VI
THE GULF COAST:
BRUNCH TIME

I left upstate New York and traveled to sunny Tampa, Florida. I didn't spend a great length of time there and missed out on the grueling summer heat. This was not my first time to the Sunshine state. My first time was a trip during Easter vacation of my first year of teaching. Two of my friends and I drove down to Tampa / St. Petersburg and stayed with one of their relatives. We eventually made our way to Pompano Beach and camped out for a few days. Since then I have been in the state on numerous vacation trips.

What better place to have brunch than in sunny Florida? If you miss breakfast and it's close to lunchtime, why not brunch? Of course, you shouldn't miss breakfast, as it is the most important meal of the day. Nothing compares to steak and eggs, even though it may not be good for you. You can have it on occasion and the same can be said for eggs served by themselves or with bacon, sausage or ham. Moderation is the key to good health and happiness.

There is nothing wrong with cereal, toast and juice for your morning meal. I use low-fat milk on my cereal and avoid cereals with sugar and high-sodium content. Shredded wheat and puffed wheat are virtually salt-free, sodium-free and good for you. You can add fruit such as bananas or fresh strawberries for excitement. As far as toast, I prefer a rye or wheat bread with orange marmalade or some type of jam. Butter or margarine as an occasional indulgence is fine.

Another good option is fresh grapefruit, and juice is loaded with plenty of vitamins, no matter what your preference. I enjoy a cup of fresh brewed coffee every so often with neither sugar nor cream. You can add a half-teaspoon of cinnamon to the coffee as it is brewing for a pleasant change of pace. There are quite a few choices of exotic blends of coffee at your local supermarket, such as raspberry chocolate or amaretto decaf.

There is no reason why you have to limit your breakfast to the usual fare of the morning. I know many people who love cold pizza for breakfast or leftover Chinese courses. If you really consider it, the largest meal of the day should be breakfast, with lunch a bit less and dinner the lightest meal of the day. And yet, we all know people who have their largest meal of the day at 9 in the evening!

Brunch makes a lot of sense. The kind that doesn't emphasize bacon, sausage, ham and eggs is best. In other words, a buffet is the way to go, with the less fat and cholesterol, the better. When I was younger, my mother always prepared the largest meal of the day on Sunday at one in the afternoon. She still does and we should all do the same not only on the Sabbath but also on the other days of the week.

Speaking of days past, I recall summers as a teenager working on a farm not far from my parents' home. My lunch was prepared by my mother and it was huge. As far as I can recall it consisted of 2 sandwiches, some cookies and / or cake, a can of pop (soda if you're from New York City or close by), a banana, orange, tomato, pear and a candy bar. That was a heck of a lunch. I always finished it, though.

Currently I fix my own lunch and it consists mainly of fruit and vegetables, with an occasional cookie, dried fruit or sandwich. Occasionally, I may even use the microwave at work to heat a leftover soup or casserole. My lunch can be quite large at times but never unhealthy. Of course, I do go out to lunch every so often.

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† Day Thirty-Six †

Chicken dishes are great for parties because you can make them a day ahead and just warm up when needed. The day in the refrigerator may even help blend the flavors better. You can even freeze them far in advance, once they're cooked. This chicken dish features a rum and soy sauce marinade. You can simmer it on top of the stove if you prefer, rather than baking in the oven.

Rum Chicken

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut up	4 tbsp. flour
2 tbsp. lime juice	3 tbsp. olive oil
1/3 cup soy sauce	3 large onions, chopped
1/2 cup rum	1/4 tsp. dried tarragon

Marinate chicken pieces in lime juice, soy sauce and rum overnight. Remove chicken from marinade and reserve marinade. Place flour into a plastic bag and dredge chicken with the flour. Heat olive oil in a heavy iron skillet and brown the chicken, a few pieces at a time. Remove the browned pieces to a large ovenproof casserole dish. Add chopped onions, tarragon and marinade, cover and bake in a 350 degree oven for 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Serve over egg noodles or boiled rice.

Boiled Brussels Sprouts

Serves 4

1 pint Brussels sprouts	2 tbsp. butter
1 cup water	freshly ground pepper

Clean the sprouts and place in a small saucepan with the water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and cook until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain Brussels sprouts; add the butter and season with freshly ground pepper. Serve.

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I have made the following dressing on numerous occasions and it seems that it tastes slightly different each time. This has to do with the sesame seeds, which can be toasted lightly or used as is. Keep an eye on the sesame seeds as you brown them, since they tend to burn rather easily. Burnt sesame dressing won't be a hit with too many people. I have also used this dressing as a dip for raw vegetables.

Sesame Dressing

Makes 2 cups

1 cup olive oil	freshly grated ginger
½ tsp. sugar	½ stalk of celery
2 tbsp. chopped onion	¼ cup toasted sesame seeds
¼ tsp. celery seeds	¼ cup soy sauce
freshly ground pepper	⅓ cup white vinegar

Place all ingredients except soy sauce and vinegar into a blender and blend for 30 seconds. Add soy sauce and vinegar and blend for 30 seconds more. Store in the refrigerator.

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A frequent diet of bacon is not recommended but bacon does add a zest to many foods, even a small amount. As I mentioned earlier, store bacon in the freezer for easier slicing. You'll also forget about it and eat less of it as well.

Horseradish Mushrooms

Serves 4

3 slices bacon	snipped fresh chives
1 tbsp. butter	2 tbsp. horseradish
2 tbsp. olive oil	pinch of cayenne pepper
1 lb. mushrooms	

If the bacon is frozen, slice off the equivalent of 3 slices of bacon into ¼-inch pieces or smaller. Sauté bacon in a large iron skillet until crisp. Crumble the bacon if necessary and set aside. Pour bacon fat off the skillet, melt butter, and add olive oil. Cut mushrooms in half and sauté until they are tender, about 5 minutes. Remove mushrooms to a small dish. Add chives, horseradish and cayenne pepper to the skillet and simmer for 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Add mushrooms and bacon and simmer for 1 minute more to blend in the flavors. Remove and serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Six

Horseradish Mushrooms	Rum Chicken
Egg Noodles	Tossed Salad With Sesame
Boiled Brussels Sprouts	Dressing

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‡ Day Thirty-Seven ‡

Meat adds so much flavor to spaghetti sauce, whether it be pork, beef or chicken. However, fresh spices and vegetables can create a heavenly sauce too, as exemplified by the summer spaghetti in the last chapter. This sauce wasn't even cooked either. One meatless sauce I shall never forget was one I enjoyed in Wales on a summer vacation in Europe. I couldn't even tell you all the ingredients, but I am sure that they included fresh herbs with fresh tomatoes. This sauce was cooked and it seemed to get better with each mouthful.

I doubt that I'll ever duplicate that recipe but here is a recipe that I hope will suffice.

Meatless Spaghetti

Serves 4

½ cup olive oil	handful fresh basil leaves
4 cloves garlic, minced	½ tsp. sugar
5 large tomatoes, peeled and chopped	pinch dried red pepper
	1 lb. thin spaghetti

Add olive oil to a heavy iron skillet on moderate heat. Add garlic and cook until golden brown. Add tomatoes, 1 at a time. Add basil, sugar and red pepper and cook about 15 more minutes. Meanwhile cook the spaghetti "al dente", about 8 minutes. Drain the spaghetti and add to the skillet. Mix the sauce and spaghetti while still simmering for about 1 minute more. Serve.

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Chicken wings make a great appetizer and taste good cold as leftovers. Buffalo wings originated in the Anchor Bar in downtown Buffalo a few years ago and can now be found all the way across the nation. I have never made Buffalo wings but have eaten my share of them. This recipe has gotten raves from those who have tried it.

Chinese Chicken Wings

Serves 6

4 tbsp. brown sugar	¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tbsp. sesame oil	½ cup Sherry or sweet vermouth
⅓ cup soy sauce	dash of hot oil
freshly grated ginger	24 chicken wings
2 cloves garlic, minced	

Mix all ingredients together except for the wings. Place wings in a large glass bowl and add marinade. Let wings marinate overnight, if not longer. The longer they marinate, the better the flavor. Bake wings in a 400-degree oven until tender, about 35 minutes. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Seven

Chinese Chicken Wings	Meatless Spaghetti
Cuban Bread	Tossed Salad

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‡ Day Thirty-Eight ‡

Shrimp makes an excellent appetizer. Its only drawback is the cost. However, if you splurge, you'll find that it's worth it. Marinated shrimp should be done a day ahead of time so that the flavors blend in. That means less preparation on the day of your dinner. This recipe is simple but you'll have to cook it just before you serve it. Just one word of caution: don't overcook shrimp, unless you like chewing and chewing and chewing!

