



# Wooden Spoons

Mary Jane's Cooking School, Inc. provides education in nutritional home cooking and homemaking in harmony with individual, community and cultural traditions, with respect and care for the environment. *Mission Statement*

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT Going Placidly Amidst the Noise ....

*Woodsman spare that tree!  
Touch not a single bough  
In youth it sheltered me  
And I'll protect it now.*

George P. Morris



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“The holy book says ‘to everything there is a season’”, intoned the military chaplain as he prepared the soldiers to say good-bye to their fallen comrades in arms. And the bodies of two more young Canadians were lifted to the plane that would take them, finally, home and to the graves where the season of their rest from life’s battles had come far too soon. Did they go, as the poet Max Ehrmann wrote, “placidly amidst the noise”? Or were they ‘raging’ “against the dying of the light” as Dylan Thomas had urged? .

Such thoughts and images return to mind as summer slips into autumn and we embrace the declining delights of the harvest once again. We celebrate the season's offerings, its beauty and nourishment of body and soul, even more as we relive Earth's cycle of birth, growth, death and rebirth. We know that winter will soon enfold in its embrace the plants and animals that have not fallen to the clear cutting bulldozer, the poisoning of chemicals, or more and more, to the effects of global warming and climate change threatening our environment.

This is a time of tallying up the costs in the way we maintain our relationships with the natural world and with one another, the time for accounting about what’s really going on in the wars we wage, actively or in silent complicity, against the Earth and all that dwell therein.

It is time to call in the auditors.

If we do that in good faith we will have to admit that too often our accounts are at best questionable, “in the red” and almost bankrupt in a war against truth.

Truth is lost in militarist mouthings where monies are deflected to arms dealers and the CEO’s grow fatter as the poor starve; where homes are destroyed by missiles and the crops are lost to chemical pollutants, technologies of termination, and the effects of fire, flood, and greenhouse gases.

Perhaps that is one of the most important reasons that Mary Jane’s Cooking School was created. Our ethical mission includes confronting the agendas of the powers-that-be as we stand up for life and health and demand an audit on behalf of the Earth. And that’s why from our

inception we’ve relied on persons of good will, high principles, and if possible a good sense of enlightened humour, to keep our accounts balanced and current. through the seasons of our growth.

One of those persons was LeVan (Van) Hall, chartered accountant by trade and justice activist by inclination.

Van Hall died in August, but until the day he left us he remained in touch with the values of community service that directed his path from Canada to Africa and back. As a young man Van responded to the urging of his father to ‘make something of himself’ by training as a chartered accountant, considered to be one of the most conservative of occupations. But it wasn’t too long before he and his wife Susan left Canada for a stint in Tanzania, working with CUSO (Canadian University Services Overseas), where he designed and taught the first national accounting program, an important step in the economic development of the African nation and its people.

Teaching for empowerment was a process that Van found exhilarating and exciting, a model for what could be done, and what he and his friends of like mind could do, in support of social and economic justice elsewhere. Especially in places like Canada’s north and amongst its native peoples.

Returning to this country, Van worked as an economic policy analyst for a short while with the Government of Manitoba, and then left public service to set up his own firm and share his accounting and business skills with multiple grass-roots groups—especially aboriginal groups and organizations, whom he recognized as dealing with many of the same issues faced by the people in a developing African economy.

The list is enormous of the people and the community businesses, aboriginal and non-native agencies and organizations that Van, his partners, and his staff served.

They were all struggling to do the right thing, to survive on a shoestring if necessary, while shooting for the stars ethically speaking. People willing to go placidly if possible, as Van usually

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did, in his casual clothing and jocular approach to life's little annoyances. People who challenge the ethical balance sheets of our times.

Mary Jane's Cooking School was one of those businesses. As founding partner of Hall Molgat Public Accountants, Van Hall will live on in the audited financial statements we received each year from the firm he ran with his partner Alain Molgat, a trusted colleague and seasoned professional who shared Van's values and will continue to meet our auditing needs through his new company.

When he became ill Van passed his business on to his son

Simon, who will draw upon his father's commitment to the auditing profession and to the people it serves. Van Hall taught that public accounting was not just a calling for the careful, but a job about justice, where the inevitable stresses are best met with a dash of good humour, and a happy heart.

That good humour is abundant this fall at Mary Jane's Cooking School. We are excited as we welcome more students than ever, with new programs and opportunities to learn and to teach about balancing the books and auditing the accounts for the Earth and its people. Good bye Van and thanks for everything. We'll miss you.

Laura L. Steiman, *President*

## Woodsman Spare That Tree

Once again this summer, my daughter and I had the opportunity to cook for a fine American family from Kentucky who own Manitucky Island, situated on the Winnipeg River, near Minaki. For generations, it has been a family tradition to holiday here, with testimonials of family get-togethers dating back to the early 1940's in the form of dozens of photographs covering the walls of the main cabin.

They are a wonderful family to work for, always positive in outlook and very considerate in every way. Their southern grace and gentleness and manner of speech are endearing. This family and their friends immensely enjoy nature and the outdoors.

According to one of the owners of the island, this holiday location is "God's country". But all is not well in God's country. The haunting calls of the loon, the songs of the eagle, populations of pelicans stationed on small rocky islands protruding from the Winnipeg River, turtles basking in the sun and otters, muskrats and beavers living quiet, playful and busy lives on the river—they all mask the encroaching threat to this idyllic creation.

On the mainland, behind a border of trees, the logging company, Weyerhaeuser, is clear-cutting the forests threatening the lives of countless creatures. It is a sad and tragic thing that crown lands, under the supervision of our elected government officials have been historically and continue to be offered to corporations to exploit. With few exceptions, forestry practices by multinationals means clear-cutting and clear-cutting ultimately destroys the forest ecosystem. Forests are being transformed into plantations. The industry sets the standards and the government rubber stamps the plans without consideration for the effects of clear-

cutting on the future of the forests, on wildlife, or on Indigenous peoples for whom the forest is home. Forests are far more than the commercial value of their timber. Forests are a precious resource. They are integral to the health of the planet. They serve to sequester carbon dioxide and ameliorate global warming. Forests offer benefits to life in ways we do not yet understand. Everything in the forest has relevance to something. Even the dead trees in the forest are of particular importance to certain animal species

and support specific lichens that feed the caribou. It is only ignorance and corporate greed that allows for the destruction of the forests.

Cottagers in the Minaki area are mounting a campaign against the clear-cutting and hopefully their interests can be merged with the larger ecological interests in this area against the corporate exploitation and destruction

of the forests. For years activists have been working with the residents of Grassy Narrows and the White Dog reserves in an attempt to stave off the destruction to their land by the forest industry. Where there is poverty multinationals have a free hand to pollute and exploit as they have on these reserves.

The American families we worked for have an invested interest in protecting the forests and have aligned themselves with the cottagers in their struggles and it may be the time the cottagers find commonality with other environmental and Aboriginal groups whose interest is in preserving the forests in its diversity. Commonality of purpose must be found amongst these groups and other environmental groups to successfully stop the endorsed clear-cutting.

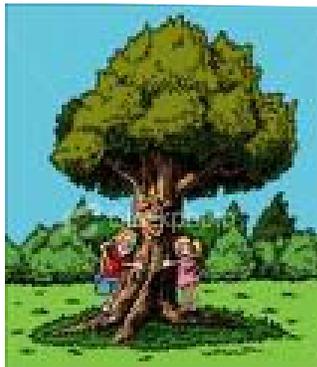
What we need to see happen is for the industry to adopt the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label, which is an assur-

ance that the forests are harvested and managed in a sustainable and environmentally responsible fashion. According to conservationists the current Canadian Standard Association (CSA) label used by the forestry industry provides no assurance of sustainable practices and is merely an indication of government approval of the standards set by the industry itself. The CSA label may be an assurance of quality when buying an appliance such as a toaster but has no relevance to ecological forest management.

As individuals and consumers we too must share responsibility in forest protection. We must be mindful of the root causes of environmental degradation, which are rampant consumerism and our unrelenting demand for wood products. Drastic steps must be taken to reduce and reuse forest products. Looking for the FSC label when purchasing wood is responsible shopping. Home Depot carries FSC wood and paper products. We need to mount pressure on our elected government officials to become proactive for a change, and stop giving away our forests to multinationals, to stop the clear cutting, to stop logging in national parks, to conserve more forests as national parks. Taking these steps would be to the betterment of future generations and for the earth. Daunting though it is we must continue the struggle to save our forests. Why not legislate a mandatory compliance to FSC standards? Why not adopt purchasing policies beginning with government purchasing policies to only use FSC wood? Then given the nature of governments and their being slow to change, why wait for them? When there is a will there must be a way.

