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Fall is the beginning of the 'putting down' season

It's fall fair weekend! I love this weekend. To me, it is the beginning of the season I love the most. (If someone could get rid of my allergies, I would love it even more).

Anyway, along with fall fair season and the return to school, also comes the time for canning, preserving or "putting down" some of your favourite fruits and veggies. I'm only guessing, but I think the "putting down" phrase came from the idea that once all these jars of delectables were prepared, they had to be put down in the cold cellar.

My grandma Kentner's cold cellar was something to behold. I suppose she was a product of the times she lived in, because although in my time and place, food has always been readily available, grandma could have fed all of Georgetown single-handedly with the pickles, jarred fruits and canned goods kept in her basement.

The principle of preservation of food, whether we are talking on an industrial level or a small domestic scale is to prevent or slow down the development and action of natural micro-organisms and enzymes and to avoid exterior dehydration.

There are several methods of preserving:

Dehydration: draws much of the water (which encourages biological reactions) from the food. Drying and smoking has been practised industrially and at home for ages. Exposure to

*What's
cookin'*

Lori Gysel
Gerry Kentner



the sun and fresh air will suffice for some vegetables (like sun-dried tomatoes), whereas most fruits must be done in an oven.

Saturation: this is the principle of preservation by cooking in sugar (like jams) or by salting (raw meat saturated in brine or dry salt). Salting is also the process used to preserve butter. Preserving with oil is also a method of saturation.

Coating: this method protects the food from the action of oxygen. This process is most commonly used when preserving meat in its own fat (confit).

Preservatives: these create a medium incompatible with all microbial life. Classic methods employ vinegar, sweet and sour preparations (pickles, chutneys), alcoholic fermentation (wine, beer, cider, spirits) and acidic fermentation (sauerkraut).

Heat: destroys enzymes and micro-organisms as long as the temperature is sufficiently high for sufficiently long.

Refrigeration: the activity of enzymes and bacteria are slowed if stored in -8 to -10 degrees C.

Before I go, just a quick note about today's recipe. If you are looking for fava beans in your grocery store, I have not seen them fresh, only frozen. They look like a large cousin to the lima bean. They are also known as broad beans.

Have fun and keep cooking!

Fava Bean Salad

Ingredients

- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and left whole
- 1 (750 g) frozen fava beans (with shells on)
- 6 oz double smoked bacon, minced
- 1 cup whole blanched almonds, toasted
- 1 cup fresh shelled peas (or frozen)
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese (the real kind that you grate yourself)
- 1/4 cup fresh mint, sliced fine
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 lemons, juiced
- salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add garlic cloves and allow the water to boil for a few minutes.
2. Add the frozen fava beans to the water. Cook for 3-5 minutes, the beans will float to the surface when they are ready.
3. Spoon out the fava beans and run under cool water.
4. Add the peas to the boiling water and cook until tender.
5. Drain peas and run under cool water. Remove the garlic cloves and set aside.
6. In a fry pan, drizzle a teaspoon of olive oil and heat until hot. Add the double-smoked bacon and cook until the bacon is crispy, but not burnt. Spoon out bacon and set to drain on paper towels.
7. Remove the fava beans from their shells by popping them out. Try to keep beans whole if possible.
8. To make the dressing, place half of the cooked peas into a food processor. Add the cheese, boiled garlic, half of the mint, olive oil and lemon juice. Process until smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
9. Just before serving, mix together the fava beans, double-smoked bacon, toasted almonds, remainder of the mint, remainder of the cooked peas and the dressing. Taste for seasoning one more time before serving.

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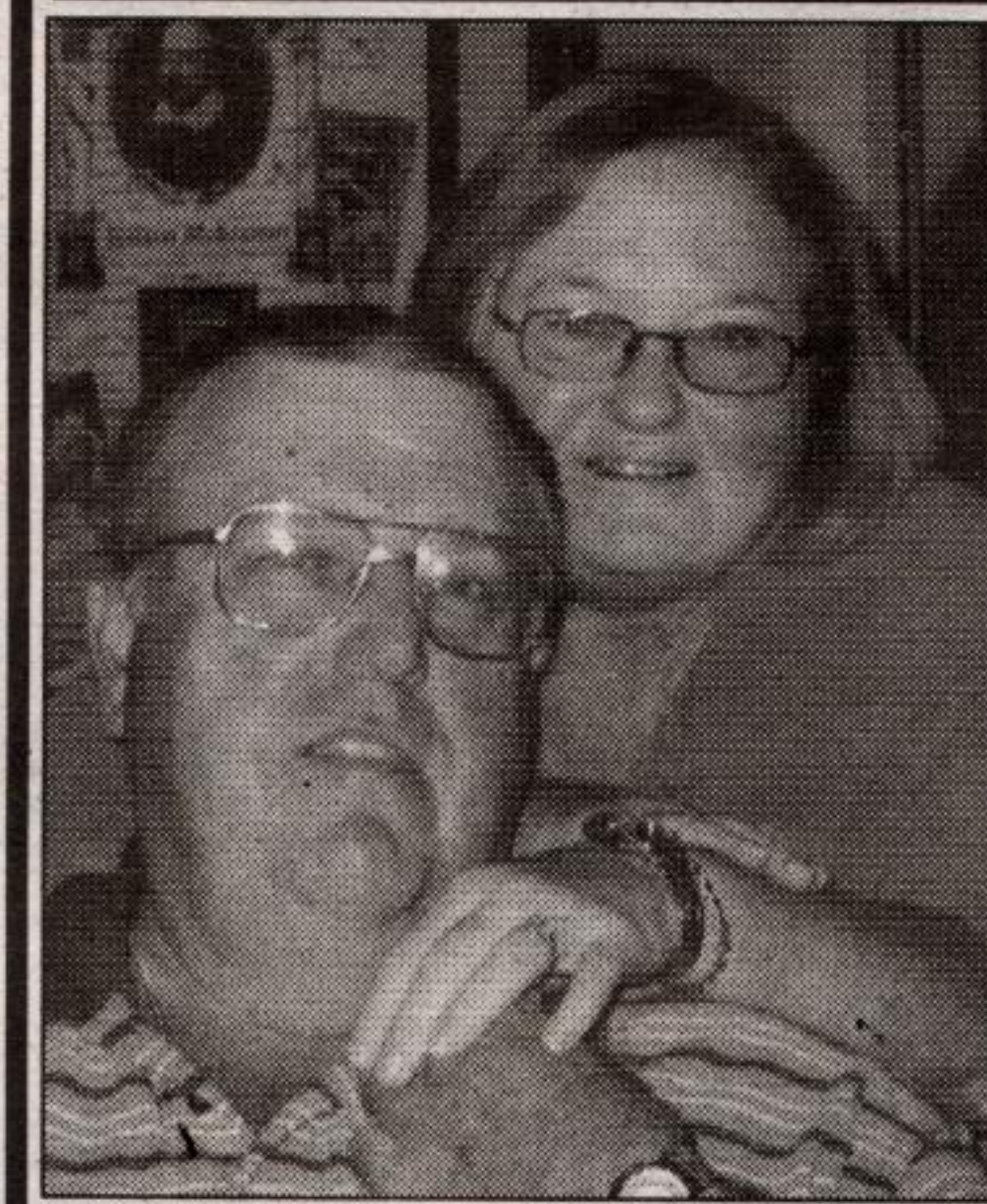
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