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# Warming to the Chill

The winter issue of *Food For Thought* is always a tough one to plan for. Of course, we want to help you prepare for the holidays. That's why we were delighted when Janice Paskey pitched us a story about made-in-Alberta gift baskets. "I often assemble baskets like these for my relatives in Ontario," she told us. And her gift ideas are great for any pampered friend, barbecue guru or baker on your list.

Speaking of baking, nothing says Christmas or Hanukkah like a batch of pretty cookies or wholesome muffins. Hey, that's part of the reason why Joy Gregory taught her daughter to bake! In "Baker's Dozen," Joy chronicles Christianne's efforts to make baking healthier for the family and still manage to use some chocolate and marshmallows.

Okay, Christmas is great, but part of the problem with preparing the winter holiday issue is that its distribution dates include December, January and February. So, after Ukrainian Christmas and Chinese New Year, we're pretty much out of holidays and we're just left with more Prairie winter. So – what the heck – let's celebrate winter!



In "Chase the Chill", we have a domestic diva, a professional chef and an up-and-coming soup pro ladling out steaming bowls of comfort that will keep you dreaming of soup and fuzzy sweaters into next spring. Ryan Smith (no, not *that* Ryan Smyth) ventures onto the rink to show us how to cook with Oil and Flames. And Wes Lafortune takes us to the Rockies and Kananaskis Country to show us that winter really is the coolest season to travel the province.

So, holidays schmolidsays. This year, let's pass around the party platter all winter long.

**Maureen Osadchuk**  
GROWING ALBERTA

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# Quick Bites

## The Saucy Life

Alberta is home to many tongue-firing, endorphin-releasing hot sauces. There's no shortage of suppliers and the names on the small bottles are as spicy as the contents.

► Cattle Boyz produces barbecue sauces with less heat. For a happy medium, add a dash of the hot stuff to your favourite barbecue sauce.

▼ The Habanero Sauce, by Get Sauced, is the company's best seller on the hot side. Get Sauced president, Melissa Hecht, has penned *120 Ways to Get Sauced*, a recipe book available at [www.getsauced.ca](http://www.getsauced.ca).

◀ In Edmonton, Get Sauced is producing award-winning tastes lauded by the Chile Pepper Zest Fest, an awards show for the saucy types. On the sweet side, Get Sauced produces Honey Garlic, and Szechuan. A little bit of this sauce is perfect for stir fries.

◀ According to Calgary culinary journalist Cinda Chavich, Alberta's most famous hot sauce is Basil's Fire & Brimstone Hot Gourmet Pepper Sauce, by Lethbridge saucier Basil Simmons. He's won several international awards.

▲ The Hatari company sells the wonderfully-packaged Alberta Crude, with an image of gushing oil well on the label, perfect for your out-of-province friends. Caution: It's an extremely hot sauce. — By Janice Paskey



## Four Favourites

We conducted an informal survey of professional cooks and domestic divas alike to find out what four pantry ingredients they always have on hand and often reach for when prepping something simple and tasty. Their answers were as widely divergent as their tastes and styles, but a few items cropped up again and again. Here's what we found:

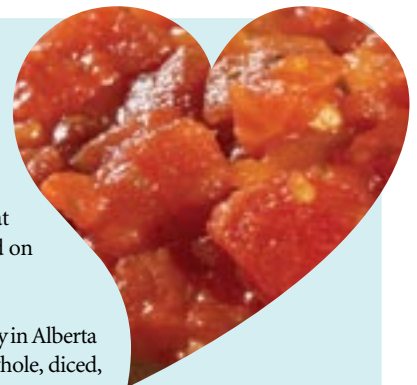
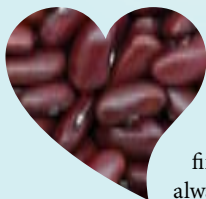
**Beans:** "It seems I really like beans! Canned or dried, they're always around," says one cook. "I usually have at least three kinds in the pantry."

**Pasta:** "My pantry is never without it," says a domestic diva. "There are probably half a dozen

different types in there right now." Some cooks named their favourite brand or noodle type, others claimed a preference for whole wheat or rice noodles, but pasta appeared on nearly everyone's list.

**Tomatoes:** It seems there is no pantry in Alberta without canned tomatoes, be they whole, diced, crushed or in a ready-made sauce.

**Oil:** Some cooks listed several types of oil, but favourites included canola, olive and sunflower. Other cooks mentioned sesame oil for seasoning.



# Gravy Training

If you've cooked your bird and it's time to get saucy, the key to gravy perfection is in the wrist, the attitude and in not getting overly complicated. Follow these simple steps to gravy greatness.

## My Secret Ingredient

By Brady Weiler, Owner & Chef,  
The Pipestone Food Company,  
Wetaskiwin

My secret ingredient is time. We make a dish from specially raised local beef that we call "Beef Glace." It's a 48-hour process.

We buy all-natural beef, prime cuts that we trim to our specifications. We roast the bones with vegetables, then add water to create a rich stock, which simmers for 18 hours. We strain and simmer the stock again until it reduces from 20 litres to two litres. We're left with a super-rich dark sauce that, as it thickens, cools and hardens to look like dark brown glass.

The process goes against our fast-paced, 'everything in a hurry world,' and it helps us showcase the quality locally-grown meats and produce that our customers expect.

— As told to Cait Wills



### Get greasy

To be a successful sauce, gravy needs grease – three to four tablespoons of it.

Use the drippings in your roasting pan, right on the stovetop over medium-low heat.

### Powder your pot

Add an equal amount of unbleached white flour to the grease in the roaster and keep the heat to medium-low.

The paste that forms is called a roux.

Cook it, stirring with a fork for one or two minutes.

### Take stock

Slowly add about two cups of liquid to the roaster. This can be water, vegetable or chicken stock. Warm up the stock ahead of time and mix gently from the wrist, using a balloon whisk, to incorporate the roux evenly.

### Another \$2 word

When you add liquid to a pan and loosen those flavour-filled bits from the bottom, which have stuck there during roasting, the process is called "deglazing." It's a great way to pack taste into any stock or sauce.

### Fine vines

You can use wine for some of the liquid you use in your gravy – say half a cup – but it's not necessary. Some cooks say that for the amount of flavour it adds, it's better to save the vino for a glass. If you do use wine, make sure it's white. Red will turn a pale poultry gravy a funny pink.

### Spice route

All that's needed is a little salt and pepper, to taste. Some cooks add a dash of garlic powder, but fresh garlic may overpower the rest of the sauce, and hence, the meal. If you want a little more flavour, add some chopped fresh oregano or thyme, especially if you've created your gravy with water, rather than stock.

### Turn brown down

Turn your back on browning agents, which are mostly msg. Beef gravy will be a lovely deep brown, but turkey gravy is paler by nature.

### Drizzle and dollop

Cook the gravy over medium-low heat until it reaches a desired thickness. Then add it to a gravy boat and pour it on. A little gravy poured over frozen peas makes them a thing of wonder.



## Spitz are it

No matter what the event – sports functions, family affairs or even just a backyard barbecue – it’s likely that you’ll find salted and flavoured products from the Alberta-based sunflower giant, Spitz International.

It’s also likely that your kids are enjoying much the same healthful snack and great taste that you did as a kid. Spitz, based in Bow Island near Medicine Hat, recently celebrated its 25th year in business. Owners Tom and Elly Droog couldn’t be prouder of the company’s accomplishments.

“We have revolutionized the industry,” said Tom after announcing that, in recognition of the company’s continued popularity, two new flavours have been added, bringing the total offerings to six.

“To celebrate our anniversary, we’ve introduced Chili Lime and Smoky BBQ,” Tom says. They’re available in the resealable packages and the smaller, Lil’ Grab sizes.

The Droogs emigrated from the Netherlands in 1972 to farm more traditional crops including wheat, sugar beets and flax, but switched to sunflower seeds in 1982. “I didn’t know where the decision would take us,” he says. “We started with salting the seeds and look where it’s gotten us. It started with an idea.”

And that idea is now one of Alberta’s most popular staples, synonymous with good times and great taste.

– *By Cait Wills*



## Chew on Super Foods

Imagine it: lower cholesterol, fewer post-menopausal symptoms and, just maybe, a chance to lower the risk of cancer. Sounds too good to be true? It’s not.

They’re the “super foods,” which medical experts say contain some of the key tools to fight heart disease, cancer and inflammatory diseases. Eleven of the 14 foods are produced here in Alberta.

Dried beans are found year-round and fresh ones are available at farmers’ markets all over the province in summer months. Pumpkins grace grocers’ and marketers’ tables into the winter. Many local dairy producers make their own yogurts.

If you’re thinking about turning back the clock, fighting disease or just feeding your body the foods its needs to be at its prime, check out this quick guide to how super foods can help you achieve your health goals. – *By Cait Wills*



SUPER FOOD	CONTAINS	BENEFITS
Beans	Fibre	Major source of soluble fibre, which grabs and traps bile that contains cholesterol, removing it from the body before it’s absorbed
Blueberries	Antioxidants	Neutralize free radical damage to cells and tissues that may lead to cataracts, glaucoma, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, peptic ulcers, heart disease and cancer
Broccoli	Photonutrients	Help repress tumour growth in breast cancer patients; has an impact on the growth of bladder and ovarian cancers
Oats	Beta-glucan	Helps fight high cholesterol, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, especially in post-menopausal woman



# Bison Business

In 2007, Canadian bison found its way from ranches into Western Canada's Safeway outlets. Now most freezers in the grocery chain boast ready-made bison burger patties and handy one-pound cubes of ground bison from Carmen Creek Gourmet Meats, easy to store and easier to use. And, despite that bison meat sales in Canada have increased by 45 per cent in the last year, Dean Andres, a partner in Carmen Creek, says that the company remains "basically an exporting company," with its main markets in the United States and Europe.

It's been tough for livestock producers, especially exporters. "Everyone is getting pum-

meled by the strong loonie," Andres says. Throw in airfreight charges and his margins on European exports are thin. On his side is demand. Consumers are more interested than ever in bison meat due to its leanness, high protein and nutrient levels.

That's why Carmen Creek is spending its marketing dollars to win over Canadian shoppers. Andres says that consumer food tastes in Canada often mirror those of the United States, with a lag time of about two years.

If that's the case, domestic demand will grow into a stampede.



SUPER FOOD	CONTAINS	BENEFITS
<b>Oranges</b>	Vitamin C, a water-soluble antioxidant	Helps prevent free-radical damage in cells; helps decrease inflammatory illnesses including asthma, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis
<b>Pumpkins</b>	Flesh has iron, zinc, fibre, Vitamin B and antioxidants. Seeds have essential fatty acids	Helps fight osteoporosis; helps red blood cells; promotes colon health. Seeds are a protein source than may help maintain healthy blood vessels and other tissues
<b>Salmon</b>	Omega-3 essential fatty acids	Helps prevent erratic heart rhythms; makes blood less likely to clot inside arteries and improves the ratio of good cholesterol to bad cholesterol
<b>Spinach</b>	At least 13 different flavonoids, which function as anti-cancer agents	Can potentially slow down cell division in stomach cancer, ovarian cancer and skin cancers
<b>Tea (Green and Black)</b>	Flavonoids	<i>Green and black:</i> May inhibit the growth of cancer cells, lower cholesterol, strengthen the immune system <i>Black tea:</i> Some correlation between regular consumption and reduced risk of stroke
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Lycopene, a super strong antioxidant	May significantly reduce risk of prostate, rectal and stomach cancers
<b>Turkey</b>	Folic acid, vitamins B, B1, B6, zinc and potassium.	Helps keep cholesterol down, may protect against some birth defects, may fight cancer and heart disease, boost the immune system and regulate blood pressure
<b>Walnuts</b>	Omega-3 essential fatty acids	Provides cardiovascular protection; helps aid cognitive function and fights inflammatory skin diseases like eczema and psoriasis
<b>Yogurt</b>	Live bacterial cultures	Helps decrease risk of yeast infections; soothes ulcers



# Chase the *Chill*

The weather outside is frightful, and company is coming. Put on a pot of stew or soup and they'll thank you

BY *Carla Alexander, Deepti Babu AND Gail Hall* • PHOTOGRAPHY BY *3Ten Photo*







## Who says stew isn't for company?

And what rule book says you can't serve soup to friends as a main course? In the winter, after they shake the snow off their parkas and doff the clunky boots, they'll be delighted to cozy around a table laden with steaming bowls of hearty winter fare. Here are some winter comfort recipes, easy enough for a weekday meal, to warm you and your friends.

### *Stew on it - Gail Hall*

#### **It's 1997 and I'm in Santa Fe, New Mexico.**

I'm standing in a busy farmers' market drinking in the fall colours. Vendors are roasting peppers in large, hand-cranked roasters over open flames. The wonderful smell of roasted pepper skins in the afternoon sun clings to my hair and clothes. I can hear the snap and pop of chili seeds as they burst from the pepper and hit the ground. The market is mesmerizing for its sounds and smells. A few days later, when I unpack my suitcase in Edmonton, I catch a faint scent of roasted peppers.

When I want to relive that trip, I make a stew that takes standard Prairie ingredients and update them with a Southwestern twist. The memory of my trip to the market in Santa Fe becomes part of this stew every time I make it. I truly believe that to understand a culture is to understand its food. There's no better way to do this than to travel to a region or country to experience the cuisine, learn how to create their dishes with signature ingredients and recreate them back home.

Did I say I love stews? I can create a dish that's hearty and inviting, not difficult to prepare and easily balanced into a complete meal with grilled cornbread and perhaps a salad. I love stews that incorporate a range of local ingredients to showcase the bounty of foods that are available in Alberta.

For me, stews are the quintessential dish of winter on the Prairies. Chances are, stews were some of the first dishes created by the settlers to provide sustenance and warmth through long, cold winters. I love the sight of a pot of stew simmering on the back of a stove, flavours blending

together providing aroma and warmth in my home as well as hearty food for friends. On cold days, I bring this image to life with a steaming pot of my favourite Green Chili Stew.

My stew involves the ingredients that I love to shop for in Edmonton. For me, the shopping is an important first chapter in the preparation of the dish. So this cold morning, I head out to the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market. (My neighbourhood haunt, the Edmonton Downtown Farmers Market, is closed after Thanksgiving until May.) For me, chatting with the vendors is just as important as buying their products. I can find out how they are doing and, most importantly, what was involved in growing their produce.

Peas on Earth is my first stop for fresh garlic, onions and carrots. Next, it's Doefs Greenhouses for red bell peppers and Ramiro peppers (also called long pointed sweet peppers). I'll use the latter and roast them to become the green chilies that this dish requires. When they're out of season, I substitute fresh with canned green chilies that are available at the Italian Centre stores, Il Paradiso as well as the ethnic sections of most grocery stores.

My last stop on my shopping journey is the grocery store for Little Potato Company potatoes, organic chicken stock and the featured ingredient, Alberta pork. I use tenderloin for this dish, although any boneless cut can be used. Alberta pork is among the best pork in the world – flavourful and low in saturated fat. (Ounce for ounce, pork tenderloin has less saturated fat than chicken breast.)

I head home. I have decided that tonight's meal will be prepared as a joint cooking experience with several friends. I'll have the 'mise en place' ready (all the ingredients assembled and ready for them to cook) when they arrive. I've decided that while the stew is simmering we'll prepare and bake the cornbread, so that it's ready for grilling just before the simmering stew is ladled into individual crocks. I know that by having my friends involved in the cooking, we'll create new memories and flavours together. Now, the big question: should I serve beer or wine?



## Carla's Alberta Beef & Barley Soup

2 cups (500 mL) barley (pearl or pot)  
3 Tbsp (45 mL) canola oil  
500g (1 lb) steak, such as sirloin, chopped  
1/2 cup (125 mL) each: chopped carrots, chopped celery, chopped onion  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 Tbsp (15 mL) each: fresh thyme, oregano  
1 1/2 tsp (7 mL) dry chili flakes  
1/4 cup (60 mL) all-purpose flour  
8 cups (2 L) beef stock  
2 cups (500 mL) chicken stock  
2 Tbsp (30 mL) tomato paste  
1/2 cup (125 mL) prepared horseradish  
2 bay leaves  
1 Tbsp (15 mL) brown sugar  
salt and pepper to taste  
1 cup (250 mL) whipping cream or half & half

In a pot over medium-high heat, bring about 1 L of water to a boil. Add the barley and cook for about 30 minutes, until it is tender but still a little firm in the middle. Drain in a colander and pour cold water over the barley to stop it from cooking.

Meanwhile, heat the canola oil in another large pot over medium heat. Add the meat, carrots, celery and onion and sauté for about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, thyme, oregano and chili flakes and cook for a few more minutes. Add the flour and stir until it is incorporated with the vegetables; cook for another minute.