A comprehensive and meticulously researched book on the subject of Canadian forestry is "At the Cutting Edge" by Elizabeth May.

Mary Jane Eason  
Program Coordinator and  
Community Nutritionist



# Fermented Products for Digestive Health

**D**r. Jordan Rubin, holistic doctor and nutritionist, at the age of nineteen suffered from a serious form of Crohn's Disease and almost died from the disease despite having grown up in a family that was very conscientious about health, his father having been a Naturopath and his mother a teacher. After searching around the world for answers, he found healing through an 'eccentric' nutritionist in California and now dedicates his life to teaching others how to find health.

Dr. Rubin promotes fermentation for digestive health and has the following to say:

*Before refrigeration was popular, people had to find a way to preserve their food and they did it through fermentation. When people would milk dairy they would drink the milk at the moment but in order to store it for longer periods of time, even weeks or months, they would ferment it using beneficial microorganisms, often contained within the food, which allowed it to be shelf-stable longer.*

*Fermentation supplies nutrients that are highly available to the body and therefore has health benefits in and of its self. Fermentation unlocks the nutrients found within that food.*

*Today food is preserved through refrigeration, through chemicals and preservatives that are artificial and make food less healthy. As we move away from fermentation digestive problems increase.*

*Every culture throughout the world consumes fermented food. Dairy is consumed all over Europe and Scandinavian countries. Fermented vegetables or sauerkraut is consumed in eastern European countries, in the Orient as kimchi, miso, and natto, South America, Central America, and Mexico.*

*Every condiment we consume today – mayonnaise, mustard, relish, sauerkraut – came from a fermented food in the past. They made our food healthier and more digestible.*

*Historically, every difficult to digest food was combined with a fermented food at mealtime. A good example is sausage and sauerkraut. Fermentation unlocks the best of the food or nutrient and it provides compounds that were not yet there before. The principle of alchemy and synergy are at work in fermentation.*

In this article I will write about fermented dairy products and how to prepare some of them. Without pasteurization or refrigeration milk sours and separates spontaneously. This is due to the process of lacto-fermentation during which lactic-acid-producing bacteria begin digesting or breaking down both milk sugar [lactose]

and milk protein [casein]. When these friendly bacteria have produced enough lactic acid to inactivate all putrefying bacteria, the milk is effectively preserved from spoilage for several days and weeks and in the case of cheese, for several years.

Like the process of sprouting grains, fermentation of milk results in numerous beneficial changes. As well as breaking down casein, one of the most difficult proteins to digest, it restores many of the enzymes destroyed during pasteurization including lactase, which helps digest lactose or milk sugar, and numerous enzymes which help the body absorb calcium and other minerals.

Lactase produced during the culturing process allows many people who are sensitive to fresh milk to tolerate fermented milk products. Both vitamin B and vitamin C content of milk increase during fermentation.

Research has shown that regular consumption of **cultured** dairy products lowers cholesterol and protects against bone loss. In addition, beneficial bacteria and lactic acid are provided to the digestive tract. These friendly creatures and their by-products keep pathogens at bay, guard against infectious illness and aid in the fullest possible digestion of all food we consume.

Fermented dairy products can be made from cow or goat milk with a minimum of difficulty. Start with the best quality milk you can find, preferably clean raw milk from pasture-fed animals. Organic pasteurized but non-homogenized milk available in some organic food stores is a good alternative. Goat milk is naturally homogenized and free of growth hormones and antibiotics since they are raised more naturally.

The easiest of cultured milk products to make is **buttermilk**. It is foolproof since its culture is not temperature-sensitive and remains active for many weeks without reculturing.

For your first batch of buttermilk you can use a cheese culture from a health food store or use store-bought buttermilk then reserve about ½ cup in a separate jar to use in your next batch. The cheese culture also makes sour cream and a cream cheese.

For making buttermilk place 1 litre of whole milk in a glass container, add the buttermilk culture or 1/2 cup commercial buttermilk, stir well and cover. Keep at room temperature [but not higher than 80 degrees] until the milk thickens and curdles slightly. Chill well.

To make **sour cream** or **crème**

**fraiche** at home, place 2 cups of a good quality cream [organic is good] into a glass jar. Add one-tablespoon buttermilk or crème fraiche from previous batch, stir well, cover tightly, and place in a warm spot [oven with light on] for about 20 hours. Chill well. It is wonderful in creamed soups and sauces.