Dilled Shrimp

Serves 4

2 tbsp. olive oil	2 tbsp. lemon juice
3 tbsp. butter	¼ tsp. Tabasco sauce
snipped fresh dill	freshly ground pepper
1 lb. shelled large shrimp	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

In a large iron skillet, heat olive oil, butter, and dill over moderate heat. Add shrimp and cook until it is pink, about 2 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 1 minute more. Remove from skillet and serve.

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Picadillo can be served in tacos or over rice. You can make it with beef or pork, but the following recipe calls for ground turkey. You can make it with any of these meats or with a mix if you like.

Picadillo

Serves 4

3 tbsp. olive oil	1 tsp. dried oregano
1 large onion, chopped	1 tbsp. Tabasco sauce
2 cloves garlic, minced	1 bay leaf
1 green pepper, chopped	1 cup sweet vermouth
¼ cup sliced almonds	1 cup water
1 lb. ground turkey	2 tbsp. ground cumin
6 oz. tomato paste	½ cup green olives, chopped
1½ tbsp. vinegar	freshly ground pepper

In a heavy iron skillet, heat oil over moderate heat. Add onion and simmer until softened. Add garlic, green pepper, and almonds and cook for about 5 minutes. Add ground meat and cook until browned, about 6 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer for 45 minutes. Serve over boiled rice.

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The following recipe can use peaches in place of the nectarines, without losing flavor.

Oriental nectarine slaw

Serves 6

½ cup mayonnaise	2 cups cooked turkey, chopped
1 tbsp. soy sauce	1 small onion, minced
2 tbsp. white vinegar	freshly ground ginger
4 nectarines, diced	2 cups cabbage, shredded
1 stalk celery, minced	freshly ground pepper

In a small bowl, mix the mayonnaise, soy sauce and vinegar until they are well blended. Mix remaining ingredients in a large bowl and add the mayonnaise mixture. Blend well and refrigerate overnight. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Eight

Dilled Shrimp	Picadillo
Boiled Rice	Steamed Vegetables
Oriental Nectarine Slaw	

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‡ Day Thirty-Nine ‡

Another favorite food in western New York is beef on wick, also known as roast beef on kimmelweck. The roast beef is covered with gravy and served on a roll called kimmelweck, which is nothing more than a hard roll covered in salt. We can get rid of the sodium by using a hard roll sans salt. If you have beef left over from your roast of beef, slice it and warm up some of the beef gravy. If there is no gravy, you can always have beef without it or warm some French onion soup for dipping the rolls. Believe it or not, onion soup is quite easy to make and certainly worth the effort. The hardest part is slicing the onions.

French Onion Soup

Serves 8

2 tbsp. butter	1 cup dry white wine
1 tbsp. olive oil	1 small bay leaf
5 onions, very thinly sliced	freshly ground pepper
3 beef bouillon cubes	½ cup brandy
3 quarts of water	bread croutons
1 tsp. sugar	sliced Swiss cheese
3 tbsp. flour	

Put butter and olive oil into a heavy iron skillet on low heat. When butter is melted, add onions, cover, and cook for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, put bouillon and water into a large pot and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to simmer. When a half hour has elapsed for the onions, raise the heat to moderate and add sugar. The sugar helps the onions to brown. Stir occasionally and continue cooking until onions are golden brown. Add flour and cook for 3 minutes, stirring as necessary. Add onions to the simmering stock along with the wine, bay leaf and pepper and simmer over low heat for 1 hour. Add brandy and heat through. Remove from the stove and refrigerate. Make the bread croutons by slicing Italian or French bread 3/4 inch thick. Put them on a cookie sheet in a 325-degree oven and bake until they are golden brown. Check occasionally to keep them from burning and remove them from the oven when done. To serve the onion soup, heat up and pour the soup into separate bowls over 1 crouton each. If cheese is desired, use ovenproof bowls and place a slice of cheese on top of each crouton and place under the oven broiler until the cheese is melted, about 5 minutes.

Russian Potato Salad

Serves 6

5 large potatoes 6 radishes, sliced
3 dill pickles, sliced 1 cup Russian dressing

Wash the potatoes and quarter each. Place in a large pot and add water to cover. Cook until potatoes are soft, about twenty minutes. Drain and cool. When cool, cube potatoes and put into a large bowl, add remaining ingredients and stir. Refrigerate overnight. Serve.

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Menu for Day Thirty-Nine

Roast Beef On Hard Roll French Onion Soup
Russian Potato Salad Hickory Baked Beans
Polish Dill Pickles

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ƒ Day Forty ƒ

As far as curry goes, you either like it or you hate it. One of the most flavorful and delicious meals I have ever had from an Indian restaurant was take-out. It was during a vacation in England a few years ago. A former classmate of mine living there ordered us a variety of Indian dishes and I will never forget the different flavors of curry present. I'm sure the English are thankful for the Italian, Indian and Hungarian restaurants in their country, as most English food is rather bland.

I once made a dish of beef curry which I wasn't thrilled with, even though my guests liked it. I probably won't ever make beef curry again. I will make chicken curry though. I think you'll like this recipe too.

Chicken Curry

Serves 4

rind of ½ lemon	½ tsp. ground cumin
3 tbsp. olive oil	freshly ground pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced	¼ tsp. ground cardamom
2 large onions, chopped	freshly ground ginger
½ tbsp. ground turmeric	1 chicken, cut up
¼ tsp. nutmeg	1 large tomato, peeled and chopped
1 tbsp. ground coriander	½ head cauliflower, separated into flowerets

Put lemon rind, oil, garlic, and onions into a blender and puree into a paste. In a large Dutch oven cook paste over moderate heat for 4 minutes, add remaining spices, and cook for 1 minute. Put chicken into the pot and coat each piece well with the mix. Cook for 30 minutes over low heat. Stir in tomato and cauliflower and simmer for 20 minutes more. Serve over boiled rice.

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Meatballs make a good appetizer, can be made ahead of time and can even be frozen. You can warm them in a crock-pot if you have one and thus eliminate worries about what pot to use for reheating. The recipe for meatballs from an earlier chapter can be modified as an appetizer by just making the meatballs tinier. The same sauce can be used or you may want to try a variation. The following recipe pleased many palates at my place recently.

Sweet and Sour Meatballs

Serves 6

1 lb. lean ground beef	1 small onion, finely minced
½ cup rye bread crumbs	3 tbsp. olive oil
1 egg, scrambled	¼ cup Dijon mustard
1 tsp. dried basil	½ cup ketchup
freshly ground pepper	3 tbsp. molasses
¼ tsp. dried thyme	¼ cup wine vinegar

In a large bowl, combine ground beef, bread crumbs, egg, basil, pepper, thyme, and onion. Mix thoroughly and form into tiny meatballs. In a heavy iron skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat and brown meatballs, a few at a time on all sides. Remove to a Dutch oven when browned. In a small bowl mix the mustard, ketchup, molasses, and vinegar and pour over the meatballs. Simmer meatballs for 35 minutes. Remove and serve with toothpicks.

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Menu for Day Forty

Sweet And Sour Meatballs	Chicken Curry
Boiled Rice	Escarole Orange Salad
Applesauce With Horseradish	

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ƒ Day Forty-One ƒ

Being of Polish descent, I am no stranger to pierogi. My mother makes them quite frequently and my friend Bill has prepared them on occasion. As far as I am concerned, it's just too much work to make your own. However, I have made a dish that incorporates the flavor and the ingredients of pierogi. It is a simple casserole and it is called "lazy pierogi." The left over gravy that it calls for can be from chicken, pork, or beef. They are all acceptable.

Lazy Pierogi

Serves 8

1 clove garlic, minced	½ lb. mushrooms, sliced
1 large onion, chopped	leftover gravy
1 tbsp. olive oil	½ cup dry white wine
1-lb. can sauerkraut	1 lb. spiral macaroni
freshly ground pepper	

In a heavy iron skillet, sauté garlic and onion in oil over medium heat for 3 minutes. Add sauerkraut and pepper and simmer slowly for 10 more minutes. Add mushrooms and simmer for 5 minutes more. Add gravy and wine and heat through, stirring to blend all ingredients. Meanwhile cook macaroni according to the directions on package. In an ovenproof casserole dish, mix the macaroni and sauerkraut mixture and place in a 350-degree oven. Bake for ½ hour. This can be cooked in a Dutch oven on the stove as well. Serve.

