

Key ingredient for memorable entertaining is tradition

BY BETHANY BROADWELL
Special to the Record-Eagle

The decorations may be divine and the music merry, but the edibles that hosts serve during holiday entertaining is a big reason guests leave feeling satisfied.

Members of the Traverse City food industry understand the significance of feasting at festivities.

"Having unique foods and dishes is what makes a party stand out," said Darric Newman, a purchaser for Folgarelli's who runs the wine shop. "When we entertain we try to have foods that meet the desires of a broad spectrum of people."

Hosts should consider the kind of occasion they want to have — whether they are serving hors d'oeuvres only, food for an open house, a formal sit-down dinner or strictly desserts, said Newman.

"By establishing this, it

helps to decide what types of food you should serve and also how much," he said.

Understanding guests' tastes is another factor that should steer menu planning. However, traditional dishes like roasted turkey prepared with chestnut stuffing and roasted or grilled beef and pork tenderloin with a port demi glaze are often customary choices.

"Have a well-balanced array of finger foods, from veggies to meats and seafood. Foods in bite-size pieces are much easier to eat at a party," advised Teri Burritt, co-owner of Burritt's Fresh Markets. "Keep ingredients on the simpler side, unless you're familiar with everyone's taste."

As far as a specific food trend for 2004 holiday entertaining, Tena Evans, senior bakery and deli merchandiser for Tom's Food Markets said, "Cheeses are

huge this year with great emphasis on English cheeses such as heart of England, English stichelster and the derby varieties. French cheeses are also growing in popularity with the flavored gourmandise, goat and French Fol Epi."

Yola Pepellashi, chef and co-owner of The Silver Swan Homemade Foods and Creative Gifts, said food trends should not really affect menu choices.

"Although it is fun to introduce people to new foods, the holidays are for whatever may be special to you, your family and friends," she said. "The aromas and tastes of the foods you present should elicit fond memories of happy experiences."

"Tradition, not over-the-top preparations, is the best bet," said Mike Busley, owner of the Grand Traverse Pie Company.

At his bakery/cafe, customers can choose from a wide-selection of gourmet,

handmade pies, assorted sauces and preserves featuring local products and other party-friendly items.

"Holiday party foods usually spare no expense," said Evans.

While the price range can vary tremendously depending on the type of event, she estimated hosts can expect to spend between \$8 and \$10 per guest for food.

Hosts may offer seafood dishes with crab, lobster and shrimp; holiday breads such as stollen and panetone, cheese fondue made from rich Swiss cheese blends of emmenthal and gruyere with hits of brandy and sweets galore.

For those wanting to serve pure decadence, Evans said, "Champagne, fresh strawberries and chocolate are an absolute must."

Allowing plenty of time in advance of a holiday gathering is another necessity to simplify food preparation. Newman suggested the five following tips:

1. Make out the menu weeks ahead of time. Shop at least a week prior to the event for products that are shelf-stable.

2. Order products, like fish, meat, cheeses and cold cuts that need to be fresh, so they are ready to pickup just ahead of the occasion.

3. Freeze dishes, like spinach pie and quiche, which can be placed in the oven and simply heated before serving.

4. Choose main dishes, such as beef tenderloin, that require little laboring over the stove during the actual party.

5. Make a list of the beverages to be served, and pick them up a week prior to the party.

Evans suggested garnishing dishes to give them a quick dazzle. The simple act of adding a sprig of fresh mint, basil or rosemary to a casserole, meat or salad, spruces up plain foods. A dusting of powdered sugar or cocoa or a drizzle of

chocolate or butterscotch syrup around the edge of the plate can make desserts extra tempting.

Offering foods with contrasting colors and textures, Burritt said, adds a festive touch. As examples, she explained cherry peppers resemble decorations and green onions can be tied into bows.

Putting care into the choice of plates, linens, stemware and silver is important, said Pepellashi, "Take a little extra time for the presentation. It makes a huge difference."

Pepellashi reminded that hosts need not get overwhelmed by holiday expectations when it comes to the kitchen.

"Don't try to do it all yourself. Enlist your family and friends to help" she said. "Cooking together can be a wonderful sharing experience."

Bethany Broadwell is a local freelance writer.