**Yoghurt** is easy to make – neither a yogurt-maker nor a special culture is necessary. Gently heat 1 litre of pasteurized whole milk to 180 degrees in a double-boiler pan [it will be steaming and small bubbles will form around the edge of the pan] and allow to cool to about 110 degrees [dip the knuckle of your small finger into the milk – it shouldn't feel warm or cool].

Stir in ½ cup good quality commercial plain yogurt [ex. *Jeresyland Organics*, non-homogenized yogurt] or ½ cup from previous batch and pour into a wide-mouth glass jar and cover with lid.

Wrap the jar in a thick bath towel and place in a warm oven [leaving the light on gives sufficient heat] and leave overnight or longer for a yogurt that is stronger in the beneficial lactic acid. Transfer to the refrigerator. Fruit and vanilla can be added before serving.

For a tasty and healthful dessert topping simply pour yogurt into a filter-lined sieve over a bowl and allow the whey to drain into it for a few hours. Blend a little honey and vanilla into the thickened yogurt and serve over fresh fruit or fruit crisp, etc.

To make a wonderful yogurt-cheese icing for a cake allow the yogurt to drain overnight as above then press out more of the whey by placing a plate of suitable size and a weight over the yogurt. When quite thick transfer to a bowl and add honey and vanilla to taste. It is delicious on a carrot cake or a chocolate-zucchini cake.

Try a delicious and healthful beverage – **Cultured Milk Smoothie**: 1 ¼ cup buttermilk or yogurt, 1 ripe banana or 1 cup berries [fresh or frozen], 1 -2 Tbs. hemp oil or coconut oil, 1 -2 egg yolks, 3 -4 Tbs. maple syrup, raw honey or stevia powder, and 1 tsp. vanilla extract [omit with berries] and a pinch of nutmeg [omit with berries].

It pays to make milk-culturing part of a daily routine so that you always have on hand the products you need for healthy snacks and appetizing meals. I hope you will venture into the domain of cultured products and enjoy their healthful benefits.

Eveline Caners,  
Board Member, *Mary Jane's*  
Cooking School, Inc.

## Programs: Afghan Canadian Women's Organization, Stradbrook Senior Centre and Private Classes

A program with the Afghan Canadian Women's Organization called "Oven Delights", expanded into another program focusing on other types of Canadian cooking. The original two groups of women (at least 10 per group) expanded into three groups as Afghan women from all parts of the city came together to experience Canadian home cooking. As usual with great aplomb the women, despite their long dresses and oftentimes head veils, rose above the challenges of cooking in a very hot kitchen during the peak of the summer's heat, creating wonderful dishes. Despite the hardships the women have undergone and still face, they have a radiance, warmth and joy. After a busy afternoon preparing a variety of foods, the women washed the dishes and cleaned the work areas in a most sparkling way; even the dishcloths and towels were hand washed.

The women's life skills of homemaking, which include masterful sewing and lace making as well as food preparation, are to be admired. Through this program we have come to learn a great deal about the diversity of peoples and ways of life that make up the sophisticated Afghan culture. It was through the dedication of Ariana Yaftali, a passionate leader for the Afghan women that the program got underway. Funding for the program came from Manitoba Labour and Immigration.

As of late, other classes and programs have been offered either at the school or offsite. Community Kitchens programs were initiated at the Stradbrook Senior Centre where seniors came together for dialogue and food preparation and sharing of a meal. The seniors came from many backgrounds, bringing with them the wisdom of their experiences, making for a very enjoyable time. Nutrition topics

were part of the fare.

Private classes have been offered to several individuals on request over the spring and summer. One young African professional woman has been meeting regularly to learn nutritional home cooking, since as a child she did not have any opportunity to learn cooking skills. Getting an education was the priority in her life and encouraged by her parents. Another young man came for classes to be able to help out with the cooking at home.

Recognition that good food is the cornerstone to physical and mental health is becoming more and more evident. Nutritional home cooking ensures that our children and future generations will be healthy.

