

Cruising

S O C I A L S T U D I E S

Adventures in cooking aboard, and great boating tales, from one of the yachting world's most acclaimed food writers. Plus, an invitation: join our new cooking web site at www.BoatUS.com/cooking

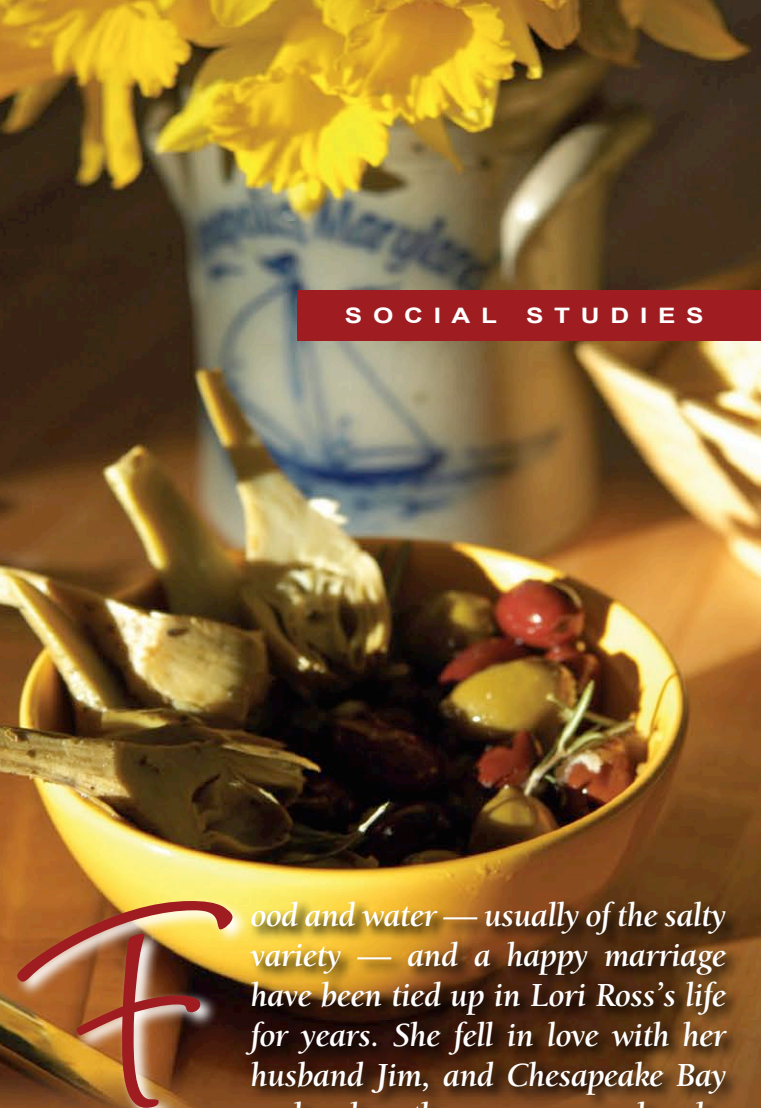
Provision Like A Pro

Much of what I learned about planning, provisioning, storing, cooking, and serving food was on cruising sailboats under 35 feet, so it was a revelation to indulge in my food and drink passions aboard *Seaworthy*, our 42-foot Grand Banks trawler. No matter the size of our boat, one thing I learned early was never, ever to buy anything we wouldn't eat at home! In our early days, on Long Island Sound, the Chesapeake Bay, and parts of the Great Circle route, I committed the newbie's error of buying all kinds of prepared, canned, and powdered vegetables, meats, stews, and fruits in case of emergency. Despite being fogged in for three days, often anchoring in quiet rivers and creeks that had no restaurants, stores, or marinas, and almost running out of food several times — we never opened those cans! At the end of each season, they malingered, moving from boat to new boat until, finally, years later, we tossed them out.

Over two decades of cruising I've learned through trial and error. My first breakfast aboard our little Shark — parmesan and chive omelets, sausage, and Portuguese bread — capsized all over our newly upholstered navy-blue settee when we were rocked by a wake because I'd neglected to use the stove's pot holder to stabilize my fry pan. Jim and I looked at each other in a moment of horror; then, forks in hand, we ate it right off the seat. With that, we each knew we'd found our soul mate!

