

JSOnline: Milwaukee-WI Journal Sentinel

Original Store URL: <http://www.jsonline.com/features/food/29514829.html>

The best recipes of 2007

We tested and savored

Posted: Jan 6, 2008

It's been a sweet, savory, crunchy, creamy, chewy, utterly delicious year.

To underscore that fact, we've pulled together some of our favorite tested recipes published in the Food and Entrée sections in 2007.

While everyone's tastes are a bit different, we guarantee you can't go wrong with any of these recipes.

So enjoy, and happy eating in 2008!

- *Journal Sentinel food staff*

Sandy D'Amato's Sautéed Green Beans with Shallots and Nutmeg

Makes 4 side-dish servings

1 pound fresh, crisp and unblemished green beans

2 shallots (about 2 ounces total), peeled and cut in fine brunoise

3 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons water

Kosher salt, freshly ground black pepper and freshly grated nutmeg to taste

Remove stem ends from beans. Put beans in a bowl and cover with warm water. Set aside until water comes to room temperature.

Drain beans, then cook in a gallon of boiling salted water until done, 3 to 5 minutes depending on thickness. Beans are done when they still have a slight raw flavor but are crisp and bright green. As soon as beans are done, remove from pot and shock in ice water. Drain and, if desired, refrigerate until ready to use.

To prepare: Place beans and remaining ingredients in a large sauté pan and place over medium-high heat. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until water is evaporated and butter coats beans and cooks shallots, about two minutes. Continue sautéing 1 to 2 minutes (possibly longer if beans are cold from the refrigerator) or until beans are heated through. Adjust seasoning to taste and serve.

Devon Seafood Grill's Almond-Encrusted Costa Rican Tilapia with Amaretto Butter Sauce

Makes 2 servings

2 fillets (6 to 8 ounces each) tilapia

1 cup seasoned flour (see recipe)

1 cup buttermilk

2 cups almond crust (equal parts chopped almonds, Japanese bread crumbs and flour)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 cup amaretto

1 tablespoon minced shallots

¼ cup white wine vinegar

1 cup whipping cream

2 cups (4 sticks) salted butter, cubed

Fresh berries for garnish (such as diced strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Dredge tilapia in seasoned flour, then buttermilk, then almond crust. Place skillet with oil over medium heat. Place fillets in warm ovenproof skillet and lightly brown each side. Place in preheated oven about 10 minutes, until crust is golden and fish flakes with a fork. Prepare almond butter sauce. Place amaretto, minced shallots and white wine vinegar in saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Reduce liquid almost all the way, about 3 to 4 minutes, add cream and reduce by half. Turn off burner and with a wire whip, add cubed butter, a couple pieces at a time, until all butter is incorporated.

Place on bed of wild rice or any starch you prefer and pour about ¼ cup of the amaretto butter sauce on the bottom of each plate. Top fish with fresh berries.

Seasoned flour:

2 cups flour

¼ teaspoon white pepper

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

¼ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

¼ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning

Combine all in small bowl.

Muskego Lakes Country Club Greenbriar Stuffed Chicken

Makes 4 to 6 servings

1½ teaspoons olive oil

½ tablespoon butter

1/8 cup finely diced yellow onion

1½ teaspoons chopped garlic

2 tablespoons sun-dried tomatoes, cut in strips (do not hydrate)

2 tablespoons freshly chopped basil

1/8 cup white wine

½ pint whipping cream
1 teaspoons salt, about
½ tablespoon black pepper, about
1 ½ to 2 cups freshly ground bread crumbs
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
4 to 6 boneless skinless chicken breast halves

Citrus cream sauce (see recipe)

Set a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat. When hot, add oil and butter. Add onion and garlic and sauté until onions are soft, being careful not to burn the garlic. Reduce heat to medium and add dried tomatoes and basil. Sauté 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Add wine and reduce by a fourth. Add cream, salt and pepper. Simmer about 5 minutes.

Remove from heat, check for seasonings and adjust salt and pepper if needed.

Add bread crumbs until mixture is a consistency similar to a cookie dough. Add cheese and mix in. Refrigerate at least 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Using a tenderizing mallet, pound each chicken breast out to ¼-inch thickness. Set ¼ cup (if making 6 chicken breasts) or ½-cup (if making 4 chicken breasts), of the cooled stuffing in the center of each chicken breast. Roll up chicken breasts, tucking in the sides. Secure with picks if desired.

Place rolled breasts, seam side down, in shallow baking pan. Season with salt and pepper and bake in preheated oven 25 to 30 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 165 degrees. Set chicken on serving dishes and drizzle with citrus cream sauce.

Citrus cream sauce:

Makes about 1 cup

1 teaspoons olive oil
½ tablespoon minced yellow onion
1 teaspoon freshly chopped garlic
Juice of ½ orange
Juice of ¼ lemon
Juice of ¼ of a lime
White pepper to taste
1 teaspoon chicken base
½ pint whipping cream
1 ½ teaspoons cornstarch whisked into 1 ½ teaspoons water

In small saucepan, heat oil, then add onion and garlic and sauté over low heat 2 to 3 minutes. Add juices and reduce by one-fourth, about 3 to 5 minutes. Add all remaining ingredients except cornstarch and water then adjust seasonings. Bring to a simmer but do not let mixture boil. Add

some of the cornstarch mixture to thicken. Sauce should lightly coat back of a spoon. (Serve any leftover sauce over seafood.)

Michelle Papala's My Berry Best Lemon Cake (State Fair Winner)

Makes 16 servings

1 box (18 ¼ ounces) classic white cake mix

½ cup water

1/3 cup vegetable oil

3 eggs

½ cup frozen lemonade concentrate, thawed

Frosting (see recipe)

1 cup fresh raspberries

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour two (8-inch) round cake pans.

