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Jody Feerst Litvak, community relations manager, pauses before enjoying her winning recipe in the Metro Café recipe contest. Litvak was one of four winners. Litvak reconstructed the recipe for "Grandma Yetta's Citrus Mushroom Holiday Chicken" from watching her grandmother prepare the dish for years.



Photo by Ned Racine

Culinary Delight: Metro Employees' Own Recipes Served in Cafeteria

By JIMMY STROUP

(Sept. 14, 2007) The Metro Cafeteria called all Metro employees who fancied themselves chefs to arms a few weeks ago when they asked for recipe submissions. The chosen recipes were to be prepared and served in the café.

After some trimming, four dishes were selected by cafeteria manager Jose Muniz. They were served up by the food service staff for the dining pleasure of Metro employees all this week.

The winning dishes had to meet certain quantitative and cost considerations (servings of 10 and no more than \$2 per serving). The chosen contestant received a free meal the day the dish was prepared by the cafeteria staff.

The following recipes are reprinted with permission of the Metro employees who designed them.

- ["Grandma Yetta's Citrus Mushroom Holiday Chicken"](#) from Jody Litvak, Community Relations Manager

Litvak, a 16-year Metro employee, lifted this family recipe from her late grandmother. Litvak describes her as a great cook who rarely – "if ever" –

measured. Her family enjoyed this favorite for Sabbath dinners, Rosh Hashanah and Hanukkah, and can be prepared kosher or not, depending on the circumstance.

- ["Grilled Flank Steak"](#) from Frances Impert, Senior Real Estate Officer

Impert developed this recipe after being inspired by a friend’s recipe for flank steak. She harbors a love for cooking shows and wishes she had more time to “play in the kitchen.” As tribute to the tasty nature of her steak recipe, Impert – a 14-year Metro veteran – recalls an instance when she served the dish to some friends who aren’t big red meat eaters. Sure enough, Impert caught them going back for seconds and thirds, despite a vegetarian dish being an alternative main course.

- ["Chicken Adobo"](#) from Chi Kemp, General Clerk III, West Valley Division 8

Kemp and her family have been enjoying this traditional Filipino dish for generations. She learned to prepare the meal from her mother, whose mother taught her, whose mother taught her. Kemp, who is relatively new to Metro at only eight months of service, said it’s easy to prepare, inexpensive, keeps well in refrigeration and is a favorite of her children.

- ["Sindhi Biryani"](#) from Ghulam Shaikh

Shaikh said biryani is a traditional South Asian dish that’s prepared different ways depending on where it’s being served. This recipe was adapted by Shaikh and his wife, Shazia, and originates from Sindh, the southwestern province of Pakistan. Shaikh said that one of the nice things about biryani – which is a “must” for his family gatherings – is that different regions adapt the basic meal to alternative specifications, so one biryani is a completely different kind of meal than another.

Grandma Yetta’s Citrus Mushroom Holiday Chicken
Ingredients <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 whole chickens cut-up (or equivalent number chicken pieces – feel free to use whatever types of pieces you like)• Salt to taste (you can omit altogether but should definitely omit if you are using kosher chicken)• 1 large orange sliced into thin disks• 2 lemons sliced into thin disks• 1 small yellow onion sliced thin, disks separated into rings• 2 to 4 garlic cloves chopped• 1 pound brown mushrooms (feel free to substitute other type of mushrooms if desired). Clean and cut larger mushrooms in half or quarters.• 1/2 jar Carmel Mushroom Soup mix or 1/4 - 1/3 cup Osem Mushroom Soup mix• 1 and 1/2 cups ketchup
Preparation <p>If you are using whole chickens, remove fat pieces, gizzards, neck, liver, etc. Discard fat. Discard liver or freeze to reserve for another purpose. Save and freeze gizzards, neck and</p>

remaining pieces for stock or other uses. Cut up chicken into serving pieces – breasts, wings, thighs, drumsticks. You should have the backbone and perhaps some other bits of the chicken remaining. Add these to the pieces you are reserving for stock.

Rinse chicken pieces and pat dry. Sprinkle with salt if you are not using kosher chicken.

Distribute orange slices in a single layer over the bottom of the baking dish. It's OK if they slightly overlap. Repeat with lemon slices. Sprinkle some of the onion rings on top of the orange/lemon layer. It's likely you will not need all the orange, lemon or onion. Sprinkle chopped garlic on top of this. Sprinkle about half the mushrooms over this mixture.

