



THE NEW BASICS

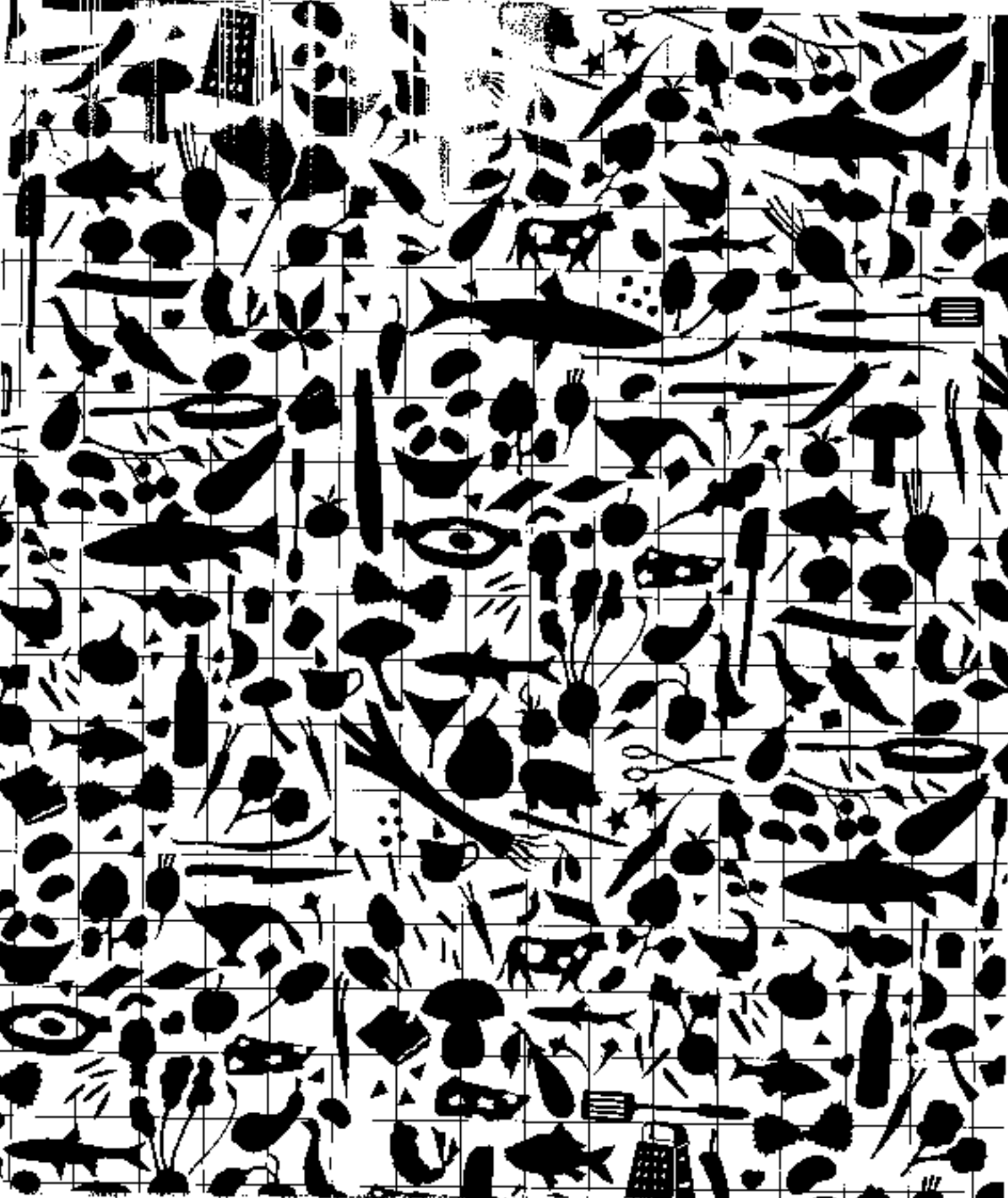
COOKBOOK

JULEE ROSSO &
SHEILA LUKINS

Authors of THE SILVER PALATE COOKBOOK &
THE SILVER PALATE GOOD TIMES COOKBOOK

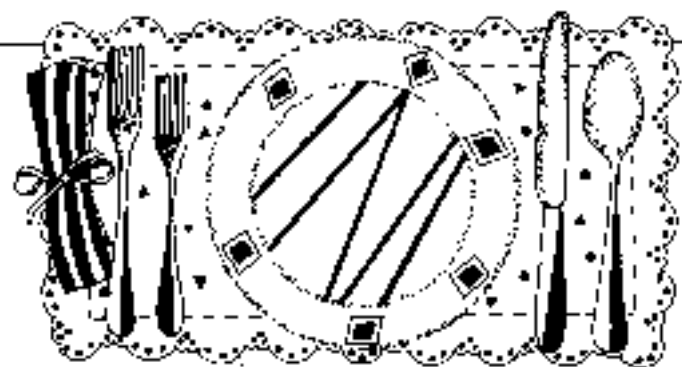


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BY JULEE ROSSO & SHEILA LUKINS
ILLUSTRATED BY SHEILA LUKINS

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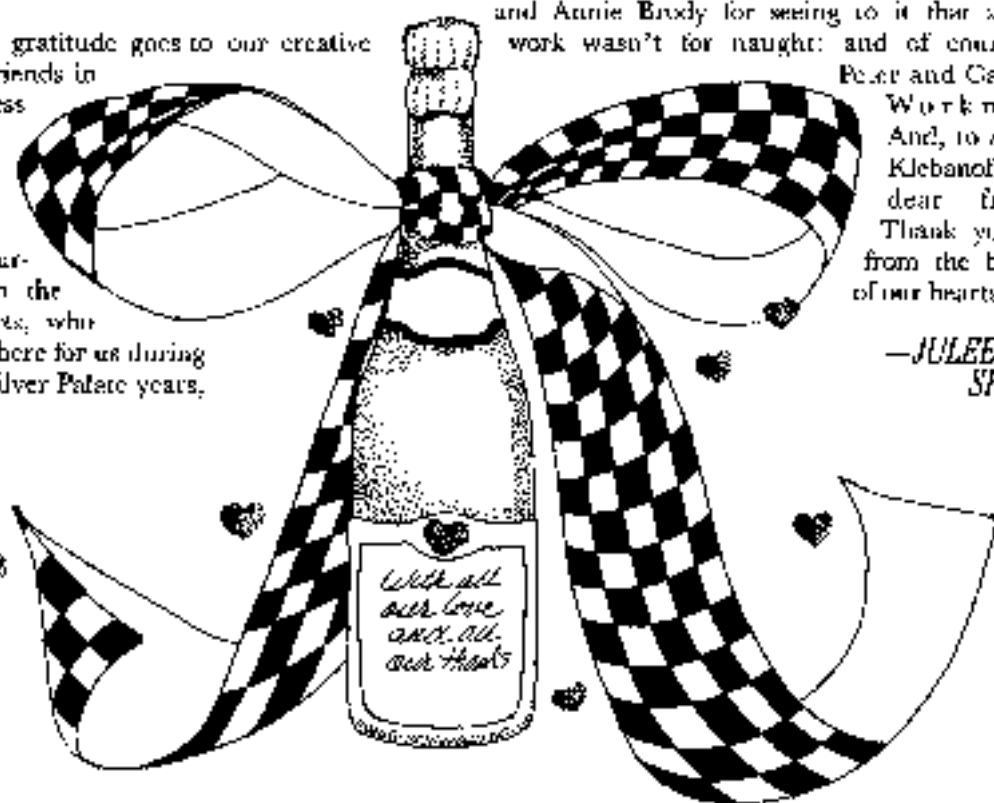
Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our creative colleagues and friends in the food business for sharing their favorite recipes with us, and who have inspired and encouraged us through the years; our cohorts, who were with us or there for us during so many of the Silver Palate years,