In large bowl, blend cake mix, water, oil, eggs and lemonade concentrate until moistened. Beat with a mixer on low speed 2 minutes.

Divide batter between prepared pans. Bake in preheated oven 30 to 35 minutes, until cakes test done. Cool in pans on rack 10 minutes, then remove from pans to cool completely.

Prepare frosting. Spread ½ cup frosting on bottom layer, then top evenly with fresh raspberries. Add top cake layer and frost top and sides with remaining frosting. Decorate as desired.

Frosting

1 cup solid vegetable shortening

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract

½ teaspoon lemon extract

1 tablespoon grated lemon peel

4 ½ cups sifted powdered sugar (about 1 pound)

3 to 4 tablespoons milk

In medium mixing bowl, beat shortening, vanilla, lemon extract and lemon peel with electric mixer on medium speed 30 seconds. Gradually add half the powdered sugar, beating well. Add 2 tablespoons milk. Gradually beat in remaining powdered sugar, and 1 to 2 tablespoons more milk, as needed, to achieve spreading consistency.

Odessa Piper's Pork Chops

Makes 2 servings

½ cup dark maple syrup

2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard

1 teaspoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1 teaspoon finely minced shallot

2 thick-cut (1 ½ inch thick) pork chops, with fat layer intact

Salt and pepper

3 tablespoons bacon fat or vegetable oil (divided)

1 tablespoon cold butter

In small bowl, combine maple syrup, mustard, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce and shallot. Set aside.

Pat chops dry and season liberally with salt and pepper.

Preheat a thick, heavy-bottomed skillet until a drop of water vaporizes when it hits the pan. Add 2 tablespoons of rendered bacon fat or oil and heat until oil starts to ripple. Sear pork chops over high heat until a light gold to medium crust forms, about 5 minutes. Turn over chops and sear other side until golden and crispy.

Remove chops from pan, pour off all fat and wipe hot pan clean with dry paper towels to remove any singed bits. Return hot pan to medium heat. Melt remaining 1 tablespoon fat (or oil) in pan. Pour a third of the maple syrup mixture into pan and place chops in it. Allow glaze to caramelize onto bottom of chops for a couple of minutes, watching carefully to prevent scorching. Pour remaining glaze on top of chops, turn tops face down and repeat caramelization. If glaze starts to scorch, reduce heat and swirl in a teaspoon or two of water.

Chops are done when center is rosy pink and juices run clear. Remove chops from pan and rest meat on warm platter loosely covered with foil.

Meanwhile, remove pan from heat and swirl in cold butter to emulsify glaze into a sauce. Keep sauce in warm pan until ready to serve. After meat has rested 5 to 10 minutes, pour sauce over chops and serve.

Great Young Cook Jonathan Campbell's Risotto with Prosciutto, Asparagus and Mushrooms

Makes 6 to 8 servings

6 cups chicken stock

1 medium yellow onion, diced

4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter (divided)

2 ½ cups arborio rice

¾ cup dry white wine

1 cup water

1 bundle asparagus, sliced into 1-inch pieces

¼ pound prosciutto, diced

2 cups sliced white mushrooms

3 tablespoons minced fresh sage

1 ¼ cups grated Parmesan cheese (divided)

Extra fresh sage for garnish

In pot, bring chicken stock to a boil.

Meanwhile, in Dutch oven or other large pot over medium heat, sauté onion in 2 tablespoons of the butter until translucent. Add rice to onions and sauté until rice is translucent around the edges. Pour in wine and stir slowly until nearly all liquid is absorbed, about 2 minutes.

Reduce heat on chicken stock to medium-low. Begin adding stock to rice, about 1 cup at a time, waiting for nearly all of the liquid to be absorbed before adding more. Stir rice occasionally to prevent sticking.

Meanwhile, bring water to a boil in shallow sauté pan. Add asparagus and cover sauté pan, steaming asparagus until just slightly tender, about 3 to 5 minutes. Drain asparagus and set aside.

In same sauté pan, melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter over medium heat. Add prosciutto and sauté until slightly browned around the edges, about 3 minutes. Add mushrooms and sauté until gently browned, around 5 minutes. Set prosciutto and mushrooms aside.

Continue to add chicken stock to rice until all stock is used and rice is tender, around 20 minutes. Stir asparagus, prosciutto and mushrooms into risotto. Mix in sage and 1 cup of the Parmesan cheese, saving ¼ cup to sprinkle over the top. Serve in large bowls and garnish with extra sage.

Great Young Cook Eric Milia's Italian Sausage Tortellini Soup

Makes 6 to 8 servings

4 to 5 links of Italian sausage

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

1 cup diced onion

2 to 3 cloves garlic (depends on size)

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

5 cups chicken broth

1 cup water

½ cup red wine

2 cups diced fresh tomato

1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce

½ cup diced carrots

½ cup diced celery

1 teaspoon dried basil

½ tablespoon fennel seed
1 tablespoon dried oregano
2 tablespoons parsley
1 ½ cups sliced zucchini half-moons
8 ounces tortellini
Salt and black pepper to taste
Grated Parmesan cheese to taste

Remove sausage from casings and brown in large pot over medium heat with red pepper flakes. Once sausage is brown, remove from pot and set aside in a small bowl.

In original pot, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil 4 to 5 minutes, until onion is transparent, taking care not to burn garlic. Add chicken broth, water, wine, tomatoes, tomato sauce, carrots and celery. Mix well.

