

In an Island Home for *Christmas*



Looking forward to having family come Home For The Holidays, Debbie and Geoff Crowther, the new owners of *The Kitchen Witch*, in Long River, bring out the fine china and prepare a traditional turkey dinner.

*D*ebbie and Geoff have been preparing traditional turkey dinners for their loyal clientele every Saturday since November, and will continue to do so, even after their family arrives from Texas: "This will be our first Christmas on the Island and our family's first winter in Canada - a bit of a change for all of them. Three generations will be here."

Debbie continues, "And I have also invited some folks from here, who would otherwise be on their own for Christmas dinner. I'm not sure how many will be at our table, but our apartment, upstairs, is very small, so everyone will be in the restaurant for our family dinner."

Debbie and Geoff are newcomers to the Island: "We first came eleven years ago, when we took one last big family trip before our oldest child started her final year of school. We





decided then, that when we moved to Canada, this was where we wanted to live."

Having purchased *The Kitchen Witch*, they chose to keep the name, and some of the menu choices, while adding a few touches of their own: "The original owners named it that. We are trying to bring back a lot of things but, perhaps, with a new twist."

Debbie and Geoff will be going to Texas for a few weeks in the New Year and plan to get some products to start making gluten-free bread. They are very conscious of the dietary needs of local customers and get plenty of compliments on their vegetarian options like hummus and the shepherd's pie - with gluten-free gravy. They won't be gone for very long though, as Debbie exclaims, "I don't want to miss one Women's Institute meeting!"

The Kitchen Witch remains open year-round from Wednesday to Sunday, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and every Saturday, from 4 p.m.-8 p.m. for turkey dinners.

Near a Confederation Trail, the restaurant is also great for snowmobilers. "It would be nice if we knew ahead of time if snowmobilers want to drop in for a lunch," Geoff remarks. "We could be ready for them. We do takeout, too - quite a bit - actually."

Kitchen witches are said to be a Norwegian custom. According to legend, rice, beans and toast will not burn, pots will never boil dry and there will never be too much salt when baking, boiling or stewing, as long as a kitchen witch "guards" your hearth. For Debbie's Christmas recipes, see page 88.



Opposite Top: Looking forward to their first Christmas on P.E.I., Debbie and Geoff bring out the family dishes: Royal Doulton's, Lavender Rose.

Opposite Bottom: Debbie's Christmas dinner includes homemade cranberry sauce and, at least, two turkey dressings.

Above: Geoff bakes all the bread from scratch.



Ice Fishing (page 45)

FRIED SMELTS OF MARY AND BILL KENDRICK

(Serves: 4)

- Ingredients: 2 lbs smelt, (heads off and gutted)
 1/2 cup oil (approx. for frying; may use any type of oil)
 2 Tbsp water
 2 Tbsp butter
 2 eggs, lightly beaten
 1/2 cup flour
 1/2 cup dried bread crumbs
 1 tsp salt
 1/4 tsp pepper

How to cook: Combine the flour, salt and pepper in a bowl, and set aside. Mix the eggs and water in another bowl, and set aside. Place the bread crumbs in a third bowl, and set aside. First, dip each smelt first into the flour mixture, then into the egg mixture, and finally into the bread crumbs. Place the breaded smelt on a rack for 15 minutes to dry. Place a heavy skillet on a very hot burner. Melt the butter in the skillet, and add enough oil to fry the smelt. Fry smelt, a few at a time, for approximately 2 minutes a side. (Times will vary according to how hot the burner is.) Make sure the fish is fully cooked before serving. Drain on paper towels. Serve with your favourite sauce, if you wish. (cocktail sauce, tartar sauce, honey mustard, BBQ sauce...)

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GRANNY ROSENAUER'S CORNBREAD DRESSING COURTESY OF DEBBIE CROWTHER

This recipe has been passed down

for several generations. It's the only dressing/stuffing I had ever tasted until I married Geoff. I have many fond Christmas memories of watching this dressing being made when I was young, and helping make it, when I got a little older. Fonder still, are my memories of eating it!

