

## CHAPTER II

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## APPETIZERS

Compared to the 1940s and 50s, today people don't really eat all that many appetizers. Back then appetizers were almost as important as the main course, but the trendy appetizers of those days were much different and fewer in number than what's on today's menus. For some unknown reason, at least half of all appetizers involved mushrooms. (Could be an interesting topic for someone's doctoral thesis!) One thing restaurants did back then that you rarely see today was what you might call table appetizers or table garnish. In addition to the obligatory bread basket, a dish of hearts of celery with some carrots and a few green or black olives was a common sight on restaurant tables, and all before you even gave the waitress your order.

At home, appetizers were saved mainly for entertaining or meals marking some special occasion. One of the really big favorites back then was stuffed mushrooms which you could say was the quiche of the 50s and 60s. Another biggie was shrimp cocktail, but beyond shrimp cocktail and appetizers with mushrooms, you were pretty much on your own, much like Columbus on his first cruise across the Atlantic. It's also interesting to note that stuffed mushrooms are one of the few appetizers that seem to have withstood the test of time and are still very popular today. We'll start off with the old familiar stuffed mushrooms for which there are probably as many recipes as there are renditions of "White Christmas"!

### *Mushroom Canapés* (Ruth Abrams)

1 loaf thin sliced day old bread  
½ lb. mushrooms  
2 tbs. butter  
Mayonnaise  
Salt  
Grated onion  
Fresh ground pepper

Cut bread slices into small circles about 1 to 1 ½ inches in diameter. Chop mushrooms very fine. Sauté in butter for about 10 minutes. Cool then add mayonnaise to moisten. Add grated onion, salt and pepper to taste. Spread on bread circles (not too thick). Place under broiler. Watch until lightly browned. Warning! They burn very easily!

### *Mushroom Dip*

½ lb. mushrooms cleaned and chopped  
1 8 oz. package of cream cheese at room temperature  
2 tsp. butter  
Worcestershire sauce to taste  
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté mushrooms in butter until they lose their moisture and then combine with other ingredients. Chill overnight and serve with crackers, wafers or water biscuits. By the way,

you can jack this one up a bit by adding a few mashed anchovies. I know you'll be all over that suggestion!

### ***Stuffed Mushrooms***

8- 10 mushroom caps  
1 tbs. butter  
2 tbs. finely minced onion  
¼ tbs. Worcestershire sauce  
¼ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese  
2 tbs. water  
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350°. Wash mushrooms quickly under running water and drain on paper towels. Remove stems from mushrooms and chop finely. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-low heat and add chopped mushroom stems and onion. Sauté until tender. Stir in Worcestershire sauce, soft bread crumbs (see end of recipe), cheese, salt and pepper. Sprinkle salt over mushroom caps and fill with sautéed mixture, mounding over the top. At this point, you may cover and refrigerate the mushrooms for up to 24 hours. Before serving put 2 tablespoons of water in a shallow dish and arrange stuffed mushrooms in dish. Bake for about 20 minutes. Serve hot.

Soft bread crumbs: Put bread on cutting board and use fork tines to tear off crumbs, or use food processor to make finer crumbs. One slice bread makes about ½ cup lightly packed crumbs. (Or now days you can go to a store and buy them!)

### ***Cheese Straws*** (Hilda Blume)

This one's a real winner. When Hilda first started making them back in the late 1950s, she was light years ahead of her time. Today you can go to just about any supermarket and get a selection of a few different types of cheese sticks. Some of them may even be good, but they're not Hilda's!

1 cup butter or margarine  
1 8 oz. package cream cheese  
½ tsp. salt  
2 cups flour  
½ cup parmesan cheese  
1 egg yolk  
2 tsp. milk

Work all ingredients together using fork and hands. Flatten dough out in foil to 2 ½ inch thick and refrigerate overnight. Next day, divide into two or three pieces. Roll each piece out to ¼ inch thick and sprinkle with 1/3 of the parmesan cheese. Fold it up and roll it out

twice more, each time adding the another 1/3 of the parmesan cheese. Roll again into a sheet about 4 inches in one direction. and brush with the yolk of an egg and 2 tsp. of milk. Sprinkle remaining parmesan cheese on top and cut into strips about 3/4 inch wide and 3 to 4 inches long. Twist each strip. Place on ungreased cookie sheet and flatten down the ends. Brush remainder of the egg yolk on flattened ends and chill in refrigerator for 1 hour. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes (until lightly brown).

### ***Crab Meat Appetizer***

1 lb. crab meat  
3 medium onions finely diced  
1 bunch celery (including some soft leaves) finely chopped  
1 finely diced green pepper  
2 level tbs. flour  
1/4 cup milk  
salt  
Pepper  
Cayenne pepper  
Worcestershire sauce  
Bread rounds (lightly toasted) or round crackers  
Cheddar cheese

Combine onions, celery and green pepper, and sauté with a 1/4 lb. of butter until soft. Dissolve the flour in the milk and then add it along with the crab meat to the sauté and cook until thick. Season to taste with salt, pepper, dash of cayenne and Worcestershire sauce. Spread on bread rounds and sprinkle with grated cheddar cheese and paprika. Place in a 350 degree oven until cheese melts. (May be put under broiler.)

### ***Carrot Log***            *(Miriam Newman)*

Yeah, I know. The name sort of backs you up a bit! When we think of food, the term “log” is usually not one of the terms that immediately comes to mind. To my way of thinking, “log” means wood and trees or perhaps even fire as in “put another log on it”. So perhaps “carrot spread”, or maybe even “carrot delight” or some other more benign sounding name might have helped this one out. I mean, why not just call it “carrot blob”? It couldn’t be any worse than “carrot log”!

4 large carrots grated  
2/3 box Ritz crackers (finely crushed)  
1/4 lb. butter or margarine (melted)  
1/4 cup (slightly less) grated onion  
1 egg  
Mix all ingredients together and roll into a log about 12 inches long. Roll into aluminum foil and place on cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Serve with crackers.

### *Eggplant Caviar Spread*

I can't really say just how popular this spread was (or wasn't). I do know that I liked it because I liked (and still do) both eggplant and caviar, and I always thought this was a great appetizer.

- 1 whole eggplant
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 tbs. olive oil
- 2 tbs. lemon juice
- 2 tbs. finely chopped scallions
- 2 tbs. finely chopped parsley
- 1 clove crushed & finely chopped garlic
- 1 small jar of caviar

Bake 1 whole, unpeeled eggplant for 1 hour at 450 degrees. Peel eggplant and mash in a bowl. Add remaining ingredients, mix well and refrigerate.

### *Caviar Pie (8 or 9 inch pie)*

If you didn't like the preceding recipe with caviar, you'll probably like this one even less. It's got everything in it that's fashionable to hate...caviar AND anchovies! So, to all you fish haters, and we know who you are, take a hike so that those of us who appreciate the finer things in life can enjoy this treat without being heckled.

Crust:

- 4 hardboiled eggs chopped very fine
- ½ stick butter
- 1 tbs. very finely chopped onion

Mix the above ingredients and use to form pies crust.

Filling:

- 1 can flat anchovies drained and chopped
- 1 tbs. mayonnaise
- 1 tbs. chopped parsley
- 4 oz. jar black caviar
- 1 or 2 scallions
- 1 loaf unsliced pumpernickel bread

Mix the above ingredients, apply over crust in 2 thin layers and refrigerate. When mixture is thoroughly chilled, spread caviar over last layer. Sprinkle with chopped scallions and serve with pumpernickel bread bits or crackers.

### ***Tempura Batter***

3 egg yolks  
2 cups cold water  
2 ½ cups sifted flour

Add cold water to beaten egg yolks, and then mix in the flour as well. Mix until fully incorporated. Good for deep frying vegetables and seafood.

### ***Cream Cheese & Worcestershire Sauce***

I don't remember exactly where we got this recipe, but when we were first married we used it a lot. It was a very fast, easy and inexpensive way of putting an appetizer out when family or friends dropped by unexpectedly. But don't let its simplicity fool you. It was also very tasty!

1 package cream cheese (large or small)  
1 or 2 tbs. Worcestershire sauce

Place the cream cheese on a small dish and pour the Worcestershire sauce over the top. Use more or less sauce to suite your own taste, and serve with crackers. It doesn't come any easier than that!

Many of us associate appetizers with cocktails, a natural accompaniment and a good paring. My parents weren't big drinkers, but you'd never know it by the rather extensive collection of alcohol related glassware they had accumulated over the years. There were two different sets of beautiful, glass beer mugs, cut crystal shot glasses, and the most unusual martini (or Manhattan) glasses I have ever seen. I am told they are Bimini glass. They were exceptionally thin, hand blown, art deco glasses which stood the better part of five inches high. About half of the height was a very simple cone shaped glass which sat atop a straight and simple stem. The cone had a hand painted spiral design which was a different color on each glass. But the most amazing thing about these glasses was that in the middle of the stem was inserted a perfectly spherical, clear, glass ball with a diameter of about one inch. Inside of this glass sphere was a jockey on a white horse that was rearing up on its hind legs.

My memories of this set of glasses are among my earliest memories of our home on River St. in Wilkes-Barre. As I already mentioned, the glass itself was exceptionally thin, and when lifted by your fingers they were as light as the proverbial feather. From that description you shouldn't have much trouble imagining just how fragile they were. In fact, a basic rule of the house was that I was not, under any circumstances and under threat of death, allowed to run through the dining room, the fear being that even the slightest vibration would cause a glass to break. It eventually got to the point that when I would walk through the dining room (which you had to do in that apartment to get to the bathroom or the bedrooms) I would not even look in the direction of the cabinet for fear that my stare might create an "incident". As odd as it may sound, a reasonable person could say that I actually came to fear that set of glassware.

Now we fast forward ahead about thirty years or so. Sally (my daughter) was about five or six years old and had spent the night with my Mother at Debbie Dr. When I arrived to pick her up the next day, I was horrified (perhaps terrified would be more accurate) to see Sally sitting at the kitchen table casually nursing a glass of fruit juice and conversing with my Mother who was cleaning up from lunch. So why was I terrified? Sally was drinking her juice from one of the Bimini Martini glasses!

“Sally, put that glass down. Who gave it to you?” I was more than a little alarmed, and I rushed forward to assist her in carefully putting it back down on the table.

“I gave it to her,” my Mother calmly volunteered. “What’s the worst that could happen? If she breaks it, I have nine more that I don’t use.”

Oh, how things change with time. Thirty years earlier I was afraid to even look at the glass my five year old daughter was now drinking from! But isn’t that how grandparents are supposed to behave with their grandchildren?

### ***Mock Deviled Crab***

As the word “mock” would indicate, this is not the real deal. It was obviously invented as an inexpensive alternative to a real (and expensive) deviled crab recipe which contains real crab meat. But it’s funny how things change with time. Today, a halibut steak, if you can even find it, will probably run you about twenty bucks a pound which is very much in the same cost range as real crab meat. But you’re probably already way ahead of me on this one. Why settle for the imitation when using the real thing isn’t going to cost you anymore?

1 ½ lb. halibut steak  
1 bunch celery  
3 medium onions  
1 mango (That’s what my Mother’s generation called it. To you it’s just a green pepper!)  
¼ lb. butter  
¼ lb. cold water added to melted butter  
2 eggs  
2 tbs. crackers crushed  
Salt, pepper and paprika to taste

Finely chop celery, mango and onions. Boil fish with a dash of vinegar and then flake with a fork. Simmer chopped vegetables in butter until tender and add more butter as needed. Add halibut to the pan and simmer five minutes. When done, flake fish in pan. Beat the two eggs and add slowly to mixture. Save some egg for the top. Add enough crackers to thicken the mixture, and then season with salt, pepper and paprika to taste. Coat top with egg and bake at 350 degrees until brown.

### ***Salmon Spread (or dip)***      *(Alma Rosenbluth)*

Obviously, one of those older recipes! You don’t see all that much combining of salmon and mayonnaise these days!