Add sausage back to pot along with basil, fennel seed and oregano. Mix and simmer uncovered 30 minutes. Stir in parsley, zucchini and tortellini. Mix and simmer, covered, another 30 minutes. Serve in large bowls with Parmesan cheese on top.

This recipe from Milwaukee Personal Chef Alisa Malavenda makes a lot of rub, but you can store it to have ready anytime for ribs or chicken.

B. Gorton's Rattlin Bones

Makes 28 ribs

1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup packed dark brown sugar
2 teaspoons chili powder
1 tablespoon ground cumin
2 teaspoons dry mustard
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ cup kosher salt
2 teaspoons black pepper
1 teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
2 racks baby back ribs
1 tablespoon liquid smoke
Favorite barbecue sauce

In small bowl, combine sugars, chili powder, cumin, dry mustard, cayenne, salt, pepper, garlic powder and cloves.

Massage a handful of the dry rub all over each rack of ribs. Place both racks in a 2-gallon or larger resealable bag and add liquid smoke. Refrigerate at least 8 hours, or overnight, flipping bag over occasionally to distribute all over meat.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line baking sheet with heavy-duty aluminum foil and place ribs and all the juice in the pan. Place another piece of foil on top and crimp edges to create a tight seal to keep all heat and steam in packet. Bake in preheated oven 60 minutes or until tender. Set oven on broil.

Drain off fat and brush ribs with favorite barbecue sauce. Brown under broiler or on grill until ribs are "pretty as a picture."

Beth Campbell's Chocolate Carrot Cake (State Fair Winner)

Makes 12 to 16 servings

2 cups flour

2 cups sugar

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

4 eggs

1 ¼ cups vegetable oil

3 cups finely shredded carrots

Frosting (see recipe)

¼ cup chopped walnuts

¼ cup mini semisweet chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Line two 9-inch round baking pans with wax paper, grease the paper and set aside.

In large mixing bowl, combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda and salt. Add vanilla, eggs, oil and carrots and beat until combined. Pour into prepared pans.

Bake in preheated oven 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes, then remove from pans, peel off wax paper and cool completely on wire racks.

Prepare frosting. Place one cake layer on a serving plate and spread with frosting. Repeat layers, then frost top and sides of cake. Sprinkle top with nuts and chocolate chips.

Note: If desired, you can split the two layers into four layers by cutting each layer horizontally. Make an extra half-batch of frosting so you can frost the extra layers.

Frosting

1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, room temperature

½ cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature

3 ¾ cups powdered sugar

¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

In large bowl, beat cream cheese and butter until fluffy. Gradually beat in powdered sugar, cocoa and vanilla until smooth.

Great Host Steve Wildgruber's Grilled Peaches and Cream

Makes about 6 servings

6 fresh ripe peaches (unpeeled)

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

¼ cup Grand Marnier

¼ cup amaretto liqueur

1 tablespoon sugar (optional)

1 cup whipping cream

1 tablespoon vanilla extract (optional)

2 teaspoons powdered sugar (optional)

1 poundcake or angel food cake, sliced

Fresh mint leaves as garnish

Halve peaches and remove pits. Brush peach flesh with vegetable oil. Place peaches flesh side down on hot grill. Grill peaches until slightly charred by grill grates (peaches should smell like cotton candy). Remove peaches from grill and cut into ¾-inch cubes.

Add peaches to mixing bowl with Grand Marnier, amaretto and sugar, and stir to combine. Cover and refrigerate 2 hours.

Remove peaches from refrigerator, place two-thirds of peach mixture in blender and puree into a fine slurry. Recombine pureed peaches with cubed peach mixture and return to refrigerator until ready to serve.

When ready to serve: In bowl, combine whipping cream with vanilla and powdered sugar, if using. Beat with electric mixer until medium stiff peaks form.

To serve: Place a single slice of poundcake or angel food cake on a serving plate; add 2 large spoonfuls of peach mixture, and top with whipped cream and a sprig of mint.

Note: Peach mixture also may be used on ice cream, or as a garnish on pork.

Great Host Nina Jones' Gibanica (Serbian cheese pastry)

Makes 12 to 15 servings

1 pound imported feta cheese (any kind, but not too mild)

8 large eggs, separated

1 carton (1 ½ pounds) small-curd cottage cheese

1 to 2 packages phyllo dough (see note)

1 ½ cups (3 sticks) butter, melted

1 cup unseasoned dry bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In bowl, mash feta cheese with a fork into small crumbles. Mix feta with egg yolks and cottage cheese.

In separate bowl, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Fold feta mixture into egg whites.

Butter 13-by-9-inch baking pan. Carefully open phyllo dough and lay it out flat. Put a dampened dish towel over dough while not in use to keep it from drying out.

Place first sheet of dough into prepared pan. Brush liberally with melted butter and sprinkle lightly and evenly with bread crumbs. This keeps layers of pastry flaky. Repeat layers twice. On top of the third sheet, spread a thin layer of the cheese-and-egg mixture. Repeat with three more layers of dough, butter, crumbs and cheese-egg mixture until you have used up all of the filling.

Top with at least two sheets of phyllo dough. Add butter and crumbs on top of the first sheet you add, but do not butter the top sheet or sprinkle it with bread crumbs.

Bake in preheated oven 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown and puffy. When done, remove from oven and let rest 5 minutes before cutting and serving. Can be served as an appetizer, snack or main dish.

Note: Phyllo dough is available both in conventional and Greek groceries. Greek stores sell it in thick or thin, and the sizes of the sheets differ, too. The amount of phyllo dough you use will depend upon which dough you buy. If using thicker sheets, you may have to use a few sheets from a second box because you will not have enough sheets.

