



An Irish Thanksgiving



The Feast of Samhain



Can you believe that this is the 20th year for the Lovitz-McCabe Thanksgiving Feast. Twenty years! It seems like only yesterday we had that Thanksgiving of Poached Salmon that made me decide that I needed to get the family back on track ☺ - back to the turkey.

My original plan was to recreate the original Thanksgiving Feast, A Cote d'Azur Thanksgiving, but I was unable to find the original menu and the recipes. I am continuing the search with the hope of being able to do it in the near future.

My next plan was to do a Nigerian Thanksgiving, in honor of Adessuwa, but I really had a difficult time finding recipes that could be adjusted and alter to fit into the normal pumpkin, turkey, cranberry themes of a traditional Thanksgiving. Plus most recipes had scotch bonnet chilies which would not have been appreciated by some members of the family. I want to do a traditional Nigerian menu and will do so also in the near future.

Over the past 19 years we have tried cuisines from pretty much every region of the United States and from around the world. We've done a New England, Northwest, and Southwest Thanksgivings. We've done Italian, Chinese, Indian and Jewish Thanksgivings. This year I wanted to try something new and perhaps unique. I have always wanted to do a menu based on my roots. I have been teaching myself about Irish cuisine and have been working on this Thanksgiving menu for over two years. I am pleased to announce that this year's theme is an Irish/Celtic/Gaelic Thanksgiving.

Over the years as I do the research for my menus it is amazing how every culture seems to have a harvest feast or festival. The Romans celebrated Cerelia, the ancient Greeks celebrated Thesmophoria, the Jews celebrate Sukkot. The Celts celebrated Samhain.

Samhain (pronounced sow-een) marks one of the two great doorways of the Celtic year, for the Celts divided the year into two seasons: the light and the dark, at Beltane on May 1st and Samhain on November 1st. Some believe that Samhain was the more important festival, marking the beginning of a whole new cycle, just as the Celtic day began at night. For it was understood that in dark silence comes whisperings of new beginnings, the stirring of the seed below the ground. Whereas Beltane welcomes in the summer with joyous celebrations at dawn, the most magically potent time of this festival is November Eve, the night of October 31st, known today of course, as Halloween.

You are invited to an Irish Thanksgiving Dinner at our beautiful Cape May home, do not eat before hand, and bring your appetite, and plan on staying the night. We will work out the sleeping arrangements.

As I said this meal has been two years in the making. I have spent many hours surfing the net and reading books and magazines. I think and hope this will be one of the best.

Please join Evie and Michael on Thursday, November 25th for the 20th annual Lovitz-McCabe Thanksgiving Feast.

**Dinner Time: 5pm (Hors d'Oeuvres at 3pm)
Place: 1012 Cape May Ave
Cape May, NJ
Phone: 609.898.9820**



And now...

An Irish Thanksgiving Menu



Hors d'Oeuvres

- **Caashey Bernagh** - Irish Cheese Assortment (Cashel Blue, Shamrock Cheddar, Blarney Castle)

Soup

- **Anbroie Pumkín** - Pumpkin Potage

Salad

- **Sallaid Mleshtit le Beetys Rostit agus Aunlyn Glassan Caashey Theeah** - Mixed Baby Greens and Roasted-Beet Salad with Creamy Irish Cashel Blue Dressing

Turkey and Gravy and Stuffing

- **Feill Kellagh Frangagh Rostit le Ceym Mill Kerey Lösserey agus O'wnee le Proghan Thoanney Cro Coull agus Shalmane** - Roast Turkey with Honey Herb Butter and Gravy with Hazelnut and Wild Mushroom Stuffing

Vegetables

- **Donair Glass le Cro Frangagh agus Doill Cro Frangagh** - Green Beans with Walnuts and Walnut Oil
- **Annish Jeh Cummev Pearl Fo Glonney le Raisin agus Almonbn Skihlt** – Glazed Pearl Onions with Raisins and Almonds

Potatoes

- **Lahney Praase le Cabbash** - Colcannon (Mashed Potatoes with Cabbage)

