

# Green tomatoes, or 'love apples,' have their uses

By SUSAN HALLETT

Who can resist sun-warmed tomatoes fresh from the garden? A gift brought by Spaniards from the New World to the Old, tomatoes were once thought to have been a favourite of Venus and were used as an aphrodisiac.

But what about all those green tomatoes, also known as love apples? In fact, in the right recipe, they're just as tasty as the ripe ones.

## GREEN TOMATO SALSA

30 green tomatoes, chopped  
6 large onions, sliced  
125 ml (1/2 cup) pickling salt  
16 russet apples, peeled and diced  
1 L (4 cups) white sugar  
50 ml (1/4 cup) mixed pickling spices (in a muslin bag)  
Vinegar

Put tomatoes and onions in a glass bowl in layers. Add salt and let stand overnight. Drain well. Place in an enamelled pan with the apples and sugar. Add enough vinegar to cover 3/4 of the ingredients. Bring to a boil, then simmer for an hour and 30 minutes. Put in sterilized jars and seal.



TANTALIZING TOMATOES: There is no shortage of recipes for delicious tomatoes, including the green ones. SANDRA SHIELDS/THE EPOCH TIMES

## GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

2 cloves garlic, minced  
1.25 L (5 cups) chopped green tomatoes  
550 ml (2 1/4 cups) sugar  
375 ml (1 1/2 cups) raisins  
85 g (3 oz) crystallized ginger, minced

7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) salt  
5 ml (1 tsp) Tabasco sauce  
500 ml (2 cups) apples cider vinegar

Simmer all ingredients in an enamelled pan until a dark colour. Put in sterilized jars and seal.

## GREEN TOMATO MINCEMEAT

3 kg (7 lbs) green tomatoes, washed and trimmed  
1.12 L (4 1/2 cups) white sugar  
15 ml (1 tbsp) cinnamon  
15 ml (1 tbsp) ground cloves  
2 ml (1/2 tsp) nutmeg  
125 ml (1/2 cup) vinegar  
2 ml (1/2 tsp) salt  
125 ml (1/2 cup) butter or ground beef suet  
250 ml (1 cup) raisins  
Grated rind and juice of half an orange  
20 ml (1 1/2 tbsp) lemon juice

Chop tomatoes and drain off liquid. Cover with cold water. Drain again and cover with boiling water. Drain well and put in a large kettle with rest of ingredients. Bring to a boil, and simmer uncovered until thick, about 25 or 30 minutes, stirring now and then. Pour into hot sterilized jars. To use for pies, put about 750 ml (3 cups) into a pastry shell and bake with a top crust in a hot oven. Refrigerated mincemeat will keep for up to five months.

Susan Hallett is an award-winning writer and editor who has written for *The Beaver*, *The Globe & Mail*, *Wine Tiders* and *Doctor's Review* among many others. Email: hallett\_susan@hotmail.com



LATTE ART: It requires skill, finesse, speed, and determination to get the perfect cup of coffee. KATI TURCU/THE EPOCH TIMES

## Art in a cup of coffee

By KATI TURCU  
Epoch Times Staff

While not an extreme sport, latte art does require skill, finesse, speed, and determination to make the perfect cup of coffee over and over again. Such is the pursuit of the most perfectly tasting—and embellished—brew that there is even a world championship dedicated to it.

### AND WHAT EXACTLY IS LATTE ART?

"It's basically pouring [frothy milk] into the cup and swaying your pitcher from left to right creating formations of white on-top of a brown canvas, thus creating art," says latte artist extraordinaire Con Haralambopoulos.

An Australian barista, Haralambopoulos won the World Latte Art Championship held in Copenhagen in 2008 and was the national champion in 2006 and 2007. Haralambopoulos took up latte art five years ago when he saw

it in a café and thought it would be a nice way to finish off a cup of coffee. But it became much more than that when he found himself practicing his skills long after closing time at 7 Grams, his small but ever popular café in Richmond, Melbourne.

"You need a great foundation to work with latte art. And obviously a good coffee is the basis of the foundation. We offer our customers something extra to crown the coffees with, from just simple latte art to extreme latte art. But it's just extra passion put into the cup as well. It's great to put a lot more idea into the top of the cup."

In the world championship, Haralambopoulos competed

against baristas from 25 countries with the top six consisting of New Zealanders, Japanese, Koreans, and Russians.

"It was really a tough competition. Very, very close. I did end up winning by half a point. So that's an indication of how close 1st, 2nd, and 3rd was and so forth. But I got enough points to get through, so [I'm] pretty happy," he says.

### AND JUST WHAT DO THE JUDGES LOOK FOR IN A CUP OF COFFEE?

"It comes down to 50 percent flavour and 50 percent symmetrical designs. So basically in the competition format there are six strengths in a minute and the first set of beverages is a cappuccino followed by a short macchiato and finishing off with a designer beverage of your choice."

Haralambopoulos runs 7 Grams with his twin brother and older brother. Watching them churn

out one perfect latte after another is like watching a film being played back at high speed.

"To create a good cup of coffee is easy. But to do it consistently a thousand times over is the skill in doing that."

Melbourne is now recognized as the food and fashion capital of Australia, and the coffee scene there is booming, he says.

"Over the last couple of years, the coffee scene has absolutely exploded in Melbourne. It's going absolutely crazy. I guess one reason for that is that people are actually drinking more coffee. There are more skilled baristas out there. There's a lot more cafes opening up specializing in specialty coffee. It's great for the public."