When using larger sheets of dough, press down into pan, then push overlapping edges down into pan. Smaller sheets of phyllo dough also can be used, in which case you will not have excess dough to push down.

Great Host Barbara Burk's Fruit and Cheese Salad

Makes 5 to 6 servings

3 cups apple cider

2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

1 ½ teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

6 cups mixed bitter salad greens

¼ cup dried currants or golden raisins

½ cup (4 ounces) crumbled blue cheese or goat cheese

2 to 3 Fuji apples or Japanese apple pears, cored and sliced

¼ to 1/3 cup chopped and toasted walnuts

In medium pan, bring apple cider to a simmer. Reduce heat to a very low simmer and cook until liquid is reduced and flavor is concentrated and reduced by a third. This will take 45 to 60 minutes. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

To make vinaigrette: In blender, combine reduced apple cider with cider vinegar, oil, salt and pepper.

To assemble salad: Pour some of the vinaigrette over greens and toss lightly. You will have some leftover dressing that can be refrigerated and used for making other salads. Set greens on individual serving plates or in one large bowl and top with currants or raisins, cheese and apples. Sprinkle with walnuts.

Great Host Jackie Valent's Moroccan Bulgur Wheat Salad

Makes 12 servings

3 cups bulgur wheat

2½ cups boiling water

8 tablespoons olive oil

6 tablespoons lemon juice

Salt and pepper to taste

4 tablespoons chopped fresh mint

6 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

2 roasted red bell peppers from a jar, chopped (about ¾ cup)

2 bunches of green onions (green and white parts), chopped

1 medium cucumber (unpeeled), coarsely chopped

4 cups (about 1 pound) crumbled feta cheese

Place bulgur wheat in large bowl, add boiling water and leave to soak 30 minutes, stirring occasionally with a fork, until water has been absorbed.

In mixing bowl, whisk together oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper.

Pour oil mixture over bulgur, add herbs and mix well. Then mix in remaining ingredients. Cover and chill until ready to serve. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Good Life's Habañero Chocolate Cake with Rum Whipped Cream and Tropical Fruit

Makes 12 servings

16 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter

½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar (divided)

8 large eggs

1/8 teaspoon habañero powder (available at the Spice House)

1 cup whipping cream

2 tablespoons powdered sugar

2 tablespoons rum or ¼ teaspoon rum extract

Dash of ground cinnamon

Dash of ground nutmeg

1 kiwi, peeled (see note)

6 strawberries

1 mango

½ cup red grapes

Powdered sugar and fresh mint for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease and line a 9-inch round cake pan with wax paper.

In double boiler over medium heat, combine chocolate and butter and heat just until melted. Do not allow to overheat, or chocolate will become grainy.

While chocolate melts, whisk together ½ cup of the sugar and the eggs in a bowl.

When chocolate has melted, remove from heat and let cool slightly. Temper eggs with the melted chocolate by slowly pouring a small stream of chocolate into the eggs while whisking continuously. Add habañero powder and mix thoroughly.

Pour batter into prepared pan and set pan inside a larger pan. Fill larger pan with hot water to about ½ the level of the cake pan. Bake in preheated oven 30 to 40 minutes, or until toothpick inserted into center of cake comes out clean. Cool at room temperature before removing from pan.

Prepare rum whipped cream: Whip cream in food processor (or with mixer) until thick. Add powdered sugar and rum or rum extract, cinnamon and nutmeg. Pulse to combine.

Cut fruit into similar-size pieces, add remaining 1 tablespoon sugar and mix. Allow fruit to sit until sugar has dissolved, macerating the fruit.

Slice a small wedge of cake and place on plate. Spoon fruit over top and side of cake and top with whipped cream. Garnish with powdered sugar and mint.

Note: You can use any fruit for this dish, just be sure that it is ripe and sweet. Other good choices would be guava and papaya.

Eagle Harbor Inn's Door County Cherry Streusel Muffins

Makes 9 to 12 muffins

1½ cups flour

¼ cup granulated sugar

¼ cup dark brown sugar

2 teaspoons baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 egg, slightly beaten

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

½ cup milk

1¼ cups pitted Door County (or any) tart cherries

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest

Streusel (see recipe)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat 12-cup muffin pan with vegetable oil spray.

In large bowl, mix flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Mix egg, butter and milk and pour into a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Stir with wooden spoon until ingredients are just combined.

Stir in cherries and lemon zest. Fill each muffin cup three-fourths full.

Prepare streusel. Sprinkle evenly over each muffin.

Bake in preheated oven 20 to 25 minutes or until nicely browned and firm. Remove from oven and let sit about 10 minutes, then run knife around the edges to loosen and remove.

Streusel

½ cup chopped pecans

½ cup packed dark brown sugar

¼ cup flour

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon lemon zest

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

In small bowl, combine pecans, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon and lemon zest. Pour in melted butter and stir.

Carol Deptolla's Mojito Mousse Icebox Cake

Makes 10 to 12 servings

1¾ cups sugar (divided)

1 cup cold water (divided)

4 cups packed fresh mint leaves

2 cups shortbread crumbs (about 8 ounces cookies, crushed)

1/3 cup (5 1/3 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted

2 scant tablespoons (two ¼-ounce envelopes) unflavored gelatin

½ cup fresh lime juice (from about 2 large limes)

¼ cup light rum

2 tablespoons lime zest

1½ cups whipping cream

Mint sprigs or candied lime peel for garnish

First, make the mint syrup: Put 1 cup sugar and ½ cup water in medium saucepan. Chop or tear mint leaves into coarse pieces and add to pan. Bring mixture to a boil and let it cook briefly until sugar is dissolved.

