

COOK'S NOTEBOOK

ON THE WEB // For more area food-related events, visit baltimoresun.com/foodevents

WINE FIND

2006 PIEROPAN SOAVE CLASSICO

From: Veneto, Italy
Price: \$22
Serve with: Seafood, Vietnamese-Thai cuisine

This is not your dad's Soave Bolla. Once almost a synonym for bland and boring white wine, Soave now can reach amazing heights when produced by artisans such as Pieropan. This wine is more complex than 90 percent of California chardonnays in its price class. The dazzling mix of flavors includes sweet pea, pear, white pepper, cherry, peach, herbs and minerals.



[Michael Dresser]

EVENTS

GINGERBREAD AND TEA // Decorate a gingerbread house and sip afternoon tea by candlelight 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Dec. 8, 9, 15 and 16 at Maja's Viennese Kitchen & Cooking School, Phoenix. \$55 for a child with one adult. For tickets, directions and/or more information, call 410-561-1157.

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE // Sample holiday foods noon to 4 p.m. Saturday at Whole Foods Market, 2504 Solomons Island Road, Annapolis. Free. Call 410-573-1800.

SITE DU JOUR

MAKE GREAT COOKIES.COM

Want more cookie ideas? This site is full of recipes and tips on cookie baking, and has several multipurpose doughs for making large batches of holiday cookies.

[KATE SHATZKIN]

BOOKMARK

Preparing latkes and other treats

BY LAURA MCCANDLISH
[SUN REPORTER]

COOKING JEWISH: 532 GREAT RECIPES FROM THE RABINOWITZ FAMILY

By Judy Bart Kancigor
Workman Publishing / 2007 / \$19.95

Just about everyone loves eating potato latkes. Making them is another story. Preparing those greasy-laden pancakes, I have realized, is a task best left up to the experts. Whenever I try, I tend to fail miserably.

One year I refrigerated latke batter overnight, forgetting that cut raw potatoes turn a ghastly purple as their starches turn to sugar when chilled. Other times the patties just seem to fall apart in the frying pan.

Yet Judy Bart Kancigor's book made me want to try again. I made Malaysian Latkes, accented with chopped cashews, curry powder, ginger and mint and served with a soothing cucumber-yogurt salad. The aromatic batter was delicious. It still didn't stay together during frying, but perhaps I beat the eggs too vigorously? Or the oil wasn't hot enough?

Latkes too greasy for you? Try Bart Kancigor's low-fat version. Or "miracle" latkes, made with zucchini, Italian bread crumbs and baked with just a touch of oil.

The cookbook includes memoirs and family photos, yet is still chock-full of recipes. They run the gamut from hearty old-country staples (challah, matzo balls, kreplach, rugelach) to more exotic, Sephardic-influenced fare (Moroccan spicy apricot lamb

shanks, African vegetable stew).

QUICK & KOSHER: RECIPES FROM THE BRIDE WHO KNEW NOTHING
By Jamie Geller
Feldheim Publishers / 2007 / \$34.99

Think of Jamie Geller as the Orthodox Jewish version of Rachael Ray. Geller's recipes are more observant than Judy Bart Kancigor's yet include shortcuts with prepared ingredients.

In an introductory section called "Secrets of the 15-Minute Chef," Geller advises busy cooks to substitute dried herbs for fresh. She wants to help working women and harried mothers effortlessly prepare for Shabbat dinners and holidays. I made Geller's Stuffed Peppers, substituting ground turkey for beef. It was a tasty, hearty meal and easier than stuffing cabbage. Photo illustrations accompany most recipes.

The book is divided into meat and dairy sections and teaches you how to shop for kosher foods and even wine.

Geller does get a tad cutesy with her cookbook narrative, especially with the constant references to what "Hubby" likes to eat. But if you want a one-stop guide to planning Jewish holiday meals, Geller may be your girl.

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ONLINE

Hungry for more? You'll find a recipe for Stuffed Peppers at baltimoresun.com/taste

COOKIN' FOR LOVE MALAYSIAN LATKES

SERVES 4

- 1/2 cup chopped unsalted cashews or peanuts
- 1/4 cup chopped mint or flat-leaf parsley (or a combination)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped jalapeno pepper, seeded and deveined
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 1 1/2 to 2 teaspoons kosher salt, to taste
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 2 large baking potatoes (12 ounces each), cut into wedges
- 1 medium-size onion, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- vegetable oil, for frying



FROM "COOKING JEWISH"

scant 1/4 cup batter per latke and flatten with a fork.

