

Holiday Happenings

Celebrating Christmas "Down-Under"

(NAPSA)—An Australian Christmas feast, while not normally kangaroo and vegamite, is decidedly different from the traditional North American holiday fare. December 25 is the middle of the summer "down-under," and among the hottest days of the year. Therefore, many Christmas celebrations are held outdoors or beachside, with an emphasis on fresh vegetables and lighter foods.

However, there are also some traditional dishes that are reminiscent of the country's British heritage, including steamed pudding and a roast. This being Australia, the roast is lamb and the pudding features dates.

To make a holiday toast, there may be nothing that goes better with Aussie cuisine than wines from the Barossa Valley, which is considered Australia's Napa Valley. One popular holiday wine is The Holy Trinity, an award-winning blend of Shiraz, Grenache and Mouvdre grapes from Grant Burge that was named after the local church (founded by his great-grandfather) where the Burge family still worships. The Holy Trinity wine has both the flavor and body to complement both lamb and sweet desserts.

ROSEMARY & GARLIC-INFUSED LAMB

One leg of lamb (size based on number of people served)
Salt and pepper
Sprigs of Rosemary
Garlic

Season the lamb by rubbing in the salt and pepper. Score the skin. Stab the lamb every 1½ inches with a long knife (about ½-inches deep) and stuff each cut with a clove of garlic and a sprig of rosemary. Be careful not to separate the flesh too much. Roast in a hot oven (1-hour for every pound). When cooked, remove the rosemary, carve and serve with steamed fresh snow peas, green beans and carrots.

HONEY BISCUITS (COOKIES) (A Traditional Barossan Christmas Treat)



An "Aussie Christmas" on the beach, with Honey Biscuits, Steamed Date Pudding and a hearty wine from the Barossa Valley.

- 1 cup honey
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. butter
- ½ cup of cold water
- 1½ tsp. bicarbonate of soda
- 1 egg, well beaten
- 1 tsp. ground cloves
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 cups self-rising flour
- 2 cups regular flour

Put honey and sugar in a large saucepan with butter and stir over a gentle heat until the butter and sugar are dissolved. Remove from heat. Add water and bicarbonate of soda. Let stand until lukewarm, then add the egg, cloves, cinnamon and flours, until the mixture becomes a soft, but malleable, dough. Leave overnight in a basin with a cloth over pan.

Next day, heat oven to 375 degrees. Roll out dough on a floured board and cut shapes with biscuit-cutter. Arrange on oven trays that are coated with melted butter and cornflower, or lined with baking paper. Lower oven to 350 degrees and bake for seven minutes. Serve hot.

For free "Australian Christmas" recipes, write to: Caravelle Wine Selections, 60 Avon Meadow Lane Avon, CT 06001 or e-mail smartin@caravellewines.com.