



Tastes and Traditions of Radiology Diversity and Wellness

University of Chicago
Department of Radiology
December 2020





Seven Fishes



Holiday Food from Italy to be enjoyed on Christmas Eve

Submitted by: Emily Marshall, Medical Physicist



The Recipe

Ingredients: Shrimp, Scallops, Lobster, White Fish (trout, monk fish, ect), Anchovies, Calamari, Clams (just pick-up whatever 7 fishes the grocery has that look tasty to you!), olive oil, wine, seafood broth, garlic, onion, fennel or endive, cilantro, italian spices (tarragon, basil, thyme, rosemary, ect), and about 1-2 lbs fresh tomatoes.

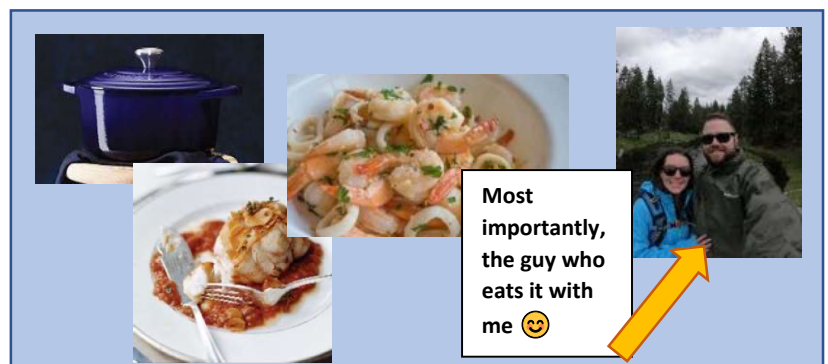
How to: I start with sautéing the garlic and diced onion together in some olive oil. Add in the anchovies, wine, seafood broth (~1-2 c), fennel/endive, and whatever spices you have on hand and enjoy. Add in the crushed tomatoes, and begin adding in the fish based on cook time requirements. Let it all simmer together for about 10-20 mins, sprinkle on the cilantro and SERVE!

The Background

I come from an Italian family - although at this point, we are several generations removed. My maternal great-grandparents immigrated from Italy and brought with them the rich cooking from their regions. They landed, separately, in Ellis Island in the 1930s. My maternal grandmother specifically, grew up in a tight knit neighborhood within NYC among Italian-American immigrants. From this neighborhood and her own at-home upbringing as an Italian immigrant, my grandmother learned to cook! My grandmother brought our family the feast of the seven fishes. This feast is to be enjoyed late in the evening on Christmas eve.

Although my grandparents are no longer with us, every year on Christmas Eve, the maternal side of my family comes together and we cook a stew of Seven Fishes to share with whatever friends and family can be present!

You don't have to eat all seven fishes in one single dish, so long as you enjoy all seven in something at some point throughout the meal! Traditionally my family has always enjoyed it as a single stew. While there are a specific 7 fishes suggested to enjoy, my family (as I'm sure many others have as well) over the years has become less restrictive to only eating those seven and has instead expanded to including whatever seven we feel like eating!!



This year of course will likely look a little different (seven fishes via zoom??) - but I still plan to cook it up and enjoy my seven fishes even hundreds of miles apart! I hope you will try it too.



Rinderroulade mit Spätzle



Traditional food from Germany to be enjoyed anytime!

Submitted by: Steffen Sammet, MD PhD, Associate Professor and Medical Physicist



The Background

Rinderroulade means "rolled beef" and it is my favorite German dish that can be served any time of the year. The most difficult part of the dish is finding the right thinly sliced beef. In the US, my wife Christina, who is an excellent cook, especially of German food, has had success with beef intended for Minute Steak or Beef Top Round Extra Thin Cut for Carne Asada, Milanese, Palomilla, or Tampiquena.

Rinderroulade can be served with German dumplings ("Knödel"), potatoes, or my favorite, spätzle. Spätzle is a simple egg and flour noodle that is made by spreading the dough on a small cutting board and swiftly cutting the dough into boiling water. For the spätzle, start with 7 whole eggs, ¼ tsp of salt, and about 1.5 cups of flour. Add flour if necessary; you want the batter to be thick enough that it does not run or drip. Use a knife to "cut" the batter into boiling water. Fish the noodles out and repeat. Noodles can be fried in butter or served as is.