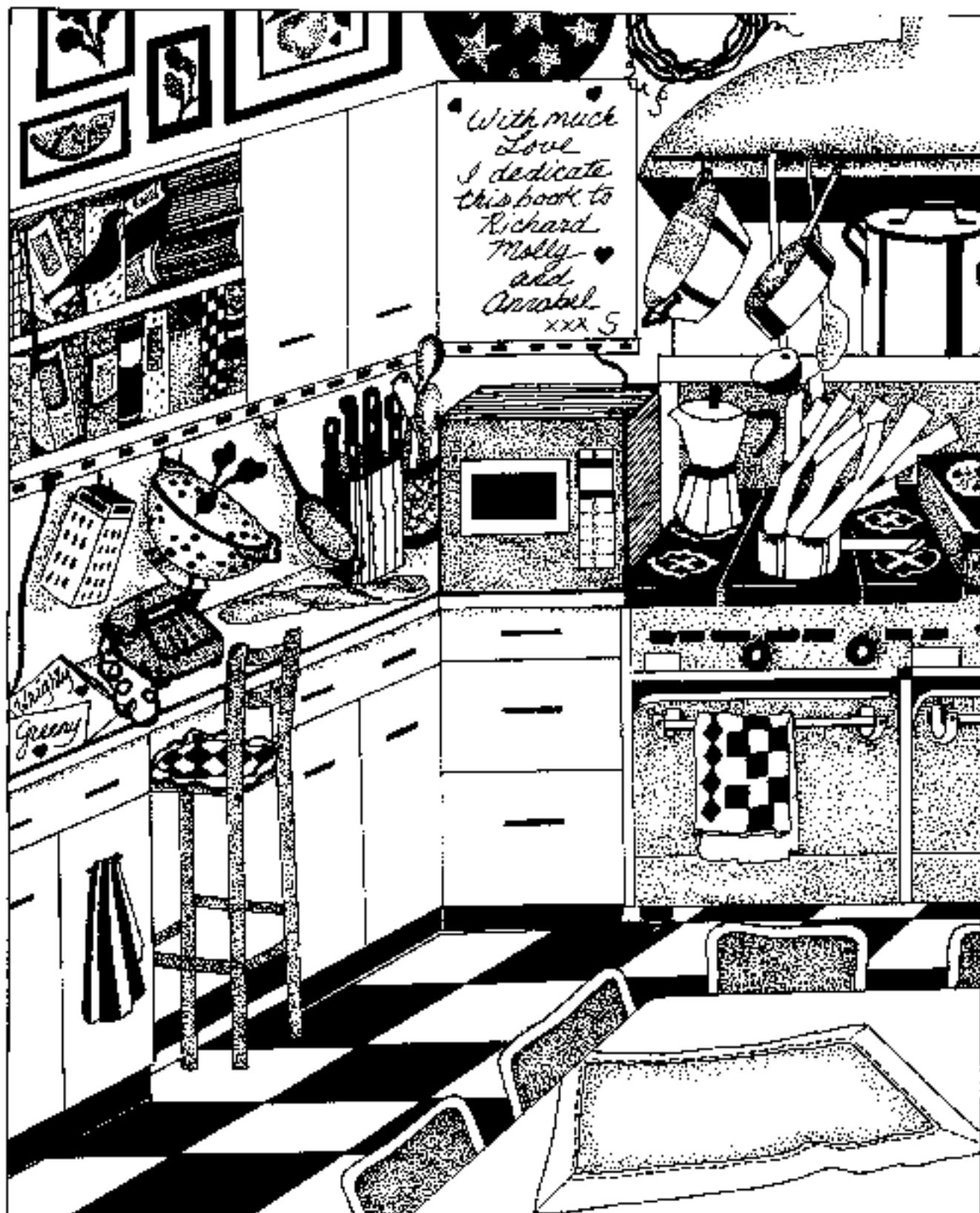
especially Michael McLaughlin and Sarah Leah Chase; and our old and dear friends, who lovingly saw us through it all.

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work wasn't for naught; and of course to Peter and Carolan Workman. And, to Arthur Klebanoff, our dear friend. Thank you all, from the bottom of our hearts.

—JULEE AND SHEILA









OUR NEXT CHAPTER



★ Since *The Silver Palate Cookbook* and *The Silver Palate Good Times Cookbook* were published, we've had a great time traveling around the U.S. and have been fortunate to meet and become friends with so many of you. It's been a real joy for us to share our passion for and curiosity about food, as well as our love for gracious entertaining.

We're often asked how we work together. Very, very well is our answer. In fact we have a creative relationship that just seems to keep getting better with age. Ideas for recipes sometimes come from an ingredient, a texture, a need to update a classic, or a dish we've tasted. But often a good idea arrives free-form—in the shower or during a walk. We talk it over and improve the concept, cook it, taste and critique it together, and decide which flavors, if any, need emphasizing; then we make the adjustments and taste it again. If we come up with something we can say we really love, we gamble that you will too.

We've become great friends over these past twelve years. We respect each other, finish each other's sentences, have ideas simultaneously, and have been known to show up in almost the same outfits. We just clicked long ago, and we're blessed with similar timetables, expectations, curiosities, and standards of taste.

But we are two different people, even though we're often confused one for the other. Sheila is married to Richard, and their teenage daughters, Annabel and Molly, hardly remember a time before *The Silver Palate* food shop. They live in Manhattan during the week and on weekends they retreat to a farm in Connecticut that has a rushing trout stream. Sheila loves her art, the opera, tending her garden, and strolling flea markets. Julie, recently married to Bill, divides her time between Manhattan and a cottage on Lake Michigan. She loves her herb and rose gardens, playing golf, grilling, sculpting, and collecting antique cookbooks.

Over the years, together and separately, we have been on the road again and again, both for business and for pleasure. We've given countless numbers of cooking classes and lectures on entrepreneurship, have signed thousands of books, and have worked with stores of every size and style to merchandise Silver Palate products. As the business expanded and the books were published in other countries, we traveled to Japan, France, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and the Caribbean. With our professional colleagues, we've been lucky to be part of a renaissance in the food business in America.

