



DOROTHY FLESHMAN
DORY'S DIARY

Infamy versus Christmas

I'm falling into the snow of December and would do so whether the white of winter is here or not. Even the thought of snow couples with planning for Christmas.

As an adult it's simply changing decorations from November's Thanksgiving to colors of red, white and green. But, as a child, it took over the whole of the month in anticipation with toy catalogs from Montgomery Ward and J. C. Penney's.

However, every month of every year is filled with things to remember and things to forget and, as one grows older, memories take a different sense of importance.

The calendar tells us of wars and reminders of wars and people who shouldn't be forgotten.

As I glance through the past diaries of my mind I see things that made me sad; nothing I could do to prevent or change the outcome; things that made me fearful because I didn't understand the reason for their happening — like the Day of Infamy for instance.

Then there were deaths of those close and those at a distance. So I turn the next page of December and find the happy ones of birth, marriages (my own included), anniversaries, and happy times together.

Christmas comes near the ending of the month before we turn the page on another new year. Most of us have always looked forward to that and the visions it brings.

Christmas is a word and so is infamy, and they both bring memories to mind, some good, some bad.

But, am I now allowed to use either one in our changing world?

Age has its advantages in spite of the disadvantages. One of them is to remember the good that brought happy times and to forget the ones that caused pain and unhappiness. But, can we?

I can select and rerun my happy times like a movie on a screen or fast-forward to acknowledge but dismiss the parts filmed as they happened.

I begin this month's remembrance on the Day of Infamy (now known as Pearl Harbor's Remembrance Day) in the days of my youth when I didn't really understand the horrors of war. It is there and even fast-forwarding the film doesn't erase those days of what it meant at the time. It is history and we weep our losses.

Tomorrows could always be better if lessons were learned from the past.

So often, though, it seems that lessons are never learned and the same mistakes or horrors are repeated. I lean towards kindness and forbearance even while some things try to "stick in my craw," as we used to say.

Let the snow fall in the mountains and cover the pain of the past that rained upon our own as well as other shores even though we can't really forget the losses.

Let us by mind play like children at sleighing and building snow people, friendships enduring, and adults walking down the aisle to a beautiful future.

And, when it gets here this month, be sure and have a MERRY CHRISTMAS for the right reasons!



Dreamstime-TNS

The spinach-based saag paneer is many Americans' introduction to the Indian cheese.

By **LARISSA ZIMBEROFF**
Bloomberg News

Given the current obsession with plant-based cooking, cheese might seem like a food in decline.

But curd consumption has risen 19% in the past decade, according to recent data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service. It's the main catalyst of per capita dairy consumption. Last year was great for the dairy case, as sales increased \$7 billion from a year earlier to \$61 billion, according to Madison, Wisconsin-based International Dairy Deli Bakery Association.

At Kroger Co., the second-best-selling overall product of 2020 was four-cheese Mexican blend. (Zero-calorie soft drinks were No. 1.)

Now a beloved Indian staple is making inroads in the U.S., even though it's been around since the 1500s. Paneer is the firm cheese that's the hero ingredient in the vegetarian dish saag paneer.

There are several reasons for the groundswell. Paneer is high in protein and fat, which makes it a favorite among those on the keto diet, a market valued at \$9.5 billion in 2019. (The U.S. is the biggest market for ketogenic diets.) And because it's got a high melting point, it keeps its shape when it's cooked, making it a good candidate for center-of-the-plate vegetarian dishes.

Unlike many faux-meat options, however, paneer is clean-label, meaning it's made with minimal ingredients.

There's also increased culinary interest in its place of origin. Searches for "Indian restaurants near me" rose 350% last year on Google Trends. "Paneer maker" was up 140%.

"Indian cuisine has grown in popularity, and people have become more interested in learning to make it at home," says Joey Wells, global senior principal for product development at Whole Foods Market Inc. Paneer sales are up, he adds: "We continue to see growth in the category overall."

Paneer has been pushed by artisans on the East and West coasts who were dissatisfied with the options on supermarket shelves in the U.S.

In New York City, the stellar version made by Unapologetic Foods chef Chintan Pandya has raised the cheese's profile. "The higher the fat, the better the paneer," says Pandya, who uses a blend of milk and cream from a dairy upstate to make his light and incomprehensibly pillow-y product. It took more than a year for him to create a viable version. (Supply chain issues contributed to the delay.) Now it's a top seller at his Lower East Side restaurant, Dhamaka, where it's grilled and topped with garam masala.

"A lot of people ask us what's different," Pandya says. "It's just that we invest time and money in it." In fact he invests so much time that, from a cost perspective, it's on par with the amount he spends on lamb and goat.