The Recipe

Ingredients: Rinderroulade has many variations; we use mustard, pepper, prosciutto/speck, grilled onion, fresh parsley, julienned carrot, zucchini, and pickles for the filling. You can use just about anything for the cooking broth including beef broth, wine, sherry, fresh herbs and vegetables.

Instructions: Spread mustard on the thin beef, add fresh cracked pepper, layer prosciutto/speck (can substitute cooked bacon), and grilled onions. Line up the parsley stalks and julienned vegetables at one end and roll the meat around them making a log. Tie with kitchen string. Brown the rolled-up beef in some butter. Add a braising liquid like broth or wine/sherry. Add any fresh herbs to taste such as savory or thyme. Add vegetable to the broth to taste including carrot, parsnip, grilled onion, etc. Cook, covered, for 2 hours or until tender.



Have a safe and healthy holiday and, as we say in German, a good "slide" into the new year! We hope to see you all at our farm next year for Oktoberfest and some authentic German food and beer!

Pīrāgi, Latvian “bacon buns”

(pronounced pee-rah-gi)

Tradition from Latvia to be enjoyed during the summer or winter solstice, or...

“just ‘cause I found a pile of ‘em in the pantry! Yum!”

Submitted by: Aleks Kalnins, MD, MBA, Vice Chair, Wellness



Pīrāgi (pronounced pee-rah-gi, Latvian “bacon buns”)

Filling

1 pound bacon
1 pound lean ham
3-4 onions
Fry the three ingredients separately and then mix together, pouring off the fat from the bacon

Yeast mixture

1 package yeast (any kind) or 1 tablespoon of yeast
2 tablespoons of sugar
2 tablespoons of flour
½ cup of warm water
Mix yeast, sugar flour and water and let rise in a warm place 15 -30 minutes

Dough

6 cups sifted white flour (about)
3 eggs
3/8 cup of vegetable oil
1 ½ cups of milk
½ cup of sugar
½ teaspoon cardamom
½ teaspoon salt

Mix eggs with sugar, oil, milk and yeast mixture. Add kardamon and salt and start mixing in the flour. Stir / knead in flour to form soft dough. Let the dough rise in a warm place until doubled. Punch down dough, knead 3-4 minutes and let rise second time.

Form Pīrāgi

Roll dough to ¼ inch thick. Use a large glass to form circles by placing top of glass on rolled dough and pressing firmly (like cutting a cookie form) Fill center of dough circle with filling and seal shut by pinching sides together and placing seam side down on the cookie sheet. Let these rise again for 10-15 minutes. Baste with a mixture of 1 egg, 2 tablespoons of water and 1 teaspoon sugar well beaten in a bowl.

Bake! 350 to 375 degrees 12 to 15 minutes

Pīrāgi or pīrādziņi are an oblong or crescent-shaped baked Latvian bread roll or pastry, often containing a filling of finely chopped bacon cubes and onion. Pīrāgi range from five to thirteen centimetres (2.0 to 5.1 in) in length, depending on if they are intended as a snack or a more substantial meal. Smaller pīrāgi are often prized for their daintiness and are considered the work of a skilled cook.

As with many national dishes, Latvian families often have their own unique recipe for the dish, yet to be called pīrāgi, it has to maintain the half-moon shape and the filling has to be bacon bits. Due to the amount of work involved to make pīrāgi, they are usually made only for special occasions and in very large numbers. Yet, you would be able to find them in most local bakeries and pastry shops in Latvia.

Pīrāgi were not a seasonal dish in Latvian society, because most ingredients needed to make the different varieties were available from the pantry year-round. After potatoes had infiltrated Latvian society from the New World, sometime potatoes were also used to replace flour in the dough, allowing the pastries to be baked even when flour was unavailable. This means that pīrāgi could be baked any time and are historically associated with Latvian celebrations year round.

