

Colin Moody
The Happy Palate



THOSE PECULIAR PERSIMMONS

I often get a funny response from people, when I mention persimmons in a recipe or dish that I am preparing. Probably because many people have bitten into and unripe Hachiya variety that will suck all the moisture out of your mouth and leave you looking like you have to drink your meals through a straw. This has happened to me too, but only once. Since then, I have been well educated by farmers as to the particulars on those peculiar persimmons (say that three times fast).

These yummy fruits are in season from October through December. There are only two commonly available types of persimmons, even though there are hundreds of varieties throughout the world. The Fuyu, which has a pale orange color, is round and slightly flat on the bottom. The Hachiya, which has a red-orange color, is more pointed at the bottom.

The majority of persimmons on the market today originated in China and Japan, and were brought to California in the mid-1800s. But the name we get from the many Native American tribes of the northeast, where a smaller grape-size version of the persimmon grows. They called it "pasimanan" to the early settlers of Jamestown. They would make breads from it, or eat it out of hand, but only after the first frost, because they do not become ripe until October. The pilgrims then began using it to help ferment and distill their spirits, because of its sweet and pleasant taste. Capt. John Smith of Pocahontas fame was quoted as saying, "If it be not ripe it will draw a mans mouth awrie with much torment; but when it is ripe, it is as delicious as an apricot."

Even though both have the "persimmon" name, they must not be treated equally. The Hachiya can only be enjoyed when soft and ripe, where the Fuyu is enjoyed firm. One farmer I worked with would call them "fool-you's," instead of Fuyu's, because they fool you, and are nice and sweet when firm. And that is how I always have remembered which persimmon is which.

On a nutritional level, both varieties have a good profile of B vitamins and fiber. The Fuyu has an amazing 3,641 IU of vitamin A. I could not find good figures on the Hachiya, but the orange color of it indicates a plentiful supply of at least one type of vitamin A, beta carotene. Some differences: Fuyu has 118 calories, compared to Hachiya's 32. The Hachiya has 16 mg of vitamin C, while the Fuyu has none. But the Fuyu makes up for that with 270 mg of potassium and 1 gram of protein, while the Hachiya only gives you 70 mg. of potassium and .02 grams of protein.

Savor the season and go try some of these wonderfully peculiar persimmons!

Some fun tips

- Add mashed Hachiya's to waffle or pancake batter for more flavor and moisture.
- Slice Fuyu's sideways (like a lemon wheel) and it reveals a beautiful star pattern. Use it to decorate your morning fruit plates, or as a seasonal garnish on desserts.

Recipes

Here are two persimmon recipes, one for each variety, and both with a holiday twist. Remember to try and create fun dishes that inspire and make your whole tongue happy.