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Gumbo file is essential in gumbo dishes and it is basically nothing more than ground sassafras leaves. You can find it in specialty shops and large supermarkets. It adds a wonderful zest to dishes.

Creole Shrimp

Serves 4

3 tbsp. red wine vinegar	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. lime juice	2 tbsp. Creole seasoning
2 tsp. Dijon mustard	1 tsp. gumbo file
1/3 cup olive oil	1 lb. cooked shrimp
1 celery stalk, minced	

In a small bowl, mix vinegar, lime juice and mustard and add oil in a stream, mixing thoroughly. Add celery, Worcestershire sauce, Creole seasoning and gumbo file and mix well. Pour over shrimp and marinate overnight. Serve with toothpicks.

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You may have noticed that quite a few of my recipes call for a pinch of cayenne pepper. There is a reason why I use only a pinch. It's fiery hot stuff! Just remember that you can always add more of a hot spice but I am not sure what you can do to cool it down if it is too hot!

Creole Seasoning

3 tbsp. paprika	2 tbsp. garlic powder
cayenne pepper to taste	2 tbsp. freshly ground pepper
1 tbsp. dried oregano	1 tbsp. onion powder
1 tbsp. dried thyme	

In a small bowl, mix all the ingredients. Transfer to a small jar and store in a cool, dry place.

Picnic Coleslaw

Serves 8

1 head of cabbage	¾ cup white vinegar
1 large onion, sliced	½ cup olive oil
1 green pepper, sliced	1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 cup sliced green olives	1 tsp. celery seeds
½ cup sugar	

Thinly slice cabbage, onion, green pepper and combine with olives in a large bowl. In a small saucepan, combine remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Pour over the vegetables and thoroughly mix. Refrigerate overnight and serve.

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If you don't have a waffle iron, you'll have to skip this next recipe. I received one as a gift quite a few years ago. Even though it is a luxury kitchen item, mine has gotten a great deal of use over the years. You will need an electric mixer for this recipe as well, but it will come in handy on numerous occasions. The secret to this recipe is the beating of the egg whites separately from the yolks.

Cinnamon Walnut Waffles

Serves 4

non-stick cooking spray	1 tbsp. sugar
2 eggs, separated	1 tbsp. cinnamon
1½ cups milk	1 tbsp. baking powder
⅓ cup olive oil	pinch of salt
1¾ cups flour	¼ cup walnuts, finely chopped

Heat waffle iron after spraying both sides with the cooking spray. In a small bowl beat egg whites until stiff. In a large bowl, beat egg yolks until they lighten in color. Add milk and oil and continue beating for 30 seconds. Add dry ingredients and continue mixing until thoroughly blended. Blend in walnuts and egg whites by hand. Pour 1 cup of the mix at a time onto waffle iron and cook until golden brown. Repeat until waffles are cooked. Serve the waffles with blueberry or maple syrup.

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Menu for Day Forty-One

Cinnamon Walnut Waffles	Creole Shrimp
Lazy Pierogi	Picnic Coleslaw
Dilled Carrots	

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† Day Forty-Two †

Some combinations of food sound unappetizing and perhaps rightly so. I once cooked a fettuccine made with peanut butter. I didn't like it. In fact, I will never combine peanuts with any main dish I cook, and I must say I like peanuts. Another combination that may not sound very appealing is pork with prunes. You just have to try it before passing judgment. That won't be the only thing you'll pass!

Pork with Prunes

Serves 4

2 lbs. lean pork stew	freshly ground ginger
4 tbsp. flour	2 cups dry white wine
2 tbsp. olive oil	½ cup water
freshly ground pepper	10 pitted prunes

Dredge pork cubes in flour. Heat oil in a Dutch oven and brown pork over moderate heat with pepper and ginger. Add remaining ingredients and simmer over very low heat for 1½ hours. Refrigerate overnight and reheat the next day. Serve over egg noodles.

Mustard Caraway Wings

Serves 6

¼ cup mayonnaise	24 chicken wings
3 tbsp. cider vinegar	1 tbsp. caraway seeds, crushed
¼ cup Dijon mustard	2 cups rye bread crumbs

In a large bowl, combine mayonnaise, vinegar and mustard. Put wings into the bowl and mix to coat. Refrigerate overnight. The next day crush the caraway seeds in a mortar and pestle and mix into the bread crumbs. Dip wings into the crumb mixture and place on a rack over a cookie sheet. Bake in a 450-degree oven until golden brown, about 40 minutes. Serve.

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Menu for Day Forty-Two

Mustard Caraway Wings	Pork With Prunes
Egg Noodles	Tossed Salad
Chinese Cabbage	

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Party Number Three

Spanish Wings	Stuffed Mushrooms
Dilled Shrimp	Vegetable Tray With
Polish Dill Pickles	Sesame Dressing
Biscotti	Cinnamon Raisin Bread
Oriental Nectarine Slaw	Roast Loin Of Pork
Applesauce With Horseradish	Lazy Pierogi
Russian Potato Salad	Steamed Vegetables

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I had some friends over from work for dinner some time ago. I made some French onion soup and commented that the hardest part was slicing the onions. One of the consequences was that the eyes tend to fill with tears from the onions. Frank, being the perfect straight man, mentioned that he heard that peeling onions underwater was supposed to help. I said, "I tried that but I almost drowned."

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VII

BACK TO WESTCHESTER: CAMPING AND TAILGATING

I returned to the north within a short stretch of time. Travel brings to mind camping and cookouts in the great outdoors. You can certainly cook on a fire, using charcoal, wood or even gas, as now portable gas grills are available. A Coleman stove can almost simulate cooking in your kitchen, minus the oven, of course.

I will never forget one camping trip into eastern Canada and Maine a few years back. We made our own oven outdoors and baked a chicken. We used large rocks, aluminum foil and plenty of charcoal. We spread bacon grease on the chicken and wrapped it in foil. It was superb and it took only 20 minutes to complete! I wouldn't say the fire was hot but some of the foil melted (not around the chicken). We had our own microwave.

My late uncle, Dick, would cook a small turkey outdoors on the grill. He did a good job of it. I have been to goat roasts and pig roasts and I'm sure you have too. The possibilities are almost endless as to what you can cook outdoors. You're only limited by your imagination.

If you are fortunate to have a Coleman stove, you can cook just about anything outdoors. On many occasions, I have prepared dishes ahead and just warmed them the day we ate them. Here is an even better idea. Why not make French onion soup and freeze it in a square container. As it is thawing in the cooler, the soup can serve as your ice. You can also do the same with chili, casseroles, and cut up chicken. It just will require you to know when the item will be completely thawed, but that is something you can live with.

As you can imagine, I have never gone hungry on a camping trip or at a tailgating party before or after a football game. The foods that we have eaten are as varied as the recipes in this book. We had chili for one Thanksgiving dinner during a camping trip in Great Smoky Mountain

National Park of Tennessee. I made sauerbraten with egg noodles and sweet and sour cabbage for one tailgate party a few years ago. Why not do it right?

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‡ Day Forty-Three ‡

The secret to marinating and basting is to let the food marinate long enough to eliminate the need to baste. This applies to meat as well as fish. A few years ago for the Dolphins versus Bills game at Rich Stadium, I had to settle for swordfish since I couldn't find any dolphin. I have eaten the latter before and it is delicious. By the way, I don't cook horse when the Bills play the Colts!

The marinade for the swordfish smelled so heavenly, that all I had to do was to grill it. The fire was just right so I put the steaks on the grill. They cooked beautifully and were ready to be removed when my friend Bill suggested I pour the remaining marinade onto the fish just before taking them off the grill. It added a trifle amount of flavor to the swordfish. The big bonus was how the outdoors was permeated with the brilliant marinade aroma.

Marinated Swordfish

Serves 4

4 medium swordfish steaks	½ cup olive oil
4 tbsp. soy sauce	½ cup Sherry
freshly grated ginger	1 tsp. grated orange peel
2 tsp. dill weed	

Place swordfish in a medium bowl. In a small bowl mix remaining ingredients and pour over fish. Let marinate overnight. Place steaks on a hot charcoal fire and cook each side approximately 7 minutes. This will depend on the thickness of the steaks and the intensity of the fire. Remove and serve.