Eventually, however, we determined that it was time to shift gears—not by any means to stop, but to reevaluate life's priorities, and to take time to smell the basil, not just purée it. It seemed the right time to sell *The Silver Palate*. For too long our schedules had kept us away from the people we wanted to share meals with—not just on weekends or at a special work-night dinner, but all of the time. We began to take a long, hard look at our own kitchens, rethinking and restocking them in keeping with all we had learned over the years.

Even without *The Silver Palate*, our schedules are still hectic, but we're in our own kitchens, setting our own moods, and cooking in our own styles. And meals with our families and friends have become the most rewarding and satisfying part of our day.

Selling the company also has freed us to do something that we have been wanting to do for the last few years—to write a basic cookbook that combines the information today's cooks need with irresistible recipes for the foods they want to prepare. *THE NEW BASICS COOKBOOK* reflects the exciting things we've learned over the years, as well as including our latest, and we think, greatest recipes. We hope you enjoy it.

—JULIE ROSSO AND SHEILA LUKINS

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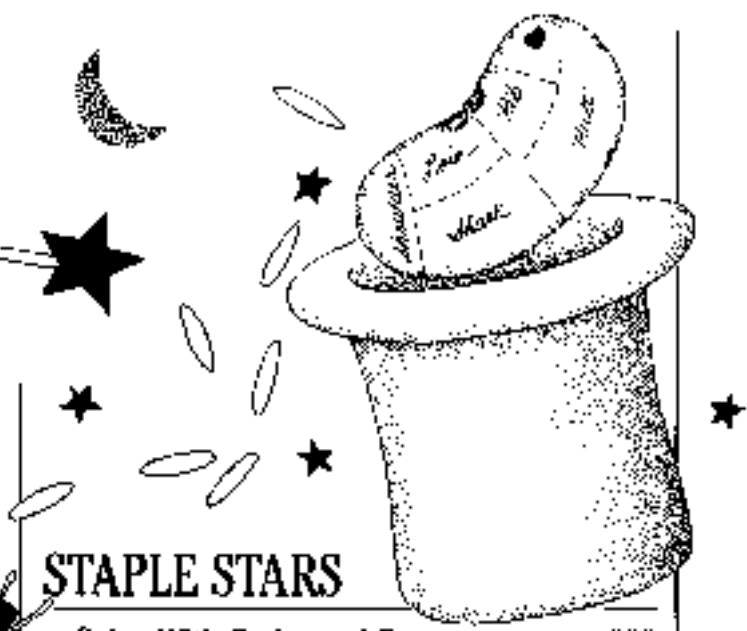
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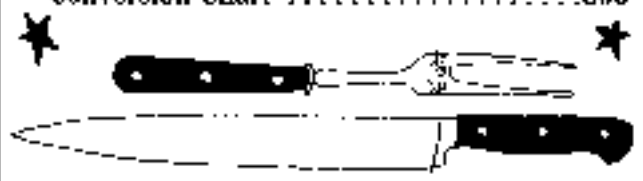
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THE BASICS BECOME NEW



After being caught up in a whirlwind the past twenty years, with food fads and lifestyles changing faster than you can run a marathon, many people say that it is now time to take a breath, slow down, and hark back to a simpler time in America—to go back to basics. And we're all for it. At least in part. You see, after more than two decades as food professionals, and with all the exciting changes we have seen in the food world, we have no desire to take a step backward after coming so far. Instead we think a new and exciting version of those basics is what is needed.

Stimulated by this need plus our love for foods with strong, vibrant flavors, our concern for health and fitness, and our insatiable curiosity, we have delved into the newest ingredients, cooking techniques, and magical time-saving equipment. As we evaluated our pantries, it became clear that the best of the past two decades have become our staples—but the shelves are never so full that there isn't room for the latest find.

The true joy of cooking well for family and friends is no longer a weekend pastime. During the 1970s and '80s we spent our time in restaurants, take-out food shops, and more often

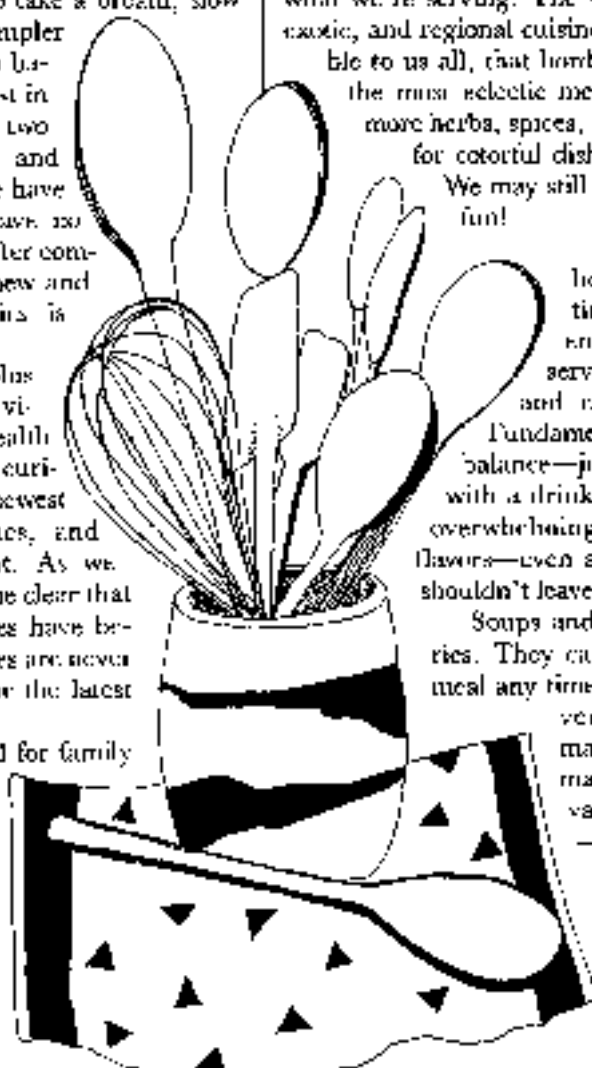
than not, picking up fast food. Now we luxuriate in the search for the best and freshest of our beautiful ingredients. We want to know and be in control of what we're serving. The vast cornucopia of ethnic, exotic, and regional cuisines have become so accessible to us all, that borders are easily crossed and the most eclectic menus emerge. We're using more herbs, spices, garlic, lemon, and vinegar for colorful dishes with clean, clear taste.

We may still break rules, but that's the fun!

Cocktail hour has always been a regular gathering time, but today it has lightened up considerably. It serves the purpose of teasing and encouraging the appetite.

Fundamental to the New Basics is balance—just a couple of light bites with a drink or glass of wine, nothing overwhelming, no heavy textures or flavors—even a full-blown cocktail party shouldn't leave the guests feeling leaden.

Soups and salads know no boundaries. They can begin a meal or be the meal any time of the year. The range of vegetables—found in the market and in our gardens—makes our heads spin. New varieties, hues, sizes, shapes—never have there been such choices. We've had to learn how to select them,



care for them, and prepare them, but the results have been great and now they are as important to us as the old favorites—the mozzarella is as basic as the button mushroom, the spaghetti squash as basic as the zucchini, and cilantro as basic as parsley.

