

Culinary Outlook

This cook likes to entertain the casual way

FOOD



AILEEN CLAIRES

to use wild roses, daisies, sweet peas and purple asters or other colorful combinations for an inexpensive bouquet. If you plan ahead, the party won't put you in a tizzy. Remember the trend is to 'relaxed' entertaining."

Another trick to dress up a casual party is to use large, colorful kitchen towels for napkins.

One casual dish Wyler enjoys is a shrimp boil. The shrimp is dumped on a paper-covered table and served with finger foods.

Some people love to entertain large groups of people. Susan Wyler does — but she doesn't like to spend three days in the kitchen cooking for the party.

This doesn't mean, though, that she doesn't enjoy cooking for her friends. Her theory is that if you can cook well, you can eat well. She has been practicing this for several years as a cookbook author, caterer and former food editor of Food & Wine magazine.

"I'm pretty much a self-taught cook, although I have attended many cooking school classes," Wyler says.

Although she and her husband, artist Rollie Erickson, live in a loft in New York City, Wyler does most of her entertaining at their country home — having people over as frequently as once every two weeks. "I give large parties in New York about twice a year," she says.

Her country extravaganza led to her collection of recipes and advice in "Cooking for a Crowd" (Harmony Books, \$24.95). In it she draws on her experiences entertaining 10 to 50 people, usually alfresco, when weather permits.

Wyler has a charcoal grill, a gas grill and a smoker, and loves to experiment with them. Although she would prefer to do all the cooking herself, she occasionally relents and lets friends bring a dish because "it makes them feel a part of the party."

She likes parties to be casual and enjoys serving finger foods, although she says, "I do use silver. I go to auctions and garage sales and buy a box of silver for a dollar."

Wyler believes in do-ahead recipes, and even blanches corn on the cob in advance, then smears it with mayonnaise and hot sauce before grilling it for five minutes. She likes to squeeze

SOUTHERN SHRIMP BOIL

- 7 to 8 pounds medium shrimp (25 to 30 per pound) in the shell
- 1/2 cup mustard seeds
- 1/4 cup coriander seeds
- 1/4 cup allspice berries
- 2 tablespoons black peppercorns
- 2 tablespoons crushed hot red pepper flakes
- 12 whole cloves
- 6 blades of mace
- 3 bay leaves, broken in half
- 2 1/2 tablespoons coarse (kosher) salt
- 3 onions, thickly sliced
- 2 celery ribs, thickly sliced
- 6 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 lemon, sliced
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice

Rinse the shrimp very well but do not shell. Drain and set aside. Fill a stockpot with 6 to 8 quarts of water. Add all the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes. (The court bouillon can be made several hours ahead.)

Just before you are ready to serve the shrimp, bring the court bouillon to a boil. Dump about one-third of the shrimp into the pot and boil for 2 to 3 minutes, until pink, loosely curled and opaque throughout. Remove with a skimmer or slotted spoon and transfer to a bowl. (The shrimp in their shell will stay hot for a good 5 to 10 minutes.) Repeat twice with the remaining shrimp.

Serve with Creole Butter Dipping Sauce (recipe follows). This kitchen-tested recipe makes 20 to 24 servings.

CREOLE BUTTER DIPPING SAUCE

- 1 1/2 pounds unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 to 3 teaspoons hot pepper sauce, to taste
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt

In a heavy medium-size saucepan, melt the butter over low heat. Skim the white foam off the top. Pour the clear butter into another saucepan or bowl, discarding the thick milky residue at the bottom of the pan. (This "clarified" butter can be made up to two weeks ahead and stored in a covered jar in the refrigerator.)

Whisk in the lemon juice, Worcestershire, hot sauce and salt. (The flavored butter can be made up two days ahead. Refrigerate in a covered jar.) Reheat over low heat or in the microwave until hot before serving. This kitchen-tested recipe makes 3 cups.

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Old cookbook gets a new look

Like the old gray mare, traditional recipes ain't what they used to be. Dramatic changes in lifestyle in the '80s have brought about a wave of cooking revisions.

