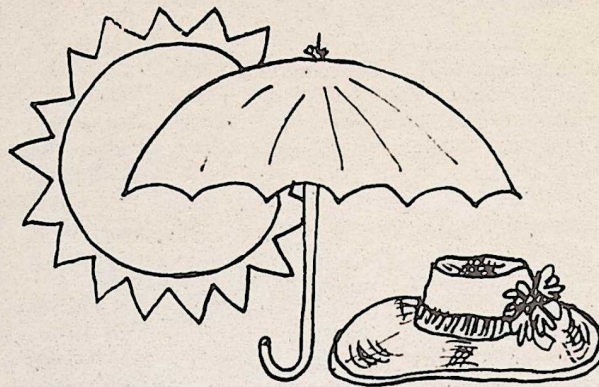


From Aunt Olivia's kitchen

Luncheon for ladies

by Lydia Lovell



After a cool and damp June, 1985, July's warmth is most welcome. Perhaps we should have expected June to be chillier than usual . . . perhaps we should even be anticipating an entire season of cooler weather this summer. Now, why might I propose such a thing? Ah, such short memories we have! Remember last winter? Remember how long fall lasted? Remember those lovely warm and balmy days in November, December, and even in January? Things have a way of evening out, over a year, you know.

It wouldn't be the first time within memory that summer on Cape Cod wasn't a scorcher . . . not any more than it was the first time, last year, that we had a relatively mild winter. Why, as recently as in the late 1960s, we had one summer when the sun shone hardly at all. Week after week, the fogs and mists rolled in from the Sound, shrouding beaches, woodlands, hills . . . even highways and Main Streets . . . with dampness, sprinkles, and drizzle, day after day. And when it wasn't precipitating lightly, or threatening to, it was precipitating heavily with cold northeasters blowing over the Cape from Cape Cod Bay with uncommon persistence.

Weathermen, broadcasting radio reports, began each week with optimistic remarks that practically assured clearing by the coming weekend, but their promises could not be kept. Tourists packed parking lots and crowded sidewalks, frustrated in their desires to enjoy seaside entertainments. Retailers catering to the tourist trade rejoiced, for there was little for their customers to do but shop the stores. Motel operators wrung their hands in despair as their clientele, weary of the weather, departed early for home. Cape Codders shook their heads in sympathy. "Think of having to pay such prices for the privilege of sleeping between clammy sheets on a damp mattress in a shore-front motel room!" And they honestly did not think it funny! Everyone talked about the weather but waiting it out was all anyone could do. And wait we did, right through Labor Day weekend. And then the sun came out and shone and shone, and Cape Codders woke, day-after-day, to glorious September.

Winters, too, may be unusual . . . unusually cold and dry, unusually snowy and rainy, or even unusually mild like last winter. Some winters Uncle Henry called 'open' when no

snow, to speak of, fell at all, and little frost penetrated the ground and that for only a short time. Mud season lasted all winter.

Predicting the weather for the balance of this particular summer is a task I'll leave to meteorologists, but rain or shine, hot or cool, we must all eat. Serving food appropriate to the weather presents just as great a challenge in summer when it's hot as during colder months . . . sometimes an even greater one. Aunt Olivia was usually equal to it, however, for she planned meals well in advance. Among her choices for treating children on a warm day were **Carrot Nuggets**. These not only delight youngsters but provide extra nutrition to supplement sandwiches and milk at lunch.

1 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened to room temp.
1 C. cheddar cheese shredded
1 T. honey
2 C. finely grated raw carrots
1 C. sunflower seeds, chopped
½ C. fine-snipped fresh parsley

In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese with cheddar and honey. Mix well. Stir in grated carrot. Cover bowl with plastic film and refrigerate overnight. Using teaspoons of the mixture, make walnut-sized balls, rolling them between palms. Place on a baking sheet lined with wax paper and refrigerate until serving time. Before serving, prepare sunflower seeds and parsley, toss together, and refrigerate. Roll balls in mixture to coat. Makes 3 dozen nuggets. Store any left-overs, covered, in refrigerator.

