



Winter 2007

*MagicKitchen.com's Seasonal Newsletter for the Best in Home Delivered Gourmet Food*

## From the President's Table

*Happy Holidays to our customers!*

It's time to ramp up for the holidays. No sooner than the last piece of Halloween candy has been gobbled up and it's time to think about all the winter festivities that are upon us. This year, our mantra is "comfort and joy." We want to challenge all of our readers to think of how you can implement comfort and joy into your holiday celebrations.

We all know people who could use a little comfort and joy in their lives this time of year. Home-delivered meals make wonderful and original gifts, because they say "Don't worry about a thing. Snuggle up by the fire. Eat. Enjoy." In this issue we have gift ideas for every person on your list.

We'd like to praise the hard work of one of our "elves" in this issue, Francesco Avella. He's one of the main chefs who is constantly creating and refining the MagicKitchen.com meals that come to your doorstep. Read our Q&A section to find out how this Italian chef came from humble beginnings in his own family kitchen, to running his own commercial kitchen in San Francisco.

May the Best Of The Season Be Yours! We'll see you in 2008!

Happy Dining,

**Michelle Tayler**  
President

**Greg Miller**  
CEO



*Happy, happy Christmas,  
that can win us back  
to the delusions of our  
childish days; that can  
recall to the old man the  
pleasures of his youth; that  
can transport the sailor and  
the traveller, thousands of  
miles away, back to his own  
fire-side and his quiet home!*

*~Charles Dickens,  
The Pickwick Papers, 1836*



[www.magickitchen.com](http://www.magickitchen.com)



## MagicKitchen.com's Christmas Feast

Filled with comfort and joy! We will have several options available for your Christmas dinner, including bundles for two to ten, dessert bundles and a special feast for six to sixty. Email us at [info@magickitchen.com](mailto:info@magickitchen.com) for more information!

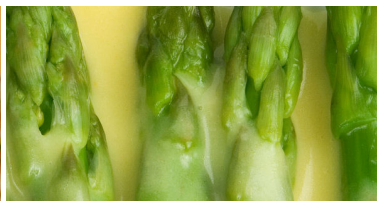


## Gift Ideas Galore!

The list seems to get longer and longer every year, doesn't it? You usually know the wish list for immediate friends and family, but what about that tough-to-buy-for person? MagicKitchen.com to the rescue! We're the perfect gift for the distant relative, the office Secret Santa, or that hard-working professional who makes your life easier all year around (think hairdressers, real estate agents, clients, and teachers). Pay your gratitude by giving them a little break from the kitchen and check out our food gift packages at <http://www.magickitchen.com/food-gifts.html>. There's something for every taste and dietary need. Or stuff a stocking with our gift certificates: [http://www.magickitchen.com/gift\\_certificates.html](http://www.magickitchen.com/gift_certificates.html).

We do big gifts too! If you're looking for the perfect corporate gift, we're happy to work with you and create gifts to suit your needs and budget.

If you're interested in stretching your budget beyond your friends and family, charities and food banks are always hard-pressed to keep their stores in stock during this time of year. We're happy to work with your favorite charity, so just give us a call or click on the "Fundraising" link on our web site.



## Souper Soups

With all the opportunities to indulge this time of year, it's nice to have some meals in your back pocket (or freezer, rather) that you can rely on to keep you healthy and guilt-free for the bigger meals. We love our soups as the perfect lunch or dinner – chock full of veggies and lean meats, they're a great way to get a lot of nutrients in a single bowl. Check out some of our winter favorites:

### Broccoli, Mushroom & Zucchini Soup

Prepare your taste buds for this unique combination of fresh, flavorful California vegetables. This exotic soup is made with Fresh broccoli, mushrooms, zucchini, vegetable base, gourmet parmesan cheese, black pepper, salt, and saffron.

### Split Pea Soup

Back this winter by popular demand. The soup is prepared from all fresh ingredients and has a hint of smoked ham to enhance the taste of the product. Tastes great and will likely be the best split pea soup you've ever tasted.

### Many Bean Soup

This flavorful and zesty rich soup will leave your mouth watering for more. Every spoonful is full of the rich color of beans and other fine ingredients. Taste it and know why people rave about this great soup starter.



# Q&A

*Francesco Avella has been cooking all his life.*

*He grew up in Naples, Italy surrounded by the bounties of the garden and the sea. For the last 20 years, however, he has been an Executive Chef running a commercial kitchen in the greater San Francisco area. In this interview, he talks about his culinary inspirations, and his passion for creating foods that fit the needs of the MagicKitchen.com customer.*

## **What started your love for cooking?**

I have been around food all my life. As a young man I was in love with my father's home cooking. After school, I was right there in the kitchen with him trying to help, but the most he let me do was peel potatoes or slice carrots or onions. My reward at the end, though, was to taste the finished meal. I still believe that home cooking is the best.

## **Why do you enjoy working with MagicKitchen.com?**

I love being part of a great company startup, seeing it grow and feeling proud of being part of it. I believe in using the best ingredients and putting them together and creating great dishes under no pressure is a great accomplishment.