Pizzas have become a passion and we love to make them in sizes ranging from mini to maxi, depending on how and when they are being served. With dough always available in the freezer, we can easily prepare pizzas in no time, ad-libbing with our own favorite fruits as toppings.

Pasta has become an integral part of our weekly menus, and at any given time there are sauces in the fridge or fresh vegetables in the crisper waiting to be tossed with steaming ribbons, tubes, or any of the dozens of attractive pasta shapes and flavors on the market.

Risotto, the staple of northern Italy, has become the rice of many moments in our kitchens. But other nutritious grains and beans have also been integrated into our diet, adding exciting flavors and textures that we had overlooked for too many years.

Fish and shellfish are regulars on our tables at home. We marvel at the delicate, yet rich flavors brought out by broiling, grilling, sautéing, and poaching. Today we see fish in our local shops that once were available only if we caught them ourselves, or if we were traveling in some other part of the world. Now they arrive in markets with their fragile flavors at their peak.

As we watch our cholesterol, we've taken more to chicken and less to eggs. So, while there was always a question as to which came first, there's no question at all as to which one wins the race. Chickens and their feathered friends are being cooked in more ways than ever, often shedding their skin to become lighter still. The trick today is to find the leanest birds around. And when you crave an egg and indulge, you want it to be either gloriously simple or a real flavor event—an omelet, frittata, strata, quiche, or a perfectly puffed soufflé.

The meat market abounds with leaner beef, veal, pork, lamb, and even tamed game, but we no longer see meat as the main event, and so are satisfied with smaller portions. We've been stimulated by the nuances of herbs and spices of many countries, although France and Italy still hold special places in our hearts and kitchens. We've adapted so many of

their ways with flavorful cuts of meat that their basics have become ours.

Our sweet tooth, never completely satisfied, craves everything from the simplest perfect pear or poached peach to the most decadent chocolate terrine. It depends on our mood, the texture and tone of the meal, the season, and our current passion. When we want to indulge, the once rarely craved brûlée or tiramisu has found as comfortable a place in our kitchen as an old-fashioned berry cobbler or homemade apple pie.

And so our pantries have evolved, our kitchens feel refreshed. There's a microwave on the counter, a bowl of bright lemons on the table, pots of fresh herbs on the windowsill. Our spice racks overflow with so many new selections next to old favorites—cumin, coriander, cardamom line up with rosemary, tarragon, sage. Our vegetable crispers are packed with lush greens, peppers, beets, and eggplants in a rainbow of colors. There are always tomatoes ripening to perfection for a quick bruschetta, fresh or dried wild mushrooms to turn into a glorious risotto or pasta sauce, and pesto to spread on crostini.

Our food tastes better than ever to us. We think it has something to do with the fact that the basics have changed—and so have we.

SYMBOLS



Some of the recipes are prefaced by a symbol. Here are what the symbols stand for:



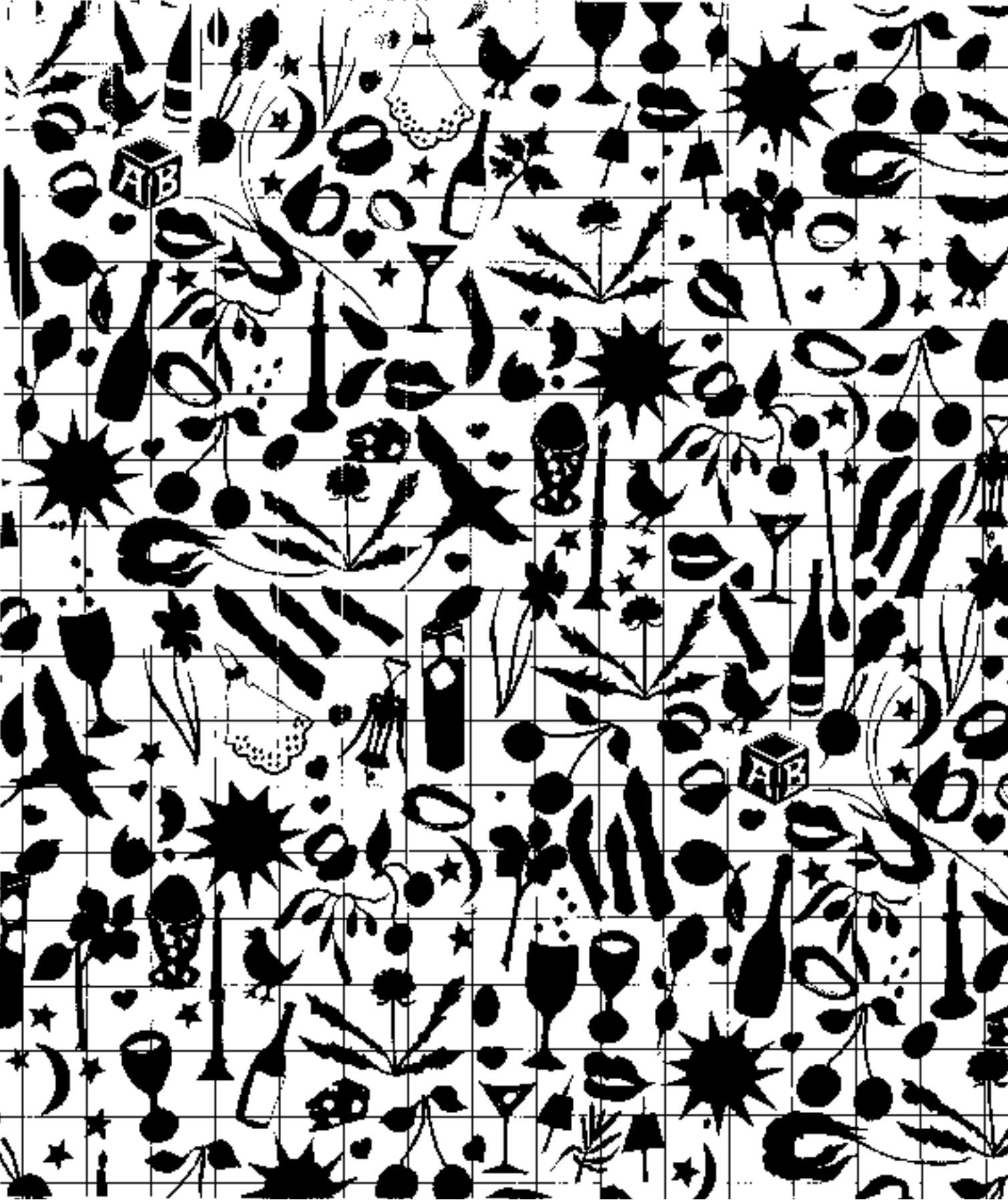
Microwave recipe



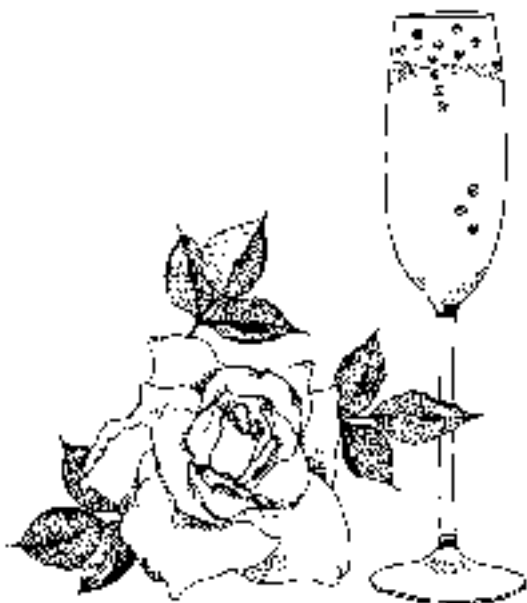
A basic from *The Silver Palate Cookbook*