Turn the heat to medium-low and add the beef and chicken stock, tomato paste, horseradish, bay leaves, brown sugar and the partially cooked barley. Bring to a simmer and cook for 25 minutes, until barley and vegetables are tender. Remove the bay leaves, season with salt and pepper to taste, and stir in the cream. Stir just until the soup is heated through, and serve immediately. Serves 8.

Per serving: 386 calories, 16.4 g fat (6.9 g saturated fat, 6.3 g monounsaturated fat, 2.3 g polyunsaturated fat), 51 g carbohydrates, 34.6 mg cholesterol, 11 g protein, 5.4 g fiber. 37% calories from fat



### *Soup for the soul - Carla Alexander*

#### **My name is Carla and I love soup.**

With my two business partners, Sal Di Maio and Brad Lazarenko, I own Soul Soup in Edmonton, which provides ethnic comfort food with simple but bold flavours. We opened in February 2006 and our business keeps us very busy. We make soup using ideas from around the world with organic and free-range products. Our soups are made with heart and soul, which make them very substantial. In fact, customers are able to view the soup pots so they can see what we have simmering and understand the soup they're considering. I know, a lot of times, customers are expecting something brothy, but that's not what they get. We use nine pounds of vegetables in each of our soups, which makes each bowl very hearty!

Soup is a super food. I eat soup about four times a week and find that, for me, it's the perfect meal. With soup, you see everything you're getting. A rich, hearty bowl of soup – maybe with a slice of freshly baked bread – it's all you need.

When it comes to soup, we will always have our own ideas about what tastes great and it's usually based on what we grew up with. And that's OK, but I want to show people that you can travel the world, and each country will have its national soup. Soup isn't always just soup; it's an interesting meal. When it comes to determining what makes a soup great, I

always say, 'different strokes for different folks.' I like that people may choose to serve soup as an appetizer, but I'm finding that, more and more, we have customers coming in at the end of the week who are planning on serving soup as a main course to their guests. They're really making it a staple on their menus when it comes to dinner parties, as well as serving it as a meal to their families. The reason, I think, that people are doing this is because they see soup as well-rounded; they understand that it's filling, it's fast and it tastes great.

Soup is a salve for body and spirit. I feel that sometimes we neglect our bodies: we forget to put in the required amount of protein, vitamins and natural oils, and soup is a great way to do all of that. With soup, you see everything at once; it's all there. There need not be strict rules when it comes to soup; you can create whatever you want, using whatever you have in the kitchen.

Some people will come in and ask for chicken noodle soup when they're not feeling well, and I think it's all about the nostalgia; it's what we grew up with, these are things our parents did for us to help us feel warm and safe and, when we're sick, that's how we want to feel again. I'll have customers come in and ask about a certain type of soup and they'll say, 'is it like my mom's?' I think that's so sweet, and I'm flattered that they rely on me and my soup to comfort them.



### Gail's Green Chili Stew

**2 Tbsp (30 mL) canola oil**  
**2 lbs (900 g) boneless pork loin or tenderloin, cut into 1-inch cubes**  
**1/2 cup (125 mL) each: chopped onions, carrots, and red bell pepper**  
**1 Tbsp (15 mL) garlic, minced**  
**1 Tbsp (15 mL) dried oregano**  
**1/2 cup (125 mL) all-purpose flour**  
**2 cups (500 mL) chicken broth, warmed**  
**1 cup (250 mL) baby potatoes, quartered**  
**2 cups (500 mL) diced, roasted green chilies\***  
**1 tsp (5 mL) salt**  
**1/2 tsp (2 mL) freshly ground pepper**

In a large, heavy pot, heat the canola oil over medium-high heat. Add the pork in batches, browning the pieces on all sides. When all the pork is browned, return it all to the pot and add the onion, carrots, red

pepper, garlic and oregano. Cook, stirring, for a few more minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-low and stir in the flour. Cook, stirring, for another minute. Add the warmed chicken stock slowly, stirring constantly. Add the potatoes, roasted chilies, salt and pepper. Simmer for an hour to an hour and a half, until the meat is very tender. Serve with grilled cornbread or flour tortillas.

Serves 6.

\*Canned green chilies can be purchased in most grocery stores. Fresh Anaheim peppers are available in grocery stores and farmers' markets also carry Ramiro (long pointed sweet, green peppers that you can roast).

Per serving: 370 calories, 14 g fat (3.5 g saturated fat, 6.8 g monounsaturated fat, 2.5 g polyunsaturated fat), 22.4 g carbohydrates, 89.2 mg cholesterol, 37.1 g protein, 2.8 g fiber. 35% calories from fat





## Deepti's Goan Curried Fish Stew

Adapted from *Quick from Scratch Fish and Shellfish* by the editors of *Food and Wine* magazine (1998)

**2 lbs (900 g) whitefish or sole fillets, cut into 1-inch pieces**  
**1/4 cup (60 mL) lemon juice (about 1 lemon)**  
**1 tsp (5 mL) each: salt, ground cumin, brown sugar**  
**1 Tbsp (15 mL) ground coriander**  
**1/2 tsp (2 mL) freshly ground black pepper**  
**1/4 tsp (1 mL) each: turmeric, cayenne pepper**  
**3 Tbsp (45 mL) canola oil**  
**1 onion, chopped**  
**1 tomato, chopped**  
**4 jalapeño peppers, seeds and ribs removed**  
**2 cloves garlic, finely crushed**  
**4 tsp (20 mL) finely grated fresh ginger root**  
**1 cup (250 mL) coconut milk**  
**3/4 cup (180 mL) water**  
**Steamed rice**

In a medium bowl combine the fish, lemon juice and half the salt. Marinate for 10 minutes. In a small bowl, stir together the coriander, cumin, brown sugar, pepper, turmeric and cayenne.

In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Add the tomato and cook, stirring occasionally, for another 5 minutes. Add the jalapeños, garlic and ginger and sauté for about a minute. Add the spice mixture and sauté for a few more seconds.

Add the coconut milk, water and remaining salt and slowly bring to a simmer, stirring frequently. Add the fish, along with a tablespoon of its marinade. Bring to a simmer and continue simmering until the fish is just done, 1-2 minutes. Serve in bowls, over rice. Serves 4.

Per serving: 552 calories, 36 g fat (13.5 g saturated fat, 11.1 g monounsaturated fat, 8.1 g polyunsaturated fat), 12.3 g carbohydrates, 136 mg cholesterol, 45.9 g protein, 1.5 g fiber. 58% calories from fat

Make your soup taste great. If your soup isn't making the grade, there are a couple of things you can do: first, check and make sure you've got your four flavours: sweet, sour, salty and bitter. For instance, I sometimes add a little brown sugar to my soup. For a seafood soup, a splash of lemon juice can do the trick. But if you put in all your seasonings and you still feel like something's missing, I say: step away from the pot. Leave it overnight and let all the flavours come together. As the soup cools and thickens the fresh ingredients and spices work together to unite as one. It sounds romantic, doesn't it?

Make your soup with love and soul and it'll fulfill the biggest appetite. And, it'll taste great!

**As told to Cait Wills**

### *Currying flavour - Deepti Babu*

**It's a blustery Alberta Tuesday evening.** The usual dilemma is on at my place about what to make for dinner. Like many people, I'm drawn to soups and stews during chilly weather. Huddling over a steamy bowl of clam chowder in our polar fleece sweaters and fluffy socks is always good, but tonight my husband and I are craving the Indian food we grew up eating. It's one of those nights when only the complex, peppery heat of an Indian curry will satisfy – something about it warms us from the inside out. Cravings like these are inconvenient when they hit on a weeknight, since it's usually impossible to dedicate the time needed to slowly simmer a curry to perfection.

This is when I usually pull out a trusty, dog-eared recipe for a stew that comes from Goa, a tropical state on the southwest coast of India. The recipe is a lifesaver because it's simple, yet tastes like I spent hours slaving over it. It can even be made at the last minute because it features ingredients easily found in Alberta's winter markets, such as whitefish, hot-house tomatoes and jalapeño peppers.

Interestingly, we usually end up sharing this stew with others when we make it because the combination of coconut milk, spicy heat and buttery fish is too delicious to keep to ourselves.

With the holiday season upon us, I keep this recipe close at hand. It's a fantastic pick for a gathering with loved ones, because it doesn't leave me trapped in the kitchen and missing all the fun. It's tricky enough to find dishes that are easy to make yet special enough to share with others. If it's a recipe that also invokes comfort and serenity, like this stew, it's an enchanting choice.

While I enjoy turkey and mashed potatoes as much as the next person, a distinctive soup or stew delights both the palate and soul. A few sips into this stew and you're transported to the beach, watching the palms sway in the tropical breeze. Now who wouldn't want to share that with their loved ones during the winter holidays? 🍲





# Chicken...



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[www.chicken.ab.ca](http://www.chicken.ab.ca)

# Hints for St. Nick

Stuck for gift ideas? Maybe you have a girly-girl on your shopping list, or a friend who loves to spend time in front of the grill, no matter the season. For those leisurely holiday mornings, give your significant other a breakfast kit that's sure to please. And everyone has a baker in the family. Thrill yours with a floury offering that'll make the baker beam.

BY *Janice Paskey* PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Laughing Dog Photography*

## The Pampered Pal

Bernard Callebaut's annual holiday chocolate cherries are simply sumptuous. You can order online if you aren't near a major centre. Upstart Kerstin's Chocolates opened its doors in Edmonton in 2003. Kerstin's Chocophilia line gives new meaning to "pampered." See [www.kerstinschocolates.com](http://www.kerstinschocolates.com) for locations or to order.

To polish the outside of a pampered body, try some plant-based cosmetics from Vada, produced by Natasha Prives, based in Calgary and sold province-wide. Try the Lip Therapy Balm made with peppermint, chai, mango and melon to name a few of the ingredients, or release your inner calm with the Ginseng Gel Mask. Check for a location near you at [www.vadaworld.com](http://www.vadaworld.com).

The Rocky Mountain Soap Company has an extensive line of products. Try the Mountain Spa Foot Butter, and the gentle Baby Bear Soap with its chamomile and lavender oils. Check out [www.rockymountainsoap.com](http://www.rockymountainsoap.com). For another treat, Edmonton's Barefoot Venus products can be found in spas across the country.





## The Business of Breakfast

Help him make your morning special. Start with Coyote Buttermilk Pancake Mix sold by Alberta's Magrath Hutterite Colony. This self-rising mix makes fluffy pancakes. Check out [www.coyotepancakemix.com](http://www.coyotepancakemix.com) for places to buy the delicious mix. Also delicious, with a bit more fibre, is Highwood Crossing's Organic Flaxseed Muffin and Pancake mix. Top with fruit or real maple syrup for perfect pancakes. Equally delicious are Highwood Crossing's organic granola and wheat-free hot cereal.

Add in a package of Fratello Coffee, delicious small-quantity roasted beans chosen from high quality world locales. Buy at the Good Earth Café or order directly from the company. Tuck in a little bottle of Bailey's Irish Cream, and that breakfast is smelling good already.

## The Barbecue Guru

There's no better sight than a man in front of a barbecue, whether he's in a T-shirt or a parka. Add a set of barbecue tongs, and a six-pack of Big Rock Beer, such as Honey Brown, which artfully employs Alberta clover honey.


A man can never have too many cedar planks; pick one up at Home Depot or visit Totem for a custom-cut board to roast a salmon on. A gift card from M&M Meats allows him to buy all sorts of tasty Alberta offerings for the grill, such as the luscious bacon-wrapped filet mignon, for example. A jar of Brassica mustard is a must, as it forms the basis for any good rub or sauce.

Toss in *The Guy Can't Cook* by Calgary author Cinda Chavich, and you'll empower him with all sorts of delectable recipes, such as Beer Can Chicken, perfect even if he's an expert cook.

## The Fantastic Flour

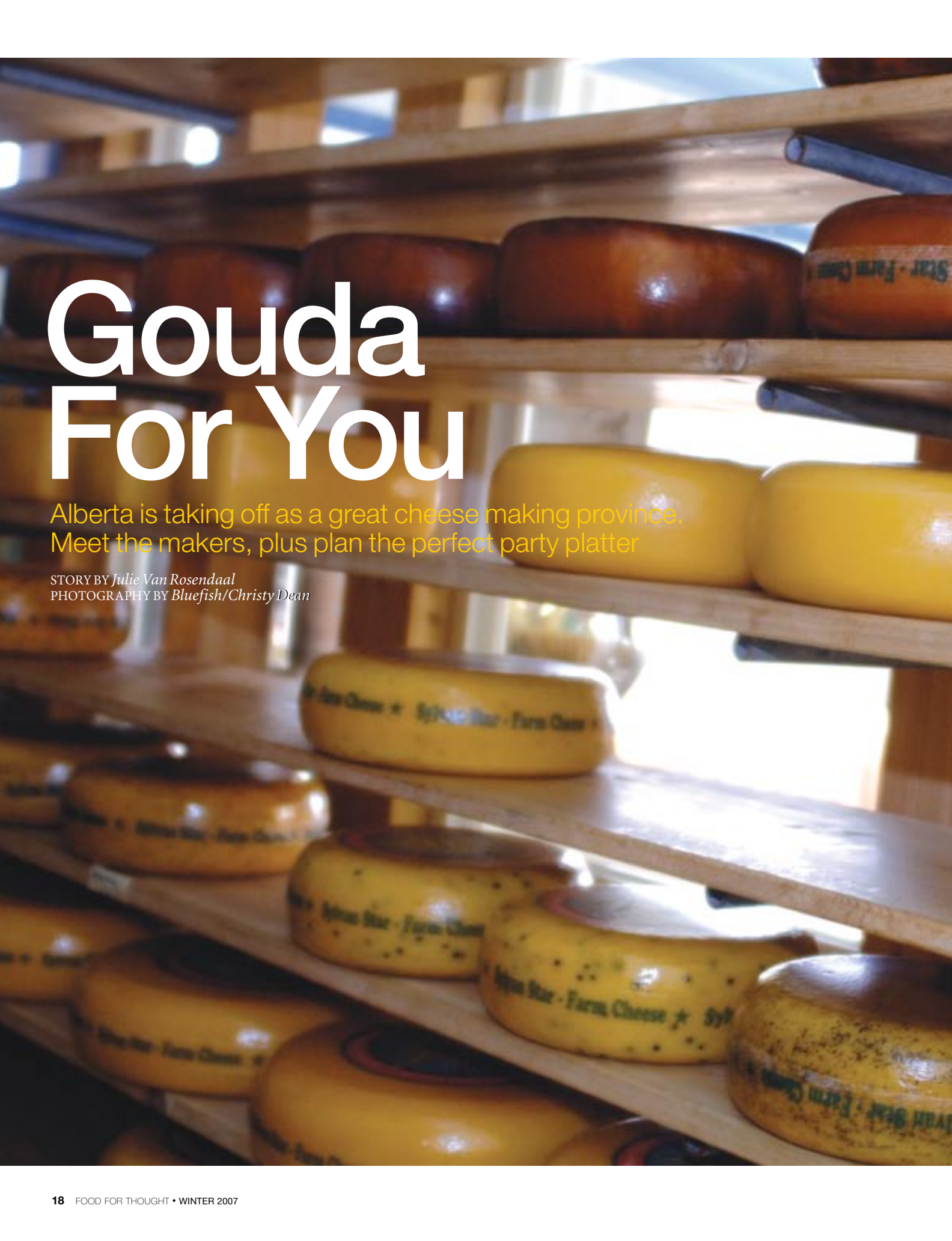
Alberta isn't known as the bread basket of Canada for nothing. We grow great grains to boast about. Begin with good bakeware, such as a silicon baking sheet by Lagostina and, for more stability, an insulated baking sheet from Pyrex. You can keep this pristine by tossing in a role of parchment paper, and by not using it for fries or chicken nuggets.

Now for our homegrown taste. Begin with a sack of Hamilton's Barley Flour. This homegrown flour creates unique baked treats; select from online recipes at [www.hamiltonsbarley.com](http://www.hamiltonsbarley.com). (Tip: Don't miss the Carrot Cake Supreme). There are more homegrown recipes with NoNuts Golden Peabutter. Substitute this nut-free, gluten-free, kosher spread for peanut butter, or follow online recipes, and you have baking that goes where nuts may not dare. Bake up some omega-3 with Highwood Crossing's Organic Flaxseed Muffin and Pancake Mix. Just add a cup of fruit, milk, egg and oil, and your "Kananaskis Muffins" bake up beautifully.

Include the recipe book *Mostly Muffins* by Jean Paré – it's a perennial classic. 







