



chapter four

OTHER NATURAL MEATS

THIS NEW WORLD grew up eating wild foods. Today, with trout and deer even thicker in many parts of the continent than during log-cabin days, one out of every five North Americans hunts, fishes, or does both.

Nearly everyone throws back to some degree to the characteristics of his caveman ancestors and, on occasion, finds satisfaction in living for a time as a primitive being. But hunting seasons are often short and the times between all too long. Then most of us must again depend on the butcher. But this is all the more reason to get the best, too, out of the meats he has to offer.

BEEF STEAK

Try to get a top grade, corn fed, fat marbled, light cherry red, boneless, 2-inch-thick, 2-pound sirloin steak that has been aged 4 or 5 weeks in the cooler. Whether the fat is yellow or white is unimportant, but the insides of the steer's bones should be red and porous, indicating that the animal was young.

Settle for wiping the steak with a clean damp cloth. Then rub the meat with your idea of enough salt and freshly ground black pepper. Using some of the discarded fat, rub your grill to avoid sticking. Preheat the broiler at a high temperature for 12 minutes.

Lay the steak 5 inches beneath the flame, searing each side rapidly to conserve as much as possible of the natural juices. For rare meat, most nutritious and therefore best if you like it, broil 10 minutes on each side. Medium takes an additional 5 minutes a side and well-done another 5 minutes on each side. Do not knife on your slab of butter or margarine until the cooking is finished. Serve the slices on hot plates while the meat is still sputtering.

BRAISED BEEF

Marinate a 4-pound top round of beef for 1 1/2 days in the refrigerator, lifting the cover and forking it over several times, in 1/2 cup olive oil, 1/2 cup dry sherry, 1/4 cup tarragon vinegar, a minced medium-size onion, a thinly sliced carrot, a finely chopped stalk of celery with the leaves, 2 dozen crushed peppercorns, a diced clove of garlic, 6 sprigs parsley, a bay leaf, a teaspoon paprika, and 1/8 teaspoon each thyme and rosemary. Finally, take out the beef and wipe it dry. Strain and keep the marinade.

Lard the meat with a 1/2 pound of fat and cold salt pork that you have sliced into long thin strips. Your butcher may be obliging enough to do this for you, or you can use a big larding needle to thread the slim lengths of fat through the lean beef at right angles to its grain, later cutting off any parts that protrude beyond the surface.

Brown the meat all over in 1 1/2 tablespoons butter or margarine in the bottom of a Dutch oven. Then warm 1/4 cup Metaxa brandy, set it afire, and tilt it over the beef. When the short-lived flames have abated, fork out the beef for the time being.

Now smoothly blend 3 tablespoons of flour with a teaspoon of tomato paste and add this to another melted 1 1/2 tablespoons of butter or margarine in the preferably heavy, cast-iron receptacle. Stir in the strained marinade, 1/2 can of concentrated beef broth, and any necessary salt and freshly ground black pepper. Bring to a rolling bubble, cover, and keep simmering 2 hours or until fork tender.

Set the fragrant chunk of meat on a hot platter, garnished with mushrooms and parsley, and cut about 1/2 of it into thin slices, drenching these with a generous amount of the strained gravy and serving what's left of the pleasantly odiferous liquid in a gravy boat.

BAKED LAMB CHOPS

This way of baking thick, prime, loin lamb chops will add deliciousness to even these widely desirable tidbits. Arrange 4 such carefully chosen chops in a low open pan along with a large, firmly ripe tomato cut into 8 wedges and a large sliced brown onion.

Blend 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, 1/2 teaspoon oregano, 1/4 teaspoon paprika, 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, and 1/8 teaspoon parsley flakes and sprinkle over the meat. Then barely cover with water and slide into a moderate 375° oven for 45 minutes. afterwards, turn the meat and bake 1/2 hour more. Serve the then delectable liquid as the gravy.

BRAISED LEG OF LAMB

Cut away all excess fat and strip as much as possible of the parchmentlike membrane from a small 4 or 5-pound leg of lamb. Insert a clove of garlic in the meat at the shank. Then brown with a melted stick of butter or margarine, in a Dutch oven, turning the lamb to reach all sides.

