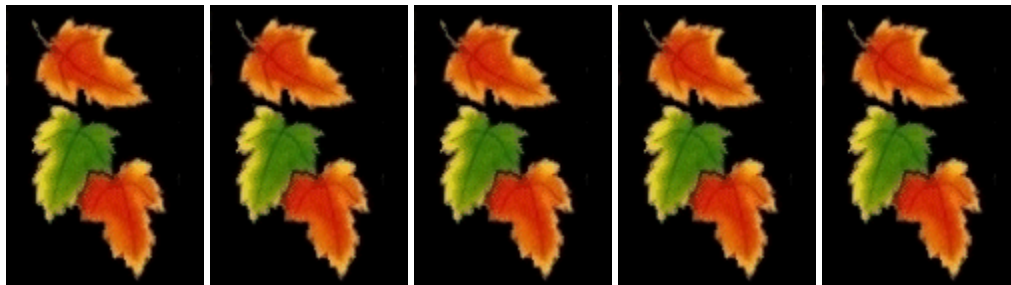




An Italian Thanksgiving



La Festa del Ringraziamento



I just can not believe that this will be the 19th year for the Lovitz-McCabe Thanksgiving Feast. Nineteen years! Where does the time go? As you see, the theme for this year's feast is an Italian Thanksgiving. This will be the second round for the Italians, we had a similar theme 10 years ago centered on a delightful *tacchino alla melagrana* (roast turkey basted with pomegranate sauce and served with pomegranate-and-giblet gravy).

Many cultures have been celebrating harvests for centuries. Thesmophoria is an ancient Greek harvest festival. Southwest American Indians perform a Corn Dance, the Jewish people celebrate Sukkot, and many Asian cultures have celebrations in gratitude for their rich rice harvest.

The Romans also celebrated a harvest festival called Cerelia, which honored Ceres, the goddess of corn (from which the word cereal comes). The festival was held each year on October 4th and offerings of the first fruits of the

harvest were offered to Ceres. Their celebration included music, parades, games and sports, and a feast.

But Thanksgiving in Italy? How about celebrating the Celtic New Year in Japan, or El Carnaval in Russia? The distinctly American tradition, created by Pilgrims to commemorate a bountiful harvest in the New World, doesn't translate well in another land where the Plymouth Rock would be just another stone in two-thousand-year-old Roman archeological ruins. Even the transliteral phrase in Italian for Thanksgiving, *La Festa del Ringraziamento*, refers to a variety of religious holidays held throughout the year for patron saints.

In fact, expatriates from North America who do honor the Thanksgiving holiday in Italy find it difficult to replicate, since the ingredients necessary for a New England-style Thanksgiving dinner are not easy to find. Italian Thanksgiving, for most Italian Americans, then, means the inclusion of special Italian recipes to accompany the roast turkey, stuffing, pumpkin pie, Macy's Annual Thanksgiving Day Parade, and A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving on the fourth Thursday of November.

Every family of Italian heritage has different culinary traditions to celebrate the holiday. An Italian Thanksgiving dinner usually includes a pasta or risotto as a first course followed by a roast turkey and contorni accented with a definite Italian flair and flavors, such as fennel, garlic, and porcini mushrooms, followed by Italian cakes and pastries. What matters most, though, during *La Festa del Ringraziamento* isn't what ingredients are used, or who won the football game, but the opportunity for families and communities to come together and celebrate the season in a tradition that's timeless.

You are invited to a real Italian Thanksgiving Dinner at our beautiful Cape May home (I would love to use my new kitchen to make this dinner), do not eat beforehand, and bring your appetite, and plan on staying for a while or even sleeping over. Seriously, we will figure out the sleeping arrangements. We have many beds and plenty of very comfortable floor space. If you must, you can get up early and head back to Philly on Friday morning.

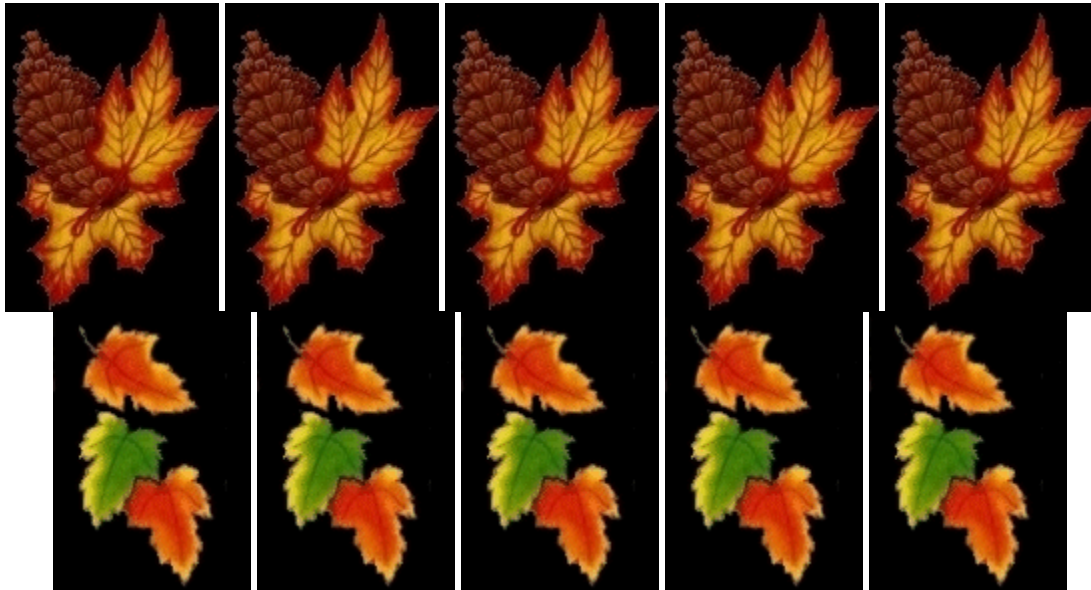
This year's menu I believe is going to be one of the best. A great deal of research went into putting this menu together. The recipes come from

various issues of Bon Appetit, Gourmet and Cook's Illustrated magazines and the Epicurious web site (www.epicurious.com).

Please join Evie and Michael on Thursday, November 27th for the 19th annual Lovitz-McCabe Thanksgiving Feast.

Date: Thursday, November 27th, 2003
Dinner Time: 5pm
Place: 1012 Cape May Ave
Cape May, NJ
Phone: 609.898.9820

P.S. For the 20th annual Lovitz-McCabe Thanksgiving feast I will attempt to recreate the dinner we had 20 years ago that started it all – La Cote d'Azur Thanksgiving – yes Sammy, Wild Mushroom Soup.



A now...