# Gouda For You

Alberta is taking off as a great cheese making province. Meet the makers, plus plan the perfect party platter

STORY BY *Julie Van Rosendaal*  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Bluefish/Christy Dean*



**B**en and Anita Oudshoorn are attending to their four-month-old son outside Calgary's River Café on Prince's Island. It's a warmish fall night and the restaurant is staging its annual harvest dinner inside. One of the dishes showcases goat's cheese from the Oudshoorns' Fairwinds Farm in a salad with beets from Highwood Crossing. As Ben and Anita dress the baby, they recount the history of Fairwinds, multitasking in a way that busy parents can appreciate. Baby Kenny is the seventh little Oudshoorn.

Ben and Anita stumbled into the dairy business when they took in their first goat in order to provide milk for their fourth child, who suffered from food sensitivities. "They told us we couldn't have just one goat, that it would get lonely, so we got two," Ben says. "Now we have 300." And it was that food sensitivity, three kids ago, that established a spot for the Oudshoorns and Fairwinds as one of the more recent additions to the world timeline of cheeses. But more about that later.

Manufacturers of goat's milk and yogurt since 1999, the couple expanded their repertoire to include cheese in 2003 after Anita's cheese-making experiments in their kitchen turned into a great new way of using up excess milk. (In Alberta, there is no quota on goat's milk, unlike cow's milk, so they had plenty.) Four years later, Fairwinds Farm goat cheese and feta are carried by 40 retail outlets in Alberta, and are favoured by local chefs. Ben and Anita work with a small food broker but do most of the distribution themselves, delivering cheese, milk and yogurt directly to stores and restaurants in Calgary, Edmonton, and small towns in between.

**Cheese lovers will make all kinds of wild claims** just to justify their cheese tooth. They'll tell you cheese can make you stronger and slimmer. They'll say it makes you better looking.

Can cheese make you stronger? Absolutely – cheese is an excellent source of protein, which helps support and rebuild muscle mass, bones, skin and blood, and produces enzymes that keep our bodies functioning well. Cheese also has other health benefits, providing calcium, vitamin D (which helps

with the absorption of calcium), B vitamins, vitamin A and zinc.

Can it make you slimmer? Come on – remember that most cheeses are relatively high in fat, making them high in calories as well, depending on the variety you choose. But there's a silver lining: because fat and protein are the most satiating nutrients and are slow to digest, they have the potential to satisfy in small amounts, making us feel fuller, longer.

So we have established that cheese can make you stronger and perhaps even slimmer, both traits that tend to make people feel better about themselves. And when you feel good, you look good, right? Here's another theory: everyone looks better when they're smiling, and cheese seems to make everyone happy. And hey, check out those gleaming white teeth – a result of all that calcium, no doubt.

They say Charles De Gaulle had a bright smile. Once head of the French Provisional Government

**Cheese lovers will make all kinds of wild claims just to justify their cheese tooth. They'll tell you cheese can make you stronger and slimmer.**

and 149th Prime Minister of France, De Gaulle attested to the blissful distraction cheese provides when he lamented, "How can you be expected to govern a country that has 246 kinds of cheese?"

Of course, artisan cheeses have told the history of France for so long that it's hard not to associate one with the other. The art of cheese making arrived in Canada far more recently, along with the domesticated cattle Samuel de Champlain brought to Québec in the early 1600s. French settlers followed with recipes for soft, ripened cheeses in hand, and

## White Bean Slather with Caramelized Onions and Goat Cheese

*Adapted from The Girl Can't Cook by Cinda Chavich, Whitecap Books Ltd.*

**2 large red or white onions, peeled, halved and thinly sliced**  
**1/4 cup (60 mL) canola oil, divided**  
**2-3 stalks fresh rosemary**  
**1, 19 oz (540 mL) can white kidney beans, rinsed and drained**  
**2 cloves garlic, crushed**  
**1 tsp (5 mL) balsamic vinegar**  
**Salt and pepper**  
**4 oz (125 g) soft goat cheese, crumbled**

In a large skillet set over medium heat, sauté the onions in half the oil for about half an hour, stirring often, until golden. Meanwhile, pull the leaves off the rosemary and place them in the bowl of a food processor along with the beans, garlic,

balsamic vinegar and remaining oil. Pulse until the ingredients are combined, but still chunky.

Scrape the bean puree into the onions in the pan and stir to combine and heat them through. Season with salt and pepper, then sprinkle in the goat cheese. Stir in the cheese and remove from the heat so that it doesn't melt completely.

Serve warm with crackers or alongside a cheese platter. Makes about 2 cups.

Per 1/4 cup: 213 calories, 12.3 g fat (4 g saturated fat, 5.2 g monounsaturated fat, 2.3 g polyunsaturated fat), 17.8 g carbohydrates, 15 mg cholesterol, 9.2 g protein, 5.2 g fiber. 51% calories from fat

soon after that, United Empire Loyalists introduced distinctly British Cheddars. It caught on quickly – by 1867, Ontario was home to almost 200 cheese factories.

In Alberta, cheese timelines are even shorter, but access to some of the finest ingredients enables local dairies to produce high quality cheeses that rival their European counterparts. This is good news for supporters of biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, or those who are simply concerned with the environmental impact of the roughly 7,000-kilometre trek European cheeses must make to reach Alberta's store shelves. Here, the number of cheese importers still far outweighs actual producers, but establishments such as Fairwinds, who are making their own cheeses, are worth seeking out.

"Cheese making is a passion – it's a way of life," says Tony James, owner of Worldwide Specialty Foods Ltd. in Calgary. James imports many types of cheese as well as distributing for local cheese producers. He knows good cheese. In its simplest form, cheese is made by adding bacteria to milk, which turn the natural sugars (lactose) into lactic acid, followed by the addition of rennet (an enzyme traditionally gathered from the stomach lining of cattle, but now also laboratory produced) to complete the process. "We have some of the finest ingredients and facilities in Alberta, and the milk is great," James says. "What we lack is heritage. When people can bring the knowledge, like John from Sylvan Star does, then we get a great product."

James is talking about John Schalkwyk of Sylvan Star Dairy. Among the most recognized Alberta cheeses are the award-winning Goudas produced by Schalkwyk and his wife, Janny, at their factory between Red Deer and Sylvan Lake. Sylvan Star turns 250,000 litres of fresh milk into 25,000 kilograms of cheese every year, and if you've ever tasted it, you're thankful they do. Plain, flavoured and smoked Goudas of various ages as well as Edam, cheddar, queso fresco and Gruyère are available at their farm store as well as at various markets and retail outlets throughout Alberta. You'll also find their mellow, golden Goudas named on many restaurant menus.

Other large and small-scale cheese producers can be found scattered across the province: Coalhurst, Alberta is home to brothers Johan and Pieter Broere, who emigrated from Holland to start Crystal Springs Cheese, a producer of cow's, goat's and sheep's milk feta, which they sell primarily to food-service providers. Attempts at Parmesan weren't as successful, but they now have plans to start producing plain and spiced Goudas.

Branded under the Rocky Mountain Cheese label, Calgary-based Foothills Creamery, which also has an Edmonton location, produces about half of the cheeses its retail outlets carry. Stock includes several varieties of cheddar, plain and flavoured mozzarella, Gouda, some havarti, Quark and cheese curds. It's all produced in Diamond City, Alberta, in what used to be the Neapolis Dairy

## Easy ways to cook with cheese

- Toss warm roasted beets with soft goat cheese until it melts slightly.
- Leftover cheese bits are also great for making mac & cheese – make a basic white sauce out of flour, butter and milk; stir in any kind of cheese you have on hand, and toss with small cooked pasta.
- Mix leftover roasted vegetables, such as peppers, beets, squash, yams, onions or asparagus, with freshly made couscous and crumbled feta or goat cheese.
- With wine, serve bite-sized chunks of fresh Parmesan drizzled with truffle oil and honey, then sprinkled with freshly ground black pepper.
- Grate any type of firm cheese and toss with a pinch of flour; bake little piles of the mixture on a baking sheet until they melt into crispy wafers. Serve with soup or salad, or on a cheese plate.
- Crumble strong-flavored cheeses into meatball, hamburger and meat-loaf mixtures before shaping and cooking.
- Drizzle halved roma tomatoes and a few cloves of garlic with oil and roast for an hour, until golden and juicy; toss with pasta and grated Parmesan and mozzarella.
- Spread plain or flavored goat cheese into a small, shallow baking pan. Top with tomato sauce and a scattering of chopped fresh herbs and/or good black olives. Broil until bubbly and serve with bread or crackers.
- Spread crostini (toasted baguette slices) with cream cheese and top with a bit of fig jam or a thin slice of fresh or dried fig.
- Stir any crumbled or grated cheese, chopped sun-dried tomatoes and a spoonful of pesto and toss with hot pasta.
- Stuff a pita with hummus, chopped cucumber and tomato, thinly sliced purple onion, and some crumbled feta.





*THE WHEEL THING: Above, John and Janny Schalkwyk produce award-winning Goudas, among other cheeses. Top, they sell cheese at the factory and in retailers across the province. Right, a Sylvan Star employee puts the finishing touches on a wheel of cheese*




## GOUDA FOR YOU

plant. Its products can be purchased in retail outlets, as well as through foodservice providers.

Similarly, the Alberta Cheese Company produces many of its products, including mozzarella, ricotta, cheddar, feta, Provolone and Monterey Jack, at its factory in southeast Calgary, which also houses a small retail store. Family-owned since the 1970s, its market base is largely foodservice companies across Western Canada.

On the other hand, Black Diamond cheese and Springbank Cheese Co. both sound very local but are actually Ontario-based companies. Calgary's Springbank Cheese retail outlets are supplied by their head office out east, with the exception of a few varieties of Sylvan Star cheeses that are repackaged and difficult to distinguish from those that aren't locally-produced.

There are few foods that vary as greatly in taste, texture and character as cheese, and are suitable for any meal of the day. Cheese can be fast or slow, portable or elegant. Certainly no other nibbles are as appropriate served with pricey wine and posh desserts as stuffed into a child's sandwich. But like all good food, fine cheese needs no adornment; when there are so many delicious options so close to home, the (Alberta) cheese stands alone. 

### Where to get some

If your local retailer doesn't carry the Alberta cheese you're looking for, ask for it. For a more extensive listing of where to buy Alberta cheeses, visit [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com).

**Springbank Cheese Company**  
2015-14 St. NW, Calgary  
(403) 282-8331

**The Cheese Factory**  
8943 82 Avenue, Edmonton  
(780) 450-2143

**Say Cheese (Fromagerie) Inc.**  
1235 – 26 Ave. SE, Calgary (in the Crossroads Farmer's Market)  
(403) 262-7530

**Italian Centre Shop**  
10878 Via Italia (95 St.), Edmonton  
5028 – 104A St., Edmonton

**Planet Organic**  
4625 Varsity Drive NW, Calgary (at Shaganappi Trail) (403) 288-6700  
10233 Elbow Drive SW, Calgary  
(403) 252-2404  
12120 Jasper Avenue, Edmonton  
(780) 452-4921  
7917 – 104th Street, Edmonton  
(780) 433-6807



### Goodbye marble cubes

Nothing says "party" like a cheese plate. But there's no rule that says a cheese plate should be populated with nondescript cubes and mini red-waxed pucks. With a whole cosmos of cheeses to explore, and so many varieties produced close to home, this is a perfect opportunity to experiment.

"The art of building cheese trays is based on presenting a variety of tastes and textures," says Sherry Assel, assembler of cheese platters at Janice Beaton Fine Cheese. "I like to see not less than three cheeses. And I try to limit the number to seven or eight. Too many cheeses will overwhelm the palate."

She says a goat or sheep's milk option is a must, not only for its unique qualities, but to address the rise of lactose intolerance. "And include something sweet, with caramel overtones, like a well-aged Gouda," Assel says. Plan on about 60 grams of

cheese per guest, assuming there are going to be other snacks.

Now that you have your cheese, you must arrange it in an appealing way. If you don't own a cheese-worthy tray or platter, try arranging it on a clean wooden cutting board, or pick up a framed mirror, a trick often used by caterers for serving cheeses and hors

d'oeuvres. Any flat surface will do. Try a large, dark-coloured stone tile or slab of granite. The heavy stone stays cool, and looks beautiful adorned with cheese.

Avoid slicing the cheese beforehand. Instead, serve larger wedges with cheese knives. "Air is cheese's enemy" Assel says.

"Cubing cheese creates more surface area, making it dry out quickly. Simply trim the rind from the sides of hard cheeses and serve bloomy (such as brie) cheeses with the rind left on." Make sure cheese is at

room temperature, rather than refrigerator-cold, in order to bring out its true flavour.

An assortment of crackers, dense breads (such as Irish soda bread or nut quick breads), dark rye, seed bread and baguettes are all great accompaniments, but Assel believes almost as much attention should be paid to the cracker constituent of the plate, which she adds after the cheeses are in place. She doesn't recommend strong flavours, however. "The cheese is the star of the show."

Snip small bunches of grapes or hothouse cherry tomatoes to nestle among the cheeses. Small bowls or pots of preserves, chutney or tapenade provide an interesting contrast. Dried fruit and nuts also make an ideal accompaniment. Slices of firm but ripe pears or tart apples round out the platter and also add colour and acidity.



# Orange Pumpkin Cake



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[www.realcreamrecipes.com](http://www.realcreamrecipes.com)

## Ingredients

1/2 cup	butter, softened	125 mL
1 cup	granulated sugar	250 mL
2 tsp	finely grated orange zest	10 mL
2	eggs	2
14 oz	can cooked pumpkin	400 mL
2 cups	all-purpose flour	500 mL
2 tsp	baking powder	10 mL
1 tsp	baking soda	5 mL
1 tsp	ground cinnamon	5 mL
1/2 tsp	ground nutmeg	2 mL
	pinch of salt	
2/3 cup	18% cream	160 mL

## Orange Syrup

1/2 cup	granulated sugar	125 mL
1/2 cup	orange juice	125 mL
	whipped cream to serve	

## Method

1. Butter a 9 inch (23 cm) spring form pan. Line base and side with parchment paper. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. Beat butter, sugar and zest in a medium bowl with an electric mixer until light and creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the pumpkin. Stir until combined (mixture may look curdled).
3. Add remaining ingredients and stir until combined. Spoon mixture into prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven for 50 to 60 minutes or until done when tested with a toothpick or cake tester.
4. To make orange syrup, heat and stir both ingredients in a medium saucepan over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. Simmer, uncovered, for about 3 minutes or until thickened slightly.
5. Pour hot syrup over hot cake; let stand until cool. Serve with whipped cream. Serves 12.

# Pasta, Present and Future

Tucked away by the CN Rail Yards, three generations of Saccomannos make Prairie Italian food that transcends the ordinary

STORY BY *Melody Hebert* | PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Christy Dean*

**I**t's just before noon on a crisp, late fall morning. Inside Saccomanno's Pizza Pasta & Deli, sunlight streams through the oversized windows illuminating the glossy tile floor. Double front doors swing back and forth, welcoming a parade of pasta seekers anxious for a peek at today's fragrant specials.

The customers, many in well worn coveralls, appear as hard working as the people behind the counter. The air is an intoxicating blend of aromatic spices and the unmistakable scent of freshly baked bread. Since the staff arrived this morning, long before sunrise, busy hands have been churning out heaps of fresh pasta and dough, roasting pans of potatoes and whipping up fragrant sauces, in anticipation of the lunch rush. A trusty crew, comprising three generations of Saccomannos, dish out stories and conversation along with the cannelloni.

Joe Saccomanno, second generation and general manager, eyes a regular at the door, and immediately gets to work slicing and assembling a monstrous looking Italian sub. As the customer reaches the counter, Stephanie, cashier and family friend,

asks the gentleman what he's having today. He shakes his head, laughs then yells out to Joe, "Hey Joe, what am I having for lunch today?"

It's a Saccomanno family trait, this warm, informal style – so engaging that many customers look forward to the people as much as the pasta. Of course warmth doesn't pay the bills.

There is a dogged determination etched on the face of Joe's father, Frank. At 77, this patriarch, founder and heart and soul of Saccomanno's, shows no signs of slowing as he paces back and forth, answering phones and assisting a customer purchasing some olive oil from the in-store market.

Perhaps no one understands Frank's unwillingness to retire better than Maria, who has worked tirelessly by his side ever since they were married 48 years ago. A petite dark-haired woman, she doesn't sugar-coat her account of working with her husband. "It's very hard," she says in a strong southern Italian accent. "The problem is he's such a hard worker and he expects everybody to be like him and we cannot do that. We worry about him doing too much physically. It is his whole life, without it he would not know what to do."

Joe's recent suggestion to close on Sundays was met with a flat out refusal from Frank. Despite passing retirement age a dozen years ago, he continues to come in every day of the week, sometimes for 14 hours a day, to bake fresh bread or create a batch of his authentic homemade Italian sausages. You don't sell sausages by sleeping in. "It's hard work," Frank says, wagging a finger, "lotts a hard work."

