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Elucidations & Elaborations

Christmas was more fun when other people really did the shopping. It seems now that the most difficult decision is, "Which gift card should I get for whom?" I know it's a lot easier to go out and buy 20 gift cards. (I see people buying 20 at a time at Costco!) You can avoid the crowds and do all your shopping in a short time that way. You can even do it online and not go out at all! On the other hand, you don't have to return a gift card, especially because it's too big! (\$\$) I wonder which ones I'll get this year.



May peace and plenty be the first to lift the latch on your door; and happiness be guided to your home by the candle of Christmas. ~ Irish Toast

Brain Teaser

Can you spot anything at all remarkable about this list of words?

FLUFF IRAQI ROBIN SANTA TOTAL

See page 3 for the answer.

As American as

It seems that pie has been around forever. Americans have loved pie longer than they have loved baseball. We had pie even before we had a flag! Pie existed long before the first Pilgrim set foot on Plymouth Rock.



By the turn of the 20th century, pie had become the undisputed symbol of American plenty and national pride. Women were judged by the quality of their pie crust. Just about all county fairs had a pie contest. Every country store sold "homemade" pie. In Pennsylvania Dutch country, where farmers ate pie three times a day, a young man would often present an elaborately carved rolling pin as an engagement gift to his future wife.

Eventually, the pie landscape changed dramatically, with the introduction of Pillsbury Pie Crust Mix. American families moving to the suburbs embraced the era of convenience in the kitchen.

Pie symbolizes ingenuity, resilience, and a mother's love. Who wants to fail at those? We all remember pies that were made by our parents and grandparents. Pie will always take us home again.

What are America's Favorite Pies? You are probably not surprised at number one, but maybe number two. In a survey done by the maker of Mrs. Smith's pies, 47% chose apple as their favorite followed by 37% for pumpkin which was number 2

From the Kitchen



There are times when you have a particular entree or dessert and you just can't wait to make it yourself. It happens a lot here, but this particular plum pudding was so good that I couldn't wait to make it. It's Christmas. We searched around for the most perfect plum pudding mold. We gathered the ingredients and invested the 3.5 hours to make it. It was delicious. That was about 15 years ago. We've made it once since then, not because it wasn't good, but we either forget or just make other traditional stuff. We still have the cute mold though! Maybe I'll make it again this year. Here is my [plum pudding](#) recipe. Go ahead and give it a try.

Plum Pudding has never contained plums! It is called plum pudding because in the 17th century, plums referred to raisins or other fruits. In fact, the Oxford English Dictionary defines plum as a dried grape or raisin as used for puddings, cakes, etc.

Holiday Recipes

Many people have traditional recipes that they use every year during the holiday season. We do too but it's sometimes nice to try something new. Unless you knew it was there, you probably didn't find the Holiday Recipes page. Recipes are organized in categories to make it easier for you to find the perfect one. Check out the [Holiday Recipes](#) page and see if you find something that sounds interesting!

Featured Recipe: White and Wild Rice Ring

This is an elegant and festive recipe for the holidays. Cook the rice in advance to make it easier. Don't leave out the sherry and please don't use the "cooking sherry" that you find in the supermarket grocery aisle. You can get a bottle of sherry for about \$8. Remember, if you wouldn't drink it, don't use it!

- 1 cup wild rice, cooked
- 1 cup long grain white rice, cooked
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 cup sliced mushrooms
- 1 teaspoons poultry seasoning
- 1/4 cup dry Sherry
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted pecans
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Butter
- Cooked Brussels sprouts

Cook wild and white rice according to package directions. Meanwhile, sauté onion, garlic and mushrooms in 1/4 cup butter.

Combine cooked rice, sautéed vegetables, poultry seasoning, Sherry and pecans. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Pack rice mixture into well buttered 9 inch ring mold, pressing firmly with back of spoon or hands. Cover mold with foil. Place in larger pan of hot water and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

To unmold, place serving dish over mold and invert. Shake firmly, holding serving dish tightly to mold. Gently remove mold and fill center of rice ring with Brussels sprouts (see note below). Makes 8 servings.

A Note about Brussels Sprouts

Don't conclude that you don't like Brussels sprouts until you have tried them different ways! I say that because I was guilty myself. These "little cabbages" will be good with the recipe above however you choose to prepare them. Steaming them is probably the most nutritious way, but here is an alternative for you to try. It's one of our favorites. Try it and let me know what you think! Use this link for delicious [Roasted Brussels Sprouts](#).

Words about Wine



This is the time of year when shoppers are searching for that unique gift for someone special. Think about wine accessories! Here are a couple of ideas for you. Cork cages come in different shapes such as a wine bottle, a wine glass, or a wine barrel. After opening the wine, just put the cork in the cage. Save those wine bottle corks and you will be saving memories. Do a Google search for [wine bottle cork cage](#).

A wine gift box makes a nice gift for the wine enthusiast on your list. You can get just the box or you can get an elegant wine gift box set which includes a corkscrew, a drip ring, a stopper, and a pourer with stopper. They come in single or double bottle sizes. Picnic & Beyond is a popular brand. [Picnic World](#) has them all. Get one for yourself while you're ordering!

People to No Longer Tolerate

Here's another list I found that I thought was worth passing on. I don't recall the author but Google probably knows!

- ▶ Those who don't know you when you're down and out but just love you when you're "back."
- ▶ Gossips
- ▶ Arrogant doctors, waiters, TV commentators, athletes, writers, legislators or anyone else who lets a little influence go to their head,

Sky View: What's Out There:

This article is directed mainly to my iPhone friends. If you don't have an iPhone, this app just might make you want to go out and get one!

SkyView - Explore the Universe is an augmented reality app which lets you point your iPhone toward the sky and find out what's up there in that direction. You can find planets, stars, satellites, and even the International Space Station. All of these show up as graphics which you can tap on to get additional information. Some of the info is just trivia, but at least it's interesting trivia.

SkyView has other features in addition to identification of objects. For example, it will show you the sky path of an object. That's the direction it will travel across the sky relative to your position.

If you're trying to find something specific, you can use the search feature. If you're looking for the North Star for example, it will give you an arrow pointing you in the right direction.

You don't have to be a star gazer to enjoy and appreciate this app. It's just cool! With over 700 reviews, it gets 5 stars. That's FIVE whole stars, not 4+. Go to the app store and get SkyView for \$1.99. If you don't have an iPhone, go ahead and get one of those, too!

A Final Word

Thanks again for reading the last edition of the newsletter for 2011. Enjoy the holidays with family and friends. Pass the newsletter along if you know someone who might enjoy it. Send ideas, comments, and questions to Glen@Glen's Place.

Until next time remember: Either you love bacon or you're wrong!

Answer to brain teaser: The first letters in sequence spell first. The last letters spell final.

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