

Spareribs for Saturday Supper

from Aunt Olivia's Kitchen

by Lydia Lovell

Happy New Year! A year of good health, joyous company, and prosperous enterprise: that's what the Lovells wished for their loved ones, their dear friends, and for themselves, and that's what I wish for you in this first week of January, 1985. The Lovells believed that eating properly would insure good health. They were positive that keeping their table well-supplied with fine comestibles would insure joyous company. And it was their creed to give their best effort to honest toil, to speak well of everyone they knew, to maintain their own good credit rating, and to do business only with those who paid fairly and promptly. These practices insured prosperous enterprise.

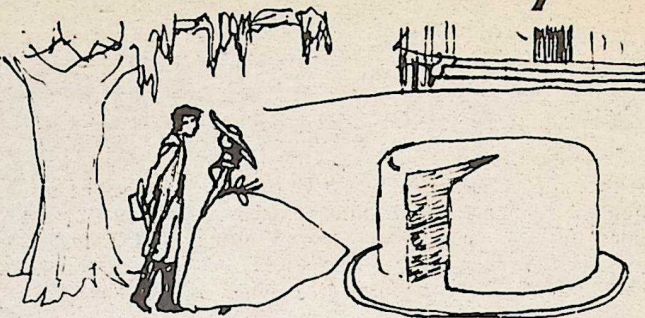
You can follow their prescription and start the new year right with plans for an especially scrumptious supper centering around a couple of slabs of pork ribs. Aunt Olivia often prepared spareribs for Saturday night supper . . . it was a change from baked beans and brown bread . . . she knew Uncle Henry was fond of ribs . . . she knew my dad and mother enjoyed them . . . and she was well aware that my brother and I were ecstatic whenever we discovered there would be **Orange-Glazed Barbequed Spareribs** for supper. For six of us, Aunt Olivia started with about four pounds of ribs and divided them into individual portions with four ribs in each one. Then she arranged them on a rack in a deep baking pan and baked them at 325° for 40 or 45 minutes. To drain the fat, she removed the ribs and rack from the pan and poured off the fat. Leaving out the rack, she replaced the ribs in the baking pan and poured **Orange Barbeque Sauce** over them. Then she reduced the oven to 300° and continued baking the ribs another 20 to 30 minutes, turning once, and basting with pan juices.

Grate peel from 2 lg. oranges 1 C. brown sugar
Squeeze 6 oranges and 2 T. Worcestershire sauce
2 lemons 1 t. celery seed
2 C. ketchup 1 t. salt
1 clove garlic, crushed 1/4 t. black pepper
1/4 C. cider vinegar Pinch of cayenne
1/4 C. prepared mustard 1/4 C. honey

In a medium saucepan, combine all ingredients and bring to a boil over medium heat. Simmer five minutes. If sauce is too thick, thin with juice from a jar of sweet pickles.

To serve with spareribs, Aunt Olivia frequently made a bowl of **Sauerkraut Relish**. She mixed it up a day ahead and let its flavors blend overnight in the refrigerator. You might like to pass this with pork chops or a roast of pork, too.

1 8-oz. plastic bag of 1/4 . each, finely chopped
of sauerkraut onion, celery, green pepper
1/4 C. sugar 1/ t. celery seed



Into a small bowl or a quart jar, empty the sauerkraut and its juices. Add rest of ingredients. Stir, cover tightly, and refrigerate. To serve, lift from bowl or jar with slotted spoon. Save liquor to pickle beets or eggs.

To complete the main course when we had barbequed ribs, members of the Lovell family knew they could look forward to crisp-skinned baked potato and big helpings of **Vegetable Casserole**.