The two biggest historic Latvian celebrations are for summer solstice and winter solstice: Jāņi (June 24 - St. John's Day) and Ziemassvētki (Christmas). One of the most popular and familiar Latvian Ziemassvētki folk songs mentions pīrāgi:

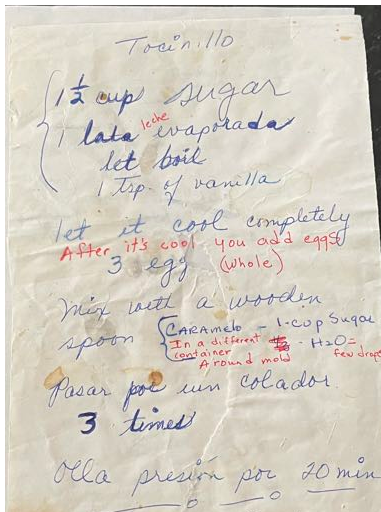
*Ziemassvētki sabraukuši
Rakstītām kamanām
Pīrāgam nabagam
Abi gali apdeguši*

*Christmas arrived
In a decorated sleigh
Oh that poor pīrāgs
Both ends were burnt*



Tocinillo de Cielo

Food from Cuba to be enjoyed whenever!
Submitted by: Jessica Telleria, Radiology Resident



The Recipe

Ingredients:

2 and 1/2 cup sugar, 1 can evaporated milk, 1 tsp vanilla, 3 eggs, Water

Instructions:

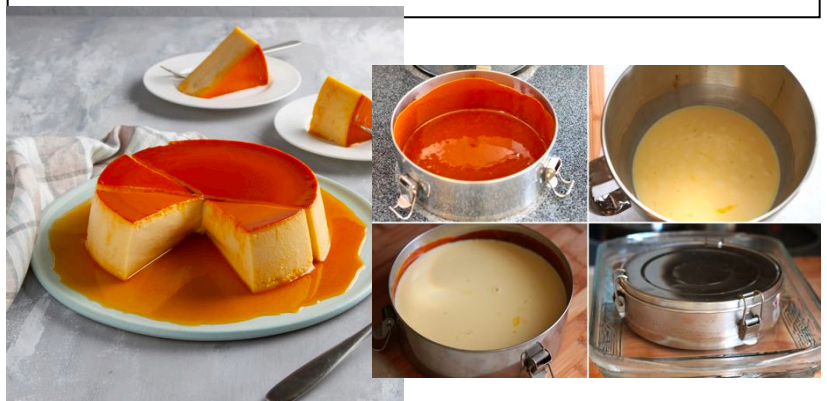
- Mix 1 1/2 cup sugar, 1 can of evaporated milk, 1 tsp vanilla and let boil on the stove; Once boiling, take off stove and let cool completely; Add 3 whole eggs and mix in with a wooden spoon; Pass mixture through colander 3 times and set aside; To make caramel mold, heat 1 cup sugar and a few drops of water in a saucepan until syrup is brown; Cover the sides of a baking tin evenly with the syrup; Pour the original mixture into the baking tin and cover; Place in pressure cooker with water bath and cook for 20 minutes; Cool completely; when ready to serve place a platter over the baking tin and flip it quickly; Make sure to scrape as much caramel from the baking tin onto the tocinillo (that's the best part!); Enjoy!

The Background

My parents and grandparents immigrated to the US from Cuba in the 1960s. Although they couldn't bring many items, a recipe book from my great-grandmother, who stayed in Cuba, was too valuable to leave behind. It included "Tocinillo de Cielo."

This creamy dessert, similar to flan, originated in Spain but quickly became a Cuban staple. "Tocinillo de Cielo" literally translates to "Heavenly Pig", although, interestingly, the dish has nothing to do with pigs.

The recipe has now been passed on to my mom, and from my mom to me. Although the original written recipe has been damaged, it has been rewritten quite a few times. It is now even written in "Spanglish," a combination of English and Spanish! We make it at any celebration, including birthdays and holidays and always remember our home country and our family.



Eight-Treasure Glutinous Rice Pudding (Ba Bao Fan)

Chinese version of sweet treat to be enjoyed during Chinese New Year

Submitted by: Carina Yang, Neuro Radiologist, Vice Chair of Diversity



Background

Chinese version of sweet treat you will see during **Chinese New Year**. Ba means eight, Bao means treasure Fan means rice = eight treasure rice. Chinese love the number “8” as it is considered a lucky number – “eight” in Chinese is a homophone of “fa”, which means *prosperity*.

So usually, eight kinds of different assortments like dried fruit, nuts, and seeds are included to make this ba bao fan. The sticky rice is cooked and then mixed in with the dried fruits, nuts, and seeds and pressed into a mold (usually a dome, like an upside down bowl) and then steamed and served with syrup on the side. Some people will arrange the assortments into decorative patterns.