These days, I routinely overprovision, ever since I had to feed eight people for two days on rations for four. We were cruising with another couple aboard and made plans to raft up for the night with mutual friends in a remote harbor on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake. We arrived first at our rendezvous spot, anchored, set out beef kabobs for four to marinate, and kicked back with a sunset cocktail while Jim regaled guests with stories about my tendency to overprovision — "Lori isn't happy unless she has enough food to feed 40!" Suddenly, a call came in via VHF from our fellow cruisers. In their rush to leave the dock, they'd left all

tip! **IT'S PARTY TIME** If you're planning a cocktail party that will be followed by dinner (out or aboard), plan on 4-5 appetizers per person and 1-2 drinks per person. But, if your cocktail party doubles as dinner for most guests, plan on 10-15 servings of assorted appetizers per person and 2-4 drinks. Plan sufficient food or the cocktails might get a little out of hand!



Food and water — usually of the salty variety — and a happy marriage have been tied up in Lori Ross's life for years. She fell in love with her husband Jim, and Chesapeake Bay crab cakes, the same year, when he was teaching her to sail. Six months later, in the afterglow of a fabulous dinner, they decided to buy their first sailboat, a 24-foot Hinterhoeller-designed Shark. Even her husband's wedding proposal came over a dinner of emergency provisions as they sat fogbound and anchored at Duck Island on Long Island Sound. For their 20th wedding anniversary they made their first run to the Bahamas on their 42-foot Grand Banks and fell in love again — this time with fresh conch and Bahamian hot sauce.

For five years Ross was the food and wine editor for *PassageMaker* magazine. This month we present the best of her columns, along with some mouthwatering recipes, and a bonus for cruising cooks: Ross's recipe collection and photos are now on our new *What's Cooking* web site, along with her unabridged columns. You can even post your own favorite recipes.

A nicely presented Pinzimonio can act as an appetizer or the main event.

Foodies, Unite!

— By Lori Ross



Left, A fruit platter adds color and contrast with not too much work. Center, Lori on *Seaworthy*, the first of her two trawlers. Right, Lori Ross and Jim Ellis take cooking and cruising to new heights.

their food in a cooler in their car and hadn't eaten since breakfast! I was redeemed; I had extra beef for kabobs, lots of salad and bread, plus emergency rations of quick-cooking couscous that stretched my dinner to eight. Plus, I'd brought a dozen eggs and muffins for breakfast. I even packed them off the next day with sandwiches and snacks for the trip back.

Adventures In Grilling

Our first boat, the Hinterhoeller Shark sailboat, didn't come with a grill so we brought my little charcoal-burning hibachi along. Everything we cooked on that grill was delicious! But it didn't have a lid, so it was tough to keep lit in windy conditions and a real challenge to keep clean and stowed. Finally it rusted out. Our second grill was an inexpensive rail-mounted marine kettle-style charcoal grill with removable lid, air vents to increase and decrease convection, and a nice plastic cover to keep it dry. We grilled delicious steaks, burgers, chicken, corn, fruit, and even sandwiches during our cruises. While this was a vast improvement on the hibachi, we still had the dual challenges of dumping the ash without getting a face-full of ashes, and the new challenge of keeping the unsecured lid from going overboard.

When marine propane grills became popular, we bought a rectangular rail-mounted propane grill, which solved several problems — it stayed lit, there was no ash disposal, the temperature was easily regulated, and it featured a hinged lid, which made it easier to light in a stiff breeze. However, propane-tank storage was a problem (we still had a sailboat) because we couldn't find an effective way to stow extra propane canisters above decks.

For our two trawlers, we've purchased larger, rail-mounted, box or cylindrical grills that feature two burners, a warming rack, and Sunbrella covers for the grill and propane tanks, so they can stay permanently mounted on the flybridge. There's lots of space

GRILLED TANDOORI CHICKEN WITH MANGO

½ cup each chopped cilantro, parsley
4 garlic cloves (sliced)
1 tbsp each ground cumin, paprika, salt
½ tsp pepper
½ cup oil
1 cup plain yogurt
¼ cup lemon juice
3-4 lbs. of chicken pieces
2 mangoes, peeled, cut, ½-inch slices

Blend herbs, garlic, spices, and pepper by hand in food processor. Whisk in oil, yogurt, lemon juice to make marinade. Place chicken in marinade and turn to coat; refrigerate 1 hour. Prepare grill for direct cooking over

medium heat. Place marinated chicken, skin side down, on grill. Cover and grill chicken for 20-30 minutes, or until cooked through, turning 4-5 times. Grill mango slices 2 minutes per side; set aside. Arrange chicken on large platter; garnish with grilled mango slices.