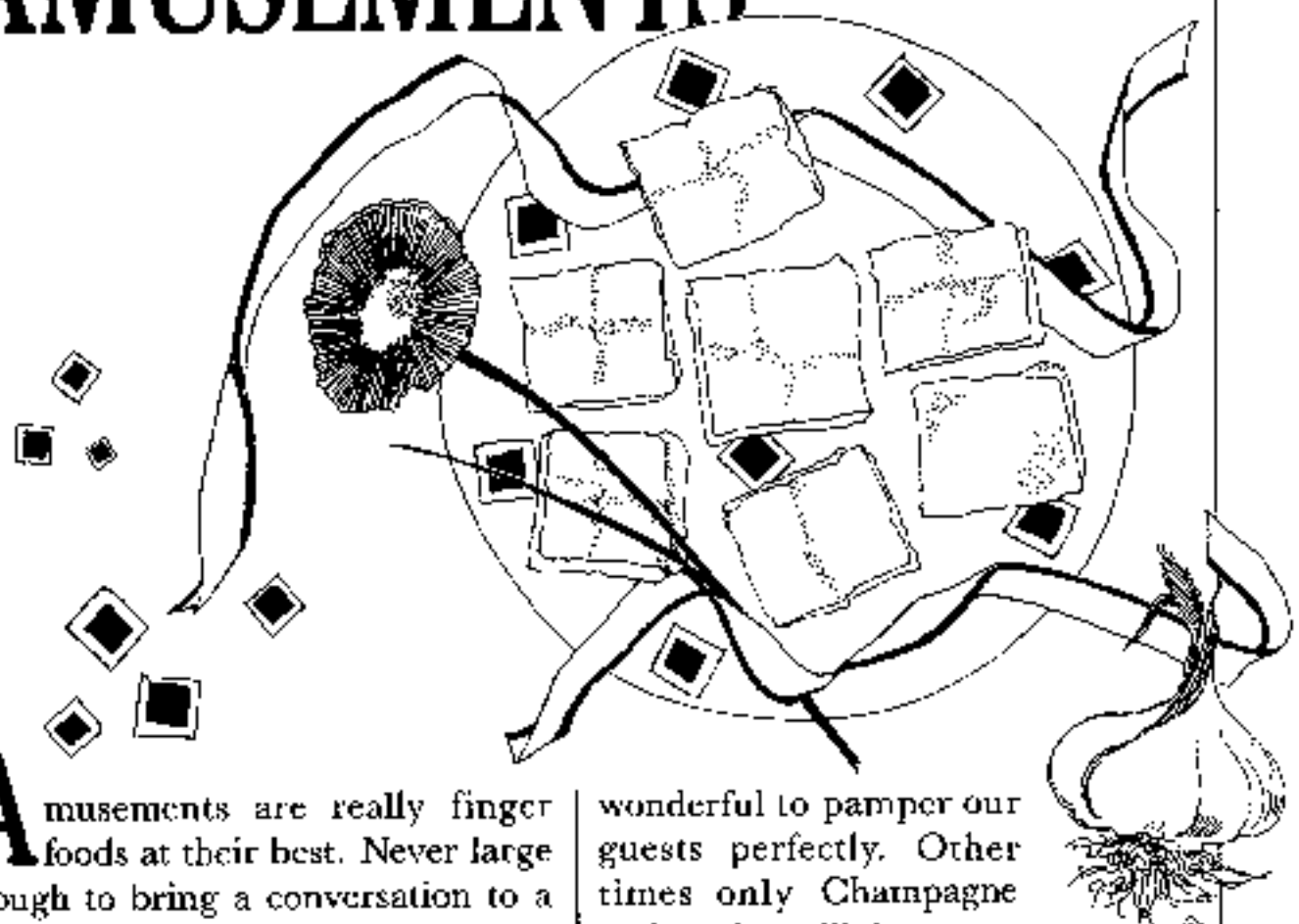
A basic from *The Silver Palate Good Times Cookbook*



FRESH BEGINNINGS



AMUSEMENTS



Amusements are really finger foods at their best. Never large enough to bring a conversation to a total stop, these bite-size little tastes are the perfect complement to a pre-dinner drink. Sometimes we like to amuse our guests with simple bowls of olives, chips, and dips, and pestos spread on rounds of toast or vegetables. Sometimes we crave a raw bar with every shellfish and sauce imaginable. Sometimes we want boards and baskets of crudités, pâtés, cheeses, and seafood mousses, or a bite of something warm and

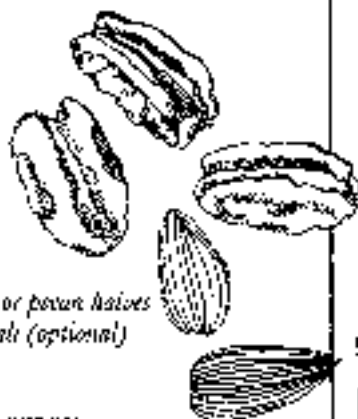
wonderful to pamper our guests perfectly. Other times only Champagne and caviar will do.

Whether the amusements *are* the party, or simply help to get the party rolling, these appetite teasers serve dozens of occasions perfectly. Cocktail parties are nothing more than drinks and two, three, or ten sorts of bite-size little tastes. If you have friends in for dinner or are gathering to go out, a cocktail with a little something to nibble on allows everyone to mix, mingle, and unwind.

SPICED PARTY NUTS

These make a great gift, and they're quick to prepare, so make some for yourself too. Always keep the batches in this size. The nuts need plenty of tossing and drying room.

½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon curry powder
½ teaspoon garlic salt
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cups shelled whole almonds or pecan halves
1 tablespoon coarse (kosher) salt (optional)
Garlic salt (optional)



1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Mix the cumin, chili powder, curry powder, garlic salt, cayenne, ginger, and cinnamon in a bowl. Set aside.
3. Heat the oil in a nonstick skillet over low heat. Add the spice mixture and stir well. Simmer to mellow the flavors, 3 or 4 minutes.
4. Place the nuts in a mixing bowl, add the spice mixture, and toss well. Spread the nuts in a single layer on a baking sheet. Bake for 15 minutes, shaking the pan once or twice.
5. Remove the baking sheet from the oven, and using a rubber spatula, toss the nuts with any spices and oil that have accumulated on the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle with the coarse salt, and a bit more garlic salt if desired. Let rest for 2 hours in a cool place. Store in airtight jars.