INGREDIENTS

Rice Pudding:

- 2 c glutinous rice (soaked for 4 hours)
- 2 c water
- 3 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 2 c red bean paste

Dried Fruits:

- 4 slices candied mango
- 2 Tbsp golden raisins
- 2 Tbsp Goji berries
- 2 Tbsp dried cranberries
- 4 Tbsp dried longan
- 8 chinese red dates
- 8 chinese black dates

Syrup:

- 1/2 c sugar
- 1 c water
- (optional dried fruit for adding to the syrup . . .
- 2 Tbsp golden raisin
- 2 Tbsp dried cranberries)

Option to serve with condensed milk

The Recipe

- Soak the glutinous rice for at least 4 hours. Overnight if you plan ahead. And Soak all the dried fruits in warm water for 30 minutes until softened. Then slice the mango into 8 thin strips.
- Cooking the rice stovetop: Add glutinous rice and water to a shallow steaming dish. Steam over high heat for 30-45 minutes or until the rice is soft and sticky. Remember to check the water level in the steamer and refill as needed. Stir in brown sugar and butter. If the rice is a bit dry, add a bit more water and stir again until it's creamy, but not wet. Set aside and continue to the assembling step below
- Cooking the rice via instapot: Add 2 cups of water in Instant Pot inner pot. Put the trivet in there. Rinse the sticky rice in water briefly, Drain. Place the rice in a heat-proof glass or stainless steel bowl. Add 2 cups water to cover the rice. Give it a quick stir and make sure all rice is submerged in water. Place this on top of the trivet. Close the lid, steam release handle to sealed. Press pressure cook and set to high pressure and use +/- to set the time to 15 minutes. When the sticky rice is done cooking, wait for ~10 minutes and make sure that the float valve is down. Then turn the steam handle to venting. Once the steam is all out and stops hissing, open the lid carefully. The sticky rice should be soft and sticky. Stir in brown sugar and butter. Set aside and continue to the assembling step below. Drain the soaked dried fruits and set aside
- Assemble: Bring water in the steamer to a boil over high heat. Rub the mold you are going to use for the rice pudding with butter. I'm using 7-inch round pie pan. You can use the steamer function in Instant pot too by pouring 2 cups water into the inner pot. For non-decorative pattern: If you are not going to make any decorative pattern then simply mix the soaked dried fruit with the rice pudding. Spread half of the rice pudding on the mold. Press down to evenly spread then top with one layer of red bean paste and then the other half of the rice. Use a rubber spatula to smooth. For decorative pattern: If you are going to make a decorative pattern, arrange the dried fruit on the mold and. Spread half of the rice pudding on top of this very gently, trying not to disturb the pattern you just created below. Gently press down with a spatula to evenly spread then top with one layer of red bean paste and then the other half of the rice. Use a rubber spatula to smooth. Lower the heat to medium and steam the rice pudding for 30 minutes. If using instant pot, press steamer and set timer to 30 minutes
- Place water, sugar and dried fruits (optional) in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat until the sugar started to thicken to a syrup consistency.
- Serve!

Sebae (세배, 歲拜, *worship elders*)

Korean New Year celebration

Submitted by Jonathan Chung, MD, Professor of Radiology



Sebae is a ritual of filial piety that is traditionally observed on New Year's Day, a tradition that children looked forward to.

Dressed in traditional clothing, children wish their elders (grandparents, parents and aunts and uncles) a happy new year by performing a deep traditional bow (rites with more than one bow involved are usually for the deceased) and the words "saehae bok mani badeuseyo" or "please receive a lot of good fortune for the New Year."

Elders typically reward this gesture by giving children new year's money, or "pocket money" called Sebaet Don (usually in the form of crisp paper money) in silk bags made with beautiful traditional designs, as well as offering words of wisdom (dökdam).

Historically, parents gave out rice cakes (ddeok) and fruit to their children.



Grilling like an Argentine Gaucho

Tradition from Argentina to be enjoyed with family and friends

Submitted by: Mario Zaritzky, Radiologist, Comer Childrens

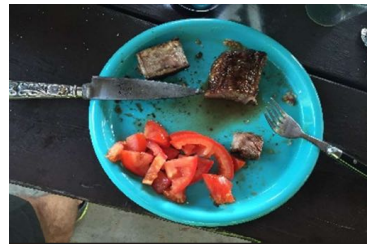


Sample of my own Parillada*

*mixed grill or barbeque



The knife is very important



We share
Asado
with
friends



And we
share
with
family



Bleigießen

Submitted by: Kurt Zacharias, 2nd Year Resident



The Background

The tradition of Bleigießen or “lead-pouring” came to me by way of my German heritage. This New Year’s Eve tradition involves heating up a lead (or now-a-days, aluminum) pellet over a fire until the lead melts. The molten lead is then poured quickly into a bucket of cold water, which instantly molds the lead, creating some very interesting shapes (examples below). Based on the shape the lead takes, one can determine their fortune for the coming year! A few examples of “official” interpretations are as follows, although my family always just made up our own!