BRUNCH STRATA

6 slices of bread (preferably day-old)
8 oz. breakfast sausage or bacon (cooked and chopped)
5 large eggs
2½ cups milk
2 cups grated Swiss (or cheddar)
1 tsp of salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper

Mix eggs, milk, salt, pepper. In a shallow baking dish (2-quart), arrange

bread into a single layer. Spoon sausage or bacon and half the cheese over bread. Pour egg mixture evenly over bread and top with remaining cheese. Let sit covered in fridge for an hour, or ideally overnight, then bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes until puffy and brown. Cut and serve warm.

PINZIMONIO

1 cup of each of the following vegetables: zucchini, cucumbers, scallions, celery, carrots, radishes
Cruet of olive oil
Cruet of red wine or balsamic vinegar
Salt
Pepper/peppermill
¼ cup mustard
¼ cup of fresh herbs (one or several) such as thyme, rosemary, mint
2 tbsp minced fresh garlic

Prepare a platter of fresh tasty vegetables, cut into strips or pieces. Set cruet of olive oil and vinegar on the table, along with salt, pepper, fresh herbs such as thyme, rosemary, mint, Dijon mustard, and minced garlic. Give your guests small bowls in which to mix up a sauce with the olive oil and vinegar, seasoning to taste. They then dip their veggies in their sauce and eat.

on the flybridge (under seats) to safely store extra propane tanks. My fantasy is a home-sized gas grill installed in the flybridge!

Breakfast On The Hook

I enjoy rising early, taking a cup of strong black coffee and ripe fruit up to the flybridge at sunrise, then later in the morning sitting down to more substantial fare to start the day. While landlocked, we usually don't have time for a second breakfast, but while cruising Jim and I often indulge in a 6:30-7:00 a.m. coffee with fruit, followed at 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. by eggs, pastry, or cereal. Like the Hobbits in author J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy, I call this meal "second breakfast."

Stewing Up A Storm

My first ocean voyage took place in a Beneteau 30 entered in the Annapolis to Bermuda Race. As the least-experienced crewmember, I was assigned the role of cook and celestial navigator. A propensity for seasickness and lack of offshore experience required I spend as little time in the galley as possible, so I produced home-cooked gourmet dinners that I froze, packed in dry ice, and then, once under way, reheated. I still remember the best of these meals: whole tenderloin with mushroom, bacon, red wine sauce, and twice baked potatoes; Brunswick stew with corn bread; stir-fried Asian chicken and wild rice with pineapple;

tip! **SPICY FRUIT PLATTER**
For a quick fruit platter, lay out contrasting colored fruits, side by side, for a beautiful display or top one ripe fruit (melon, mango, pineapple) with fresh-ground pepper or a pinch of chili powder, salt, and a squeeze of lime as they do in West African and Latin American countries to awaken the sweetness of the fruit.

savory, smooth, and rich with tender chunks of beef, soft onions, potatoes, carrots, and garlic — so satisfying and delicious I can almost taste it today!

Cool Cooking On Hot Days

While in the Bahamas on a group cruise in 2003, the participating yachts gathered dockside one sweltering afternoon for cocktails and nibbles. Every boat cook brought a favorite cold food and cocktail. Bombay Bellinis got us started. Fresh chunky guacamole with taco chips and fresh conch ceviche followed some creamy, cool dips with raw, iced veggies. Smoked salmon, smoked halibut spread, and a hard-boiled egg, sour cream and caviar dip along with cold melon and grapes completed the memorable feast



Many a pile of vegetables have disappeared into Lori Ross's galley only to reappear as a tasty meal.

and inspired all of us to be more creative on hot days aboard!

When the Chesapeake Bay's languorous spells of hot, humid, and hazy days take hold, cooking seems a burdensome chore. Jim and I just want to retreat into cool, shady places on the boat, drink iced drinks, and eat cool, soothing foods. At mealtimes, I typically wander around opening the fridge and freezer, or "shopping" in the cupboards seeking a light meal that won't warm us, or the galley unnecessarily. Some of our favorite chilled creations include cold cucumber soup and open-faced sandwiches; fish and steak *tartares* and *carpaccios*; French *crudité* and *charcuterie* platters; Italian *antipasto* platters and fish cooked without heat.

