

Time-saving tips to enjoy Thanksgiving

What's for dinner this weekend? Are you in charge of making Thanksgiving dinner for a couple dozen people? I am. So I know what it's like! Once again, our mission is to host a fabulous event, but not spend the entire party in the kitchen. How are we going to manage to do that? Here's my list of suggestions:

1. If someone offers to bring something—accept! But ONLY if they bring it ready to go. If they are going to bring a whole bunch of raw ingredients and mess up your kitchen and cause more work for you, then graciously tell them that perhaps a bottle of wine would be a better idea.

2. Rent anything you can afford. Glassware is the best bang for your buck because it is the most time consuming to wash your own. If you can afford more than the glassware, then rent the plates, cutlery and linens too! In case you weren't aware, when you rent dishes, you get to send them back DIRTY!

3. Make the rest of your family help by tidying up the house and setting the table.

4. Make two lists before you go grocery shopping. One list should be the menu—and don't leave anything off. So that on the day of the party you can check the list to see if you have remembered to put everything out. This will also help you create your grocery shopping list.

The second list is the grocery shopping list. This should have everything on it, but not only the food. Make sure you list wine, candles, toilet paper, napkins, anything you will be needing. The purpose is to try and eliminate time consuming extra trips to the store.

5. If you are serving a chicken/turkey or capon, consider buying some bones and try making a stock from scratch. I know it sounds like extra work, but it is really very easy and you could do this on Saturday. This would then allow



What's cookin'

Lori Gysel
Gerry Kentner

you to make your gravy in advance and not have to worry about making it at the last minute.

6. For turnip, rutabaga or sweet potatoes, these can be made and mashed in advance, mixed with the butter, sugar, nuts, whatever else you like and then returned to the oven shortly before serving to be warmed up.

7. If possible, do some of the work the day before. Prepare stuffing (do not put in the bird until immediately before roasting—or even safer would be to cook the stuffing separately), peel potatoes, clean vegetables, bake desserts, find and clean serving platters.

8. Buy the dessert! You've worked so hard on the rest of the meal, give yourself a break—there are some great stores that sell homemade pies. Take advantage of the opportunity!

9. On the day of the event when someone says can I help with anything? You should say yes! Don't do it all yourself. Take the help when offered.

10. Make a list of cooking times. Sit down and think about when everything needs to be ready by, what can be done in advance and make yourself a timing list. This is what the professionals do. That way, you just follow the list on the day of the party.

Have fun and keep cooking!

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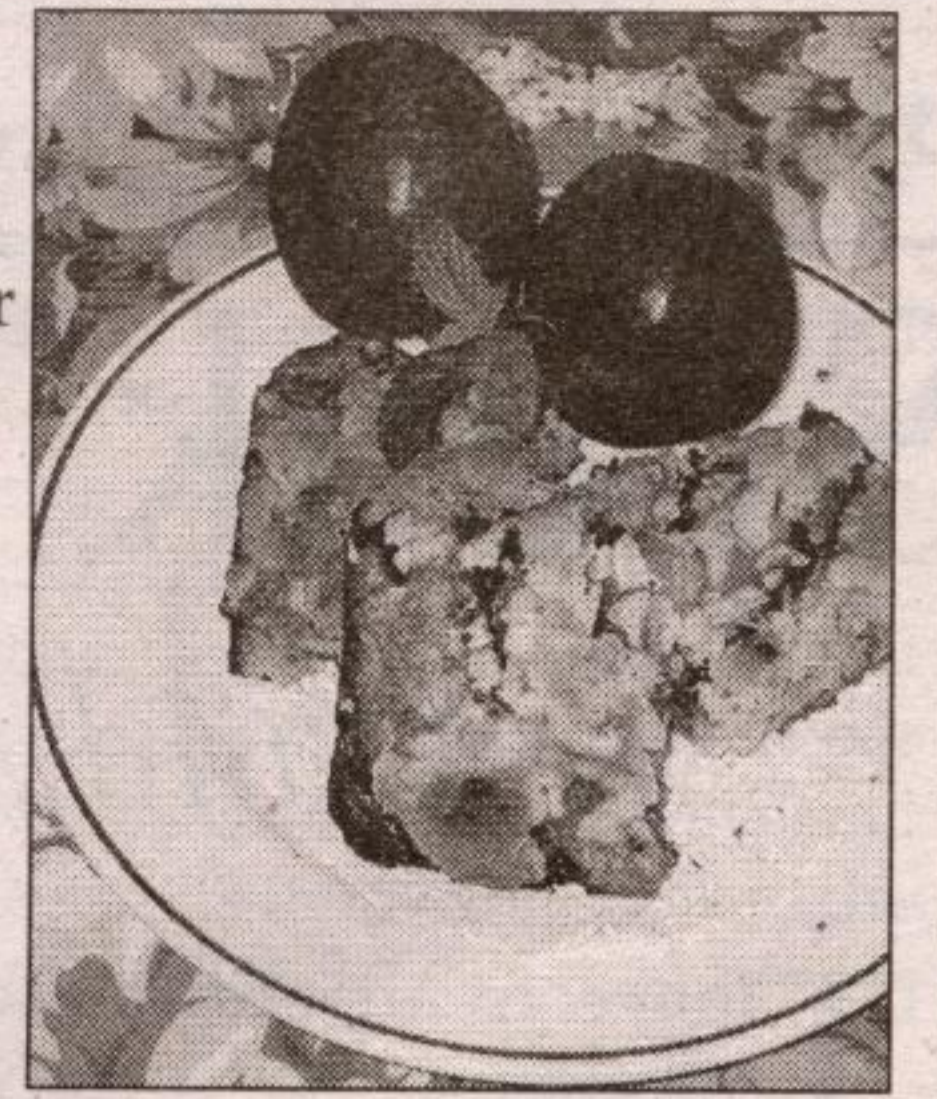
Fresh Plum Macaroon Squares

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup butter, softened
- 1 tbsp grated orange rind
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup ground almonds
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Topping

- 1/4 cup butter, softened
- 3 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1 tbsp grated orange rind
- 1/2 cup ground almonds
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 4 cups sliced plums



Method

1. In a medium bowl, beat butter with orange rind until creamy. Stir in sugar, then the ground almonds. Gradually blend in flour, using fingertips when mixture becomes stiff.

