

Hogtown HomeGrown

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Our family holiday meal

Around the holidays, it seems everyone asks us—well, if you don't eat turkey for your holiday meal—What Do You Eat? My standard answer is everything but the turkey. But the reality is actually a mixture of tradition and innovation, special tastes reserved for holidays—in other words, everything in it's season.

When we first became vegetarians, we tried the infamous meat substitute—often a lentil nut loaf, with some type of gravy. After a while, we realized we really didn't crave that, but we all did have a favorite dish that we wanted to see on the holiday table. Certain dishes evolved into healthier versions—like the elimination of soup from the green bean casserole or the whole wheat rolls instead of pop-n-bake crescents—as the menu has been tweaked through the years.

Occasionally we snuck in a strange meal. When I was growing up, on a few Christmas holidays we enjoyed lasagna. Because my dad loved them, I've been know to serve black beans and rice with toppings. And for something completely different, in 2006, I made seafood paella.

Strange and exotic meals aside, our favorites are really Southern and seasonal foods, so here it is—our menu for the holiday meal that has evolved in our family. Most of the recipes can be found in the recipe section of the Hogtown HomeGrown website, the rest are in this issue.

Cornbread Stuffing (Green Stuffing)

Mushroom Tamari Gravy

Corn Pudding

Squash and Carrots

Green Bean Casserole (“No Soup for You“ Green Bean Casserole)

Ginger Carrots

Sweet Potato Casserole (with a few marshmallows or pecans on top)

Cranberry Orange Relish

Cranberry Sauce (Cranberries for Dinner or Dessert)

Relish tray with carrots, celery, olives and gherkins

Soft Homemade Whole Wheat Rolls

And dessert? For Thanksgiving, dessert can only be Jeff's pies—always pecan, and maybe pumpkin, apple-cranberry, sweet potato, maple walnut or lemon chess—depending on family requests and the baker's mood.

At Christmas, we indulge in a tradition started by my mom four decades ago—Bourbon Cake—the best of poundcake and fruitcake, aged with bourbon. Mom also makes wonderful morsels called Bourbon Balls, and we always seem to have all kinds of cookies. If we are really lucky, we'll have more of Jeff's pies! Make mine pecan, please.



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What's Fresh Right Now?

Arugula
Basil—italian, microgreens
Beans—green, long, pole
Beets
Bok Choy—baby, full size
Cabbage
Carrots
Chestnuts
Citrus—juices, kumquats, grapefruit,
chinese honey tangerine, satsuma
Collards
Cucumbers—slicers, kirby, mini seedless
Eggplant—purple italian/small
Garlic—elephant
Greens—collards, mustards, kale,
dandelion, mizuna
Herbs—basil, rosemary, chives, mint
Honey
Kale—russian, tuscan, other varieties
Lettuce—leafy green, spring mix
Melon—bitter
Microgreens—basil, arugula, radish, cress
Mushrooms—shitake, oyster
Onions—red/green scallions, dry yellow
Papaya—green
Peanuts—green
Peppers—green/red/yellow sweet bell,
poblano, red/green jalapenos
Persimmon—non-astringent
Potatoes—white, red, sweet
Pumpkins—calabasa, seminole
Radish—microgreens, red globe,
white (daikon)
Shoots—pea, corn, sunflower
Spinach—malabar (asian)
Squash—yellow/summer, butternut,
zucchini, calabasa, seminole
Sprouts—alfalfa, clover, quinoa, wheat,
adzuki, garbanzo, mung bean,
french lentil, green lentil, radish
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes—red beefsteak, grape, cherry,
large plum, green

Local and Fresh— Squash and Carrots

There are still tasty summer squash available at the market. When buying veggies for the Squash and Carrots recipe, I look for thinner yellow squash with almost no crookneck to make the diagonal slices easier to cut.

Small bunches of carrots are just making their appearance on farmers market tables. While I must admit that I use organic “baby” carrots for my Ginger Carrot recipe, there is nothing like freshly harvested carrots in Squash and Carrots.

This recipe originated with Nikki and David Goldbeck's *American Wholefoods Cuisine*—Lemon Squash and Carrots. I have made changes through the years—the recipe below is our most recent version.