Lose 10 Pounds On A Two-Week Cruise

The only time I ever lost weight on a cruise was during the spring I took our Fleming 55 from Ft. Myers, Florida, to Annapolis, Maryland, while learning to handle the boat without my husband through SeaSense, "The Women's Sailing and Powerboating School." Because I planned to do all the cooking for the trip and was training to walk the Marine Corps Marathon at the time, I needed to keep my training program going during the trip north. I decided to make an effort to drop a few pounds during the 17-day cruise.

First, I cleaned out the boat before we left, stocked it with lots of fruits, veggies, lean meats, seafood, pasta, rice, beans, olive oil, and whole grains, and planned a menu around the popular "Mediterranean Diet." Underway we tried to shop for fresh tasty foods a little at every port and waited until we ran out of fresh foods to break into the processed or prepared foods. The trip was delightful and, to my surprise, I lost nearly 10 pounds!

Cooking Aboard For Special Diets And Allergies

The most challenging menu I ever created was a dinner we hosted aboard for business acquaintances we wanted to get to know better. I asked my guests in advance whether they had any dietary restrictions, food preferences, or allergies. One couple was on the Atkins Diet; the other guest told me that he was on a low-cholesterol and low-fat diet and his wife was a vegetarian who ate eggs, milk, and cheese, but she had a severe allergy to ground pepper and the nightshade family of vegetables! Understand that these are delightful people who would never have *asked* us to make any special accommodation for them; they simply responded to my request.

Jim and I were baffled. What would we serve that would be delicious and avoid calling attention to their conditions? Online we learned that the nightshades were a family of plants including potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, chilies, paprika, tobacco, and petunias. Creating a menu would require some imagination! We decided on a Mediterranean theme that would incorporate all the foods our guests could eat. We started with a *Pinzimonio* — a platter of fresh, tasty raw vegetables (none from the nightshade

family) served with oil and vinegar. For those who didn't want olive oil dip, a garlicky non-fat yogurt dip was also served. A platter of Italian prosciutto, cheeses with bread and crackers, plus a bowl of kalamata olives rounded out the hors d'oeuvres. Low-fat dieters could have veggies and yogurt dip, a few olives and a slice of cheese or prosciutto, while the Atkins followers could eat everything but the crackers and bread, and the lacto-vegetarian could eat all but the prosciutto — and simply avoid adding pepper to her olive oil dip.

A simple salad of Asian greens and non-nightshade vegetables with optional cashews and Asian chili oil was followed by an assortment of skewers of grilled chicken, shrimp, and beef. In addition, we prepared a huge platter of more than a half-dozen perfectly roasted non-nightshade vegetables along with wild rice pilaf with a gremolata of lemon, garlic, and parsley, plus a bowl of silky white beans with sage and garlic to round out the meal. We served all this with several sauces ranging from a spicy harissa to a mild horseradish. Everyone was happy.

tip! **HAPPY HOLIDAYS**


When celebrating holidays and milestones on a long cruise, planning, creativity, and spontaneity are the keys to success. Consider local customs and traditions, and participate in celebrations and events. Experiment with seasonal and locally available foods when designing your menu, and plan to bring along "must have" ingredients (cranberries, for example, are not available in the Caribbean). Bring a few cherished decorations and your favorite music to make the celebration complete!



Chilled shrimp and a cool creamy dip make the perfect appetizer for a party or warm-weather meal.

Holidays On The High Seas

Planning is critical to success in celebrating holidays aboard. One of the most disappointing holidays we ever spent aboard was simply the result of a lack of planning, and our not keeping some provisioning staples aboard. Several years ago, we brought our boat to

Dinner Key Marina in Coconut Grove, Florida, for the winter. When we flew into Miami for Thanksgiving, our anniversary and my birthday — all the same day! — our flight was delayed, and by the time we got to the boat, most grocery stores and restaurants were closed. We didn't have a backup plan and hadn't bothered to shop on our way to the boat, so the long-awaited celebration of my birthday and our anniversary turned into a meal of crackers and squeeze cheese, boxed macaroni, and Girl Scout cookies for dessert. Happily, this story has a good ending — Jim ended the day by taking me up to the flybridge, and giving me a bottle of vintage Bordeaux from the year of our marriage, and we toasted our anniversary and my birthday under a full moon and canopy of stars! For boaters, so much of our pleasure is about the food we eat along the way, but the thing that makes eating aboard magical is how our boats transport us and our moods, and heighten our appreciation of what and who we have around us. 