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This next recipe may seem a little contradictory: Indian beans using French-style green beans. Trust me – it's an international dish.

Indian Green Beans

Serves 4

1 tbsp. butter	2 tsp. ground coriander
1 tbsp. olive oil	½ tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. mustard seeds	10 oz. French-style green beans
1 small onion, minced	2 tbsp. lemon juice
freshly grated ginger	

In a heavy iron skillet on medium heat, melt butter with oil. Add mustard seeds and sauté until they begin to pop, about ½ minute. Add onion, ginger, coriander, and cumin and cook until onion is soft. Add green beans and lemon juice and continue simmering for 3 minutes. Serve.

Boiled Cabbage

Serves 4

1 head of cabbage	freshly ground pepper
2 cups of water	2 tbsp. butter

Trim the outside leaves of the cabbage and quarter. Put cabbage into a medium saucepan and add water. Bring to a boil and simmer until tender, about 15 minutes. Drain, add the pepper and butter, if desired. Serve.

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Menu for Day Forty-Three

Marinated Swordfish	Vegetable Tray With Russian Dip
Rice Pilaf	Boiled Cabbage
Indian Green Beans	

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† Day Forty-Four †

I mentioned that chicken is quite versatile and difficult to mess up. This brings to mind a day in Albany when I volunteered to make the barbeque sauce for the chicken at a friend's house. I had my own recipe that was good so I wasn't worried. Unfortunately, it seemed that as I went down the list of my required ingredients for the sauce, one after another was missing and no one felt like driving to town to get them. So I improvised and mixed something together. I really don't recall exactly what went into it. The sauce didn't smell great, but we slopped it on the chicken anyway and the chicken was very good. You just never know!

The chicken can be parboiled if you like. If not, be sure to cut the chicken into small pieces to assure that no piece is partially cooked. Chicken tartare is about as popular as chicken salmonella.

Tangy Barbequed Chicken

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut up tangy barbeque sauce

Place the chicken on the hot fire and cook the first side for about 20 minutes. After turning the chicken, spread sauce on the top and cook the second side 20 minutes. Turn the chicken over and spread sauce on the second side. Continue cooking and basting until the chicken is thoroughly cooked. Remove the chicken and if any piece is not properly cooked, return to the grill for a few more minutes.

Tangy Barbeque Sauce

For 2 chickens

6 pitted prunes	8 oz. tomato sauce
1 tbsp. hot chili paste	1 large onion, minced
3 tbsp. olive oil	2 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup lemon juice	1 tbsp. dry mustard
1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce	

Put the prunes, chili paste, oil, juice, Worcestershire sauce and tomato sauce into a blender and puree. Add the remaining ingredients and puree for 30 seconds more. Transfer the sauce to a small saucepan and simmer for 1/2 hour, stirring occasionally. Refrigerate until ready to use.

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Menu for Day Forty-Four

Tasty Barbequed Chicken	German Potato Salad
Tossed Salad	Garlic Cauliflower
Polish Dill Pickles	

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† Day Forty-Five †

You need not buy salad dressing from the supermarket. Make your own. The stores today sell all different kinds of vinegars and you can experiment. Not too long ago I bought a bottle of raspberry flavored vinegar and the back of the bottle had a recipe for dressing. I tried it and it was very good. True French dressing is vinegar and oil. The recipe that follows is a tomato French dressing. If this is too sweet for you, reduce the amount of sugar. If too sour, add some.

French Dressing

Makes 3 cups

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vinegar
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup ketchup
$\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. garlic powder	1 small onion, minced
$\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. celery seeds	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dry mustard	1 tsp. paprika

Put all the ingredients into a blender and puree. Refrigerate.

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Between Christmas and New Year's Day recently I invited some relatives over for dinner. Not as many people sat down to dinner as I had planned. I made fruit Jell-O mold and my Aunt Esther brought a raspberry applesauce Jell-O dish, unknown to me until her arrival. The children may not have eaten too much of the other food I prepared, but they made sure that the Jell-O was not left over. Here is my version of fruit Jell-O.

Jell-O Fruit Mold

Serves 6

1 package Jell-O 1 cup tiny marshmallows
2 cups of water ½ cup chopped walnuts
16 oz. fruit cocktail

Prepare the Jell-O according to the package directions. Refrigerate until the Jell-O begins to set, about 1 hour. Drain the fruit cocktail. If you don't want to use the canned variety, use fresh fruit, such as oranges, pineapple, peaches, pears, seedless grapes, and grapefruit. In a large bowl, mix the fruit, marshmallows, walnuts, and the semi-set Jell-O. Pour into a Jell-O mold and refrigerate overnight. Un-mold by dipping in warm water. Serve.

Fff

There is nothing like Polish sausage and that includes the fresh variety as well as the more familiar kind found in any supermarket, the smoked variety. You will really have to search to find fresh Polish sausage unless you live in a city with a large Polish population such as Buffalo, Chicago, or Milwaukee. You can ask at the butcher shop or else make your own. Each variety offers a different flavor to any dish and you can use either or both kinds in the following soup recipe even though it calls for fresh Polish sausage.

Lentil Sausage Soup

Serves 8

1 ham hock	3 stalks celery, chopped
2 cups lentils	2 carrots, chopped
7 cups water	large onion, chopped
1 bay leaf	1 clove garlic, minced
½ tsp. dried thyme	¼ lb. fresh cooked Polish sausage
½ tsp. salt	½ cup ditalini
16-oz. can tomatoes	freshly ground pepper
pinch of sugar	

Place the ham hock, lentils, water, bay leaf, and thyme into a large Dutch oven and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 1 hour. Add the salt, tomatoes, sugar, celery, carrots, onion, and garlic and simmer for 30 minutes more. Slice the Polish sausage 1/4 inch or less, add to the soup and continue simmering until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes. Remove the ham hock and let cool. Cook ditalini for only 3 minutes and drain. Separate any meat from the ham hock and add back to the soup with the ditalini and ground pepper. Refrigerate overnight. Warm and serve.

Fff

Menu for Day Forty-Five

Lentil Sausage Soup French Bread
Jell-O Fruit Mold Tossed Salad With French Dressing
Steamed Green Beans

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† Day Forty-Six †

I don't usually use dips for chips and vegetables, except for an occasional salsa. That's because most dips are loaded with calories, fat, and cholesterol. However, salsas and bean dips certainly don't fit into the same category. Hummus is another healthy dip that you can use. If you're familiar with Middle Eastern cooking, then you probably have heard of tabbouleh, hummus, pita bread, stuffed grape leaves and kibbeh. I dated a Lebanese woman a few years ago. Thank heavens her mother did the cooking so I experienced the cuisine of that part of the world. I can't honestly say that Middle Eastern food is one of my favorites. Fortunately, this family had Cuban influences so that made for some interesting dinners.

Here is a recipe for lentil hummus that is great for dipping raw vegetables or bread.

Lentil Hummus

Serves 8

1 cup lentils	¼ tsp. dried thyme
4 cloves garlic, minced	1 chicken bouillon cube
1 small onion, minced	⅓ cup lemon juice
4 cups water	¼ cup olive oil
1 clove	½ cup tahini
5 sprigs parsley	¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
1 bay leaf	freshly ground pepper

In a large pan put lentils, 2 cloves of garlic, onion, water, clove, parsley, bay leaf, thyme, and bouillon cube. Bring to a boil and simmer until lentils are tender, about 45 minutes. Drain the lentils and cool. Remove the bay leaf and clove, if you can find it and puree the lentils in a blender. Add remaining garlic and lemon juice and puree. Transfer mixture to a large bowl and blend in the olive oil, tahini, cayenne pepper, and black pepper. Hummus may be refrigerated. Serve.

fff

Fresh asparagus from the garden is good when steamed for a few minutes. Nothing needs to be added. I prefer it slightly crunchy.

Steamed Asparagus

Serves 4

1 lb. asparagus water

Trim the ends and wash each stalk. Place asparagus in the water in a shallow pan and cook until tender, about 4 minutes. Serve.

fff

I mentioned the famous speedie of Binghamton. Someday I will come up with the recipe for that specialty. For now, this will have to do.