Please see Moody page D6

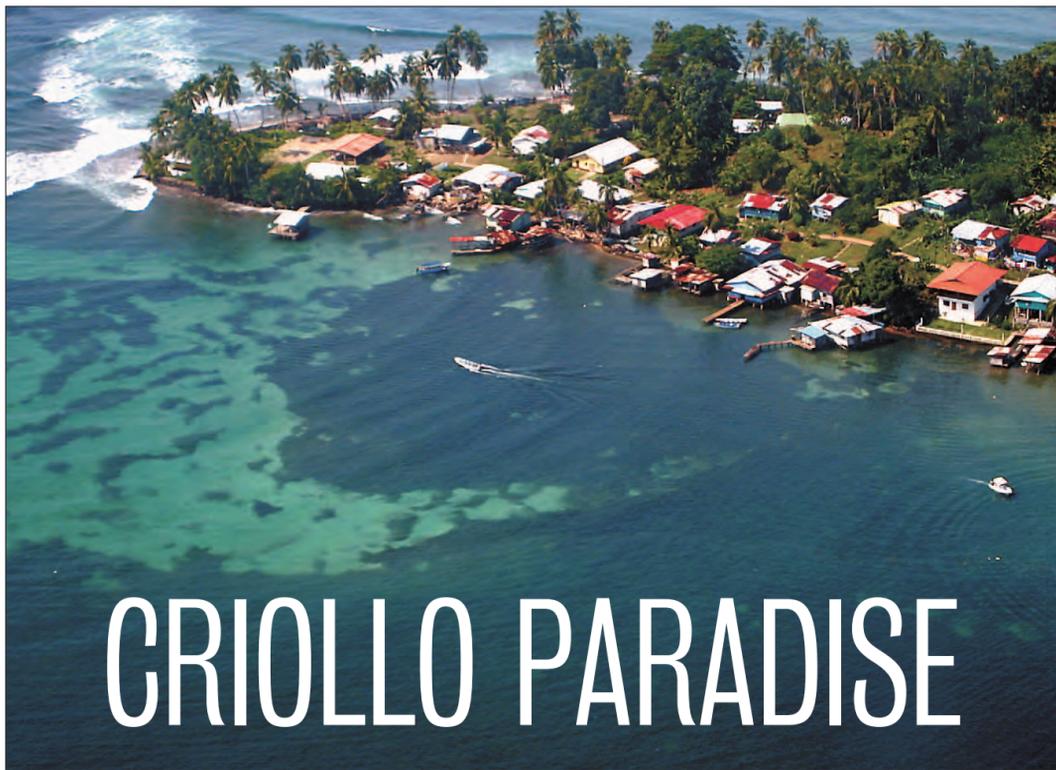


SPECIAL TO THE HERALD
Persimmon cranberry muffins.

Monterey County Taste

www.montereyherald.com

The Panamanian islands of Bocas del Toro offer laid-back, carefree lifestyle



CRIOLLO PARADISE

MARIE PERUCCA-RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald

By **MARIE PERUCCA-RAMIREZ** and **JULIO RAMIREZ**
Herald Correspondents

Flying low over the cloud-crowned Panamanian forest, our small plane cut through the cumulous cotton balls — and suddenly below us were the islands of Bocas del Toro floating green in the turquoise sea. We landed on the dirt runway of Bocas Island in the sultry heat of a Caribbean afternoon.



MARIE PERUCCA-RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald
Guaymí children paddle on an island river; with few roads on the whole archipelago, water provides the main mode of transportation.

Bocas del Toro is an old town: sweaty, salty and humid. Wooden buildings are built out over the water, and many houses stand on stilts, bordered by rain-puddled streets. The legacy of pirates and slaves, banana company workers, East Indians, West Indians and Guaymí Indians, Bocas is a polyglot and evolving community, exuberant and laid back at the same time.

Transportation is mainly provided by cayucos — motorized dugout canoes that serve as water taxis, busily running people between the many nearby islands. A paved road cuts through the interior of the island, past farms hewn out of the rainforest; another travels part way around the shore where big waves break on shallow coral bottoms. The island has become a magnet for surfers as well as scuba divers, birdwatchers, backpackers and

Food Wranglers
Back Roads, Good Food



sailboat crews — but it's still a backwater town of small cafes, locals' bars, funky dockside restaurants and bougainvillea-covered guesthouses catering to those independent travelers who find their way here from all over the world. Bocas town is quiet during the afternoon siesta — but as the temperature drops with the sun, the streets come alive. Local boys on bicycles practice their moves on the empty dirt runway, neighbors sit gossiping on their verandas, chickens pick at bugs in grassy front yards and groups of animated men play serious dominoes. Couples out for a stroll, laughing and gesturing,

call out to friends sitting on porches. Bands of girls in tight jeans, looping around the town center, flirt with young men cruising the streets, their rap music pulsing.

As the evening progresses, Bocas fills with travelers eating in the small open-air cafes, the aromas of island cooking — the criollo curries and spicy jerks — as lively as the music on the street. Friends meet with friends over beers to talk about the waves they caught, the fish they didn't, or the next island they're heading for. Street vendors lay out their wares — handmade jewelry, crystals and tie-dyed shirts. Travelers in shorts and dreadlocks, chakra tattoos and pierced navels make plans to party later on as reggae music from local bars begins to fill the air.

Hearing about a remote hotel on the far side of Bastimentos Island, we decided to spend a few days there; but we were told a storm had damaged the pier and the hotel was closed — no one but the old caretaker was there. Explaining that we traveled light and could swim ashore if we had to, our stay was arranged.

Please see Bocas page D4



A whole fried fish topped with a criollo sauce, served with coconut lentil rice and cabbage slaw. Top: Bocas Island (Isla Colón) as viewed from the air.

Cherished holiday treats from Norway

By **ALETA WATSON**
San Jose Mercury News

Krumkake, brun brod, piparkakut and sandbakelser. The holiday season doesn't begin at Karen Karpen and Glenn Krasner's Los Altos Hills home until the traditional Scandinavian cookies with tongue-twisting names emerge from the oven, filling the kitchen with the sweet aroma of butter, sugar and spice.