Squash and Carrots

INGREDIENTS

1 Tablespoon olive oil
3 carrots, sliced diagonally
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
3 yellow summer squash, sliced diagonally
1 teaspoon meyer lemon zest
2 Tablespoons golden raisins
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/4 cup hot water
2 teaspoons meyer lemon juice
1 teaspoon honey
1 Tablespoon fresh mint, slivered (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Saute carrots, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes. Sprinkle with cinnamon and cook an additional 2 minutes. Add squash and sauté for 5 minutes, but be careful while stirring, so the squash remain intact.

Stir in lemon zest, raisins and salt. Pour water over everything, cover, lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir, cover and cook another 5 minutes.

Turn heat off, stir in lemon juice and honey and serve. Refrigerate leftovers.

Corn Pudding

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds sweet corn kernels, frozen works great, but let it defrost for at least an hour
6 eggs
2 cups milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg (preferably fresh nutmeg)
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
butter to prepare baking dish

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a shallow 3 quart ovenproof baking dish—I use a glass rectangular pan that measures 9.5" x 13.5".

Pour corn into prepared pan, using your hand or a spoon to distribute evenly.

Beat eggs until light, then add milk and remaining ingredients. Beat well to incorporate seasonings. Pour mixture over corn.

Bake 35-45 minutes, until center is set and edges are golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to rest for five minutes before serving.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

NOTE: If using frozen corn, the casserole may be assembled several hours before baking, but take care to pour egg/milk mixture evenly over the corn, since it will freeze on contact.

VARIATIONS: Looking for a little more decadence? Use richer dairy products, like whole milk or half and half. Or simply dot the top of the casserole with bits of butter—about a teaspoon is enough to add extra richness.

Cranberry Orange Relish

INGREDIENTS

1 navel orange
1 bag fresh cranberries
3/4 - 1 cup granulated sugar

DIRECTIONS

Do not peel orange, but cut off stem end and cut orange into 8 wedges. Remove any large amounts of white pith and seeds. Place in food processor and chop. Add cranberries and process to desired chunkiness.

Remove from processor, spoon into storage container and stir in sugar. Cover and refrigerate at least 24 hours before serving. Stir and taste before serving. Adjust sugar if necessary. Cover and refrigerate leftovers. Keeps well for at least two weeks.

Tricks and Tips

Serving leftovers from a holiday meal? Single servings are easy—just plate and microwave. Got a group to feed? They can each plate and “nuke” or you can reheat everything in the oven.

If there's a small amount left in a large dish, put leftovers in a smaller container to save space in the oven and avoid a baked-on mess. Rolls can be heated in the oven in a damp brown paper bag to retain just baked freshness.

Tricks and Tips

Cranberry Orange Relish seems simple, but here are some tips. First, use organic oranges. Second, try red navels, but use a little less sugar since they are so sweet. Third, vary the fineness of the grind. I recently met a 97 year old cook who uses her food processor to finely chop the oranges, then grinds them again with the sugar before adding the cranberries and processing a third time.



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Tricks and Tips

I had a sudden realization this year—there is high-fructose corn syrup in the candied fruit found in the grocery stores and in most of the online offerings as well. Hopefully, somewhere, there is a small shop taking pride in making quality candied fruit the way it has been made for centuries—without high-fructose corn syrup.

Bourbon Cake

INGREDIENTS

4 1/2 cups sifted cake flour, divided

1/2 cup walnuts, chopped

2 cups granulated sugar

1 cup (or more) good quality bourbon

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325 degrees and place a very small pan of water on a lower rack. Butter and flour a large bundt or tube pan, tapping out excess flour.

Mix 1/2 cup measured flour with candied fruit and walnuts. Set aside.

Cream butter until light, then gradually add sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time and beat well after each addition. Add remaining flour, a third at a time. Beat after each addition until flour is completely incorporated. Gently, but thoroughly, fold in floured fruit and nuts.

Scoop batter into prepared pan and gently smooth top with the back of a spoon. Place in center of preheated oven. The cake will take almost two hours to bake, but start checking for doneness after about 90 minutes. I use a long thin skewer, since a toothpick isn't long enough.

Cool in pan for about 20 minutes. Turn out onto a rimmed platter or cookie sheet. Slowly pour bourbon over cake—it will soak right in. If using more than 1 cup of bourbon, carefully flip cake over and soak the other side too!

Completely cool. Wrap tightly in two layers of foil and then place in a 2 gallon zip top bag. Store in a cool dark place for at least three weeks before cutting.