

Jobs Cars Homes Rentals Shopping More Classifieds... Web Search... Subscriber Services...

**JSOnline**  
MILWAUKEE  
JOURNAL SENTINEL

News Business Sports Entertainment More... Classifieds

Classifieds : Jobs Wheels Homes Rentals Pets Rummage Stuff  
Also see: Personals Milwaukee Marketplace Tickets Coupons Contests

Article search... | Make Us Your Home Page | Subscriptions

YOUR KIDS THINK YOU CAN DO IT ALL.  
**PROVE 'EM RIGHT.**

THERE ARE NO CONTRACTS, AND IT'S ONLY \$25 TO JOIN.

- FOOD & COOKING**
- Main Page
  - Milwaukee
  - Waukesha
  - Washington
  - Ozaukee
  - Racine
  - Wisconsin
  - State Politics
  - Watchdog Online**
    - » Watchdog Reports
    - » Public Investigator
    - » Citizen Watchdog
    - » Data on Demand
    - » No Quarter
  - Editorials
  - Crossroads
  - Traffic
  - Education
  - Obituaries
  - SPORTS**
    - Main Page
    - Packers/NFL
    - Packer Insider**
    - Bucks/NBA
    - Brewers/MLB
    - Badgers
      - » Football
      - » Basketball
    - Golden Eagles
    - Panthers
    - Preps
    - Golf
    - Outdoors
    - Wave/Soccer
    - Admirals/Hockey
    - Racing
  - BUSINESS**
    - Main Page
    - News
    - Economy
    - Health care
    - Investing
    - Workplace
    - More...
  - ENTERTAINMENT**
    - Entertainment Main Page
    - Dining
    - Movies
    - Festivals
    - Music and

JS ONLINE: FOOD & COOKING: E-MAIL | PRINT THIS STORY

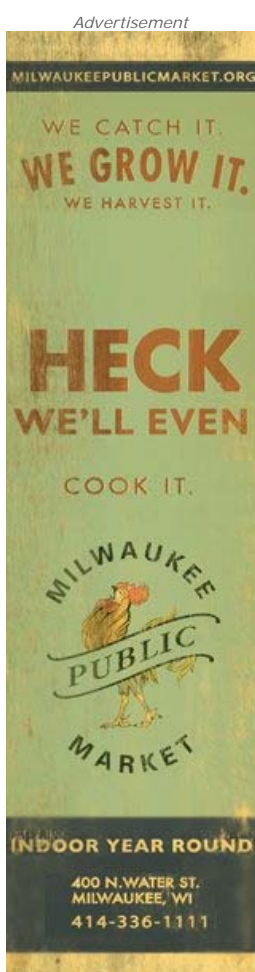
## Meal progress

### Sharing work, food, homes the neighborly thing to do

By **DAWN ALBRECHT**  
Special to the Journal Sentinel

Posted: Oct. 20, 2007

With the weather starting to turn cool, it can get harder to bring friends together for a casual evening, as we did all summer with backyard cookouts or suppers on the porch.



Try a progressive dinner party group.

This is a traveling dinner party, which starts at one house and stops at several homes during one evening. It's a great way to share the cooking *and* spend a night out with friends. Make it a monthly or bimonthly affair.

The progressive dinner party originated during World War II, according to Sylvia Lovegren in "Fashionable Food: Seven Decades of Food Fads" (Macmillan, 1995). Going from house to house was an easy way "to pool the work, the rationed resources and the fun," she writes.

Now, as then, a progressive dinner party doesn't have to be fancy. Everyone adds his or her own flavor to the night.

The idea works at any time of year, but it's ideal during the holiday season, spreading out the planning and work and allowing guests to see the holiday decorations of several homes.

How many homes should be involved in a party? As many as you like, though be sure to factor in travel time between houses, particularly if they're not all in the same neighborhood. Four courses works well, but don't let that limit the number of people involved.

If you would like to have five households and four courses, rotate who skips a course monthly. The couple or individual who skips can always provide a bottle or two of wine to accompany the main course. And that reminds us: Always have a designated driver.

Have one person coordinate the dinner, rotating that job monthly. The

### Meal Progress



Illustration/  
Gary Markstein

Sharing work, food, homes the neighborly thing to do.

### Recipes



Photo/  
Karen Sherlock

Fall Salad with Cranberry Vinaigrette starts off a meal right.

