



Newsletter for Spring, 2009

YOU CAN DRESS DC UP..... - by Barbara L

Unless you are a newcomer to Discuss Cooking, you have surely noticed our new look by now. Andy R is still working on the new "skin", and your input is greatly valued. Please give us your feedback - what you DO and DO NOT like about it { [HYPERLINK "http://www.discusscooking.com/forums/f29/constructive-feedback-about-the-new-skin-55883.html"](http://www.discusscooking.com/forums/f29/constructive-feedback-about-the-new-skin-55883.html) }.



Hopefully you are learning to love the new skin and new features. However, if you are not comfortable with it, you are still able to access the old version. To do that, just go to the bottom left of any page to find the Quick Style Changer. Click on the pull-down menu and choose "Discuss Cooking v1.0" to switch back to the old style.

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OUR FEATURED CHEF: Uncle Bob - by Alix



One of our most beloved members here at Discuss Cooking is Uncle Bob. Always ready with some help or some humor to lighten the day. He is known for his charm and his passion for his bourbon! He makes pairing an art form. Its taken us a while to get his story in print but thankfully, Uncle Bob is also a very patient man.

Alix - As always, I asked him to tell us about his cooking journey, how did he learn to cook?

Uncle Bob - Two ways. First through osmosis. I have always loved good food. Even as a young child I was drawn to the kitchen by all of the smells, sounds, and activities, etc that was going on there. It was a gathering place for the family. I watched with great interest and anticipation what my Grandmother, Mother, and/or Family Cook were doing. My stepfather who loved to entertain large groups of friends and family with BBQs, Fish fries, Crawfish boils, etc, was not much of a cook, so the job of cooking for those occasions always fell on some of the men who worked on the farm. Some of my fondest memories are being outside with the men around the fires, BBQ pits, and big pots as they cooked. It was always a very special, fun, and educational time. As I grew older, I became more and more involved in the actual cooking outside, as well as what was going on in the kitchen, and as usual, I was asking hundreds of questions.

Secondly, I am mostly self taught. I have done, and still do a lot of reading, researching, and studying. I believe you also learn by doing, so I have practiced a lot!! I cook something everyday so I learn something everyday! It has been, and remains a life long journey of continuing education.

A - Who has been your biggest influence?

UB - Who? If I had to say what one person had more influence on my knowledge and love of cooking it would have to be Bertha Coleman, our family cook! She was a Creole lady of color from Louisiana who was an awesome cook, a great friend, and in many ways was like a mother to me. From my earliest childhood I often watched her as she cooked the noon meals for my family and several men who worked

on the farm. Fried Chicken, Cornbread muffins, Greens in season, and Southern field peas were cooked everyday regardless of whatever else was being served. I watched her prepare whole Red Snapper filled with seafood dressing, or a whole fresh ham with sweet potatoes, or fry up huge platters of Quail for dinner parties. It all seemed so effortless to her. She just had this "instinct" for cooking everything... She worked for my family her entire life, even working for me P/T up until her death several years ago...

A - It should surprise no one that Uncle Bob characterizes himself as a "down home cook who enjoys being adventurous and experimental at times." And as those of us who have had lots of questions will know, he likes outdoor cooking, BBQ, grilling etc. He finds inspiration in many different places though. He tells me he will try something and then take the idea home and tinker with it until it is to his liking.

UB - I am inspired at times to cook a recipe, or to go home and make a dish I found in a restaurant. Recently I had an appetizer at a restaurant that was a crab cake on a slice of fried green tomato, with some kind of sauce. It sounded good, but when it arrived I was so disappointed. The fried green tomato was a frozen, pre-breaded item, the crab cake was mostly just filler, the sauce very un-appetizing, but I thought it was a great idea. I couldn't wait until I could get home to make it. A nice thick slice of fresh green tomato fried to perfection, a crab cake that was actually/mostly crab and a remoulade sauce...Delicious!!! The next time I made the dish I substituted Crawfish cakes for the crab cakes..... I've thought about what if I started with a nice thick slice of fried eggplant. A different sauce maybe..... Hmmm!

A - As adventurous as he is, even he has things he finds challenging. Baking is not his cup of tea. He can do biscuits and cornbread, cookies and brownies but leaves "the real baking" to his DW. (You're in good company Uncle Bob, I have it on good authority kitchenelf avoids baking too!)

On a personal note, he shared,

UB - I am married with grown children and one "Kill Dog" who is convinced he is human! I'm not really that close to retirement age, but I am retired. I love all things, and activities in the great outdoors.....Except lawn mowers and weed-eaters!