Fry only as many latkes as will fit in the skillet without crowding. Cook on one side until crisp and brown. Turn over and cook until the other side is crisp and brown.

Transfer latkes to paper towels to drain. Keep the latkes warm while frying the remainder. Serve immediately with Cacik.

From "Cooking Jewish"

Per serving: 426 calories, 10 grams protein, 25 grams fat, 3 grams saturated fat, 44 grams carbohydrate, 4 grams fiber, 106 milligrams cholesterol, 767 milligrams sodium

CACIK (MINTY CUCUMBER-YOGURT SALAD)

SERVES 4 TO 6

- 1 English (hothouse) cucumber or 2 regular cucumbers
- kosher salt
- 2 cups plain yogurt
- 1 to 2 teaspoons crushed garlic
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons crushed dried mint leaves
- fresh mint leaves, for garnish

minutes. Rinse off the salt and let drain.

Combine the yogurt, garlic, olive oil, mint and salt to taste in a bowl, and whisk until smooth and creamy. Pat the cucumbers dry, and combine them with the yogurt sauce. Taste and adjust the salt. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour. Serve garnished with fresh mint leaves.

From "Cooking Jewish"

Per serving (based on 6 servings): 108 calories, 6 grams protein, 6 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 9 grams carbohydrate, 1 gram fiber, 5 milligrams cholesterol, 62 milligrams sodium

Shipping tips for holiday cookie packages

BY JENNIFER FORKER
[ASSOCIATED PRESS]

Planning to bake and ship a little love this holiday season?

If you want to make sure your cookies don't end up as crumbs by the time they get to your friends and family, the type of cookies you make can be as important as how you wrap and pack them.

"We've all seen the footage" of shipping operations, says Gary Welling, director of the International Baking and Pastry Institute at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I. "Man oh man, things get thrown... and jostled."

Here's what you need to know:

The cookies
Experts were reluctant to herald one variety of cookie over another, but all agree sturdiness is key. This isn't the time for brittle, delicate or thin-cut cookies with intri-

cate woven sugar decorations.

Whether shipped by the U.S. Postal Service or a private carrier, your package will travel along conveyor belts, be exposed to hot and cold, get handled by several people and possibly rattle for many miles in a truck.

The UPS Store has compiled a list of baked goods its shippers say can take the tumbling and temperatures.

They recommend molasses cookies, peanut-butter cookies, shortbread, sugar cookies, brownies, biscotti and puffed rice treats. Agnes Hsu, owner of the Teacake Bake Shop in San Francisco, bakes roughly 20,000 cookies a month, many of which she ships. She suggests drop cookies, which tend to be thick.

Also, think small. Small, thick cookies are less likely to break than large, thinner cookies.

The packing

Hsu says the key to shipping

cookies is to wrap each one separately. This helps cushion the cookies, prevents them from sticking together and allows you to ship a variety of cookies without the flavors mixing.

For the wrapping, there are plenty of options. Hsu suggests using parchment paper to create sleeves or envelopes for each.

If your cookies need to travel some distance, freshness may be a concern. In that case, consider cling wrap or press-and-seal-type

wraps, which lock out the air and lengthen the life of baked goods.

Once wrapped, the cookies should be arranged in a small box or canister. If there is extra space in the box, use crumpled waxed paper, which cushions and helps absorb excess moisture.

Hsu wraps her cookies in small hatboxes. Welling suggests visiting dollar stores for gift boxes and tins.

Or take the UPS Store's creative advice and recycle Pringles pota-

to-chip cans. Cut your cookies to be slightly smaller than the diameter of the can, then stack them (separated by rounds of parchment paper) in the can.

The smaller box or container of cookies then should be placed inside a larger shipping box that is filled with packing peanuts or other packing material. Aim for at least 2 to 3 inches of packing around the container of cookies.

When you think you've got the box packed, close and shake it.

If anything moves, add packing. Air pockets allow the contents to vibrate during transit.

The timing

The most important rule is to take your time, says Marc Haymon, a baking instructor at the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y. Haymon advises baking the cookies the evening before mailing them, which gives them about 12 hours to set up.

Even the day of the week matters when shipping food. The pros mostly ship on Mondays and Tuesdays to ensure the packages arrive before the weekend, when the cookies could end up sitting in a warehouse until the next week.

Antonio knows getting through high school is challenging enough. Being homeless and on his own definitely makes it a lot more challenging.

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