

Jobs Cars Homes Rentals Shopping More Classifieds...

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...

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

Mystery meet

Don't kill yourself - our clues make planning a detective dinner elementary

By DAWN ALBRECHT
Special to the Journal Sentinel

Posted: June 23, 2007

Murder mystery parties were a hit years ago. While that fad may have passed, the marriage of murder and food is still going strong. From Patricia Cornwell to Joanne Pence, popular mystery authors are including food as a side dish to murder.

Advertisement Today, a different type of mystery party is starting to surface. At these parties, the mystery is in the food. Whether you tie your mystery dinner to your favorite

HOORRAY Photo Sharing
Try The Easiest Photo Sharing Site. 100% Free and Safe for Life.
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

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

author's new book or to your favorite foods, a mystery dinner is a great excuse try out new tastes with your dinner guests.

Deciding which type of mystery party you want to throw depends on your guests.

Are they mystery readers? Do they like to wrap their mind around a puzzle? Are they out to solve the mystery the author sets for them?

These guests are well-suited for a mystery dinner based on a specific book or author.

Do your guests love good food? Are they into trying new restaurants and ordering the most unusual items on the menu?

These are your foodie guests. While they may enjoy a good food mystery, tying them to one book or author probably won't work as well as treating them to a great meal where they will have to decipher the tastes.

Choosing an author or book for a mystery dinner has gotten increasingly easier. A number of authors feature food in their writing, and some even include recipes. Diane Mott Davidson's protagonist, Goldy Bear, is a caterer, and the recipes she provides are from scenes in the book.

If your dinner party features recipes from a chosen book, there won't be any surprise ingredients because most of your guests will have read the book. Then again, this approach helps bring the book to life.

If the featured book does not include recipes, take some liberties and throw a protagonist dinner party. Pick your favorite main character from a

Mystery Dinners



Illustration/ Bob Helf

Food Turns Up In Mysterious Places

Some of the more famous mystery and food writers and their newest books include:

- Patricia Cornwell: Cookbook based on Kay Scarpetta's character, "Food to Die For: Secrets From Kay Scarpetta's Kitchen," published in 2003 by Berkley Books
- Joanna Carl: "The Chocolate Jewel Case: A Chocoholic Mystery," coming in August from Signet
- Diane Mott Davidson: "Sweet Revenge," coming this summer from William Morrow
- Jerrilyn Farmer: "Desperately Seeking Sushi: A Madeline Bean Culinary Mystery " coming in 2008 from William Morrow

- 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



12 Days Milwaukee Christmas
November 23 - December 24, 2007
Inspired by a true story of a very special teacher
Original script by James DeVita
BUY TICKETS NOW!
Most appealing to adults, teens and people ages 18-34
FIRST STAGE

mystery series and base the menu off her likes and cooking habits.

For example, Kay Scarpetta (author Patricia Cornwell's protagonist) is known for Italian cooking. Angie Amalfia (Joanne Pence's protagonist) has a wide variety of tastes from which to build a menu. In addition to the book, look at the author's Web site for menu ideas and possible recipes.

If your guests are the foodies, you have a great opportunity to try out special recipes on them. Focus on recipes that have unusual flavors and that will give your guests a mystery to solve.

Maybe it's the coffee in the sauce adorning your roast, or the cauliflower instead of cheese in your stuffed pasta. Whatever it is, encourage your guests to crack the taste mystery. Just be sure the mystery flavor isn't overpowering or out of place.

Using recipes you know and challenging your guests to name as many flavors as possible is another, perhaps less intimidating, way to involve them in a food mystery.

Setting the stage for your dinner party begins with the invitation. Include some clues as to what your guests can expect. Tell them the mystery is in the food and they should don their detective hats before arriving.

If the dinner is based on a book, include the name of the book and author and let guests know where they can pick up a copy well in advance of the party so they have time to read it.

Be sure to ask for any food allergies in your invitation. You can phrase this in such a way as to provide clues (or deliberate miscues) to the mystery ingredients. For example: "Please let me know of any food allergies, such as peanuts or blue cheese. . . ." You can use these clues to your or your guests' advantage.