Eagle – You want to fly, you are ambitious

Anchor – Safety has priority

Angel – Wait until luck comes

Ball – Mind the line

Tree – Loyalty in love

Balloon – Free yourself from your yoke (controll)

Blanket, Robe – You will get younger

Triplets – The next generation is coming

Dome – Good days are in view

Elephant – Someone is going to walk all over you

Origin: I’ve done this every year at New Year’s ever since I can remember. It started with my Dad’s heavily German family and we’ve continued it every year. Although there are traditionally some “rules” to the fortunes (i.e. x type of shape means y type of fortune), some of these prescribed fortunes are too ominous, so my Dad or Opa always just made them up on the spot, often after too much Gluhwein, and no matter what they were always good!

Why do you look forward to it?

It’s just a fun, unique tradition that I’ve always enjoyed and which my friends always found fascinating!



Holiday Brandy Balls

For Holiday Get-togethers

Passed down recipe

Submitted by: Mary Green, Secretary for Breast/Neuro



The Recipe

- 2 cups vanilla wafers ground fine
- 2 Tbsps. Cocoa
- 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted.
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans or
- 2 1/2 Tbsps. Honey
- 1/2 cup brandy, rum, whiskey

Mix together dry ingredients

Mix together honey and brandy thoroughly

Add liquid to the dry mixture until it holds together, keep a little in reserve- add as needed to hold mixture together

Roll into balls, then roll preferred size balls in large sugar crystals

Place in a sealed container for 12 hours

The Background

I come from a multi-cultural background- Irish, Scots, English, Germanic, I don't really have a defined cultural tradition that I follow. When I was a kid, we always had ham and scalloped potatoes- that was from my mom's Germanic/English heritage. I no longer eat pork, so that didn't carry forward. The things I cook and serve at the holidays now have been gathered over the years from recipes, and trial and error. The good ones have become traditional.

Now each year I make brandy balls. The recipe has been around forever, and often the brandy is swapped for rum. I first had these about 20 years ago at a pot-luck holiday party when I worked at NCA. They were delicious, and I got the recipe from the woman who brought them. I made them once, and then every holiday party my coworkers expected them.

I made a slight change to the recipe I received, coating them with sugar crystals as opposed to powdered sugar- it adds a little crunch. I even made them once with Fireball whiskey and took them to New Orleans for a party.



Dickens themed Christmas party- brandy balls on the treats table
University Club 2010

Happy Holidays to all, Peace on Earth; May your hearts be light and filled with mirth. Let us look ahead to the coming year, for the last must past, and Hope draws near.

Česnica

Food from Serbia to be enjoyed at Orthodox Christmas

Submitted by: Nick Feinberg, R3



Česnica is a loaf of bread eaten at the beginning of Serbian Orthodox Christmas dinner.

I was introduced to this tradition by my wife's family, who are Serbian Orthodox and emigrated from former Yugoslavia in the 90s. Česnica is so much fun because it's a food and a present combined. The baker—in my case my amazing mother-in-law—hides a silver coin somewhere in the loaf, and then everyone takes turns tearing off pieces of bread in search of the treasure. The finder of the coin is guaranteed to have good luck over the next year. I'm not ashamed to admit that my mother-in-law always tells me where the coin is ahead of time, and I have had good luck for the last 9 years...

Ingredients

Time: 2 1/2 hours

4 1/2 cups bread flour

1 cup warm milk

1 cup warm water

1/2 ounce active yeast

2 tablespoons salt

1 tablespoon sugar

9 tablespoons melted butter

2 eggs

Stir together flour, salt, sugar, yeast, melted butter and one beaten egg in a mixing bowl. Pour warm milk and water into the flour mixture. Mix everything with the spoon.

Turn the dough onto a hard surface and knead for ~10 minutes. Add more flour if sticky.

Pat the dough into a round shape and put in a lightly oiled large bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let rise until double its original size (usually ~1 hour).

