

BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

Traveling with Jewish Taste

The Gefilte Manifesto

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



Ashkenazi spirit” into your everyday eating and drinking.”

The syrup itself was super easy to prepare, especially since the rhubarb patch in my backyard garden was at the height of its springtime glory. And the flavor? Refreshing, but do go light on your pouring unless you like things very sweet. A little syrup goes a long way.

This cookbook has an entire chapter on pickling, something I had only tried a couple of times before. The recipe for Cardamom Pickled Grapes intrigued me and, since I happened to have all the ingredients in the house, I gave it a shot. I was pleasantly surprised by the sweet-tart mix of flavors rendered by a mix of spices and chile pepper, white wine vinegar, and sugar. These crisp little orbs would be a great addition to a mezze tray.

Drinks and appetizers are nice, but I still needed to make supper. The Leek and Onion Frittata sounded yummy; after all, it was made with three types of onions, one of my all-time favorite foods. What could be bad?

Because I was preparing the recipe for review, I followed it faithfully, even though I did question the call for 2½ teaspoons of kosher salt. With puckered mouth, we regretfully had to dump the eggs as they were far too salty. A word to the wise, and especially to the sodium conscious: If you make this recipe, cut down the salt!

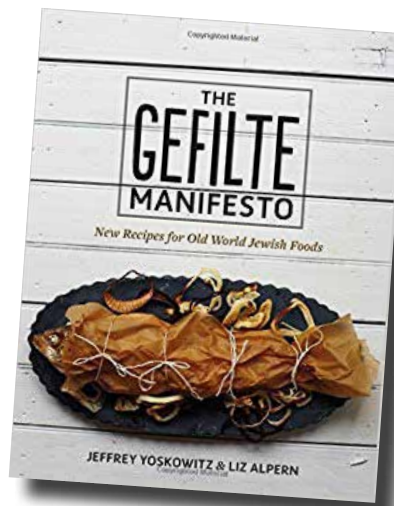
The week was flying by and my calendar was full, so I decided to try the Spicy Hungarian Cholent. Even though the recipe called for lima beans, not my favorite legume, I was willing to take one for the team. And, it was the perfect opportunity to test-drive my new Crockpot.

But first, a confession: Having learned my lesson with the frittata, I did not follow the recipe faithfully. I didn't want to take any chances, especially given that kosher meat is expensive. Throwing out a few eggs is tolerable; throwing out a chuck roast is not. I cut the salt drastically, figuring that I could always add more if needed. After all, kosher meat has already been soaked and salted. Also, I chose to leave out the optional hot paprika, but did use the called-for dried chile, thinking I could always add more heat later.



Authors Jeffrey Yoskowitz and Liz Alpern

A most amazing aroma filled every corner of the house during the long cooking time. And the result? A delicious, if heavy, mixture of meat, beans, barley, onions, garlic, and potatoes. This is a dish probably best served in the dead of



for its resemblance to a snail's spiral. However, I was certainly familiar with crescent-shaped rugelach, and the recipe for the schnecken looked eerily familiar. On poking into some culinary history, I learned that in the United States, and even in Israel, these delectable treats are often mistaken for one another, even though the Germans traditionally prepare a yeast dough that yields something more like cinnamon buns than the rich, sweet cookies that are the cream cheese-based rugelach.

No matter what you call them, the result is absolutely delicious.

winter, not on a hot summer's night.

Finally came dessert, so I chose Bessie Weinstein's Schnecken. Given that my ancestors came from Eastern Europe, I had never heard of this German pastry, named

Fair warning: The recipes in *The Gefilte Manifesto: New Recipes for Old World Jewish Foods* are strictly Ashkenazi, so you won't find a recipe for falafel, shakshuka, or a nice sabich. But the Ashkenazi recipes you will find are not necessarily exactly like Bubbie's. The authors, Jeffrey Yoskowitz and Liz Alpern, have added some interesting updates to their Old Country dishes, so you'll find everything from a kimchi-stuffed cabbage to a pierogi stuffed with lentils and chard. But then, you'll also find a nice, traditional hamantaschen.

Before I get into the recipes themselves, let me vent my displeasure with the publisher. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Cookbooks need to have bindings that allow the book to lie flat! My JNF blue box had to be put into service to hold down the pages. (The upside was that I realized it was time to turn it in to the Hadassah lady.)

Now, for the food. I started off in the chapter on beverages, wherein Yoskowitz and Alpern do their take on the late 19th/early 20th century Lower East Side practice of infusing seltzer with light flavors. Rhubarb Syrup is one of the syrups they claim will bring "a bit of that

Cardamom Pickled Grapes

Want to make a statement at your next party? Put these lovely little orbs on the table. Yoskowitz and Alpern give an alternative use: pulsing them to make a relish to pair with soft cheeses.

Ingredients

- 1½ pounds seedless red or black grapes
- 1½ cups white wine vinegar
- 1½ cups sugar
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, plus a pinch
- 1½ teaspoons whole black peppercorns
- 1 cinnamon stick

- 1½ heaping teaspoons green cardamom pods, lightly crushed
- 1 dried chile pepper
- ¾ teaspoon ground allspice



Directions:

Wash the grapes well and remove them from the stems. Place in a clean quart-size jar. In a small saucepan, combine the remaining ingredients to make a brine. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 3 minutes, stirring well. Remove the brine from the heat and let cool until warm but not hot. Pour the brine over the grapes and close the jar. Let cool to room temperature before refrigerating. Let sit for 24 hours in the refrigerator before serving. The grapes will stay delicious in the refrigerator for about 3 weeks.

Carol Goodman Kaufman is a psychologist and author with a passion for travel and food. She is currently at work on a food history/cookbook, tracing the paths that some of our favorite foods have taken from their origins to appear on dinner plates and in cultural rites and artifacts around the world. She invites readers to read her blog at carolgoodmankaufman.com and to follow her on Twitter @goodmankaufman.

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