



### In This Issue

- Happy Halloween
- Your Brain on Music
- Avocados: For Your Heart's Health
- The Wine Corner
- Recipe of the Month
- A Final Word

### A Note from Glen

It's time to get out and get your costume and all of that candy for Halloween. (Don't forget to get twice as much candy as you think you need because you know you are going to eat half of it before Halloween gets here!) The economy needs a boost and this is the season. It's the time of year when you can find Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas merchandise at the same time in the stores. And remember, Halloween is not just for kids any more!

### Fun Facts and Trivia

During their growth peak—usually August—giant pumpkins can gain as much as 40 lbs. per day.

Pumpkins are 90% water.

In early Colonial times, pumpkins were used as an ingredient for pie crusts more often than for pie filling.

### Brain Teaser

What word can be written forward, backward or upside down, and can still be read from left to right?

See page 3 for the answer.

### Happy Halloween



Fall is here and it's time to get ready for Halloween, a day that both kids and adults look forward to. How much do you know about this spooky day? Here are some interesting facts about Halloween for your enjoyment!

- ❖ The carving of jack-o'-lanterns originated from the tradition of carving the faces of lost souls into hollowed out pumpkins and turnips. A candle was placed inside the carvings making the faces glow. The Halloween lanterns were placed on doorsteps to ward off evil spirits.
- ❖ More than 93 percent of children go trick-or-treating each year. (source: NCA).
- ❖ The world's fastest time to carve a face into a pumpkin is 24.03 seconds, by Stephen Clarke in Orlando, Florida on July 23, 2006 (source: Guinness World Records).
- ❖ There were an estimated 36.1 million potential "trick-or-treaters" ages 5-13 in 2006.
- ❖ Legendary magician Harry Houdini died in Detroit from a ruptured appendix on Halloween in 1926 at age 52.
- ❖ It is very rare for a full moon to occur at the same time as Halloween. It has only occurred in - 1925, 1944, 1955, and 1974. The next time it is said to occur is October 31, 2020.
- ❖ According to BIGresearch, in 2005 consumers spent approximately \$3.3 billion on Halloween. The average person spent \$48.48 on merchandise,
- ❖ Halloween is one of the biggest decorating holidays of the year, second only to Christmas,
- ❖ According to ancient superstitions, if you stare into a mirror at midnight on Halloween, you'll see your future spouse.
- ❖ Spooky! Last year, Halloween candy sales scarily climbed to some \$2.1 billion, making it the largest candy season of the year, according to the National Confectioners Association.
- ❖ Orange and black became Halloween colors because orange is associated with harvests and black is associated with death.

## Your Brain on Music



Did you know that practicing the piano or learning to play the violin may do more than tune up your recital skills? It may make the language areas of your brain more efficient, too. If you never took music lessons, maybe you should start!

Researchers recently asked a group of musicians and nonmusicians to listen to - and reproduce tone sequences. Not surprisingly, the musicians performed better on the task. But this was a surprise: As the musicians reproduced the tones, scans of their brains showed major activity in areas linked to language, leading researchers to conclude that building music skills may bolster language areas of the brain as well. In other words, studying music is like doing push-ups for your brain!

## Ah, Honey: A Sweet Idea

The next time you crave a little something sweet, skip the sugar bowl, and spoon on some buckwheat honey instead. This dark, sweet, sticky stuff will give your body a powerful shot of cell-protective phenols, something plain old sugar can't do.

Honey is a super way to bolster your body's defenses against the kind of cell-damaging processes that can lead to premature aging and disease, but when it comes to honey's antioxidant content, color makes all the difference.

Buckwheat honey, the darkest of all the kinds tested in a recent study, had the highest antioxidant activity by far so why not look for some at your local market.

## Avocados: For the Health of Your Heart

Avocados seem too luscious to be healthful, but they contain many valuable nutrients. Yes, they do contain a lot of fat, however, it is highly monounsaturated, the kind that's associated with a healthy heart. Ounce for ounce, the avocado contains 60% more potassium than bananas, which are usually thought of as an exemplary potassium source. Avocados are also rich in vitamin E and provide substantial amounts of folic acid, vitamin B6, and pantothenic acid. They also contain iron, copper, and magnesium. Avocados contain glutathione, and antioxidant with anti-carcinogenic potential. They also contain a significant amount of a cholesterol-lowering phytosterol called beta-sitosterol.



