



MARY'S MEMO

Recipes • Shopping • Cooking • Health Tips

Memo No. 2250 January 30, 2012

Chief and Rays Supermarkets

GARDENING WITHOUT SOIL

Though the method has been used for centuries, the term hydroponics (hydro, meaning water, and ponics, meaning labor) was coined about 89 years ago by a University of California at Berkeley scientist, who grew tomatoes, potatoes, corn and beans without soil. Today, you can also find hydroponic herbs, leafy greens, squash, eggplant, peppers and other vegetables, as well as watermelon, strawberries and other fruits.

Growing plants hydroponically has advantages over traditional methods. Since no soil is involved, you don't need large tracts of land, nor do you get potential problems from insects, fungi and bacteria in soil. Hydroponics also use less water than conventional methods and doesn't pollute natural waterways. What's more, you can produce food anywhere, anytime. There are disadvantages controlling the indoor environment of a greenhouse including the lighting that requires a lot of energy, monitoring everything from temperature and humidity to pH (acidity or alkalinity of a solution) is also time and labor intensive. Hydroponic produce can cost twice as much as field-grown vegetables.

Most studies find that hydroponic produce has pretty much the same nutritional profile as conventionally grown produce.

SOURCE: University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter, January 2012.

FOOD IS ALWAYS THE WINNER ON SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

I really don't care who wins the game in Indianapolis on February 5, but whoever is in charge of food is a definite winner with everyone!

During the Christmas season at Mary Ann's, we attended a 2-1/2 hour tapas class at Sur La Table in downtown Naperville, IL. For those unfamiliar with tapas, they're Spanish appetizers. They can be served individually or several can be part of a meal. (More on the tapas class in a future memo.)

What I am sharing is an appetizer the chef and her assistants had made for us before we arrived for the class. It only takes 3 ingredients: A roll of goat cheese (available at Chief and Rays), enough minced fresh mint to cover it and some kind of seedless red jam drizzled on a serving plate before the cheese is placed on it. Serve with assorted crackers. Our class of 16 polished it off before tapas samples were available!

BEST RECIPE OF 2012?

I served Sourdough Bread Stuffing with Leeks, Sliced Mushrooms & Chicken at the Bryan Chief the weekend before Christmas. I made enough changes in the recipe to call it my own and although it would be perfect for the holiday

sheet, I've decided to share it now because it's going to be my "go to" luncheon dish this year. Besides, a lot of Bryan Chief shoppers already have the recipe so why should you wait 11 months to try it!

SOURDOUGH BREAD STUFFING WITH LEEKS, SLICED MUSHROOMS AND CHICKEN

- 12 cups sourdough bread cubes, crusts removed (I used Pepperidge Farm® brand)
- 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
- 3 cups chopped leeks, white and pale green parts only (2 medium)
- 3 cups chopped celery
- 1 pound cleaned and dried sliced mushrooms
- 1-1/2 tablespoons dried sage
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 3/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups cut-up rotisserie chicken
- 1 quart low-sodium chicken broth plus an additional 1/2 cup
- 2 large eggs
- 1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder

Preheat oven to 325°F. Spread bread cubes on two baking sheets. Bake until dry and crisp, stirring occasionally, about 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer bread to a large bowl. Melt butter; sauté leeks and celery until tender, about 10 minutes. Add mushrooms, sage, thyme, salt and pepper and sauté until tender, about another 10 minutes. Pour mushroom mixture over bread cubes. Add chicken and chicken broth and toss to blend. Stuffing can be prepared to this point, 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate. Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 9x13-inch glass baking dish. Whisk eggs and baking powder together and add to stuffing mixture. Transfer to baking dish. Bake until stuffing is cooked through and golden brown on top, about 1 hour. Recipe makes 12 servings.

OUT OF DATE

If you consume vitamin-D-fortified foods, be aware that the Daily Value listed on nutrition labels is out-of-date and too low. The Daily Value is still 400 IU, but the Institute of Medicine (IOM) now recommends 500 IU for adults through age 70 and 800 IU for those over 70. Many experts believe the new IOM recommendations are still too low. The good news is that an increasing number of food companies are fortifying their products with the vitamin, which is found naturally in few foods.

Source: University of California at Berkeley Wellness Letter, February 2012.