2 cups

"The beginning is the most important part of the work."

—PLATO

BEST BITES

A few bowls of earthy black, green, and purple olives, salty toasted nuts, caviar, toasted seeds, raisins, dried figs, apricots, apples, and dates, radishes with sweet butter, chips with dips, pestos and toasts, and *crostini*. They're hardly any work for the cook but dazzle the eye and titillate the taste buds. These are the lightest and easiest of all amusements.

CLASSIC TUSCAN CROSTINI

In Florence, *crostini* are a sign of hospitality. They greet you as prologues to a meal in homes and restaurants alike—tiny rounds of toast spread with anchovy paste, cheese, shellfish, or chicken liver pâté.

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup extra virgin olive oil
1 pound chicken livers, trimmed, rinsed, and patted dry
1 cup chopped onion
½ cup Bert's Chicken Stock (see Index) or canned broth
½ cup dry white wine
3 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
2 teaspoons crumbled dried sage leaves
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary leaves
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
3 tablespoons tiny capers, drained
4 anchovy fillets
1 ½ teaspoons tomato paste
Toasts made from thinly sliced French bread
Extra virgin olive oil, for assembling the crostini
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for garnish

1. Heat the butter and oil in a skillet over medium heat, and sauté the chicken livers and onions

until browned, about 10 minutes.

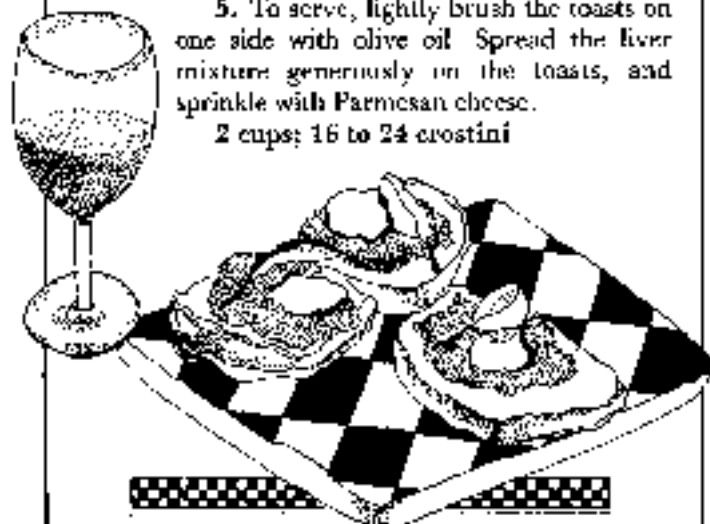
2. Add the stock, wine, garlic, sage, rosemary, and pepper to the skillet. Cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid has reduced by two thirds, 3 to 4 minutes.

3. Add the capers, anchovies, and tomato paste. Stir well, and cook 1 minute. Transfer the mixture to a food processor or blender, scraping the skillet well.

4. Purée the mixture until almost smooth. Remove it to a serving bowl, cover, and refrigerate at least 2 hours. Let the pâté stand at room temperature 30 minutes before serving.

5. To serve, lightly brush the toasts on one side with olive oil. Spread the liver mixture generously on the toasts, and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

2 cups; 16 to 24 crostini



CROSTINI

Crostini, Italian for "little crusts," originated as a clever way of using the very last bit of bread from yesterday's loaf. These small toasts are traditionally grilled over an open wood fire or under the broiler, drizzled with good olive oil, and topped with a mélange of mixtures from the simple to the complex. Crostini in one form or another are the invariable nibbles that precede a meal in Italy.

Crostini will stand up to almost anything you want to put on them. Some of our favorite savory crostini are: coarsely chopped olives, anchovy paste, caper butter, minced chicken livers, and chopped fresh herbs with capers.

OLIVADA CROSTINI

The perfect olive spread—pungent with capers and garlic—is topped with fresh mozzarella and roasted peppers and grilled ever so gently on bread slices for a delightful amusement.

1 red bell pepper, cored, halved, and seeded
1 yellow bell pepper, cored, halved, and seeded
1 narrow loaf Italian or French bread
2 balls (each about 6 to 8 ounces) fresh mozzarella cheese
1 cup Olivada (recipe follows)

1. Preheat the broiler.

2. Lay the peppers skin side up on a flat broiling pan, and place the pan 3 to 4 inches below the heat. Broil the peppers until the skins are charred (they should be black). Then place the peppers in a plastic bag, seal it with a twist tie, and set aside. Let the peppers steam in the bag for 20 minutes. Leave the broiler on.

3. Remove peppers from the bag and peel them. Slice them into thin strips, and set aside.

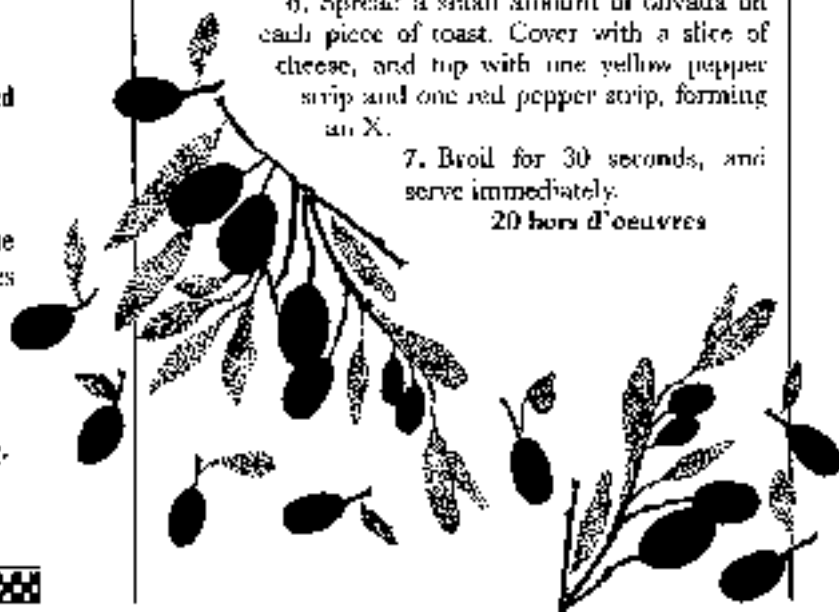
4. Slice the bread into twenty ¾-inch-thick slices. Place them under the broiler and toast for about 20 seconds on each side. Remove them from the broiler.

5. Slice the two mozzarella balls into twenty ¾-inch-thick pieces.

6. Spread a small amount of olivada on each piece of toast. Cover with a slice of cheese, and top with one yellow pepper strip and one red pepper strip, forming an X.

7. Broil for 30 seconds, and serve immediately.

20 hors d'oeuvres



OLIVES

Olives are an easy and attractive "bite" to serve with drinks. Choose a variety of black, purple, brown, and green, shriveled and plump, large and tiny. If they're preserved without a distinctive flavoring, toss them in a bit of good olive oil and add whatever herbs and flavoring ingredients strike your fancy.