Chefs across the U.S. have likewise become inspired. At Ghee in Miami, Niven Patel smokes the cheese and serves

it with charred corn. Paneer pies are a popular option at Chicago's Pizza With a Twist, which has locations around the country. At a recent pop-up dinner, Contra chef Fabián Von Hauske Valtierra bathed Pandya's paneer in a wine sauce and served it with caviar.

At Aurum in Los Altos, California, Manish Tyagi reimagines classic palak paneer as lasagna, using slices of the cheese in place of pasta. Between the layers are sautéed spinach, ground paneer, cumin, and fenugreek leaf powder. It's baked with shredded mozzarella and served with tomato sauce.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, two former tech employees, Jasleen and Tarush Agarwal, have also boosted paneer's local profile. In 2019 the married couple, who worked at Facebook and the children's platform Toca Boca, started Sach Foods, which specializes in small-batch paneer, made with organic grass-fed milk from Holstein cows.

Their product has a creamy texture that stands out from most widely available commercial versions such as Nanak, made by Canada-based Punjab Milk Foods; Amul, based in Gujarat, India; and Mother Dairy, a wholly owned subsidiary of India's National Dairy Development Board. The Agarwals found a place for their paneer in Whole Foods after meeting regional buyers at cheese festivals in Portland, Oregon, and San Francisco who said it was superior to the Gopi brand they were currently carrying.

Retailing for \$8 for a 6-ounce package — in flavors ranging from plain to turmeric twist to spicy habanero — it's now on shelves at about 200 Whole Foods and 140 Safeway stores, as well as specialty food stores.

Bay Area-based grocer Good Eggs has seen a four-fold increase in sales since launching the product in late 2019. Meherwan Irani, who owns Chai Pani in Asheville, N.C., switched to Sach paneer in 2021; since then, sales of his paneer tikka roll, made with yogurt marinated cheese that's char-grilled and served in buttered naan, have increased more than 30%.

"Our growth is unique in the cheese world, especially during a global pandemic, when the normal ways of selling to new accounts don't apply," Tarush says.

As grocery store sales remain strong, the Agarwals are doing research and development on a second paneer-related product. They're also ramping up production to five days a week — from two to three days — to start serving 1,000 stores in the first quarter of 2022.

Donna Berry, a former Kraft Heinz Co. scientist who's now a dairy industry consultant, says sales of paneer in America can continue rising along with awareness, as in-store tastings and other events return. "It's products like paneer that keep consumers interested in dairy," she says. "Cheesemakers have upped their game to be competitive with plant-based innovators."

Basements and billiards



GINNY MAMMEN
OUT AND ABOUT

On the southeast corner of Adams and Elm in downtown La Grande stands the two-story blond brick West-Jacobson Building, serving 1302-1306 Adams and several businesses on Elm. It was constructed in 1913 on a lot that had been vacant since the fire of 1891, which destroyed the wooden structure housing a general store.

Nathanial K. West, the pioneer merchant who ran a clothing and dry goods store at 1210 Adams, found a partner in C. S. Jacobson of Portland who wanted to invest in the progressive city of La Grande. Their partnership created this fine structure.

The building provided commercial

space on the first floor and offices on the second floor. Even though this was the same year the Foley five-story building was completed, it didn't take long before this new building was filled with a variety of businesses and services. The second floor housed doctors, dentists, lawyers, architects and accountants. The attorney James Slater was one of the earliest occupants.

The street level became the location for many businesses over the years. With the spacious main floor, and by being constructed on a corner, it offered space for up to five businesses and became a hub for shopping. One of the very first stores was Morgan's 10 & 25 cent store. Some of the others located in the commercial spaces over the years included White's Candy Kitchen, in 1916; La Grande Pharmacy, around 1915-mid 1920s; The Men's Wear in the mid 1920s; National Serve Yourself Shoe

Store, 1927; Earnie's Buster Brown Shoe Store, in the 1950s; Townes Studio, a photograph studio; A&W Root Beer; Jack Allens Auto Supply Company in the late 1920s; and Red Cross Drug, opening here in their new location December 1940. In later years the building was home to Marie Josephine and Looking Glass Books. Today 1302-1306 serves as the location of Raul's Taqueria, Raul's Cantina and a vacant storefront.

For most downtown buildings, basements were used for storage of supplies. But not this one. One of the more interesting occupants, and perhaps the most lively, was the one that was located in the basement for a number of years.

In June of 1913 it was announced that C. C. McCornick of Eugene was to open a billiard parlor in the



Fred Hill Collection