Remove from heat and let stand an hour or so to steep. Pour through a strainer into a small bowl, discarding leaves. (This can be done several days in advance; refrigerate syrup.)

While syrup steeps, make crust: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter bottom and side of 9-inch springform pan.

In medium bowl, combine shortbread crumbs and melted butter. Pat evenly over bottom of pan. Bake in preheated oven until golden and fragrant, about 10 minutes. Remove from oven; let cool completely on rack.

Now for the mousse: Put a large bowl and the beaters for an electric mixer in the freezer to chill. Put remaining ½ cup cold water in a small bowl and sprinkle gelatin over it; let it stand 4 or 5 minutes to soften. Put lime juice, remaining ¾ cup sugar and the ½ cup mint syrup in medium saucepan over medium heat.

Stir and let it come to a boil, to dissolve sugar. Whisk in gelatin to dissolve. Remove from heat, pour into large bowl, stir in rum and set aside.

In a larger bowl, empty three trays' worth of ice cubes and add some cold water. Set the bowl with the hot gelatin mixture in the cold water bath and let it stand, whisking mixture occasionally, until it's the consistency of egg whites, about 10 minutes. Whisk in lime zest. Don't let mixture solidify.

While gelatin chills, beat whipping cream until stiff peaks form. As soon as gelatin is ready, stir in a large dollop of the whipped cream to lighten it, then gently fold in remaining whipped cream.

Pour mousse into the springform pan, smoothing top. Refrigerate overnight to let it firm up.

To serve, run a thin knife around pan to loosen cake from side, then release and remove the ring.

Set cake on a serving plate and garnish with mint springs or candied lime peel and cut into wedges. Serve cold.

A dough virtually identical to that of German kuchen holds a pretty combination of summer fruit in this recipe, from Epicurious.com. It keeps well at room temperature but is best eaten the day it's baked.

Peach Blueberry Cake

Makes 8 to 10 servings

Pastry (see recipe)

½ cup sugar (divided)

2 tablespoons flour

1 tablespoon quick-cooking tapioca

2 pounds firm but ripe large peaches (about 4), halved lengthwise, pitted, halves cut into fourths

1 cup blueberries (½ pint)

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Prepare pastry and chill. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and set oven rack in center of oven.

To make filling: Grind 2 tablespoons sugar with the flour and tapioca until mixture turns into a fine powder, using coffee grinder or mortar and pestle.

Put peaches, blueberries and lemon juice in large bowl. Add tapioca mixture and remaining 6 tablespoons sugar and gently toss to coat. Spoon filling into prepared pastry crust and bake in preheated oven, loosely covered with a sheet of foil, until filling is bubbling in center and crust is golden, about 1 ¾ hours.

Transfer cake in pan to a rack and cool, uncovered, 20 minutes. Carefully remove sides from pan and bring to room temperature. Cut into wedges with a sharp knife to serve.

Note: Pastry can be made and pressed into the pan 1 day ahead and chilled, wrapped well in plastic. Remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before filling.

Pastry

1 ½ cups flour

½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

½ cup (1 stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt in food processor and pulse until combined. Add butter and pulse just until mixture resembles coarse meal with some small butter lumps. Add egg and vanilla and pulse just until dough clumps and begins to form a ball, about 15 pulses.

With floured fingers, press dough onto bottom and evenly nearly all the way up side of shiny, light-colored metal 9-inch inch springform pan. If using dark-colored pan, lower oven temperature by 25 degrees to prevent burning. Dough should be ¼ inch thick on both bottom and side of pan. If desired, you can use a sheet of plastic wrap to press dough into pan and keep it from sticking to your fingers. Chill until firm, about 10 minutes.

Carol Deptolla's Grilled Sausage and Chicken Packets

Makes 4 servings

1 ¼ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast (about 3 small), cut into bite-size pieces, 1 inch or so

12 ounces smoked (fully cooked) Spanish chorizo links, cut into ¼-inch slices

1 large green pepper (about 8 ounces), seeded and cut into ¾-inch chunks

½ medium white onion, cut into thin wedges

1 medium sweet potato (about 12 ounces), peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes (no larger)

½ cup canola oil

¼ cup honey

1 tablespoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

1 teaspoon ground cumin

¼ cup water

Put chicken, chorizo, green pepper, onion and sweet potato into a large metal bowl. Pour over it the oil, honey, salt, pepper and cumin, and toss everything to coat evenly.

Have ready four sheets of heavy-duty aluminum foil, torn into 18-by-12-inch pieces. Divide mixture evenly among the four sheets, placing it in center of each sheet. Over the food on each sheet, pour 1 tablespoon water. Bring up the long ends together, and fold the ends over crisply twice, about a half-inch each fold. Then close the ends, folding the same way, to form a tightly sealed packet.

Refrigerate until ready to take to the game, and keep the packets in a cooler until ready to grill. They shouldn't leak, but keep them in large sealable plastic bags, just in case.

When coals are hot, place packets on grill. After 5 minutes, flip packets, taking care to not poke a hole in the foil, and let packets cook another 5 minutes. Remove packets to sturdy disposable or plastic plates. Unfold carefully so as not to get burned by steam, or just cut a flap into the foil to open packet.

Carol Deptolla's Benedictine Dip

Makes about 1 1/2 cups

1 cucumber (about 1 pound), peeled, seeded and grated

2 tablespoons sour cream

1 tablespoon half-and-half

1 tablespoon chopped parsley

8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature

2 tablespoons grated onion

Veggies and crackers for dipping

Let grated cucumber drain in a fine-mesh sieve.

Meanwhile, process sour cream, half-and-half and parsley in food processor or blender until parsley is chopped fine and mixture is green, about 1 minute. Combine with cream cheese and onion. Press on grated cucumber to eliminate the last of the juice and add to cream cheese mixture.

