

The Food You Eat

What's Cookin' at the Co-op Café Kitchen!

This time of year many of us are either entertaining at home or are visiting friends and family. This recipe for Apple and Sage Cous Cous can help make that potluck dish or extra side dish for a holiday dinner a snap. It features complex textures with chewy cous cous and juicy apples, and it is also quick and economical. Enjoy!



Co-op Café APPLE AND SAGE COUS COUS

- 4 cups pearl cous cous, sometimes called Israeli Cous Cous
- 5 cups vegetable broth
- 1 Tablespoon garlic, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons sage, dried
- 3 pieces celery, medium dice
- 1/2 onion, medium dice
- 1 1/2 granny smith apples, medium dice
- 1/4 cup curly parsley, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Sauté garlic, sage, apples and vegetables in olive oil until they're tender. Bring vegetable broth to a boil and remove it from heat. Add cous cous and cover with a lid. When cous cous is tender, add sautéed vegetables, chopped parsley and enjoy!

Serves about 6-8 people.

What's NEW? In the AISLES...

- AISLE 1**
 - Consorzio Organic BBQ Sauce
 - Frontera Texas Black Pepper Barbecue Sauce
 - Frontera Gourmet Chipotle Garlic Taco Sauce
 - Edward and Sons Organic Panko Japanese Style Breadcrumbs
 - The Righteous Bean Organic Fair Trade Coffee
- AISLE 2**
 - GoMacro Macarbars, grain-sweetened and macabiotic, Granola and Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip flavors
 - GoMacro Macro treats, Original and Almond Perfection
 - Wilderness Family Naturals Coconut Spread, in the raw foods section
 - Annie's Bunny Grahams, Honey, Cinnamon, Chocolate and Chocolate Chips
- AISLE 3**
 - Cherrybrook Kitchen Fudge Brownie Mix, Dairy, Egg and Peanut-Free
 - Natural Value Mandarin Orange Segments
 - NuGo Organic Dark Chocolate Raspberry Nutrition Bars, Local Product!
- AISLE 4**
 - Desert Pepper Pineapple Salsa and Raspberry Chipotle Salsa
 - Charantea Bitter Melon Tea
- AISLE 5**
 - Organic Blessings Certified Organic Skin Care for Infants; Baby Bar Soap, Massage Oil, Vapor Rub, Diaper Ointment, Shampoo/Body Wash, Baby Lotion, and Gift Basket, Local Product!
- DELI**
 - Shalom Farm Organic Daylily Colby and Part Skim Farmer Cheese
 - Raclette cheese, a buttery cheese from Switzerland



Here We Come A-Wassailing

By Debi Sciranka

Whether it is eating a holiday dinner together, picking out a Christmas tree, or volunteering for a good cause, holiday traditions with friends and family are good for the soul.

I personally love traditions and have created a few of my own through the years. One of the traditions that I enjoy each year is taking a day with my husband to search for the perfect Christmas tree. This is followed by a tree trimming celebration featuring wassail.

For anyone unfamiliar with wassail, this is a traditional holiday drink that is usually a blend of either wine or cider mixed with fruit juices and spices that is served warm. Its origins are unknown but it is mentioned in texts dating as far back as the 14th century.

Wassail is an Old English term meaning "to your health." In Saxon times the original form of this word was was hail (be whole), and was a greeting meaning "be in good health." It later became a toast to which you replied drink hail, or "drink good health." Eventually, the word was used for the name of the drink related to the toast.

Wassailing is a tradition that has always been associated with partying and merry making. There are three main types of wassailing. One is the filling of a common bowl or cup often referred to as a Loving Cup and passing it around a room to be shared. Another variation is when a bowl is taken around to individual houses in a village so neighbors can partake as friends. The third is a celebration of the apple harvest and the blessing of the fruit or trees. In the earliest known days of the practice, the wassail was poured on to the orchards after harvest as an offering to bless the fields for the coming spring and to ward off evil.

The "Wassail Bowl" was a great punch bowl decorated with ribbons and sprigs of rosemary and holly. Some traditional Wassail Bowls were made of wood, others had two, four, and even twelve handles, to aid the passing of the bowl between celebrants. The Wassail Bowl symbolically serves as being the "One Source" from which all celebrants take their drink.