Dust lightly all over with garlic salt, freshly ground black pepper, and paprika. Sprinkle with 1/4 cup chopped parsley and add 2 later-removed bay leaves. Then pour on

1/2 can concentrated beef broth into which you've stirred a teaspoon thyme. Cover snugly and simmer slowly, still atop the stove, for 3 hours.

Then interrupt the braising only long enough to pour most of the liquid into a small saucepan where you can thicken it by simmering it uncovered. Spoon off as much of the fat as possible.

Meanwhile, add 2 cups of halved and pitted green olives and 3 tablespoons butter or margarine to the bubbling contents of the Dutch oven, stirring the olives well in the juices.

Serve the lamb sliced on a hot platter, garnished with the olives and fresh sprigs of parsley and drenched with the saucepan of steaming, reduced deliciousness.

BROILED PORK TENDERLOIN

Cut a pork tenderloin, perhaps the choicest portion of the pig, crossways into inch-thick slices, rub lightly with a little freshly ground black pepper, and pan broil slowly over a low heat for about 1/2 hour or until very tender, turning it at short intervals so that it will brown evenly. Garnish it with melting butter or margarine, chopped parsley, and a bright dusting of paprika.

Timing it so that they'll be done at the same time, peel 4 bananas, scatter 1/2 teaspoon brown sugar and a bit of grated lemon peel atop each, set in a low well-greased pan, and bake in a moderate 350° oven 15 or 20 minutes or until the fruit begins to puff and blister on top. It'll really set off the savor of the sputtering pork.

ROAST PORK LOIN

Get a 4-pound center cut of loin, preferably with firm, fine-grained, whitish meat and firm white fat, planning to roast it the day it is brought home from the butcher's shop. First, though, have that worthy saw through the bone so that the cooked chunk can be carved more easily.

Rub salt and freshly ground black pepper generously into the roast before setting it, fat side up so that it will be self-basting, in a roasting pan. Lay thinly sliced onion over the top. Roast in a moderate 350° oven for 3 hours. For added delectability, serve hot applesauce.

STUFFED CHICKEN BREASTS

These were first served to us by Canadian artist and world-traveler Michael John Richmond in, of all places, his neighboring Hudson Hope log cabin. Mike's recipe is for eight diners, but that's all right as the stuffed chicken breasts, of which you'll need 1/2 breast per serving, are equally good cold. Leave the skin on the breasts. You'll also need 8 slices of thinly cut cooked ham.

Bone the chicken breasts or have your butcher do it. If the breasts are whole, cut them in half. Smash each halved breast with the side of a cleaver until quite flat.

Blend 1/2 cup butter, 1/2 cup chopped fresh mushrooms, 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, 1/4 cup chopped green onions, 1 teaspoon salt, another of freshly ground black pepper, and 1/8 teaspoon powdered garlic. Shape the resulting mixture into 8 little butter balls. Freeze these.

Lay a strip of ham over the filleted breast, enclose a frozen butter ball, roll the meat tightly around it, and secure shut with toothpicks. Place the stuffed breasts snugly together in a chilled dish in the refrigerator or ice box until ready to use.

Then dip the cold stuffed breast into flour, beaten egg, and finally fine bread crumbs in that order. Drop into hot fat and deep fry for 8 to 10 minutes, until well browned. Serve the first round at once. See if they aren't as wonderful as a first kiss.

CHICKEN A LA KING

Melt 1 1/2 sticks of butter or margarine, or preferably, 3/4 cup of chicken fat, in your heavy, cast-iron frypan.

Saute for 5 minutes 1 cup diced mushrooms and 1/4 cup diced pimento. Pour in a cup of heavy cream and another of whole milk and heat, stirring, short of a bubble.

Smoothly blend 1/2 cup of sifted flour into a thin paste with a little water and slowly add this to the contents of the frypan, all the time stirring. Season with 2 tablespoons salt and 1/8 teaspoon white pepper. Cook over low heat, always short of a simmer, until the sauce thickens. Then stir in 2 1/2 cups of diced cooked chicken and heat for serving, garnished with parsley and egg slices. If you find yourself preparing this often, the addition of 3 tablespoons of your best sherry just before it goes on the table will on occasion provocatively touch up the flavor.

