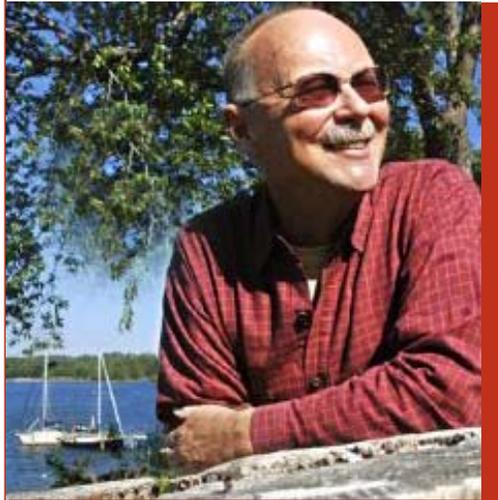


CH W *Line*

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C.

March 2010

Volume XIV, Number 6



Spices of Life: The Savory Story of the First Global Marketplace

Speaker: Dr. Frederick R. Czarra

Sunday, March 14, 2010

2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Dr. Fred Czarra is an administrator, author, editor, educator, historian and designer of computer programs and instructional materials for schools, libraries, and businesses. His latest book, *Spices – A Global History*, written for British publisher Reaktion Books, was released by The University of Chicago Press in March 2009 (see www.spicesaglobalhistory.com).

He received his B.S. degree in English, History and Philosophy at Mt. St. Mary's College and his Master of Arts degree in History from the University of Scranton. His doctorate is in History, Education, and Sociology from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Dr. Czarra is the author, co-author or editor of seven books, including *Fresh Water: Enough for You and Me* (for the 2003 United Nations Year of Freshwater). From 1975 to 1990, Dr. Czarra served as the Executive Editor of *The Social Studies*, the oldest journal in the United States devoted to teaching and learning about history and the social sciences.

Additionally, he has taught undergraduate history and/or geography courses at the University of Maryland, St. Mary's College of Maryland and Howard Community College. Dr. Czarra also has been on the graduate faculty of American University, Bowie State College, the Johns Hopkins University and Loyola College.

He was the education consultant for Maryland's 350th Anniversary Celebration in 1984. In recent decades he has served as an advisor to the ministries of education in Brunei, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Singapore. In 1995 he received the Global Apple Award in New York City for his contributions to International Education in the United States.

From 1986-2006 he was the Director of International Education and Specialist in Social Studies and Interdisciplinary Learning for the state superintendents of schools and the state education agencies in the United States at the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in Washington, D.C. In 2009, Dr. Czarra spoke about spice history for the Smithsonian Institution.



CALENDAR CHoW Meetings

March 4

Special Tour: Library of Congress's rare book holdings on gastronomy by Mark Dimunation, Chief. Thursday, 4:00 p.m. (see page 3).

April 11

Cooperative Supper (Note: time change 4 to 6 p.m.)

May 2

Barbara G. Carson, "Ambitious Appetites" – political aspects on dining in D.C. during the Federal period. (Note: first Sunday)

Culinary Historians of Washington, D.C. (CHoW/DC)

founded in 1996, is an informal, nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to the study of the history of foodstuffs, cuisines, and culinary customs, both historical and contemporary, from all parts of the world.

www.chowdc.org

What Happened at the January 10 Meeting?

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

The meeting was called to order by the president, **Katherine Livingston**, about 2:45 p.m. Approximately 40 to 45 people were present, including six visitors and guests.

Shirley Cherkasky described the planned March 4 CHoW visit to the Library of Congress rare cookbook collection and circulated a sign-up sheet. There will be further opportunities to sign up at the February meeting or by contacting Shirley directly. We have not been given a limit on attendees, but are restricting this to members.

CiCi Williamson described a Les Dames d'Escoffier event to be held on February 27 and circulated a sign-up sheet for volunteers to staff a CHoW table there. An adequate number were obtained.

Suggestions for a theme for the April cooperative supper were solicited. Those obtained were Cajun food, foods with funny names, World's Fair food, and indigenous (pre-contact) New World foods. Further suggestions will be sought and will be voted on at the March meeting.

A whatzit brought by Judy Newton, a hollow, bottomless china cylinder about 3 inches long with an inscription associating it with the Cunard steamship line, was not definitively identified but was thought to be an egg holder.

Refreshments served included pork Jaegersahne schnitzel from **Tom Weiland**, German potato soup from **Kathleen Carrington**, country ham spread on corn muffins from **Jane Olmsted**, bienenstich Kuchen (bee sting cake) from **Clara Raju**, chocolate biscotti from **Janet Dinerman**, and German citrus-glazed spice squares from **Amy Riolo**.