An example is the 10th edition of "Better Homes and Gardens New Cook Book" (Meredith, \$19.95). According to Linda Henry, one of the book's four editors, preparing the new edition involved revising or adding 1,300 recipes. It was done to address busy families, smaller families, increased use of the microwave and burgeoning health-consciousness.

"We cut salt, sugar and fat wherever we could without changing good flavor," Henry explains. For example, salt was eliminated from all cookie recipes because it serves no purpose in them.

Cholesterol counts were added to the nutritional charts at the beginning of every chapter, so a person can just run a finger down the column and pick and choose a recipe to fit a diet need.

Fish, chicken and meat chapters were expanded to reflect the changes in eating habits.

In planning the "Better Homes and Gardens New Cook Book," the editors did not assume that the cook knows how to fold, blend, chop, dice or saute. They went back to the basics, explaining techniques and providing photos to identify foods.

To prepare the current edition, eight full-time home economists worked in the test kitchen for 2 1/2 years and ran up a \$70,000 grocery bill. They prepared five recipes each a day.

Perhaps this is why Henry says she doesn't like to cook at home. She lives with her husband, Don, and 14-month-old daughter on 150 acres in Osceola, Iowa. Her husband farms about 500 acres. "I don't ride the tractor," she says. "I set that rule when we were first married."

Henry is a weekend cook who lights up the grill for a couple of hours on Sunday. She grills chicken and burgers to freeze for meals during the week. In winter, she makes hearty soups to freeze.

Her lifestyle reflects that of many throughout the country. "I've gone to lighter entrees," she says, "and don't serve as much food. I don't entertain that often, but lots of my friends entertain with appetizers. We're grazing at evening meals."

While she thinks her fellow Midwesterners still eat beef, the meat recipes in the book include techniques for preparing the leaner beef, pork and lamb, with advice from the Live Stock and Meat Board.

For first-time cooks, the "Better

Homes and Gardens New Cook Book" features information on shopping, meal planning, how to make a dish more attractive, food safety and cooking and measuring terms. Canning and freezing information came from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The latest edition also responds to the requests for quick, simple recipes. "As many recipes as possible are done fast, 30 minutes or less, and made as easy as possible," Henry says. "The recipes were not created for use by a master chef."

Even with changing eating habits, desserts are always popular.

FUDGE CAKE

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 eggs
- 3 squares (3 ounces) unswetened chocolate, melted and cooled

In a bowl combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add water, shortening and vanilla.

ASK KATHY:

Are You Sensitive to Certain Foods?

Each of our bodies are different in the way they are affected by various foods. Two factors that influence the final outcome of our food intake are metabolism and sensitivity to certain foods. We can even be affected by the time of day and our attitude at the time we eat the food. It's true that some people can eat with reckless abandon and gain very little, while others seem to gain weight at the thought of food.

At Diet Center we work closely with you to identify those foods that may be a problem for you. We can