Born in the picturesque village of Grimaldi, anchored on the shores of Southern Italy, Frank Saccomanno immigrated to Canada as a young man in the 1950s. He took a strenuous job labouring on the railroad, where he continued for the next few years. In 1965, the same year Canada traded in the Union Jack for the Maple Leaf, Frank Saccomanno asserted his own independence, along with brother Maurizio, launching a European style grocery store, aptly named Saccomanno Brothers in the heart of Edmonton's Little Italy.

The duo, proving to be talented businessman, quickly branched out into distribution, delivering fresh goods and produce to larger retailers and restaurants throughout Alberta. In 1979, they decided to purchase their own building and they moved





*FAMILY FORTUNATE: Clockwise from top left, Maria Saccamanno keeps downtown in pasta with Stephen, family friend, son Joe, grandson Francesco and husband Frank. Days start early and last long, but Frank still works harder than anyone*



Saccomanno Brothers to the current location north of the CN rail yards, where they added a small deli to service the hungry railway workers across the road. Tragically, in 1984, a massive fire destroyed their business and severed the brother's partnership forever.

Following Maurizio's departure and sensing a change in the market, Frank saw an opportunity for his now adult son, Joe, to assume more responsibility – promptly changing the name to Saccumanno's Pizza Pasta & Deli. With a new generation at the helm, Saccumanno's was rebuilt, and the father and son team left the distribution end of the business behind to focus on the restaurant, deli and the creation of an in-store specialty market featuring imported Italian groceries and locally sourced Alberta produce. Along with the space, which has grown to more than 1,300 square metres (14,000 square feet), a third generation Saccumanno is now on board with the addition of Joe's 21-year-old-son, Francesco.

So what's it really like working with family?

"It has its good days and its bad days," says Joe, a diplomat. After all, what father and son relationship doesn't have its share of disagreements, espe-

cially with a son eager to put his personal stamp on the family business?

As for a fourth generation, that will have to wait. In addition to helping his father, Francesco is pursuing his dream of becoming an actor, already securing bit parts in a couple of big budget films shot on location in Alberta.

For now, Joe is happy to grow the business that allows him everyday to pursue his passion. "I love

**"I love to cook," he says, "to use fresh, simple ingredients – everything from scratch."**

to cook," he says, "to use fresh, simple ingredients – everything from scratch."

A buzzer sounds and Joe makes his way past the deli toward the warehouse to welcome another delivery. At this time of the year, Italian

winemaking takes centre stage. The warehouse overflows with boxes of wine grapes and crates of wine-making grape juice for sale to do-it-yourself winemakers. Frank, Joe and Francesco will spend hours inspecting and readying the stock before they put it out for sale on the shop floor.

Joe's proud that he has learned a lot about business from his father. Less easily defined, but still apparent, is that core of interconnectedness many Italian people feel for land, family and food. The Saccumannos are proof of that. **f**

## Joe's Penne alla Vodka

**1/2 cup (125 mL) chopped onions**  
**2 Tbsp (30 mL) butter**  
**Splash of vodka**  
**2 cups (500 mL) whipping cream**  
**1 cup (250 mL) freshly grated Parmesan cheese**  
**4 cups (1 L) pureed Italian tomatoes**  
**1/4 cup (60 mL) chopped fresh Italian (flat leaf) parsley**  
**Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste**  
**2 lbs (900 g) fresh penne, cooked**

In a skillet set over medium-high heat, sauté the onions in butter until soft. Add a splash of your favourite vodka, and lower the heat to medium. Stir in the cream and Parmesan cheese. Add tomatoes, parsley, salt and pepper, bring to a simmer and cook for 10 minutes. Serve hot over cooked pasta. Serves 6. (This recipe freezes well.)

Per serving: 980 calories, 37.1 g fat (22 g saturated fat, 10.4 g monounsaturated fat, 2.1 g polyunsaturated fat), 129.7 g carbohydrates, 115.62 mg cholesterol, 30.4 g protein, 7.1 g fiber. 34% calories from fat





## Wafer targets prevention of type 2 diabetes

An Alberta company launches an edible screening tool.



It looks like a simple biscuit.

But CeaProve®, a specially-formulated cookie-style wafer developed by an Edmonton company, is changing the way people are screened for type 2 diabetes and prediabetes.

This wafer will save lives, says Gayle Langford, a registered nurse-turned lawyer, who advises governments and private companies on health care issues. "We know the number of type 2 diabetes cases is skyrocketing. We also know it's largely preventable," she says.

CeaProve® is a standardized test meal containing exactly 50 grams of available glucose. Individuals will fast overnight, test their blood sugar with a portable hand-held glucose meter, then eat a package of CeaProve® wafers within 10 minutes. Sixty minutes later, they will re-test their blood sugar.

CeaProve® challenges the body's glucose tolerance. Impaired tolerance is associated with excess blood sugar after a meal and indicates prediabetes, says Sarah Lord, PhD, of Ceapro, the company behind CeaProve®. Ceapro received investment funding from AVAC to support the CeaProve® project.

An early diagnosis of prediabetes improves an individual's chances of preventing the onset of type 2 diabetes through lifestyle changes involving nutrition and activity,

explains Dianne Lehman of Diabetes Compass, an Edmonton company that promotes diabetes education and awareness.

"Four of five people diagnosed with diabetes will die of a heart attack or stroke. The sooner they know they're prediabetic, the sooner they can get help – and get healthy," says Lehman.

Because the test can be administered in pharmacies, grocery stores or at public institutions like schools, individuals will also be able to re-test themselves after making lifestyle changes, notes Lord. "CeaProve® is a lifestyle motivator."

Beginning this fall, the wafers will be available through blood collection centres, workplace programs and through health care professionals in Ontario and in Quebec. Lord expects the wafer to be more palatable than the current drink used to test glucose tolerance.

Langford foresees a day when CeaProve® is as readily available as the blood pressure monitors now found in public places. "There are a lot of Canadians out there with prediabetes and they don't even know it. What if you knew your body was already showing signs of developing diabetes – would you be more motivated to make changes to prevent diabetes? This is what is exciting about CeaProve®."



### Prevention works.

Moderate exercise for 30 minutes a day and a weight reduction of 5 to 7% can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes by 58%.



### Diabetes kills.

A Canadian with diabetes is four times as likely to die at age 35 than a 35-year-old without diabetes.



### A shorter life.

Life expectancy for people with type 2 diabetes drops by 5 to 10 years.



## Type 2 diabetes: Are you at risk?

Diabetes prevention starts today.

### Diabetes is epidemic.

Two million Canadians have type 2 diabetes. Another four million have prediabetes and 29 to 55% of them will develop type 2 diabetes.

### Prediabetes.

Prediabetes, or impaired glucose tolerance, may last for 5 to 10 years before the onset of diabetes.



### Weight matters.

If your waist is greater than 35 inches (woman) or 40 inches (man), you're at risk for type 2 diabetes, coronary artery disease and hypertension.

"The incidence of type 2 diabetes is rising dramatically and many of the people at risk do not know it," says Rami Chowaniec, a Safeway pharmacist and a certified diabetes educator based in Edmonton.

Type 1 and 2 diabetes occur when individuals have too much glucose in their blood because the body doesn't produce enough insulin, or can't use insulin effectively. Type 1 diabetes typically strikes people under the age of 30 and accounts for about 10 per cent of total cases. Type 1 is caused by an autoimmune reaction that destroys insulin-producing cells. It may be triggered by a virus or other environmental causes.

Type 2 diabetes is different. It's linked to genetics, lifestyle and age and accounts for 90 per cent of the cases. While it's largely preventable, its incidence is skyrocketing.

"Type 2 diabetes is an epidemic. More than 105,000 Albertans have already been diagnosed with diabetes and that's expected to double in the next 15 years," says Chowaniec.

Data from the Canadian Diabetes Association (CDA) shows the direct annual costs for medication and supplies range from \$1,000 to \$15,000 per individual. By 2010, diabetes could cost the Canadian health care system \$15.6 million a year.

The health implications are dire. "This is a cardiovascular disease. People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke. Their risk equivalent for heart attack is at the same level as someone who's already had a heart attack," says Chowaniec.

People with diabetes are also at risk for kidney disease, blindness, amputation and erectile dysfunction.

What can Albertans do? First, know your risk factors:

**Genetics.** If someone in your family has been diagnosed with type 2, your risk increases. Certain ethnic groups are also at greater risk, including those of Hispanic, Asian, South Asian or African descent.

**Lifestyle.** Weight is a big factor, no pun intended. Sixty per cent of Canadians are overweight and the risk of diabetes rises for individuals with high cholesterol and high blood pressure. Both conditions also increase the risk of complications from diabetes, including heart attack or stroke.

**Age.** The incidence of type 2 diabetes rises with age. "Albertans over the age of 40 should be screened for diabetes every three years. It's a simple blood test and it can identify those with prediabetes as well," says Chowaniec.

### Prevention works

And now, the good news.

Increased physical activity, healthy eating, weight loss, stress reduction and not smoking all play important roles in good health and may prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. Chowaniec urges Albertans at risk, or with prediabetes, to seek lifestyle advice and support from health care, nutrition and fitness professionals.

"You can have a long and healthy life if you get involved with your health," insists Chowaniec. "But don't delay. Prevention starts today."



## New Alberta food ingredients support diabetics

Consumers want functional foods. Alberta delivers!



Two new food ingredients and a no sugar-added ketchup developed by Alberta companies, with support from AVAC Ltd., are finding their way onto the list of foods that benefit health-conscious consumers, including those with diabetes or prediabetes.

Viscofiber®, a natural fiber source from oats and barley developed by Cevena Bioproducts Ltd. in Edmonton, is being used as an ingredient in dietary supplements in the US, including 'shake-style' powder mixes, says Kristina Williams of Cevena.

As a concentrated soluble fibre fraction from oat and barley grains, Viscofiber® improves cholesterol levels, slows the uptake of blood sugar and gives consumers a sense of 'fullness', also called satiation.

Another Edmonton company, BioNeutra Inc., produces oligosaccharides, the largest-selling functional food ingredient in the world. Its natural fiber sweetener is made from the starch of wheat, barley and potatoes, says Dr. Jianhua Zhu, CEO. "Currently, some U.S. clients are using VitaSugar™ in breakfast bars, nutrition bars and retail products in health food stores."

High in soluble fiber and featuring a low glycemic index, VitaSugar™ also acts as a prebiotic, promoting the growth of "friendly" bacteria in the large intestine. Unlike some artificial sweeteners, there is no bad aftertaste with VitaSugar™, says Dr. Mohammed Hassan, BioNeutra's chief scientific officer.

Other companies are looking at using Viscofiber® and VitaSugar™ in their formulations.

### Pass the ketchup!

Thomson's Pride No Sugar Added Ketchup hit the market about a year ago, says Helen Thomson, of LesLee Creations Ltd.

Sold in Sobeys and at Planet Organic Market, it's the first of three no-sugar-added condiments the company wants to develop.

Echoing comments made by other company principals, Thomson says LesLee is "grateful for AVAC's investment support. Their repayable loans demand a high level of documentation and planning – and that worked in our favour."



### Know the signs.

Unusual thirst. Frequent urination. Blurred vision. Frequent or recurring infections. All are signs and symptoms of diabetes.

### Diabetes is bad for your heart.

Four out of five people with diabetes will die due to heart disease or stroke.

### Get the facts.

Prediabetes is reversible if detected and treated early. If you're at risk, take action.





## New insulin a better way to meet growing demand

A made-in-Calgary company develops leading-edge products for rapidly-expanding diabetes population.

A Calgary-based firm called SemBioSys Genetics Inc. is developing products for some of the world's fastest-growing markets, including "unprecedented demand for insulin, related to increases in the incidence of diabetes and the need to find more cost-effective ways to produce the life-saving drug," says Andrew Baum, President and CEO.

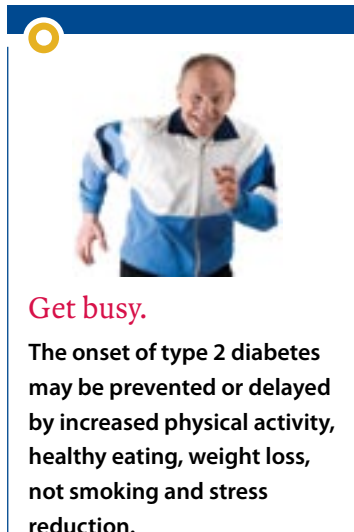
Produced in the safflower seed, SemBioSys's insulin exemplifies the company's "vision to use plants to produce pharmaceutical proteins for metabolic and cardiovascular diseases," explains Baum.

With one eye on lucrative U.S. markets, where one in three children born after 2000 is expected to be diagnosed with diabetes in their lifetime, SemBioSys is working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to move its product towards clinical trials.

A spinoff of the University of Calgary, SemBioSys expects to market insulin that can be used for inhalation or injection. The company's plant-based technology makes their safflower-derived insulin a lower-cost source of insulin than products currently available.

Early trials demonstrated it is safe to use in animals and proved the company's innovative technology can produce large, commercial-levels of insulin.

Baum praises the start-up support of AVAC Ltd. "AVAC is the quintessential example of how high-tech businesses should be supported. As a CEO, I admire their professionalism and input. As a taxpayer, I'm glad they're on the case because they have been indispensable to what we're doing, in this case, for diabetics."



### Get busy.

The onset of type 2 diabetes may be prevented or delayed by increased physical activity, healthy eating, weight loss, not smoking and stress reduction.

## AVAC puts good ideas to work

Start-up companies get a healthy boost.

What do diabetes-testing wafers, new soluble-fibre products, sugar-free ketchup and flavour-infused canola oil have in common? They're all great examples of how a company called AVAC Ltd. helps Alberta entrepreneurs take good ideas from the scientific drawing board to health-conscious consumers in Canada and abroad!

Getting a good idea to market has never been easy. But since 1998, Alberta companies working to develop value-added markets for agricultural products

have been able to call on AVAC's support, says Ross Bricker, President and CEO.

"Many of our clients come to us with well-developed business plans, but a shortfall in the cash needed for the early stages of product development," says Bricker. AVAC offers a number of investment options, most featuring a flexible royalty-based repayment schedule that matches the client's sales success.

The focus, in other words, "is on building real-world success. Our goal is to

build knowledge-rich industries from knowledge-rich technologies. These technologies take the products from traditional agricultural resources and use them to create demand for entirely new products and services."

"In some ways, the conversations we're having with our clients are no longer about food, but about wellness," says Bricker. "This is an exciting time to be on the leading edge of new product development – and Alberta companies and AVAC are rising to the challenge."



# Do You Know the *Muffin Girl*?

When it came to baking, I taught my daughter everything I know. It was a stroke of genius

BY Joy Gregory

**M**y meeting ran late. I'm hungry, a little grumpy, and I've barely time to get salad and a frozen casserole into the microwave and onto six plates before our three girls hit the ice and their older brother grabs a quick bite in between high school and his part-time job. I pull into the garage and leap from the car. Then, turning the ice-cold knob on the door that leads into the house, it hits me – in all the right places. Rounding the entrance hallway, my glasses lightly fog from the moist indoor heat. I see what I inhaled seconds before. The kitchen countertops are laden with three kinds of freshly-baked cookies and there's my 14-year-old daughter, elbow deep in sudsy dishwater. This kid's mother is a slave driver – or a genius.

"Hi Mom," says a smiling Christianne, hair up and her apron neatly tied around her neck. "I finished my work early so I baked some cookies."

I'm going with 'genius.'

I'm not sure how it happened, but I do remember the moment when Christianne crossed that culinary threshold and became our family's chief

baker. She was 11 years old and I was running out the door to yet another meeting when she asked if she could bake cookies using the dough I had made and refrigerated the day before. "Oh honey. That's such a nice offer. But I really don't think you should be handling the oven and hot cookies sheets all by yourself," was my quick response.

Then our eyes met, and we both started laughing. Christianne had lots of experience baking and had already started finding her own cookie and cake recipes. She was beyond needing my help. "Be careful," was my next response. "I'll be back in a few hours."

Homeschooled and a six-year veteran of Calgary's AA ringette program, Christianne Varty is an aggressive defense player on the ice. In the kitchen, her stick of choice is a black silicone spatula and because she pays a lot of attention to nutrition, we all benefit, especially when it comes to the delectable baked goods that satisfy an inherited sweet tooth (we blame Grandpa Gregory) and a maternal plea for nutritional balance.

Our family's food plan is based on tradition and science. On the tradition side, my husband and I come from rural Alberta families who put homemade food on the table. Long-time residents of Calgary, we still buy our beef from our home-town butcher shop in Provost, a few kilometres inside the Alberta-Saskatchewan border. We get our chicken from a farmer at Strathmore. We grow fresh vegetables, supplementing our production with supplies from local farmers' markets.

