

TASTE!

Your essential guide to food & beverage

SECTION D



STAFF PHOTOS: BOB BIELK

Gary Sable, owner of That Hot Dog Place in Red Bank, prepares his famous soups (above) and holds a bowl of his chicken soup (below).

SOUPER SATISFYING

Soup serves up big taste and all the comforts of home

By **SUSAN BLOOM**
CORRESPONDENT

It's been a cold and snowy winter. But the one saving grace that makes it all worthwhile is a pot of soup simmering on the stove.

Nothing satisfies quite as much or harks back to childhood more than the inviting aroma and warming goodness of your mom's homemade soup.

Most people have happy childhood memories involving soup, and local soup expert Gary Sable is no different.

"It's definitely a comfort food," he said.

The 58-year-old Hazlet resident and owner of Red Bank-based soup and sandwich take-out store, That Hot Dog Place, fondly recalls the many enjoyable times spent making soup with his mother at home when he was a child.



Spicy sausage soup from That Hot Dog Place.

"Whether times are good or bad," he said, "people come in for soup."

Cream or chowder, broth or bisque, one of the great things about soup is that there's one to please every palate.

Sable calls on an arsenal of more than 200 recipes that he more often than not recalls from mem-

ory rather than from a written record. But one needn't be a "soupmeister" as Sable to prepare homemade soup like a pro.

According to Sable, "Everyone's got their favorites, and it's relatively easy for people to make them at home. One of the first keys to great soup is to use fresh ingredients."

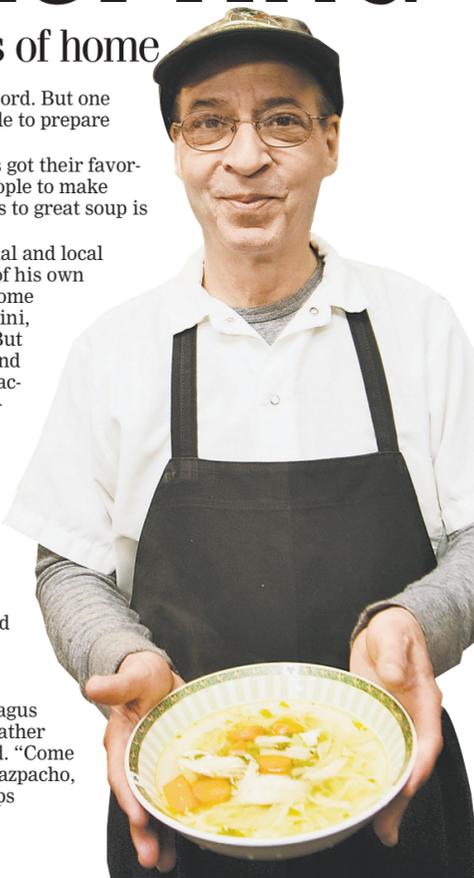
Sable recommends using seasonal and local fare for freshness. He grows a lot of his own vegetables and herbs in his own home garden, including tomatoes, zucchini, hot peppers, basil and rosemary. But supermarkets, farmers' markets and specialty outlets can be great and accessible sources of high-quality ingredients.

Sable also recommends preparing soups according to the season.

"In the fall, when squash becomes more available and less expensive, squash soups are great, as are vegetable and potato-based soups and soups involving root vegetables such as turnips and parsnips," Sable said.

"In the spring, lighter, brothier soups and those involving spring vegetables such as peas and asparagus make the most of the changing weather and early-season produce," he said. "Come summertime, cold soups such as gazpacho, vichyssoise, borscht and fruit soups

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ASK THE EXPERT



FILE PHOTO

Aioli is a mayonnaise-like sauce that can be used as a sauce or dip.

Bain-marie is a water bath

Q. We urge readers to send us their questions about food so we can ask our vast resources of experts about it. We gave examples, asking if folks are wondering about what aioli is or what bain-marie means to a recipe.

Well, Eileen Donahue of Toms River wrote us to say she did want to know what they are. So here is what our experts had to say.

A. Bain-marie is a French term for a method of warming food in a "water bath."

Matt Maygar, owner of the Third Avenue Chocolate Shoppe in Spring Lake, said the bain-marie is a fancy version of a double boiler.

It is a smaller pot placed into a larger pot holding boiling or heated water. The separation of the food — as in his case chocolate — and the direct heat of the stove will prevent scorching, Maygar said.

"There is no difference between a double boiler and a bain-marie with the exception of cost, Maygar said. You can purchase an expensive bain-marie set or just use a double boiler, he said.

Bain-marie is used in making cheesecakes, custards, Hollandaise sauce and pates; all sensitive to overheating.

Chef Ian Smith, an instructor at the post-secondary culinary arts program at Ocean County Vocational Technical School in Lakehurst, said the bain-marie is a method of using moderate heat so things don't dry out. The bain-marie will keep food hot, but the heat doesn't change the structure of the food. If some foods become too hot, the emulsions can break down, Smith said. A bain-marie also can be used to hold food for a long time without cooking it further.

A variation of a bain-marie is a chafing dish, Smith said.

Eileen's second question about aioli also was answered by Smith.

Essentially, aioli is a mayonnaise, Smith said.

Aioli is garlic, olive oil, egg yolk and lemon juice blended to produce a mayonnaise-like sauce that can be spread over sandwiches or used as a sauce or dip, he said.

"Aioli to me is mayonnaise that has garlic," Smith said.

It can have other flavors added to it as well, he said. The ingredients can be blended with a mustard and served on seafood as a dressing.

Margaret F. Bonafide

More bakers reinterpreting classic king cake

By **MARY FOSTER**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pastry chef Jean-Luc Albin certainly can turn out a delicious traditional king cake — one with a premium brioche dough, rich with butter and eggs. But these days it's his inspired variations on that classic that he's most passionate about.

His Bourbon Street king cake, for example, with chocolate custard, bourbon and toasted pecans. Or there is his General Foster king cake with a banana Foster-type filling; the Woodlawn Plantation, with praline cream and Southern Comfort; or even the Pontchartrain, filled with Bavarian cream custard, sliced strawberries, almonds and whipped cream.

"Every year I do something a little different, something new," Albin says. "It makes things interesting."

Interesting, and perhaps un-



AP PHOTO

An inspired variation on the classic Mardi Gras king cake by pastry chef Jean-Luc Albin is stuffed with cream and strawberries.

recognizable to those first French settlers who brought the annual Mardi Gras celebration — as well as its king cake — to Louisiana 300 years ago.

Traditional versions are a sim-

ple circle of buttery dough spiced with cinnamon and sweetened with a sugar icing. And while those still represent the dominant king cake, each year sees more variations as bakers pump

them full of fruits, cheeses, chocolate and other flavors.

"The filled king cake trend started in the 1970s," says Liz Williams, president of the Southern Food and Beverage Museum in New Orleans. "People wanted things that were sweeter and sweeter, and bakers wanted to be different. Before that king cakes looked the same and were pretty much the same."

These days, at least two dozen flavors and fillings are readily available.

In addition to most fruits, you also can get such exotic flavors as praline, cream cheese and almond paste.

At Navarre's Famous King Cakes in Springfield, La., about 45 miles northwest of New Orleans, Earnie Navarre has even introduced a sweet potato praline king cake.

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