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Table Traditions

Dinner rituals and classic recipes feed cultural connections during the festive season

BY ANNABEL COHEN



Martha Stewart yellow wine/water glass, \$5.99, at area Macy's stores; macys.com. Noma amber water glass (center), \$65, purple-stem wine glass, \$79, Caspary green/gold plastic bowl, \$11, porcelain plate, \$120/five-piece place setting, and black-plastic serving tray, \$22.50, all at The League Shop, Grosse Pointe Farms; 313-882-6880. Comptoire et Famille fork, \$5, at La Belle Provence, Birmingham; 248-540-3876. Ralph Lauren cotton tablecloth, \$60, at area Macy' stores; macys.com.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE VAUGHN

Christmas

// For many Americans, ham or turkey is de rigueur at the feast for the holiday that celebrates the birth of Christ. For others, it's an English roast beef, with horseradish sauce, of course.

The key to preparing a succulent cut of beef is to give it a blast of very hot heat to sear the "crust" and then cook it at very low heat for a while. When just medium rare, let it sit for a while and slice it paper thin and drizzle it with pan juices.

Perhaps after your feast of beef, you may wish to pull a Christmas "cracker" for all the little trinkets.

Holiday Roast Beef with Mustard- Horseradish Sauce

(Though a rib roast is specified, other cuts, such as rib-eye roast, top loin roast, tip roast, or rump roast may be prepared the same way.)

6 pound boneless prime rib roast

Fresh ground black pepper
to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons minced garlic
3 tablespoons chopped fresh
thyme leaves
Kosher salt to taste
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Mustard-Horseradish Sauce

1 cup heavy whipping cream,
not whipped
1/3 cup mayonnaise
1/3 cup prepared white
horseradish
1/3 cup grainy brown mustard

Remove roast from refrigerator two hours before cooking. Preheat oven to 500 degrees.

Combine the oil, garlic, and thyme and rub all over the beef. Season with salt and pepper. Place beef on a rack in a roasting pan.

Roast the beef for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 200 degrees and cook for 12-14 minutes per pound of beef for medium-rare or until a meat thermometer inserted into the center of meat registers about 130 degrees.

While the beef is roasting, prepare the sauce. Whip cream in a medium bowl with an electric mixer until soft peaks form. Fold in the mayonnaise until uniform. Fold in the horseradish and mustard. Transfer to a serving bowl, cover and chill until ready to serve.

Remove the roast from the oven and let stand 15 minutes before carving into very thin slices against the grain. Serve the beef with juices spooned over and the mustard-horseradish sauce on the side. **Makes 8-12 servings.**



Cellar black glass cup, \$10, at area Macy's stores, macys.com. Juliska black-footed bowl, \$150, at The League Shop, Grosse Pointe Farms; 313-882-6880. Clear water/wine glass, \$3.95, and Tikoli cotton napkins, \$9 each, at Bureau of Urban Living, Detroit; 313-833-9336. Vietri stainless-steel fork, \$70/five-piece place setting, and Vietri dinner plate, \$35, The Italian Dish, Birmingham; 248-593-8299.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE VAUGHN

Kwanzaa

// The American-born holiday of Kwanzaa, which is observed Dec. 26 through Jan. 1, is about reaffirmation. As a local celebrant puts it, "Kwanzaa gives [African-Americans] our unique tradition to follow. We don't have many unique traditions, so it helps us realize where we have come from, and gives the community a sense of unity."

Kwanzaa's seven basic principles celebrate history, tradition, roots, values, unity, faith, self-determination, and the future. Seven candles are lit (three red, three green, and one black — the colors of the Kwanzaa "bendera," or flag). Each day, the question "habari gani?" (what's the news?) is raised. The answer is one of the principles.

As with most cultural celebrations, food plays a symbolic role. Many African-Americans will cook foods that reflect their more recent pasts. Some choose mostly vegetarian fare, which relate to the definition of the word Kwanzaa, which means first fruits of the harvest. Others opt for foods of African origin. The following recipe traces its roots to Ethiopia.