Others may mark the season with a day of baking, but Karpen goes all out. To the quartet of standards, she usually adds several more varieties of buttery cookies to round out her annual production. Baking is a cherished tradition in Norway, her grandparents' homeland, where

custom dictates seven varieties of cookies be served at Christmas. "We always make too many," she says. "We give them away and eat a lot of them, too." Most of the recipes date back to Karpen's childhood in Oregon, where she learned to bake from her mother. The crisp, almond-accented sandbakelser, often called sand tarts, are straight out of a much-loved 1963 Betty Crocker cookbook, the spine broken and the pages interleaved with recipe clippings. More recently, the retired lawyer has baked her cookies with schoolchildren and volunteered to teach her recipes to adults as part of

Please see Norway page D6



LIPO CHING/San Jose Mercury News
Karen Karpen bakes a wide variety of Scandinavian cookies each year, including the Brun Brod, center, the Sandbakelser, foreground, and the Krumkake.

Inside

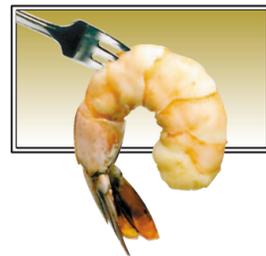
Barbara Quinn reveals a reasonable way to enjoy holiday treats. Page D5



D

Good to know

What's cooking?



Quick fix

Salsa shrimp and broccoli rice
(Serves 2)

Olive oil spray
¾ lb. shelled shrimp
1 cup tomato salsa
3 T. pine nuts
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Steps: Heat a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Spray with olive oil. Add shrimp and salsa. Cook 2 to 3 minutes or until the shrimp turn pink. Sprinkle with pine nuts, salt and pepper.
Per serving: 313 calories (32 percent from fat), 11.2 g fat (1.8 g saturated, 2.9 g monounsaturated), 258 mg cholesterol, 39.5 g protein, 12.5 g carbohydrates, 2.4 g fiber, 809 mg sodium.

Broccoli rice

½ cup 10-minute brown rice
8 oz. frozen broccoli
1 T. olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Steps: Bring a large saucepan filled with water to a boil. Add brown rice and boil 5 minutes. Add broccoli and continue to boil 5 minutes. Drain and toss with olive oil and salt and pepper to taste.
Per serving: 249 calories (23 percent from fat), 6.3 g fat (1 g saturated, 3.8 g monounsaturated), 0 cholesterol, 7.6 g protein, 42.6 g carbohydrates, 5.5 g fiber, 39 mg sodium.
— From Linda Gassenheimer at www.DinnerInMinutes.com.

Q&A

Q: Can you tell me the proper way to use panko breadcrumbs? When I make chicken cutlets, I dip the cutlets in egg, then in panko breadcrumbs (dressed with seasonings). I try to pat them on chicken but alas a lot of the breadcrumbs fall off.
A: Panko crumbs are lighter, flakier, and bigger than regular breadcrumbs, but they can essentially be treated the same way. What might be happening to your cutlets, though, might not be related to the panko. Before you dredge your cutlets in egg, you should give them a quick (and light) dusting with flour, so that the egg has something to grip on to and doesn't slide off. That should keep your breadcrumbs on.
— Food Network

Tips

Gentle technique
For delicate foods such as fish, fruit or out-of-shell eggs, you can't beat poaching (cooking in liquid over low heat, generally around 170 degrees, or slightly lower than a simmer). When you're poaching something, you want small bubbles to appear around the outside of the pan, but they shouldn't be breaking violently. It's a great technique for foods that you wouldn't want to boil, as the rapid heat of boiling would make them tough and unpleasant to eat. You can poach in anything from water to broth to wine to butter. One of the major rewards of poaching is the gently-flavored broth that results from longer poaches; once the food is removed, the broth can either be reduced and used for sauces, or used as-is as a base for soup.
— Food Network

All about wine

Our online wine expert George Edwards of WineMarket in Pacific Grove writes about his personal favorites. Read Edwards' columns or ask him a wine-related question of your own. Go to www.montereyherald.com, click on columnists and find "All About Wine."
— Herald staff reports and wire services



TASTE

Bocas

From page D1

We picked up Milda, a local woman who would cook for us, and loaded the cayuco with her shopping: pineapples, beans, rice, coconuts, eggs, chicken, fresh fish and beer. Navigating past islands, coves and cays where Columbus had once careened his ships, we found the hotel with bright blue verandas standing alone on a shimmering beach against a backdrop of tropical rainforest. A palapa strung with hammocks stood on a pier built out over the water.