A - His specialty is Southern, Cajun/Creole and BBQ (YUM!!) and when asked to share a recipe he chose to share one of his favorites from his childhood. (See below) Ever modest, this recipe is attributed to Bertha, his biggest cooking influence. He's cagey too, he wouldn't tell me about any of his cooking disasters. Darn it! Now we can only assume he hasn't had any!

UB - "From age 4 or 5 I remember this warm, sweet, delicious dessert she made...I always had to have seconds. It is so simple, and yet so warm and homey. For years she would never tell me the name of the dish regardless of how many times I asked. It was her "secret" One day, after I was grown and married with children, I finally persuaded her to tell me the name of the dish... She said it was "Fill Up" I said, "Fill Up?" What do you mean Fill Up?? She said, It's called Fill Up...Something you mix up, toss in a bowl, and "fill up" ----"

Bertha "Berta" Coleman's "Fill Up"

½ cup butter	1 cup buttermilk
½ cup Crisco	1 tsp. baking Soda
5 egg Whites	1 tsp. vanilla
5 egg yolks	2 cups AP flour
2 cups sugar	

Blend the butter and (Crisco) shortening together. Gradually add the sugar and beat until light and fluffy. Add the egg yolks one at a time, and the vanilla. Sift the flour and soda together and add it to the creamed butter-sugar mixture. Alternate between adding a little flour and a little buttermilk until all of it

is incorporated into the batter. Beat the egg whites until stiff. Gently fold them into the batter. Place cupcake holders in a muffin pan, and, fill 2/3 full, and Bake in a 350* oven for 20 minutes or until done.

(Or you can make your favorite yellow cupcake)

The Sauce

3 cups milk	1 tbs. vanilla
1/3 cup flour	2 eggs
1 cup sugar	

Mix the flour, sugar, and salt in a bowl. Place the milk in a boiler. Beat the eggs and add to the milk. Stir well. Add the flour mixture. Stir well. Cook over low heat until the sauce is slightly thickened. Add the Vanilla, stir and cool slightly. Serve the warm sauce over a couple of warm cup cakes and FILL UP!!!

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TERMS & TECHNIQUES: Bouquet Garni – by LPBeier (filling in for GB)

As the name suggests, a bouquet garni is an herbal “bouquet” of scent and flavor which is added to stews, soups, sauces and even poaching liquids. The traditional “bouquet” consists of the following, which are wrapped in a length of leek green which is folded over the contents, or a piece of cheesecloth, and tied with string. It is added during the simmering stage and removed before thickening or finishing.

1 sprig of fresh thyme	1 bay leaf
1 sprig of fresh parsley	5 peppercorns

You may substitute basil, chervil/cilantro, tarragon or rosemary depending on what you are cooking. Recipes that can be made flavorful with a bouquet garni include poached salmon, béchamel sauce and similar sauces, beef bourguignon or other stews, any stock, broth or soup, or one of my favorites, chicken pot pie, where I use sage, tarragon and rosemary in place of the thyme and parsley.



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SPRING INTO FOOD AND WINE – by Kitchenelf



Springtime to me calls for leg of lamb. A leg of lamb calls for a Chateauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas, or a Côtes du Rhône. Another way to say that is just about any Southern Rhône will do. Lirac and Côtes du Ventoux are two of my favorite Southern Rhône regions, after Chateauneuf-du-Pape that is! Sometimes a bottle or two is worth the extra money and a real treat! These wines are usually fruit forward, food friendly and can stand alone quite easily. A quick Google search will give you loads of information on the grape varietals used to make these wines.

Leg Of Lamb With Rosemary/Mustard Coating

5-6 lb leg of lamb	3-4 branches of rosemary with leaves stripped off*
1/2 cup Dijon mustard	5-6 branches fresh thyme with leaves stripped off*
1 TBS soy sauce	2 cloves garlic
1/2 tsp. ground ginger	salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup olive oil	1/4 cup toasted pine nuts, walnuts or pecans

* Depending on size

1. Toast pine nuts, walnuts, or pecans, in oven set on 375° F. or toast in dry skillet set on med-high and tossed until done.
2. In a food processor or blender add all of the ingredients except oil. Turn machine on and slowly drizzle in oil until everything is blended. You might not need to use all the oil, or you may need more, it just depends on how much rosemary you used, etc. You want it to be a little thick. Taste

and adjust salt, pepper, rosemary, or garlic until it suits your taste. If it's a little strong that's OK because it will help flavor the lamb better.

3. Put lamb in shallow pan, cover with this mixture and bake. I bake mine at 325° until 130°, as we like ours rare. Whatever temperature you wish to bake yours to just take the lamb out about 5° less than you like it. Let it rest for about 10 - 15 minutes. The lamb will continue cooking after you take it out of the oven, while the resting will let the juices absorb back into the meat and not just run out.