For science, we turn to information generated by Colleen Parsons-Olsson, Director, Health and Fitness programs, Faculty of Kinesiology, University of Calgary. Using a handout she generated about feeding young athletes, and liking how it simplifies healthy meal strategies for families, we aim for meals that include three or four food groups and snacks that feature two or three. (That's fresh fruit with a homemade granola bar and chocolate milk; a puffed wheat square with yogurt and grapes; whole wheat crackers with cheddar cheese and apple slices.)

We also look for ways to make recipes healthier. Muffin recipes that call for white flour get 50 per cent whole wheat and we often buy a certified organic whole wheat made by Sun Prairie Mills Ltd., whose flour is stone ground at a mill near its farm at Nanton, 80 kilometres south of Calgary.

Since oatmeal is packed with five grams of protein per half cup, we typically stir in as much fibre-rich oatmeal as the muffin batter can handle. The caloric load is lightened by cutting sugar by 25 per cent and the fat by up to one-third.

Ah yes. Fat gets its own attention. Lard is a must for pies like Grandma Teresa makes, but that's it. We've banished shortening in favour of butter or heart-healthy non-hydrogenated canola-based margarine. Where recipes call for melted

butter or margarine, we use straight canola oil (including in all bread machine recipes, it replaces all fats, liquid or solid). Recipes that call for sour cream or whole milk get low-fat yogurt or no-fat milk and we sometimes use apple sauce to replace all of the fat in cake and muffin recipes.

Our approach to food takes a little planning and I sometimes wonder if this kind of attention to detail really matters.

"I think it does matter, from a few different perspectives," says Parsons-Olsson. In addition to fielding nutrition queries from the parents of young athletes, she also plays an important role in University of Calgary programs that promote nutrition and fitness among young Calgarians whose lifestyles put their health at risk due to obesity. From that vantage point, Parsons-Olsson is convinced consumers have much to gain when they pay attention to the "details" of what they eat.

Whole wheat and oatmeal are a case in point. Every time you trade whole grains for their processed cousins, Parsons-Olsson says, "you increase the amount of fibre that's going in. That slows the breakdown of carbohydrates, preventing a sugar high by raising blood sugar more slowly." And that means whole grains take longer to digest.

With higher levels of soluble fibre (the kind of fibre that improves cholesterol levels) whole grains promote what food scientists call satiety. In consumer language, these foods help us feel full longer, says Parsons-Olsson. And whole grains also tend to be higher in protein, which is good because it helps build and repair body tissues. Protein also regulates body processes, such as nutrient transportation and muscle contraction, and it helps our bodies

## Baker's dozen

Here's a list of what Joy Gregory and her teenage daughter, Christianne, count as their top picks for sweet treats, in no particular order. "Except for the Chocolavas," says Christianne. "They're first."

**Chocolava Cookies:** Christianne found this recipe in *One Smart Cookie*, by Alberta's Julie Van Rosendaal. Beautiful and delicious, serve them plain, with ice cream or no-fat vanilla yogurt.

**Balloon buns:** Too fun! The expanding marshmallow transforms the bun into a shell lined with cinnamon sweetness.

**Joy's Zucchini Banana Oatmeal**

**Muffins:** "We mix up a batch of these muffins every couple of weeks," says Joy. "We put some into the freezer for post-game snacks."

**Chocolate Pizza:** This recipe is from Jean Paré. Cover a chocolate chip crust in melted chocolate and peanut butter, and top it with pieces of your favourite chocolate bars.

**Crystal Cookies:** Named after a favourite nanny, these are often called Best-Ever Oatmeal cookies. Christianne's version has three cups of oatmeal.

**Barley Biscotti:** Also from *One Smart Cookie*, these are made with Alberta's own Hamilton's Barley Flour.

**Pumpkin bread:** A great addition to a healthy breakfast or snack. Joy purees pumpkins and freezes the puree in two-cup bags.

**Grandma Teresa's Five-Minute Fudge:** Chocolate and marshmallows.

Christianne's favourite combination!

**Apple Crisp:** Joy quadruples the oatmeal crisp and freezes it on a cookie sheet. It then goes into a pail, ready to be scooped atop apples and baked.

**Cinnamon Raisin Buns:** Homemade cinnamon buns are great. Let them rise atop a caramel syrup and include pecans.

**Super Chocolate Cake:** From *Best of Bridge*, another great Alberta contribution to cooking. Make it in a Bundt pan and drizzle with homemade caramel icing.

**Carmel Popcorn:** A great gift wrapped in cello paper with a fancy ribbon.

**Chocolate Haystacks:** These aren't baked – so what? They're delicious, and all that oatmeal must be good for you!

resist diseases common to malnourished people. Plus, protein is a fatigue-fighter that promotes stamina.

With nine grams of protein in every four tablespoons of powder, skim milk powder is another simple way to increase protein in foods such as fruit smoothies or oatmeal, adds Parsons-Olsson. She mixes a little skim milk powder right into the container that holds her family's breakfast oatmeal. At my house, Christianne and her sisters mix it right into their fruit smoothies.

Cutting back on sugar is another no-brainer, says Parsons-Olsson. She reduces the sugar in her favourite banana bread recipe by 25 per cent, then smiles when friends and family rave about it. Her trick? Parsons-Olsson sprinkles a little sugar on top of the loaf before she pops the pan into the oven.


She also boosts flavour and nutrition by mixing dried fruit, nuts and seeds into everything from breakfast cereals to salad. This is one of the easiest ways to add a whole new food group to a snack or meal, says Parsons-Olsson.

While Christianne and I cook with non-hydrogenated margarine, Parsons-Olsson admits she loves the flavour of real butter. This, she says, is a matter of choice more than nutrition. "In the end, one gram of fat, no matter what it looks like or where it comes from, is going to be about nine calories." And recent research suggests that CLA, an essential fatty acid, is found chiefly in dairy and meat, meaning that butter lovers have one more reason to imbibe.

During the holidays, we all imbibe. Her advice for people concerned about the abundance of tasty temptations is to spend more time at the fruit and vegetable trays and eat less of the other stuff, including those sweet and savoury snacks that tend to pack a heavy caloric punch.

She's also big on developing a nutrition strategy before you venture onto the festive holiday circuit. If you love shortbread, for example, Parsons-Olsson recommends you hold yourself to a plan to eat just one piece a day.

The key is moderation, not deprivation. I keep this in mind when Christianne shares news of her latest cookie conquest. She's working on a recipe that will feature two of her confectionery favourites: chocolate and marshmallows. I prefer her pavlova, an Australian meringue topped with fresh

berries and whipped cream, which she cuts in half by adding strawberry yogurt. But, since marshmallows are in season and raspberries are not, I smile and, in the lingo of parenting gurus, pick my battle. "Go ahead. Just clean up when you're done." 





Develop a nutrition strategy before you venture onto the festive holiday circuit. Hit the fruit tray first. If you love shortbread, hold yourself to a plan to eat just one piece a day.



## Zucchini Banana Oatmeal Muffins

- 2 1/4 cups (560 mL) all-purpose flour**
- 2 1/4 cups (560 mL) whole wheat flour**
- 1 1/2 cups (375 mL) oats**
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) baking soda**
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) baking powder**
- 2 tsp (10 mL) cinnamon**
- 1 tsp (5 mL) nutmeg**
- 1 tsp (5 mL) salt**
- 1 cup (250 mL) mashed ripe bananas (about 2 bananas)**
- 2 cups (500 mL) grated zucchini**
- 6 eggs**
- 1 1/3 cups (330 mL) packed brown sugar**
- 2/3 cup (160 mL) canola oil**
- 3/4 cup (180 mL) chocolate chips**

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). In a large bowl, stir together the flours, oats, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. In another bowl, combine the banana, zucchini, eggs, brown sugar and oil. Add to the dry ingredients and stir until almost combined; add the chocolate chips and continue to stir, just until blended.



Divide the batter among muffin tins that have been lined with paper liners or sprayed with non-stick spray. Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until golden and springy to the touch.

Makes 3 dozen muffins.

Per muffin: 183 calories, 6.8 g fat (1.5 g saturated fat, 3.1 g monounsaturated fat, 1.7 g polyunsaturated fat), 27.6g carbohydrates, 36.2 mg cholesterol, 4 g protein, 2.3 g fiber. 33% calories from fat

## Chocolava Cookies

*From One Smart Cookie by Julie Van Rosendaal*

- 1 1/3 cups (330 mL) all-purpose flour**
- 1 cup (250 mL) sugar**
- 1/3 cup (80 mL) packed brown sugar**
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) cocoa**
- 1 tsp (5 mL) baking powder**
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) salt**
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) butter or non-hydrogenated margarine, softened**
- 3 large egg whites or 2 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- 2 tsp (10 mL) vanilla**
- icing sugar, for rolling**

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C). In a large bowl or in the bowl of a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, brown sugar, cocoa, baking powder and salt, breaking up any lumps of brown sugar. Add the

butter and pulse or stir with a fork, pastry cutter or whisk until the mixture is well combined and crumbly.

Add eggs and vanilla and stir by hand just until the dough comes together. The dough will be fairly dry – it will seem at first that there isn't enough moisture, but if you keep stirring, or get in there and use your fingers, eventually it will come together.

Place a few heaping spoonfuls of icing sugar into a shallow dish. Roll dough into 1 1/2" balls and roll the balls in icing sugar to coat. Place them about 2" apart on a cookie sheet that has been sprayed with nonstick spray. Bake for 12-14 minutes, until just set around the edges but still soft in the middle. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Makes 2 dozen cookies.



Per cookie: 93 calories, 2.1 g fat (1.3 g saturated fat, 0.6 g monounsaturated fat, 0.1 g polyunsaturated fat), 17.8 g carbohydrates, 5.2 mg cholesterol, 1.5 g protein, 1 g fiber. 20%

# Who Says Healthy Doesn't Taste Good?



## Slow Roasted Beef and Ratatouille

- 3 plum tomatoes, cored and quartered
- 1/2 lb (250 g) zucchini (~2), cut into 1/2-inch (12 mm) slices
- 1 small Spanish onion, cut into 12 wedges
- 1 baby eggplant, chunked
- 1 EACH sweet red and yellow pepper, chunked
- 1/4 lb (125 g) cremini mushrooms, quartered
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) Prepared basil pesto
- 1 tsp (5 mL) liquid honey
- 1/4 cup (50 mL) pitted kalamata olives (optional)
- 2 tsp (10 mL) olive oil
- pepper
- 3 lb (1.5 kg) Beef Sirloin Tip or Inside Round Oven Roast
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) prepared basil pesto

Prep Time: 20 Min      Cooking Time: 1 1/2 hours  
Makes 6 Servings

*Nutrition Info Per Serving: 240 Cal, 10g Fat, 29g Protein, 10g Carbs*

- Directions:
1. Combine vegetables (not including olives) and pesto into a large bowl, tossing well to coat. Spread on foil lined jelly roll pan lightly coated with vegetable cooking spray; set aside.
  2. Heat oil in a heavy sauté pan or oven-proof skillet over medium-high heat; season beef with pepper and brown all over, turning with tongs, for about 10 minutes. Spread pesto all over roast and place on rack in the same pan. Insert oven-safe meat thermometer into centre of roast. Cook beef and vegetables, uncovered, in 275°F (140°C) oven until meat thermometer reads 140°F (60°C) for medium-rare, about 1 1/2 hours.
  3. Remove roast to cutting board. Tent with foil for 5 minutes. Lift foil and vegetables from pan and use a rubber spatula to scrape vegetables into a large bowl; toss with vinegar, honey and olives (if using). Carve roast into thin slices across the grain. Serve sliced beef and vegetables with cooked rice or whole wheat couscous.

*For more nutritious recipes pick up the I ♥ Cookbook at [albertabeef.org](http://albertabeef.org)*

# Alberta Beef



*BODY CHECK: Dr. Chad Moreau is in charge of minding the Edmonton Oilers' nutrition plans, hoping to gain an edge*

# Cooking & With Oil Flames

The Battle of Alberta spills out of the rink and into the kitchen. When it comes to feeding the teams, the gloves come off

STORY BY *Ryan Smith*

**F**or most of the summer of 2007, more than a dozen Edmonton Oilers veterans trained together at a fitness facility in Redondo Beach, California. Many arrived at training camp in the fall and announced they were in the best shape of their lives. All of them registered less than 10 per cent body fat.

According to the Oilers' strength and conditioning consultant, Chad Moreau, the players trained "with the mentality of a wolf pack."

He might have added that they've been eating like wolves, too.

In his role with the Oilers, Chad Moreau creates nutrition plans for the players, and he's been steering them towards wild game meat, such as elk,

antelope and caribou. "The exotic game meats are lean and low in cholesterol – great for high performance athletes," he says.

The wolf comparison deepens, when Moreau's younger brother, Oilers captain Ethan Moreau, explains how the players like to eat their venison.

The team eats meat as rare and as fresh as possible. "The closer it is to being alive, the more energy you'll get from it," Ethan says.

But Chad doesn't want anyone thinking the Oilers are wild men, hunting down their own food and eating it raw. "It's not like that. The game meat is a part of their diet, but it's a small part." He pauses, then adds, "these guys are like Formula One race cars. They require high performance fuel."

Wolves or race cars? Regardless, one thing is clear: the players are careful about what they consume, believing it will affect how they perform on the ice.

“We’re in a competitive environment,” Ethan Moreau says of the team’s nutritional plan. “And you look for every advantage you can get.” It turns out the Oilers aren’t the only Alberta team concerned with what’s going into its players.

In their quest to explore every advantage, the separate management groups for the Calgary Flames and the Edmonton Oilers have recently decided to spend more money than ever to ensure their players are eating well. Starting last year, the Flames have provided their players with most of the food that they’ll eat throughout the season. The Oilers have followed suit, offering the same service to their players this year.

“It’s obvious how important nutrition is, and last year we decided to take things a step further,” says Flames CEO and President Ken King, instrumental in implementing the teams nutrition program. “We’re not their parents, we can’t make them eat or not eat something, but we can provide them with healthy choices.”

Both teams now provide meals in their home facilities before and after games and practices. Team management pays for the meals, which are prepared at on-site kitchens. In the Oilers’ case, the kitchen is brand new – part of a multi-million dollar renovation project of the team’s facilities.

But even when the players are on the road or on their own, their food choices are made easier thanks to each team’s new nutrition programs.

For the Oilers, Chad Moreau, who is in his third year with the team, has set up a password-protected website that helps each player learn what his own personal healthy eating options are for any scenario, including, for example, before a game, after a practice, or on a rare day off.

The Flames have a similar program set up by their own nutritional consultant, whom they hired last year. Ken King was reluctant to provide a name. “We’ll keep our powder dry on that one,” he says. “We need to keep some of our secrets.”

The team also arranges for special meals for when players need to eat in planes or hotels. “For us,



## Ethan Moreau’s Favourite Sweet and Sour Beef with Greens

### Beef & marinade:

- 1 1/2 lbs (680 g) boneless beef sirloin, trimmed of fat and cut into 1/4-inch strips**
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) each: light soy sauce and orange juice**
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) cornstarch**

### Sauce:

- 1/4 cup (60 mL) ketchup**
- 3 Tbsp (45 mL) cornstarch**
- 1 cup (250 mL) low fat milk**
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) each: light soy sauce, vinegar, brown sugar**
- 1/4 tsp (1 mL) Alberta-made hot sauce**
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) canola oil**
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 3 Tbsp (45 mL) grated ginger root**
- 6 green onions, chopped**
- 1 bunch broccoli, trimmed and chopped**
- 2 stalks celery, chopped**
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced**
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced**
- 12 oz (340 g) fresh spinach, washed, trimmed and chopped**
- salt and pepper to taste**

In a medium bowl, combine the beef, soy sauce and orange juice. Let it sit while you prepare the sauce: in another medium bowl, stir together the ketchup and cornstarch until smooth. Whisk in the milk, soy sauce, vinegar, brown sugar and hot sauce.

In a large skillet or wok, heat half the oil over medium-high heat. Remove the meat from its marinade and add to the pan; cook just until browned. Remove from the pan and set aside; wipe the pan clean with paper towel. Add the remaining oil, then the garlic, ginger and green onions. Cook for 30 seconds, until fragrant. Add the broccoli, celery and peppers and cook for another 3 minutes. Add spinach and cook until just wilted. Add beef to the pan along with the sauce; cook until the sauce boils and thickens. Serve immediately, with noodles or rice. Serves 6.

Per serving (without noodles or rice): 374 calories, 14.7 g fat (3.2 g saturated fat, 8.6 g monounsaturated fat, 1.4 g polyunsaturated fat), 31.6 g carbohydrates, 55.5 mg cholesterol, 32.8 g protein, 6.6 g fiber. 34% calories from fat

*Adapted from Cooking with Oil (2002)*



the nutrition program is really important,” says Flames forward Matthew Lombardi, who, by his own admission, is not much of a cook. “Having all these top quality meals prepared for us at the right times makes a huge difference.”