ARROZ CON POLLO

For chicken and rice with a difference, disjoint about a 3 1/2-pound chicken and saute the pieces slowly in a large frypan with 1/2 cup olive oil until golden brown. Warm 2 tablespoons of dry sherry in a small saucepan, touch a match to it, and drench the chicken with this. Then add 3 finely diced medium-size green peppers, a finely diced medium-size white onion, and a mashed clove of garlic. Simmer everything gently until the onions are brown. Stir in 2 peeled and diced medium-size fresh tomatoes and cook 3 more minutes.

Then move everything into a well-greased casserole or baking dish that can later be transferred to a pad in the center of the table. Add a quart of chicken broth, 2 cups of long grain rice, and the merest pinch of saffron. Salt to taste and include 1/8 teaspoon red pepper. Then stir carefully with a wooden spoon, working from the rim toward the center without removing the spoon until you're finished, this to avoid breaking up the rice. Bring to a boil atop the stove. Cover and set in a moderate 350° oven for an hour.

To decorate this truly memorable dish, at the end remove the cover and arrange attractively over the top of the steaming delectableness 6 tablespoons of freshly simmered green peas, a tablespoon of chopped parsley, and 8 slices of pimento.

TURKEY TETRAZZINI

Saute with a stick of butter or margarine in your frypan 1/2 cup of thinly sliced mushrooms until lightly browned. Add 2 cups cooked turkey strips, 2 tablespoons dry sherry, 1 cup turkey stock, 1 cup heavy cream, the merest pinch of grated nutmeg, and salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Stirring over low heat, bring to a point just short of a simmer.

Blend 2 tablespoons of flour and an equal amount of butter or margarine into a smooth paste. Stir this, bit by bit, into the steaming turkey mixture. Continuing to stir, cook 5 minutes with no more than the occasional bubble plopping to the surface.

You'll need to boil 1/2 pound of thin spaghetti in salted water until tender but still firm to the bite, according to the directions on the package, first bending it gradually into the pot of hot liquid so that it will remain long. Drain in a colander. Then coil in a buttered, shallow casserole or baking dish that can be taken to the table.

Add the turkey mixture. Sprinkle with 3/4 cup of freshly grated Parmesan cheese. Bake in a preheated moderate 375° oven for 1/2 hour or until temptingly golden.

TURKEY AND ALMONDS

Mix 3 tablespoons flour into a thin paste with a little cold water and, stirring, blend smoothly with 2 tablespoons of melted butter or margarine, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/8 teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper. Pour in 1/2 cup turkey stock and bring to a simmer. Then remove from the

heat and stir in 1/2 cup regular cream. Break up an egg with a fork and add that.

Mixing as you proceed, add in order 1 tablespoon diced onion, 1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley, 1/8 teaspoon celery salt, 1/8 teaspoon paprika, 1/2 cup soft white bread crumbs, 1/2 cup slivered almonds, 1/4 cup sauteed sliced mushrooms, and 2 cups finely chopped cooked turkey.

Once everything is thoroughly blended, put into 4 large, buttered custard cups or similar containers, set these in a low flat pan of hot water, and bake in a moderate 325° oven 1/2 hour.

ROAST GUINEA HEN

A 4-pound guinea hen, next door to game in flavor, can be exceedingly good when roasted if properly seasoned and larded. Your butcher, especially as in most markets such a bird is a special event, may help matters along for you by sticking little slivers of fat in the breast. Lacking this, at least shove a chunk of salt pork into the cavity after rubbing the bird well inside and out with salt and freshly ground black pepper, truss the legs close to the body, arrange on a rack in a roasting pan, and drape several strips of salt pork over the top.

Roast uncovered in a moderate 325° oven for an hour or until fork-tender. For that crowning fillip, when the guinea hen is established at the table on a hot platter on its bed of steaming wild rice and 1/2 cup pinons, warm 1/4 cup of brandy in a small saucepan, set afire, and pour over everything.

GUINEA HEN PARMESAN

This is for that special foursome, as the subtly gamy guinea hen is usually both rather expensive and difficult to find, often having to be especially ordered. You'll need the boned and skinned breasts of 4, browned on both sides with 1/2 stick of butter or margarine in an oven proof pan you

can cover. Once the meat is bronzed, add 8 fresh sliced mushrooms, put on the lid, and slide into a preheated hot 400° oven for a dozen minutes.