At a more sophisticated luncheon, one suited to a gathering of five or six ladies, Aunt Olivia might serve **Sunny Day Soup** which is especially appreciated on a hot day.

6 oranges
2 large bananas
1 8-oz. can crushed pineapple
1 sm. bottle maraschino cherries
½ C. sugar [approximately]
½ C. grated fresh coconut

Peel, seed, and section oranges. Put in blender, process, and pour into medium bowl. Blend peeled bananas, pineapple with its juice, and drained cherries. Stir into oranges with sugar to taste. Refrigerate until well-chilled. Served in individual soup bowls, sprinkled with coconut, this is a pretty way to begin a meal.

Follow Sunny Day Soup with an entree chosen not only for convenience, but also because **Cantonese Pork** is unusual and a welcome change from the ubiquitous 'cold cuts' and salad.

4 lbs. pork tenderloin
4 T. soy sauce
2 t. white sugar
2 t. cinnamon
2 t. dry mustard
3 T. dry mustard
3 T. soy sauce
3 T. prepared horseradish sauce
½ C. sesame seeds
1 T. butter

Two days before the scheduled luncheon, purchase two whole pork tenderloins, each weighing about two pounds. In a shallow baking dish, mix soy sauce, sugar, dry mustard, and cinnamon. Soak tenderloins in the marinade overnight, covered, in the refrigerator, turning twice. Bake at 225° for two hours until meat is tender. Remove from pan, wrap in aluminum foil, cool, and refrigerate. When thoroughly cold, slice ¼" thick. Before serving, allow meat to come to room temperature.

Prior to the arrival of guests, mix mustard, soy sauce, and prepared horseradish sauce. Serve sauce cold with sliced meat. Just before serving, brown sesame seeds lightly in butter. Serve sesame seeds hot. Plan **Steamed Rice** with the pork. An hour before serving time, bring 2 C. salted water to boil in large covered saucepan. Add 1 T. oil and ¾ C. white long-grained rice. Return to boil, cover, reduce heat to simmer. Stir occasionally with a fork until rice is tender and all water is absorbed. At serving time, fluff with fork while tossing with 2 T. finely-snipped parsley.

A refreshingly tart relish that complements Cantonese Pork and Steamed Rice is **Pickled Green Tomato**. Aunt Olivia used a 32-oz. mayonnaise jar to prepare these. First, she chose six to eight unblemished green tomatoes, washed them thoroughly with soap and water, then rinsed and dried them before cutting them in bite-size sections. She lined the bottom of the jar with celery leaves and two celery stalks, coarsely chopped. After peeling six garlic cloves, she dropped them into the jar before packing it as fully as possible with tomato sections. Over the tomatoes she poured half-a-cup of white distilled vinegar. Finally, using an 8-oz. measuring cup of hot tap water, she stirred a teaspoon of coarse sea-salt into the hot water until the salt dissolved, then filled the jar to the rim with brine. If she needed only a little more to top off the jar, she always made a full cup and discarded the balance.

She screwed on the cover, set the jar aside on the kitchen counter for two or three days until the flavor of the tomatoes suited her. These pickled tomatoes will stay crisp and fresh for months in the refrigerator if they aren't gobbled up long before. And no chemicals!

Aunt Olivia prepared rich and fancy desserts for luncheons when her entree was of the plain and simple variety. Following Cantonese Pork, however, she preferred to offer guests slices of unfrosted cake with their coffee. Her **Carrot Cake** always drew praise.

2 C. cold mashed cooked carrots
3 C. flour
3 C. sugar
2 t. baking powder
2 T. baking soda
2 t. cinnamon
4 eggs
1½ C. salad oil
¾ C. chopped walnuts

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Beat with electric mixer for two full minutes. Pour into a large greased loaf pan. Bake at 350° for one hour or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Remove from pan and cool on a rack. Carrot Cake is best served at room temperature and keeps well, wrapped in plastic film. Make it a few days ahead so your kitchen will remain cool on the day you entertain the ladies.