

# *I learned to cook by Ear*



*My husband often taste-tests party dishes. Verdict: 'M-m-m!'*

By **PATRICE MUNSEL**  
AS TOLD TO JEAN ANDERSON

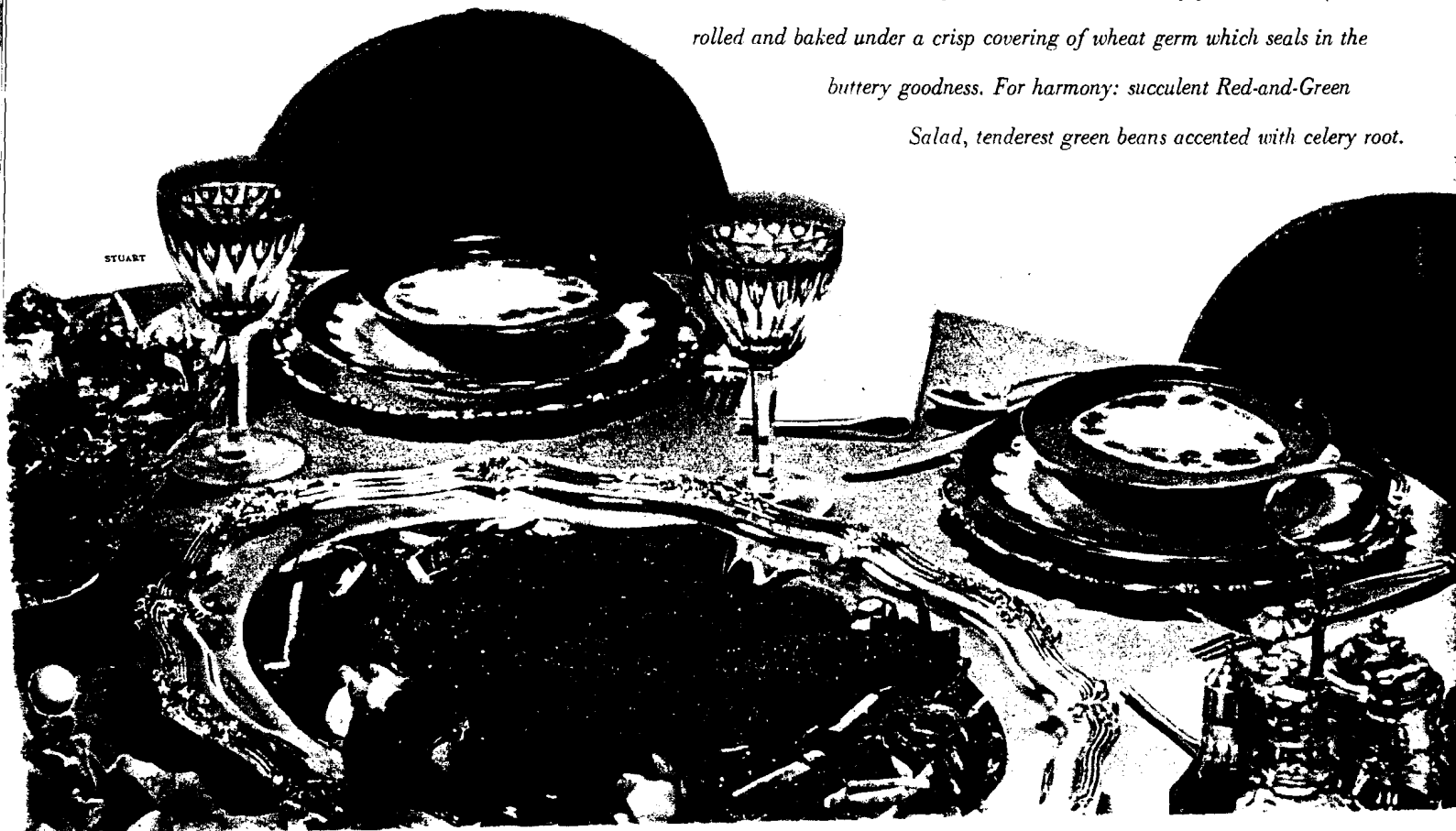
*A dramatic hit: a soup medley (turtle and green pea) under a drift*

*of broiled cream sets the key for Chicken Kiev,*

*rolled and baked under a crisp covering of wheat germ which seals in the*

*buttery goodness. For harmony: succulent Red-and-Green*

*Salad, tenderest green beans accented with celery root.*



STUART



DI PIETRO

Food and family fun go together at our house. Just look at Coakie, Chico and Heidi!

