

Eye roast of beef . . . welcome change from holiday birds

by Lydia Lovell

As every chief executive officer of the kitchen knows, one of the secrets of keeping appetites in top form is variety; Aunt Olivia was no exception. After serving traditional turkey dinners at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and finishing up the leftovers before New Year's Eve when a baked ham usually relieved the tedium of eating bird, wintry January weather suggested that roast beef would be a welcome change for Sunday dinner.

No homemaker at the meat counter can look at a roast of beef without wincing, of course, at the price; on the other hand, a glance at the restaurant price for one meal of roast beef reveals that a whole family can partake of eye roast for about what a menu lists as the cost of a single meal.

Eye Roast of Beef is one of the best buys at the butcher shop if you choose one that's well-trimmed of fat. It should have some fat, of course, to tenderize and give flavor to the meat, but because there's no bone, eye roast is an economical purchase. The secret to perfect roasting is starting with a very hot oven to seal in the juices, then a slow roast while oven temperature gradually drops.

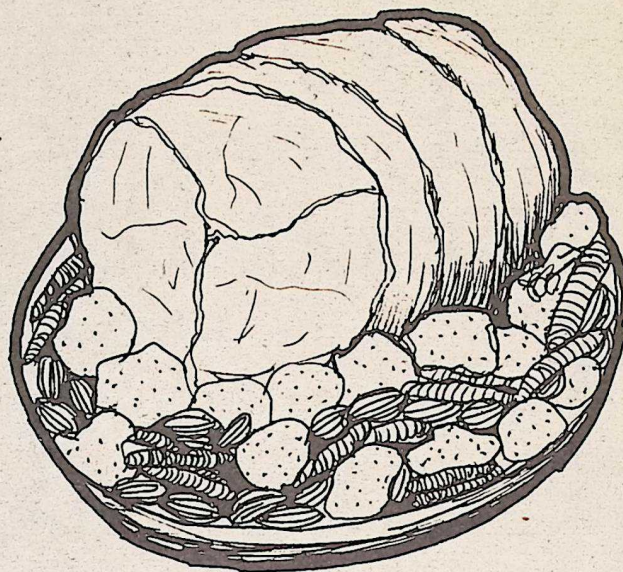
In Aunt Olivia's day, when her kitchen range was a black iron cookstove, heating the oven to 500° was impractical, so she seared the meat in a hot iron kettle on top of the stove before roasting it in the oven. With modern stoves, achieving a 500° temperature is simply a matter of setting the dial and turning a switch. And that's the best way to assure your eye roast will cook to perfection.

After having arranged the oven racks so the pot will occupy, as nearly as possible, the center of the oven, preheat the oven to 500°. Meanwhile, place the eye roast on a rack in a deep pan; a Dutch oven is a good choice because its sides are high enough to prevent the spattering grease getting all over the inside of your oven. Do not cover the pot. When the oven is fully heated, pop in the pot.

Set the timer to allow 5 minutes for each pound of meat; i.e., if the roast weighed 3.2 pounds, set the timer for 17 minutes; if the roast weighed 4.8 pounds, set the timer for 24 minutes. At the end of that period, turn the oven off. Do not open the oven door for two hours. At the end of two hours from the time you turned the oven off, the eye roast will be done.

When preparing eye roast in this manner, keep in mind that you cannot use your oven until after the meat has finished cooking. Potatoes placed in the oven at the same time as the roast will not be thoroughly baked when the meat is ready. A better plan is to prepare mashed potatoes, or a casserole that may be heated quickly after the meat comes out.

Aunt Olivia sometimes served **Sweet Potato Souffle** with eye roast; Uncle Henry was especially fond of this dish, and enjoyed it equally well when made with canned or fresh sweet potatoes.



¼ C. melted butter or
margarine
½ C. evaporated milk
3 eggs

1 C. sugar
¼ t. salt
3 C. sweet potatoes, cooked
and mashed

Stir together thoroughly and pour into a buttered baking dish and top with the following mixture:

¼ C. self-rising flour
2 T. butter, melted

½ C. packed brown sugar
¼ C. chopped pecans (opt.)

Blend these ingredients, using a pastry blender or two knives, until you have a course crumbly mixture. Sprinkle on top of potatoes. Bake uncovered at 350° approximately 15 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

This casserole bakes quickly enough so that you can be making the gravy from the meat drippings, cooking a green vegetable, or fixing a relish tray, and calling one of the men-folk to come slice the roast. There is also plenty of time to warm up a pan of hot rolls, or add an oil and vinegar dressing to salad greens. A quick toss, and you have a crispy side dish especially well-suited to the choice of meat.

Even in those long-ago days when Aunt Olivia presided over the kitchen, there were those at her table who enjoyed a dash of Worcestershire sauce with beef, but Uncle Henry preferred a spoonful of ground horseradish with his. Although now obtainable in most grocery stores, Aunt Olivia used to make her own **Pickled Horseradish** from fresh roots. To one cup of ground, peeled roots, put through the food

chopper, she added 1½ t. brown sugar, 3 T. white vinegar, and ½ t. salt. After stirring together, she let the sauce stand at room temperature overnight and then put in a covered jar and refrigerated it. This mixture was very "hot" for several days, but mellowed during the second week.

As a grand finale to a Sunday roast beef dinner, Aunt Olivia always produced a scrumptious dessert and, since Uncle Henry's preference was for chocolate in any shape, form, or manner, Aunt Olivia had a grand collection of recipes for chocolate cakes, chocolate pies, chocolate puddings, and chocolate candy. She would be astonished to find the cake mixes available to us today; I wonder if she, too, would use them as freely as many of us do. One recipe I feel sure she would have liked is this one for **Chocolate Cherry Cake** because any good Devil's Food or Fudge Cake mix can be used as long as it contains no pudding.

This cake can be baked in either a 9"x13" pan at 350° for 35 to 40 minutes, or in a 12-cup Bundt pan, greased and floured, at 350° for 45 to 55 minutes.

1 pkg. dark chocolate cake mix (without pudding)
1 21-oz. can cherry pie filling
1 t. vanilla or almond extract
3 eggs

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare pan. Blend cake ingredients together until moistened; then beat an additional two minutes at highest speed of electric mixer. Pour into pan and bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool upright in pan for 25 minutes; then turn onto serving plate and cool completely before spooning glaze on top.

Chocolate Glaze may be gilding the lily, and there are some cooks of my acquaintance who prefer to serve warm Chocolate Cherry Cake with a dollop of whipped cream, but for true chocolate aficionados, mix up this frosting.

1 C. sugar
5 T. butter or margarine
⅓ C. milk
1 6-oz. pkg. chocolate chips

Mix sugar, margarine, and milk in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Boil for one minute. Remove from heat and add chocolate chips. Beat until chips melt and mixture is thick and smooth. Pour over cooled cake.

Should you find you have on your pantry shelf a chocolate cake mix with pudding, all is not lost. Preheat oven. Grease and flour a 9"x13" pan, and prepare the mix according to directions. Pour half the batter into the pan, spoon cherry pie filling on top, finish off with the remaining batter, and bake at 350° for 40 to 45 minutes, testing with toothpick to be sure center is cooked.

However you prepare Chocolate Cherry Cake, the results are remarkably good; the cake is deliciously moist and sure to receive rave reviews among your family's chocolate lovers.

End your Sunday dinner with a generous cup of hot strong coffee, and you'll start off the New Year in top form.