Exploring the grounds near the deserted hotel we came upon what seemed to be a stage set — a bamboo bridge over pools of water adorned with conch shells, an archway hung with a shield and spears, slots for torches, crude benches hewn from driftwood arranged in a semi-circle for group seating, and a campfire with remnants of propane pipes extruding from the sand. It turned out we'd arrived at "Tribal Council" for the European Survivor series. In the storage space beneath the hotel, we found treasure chests, totem poles and other props for the reality TV show. In the distance we could see the small island where the Survivor "tribes" had lived while they played the game.

Paddling sea kayaks up the



A Guaymí woman sits with her children in their thatched-roof home. The men of the village supply lobsters and fish to local restaurants.

coast and through a river channel in the mangroves, we entered a settlement of several hundred Guaymí people. Hidden by thick vegetation, as it must have been centuries ago, the thatched-roofed village is home to fishermen whose great-great grandfathers had seen pirate ships skulking in nearby coves.

The men were busy fishing and diving for lobsters, but the

village was alive with scampering kids who came running down the wooden walkway to greet us. Smiling women paddling dugout canoes passed us along the river as they went about their daily chores.

Hiking through the rainforest we found three-toed sloths, tree-clinging orchids, multicolored birds, chattering monkeys, jewel-like frogs,

huge mega-colonies of leaf cutter ants — and that wonderful feeling of being "out there." At sunset, fireflies came out and the jungle began to pulse and throb. Crocodiles, their eyes reflecting our flashlight beams, lurked near the brackish stream. Returning to the hotel in the dark, we inhaled Milda's dinner of fried fish with criollo salsa, patacones (deep-fried plantain patties) and coconut lentil rice.

The islands seemed like a slow-paced paradise, but according to Luis, a local cab driver, change was coming: cruise ships would soon be calling on Bocas town; a dock was being built. Many pieces of property on the island were for sale or being sold. His apprehension was echoed by Oscar over on Bastimentos Island, owner of a thatched-roof waterfront restaurant. After inviting us to a game of dominos, he shared his concerns about the future of the islands: land was rapidly being bought up by outsiders. Locals were selling their family properties for more money than they'd ever had before — but they were selling cheap. Savvy buyers resold the properties for a nice profit and drove prices up; the next



The view from a cayuco on Bastimentos; island restaurants serve fresh seafood, curries and criollo dishes.

generation of islanders wouldn't be able to afford to live on Bastimentos. If corporate concerns came in, building big hotels or resorts, management would be brought in from the outside and the locals would be left with the menial jobs.

Late one night, we were relaxing in hammocks on the veranda of our Bocas guesthouse. We'd just finished a dinner of coconut curried shrimp and jerked chicken. The ambient air was like a soft cocoon. Frogs were chirruping, geckos were making those kissing sounds they make, an occasional dog barked . . . you could hear the distant rumble of a motor scooter, the lapping sea, the lilt of reggae music from a party still going on down the street . . . for now, I thought, this is a town you could want to stay in for a long time.

Pescado Criollo (Panamanian-style fish with Salsa criollo)
(Serves 4)

This is a great way to serve chicken, pork or eggs — as well as fish. Criollo sauce is found in different variations throughout Panama, especially along the Caribbean coast. The sweet from the pineapple and the salty counterpoint along with the full-flavored roasted peppers give layers of complexity that the tongue discovers as the sauce moves through the mouth.

Four 6-oz. tilapia fillets (or use stripped bass, barramundi, corvina), 1½ inches thick at thickest part, rinsed and patted dry with paper

towels
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 T. peanut oil
1½ cups Salsa Criollo (see below)
Steps: Season the fillets with the salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a 12-inch sauté pan over medium heat; heat until the pan is almost smoking. Add the fillets to the pans, and cook for 2 minutes on one side, then turn and cook for 2 additional minutes. Remove from heat. Serve on individual plates, covering each fillet with 6 T. or so of Salsa Criollo. Accompany with rice, tostadas or tostones, and a green salad.

Salsa Criollo

(Makes about 4 cups)
1 cup minced fresh pineapple
2 T. sugar
1 T. peanut oil
1 med. onion diced (about 1¼ cup)
1 T. minced garlic
¼ fresh chombo (see note) or habanero chile, minced
1 pasilla chile, roasted, seeded and deveined, diced
2 California chiles, roasted, seeded and deveined, diced
1 red bell pepper, roasted, seeded and deveined, diced
4 tomatoes, diced (about 2 cups)
½ cup water
2 tsp. kosher salt
1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered
2 T. chopped cilantro

Steps: Place minced pineapple in medium saucepan over medium heat; add sugar. Cook until sugar has melted and its liquid mixes with the liquid from the pineapple, about 15 minutes. Set aside. (To save time you can skip the above step and simply add the minced pineapple, without the sugar, directly to the sauce pan along with the onions (see below), but the sauce will not have the same sweetness without the caramelized sugar.)