After a presentation by **Tom Weiland** on the subject of schnitzel and a question period, the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

— **Katherine Livingston**, for **David Bender**, Recording Secretary

2009 CHoW Programs

- September 13** **Susan Pinkard**, "A Revolution in Taste: The Rise of French Cuisine 1500-1800"
October 11 **Patrick Evans-Hylton**, "Wine in Virginia"
October 17 **Field Trip to Alexandria Archaeology Center. Saturday, 2:00 p.m.**
November 8 **Joan Bacharach**, "Curating Culinary Exhibits for Museums: Behind the Scenes"
December 13 **Nongkran Daks**, ""Beyond Curry & Pad Thai: Regional Thai Cuisine"

PROGRAM

"The Search for the Elusive Schnitzel Ends on the Plate – Where It Belongs"



Tom Weiland has spent 47 years searching for the elusive "schnitzel" and is so knowledgeable on the subject that in jest he is able to expound on the rather arcane study of "schnitzelology." Tom does not disappoint! He takes the learner through the history of the schnitzel, noting the many difficulties in tracking it down due to its numerous disguises and variety of names.

Schnitzel can be found dressed as the Austrian *Wiener Schnitzel*, the *Cotoletta alla Milanese*, and perhaps even the *Paleo* schnitzel. On the last, Tom would argue that schnitzel, which simply means "small cut" in German and has no clear delineation from steaks, chops and mashed meat, is likely to have been a preferred food of our very earliest ancestors. Making this point, he described how schnitzel only requires the most basic cutting tools to trim the meat and limited fire or rock cooking heat to prepare it, given its small size.

The written record on schnitzel is vague perhaps due to the simple nature of its preparation and cheap ingredients. It is a dish that in its basic form requires little instruction. The meat is boned, cut across the grain, pounded to tenderize, and then cooked quickly, resulting in a tasty serving of meat that opens itself up to a myriad of sauces to accompany it. It is the variety of sauces that likely put the dish into print. The first dictionary reference to schnitzel found by Tom is 1847, although there are hints of schnitzel as a 15th century Venetian dish, in earlier dishes of Persian origin, as perhaps the Middle English dish of *Bruet of Sarcynesse* and possibly in Apicius around 200 A.D. as *Vitellina Fricte* or "Fried Veal."

As exciting as these finds are, Tom is also interested in exploring the role of schnitzel in our modern diet. "Schnitzel" by name, has been popular in America since World War II veterans returned from Germany in the 1940s. Schnitzel may need a dust off as we ease into the 21st century but it appears to have a bright future given that it retains its relatively inexpensive cost, can be matched with sauces and coatings of any culture, and its quick cooking time makes it a convenient weeknight dish for busy professionals, parents, students and others on the go. Tom says "Stayed tuned - watch for where schnitzel turns up!"

Written by **Kari Barrett**, former CHoW Director and President.

What Happened at the February 14 Meeting?

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

CHoW Vice President **CiCi Williamson** led the meeting for President **Katherine Livingston** who couldn't attend. About 50 CHoW members and guests celebrated both Valentine's Day and Chinese New Year on February 14 (see also last month's newsletter for an article on Year of the Tiger).

Audrey Hong told of some of the New Year customs such as cleaning house and paying debts. Symbolic foods in New Year feasts include fish (because fish scales look like gold), long noodles for long life and pomegranates because the seeds symbolize many children. **Zina Pisarko** also mentioned that today Russians celebrate *Maslenitsa*, the start of Butter Week.

- **Shirley Cherkasky** described the Library of Congress tour on March 4 that will feature rare books of gastronomy in the Library's collection. (See Upcoming Events.)
- **Francine Berkowitz**, Chair of the Board nominating committee, invited all members who might be interested in a Board position to contact her as soon as possible. fcb@si.edu
- CiCi told the audience about the February 27 Les Dames d'Escoffier conference, "Celebrating FOOD!" which features several CHoW members as speakers and organizers.

Topics were suggested for the April 11 Cooperative Supper to be held in Alexandria (see column 2). Francine reminded us all that the topics should reflect CHoW's mission as stated on the front page of each month's newsletter: CHoW "is an informed, nonprofit, educational organization dedicated to the study of the history of foodstuffs, cuisines, and culinary customs, both historical and contemporary, from all parts of the world."

Whatzit: **Laura Gilliam** brought a *coeur a la crème* mold, and **Jane Olmsted** brought what looked like colored rubber bands that are heat-proof silicone loops for securing deboned meats and for trussing turkeys.

Refreshments brought to the meeting:

Nancy Baggett – Peanut Cookies

Audrey Hong – Vegetable Jiaozi for Chinese New Year

Claudia Kousoulas – Sugar Cookies

Nancy Muzeck – Chocolate Babka

Clara Raju – Won Ton Strips

Jane Olmsted – Lebanese Cookies

Phylis Krochmal – Texas Chocolate Bars from the *Fairfax Chocolate Festival Cookbook*

Hanne Caraher – Linzer Hearts

Zina Pisarko – Blini for Russian Butter Week, with sour cream, herring, caviar and vodka flavored with fresh ginger

Amy Snyder – Trader Joe's Lovely Gummy Tummies Hearts

Claire Cassidy – Peach-Ginger soy sour cream Bundt cake

Cooperative Supper Theme to be Decided at March 14 CHoW Meeting

Much of the fun of the cooperative supper is doing a little research to decide what dish you want to bring that is reflective of the chosen topic and then being able to describe the history of the dish to everyone attending the supper. Anyone can suggest a topic; the vote for the final selection is at the March meeting.

Topics suggested at the January and February general meetings are:

World's Fair Food (choose older Fairs such as in 1893 and 1904 that showcased culinary trends at times when there were significant shifts in culinary knowledge and practice)

Indigenous (pre-contact) New World Foods

Cooking Contest Foods

Healthy but Delicious

Foods with Funny Names (e.g. "Bubble and Squeak")

Foods Grown, Raised, Caught or Produced within 100

Miles of the CHoW meeting site

Cajun Food (Acadian relocation from Nova Scotia to Louisiana)

Victorian Era

Food Named for a Geographic Location or Person (e.g. Caesar Salad or Waldorf Salad)

James Beard Specialties

Beverly Firme – Kabinose, smoked sausage and mustard from the Kielbasa Factory in Rockville, MD.

Pictured below: **Elizabeth, Mary Kate and Colleen Barrett** (Sugar Cookies) and **Kari Barrett** (Chocolate Hearts) both recipes from Nancy Baggett's *All American Cookie Book*.



--- Reported by **Dianne Hennesy King** for **David Bender**, Recording Secretary, who was unable to attend.

Keep Those Refreshments Coming!



February 14 Program by Nancy Baggett

Nancy Baggett, cookbook author and food journalist, gave an illustrated presentation on "Modern Valentine's Day – Amazing Amalgam of Ancient Traditions and Iconography."

Modern icons of Valentine's Day include heart shaped boxes of chocolate and also Valentine cards. Today St. Valentine is linked to love but the early biography of St. Valentine contains no romantic elements.

The origin of the stylized heart shape being linked to love goes back to 630 BC and *silphium*, a type of Fennel whose seed pod was heart shaped. The plant was used as an herbal medicine and contraceptive.

Early Christian use of the heart shape is seen in the West Window of York Minster Cathedral built in 1338. A primitive heart shape is also seen in stained glass in a church in Barcelona. Early Christian heart shapes were often in blue or greenish blue to symbolize the spiritual aspect of religious life or in the color red to symbolize the blood of Christ and/or the vitality of humankind. The Devotion of the Sacred Heart Icon of Divine love for Humanity became a strong movement.

The use of the word Valentine linked to romantic sentiment is first recorded in Chaucer's 1382 *Parlement of Foules*. The first known Valentine message was written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London for 25 years. He wrote to his wife, "I am already sick from love, my very gentle Valentine."

Sending Valentine cards caught on: In 1797 a British publisher printed a book called *The Young Man's Valentine Writer*. Commercial cards were widely available by mid-nineteenth century.

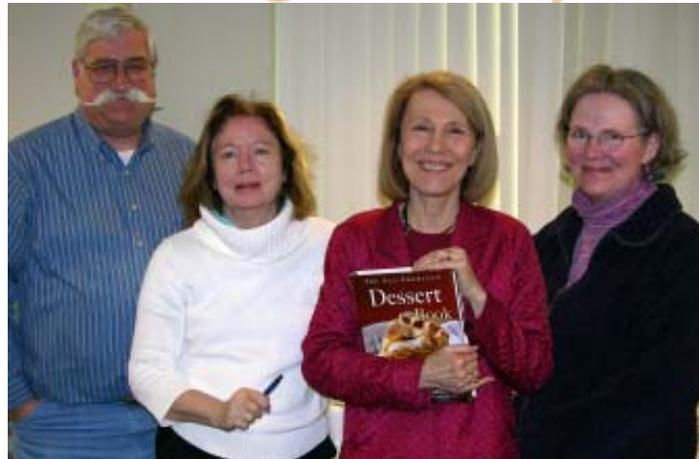
Heart shaped desserts came early with carved baking and confectionary molds. Chocolate, the other mainstay of modern Valentine's Day, came from the Aztecs.

