



A Chinese Fusion Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 24th, 2005

和 福 喜 好 幸 月 節

Throughout the course of mankind's history, the Earth's bountiful harvest has been celebrated with ceremonies of giving thanks. Prior to the establishment of formal religions, many ancient tillers of the ground believed that their crops contained spirits...spirits which caused the crops to grow and to die. The belief was also strong that these spirits would be released when the crops were harvested. Therefore, they had to be destroyed or they would wreak revenge upon the harvesting farmers. Some of these ancient rituals celebrated the defeat of such spirits. As time went by the perspective shifted from rituals to defeat spirits to the realization that the fall harvest must take an agricultural society through winter, and thus is vitally important for survival. Whatever power provides that bounty, it deserves praise. So cultures the world over - Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, Chinese and Egyptians have all given thanks for a bountiful harvest. They might have differed in their forms and presentations. But their spirit - setting aside a date to reflect on life's blessings, remains the same.

For over 20 years our family has, indirectly through our menus and cuisines, celebrated many of these festivals like the Roman festival of Cerelia and the Hebrews Sukkoth. This year we will explore the ancient Chinese festival of Chung Ch'ui and the Moon Festival.

The ancient Chinese celebrated their harvest festival, known as Chung Ch'ui, with the full moon that fell on the 15th day of the 8th month. This day was considered the birthday of the Moon and special "moon cakes," round and yellow like the moon, would be baked. Each cake was stamped with the picture of a rabbit since it was a rabbit, and not a man, which the Chinese perceived to be on the face of the Moon. Families would gather together to partake of a thanksgiving meal, feasting on roasted pig, harvested fruits and the "moon cakes." It was believed that during the three-day festival of Chung Ch'ui, flowers would fall from the Moon and those who saw them would be rewarded with good fortune.

The Moon Festival is one of the most celebrated Chinese holidays. This year the festival falls in mid-September. Chinese families celebrate the end of the harvest season with a big feast.

The Moon Festival is often called the Women Festival and symbolizes beauty and elegance. The Moon is the Yin or female principle and it is a trusted friend.

In fact, many ancient Moon folktales are about a moon maiden. On mid-autumn moon, children on earth can see a lady on the Moon on this magical occasion. Children who make wishes to the lady on the Moon will find their dream comes true.

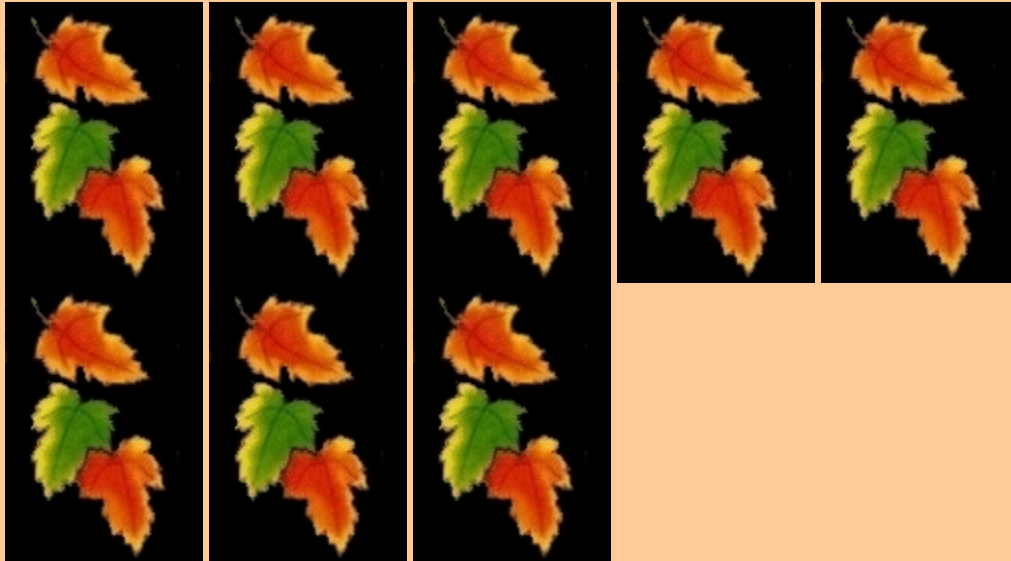


A traditional Moon Festival menu is a leisurely multi-course affair celebrating the bounty of the harvest centering on a roast pig and of course moon cakes. After doing a great deal of research I decided instead of a traditional menu that I would explore the world of Chinese Fusion and bring in the traditional components of an American Thanksgiving. Our menu is based on and adapted from recipes by Susanna Foo, Joseph Poon, Ming Tsai and Martin Yan.

Please join Evelyn and me as we celebrate the 21st annual Lovitz-McCabe Thanksgiving.

- Thursday, November, 24th, 2005
- 1012 Cape May Ave – Cape May, NJ 08204 – 609-898-9820

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Hors d'Oeuvres:

- **Chinese Antipasti**
 - Chinese Chicken Wings
 - Stir-fried Salt and Pepper Shrimp
 - Stir-fried River Shrimp
 - Sweet and Sour Cucumbers

(Prosecco)

Soup:

- **Gingered Pumpkin Soup**

(Gewürztraminer)

Dumpling:

- **Shrimp and Crab Dumplings**

Salad:

- **Chinese Greens with a Sesame-Soy Vinaigrette**

Turkey, Stuffing and Gravy:

- **Roast Turkey with Eight-Treasure Stuffing and Gravy**

(Pinot Noir)

Potato:

- **Chinese Potato Latkes**

Vegetable-Side:

- **Stir-Fried Bok Choy with Oyster Sauce and Garlic**
- **Hot and Sour Cabbage**

Cranberry:

- **Sweet and Sour Cranberry Chutney**

Bread:

- **Dinner Buns with Coconut Milk**

Dessert:

- **Moon Cake**
- **Pear and Apple Crostata with Five-Spiced Whipped Cream**
- **Chinese Chocolate Cake with Ginger Cream**

(Moscato d'Oro)

- **Coffee**
- **Chinese Black Tea**



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Peace ! Happiness ! Joy ! Love ! Thanks ! Moon ! Festival