According to Chad Moreau, the feeding formula is pretty simple.

The players should stay away from protein in the morning and stock up on carbohydrates and sugars to prepare them for the extraordinary amount of energy they will exert on the ice. Multi-grain bagels, oatmeal and fruit are fairly typical.

“Basically, the way they eat is the opposite of what I would suggest to someone who is trying to lose weight,” Chad Moreau says.

After a practice, the players get handed a blended shake made with a special formula to replace some of the lost glycogen.

“There is about a two- to three-hour window after strenuous activity where muscles are really sensitive to sugar, so we want to get it to them in a form that is easily digestible,” Moreau says. He adds that when the players eat their meals is as important as what they eat. Lunch should be a blend of carbs and protein, such as leafy greens, beans, and turkey or wild small fish, such as

salmon, trout or whitefish.

“For these guys, fruit is good in any meal,” Chad says. “In fact, raw, organic fruits and vegetables are the foundation. When it comes down to it all they really need is a stocked fridge and a blender.” He adds with a laugh, “if they use an oven they might burn the place down, anyway.”

“For these guys, fruit is good in any meal,” Chad says. “In fact, raw, organic fruits and vegetables are the foundation.”

Dinner is similar to lunch, starting again with a thick bed of leafy greens, such as kale, spinach and romaine. The players then add raw vegetables (or vegetables cooked as little as possible), with venison or bison and, on occasion, beef or chicken. The players are instructed to stay away from heavier, harder to digest meat on game days.

“When they eat meat, they should eat lean cuts. As a general rule, we say anything that moves fast is good for them,” Chad says.

“We’re pretty lucky in Alberta, because we have so many good options and so many places to order choice meats,” Ethan Moreau adds.

Pasta on game days is a thing of the past.

“We used to always have pasta before a game,” says former Flame Jim Peplinski. “But then again, I can also remember having chicken wings and maybe even a beer – pub food – for lunch on a game day. I’m pretty sure they don’t do that anymore.”

For Ethan Moreau, who follows an especially strict nutrition regime, pasta is prohibited throughout the season.

“You want to stay away from foods that are hard to digest. My favorite meals are Italian, but I try to avoid them during the season,” he says. “If I’m going to cheat on my program I’ll probably do it with pasta or pizza.”

Peplinski says there were a few players in his day who were careful eaters, himself included, but there were a lot more players with diets that would be unheard of today.

He remembers one teammate who, as a good luck superstition, would eat fried chicken while



## Eggs. An everyday occasion.

### Cinnamon Oatmeal Breakfast Pudding

500 mL (2 cups)	water	300 mL (1¼ cup)	quick cooking oats (not instant)
1 mL (¼ tsp)	salt		
4	eggs	325 mL (1½ cups)	2% milk
50 mL (¼ cup)	2% milk	50 mL (¼ cup)	dried cranberries
2 mL (½ tsp)	cinnamon	20 mL (4 tsp)	granulated sugar (to taste)
2 mL (½ tsp)	vanilla		

Bring water and salt to boil in medium saucepan over high heat. Whisk together eggs, 50 mL (¼ cup) milk, cinnamon and vanilla in medium bowl; stir into boiling water. Reduce heat to medium-low. Stir in oats. Simmer until desired consistency, about 5 to 6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Spoon into bowls; top each serving with milk, cranberries and sugar. Makes 4 servings.

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driving to the arena on game day. Another set of teammates who lived together, one of them an all-star, would melt ice cream in the microwave and pour it on their cereal for breakfast. “That was only when they ran out of milk, but they ran out of milk a lot,” Peplinski laughs at the memory.

“We used common sense and watched what we ate, for the most part, but we didn’t pay attention to it like they do now,” Peplinski says. “For sure we didn’t have meals made for us at the rink. I’m pretty envious about that.”

According to Chad Moreau, the provision of meals for the players serves two main purposes. “We’re just trying to make it easy for them to eat well,” he says. “And then, when they’re on their own, we hope they’ve been educated enough, especially the young guys, so that they’ll make healthy choices.”

“I don’t really have a nutrition plan, and I don’t know how to cook, so when we get to the rink and we have healthy choices right there,” says Oilers 2007 first round draft pick Sam Gagner. “It’s great. I’ve always been a guy who’s needed to eat well to stay at my weight, so it helps me a lot.”

Another benefit of providing sustenance at the rink is that it allows the players to eat together more often, Peplinski adds. “We rarely had team meals, except during the playoffs, and I wish we had had more of them. Those were some of my greatest memories, when we could all go out and eat together.”

Sort of like a wolf pack. 🐺

*Ryan Smith is a freelance writer in Edmonton. He can be found playing ball hockey in Old Strathcona, but has never donned the blades at Rexall Place.*

## Jim Peplinski's Skinny Ribs

**4 lbs (1.8 kg) baby back pork ribs, trimmed of fat**

### Sauce:

**3/4 cup (180 mL) water**

**3/4 cup (180 mL) packed brown sugar**

**1/2 cup (125 mL) white wine**

**1/2 cup (125 mL) ketchup**

**2 Tbsp (30 mL) Worcestershire sauce**

**1 tsp (5 mL) chili powder**

**1 onion, finely chopped or grated**

Preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C). Place the ribs meat side up on a rimmed baking sheet, and cover the pan completely with foil. Bake them for 2 hours. Meanwhile, stir together all the sauce ingredients in a medium bowl.

Remove the foil from the ribs and brush them generously with barbecue sauce. Roast for another hour, until the meat is very tender and falling off the bone. If you want to grill your ribs, cook them in the foil for 2 1/2 hours. Brush the ribs with sauce and then grill over medium-low heat for about 15 minutes. Serves 8.

Per serving: 956 calories, 67.2 g fat (24.9 g saturated fat, 30.5 g monounsaturated fat, 5.3 g polyunsaturated fat), 27.1 g carbohydrates, 267.6 mg cholesterol, 56 g protein, 0.8 g fiber. 65% calories from fat

*Adapted from Flames Family Favorites (1996)*



## Playing by the book

Throughout their collective histories, the Calgary Flames and Edmonton Oilers have published four cookbooks, with the proceeds going to charity. The Flames published three, with the most recent coming out in 1996. The lone Oilers book, *Cooking With Oil*, appeared in 2002.

The Oilers head office still has a few of its cookbooks for sale for \$10. The Flames’ books are more difficult to attain.

The 1996 Flames cookbook, *Flames Family Favorites*, is filled with pictures and bios for each player, and more than 100 recipes, including Theoren Fleury’s Hat Trick pasta sauce and Jim “Bearcat” Murray’s Chicken Glazed with Balsamic Vinegar and Basil.

The only Flames player on the current roster with a recipe in the 1996 book is Jarome Iginla, who offered recipes for a sandwich loaf and a salsa dip (to be served with blue corn chips). The Iginla loaf includes a half cup of mayonnaise, two 8-ounce packages of cream cheese and an unspecified amount of Cheese Whiz. The loaf is meant to

feed between eight and ten and likely explains Iginla’s chubby cheeks in the accompanying photo.

“He’s on a pretty strict nutrition program now, so I doubt he eats that anymore,” says Iginla’s current teammate, Matthew Lombardi. “But I’ll have to bug him about that.”

Edmonton Oilers fans may be interested to know that their current number one goalie, Dwayne Roloson, was a Calgary Flame in 1996, and Flames fans may be enjoying his Artichoke Party Dip or his grandma’s butter tarts while cheering against him in the Battle of Alberta.

The 1996 Flames cookbook also presents a bit of a conflict of interest for another current Oiler, 2007 first round draft pick Sam Gagner, who’s is pictured in the book with the rest of his family, including his father, former Flame Dave Gagner. In the picture, seven-year-old Sam sports a Flames baseball cap. Does Sam still enjoy his mom’s recipe for Macadamia Brownies? “No, she hasn’t made those in a long time. I wish she would.”



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# The Coolest Season



Forget about  
summer holidays.  
It's winter in the  
Rockies that will  
give you something  
to remember

STORY BY *Wes Lafortune*  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Bookstrucker*

**T**he Rocky Mountains are Alberta's magnificent connection to an ancient time. And somehow these mesmerizing peaks transform everyone who makes the pilgrimage. So, during the holiday season, it's no wonder that thousands of us visit these silent sentinels, which beckon year-round, but seem to pull more strongly when snow lies on their steep slopes.

For my rejuvenating journey to the mountains, I leave from Calgary and head west for a 45-minute drive on the Trans-Canada Highway to Kananaskis Country. From the Trans Canada, I take Highway 40 to Kananaskis Village.

They don't use the word 'country' by mistake to describe Kananaskis. A region comprising nine provincial parks, it has an area of more than 4,200 square kilometres. Kananaskis was named by Captain John Palliser, who explored the territory in 1858. With the moniker, Palliser paid homage to a local Stoney man of the same name, who gained fame for surviving an axe attack.

In the early 1970s, then-Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed spearheaded a plan to officially designate Kananaskis as a provincial wilderness and recreation area. Thirty years later, we see the results of his work. Less than an hour from the million people of Calgary, Kananaskis is a site where bleeping cell phones, digital assistants and the grimy film of city life is peeled away and replaced by the

soothing sight of these bluish mountains, which have a habit of enveloping you.

Another traveller is Jeff O'Neill, the executive chef of the Delta Lodge at Kananaskis. Moving to Alberta as a young man, O'Neill left his home in Ontario for Alberta to train as a chef, at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology before heading to Alberta's mountain castles to ply his trade working at the Banff Springs Hotel, Chateau Lake Louise and Jasper Park Lodge. "I love the area," he says. "I'm sold on the mountains."

O'Neill, who lives in Canmore with his Australian-born wife and their two children, spends as much time as possible outdoors river rafting, hiking and, in the winter, ski touring. It's the type of lifestyle that calls for stick-to-your-ribs food, the kind that O'Neill routinely delivers at the lodge.

"It's about terrines, pâté, preserves and cranberry sauce," he says of the style of food he enjoys preparing during the winter season. "It's about things that will last on the shelf a bit longer."

And, of course, it's about turkey. "We cook hundreds," says O'Neill.

O'Neill starts preparing Christmas meals at the lodge in early November, for corporate parties. He says the prolonged holiday season in Alberta's mountains allows visitors a rare opportunity to connect to the land using all of their senses, especially their taste.

"Butter milk mashed potatoes, butternut squash, and gravy made from the pan," says O'Neill listing off some of the items he'll be offering to guests over the holidays. "Also pumpkin soufflé and pumpkin pie," he says. "Pumpkins – they are of the land of Alberta. Maybe they weren't always here, but they are Alberta."

Convinced that guests of the lodge will leave Kananaskis Country with stomachs and spirits well nourished, my next stop is Lake Louise, located just 45 minutes west. Known by the Stoney people of the area as *Ho-run-num-nay* or "Lake of the Little Fishes," Lake Louise has been part of Banff National Park since the federal government created legislation to protect it in 1902.

At the heart of this lake- and glacier-adorned setting is The Post Hotel, nestled beside the Pipestone River just outside of the village of Lake Louise. Long a destination for skiers seeking luxury, the hotel is the result of the passion of Sir Norman Watson, a British aircraft manufacturer who arrived in the area in 1931. So taken by the beauty of Lake Louise, he acquired Mount Temple Ski Lodge and the Skoki Ski Lodge. In the spring of 1942, Sir Norman bought Lake Louise Ski Lodge; renamed The Post Hotel in 1957.

In the 1970s, brothers André and George Schwarz arrived in Lake Louise from Zurich, Switzerland to ski.

"We didn't want to go home," George says. So,

in 1978, the brothers bought the hotel from Sir Norman.

Preparing to celebrate their 30th year as the stewards of The Post Hotel, the Schwarzes have done Sir Norman proud, appearing on numerous "best of" lists including a recent nod from *Travel + Leisure* magazine's 930,000 subscribers who voted the lodge as one of the best hotels in the world, ranking it number 32 in the magazine's 12th Annual *World's Best Awards* readers' survey.

Thankfully for those living in, or visiting Alberta, the hotel jumps off coveted lists and into reality. Featuring 92 rooms, five cabins and a new spa, this is heaven on earth. During the winter, guests at the hotel can be found skating on the rink out front, going for a ride on a horse-drawn sleigh or returning from a day on the snowy slopes. Then they're free to consider the sumptuous Albert-focused meals on the menu, perhaps a traditionally prepared turkey or veal tenderloin, while lingering over a wine list that features more than 2,000 selections from a cellar replete with 30,000 bottles.

And it's easy to linger. The Schwarzes from Switzerland, Chef O'Neill from Ontario and like-minded British predecessor, Sir Norman Watson, all embarked on a journey of discovery and were captivated by Alberta's monumental landscape. 🍷

*CRANBERRY HAPPY: Chef Jeff O'Neill, below, preps dinner for a hungry crowd, attracted to the same mountain magic that brought him here*



## A peek at the peaks

The winter season is a special time in Alberta, whether that means a visit to Kananaskis Country or nearby Banff and Lake Louise.

Kananaskis has Nakiska Mountain Resort, which was developed for alpine events during the 1988 Winter Olympics. Taking advantage of extensive snowmaking equipment, Nakiska's ski season runs from the beginning of December to April. For information, call 1-800-258-7669 or visit [www.skinakiska.com](http://www.skinakiska.com).

Cross country skiing is also central to Kananaskis, with hundreds of kilometres of trails to enjoy. Popular areas for experienced skiers include Spray Valley Provincial Park and Evan Thomas Recreation Area.

Other activities in Kananaskis Country include ice fishing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing. For detailed information, the area's activities visit <http://tprc.alberta.ca> and navigate to 'Parks,' then 'Kananaskis.'

Banff is a destination for more than three million visitors per year. Skiing tops most travellers' agendas. Lake Louise Mountain Resort had 553 centimetres (more than 18 feet) of snow last season and expectations are high for a similar bounty this year. Check out [www.skilouise.com](http://www.skilouise.com).

And if you'd rather watch, Lake Louise Mountain Resort hosts the WinterStart World Cup Ski Races (women's downhill races weekend) on December 1 and 2.

On January 25 to 27, the Ice Magic competition gathers ice carvers from across the world at Lake Louise. Carvers transform massive ice blocks into frozen masterpieces.

Also throughout December the Fairmont Banff Springs and Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise light up with seasonal decorations.

For up-to-date information visit [www.banfflakelouise.com](http://www.banfflakelouise.com) and navigate to 'Experience the park,' then 'Events and festivals.'

# Feed the Many

Never mind the extra guests around the card table this year, some Albertans are feeding Christmas dinner to thousands

STORY BY *Sally Johnston* • PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Chris Bolin*

**O**n Christmas Day, as he has for the past 30 years, Micky Murphy will head to the kitchen, sharpen his carving knife and serve turkey to his guests – all 1,200 of them.

If you think roasting a 10-kilogram bird for the in-laws is a challenge, try Murphy's menu on for size. "We'll get through about 550 kilograms of turkey and 225 kilograms of ham," Murphy says. There'll be huge bowls of mashed potato, vegetables, bread, fruit, ice-cream, Christmas cake, coffee and juice.

Murphy, a 70-year-old retired trucking company manager, is a longtime volunteer. He and 15 friends put on a festive feast for inner-city residents at the Sacred Heart Church, which has a roomy basement and an old but well equipped kitchen. It's a focal spot for residents of the colourful downtown neighbourhood.

Getting this marathon meal to the table is possible through the kindness of strangers. Stores, restaurants and families donate ingredients. An army of volunteers delay their own Yuletide celebrations to set up tables, hang cheerful decorations and, of course, to cook.

As tinsel is strung across Alberta, there's a glut of giving from people wanting to spread joy.

In Calgary, a Christmas Day dinner for homeless people is sponsored by an anonymous local businessman. "Every year he writes a cheque for \$1,500, enabling us to serve about 1,200 people in several sittings," says Louise Gallagher, spokesperson for the Calgary Drop-In and Rehab Centre. The meal is served at the centre's downtown Riverfront Avenue location, a bright, purpose-built facility that provides meals, shelter, health services, counselling and other programs for homeless people.

"We have a modern kitchen and three full-time



chefs," says Gallagher. She describes the second-floor kitchen and adjacent dining room with seating for 464, as "the heart of the organization." Like Calgary, Edmonton has no shortage of volunteers to dish up cheer.

"For our New Year's Day dinner we get so many volunteers that we have to refuse some," says Ele Gibson, resource development director for the Bissell Centre, an Edmonton community agency for people living in poverty. "At Christmas, everyone wants to give."

The Bissell Centre bash, held in a community centre, feeds 1,000-plus. Participants line up outside, bundled against the cold, waiting their turn. "It's an upbeat occasion," says Gibson. "We're not just filling their bellies, we're also filling an emotional need. There's a lot of gratitude, a lot of hugs."