Moctezuma II, in 1519, was said to drink 40 goblets of chocolate a day, especially before visiting his harem. In *The History of the Conquest of Mexico*, written by William Hickling in 1838, long after the age of the Aztec ruler, the author states that Montezuma took no other beverage and that chocolate was considered an aphrodisiac. Chocolate was imported to the Spanish Court, whose royals kept chocolate a secret before news of its arrival leaked to other European sites.

Chocolate came to America later. The first chocolate

company was formed in 1780. In the 1870s and 80s, Cadbury created Chocolate Box Art, putting a number of different images on the boxes of candy.

-- By Dianne Hennessy King



Left to right: Bruce Reynolds, Dianne Hennessy King, Nancy Baggett and Katy Hayes.
Photo by CiCi Williamson.

Welcome, New Members!

Donna & Skip Bullen, Baltimore, MD (CHoWLine subscribers) History of specialties; how recipes, formats, and cooking styles have changed; special events.

Karen Daly, Dumbarton House, Washington, DC, American food history; Colonial & Federal period food; tea; chocolate; etc

Beverly Firme, Kensington, MD Colonial period; restaurants; local/organic; travel & international

Myra Karstadt, Chevy Chase, MD Southern & Italian food, food history

Upcoming Events

Special CHoW Tour LIBRARY OF CONGRESS'S

Rare Book Holdings on Gastronomy
Thursday, March 4
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

by Mark Dimunation, Chief,
Rare Book and Special Collections Division

Mr. Dimunation will give us a brief tour of the Library before taking us to view its holdings on gastronomy in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.

RESERVATIONS ARE CLOSED

Due to the overwhelming number of CHoW members who signed up for this field trip at the last two CHoW meetings, reservations are now closed. Only those who made a reservation can be accommodated.

LOCATION

The Thomas Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress
10 First Street, S.E., Washington, D.C.
(almost directly behind the U.S. Capitol and south (on your right, as you face it) of the Supreme Court.

Limited street parking on streets east of the Library.

Using **Metro** is advised:

Blue Line, exiting at the **Federal Center S.W. station**, or
Red Line, exiting at **Union Station/Capitol South** station.

Each station is just a few blocks on either side of the Library.

WHERE TO ENTER THE BUILDING

From the drive-through that extends at street level on **First Street**, enter the door on your right, under the portico, as you are facing the building.

Proceed through Security and we'll gather right there in the Visitors' Lobby, to be met by Mr. Dimunation.

Please try to be a bit early to pass through Security.
Since our tour time is 4 to 6 pm, waiting for latecomers will shorten the viewing time for all of us.

Arrive early to the Library to allow time to see on your own the short-term exhibit 1602 Rare World Map (see column 2).

Katy Hayes will be leading a workshop in confectionery on March 13, 2010 at Riversdale House Museum in Riverdale Park, MD. Please call 301-864-0420 for more information.

Jean Robbins and the Peacock-Harper group in Blacksburg/Roanoke are doing a "From the Hearth to the Cookstove" on March 12. **Nancy Carter Crump** is one of their speakers.



Rare 1602 World Map, the First Map in Chinese to Show the Americas

On Display at Library of Congress
January 12 to April 10

A rare, 400-year-old map that displays China at the center of the world will be on exhibit at the Library of Congress before it heads to its intended home at the James Ford Bell Library at the University of Minnesota. The map is on loan from the James Ford Bell Trust.

The Matteo Ricci World Map, the first in Chinese to show the Americas, will be on exhibit for the first time in North America, joining the Library of Congress' cartographic gem, the 1507 Waldseemüller World Map, in the ongoing exhibition "Exploring the Early Americas."

The exhibit is free and open to the public from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday, in the Northwest Pavilion on the second floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building, 10 First St. S.E., Washington, D.C.

