

You are What you eat

BARBARA McCLELLAN

Soup for the southern soul

Let's do something I do not do often enough — let's get into the mailbag.

One of my great pleasures is receiving letters or notes from readers. Sometimes they are a little slow getting to me (unless you send me an e-mail message), so don't give up if you do not hear from me by "small mail" for a while.

Before my responses to you, I have to make a small confession. I had shoulder surgery five weeks ago, but I hope you did not pick up on it from my writing (only my poor editors had to suffer through my writing with only the left hand). I had something called a shoulder reversal, which I had never heard of until I had one. Thankfully I am doing much better, and I can now type and play piano with both hands; however, the surgery did not make me better at either one! Thanks to some of you who saw me around town with a giant sling on my right arm and sent sweet notes. Especially my friend, Martha Miller, who sent me a marvelous special cake and a beautiful card. You will hear more about her very soon.

Cynthia Chappell from White Oak sent a wonderful soup recipe. She says it comes from a friend in Iowa, but Cynthia "jazzed it up a little" for us Southerners. It is hearty and fairly inexpensive.

Cynthia's Southern Soup

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound package lean sausage (I prefer the skinless type), sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 (15 1/2 ounce) can tomato-style tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups water, chicken broth, or beef broth (I used chicken)
- 1 cup small shells pasta, uncooked
- 1 (15 1/2 ounce) can beans (Cynthia uses either kidney beans or pinto; I used cannellini beans which are white kidney beans)

Fresh or frozen spinach (see note).
 Sauté sausage and onion in oil. Add tomatoes, water or broth. (You may add fresh chopped garlic, or garlic powder.) Bring to boil, and let simmer for about 5 minutes. Add pasta and beans. Boil heat and simmer about 5 minutes until pasta is tender.

Note: Cynthia says that spinach is optional, or you can add about 1 cup chopped cabbage or cole slaw mix. I used fresh spinach, about half a pound, chopped.

Makes 6-8 servings.
 A dear reader from Gladewater, Abb Sadler, wrote to ask about a chicken-fried steak recipe that was in the paper recently. Some of you may not be aware that I only write the column "from my kitchen," and have nothing to do with any other recipes. I do not fry anything anymore (so I would not even have saved the recipe). However, I am going to tell you how my mother fixed chicken fried steak. Those were before the days when cholesterol was never mentioned.

Mother's Chicken Fried Steak

- 6 pieces round steak, pounded to make it tender
 - Salt and pepper
 - 1/2 cup milk
 - 1 cup flour
 - Hot oil or grease
- Salt and pepper the pieces of meat on each side.
 Dip in flour, then into milk, and back into flour, coating well. Place oil in deep skillet (so you will not have to clean up the spattered grease), and heat until slightly bubbly. Drop each piece of coated steak into hot fat. Let cook until slightly golden brown on one side, then turn and cook the other until both sides are golden brown. Remove and drain on paper towels. Gravy recipe will have to follow at another time. My arteries feel clogged from just writing this. Makes 4-6 servings.

Barbara Richardson McClellan is a long-time food columnist and has written three self-published cook books. Her column appears in the Longview News-Journal's Taste section each Wednesday. Write her at barbmcclellan.net or in the care of the Longview News-Journal, P.O. Box 1792, Longview, TX 75605.



Raw sunflower seeds and hummus wrapped in collard greens are one of Danielle Heard's creations.

Eating your way to healthier life

BY CHARLOTTE STEWART
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Some people have found modern medicine lacking and have resorted to changes in their diets to treat illness. Two such local individuals are LeTourneau engineering graduate Matthew Cadman, who suffered from ulcerative colitis, and Danielle Heard, who was diagnosed with fibromyalgia and mixed connective tissue disease.

Heard, who holds a master's degree, said she was unwilling to accept a life of illness and medication, and believes that a complete change in lifestyle and diet has made the symptoms vanish. She said diet is frequently ignored or belittled in the medical communi-

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Left: Danielle Heard prepares wraps. Below: Sunflower seed hummus ingredients are placed into a blender.



Les Russell/News-Journal Photos

When shopping for meat, consider cost per pound

Saving money on food doesn't mean you have to give up the virtues even if they cost more than what you really want to spend. A real money saver for us is frozen meat. Ours is 21¢ a lb., and we keep it full by buying food on sale and stocking up. Look for ads in the paper; go to one of the thrift stores, or log onto E-Bay or Craig's list to find one if you're interested in a used one. Ours was new, but cheaper because it had a small dent in the side. Probably the most expensive



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item for a family's meal is meat. Buy with the cost per person in mind rather than the total cost. Occasionally, we love a sir-

loin tip roast or a pork roast. Twice lately I've paid almost \$6 per pound for the beef, but it's boneless and will yield 3-4 servings per pound. That comes out to \$1 to \$1.50 a person. Since there are only two of us, I cut it into two or three pieces, depending on the size, and put the others in the freezer. If I have some left and what I've cooked, I re-purpose it into stew, soup or even tacos. You can also add barbecue sauce to beef or pork for sandwiches or Sloppy Joes.

My husband, Ron, likes a bone-in pork roast, which is cheaper than the boneless. Sometimes it, too, can be divided and frozen. Left-over meat can be shredded for tacos, burritos or even tamales if you have the time and interest. But the bone left goes into the soup or bean pot providing needed protein.

The point is to think "planned-overs." Before you even put a large piece of meat in the oven, think about what you're going to do with part of it. You may want to cut some off and put it into the freezer to cook a different way, or think about ways you can use what you've cooked. If you add it to other ingredients, such as rice or pasta, you've stretched a little bit into it. Ham is another item that can be made into several different dishes, with the bone going into soup or beans.

With St. Patrick's Day coming up, you may want to cook corned beef and cabbage. Corned beef is made from brisket that is salted to cure it. Some-

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Culinary classes causing a stir

Schools, restaurants partner to give students hands-on experience

BY CHRISTINA LANE
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Hallsville High School senior Crystal Trardo started cooking by herself years ago, helping out her mom. In a few months, she'll be headed to the Art Institute of Dallas to pursue a career in culinary arts.

Trardo is one of several high school students to have discovered her passion for cooking through culinary arts classes that have become increasingly more popular in Texas high schools in the past few years.

"They've taught us basic stuff like measuring flour and measuring liquids, but we've also gotten to go to restaurants and work in the back," Trardo said. "They've taught us what to do and how to make orders."

Hallsville is among several local high schools to partner with area restaurants to give students hands-on experience in a professional kitchen. Soon, Hallsville students will have their own professional kitchen to call home. When the new high school opens in August, it will feature state-of-the-art equipment for culinary students, teacher Delicia Church said. The school also plans to open a restaurant for schools.

"It will be just like working in a restaurant," Church said. "We'll have a griddle, deep fryers, conventional ovens — everything you would see in a restaurant. It's going to be great for the kids. I am super excited about it. The kids are excited. There is a lot of interest in culinary arts for next year's scheduling because we will have the new kitchen next year."

Spring Hill High School opened a café this month for its culinary arts students to hone their skills and Longview High School opened a restaurant at the campus a year ago for its students. The Union Grove ISD is building a new culinary arts area with a bond that passed in 2011. The rural Upshur County school district also has a small café in the library in which students serve coffee.

Pine Tree High School has been teaching students how to run a restaurant from beginning to end, including everything from completing purchase orders to selecting a recipe and cooking the food.

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