Note: Can be made a day ahead and stored in a refrigerator.

This recipe featuring leftover rotisserie chicken is from "150 Things to Make with Roast Chicken" by Tony Rosenfeld (Taunton Press, \$14.95).

Gemelli (Pasta) with Chicken, Asparagus and Caramelized Onions

Makes 4 servings

¼ cup olive oil (divided)

1 pound fresh asparagus, bottoms trimmed, peeled if thick, and cut into 2-inch lengths

Kosher salt and black pepper

1 large Spanish onion, thinly sliced

2 cups diced leftover roast chicken

1 cup low-salt chicken broth

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar or balsamic vinegar

½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (divided)

¾ pound gemelli or penne pasta

In large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the oil over medium-high heat until shimmering hot, about 1½ minutes. Add asparagus and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper (about ½ teaspoon each). Cook, stirring occasionally, until it browns and becomes just tender, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large plate.

Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil and onion to skillet, sprinkle generously with salt and cook, stirring, until it wilts and becomes translucent, about 2 to 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until onion softens completely and turns a light caramel color, another 10 to 15 minutes.

Return asparagus to pan and add the chicken, broth and thyme. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer and cook 5 minutes. Add vinegar and ¼ cup of the Parmesan. Season generously with salt and pepper to taste and reduce heat to low.

Meanwhile, bring large pot of water to a boil, then stir a couple tablespoons of salt into boiling water and cook pasta until just tender to the tooth, about 10 to 12 minutes. Drain and add pasta

to skillet. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring, 2 minutes so flavors mix and meld. Serve immediately with sprinkling of remaining ¼ cup Parmesan.

Great Young Cook Sarah Uecke's Coconut and Seafood Soup

Makes 4 main-dish servings

2 to 2 ½ cups fish stock (see note)

5 (or more) thin slices galangal or fresh ginger

2 lemon grass stalks, chopped

1 bunch garlic chives (about 1 ounce; see note)

1 ounce cilantro

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

4 shallots, chopped

1 can (14 ounces) coconut milk

2 to 3 tablespoons Thai fish sauce

3 to 4 tablespoons Thai green curry paste

1 pound uncooked large prawns (shrimp), peeled and deveined

1 pound prepared squid or firm whitefish

Fresh lime juice (optional)

Salt and pepper to taste

Pour fish stock into large pot and add slices of galangal or ginger and lemon grass.

Reserve a few garlic chives for garnish, then chop the rest. Add half the chopped garlic chives to pot. Strip cilantro from stalks and chop leaves. Set leaves aside and add stalks to pot.

Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and cover, then simmer gently 20 minutes. Strain the stock into a bowl.

Rinse and dry pot. Add oil and shallots. Cook over medium heat 5 to 10 minutes, until shallots begin to brown.

Stir in strained stock, coconut milk and fish sauce.

Heat gently until simmering and cook over low heat 5 to 10 minutes.

Stir in curry paste and prawns, then cook 3 minutes. Add squid or whitefish and cook 2 more minutes. Add lime juice, if desired, and stir in remaining chives and the cilantro. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Notes: If you can't find fish stock or don't like it, Uecke said she has also used vegetable stock and it worked well.

Regular chives can be used.

Gatherings columnist Carol Deptolla says this soup, loosely based on a recipe from Bon Appetit, is also lovely made with yellow tomatoes.

Heirloom Gazpacho Shooters

½ cup day-old firm bread, crust removed, torn into pieces

2 pounds red heirloom tomatoes, using one variety or an assortment

¼ cup sherry or red wine vinegar

1 large red bell pepper, seeded and chopped

½ large cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped

½ large red onion, peeled and chopped

1 garlic clove, chopped

½ teaspoon smoked paprika

1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

½ teaspoon black pepper, or to taste

¼ cup olive oil

In small bowl, soak bread in water. Cut tomatoes into quarters and seed them, letting seeds and juices drip into a bowl. Chop tomato flesh. Strain tomato seeds for the juice; add juice to blender and discard seeds. Squeeze water from bread and add bread to blender. In two batches, puree tomatoes, vinegar, bell pepper, cucumber, onion, garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Transfer each batch to a wire mesh strainer over a large bowl and let it drain, pressing on solids with a spoon. Discard solids. Whisk oil into soup. Let it chill thoroughly in fridge, at least several hours or up to a day. Serve gazpacho cold in shot glasses.

Sandy D'Amato's Hot Fudge Nut Ball

Makes 8 servings

Toffee (see recipe)

Hot fudge (see recipe)

1 cup chopped, toasted and salted almonds

½ gallon good-quality ice cream (I use butter pecan)

Whipped cream for garnish (optional)

Prepare toffee and hot fudge. Set aside.

Mix toffee with chopped almonds.

Cut 8 pieces of plastic wrap into 10-inch squares and lay out flat on counter. Wearing thin plastic gloves, scoop out two scoops (about an eighth) of the ice cream for one portion and quickly form into a ball so ice cream does not melt. Sprinkle ¼ cup of the toffee/almond mixture over the ice cream, coating it evenly. Immediately pull up sides of plastic wrap and form into a ball. Place in freezer. Follow with remaining seven portions.

To serve: Reheat hot fudge until just melted. Serve alongside or under individual nut balls and garnish with whipped cream if desired.

Toffee

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

2 tablespoons whipping cream

3 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces, room temperature

Pinch of salt

Place piece of parchment paper on bottom of 13-by-9-inch pan.