Dumbarton House Museum

"Fran, Have You Supplied the Table?"
Foods, Service & Etiquette in the Federal Era

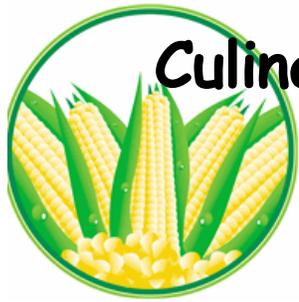
September 18, 2009 to June 12, 2010

Fee: \$5 for adults; students with valid ID are free.

This is an exhibition presenting the upper middle-class perspective on dining in the context of preparation, presentation, and manners as discovered through a unique collection of silver, porcelain, serving wares, and letters.

2715 Q Street, NW, Washington DC 20007
202-337-2288; www.dumbartonoaks.org

Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Closed all Federal holidays. Tours: Docent-led tours begin at 10:15 and 11:15 a.m., and at 12:15 and 1:15 p.m.



Culinary Humor

By Tom Weiland

This month, let's get a taste of "Foods with Funny Names." These were sourced from the book, *Ladyfingers and Nun's Tummies* (1997) by Martha Barnette, which **Shirley Cherkasky** graciously loaned to me (thanks, Shirley!), cross-checked with the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED).

"Coconut" comes from Portuguese *Coco* or "Goblin" (OED says "Grinning Face," first used by Vasco da Gama in 1498). It references the three dots on the bottom looking like an eerie little face.

Tomatoes, when originally imported into England, were called "Love Apples" (OED "Apples of Love" to late 16th century) because they resembled the familiar fruit, and were thought to be aphrodisiacs. Similarly, the French called them *Pomme d'Amour* and the Germans, *Liebsapfel*.

British "Garibaldi" cookies were named after Giuseppe Garibaldi (OED: Italian General and nationalist, 1807-1882). They have a layer of currant paste, so the Brits often call them "Squashed Fly Biscuit," the Scots "Fly's Graveyard."

The word *canapé* (OED: bread with savories, reference to 1890) comes from the ancient Greek *konops*, meaning "gnat" or "mosquito." The relationship is not obvious at first, but the ancient Greek *konopion* was a couch surrounded by gauze to keep out pests (OED: sofa, reference dated 1892), then it later referred to the gauze itself. Hence a canapé is a couch of bread upon which other things sit, just as a canopy is a covering. At weddings you have canapés under canopies while avoiding *konops*.

Hush Puppies (OED: 1918, usually served with fried fish) supposedly got the name by Southern hunters/fishermen tossing scraps of fried dough to their hunting dogs to make them stop barking. This seems rather anti-Pavlovian, don't you think?

Perhaps my favorite is the Italian pasta *Strozzapreti*, or "Priest Stranglers." There are various stories for the origin of the name, but one says that back in the late Middle Ages, the women of Romagna would hand-make the chunky pasta for the local churches, while their less-than-enthused husbands would curse that the priests should choke on it. (No OED references.)

Send in your own Foods with Funny Names and any known history . Cheers!-TW

Nominating Committee for 2010-2011 Board Members

Francine Berkowitz, Bryna Freyer, and Katy Hayes, and have agreed to serve as a nominating committee for next year's officers.

Per the by-laws, the committee will present its slate at the April meeting and will also ask for nominations from the floor. The election is in May.

All the existing board officers are eligible to serve again in their current capacity except for **Felice Caspar** who has pioneered the position of Membership Secretary and has reached the term limit for that office. Please volunteer or send a nomination to Francine at fcf@si.edu.

Although the number of Board officers is few, the tasks of the Board are many. We would welcome volunteers who, even if they are not interested in a Board position, would like to occasionally volunteer their time according to their own schedules.

CHoW events can always use a helping hand with organizing field trips, monthly hospitality, publicity, mailings, information gathering for the newsletter and a variety of other assistance.

News of Our Members

Food historian **Ann Chandonnet** has branched out into history, period. Chandonnet inherited 150 unpublished letters from distant relatives, covering the period 1850 to 1919. She has spent the past four years annotating these letters to create a book titled "*Write Quick: War and a Woman's Life, 1835-1868*."

The 600-page book will be published April 1 by Winoca Books & Media of Wilmington, N.C. It includes more than 50 period illustrations, 3 family trees, rosters of Massachusetts and Maine infantry companies, and footnotes as well as source notes.

Online Culinary History

From **Claudia Kousoulas**, a note about a great Web site: "TED, which stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design, is a Web site devoted to Ideas Worth Spreading."

In 15 minute talks, experts discuss arts, politics, science, and more including culinary history. You can watch and listen to Peter Reinhart on artisan bread, Carolyn Steel on how food shapes cities, Jennifer 8 Lee on General Tso's Chicken, or Malcolm Gladwell on spaghetti sauce."