BERMUDA BEEF STEW

After several years of trying to "doctor" Dinty Moore Beef Stew, I gave up. This version was a revelation and it still tastes terrific, even at the dock! (Serves 6 to 8)



- 2 lbs. chuck roast (1½-inch cubes)
- 1½ tsp each, of salt and pepper
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped (2 cups)
- 3 minced cloves garlic
- 3 tbsp flour
- 1 cup red wine
- 2 cups beef broth or stock
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 6 potatoes, boiled (peeled, halved)
- 4 large carrots (sliced ¼-inch thick)
- ½ cup fresh parsley, (minced)

Place beef cubes in large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; toss to coat. Heat 2 tablespoons of oil over medium-high heat in large non-reactive soup kettle; add beef in two separate batches. Brown meat on all sides, about 5 minutes per batch, add remaining tablespoon of oil if needed. Remove meat; set aside. Add onions

to empty kettle; sauté until almost softened, 4 to 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and add garlic; sauté about 30 seconds longer. Stir in flour; cook until lightly colored, 1 to 2 minutes. Add wine, scraping up any browned bits that have stuck to kettle. Add stock, bay leaves, thyme; bring to simmer. Add meat; return to simmer. Cover and simmer about 1 hour. Add potatoes and carrots, cover and simmer until meat is just tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Stir in parsley, adjust seasonings, serve.

Variations: Replace potatoes and carrots with: mushrooms and pearl onions; or tomatoes, orange zest and olives; or tomatoes, cinnamon, and cloves

Now, with a fully provisioned galley on their 55-foot Fleming, and decades of fabulously concocted meals behind her, Ross has a wealth of experience on how to make the perfect meal aboard. Join her online: www.BoatUS.com/cooking

SEAFOOD OR VEGETABLE RISOTTO

I made this risotto on the "lose 10 pounds" trip and it met with rave reviews. The first time, I used bay scallops; the next time, fresh morel mushrooms; the third time, lobster. I also made it once with brown rice and barley! It can be served with saffron and fresh or frozen peas (added at end of cooking) or unadorned, as is. Serves 4

- 4 cups low-fat chicken broth
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 3 tbsp finely chopped onion
- ¾ cup uncooked Arborio rice, brown rice, or barley
- 3 tbsp minced fresh parsley, rosemary or thyme ½ tsp each of salt and ground pepper
- 2 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ lb. cooked seafood (shrimp, scallops) or fresh mushrooms or peas (not included in nutritional information)

Heat broth in a saucepan to a simmer. Meanwhile, in another saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté 2 minutes. Add rice; reduce heat to medium and cook rice 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Add broth, 1/2 cup at a time, stirring constantly; cook until each portion of broth is absorbed

by the rice before adding the next 1/2 cup. This should take no more than 20 minutes total or about 2-3 minutes per addition of broth. Once rice is cooked al dente, stop adding broth and stir in parsley, other herbs or seafood or vegetables, and cook 2 minutes or until thoroughly heated, stirring constantly. Spoon onto plates; sprinkle with cheese. I also like to make this risotto with about 2 tablespoons of fresh lemon juice and ½ teaspoon fresh-grated lemon peel at the end of cooking. (Per serving, without seafood or mushrooms: 229 Calories; 3g Total Fat; 21g Protein; 30g Carbohydrate; 292mg Sodium)



SEAFOOD CEVICHE

- 1 lb fresh raw white fish such as cod, halibut, bass, or raw scallops, shrimp, conch (single type of fish or mixed)
- ½ cup lime, lemon, orange or grapefruit juice
- 2 fresh red chilies, chopped (optional)
- small bunch of fresh coriander, chopped
- 2 fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 4 tbsp of chopped onion
- Salt and pepper
- Crackers or tortilla chips to serve

Slice or chop fish and put into a glass or plastic container. Cover completely with freshly squeezed citrus juice. Add finely chopped coriander, chilies, onion, and tomato. Make sure all the ingredients are covered with lime juice, cover with a lid, refrigerate for at least 4 hours. Serve within 24 hours with tortilla chips and salsa.