I am passing on the recipe, exactly as written on the recipe card my mother gave me, when I got married over thirty years ago. As the card reads, "Dressing is a do-your-own-thing affair", and mine is very close to the original. The stuffing we serve at *The Kitchen Witch* is based on this recipe.

I don't measure anymore so I can't tell you exact amounts. I just "know" when it's right. I can honestly say I never saw any of the women in my family make this small a batch. It's so good the next day, they always made several large pans of the stuff!

- 3 cups baked cornbread, crumbled
- 2 slices toasted or dry bread
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- salt & pepper, to taste
- poultry seasoning, to taste.
- broth to moisten, from a boiled hen.
- If mixture becomes too soupy you may add a beaten egg.
- Pour into a greased pan. Bake at 350F for 30 minutes.

Dressing is a do-your-own-thing affair!

- To this basic recipe you may also add:
- chopped celery
 - chopped nuts
 - chopped apple
 - chopped meat

This recipe will serve 4-6 people. To make small amounts of dressing, you may use canned chicken broth or cream of chicken soup.

DEBBIE'S SAGE & ONION DRESSING, COURTESY OF DEBBIE CROWTHER

This recipe is based on the stuffing my mother-in-law makes. I have adapted it to bake in the oven. Like my grandmother's recipe, I don't measure anymore, however; this is the basic recipe I started with years ago. This is also a dressing recipe for vegetarians.

Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a large sauce pan.

Add 8 cups of chopped onion to the water. Boil 10 minutes.

In a large bowl, toss 12 cups bread crumbs (approximate), with 2 tsp salt, and 2 tsp rubbed sage.

Add onion water to the crumbs. Toss together.

The mixture should be soft but not soupy. Add more bread crumbs if needed. Pour in a greased pan, and bake in 350F oven for 45 minutes or until set.





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PEI SAUSAGE CREAM GRAVY, COURTESY OF DEBBIE CROWTHER

(Yield: 8 cups)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb Spring Valley ground sausage
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2/3 cup flour
- 7 cups milk
- 6 twists fresh pepper (pepper mill)
- 1/2 tsp Italian seasoning

Method:

Brown sausage, stirring until it crumbles. Set aside. Melt butter in a saucepan. Add flour, stirring until smooth. Cook for one minute, stirring constantly. Gradually add milk; cook on medium heat, stirring constantly, until thickened. Stir in seasonings and sausage. Cook until heated.

HONEY CURRY BREAD, COURTESY OF GEOFF CROWTHER

(Yield: 2 loaves)

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup (1/8 lb) butter
- 1 Tbsp + 1 tsp curry powder

- 1 3/4 cups milk
- 2/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup warm water
- 2 pkgs yeast
- 1 tsp sugar
- 8 cups white flour
- 1 Tbsp salt

Method:

Melt the butter in a saucepan. Add the curry powder and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, for one minute. Add the honey and milk and heat to 115 degrees.

In a large mixing bowl, dissolve the yeast in 1/2 cup warm water with 1 tsp sugar. Allow to stand for five minutes.

Stir in the milk mixture and add 3-4 cups of flour, mixing until smooth. Add remaining flour and knead until smooth and elastic.

Cover and let rise in a warm draught-free place for an hour or until doubled. Punch down and divide into two greased loaf pans. Cover and let rise 45 minutes or until doubled.

Bake at 350° F for 25-30 minutes or until loaves sound hollow when tapped.

SOUTHERN BISCUITS, COURTESY OF GEOFF CROWTHER

(Yield: 24 biscuits)

Ingredients:

- 6 cups flour
- 2 Tbsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 75 g buttermilk powder
- 2 tsp sugar
- 550 ml water

1/2 lb margarine, softened

Method:

Combine first six ingredients in mixing bowl.

Fold in margarine and mix until crumbly.

Add the water, stirring just to moisten.

Knead five times and roll out to 3/4 inch thickness. Cut dough with 2 1/2 inch cutter, to make biscuits.

Bake at 425F for 12 minutes or until golden brown.