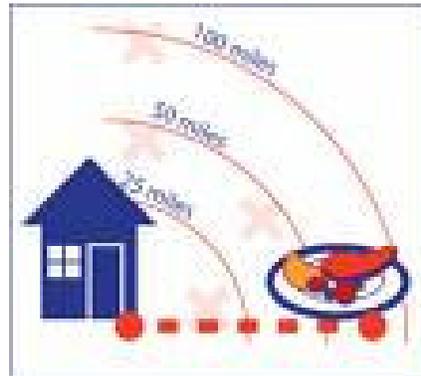


## LOCAL EATING ON THE 100-MILE DIET

100 people are going to begin a diet that consists of food that can be procured within a 100-mile radius, for 100 days beginning in September. Interest in local eating soared when Alsia Smith and J.B. MacKinnon wrote the 100-Mile Diet in which they chronicled their eating experiences over the course of a year with some surprising findings. Actually local eating was a way of life until the mid 20th century when corporate dominance of our food changed our world and our attitudes. And so a group of committed food adventurers are going to take up the challenge of rediscovering the joys, challenges and benefits of local eating, an alternative response to 'turbo-capitalist' globalization.

What the project of the 100-mile diet does is focus attention on what is available in our locality and also the potential for variety and abundance right around us. According to David Suzuki, "eating locally isn't just a fad-it may be one of the most important ways we save ourselves and the planet". Eating, how we eat and what we eat has profound implications and makes a huge statement about our society and ourselves.

Local eating forces us to source out our food and check out the food sources, where the food is grown and how it is grown and to become acquainted with the producers of our food. That can change the world. A commitment to local eating awakens us to the bounty around us and the untapped potential of our environ-



ment. It teaches us to appreciate our food and experience the seasonal variability of our food. So instead of the supermarket model that brings us food from all over the world, we begin to eat what our own environment provides us with, and we become attuned to our environment and experience a relationship with our food and the earth and its Creator. Year round sameness will be replaced with seasonal variability.

MacKinnon writes about traceability, a measure of how close or how distant one is from one's food. The farmers who save their own seeds, cultivate, raise and harvest the plants and animals they eat have total traceability. As a society we have been losing the traceability of our food, and every aspect of our lives. We do not know the people who raise our food, who make our clothes or anything for that matter. Few people will ever have the experience of raising an animal,

knowing a cow, a pig, or a chicken. For most these sentient beings are just a commodity presented in trays of Styrofoam in various cuts.

Loss of diversity of our food is not something that most of us are aware of yet while we think that we have a great variety of food, bringing the world at our table, as it were, we are not so aware of the loss of our local foods and local crops, all gone to satisfy the global capitalist economy of sameness. In times past there were many varieties of plants, and except for the people who save heritage seeds, these hardy varieties of cabbage, corn and tomatoes would be totally lost. My grandmother, who was an avid gardener and a pioneer, grew citron, okra and salsify among other vegetables in her backyard garden, hoed by hand. Few today know what "salsify" is or even "citron".

Dr. Abram Hoffer and Jonathan Prousky in their book "Naturopathic Nutrition" refer to our modern high tech food as dead. The more a food is divested of its nutrients, the more it is apt to be stable and of course flavourless. They assert that the scientifically based high tech diet is monotonous. The supermarket with 15,000 items or more on its shelves does not mean variety. On the contrary it is the same foods packaged in various ways, and loaded with sugar and salt and a host of artificial flavours and

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other additives such as monosodium glutamate (MSG) to camouflage the loss of flavour as a result of processing. It is a boring assembly of foods. When nutrients are taken out of a food, flavour goes too. Even juices are processed to remove certain bitter flavours, those compounds that would impart health benefits. So for the sake of blandness and stability natural flavours are removed.

The authors also point out that when comparing food that is locally grown to that grown far away, the locally grown food will have a better match of nutrients with the plants and animals and those who consume the food.

Apparently the ratio of essential fatty acids to non-essential fats is important in colder climates for developing cold tolerance. It is important for plants and animals to have more essential fatty acids, which tend to be part of more unsaturated fats and have a lower freezing point. Contrast the oils of tropical plants like palm and coconut, which are liquid on a warm day but will become solid on a cool day. This is just one of many ways in which endogenous food is better suited to our health. Our environment indeed shapes us.

Focusing on locally grown food is really a tribute to regionalism in cooking and eating. The local focus allows for the development of cuisines that reflect and celebrate the foods of an area. The effect of the 100-mile diet experience by some

committed people prepared to brace the challenges of eating only local foods—doing without tea or coffee, salt and tropical fruits—highlights the need for the local accessibility of food, of bringing the producers and eaters together.

Hopefully the long term overall effect will strengthen the local economy, improve our health and reduce carbon emissions resulting from long distance transportation of foods.

