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Cookbook offers a tart for Thanksgiving, and cranberries for all seasons



Joanna McQuillan Weeks
A Slice of Life

It's true: You really do learn something new every day.

For example, in reviewing "Cranberry Cooking for All Seasons," Nancy Cappelloni's book that will be available soon from Spinner Publications, I learned that some vines growing in Massachusetts are more than 150 years old and still bear fruit.

I thought I knew quite a bit about cranberries, having grown up here, visited Cranberry World, judged a cranberry cooking contest, and even fallen into a bog ditch when picking berries with my parents when I was a kid. But it never occurred to me that the vines could live that long.

It took a primary-school teacher from Marin County, Calif., just north of San Francisco, to give me that bit of knowledge.

While waiting for a plane from Hyannis to Nantucket on a trip with friends, Ms. Cappelloni became intrigued with cranberries after reading an article about the harvest in an airline magazine.

Having earlier authored "Ethnic Cooking the Microwave Way," published by Lerner, she started investigating the idea of a cranberry cookbook.

"Lo and behold, I found out that besides Joe's (Spinner publisher Joe Thomas) book on the cranberry harvest, there really weren't any single-subject books about the cranberry," Ms. Cappelloni said. She's been working on the book, which will be available by Dec. 1, since 1995.

"It takes a big chunk out of your life, but it's fascinating," she commented. One great benefit is the wonderful people, so enthusiastic and willing to share, she's met during her research, Ms. Cappelloni said, such as Helen Manning, a Wampanoag elder from Aquinnah.

"Though the cranberry has found its way into many cookbooks, it generally plays a background role," the book's introduction states. "'Cranberry Cooking for All Seasons' is unique because the cranberry is the star. Besides offering you the best cranberry recipes on Earth, you will learn about cranberry history, legend and folklore, as well as harvesting, production and cooking." I couldn't sum it up better myself.

As good mothers say about their children, Ms. Cappelloni says of her recipes, "I do love them all, but I definitely have some favorites." She said she found the chapter on poultry, pork, game and duck the most challenging, and particularly recommends Pork Chops with Simmered Cranberries. Others that caught my eye from that section were Oven Braised Ribs, Chicken with Honey and Dried Fruit, and Muscovy Duck Breasts in Sherry, Port and Cranberries.

Just to pique your appetite, I'll mention a few more: Sri Lankan Cranberry Chutney, Crunchy Cranberry Salad Mold, Tangerine Yams with Cranberries, Cranberry Creme Brulee, Zucchini Cranberry Nut Bread, and California Cranberry Berry Smoothie.

Spinner will hold a "Christmas Book Festival" from 4 to 7 p.m. Dec. 15 at the UMass Dartmouth Star Store campus to introduce "Cranberry Cooking for All Seasons" and other new books. Ms. Cappelloni will attend, and Mr. Thomas promises cranberry treats and beverages will be served. The richly illustrated soft-cover book, containing more than 125 recipes, will cost \$19.95. For more information, call Spinner at (508) 994-4564.

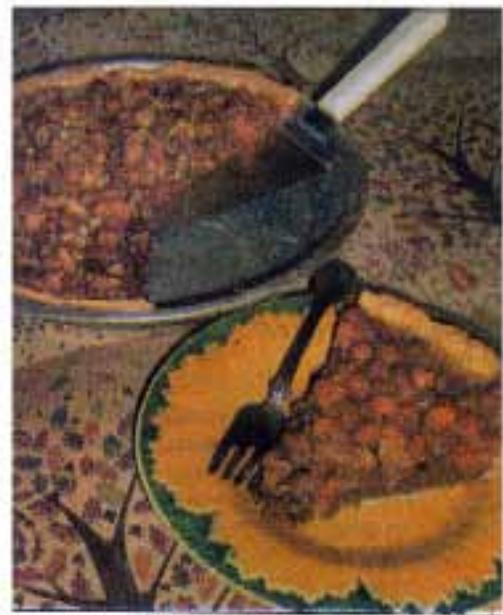
Here's a sample recipe from the book that would make a great addition to your Thanksgiving table. I think you'll agree, as Ms. Cappelloni writes in introducing the recipe, "It makes a stunning holiday dessert."

CRANBERRY NUT TART

Serves eight to 10. From "Cranberry Cooking for All Seasons."

3 large eggs
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup light corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 cup butter, melted
1 tablespoon flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/4 cups walnuts, hazelnuts or pecans, lightly roasted and coarsely chopped
3 cups whole fresh or frozen cranberries (a 12-ounce bag) **One 9- or 10-inch pie crust**

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
- In a large mixing bowl whisk together the eggs, brown sugar, corn syrup, vanilla and butter. Add the flour and salt and stir until the mixture is smooth. Stir in the nuts, and gently fold in the cranberries.
- Bake the pie crust in the middle of a 425 degree oven for 10 minutes. Remove the crust from the oven and let it cool for 10 minutes. Lower oven heat to 350 degrees.
- Pour the cranberry-nut mixture into the crust and bake for 45 to 50 minutes or until the crust is golden and the tart has set. Cool on a rack.
- Serve warm or at room temperature, either plain or with ice cream or whipped cream. This tart can be made a day in advance and stored covered at room temperature.



JOANNA MCQUILLAN WEEKS/Standard-Times special
Cranberry Nut Tart would be a splendid dessert to serve your Thanksgiving guests. It's from "Cranberry Cooking for All Seasons."