ITALIAN

▲ **Alfonso** olives are huge, black, and delicious. Alfonsos also come from Spain, where they're green and usually stuffed, and South America, where they're not quite so black and have a meaty, sometimes mushy, texture.

▲ **Calabrese** are dull bronze-green and cracked. They are mellowed than Sicilians.

▲ **Gaeta** are small, wrinkled, and black or mahogany-colored. They're sometimes packed with rosemary and have a mild earthy flavor.

▲ **Liguria**, brown-black to black, are slightly acidic and very flavorful.

▲ **Lugano** are salty and dark purple-black.

▲ **Sicilian** are small, cracked green ovals, sharp and bitter-tasting, and traditionally spiced with red pepper and oregano or fennel.

FRENCH

▲ **Nicoise** are purple-brown to brown to black. Small, tender, and shiny, they have more pit to meat than most olives and are redolent with the perfume of Provence, where they are grown.

▲ **Nyons** are small, round, and reddish brown.

Their taste is pleasantly bitter.

▲ **Picholine** are medium green in color, fresh-tasting, crisp and tender, and a little salty, too.

GREEK

▲ **Calamata** (Kalamata), purple-black and shiny, with an elegant almond shape, are considered superior olives. Small ones have the richest flavor.

▲ **Naphtion** (Nafthion) are dark khaki-green, cracked and crisp, and taste fresh-fruity with a tart bite.

▲ **Royal** (Royal Victoria) are red to light brown to dark brown. Cured in olive oil and vinegar, they are like Calamatas in flavor and richness. Superbly luscious.

MOROCCAN

▲ **Morocco** olives are jet black, small, and shriveled like large raisins. They come packed with twigs and leaves.

CALIFORNIAN

Aside from the black olives packed in cans, California produces some of its own "ethnic" olives.

▲ **Dry-cured** are black, wrinkled, and tasty, with a meaty texture.

▲ **Greek-style black** have a purple tinge and firm flesh, with smoother, thicker skins than those grown in Greece.

▲ **Greek-style green** are cracked and fairly good.

▲ **Sicilian-style** are medium green and crisp.

OLIVADA

- 3/4 cup pitted black Italian or Calamata olives*
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic*
- 1 tablespoon capers, drained*
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil*
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley*

Combine the olives, garlic, and capers in a food processor, and process for a few seconds to combine. With the motor running, slowly drizzle the olive oil through the feed tube, and process until smooth. Transfer the mixture to a bowl, and stir in the parsley. This will keep for 2 to 3 days, covered, in the refrigerator.

1 cup

CRAVING CAVIAR

We would bet that no one has ever served caviar and had any left over, nor has anyone ever had enough. Caviar is far too rare and precious a pleasure for most. When you decide to indulge, treat it tenderly.

You must always buy from a reputable dealer who specializes in caviar and therefore has the greatest turnover. Choose a well-known producer and read the label. Smell and taste the product if you can: caviar should never smell or taste fishy or salty. Malossol is the best grade and the least salty. Jet black, golden yellow, gray, or dark brown, the eggs should look shiny, translucent, firm, perfectly whole, and distinct.

Keep caviar refrigerated (never frozen) until 15 minutes before serving. Ideally, place the entire open tin on a bed of crushed ice, with the lid alongside. To avoid crushing the eggs, transfer the caviar to plates carefully with a bone, tortoise-shell, or mother-of-pearl spoon (stainless steel will do, too). Never use silver, as it gives the caviar a metallic taste.

Accompany caviar with fresh toast points (crusts removed), with or without sweet butter. This is not the time to bring out the packaged crackers or toasts, or distract from the delicate flavor with lemon wedges, chopped egg, and sour cream. We like ours best with iced vodka, Champagne, aquavit, or dry white wine. Heavenly!

THE STURGEON DOES IT BEST

There are many types of fish eggs on the market, yet only eggs from the sturgeon can be labeled simply "caviar." Other fish roe processed in the same manner must be labeled with the name of the fish preceding the word "caviar." Sturgeons eggs come in several varieties:

▲ **Beluga** is gray and has the largest, best-quality, and mildest-flavored berry. The color is graded from

000 for the lightest gray (also the most prized) to 0 for the darkest.

▲ **Ossetra** is large grained and can be golden brown, bottle green, slate gray, or bluish white. Its flavor is more intense than the others'.

▲ **Sevruga** is the smallest grained and is dark gray to black. There are those who prefer sevruga above all others.

▲ **Keluga** caviar comes from northern Manchuria. The eggs are like beluga in size and gray, moist, and nonoily. The Chinese are striving to refine their processing of this caviar, and it may well be worth looking for in the future.

BUT OTHERS DO IT TOO

Salmon, whitefish, cod, flounder, saad, herring, scallops, crabs, and crawfish are all stuffed to the gills with eggs at spawning time. Cod has apple-pink roe, whitefish golden, and salmon Chinese red. Serving caviars of different colors is sheer drama.

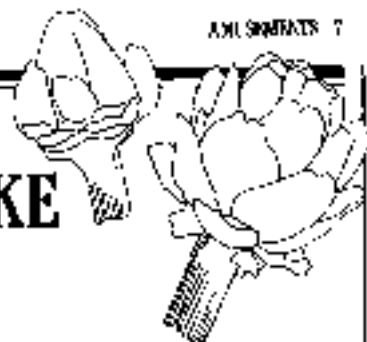
▲ **Keta** is red salmon roe. It is bright orange-red and large grained.

▲ **Lumpfish** caviar is naturally sand-colored but is dyed either black or red. It is inexpensive and can be used as a substitute for the more expensive varieties in dips or as a garnish. It must be added to recipes just before serving, as the dye tends to run.

▲ **Whitefish** caviar comes from the Great Lakes and Canada. It has a mild, crisp, and clean taste and, because of its small grain, is not oily. Some whitefish caviar is flavored with chiles or liqueur.

▲ **Crab, flying fish, and cod** caviar are used in Japan for sushi. The crab roe has a bittersweet flavor and a crunchy texture. The flying fish produces a caviar with crunch and a fishy flavor.





CAVIAR ARTICHOKE LEAVES

We use artichoke leaves instead of bread for these canapés. It's a light and elegant presentation for these little-size amusements.

2 artichokes
 ½ cup sour cream
 4 ounces red salmon caviar
 1 tablespoon snipped fresh chives or
 chopped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley



1. Wash the artichokes thoroughly, and trim away the tough outer leaves.

2. Place the artichokes in a saucepan, add an inch of water, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover, and simmer until tender, about 45 minutes. Remove the artichokes from the pan, and allow to drain and cool.

3. Place one of the artichokes in the center of a large plate. Peel the leaves away from the other artichoke (reserving the bottom for another use). Arrange the leaves in a circle around the whole artichoke. Place a small dollop of sour cream on the fleshy part of each leaf. Top it with a few caviar eggs, and garnish with chives.