Remove the dough from the bowl and divide 80/20 into two pieces—the smaller 20% will be used for braiding.

Make the boule (the rounded base loaf) from the larger piece and transfer it to slightly oiled baking pan. Take your silver coin and press it into the dough. Smooth over the area to hide any evidence!

Divide the smaller piece of dough into 3 equal pieces. Roll out the pieces into strands and braid them using 3-braid method. Transfer your braid to the top of the boule.

Brush the bread with egg wash (beaten egg with a little bit of water) and cover with plastic wrap for 40 minutes.

Bake the bread for 35 to 40 minutes in a 400° F oven. The bread should be golden brown on the top.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!

Green Chile Chicken Tamales!

Food from Ecuador and Mexico to be enjoyed whenever (but especially Christmas eve)

Submitted by: Gustavo Mendez, Radiology Resident



Background

My family combines Ecuadorian and Mexican holiday traditions. Christmas Eve dinner was variable, but one consistent late-night snack every Christmas Eve (usually after opening presents) was tamales and hot Mexican fruit punch! Our family friends usually gifted us the tamales, but I've attached a recipe that is a close-ish approximation of the tasty green chicken chile tamales we enjoyed.

INGREDIENTS

Filling:

1 package dried corn husks
1 lb tomatillos, husked, rinsed
4 serrano chiles, stemmed, chopped
4 large garlic cloves, chopped
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups low-salt chicken broth
4 cups (packed) coarsely shredded cooked chicken (about 1 pound; from purchased rotisserie chicken)
2/3 c. chopped fresh cilantro

Dough:

1 1/3 cups lard or solid vegetable shortening
1 1/2 teaspoons salt (omit if masa mixture contains salt)
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder (omit if masa mixture contains baking powder)
4 cups freshly ground masa dough for tamales (34 to 36 ounces), or make masa dough with 3 1/2 cups masa harina (corn tortilla mix; about 17 ounces) mixed with 2 1/4 cups warm water
2 cups (about) low-salt chicken broth

The Recipe

For filling:

- Place husks in large pot or large bowl; add water to cover. Place heavy plate on husks to keep submerged. Let stand until husks soften, turning occasionally, at least 3 hours and up to 1 day.
- Preheat broiler. Line heavy baking sheet with foil. Arrange tomatillos on prepared sheet. Broil until tomatillos blacken in spots, turning once, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer tomatillos and any juices on sheet to processor and cool. Add chiles and garlic to processor and blend until smooth puree forms. Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add tomatillo puree and boil 5 minutes, stirring often. Add broth. Reduce heat to medium; simmer until sauce coats spoon thickly and is reduced to 1 cup, stirring occasionally, about 40 minutes. Season with salt. Mix in chicken and cilantro. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.)

For dough:

- Using electric mixer, beat lard (with salt and baking powder, if using) in large bowl until fluffy. Beat in fresh masa or masa harina mixture in 4 additions. Reduce speed to low and gradually beat in 1 1/2 cups broth, forming tender dough. If dough seems firm, beat in enough broth, 2 tablespoons at a time, to soften.
- Fill bottom of pot with steamer insert with enough water (about 2 inches) to reach bottom of insert. Line bottom of insert with some softened corn husks. Tear 3 large husks into 1/4-inch-wide strips to use as ties and set aside. Open 2 large husks on work surface. Spread 1/4 cup dough in 4-inch square in center of each, leaving 2- to 3-inch plain border at narrow end of husk. Spoon heaping tablespoon filling in strip down center of each dough square. Fold long sides of husk and dough over filling to cover. Fold up narrow end of husk. Tie folded portion with strip of husk to secure, leaving wide end of tamale open. Stand tamales in steamer basket. Repeat with more husks, dough, and filling until all filling has been used. If necessary to keep tamales upright in steamer, insert pieces of crumpled foil between them.
- Bring water in pot to boil. Cover pot and steam tamales until dough is firm to touch and separates easily from husk, adding more water to pot as necessary, about 45 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Cool 1 hour. Cover and chill. Before serving, re-steam tamales until hot, about 35 minutes.)

Latvian Yellow Bread “Kliņģeris”

This is a traditional Latvian birthday or “name day” cake when shaped as a huge pretzel and decorated with candles or may be served during any holiday or festivity.