The ingredients in a wassail bowl vary widely. This could be attributed to the fact that the festive bands of people who traveled from home to home would often replenish their wassail bowl with whatever was available. One home might offer apple cider or ale while another might have mulled wine.

Alcohol definitely played a major part in wassail's history, but I find it is not essential. Continuing the custom has more to

Wassail (with alcohol)

- 1 cup sugar
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 2 lemons sliced
- 2 cups pineapple juice
- 2 cups orange juice
- 6 cups dry red wine
- 1 cup dry sherry



1. Boil the sugar, cinnamon sticks, and 3 lemon slices in 1/2 cup of water for 5 minutes and strain. Discard the cinnamon sticks and lemon slices.
2. Heat, but do not boil, the remaining ingredients.
3. Combine with the syrup, garnish with the lemon slices and serve hot.

Wassail (alcohol-free)

- 3 quarts cider
- 1 quart unsweetened pineapple juice
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 3 sticks cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 lemon sliced

1. Combine all ingredients except lemon slices.
2. Bring to a boil and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Strain into punch bowl and decorate with lemon slices. Serve hot in mugs.



do with the good will and friendship that wassailing generates than it does with the contents of the drink.

Wassail is a great beverage for parties, and keeps well simmering on low in a crock pot. Any leftover wassail can be cooled and refrigerated. It will keep for several days and can be consumed cold or hot.

Making and serving wassail is one of my favorite winter holiday traditions. If you would like to share in this tradition, please join me at Winterfest 2006 on Saturday December 16th, where we will be toasting good health with good friends.



Think globally.
Eat organically
Buy locally.

In the Community

Community Highlight

East End Food Co-op's One-Percent Wednesdays

The Co-op's One Percent Wednesday program is designed to give financial support through monetary donations to local non-profits, but the program encompasses so much more than that. It gives the Co-op's members and customers a chance to learn more about these groups and organizations by interacting with their staff and volunteers right in the store or reading about their programs or volunteer opportunities in this newsletter. Many local non-profits have benefited from the One Percent Wednesday program, including:

- Good Grief Center for Bereavement Support
- Three Rivers Adoption Council
- Fund for Feral Cats of Pittsburgh
- Turtle Creek Watershed Association
- The Ohio River LifeBoat Project



Do you know of a local non-profit who could be a potential partner in the One-Percent Wednesday program for 2007? All suggestions are welcome. Applicants should have missions and policies that are in line with the co-op's Ends Policy Statement:

East End Food Cooperative, a member-owned business, exists to create, promote and sustain a healthy, strong and vibrant local community that serves the need for physical well-being, mutual respect, social connectedness and economic vitality while ensuring sustainability in the use of all resources toward this end.

Applications are available online on our website www.eastendfod.coop by clicking "Donations" at the bottom of our homepage, or are available at Customer Service. You can also e-mail suggestions to memberservices@eastendfood.coop, or call Kara at 412.242.3598

Gifts That Go Further

by Jane Harter

As December approaches I begin to hear comments like, "Oh no, I have to start shopping for the holidays." "I wonder what I can give my Mother? She's really hard to buy for."

The range of emotions that go with the buying frenzy we come to know as "The Shopping Season" verges on extremes — love and hate. We want to show love and appreciation to people in our lives but the process of giving has gone south for me because of the terror of the dreaded shopping mall, the press to buy, buy, buy and various expectations thrust upon me by a culture which is lost in its conspicuous consumption without regard for the needs of a larger world.

In recent years I have come up with a way that fulfills my wish to remember friends and family without suffering the traumas of our consumer culture. It is a means of alternative giving.

Consider this: "If I die my family will weep for me. If my buffalo dies, my family will starve," explains a Thai farmer.

This quote is taken from a Heifer International catalog on a page that describes how a family's water buffalo is a gentle creature which provides protein rich milk and can be used in tilling the land. Its manure is a rich fertilizer and source of energy, and the water buffalo is happy to eat coarse grasses. They present the option for me to give the gift of a water buffalo (\$250) or a share of a water buffalo (\$25). Hey, sign me up! I'll buy a share and "give" it on behalf of my brother.

The SIVA Foundation is another alternative giving organization, offering "gifts of service." One such gift is for "Com-

munity Self-Development" in Guatemala and Chiapas, Mexico, where funds are invested to create "sustainable solutions to poverty, injustice and inequality." This is Co-op Country where Fair Trade is flourishing. Let's see... I can purchase a share to support the health clinic, community networking, or pipes for clean water systems. This feels like a present my niece would appreciate.

As I turn the page of the SIVA catalog, I'm particularly taken by a picture of an older man wearing a pair of glasses. He is clearly pleased. Why? Because he can see! The header says "Restore Sight to a Blind Person." Now there's a gift! Their services are being provided in developing countries all over the world. \$50 provides sight-restoring surgery for one person at an eye camp. Wouldn't this beat a bottle of perfume that your Aunt Bess probably won't use anyway, thank you very much?

One of the more diversified catalogs is that of Alternative Gifts International. Their byline is "Give the World a Present." Each page of their catalog spots the location of the service on a map and goes on to picture and describe the service you might chose to give.

Here's one: The map highlights Bolivia. Title: Equipa Clinic — Improve health in rural Bolivia by funding the distribution of surplus medical supplies and equipment to new village clinics. There, pictured, is Dr. Grover, a dentist, next to a simple dental chair. \$20 distributes essential medical supplies and equipment. Someone has a challenge grant going... a match up to \$50,000.

The next page targets the Democratic Republic of the Congo... "New Life for Polio Victims." (Polio victims? I thought

Time Saving Cooking Tips for the Holidays

by Jesse Sharrard

The holidays are upon us. They lurked in the shadows through a quick, but enjoyable, summer and a dazzling display of colorful fall foliage. Before Halloween, when many stores hauled out their Santa Claus decorations, we laughed at the absurdity of something so wintry being offered for sale so soon. Confronted finally by the last page in our calendar, there's no denying the imminence of a variety of solstice celebrations. Despite the holiday season's festive mood, you may find yourself harried after standing in too-many too-long lines on every errand you run. So, why spend more time in the kitchen than you have to? Here are a few hints to help you entertain more quickly and easily:

1 Have a prep day. There are certain things you're going to need for most meals (like chopped onions and garlic) and others (like vegetables cut and ready for a raw veggie platter) that are nice to have on hand when company drops by. Cut extra of everything before you need it and store the various items in covered containers in your refrigerator. That way, when you're in a hurry, all you'll have to do is grab some out of your reserves and you'll be one step

ahead.

2 Have a few varieties of cheese and a couple varieties of crackers on hand. A cheese platter is one of the quickest hors d'oeuvres known, and one of the most appreciated. If you want to dazzle your guests with your presentation skills, slit open sleeves of crackers lengthwise and take stacks of crackers out neatly. Guide each stack onto a plate in a fluid motion so that evenly shingled crackers trail around your blocks of cheese.

3 Make quick work of your devilled eggs. Pull your cake decorating bag out of storage and fit it with its largest tip. Fill your bag with your deviled egg yolk mixture and use it to pipe the yolks into the empty whites. Be sure to "burp" the bag before you begin piping: gently squeeze the air from the tip until the main body of filling is ready to glide smoothly from the bag under gentle pressure. Not only will your eggs look like they were catered, you'll cut down your prep time because you won't have to try to guide unruly masses of yolks off of an uncooperative spoon.

Continued on page 7



we licked that in the 50s.) The picture speaks volumes. It shows children with crutches and braces on their legs. They are smiling and waving! These are the children that the polio vaccine never reached. I can give a child a brace or share in the cost of surgery and rehab.

Here's another: Sun Power for the Lakota Sioux — supply solar heat for Native American families facing harsh winters...

Or how about this: Nepal: Micro-Enterprise for Untouchables...

Or this: Scholarships for Nomadic children...

And yet another: Green Education in Haiti — help restore their environment through education in sustainable agriculture.

I think that there's something here that would appeal to anyone.

When I began to give these kinds of gifts, I began to have a renewed sense of spirit around the holidays. I've discovered that it may take a few seasons for family and friends to get used to the idea, but it's worth it.

Who really wants another something to dust or a book that sits on the table unread. Perhaps giving something "meaningful" is where it's at! Opening a card with a thank you for a gift that has been given in your name, a gift that has an amazing impact on

someone's life can really be appreciated. I encourage you to give it a try.

All three of the organizations listed above are non-profits. There are probably others, but these are the ones that I know about:

- www.alternativegifts.org
- www.siva.org
- www.catalog.heifer.org

You might also consider donating to a local non-profit in the name of a loved one. Some other ways to cut down on the consumerism and excess packaging that invades our winter holidays are to buy second hand gifts, or make handmade gifts or even food gifts that are homemade.

Where Can You Find Some

DOT CALM

In the Turbulent Sea
of Online Information?

Finally, a community "portal" with all the information you've been looking for. If you are looking for a **Holistic Health Practitioner**, check out the **Merchant Yellow Pages**. Looking for something to do? Visit the **Calendar**. Confused about a phrase you heard? Look it up in the **Encyclopedia**. With **News, Articles, Book and CD Reviews**, and much more, it is the only place you need to look for all things Holistic.

Best of all, everything is **local**. Once you find the event or product or service you want, you go and make the personal connection, and that makes it truly Holistic.

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Who We Are
The East End Food Co-op is Pittsburgh's only member-owned natural and organic food market, serving the community since 1977. We offer the finest in certified organic produce and herbs, bulk foods, vitamins and supplements, cruelty-free health and beauty aids, organic and natural packaged goods and hard-to-find items for special dietary needs.

Our award-winning Vegetarian Café and Juice Bar offers a daily array of fresh, wholesome, hot entrées, soups, salads and vegan dishes.

While the Co-op is open to the public and membership is not required to make purchases, members do receive better prices, have access to the EEFC Federal Credit Union, and can vote and serve on the Board of Directors.

Management Team
Rob Baran, *General Manager*
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Sarah Lewis, *Café Manager*
Mark Perry, *Merchandising Manager*
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Linda Raden, LR Design, Design, Layout & Production

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We welcome letters to the editor. Send your message (250 words or less) to: Attn: Member Services, 7516 Meade St. Pittsburgh, PA 15208 or e-mail to: memberservices@eastendfood.coop

Submission Deadlines

All submissions, including articles and advertisements, must be received in the Co-op office by the first of the month for the following month.

The East End Food Co-op does not endorse the views or products of the advertisers in this newsletter. Opinions expressed are the writer's own and do not necessarily reflect Co-op policy.

For information about submissions and advertising, please contact Member Services at 412.242.3598.

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WRITE TO US: The Editor of *The Co-operator* welcomes your letters! Send your 250 words or less to:
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Staff News

WELCOME BACK

The Front End welcomes back *Michael Moran*, and also *Maggie Nefores*, who has moved from the Café to the Front End.

STAFF PICKS: December FAVORITE PRODUCTS OF THE CO-OP STAFF



WHO: Tom, Produce
WHAT: Asmar's Chili Crushed Pepper
Spicy Hummus
WHERE: Deli cooler
WHY: "I really like Asmar's "Chili
Crushed Pepper" Spicy Hummus. It
tastes great on Najat's pita bread, and
is an energizing snack that warms me up
on chilly days."

Time Saving Cooking Tips for the Holidays

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■ **4**
Beans are a great "company food"—once you have them cooking, they need very little further attention, freeing you to prepare for your guests' arrival or to visit with them once they get there. Soaked beans will keep in water in the refrigerator for several days before you need to cook them. Start a pot four to six hours before you want to eat and then do whatever else needs to be done—just remember to stir them occasionally! If caught unprepared, put on a pot of lentils. After it's been simmering for 25 minutes, add rice and additional water. Simmer another 20 to 25 minutes and you've got a complete meal in a single pot and you hardly had to pay attention to it.