Although there are many varieties of avocados, California varieties are more widely available nationwide. They are considerably higher in fat, thus "creamier" and more flavorful. The most popular California avocado is the Hass, which weighs about 1/2 pound and has a pebbly black skin when ripe.

When shopping for avocados, select heavy, unblemished ones. If the avocado is rock hard, it will need a few days to ripen. If an avocado yields slightly to gentle pressure, it is ripe enough to slice. If pressing the fruit leaves a small dent, it is too ripe to slice, but is suitable for mashing. If pressing leaves a large dent, the fruit is overripe, and the flesh will have darkened and spoiled.

Hard avocados ripen at room temperature in three to six days. To speed up the process, place them in a paper bag, preferably with an apple. Never put hard avocados in the refrigerator because they will never ripen. Keep ripe avocados in the refrigerator and use within two to three days.

To pit an avocado, cut it lengthwise all the way around, working around the pit. Then, gently twist the two halves apart. Tap the blade of a heavy knife into the pit, and twist gently to release the pit from the flesh. You can then slice the flesh inside the skin and scoop it out with a spoon. If you wish to remove the flesh without slicing, you can scoop out the entire half.

The flesh of an avocado that has been cut will turn dark within a few minutes after being exposed to air. To delay darkening, rub the slices with lemon or lime juice.

## The Wine Corner



**Marsala** [mahr-SAH-lah] is imported from Sicily and made from local grapes. It is Italy's most famous fortified wine which means that it has alcohol added to it. Marsala has a rich, smoky flavor that can range from sweet to dry. Many people ask whether sweet or dry Marsala is best in a recipe. It's kind of like asking whether to use mild, medium, or sharp cheddar when a recipe just calls for cheddar cheese. It probably depends on what you have on hand. So, when it comes to Marsala, it's up to each individual's taste. I personally prefer dry. Don't ever use the so called "Cooking Marsala" that you might find near the vinegar in the grocery store. You have read in this column, and heard elsewhere, that you should not cook with wine that you wouldn't drink.

Since Marsala is a fortified wine it can be stored easily. Just like you can keep opened (sealed) bottles of vodka and rum on your shelves, you can also keep an opened bottle of Marsala around. Yes, the flavor will gently deteriorate over time, but it won't go from wonderful tasting to awful tasting in 3 days. You probably won't even notice the flavor difference after a month or two. I'd still suggest using it all within 3-4 months. When you cook with Marsala, you want a concentrated version of that flavor so don't leave it on the shelf too long!

## Quotable Quote

There are three ways to get something done: do it yourself, hire someone, or forbid your kids to do it. ~Monta Crane

## Recipe of the Month

### Pork Chops with Apples and Raisins

1 cup all-purpose flour  
4 center-cut, bone-in loin pork chops, about 8 ounces each  
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
2 tablespoons unsalted butter  
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper  
3 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and sliced in 1/2-inch-thick wedges  
1/2 cup raisins  
3 tablespoons brown sugar  
2 cups beef broth  
Freshly chopped parsley for garnish (optional)

Season both sides of pork chops with salt and pepper then dredge in flour to coat. Heat the olive oil and butter in a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Brown the pork chops on both sides. Add the beef broth, apples, raisins, and brown sugar. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 45 minutes to an hour. Remove cover and increase the heat for a few minutes until the sauce thickens slightly. Garnish with freshly chopped parsley and serve.

## A Final Word

Once again, thanks for reading the Glen's Place Newsletter. Your questions and comments are appreciated. Send them along to [glen@glenplace.com](mailto:glen@glenplace.com). If you have a favorite recipe that you would like to have published on [Glen's Place](#), there is a form on the [Guest Recipes](#) page. Just paste (or type) your recipe on the page and click the submit button. It's simple! You will receive credit for the recipe and you can become world famous, too!!!

Until next time remember: You can always mend a broken Jack-O-Lantern with a pumpkin patch! (I just had to say it!!!)

**Answer to Brain Teaser:** NOON



Happy Halloween



If for some reason you no longer wish to receive the Glen's Place Newsletter, you can [unsubscribe here](#). If you know someone who would like to be on the mailing list, they can [subscribe here](#). Submit your comments or questions [here](#).