Marinated Pork

Serves 4

½ tsp. ground marjoram	⅓ cup olive oil
¼ cup Sherry	2 tbsp. soy sauce
2 tbsp. honey	2 tbsp. lemon juice
2 garlic cloves, minced	1 tsp. dried sage
1 tsp. dried thyme	2 lbs. lean pork stew
1 bay leaf, crumbled	metal skewers

Thoroughly combine all ingredients, except for the pork. Pour marinade over pork and refrigerate overnight. Thread about 5 pieces of pork on each metal skewer and cook over hot charcoal, turning until pork is cooked through. When pork is done, wrap a thin slice of Italian bread around it, and pull meat off the skewer. Indulge.

Fff

Menu for Day Forty-Six

Marinated Pork

Sliced Italian Bread

Lentil Hummus

Steamed Asparagus

Vegetable Tray

With Sesame Dressing

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‡ Day Forty-Seven ‡

Monkfish brings with it a texture similar to that of lobster. If you have ever had lobster in a restaurant in some kind of dish, you may wonder if you weren't actually eating lobster, but monkfish. A few years ago, I met some friends for lunch and each of us had the specialty of the restaurant, lobster bisque. It was very good and not cheap. I sincerely hope that those pieces of seafood in the bisque weren't monkfish.

Because of its texture, monkfish can be grilled quite nicely without falling apart like some other types of fish. Here is one way of grilling monkfish.

Grilled Monkfish

Serves 4

2 lbs. monkfish	1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
½ cup olive oil	chopped fresh dill
¼ cup lemon juice	

Cut the fish into 1-inch cubes. Mix oil, lemon juice, mustard and dill in a small bowl and pour over monkfish. Let fish marinate in the refrigerator overnight. Thread metal skewers with the fish and cook over a charcoal fire, turning until monkfish is tender, about 7 minutes per side. Serve over rice pilaf.

fff

Menu for Day Forty-Seven

Grilled Monkfish	Rice Pilaf
Corn On The Cob	Steamed Vegetables
Tossed Salad	

fffff

† Day Forty-Eight †

One of my favorite treats is – pretzels. I have even gotten used to the unsalted variety. You can make your own pretzels and even though I have never done so myself, one of these days I will try my hand at it. Biscotti must be a distant cousin of the pretzel. I make some for the annual summer corn roast from time to time and just about everyone wants the recipe. It's a small effort but well worth it.

Biscotti

Serves 12

5 cups flour	1 tbsp. baking powder
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar	1 cup dry red wine
1 tsp. salt	1 cup olive oil

Mix dry ingredients together, add wine and oil and mix, to form a soft dough. You will have to add more flour to keep dough from sticking. Divide dough in half and continue to divide the portions until you have 64 pieces. Roll each piece into a 3-inch crescent and place on greased cookie sheets, keeping them apart. Bake in a pre-heated 350-degree oven for 20 minutes and lower the heat to 300°. Continue baking until biscotti are golden brown, about 20 minutes. Cool on racks and serve. You won't have to worry about storing as there won't be any left over.

Chicken Teriyaki

Serves 4

½ cup olive oil freshly ground ginger
¼ cup lemon juice 2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp. soy sauce 1 chicken, cut up

In a small bowl, mix oil, lemon juice, soy sauce, ginger and garlic. Pour over chicken and let marinate in the refrigerator overnight. Cook chicken over a medium hot charcoal fire, turning until chicken is done, about 25 minutes per side. Serve.

fff

Menu for Day Forty-Eight

Chicken Teriyaki	Biscotti
Tossed Salad	Cole Slaw
Bread And Butter Pickles	

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† Day Forty-Nine †

Many people marinate chuck steak but personally, I think it has too much fat and gristle. I personally use a leaner cut of meat and if it is not that tender, don't worry. The marinating process will make it tender. Round roast or flank steak are fine. I made a beef marinade last year that wasn't bad except it had vinegar in it, which brought sauerbraten to mind. I love sauerbraten, but that wasn't what I had in mind when I made the marinade. The following marinade should not remind you of any German specialty.

Marinated Beef Kebabs

Serves 4

¼ cup Dijon mustard	freshly ground pepper
¼ cup bourbon	1 small onion, minced
¼ cup soy sauce	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 tbsp. brown sugar	3 lb. sirloin tips

In a small bowl, thoroughly mix mustard, bourbon, soy sauce, sugar, pepper, onion, and Worcestershire sauce. Pour over beef and marinate in the refrigerator overnight. Thread beef on metal skewers and cook over a hot charcoal fire until done to your taste. If you like, thread mushrooms, onion wedges, cherry tomatoes and green pepper pieces, or any combination, between the beef pieces before grilling. Serve.

fff

I mentioned before that I had never made Buffalo chicken wings. I did make a batch of wings in the oven that came close to them. They may not be the real thing, but I think you will like them anyway.

Spanish Wings

Serves 6

2 tbsp. ground cumin	¼ cup red wine vinegar
2 tbsp. Tabasco sauce	1 tbsp. paprika
2 cloves garlic, minced	3 tbsp. olive oil
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper	24 chicken wings

In a small bowl, mix cumin, Tabasco, garlic, cayenne, vinegar, paprika, and oil. Pour over the wings and marinate overnight in the refrigerator. Place wings on a wire rack over a cookie sheet and bake at 375 degrees for 45 minutes, or until wings are tender. Serve.

Pecan Rice

Serves 6

2 tbsp. olive oil	1 tsp. summer savory
1 small onion, minced	2 cups long grain rice
¼ cup pecans, chopped	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
½ tsp. dried thyme	3 cups chicken broth
¼ tsp. dried tarragon	

Heat the oil in a heavy iron skillet on medium heat. Add onion, pecans, thyme, tarragon, and savory. Cook until onion is soft and add rice, stirring to coat each grain. Add the Worcestershire sauce and broth and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer until broth is absorbed. Serve.

Ffff

Menu for Day Forty-Eight

Spanish Wings Marinated Beef Kabobs
Pecan Rice Mashed Rutabagas
Tossed Salad

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Party Number Four

Chinese Chicken Wings Creole Shrimp
Sweet & Sour Meatballs Vegetable Tray With Russian
Macaroni Tuna Salad Dressing
Jell-O Fruit Mold Irish Soda Bread
Coq Au Vin Sweet And Sour Red Cabbage
Roast Round Of Beef Rice Pilaf
Black Beans And Rice

fff

I worked with Hank in the Boston area for a while and even had the chance to visit his lovely family in Maine. He had a large family and a large house and he was quite the cook, as was his wife Fran. Hank also had a great sense of humor and used to kid with his sons and daughters. One day one of the children asked what was on the menu for supper and he responded "potatoes au gratin." One of the other kids then repeated, "we're having rotten potatoes?" To this, Hank only smiled and emphatically agreed.

fffff

VIII
HOME AGAIN:
JUST DESSERTS

I returned to the town of my birth in May 1991. I had been in Western New York many times since moving away in 1968. My parents and my sister's family reside there as well as many friends, so it was not a difficult place to move to.

As far as desserts go, I love them but do not prepare too many of them myself and have them only occasionally. I have a few recipes of my own that I will share, but if you are looking for a great many finishing touches to meals, you will have to find them in another book.

Some of the best desserts that you will ever indulge in are loaded with butter, fresh whipped cream and of course, chocolate. I have seen many chocolate mousse recipes that use the yolks of the eggs as well as the whites. The recipe in this book uses only the whites, but the cream and chocolate more than make up for the decadence. I have gone one step further in a berry mousse recipe that uses strawberries instead of chocolate, but you'll have to live with the fat from the cream. Just remember that you are entitled to a treat every so often so don't despair.

This last suggestion for strawberry mousse brings up a very good idea: why not have fruit for dessert? Granted, each fruit has its season, but this way you can have dessert every day. Fresh pineapple is delicious, and if you have never tried kiwi fruit, you should give it a taste. You will be surprised at how good they are. Each spring I look forward to the arrival of the Bing cherries. Unfortunately, their presence is short-lived. Don't forget mangoes, carambola, papaya, quince and some of the other unfamiliar foreign-looking fruit in the supermarket. If you do not try them, you will never know if you like them.

My dad used to grow strawberries many years ago. Somewhere in the collection of home movies that my dad shot, is a frame of me with huge strawberries in my hand.

When the berries grow too close together, the result can be doubles, triples and even more than that. What you end up with is a huge strawberry that fans out and can weigh 3 ounces or more; and I held about 3 of those in my hand.