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat, add onions, garlic and chombo chile. Increase the heat to medium high; stir occasionally until onions begin to sweat, about 4 minutes. Add the roasted pasilla, California chiles and bell peppers. Stir well. Add the diced tomatoes, stir well, and reduce heat to medium. Stir occasionally for 5 minutes; the mix will have produced a nice red liquid. Add water and the salt. Remove from heat. Add the cherry tomatoes, the cilantro and the pineapple. Correct the seasoning. Serve hot over grilled fish, chicken or pork.

Note: Chombo is the Panamanian variety of the habanero chile found in the Caribbean. Very hot! This recipe is mildly picante — add more chile if you really like it hot.

Curried Chicken Bastimentos
(Serves 4)

This recipe embodies the flavorful East Indian influence on the criollo cuisine of the Bocas del Toro Islands. The coconut curry sauce also works beautifully with sautéed shrimp. Serve with rice and a crisp green salad.

8 skinless chicken thighs, bone out
3 T. peanut oil, for cooking
2 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
2 medium tomatoes, diced (about 1 cup)
¼ cup chopped scallion greens (set aside during curry sauce preparation)
2 cups coconut curry sauce

Please see Bocas page D5

"HOME STYLE" CHRISTMAS BUFFET
Served 2-5pm • Christmas Day

Free Range Organic Turkey with all the "fixin's," Stuffing, Mashed Potatoes, Yams, Cranberry Sauce, Holiday Pies & More! No cooking or clean-up! Bring the whole family!

ADULTS \$28 • SENIORS \$18
KIDS 8-UNDER EAT FREE!
RSVP'S ACCEPTED

Central Ave. Bakery
MOSTLY ORGANIC • ALWAYS DELICIOUS

173 Central Ave. • Pacific Grove • 373-2000
www.CentralAvenueBaker.com

One out of every two adults lives with a fear of the dentist.

Adult Sedation Dentistry is the answer!

- Adult Sedation Dentistry is SAFE, PAINLESS, and with NO NEEDLES.
- Your experience is relaxing, gentle and comfortable
- Have several visits in one appointment

We moved to a NEW location

24551 Silver Cloud Ct., Suite 202 • Monterey
Formerly 800 Cass St., Suite 200, Monterey

William Dodson, D.D.S., FACP
 Founder & Director of C.C.C.S.D.
 Fellow/Member, The American College of Prosthodontists
 Diplomate, The American Board of Prosthodontics

24551 Silver Cloud Ct., Suite 202, Monterey • 649-1982
3337 MISSION DRIVE • SANTA CRUZ • 688-3663
Visit our web site at www.dodsondds.com

Monterey County's First Hospital Trained and Board Certified Specialist in the treatment of adult dental problems.

Monterey's Best Selection of Eyewear...
Over 3,000 styles by 85 manufacturers, including sunglasses

PRE-HOLIDAY SALE
with
**Gift Certificates
Stocking Stuffers
Fabulous Markdowns
New Arrivals!**

★ Use Your Flex Spending \$\$ Here!! ★

InSight Eyewear
Insurances Welcome

Cathy Shue ABO, NCLE
187 El Dorado Street, Monterey
Monday-Friday 9-6 • Saturday 10-4
www.insighteyewear.com • 373-4400

WANT TO EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS IN THE LATINO MARKET?

Advertise with **LaGanga**
The Weekly Spanish Magazine

94,000 potential readers every week.
One of the biggest readerships on the Central Coast.
Let La Ganga be the tool for your promotional campaigns. Check out our effectiveness for yourself!

Call Bill Valdez at 831-753-6764

©1998 & 2001 La Ganga Survey Study. Readership factor of 4.7 per week.

essure
Permanent Birth Control

The easy decision for **Permanent Birth Control**

Is your family complete? Are you considering more permanent forms of birth control? Unlike tubal ligation or vasectomy, the Essure procedure offers women these advantages:

- 99.80% effective (based on 4 years of clinical data)
- Covered by most health insurance plans
- No cutting into the body
- Quick recovery

CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY WITHOUT INCISIONS.

