



pinnacle

Exchange

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Welcome!



PLEASE JOIN US IN WELCOMING GERALD GERVASIO AS OUR NEW CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

In his role, Jerry will be responsible for all matters related to the daily operations of Pinnacle Dietary.

Jerry worked for Pinnacle Dietary from 2008 to 2014 as Vice President of Operations and returns to us now as COO, bringing with him experience in fiscal budgets, corporate and regulatory compliance, human resource and union contract negotiations and policies, and training and development. In this role as a member of the executive team, Jerry will directly oversee the Pinnacle Dietary senior operations team and will work with both the Pinnacle employees in the facilities as well as senior level management of our clients to ensure all levels of operations are running efficiently and in full compliance.

Jerry can be reached at JerryG@pinnacledietary.com or **215-630-9830**.

NEW HIRES

PRISCILLA GRANT

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, CANTERBURY

KIMBERLY MITCHELL

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, MANHATTANVILLE

SARAH DONNER

CHEF MANAGER, WEDGWOOD

ANDREW GAYLE

DIETARY SUPERVISOR, WATERVIEW

ANAKAWONA JOSEPH

DIETARY SUPERVISOR, WEDGWOOD

JEFF ROLEN

DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, CORNELL

NEIL NELSON

DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, MONMOUTH

VICTOR SANABRIA

DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, VENETIAN

RAYMOND CABANA

DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, MANHATTANVILLE

JOHN VANDERBECK

DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, WEDGWOOD

ALIESHA JOHASHEN

DIRECTOR OF DINING SERVICES, WATERVIEW

CHARLES RICCIARDI

PURCHASING DIRECTOR, CORP. OFFICE

ANDREA SAENZ

REGISTERED DIETITIAN, KING DAVID

LUCIA DAVIS

REGISTERED DIETITIAN, CROWN HEIGHTS

SUSAN BALASSIANO

REGISTERED DIETITIAN, WATERVIEW

VIKTORIA RUSINOVA

REGISTERED DIETITIAN, VENETIAN

TAMMILEE BENSON

REGISTERED DIETITIAN - PT, LINDEN

A Drink a Day Keeps the Doctor Away ... Or Does It?

By Jeannine Re McNamara

We have all heard the excuse that a drink or two is good for your health. But how beneficial is drinking, and does the type of alcohol really matter? Researchers are starting to look more closely at studies of alcohol and health. Recent research seems to be questioning how beneficial wine and other alcohols really are for you.

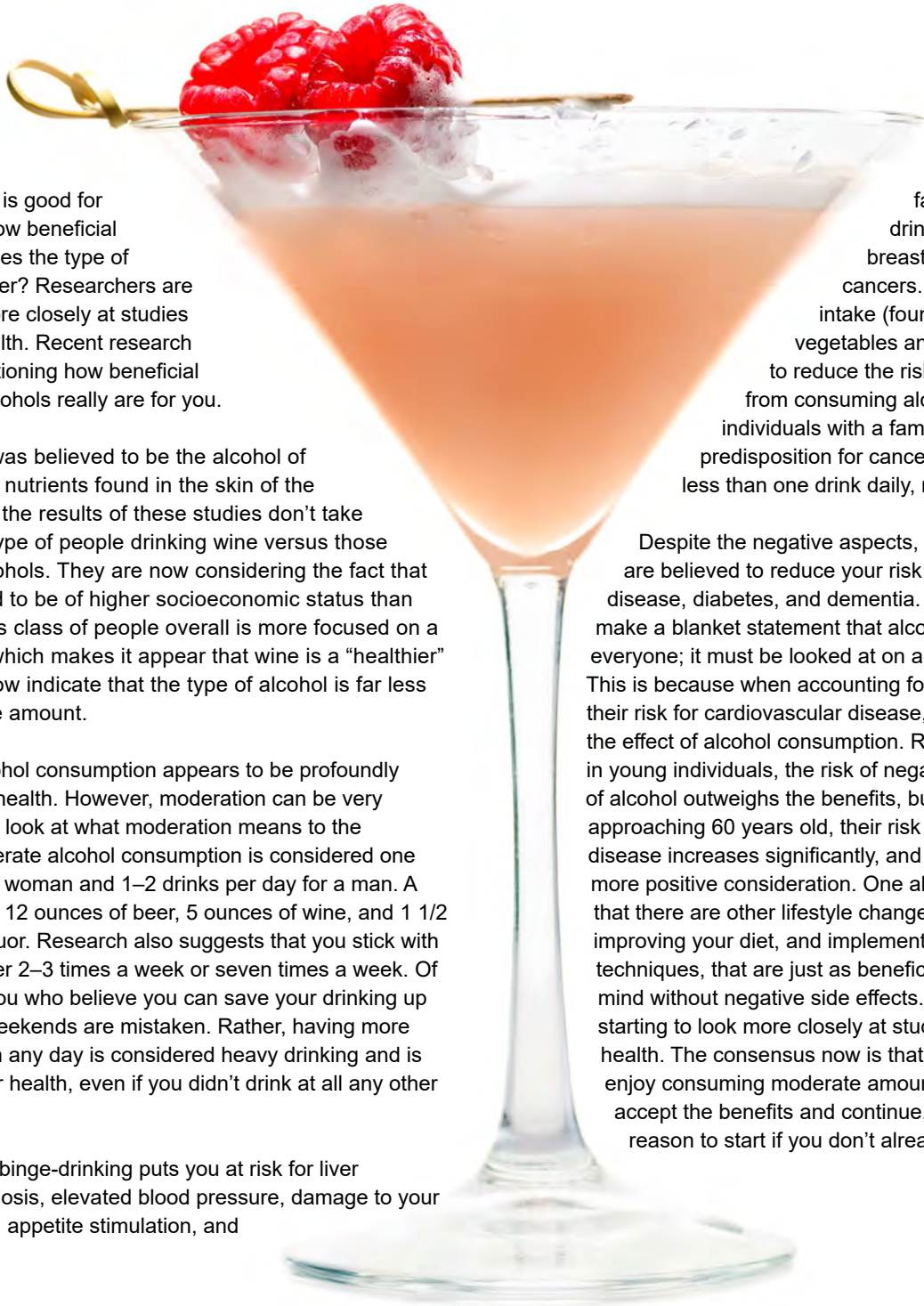
Previously, wine was believed to be the alcohol of choice, due to the nutrients found in the skin of the grapes. However, the results of these studies don't take into account the type of people drinking wine versus those drinking other alcohols. They are now considering the fact that wine drinkers tend to be of higher socioeconomic status than beer drinkers. This class of people overall is more focused on a healthy lifestyle, which makes it appear that wine is a "healthier" choice. Studies now indicate that the type of alcohol is far less important than the amount.