But who bastes the dozens of turkeys and peels the sacks of spuds for the New Year's dinner? That's where Roger Sarna, owner of Palace Banquet catering facility, steps in. He and several of his employees and relatives pull an all-nighter in their commercial kitchen, roasting 60 turkeys. The next morning they truck the hot food in insulated containers to the Bissell Centre's party.

"We finish clearing up after the New Year's Eve banquets at our venue around 3 a.m. and head straight back into the kitchen to start the turkeys," he chuckles. "We don't sleep." Sarna has catered the Bissell party for the past six or seven years, taking his son, 16, and daughter, 11, along to help. "God has been good to me. It's our civic and moral responsibility to help others."

The spirit of giving is welcome around Christmas, but Gallagher stresses that feeding the hungry is a year-round undertaking. "The need doesn't disappear with the seasonal glow," she says. Every day the Calgary Drop-In Centre serves breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks: a lot of chopping and stirring, even with a trio of professional cooks on staff. The centre receives 63 per cent of its \$18-million annual budget from the province and other official sources and depends on donations for the rest. "We rely on volunteers. Some are clients who want to give something back," says Gallagher.

John Powers preps vegetables and carries out other duties several days a week after completing his day of labour on a construction site. It's his way of saying thanks to the drop-in centre which has been his temporary home since he arrived in Calgary from Newfoundland several months ago. "I landed a job the day after I got here. But I haven't been able to find a place to rent," he says.

The economic boom has given the province a reputation as a land of milk and honey but some people can't afford to buy even pantry basics. The shortage of affordable housing has created a class of working poor, people with jobs who are unable to make ends meet.

The Mustard Seed Street Church, a Christian humanitarian group, serves nutritious fare in Edmonton and Calgary. "They're not always down





*KITCHEN MAGICIAN: Cindy McPhee is a full-time chef at the Calgary Drop-In & Rehab Centre. She ensures that hot meals are delivered to satellite shelters nightly*

to their last penny but if they can get one or two meals here, it helps them stretch their budget,” says Denise Van Weelden of the 200 to 500 people who eat in Edmonton nightly.

Denise, an emergency room nurse, her father-in-law Buzz Van Weelden and their friends from the Inglewood Christian Reformed church, host a monthly chili night at the Mustard Seed.

Dozens of local churches, businesses and clubs take turns in the kitchen. Others simply drop food at the door. One night an Edmonton Eskimos’ football player arrived unannounced, his arms full of pizza. It was his payback for disappointing fans on the field earlier.

The Inglewood group makes the chili in their homes, paying attention to food safety guidelines. They tote it to the Mustard Seed where it’s served cafeteria-style with salad and bread. Dessert is usually a choice of fruit – a banana, apple or orange. “When people come through this system,” says Buzz, “it’s usually ‘take it or leave it.’ We give them a choice. It’s no effort for us and it gives them a little more dignity.”

The Van Weeldens’ motivation is simple. “How many of us haven’t had a friend make us a meal?” says Denise. “Sometimes you give, sometimes you receive. Both of those have honour.”

While the Calgary Drop-In Centre purchases many of its ingredients, the Bissell Centre relies heavily on donations of leftovers from restaurants, hospitals and stores to feed those attending its drop-in centre, casual labour service, women’s health groups and other programs. The exception is the food purchased for tots attending the early childhood centre. “We’re always scrambling for food,” says Gibson.

Food coordinator Martin Tanner oversees the



receipt and distribution of the food donations, deciding what’s refrigerated, frozen, used that day or tossed. “The challenge is to keep everything rotated to make sure the food is safe and fresh enough to eat,” says Tanner, who’s based in the Bissell’s temporary kitchen, a home economics classroom in a disused school. “We’re governed by Capital Health, we can’t take anything that’s opened or past its sell-by date.”

As he talks, Tanner’s large hands guide a slab of bologna through a meat slicer. Beside him, a volunteer spreads ketchup on slices of whole-wheat bread for sandwiches. The Bissell Centre is building a swish new kitchen, part of a \$7-million facelift of the agency’s facilities. “We’ll be able to make hot dishes such as soups and stews, good rib-sticking

meals. That’s what people out on the streets need,” Tanner says.

Meanwhile, Micky Murphy is making his list and checking it twice in preparation for the Christmas dinner at Sacred Heart. There are many tasks to assign, from filling salt shakers to washing pots. It helps that the church kitchen has a walk-in fridge, food warmers and other commercial tools they’ve acquired through donation and fundraising. And it helps that dedicated staff and volunteers are well-practiced at prep for the shindig. “We’ve been doing it so long,” says Murphy, “it’s at a point where it’s working really well.”

*Want to help? Check out [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com) to find out how.*



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# Don't Run Afoul of Fowl

Here's how to eliminate the hassle and danger of holiday dinner. Plus, thaw it on the counter? Say it ain't so!

BY Lisa Ricciotti • ILLUSTRATION BY Alanna Cavanagh



**T** rue confession time: I can't resist turkey. Nothing surprising about that: turkey is high in protein, vitamins and minerals, and compared to other meats, has fewer calories, fat, less cholesterol and sodium. And then there's that mouth-watering taste.

All true, but here's my predicament: I'm a vegetarian. Yet once a year, I put all that aside. The occasion is always Thanksgiving or Christmas, rituals requiring the roasted bird.

Now that I've made a clean breast of it, I'll admit

another weakness. I hate cooking turkey.

The preparation starts days in advance. Not to mention all the warnings: wash hands with soap after touching the raw bird, wash everything else it has touched, such as cutting boards, counters and dish cloths. The list goes on.

There's good reason for the precautions. According to Health Canada, every year thousands of Canadians get sick from improperly stored or prepared food. The fact is, perfectly healthy, raw meat harbours some bacteria. Fact of life. But there's no

reason to fear the feathered bird, or other meats, if they're properly stored, handled and prepared. A smart cook is a safe cook, and a bit of education is all that's needed to avoid poultry pitfalls.

Still, the modern mind can't help wondering whether there's an easier way than the traditional process, one that's still safe, but more convenient.

Fortunately, researchers at Lilydale had the same thought and came up with a new twist on frozen turkey called "Roast & Boast," which debuted in Sobeys' last April. As Lindsay Thompson, vice-president of marketing explains: "Roast & Boast is the perfect turkey made easy. At between five and seven kilograms the turkey comes in its own roasting jacket. It goes directly from freezer to oven, no thawing or handling required. You never have to touch the turkey."

If that sounds too good to be true, it isn't. Strictly for research, I picked one up recently, cooked it for friends and we tucked in. I followed instructions to the letter – stick it in a preheated oven, wait four to five hours until its built-in timer pops up to say it's done, then carve and enjoy. No basting needed. Here's the boast part: It was like magic, juicy and tender enough I could cut it with a fork, golden brown skin, like mom used to make. But the most delicious part: not waiting days for the turkey to thaw. And nothing pleased me more than avoiding the potential for cross contamination by roasting that bird in its tidy bag.

The only downsides: no stuffing (Lilydale is working on that), and at \$30 to \$40 it costs more than the unjacketed equivalent. But for cooks like me, who want it safe and simple, that's a small price to pay.

"No one wants to touch turkey anymore," Thompson concludes. "This is definitely turkey for the next generation. The younger demographic love it; anybody can cook this turkey." Even me, a vegetarian, who's now had my turkey fix – until next year. 🦃

For tips on how to handle turkey safely, visit [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com)

## FOK SHOCKS!

### Safety expert says OK to thaw turkey at room temperature

Read about safe turkey handling and one message seems a common refrain: do not thaw poultry at room temperature. So it's a shocker when a food safety authority such as Capital Health's Nelson Fok, associate director of environmental public health, says that's old thinking, not backed up by recent scientific studies. **What?**

Fok explains safe thawing methods currently recommended are impractical or impossible. "Many don't follow them anyway," he says. "And who has enough space in their fridge for thawing a turkey?" Microwaves are usually too small. And thawing in the sink is a big water waster. Besides, you'll need that sink when you're preparing dinner.

This reality forced scientists to re-examine

basic assumptions. Point: bacteria multiplies in turkeys at room temperatures. Counterpoint: heat kills those bacteria. Conclusion: pre-existing bacteria, plus any new growth while thawing, all die with proper roasting. However, thawing at room temperatures does increase cross-contamination risks, so cooks must scrupulously clean up afterwards. And, for extra protection, leave the plastic on until thawed and wrap the bird in brown bags or newspaper.

Still shocked by Fok? See the University of Guelph's updated Turkey Handling Factsheet at [www.foodsafetynetwork.ca](http://www.foodsafetynetwork.ca), seconded by new Health Canada info at [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/turkey-dinde\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/turkey-dinde_e.html).



# Nature Preservation

Jennifer checks out the production line at Zinter Brown Taste Treats. Will she find herself in a jam?

STORY BY *Jennifer Cockrall-King* • PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Amy Senecal*



**J**oanne Zinter looks like she's ready for anything: she's outfitted in a long, white lab coat, hairnet and hardhat. She climbs a few steel stairs and gingerly lifts the lid off of the most enormous steam kettle I have ever seen. "It holds 450 kilograms," she says, as clouds of steam billow out. Then she manages to hoist a 20-kilogram pail of mango purée up to the kettle and slowly tips it into the bubbling mixture. The air is pungent and thick with the smell of cooking spices, peaches and now mango. An operating bottle line is clacking and chattering nearby. Joanne is part way through the second batch of Peachy Mango Chutney today at the Food Processing Development Centre in Leduc. By day's end, she'll have made 2,400 jars of this bright orange savoury jam, one of her perennial strong sellers in her line of Zinter Brown Taste Treats gourmet condiments and appetizers.

Having made the odd batch of jelly and pickled garden produce, I was keen to see how the pros do it. But this is canning on a scale that I've never even imagined. Instead of measuring cups, ingredients are added by jug and pail, and it takes a team of seven people, not including Joanne. One man unloads sterilized, empty 265-millilitre octagonal jars onto the bottling line, while a woman squeezes a piston-filler to hand-fill each jar with incredible precision. Another takes the temperature of the filling to ensure its safe processing and weighs every 12th jar for consistency. The jars zip along

through a machine which screws on a lid. Next, while the jars are still warm, three people affix labels by hand and pack the jars into cardboard shipping boxes. The combination of the heady aroma and the productivity of the box line makes me feel like I've somehow wound up inside Santa's workshop.

Instead, the workshop in question is a multi-million-dollar, state-of-the-art food laboratory and processing centre. It comes complete with food scientists, engineers, technologists and staff available on a fee-for-usage basis, and it's much in demand for Alberta's \$10-billion manufactured food and beverage industry.

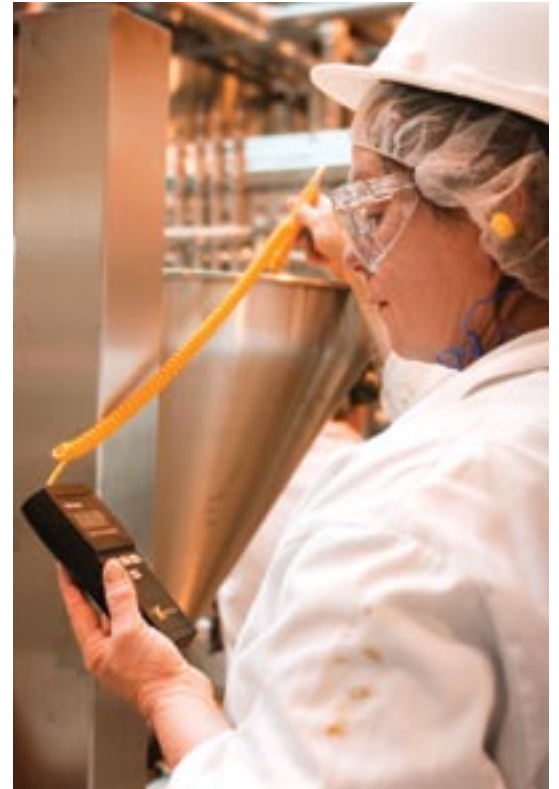
She books a day and then, far in advance, Joanne starts working on obtaining ingredients from her suppliers. Cooking on this scale, she assures me, doesn't allow for any variation in the product, or it might ruin the whole batch, which would be a costly mistake. She has to make sure that she can get all of the ingredients she needs, fresh or otherwise, from her trusted sources and delivered on time.

Joanne arrived at 8:15 a.m. to chop and prepare the fresh ingredients that go into this gigantic recipe. By the time I show up, she has peeled several 50-pound bags of onions, by hand. She's put the onions, along with mounds of fresh ginger and garlic, through a giant food preparation machine the size of an industrial meat grinder, to turn them to pulp. Though she's careful not to disclose too

much about the quantities or the exact recipe, she explains that the "hit" in this Asian-inspired recipe comes from hot, dried chili peppers. The peaches come already peeled and diced, and the mango comes already puréed in the giant pail, but she's quick to point out that an uncompromising commitment to the quality of ingredients are the key to the success of her line. It's what kept her business growing for the past two decades.

Joanne is soft-spoken and polished. A registered nurse by training, but a foodie by calling, she has always enjoyed cooking, and found her niche in creating party food, savoury gourmet treats that were perfect for entertaining. Twenty-one years ago, Joanne and a friend started making and selling a tomato-y shrimp-and-tuna-filled antipasto at the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market in Edmonton. "We'd be sold out by noon," she remembers. "It was so inspiring." With their Antipasto a steady seller, soon Orange Brandied Cranberries and a Jalapeño Hot Pot (a spicy, green bell pepper jelly) was added. Not long after, an illness forced a year-and-a-half hiatus from nursing, but the time off actually allowed her to "get proper labels made" and work on other aspects of growing her business.

In particular, Joanne approached the Food Processing Development Centre to help her scale up her recipes. "You just can't take a home recipe, keep doubling it, and hope to God that it works," laughs



*IN A JAM: Top left, ingredients are added by the bucket-full rather than the cupfull. Above, a production line staff member checks the temperature of the mix regularly. Below, consumers can be confident of great taste when they see a Zinter Brown label*

Joanne. “You need the food scientists who really understand the food chemistry.” The person who helped Joanne with her first three recipes almost 20 years ago – the Antipasto, the Orange Brandied Cranberries and the Jalapeno Hot Pot – was Jacqueline Martin Lopez. Lopez has her master’s degree in food science and she oversees everything from product and recipe development with meats, dairy, processed foods and eggs to the baked goods, making sure that everything is done to code and according to the very strict food safety laws in place at this federally inspected food processing plant.

Lopez explains that, being a government facility, the processing centre adheres to HACCP standards. (HACCP stands for Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point, and is pronounced “has-sip.”) She points to the one person solely responsible for weighing every 12th jar. The temperature of the filling is also recorded, as are the pH levels, all to make sure that the food is safe at various points during the cooking and bottling circuit. Everything at these critical control points is documented. Chutney, apparently, is a highly regulated product and must be produced in a way that conforms to a very strict set of food safety rules.

“HACCP was developed in the United States for the astronauts’ safety,” Joanne says, raising her eyebrows to let me know that the rules are a bit overwhelming at times. But then she adds, “Any large chain that buys my product wants to know that





**“I get ideas when we go to places like Mexico. We see how the locals make their salsa and we pick up their tricks.”**

I’m producing in a HAACP governed facility.”

Once Joanne had aligned herself with the processing facility, and with Lopez, it was a matter of slowly adding more products, and selling them at farmers’ markets, Christmas craft and gift shows, a gruelling circuit, combined with her “day job,” but this allowed her to stay connected with her customers and gain ground in gourmet food stores in the province. Finally, she took an early retirement package when the government was cutting back on middle management in the health care field.

So, under Lopez’ supervision, and within some strict guidelines, I’m able to watch as Joanne and her crew cook, bottle, seal and label 200 cases of Peachy Mango Chutney. It’s one of the top sellers in a roster of 18 different products.

Zinter Brown’s Garlic and Onion Jamboree is the top-seller, and she sells a lot of this product in gourmet food shops and to higher end restaurants in Western Canada. It won the *Best New Food Product* at the 1998 Canadian Fine Food Show and was a silver-award-winner in the 1999 Entrepreneur’s Competition for *Best New Food Product* in Western Canada. This versatile, mahogany brown sticky concoction of caramelized onions and garlic can be used to slather on roasted meats, to enhance a soup or to use as a dip for shrimp, meatballs or chicken fingers.