Doro Wat

(Ethiopian Chicken Stew)

2 frying chickens (about 6 pounds total), each cut into 8 pieces
 Juice of 1 lemon or 2 limes
 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
 8 cups chopped onion (about 4 large onions)
 2 teaspoons minced garlic
 2 tablespoons paprika
 2 tablespoons Berbere powder (recipe below)
 1 cup dry red wine

1 cup water
1 teaspoon grated ginger root
Salt and pepper to taste
Hot pepper sauce to taste
8 hard boiled eggs, peeled

Berbere Powder

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/2 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/2 teaspoon ground cayenne
pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon allspice
1 tablespoon paprika
1-1/2 teaspoon salt

Place chicken pieces in a large bowl. Drizzle the lemon or lime juice over the chicken and marinate one or more hours.

In a large Dutch oven or pot over medium-high heat, cook the onions and garlic in a dry pan, stirring constantly, until they are tender, about 8 minutes. Stir in the butter, paprika, Berbere spice mix, wine, water, and ginger root. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to simmer, and add the chicken pieces, skin side down. Cook, covered, for 30 minutes, turning the chicken once or twice, or until the chicken is tender. Add salt and pepper to taste, and additional hot sauce if desired.

Prick the eggs all over with a fork and add them to the pot. Heat the chicken through and keep warm until ready to serve. Serve with cooked rice, couscous or injera (an Ethiopian flat bread), if desired. **Makes 8-10 servings.**



Juliska medium-size glass pitcher, \$85, Robbe Berking sterling silver fork, \$1,123/five-piece place setting, and sterling silver Robbe Berking spoon, \$1,123/five-piece place setting, at The League Shop, Grosse Pointe Farms; 313-882-6880. Martha Stewart medium-size water glasses, \$3.99 each, and Sango square dessert plate, \$25/set of four, at area Macy's stores; macys.com. Design Ideas cotton napkin, \$13/set of four, at Bureau of Urban Living, Detroit; 313-833-9336.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE VAUGHN

Hanukkah

// About 2,200 years ago, on the 25th day of the Jewish month Kislev, the eternal light of Second Temple of Jerusalem was relit with a small jug of purified oil — enough oil to burn for just a single day. Miraculously, the oil burned bright for eight days, which is why the Hanukkah celebration lasts for eight days.

Foods fried in oil are allegorical and traditional during Hanukkah. Most American Jews are of Eastern European descent and are known as Ashkenazim. Latkes, (fried potato pancakes) are the American "it" food at Hanukkah. Like their German or Polish relations, latkes stem from the culinary traditions of these countries.

Jews who settled in Spain and Portugal, are referred to as Sephardim. The Spanish Inquisition scattered Sephardim to, among other places, what is now Greece and Turkey, where other cooking styles were adopted. Among these are fried sweets called bimuelos, small yeast fritters, drizzled with honey syrup.

Bimuelos

Vegetable oil for frying

Batter

1/2 cup warm (105-115 degrees)

water

1 packet (about 2 teaspoons)

active dry yeast

1 teaspoon sugar

2-1/4 cups flour

1/4 teaspoon salt

Another 1/2 cup warm water

1 large egg

Honey Syrup

1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup cold water
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Prepare the batter: Combine water, yeast, and sugar in a large bowl. Allow the mixture to sit until it becomes foamy, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining batter ingredients and, using an electric mixer, beat until uniform. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a damp (not wet) towel and allow the batter to rise for 1 hour.

While the batter is rising, prepare the honey syrup. Combine all ingredients in a saucepan and slowly bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and allow to cool.

Fry the batter: Line a baking sheet with several layers of paper towel.

Heat about 2 inches of oil in a large saucepan over high heat, to 375 degrees. Use one spoon to scoop up a small amount of batter. Use another spoon to form the batter into a ball while dropping it into the oil (do not crowd the pan). The fritters will puff and rise to the surface of the oil. Cook 1-2 minutes, turning them in the oil to cook all around.

When cooked, transfer the bimuelos to a bowl and drizzle with the syrup. Serve hot or warm. **Makes 12 servings.**