When I was a little girl, I used to wander into the kitchen and help mother, but I never *really* cooked until after I was married. My mother was an excellent cook; and thank goodness, I discovered I wasn't bad at it either. Chicken Kiev was the first recipe I tried. I just blundered into the kitchen one day and made it. Perhaps it was beginner's luck—the Kiev was marvelous. Next I made lobster thermidor, which was a big success too. To be perfectly honest, though, neither one of these dishes is very hard to make in spite of their elegance. Pot roasts and scrambled eggs require far more courage and skill—I didn't try them until some time later. Of course I've had my share of culinary fiascoes—which in my case always seem to be accompanied by music. I'll never forget the night I was preparing an especially dramatic dinner. Up until the last minute everything had gone smoothly—too smoothly, I should have suspected. I was in the kitchen feeling glamorous and a bit smug, too, when I poured cold water down the spout of a hot teapot. You know the rest—a geyser of steam spewed forth, scalding both my hands. My husband, Bob Schuler, was upstairs dressing and couldn't hear my screams for the dinner music. Finally, just as the guests were arriving, I was rushed to the hospital. Entertaining is a big part of our lives. Usually my menus include recipes I can make ahead of time, or at least dishes that do not require constant prodding. Much of the credit for my learning to cook goes to Bob, who has been my sounding board. Although he doesn't cook at all he is an excellent judge and will tell me frankly when something is right or wrong. My biggest cooking problem today is keeping

#### CHICKEN KIEV

6 chicken breasts, boned and pounded flat  
Salt and pepper  
1 stick (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) ice-cold butter  
1 tablespoon finely chopped parsley

6 cloves garlic  
2 cups wheat germ  
3 eggs, beaten until frothy

Salt and pepper chicken breasts on both sides. Lay skin side down. In the center of each, place a sliver of butter about the size of your little finger,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon chopped parsley, 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed. Now fold the two shorter ends of the breast in toward the center, then the two longer ends, overlapping one end over the other envelope style to make as tight a package as possible, so that the butter will not ooze out. Skewer firmly shut. Roll breasts in wheat germ, then in egg, then again in wheat germ. Roast breasts, uncovered, in a moderately slow oven, 325° F., for about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Near end of roasting time, baste chicken with a little melted butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper. When breasts are golden brown and tender, they're done. Makes 6 hearty servings.

#### GREEN BEANS WITH CELERY ROOT

3 (9-ounce) packages frozen French-style green beans  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup julienne strips of fresh celery root

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter  
Salt and pepper

Cook beans according to package directions. Slowly sauté celery root in butter until tender. When beans are done, drain well, add butter and celery root and toss together lightly. Salt and pepper to taste. Makes 6 servings.

#### BOOLA-BOOLA

$3\frac{1}{2}$  cups green-pea soup  
 $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups clear green turtle soup

2 tablespoons dry sherry (if you like)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream, whipped

Heat soups together in a saucepan, stirring until well blended. If the pea soup is condensed, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  as much water as directions on the can specify. Flavor with sherry, if you like. Transfer hot soup to an 8-quart baking dish or to individual ovenproof soup bowls. Top with a float of whipped cream and broil quickly until golden brown. Makes 7 cups soup.

#### RED-AND-GREEN SALAD

##### DRESSING:

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup salad oil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup tarragon vinegar  
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried chervil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried arécano

##### SALAD:

1 quart thinly sliced red cabbage  
1 quart mixed salad greens, broken up  
4 scallions, sliced thin  
1 celery root, peeled and cut into julienne strips (optional)  
Salt and pepper

Combine all dressing ingredients in a bottle and shake until well blended. Mix salad ingredients together in a large bowl; salt and pepper to taste; then dress with enough dressing to coat each leaf lightly. Toss all together. (Store any dressing left in the refrigerator to use later.) Makes 6 to 8 servings.

#### CHOPPED SPINACH WITH CURRIED BUTTER

3 (10-ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter  
Salt and pepper

1 teaspoon curry powder  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon nutmeg

Cook spinach according to package directions. Melt butter, stir in seasonings. Drain cooked spinach, add curried butter and toss together lightly. Salt and pepper to taste. Makes 6 servings.

#### RAISIN TARTS

##### PAstry:

$1\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shortening  
3 tablespoons ice water

##### FILLING:

1 cup light brown sugar  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup melted butter  
1 egg  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup light corn syrup  
1 cup seedless raisins  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped pecans or walnuts  
1 teaspoon vanilla

For the pastry, place flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Cut in butter and shortening, using two knives or a pastry blender, until pieces are about the size of small beans. Slowly add water, tossing mixture lightly with fork. When pastry holds together, shape it with your hands, then roll out  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick on a lightly floured board. Use a  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " round cutter to cut out tarts and fit them into fluted tart pans  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter at the top (pastry won't completely fill pans). Mix together filling ingredients and fill each tart  $\frac{1}{2}$  full (mixture bubbles up while baking). Bake in a preheated oven at 350° F. for 15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack.