

## A Taste of Canada



By Ellie Topp

If you are looking for new ways to feature traditional Canadian foods, a new book by well-known author Rose Murray offers some delicious ideas.

In *A Taste of Canada, A Culinary Journey* (Whitecap 2008). Murray draws from Canada's rich heritage to create some truly inspired dishes. There has been much debate in Canada about what constitutes Canadian cuisine. In the introduction, Elizabeth Baird, well known in the Canadian food scene, defines our cuisine as simply "what we eat." This includes native ingredients such as salmon, maple syrup and a myriad of wild berries such as Saskatoons, huckleberries, and buffalo berries, as well as the more common raspberries, strawberries and currants. Add to this the wonderful flavours brought to our shores by immigrants and the result is a delicious and varied cuisine all experienced differently by people in our vast country.

While not exactly a culinary journey, in *A Taste of Canada*, you will find traditional favourites with fresh interesting twists along with glimpses of what grows in various regions of the country and how that is reflected in the cooking of the area. Parsnip and Pear Soup with Five-Spice Powder uses two Canadian foods enhanced with a new Asian flavour. Bread pudding, long a staple of family fare, is made this time with Brie and Prosciutto, which made a treat for Christmas day in our house.

Over the years, I have enjoyed many of Rose Murray's recipes, which can be relied upon to create delicious eating. In this book, I looked for recipes that took minimum effort to make. Maple Cabbage Slaw is a nice creamy coleslaw, and while the maple flavour does not come through, the overall effect is yummy. Although commercial pâté is readily available, homemade is easy to make and generally much more flavourful. The Quick Brandied Chicken Liver Pâté is a winner, and about as easy as possible. For an added bonus, it freezes nicely to keep on hand in small containers ready to serve whenever company is coming. And while fresh cranberries are still available, try the Cranberry Streusel Muffins for a wonderful accompaniment to afternoon coffee.

## **Quick Brandied Chicken Liver Pâté**

1/4 cup butter  
1 lb chicken livers, trimmed  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
1 tsp crumbled dried sage  
1/2 tsp dried thyme  
1/4 cup brandy  
1/2 pkg (250 g) light cream cheese  
Salt and pepper  
Sage leaves

In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat and reserve 2 tbsp in a small bowl. In the remainder, cook the livers, garlic, sage and thyme until the livers are browned but still slightly pink inside, about 5 minutes. Stir in the brandy; cook until almost evaporated, about 1 minute. Let cool. Transfer to a food processor. Add the cheese, and salt and pepper to taste. Puree until smooth. Spoon into a 2-cup serving dish or two 1-cup dishes. Place 1 or 2 sage leaves on top and pour the reserved butter over the top of the leaves and pâté. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours, and for up to 2 days. (Pâté also freezes well for up to 2 weeks if wrapped well in foil.) Makes about 2 cups.

## **Maple Cabbage Slaw**

6 cups finely shredded green cabbage  
1/2 cup diced red onion  
1/2 cup shredded carrot  
1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh parsley  
2/3 cup light mayonnaise  
3 tbsp maple syrup  
1 tbsp cider vinegar Salt pinch paprika

In a large bowl, toss together the cabbage, onion, carrot and parsley. In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, syrup, vinegar, salt to taste and paprika. Pour over the vegetables and toss to coat well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 4 hours. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

## **Cranberry Streusel Muffins**

### ***Streusel Topping***

2 tbsp all-purpose flour  
2 tbsp granulated sugar

1/4 tsp ground cinnamon  
2 tbsp butter

### ***Muffins***

2 cups fresh cranberries  
1/2 cup icing sugar  
1/4 cup butter, softened  
1/4 cup granulated sugar  
1 egg  
1 tsp vanilla  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tsp baking powder pinch salt  
1/2 cup milk

**Topping:** In a small bowl, combine the flour, sugar and cinnamon. Cut in the butter until the mixture is crumbly; set aside.

**Muffins:** In a medium bowl, combine the cranberries and icing sugar; set aside. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the egg and vanilla. In a separate a bowl, combine the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the creamed mixture alternately with the milk, making three additions of dry ingredients and two of milk, stirring just until combined; do not over mix. Gently stir in the sugared cranberries. Spoon the batter into 12 small or 9 medium greased or paper-lined muffin cups. Sprinkle evenly with the streusel topping. Bake in the centre of a 375°F oven until the tops are firm to the touch and a tester inserted in the centre comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cook in the pan for 5 minutes, then turn out and cool completely on a rack. Makes 12 small or 9 medium muffins.

*Ellie Topp is a professional home economist and a certified culinary professional. She is co-author of several books including The Complete Book of Small-Batch Preserving and Savoury Wisdom: Delicious, Healthy Recipes for Two.*

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