

Island Cuisine

By Kathi Caldwell-Hopper

Courtesy of The Laker

“We are just a couple of island girls who love to cook and entertain our family and friends.” —Jeannette Buell and Daryl Thompson

Mark Island Bean Hole Beans. Rainy Day S’mores. Anadama Bread.

Daryl Thompson and Jeannette Buell never met a recipe they didn’t find interesting, and they both know their way around the kitchen. While they have ample kitchens in their year-round Lakes Region homes, they cook in a very challenging manner each summer and into the fall at their island cottages.

Their love of cooking and their expertise in whipping up meals while living at their island cottages each summer has led to a yummy idea that will warm the hearts and palettes of everyone lucky enough to read the book they are currently writing.

Titled *Winnepesaukee Cuisine*, the cookbook-in-the-making is just about the most unusual idea to come along in years.

“The idea started when we were looking around for Winnepesaukee related items, like puzzles and games for our cottages,” explains Daryl. “We realized then that there weren’t any books on Winnepesaukee cooking. Cooking has always been a passion for us, and we got talking about how unique a community we live and cook in each summer.

“People do things differently when they live and cook on an island,” she continues. “There is no easy access to grocery stores, and added to this we always have lots of company on the island. Between friends who stop by for a drink and end up staying for dinner to overnight company almost every weekend of the summer, we both cook a lot!”

Both Jeannette and Daryl have long family histories of island life; Jeannette’s husband’s family has been on Mark Island since the 1960s. Daryl grew up spending summers on Welch Island; her father built a summer place there when property was inexpensive and not many people ventured off the mainland.

Comments Jeannette. “Daryl and I have been friends for a long time, and we wanted to do a project together. We talked about a cookbook, and knew we’d hit on something unique with a cookbook of recipes from island residents.”

The idea has quickly taken hold, and after contacting as many islanders as they could, Daryl and Jeannette have gladly accepted many recipes that will warm the hearts (and fill the stomachs!) of those who purchase the cookbook.

The project has been extensive. Says Daryl. “We have been working on it about three years. We got lists of island residents who live around the lake and we delivered packets of information to them asking for recipes, stories and photos. We sent out a mailing and we’ve

done some of it by word of mouth. We've also put up flyers on the islands letting people know that we welcome their recipes.”

The cookbook will feature recipes from islands, as well as the stories around the recipes. People have been generous and very willing to share recipes that they enjoy cooking, some of which are beloved by generation after generation of island dwellers whose cuisine, as well as cottages, is passed down through their families.

“We have some great stories, such as how to make bean-hole beans and a family’s recipe for Anadama bread made on their cottage stove,” Daryl says. “We have recipes from older islanders, such as a great recipe for Hot Diggety Stew. The photos people have shared are also great.”

Those photos will offer those of us who don’t live on a Winnepesaukee island a glimpse into the lifestyles and histories of the families who dwell on the islands each summer. Many are seasoned with the advice and “make do” philosophy of cooking and island life.

As Daryl and Jeannette write on their website (www.winnicuisine.com), “It takes a special type of person to enjoy living on an island. Island ingenuity means being resourceful – you learn to live with what you have – whether creating a recipe or making repairs. Many of our island recipes have evolved from pantry items on hand. This results in some creative dishes. We also realized that so many of our favorite island recipes have a good story or two attached to them...we thought it would be fun to share our stories and those of other islanders.”

Thus far about 150 stories and recipes have been submitted; the goal is to publish a 400-page book that will be circulated to islanders plus Lakes Regioners and all others who wish to read the cookbook.

It can be sure a publisher will snatch up this unique and fun book, and it will soon be a favorite with readers.

“Island cooking runs the gamut,” says Daryl. “Grilling is obviously big, and a lot of island cooking is done with what is on hand in the pantry. We like to prepare meals ahead and enjoy our guests.”

Daryl says she has sleepover company most weekends during the summer and has gotten used to all the “lugging” involved in transporting food and supplies from her boat to her island cottage.

Jeannette is also busy at her island cottage, and she spends as much of the year as possible at her cottage. “We are still living out there,” she says at the time of this interview in late September. “We close up our place on the island when the weather gets too cold. I enjoy the quieter life on the island, such as pattering around my place and listening to audio books. The other night the moon was very bright and beautiful and we really enjoyed it over the lake.”

The cookbook will also feature some winter recipes and stories, such as a group who snowshoed out to an island on the lake and cooked a big pot of chowder. A charming photo shows the big group gathered around an outdoor fire pit with a huge pot of chowder simmering over the fire.

All of life's moments, large and small, are enjoyed by islanders and will be featured in the cookbook. Weddings, holidays, parties, boating and of course, the cooking that accompanies these island events will pepper the book and add to its charm.

The ability to take what is at hand in the pantry and turn it into a good—sometimes a great—meal and the spirit of hospitality abounds at the tables of Daryl and Jeannette. These women who call themselves “just a couple of island girls” are much more than amateur chefs.

When *Winnepesaukee Cuisine* appears on the shelves of local bookstores, these island girls will bring a taste of what makes the Lakes Region so great, right to our kitchens and dining room tables.

For information on Winnepesaukee Cuisine, visit www.winnicuisine.com.