Visual clues at the party itself can further send your guests on or off the trail. If you decide to put watercress in your pasta sauce as the mystery ingredient, place some watercress in your centerpiece flower arrangement. If you're using an unusual fruit, leave a piece in a bowl of fruit on your kitchen counter.

Timing in a mystery keeps the book moving and the reader intrigued. Timing in your dinner party is just as crucial.

"A dinner party is a little like playing chicken," according to chef Chuck Meitner, executive chef at Western Racquet Club in Elm Grove. "Flinch too early and your food will be cold before your guests are ready. Flinch too late and your guests wait. It's all about the timing."

And don't make the mysteries too hard to solve. Making some of your mystery flavors easier to guess will add a feeling of accomplishment and camaraderie to your dinner. Save your more advanced mysteries for later courses in the meal.

Chef Mic Pietrykowski, president of the American Culinary Federation Chefs of Milwaukee, likes to use fresh produce during summer to help make a healthy, fresh meal. "A salad with fresh produce topped with a grilled chicken breast has many tasty options for mystery," she said. Visit a farmers market for unusual vegetables you might not find in a regular grocery store. (See accompanying story for more tips.)

To execute the guessing part of the evening - and identify the super-

Joanne Pence: "The Da Vinci Cook: An Angie Amalfi Mystery," published in February by Avon

Joanne Fluke: "Key Lime Pie Murder" (Hannah Swensen Mysteries), published in March by Kensington

Miranda Bliss: "Murder on the Menu: A Cooking Class Mystery," published in June by Berkley Books

Mignon F. Ballard: "The Angel and the Jabberwocky Murders: An Augusta Goodnight Mystery (with Heavenly Recipes)," published in November by St. Martin's Minotaur

Cleo Coyle: "Decaffeinated Corpse: A Coffeehouse Mystery," coming in July from Berkley Books)

Recipes



Photo/Dawn Albrecht

Tell your guests to be on the lookout for the mysterious focus of the Manhunt Manicotti. Visual clues can help them track it down.



Photo/Dawn Albrecht

Killer Caprice and Tapenade



Photo/Dawn Albrecht

Steak-Out Roast may create a buzz.



Photo/Dawn Albrecht

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.LoanOffer...

What's Your Credit Score?

See your 2007 credit report and score instantly and online.
www.FreeCreditRep...

Buy a link here

sleuth at the table - you could simply encourage lively discussion throughout the meal to see if the mystery can be solved by consensus. Or, you could be more structured, with ballots at each place and a prize for whoever gets the most right.

On the ballots, list the menu, using phony names if necessary, and leave a space for your guests to fill in their thoughts on the mysterious ingredients. Or make a multiple-choice ballot with similar or vastly different ingredient options.

Awards for the super-sleuth can be tailored to the dinner. For dinners based on a book, another book by the same author or a gift certificate to a bookstore or Amazon.com would be a great reward. For foodie dinners, the reward could be a kitchen gadget, a great bottle of wine or a restaurant gift certificate.

Whether your guests figure out every mystery ingredient or just one, as long as they enjoy the meal your party is a success.

RECIPES

These recipes were created by author Dawn Albrecht from family favorites or from dishes she's seen. Mystery ingredients are designated with an asterisk. In the case of the parfait recipe, the mystery theme is carried out in the title.

Killer Caprice and Tapenade

Makes 6 to 8 servings

- ¼ cup chopped black olives (divided)
- ¼ cup chopped green olives (divided)
- 3 anchovies (divided)*
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 vine-ripe or farmers market large tomatoes
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella
- Parsley or cilantro as garnish

Blend half the black and half the green olives with one anchovy. Set aside to serve as an olive tapenade. Blend remaining green and black olives with one anchovy and the olive oil. Blend remaining anchovy into olive and oil mixture to taste.

Thickly slice tomatoes and mozzarella. Alternate tomato and mozzarella slices on a platter.

Drizzle olive and anchovy oil over tomato mozzarella platter. Sprinkle parsley or cilantro over the top as garnish.

Steak-Out Roast

Makes 6 to 8 servings

- 2 ½ pounds top round roast
- Vegetable oil
- ½ cup strong brewed coffee (to taste)*
- 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste
- 1 cup diced onions
- 2 ½ tablespoons minced garlic

Prison Parfait earns its stripes - and its name.