In medium-size, heavy-bottomed saucepan, mix sugar and water. Stir to dissolve, then bring to a full boil and cook to a dark caramel stage, without stirring, 6 to 8 minutes. While mixture cooks, lightly brush down any granules that form on the sides of the pan using a brush dipped in water.

Remove from heat and carefully stir in cream, butter and salt until butter melts. Be careful, as this will create steam.

Quickly pour mixture onto parchment-lined pan and freeze until firm. When firm, break into small pieces and coarsely chop in food processor on pulse until you get peppercorn-size pieces. Reserve frozen in an airtight container.

Note: When working with caramel, use extreme caution, as it can give you an extremely dangerous burn.

Hot fudge:

Makes 1 quart

6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped

½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

½ cup hot tap water

½ cup whipping cream

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter

½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (about 4 ounces) packed brown sugar

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons maple syrup

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Melt bittersweet chocolate over low heat in a double boiler or microwave oven.

In medium-size, heavy-bottomed pan, mix cocoa powder with hot tap water until smooth. Add melted chocolate and stir until combined and smooth. Add cream, butter, brown sugar, maple syrup and salt and bring to a simmer.

Whisk with a small whisk 6 to 8 minutes or until mixture thickens and mounds slightly on a spoon. Stir in vanilla. Pour into a heat-proof container. Cover and let cool in refrigerator if not using immediately.

Reheat to serve. Can be refrigerated 1 to 2 weeks.

Great Young Cook Phil Georges' Pasqualina (Savory Easter Pie)

Makes 8 servings

Store-bought phyllo dough (optional; see note)

4 cups flour, plus more to roll out dough

Pinch of salt

1 cup water (about)

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to brush baking pan and phyllo

3 pounds leaf spinach, either fresh or dried (see note)

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

1 to 2 teaspoons minced fresh marjoram

1 stale dinner roll

½ cup milk (about)

8 small eggs (do not substitute larger eggs) (divided)

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese and 1/3 cup Romano cheese (see note)

1 pound or about 2 cups ricotta cheese (or drained cottage cheese)

3 tablespoons butter

If using purchased phyllo dough, use 13 sheets of fresh country-style dough. Unwrap dough and cut off one end to make square pieces. Keep covered with moist cloth until needed.

For homemade phyllo, combine 4 cups flour with pinch of salt on a clean surface. Mix in 2 tablespoons olive oil and enough water for a smooth, silky dough. Knead about 10 minutes. Cut dough into 13 even portions, shape into small rolls, and set aside on well-floured surface. Cover with slightly moist dishcloth. Let rest about 1 hour.

Prepare filling: Trim, rinse and drain spinach leaves. Salt and cook spinach in a large pot over medium heat until it comes to a boil. Cook about 2 minutes, until blanched. Set cooked spinach aside to drain and cool. Once cool, squeeze to remove excess moisture. Chop, season with pepper and more salt, if necessary, and flavor with marjoram.

Dice stale roll and soak in milk. In bowl, beat 2 eggs and combine with Parmesan and Romano cheeses. Add squeezed and drained soaked roll, ricotta or drained cottage cheese, and spinach. Fold and season with salt and pepper.

On lightly floured work surface, roll out the 13 balls of dough as thin as possible, if making own dough, stacking the sheets on top of each other with wax paper between each sheet. If necessary, finish pulling dough by hand to make a thin sheet. (You also may roll dough as each layer as needed instead of rolling all at once and stacking.)

Brush a 10-inch springform pan with oil and position 1 sheet of homemade or purchased dough so it overlaps rim of pan by ½ inch. Lightly brush dough with oil. Repeat this procedure with 5 additional layers of dough, layering each on top of the other. Lightly brush each layer, except the last one, with oil. (This makes the dough crisp, but go easy on the oil.)

Evenly distribute prepared filling over layers of dough and drizzle with more oil. With back of a large spoon, press 6 indentations at even distances throughout the filling. Add a small pat of butter in each indentation (too much butter will seep through and pool at the bottom). Without breaking egg yolk (which is symbolic of life), gently break one egg into each indentation. Season each raw egg with salt and pepper, and cover the dish with remaining cheese. (Make sure you remember where each egg is placed so you don't later pierce it before baking.)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Place remaining sheets of dough as before in baking pan, brushing each with oil. Line edge of dough with small pats of butter, then roll and press inward the overlapping edges of dough along rim of pan.

Carefully pierce top of dough about 8 places with a cake tester or toothpick (do not pierce eggs underneath!) to let steam out during baking. Bake in preheated oven about 75 minutes, or until golden brown. Allow to sit about an hour so that filling sets. Serve warm. (Do not serve directly from refrigerator if making ahead. It tastes best if slightly warm.)

Notes: Fresh country-style phyllo dough is the best alternative to homemade. It is thicker than standard store-bought phyllo dough, which Georges said is too thin. Grecian Imports, 1532 S. 84th St., and Parthenon Foods Liquor & Deli, 9131 W. Cleveland Ave., both carry the dough, which was used in testing this recipe.

Georges increased the spinach from the original recipe from 2 to 3 pounds. He also substituted Romano for 1/3 cup of the Parmesan to give it a saltiness reminiscent of a Greek spanokopita.

Savory Bread Pudding

Makes 8 servings

½ cup chopped sun-dried tomatoes, dry pack

2 tablespoons butter

8 ounces cremini mushrooms, trimmed, cleaned and sliced ¼ inch thick

¾ pound sweet Italian sausage, bulk or with the casings removed

8 large eggs

3½ cups whole milk

1 teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon black pepper

1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme

8 cups sourdough bread with the crusts trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces (nearly 1 loaf)

3 green onions, trimmed and chopped

½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 cup grated provolone cheese (divided)

½ cup grated Asiago cheese

Reconstitute tomatoes by pouring boiling water to just cover them in a small bowl. Let stand 15 minutes; drain.

In skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Sauté mushrooms until they release their liquid, 7 to 10 minutes. Remove to a medium bowl. Sauté sausage until cooked through, breaking it apart and stirring occasionally, 7 to 10 minutes. Drain and add to mushrooms.

In large bowl, whisk eggs until blended; whisk in milk, salt, pepper and thyme. Add bread, submerging all of it. Stir in tomatoes, mushrooms, sausage, green onions, Parmesan and half the provolone.

Butter 13-by-9 glass or ceramic pan that goes safely from fridge to oven. Scrape mixture into pan and top it with remaining provolone and the Asiago. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

To bake, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Uncover bread pudding and bake in center of oven until browned and set in the center, about 50 minutes.

A staple of Southern cooking, the black-eyed pea does a turn as party food in this salsa flavored with cumin. The vinaigrette is adapted from "The New Basics Cookbook" by Julee Rosso and Sheila Lukins.

Black- Eyed Pea Salsa

Makes about 7 cups

½ cup olive oil

2 tablespoons cider vinegar

1 clove garlic, minced

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon ground cumin

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

2 cups (about) black-eyed peas

2 cups (about) black beans

2 cups (about) corn kernels

¾ cup minced red onion

½ jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced

1 red bell pepper (about 8 ounces), seeds and ribs removed, finely diced ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Tortilla chips for dipping

Combine oil, vinegar, garlic, mustard, cumin, salt and pepper in a jar and shake until emulsified. Set aside.

In large bowl, combine black- eyed peas, black beans, corn, red onion and jalapeno and bell pepper. Pour vinaigrette over, and let stand at room temperature several hours to let flavors combine. Taste and adjust seasonings. Add cilantro shortly before serving. Salsa can be made a day ahead, covered and refrigerated. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Note: If using canned black-eyed peas and beans, first drain beans and rinse with water.

Sandy D'Amato's Raspberry Turnovers

Makes 4

1 sheet fresh puff pastry (see recipe) or use prepared pastry

1/3 cup sugar to roll out puff pastry, plus sugar to sweeten berries if needed (divided)

4 ounces fresh raspberries

½ teaspoon flour to coat berries

2 tablespoons good-quality raspberry preserves (see note)

4 fresh mint sprigs

1 large egg yolk

2 tablespoons heavy whipping cream

1 tablespoon sugar mixed with ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Prepare puff pastry and set aside.

To prepare turnovers: Roll out puff pastry with sugar so it does not stick to the board. Roll into a 12-by-12-inch square that is about ¼ inch thick. Try to roll it evenly without going over the edges and pushing them down (let the rolling pin do the work).

Cut the square into four (6-inch) squares and refrigerate 15 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Remove dough from refrigerator and spread ½ tablespoon preserves on each square, leaving a border of about ¾ inch around. Taste berries. If extremely tart, add a bit of sugar to sweeten, otherwise sweetness of preserves will be enough. Toss berries with the flour, then divide over middle of preserves and top each berry mound with a mint sprig.

Make an egg wash by mixing the egg yolk with the heavy whipping cream. Lightly brush mixture over ¾-inch edges of dough. Lift one corner to meet opposite corner to form triangles, or the classic turnover shape. With fingers, press down edges to seal. Brush top of each turnover lightly with remaining egg wash, trying not to let it drip over the sides.

Lightly sprinkle cinnamon sugar over each turnover. With tines of a fork, once again press down edges of dough. Cut three (¾-inch-long) slits in top of turnover to let steam escape while baking.

Place on sheet tray and bake in preheated oven about 15 minutes.

Reduce temperature to 375 degrees and bake another 10 minutes. If pastry starts to get too dark, reduce temperature slightly. Turnovers should be a deep golden brown, crispy and fully cooked. Cool on rack and serve.

Note: D'Amato uses St. Dalfour brand.

Fresh puff pastry

½ cup very cold water

1¾ cups flour (divided)

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter (divided) (see note)

Mix water, all but about 3 tablespoons of the flour, the salt and the 2 tablespoons room-temperature butter in bowl of a heavy-duty mixer with a dough hook attachment until medium stiff and smooth and ingredients are incorporated. This will take 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from mixer and form into a ball. Wrap in plastic wrap and let rest in refrigerator 15 minutes.

Mix remaining (chilled) butter with remaining flour until it just holds together. Form into a square that is about ½-inch thick and measures 2-by-2 inches. Refrigerate about 5 to 10 minutes. Both mixtures should be at the same temperature when you're ready to use them.

To bake: Place dough square on lightly floured surface and cut a shallow X in top of dough. Lightly pull the four corners out and flatten the corners slightly with a rolling pin. Slightly roll out the middle. The middle should be slightly thicker than the corners and large enough to encapsulate the butter/flour mixture. Place the butter/flour mixture in center of dough and lap over the four sides. (Butter/flour mixture should be same temperature as dough.)

Dust dough with flour and roll out into a rectangle ½-inch thick and twice as long as it is wide. Brush off excess flour with a pastry brush. Starting on long side, fold the two ends toward the middle and fold again (one side over the top) to make a package. This is your first fold.

Let rest 15 minutes and repeat process by rolling out a rectangle again to the ½-inch thickness and folding the same way. Repeat twice more so you have folds of four.

At this point keep the dough wrapped with plastic wrap in refrigerator or, if not planning to use right away, divide dough in half; you'll need about half of this dough for the above recipe, and you can freeze remaining puff pastry for another use.

Note: 2 tablespoons of the butter should be at room temperature. The remaining butter should be chilled.