8 to 10 portions

God roe resembles anchovy paste in both flavor and texture. These roes are often dyed pale orange or yellow.

JUST A SPOONFUL . . .

- ▲ Top thinly sliced bread with cream cheese, a layer of smoked salmon, and salmon caviar
- ▲ Spoon caviar on broiled oysters
- ▲ Stuff baby new potatoes with sour cream and top with a little caviar
- ▲ Stir salmon or whitefish caviar into softened butter and put a dollop on grilled fish
- ▲ Garnish soup with a lemon slice or a spoonful of sour cream topped with a dab of caviar
- ▲ Spread black bread with sweet butter and then pressed me. Sprinkle a few whole eggs over the top
- ▲ Spoon caviar on lightly scrambled eggs
- ▲ Frost a small round of J;Explosateur or St.-André cheese with several brightly colored caviars
- ▲ Stuff raw mushroom caps with sour cream and caviar
- ▲ Spoon sour cream on cucumber slices and sprinkle with minced hard-cooked egg and a little salmon caviar
- ▲ Garnish a seafood salad or fish mousse with caviar
- ▲ Sprinkle paper-thin carpaccio with caviar
- ▲ Gently toss angel hair pasta with crème fraîche and caviar
- ▲ Make a vinaigrette with fruity olive oil, fine wine vinegar, and a generous spoonful of caviar—serve on a salad of simple greens
- ▲ Serve four different spoonfuls—golden whitefish, salmon, beluga, and sevruga—on chilled glass plates around toast points
- ▲ Spoon lobster salad into artichoke bottoms and crown with caviar
- ▲ Toss sliced cooked potatoes with fresh mayonnaise and fold in caviar just before serving
- ▲ Top potato pancakes with a dollop of sour cream and a spoonful of caviar
- ▲ Crown beef tartare with caviar

TOMATO ARUGULA PROVENÇAL



This robust combination is a perfect topping for pizza, pasta, small puff-tart hors d'oeuvres, or just spread on crusty toasted French bread.

- 20 ripe plum tomatoes
 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 8 cloves garlic, finely minced
 1 large bunch arugula, well rinsed and pulled dry, stems removed and leaves coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)
 15 sun-dried tomatoes (packed in oil), drained and coarsely chopped
 3 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1. Bring 4 quarts of water to a boil in a large pot. Drop the tomatoes into the water and leave for 20 seconds. Then drain and cool under cold water. Peel, core, and seed the tomatoes, and coarsely chop.

2. Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add the chopped tomatoes, salt, and pepper. Simmer over medium heat for 15 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook another 5 minutes. Then add the arugula, mix thoroughly, and remove from the heat.

3. Add the sun-dried tomatoes and Parmesan cheese to the mixture, and gently fold together. Let the mixture rest, covered, in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours before serving. This dish may be made up to 2 days ahead.

4 cups



CASUAL INDIAN SUMMER COCKTAIL PARTY

- Elegant Eggplant Caviar
- Crudité With Sorrel Mayonnaise and Sesame Dip
- Grilled Comin Shrimp
- Herbed Clèvre Bites
- Classic Tuscan Crostini
- Tomato Arugula Provencal
- Spiced Party Nuts
- Crocks of Black and Green Olives
- Radishes With Sweet Butter



CAPONATA

Made subtly different from ratatouille by the addition of celery, Calamata olives, and capers, this is just the right consistency to fill One Bite Bread Cups and serve as canapés.

- 2 cups cubed peeled eggplant
 1 teaspoon coarse (kasha) salt
 4 tablespoons olive oil
 1 cup chopped onion
 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
 1/4 cup chopped celery
 2 cups drained canned plum tomatoes, chopped (reserve the juice)
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
 1 tablespoon minced garlic
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian (flat-leaf) parsley
 1/2 cup chopped pitted Calamata or Gaeta olives
 2 tablespoons capers, drained

1. Place the eggplant in a colander, sprinkle it with the coarse salt, and let it drain for 1 hour.

2. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large flame-proof casserole or dutch oven. Par the eggplant dry with paper towels, and add it to the casserole. Sauté over medium heat until soft and lightly browned, 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, remove the eggplant and set it aside. Add the remaining oil, then the onion, bell peppers, and celery to the casserole. Sauté over medium heat until the vegetables are softened, 10 minutes. Return the eggplant to the casserole.

3. Add the tomatoes, pepper, oregano, basil, garlic, parsley, olives, and capers. Simmer until the vegetables are tender, 15 minutes. If the mixture starts sticking while cooking, add the reserved juice from the tomatoes in small amounts. Serve hot or at room temperature.

4 cups

CAPONATA

Caponata is an Italian ratatouille with very similar ingredients—basically tomato, eggplant, onion, garlic, black and green olives, red peppers, and artichoke hearts. Traditionally, each vegetable is cooked separately in olive oil to its optimum point, seasoned with herbs, and then combined with the others. We've broken tradition in *The New Basics* and melded the ingredients from the start. We think it's tastier than ever!

Caponata can be served warm or at room temperature (never cold, for the flavors won't be at their best). In Italy it is often served as part of an antipasto platter, but we don't like to limit it. Begin by using it as a bed for slivered sausages or poached eggs for a first course; or serve it with crusty bread, a green salad, and olives for lunch. Let your imagination soar.

Combine the olives, garlic, and capers in a food processor and process to form a paste. With the motor still running, slowly add the olive oil through the feed tube and blend thoroughly. Then add the tuna and lemon juice, and continue processing until smooth.

1 cup

**ELEGANT
EGGPLANT CAVIAR**



We love serving a bit of this full-flavored "caviar" on the end of crisp Belgian endive leaves, atop soft scrambled eggs for brunch, or spread on grilled peasant bread toast.



- 1 eggplant
- 1/2 cup walnut pieces
- 1/2 cup minced onion
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley
- 1 to 2 teaspoons minced hot finger chile pepper,
depending on taste
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1. Prick the eggplant in several places with a fork. Place it on a microwave-safe dish and cook at full power (650 to 700 watts), uncovered, until soft and collapsed, 10 minutes. Set it aside to cool.

2. Arrange the walnut pieces on another microwave-safe dish and cook, uncovered, until fragrant and toasted, 2 1/2 minutes. Chop fine.

3. Scrape the eggplant flesh into a wooden chopping bowl and coarsely chop.

4. Stir in the walnuts, onion, parsley, chile pepper, garlic, salt, and pepper. Then slowly beat in the oil and lemon juice. Adjust the seasonings if necessary.

5. Cover loosely and let stand at room temperature for several hours before serving.

1 1/2 cups

Note: This recipe was cooked on High (full power).

**TAPENADE SANS
ANCHOVIES**

We've made a less salty tapenade by eliminating the intense flavor of anchovies. Serve on toasted crostini alongside summer-ripe tomatoes or mix with a bit of Light Lemon Mayonnaise and spread over thin slices of cold roasted veal.

- 1 cup pitted Niçoise or other black imported olives
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon capers, drained
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 can (3 1/2 ounces) tuna packed in oil, drained
- Juice of 1/2 lemon

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