

# Celebrate food times

## Family act cooks up delicious meals

ALL FOUR OF US grew up with a celebratory appreciation for family meals. We all share a love of cooking as a way of spending quality time together—and this is especially true around the holidays. The whole family is drawn to the kitchen by the wonderful aromas emanating from the stove, and the butcher-block island serves as a hearth as family members gather around to marvel at the meal unfolding.

Holidays and food are so intertwined that festive occasions are always celebrated with a delicious meal and wonderful family get-togethers. Our holiday memories are marked not only by gifts and travel, but, more significantly, by the meals we've shared.

A week or so before Thanksgiving, Christmas or any of our other favorite holidays, emails fly back and forth among the four of us, outlining the dishes we'll be making. Comfort is found in the traditional dishes we prepare each year. However, there is also excitement and anticipation for recipes we are eager to try out, so at each holiday meal we introduce one or two new dishes.

A favorite element in our Thanksgiving family dinner arrives at the moment when we all seem to be sated and nearly finished with our meal. One by one, all of the children and adults recount the part of the year they are most thankful for. Invariably, more than a few cite the feast they have just enjoyed.

We have all prepared the meal together, and together we all clean up, laughing and talking. An inverse version of the cooperative assembly line that helped create the meal now forms in order to break it down. Load the dishwasher, dry the pots and carefully refrigerate the leftover food for the next day's lunch. The joy and sense of community we have created will last much longer.

*The Pollan Family Table* is filled with delectable recipes that the whole family will love, ones that are sure to become family favorites. Add one or two of these to your traditional holiday menu and they'll help nurture the kind of fond memories we have of togetherness at shared holiday meals.

—Corky, Lori, Dana and Tracy Pollan



From left to right: Dana, Tracy, Lori and Corky Pollan.



PHOTOS BY JOHN KERNICK



### In our digital editions

Click here to see the Pollan family talk about their new cookbook. (See page 14 for details.)

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## Pollan Signature Salad

We serve this salad at all our large family gatherings. Light, crisp, both vinegary and sweet, our signature salad is a delicious addition to any meal.

### CARAMELIZED WALNUTS

- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 3 tablespoons sugar

### DRESSING

- 1/3 cup white balsamic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon raspberry vinegar, Champagne vinegar or sherry vinegar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1/3 cup grape seed oil
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/8 teaspoon sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

### SALAD

- 5 to 7 ounces mesclun or mixed baby greens
- 1/2 Bosc pear (cut lengthwise), cored and thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup shaved Parmesan cheese

**Prepare the walnuts:** Line a plate or work surface with wax or parchment paper.

Place a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the walnuts and sugar, and stir continuously with a wooden spoon. After about 3 minutes the sugar will begin to melt. Keep stirring until the sugar turns caramel brown and the nuts



are golden and toasted, an additional 1 to 2 minutes. Remove from the heat immediately (they can burn quickly) and spread on the wax or parchment paper, using the wooden spoon to separate them at once. Let cool completely.

Break the walnuts apart with your fingers. Stored in an airtight container, they will last for 3 to 4 weeks.

*Tip:* To clean the candy coating off your skillet, simply add water to it, bring the water to a boil and stir with your wooden spoon. The caramelized sugar will dissolve.

**Prepare the dressing:** In a glass jar with a lid or in a small mixing bowl, combine the vinegars, mustard, grape seed oil, olive oil, 1/8 teaspoon of salt and pepper to taste. Shake the jar vigorously or whisk in the bowl to emulsify.

**Prepare the salad:** Place the mesclun in a large salad bowl. Pour on half of the dressing and toss the greens to coat. Add the walnuts, pear slices and more dressing to taste (taking care not to overdress), and toss again. Top with the Parmesan cheese shavings and serve. **Makes 6 servings.**

## “Marry Me” Roast Beef Tenderloin

This recipe was given to me by my son, Sam's, beloved nanny, Patricia. I prepared it for dinner one night for my best childhood friend, the actress Jennifer Grey. She quickly added the recipe to her repertoire. Single at the time, Jennifer would make this dish to impress the men she was dating. In time she realized she had to be careful whom she cooked it for because they would invariably ask her to marry them after the meal—it is that delicious. I serve it for special occasions and dinner parties.—Tracy

- 2 1/2 pounds beef tenderloin
- 2 extra-large beef bouillon cubes
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup red wine
- 1 tablespoon dry sherry
- 1 cup low-sodium beef or chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons cold water

Poke the meat with a knife or thick skewer to make small holes all over. Set aside.

In a small mixing bowl, combine the bouillon cubes, garlic, mustard, tomato paste, pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Pour in 1/4 cup of boiling water to dissolve the bouillon. Using the back of a wooden spoon, crush the bouillon cubes. Keep

crushing and stirring until you've made a nice thick paste.

Rub the paste all over the meat, rotating it to coat all sides well. Transfer the meat to a roasting pan, cover loosely with foil and marinate for a minimum of 30 minutes or up to 1 hour in the refrigerator.

While the meat is marinating, set a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 425 F.

Pour enough water into the roasting pan to come to a depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Place the pan in the oven and roast, covered, for 15 minutes.

Remove the foil and rotate the pan. Continue cooking and check after 10 minutes that there is still liquid in the pan; add 1/4 cup of hot water if needed. Roast for an additional 5 minutes for rare, an additional 15 minutes for medium-rare and an additional 20 minutes for medium, or until the center of the roast registers the desired temperature on an instant-read thermometer (rare: 125 F, approximate total cooking

time 30 minutes; medium-rare: 130 F, approximate total cooking time 40 minutes; medium: 140 F, approximate total cooking time 45 minutes).

Transfer the roast to a platter or cutting board, cover with foil to keep warm and allow it to rest while you prepare the gravy.

Place the roasting pan with all of the drippings on a burner over medium heat. Scrape up the brown bits with a wooden spoon. Add the butter and stir. Whisk in the wine, sherry and broth. Add the cornstarch-water mixture, whisking until thickened, another 2 to 3 minutes.

Slice the roast and arrange on a platter. Serve the gravy separately. **Makes 6 servings.**

### The Costco Connection

*The Pollan Family Table* (Item #942564) is available at Costco warehouses along with a variety of fresh foods.