Moderation in alcohol consumption appears to be profoundly beneficial to your health. However, moderation can be very subjective, so let's look at what moderation means to the researchers. Moderate alcohol consumption is considered one drink per day for a woman and 1–2 drinks per day for a man. A drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, and 1 1/2 ounces of hard liquor. Research also suggests that you stick with the daily total either 2–3 times a week or seven times a week. Of course, those of you who believe you can save your drinking up for going out on weekends are mistaken. Rather, having more than 1–2 drinks on any day is considered heavy drinking and is detrimental to your health, even if you didn't drink at all any other day of the week.

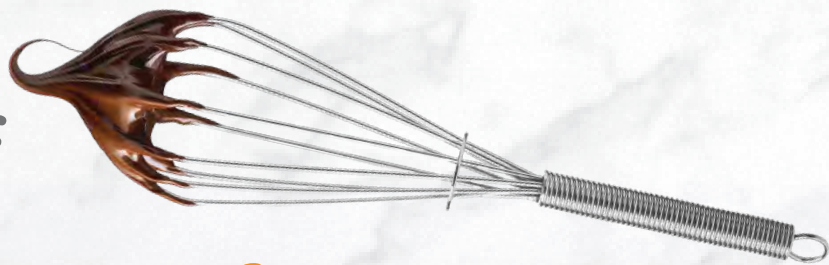
Heavy drinking or binge-drinking puts you at risk for liver inflammation, cirrhosis, elevated blood pressure, damage to your heart, weight gain, appetite stimulation, and

certain cancers. As a matter of fact, even moderate drinking can be linked to breast cancer and colorectal cancers. Increasing folate intake (found in leafy dark green vegetables and citrus fruit) is shown to reduce the risk of breast cancer from consuming alcohol. But those individuals with a family history or genetic predisposition for cancer should consume less than one drink daily, regardless.

Despite the negative aspects, moderate amounts are believed to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and dementia. However, one cannot make a blanket statement that alcohol is beneficial to everyone; it must be looked at on an individual basis. This is because when accounting for a person's age and their risk for cardiovascular disease, you need to weigh the effect of alcohol consumption. Researchers feel that in young individuals, the risk of negative side effects of alcohol outweighs the benefits, but once a person is approaching 60 years old, their risk of cardiovascular disease increases significantly, and alcohol becomes a more positive consideration. One also needs to consider that there are other lifestyle changes, such as exercise, improving your diet, and implementing stress-reducing techniques, that are just as beneficial to your heart and mind without negative side effects. Researchers are starting to look more closely at studies of alcohol and health. The consensus now is that those who already enjoy consuming moderate amounts of alcohol can accept the benefits and continue, but there is also no reason to start if you don't already drink.