1 small onion grated  
1 jar pimento cream cheese spread  
1 tbs. mayonnaise or Miracle Whip  
1 7 oz. can of salmon

Mash ingredients together and serve with your favorite crackers.

***Spinach Balls*** (Ann Archer)

It has occurred to me that “balls” seemed to be the preferred shape for a number of foods, and that’s particularly so with appetizers, though not necessarily limited to them. It would appear that it is somehow man’s destiny, whenever possible, to shape food into a sphere. There are spinach balls, cheese balls, melon balls, cream cheese balls, butter balls, popcorn balls, ice cream balls and, of course, the much maligned and celebrated matzo balls.

2 11 oz. packages of chopped spinach  
2 cups Pepperidge Farm seasoned bread crumbs  
6 eggs beaten  
½ cup butter softened  
1 cup grated parmesan cheese  
Salt and pepper

Combine ingredients, add salt and pepper to taste and mix well. Shape into (of course!) balls about the size of a walnut. Freeze, and then bake on a cookie sheet at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes.

***Artichoke Spread (Soufflé)*** (Margie Shapiro)

Margie still makes this one on a regular basis, and it’s still a big favorite with our friends and family. You don’t see all that many hot appetizers any more, and that’s one of the things that makes this recipe stand out.

½ cup finely chopped onion  
½ cup water  
4 eggs  
½ cup Italian bread crumbs  
Salt & pepper  
1/8 tsp. dried oregano  
Tabasco sauce  
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese  
1 can or jar of artichoke hearts (not marinated)

Chop all ingredients in processor. Place mixture into a shallow dish and bake at 350 degrees for about 20 minutes. Serve with crackers. (Editor’s note: Cannot be formed into a ball!)

## *Cheese Ball*

Throughout time, and with the possible exception of mushrooms, cream cheese is probably the most used prime ingredient for appetizers. It's value in that regard is not so much for its taste, but rather for its texture and its ability to take on the taste of other ingredients mixed with it.

3 3 oz. packages cream cheese (softened)  
4 oz. crumbled blue cheese  
2 tsp. bourbon (optional, but why not go for it!)  
¾ tsp. dry mustard  
Worcestershire sauce (to taste)  
2 tbs. toasted sesame seeds

Day before serving:

In a small bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed, beat cheeses until soft. Add bourbon and mustard and blend well. With hands, shape into a ball and cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate overnight. Right before serving, reshape ball and roll in sesame seeds. Serve with crackers.

## *Chopped Liver*      (*Ruth Dickstein*)

I've saved one of the very best appetizers for last. Even people who don't particularly care for chopped liver love this one. First of all, the term "Chopped Liver" infers chicken liver, not duck or some other unsuspecting animal. Chopped liver, or "pate" as it is now called in more fashionable culinary circles, is one of those foods that can bless your taste buds with the taste experience of a lifetime or be so bad that that you'd rather swim with snakes that eat the liver. This is the recipe I remember my Mother making when we still lived on River Street in Wilkes-Barre. My Father, who had a very "selective" pallet (he ate nothing green, like vegetables or anything that was even slightly out of the mainstream of known and recognized food), loved this recipe, and it was a common sight on our Friday evening dinner table or when we had guests. There is huge range in taste and texture between chopped liver recipes, and this is one of the few I not only eat but truly enjoy as well. Part of its goodness stems from making it with a hand meat grinder rather than an electric food processor, the latter of which tends to reduce it to an indistinguishable, monochromatic paste which lacks both texture and taste. By the way, while it's typically served with crackers, it's also very good with so called "party" rye which is essentially a sliced loaf of mini-rye bread.

2 eggs (hardboiled and chilled)  
2 1/4 pounds chicken livers  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided (or chicken fat)  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 small onion, chopped  
salt and pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon chicken stock

Preheat the oven's broiler and set the oven rack about 6 inches from the heat source. Place chicken livers on a baking sheet in a single layer and broil until the liver is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear, about 3 minutes per side.

Heat 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in the chopped large onion and cook and stir until the onion has softened and turned translucent, about 5 minutes. Divide into two bowls and set aside.

Put the chicken livers, 1 hardboiled eggs, cooked onion, salt and pepper through a hand meat grinder. Pour in the chicken stock into the grinder a bit at a time with the other ingredients. Arrange the liver mixture in a bowl and top with a sprig of parsley. Refrigerate for 4 hours before serving, and serve with crackers. (A food processor can be used in place of a hand meat grinder, but the texture will not be the same. A meat grinder provides a more desirable texture, whereas a food processor tends to make the finished product too pasty.

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## SOUPS & STOCKS

### *Chicken Matzo Ball Soup*

*(Ruth Dickstein)*

If you were brought up in a Jewish family, soup was as much a staple as sugar and flour. Most were thick hearty soups made with beef or chicken, and they all warmed the body on a cold winter day. Much like filet mignon is considered to be the king of beef, and lobster tail the king of seafood, good old fashion chicken soup reigned supreme in Jewish households. It's healing powers are legendary, and it has been reported to cure everything from a common cold to warts and a lackluster personality. A good chicken stock had to be slow cooked, cooled in the frig and then the fat thoroughly skimmed off the top. That's a process which can't be done while the soup is warm because the fat won't congeal at the top of the pot.

From there, each mother had her own approach to completing the soup. Some would simply add matzo balls, an excellent choice, but one that in our house was reserved strictly for Jewish holidays. As a kid, I noticed that in many of my friends' homes it was like there was some Jewish law that wouldn't allow you to make or eat matzo balls on any days other than Rosh Hashanah, Passover or the evening before Yom Kippur. When their moms served chicken soup on Friday nights, as most Jewish households did except in the warm summer months, it was loaded with pieces of chicken, noodles and usually a few pieces of carrot for color. But in our house, chicken soup had to be accompanied by matzo balls. Different strokes for different folks!

#### Matzo Balls:

- 2 eggs
- ½ cup matzo meal
- ½ tsp salt

Beat the eggs thoroughly and then add the matzo meal and salt. Mix thoroughly and then refrigerate for 30 minutes to allow mixture to set. Form matzo balls by hand (about the size of an apricot) and boil covered for about 30 minutes or until just cooked through. Store in the soup broth.

#### Chicken Soup:

- 1 whole chicken (be sure to remove innards)
- 1 parsnip cut in half
- 2 carrots cut into pieces
- 2 stalks of celery cut into pieces (include the celery leaves as well)
- 1 medium onion (peeled and quartered)
- Salt to taste
- 3 sprigs of dill
- 2 packets of George Washington Golden bullion
- Water

Combine all ingredients, except dill and salt, into a soup pot and bring to boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook uncovered for about 1 hour. During cooking, periodically skim top of soup. After about 3 hour, taste test, and if more flavor is needed add 2 or 3

packets of George Washington Golden bullion. Stir in bullion and salt to taste. Add dill sprigs and simmer for another 15 minutes. Remove from stove and strain to remove everything from the broth. Allow to cool to room temperature and refrigerate overnight. Next day thoroughly skim any grease or residue from the top. Soup and matzo balls can be reheated together in a soup pot on the stove or in a microwave oven.

***Cold Cucumber & Spinach Soup*** (Miriam Newman)

1 bunch scallions  
2 tbs. butter  
4 cups sliced cucumber  
½ cup chopped spinach  
½ cup sliced, raw potato  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. lemon juice

Slice and then sauté 1 bunch of scallions in a sauce pan. Add butter until softened. Add all of the remaining ingredients and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Puree in small batches in a processor and then place in a large bowl to cool. When cool, blend in light cream, and chill several hours before serving. (Consider adding a few sprigs of fresh dill when in processor.)

***Kreplach*** (Nancy Leventhal Robinett)

For those of you wondering, “What the hell is kreplach?” think of *them* as Jewish raviolis and, like ravioli, they’re plural because *they* travel in groups. Kreplach are not typically found on a dinner plate, but rather hanging around in bowls of beef broth.

Filling:

1 lb. chopped beef  
1 egg  
½ medium onion  
½ tsp. salt  
2 slices white bread (soaked in water and wrung out)

Dough:

2 eggs  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ glass water  
1 ½ cups sifted flour

Combine all ingredients for the filling in a bowl and mix with hands. Combine all dough ingredients and kneed. Cut dough into three sections and roll out one at a time. Cut into

strips and then pieces about 1 ¼ inches square. Add the filling, cover with another dough square and pinch ends together. Cook in boiling beef stock or beef soup.

What follows is two recipes for court bullion. I'm not sure which one Mom used, or used most, but both index cards seemed to be fairly worn which would seem to indicate that both were popular with her. It is my understanding that court bullion is used to poach fish, not something my Mother did all that often, so I have no idea why she would want two recipes.

***Court Bouillon (1) (to boil fish)***

Water to cover fish  
2 cups dry white wine  
1 tbs. salt  
1 sprig fresh dill  
1 onion chopped  
1 carrot chopped  
1 celery root or 1 celery stalk chopped  
2 sprigs parsley  
1 bay leaf  
6 – 8 peppercorns

Combine ingredients, bring to boil and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes.

***Court Bullion (2) to boil fish***

1 tsp. salt  
2 tbs. dry wine (white or red – or lemon juice or vinegar)  
¼ tsp. peppercorns  
1 small onion (unpeeled and quartered)  
1 small carrot (unpeeled and cut coarsely)  
3 sprigs parsley  
1 stalk celery (with leaves)  
1 clove garlic (whole but peeled)  
1 tbs. of dry herbs (tarragon, basil, summer savory)  
2 cups water

Combine all ingredients in a pot, cover and boil for 20 minutes. Reduce heat, and when liquid stops boiling, add sea food or fish, cover and cook at a simmer until done.

***Potato Dill Soup*** (4 servings)

My Mother had a love affair with dill, and she was always looking for new ways to use it. I think you'll agree that this is one place where dill really rocks! (Not that it doesn't rock elsewhere as well!)

½ cup onion (finely chopped)  
2 tbs. butter  
4 medium potatoes (diced)  
2 cups water  
1 ½ tsp. salt  
2 ½ cups milk  
1/3 cup chopped fresh dill  
2 tbs. flour  
1 cup sour cream

Sauté onion in butter. Add potatoes and cook two minutes without browning. Add water and salt. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer until potatoes are tender (about 15 minutes). Add milk and dill and bring to a boil again. Gradually blend flour with the sour cream, and then stir in a little of the soup mixture. Empty sour cream mixture into the soup and cook at a very low heat until desired thickness is reached. Do not allow soup to boil.

***Zucchini Soup*** (Ruth Dickstein)

Zucchini is not on my vegetable hit parade. However, this soup is the one exception to my anti-zucchini campaign. For more information on zucchini, please refer to *Vegetables* in Chapter II where I have provided a brief editorial regarding the unfettered proliferation of zucchini as a food source in the free world. (Editor's note: It is recognized that the sentiments contained in that editorial may not be shared by all readers.)

4 medium sized zucchinis  
1 large onion  
3 carrots  
1 large potato  
1 or 2 sprigs fresh dill  
Water (about 4 cups)  
3 George Washington Golden bullion packets  
2 tbs. butter  
Sour cream  
Salt, pepper and sugar to taste

Scrub and cut zucchini into small pieces. In soup pot, add zucchini, onion, carrots, potato, dill, and water. Cover and bring to a boil, and then simmer until vegetables are soft. Add GW bullion, butter and then salt, pepper and sugar to taste. Put in blender on puree cycle. Serve hot or cold with a dollop of sour cream, and as my Mother would want me to tell you, don't skimp on the dill!

## ***Cream of Tomato Soup*** (4 servings)

### Rich Cream Sauce:

2 tbs. butter  
2 tbs. flour  
¼ tsp. salt  
1/8 tsp. black pepper  
1 cup cream

To make 1 cup of rich cream sauce, melt butter in a sauce pan, stir in flour, salt and pepper and stir until smooth. Warm the cream and gradually add it to the butter mixture stirring constantly. Bring to a boil and cook for 2 minutes. The sauce should be very rich.

