

The Heritage of Cooking Series

Pioneering Washington State

Last week the Heritage of Cooking Series explored the beginnings of Black society in Washington State. This week we present some of the food traditions that evolved as this group adapted food habits to their new environment.

Although the old pioneers discovered the delicacies of salmon, seafood and other Washington products, these new traditions are often most appreciated by the more recent settlers.

by Norma Jean Darden for Kraft, Inc.

Two modern-day "settlers" being written and talked about are Seattle Supersonics coach Lenny Wilkens and his wife Marilyn. In many ways their stoic faces and calm decisiveness seem to echo and personify the spirit of Northwest blacks. In true pioneer spirit, the Wilkens have ventured into the restaurant business. On the Kirkwood shore overlooking Lake Washington, "Lenny's" promises a fresh, relaxing and delightfully delicious eating-out experience. From the attractive menu we tried that North-west delicacy, the traditional fish of

the land, salmon.

"The salmon is to Blacks in the Northwest what sirloin steak is to those in the East," explained Chris Bennett. Chris, a Georgia-born G.I., fell in love with Seattle while in the service and is now a moving force in the area as editor of *The Seattle Medium*. His wife, Gloria, already a master salmon preparer, shared her secret recipe with us. Using the abundant fresh vegetables and herbs of the area, she first coats the inner cavity of the fish with mayonnaise to keep it moist, then stuffs it with slices of tomatoes, onions, green peppers and parsley before baking. Delicious!

But of course everyone in Washington has his own special recipe for salmon. Tessie Thomas, who sings the national anthem before Seattle sports events, stuffs her salmon with cornbread mixture. Rich with oysters and mushrooms, it's a recipe that she learned from her mother, Ms. Emma Thomas, formerly of Tennessee.

Teaching goes two ways for the Thomases, for recently in a health-conscious effort to eliminate salt and pork from her diet, Tessie started using smoked turkey as seasoning for



Seattle Supersonics coach Lenny Wilkens and his wife Marilyn meet with writer Darden for lunch at "Lenny's restaurant to talk about life in the Northwest.

greens. Now her mother prepares them that way, too. Ms. Thomas is now from Bremerton, a shipyard

town that is a short ferry ride from Seattle. One of her best friends there is an American Indian, so that bet-

ween these three women they can get a salmon smoked, barbecued, baked, stuffed broiled, boiled, grilled, fried or croquetted. "Just think," said Ms. Thomas, "I had never tasted fresh salmon until I moved here, only the canned kind." The expression on her face clearly indicated that there is nothing like the real thing.

Not only do salmon recipes abound in the Northwest repertoire, apple ones do, too. It was Virginia Gayton who said that expressions such as "an apple a day keeps the doctor away," and "as American as apple pie" must have originated in the state of Washington. She can remember having them fried with sausage for breakfast, baked, stewed, and in cobblers for dessert as a child. Beulah Hart also mentioned that raw apples were given out free to

starts you off with the healthful fruit, make Cinnamon Streusel Apple Muffins. These fine-smelling muffins boast a crunchy cinnamon topping and are especially moist and delicious.

Picnics and parties call for convenient salads that can be made in advance. A colorful way to serve fresh apples is in Waldorf Crown Salad. A perfect dish for a gathering of family or friends, this Waldorf salad in strawberry gelatin mixes the crunch of chopped apple and walnuts with the fluffy texture of miniature marshmallows. The Fluffy Dressing is a quick and easy mixture of Miracle Whip salad dressing, miniature marshmallows and sour cream. The dressing is also a festive addition to other gelatin or fruit salads.

No story on the heritage of



Ms. Emma Thomas and her daughter Tessie work together to create sweet potato pie, a perfect dessert to follow Emma's salmon baked with an oyster and cornbread stuffing

miners before work.

We took these Northwest heritage food findings back to the Kraft Kitchens where they were translated into convenient recipes from a bountiful, miner-style breakfast to an elegant seafood soiree.

If an apple a day does keep the doctor away, what better way to start the day than with Hearty Oat'n Apple Pancakes. They provide a tasty breakfast or brunch when served with fruit, bacon or sausage, and a choice of pancake toppings. For a tangy fruit flavor try strawberry or apricot preserves. Syrup or confectioners' sugar adds sweetness to the hearty pancakes, too.

For a quicker breakfast that still

cooking in the Pacific Northwest would be complete without a special recipe for salmon. Like the Bennetts and the Thomases, the Kraft Kitchens have developed a stuffed version, featuring cornbread, vegetables and seasonings along with Lemon Parsley Sauce. It's a spectacular dish for guest dinners. Garnish the fish with lemon slices and parsley for a more elegant finish. If salmon is unavailable in your supermarket, try other whole fish of similar size such as trout or red snapper. The stuffing can also be used with pork or poultry.

Fish doesn't have to be saved for special-occasion eating, either. We've found in the Northwest that (Please turn to page 7 col. 1)

Storing vegetables for winter

All pumpkins and hard-shelled winter squash may be stored at the end of the growing season.

"For best results, these late-ripening vegetables should be stored in a dry, ventilated area with a temperature between 50 to 55 degrees F," says Ray McNeilan, Oregon State University Extension home gardening coordinator.

The length of storage life depends on the variety and type of squash or pumpkin; the storage life of hard-shelled winter squash are as follows: Table Queen (acorn type), one to two months; Butternut, two to three months; Hubbard types, Banana, Buttercup (turban type), three to six months; Sweet Meat squash, four to six months.

Jack O'Lantern and Connecticut Field variety pumpkins can be stored for two to three months.

Pumpkin and squash should be left on the vine until mature; but regardless of size, they should be harvested before the first heavy frosts, McNeilan says.

Squash are ready for harvest when the rind is hard enough to resist fingernail scratches. Handle the vegetables carefully to keep them in good condition. Ones with bruises should not be kept for storage because bruises will not heal.

"Cuts and scratches in the skin, however, will heal over," says McNeilan.

Some pumpkins and squash can benefit from a short period of curing. Curing involves holding

squash and pumpkin at a temperature favorable for healing cuts and scratches and for forming a protective corky layer over injuries and cut surfaces of the stem.

"Well-matured squash under good storage conditions do not need to be artificially cured," says McNeilan.

But nearly mature squash—except acorn types—and pumpkins can be cured for 10 days at temperatures of 80 to 85 degrees F and a relative humidity of 80 to 85 percent. A warm room in the house should do the job.

Squash and pumpkin deteriorate rapidly if stored at temperatures below 50 degrees F. Those that have been exposed to freezing before harvest also will deteriorate rapidly.

A relative humidity of 75 percent, about normal for garages or other suitable storage areas in western Oregon, is satisfactory. A temperature range between 50 to 55 degrees F is important. Also, keep the surface of the vegetables dry to prevent the growth of decay fungi and bacteria.

Good air circulation will help prevent moisture from forming on the surface of the vegetables.

Provide shelves for storing pumpkins and squash. Do not leave them on cold concrete floors. They should not be stored near apples, pears or other ripening fruit. Ripening fruit releases ethylene gas, which causes the squash to yellow and shortens storage life.



HARVEST HOEDOWN!

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