Afterwards, pour over the cooked fowl a sauce you've made by stirring and heating a cup of heavy cream and a jigger of your best sherry in a saucepan for 3 minutes, then removing it from the stove and thickening it by beating in an egg yolk. Sprinkle the birds with 1/2 cup of freshly grated Parmesan cheese, dust liberally with parsley flakes and paprika, and brown under the broiler.

Have ready 4 slices of lightly browned, cooked, smoked ham and 4 large slices of sourdough bread, cut 1/2-inch thick and sauteed in 1/4 stick butter or margarine until golden on both sides. Arrange the sourdough slabs on a hot platter. Place a slice of ham atop each. Then spoon on each portion of the guinea hen, mushrooms, and sauce. Serve at once, while the bread is still crisp.

DOMESTIC DUCK A L'ORANGE

Domestic duck is a far different article from the whistle-winged wild bird you finally manage to bag from a blind, and when roasting one, for example, you'll want to prick the skin periodically with your fork to let the excess fat escape.

For a domestic duckling for this recipe, one weighing about 5 pounds, rub it well with freshly ground black pepper, paprika, and salt and place a segmented orange in the cavity before consigning it to a rack in your roasting pan and setting it, uncovered, in a moderate 325° oven. Roasting it some 20 minutes per pound will be right, at the end of which time the drumsticks should wiggle easily, and when you jab it with a fork, the emerging juice will not be pink. Meanwhile, be periodically removing the excess grease so that its level does not meet the meat.

When the fowl is almost done, pour off all that remains of the accumulated fat and daub the top of the bird with a

mixed 1/4 cup apiece of maple syrup and frozen concentrated orange juice. Turn up the oven heat 50° and let the bird glaze in it for 20 minutes.

While the oven activities are going on, keep the neck and the sliced giblets with the exception of the liver, bubbling in salted water to cover. This will give you a savory broth by the time you are ready to concoct the sauce. Also, peel a ripe thin-skinned orange, cut the rind into slivers, boil these 12 minutes in enough water to cover, and then scatter them on absorbent paper to drain.

Prepare the sauce by bringing to a simmer what's left of the 12-ounce can of frozen orange juice concentrate, 1 cup of some tart jelly such as currant, and 1 cup of the strained giblet broth, stirring until everything is dissolved. Add a tablespoon of lemon juice, a teaspoon powdered ginger, and the slivered rind, and simmer 3 minutes more. Serve everything hot, the pieces and slices of delectably glazed duckling streaming with the sauce.

DOMESTIC DUCK CASSEROLE

Rub a duckling, weighing about 5 pounds, inside and out with freshly ground black pepper, seasoned salt, and paprika. Set on a rack in a roasting pan and relegate to a hot 425° oven until it bronzes, pricking it occasionally with a fork to let the melting fat escape, all the time watching the bird carefully to make sure it does not burn.

Then, pouring off and saving for other cooking needs the accumulated grease, add a medium-size minced onion, a medium-size chopped carrot, a thinly sliced stalk of celery, a crushed clove of garlic, a bay leaf, and 1/8 teaspoon thyme. Lower the heat to a moderate 325° and cook an hour. Then take out the duckling and allow it to cool enough so that you can quarter it. Put these quarters on a hot platter in the oven with the heat shut off.

In the meantime, simmer the giblets except for the liver (which you can enjoy as a separate reward, sauteed for a

minute on each side in a tablespoon of butter or margarine) and the neck in enough lightly salted water to cover. Drain the results into another saucepan and boil down the liquid, if necessary, to 1 cup. Discard the neck, first removing what meat you can and chopping this and the giblets. Blend 2 tablespoons sifted flour smoothly with 2 tablespoons of the melted duck fat. Add the chopped giblets and the flour paste to the stock and simmer, stirring, until the resulting gravy thickens.

Brown 8 small white onions with 2 tablespoons of the reserved duck fat in the bottom of a casserole. Add a package of frozen green peas, a shredded half of a heart of crisp lettuce, 2 cups boiling water, a tablespoon of sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt. Bring to a bubble, cover, and cook 1/2 hour. Then take off the heat, dust with paprika, and fold in 1/2 stick of butter or margarine.

Bring the platter of hot roast duckling out of the oven. Surround it with the vegetables from the casserole, and pour the gravy over the bird. Serve with applesauce.