CALL TEKI HEGWOOD, M.D. AT 831 649-9000

Teiki Hegwood, M.D.
880 Cass Street, Suite 208 • Monterey, CA 93940 • 831-649-9000
www.DrTeikiHegwoodOBGYN.medem.com

The Essure procedure is not reversible and should be used only if you want to permanently avoid pregnancy. It is not intended for use as a temporary method of birth control. The Essure procedure should not be used if you are pregnant or suspect you are. If you are pregnant or suspect you are, please inform your doctor at once. If you have had a hysterectomy, you should not use Essure. The Essure procedure may not be suitable for all women. It is not reversible. The Essure procedure may not be suitable for all women. It is not reversible. The Essure procedure may not be suitable for all women. It is not reversible.

GOLITE JACKETS

20% OFF

We carry travel, running and yoga gear too!

PACIFIC GROVE OUTDOOR SUPPLIES

223 Forest Avenue
Pacific Grove
M-Sat 10-6 / Closed Sun
831/333-9279

TASTE

About the authors

Julio Ramirez and Marie Perucca-Ramirez, creators of the Fishwife Seafood Restaurants and Turtle Bay Taquerias on the Peninsula, sold their restaurants to start The Food Wranglers Inc., a restaurant consultant group.

Julio is certified as an executive chef by the American Culinary Federation and in 1999 was inducted into the prestigious American Academy of Chefs. Marie is a writer with a degree in history and sociology and a master's in applied linguistics.

The couple have always enjoyed traveling the back roads of the world; they are interested in seeing what other ethnic groups grow, what they eat, how they prepare their food — what their various cultures "taste like."

During their travels they have met many remarkable individuals, had a number of unusual experiences, eaten a variety of unfamiliar foods — and collected some great recipes they have adapted for home use.

Once a month they will share their experiences — through words and photos — with Herald readers. Write to them at marie@foodwranglers.com.



Travelers stop for ham and egg sandwiches at a street-side food stand in Bocas town. MARIE PERUCCA-RAMIREZ/Special to The Herald

the white "heads" chopped and set aside (about ¼ cup), the green stems chopped and set aside (about ¼ cup) for use in chicken preparation above

- 1 tsp. peanut oil
- 1 T. butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (about 2 tsp.)
- ½ serrano chile, minced (about 1 tsp.)
- ¼ green bell pepper, diced (about ¼ cup)
- ¼ red bell pepper, diced (about ¼ cup)
- 1 T. good-quality curry powder (if you like your food spicy use the Madras variety)
- 1 13-oz. can coconut milk (not cream)
- 1 T. sugar
- ¼ tsp. salt

Steps: Put the oil and butter into a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the scallion whites, garlic, chile, green and red bell pepper and cook for 2 minutes until the vegetables sweat. Add the curry powder and continue cooking for 1 more minute. Add the coconut milk, stir, and allow the mixture to come to simmer; add the sugar and the salt, stir, then reduce heat to low. **Note:** If you are making the sauce ahead and not planning to cook the chicken at this time, remove the coconut curry sauce from the heat. When you are ready to proceed with the chicken, warm the sauce over medium heat, bringing it to simmer.

Bocas ham and egg sandwiches (Serves 4)

These sandwiches are sold on the streets of Bocas town from small, open-air kitchens — made to order and wrapped in aluminum foil. How can something seemingly so common taste so good? The secret is in the bread — a soft,

slightly sweet, fresh-baked roll that complements the ham and eggs. For an informal meal, serve the sandwiches with a tropical fresh-fruit smoothie and chips.

- 4 fresh sandwich rolls, (Cuban rolls, if you can get them, egg bread (challah) sandwich rolls, or Kaiser rolls from a bakery). Large, round rolls hold the ingredients best.
- Mayonnaise
- Yellow mustard
- 2 tomatoes, sliced thin (12 slices)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 T. and 1 tsp. peanut oil
- 1 ham steak, approximately 1 lb., ¼-inch thick (or use smoked ham)
- 4 large or extra large eggs
- Optional: ½ very thinly sliced habanero chile

Steps: Slice open the buns; spread a generous amount of mayonnaise on the bun bottoms, add mustard and blend it in. Spread a small amount of mustard on top halves; salt and pepper both halves. Place 3 slices of tomato on the bun bottoms, sprinkle salt and pepper, and set aside. In a large 12-inch Teflon sauté pan, heat 1 tsp. oil over medium heat and fry the ham for 2 minutes on each side, remove from pan, and cut into 4 approximately equal pieces. Place ham on top of the tomatoes. Wipe the pan; add 1 T. oil to the Teflon pan, heat over medium heat, and cook the eggs for 2 minutes on one side; carefully turn, cook 30 seconds, then place eggs on top of ham. (Note: eggs are placed on top so the bun will absorb the yolk when eating.)

