



FOOD FOR THOUGHT



IN THIS ISSUE

**New Year.
Who's This?**

**What's for Lunch?:
New Items to Try**

**Worldly Winter
Stew: A French
Classic**

**Home Cookin' Good:
Cook the Food We
Serve at Home**

NEW YEAR. WHO'S THIS?

The beginning of a new year is celebrated around the world. Usually symbolizing a fresh start and a year of wealth. For centuries, and to this day, New Year's celebrations are closely tied to the lunar calendar and religious holidays. Throughout this month we will explore how people celebrate the new year through food!

Let's start this journey in our own back yard. In the American South, eating black-eyed peas has been a long standing tradition. For almost 1500 years, black-eyed peas have been considered good luck, starting with Rosh Hashanah, which is the Jewish New Year, and celebrated in the fall. These legumes are also very cheap and store well, so they were used as a cheap food for slaves in the South. By the time of Emancipation for slaves after the Civil War, which was made official on New Year's Day in 1863, black-eyed

peas were a common a dish for New Year's and then, according to Southern Folklore, became a celebratory dish marking the end of slavery and a new year. Today, pork chops are a common addition to black eyed peas, along with collard greens and rice, making it a true Southern soul food staple.

Across the world in China, Chinese New Year isn't celebrated until February and lasts for 15 days! Chinese legend states that a wild beast named "Nian", which is also the Chinese word for *year*, would attack villagers. The only way to keep Nian away was with loud noises and lights. These celebrations are filled with food such roasted duck, chicken, dumplings, and a variety of rice cakes or balls that are both sweet and savory. Chinese New Year ends with the Festival of Lanterns, which is where Disney's Rapunzel got the idea for the lantern festival Rapunzel can see from her tower.

Moving onto Europe, Scandinavian countries: Finland, Norway, and Sweden, along with Poland celebrate by eating Pickled Herring! Don't worry



**Scratch-made
51% whole
wheat pizza
rolls stuffed
with mozzarella
cheese,
seasoned
sauce, and
pepperoni**

Pork & Black-Eyed Peas



this is one dish we won't be trying at school! A tastier dish that is eaten in Norway and Demark is, *Krasenkage*, meaning "wealth cake". *Krasenkage* is a tall tower of ring cakes made with marzipan, which is a sweet almond confection. The cake is decorated with icing, flags, and prizes to share.

In Pakistan, Eid-ul-Adha is celebrated at the end of the Islamic Calendar which occurs every 355 days. Typically, lamb is eaten to symbolize events in the Koran. Meals are finished with a stuffed shortbread cookie called, *Maamoul*, which is filled with pistachios, walnuts, and sugar!

In Mexico, a familiar favorite is made for New Year's and many other holidays. *Tamales* were traditionally made by the women in the family, although now all family members enjoy making these together. Families will work as a team to make dozens of dozens of tamales that they will share with friends and other family members to celebrate. Tamales are made from corn masa, or dough, and filled with delicious meats and vegetables. They are wrapped in a dried corn husk and steamed to perfection.

The New Year brings new possibilities! What new foods can you try, to celebrate the long overdue end of 2020?



WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

HARVEST OF THE MONTH -

Root Vegetables

Thursdays in January

All of our food grows out of the soil, but some of our favorites grow under the soil! Potatoes, onions, carrots, and more grow as part of plants' root system. This month, try root vegetables sautéed into soups, roasted, and baked!



Jicama Slaw

January 5th and 21st

Jicama (HIK-KA-ma) is root vegetable that is native to Mexico and areas of South America. When sliced and served fresh, it has a crunchy and juicy texture; with a taste some say is a cross between a potato and pear. Our slaw will contain fresh jicama, carrots, cabbage, cilantro, lime juice, and packed with seasonings for a fresh and healthy vegetable side!

Worldly Winter Stew

January 5th and 21st

This Month our "stew" is something that many of us are familiar with in WNY. Beef on Weck is commonly served with "jus", a rich and tasty French sauce. A traditional *jus* is a painstakingly long process of reducing and adding flavors to broth. The sauce we are used to and will serve this month is a beef broth simmered with rosemary, onion, garlic, and roast beef!

HOME COOKIN' GOOD



Try this fresh new version of coleslaw made with jicama!

Ingredients

- 1 large jicama, shredded and peeled
- 1 cup of coleslaw mix
- 1/2 cup lime juice
- 2 T rice vinegar (any type will do)
- 2 T chili powder
- 2 T honey
- 1/2 cup olive or canola oil
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup diced cilantro

Directions:

1. Peel and shred jicama. You can use a cheese grater or a knife to dice into small pieces.
2. Whisk together lime juice, vinegar, chili powder, honey and oil.
3. In large bowl mix jicama, coleslaw mix, and vinegar mixture.
4. Taste and season with salt and pepper to your preference.
5. Let sit for 30 minutes before serving. You can enjoy this with tacos, BBQ, sandwiches, or as main course salad for a healthy-low-calorie meal!