Haralambopoulos believes coffee drinkers have become more educated about coffee, thanks largely to latte art and barista schools. The home barista scene has also taken off with coffee machines being the biggest selling item in stores in 2006 and 2007.

Any latte art champion obviously needs to have an edge over the competition in the way his creation tastes, and Haralambopoulos's secret is his own blend of single origin coffee beans, Gridlock coffee, which he uses at 7 Grams.

For information about Haralambopoulos's own blend as well as tips for budding home baristas on how to get the best out of your beans, see [www.gridlockcoffee.com.au](http://www.gridlockcoffee.com.au).

# Pineapple delight

By SANDRA SHIELDS  
Epoch Times Staff

This is a wonderful, cool dessert that will evoke thoughts of the tropics. Prepare it early in the day to set, and serve with a garnish of fresh fruit. It will disappear fast, but if you're lucky enough to have leftovers it will taste even better the next day.

Makes 7 to 9 servings

### BOTTOM LAYER:

500 ml (2 cup) graham crumbs  
125 ml (1/2 cup) butter, melted

Mix graham crumbs and butter together with a fork and press into a 20-cm (8-inch) pan. Bake at 180°C (350°F) for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

### MIDDLE LAYER:

125 ml (1/2 cup) butter, room temperature  
250 ml (1 cup) confectioner's sugar

Cream butter and confectioner's sugar in



TROPICAL TASTE: A light, refreshing dessert great for any time of year. SANDRA SHIELDS/THE EPOCH TIMES

a medium bowl until light and fluffy. Spread over cooled graham crust.

### TOP LAYER:

250 ml (1/2 pint) whipping cream  
15 ml (1 tbsp) confectioner's sugar  
2 ml (1/2 tsp) pure vanilla extract  
1 can 540 ml (19 fl oz) crushed pineapple, packed

in juice, well drained  
30 ml (2 tbsp) graham crumbs

Beat cream, confectioner's sugar and vanilla until stiff peaks form. Fold in drained crushed pineapple (reserve juice for another recipe). Spread over the middle layer and sprinkle graham crumbs over the top. Refrigerate until set. Cut into squares and serve.

# Feeding your 'green' baby

By CHERYL TALLMAN AND JOAN AHLERS  
MomsMenu.com

If you are looking to reduce your carbon footprint making organic baby food is a great way to go. Consider the green facts:

**ORGANIC:** Organic fruits and vegetables are the best choice for making baby food. They are the most natural ingredients and organic foods drastically reduce harm to the environment.

**LESS WASTE:** When you make your own baby food, there are no jars, labels or metal lids to dispose of or to recycle.

**NO FACTORY REQUIRED:** Just a little energy to steam foods and run a blender is all you need to make your baby's meals. Did someone say near "zero" greenhouse gases?

**LOCAL:** Your baby's food does not need to be trucked to you from a factory thousands of miles away. Instead you can simply buy



HEALTHY BABY: Homemade baby food is safe and nutritious. PHOTOS.COM

organic produce from your local farm market and get started.

**HEALTHY:** Homemade baby food is safe and nutritious. Baby food jars are often lined with bisphenol-A, a controversial hormone disruptor that should be avoided. In addition, homemade baby food has no preservatives, additives or chemicals—it is pure and natural goodness.

### HOMEMADE BABY FOOD AND HEALTHY MEALS IN LESS THAN 30 MINUTES PER WEEK:

**TO PREPARE:** Wash, peel and cut fresh fruits or vegetables, then

stove-top steam or microwave in less than 10 minutes. Create a very smooth texture with a blender or food processor. Add a little water if needed to reach pudding-like texture. Pour into baby food storage trays, cover and freeze overnight. Pop cubes out and store in freezer in an airtight container or freezer bag. Frozen baby food cubes last up to 2 months.

**TO SERVE:** Select frozen baby food cubes from the freezer, place in a dish and thaw or warm. Stir food before serving and check the temperature. If you want to thicken something, use baby cereal, yoghurt or mashed banana. For thinning, use breast milk or formula, 100 percent juice or low-sodium soup stock.

**MAKING HEALTHY MEALS:** You can mix different baby food cubes together to create tasty, healthy meals. You can also add yoghurt, melted cheese, ground nuts, mashed pasta or rice to introduce new flavours and textures. Here are a few ideas:

- Green peas and sweet potatoes
- Butternut squash and mashed banana
- Broccoli, cauliflower and melted cheese
- Peaches, pears and oatmeal baby cereal
- Black beans, corn and rice
- Strawberries, apples, yoghurt and ground pecans

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** Making baby food is a great gift to the environment and your baby. Plus homemade baby food tastes great. Who knows? Your baby may even grow up to like the taste of Brussels sprouts and mangoes.

Cheryl Tallman and Joan Ahlers are sisters, the mothers of five children and founders of *Fresh Baby* ([www.FreshBaby.com](http://www.FreshBaby.com)). They are the creators of the award-winning *So Easy Baby Food Kit* and *Good Clean Fun Placemats*, available at many fine specialty stores and national chains including Target and Whole Foods Markets.



BARISTA: Con Haralambopoulos took up latte art five years ago when he saw it in a café and thought it would be a nice way to finish off a cup of coffee. KATI TURCU/THE EPOCH TIMES



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