Salt and pepper the eggs — and, if you like, add a few very thin slices of habanero chile for some "kick." Cover with bun tops and serve.

Croustades

From page D3

loosely crumple the dough into a circle and lay it into the pastry ring. Sprinkle it with about one-fifth of the almonds. Repeat this procedure three more times, until you have four buttered, sugared and almond-sprinkled sheets of filo layered in the ring. Do not press them together — let them keep some height.

Spoon the apples into the center of the croustade, leaving a 1-inch border bare. Working as you did before, butter, sugar and crumple a sheet of filo, fitting it over the apples. Sprinkle this layer with the remaining almonds, and cover this with another crumpled sheet of buttered and sugared filo. Do a little styling and draping; arrange the filo so it looks good.

Slide the croustade into the oven and bake for about 10 to 12 minutes, watching the top of the tart carefully to make certain it doesn't brown too much. The top should be just lightly browned. Remove the croustade from the oven.

Increase the oven temperature to 400 degrees. Butter and sugar another sheet of filo, loosely crumple it and place it on the last layer to make a light, airy crown. Bake the tart for 5 to 10 minutes, or until lightly browned, then remove it from the oven again.

Butter the last sheet of filo and, once again, crumple it to make a crown. Place it on top of the croustade and dust it heavily with the remaining powdered sugar. Return the tart to the oven and bake until the top layer caramelizes evenly, about 5 to 10 minutes. Check the progress of the sugar frequently because it can go from brown to burned in a flash. Pull the croustade from the oven as soon as the top is a golden caramel color and allow it to cool for 5 to 10 minutes.

To serve, lift off the tart ring and, using two large, wide metal spatulas, transfer the croustade to a serving plate. Serve the tart warm or at room temperature the day it is made, with crème fraiche, whipped cream (or even better, crème fraiche lightened with whipped cream) or vanilla ice cream.

Steps: Each serving: 363 calories; 3 grams protein; 46 grams carbohydrates; 5 grams fiber; 18 grams fat; 10 grams saturated fat; 38 milligrams cholesterol; 95 milligrams sodium.

— Adapted from a recipe for apple and Armagnac croustade in the "Cafe Boulud Cookbook" by Daniel Boulud and Dorie Greenspan.

Barbara Quinn

bquinn@chomp.org

On Nutrition



SAVORING HOLIDAY JOY

Two of my most cherished Christmas decorations are cutouts in red, white and green felt of the letters J-O-Y — made by our young daughters several years ago. In the middle of the "O" is a tiny bell. I smile each year when I unpack them with the rest of our Christmas treasures.

Even the recipes I pull out for this season are filled with memories . . . and food stains from years of use. My sister-in-law Molly's praline pecan cookies remind me of holidays back in New Mexico. And a year doesn't go by that I simply *must* make a batch of my sister Cheryl's chocolate peanut butter cookies.

Let I get too gooey in my holiday reflections, let us not forget that holiday food is loaded with more than just memories. Is there a reasonable way to enjoy the foods of this season without asking Santa to send us a bigger size for 2008? Here are some ideas to help match up healthful habits with traditional times:

► Take the emphasis off the cookie and put it on the "exchange." Prior to our cookie exchange at work, a co-worker from another department said to me, "You dietitians will probably make something healthy, huh?" ► Uh . . . no. In fact, we

brought goodies made from tried and true family recipes. What we did do, however, was avoid eating all four dozen cookies at once. In fact, one of the best reasons to do a cookie exchange is to have food gifts to pass on to friends and neighbors.

► Don't even think about changing beloved family traditions. It's a custom in my friend Michael's family to eat cookies on Christmas morning. This one day of the year, that's important. Oatmeal and fruit will return soon enough.

► Enjoy special food occasions. Every year, my friend Michelle and I plan a Christmas "tea time" together. And not because tea is rich in polyphenolic compounds that protect our health. We take this time over tea and scones to nourish our friendship during this special season.

► Be sensible with serving sizes. We can automatically cut in half the calories in any food or beverage if we eat half our usual portion.

► Slooowww down. Taste and smell the wonderful foods of the season. Savor each bite. It's one of the best ways to enjoy more with less.

► Remember that Christmas is more than food. The original Christmas story gives no mention of what Mary and Joseph ate to sustain themselves on their way to Bethlehem. And even the wise men showed up without Christmas cookies.