I ask her how she comes up with some of these exotic and tasty creations. “My husband and I travel a fair amount, and I get ideas when we go to places like Mexico. We see how the locals make their salsa and we pick up their tricks.” This is how the Three Pepper Salsa Roja came about. “I also spent four months in Italy at a cooking school and working in a restaurant. From there, I was able to create the Italian Bruschetta Topping – a garlic, tomato and herb appetizer served on toasted bread.” Joanne also does her research at some of the big prepared food shows like the Fancy Food Shows in San Francisco

*A VERY NICHE LADY: Joanne Zinter specializes in the care and feeding of her specialty market*



and New York. She’s also excited about the flavours she experienced on a recent trip to Australia, which might spur her on to new product ideas.

This is the part of the business that Joanne really loves. If a new recipe has potential, the next step is to test it out on friends and family. And if the reaction is overwhelmingly positive, she considers taking it out to Lopez for scaling up. And while many food businesses are preoccupied with expanding their product lines and territory, Joanne keeps it simple knowing her niche: gourmet food shops and chains primarily in Western Canada. “It’s not really supply and demand,” she smiles. “It’s demand and supply. The rule of thumb is to take care of your market.” The demand is steady and strong from her clients and she’s fine with keeping them happy.

Finally, I ask her which of her 20 different products is her favourite. She’s currently excited about her new spice blends, which include an Italian-inspired Mediterraneo Gourmet Salt & Pepper. It’s a seasoning that livens up just about anything: pasta, meat, salads and soups. She’s also keen on the Lavender Lemon Greek Rub for easy Greek salads, potatoes, souvlaki and moussaka. Then she pauses and admits that her favourite is her Antipasto, the very first product that launched her in this business. “The Antipasto is the recipe that I’ve been making for 30 years or so. I’ve never replaced an ingredient. I’ve never substituted frozen cauliflower for fresh. And it’s as good as or better than anything else I have tasted.” It’s a recipe, like her business, that has stood the test of time. 🍷





# Anytime is Tomato Time

Get 'em fresh, get 'em local, even in the “off” season. Here's the real dirt on Alberta's indoor, year-round vegetable production

STORY BY Joy Gregory

**G**reenhouse vegetable growers in this province can tell you it's tough to grow commercial quantities of vegetables under glass. The highly-controlled environment keeps out natural predators and can breed the ideal conditions for potentially-devastating infestations of disease and pests.

For help, they can turn to Alberta scientists at the Crop Diversification Centre South. Research there, combined with an overall focus on integrated pest management using natural controls, is changing the way greenhouse crops are grown in Alberta. Here's how they're doing it:

## **Q. How many greenhouse vegetable growers are there in the province?**

According to a 2006 study by the Alberta Greenhouse Growers Association, the province has 192 greenhouse vegetable growers. The majority of them are in the Medicine Hat area, says Lyle Aleman, general manager, Red Hat Cooperative Ltd.

Based at Redcliff, just west of Medicine Hat, Red Hat is the province's largest greenhouse vegetable cooperative. Its 45 active members produce their crops under about 90 acres (36 hectares) of cover.

## **Q. What grows in Alberta's hothouses?**

Long English cucumbers are the number one greenhouse vegetable crop in Alberta, accounting for close to 65 per cent of production, says Nick Savidov, leader of the greenhouse crops program

at the Crop Diversification Centre South in Brooks. Many growers in Alberta aim for three cucumber crops every year.

Tomatoes are the next largest crop, with bush, beef steak and cluster tomatoes accounting for 20 per cent of greenhouse vegetable production. Bell peppers chalk up the other 10 to 15 per cent. “Overall, the production of bell peppers is growing very fast and this is a trend in the whole Canadian greenhouse industry,” says Savidov.

Greenhouse lettuce production is also on the rise and Savidov expects Albertans will love the product. Greenhouse-grown lettuce is tender and is protected from contamination by water-borne sources of disease. Close to sterile growing conditions also negate the need for weed control.

## **Q. What are the main problems growers face?**

On the business front, “stagnant commodity prices, high energy costs and a low supply of labour are the biggest problems the industry faces,” says Red Hat's Aleman.

These factors also boost competition by out-of-province growers, adds Savidov. Alberta imports about \$25 million in tomatoes every year, plus \$20 million in red, yellow, orange and green bell peppers and \$6 million in cucumbers.

## **Q. Why does greenhouse dirt matter?**

Soil harbours diseases and pests. Combine that with a lack of natural predators and greenhouse

dirt becomes a business concern. In a confined area with lots of heat and humidity, greenhouses can literally breed trouble. To get around that, growers plant crops in a soil-less mixes substrate.

Savidov's research targets better substrate mediums using coir (coconut fibre) and a sawdust-zeolite combination. Coir works, but has to be imported. Adding zeolite, an inorganic mineral, to sawdust improved the performance of the recycled sawdust, which growers have been using for decades. But with no commercial product on the market, few growers were interested in adopting a zeolite-sawdust mix.

Savidov expects to continue his substrate research to further improve quality of the material and produce higher yields of greenhouse vegetables. Lyle Aleman says that's more good news to an industry that's already posting annual production increases thanks to production experience and the quick adoption of new technologies.

## **Q. What's next?**

Savidov is naturally excited about where his substrate research is headed. But he's also got an eye on a whole new field, aquaponics. Aquaponics integrates aquaculture (fish production) and hydroponic plant production. Savidov is one of the nation's leaders in aquaponic research. “This will prove to be the most efficient use of water for agricultural food production,” he says. “This is the technology of the future.” 🌱

# What's Online?

For more great ideas and recipes on the topics covered in this issue, visit [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com).



## HELP AT HAND

Most of us in Alberta are fortunate to be living well in prosperous times. On page 42, Sally Johnston writes about some of the kitchens in the province whose business it is to feed those among us who have not fared as well and are currently facing challenges. On our website, find out a few ways that you can help.



## FARM GATE TO PLATE

"Alberta produces approximately two million turkeys a year," writes Lisa Ricciotti. "Each bird is health-checked by a federal government inspector before processing. Producers follow rigid regulations to ensure food safety. But once it leaves the store, it's up to consumers." Like all raw meat, turkey needs to be handled with care. Find out how on the website.



## TAKE THE CHEESE

Writer Julie Van Rosendaal explores the world of Alberta cheese on page 18. During the course of her research, she sacrificed long evenings nibbling diligently at cheese platters, leaving nothing out in her quest for Alberta's best. See the website for her list of spots to buy cheese.



## RECIPES

Serving up Gail Hall's southwestern-inspired stew from "Chase the Chill," on page 11? Why not bake a batch of her cornbread to accompany it? Check out [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com) for some of the mouthwatering recipes that just wouldn't fit in the magazine. Plus, peruse their online library of recipes for more mouthwatering hits!

Watch your inbox for the next edition of *Food for Thought Online* coming soon



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# Just For Kids

STORY BY Mifi Purvis

ILLUSTRATIONS BY Cindy Revell



## Eat For the Team

Professional sports teams, such as the Edmonton Oilers and Calgary Flames, now include nutrition as part of their training plans. Players are looking for any way to give their game boost. It's not just the pros who can get better with healthy eating. You can too, whether you're into indoor soccer, hockey or skiing.

Colleen Parsons-Olsson is the Director of Health and Fitness programs at the University of Calgary. She says kids need to pay more attention to nutrition if they play sports. "Have a snack before you exercise and then again soon after," she says. An hour or so before your game or practice, eat a little some-

thing. The closer to game time, the smaller the snack should be. Soon after the workout, have another snack, maybe a treat such as sweetened yogurt or chocolate milk. Parsons-Olsson says that while kids should eat less sugar, right after a workout, your body needs it for recovery. And be sure to drink lots. Sports drinks such as Gatorade are generally too sweet and salty. Try plain old water instead.

### Post game treats

- Sweetened yogurt and fruit
- Chocolate milk and a muffin
- Milk and cookies
- A granola bar and water
- Half a ham and cheese sandwich and yogurt drink
- A banana and a handful of nuts and seeds

## Darcy's Birdseed cookies

### Ingredients

In a big mixing bowl, combine:

1/2 cup (125 mL) each: butter, brown sugar, white sugar  
3 eggs, lightly beaten

In another bowl, mix:

2 cups (500 mL) corn flakes (crush after measuring)

1 cup (250 mL) each: white flour and whole wheat flour

1 tsp (5 mL) each: baking powder and baking soda

Add these two mixtures together to make a batter.

Finally, add:

1/2 cup (125 mL) each: flax seed, sunflower seeds and chocolate chips

1/4 cup (60 mL) sesame seeds

1 cup (125 mL) each: coconut and raisins

Combine well, using a food processor or your freshly-washed hands. Roll into small balls and bake on a cookie sheet for 10 to 15 minutes at 350° F (175°C) until brown. Makes 2 dozen cookies.

## Go For Gold Wordsearch Puzzle

ATHLETE  
BRONZE  
FUEL  
GOLD  
GRAINS  
HEALTH  
PROTEIN  
SILVER  
SPEED  
STAMINA  
STRENGTH  
WHOLE



# BIRD OF A DIFFERENT FEATHER

We all love turkey this time of year. What's not to love? But if you don't have the time, inclination, or size of family to justify roasting a big bird, you can always opt for chicken with all the trimmings for a festive meal. It's a delicious alternative with just as much going for it, nutrition-wise. Here are some great things to know about chicken, from the Chicken Farmers of Canada:



- Chicken is a great source of Vitamin B6. Your body needs that to metabolize protein and synthesize amino acids.
- A single serving of any meat is 100 grams. That's about the size of a deck of cards.
- Chicken offers complete protein with all the essential amino acids.
- Chicken is lean protein. A 100-gram portion of skinless chicken breast contains just over two grams of fat and 33 grams of protein.

- Dark chicken meat, the thighs and legs, has more iron than breast meat. A single serving of chicken breast contains seven per cent of the iron you need in a day, while a chicken leg contains 10 per cent.
- If you are stuck for gift ideas, order *Simply Chicken*, a cookbook with 85 recipes, from the Alberta Chicken producers. Visit [www.chicken.ab.ca](http://www.chicken.ab.ca) or call (780) 488-2125.

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Enter our contest. Send in a reader reply card or enter online at [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com) for your chance to win some of the great Alberta beauty products in the Pampered Pal basket, featured on page 16.

## WHAT'S COMING?

After the hully-gully of the holiday season is over, it's time to relax and enjoy what's left of the coolest season. But as the days lengthen, you may find your thoughts turning to spring. Here at *Food For Thought*, we're already planning for it. Here's what's in store for future issues:

### CATERING TO YOU

Spring is the time to plan for a summer party, be it a wedding or just a fun family get-together. Meet two Alberta caterers who have catered it all, and whose focus is squarely on Alberta products.

### FARM VACATIONS

Scratch the surface in Alberta, and everyone's a bit country. Get back to your roots with a farm vacation. Find out where to stay, when to go and what's in store with our roundup of country destinations.

### THE EXOTICS

Most folks rely on that tasty trio of meats – beef, chicken and pork. But to step out of the ordinary, you don't have to look far. Duck, elk, rabbit, bison and even ostrich are all farmed in Alberta.



Watch for our next issue  
coming March 2008.



PHOTOGRAPH BY *Robert Bearden*

Send us your  
**best food or  
farm photo\***  
for a chance to  
**win  
\$300!**

**Welcome to cow town:** Robert Bearden is a photographer in Calgary. Normally his beat is nature and landscape photography, but he captured these curious cows last December on a back road near Water Valley, Alberta on his way to nearby Mossleigh. “We go out there in the winter looking for snowy owls,” he explains. “And in the spring there are tundra swans.” The winter lighting was lovely that day and “these cows just looked so appealing,” Berdan says.

\*We are looking for photos that capture the spirit of Alberta's agriculture and food industry – from fields of wheat and farmers' markets to food preparation and fine dining. Photographs will be judged based on technical quality, creativity, composition and overall impact; one winning entry will be selected per issue. E-mail your entries or questions to [contest@venturepublishing.ca](mailto:contest@venturepublishing.ca) or mail them to Food for Thought Contest, Venture Publishing, 10259-105 Street, Edmonton, AB, T5J 1E3. For full contest details, visit [www.growingalberta.com](http://www.growingalberta.com).



# Make your holiday cooking sparkle



Win one of ten holiday-themed gift packages by entering our online contest at [www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com](http://www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com). Contest runs from November 1, 2007 to December 14, 2007. Only online entries will be accepted.

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## A HOLIDAY COLLECTION

### Cherry Lime Mocktails

- ▶ 1 jar (250 mL) maraschino cherries with stems
- 1 can (355 mL) frozen limeade concentrate, thawed
- 2 cups (500 mL) cold water
- 4 cups (1 L) carbonated lemon-lime beverage, chilled

▶ **COOK'S NOTE** Maraschino cherries with stems are usually labelled cocktail cherries with stems.

Drain maraschino cherries, reserving syrup. There should be about 1/2 cup (125 mL) syrup. Set aside 10 cherries for garnish; reserve remaining cherries for another use. Combine syrup, limeade concentrate and cold water in a large pitcher. Stir in lemon-lime beverage. Pour into martini or wine glasses. Garnish each serving with a cherry. Serve immediately.

▶ **Serves 10**



If you like this recipe, order your copy of the ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen's brand new *A Holiday Collection* today!

# WINTER'S TURKEYS

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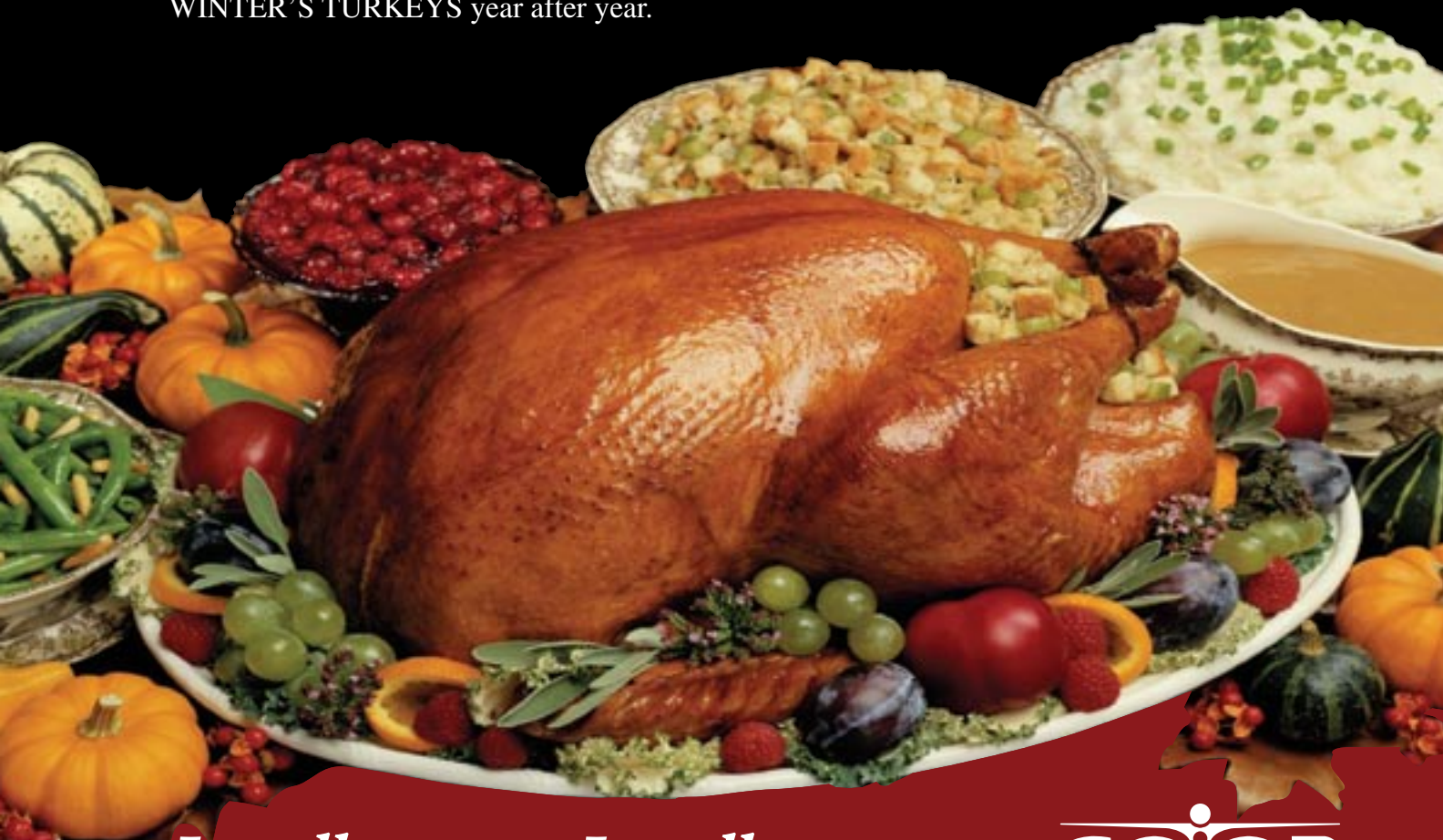
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