1 cup ripe tomatoes (peeled & quartered)  
1 small bay leaf (or piece of)  
1 tbs. onion juice  
A pinch of baking soda

Combine tomatoes, bay leaf and onion juice and cook for about 10 minutes. Take off heat and immediately add a pinch of baking soda. Combine cream sauce and tomato mixture and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve each bowl with a small dollop of whipped cream.

## ***Borscht***

WARNING! If you're not a big fan of red beets, you may want to skip ahead to the next recipe because borscht is a soup whose main ingredient is red beets. Borscht is served cold, and that makes it an excellent choice for a hot summer day or if your electricity goes out and you can't cook! Most borscht connoisseurs will take their borscht with a dollop of sour cream which they stir into the soup until the crimson red beet juice and white sour cream combine to turn the borscht into a truly hideous shade of hot pink. My Father loved borscht with sour cream and a boiled potato, but I was never able to get past the fact that it was hot pink in color. I don't know why, but I don't think soup (or for that matter, any food!) is supposed to be that color.

4 red beets  
¼ cup vinegar  
1 plate water (I didn't make up that unit of measurement...that's what the recipe said!)  
3 eggs (beaten)  
2 tbs. sugar  
½ pt. sour cream  
2 tsp. of water  
2 boiled potatoes (skinned, quartered and chilled)

Wash and shred beets. Combine beets and vinegar in a soup pot, cover and boil for 20 minutes. Combine eggs, sugar, sour cream and water together in another pan and beat. Add that mixture to the beets and vinegar. Allow to cool and refrigerate overnight before serving. Add the chilled, boiled potato and a dollop of sour cream just before serving.



***Hamburger Soup***      (*Margie Shapiro*)

This is what you'd call your prototypical "hearty" soup. It's got a hearty beef flavor, but there's a crispness and clarity to its flavors that I find exceptional. Even better, once the pot hits the stove it only takes an hour or so until its ready to serve.

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 medium size sweet onion peeled and finely chopped
- 2 medium size potatoes cut into cubes
- 2 large stalks of celery cleaned and chopped
- 2 large carrots peeled and chopped
- 1 tsp. sugar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- 1 or 2 George Washington Brown beef bullion packets
- 2 cans stewed tomatoes
- 2 ½ cans (empty stewed tomato cans) of water

Brown meet and onions in soup pot and drain off excess fat from meat. Add remaining ingredients, except for sugar and basil, and stir. Cook at a simmer for about 1 hour or until vegetables are cooked through. Add sugar and bullion, stir and cook another five minutes. Taste, and if necessary add a second packet of bullion.

***Mushroom Beef Barley***      (*Lou Shapiro*)

This is one of our favorites, and it will probably be one of yours too if you like the hearty taste of mushroom and beef.

- 1 to 1 ½ lb. chuck roast (cubed and fat trimmed)
- 1 small package of mushrooms (cut up)
- ½ package barley (about 1/3 cup)
- 2 to 3 George Washington Brown (beef) packets
- Beef bone
- 1 medium onion finely chopped
- 3 cups water (+ or -)
- Flour

In the soup pot, sauté onions until translucent and then remove and set aside. Coat meat cubes in seasoned flour and brown in same soup pot. When meet is done, add water, onions and meat bone and simmer on low heat for about an hour. Skim off any residue on top, add 2 hands full of the barley and continue cooking for another 30 minutes. Add mushrooms and two GW packs and cook for another 20 to 30 minutes or until barley is cooked. Taste, add salt and pepper to taste, and if necessary, add one more GW packet. (Some supermarkets carry mushrooms in a variety pack which may have three or even four different kinds of mushrooms in the same package. If this is available, it is a far superior option to just plain button mushrooms.

## Gazpacho

Like borscht, this is another cold soup. But unlike borscht, this is not a “developed” taste. When the temperature is in the 90s and the humidity is so high that it’s making fish sweat, it’s time to make gazpacho. Gazpacho is essentially a cold vegetable soup with a few more things like lemon, lime and a bunch of herbs added. The act of eating it seems to cool you off after a few spoonfuls, and although it requires a whole lot of busy work in the preparation, once you taste it I’m sure you’ll agree that all that work is worthwhile. By the way, only make it when local homegrown tomatoes are readily available. That’s the most important ingredient because if you can’t get really good tomatoes then you’re just wasting your time and money. This is not the traditional recipe, but rather one that I have evolved to after many years of trial and error. Good gazpacho is extremely hard to find in restaurants, and even those that do carry it don’t have a recipe half this good!

Preparation should ideally take place about two days before planned use to give the ingredients time to “soak” and blend. The vegetables need to be cut by hand and very small. Use of a processor in place of hand chopping will yield an unsatisfactory texture and change the taste of the soup. Yes, I’m really serious about that. It will actually change the taste!

1 large can of regular tomato juice  
5-6 medium tomatoes chopped finely with seeds and all  
3 sticks of celery  
1 cucumber (seeds removed)  
1/2 yellow peppers  
2 green peppers  
¼ sweet onion  
juice from 1 lemon  
juice from 1 limes  
3 ears of corn

Seasoning and herbs *to taste*

3 cloves of garlic  
Fresh Thyme (remove leaves from about 4 sprigs and reserve for food processor)  
3 pinches cumin  
2 pinches dried oregano  
Kosher salt to taste (about ¼ tsp.)  
Black pepper to taste  
A few shakes of Worcestershire sauce  
A few shakes of Tabasco sauce, if you want some heat

Place about one half of all the vegetables, all of the chopped garlic, and the thyme leaves into a food processor, add a splash of the tomato juice and puree the mixture until fairly smooth in texture. Place the pureed mixture in a large container and add the remainder of the tomato juice, the remainder of the chopped vegetables, and the herbs and seasoning. If the soup seems too thin or watery, add more chopped veggies. After it sits for a day or so, stir it well, taste it and add seasoning as necessary. Lemon, lime and salt are the most common things to be added at the end, as necessary.

Right before serving, garnish with fresh chopped dill.

Included in the photo section of this book is what is probably my favorite photo of my Father and me. There are actually more photos of us together when I was a baby than in my teens, so you could say that it's my favorite because there really aren't any (or at least not many) to choose from. The shot I'm talking about was taken when I was about seven years old. It was taken on the top observation floor of the Empire State Building on the occasion of my very first trip to the Big Apple. This was a trip my Father made quite frequently to buy merchandise for the stores, and I remember the trip well because I looked forward to it for weeks in advance.

To begin with, my father explained that we would go by car, but to get on to Manhattan island we would need to travel under the Hudson River. This was not an easy concept for a six year old, and my primary concern, although there were others, was how we would be able to breathe under water. Dad explained that they piped air in, but he was quick to add that a raincoat and perhaps an umbrella would be beneficial to help keep dry. (And you wonder where I get it from!) We stayed at the New Yorker Hotel where Dad and Uncle Charlie always stayed, and all the hotel staff seemed to know him by name. One of the highlights of the entire trip was that from our hotel window I could see the Queen Mary docked at one of the piers in the Hudson River. It was truly larger than life.

The trip lasted two days and two nights. On the first day I accompanied Dad to many of the clothing showrooms and buying offices, and in the afternoon we hopped in a cab to take us to my big surprise, something Dad had talked about for weeks but without revealing exactly what it was. The cab dropped us off in front of a large building Dad said was called Madison Square Garden. We bought tickets at the entrance, and as we began walking inside to whatever this event was, I suddenly recognized the sounds and smells to be a circus. It was the "Greatest Show on Earth", Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey which, as far as circuses go, was the biggest and best. It was a great show, and afterward on the way out we stopped to look at what one of the many vendors was selling. It was, to say the least, more than a little odd. On the shirt of the guy selling these oddities were no less than twenty baby chameleons about three or four inches long. Each of them had a gold metallic collar with a short chain that was attached to his shirt with a safety pin. His entire shirt was quite literally crawling with chameleons! Dad agreed to buy me one (what was he thinking!), and the guy let me pick one out which he then unpinned from his shirt and repinned onto my shirt. That night and the next day we somehow kept the little reptile contained in the hotel room, and it then accompanied us in the car on the trip back home to Wilkes-Barre. The best part of this story is what happened during the next few days at home, but we'll pick that one up a little later.

To finish up this story, on the second day and before leaving for home that afternoon, Dad fulfilled his promise made several weeks ago that we would go to the top of the world's tallest building. Do any of you males remember what a big deal it is for a young boy to make such a pilgrimage? Well, let me tell you. For a young boy in the late 1940s, going to the very top of the world's tallest building was probably bigger than having lunch with the Green Hornet! The photo which I spoke about earlier was taken to commemorate the occasion. Check out the photo on page 182, and then tell me...are these two guys real studs, or what?

\* \* \*

## SALADS & DRESSINGS

Whenever I think of salads, I automatically think of the Lake, Harvey's Lake, where we spent about six magical and memorable summers and where salads were popular summer fare both at the lunch and dinner tables. The Lake would have made a great movie because there was an endless supply of characters and story lines that would appeal to people of all ages.

The house at the Lake where we lived was rather unique. It was an old, very large, very beautiful and well kept home that had been renovated and divided into three separate apartments. My parents and the other two tenants all knew each other well, so it was like one big happy family. As great as the house was, the land it sat upon was even better. It consisted of what I'd guess to be about five or more acres which included a large white barn, great for playing in on rainy days, and a large dock and boathouse. It was all surrounded and interspersed with beautiful natural landscaping including a long row of no less than thirty, tall Hydrangea bushes, wild raspberry, blackberry and huckleberry bushes and a broad variety of colorful flowers. The lawn was large and spread on all four sides of the house. Beginning at the rear of the barn and continuing as far as the eye could see were dense natural woods, ideal for hiking and doing all sorts of "kid" stuff.

Immediately to the rear of the house, and directly under my second floor bedroom window, was one of the property's great attractions, the outdoor ping pong table which was also lighted to allow night time play. Another fifty feet or so past the table and toward the garage was the tallest, broadest apple tree on the entire planet. It towered over everything else and produced enough apples to feed a medium size country. And not far from the ping pong table, but well clear of the apple tree, was a large, stone fireplace with a steel grate for cooking.

Two things I really liked about the Lake was (1) there were a lot of kids my age to play with, and (2) just about everything at the Lake was community property. Once you walked out your apartment door, everything was fair game. There was none of this nonsense with, "This is your side and this is mine." Everything was my side AND your side at the same time. It really was one big happy family made up of three families and *anyone* who came to visit them, and that leads us to our first Lake story.

Back in the early and mid 1940s, air conditioning was non-existent, and it wasn't until the late 40s or very early 50s that it began to appear, first in movie theaters and then in retail stores. No one had it in their homes, and profuse sweating was pretty much the national summer pastime. So there you are on a hot and humid (very hot and very humid!) Saturday or Sunday afternoon with nothing to do but sweat. So what do you do for relief? You go to the lake and sponge off someone!

That may be a slightly harsh assessment, but that's really what it amounted to. On a hot summer weekend you never knew who you'd find turning up into the driveway. There was an unwritten rule that some sort of food dish was the price of admission, and most of the time the tenants of the house provided only the main course which was usually hamburgers, hotdogs or sometimes even steak. The meat of the day was cooked on the large stone fire place situated in the yard at the rear of the house near the ping pong table which was often pressed into action as a serving table. It was not unusual to have ten or even fifteen guests arrive, mostly unannounced, on a Sunday afternoon. "Hi, we were in the area and thought we'd just stop by to say hello. And I just happened to have a noodle pudding with me. What a coincidence!" The men would sit in one group talking men things, and the women would do their thing in another group, and at least two adults were always on guard on the dock to watch the kids as they swam in the lake.