Cranberry Sauce

- **Aunlyn Smevr Churree Cumberland** - Cranberry Cumberland Sauce

Bread

- **Arran Bane Jastee-hollan** - Irish Soda Bread

Dessert

- **Custart-puiddin Dn Fouyr le Doyl-Pearr Kostit agus Aunlyn Pumkin Caramel** - Autumn Trifle with Roasted Apples, Pears, and Pumpkin-Caramel Sauce
- **Soddag Chaashey Shocklaid Shiulagh Vernagh** - Chocolate-Irish Cream Cheesecake

Wine

There are very few wineries in Ireland. While the EU has recently designated Ireland a wine-producing region, the wineries there are very small and only produce enough wine for their own

consumption. Most of the wine in Ireland is imported so for our Irish Menu we will also import our wine. I am recommending ...

- **Beaujolais Nouveau**

This is the "first wine of this harvest" - barely any time passes between when the grapes are picked and the bottles are out to the consumers. It celebrates the grape harvest of the year. How does this young Beaujolais Nouveau taste? It's a very white-wine style, since it has not been with the skins for long and has hardly aged at all. It should be drunk chilled - around 45F, and is a light, fruity wine.

- **Pinot Noir**

The classic pairing with turkey is Pinot Noir. Typical pinot noir flavors include earth, leather, vanilla (from the oak), and jam ... the fruity flavors of the jam often taste like raspberry, strawberry, and plum. This goes great with turkey and goose.



The Feast of Samhain

Samhain literally means "summer's end." In Scotland and Ireland, Halloween is known as *Oíche Shamhna*, while in Wales it is *Nos Calan Gaeaf*, the eve of the winter's calend, or first. With the rise of Christianity, Samhain was changed to *Hallowmas*, or *All Saints' Day*, to commemorate the souls of the blessed dead who had been canonized that year, so the night before became popularly known as *Halloween*, *All Hallows Eve*, or *Hollantide*. November 2nd became *All Souls Day*, when

prayers were to be offered to the souls of all who the departed and those who were waiting in Purgatory for entry into Heaven. Throughout the centuries, pagan and Christian beliefs intertwine in a gallimaufry (hodgepodge) of celebrations from Oct 31st through November 5th, all of which appear both to challenge the ascendancy of the dark and to revel in its mystery.

In the agricultural year, Samhain also marked the first day of winter, when the herders led the cattle and sheep down from their summer hillside pastures to the shelter of stable and byre. The hay that would feed them during the winter must be stored in sturdy thatched shelters, tied down securely against storms. Those destined for the table were slaughtered, after being ritually devoted to the gods in pagan times. All the harvest must be gathered in -- barley, oats, wheat, turnips, and apples. Peat and wood for winter fires were stacked high by the hearth. It was a joyous time of family reunion, when all members of the household worked together baking, salting meat, and making preserves for the winter feasts to come. The endless horizons of summer gave way to a warm, dim and often smoky room; the symphony of summer sounds was replaced by a counterpoint of voices, young and old, human and animal. Divination of the events of the coming year was another prominent feature of Samhain. Celts used hazelnuts, symbols of wisdom, to foretell the future.

There was also a lighthearted side to the Celtic New Year rituals. Young people would put on strange disguises and roam about the countryside, pretending to be the returning dead or spirits from the Otherworld. Celts thought the break in reality on November Eve not only provided a link between the worlds, but also dissolved the structure of society for the night. Boys and girls would put on each other's clothes, and would generally flout convention by boisterous behavior and by playing tricks on their elders and betters.

At all the turning points of the Celtic year, the gods drew near to Earth at Samhain, so many sacrifices and gifts were offered up in thanksgiving for the harvest. Personal prayers in the form of objects symbolizing the wishes of supplicants or ailments to be healed were cast into the fire, and at the end of the ceremonies, brands were lit from the great fire of Tara to rekindle all the home fires of the tribe, as at Beltane. As they

received the flame that marked this time of beginnings, people surely felt a sense of the kindling of new dreams, projects and hopes for the year to come.