Easy recycling tips makes the holidays and future merrier

BY KELLY IGNACE
Special to the Record-Eagle

Recycle Santa Claus? Recycling the Santa story has been a tradition handed down from parent to offspring for generations. Well, not only is Santa Claus recyclable, but so are many other items associated with the Christmas holidays.

Christmas Trees

They can be recycled, thanks to Traverse City Light & Power, from Sunday, Dec. 27 through Saturday, Jan. 22, at Hull Park, behind the Traverse Area District Library at the end of Hannah Street. Hours will be from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Follow the drop-off signs to the boat parking lot at Hull Park. The trees are chipped and the mulch is used to groom area nature trails.

Christmas Lights

You may have had a few un-kind words with dud lights in the past. But look on the bright side. You can recycle them at your local scrap metal facility. In the Traverse City area, take them to Integrity Iron & Metal on Cass Rd., 946-3499 or Traverse Bay Recycling on Blair Town Hall Rd., 943-9000. Please bundle and tie your light strings.

Christmas Cards

My favorite re-use for old Christmas cards is to cut them up and use them for next year's gift tags. Another suggestion is cutting out the pictures and gluing them on homemade cards for the following year. Children love this. Donate them to a preschool or latchkey program to be used for arts & crafts activities. They can also be recycled at the county drop-off recycling sites.

Gift Boxes

Of course, reuse them. If

they are beyond repair, recycle them at one of the nine Grand Traverse County drop-off sites.

Corrugated cardboard

Can be taken to any one of nine conveniently located Grand Traverse County drop-off recycling sites. Sites are open 24/7 for your convenience. For locations, call the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555 or go to www.grandtraverse.org

Paper

You know you are not going to read those instructions, so you might as well recycle them. And most holiday gift wrap with the exception of foiled and glittered paper can be taken at the drop-off sites as well.

Old Clothes/Shoes

Make room for the new. Take your unwanted items to one of the many area reuse stores, such as Goodwill or the Women's Resource Center. There is a helpful way to find local re-use centers using the web. Go to the following Web site: www.liaa.cc/seeds/green-map.asp. Choose the search for locations option. Enter your zip code and choose reuse site from the drop-down box.

Electronics/e-waste

Electronics are a growing concern. Many electronics are host to toxic heavy metals. While it is still legal to dispose of them in regular trash, many states have already banned the disposal of e-waste in landfills. Grand Traverse County held an e-waste collection in October 2004. Nearly 45,000 pounds (2

semi-trucks full) of electronics were collected for recycling. The collection was a great success. No date is yet scheduled for the next collection. To save your place on the e-waste collection waiting list, please call the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555.

Household Batteries

Batteries contain toxic heavy metals and when disposed of improperly, are a danger to you and the environment. You can recycle batteries year-round at the following locations:

- Traverse City Fire Station at 510 W. Front St.
- City/County Building on Boardman
- County Public Services Building on Lafranier Rd.

Accepted at these locations are regular household batteries, rechargeable batteries and cell

phones. Please take your auto batteries to a scrap metal facility (see Christmas lights). Call the Recycle Hotline for more information 941-5555.

Food & Beverage Containers

These containers can be taken to any one of nine conveniently located Grand Traverse County Drop-off recycling sites. Sites are open 24/7 for your convenience.

For locations, contact the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555 or www.grandtraverse.org

The following clean items are accepted:

- Glass food and beverage containers that are clear, green or brown.
- Metal food and beverage cans and kitchen foil items.
- Plastic food and beverage containers marked with the numbers 1 or 2 contained in the recycling

symbol.

Leftovers

When you've had all that you can take of leftover casseroles, compost them. Composting is a great way to cut down on disposal costs while creating a helpful soil amendment. Remember to compost only plant matter. Meat should not go into the compost pile. Re-use leftover turkey meat & bones by making soup. Freeze in a storage bag and pull it out on one of those "don't feel like cooking" nights. For information on composting or to purchase a backyard compost bin for \$53, call the Recycle Hotline at 941-5555. Remember this: Please use your garbage disposal lightly. Over-using this appliance can be a burden on municipal wastewater treatment systems and on your septic.

Styrofoam

Unfortunately there is not a local option for recycling Styrofoam in the Traverse City area. Please throw your molded Styrofoam away. Do not put it into a recycling bin. Clean foam packing peanuts can be taken to your local shipping store for re-use.

Kelly Ignace is a Grand Traverse County Resource Recycling Specialist.

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