## **People are becoming more familiar with how restaurant chefs live their daily lives, but probably don't know as much about a commercial chef. What are some of the differences?**

There's a big difference between a restaurant chef and a commercial chef. Restaurant chefs cook and serve the food right away while it is still hot. My job is to create and prepare dishes that have to be reheated in the microwave or the oven and while still preserving the freshness and the flavor. My MagicKitchen.com dishes require a lot of preparation and tasting in order to come up with the right texture and freshness. It takes a lot of patience!

## **What ingredients do you love to work with?**

The ingredients that I like to work with are mainly vegetables and seafood; obviously, because it reminds me of home.

## **What are some of the dishes you've created that are the most popular, or that you're the most proud of?**

I feel proud of my eggplant parmesan, because it's a recipe from home and we do it a little differently than most cooks. Also it is one of MagicKitchen.com's top selling products. Typically when you cut basil, it turns black pretty quickly. So instead we create a basil pesto that we stir into the tomato sauce. You get a great basil flavor, and a good color. Also, we don't bread the eggplant – just use egg and flour, fry it lightly in canola oil, and drain it well so it's not oily at all. It's time consuming and more costly this way, but we really want to create a flavor that lets the customer know that a lot of time and care went into preparing the dish – even though it takes only a few minutes to heat it up!

## **Any memorable mistakes in the kitchen? Or a dish that didn't quite work out?**

Yes! I've made many mistakes in my cooking; sometimes to the point where I feel like giving it up all together. But my love for cooking always returns and there are always new challenges to come up with the best products.

In this business, you have to think about not only how you're going to cook the ingredients, but how they'll reheat as well. Water is the enemy of freezing and reheating food! For example, with vegetables that contain a lot of water like mushrooms and zucchini, we bake them with a little olive oil and garlic to get out the water. We also use a lot of crunchier vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and carrots because they don't have as much water. The same goes with sauces – we test our sauces many times so that they'll reheat at the right consistency.

# Yes, Chef!

## Quick-to-Prepare Tangy Meatballs

24-32 oz. package of frozen meatballs

- 1 16 oz. can cranberries, whole (not jellied)
- 1 12 oz. jar of chili sauce
- 3 Tb. brown sugar

Heat all ingredients in a crock pot for 4+ hours, stirring periodically. Serve warm right out of the crock pot with toothpicks.

## Mulled Wine

- 2 bottles of red wine (Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot are perfect)
- 2 cups water (for lower alcohol)
- 1 orange studded with 10 cloves
- 6 Tb. sugar (or more to taste)
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 allspice berries (optional)
- 4 quarter-sized slices of fresh ginger

Put all the ingredients in a large saucepan and heat very gently over a low heat for 10 minutes. Taste and adjust sugar and water. Do not boil or all the alcohol will burn away. Feel free to try variations; add a dash of cognac, Grand Marnier or another liqueur at the end of heating. Or add a star anise or a couple of cracked whole nutmegs. If you run low, add more wine or water.



## Magic Customer

Our MagicKitchen.com customer is Debbie DeMarco from San Carlos, CA. She first heard about us from a coupon in the mail. The nutritious, home-delivered, chef-prepared meals caught her eye and she decided to give it a try. "We've been hooked ever since!" she says.

Debbie's favorite meal is the Turkey with Gravy, the Apple Sage Stuffing, and Minted Carrots. "It's a delicious meal that is quite comforting! The Apple Sage stuffing is incredibly flavorful and unique," she says. Debbie has also gotten creative by cooking her own main dish and then adding the sides to round out the meal, such as serving MagicKitchen.com's saffron rice alongside her own homemade salmon dish.

Debbie was so impressed after trying out MagicKitchen.com, she encouraged one of the company's founders, Greg Miller, to get involved in the community. Specifically, Debbie works for YFES (Youth and Family Enrichment Services), a private non-profit agency in San Mateo County that provides a wide array of free and low-cost services to help children, teens and adults who are dealing with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, relationship and communication issues. Since hearing about their cause, Greg and the company have generously supported YFES by donating meals each month for families in need.

Thanks to Debbie for helping us make a Magic Community Connection, and for being a loyal customer!

## Christmas Contest

**M**agicKitchen.com is proud to announce our first-ever **Christmas contest!** Sign up three friends to receive our newsletter and get entered to win one meal bundle a month for three months. Simply send three friends' names, email addresses and addresses to: **contest@magickitchen.com**, using the subject line: Christmas Contest. If your friends order a meal from the web site, they can enter the contest as well. The drawing will be held on December 23rd, and winners will be announced January 7th, 2008.

## Easy Fundraising with MagicKitchen.com

*We at MagicKitchen.com believe in giving back to our community. Let us help you develop ways to raise funds.*

*For information on fundraising with MagicKitchen.com, simply click on the **Charity Fundraising** page on our home page to review our corporate presentation. Alternatively, email us at: **info@magickitchen.com** or call toll free: **1-877-MAGIC (877-516-2442)**.*