Homegrown strawberries are delicious. If you don't grow your own, you can certainly go out and gather your own. "Pick your own" farms can be found just about everywhere and they are not limited to strawberries. The benefits are freshness, a bit of exercise and cost savings. What you don't eat right away you can freeze. When I lived in Florida in 1988, I went out and picked 4 quarts of strawberries for one dollar. The following week I got 8 quarts for the same price. I do believe that the strawberries grown in Florida are not as flavorful as those grown up north, but that's probably because of the soil differences.

I managed to do some strawberry picking in western New York the spring after my return. It was well worth the effort. I picked enough to give some away to my family and friends. I should have charged them and made some money on the deal. What I couldn't eat I froze. Then some time after that I reached into the freezer and popped one of the frozen berries into my mouth. It was an excellent frozen delight, not unlike one of those frozen fruit bars but cheaper and good for you. I bet you can't eat just one!

Since I am on the topic of desserts, I recall what I said in the chapter on brunch with respect to the normalcy of breakfast foods. I worked with a guy who loved food as much as I do. He had an uncommon name, *Bernd*, but besides food, he appreciated a good beer as well. He mentioned that there were times when he would have a nice lobster dinner and then order his dessert. I don't think he was much into sweets, so what did he have for the clincher?

Another lobster.

fffff

f Day Fifty f

When I moved to my first house in Westchester, I invited one of my co-workers over for dinner. He brought his wife and son. Jeremy must have been no more than 4 years old. I have an ice cream freezer that I had used only too rarely, so I decided to make lemon sherbet for dessert. Everyone had their sherbet and seemed to like it. As I was returning to the kitchen, the young Jeremy intercepted me and asked if he could have more dessert. I guess he enjoyed it, or else that was the only food I made that he liked.

You can adapt the following recipe to lemon or orange, depending on your tastes.

Lime Sherbet

Serves 6

1 ½ cups sugar	1 tsp. grated lime peel
2 ¼ cups water	4 oz. heavy cream, whipped
14 oz. lime juice	

In a small saucepan over low heat dissolve the sugar in the water, stirring as necessary. Cool the syrup. Stir in the lime juice and the rind and refrigerate for 2 hours. Freeze the mixture in an ice cream freezer according to the manufacturer's directions until it is thick but not frozen. Blend in the whipped cream, transfer to a bowl, cover, and freeze until the sherbet is firm. Serve.

fff

I never throw away stocks, sauces, or gravies. They can be used in a variety of recipes. I recall an occasion when I had some sauce left over from a chicken dish. I added it to a macaroni and ground beef casserole and the addition only improved the flavor. This may have been what prompted the following recipe.

Nepal Spaghetti

Serves 4

2 cloves garlic, minced	28-oz. tomato puree
1 large onion, chopped	3 tbsp. curry powder
1 green pepper, chopped	½ tsp. sugar
2 tbsp. olive oil	1 lb. thin spaghetti
1 lb. ground turkey	

Sauté the garlic, onion, and green pepper in oil over moderate heat in a large Dutch oven. Add turkey and brown. Add puree, curry powder, and sugar and simmer for 45 minutes. Meanwhile cook spaghetti according to directions on the package. Drain spaghetti and serve the sauce over it.

fff

You can buy curry powder or make your own. I prefer to make my own and just about any spice can be used. In addition to the spices in the recipe that follows, you could add chili powder, paprika, fennel seed, anise seed, fenugreek seeds, ginger, and saffron, in any combination.

Curry Powder

Makes about 3 Tablespoons

2 tsp. ground cumin	1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
2 tsp. turmeric	1 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 tsp. ground coriander	¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
½ tsp. ground cloves	¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
¼ tsp. ground allspice	¼ tsp. ground cardamom

In a small bowl, mix all the spices thoroughly. Transfer to a small jar and store in a cool place.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty

Nepal Spaghetti	Cuban Bread
Tossed Salad	Cooked Beets
Lime Sherbet	

fffff

† Day Fifty-One †

I have already mentioned my good friends Thom and Linda and their two sons. They paid me a visit in my first house and I prepared a dinner for them, which I can't remember, except for the dessert and soup. The latter was black bean soup, which is delicious but there are certainly more appealing looking soups. It is very dark in color, along the lines of grayish purple. At the time, their sons Karl and Ben were probably 5 and 2 years respectively.

While I was heating the soup, either Thom or his wife Linda, maybe both came over to see what was brewing. Upon glancing into the pot, a few derogatory comments followed. It was nothing personal, but let's face it: the soup looked wretched. Unfortunately, the ears of the children were not protected from the culinary abuse heaped upon me.

When we sat down to dinner, Thom and Linda both tried the black bean soup but Karl refused. Ben was just beginning to talk but the look on his face said it all. He would rather die than try the soup.

For dessert, I made chocolate mousse, which is also very dark in color. Apparently, the mousse is too similar in color to black bean soup because at least one of the boys refused it. Did you ever hear of anyone refusing chocolate mousse?

The story hardly ends here. It was during winter and there had been snow recently, so I had sprinkled some ashes from the fireplace on the outside sidewalk, the color being a purplish gray. My guests thanked me for dinner and departed. On looking down at the sidewalk and the ashes sprinkled on top, Karl remarked, "Bob, did you put black bean soup on the sidewalk?"

So ends the black bean soup caper. Don't let this episode influence your decision to try mousse au chocolat or any dish with black beans.

Black Beans and Rice

Serves 6

1 ¼ cups black beans	2 large tomatoes,
3 cups water	peeled and chopped
¼ cup dry Sherry	freshly ground pepper
2 large onions, chopped	1 green pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced	¼ tsp. cloves
¼ tsp. cayenne pepper	boiled rice
1 tsp. sugar	

Place beans in a medium pan, cover with water, bring to a boil, cook for 2 minutes and let stand for 1 hour. Raise the heat and bring to a boil. Cook for 1 hour. Drain. Put beans back into the pan and add all remaining ingredients except the rice. Simmer for 1 hour or until beans are tender. Serve over boiled rice.

fff

The chocolate mousse recipe that follows has been requested by just about everyone who has tasted it. The most amazing thing about this recipe is the simplicity.

Mousse Au Chocolat

Serves 8

8 oz. semi-sweet chocolate morsels 3 tbsp. sugar
2 oz. rum 8 oz. heavy cream
4 egg whites

In a small saucepan over low heat, melt the chocolate morsels with rum, stirring to blend thoroughly. Whip egg whites with 1 tablespoon of sugar until they form peaks. Blend into the chocolate mixture. Whip the cream with remaining sugar and blend into chocolate mixture. Put mousse into a bowl, cover and refrigerate overnight. Serve.

fff

A very popular appetizer is shrimp with spicy cocktail sauce. You can make your own cocktail sauce and you can make it as tangy as you want. It's simple and cheaper than buying the already prepared kind.

Shrimp Cocktail

Serves 4

1 cup ketchup	1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
3 tbsp. horseradish	2 lb. cooked shrimp
1 tbsp. lemon juice	

Mix the ketchup, horseradish, lemon juice and Worcestershire sauce until thoroughly blended. Serve with the shrimp.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty-One

Shrimp Cocktail	Black Beans And Rice
Tossed Salad	Mousse Au Chocolat
	ffff

f Day Fifty-Two f

If you have ever been in Times Square in Manhattan, you probably have seen the small places selling Orange Julius. The drink is made with a few ingredients in a blender and is something one must try. You can also buy a Pineapple Julius or Strawberry Julius. I have made the drink myself and it is easy, delicious, and healthy. A dessert that you will enjoy is frozen Orange Julius.

Frozen Orange Julius

Serves 6

juice of 6 oranges	1 tbsp. vanilla flavoring
½ cup milk	1 cup crushed ice or 4 cubes
1 cup water	4 tbsp. sugar

Blend all the ingredients in a blender. If you use ice cubes, be sure to completely crush them. Transfer to a small container, cover and freeze overnight. Serve slightly thawed.

fff

Coq au vin can be made in a Dutch oven on top of the stove or in a casserole dish in the oven. I have prepared it both ways. There are recipes for the entree with white wine but the recipe that follows uses dry red wine. Who said you can't have red wine with chicken?