Mix up the Carmel Mushroom soup mix with the ketchup to make a paste. Rub paste all over chicken pieces. Place the chicken pieces in the baking dish fairly close together. Sprinkle remaining mushroom pieces over the top. Add any remaining soup/ketchup mixture on top of this.

Cover baking dish tightly with aluminum foil and place into a pre-heated 350 degree oven. Bake about an hour. Once chicken pieces are baked through, remove foil and bake for an additional 5-10 minutes to allow the top to brown and the sauce to carmelize a bit. (Don't worry; it's really hard to overbake this dish.)

Remove chicken pieces to a serving platter and cover to keep warm. Strain what's left in the baking dish into a sauce pan being sure to reserve the solids. Allow liquid to settle, and then remove the fat from the top. Return the solids to the remaining sauce and pour some over the chicken pieces. Keep the remaining sauce warm until ready to serve. Pass the remaining sauce in case anyone wants extra.

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Grilled Flank Steak
<p>Ingredients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 and 1/2 lbs. flank steak• Marinade• 1/2 cup olive oil• 1/2 cup balsamic vinegar (full-bodied red wine may be substituted)• 4 tbsps fresh rosemary, lightly chopped• 5 garlic cloves, crushed• "Salsa"• 6 large or 10 medium Roma tomatoes, chopped• 3 tbsps green olives stuffed with pimentos, chopped• 2 tbsps fresh basil, chopped• 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil• Squeeze of fresh lemon juice (approx. 2 tsp)• Salt and pepper <p>Preparation</p> <p>Mix all marinade ingredients. Score steak 1 inch apart. Place in a large, re-sealable plastic bag. Pour in marinade, seal, making sure to remove most of air out. Gently "massage" the bag, making sure marinade is distributed all over steak. Refrigerate overnight, two nights, or at least four hours, turning steak over occasionally.</p> <p>Remove steak from refrigerator one hour before grilling, and let stand at room temperature. Meanwhile, make salsa and set aside. Preheat grill on high and lightly oil. Remove steak from marinade, discard marinade. (You can leave the garlic and rosemary pieces on the steak.)</p>

Season steak generously with salt and pepper on both sides and place on hot grill. Cover grill and let cook approx. Five to six minutes on one side, flip over, and grill other side four to five minutes for medium rare or to desired doneness (remember that the steak will continue cooking after being removed from heat!).

Transfer steak to a plate, tented with foil, and let rest for eight to 10 minutes. Using a very sharp knife, slice diagonally against the grain into ¼ inch slices. Transfer to a serving platter, and lightly fan out. Spoon “salsa” down the center of the steak, and serve remaining salsa on the side.

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Chicken Adobo

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. chicken thighs and legs
- 1/3 cup Kikkoman soy sauce
- 1/3 cup white vinegar
- 2 tbsp chopped garlic
- 1/2 cup chopped onions
- 2 tbsp oyster sauce
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup water (optional)

Preparation

Wash and cut chicken into bite-sized pieces approximately three by three inches. Marinate chicken with vinegar, soy sauce, garlic and pepper 30 minutes before cooking.

In a saucepan, add remaining ingredients and cook for about 30 minutes. Stir when it begins to boil.

Serve with steamed white rice.

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Sindhi Biryani

Ingredients

- 4 medium-sized onions, finely sliced
- 1 and 3/4 pounds boned chicken pieces
- 2 and 1/2 cups cooking oil
- 2 tbsp ginger
- 2 tbsp garlic
- 2 tbsp red chili powder
- 1 cup yogurt, whipped
- 2 tbsp cumin seeds, ground
- 2 tbsp fenugreek seeds, ground

- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 3 tbsp ground mix of black pepper, cinnamon, clove and coriander
- 4 medium tomatoes, sliced
- 4 small green chilies
- 4 cups water
- 4 cups rice
- 1/2 bunch fresh green coriander
- Mint leaves to taste
- Salt to taste

Preparation

Fry onions in oil on medium heat until golden brown. Add chicken meat, ginger and garlic; stir fry for about 10 minutes.

Add red chilies and yogurt and cook for another 10 minutes.

Add cumin, fenugreek, turmeric, and ground seasoning mixture; cook for two minutes. Add tomatoes and green chilies. Cook for few minutes.

Add water and rice. Add salt to taste. Cook until rice is softened and well cooked, or until all the water has dried out.

Add two pinches of green coriander and mint leaves. Bring the flame to low and cook rice on the low flame for about five minutes.

Serve with salad and ranch (raita).

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