It is also a very community building exercise as people come together to learn and share their knowledge and experiences and to assist one another in the process.

### Some local foods and some experimentation

**Elmer's pickles** and horseradish, made in Manitoba are good and free of additives

**Bothwell cheese**, an artisan cheese made using traditional methods and natural ingredients comes in a variety of cheese types and flavours. The Manitoba cheese is made in the town of Bothwell.

**Trappist cheese**: also an artisan cheese made in the traditional way from natural ingredients by the monks in Holland Manitoba

**Rhubarb**: a good substitute for lemon, use it on fish for example, or to add sourness to soups or desserts

**Burdock root**, harvest the young roots as opposed to those grown over two years. Scrub and cook like potatoes, with

some butter or even use raw grated into salads. Very healthy. Also known and sold as Jerusalem artichoke in Organic Planet. Often found growing in our yards.

**Nettles**: harvest with gloves. Wash and cut as you would spinach and use in the same way for a vegetable or in soups and lasagna. Choked full of minerals. The stinging chemical is neutralized by cooking.

**Dandelion root**: harvest, clean and dry the entire taproot. Grind up and use for dandelion coffee.

**Barley coffee**: Soak some barley in skim milk over night. Drain off milk and spread barley on a baking sheet and bake in a low oven at 300 F until the barley is dry and browned. Grind before using or use whole by adding to a pot of cold water and bring to a boil then allow to simmer until the water turns a coffee colour. My mother made barley coffee from barley that she parched until they turned black. It had a good flavour.

**A cautionary note**: use only those wild plants such as burdock or nettles that have not been sprayed. We cannot assume that parks have not been sprayed. It is better to encourage wild plants to grow in one's own yard.

Mary Jane Eason  
Program Coordinator and  
Community Nutritionist

### Cleaning Solution For Laundry

- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1/4 cup washing soda (Borax)
- 1/2 cup ammonia

Dilute in warm water and add to 1 gallon (4 liters) water. For double strength add to 1/2 gallon (2 liters) water. Make more concentrated for heavily stained items. Soak clothing overnight. Wash in hot water.

### NEWS FLASH!!!

Mary Jane's Cooking School has received a contract through the United Way of Winnipeg to offer our program, *Making Food, Making Friends* to six groups of Aboriginal and refugee women over the next two years. We look forward to offering this exciting new initiative in our community



### RADIO PROGRAM

Tune into **Wooden Spoons**, our radio program on CKUW, Community Radio -95.9 FM, every Friday from 8 to 9 am. Along with nutritional information and recipe ideas, *Wooden Spoons* brings you a variety of perspectives from guests in the community.

Visit MJCS webpage at: [www.maryjanescookingschool.org](http://www.maryjanescookingschool.org)

## WILD RICE CAKES

At Manitucky Island, where we cooked for an American family and their friends from Kentucky, this tasty recipe was improvised as a way of using up leftover cooked wild rice. Serve with yogurt curry sauce as a lively complement

2 or more tablespoons oil  
2 cups cooked wild rice  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 stalk celery, finely chopped  
1 tablespoon parsely, finely chopped  
¼ cup bacon bits (optional)  
1 egg  
½ cup bread crumbs  
salt and pepper to taste

Set ½ to ¾ cup rice aside and puree in a food processor or food mill.

In a bowl combine the remaining ingredients. Mix in the pureed rice.

Shape into flat cakes with hands and set on a floured plate. Fry the patties in a frying pan over medium heat until browned on both sides. Serve with yogurt curry sauce

\* The rice is pureed to bind and hold the ingredients together

### Yogurt Curry Sauce

1 cup plain yogurt  
½ cup good quality mayonnaise (not the fat-reduced kind)

1 teaspoon or more curry powder or to taste

Squeeze of lemon

Salt and pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients together until well blended. Let stand for 10 to 20 minutes to develop flavour.

### *I want to support the work of Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc.*

With donations of \$10.00 or more you become a member of Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc. Your contribution will promote nurturing today for a healthier tomorrow.

\_\_\_ \$10

\_\_\_ \$100 Bronze Spoon

\_\_\_ \$25

\_\_\_ \$200 Silver Spoon

\_\_\_ \$50

\_\_\_ \$500 Gold Spoon

\_\_\_ \$75

\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Cheque or money order enclosed payable to Mary Jane's Cooking School Inc.

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