3 C. broccoli flowerets 1/8 t. pepper
2 C. sliced carrots 2 C. milk
1/2 lb. small mushrooms 1/4 C. margarine
2 C. small white onions 2 T. lemon juice
3 T. cornstarch 2 T. chopped fresh parsley
1/2 t. salt Breadcrumb topping

Aunt Olivia proceeded as follows: In a large saucepan, cook broccoli and carrots together for 20 minutes. Drain and set aside. In a small saucepan, bring onions and a little water to a boil over high heat; boil one minute and add mushrooms. Cover and boil another two minutes. Drain and mix gently into broccoli and carrots. Turn vegetables into a well-buttered casserole dish. In the same small saucepan, prepare white sauce, stirring cornstarch, salt, and pepper together and gradually adding milk. When smooth, set saucepan over medium heat and bring to a boil, stirring. Add margarine and cook for a few minutes until thickened. Remove from heat, add lemon juice and parsley, and pour over vegetables.

Top with **Breadcrumb Topping**.

2 T. melted margarine 3/4 C soft breadcrumbs, white
3 T. chopped fresh parsley 1/3 C. grated Parmesan cheese
 In the small saucepan, melt margarine, stir in parsley, and add bread crumbs. Toss until margarine is absorbed by breadcrumbs. Sprinkle on top of vegetable casserole and dust surface with grated Parmesan. Bake 35 minutes at 325°.

As a general rule, Aunt Olivia issued her invitations to us to join her and Uncle Henry for Saturday night supper at least as early in the week as Wednesday. Sometimes she asked us a whole week ahead of time. In so doing she accomplished two goals important to her: first, she set a schedule for spending her own time; and second, she provided each of us something to look forward to. We did anticipate with pleasure the meal and the company we knew would bring the week to a close.

At home our supper hour was usually 5:30 although sometimes it was as late as 6 o'clock, but Aunt Olivia served promptly at 6:30 p.m. The delay gave all the grown-ups an opportunity to relax a few extra minutes at the end of their busy days and, although we children believed ourselves famished, we always survived and if we brought whetted appetites to the table, we were soon satisfied.

To guarantee we didn't wake before dawn with gnawing hunger pains, however, Aunt Olivia never failed to prepare an especially fancy dessert. Her puddings and pies were delectable, her cakes rich, light, and airy. No cake met with more enthusiastic reception than the one she said was named **HOOTANHOLLA CAKE**. She said the recipe was brought home by a soldier who had served during the Civil War and had wooed a southern belle who brought him huge slices of this cake whenever she could arrange a secret rendezvous with her admirer, but who turned down his proposal of marriage when her childhood sweetheart returned from the war unscathed.

1/2 C. butter 1/2 t. nutmeg
1 C. sugar 1/4 C. milk
3 eggs 1/4 C. molasses
1 C. flour 1/4 t. baking soda
1/2 t. baking powder 1/4 C. bourbon
1/4 t. salt 3/4 lb. dark raisins

2 C. chopped pecans

Soften butter to room temperature. In a large bowl, cream butter, adding sugar slowly, continuing to beat until fluffy. Add eggs, one by one, beating after each. On a sheet of wax paper, sift flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg together. Alternately with the milk, add dry ingredients to creamed mixture, beginning and ending with flour. Stir baking soda into molasses, then add to batter. Stir in bourbon, raisins, and pecans. Pour batter into a well-greased and floured, 9" x 5" x 3" loaf pan. Bake at 300° for two hours or until a knife blade inserted in center comes out clean. Let rest in pan for ten minutes, then remove from pan and cool on rack.

Aunt Olivia preferred to make this cake at least one day ahead of time. She wrapped it, when cool, in wax paper (I use foil or plastic wrap), and stored it in the refrigerator. It freezes well, too. Aunt Olivia advised it was much easier to slice if it had rested a day and was kept cold. I never doubted that she knew what she was talking about because it was little things, little things like that, that make Aunt Olivia a better-than-average cook with a Cape-wide reputation for culinary excellence. On the wall next to her shelf of herbs she had hung a framed sampler; the embroidered letters spelled out this motto, and I know she lived by it. "May good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both."