

Cooks without Kitchens

Real Change Recipe Contest Challenges the Senses

By ANITRA FREEMAN

It was a real party the day we dreamed up this issue. We had a LOT of fun with the idea. I woke up the next day, took two aspirin, and screamed "What am I doing?"

I calmed myself by deciding on criteria I'd use to evaluate the recipes that came in:

- 1) Taste and nutrition: "Is this worth making?"
- 2) Practicality: cost/portability/storability. "Is it really possible to make this?"
- 3) Side benefits: "Do I get anything out of this besides not-hungry?"

Now I had Criteria, so I was an Expert. I felt a lot more confident.

When the recipes came in, they actually arranged themselves into categories, depending on the criteria they emphasized.

Side Benefits (The Focus Here Isn't the Food)

PHEWBURGERS

- 1 day old roll
- + 1 pkg. ripe limburger
- = free use of any park,
- by oneself
- Wes Browning

Evaluation:

Taste and nutrition: Limburger is very nutritious. Some people like the taste.

Practicals: Limburger is expensive and difficult to find. On the other hand, it doesn't weigh much, and lasts forever - rotten limburger tastes pretty much like limburger.

Side Benefits: Slightly exaggerated. Radius of privacy unlikely to exceed 12 feet, except in hot weather.

Practicals: Cheap, Portable, Will Probably Last Longer than You Want Them

CARMEN'S RECIPE FOR TOMATO SOUP

Cooking with Condiments

Add several plastic packets of ketchup to a cup of hot water. Nowadays, with packets of Cremora all over the #\$\$@!* place, you can even make cream-of-tomato soup. And you can always scrounge crackers from somewhere.

Evaluation:

Taste and nutrition: Zipola. (This is a very technical, Food Evaluation Expert word. It means "Measure of the unit of flavor contained in the cellophane wrapping off a bologna-and-white-bread sandwich purchased in a Greyhound bus station after midnight.")

Practicals: Cheap, portable, and the ingredient packets, as long as

unopened, will never rot. The Cremora won't rot even after it's opened.

Side Benefits: Thalia, Muse of Comedy, approves this one.

JT'S DUMPSTER STEW

Heat dumpster tomatoes in large pot over campfire to make base. Add bouillon cube, salt, pepper. Add chopped vegetables and water. Simmer.

—J.T. Grogan

Evaluation:

Taste and nutrition: Quite good, depending on type and condition of vegetables.

Practicals: Cheap - all ingredients can be scrounged; portable, as long as you're not working with discarded Halloween pumpkins; storability, not to worry - like I said, it tastes good.

Side Benefits: Makes you a lot of friends.

MARION SUE FISCHER'S RECIPE FOR RESTAURANT LEFTOVERS

"It's endless what you can do with an electric frying pan."

Take whatever restaurant leftovers you have and warm them in an electric frying pan. Open an egg on top of the leftovers and let it cook until you're happy with it. Put all of this over a piece of bread on a plate. People will think you're a gourmet!

Evaluation:

Taste and nutrition: Excellent.

Practicals: Not bottom-end cheap, but

practical. An electric frying pan can even be used some places on the street.

You have to be careful with eggs, but wrapping them in saran-wrap helps prevent breakage. And goopage.

Side Benefits: Recycling is socially responsible.

Taste and Nutrition

MARION SUE FISCHER'S RECIPE FOR STREET SHRIMP

"I'm a class act. Even if I am in a sleazebag hotel full of junkies."

Bur 1/3 lb. per person cooked shrimp meat (it's cheaper than you think). Or tuna, or surami (known as Krab or imitation crabmeat) if you don't have that much money. Track down a lemon, and cilantro. If you can, get a ripe avocado and bread from the foodbanks.

Toss the shrimp (or substitute) with lemon juice and chopped cilantro. Heap this in the middle of a plate. Arrange the avocado slices around the plate, artistically. Eat!

Evaluation:

Taste and nutrition: Excellent.

Practicals: Affordable, as long as you're getting some money or foodstamps. Krab meat is not only cheaper than shrimp, it lasts longer - but it still needs refrigeration. Don't try to keep any kind of seafood in your backpack. Please.

Side Benefits: It is good for the soul to have at least one "quality meal" every few weeks. "You are what you eat" - be quality. There's enough spam and

crackers out there already.

Other

When everything was all nicely organized, someone threw a pigeon into the stew.

THE MYSTERIOUS GOURMET

Flying rats? Not everyone thinks pigeons are disgusting. Here is a lovely pigeon recipe, with suggested substitutions for those who do not hunt their own game, and prefer to shop at food banks and dumpsters.

Pan Roasted Pigeon Breast with Seared Foie Gras* and a Cassoulet** of White Beans

* Yeab, right.

** Side dish.

Serves 4

2 pigeons (try a box propped up on a stick with a string tied to it, at the Fifth Avenue Library Plaza)

3 tbs canola oil (bacon grease)

4 3 oz. medallions of Foie Gras (French for liverwurst)

2 tsp chives, chopped (parsley or lawn clippings - it's just for garnish)

Salt and pepper (McDonald's packets)

1 cup small white beans (or whatever the food bank's giving out)

1 tomato, peeled and chopped

1 small bouquet of whatever herbs you can snatch from some yuppie's garden

2 tbs sweet butter (= 6 to 8 restaurant butter pats)

1/2 tsp white wine vinegar (Wild Irish Rose will do)

Remove the breast from the carcass and peel skin away. Chop up the bones. Fry the bones till brown, then add 4 cups of water. Boil down to one cup at low heat, skimming gunk off the top.

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