Submitted by: Aleks Kalnins, MD, MBA, Vice Chair, Wellness



Ingredients:

A. Warm milk mixture

2 cups whole milk
1 cup sugar
Grated zest of 1 lemon
1 tsp salt

In a large saucepan heat the milk up to the boiling point, add sugar, lemon zest and salt. Stir well until dissolved. Set aside.

B. Butter/Sugar/Egg mixture

1 lb salted butter
1 cup sugar
4 X-large whole eggs
1 egg, separated

In a food processor, cream the butter gradually while adding sugar. When well creamed add one egg at a time, including the 5th (separated) egg yolk. Reserve remaining egg white.

½ - ¾ tsp saffron
½ - 1 tsp cardamom

Place saffron threads between wax-paper and rub with the back of a spoon until saffron is powdered. Dissolve saffron in 1 Tbs of hot milk, pass through a small sieve. Add saffron and cardamom to the warm milk mixture (A).

C. Proofed yeast

2 packages dry yeast
½ cup warm water
1 tsp sugar

Dissolve the sugar in warm water and proof the yeast according to package instructions (approx. 10 mins)

8½ - 9 cups all purpose flour
2 - 3 cups raisins (dark)

Stir 3-4 cups flour into warm/spiced milk mixture. Beat well. Carefully stir in the butter/sugar/egg mixture (B) and the proofed yeast (C). Gradually, add remaining flour, stirring well between additions. Lastly, add raisins which have been dusted with flour. Cover dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate 6-12 hours (overnight).

Egg white (reserved)
Almonds, slivered or sliced

Set oven to 350F. Grease baking pans with unsalted butter.
Shape smaller half of dough into pretzel 'kliņģeris' shape or place into loaf pans. Brush tops with beaten egg white, Sprinkle with almonds, brush again with egg white. Bake 35 - 50 minutes according to shape baking.
Immediately after baking, drizzle with melted sweet butter.

Kliņģeris is a traditional Latvian birthday "cake" shaped as a huge pretzel and decorated with candles.

Kliņģeris can also be used to celebrate name days – which, as it sounds, is the day dedicated to celebrating your particular name. Latvians celebrate name days with gifts and parties, and often these celebrations are even larger than standard birthday celebrations.

Kliņģeris can also be served on similar festive occasions, family anniversaries or as a central piece in a dessert smorgasbord.

It's always nice to have a Kliņģeris for Christmas.



GENERAL TSO'S CHICKEN

Food created by Chinese American to be enjoyed all year around

Submitted by: Zheng Feng Lu, Medical Physicist



The Recipe

Ingredients:

3 pieces of boneless chicken thighs (~ 1 lb); 3 eggs; 1 cup corn starch; 2 Tsp soy sauce; 1 Tsp vinegar; 1 T sugar; 1 T sesame oil; ginger; garlic; chili paste; scallions
Typically, steamed broccoli, but I cooked pea sprouts instead.

Instructions:

1. Cut the chicken into bite sizes (~ 1" chunks). Marinate with soy sauce and egg for about 30 minutes.
2. Toss the chicken with the cornstarch. Deep fry or stir-fry.
3. Make the sauce with all the ingredients (add more if you like) and mix in the chicken. Add cornstarch to thicken the sauce.

The Background

I was going to submit a recipe for Chinese dumpling because that's a traditional holiday food for Winter Solstice in my hometown - Hangzhou. But my daughter thought making dumplings would be too time-consuming. So we made General Tso's chicken, her all-time favorite.

As the story goes, this dish was first invented in America by a Chinese American and has gone through many revisions to become an iconic Chinese-American dish. Now you can find General Tso's chicken on the menus of Chinese restaurants all over the world. However, the place hard to find this dish probably is inside China where people know General Tso only as a famous historical figure.

An entertaining documentary called "The Search for General Tso" talks about the origins of this Chinese American dish. Its director Ian Cheney is one of the co-directors for the inspiring documentary "Picture a Scientist" that many of us watched recently.



Wishing you all a blessed holiday season!

Steve Zangan, Interventional Radiology



The Gingerbread House (Lebkuchenhaus) originated in Germany, inspired by the edible house Hansel and Gretel found in the forest. My mother is from Germany and I remember building a house with her every Christmas. Today my kids build them (my mom still helps as you can see) using kits, homemade items and random candy they find around the house. In this year of virtual gatherings, they sent a time lapse video of the construction to family. Though they have grown older their favorite part is still smashing the house with a hammer after Christmas.