

# Road trip results in good memories, excellent recipes and lots of pounds.

(Gerry is writing this week).

**W**e recently returned from a driving trip to the U.S. and, as usual, while away, the pursuit of some interesting food and food-related experiences is always a mission on my mind.

For years, I have collected menus from most of the noteworthy restaurants we have visited. Whatever I will do with them, I do not know, but it is very interesting to look back and see how foods and prices have changed and evolved in 30 or more years.

We discovered that most family style or casual restaurants (not fine dining) in the southern states seem to offer a similar style of menu, offering home cooked traditional southern fare. This generally consists of six to 10 entrees featuring country cured ham, which is salt-cured, baked ham, which is sugar cured and the type we are used to, chicken and dumplings, catfish, mountain trout, pot roast, crab cakes, chicken pot pie and southern fried chicken.

The mains are accompanied by two or three sides, and the list is endless. Here is a sampling of some of the side choices: coleslaw, candied apples, pickled beets, pinto beans, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, sweet potatoes, green beans, turnip greens, baked potato, mashed potato, fried apples, sliced tomatoes, applesauce, fried okra, rice, French fries, grits, corn and dumplings. Whew! What choices!

Food tends to be heavy, well cooked and lots of starches. On top of the meal, they always bring baskets of biscuits, cornbread or both. We seldom made it to dessert unless we only had an appetizer or soup. But desserts were plentiful and varied. Fruit cobblers of any kind were the house favourite, followed by an endless list of homemade pies, including key lime and pecan. Bread pudding

## What's cookin'

Lori Gysel  
Gerry Kentner



is also very popular and one of the desserts I did try was a butterscotch bread pudding. Man, was that good! I have no shame when it comes to acquiring a recipe I want, but the cook was so busy that night and again in the morning, she didn't have time. But I will still pursue the recipe and pass it on.

Here's a few foods we tried that were unusual and unusually good. In Elizabethtown, Kentucky, I had a white bean soup, in which the beans were cooked, but whole, in a little broth and served with diced onions and sweet green relish on the side! In North Carolina, the most popular side was appleslaw, consisting mainly of Granny Smith apples, very crunchy and refreshing. I have the recipe and will surely repeat it for you.

The most unique entrée I had was in Tennessee at the Opryland Hotel in Nashville. It was called "hot rocks". To best explain the fabulous presentation, it was a plate-sized stone, heated and sitting on a bed of salt crystals. On top of the stone were sizzling shrimps, scallops, ahi tuna, vegetables and king crab. At tableside, the waitress poured over a soy butter which sizzled on the hot rock. Very imaginative and very delicious.

It was a wonderful holiday and we hope to be back on the road again searching out new foods before long!

Have fun and keep cooking!

## Bolognese Meat Sauce

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 130 g pancetta bacon, diced
- 250 g lean ground beef
- 250 g lean ground pork
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 28 oz can crushed tomatoes
- 2-3 cups beef stock
- 1/2 cup 35% cream
- salt and pepper to taste



### Method

1. Heat butter and oil in a large skillet until sizzling.
2. Add vegetables. Allow vegetables to soften. Add garlic.
3. Add pancetta and cook for approximately 10 minutes.
4. Add ground meats, lower the heat and cook gently for 10 minutes, stirring frequently and breaking up lumps of meat that may form.
5. Add wine. Continue simmering for five minutes or until slightly reduced.
6. Once there is little liquid left, add the tomatoes and 1 cup beef stock, bring to a boil. Stir well and reduce again.
7. Half cover the pan and leave to simmer for 90 minutes stirring occasionally.
8. Stir in more stock as it becomes absorbed.
9. Add the cream, stir well and simmer without lid for 30 minutes.
10. Salt and pepper to taste.



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