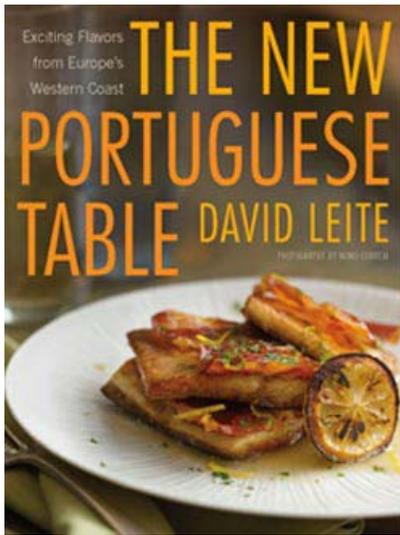
www.ted.com

Book Review

The New Portuguese Table : Exciting Flavors from Europe's Western Coast

Book Review by Clara Raju

I had very high expectations for David Leite's first cookbook *The New Portuguese Table*. I have been a long-time avid reader of his Web site www.LeitesCulinaria.com which has won three James Beard awards. David Leite also has written for the *New York Times* and numerous magazines.



What intrigued me the most about him was how similar our backgrounds were. I, too, grew up in a Portuguese community eating the peasant food of the Azores. The main difference was that as a child I emigrated from Graciosa, Azores (one of the smaller islands), to the U.S. and lived in Lowell, Massachusetts. His comments about not appreciating Portuguese food growing up ring so true. I still recall how I envied kids who took bologna sandwiches (on Sunbeam bread) to school instead of sandwiches made from ground *carne asada* formed into patties and stuffed into homemade bread. His book took me on a memory trip through my childhood.

The New Portuguese Table is a cookbook that takes many classic dishes and updates them without using hard-to-find ingredients. David Leite takes us on a culinary tour of the different regions of Portugal, and the islands of

By David Leite
Hardcover, 256 pages
Clarkson Potter (August 2009)
ISBN 0307394417
\$32.50

Madeira and the Azores. He explores the food culture, the typical dishes and the wines of the various locations.

People who are not familiar with Portuguese cooking will feel comfortable with this book. There are about 95 recipes which cover the usual categories of Soups, Fish, Meats, Poultry, Eggs, Vegetables, Rice and Bread. He also includes Little Bites (appetizers) and Sundries (stocks, pastes, sauces etc). There is a guide to Portuguese ingredients and explanations of the terms used in the book. The section on wines is also very informative.

The instructions are very clear and concise. In some of the recipes he also includes instructions for the classic way to make the dish. This is especially handy when it comes to some of the salt cod dishes.

There are plenty of beautiful pictures of Portugal and the food. The only drawback to the book is that he doesn't include a map which would have helped people not familiar with the area or the location of the islands. Looking through the recipes I realized that most come from the mainland. Culinary traditions not only vary from mainland Portugal to the Azores, but there is also great diversity amongst the islands. Hence, many of the recipes were unfamiliar to me. However, trying out the recipes gave me a new appreciation of the food of Portugal.

I felt compelled to try many of his recipes. The first thing that I had to make was the Quick Weekday Roast Chicken with Potatoes. It was easy and a success. I made the Amped-Up Red Pepper Paste to use on the chicken and then had plenty for other dishes. I used

the paste in Indian dishes and even in my Minestrone Soup. It is versatile.

Other dishes that I made were: Lemon-Mint Chicken Soup (just like my mother makes), Rich Fish Soup with Corn Bread Croutons (actually tasted better than what I had at home), and Corn Bread (instructions were so clear that you can't go wrong). I especially



enjoyed the Salt Cod of My Youth, though I used the classic recipe because we would never use cheese in this dish.

It is refreshing to see Portuguese dessert recipes that don't include a dozen eggs. I especially enjoyed the Orange Cake. I was hesitant using all that olive oil but it really does work (if you wait the 24 hours before cutting). The Russian Nut Cakes are fast to make and tasty. The Milk Mayonnaise is amazing. It tastes so good that I plan to use this often.

I was a bit disappointed that some of the familiar Azorean recipes he mentions in his introduction are not included in the book: *Favas Ricas* (stew of fava beans), *sopa do Espírito Santo* (soup served on the Feast of the Holy Ghost), *alcatra* (braised beef), and my favorite soup – *sopa de funcho* (fennel soup). Maybe he can cover these in his next book!