- Nightlife
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- TV and Radio
- Books
- Calendars
- FEATURES**
- Lifestyle
- Advice Columns
- Homes
  - » Real Estate
  - » Entree
- Food/Cooking
- Personal Technology
- Health/Science
- Religion
- Cars
- Travel
- AP COVERAGE**
- National
- World
- Business
- Sports
- Entertainment
- NEED HELP?**
- Searching Articles
- Photo Archives
- Placing an Ad
- Setting Your Home Page
- Newspaper Subscriptions
- Jobs @ MJS
- About the Journal Sentinel
- Internships
- Submit News Tips
- Contact Us
- FAQ**
- Questions about accessing stories? See our Frequently Asked Questions page.
- PARTNER SITES**
- MKEonline.com
- MilwaukeeMoms
- TODAY'S TMJ4
- 620 WTMJ
- 94.5 WKTI
- CNI Newspapers
- Lake Country

**HOORRAY Photo Sharing**  
 Try The Easiest Photo Sharing Site. 100% Free and Safe for Life.  
[www.HOORRAY.com/Photo-Sharing](http://www.HOORRAY.com/Photo-Sharing)

**Mortgage Rates at 4.65%**  
 \$170,000 loan for \$656/month. See New Payment - No SSN Rqd. Save Now!  
[Refinance.LeadSteps.com](http://Refinance.LeadSteps.com)

[Buy a link here](#)  
[Buy a link here](#)

coordinator's duties include deciding whether or not the dinner will have a theme, such as seasonal, ethnic, "under the sea" or vegetarian. Or the theme could be arranged by type of meal, such as an evening of all appetizers or all salads. The

coordinator can also assign courses or let hosts volunteer.

Hosts should let everyone know about how long their course will take. The night of the dinner the coordinator can help each course stay on schedule.

For a traditional meal, stick to well-defined courses to make recipe choices easier: appetizer/salad, soup, entrée and dessert.

The appetizer/salad course is perhaps the easiest. There is little to no holding time for this course, so the food can be prepared just before guests arrive.

For a fall salad, try incorporating cranberries and apples or pears to add a little fruitiness to the crisp and sometimes bitter greens. The Fall Salad with Cranberry Vinaigrette mixes fresh cranberries and pears with Gorgonzola cheese for a fruity, creamy blend in each bite.

Take some liberties during the soup course. If everyone is used to heavy soups and stews, lighten it up with a miso or consommé.

If you think your group needs a bigger taste experiment, try a cold soup or stronger flavors. The Ginger Pumpkin Soup has a few ingredients - peanut butter and cayenne among them - that you might not expect in a pumpkin soup.

Be sure to serve an appropriate bread to accompany the soup. There's something about being able to dip a warm piece of bread into soup that adds to the experience. A slow cooker is an easy way to keep soup warm.

The entrée course is the most difficult to hold at the right temperature without losing quality.

John Damico, executive chef at the Milwaukee Institute for Art and Design, has thrown a party or two. One thing he always checks is the meat temperature. If in doubt, check the FDA's recommended cooking times for meats, fish and poultry at [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fttextra.html#heat](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fttextra.html#heat).

Roasts and ribs are great in the slow cooker and can be ready when you are. Turkey or ham is also easy to hold at a safe temperature while you're enjoying the salad and soup courses.

"My favorite trick is to stir-fry the main course," Damico said. "Have everything ready and holding in the fridge. Heat your pan and throw things in as needed. Fast and hot and fresh!"

Stir-frys don't have to skew Asian, he said.

"Use fresh vegetables with marinara sauce and chilled precooked pasta for a pasta pronto stir-fry. Use sliced onions and peppers with thinly sliced steak for stir-fry fajitas. You get the idea."

As for dessert, the do-ahead possibilities are endless. A caramel cake in the slow cooker is a great way to warm everyone up on a cold fall or winter evening.

If you are not serving the first course, set the table before you leave.

## RECIPES

Following is a suggested menu for a progressive dinner party themed to fall. The salad recipe is



Ginger-Pumpkin Soup is fairly easy to make and keep warm.

### Another Direction

Progressive dining can be just as fun without anyone lifting a spatula. Try progressive dining out. Have everyone pick a different restaurant for a different course and make reservations if necessary. Here are some restaurant combinations in the same general vicinity that might work for you:

#### Downtown

- Appetizer: Coast, 931 E. Wisconsin Ave.
- Salad: Coquette Caf, 316 N. Milwaukee St.
- Main course: Sake Tumi, 714 N Milwaukee St.

#### Fall colors

- Appetizer: Quilted Bear, N111-W18611 Mequon Road, Germantown
- Main course & dessert: Alpine Retreat, 1380 Friess Lake Road, Hubertus

#### West side

- Appetizer: Eddie Martini's, 8612 Watertown Plank Road, Wauwatosa
- Fish course: The Grove, 890 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove
- Main course: Pleasant Valley Inn, 9801 W. Dakota St., West Allis

#### East side

- These three are interchangeable.
- Appetizer: Lake Park Bistro, 3133 E. Newberry Ave.
- Pasta course: Pasta Tree, 1503 N. Farwell Ave.
- Main course: Mimma's Caf, 1307 E. Brady St.

JSOnline AdLinks

**Try 4 Free Issues!**

The Week Magazine brings you the best news, opinions, arts and ideas.  
www.theweekmagaz...

**Mortgage Rates at 4.875%**

Get \$225,000 loan for \$914/month. Lower Your Monthly Payment. Act Now!  
Refinance.LoanOffe...

[Buy a link here](#)

from [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com), the soup from [www.countryliving.com](http://www.countryliving.com), the beef dish from [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com) and the dessert from [www.cdktichen.com](http://www.cdktichen.com).

