



MARY'S MEMO

Recipes • Shopping • Cooking • Health Tips

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Chief and Rays Supermarkets

It's the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature is stirring except the cook of the house. She's made a list and checked it twice so that Christmas dinner will be flavorful and nice.

Turkey was (and still is) the favorite meat served when the Smith clan got together, even in the summertime, but with other families, prime rib, a crown roast of pork, leg of lamb or a spiral ham may take center stage at Christmas. Having an appetizer buffet or brunch are other options.

Because I wanted things done my way, I seldom asked other members of the family to contribute any of the food but I'm getting wiser in my older days and this Thanksgiving I did ask for help and family members obliged! I even supervised grandson, Gabe, carving the turkey.

Daughter-in-law Kelly has usually brought appetizers but this year I asked her to bring a large salad instead. One forkful and I knew it would be perfect for the Christmas memo.

Kelly made several changes to Food Network's Pioneer Woman's Apple, Pecan, and Blue Cheese Salad with Dried Cherries, using Spring Mix salad greens, dried cranberries instead of cherries, crumbled gorgonzola cheese in place of blue cheese and she toasted the pecans. To the dressing she also added 1 to 2 tablespoons more of pure maple syrup because she thought mustard taste was too strong. The revised recipe is as follows:

KELLY THAMAN'S APPLE, PECAN AND GORGONZOLA CHEESE SALAD WITH DRIED CRANBERRIES

- 12 oz. Spring Mix salad greens
- 2 whole apples, cored and sliced very thin
- 1/2 cup pecan halves, toasted
- 1/4 cup dried cranberries
- 6 oz. gorgonzola crumbled cheese (served on the side)
- 1 heaping tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup or more to taste
- 1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Add greens, apple slices, pecan halves and dried cranberries together in a large salad bowl. Because everyone doesn't like gorgonzola cheese, Kelly served this in a separate dish for people to add. To make the dressing, in a small jar combine Dijon mustard, maple syrup, vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper and shake well to mix. Just before serving pour a little salad dressing over the top of the salad and toss to combine. Taste salad and add more salad dressing to taste (you will have some left).

SOURCE: Pioneer Woman recipe adapted by Kelly Thaman, Indianapolis, IN.

HEALTHY SIDE FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER

Daughter Mary Ann was the first to make Bok Choy Mushroom Stir-Fry from www.cdktichen.com. I liked the combination but told her I would thicken my version with cornstarch because

I love things flavored with soy sauce and unless mixture is thickened and coats the vegetables, much of the juice remains in bottom of the serving dish (at least that's my opinion). But it's your call.

BOK CHOY MUSHROOM STIR-FRY

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 cup thinly sliced onions
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-1/2 teaspoons grated ginger
- 1 lb. coarsely chopped bok choy
- 8 oz. sliced mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon La Choy soy sauce (it's gluten-free)
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch

Heat oil in large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions, pepper, garlic and ginger. Stir-fry for about 1 minute. Add the bok choy and mushrooms and stir-fry for about 1 minute. Whisk lemon juice, soy sauce, sugar and cornstarch together. Add to vegetable mixture and stir-fry for about 2 to 3 minutes, until done. Recipe makes 4 servings.

SOURCE: Adapted from cdktichen.com recipe.

EATING FOR LONGEVITY

The so-called Mediterranean diet has been linked to living longer. To start eating like a Mediterranean, try these simple diet changes:

1. Drink alcohol in moderation.
2. Eat less meat and meat products
3. Eat more vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts.
4. Choose more monounsaturated fats (like olive oil), less saturated fat (like butter).
5. Eat more fish.

SOURCE: *Tufts University Health & Nutrition Letter*, December 2012.

DEAR READERS:

It boggles my mind thinking about how much food trends have changed since I started writing *Mary's Memo* for Chief in the spring of 1968. I am gratified that customers of all ages make a point of taking a memo home each week. The food industry has made many improvements, either voluntarily or legislated. Labels are more informative for sure! Shoppers taste in food is more sophisticated, thanks to the Food Network and the internet in general. From what I've observed, men are assuming more culinary responsibilities and the kitchen's no longer a woman's domain. Through all these changes Chief and Rays try their best to accommodate shoppers' demands.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!