As dinner time drew near the women would disappear into the kitchens of the three apartments while the men got a good fire going in the outdoor fireplace. A big flaming fire was not good for cooking, and it took a fair amount of time to burn down enough wood to produce a pile of hot coals which is what was really needed to properly cook the meal. Once the fire was ready, the fireplace grill was covered with the meat of the day, and ten or fifteen minutes later all of the side dishes were removed from the various refrigerators and moved, along with the meat, to the ping pong table for serving.

Following dinner and dessert, and an appropriate time of just sitting, talking and digesting, the ping pong table was cleared for the main event, ping pong, which on a Saturday night could go on until 1:00 AM! They played singles, they played doubles, they played mixed doubles, and watching was about as much fun as playing. Everyone got into it. Even if you weren't a player, you cheered for or against someone. Dad held the paddle vertically, much like the Asians do. His play was very aggressive, and he was difficult to beat. Mom played a very steady game and could hold her own with most of the players, but my sister Sally was the one who gave the men fits with exceptional defense. She never slammed the ball, but it seemed as if she could return anything they had to offer. Sometimes the men would get so frustrated that they would attempt impossible slams and end up losing the point. But all the while Sally remained calm and very much in control. There were usually no less than ten people watching, and at times as many as fifteen or even more. It was like the Olympics, but without the endorsements or drugs! And I know all of this because I had the best seat from my second floor bedroom window where I always stayed up well past my bedtime. These afternoon and night activities were rituals that were repeated weekend after weekend and year after year.

### ***Blue Cheese Dressing***

½ cup sour cream  
2 tbs. mayonnaise or Miracle Whip  
1/3 cup crumbled blue cheese  
2 tsp. lemon juice  
½ tsp. seasoned salt

Combine and let ingredients set for at least 15 minutes.

### ***Green Goddess Dressing***

½ cup sour cream  
¼ cup tarragon vinegar  
¼ cup finely chopped parsley  
1 tbs. anchovy paste  
1 tbs. lemon juice  
1 tbs. finely chopped green onions or chives  
1 clove garlic crushed and chopped

Combine and let ingredients set for at least 15 minutes.

### ***Russian Dressing***

½ cup chili sauce  
½ cup mayonnaise  
½ small grated onion  
Salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce and mustard to taste  
1 tsp. pickle relish  
Combine and let ingredients stand for at least 15 minutes.

### ***La Maize Dressing***

1 hard boiled egg (chopped)  
1 tbs. finely chopped green pepper  
1 tbs. finely chopped red pepper  
2 tbs. finely chopped celery

Add to Russian Dressing and let stand set for at least 15 minutes.

(Editor's note: Are you sensing a pattern here? Combine and let sit for 15 minutes!)

### ***Tuna Salad***      *(Margie Shapiro)*

This is not your typical tuna salad in which a bit of tuna is drowned in a big bowl of mayonnaise. If there is such a thing as gourmet tuna salad, this is it! It's great on a platter, in a sandwich or with a spoon right out of the bowl.

1 large can white albacore tuna packed in water and well drained  
2 hardboiled eggs (cool after boiling)  
1 celery stalk (chopped)  
2 thin slices of onion (chopped)  
2 tablespoons (+ or – to taste) Miracle Whip (not mayonnaise!)

Drain the can of tuna, and then break it up with a fork. Peel, and coarsely chop the hardboiled eggs. Add the tuna, eggs, celery and onion to a mixing bowl, and then gently add in the Miracle Whip. Add salt and pepper to taste, and then mix gently with a fork. Leave the tuna and eggs in reasonable size chunks. Here is a case where “less is more”. Do not over mix or the texture will turn to paste. By the way, this recipe utilizes hardboiled eggs because they enhance both the taste and the texture. Another key element is showing restraint with the Miracle Whip. Once again, if in doubt, less is more!

## ***Ambrosia Salad***

1 pkg. lime Jell-O  
1 cup boiling water  
¼ cup cold water  
½ cup sour cream  
2 tbs. French's yellow mustard  
½ cup shredded coconut  
1 banana (sliced)  
¾ cup crushed pineapple (drained)  
1 can mandarin oranges (drained)

Dissolve Jell-O in boiling water, then chill until partially set. In a bowl, combine sour cream, mustard, coconut, banana and pineapple. Add Jell-O and mix well. Pour into an oiled 1 ½ qt. mold and chill in refrigerator until set. Unmold on to lettuce lined serving plate. By the way, some mini marshmallows are an optional addition to the recipe.

## ***Italian Arugula (Tri-color) Salad***      *(Lou Shapiro)*

This is probably my favorite salad and the salad most people ask me to make. To give credit where credit is due, I first came upon this salad at a restaurant called Pane Vino on Rt. 10 near Whippany, New Jersey. It took at least two years of trial and error, and finally some inside information from one of the waitresses, but I finally got it pretty close. The arugula and pine nuts are probably the two most important ingredients which give this salad its very distinctive taste. This is also one of those salads that looks as good as it tastes!

Salad:

Arugula (remove big stems)  
Belgian Endive  
Radicchio  
Hearts of romaine lettuce (break by hand)  
2 medium slices red onion (chopped)  
1 tomato chopped  
1 handful roasted pine nuts (probably about 2 to 3 oz.)  
Crumbled blue or gorgonzola cheese (optional)

Sprinkle chopped tomatoes with salt and lemon juice.

To roast pine nuts, cover bottom of skillet with a splash of olive oil and roast pine nuts over a medium heat. Stir at least once every thirty seconds if not more. Nuts will burn very quickly, so keep heat on low side of medium and don't leave the stove! At twenty bucks a pound you don't want to burn them! When nuts are light brown, remove from pan and place on paper towel for fifteen minutes or until cool. May be stored in refrigerator in sealed container. By the way, the nuts are quite expensive but three or four dollars worth should be enough for salad for six.

Dressing:

*(These are only suggested proportions, and you should adjust to your own taste.)*

1 cup olive oil ( good quality)  
1 tbs. cider vinegar  
1 tbs. balsamic vinegar  
1 tbs. red wine vinegar  
1 tbs. lemon juice  
1 tbs. water  
1 tbs. dried basil  
¼ tbs. garlic powder  
1/8 tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. black pepper  
grated blue cheese to taste

In a sealable jar or carafe, combine the above ingredients and shake well. Allow to stand at room temperature for fifteen minutes. Shake jar again immediately before use.

Place all salad ingredients (except tomato, pine nuts and blue cheese) in a salad bowl. Add dressing lightly and toss. Add a bit more dressing, toss and taste. Add additional seasonings as necessary and toss again. Do not drown salad in dressing! Top with tomatoes, pine nuts, blue cheese and serve.

***Original Caesar Salad***      *(Lou Shapiro)*

This is the original Caesar salad, and although I make it without the egg yolk or anchovies, you should feel free to add them. This is a salad that's also great for dinner on a hot summer evening topped with a can of white albacore tuna or some cold chicken. I learned to make the salad from the head waiter at the old Alora Restaurant in Olyphant who regularly made it at tableside. In order to do it right, you'll need an unvarnished salad bowl. I know what you're thinking. "I don't have an unvarnished bowl, so I'll try it in our regular varnished bowl." Don't waste your time or your garlic. Here's why. The first two steps in the recipe involve putting salt into the salad bowl and then rubbing a piece of garlic on a fork into the salt and around the surface of the bowl. The unvarnished rough finish makes it possible for the bowl to offer some resistance to the salt as its rubbed around so that it the salt gets rubbed around the garlic and the bowl surface thereby transferring the garlic taste both to the salt and the bowl itself. With a varnished bowl, the salt just slips around and never really gets enough of a chance to pick up the garlic flavor.

1 head romaine lettuce  
1 clove garlic cut in half lengthwise  
¼ to ½ tsp. salt (regular, not kosher or sea salt)  
¼ (scant) cup extra virgin olive oil  
2 shakes dry mustard powder  
2 dashes of Worcestershire sauce  
Juice from ½ lemon  
Parmesan or Romano cheese



1 fresh tomato (optional)  
1 egg yolk beaten (optional)  
1 cup croutons (optional)  
Anchovy fillets (optional)

Put the half clove of garlic on a fork and rub the garlic repeatedly into the salt and around the interior surface of an unvarnished salad bowl. Scrape the excess salt from the garlic and put it in the bowl. Add the olive oil, then the mustard powder, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice and then whisk until all ingredients are thoroughly combined. Add cut up romaine leaves, toss and garnish with cut up fresh tomatoes, croutons and grated Parmesan or Romano cheese. It takes at least one time to get the hang of making this salad, especially doing the garlic and salt thing. By the way, if you opt to include the raw egg yolk which is part of the original recipe, mix it into the salad right before you add the grated cheese. The optional anchovy fillets can be placed on top of the completed salad as a garnish. Adjust amounts of the ingredients to suite your taste.

### ***Mediterranean Salad*** (Lou Shapiro)

Another exceptional salad. There are also a bunch of options that you can add depending on your mood on any given day. These options would include a small can of well drained sweet corn, cut up bacon pieces, red pepper, celery and other types of olives.

Salad:

½ head iceberg lettuce  
1 ¼ cups red cabbage (cut up)  
¼ cucumber (peeled and thinly sliced)  
8-10 Kalimata olives (pitted)  
8-10 pimento stuffed green olives  
1 roasted sweet red pepper (cut into thin strips)  
1 cup good quality chopped mozzarella or crumbled feta cheese (optional)  
1 tomato chopped  
2 slices red onion (chopped)  
1 medium clove of garlic (peeled and finely chopped)

Dressing:

*(These are only suggested proportions. You should adjust to your own taste.)*

1 cup olive oil  
1 tbs. red wine vinegar  
1 tbs. Champagne vinegar  
½ lemon  
Dried oregano to taste  
Dried basil to taste  
Kosher salt to taste

Spread finely chopped garlic around bottom of salad bowl. Cut lettuce into rough cubes. Combine in a salad bowl cubed lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, cheese and onion and lightly toss. Add remainder of salad ingredients except for tomato. Sprinkle lightly with olive oil and other dressing ingredients and toss lightly. Add a bit more oil, vinegars and lemon juice and seasonings and toss lightly again. Allow to sit for five minutes, taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. The measurements are merely guidelines, but you'll need to adjust these seasonings by taste. Top with olives, red pepper and tomatoes, and serve. Do not drown salad in dressing!

***Southwestern Salad***                      (*Lou Shapiro*)

Salad:

- 1 head Boston lettuce very roughly chopped
- 4 pieces crisp bacon (crumbled)
- 2 hard boiled eggs (chilled and then chopped)
- 1 sweet red bell pepper (diced)
- 2 slices red onion (diced)
- 1 small can sweet corn (drained)
- 1 can black beans (drained)
- 1 ripe tomato (diced and salted)

Dressing:

- 4 oz. sour cream
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- ½ cup blue cheese (crumbled)
- Salt & pepper to taste

Combine all dressing ingredients and mix well with a fork or spoon. Let stand 15 minutes before using. Combine salad ingredients, add only as much dressing as needed to coat, and serve. Add more salt, pepper or lemon juice as necessary.

***Lettuce Wedge with Paprika Dressing***                      (*Ruth Shapiro Dickstein*)

This salad probably accompanied more meals at my Mother's dinner table I did!

- 1 wedge of iceberg lettuce
- 1 ½ cup vegetable oil (not olive oil!)
- 2 tbs. apple cider vinegar
- 1 rounded tbs. of finely grated onion
- Salt & pepper to taste
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. paprika
- Juice from ½ lemon
- 1 fresh tomato

Combine all of the dressing ingredients into a jar with a lid and shake vigorously until all ingredients are thoroughly combined. Let the dressing sit for at least 24 hours to allow

seasonings to fully combine and do their thing. On a salad plate, place a lettuce wedge and a thick slice of tomato. Cover lettuce and tomato with the dressing. Like most of the salads offered in this book, they never came from sources which provided exact measurements, so I'm trying to eyeball it for you. If an ingredient seems too strong, or not strong enough, do what you need to do to correct the imbalance. The one thing I do know is that these are some of the very best salads I've ever had, and it's worth experimenting with them and adjusting the ingredients to your personal liking.

