



Old-fashioned FLAVOR

Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Swedish tea ring.

Experimenting with nearly forgotten baked goods recipes

By DANIEL NEMAN
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Far away on a distant sea lies the Island of Old-Fashioned Baked Goods.

There, slices of apple-sauce cake play in the tall green grass. Charlotte ruses dance in the dappled sunlight. Coconut cream pies huddle with date-nut bread to gossip about pineapple upside-down cake.

But despite the appearances, all is not happy on the island. The pleasant, hopeful veneer hides an undercurrent of sorrow.

These baked goods were once beloved. They were in every magazine, they were on everyone's tongue. But now they are all but forgotten.

Does that diminish their inherent quality? Does that make them any less worthy of being eaten?

Does that make them ... stale?

I say no. I say it is time for these brave and stalwart baked goods of yore to make a stand, to leave the peaceable comforts of their isle and to find their way back to our tables — for the sake of nostalgia, if nothing else.



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Gram's doughnuts.

I went back to some old cookbooks (and one cookbook that went back to old cookbooks) to make some favorite baked goods that have not lost their luster over the decades.

I began with butterhorn rolls, which I always knew as crescent rolls (the names are, apparently, interchangeable). These were a favorite of mine when I was growing up, and I looked forward to dinners at my grandmother's house when she would serve them.

It's possible we only had them at Thanksgiving, but they have loomed large in my memory because they were so buttery and flaky and delicious.

But I also haven't had them since my childhood, and I haven't seen them anywhere, either. Those store-bought refrigerated rolls that pop out of their container do not count. They do not count at all.

The homemade version is vastly superior. And it's not because of the yeast that makes them rise so beautifully, nor the eggs and the milk that make them so rich. It's not even the modest amount of sugar, that brings just a hint of sweetness.

It's the butter in the butterhorns that makes them so addictive, a half-tablespoon of it in every roll.

Hillary Levin, the photographer who takes the pictures of most of my food that grace these pages, called it one of her favorite breads that I have ever made.

For my next baked good, I went to a cookbook that was published in 1940. My wife's aunt bought "The American Woman's Cook Book" that year, and I'd like to think she used it to make a lemon chiffon pie.

If she didn't, she should have.

I, for one, had forgotten

all about lemon chiffon pies until I saw the recipe. And then the memories came flooding back: the sweet, delicate tartness of the filling, so impossibly light, on a simple crust, with a dollop of whipped cream on top for an additional little taste of sin.

It took a few steps to make, but that is largely because I made my own crust (old-fashioned desserts deserve homemade crusts) and I whipped my own egg whites and my own cream (I don't have an epigram for that, I just like whipping egg whites and cream).

The result was magnificent. It was lemony and chifflony and delightful.

My wife said it had the taste and the texture of the '50s.

Next, I made doughnuts. You could argue that there is nothing old-fashioned about doughnuts, but I would present the counterargument that these were homemade. When is the last time you had homemade doughnuts? And why didn't you invite me?

Besides, these are called Gram's Doughnuts, which automatically makes them old-fashioned.

In fact, the recipe dates back to the Depression, when one of the cookbook's author's grandmother would invite local workers inside for coffee and all the doughnuts they wanted for 10 cents.

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Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Fresh strawberries add a sweet touch to this easy spring salad with fried chicken.

Celebrate the strawberry season with fresh salad

By GRETCHEN MCKAY
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

STRAWBERRY SPINACH SALAD

One of the first true delights to turn up at farmers markets this time of year are local strawberries. Boy, they're terrific out of hand — just try getting a quart container of them home without snacking on a handful — but they also can add a sweet, juicy touch to any number of desserts and appetizers such as salsa and crostini.

Full of good-for-you antioxidants, the bright-red berry works a particular magic in a salad, especially when paired with another favorite spring market find, spinach.

To turn this easy spring recipe from a side into a more hearty main, I threw sliced fried chicken into the mix, along with crumbles of gorgonzola, a mild blue cheese. Grilled or roasted chicken — shredded or diced — would be a fine substitute if you're cutting back on fried foods.