**Fall Salad with Cranberry Vinaigrette****Makes 8 servings**

- ½ cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup cranberries
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 2 heads romaine lettuce, rinsed, dried and torn into bite-size pieces
- 2 medium heads Belgian endive, washed, dried and chopped
- 2 red Anjou pears
- ½ cup toasted walnuts, chopped
- ½ cup crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

To make dressing, in saucepan, combine vinegar and cranberries. Cook over medium heat until cranberries soften. Remove from heat; add olive oil, sugar, salt and pepper. Place in blender and mix until smooth. Refrigerate until chilled.

Core and slice one pear, core and dice the other.

In a large bowl, combine the romaine lettuce, endive, diced pears, walnuts and Gorgonzola. Toss and drizzle with enough dressing to coat.

Divide among salad plates and garnish with sliced pear. Top with any additional walnuts as well.

-----

Serve this soup with a crusty French bread.

**Ginger-Pumpkin Soup****Makes 10 servings**

- 2 cans (15 ounces each) pumpkin puree
- 3 cans (14½ ounces each) chicken broth
- 1 can (11½ ounces) pear nectar
- 1/3 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh ginger, grated
- 2 tablespoons green onion, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- Toasted pumpkin seeds (optional)

Chopped chives (optional)

In 6-quart saucepan, combine pumpkin puree, chicken broth, and pear nectar. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer 10 minutes.

In blender or food processor, process 1 cup pumpkin mixture with peanut butter until smooth. Return to saucepan with the remaining pumpkin mixture. Add garlic, ginger, green onion, lime juice, salt and cayenne pepper; cook 10 minutes over medium heat.

Divide among soup plates and garnish with pumpkin seeds and chives, if desired. Serve immediately.

## Slow Cooker Beef with Root Vegetables

**Makes 8 to 10 servings**

3 onions, chopped

12 small red potatoes, quartered

6 carrots, peeled and chopped

3 turnips, peeled and chopped

3 rutabagas, peeled and chopped

1 chuck roast (3 pounds)

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

3 tablespoons flour

1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce

2/3 cup packed brown sugar

2 teaspoons chili powder

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon mustard powder

1 teaspoon garlic powder

Arrange onion, potatoes, carrots, turnip and rutabaga in bottom of slow cooker. Season beef all over with salt and pepper. Rub flour all over beef. Place roast on top of vegetables in slow cooker.

Whisk together tomato sauce, brown sugar, chili powder, cumin, mustard powder and garlic powder. Pour mixture over beef. Cover and cook on low 12 hours or high 8 hours.

## Caramel Pear Cake

**Makes 8 servings**

1 cup flour

1/3 cup sugar

1 teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ cup whole milk

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

½ cup chopped pecans

¼ cup chopped dried pears

- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup pear nectar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger

In large bowl, mix together flour, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon. Add milk and oil and mix just until combined. Stir in pecans and dried pears. Spread in bottom of 3- to 4-quart slow cooker.

In small saucepan, mix brown sugar, water, pear nectar, butter and ginger. Bring to a boil and boil 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Pour over batter in slow cooker. Cover slow cooker and cook on high 2 to 2½ hours until a toothpick inserted 1 inch into center of cake comes out clean.

Remove cover from slow cooker, turn off slow cooker just before leaving for the first course, and let cake stand, uncovered, 30 to 40 minutes to cool before serving. There will be a tender cake that has formed over a caramel sauce; turn the servings over as you scoop them out of the slow cooker.

JSOnline AdLinks

**AARP Auto Ins Quotes**

Over 50? Save \$385 On Auto Ins With The Hartford. Free No Hassle Quote  
AARP.TheHartford.com

**What a Healthcare Degree?**

Associates, bachelors and masters program available. Request info now.  
ilearn101.com

**Free Rachael Ray Products**

Extra Virgin Olive Oil & Recipes. Book & Knife Set. Act Now!  
food-drink-rewardpath.com

**Mortgage Rates at 4.65%**

\$170,000 loan for \$656/month. See New Payment - No SSN Rqd. Save Now!  
Refinance.LeadSteps.com

**Free Rachael Ray Cookbook**

Get 4 Hardcover Rachael Ray Cookbooks Free! Participate Now.  
www.food-drink-rewardblvd.com

[Buy a link here](#)

From the Oct. 21, 2007 editions of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
Have an opinion on this story? [Write a letter to the editor](#) or start an [online forum](#).

Subscribe today and receive 4 weeks free! [Sign up now](#).

[BACK TO TOP](#)

Now Formulating



[News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Wheels](#) | [Homes](#) | [Rentals](#)

[RSS](#) XML/RSS News Feeds (*What's this?*) | [JSO Wireless](#) | [Careers at the Journal Sentinel](#)

© 2005-2007, Journal Sentinel Inc. All rights reserved. | Produced by [Journal Interactive](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

Journal Sentinel Inc. is a subsidiary of Journal Communications.