

Food & Wine

TIDBITS

Outdoor recipes that work



CINDA CHAVICH
Herald writer

Still time to grab your pack and head to the hills before the snow flies. Fall is a great season for backpacking and finally there's a collection of local recipes that you can actually take along.

Recipes for Roaming: Adventure Food for the Canadian Rockies (Babes in the Woods Press) is a new little book published by Astrid Blodgett, Brenda McIntyre and Janet Pullan, three Edmonton women who love to hike.

"Back country food doesn't need to be time-consuming, expensive, prepackaged or dull," says Pullan who met her cooking cohorts through the Grant MacEwan Mountain Club, a non-profit group that holds mountain excursions every weekend.



OUTDOOR CHEFS: Brenda McIntyre, Astrid Blodgett and Janet Pullan

They include lots of ideas for backpacking staples like instant hummus mix, instant refried beans, couscous and seasoning mixes that make back-country cooking easy, plus real life tips like "small plastic peanut butter jars are perfect for holding two muffins and also work well for rehydrating food," or "try warming a cheese-stuffed pita in an inverted pot lid while boiling water for tea or coffee."

After reading a couple of completely impractical articles in food and outdoor magazines this summer, it's refreshing to find ideas for meals that make sense for carrying and cooking in the back country. This is a book that should be on every backpacker's shelf. Available at Mountain Equipment Co-op and mountain gift shops. Suggested retail price: \$12.95.

Take advantage of the deals on sweet peppers on the market with this impressive dish from the International Olive Oil Council, to cook on the grill alongside your favorite main course.

GRILLED EGGPLANT ANTIPASTO WITH ROASTED RED PEPPER



Dressing:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon each chopped fresh basil, mint and parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon balsamic vinegar

Antipasto:

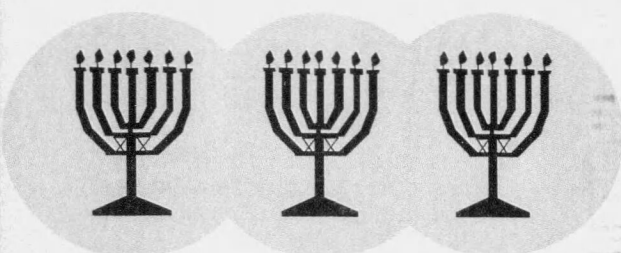
- 1 young eggplant, about 1 pound, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 1/2 sweet red pepper, cut into 2 pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Combine dressing ingredients and set aside at room temperature. Brush eggplant slices and red pepper pieces with olive oil and grill over medium heat, turning frequently until eggplant is tender and lightly marked but not charred, and red pepper skin is charred and blistered. Peel off red pepper skin and discard. Cover and refrigerate pepper pieces. In a dish, place a layer of eggplant and drizzle with half the dressing. Season with salt and pepper. Repeat with remaining eggplant and dressing, salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate 4 hours. One hour before serving, transfer to a platter. Cut roasted pepper into thin strips and scatter over eggplant. Serve at room temperature, garnished with mint. Serves 4-6 as an appetizer.

ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR



ABOVE: Terry Hornstein of Haifa Deli removes a batch of knishes from the oven



Mike Sturk, Calgary Herald

Chris Wood, Calgary Herald

TOP RIGHT: Honey cake is a delicacy traditionally served during the holiday season spanning Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur



Jewish holidays are time for

Sweet Celebration

Recipes, see **CELEBRATION** on Page D9



UPLIFTING: Lush blintzes play a role in holiday festivities

CINDA CHAVICH
Calgary Herald

This weekend marks the beginning of the highest holidays in the Jewish calendar:

The two-day holiday of Rosh Hashanah began at sunset Friday and today Jews around the world continue the celebration of the New Year that leads, in 10 days, to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement.

This week is a time to reflect and apologize for past wrongs. It's standing room only in synagogues for these holiest days of the year as people pray for forgiveness and make amends.