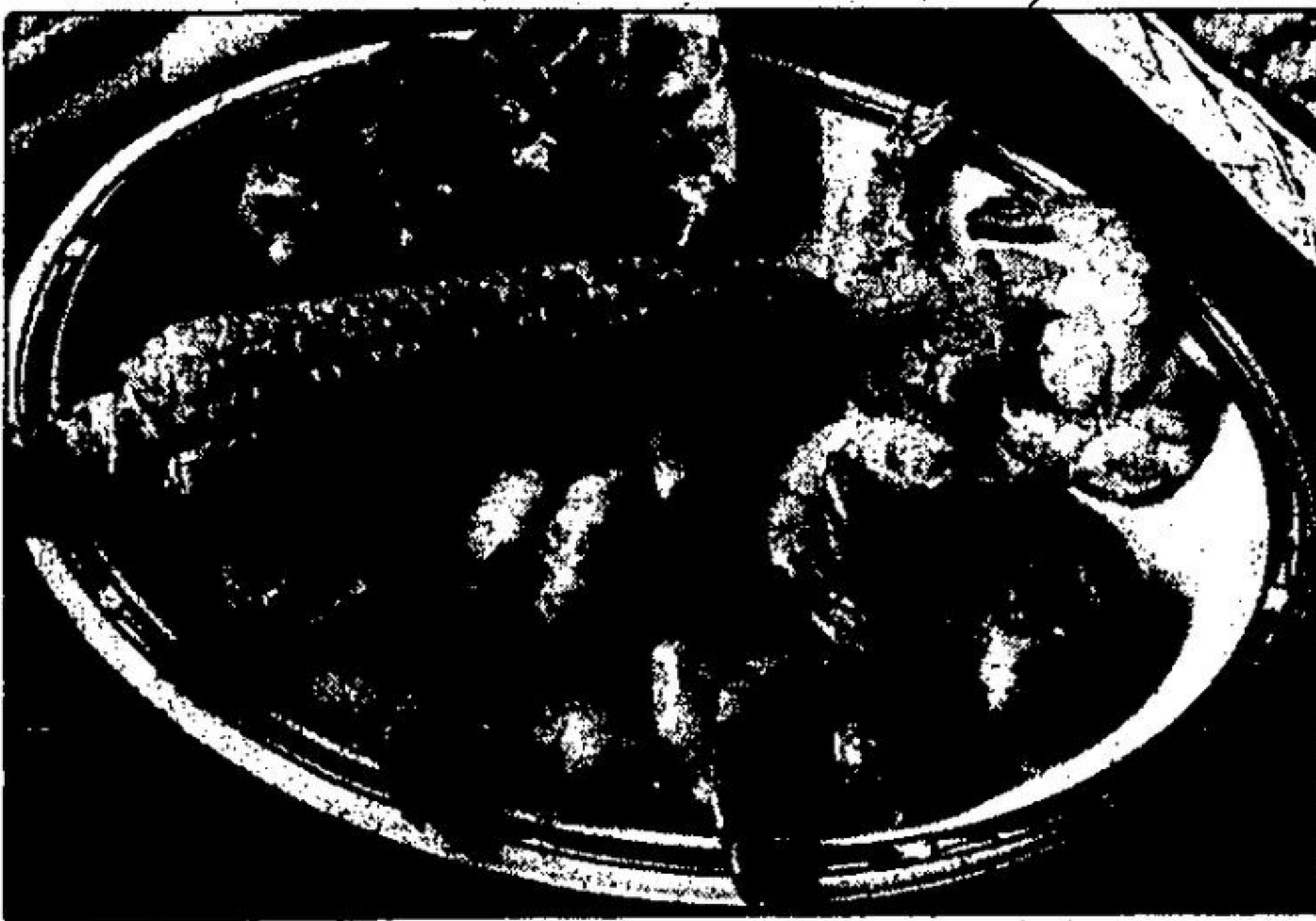
also help you to understand how exercise can increase your metabolism and how reducing stress can help you to lose your excess weight and keep it off forever. Call today, or come in for a free consultation and let us explain why Diet Center is the last diet you'll ever need.

NO-COOK FUDGE FROSTING

- 4 1/4 cups sifted powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup unswetened cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup margarine or butter, softened
- 1/2 cup boiling water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix powdered sugar and cocoa in medium bowl. Add margarine, boiling water and vanilla. Beat with an electric mixer on low speed until combined. Beat for 1 minute on medium speed. Cool for 20 to 30 minutes or until of spreading consistency. Frost tops and sides of two 8- or 9-inch cake layers.

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SUSAN WYLER'S Southern shrimp boil will delight a hungry crowd.

lime juice on the corn or toss on some grated cheddar.

Now a packager of cookbooks Wyler sees a return to more home entertaining by those in their 30s and 40s. She believes baby boomers are tired of spending lots of money on mediocre foods and are beginning to enjoy entertaining in the home more. After all, friends can even bring their babies to the party.

But today's hosts want to make entertaining easy on themselves. "That's why casual outdoor entertaining is so much fun," she says. "You can always dress up the table with whatever wildflowers are out. I like

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