### *Tuesday Summer Salad*

In the next section under "Main Courses", I describe how my Mother had a weekly meal master plan which was a well thought out and coordinated effort to bring both variety and economy to the dinner table. The one thing I didn't mention was what I like to think of as the *Tuesday Summer Option*. If you pay attention when I describe the weekly menu planning process, you will see that Tuesday was always fish day because that's when the local fish market received its fresh fish shipment, and my Mother's weekly menus were built around that one simple fact. Had fresh fish day been Thursday instead of Tuesday, well, the whole world of eating would have been quite different for our family. In the summer my Mother tended to think of fish as perhaps being too heavy for the seasonal heat and humidity. During those summers when we were at Harvey's Lake, driving into Wilkes-Barre just to hit the fish market would have involved a two hour round trip. So rather than dump fish altogether from the Tuesday night dinner menu, my Mother came up with a cold fish and salad idea that was one of my favorites, although I suspect that many of you may not feel the same way when I tell you what was in it. Instead of fresh fish, Mom used canned skinless and boneless sardines and canned red salmon.

I know, canned salmon is bad enough, but just the thought of canned sardines and that strong fishy smell already has you sweating like an Olympic marathoner. My Mother exposed me to fish and seafood from an early age and on a very regular basis, and this is undoubtedly why even today fish and seafood are among my favorite foods. But there was something very special about the Tuesday summer salad which I will always remember. I liked the way it looked on the big oval platter as well as how it tasted. Mom would sprinkle the oil left from both the sardine and salmon cans over the entire platter. In fact, my favorite thing was eating the leftovers the next day after those oils had had a chance to permeate everything. If you like canned sardines and canned salmon, you'll love this, and even if you don't, try it anyway. You might get hooked just as I did.

1 can skinless and boneless sardines in oil or water

1 can red salmon

Iceberg lettuce leaves

1 or 2 tomatoes cut into wedges

1 cucumber peeled and sliced

1 can black olives

1 jar pimento stuffed green olives

4 eggs (hardboiled, cut in half and deviled)

1 lemon cut into small wedges quartered

Cut in half 4 hardboiled eggs and scoop out yolks into a small bowl. Add a bit of Kraft Miracle Whip, some Heinz ketchup and a bit of dark mustard to the yolks and mix in along

with a little salt and pepper to taste. Return mixture to hardboiled egg whites and top with a sprinkling of paprika.

Arrange the iceberg lettuce leaves to cover a large serving dish or platter. Add deviled eggs, tomato wedges, cucumber, black and green olives and lemon wedges. Add sardines to the plate and sprinkle remaining oil over the entire salad. Do the same with the canned salmon. Over the entire platter squeeze some lemon and sprinkle some pepper. Sprinkle a bit of salt on everything except the sardines and salmon. If you're in the mood, a large scoop of Margie's Tuna Salad (also included in this section) would be another great addition to this platter. By the way, a cold soup is a perfect way to start off this meal when it's really hot outside.

### ***Cucumber Salad***

1 cucumber peeled  
1 clove garlic (crushed)  
1tbs. white vinegar  
½ pt. sour cream  
2 tbs. olive oil  
Fresh pepper to taste  
½ tsp. salt  
½ tsp. fresh dill

Let garlic clove stand in vinegar for at least 15 minutes so that vinegar absorbs garlic flavor. Then remove garlic from vinegar. In a bowl combine vinegar and sour cream and all remaining ingredients except cucumber. Allow to stand for 15 minutes. Slice cucumber fairly thin and add to sour cream mixture. Before serving, garnish with a sprig of dill.

### ***French Dressing***                      (*Den Restaurant*)

Liz Martin Landau sent me this recipe. It's not a "family" recipe, but it looked good so I included it anyway.

1 cup oil  
¾ cup vinegar  
1 can tomato soup  
¼ cup water  
2 tbs. horseradish  
½ tsp. pepper  
1 tbs. mustard  
2 garlic cloves  
1 tbs. Worcestershire sauce  
¾ cup sugar  
1 tbs. salt

### *Dressing for Fruit Salad*

2 egg yolks beaten

½ cup sugar

1 orange juiced

½ lemon juiced

Whipped cream (Sorry, it didn't say how much!)

Moisten sugar with a bit of juice. Add yolks and place in a double boiler. Let cook until thick, and then allow to cool. When cooled, fold in whipped cream.

\* \* \*

## MAIN COURSES

So that I don't get too far ahead of myself, it would probably be a good idea to introduce you to the Ruth Shapiro Dickstein "schedule of meals". I know, what the hell does that mean? Well it's really fairly simple. My Mother had a specific category of food for every dinner of the seven days of the week, and that system was more inviolate than a train schedule. They weren't just seven disjointed days, but rather seven totally and completely integrated days with meals that grew one from the other, and the cycle didn't begin at the beginning of the week, but rather on Friday. Let me explain.

The biggest meal of the week was Shabbos dinner on Friday evening, and it was always selected from among one of four main courses. Roast beef, brisket, whole roasted chicken, or Swiss steak. Mom always made enough so that it was impossible not to have leftovers, but that too was part of the master plan. Saturday night my parents always went out for dinner, so I usually had something like a hamburger. Sunday nights were by far my favorite night because it was a virtual feast of kosher deli. Dad would go to Greenberg's deli in the Hill Section of Wilkes-Barre, and after waiting in line for quite some time he'd order corned beef, pickled tongue, link hotdogs, dill pickles and coleslaw. The aroma in the car during the ride home was so strong that you couldn't help but salivate. Mom would get things ready, and we'd sit down to eat around 5:00 PM and would remain at the table until at least 7:00.

It was a very leisurely meal, but what kept us there so long wasn't just the food, but rather the radio. In the 1940s and early 50s Sunday evening was radio prime time. The shows included classics such as Henry Aldrich, Name That Tune, Stop the Music, Jack Benny, the Shadow, Quick as a Flash and many more. These were shows that could hold your attention like a hundred dollar bill blowing down the street, and we listened while slowly picking away at our food and sipping multiple cups of tea. Okay, enough about Sunday night.

Monday was a straightforward menu which featured an encore performance of whatever was left over from Friday night. These leftovers would reappear as meatloaf, chicken potpie, shepherd's pie and many other dishes which were obviously created to facilitate the disposal of leftovers. Tuesday was the day when fresh fish arrived at the local fish market. Not Wednesday, not Friday, and not Sunday, but Tuesday...and every Tuesday. Mom would drop by the market in mid afternoon to see what fresh fish options were available, and they weren't the same choices every week which helped to provide variety. One week we might have broiled fluke, the next week maybe halibut and the week after that fin and haddy which, by the way, contained enough salt to season an ocean. But that didn't stop us!

Wednesday was typically steak or pasta night, and Thursday was a day off from cooking for my Mother. The family's women's clothing store was opened on Thursday nights, and since Mom worked in the store on Thursday evenings, we'd all go out to a Greek restaurant called the Embassy where, as regular customers, we were welcomed as if we were family. And that takes us full circle back to Friday night. So now you have it... the dinner master plan has been revealed!

The recipes which follow are a really good mix of the last generation with my generation, both of which are well represented in this book and on our dinner table as well. Many of the older recipes are still quite good even by current culinary standards, and I think you'll find many worth trying.

*Brisket* (Ruth Dickstein and Margie Shapiro)

This is the big one, the most favorite of all Jewish dishes, and because it manages to cram into a single serving more cholesterol than a truck load of butter, it is known to Jews and cardiologists around the world as “the widow maker”. Studies have shown that the widow maker is responsible for the deaths of more Jewish males than nagging by their wives. (Editor’s note: No, really, that’s true. I wouldn’t make that up!) In fact, many food stores that sell brisket include with your purchase a gift certificate for half off on a heart catheterization. However, this particular recipe is so good that it’s worth shortening your life and the lives of your loved ones for. There are countless recipes to cook brisket, and in recent years it has become very popular with the barbecue culture which has elevated it to celebrity status. You’ll hear barbecue experts lecture on how to make good brisket and what makes brisket good (two different things!), but believe me when I say that nothing cooked on a barbecue, nor for that matter any other conventional brisket recipe, can even begin to be discussed in the same sentence with this recipe. It is, without exaggeration, in a class all by itself. But never mind what I think. Try it, and you be the judge.

- 1 brisket single cut about 6 lbs.
- 2 good size onions (more or less depending on size of brisket)
- 1 or 2 bay leaves
- 1 small can tomato paste
- Garlic powder

In a large frying pan with 1 to 2 tsp. of oil, sauté onions until translucent (not brown), and then transfer to a large Dutch oven. Remove cooked onions while leaving behind as much oil as possible.

Cut away most of the brisket’s surface fat, but not all of it, and then liberally sprinkle that side of the brisket with garlic powder. In the frying pan in which the onions were cooked, brown the brisket beginning first with the fat side. Larger briskets may require folding over of the brisket in order to accomplish browning. Before browning brisket on the second side, sprinkle that side with garlic powder as well. Mix 1 tbs. of the tomato paste into the onions in the Dutch oven while the onions are still hot. Transfer brisket into the Dutch oven. Add 1 cup water to the frying pan and return to heat to loosen residue from bottom and sides. Pour contents over the brisket. Spoon some of the onions from the bottom of the pot over the brisket, cover and cook in oven at 325 degrees for 1 to 1 ½ hours. Check to see if there is more gravy than at the beginning. If not, add 1 cup of hot water to a packet of George Washington beef bouillon, pour over brisket and continue cooking. If sides (inside) of Dutch oven begin to brown, reduce heat by 25 degrees. Cooking time for a 6 lb. brisket should be 3 to 4 hours.

When brisket is fork tender, remove from heat and allow to cool until it is cool enough to put in refrigerator. (Put the whole thing, brisket and Dutch oven, in the frig.) in the refrigerator for at least 2 or 3 hours. About two hours before serving remove the brisket from the Dutch oven for slicing. Before slicing, cut away main areas of remaining significant surface fat. Slice the brisket perpendicular to the grain, about 1/8” per slice. Place sliced brisket back into sauce in Dutch oven (or Pyrex casserole dish) and spoon the

sauce over and between the slices. Heat in oven at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until hot enough to serve. Can also be heated in a microwave oven.

***Sweet Potato & Brisket Tsimes***      (*Ruth Dickstein*)

There are many variations of tsimes, and I've included only two or three versions. However, the one that follows is the one I think of when I hear the work "tsimes". This is what you'd call a real hearty meal with brisket, carrots, sweet potatoes and a whole lot of other flavorful things added to it. It was one of my Father's favorites although personally I had a tough time getting past the prunes!

2 tbs. fat  
3 lb. brisket  
1 lb. pitted prunes  
1 cup honey  
2 tbs. lemon juice  
4 cups boiling water  
1 ½ tsp salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
¼ tsp. nutmeg  
½ tsp. cinnamon  
1 lb. carrots – cut in chunks  
4 large sweet potatoes – peeled & cut in quarters  
1/3 cup brown sugar

Melt fat in heavy Dutch oven & brown meat. Add water & seasonings. Cover & cook over low heat 1 ½ hours. Add carrots & sweet potato & brown sugar. Cover & bake at 350 degrees for 2 hours. Remove cover last half hour.

Soak 1 lb. prunes in hot water for 1 hour. Add ¼ cup honey & about 2 tsp. lemon juice. Add mixture to the tsimes for the last half hour of baking. Thicken juice last ½ hr. with about 1 tbs. matzos cake starch. Serves 8.