"The whole month before Yom Kippur is to get ready for judgement," says Eliezer Segal, a professor of religious studies at the University of Calgary. "This is largely a synagogue-based holiday and one that everybody keeps."

The holidays are also a time for ceremonial meals with family and friends and the enjoyment of traditional foods. Many Jews follow strict dietary laws — never mixing meat and milk products at a meal, eschewing pork and shellfish. Yom Kippur, Sept. 23, is a fast day spent at the synagogue in prayer. The fast is broken after sundown, often with a brunch-like meal, usually dairy-based, with bagels, herring, smoked salmon, kugel, salads, cakes and blintzes.

Foods for Rosh Hashanah meals include lots of sweets, to prime the pump for a happy future — apples dipped in honey, sweet egg challah breads studded with raisins, honey cakes and sweet carrot tzimmes.

"Everything we do is for sweetness, for a happy and sweet year," says Susan Rose, who runs Susan's Kosher Bakery with her husband Ian. She'll make plenty of her special round challah for the holidays.

"Everything we do is for sweetness, for a happy and sweet year"

Susan Rose, of Susan's Kosher Bakery



Segal says the circle symbolizes the cycle of the new year and the cycle of life, and is a common theme in holiday dishes from bread to matzo balls and knishes.

Other foods have symbolic meaning too. The multi-seeded pomegranate represents the number of good deeds a Jew should perform in the coming year. The carrot represents gold coins (for riches) and its name in Yiddish sounds like the word for "more" or "multiply." Sometimes the head of a lamb or fish is used to signify the hope that Jews will be at the head of nations.

Most Jews in Calgary come from the Ashkenazi communities of Central and Eastern Europe. Their traditional holiday foods have a distinct European pedigree, some that can be traced to ancestors who lived in Germany, Poland, and areas around the Black Sea.

From kugel (noodle puddings) to potato-stuffed pastries called knishes, cabbage rolls, herring, chicken soup and matzo ball dumplings, there's a hearty European feel to most holiday menus.

But Jewish Sabbath laws have also helped dictate what is served at the holiday table.

"On the Sabbath you're not allowed to cook or even use an electric oven to warm things," says Rose, who keeps a kosher home and a *pareve* bakery, with no milk products used in any of her breads or pastries.

For Sabbath meals, foods are cooked the day before and kept warm. Hence the popularity of foods like knishes or kugels that can be prebaked and served later without drying out.

"That's why we have these foods, it comes from necessity," says Rose. "We also do things like cholent (a popular Sabbath stew) that can cook for 24 hours."

These days families use modern conveniences like warming ovens and

crook pots to keep the Sabbath and still enjoy a hot meal. And Jews like Terry Hornstein who are part of the less restrictive Reform community, will cook on the Sabbath but still keep the traditional foods.

"What's traditional for Rosh Hashanah for my family is a turkey and sweet and sour meatballs," says Hornstein. "My friend will make brisket and chicken. We definitely have a large gathering with kugel and knishes, apples with honey, carrot tzimmes. We make a big to do out of this."

Hornstein owns the Haifa Deli, a kosher-style store brimming with her home-made pastries, knishes, matzo balls, chicken soup and other Jewish delicacies. Before the holidays she's working at warp speed to create all of the traditional foods that modern families don't have time to make.

"With more people working, and in Calgary where people don't have a lot of family, people can't do all of this holiday cooking," she says, rolling the dough for dozens of knishes and popping matzo balls into huge kettles of boiling water. "So they're relying on me. I do everything from full meals to chicken soup, gefilte fish, kugel, honey cake and special cookies."

Rose says that Jews have lightened their everyday meals but she'd never skimp on eggs in her holiday Challah. Hornstein agrees.

"It's only once a year. It's like making a light pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. What's the point?"

While these holidays are solemn events, Segal says the promise of a fresh start also helps make it the happiest time of the year.

"God is really forgiving," says Segal. "If you come in determined to change your ways, God will erase the slate."