2. Grease the sides of a 9" x 13" baking pan. Press mixture into the bottom of the pan. Bake this layer in a preheated 375 F. degree oven for 12-15 minutes.

3. For the topping, combine the butter and 1/4 cup of the sugar and 1/4 cup of the flour. Mix in sliced almonds and set aside.

4. In a bowl beat eggs with remaining sugar for five minutes until light and fluffy. Then stir in orange rind.

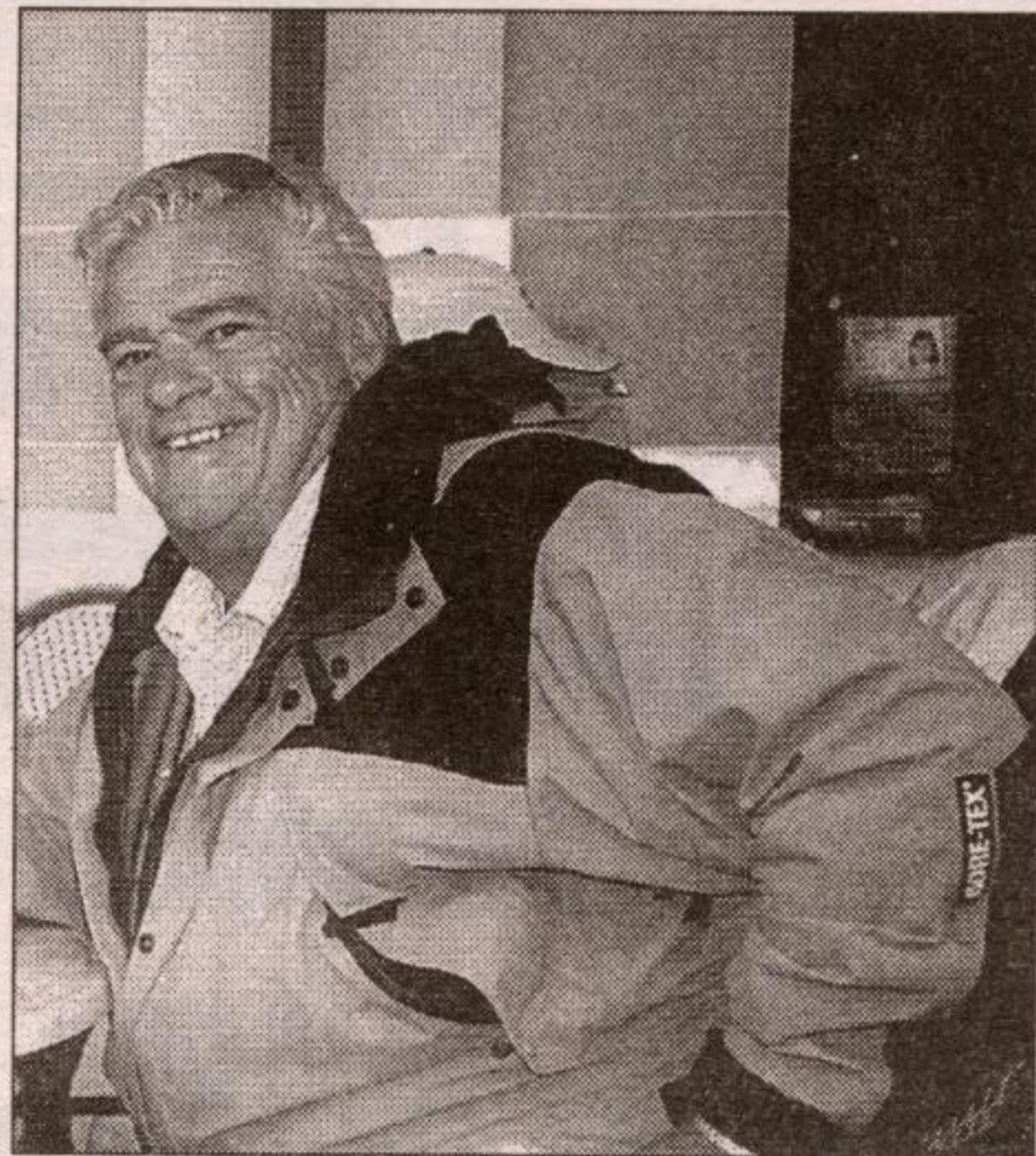
5. Combine remaining flour, ground almonds and baking powder. Stir into egg mixture.

6. Arrange the plums evenly over the base. Spread egg mixture on top. Sprinkle with sliced almond mixture. Bake at 375 F degrees for 40-45 minutes, or until top is puffed and golden and plums are tender. Remove from oven and run knife around the edges of the pan.

7. Cool and cut into squares. Serve.

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Herbal Magic® Systems wishes you a time of rest, reflection, and joy this Thanksgiving weekend!

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