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Herbal Quotes— by Alix

"Time is an herb that cures all Diseases."

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) Poor Richard's Almanac



{ HYPERLINK "http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/1693.html" |o "Click for further information about this quotation" }

Alice May Brock

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THE SPICE OF LIFE— by Bugs

How sensitive are your taste buds? Do you live for the burning sensation of spicy flavors, or tend to shy away from those kinds of foods? Would your friends call you a spice wimp or a risk taker based on your preferences? Maybe you're somewhere in the middle. Whatever you prefer, I'm sure we can all agree that spices are what make us want to eat food. Who wants to eat a bland meal? Well, perhaps that's not entirely accurate. I personally know people who are content with eating a completely white meal. White chicken breast, white rice without soy sauce, white bread and vanilla ice cream for dessert are what they will gladly choose to eat as a meal. But on the other hand, I know people who will eat several spicy chicken wings in one sitting without breaking a sweat. And they enjoy it! Basically, it's about finding a nice balance.



One "lack of balance mishap" that comes to mind, is when my dad was making dinner one night a few years ago. Mom was working an evening shift that fateful day and as such, was not around to supervise in the kitchen. Everything was working out quite nicely and by the time the pot of chili was finally ready to eat, our family was starving. As usual, we sat down, said grace, and helped ourselves to the delicious looking meal. Immediately after tasting one bite of the chili, I was forced to chug half of my glass of milk because it felt like somebody had built a fire in my mouth. It was the hottest and spiciest chili I had ever tasted! In fact, it was the spiciest ANYTHING that I had ever tasted!

But what could I do? Dad had worked hard to prepare dinner and I was already ravenous. I decided I'd try to focus on something other than the extreme heat and try to finish some of my chili at least. Luckily for my sister and me, dad spoke up quickly and didn't force us to take another bite. Even he couldn't eat his own creation. So we packed it up and stored it in the fridge just in case somebody came down with a cold and couldn't taste the spice I suppose. Needless to say, we each scavenged around elsewhere for our dinner that night. Thank goodness for pizza pops!

We didn't find out until the next day what had happened to make our dinner so extremely hot. What dad later told us was that, instead of adding just a few pinches of chili pepper flakes to the chili pot, he had sprinkled them so that they covered the entire surface of the chili. Oops. But you don't have to worry about the chili going to waste. My mom heated up what we had put back into the fridge when she got home from work and ended up finishing it off. She thought it was great! Oh well. To each his own, right?

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A FAVORITE MENU: Easter— by Kadesma

We always get together on Sundays and holidays. Easter will be next and we will break out some favorites...Some are Gil's mom's and almost impossible to give a recipe for as I add the herbs and such to taste, but there are several things the kids love and that will be included.

Here is a possible menu, or let's say "wants", already in for making:

- Fried chicken finished off in the oven with butter, wine, garlic, salt and pepper
- Mushrooms cooked in butter, parsley, garlic and marsala
- Garlic mashed potatoes, fixed with cream and garlic cooked to reduce the cream and soften and sweeten the garlic, which will melt into the potatoes as it is mixed in
- Fried artichokes, recipe to follow
- Garbanzo beans with parsley, garlic, evoo
- Escarole, tomatoes, avocado, dressed with evoo, lemon and a touch of honey
- If there is time I'll make some stuffed mushrooms

We will also have a platter of veggies and avocado dip and a platter of fresh cold fruit. Of course there must be bread. This year I'm making a foccacia. I'll be happy to provide a recipe to anyone who would like one.

Fried Artichokes

1. Take about 16 (or 2lbs) of baby artichokes, cleaned and trimmed but stems left on. Cut the chokes in half, no need to remove the choke inside.
2. Put artichokes into about 3 cups of water and add 1 cup white wine, bring to boil over med heat. Let cook about 10 -12 min. Drain.
3. Mix 1/4 cup AP flour with salt and pepper, 1/2 teaspoon each, in shallow bowl. In large bowl whisk 3 large eggs and 3 tablespoons pecorino cheese. In another bowl, mix 1 cup dry bread crumbs with 1/2 teaspoon chopped parsley and 1/2 teaspoon dry basil.



Coat artichokes with flour mix, dip in egg then into the bread crumbs. Coat all sides. Heat 1 cup olive oil and add artichokes a few at a time. Cook about 3 min or until golden. Drain on paper towels. You can now top the artichokes with a small amount of Bel Passe cheese and eat. These can be a side or a hot appy.

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