***Salmon Croquettes***      (*Ruth Dickstein*)

1 raw egg  
1 slice bread  
2 hardboiled eggs (chopped finely)  
Celery (chopped finely)  
Parsley (chopped finely)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Mango (chopped finely)  
Bread crumbs



(Note: What my Mother's generation called a "mango", we today call a "green pepper," and it should not be confused with the tropical fruit available in most produce sections today which is also called a "mango".)

Combine all ingredients and mix. Form into small balls (croquettes), coat with bread crumbs and fry in a skillet. Serve with cocktail sauce or, if you prefer, tartar sauce.

***Pigs in a Blanket***      (*Ruth Shapiro Dickstein*)

The word "pigs" just doesn't seem right for a Jewish dish, but don't blame me. I didn't name it. Perhaps "beef in a blanket" or even "cow under cover" would have been more appropriate. In any event, I guess this dish is what you'd call sweet and sour. I haven't had it many years, but it was always one of my favorites that had a place in Mom's Monday night rotation.

2 lbs. ground meat  
1 sweet onion  
1 can tomato sauce  
1 can tomato paste  
Brown sugar  
Lemon juice  
1 head of cabbage  
White rice (about ½ cup cooked)  
¼ cup brown or white raisins (optional)

Sauté some chopped onion and then add the ground meat and cook. Add some cooked white rice (to taste). Sautee large cabbage leafs and raisins in a pan, and then add the meat mixture and roll. Heat the tomato sauce and add a bit of the tomato paste. Cover the cabbage rolls with sauce and serve.

***Classic Roast Beef (standing rib roast)***      (*Ruth Shapiro Dickstein*)

The ultimate company meal, both then and now, but back then you didn't need a bank loan to buy the roast! Mom typically accompanied it with pan roasted potatoes (a little crusty on the outside), asparagus and a lettuce wedge with a thick slice of tomato and her classic garlic paprika vinaigrette. (See page 33 for that recipe.) One of my favorite memories was coming home from school on a Friday afternoon and being hit in the nose with that indescribable smell of the cooking beef and its onion coating permeating the entire house. A special word about the onion coating. When the roast is done you'll see that the onion will have an absolutely black onion crust covering the roast. Your first inclination will be to remove it and toss it, but DON'T! In our household that crust was perhaps even more sought after than the meat itself. The roasted and burnt onion has a remarkable taste of its own, and it is largely that flavor transferred to the roast which gives the beef its distinctive taste and sets this recipe apart from all other roast beef recipes.

(for a 3 rib roast)

Let roast stand until it reaches room temperature  
Season outside of meat with salt and pepper  
Coat the top and sides of roast with grated onion  
Preheat oven to 500 degrees  
Cook roast at 500 degrees for 30 minutes  
Turn off oven but do not open oven door  
Allow roast to continue cooking in oven for another 2 ¼ hours  
Check with a meat thermometer to insure it has reach the proper internal temperature

***Pickled Fish***                      (*Ruth Shapiro Dickstein*)

Not a dish for the faint hearted, but one for the adventuresome and die hard fish lover. I like to think of dishes like pickled fish, lox or smoked white fish as Jewish sushi or, “Jewshi”! My mother would make it in a large glass jar with a glass lid that looked very much like (and may actually have been) a cookie jar. Through its glass sides every time I opened the refrigerator could be seen various parts of fish anatomy packed together in the pickling liquid along with a generous portion of onions. I can still recall, somewhere around the age of six, opening the fridge and being eyeball to eyeball with the severed head of a fish. It was probably as traumatic for the fish as it was for me. After the first few encounters I became used to it, but it certainly isn’t a sight you’ll run across in most households today. Remember the potato chip ad that had the famous line, “Bet you can’t eat just one!” Well, that would apply here as well, and I really mean it when I say, “I bet you can’t eat *one!*” Despite all its Stephen King like attributes, pickled fish was a dish much enjoyed back then by both family and company. Try serving that to company today, and be sure to let me know how that works out for you.

1 qt. water  
¾ cup (scant) sugar  
¾ cup white vinegar  
1 tbs. mixed pickling spices  
1 onion sliced  
½ tsp. salt  
Accent  
4 lbs. pickerel, white fish or pike (including heads and tails!)

Clean fish, cut into thick slices, lightly salt and refrigerate over night. Next day, combine all of the above ingredients except the fish and boil 20 to 30 minutes. Add fish to broth, cover and boil for 20 minutes. Allow fish to cool in the broth. When cool, carefully remove fish and place in deep container. Strain remaining liquid and add to fish. Refrigerate for a few days, and then throw the whole thing away. Oops, that slipped out, but you really do need to refrigerate the fish for at least a day before eating. Don’t be alarmed if a gel forms around the fish. Be alarmed if it doesn’t!

Writing about pickled fish makes me think of fishing at Harvey’s Lake. From the time I was about seven years old, I was allowed to go down to the lake early in the morning and fish from our dock or the docks of a few of our nearby neighbors. The rule was that I had to wear a life vest, and that

was the ticket that allowed me to fish unaccompanied by an adult. Looking back on it now, I find it hard to believe I was given that degree of freedom at that age, but I did enjoy it.

Every morning around 6:00 or 6:30 I would tip toe out of the house so that I would not wake anyone. I'd grab my fishing rod along with the nightwalkers I had harvested the previous night from the lawn around our cottage and head down to fish for my lunch. The three or four neighboring docks had quite different lake bottom conditions. Our dock was mainly sand and pebbles with no weeds and also no fish. The Leibenson's on the left had heavy weeds which attracted pickerel and perch, and the Baker's to the right had large rocks and a few weeds which seemed to attract bass. The fishing was prolific, and I almost always threw back most of what I caught. On a typical day I might take back to the house two or three decent size perch or a fifteen to eighteen inch large mouth bass. Mom would put the fish in a bucket of cold water where they would remain until about 11:30 or so when she would remove them from the water and scale and clean them. That may not sound particularly noteworthy, but how many women do you know today who would willingly clean fresh fish? Let me guess...is your answer "None"! Every summer we spent at the Lake, probably five times a week, that same routine was repeated, and not even once did my Mother balk at cleaning the fish. In fact, it became a ritual that we both enjoyed and looked forward to each day. I'd watch her very closely while she cleaned the fish, which is how I learned to do it, and then fry it in a pan on the stove. She and I, and sometimes Sally, would have fried fish and a tossed salad almost every day as our regular lunch. She quite literally taught me to enjoy fish of all kinds.

Mom's talent with fish was not limited to just cooking them. She was an accomplished fisherman who enjoyed fishing both at the Lake and in Canada. Each year she and my Father along with one or two other couples would go fishing in Canada where the women seemed to enjoy it as much as the men. Most evenings at the Lake, right around dusk, she would make some long casts from the dock with a floating lure. She'd only fish for fifteen or twenty minutes, but rare was the evening she didn't land a good size fish and then throw it back to be caught another day. Mom and Dad always seemed to enjoy our time at the Lake, and it was certainly when my Mother was most relaxed.

***Chili Con Carne***      (*Ruth Shapiro Dickstein*)

There are certain things Jews just aren't cut out for, and making chili is one of them. But who am I to judge?

3 medium onions chopped  
2 green peppers chopped  
1 large can kidney beans  
1 small can kidney beans  
1 can tomato soup  
1 lb. ground beef

Sauté beef, then onions and green peppers. Transfer into large pot, add remaining ingredients and add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with a hearty bread.

***Hamburg Barbecue***      (*Sally Shapiro Martin*)

2 lbs. ground beef  
2 large onions

1 green pepper  
1 whole bottle of chili sauce  
¼ bottle water (3 oz. more or less)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Break up the beef, cook in skillet, and then sauté onions and green pepper. Transfer beef, onions and green peppers to a deep pot and add remaining ingredients. Cook on low heat for 1 ½ hours. Serve over warmed hamburger buns.

***Chicken Cacciatore***      (*Nicole Martin*)

This is a really great comfort food with bold and distinctive flavors enjoyed best in the middle of a heavy snow storm on a cold and windy winter day. By the way, it's just as good the next day heated up for a minute or two in the microwave. The broth by itself would make an incredible soup, and I often soak it up with a piece of freshly baked bread.

Chicken legs, thighs and breasts (with bones in)  
1 George Washington Golden Bullion pack (or chicken bullion cube)  
1 onion (chopped)  
3 cloves garlic  
1 green pepper (cut into strips)  
2 stalks celery  
1 can whole tomatoes  
1/3 bottle red cooking wine  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
¾ tsp. oregano

Sauté chicken pieces in a little olive oil until slightly brown. Transfer chicken to a soup pot. Slice onions, cut up celery and green pepper and add to soup pot along with garlic cloves and cook for a few minutes. To the canned tomatoes, add wine, GW bullion pack, salt, pepper and oregano. Pour mixture over chicken, cover and cook for about 1 hour, or until meat falls off the bone, at 350 degrees.

***Broiled Chicken***      (*Margie & Lou Shapiro*)

This is another one of our personal favorites that is a slightly different take on the barbecue chicken recipe also included in this section. If properly cooked, the crisp, brown skin will be one of the best parts. Don't be afraid to let the skin get really brown.

1/2 chicken (or chicken pieces with bones in)  
Lowry seasoning salt  
Dried Basil  
Dried oregano  
Garlic powder

Balsamic vinegar  
1 lime (or bottled lime juice)  
Olive oil

Sprinkle one side of chicken with dry ingredients, and rub into chicken with fingers. Sprinkle with a bit of balsamic vinegar, lime, and a light drizzle of olive oil. Place chicken in a baking dish on the second oven rack setting from the top and broil. (Note: If you place the oven rack too high, the chicken will burn before it cooks through. If you place it too low, the broiler won't be able to cook it.) When the meat is dark brown, remove from oven and turn it to the other side. Repeat the same seasoning process on this side and return to the oven until dark brown on this side as well. The entire cooking process should take about 30 minutes.

***Tarragon Turkey - stuffing optional***      *(Margie Shapiro)*

Up until the early or mid 1980s, Thanksgiving dinner was always held at my Mothers. It was, to say the least, a huge undertaking, and as Mom got older it became more of a chore. Finally, after several years of laying the ground work, we managed to convince her that Thanksgiving should be moved to our house. But it wasn't quite that easy. About a week or so before the first Thanksgiving we were to host in our home, Mom called Margie to inform her that she would bring the turkey (of course cooked) along with the sweet potatoes and a vegetable. In other words, could Margie and I please provide electricity, water and a bathroom for use by the guests. Well, it took some fast taking on my part along with a good measure of pressure, but she finally agreed to bring only the sweet potatoes. Faced with the challenge of hosting our first family Thanksgiving, Margie knew she had to produce a turkey that was a real star!

The star turned out to be a chicken recipe that Margie found in a magazine sometime in the 1980s, but shortly thereafter she made the fateful decision to adapt it to our Thanksgiving turkey, a decision that has since spawned a Thanksgiving tradition. Although we never remember to do so, this is a recipe that deserves to be resurrected between Thanksgivings. Over the years it has been slightly modified to further enhance the flavor, and it looks as good as it tastes. One of the great benefits of this recipe is the sauce it creates while cooking. Notice I said "sauce", not "gravy". It's not thick enough to be called gravy, but it's tasty enough to be poured over everything on your plate!