Sleuthing For Recipes

Scouting around for recipes with unusual, "mystery" ingredients?

You'll find plenty with a simple Internet search. Here's just a taste of what you will find:

■ Cocoa powder in soup: Brazilian Soup (soup/meat category of recipe center at www.nestle.com)

■ Tomato soup in cake: Mysterious Orange Cake at Recipe Zaar (www.recipezaar.com)

■ Garlic in ice cream: Garlic Ice Cream at Home and Garden Television (At Home section of www.hgtv.com)

■ Rose petals in soup: Rose Petal Soup at Gold Harvest Organics (www.ghorganics.com)

■ Cranberry in meatloaf: Cranberry Meatloaf at About.com (www.southernfood.about.com)

■ Other resourceful recipe Web sites: Allrecipes.com, Epicurious.com, Foodnetwork.com, Cooking.com, CookingLight.com, Kraft.com, Dole.com, Hormel.com, Penzeys.com, Tyson.com.

Or, if you're really adventurous, you can add a mystery ingredient yourself to a favorite recipe. Consider spices, herbs, extracts, sauces or condiments for an easy flavor accent.

1 cup water

Salt and pepper to taste

Horseradish (optional)

In heavy pot in a little oil, brown meat on all sides. Place in slow cooker.

Mix all remaining ingredients except salt and pepper and gently pour over beef. Cover, cooking beef on medium setting until meat reaches 170 degrees internally, about 6 to 8 hours.

Slice beef ½ inch thick and place on platter. Season sauce from slow cooker with salt and pepper and spoon 1 ½ cups over beef slices. Serve with horseradish or extra sauce on the side.

Manhunt Manicotti

Makes 7 servings of 2 stuffed manicotti noodles each

1 box (8 ounces) manicotti (14 pieces)

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 head cauliflower (8 to 9 cups of cauliflower florets)*

¾ cup milk

¾ cup shredded mild cheddar

¼ cup (½ stick) butter, room temperature

2 tablespoons sour cream

2 tablespoons crushed garlic or to taste

3 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley

2 cup marinara-style pasta sauce, warmed

Prepare manicotti according to box directions, adding a tablespoon of olive oil to the water. Rinse noodles in cool water and allow to cool slightly for ease of stuffing.

Steam cauliflower until soft and place in large bowl. Add milk, cheddar, butter, sour cream and garlic to bowl with cauliflower. Blend with a hand mixer or mash with a potato masher until well mixed and the consistency of heavy mashed potatoes. Gently fold in parsley for color.

Stuff cauliflower mixture into cooked manicotti noodles. Place stuffed manicotti on platter and gently drizzle with warm pasta sauce.

Prison Parfait

Makes 6 servings

1 pint blackberries plus additional berries for garnish

3 tablespoons Chambord (optional) or water

2 tablespoons sugar

8 ounces cream cheese, room temperature

1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk

2 tablespoons vanilla extract

½ tablespoon lemon juice

3 full-size graham crackers (about)

Toss 1 pint cleaned blackberries with Chambord (or water) and sugar. Blend with hand blender to

the consistency of jam and place in refrigerator 10 minutes.

In bowl using mixer, blend cream cheese with condensed milk, vanilla extract and lemon juice.

Crush ½ graham cracker (1 square) (or more depending on the size of the glass) in the bottom of each parfait glass. Add about 3 tablespoons of cream cheese mixture on top of graham cracker layer. Place in freezer 10 minutes.

Add about 3 tablespoons blackberry mixture on top of cheese mixture. Place in freezer 10 minutes.

Add 3 tablespoons of cream cheese mixture. Refrigerate at least 2 hours. Add 2 or 3 fresh blackberries to the top. Serve.

JSONline AdLinks

Auto Insurance Quotes

Save Hundreds In Minutes w/ Fast, No Hassle Auto Ins From The Hartford
AARP.TheHartford.com

What a Healthcare Degree?

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

Extra Virgin Olive Oil & Recipes. Book & Knife Set. Act Now!
food-drink-rewardpath.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 June 24, 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](#)

The advertisement features the Aerobed logo on the left. The main text reads "A couch is not a bed. Learn more at artoftheguestbed.com" with a red button that says "click". On the right, the "art of the guest bed" logo is displayed.

[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.