CRUNCHY, CRISPY CORNISH GAME HEN

Take 4 of the little game hens and lightly butter them. Then roll them in a mixture of prepared stuffing mix that has been mashed into crumbs with a rolling pin and reinforced with 5 tablespoons Parmesan cheese and 2 tablespoons parsley flakes. Slide into a preheated hot 400° oven and bake until brown and tender—some 45 to 50 minutes. The results will be delectably crisp and crunchy.

BETTY BROWN'S ROCK CORNISH GAME HEN

Here is a favorite of ours that our good friend Betty Brown serves at least once for her lieutenant colonel husband and us whenever we are visiting their home, Seawynd, on Puget Sound. Before placing the 4 tiny fowl in pans, Betty soaks them 1 1/2 hours in salted water.

Then she blends 1 1/2 sticks butter, 2 tablespoons seasoned salt, 1 tablespoon onion powder, 1 1/2 teaspoons basil, 1 1/2 teaspoons rosemary, 1 1/2 teaspoons paprika, 1 teaspoon summer savory, and 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper. She coats the birds well with this, then bakes them uncovered 1 1/2 hours in a moderate 350° oven.

These are excellent with rice. Betty uses Uncle Ben's Wild and Long Grain Rice mix, preparing it according to the directions on the package. She also sautes a cup of sliced fresh mushrooms and adds these to the rice along with 1 beaten egg. Then she pours the rice mixture into a greased pan, covers it, and pops it into the oven the last 20 minutes the birds are cooking.

ROAST ROCK CORNISH HEN

To make rapturous little roasts of 4 rock cornish game hens, season the inside of the birds with salt, freshly ground black pepper, and a delicate dusting of powdered garlic.

A good stuffing can be prepared by stirring a cup of long-grain white or brown rice in 2 tablespoons of butter or margarine in your frypan over low heat until golden. Then add 1 1/2 cups chicken broth or bouillon, 1/4 cup dry sherry, cover, and allow to bubble until all the liquid is absorbed. Pack loosely in the body cavities and sprinkle everything with paprika. Shape any remaining stuffing into tiny balls to roast along with the birds.

Place the hens, breast sides up, in a shallow roasting pan. Melt a stick of butter or margarine and pour over them. Set in a preheated hot 400° oven, covered with a sheet of foil, for 1/2 hour. Then carefully remove the foil, brush with the drippings, and roast uncovered for 20 minutes or until the drumsticks are soft and pink juice does not ooze out when the thickest part of a thigh is pierced with a sharp fork. Serve at once, perhaps when the sunset is turning the horizon as excitingly crimson as the paprika.

ROCK CORNISH GAME HEN WITH COFFEE

Ever since the momentous day when the coffee berry, according to fable, was discovered on an Abyssinian hillside, more and more people throughout the world have been refreshing themselves with this bracing drink. Here's a way to enjoy the stimulating bean in your meat cookery.

Shake the 4 game hens, one by one, in a paper bag containing 1/2 cup sifted flour seasoned with a teaspoon of salt, a teaspoon of powdered instant coffee, and 1/8 teaspoon of freshly ground black pepper. Turning as necessary, brown in 1/4 stick of butter or margarine in a heavy frypan over low heat. Then tip into a well-greased casserole along with a dozen small white onions and an equal number of small scraped carrots.

Bring 2 cups of chicken bouillon to a simmer in a saucepan, stir in 1/4 cup good dry sherry and 1 tablespoon powdered instant coffee, tilt over the fowl, and cover. Bake in a preheated hot 400° oven 1/2 hour. Then add a package of frozen green peas, sprinkle with paprika, recover, and bake another 20 minutes or until the little birds are tender.

While this is going on, prepare enough mixed brown and wild rice for four according to the directions on the package and concoct about 1 1/2 cups of mushroom sauce for your gravy boat.

Start this sauce by melting 3 tablespoons of butter or margarine in a frypan over low heat. Add 1/2 pound of diced mushrooms and saute until shriveled. Then stir in 3 tablespoons sifted flour, first blended into a thin paste with a little water, several drops of the juice from a crushed clove of garlic. Cook 5 minutes over the same conservative heat. Stirring continually, pour in a cup of cream bit by bit. Season with a dissolved beef bouillon cube, a dusting of paprika, and salt to taste. Touch up with a dash of Worcestershire sauce if you like that flavor. This would have been worthy of a toast at any period of history.