■ **5**
Don't bother peeling the potatoes—just mash them with the skins on (though you should wash them well first, of course). Leaving on the skins eliminates a time-consuming chore while preserving nutrients and fiber for the finished dish. Additionally, skins add a new—and pleasurable—texture dimension to your spuds.

■ **6**
Make your own hot chocolate mix. Combine 1 cup sugar, ½ cup cocoa powder, 2 tablespoons cinnamon, 1 tablespoon allspice, and ½ teaspoon salt. Use ¼ cup of mix per cup of hot milk for delicious homemade hot chocolate whenever you want, with no fuss.

■ **7**
Find some recipes for slice & bake cookies. The dough for this type of cookie is rolled into logs and frozen. Then, individual cookies are sliced from the log and baked. If you have several logs of dough frozen, you can slice them down for freshly-baked cookies at a moment's notice.

■ **8**
Host a cookie exchange. Instead of making six types of cookies yourself, get together with five friends. You can each make a big batch of a knock-your-socks off cookie and share them with each other. That way, you'll have six kinds of homemade cookies even though you only made one.

■ **9**
Put those candy canes to some use—make ice cream if you've got an ice cream maker. Admittedly, this isn't so much a time-saving technique as it is a strategy aimed toward efficient utilization of resources; but, if you're like me, the candy canes you have now are the same ones from a year ago and the only way you ever get rid of them is if they fall off of the tree and break. Break the cycle and treat your friends to some delicious peppermint-stick ice cream. Grind candy canes on wax paper with the bottom of a saucepan. Collect the smithereens. Make a batch of vanilla ice cream, substituting peppermint extract for 2/3 of the vanilla extract in the recipe. Add candy during the last five minutes of mixing (or according to machine manufacturer's instructions) and enjoy.

■ **10**
Buy local. You might be tempted to visit a super-mega-everything-you-need-and-lots-more-that-you-don't store in an attempt to cut down on your shopping time by only making one stop. Though you'll only be in one place, you'll have to fight through lots more traffic to get there and a much bigger crowd once you've arrived. The holidays are as much about community and togetherness as they are anything else, so show your community that you care by supporting your local merchants (including your member-owned food co-op). ☺

Jesse Sharrard is a co-op member, a classically trained chef, and author of the Corduroy Orange food blog at www.corduroyorange.com.

DID YOU KNOW...

...that the Co-op has a great selection of books that make perfect holiday gifts? The books have moved back near the Café area with the other gifts, and now there is plenty of aisle space to linger and browse some of these titles:

☺ *The Garden of Vegan* by Tanya Barnard and Sarah Kramer (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2002). More from the authors of the popular *How It All Vegan*

☺ *Naked Chocolate* by David Wolfe (Maul Brothers Publishing, 2005). If you missed his rare Pittsburgh appearance in September, you can find out why everyone is saying chocolate is as good for us as it tastes.

☺ *The Stevia Cookbook* by Ray Sahelian, M.D. and Donna Gates (Avery, 1999). Learn how to satisfy your sweet tooth without sugar!

☺ *The Whole Foods Bible* by Chris Kilhan (Helaing Arts Press, 1997). How to buy, cook and store the best foods for your body.

☺ *The Healing Garden* by Sue Minter (Tuttle Company, Inc, 1995). Designs for healing spaces, herbology and recipes, and so much more.

☺ *The Cheese Primer* by Steven Jenkins (Workmen Publishing, 1996). Detailed information on the cheeses of the world and how to buy and serve, for novices and the initiated.

☺ *The Untold Story of Milk: Green Pastures, Contented Cows and Raw Dairy Foods* by Ron Schmid (New Trends Publishing, 2003). Learn about the science and politics behind the white stuff in the paper carton.

While you are kicking back reading your new book, relax with a Soy Aromatherapy Candle from Of This Earth. These locally made candles come in Lavender Relaxation, Peppermint Pick-Me-Up and Eucalyptus Sinus Relief.

Or maybe you can convince someone to treat you with a henna tattoo from the Earth Henna Body Painting Kit or Hawaiian Henna body paint.

You can find our fine selection of books and many unique gifts on the shelves directly across from the Café counter.

Happy Hunting!