Coq Au Vin

Serves 6

1 chicken, cut up	1 bay leaf
5 tbsp. flour	½ tsp. dried thyme
3 tbsp. olive oil	¼ tsp. dried tarragon
1 large onion, chopped	2 cloves garlic, minced
1 slice ham, chopped	freshly ground pepper
1 sprig parsley, minced	2 oz. brandy
½ lb. mushrooms, sliced	12 oz. dry red wine

Dredge chicken in flour. In a heavy iron skillet, brown chicken in oil and transfer to an ovenproof casserole. Put onion, ham, parsley, mushrooms, bay leaf, thyme, tarragon, garlic and pepper on top of the chicken. Heat the brandy, pour over chicken and ignite. When the flames die down, add wine. Place casserole in a heated 300-degree oven and cook until chicken is tender, about 2 hours.

fff

There is nothing like fresh peas. The only problem is that if you pick them from the garden, they are so good that by the time you get inside your kitchen there won't be any left. A close second to fresh peas is frozen baby peas.

Steamed Peas

Serves 6

1 cup water 1 tbsp. butter
10 oz. frozen baby peas freshly ground pepper

In a small saucepan bring water to a boil. Add peas and simmer until peas are heated, about 3 minutes. Drain. Add butter and pepper and serve.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty-Two

Coq Au Vin Rice Pilaf
Escarole Orange Salad Basil Tomatoes
Steamed Peas Frozen Orange Julius

ffff

† Day Fifty-Three †

One dessert that I remember from early childhood is Jell-O pie. It's quite easy to make and all you need to start are 2 piecrusts. You can use graham cracker crusts or regular piecrust. Both types can be bought at the supermarket or you can make your own. I usually make my own graham crust. You can use any flavor Jell-O you like.

Jell-O Pie

Serves 8

1 package of Jell-O	1 can chilled evaporated milk
1 cup of sugar	2 piecrusts
1 cup of water	whipped topping

In a small saucepan bring Jell-O, sugar and water to a boil, stirring until sugar and Jell-O are completely dissolved. Cool. In a large bowl whip evaporated milk until it forms peaks and fold in the Jell-O mixture. Pour into piecrusts and refrigerate. Top with whipped cream or topping, if desired.

Graham Crust

¼ lb. margarine 2 cups crushed graham crackers

Remove margarine from the refrigerator and let it soften at room temperature. Cream with a wooden spoon and add the graham crackers; mix in thoroughly. Put the mix into a pie plate and form the crust with a wooden spoon.

fff

Shrimp has plenty of flavor of its own but adding some garlic makes it better. Add some tomato sauce and vermicelli and you have an easy, delectable entree.

Garlic Tomato Shrimp

Serves 4

4 cloves garlic, minced	1 tsp. dried red pepper
2 tbsp. olive oil	2 cups of water
28 oz. tomato puree	1 bay leaf
pinch of sugar	2 lb. cleaned shrimp
1 tsp. dried basil	

In a heavy iron skillet, sauté garlic in oil until golden brown. Add puree, sugar, basil and red pepper and simmer for 30 minutes. In a small saucepan, bring 2 cups of water to boil with the bay leaf and add shrimp. Cook until shrimp is pink, about 2 minutes. Drain shrimp and add to the sauce. Simmer for 1 minute. Serve over thin spaghetti.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty-Three

Garlic Tomato Shrimp	Vermicelli
Tossed Salad	French Style Green Beans
Jell-O Pie	

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† Day Fifty-Four †

Oranges are an excellent source of vitamin C, but they are quite versatile as well. This next recipe uses them with pork.

Orange Pork Chops

Serves 4

1 orange	1 ½ cups beef broth
4 lean pork chops	1 tbsp. brown sugar
1 tbsp. butter	1 tbsp. cornstarch
¼ tsp. nutmeg	2 tbsp. orange juice
¼ tsp. cinnamon	

Peel orange and slice it. In a heavy iron skillet, brown the chops in butter. Sprinkle each chop with nutmeg and cinnamon and place a slice of orange on each. Add broth and sugar and simmer for 35 minutes. Remove chops and orange slices to a small dish. Bring broth to a boil. Mix cornstarch with orange juice and add to the broth. Stir until sauce thickens. Transfer pork and orange slices back to the sauce and simmer until pork is tender, about 10 minutes. Serve over boiled rice.

Apple Crisp

Serves 8

6 apples, peeled and sliced	4 tbsp. butter
1 tbsp. lemon juice	½ cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon	½ cup flour
¼ tsp. ground cloves	¼ cup chopped walnuts
¼ tsp. ground cardamom	whipped cream

In an ovenproof casserole mix apple slices with lemon juice, cinnamon, cloves and cardamom. In a small bowl mix butter, sugar and flour to form a crumb topping. Mix in walnuts and sprinkle over the apples. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 35 minutes or until apples are tender. Serve with whipped cream, if desired.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty-Four

Chinese Chicken Wings	Orange Pork Chops
Boiled Rice	Steamed Vegetables
Apple Crisp	

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f Day Fifty-Five f

Strawberry Mousse

Serves 8

1 pint strawberries	¼ cup cold water
¼ cup sugar	4 egg whites
1 envelope unflavored gelatin	½ pint heavy cream

Wash and remove stems on the strawberries. Puree in a blender and reserve half of the puree. You may have to add a small amount of water to puree the berries depending on how juicy they are. Pour the other half into a small saucepan with sugar and heat to boiling. Sprinkle gelatin over cold water and let stand for 1 minute. Put the hot puree into blender with gelatin and process at low speed until gelatin is completely dissolved, about 2 minutes. Stir in the cold puree. Whip egg whites until they form peaks. Blend into the puree. Whip cream and fold into the strawberry mixture. Transfer to a small bowl, cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Serve.

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Hungarian Goulash

Serves 6

3 lb. lean stew beef	6 oz. tomato paste
4 tbsp. flour	2 tbsp. paprika
3 tbsp. olive oil	8 oz. beef stock
freshly ground pepper	

Dredge the beef cubes in flour. In a heavy iron skillet over moderate heat, brown the beef on all sides in oil. Transfer to an ovenproof casserole. Add pepper, paste, paprika and beef stock to the casserole and place in a 325-degree oven. Bake until beef is tender, about 2 ½ hours. Serve over egg noodles.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty-Five

Hungarian Goulash	Egg Noodles
Tossed Salad	Polish Dill Pickles
Dilled Carrots	Strawberry Mousse

ffff

† Day Fifty-Six †

I have already mentioned some of my childhood culinary delights. One dessert that I always looked forward to was glorified rice. When I was younger I really did not care for rice that much. Presently, I eat rice with meals just about every day. This dessert is quite easy to make and a nice addition to any dinner party.

Glorified Rice

Serves 8

1 cup crushed pineapple	2 tsp. lemon juice
1 ½ cups tiny marshmallows	1 ripe banana, diced
1 cup cooked rice	8 oz. heavy cream, whipped
½ cup chopped walnuts	

In a small saucepan heat the pineapple. Remove from heat. Add marshmallows, rice, walnuts, lemon juice and banana and blend thoroughly. Cool. Fold in the whipped cream. Chill overnight. Serve.

Pineapple Chicken

Serves 4

1 chicken, cut up	1 cup pineapple tidbits
4 tbsp. flour	2 large onions, chopped
3 tbsp. olive oil	2 cups beef stock

Dredge chicken in flour. In a large Dutch oven over moderate heat, brown the chicken on all sides in the oil. Remove to a small dish. When the chicken is browned, put back into the pot and add pineapple, onions and beef stock. Cover and simmer until chicken is tender, about 45 minutes. Serve over boiled rice.

fff

Menu for Day Fifty-Six

Pineapple Chicken	Boiled Rice
Tossed Salad	Boiled Brussels Sprouts
Glorified Rice	

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Party Number Five

Mustard Caraway Wings	Shrimp Cocktail
Horseradish Mushrooms	Lentil Hummus
Raisin Rye Bread	Hungarian Goulash
Jambalaya	Egg Noodles
Glorified Rice	Picnic Coleslaw
Indian Green Beans	Tossed Salad
Mousse Au Chocolat	

Ffff

"Your food stamps will be stopped effective March 1992 because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances."

—Excerpted from a letter to a dead person from the Greenville County (South Carolina) Department of Social Services.