I like the tangy contrast of blue cheese against the strawberries, but if you're not a fan, substitute feta or goat cheese or even brie or fresh mozzarella. Same with the nuts: I used pre-packaged honey-roasted sliced almonds (available in the produce aisle), but you may prefer toasted or caramelized pecans or walnuts.

Serve with crusty bread and a crisp, chilled bottle of sauvignon blanc for a simple supper.

For salad
1/2 small red onion, very thinly sliced into half moons
4 cups baby spinach or spinach-arugula mix
1 quart local strawberries, hulled and quartered
1/4 cup crumbled gorgonzola
3/4 cup toasted pecans, walnuts or honey roasted almonds
2 cooked chicken breasts, sliced thin on the diagonal

For dressing
1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
1 small shallot, thinly sliced
1 1/2 tablespoons poppy seeds
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/4 cup olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Place sliced red onion in a small bowl and cover with cold water.

Prepare dressing: Place vinegar, honey, shallot, poppy seeds, mustard and olive oil in a mason jar, screw on the lid and shake vigorously to combine ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper, and put aside while you compose the salad.

In a large salad bowl, place the greens along with a pinch of salt, and toss with your fingers to combine. Add the quartered strawberries. Drain onions, and then place into the bowl. Add crumbled cheese and chicken, and then drizzle with about 1/2 of the salad dressing (or more, depending on how well-dressed you like your salads).

Toss the salad, making sure all of the greens are nicely coated with dressing. Garnish with nuts and serve.

Serve with extra dressing on the side.

Serves 4.
— Gretchen McKay

The short history of the original Roesch Building



GINNY MAMMEN
OUT AND ABOUT

The southeast corner of Adams and Fir in downtown La Grande was, up until the early 1900s, a generally undeveloped area. In addition to the occupants and businesses mentioned in the previous article there were several dwellings, and Ole O. Johnson had his flour and feed business here. Kate Usher, a dressmaker working from her home, was located at 1412 Adams. By 1913, Kate was no longer there and there was a new resident — a D.R. Fong Medicine Company dealing in "Chinese Root & Herb Remedies" that remained until January 1916.

In our last visit to this corner we concentrated primarily on the Sacajawea Hotel, but prior to building this, Julius Roesch had dreamed of big things happening for this last corner to be developed in downtown La Grande.



Bob Bull Collection

The Roesch Building, constructed in 1916 at the southeast corner of Adams and Fir in downtown La Grande, was partially taken down 11 years later to make room for the Sacajawea Hotel.

The west end of Adams Avenue had been filled with businesses for the basic everyday

needs, but there was a new invention taking the nation by storm that needed its place in La

Grande to serve the people. This was the automobile. Roesch, a man with enthusiasm, substantial finances and vision, was ready to meet this need and he had just the spot for it on the last main corner on Adams that had not yet been fully developed.

In 1916 the existing wood structures on the corner of Adams and Fir were torn down and a large two-story brick building, aptly name the Roesch Building, was constructed.

The first occupant of this attractive new brick building was Hilton's Garage, advertised as "one of the best equipped in the state for handling automobiles and other motor vehicles." When in 1922 Hilton moved to Portland to establish a garage business, Roesch Motor Company took over what had been Hilton's Garage.

Then Roesch Motor Company was followed by Perkins Motor Company Co., Ledbetter Garage and other automobile related businesses.

In addition to automobile sales

there were stores and offices located in the building such as Hugh E. Brady, attorney; Dr. C.E. Brenner and Dr. C. S. Moore; Gwilliam's Electric Bakery and Skala Hardware Co. Piggly Wiggly established a store here in 1925 at 1408 Adams and Sprouse-Reitz opened a store at 1406 in 1926. These and many other occupants called this building home over the years.

Then the inevitable happened in 1927. Julius Roesch realized this was the perfect time to act on his dream of having a fine hotel, on this corner. In order to do so he decided that part of the Roesch Building had to be sacrificed in order to construct the proper hotel. As a result a portion of the two-story building, just over 10 years old, was demolished to make room for the spectacular new Sacajawea.

Keep looking up! Enjoy!

■ Ginny Mammen has lived in La Grande for more than 50 years and enjoys sharing her interest in the history of people, places and buildings.