1 turkey (12 lb. plus or minus, thawed)  
8 shallots grated  
4 to 5 medium carrots (peeled and cut into medium size pieces)  
dried tarragon  
4 medium potatoes cubed with skins  
1 bottle white wine (any kind)

Remove any packed innards, (Don't be a wimp...get your hand all the way in there!) wash thawed turkey thoroughly inside and out and allow to drain for a minute. Grate shallots in processor. Push hand between turkey skin and breast to create a pocket. Move turkey into roasting pan (disposable roasting pan recommended). Combine some of the grated shallots and tarragon together and, using hand, smear it under skin of turkey and in the turkey cavity. Take remaining grated shallots in hand and smear over exterior of turkey covering breasts,

legs and wings. Sprinkle turkey liberally with tarragon and place in oven at 350 degrees. After 30 minutes pour ½ bottle of white wine gently over the turkey (including legs and wings) trying not to disturb the grated shallots. Add carrots and potatoes and sprinkle them with tarragon. Baste every twenty minutes (carrots and potatoes too), and add remaining wine as necessary to form sauce in bottom of pan around carrots and potatoes. (The regular basting is very important!) Total cooking time should be around 4 hours (20 minutes per pound). If the turkey begins to get too brown before it is cooked through, tent with foil and return to oven until done. Check with a meat thermometer before removing. Remove vegetables and turkey from pan, and let turkey rest for 15 minutes. While waiting, skim fat from sauce. Slice turkey and put on platter for serving. Serve sauce in gravy boat.

Stuffing (optional):

- 1 bag Pepperidge Farm stuffing mix
- 2 medium onions (finely chopped)
- 1 stick butter or margarine
- 2 stalks celery
- mushrooms (enough to yield 1 ½ cups of chopped and cooked mushrooms.)

Saute mushrooms and celery in a bit of the butter until vegetables are soft. Melt the remaining butter separately. Empty the bag of stuffing mix into a large bowl and mix in the sauted vegetables. Next, slowly add the melted butter while constantly mixing the stuffing. Add salt and pepper to taste then stuff turkey cavity and cook as noted above.

### ***Barbequed Grilled Chicken*** (Lou Shapiro)

The origins of this recipe go back to about 1964 and my Penn State apartment on Prospect Ave. On a prematurely warm Saturday in late April or early May, my roommate and I decided to have a party that evening – “party” meaning dinner, music and lots of beer (I mean *lots* of beer!). We had a decent charcoal grill inherited from the previous tenants, so we decided to do chicken on the grill. When it came time to cook, we weren’t sure exactly how to do it, but we did recognize that just throwing chicken pieces on a hot fire probably wasn’t going bring about a final product with any real taste. We knew we had to put something on the chicken, but there was no barbecue sauce on hand and no time to run out for it. Checking the frig and pantry, we came upon a bottle of Italian salad dressing which we decided we’d use to coat the chicken. We even put more of it on as the chicken cooked, and when all was said and done we knew we had a winner. We continued to have parties and grill chicken, and with each grilling we learned something new and made appropriate recipe adjustments. The parties were really great and grew in frequency, but our chicken soon became as sought after as the beer! After a while we realized that marinating was the way to go for the most flavor, and over the years the recipe has been further refined to include lime, wine vinegar, honey and a few other things. After much experimentation, we also found that the more beer you drink while cooking, the better the chicken will taste! By the way, I never (and I mean never!) measure the ingredients, so I really can’t tell you how exactly much of each to include. I guess you’ll just have to wing it like I do!

- Chicken pieces (legs, thighs and/or breasts)
- 1 pack of Good Seasons Italian Dressing (dry in packet)
- Vegetable oil (for Good Seasons)

Red wine vinegar  
Kosher salt  
Garlic powder  
Dried basil  
Dried oregano  
2 fresh limes (Don't be bashful. More is better!)  
1 tbs. balsamic vinegar  
Honey  
1 bottle of beer (drink while grilling chicken!)

Marinade: (Additional marinade may be required depending on amount of chicken to be marinated.)

1 pack Good Seasons Italian or Garlic salad dressing made with vegetable oil and red wine vinegar as per directions on pack, and add 1 tbs. of balsamic vinegar and the juice from 1 lime to the mix. Shake well and let stand for 15 minutes. Shake well again before using.

#### Chicken Preparation:

Wash all chicken pieces thoroughly and pat dry with paper towel. Sprinkle both sides of chicken pieces with kosher salt, garlic powder, oregano, basil, and fresh lime juice, and use fingers to rub it into chicken. Place chicken in zip lock bags (or sealable plastic container), add marinade, push out as much air as possible from the bag, seal and refrigerate. Allow to marinate for at least 12 hours (24 hours preferable), turning bags over occasionally.

#### Grilling:

With grill lid closed, heat grill to high. Drain off excess marinade from each piece before placing on grill. Cook either with lid up or closed, whichever is required to maintain a bit of flame and a high heat. Allow chicken to brown well (charred is even better!) on all sides over high heat, turning frequently as needed. After browning is completed, reduce heat down to 250 - 275 degrees and continue cooking with lid down. Cook for about 1 hour, turning chicken every 15 minutes or so. After 30 minutes, drizzle some more fresh lime juice over chicken, close lid and cook another 15 minutes. Turn chicken, sprinkle new side with more lime juice and cook another 15 minutes. Chicken should now be done. The cooking time isn't all that important just as long as it's cooked through. After browning, the main thing is to cook it low and slow until done. Before removing chicken from grill, drizzle honey over the chicken, close the lid and cook for another minute. Turn chicken, drizzle with honey on the other side, and cook another minute with lid closed. At this point, all you're trying to do is liquefying the honey, so thirty to sixty seconds a side should be enough time to do it. By the way, it's just as good cold or off the bone on salads.

*Pickled Tongue* (Ruth Shapiro Dickstein)

Caution! Wait at least 30 minutes following a meal to read this, and keep repeating the words “acquired taste”! Every day throughout millions of American homes can be heard the familiar cry, “Hey Mom, can we have pickled tongue tonight for dinner? Please!” Well, maybe that’s not exactly how it goes. Today, the term “pickled” is simply not a part of everyday American cuisine, and those of us who have experience pickled foods are a rapidly dying breed – hopefully not because of the pickling! In fact, when talking about food, use of the prefix “pickled” has roughly the same effect as, “Oh, shit!”, when painting, or “Incoming!” when yelled in a foxhole. That being said, here in a nut shell is everything you always wanted to know about pickled tongue but were afraid (or simply didn’t care) to ask.

First of all, the biggest question. What exactly is *tongue* and where does it come from? Well, it is what its name says it is, and it comes from where so much of our dietary protein comes from, our buddy the cow and, yes, it comes right from his mouth. In case you’re wondering what it looks like, strike a pose in front of your bathroom mirror, lean in toward it and then open wide and stick out your tongue. Multiply that times four or five and you’ve got it. Other than size, your tongue is pretty much the same as a cow’s tongue, except that your tongue probably won’t end up on somebody’s dinner table! The little bumps and ridges on your tongue are also present on a cow’s tongue, but they’re a little bit bigger and more pronounced than on yours.

And here’s where we get into another fascinating aspect of tongue anatomy. In any kosher deli that carries pickled tongue, you usually have the option of ordering *end cut* or *center cut* tongue, a difference that can be readily seen even by the untrained eye. The *end* portion is the part you can actually stick out at people and that sort of flails around like the short tail of a dog. The *center* portion is that portion of the tongue where it is actually connected to the mouth through all sorts of tissue. It includes all that stuff under your tongue that connects it to your throat and lower jaw and that keeps it from falling out of your mouth. The difference between these two primary cuts (end versus center) becomes particularly evident when the tongue is sliced for serving and, believe it or not, many people have a very strong preference for one cut or the other.

But before I leave the totally absorbing topic of tongue, I should also probably tell you that there are actually three totally different recipes for preparing tongue. The one you commonly see in a kosher deli is “pickled” tongue because, as the name hints at, it’s cooked utilizing a pickling process. The other cooking methods are referred to as “sweet and sour” and “fresh” tongue and where the latter it gets its name, well, I have no idea. The word “fresh” brings to mind fresh produce like tomatoes or apples and all those other great fruits and veggies you see yelling “buy me, buy me” at the farmers’ market. But fresh tongue isn’t exactly like that. It’s cooked in a big pot on the stove or in the oven sort of like a brisket, but believe me, you’ll never get the two confused. What eventually comes out of the pot is a brown tongue which must then be stripped of its tough and knobby outer skin before serving. Unfortunately, (or perhaps not so unfortunately), I don’t have that recipe to share with you, but “luckily” I do have the recipe for sweet and sour tongue which I have also included. As far as the pickled tongue goes, you might want to sample a slice or two at your local kosher deli before spending the time to cook this delicacy at home. And by the way, here’s a little home helper’s hint. Got some bad smells in the house you want to get rid of? Well, consider this. Pickling a tongue will cover up virtually any other odor including even the smell of cooking skunk shit. Bon Appetite!



And now for the actual preparation. If you've decided, kind of on the spur of the moment, that you'd like to have pickled tongue for dinner tonight, forget it! The preparation of pickled tongue is a two part process (pickling vs. cooking) which takes – and get this – about ten days. Yes you read it right, ten days! The good news is that you don't have to move your bed into the kitchen. The tongue just sort of hangs around by itself for most of that time.

#### (Pickling Process)

- 1 beef tongue
- 5 qts. water (preferable bottled)
- 1 lb. light brown sugar
- 1 lb. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. juniper berries
- 5 cloves
- 5 bay leaves
- 1 sprig thyme
- 2 tbs. saltpeter (Keeps the meat from turning brown and, no, I have no idea where to get it!)

Add all brine ingredients in a large pot over low heat. Stir well until sugar and salt are dissolved completely. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Place tongue in a plastic container or zip lock bag and pour in brine liquid being sure to cover entire tongue. Refrigerate for about a week and flip tongue once a day to insure even pickling. Pickle for 7 or 8 days or longer if the tongue is more than 6 lbs. Remove tongue from container, rinse well in cold water and return to a new container with cold water added to cover tongue. Soak in water for 24 to 48 hours, and change the water every 12 hours.

#### (Cooking Process)

- 1 pickled tongue
- 1 bouquet garni (sprigs of thyme, small bunch of parsley and a bay leaf)
- 1 small carrot chopped
- 1 onion peeled and halved
- 1 leek halved lengthwise
- ½ garlic bulb with outer skin removed

Move the pickled tongue to a Dutch oven with all ingredients. Cover with fresh water and bring to a simmer on the stove top. Cook at low simmer (or in the oven at 275 degrees) for 2 ½ to 3 hours. The tongue will become very tender and can be tested by inserting a fork. Remove tongue from Dutch oven and place on a cutting board. Peel away the outer rough skin and discard. If the tongue is sufficiently cooked, it should be easy to remove. Cut into ¼ inch slices and serve with a brown mustard or creamed horseradish.

### *Sweet & Sour Tongue*

(Sylvia Goldstein)

Okay, let's pretend for a minute that you made the pickled tongue recipe and absolutely loved it. Now you have this uncontrollable craving for some other tongue dish and, fortunately, I'm Johnny on the spot to help you satisfy that craving with the next recipe which takes tongue to a never before experienced culinary level! This is a dish that somehow made it into my Mother's Friday night dinner menu rotation. Sweet and sour tongue has a different look than pickled tongue. I don't mean that the tongue takes on a different form or shape, but rather that it takes on a brownish, cooked meat looking color! There was a time when I enjoyed *pickled* tongue, particularly cold, on fresh rye and with dark mustard. However, there was never a time, nor will there ever be, when I enjoyed sweet and sour tongue. Shouldn't there be legal limits on what you're allowed to do with animal parts! Bon appetite!

1 beef tongue  
6 ginger snaps  
¾ cups sugar  
¾ cup brown sugar  
1 ½ cups water  
Juice from 1 lemon  
1 ½ tbs. white vinegar  
Unsalted almonds (No, I have no idea how much.)  
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients together, except for the tongue, and bring to a boil. Add cold tongue and boil for 30 minutes. Serve hot or cold. (Editor's note: This one will tax your gag reflex!)

What follows are several excellent chicken recipes which have been favorites at our home for many years. Of the three, Picatta is perhaps my favorite. It has a great lemon taste and reheats well the next day in the microwave. The Divan recipe is from Hilda Blume, so you know it has to be good, and the Kiev dish is perfect for you garlic lovers out there.

### *Chicken Picatta*

(Margie Shapiro)

This is a great company dish and not all that difficult to make. I'll even eat it cold, and it nukes great the next day.