The above letter is authentic. I didn't make it up. I couldn't have.

ffff

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Hungarian goulash 169

marinated beef kabobs 150

meatballs 8

pan-fried steak 4

roast round of beef 74

spaghetti sauce with meatballs and sausage 8

stewed hamburgers 32

sweet and sour meatballs 125

beef and beer stew 27

beef and onions 101

beef stew 15

biscotti 148

black beans and rice 159

boiled Brussels sprouts 113

boiled cabbage 136

boiled rice 38

bread and butter pickles 104

breads

biscotti 148

cinnamon raisin 63

cinnamon walnut waffles 129

Cuban 51

dill rye 56

graham crust 165

Irish soda 53

onion 58

raisin rye 67

Russian brown 48

broiled smelts 107

bulghur pilaf 86

cabbage

boiled 136

Chinese 64

cole slaw 98

lazy golabki 87

Oriental nectarine slaw 120

picnic coleslaw 128

sweet and sour red 83
vegetable Jell-O mold 85

Cajun beans and rice 38

chicken

baked 13
barbequed 66
broth 42
cacciatore 52
curry 124
Chinese wings 117
coating mix 29
coq au vin 163
Hong Kong 94
jambalaya 49
mustard caraway wings 130
Oriental stew 76
pineapple 171
rum 113
shadow soup 37
Spanish wings 151
tangy barbequed 137
tasty baked 28
teriyaki 149
with mushrooms 105

chicken broth 42

chicken cacciatore 52

chicken coating mix 29

chicken curry 124

chicken shadow soup 37

chicken teriyaki 149

chicken wings
 Chinese 117
 mustard caraway 130
 Spanish 151

chicken with mushrooms 105

chili con carne 12

Chinese cabbage 64

Chinese cauliflower 35

Chinese chicken wings 117

cinnamon raisin bread 63

cinnamon walnut waffles 129

city chicken 84

cole slaw 98

cooked beets 10

coq au vin 163

corn on the cob 98

creamy mustard dressing 102

Creole seasoning 127

Creole shrimp 127

croutons 6

Cuban bread 51

curry powder 157

desserts

apple crisp 168

frozen orange julius 162

glorified rice 171

Jell-O pie 165

lime sherbet 156

mousse au chocolat 160

strawberry mousse 169

dill rye bread 56

dilled carrots 17

dilled shrimp 118

egg noodles 16

escarole orange salad 54

fish chowder 24

French dressing 139

French onion soup 122

French style beans 5

frozen orange julius 162

fruit

- apple crisp 168
- escarole orange salad 54
- Jell-O fruit mold 140
- Oriental nectarine slaw 120
- spicy applesauce 62
- strawberry mousse 169

garlic cauliflower 74

garlic tomato shrimp 166

gazpacho 26

German potato salad 108

glorified rice 171

graham crust 165

green beans

- French style 5
- Indian 136
- steamed 101

green split pea soup 54

grilled monkfish 147

grilled steak 3

hickory baked beans 25

Hong Kong chicken 94

horseradish broccoli 50

horseradish mushrooms 115

Hungarian goulash 169

Indian green beans 136

Irish soda bread 53

jambalaya 49

Jell-O

pie 165

fruit mold 140

vegetable mold 85

Jell-O fruit mold 140

Jell-O pie 165

lazy golabki 87

lazy pierogi 126

lentil hummus 144

lentil sausage soup 141

lentils

lentil hummus 144

lentil sausage soup 141

lime sherbet 156

marinated beef kabobs 150

marinated pork 145

marinated swordfish 135

mashed rutabagas 55

meatballs 8

meatless spaghetti 116

mousse au chocolat 160

mushrooms
 chicken with mushrooms 105
 horseradish mushrooms 115
 stuffed mushrooms 95

mustard caraway wings 130

Nepal spaghetti 157

onion bread 58

orange pork chops 167

Oriental chicken stew 76

Oriental nectarine slaw 120

pan-fried steak 4

pasta, beans and rice
 Atlantic Chop Suey 82
 bean with bacon soup 30
 black beans and rice 159
 boiled rice 38
 bulghur pilaf 86
 Cajun beans and rice 38
 egg noodles 16

- hickory baked beans 25
- jambalaya 49
- lazy golabki 87
- lazy pierogi 126
- lentil hummus 144
- meatless spaghetti 116
- Nepal spaghetti 157
- pecan rice 151
- rice pilaf 13
- spaghetti sauce with meatballs and sausage 8
- Spanish rice 81
- summer spaghetti 97
- three bean salad 106
- tuna macaroni salad 34
- Viennese rice 102

pecan rice 151

picadillo 119

pickles

- bread and butter 104

- Polish dills 100

picnic coleslaw 128

pineapple chicken 171

poached cod 57

poached haddock 78

Polish dill pickles 100

pork

- city chicken 84

- gravy 64

- jambalaya 49
- lentil sausage soup 141
- marinated 145
- orange chops 167
- roast loin 61
- spaghetti sauce with meatballs and sausage 8
- with prunes 130

pork gravy 64

pork with prunes 130

potato salad 19

potato sprout soup 41

potatoes

- baked 4
- German salad 108
- salad 19
- sprout soup 41
- Russian salad 123

raisin rye bread 67

rice

- boiled 38
- glorified 171
- jambalaya 49
- lazy golabki 87
- pecan 151
- pilaf 13
- Spanish 81
- Viennese 102
- with black beans 159
- with Cajun beans 38

rice pilaf 13

roast loin of pork 61

roast round of beef 74

rum chicken 113

Russian brown bread 48

Russian dressing 79

Russian potato salad 123

salad dressing 6

salads

escarole orange 54

gazpacho 26

German potato 108

Jell-O fruit mold 140

potato 19

Russian potato 123

three bean 106

tossed 5

tuna macaroni 34

vegetable Jell-O mold 85

sausage

baloney and onions 18

Cajun beans and rice 38

green split pea 54

jambalaya 49

lentil soup 141

potato sprout soup 41

spaghetti sauce with meatballs and sausage 8

Viennese rice 102

seafood

- baked fish 41
- broiled smelts 107
- Creole shrimp 127
- dilled shrimp 118
- fish chowder 24
- garlic tomato shrimp 166
- grilled monkfish 147
- marinated swordfish 135
- poached cod 57
- poached haddock 78
- shrimp cocktail 161
- shrimp scampi 59
- tuna macaroni salad 34

sesame dressing 114

shrimp

- cocktail 161
- Creole 127
- dilled 118
- garlic tomato 166
- scampi 59

shrimp cocktail 161

shrimp scampi 59

soups

- bean with bacon 30
- chicken broth 42
- chicken shadow 37
- fish chowder 24
- French onion 122
- gaspacho 26
- green split pea 54

lentil sausage 141
potato sprout 41
turkey minestrone 31
yellow split pea 33

spaghetti

meatless 116
Nepal 157
sauce with meatballs and sausage 8
summer 97

spaghetti sauce with meatballs and sausage 8

Spanish rice 81

Spanish chicken wings 151

spicy applesauce 62

steamed asparagus 145

steamed green beans 101

steamed peas 164

steamed vegetables 14

stewed hamburgers 32

strawberry mousse 169

stuffed mushrooms 95

summer spaghetti 97

sweet and sour meatballs 125

sweet and sour red cabbage 83

tangy barbeque sauce 138

tangy barbequed chicken 137

tasty baked chicken 28

three bean salad 106

tossed salad 5

tuna macaroni salad 34

turkey

Atlantic chop suey 82

lazy golabki 87

Nepal spaghetti 157

picadillo 119

minestrone soup 31

Oriental nectarine slaw 120

turkey minestrone soup 31

vegetable Jell-O mold 85

vegetables

baked acorn squash 77

baked potatoes 4

basil tomatoes 34

boiled Brussels sprouts 113

boiled cabbage 136

bread and butter pickles 104

Chinese cabbage 64

Chinese cauliflower 35

cole slaw 98

cooked beets 10
corn on the cob 98
dilled carrots 17
French style beans 5
garlic cauliflower 74
gazpacho 26
German potato salad 108
horseradish broccoli 50
Indian green beans 136
Jell-O mold 85
mashed rutabagas 55
Oriental nectarine slaw 120
picnic coleslaw 128
Polish dill pickles 100
potato salad 19
Russian potato salad 123
steamed 14
steamed asparagus 145
steamed green beans 101
steamed peas 164
sweet and sour cabbage 83
vegetable Jell-O mold 85
wilted endive 16

Viennese rice 102

wilted endive 16

yellow split pea soup 33