We won't be in New Mexico for Christmas this year but you can bet that we'll have our family's traditional eggnog on Christmas Eve . . . with a little sprinkle of nutmeg.

May this Christmas season bring you comfort . . . and joy.

Barbara Quinn is a registered dietitian at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. E-mail her at bquinn@chomp.org.

Bocas

From page D4

(recipe below)

- 2 T. fresh cilantro, minced
- 4 T. shredded coconut, toasted (spread on baking sheet, heat in 350-degree oven for 2-3 minutes until golden brown — don't burn!)

Steps: Add oil to a 12-inch sauté pan, heat for two minutes over medium heat; Add the chicken, sprinkle with 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper; cook for 3 minutes. Turn chicken, sprinkle with remaining salt and pepper; cook for 3 minutes. Add diced tomatoes, stir; add the scallion greens, stir; add the coconut curry sauce, and stir well. Simmer for 4 minutes. Remove from heat; garnish each serving with ½ T. of the cilantro and 1 T. of toasted shredded coconut, and serve immediately.

Coconut curry sauce (Makes about 2 cups)

- 1 bunch scallions (green onions),

BETTER GRADES! BETTER GRADUATE!

BBB ACCREDITED BUSINESS

Best-Test Tutoring (C)

393-0377

ESSAYS. EXIT-EXAM. E S L. MATH. S A T PREP.

... for the HOLIDAYS ...

fresh ...light ...lyrical!

Group dining available for up to 80 people. Private and/or corporate groups. Holiday occasions. Intimate luncheons.

the Grill

ON OCEAN AVENUE

California Cuisine

Daily Lunch and Dinner

Specialty Priced Sunset Dinners

Ocean Ave between Dolores and Lincoln

Carmel-by-the-Sea • 624 2569 www.carmelsbest.com

"Carmel's Finest"

BRUNO'S

MARKET & DELI

Corner of 6th & Junipero Ave., Carmel

624-3821

Carmel's Finest Full Service Meat Counter

Prime USDA Choice Meats

Fresh Local Seafood

Farm Fresh Produce

Gourmet Deli

Fine Wines & Champagne

Coats FOR Kids!

Donate new or next-to-new **WINTER COATS** to those in need.

Two local quality cleaners have joined forces with the Boys & Girls Clubs & Monterey Peninsula Sunrise Rotary Club this year to assure that the children of Monterey County will not be cold this winter.

BRING YOUR DONATED COATS TO:

Country Club Cleaners
900 Del Monte Center, Monterey, 372-3101 (Next to Whole Foods Market)
2242 Fremont St., Monterey, 375-7866 (Next to Doctors On Duty)

Owl Cleaners
153 Webster St., Monterey, 372-3153 (Next to Monterey Post Office)
26135 Carmel Rancho Blvd, Carmel, 625-1950 (Carmel Rancho Shopping Center)
152 Country Club Gate, Pacific Grove, 333-9370 (Next to Rite Aid)

The coats are cleaned & repaired and brought to the Boys & Girls Club for distribution to those in need. Your Donation Is Tax Deductible.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE MONTEREY PENINSULA OF MONTEREY COUNTY

Donate Your Vehicle

BOATS RVs TRAILERS or REAL ESTATE

Tax Deduction - We do DMV
Running or Not - Restrictions Apply

Polly Klaas FOUNDATION

800 380-5257

Live Operators - 7 days! Free Pick Up

Providing safety information and assisting families in bringing kids home safely

GET YOUR FILL FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Aesthetics and Genetics by the Bay offers the most customized, personal experience on the Monterey Bay Peninsula.

- Botox®
- Juvéderm™
- Radiesse®

Call Joanne Shiffman RN, GCN or An Ruder, RN for your complimentary consultation today!

AESTHETICS GENETICS by the Bay

550 Wave Street Suite 2, Monterey 375-9555 www.agbythebay.com

Gift Certificates Available

\$49.95 Holiday Sale!

THE HEALTHY WAY
Weight & Lifestyle Solutions

Your LOCAL Weight Loss Experts

MONTEREY 1015 Cass Street #2 • 831.649.1211

SANTA CRUZ 3251 Mission Drive • 831.462.5900

*\$49.95/week. minimum 4 week program purchase. Cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts. Registration service fee may apply.

www.thehealthyway.us | Franchise Opportunities Available

GO!ForIt

YOUR GUIDE TO THE ACTIVE LIFE

Every Thursday in the Sports Section

Monterey County **The Herald**