4 whole skinless chicken breasts boned  
½ cup flour  
1 tbs. olive oil  
½ tsp. salt  
2-4 tbs. water  
¼ tsp. paprika

3 tbs. fresh lemon juice  
¼ cup clarified butter  
Lemon slices  
Parsley for garnish

Place chicken breasts between two pieces of plastic wrap and pound very thin. Combine flour, salt and paprika in a bag, add chicken breasts and shake well. Remove chicken and shake off excess flour. Heat butter and oil in skillet and sauté breasts 2 to 3 minutes per side. When all breasts are done, add lemon juice and water and deglaze pan on high heat, then cook until sauce thickens. Place chicken on platter, cover with sauce and garnish with parsley.

***Chicken Divan***      (*Hilda Blume*)

4 Boneless chicken breasts (sautéed)  
4 tbs. margarine  
4 tbs. flour  
2 cups chicken broth  
2 tsp. sherry  
½ tsp. salt  
Dash white pepper  
2 egg yolks  
1 or 2 broccoli crowns (partially cooked)  
½ cup mushrooms (cooked)  
Parmesan cheese  
Whipping cream

Sauté chicken breasts in a pan until nearly cooked through. Heat broth. Beat egg yolks and add some broth to eggs. Pour egg and broth mixture back into heated broth. Add sherry and keep mixture hot. Place partially cooked broccoli into a greased baking dish and cover with some of the sauce. Add sliced cooked chicken to top and cover with remaining sauce. Sprinkle with mushrooms, Parmesan cheese and add some whipping cream. Bake at 350 – 400 degrees until bubbly and then finish under broiler until slightly brown.

***Chicken Kiev***      (*Marian Isaacs*)

Chicken breast (boneless and pounded)  
1 tbs. margarine or butter combined with 1 clove crushed garlic for each chicken breast  
Finely chopped onion  
Chopped fresh parsley  
Bread crumbs  
Eggs beaten with a little water  
Cover each breast with 1 tsp. of the margarine or butter mixture and top with onion and parsley. Roll breasts from narrow end and tuck in sides as you go. Secure with wood toothpicks. Dip in egg and water mixture then in bread crumbs. Sauté in fry pan until brown on all sides and cooked through.

### *Aunt Marge's Chicken*      (Marge Smith)

This is a good one, and I mean really good! Aunt Marge was the Irish catholic branch of the family who was married to Uncle Monroe, my Mother's brother. Every family should be lucky enough to have an Aunt Marge. She was an upbeat person who was both funny and fun to be with. Through her, we were related to a Monsignor in the catholic church who was her first cousin. (That could be a first for the catholic church!) Aunt Marge died from cancer in her mid sixties, but she left behind this chicken dish which had a subtle flavor that made it very distinctive and different from all other chicken dishes. It's a recipe with a taste that remains contemporary even by today's standards.

- 1 cut up chicken
- ½ cup dry vermouth
- ½ cup oil
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- Paprika to taste
- Rosemary to taste

Combine all ingredients except chicken and mix well. Refrigerate and marinate chicken in mixture for 10 to 12 hours. Broil on both sides until nicely brown. Bake at 350 degrees for an hour or until thoroughly cooked.

### *Chicken Strips*

- Split and boned chicken breasts
- Flour
- 1 lemon (or lemon juice)
- ½ cup Chablis wine
- 2 cans mushrooms (or fresh equivalent)
- Vegetable oil (or olive oil)
- Salt
- Pepper

Remove skin and cut breasts into 1 inch strips. Wash and dry, and then squeeze lemon juice over pieces. Heat oil in frying pan with a clove of garlic. Season chicken with salt, pepper and garlic powder, sprinkle with flour and cook chicken until brown on all sides. Drain cooked chicken on paper towels. Pour off oil and add wine, mushrooms and a bit more flour. Let chicken cook slowly uncovered until wine is absorbed and chicken is done (about 15 minutes). Add salt and pepper to taste.

***Lemon Chicken***      (*Carol Goldberg*)

3 chicken breast split, boned, skinned and pounded  
2 eggs  
¾ cup flour  
1 cup milk  
½ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
¾ cups bread crumbs  
½ cup blanched and finely crushed almonds

Mix everything but chicken, bread crumbs and nuts together in bowl to form a batter. Allow chicken to stand in batter for at least 1 hour. Mix bread crumbs and almonds together, and then roll chicken in it to coat. Cook covered in a 300 degree oven until done. Melt ¼ lb. butter in a frying pan, and add the juice from 1 lemon. Cover chicken with the sauce, garnish with fresh parsley and serve.

***Chicken Provincial***

2 lb. chicken cutlets  
Olive oil  
1 med. onion, chopped  
½ can pitted black olives  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
Salt & pepper to taste  
6 tomatoes, peeled  
1 cup dry white wine  
Fresh basil leaves

Heat olive oil. Brown chicken cutlets. Add onion, garlic, tomatoes, and wine. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Simmer, uncovered for 30 minutes. To serve, add black olives and sprinkle with basil leaves.

***Chicken Teriyaki***

6 chicken breasts with bone  
¾ cup brown sugar (or less, to taste)  
½ cup plus 2 tbsp white vinegar  
½ tsp. salt  
6 tbs. soy sauce  
4 tbs. water  
3 tsp. ground ginger  
¼ cup honey

2 eggs  
½ cup flour

Beat eggs with 3 tbsp water. Dip chicken egg mixture and coat in flour seasoned with salt and pepper. Fry in skillet with oil until meat is a golden brown. Place meat in a casserole dish. Mix together in sauce pan the sugar, vinegar, salt, soy sauce, water, ground ginger and honey. Bring to a boil on medium heat, then pour over meat and bake uncovered at 350°F for 1 hour or until meat is cooked through and juices run clear.

***Marinated Grilled Flank Steak***                      (*Lou Shapiro*)

For those of you who like Mexican food, this recipe is a great accompaniment to fajitas. It also rocks on its own as a main course. There probably won't be any leftovers, but if there are it makes a great sandwich cold with a touch of Dijon or brown mustard.

1 flank steak  
4 – 5 finely chopped cloves of garlic  
Kosher salt  
Thyme  
Cumin  
2 fresh limes (You can use bottled juice, but it's not the same)  
½ cup (+ or -) fresh parsley chopped  
Steak Preparation:

Allow steak to stand until it is near room temperature. Then begin to think about something that really annoys you. I mean something that gets you madder than hell and starts your blood to boiling. Once you've worked yourself into a suitable rage and want to hit something (or someone), quick grab a fork and begin stabbing the flank steak. When you've really perforated hell out of one side, flip it over and do the same thing on the other side. When you're done, the steak will be better able receive the marinade and you'll feel better too!

Marinade:

The marinade is really made "on" the meat. Sprinkle one side of the meat with the kosher salt. Then sprinkle same side liberally with thyme and a little bit of cumin. Next squeeze a liberal amount of the fresh lime juice on the meat and then add some fresh chopped garlic on top of that. Finally, sprinkle with parsley and kneed the seasonings gently into the meat with the tips of your fingers. Flip the steak over and repeat the entire procedure on the other side. Place the steak in a zip lock bag and add just enough olive oil to cover (not drown!) it. Force the air out of the bag, and then let it marinate in the refrigerator for two to four hours turning the bag over periodically to provide even marinating of the beef. On a hot preheated grill, cook for about 4 minutes per side. The

actual time will depend on the thickness of the steak and the heat of your grill. When done, remove from grill, squeeze a bit more fresh lime on both sides, and let steak sit for at least five minutes before serving. Slice very thin and on an angle.

### *Imperial Crab Baltimore (Esther Slaff)*

2 tbs. green pepper (finely chopped)  
2 tbs. pimento (finely chopped)  
½ tsp finely minced onion  
1 egg  
¾ tsp. salt  
¼ tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. dry mustard  
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 cup mayonnaise  
1 lb. lump crabmeat  
Green olives (garnish)  
Fresh parsley (garnish)  
Capers (garnish)  
Paprika (garnish)

Combine and mix mayonnaise and crabmeat along with green pepper, pimento, onion and egg. Add and mix in remaining ingredients except for garnishes. Fill scallop shells with mixture, and garnish with sliced olives, capers, paprika and parsley. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until slightly brown.

### *Swiss Steak*

The cooks of today whom I consulted knew nothing of a beef “second shoulder” cut, and it would appear to be a term no longer used. So if your butcher gives you that “huh?” look when you ask for it, tell him it’s a term used many years ago and ask him what he thinks might be the present day version. I mean it’s not like the cow has changed all that much in the fifty or so years since I last tasted Swiss steak, so it’s still got to be around!

1 Swiss steak (second cut shoulder)  
1 medium size onion  
1 green pepper  
1 can tomato soup  
Flour  
Salt  
Pepper  
Paprika  
Chicken fat

Brown onions in chicken fat in same pot that meat will be cooked in. Pound flour into the meat. Brown meat in same pot. Add a bit of water and all other ingredients and simmer on low heat until tender (probably about 3 hours).

Earlier in this chapter I related the story of my first trip to New York. As you may recall, in that same segment I also began the story of my first (and last) purchase of a reptile, a story I would now like to finish telling. After conferring with my father on the ride home from New York, I finally came up with a name for my new pet, and if I recall correctly, I believe the name was Jinx, a name I had previously used for one of our two pet turtles which my Sister, Sally, and I shared. (Editor's note: As a simple historical point of information, the other turtle was named Trux.)

To say that my Mother was a bit put off by the new addition to the family would probably be the greatest understatement since life emerged from the great oceans onto land. Ultimately, a fragile peace was entered into which required the "beast" to be confined to a shoebox in my room. Two or three days after we returned from New York with the "beast" in tow, I decided that Jinx, after being confined to a shoe box for several days, deserved an opportunity to stretch his legs. And this is where the facts get a little murky. At one point in time, many years later, my Mother seemed to infer that the idea to let Jinx stretch his legs may have come from her. So by now you're probably asking, why is this particular point of whose idea it was so important? Wait, you'll see!

It was a beautiful spring day with temperatures in the high 60s and lots of blue sky, so with Jinx and his shoebox in hand, my parents and I headed out to the front lawn where Jinx would get his well deserved exercise. Back then River Street was a fairly busy street, and although it was only two lanes and in a very residential area, it still had a heavy flow of commercial traffic. We had a fairly nice lawn which I knew Jinx would enjoy, and so with Mom's urging I released him from the box and watched him scamper around the lawn. Suddenly, and quite surprisingly, it became difficult to see him, and then it seemed as if he had just vanished. And this brings us back to the name "chameleon" which Webster's dictionary defines as "...any of various lizards that can change the color of their skin...at will to match the color of their background"!

For the next five minutes or so I frantically searched the lawn looking for some telltale movement that would show me Jinx's location, but nothing. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I saw some movement on the side walk at least fifteen feet from where I was standing. It was Jinx!

"Look, Mom! Look Dad! There he is!" And they both looked to where I had pointed. But before anyone could react or move toward him, he made a mad dash for the curb and then jumped the curb onto the street where we was promptly immortalized in the pavement by the tire of a rather large tractor trailer. It really happened that quickly. If there was a "squish" sound, you couldn't hear it, but the flattened imprint on the street blacktop was quite obviously that of a small lizard. You could even see the points of his tiny claws. It almost looked as if it had been hand painted by an artist.

I was obviously quite traumatized, and I began to cry and sob uncontrollably. Mom and Dad tried to console me, but I was beyond consolation. Well, almost beyond consolation until Dad asked if I'd like to walk down to the corner store for some ice cream. It's amazing how quickly that horrid memory evaporated into visions of orange Creamsicles! However, one possibility still lingers even today in the back of my mind. Was Jinx the victim of circumstance and his own innate abilities of camouflage, or was something more sinister afoot? Coincidence, or something more? Well, we'll never know because my Mother took that secret with her.

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