The *art* of *Cooking*



BACK TO BASICS

By Chef Roel Lopez, Culinary Instructor

At Pinnacle Dietary, not only do we care about our residents, but we also care about our culinary team behind the scenes that is dedicated and committed to care every single day. This is why I am happy to announce our upcoming Pinnacle Dietary Culinary Clinic. There is no better way to express our gratitude and appreciation for all of our culinary artists than with a two-day lecture, hands-on training, and exciting competition. Nothing is more exciting than seeing a classroom full of talented, passionate, and hard-working culinary artists from different regions networking, exchanging ideas, having a good time, and learning the art of cooking.

During this two-day training, our culinary team will learn the basic fundamentals of cooking such as knife skills, cooking techniques, creative cooking, infused flavor technique, plating, and presentation.

The excitement continues with our much-awaited culinary competition, during which our talented culinary team will demonstrate their passion and creative works with their own signature dishes, which will be judged by our own residents.

Not only is this a learning opportunity but also a day of fun that adds fuel to our culinary team and fires up their passion and love for cooking.



'DON'T TAKE IT SO PERSONALLY' — OR MAYBE YOU SHOULD! Maneuvering the New State Survey

Clinically, dietitians focus on assessing a patient's therapeutic diet needs. However, more recently, we have learned that in the long-term care setting, we need to take a more liberalized approach. We have shifted away from such diets as low-fat or low-cholesterol. The new survey takes it even a step further: We must now allow the resident to make the choice about their diet, despite what we think is best for them. The following steps will help you meet this goal while ensuring there is no failure to provide appropriate care:

1. Explain to the resident what diet was prescribed and why. Then determine if the resident wants to comply with it.
2. Educate the resident and family on the effects of not following the diet restrictions.
3. Document that the diet and side effects of noncompliance were reviewed and understood.
4. Document that the resident/family insisted on noncompliance despite understanding the consequences.
5. Be sure to document this in the Care Plan as well.
6. Upon follow-up documentation, assess if the resident's choice stays the same.

A resident also has the right to refuse proper nutrition, despite the negative consequences. Again, we must ensure that we document properly to show we have made every attempt to meet the resident's nutritional requirements.

1. Always educate the resident and/or family on how refusal of foods, fluids, or supplements will affect their health.
2. Document that this education has taken place and they understood the effects of noncompliance.
3. Attempt to find alternate choices to meet the needs. For example, if a resident dislikes breakfast foods, attempt to increase intake with nontraditional foods at breakfast such as ice cream, soup, pizza, etc.
4. Add all interventions and documentation of diet and reinforcement to their care plan.

Honoring resident choice also affects the facility's Dining Service, and state compliance takes a few adjustments. Typically, to be most efficient at serving a large amount of resident meals daily, the Dining Service Department has always maintained specific meal times. However, the new Survey Process requires that we make adjustments to the timing of meals "in accordance with resident's needs, preferences, requests, and plan of care." So, we must adjust by having nourishing alternate meals and snacks for nontraditional meal times. To meet every facility's goal of cost containment, we need to find ways to offer alternate times while limiting excess staff and food. Here are some suggestions.

Grab and Go Items

- Nicely packaged in clear clam shell; prepared and stored in refrigerator
- Sandwiches with a small bag of chips, or individually wrapped cookies, and some fruit or side salad
- "Dinner salad" platter with a source of protein such as tuna, chicken, egg salad, etc.

Be creative and have special employee meal sales, such as make-your-own burger/hot dog/stuffed potato etc. to offset cost of to-go packaging.

Buildings With a Warmer

Prep meals as usual, then plate a few and hold in warmer to be available one hour before and after the meal service.

Be sure to interview residents upon admission to find out what general time they eat meals. This will help you plan for how many meals you will need at nontraditional times. Try to adjust the times to fit into tray delivery times by having a first truck and last truck that can go to multiple units. Rearrange tickets so those who want to eat early are first and on the "early" truck, while those who want to eat later are on the "late" truck.

The menus also need to reflect cultural, religious, and ethnic needs and preferences of the residents. Due to the variety of residents in each facility, this can seem like a daunting task, but there are many ways your department can meet the residents' preferences.

- Monthly food committee meetings are a must. The State may even request the minutes from these meetings. Ask about preferred foods from their younger days.
- Evaluate your population for types of ethnic groups and how large each group is.
- Incorporate a "Chef's Special International Item" a few times a week as your second meal choice. Some items may already be part of your menu, so put a highlight on them.
- Offer ethnic side dishes, soups, appetizers, or desserts several times a week. For example, tiramisu for dessert, stir-fry vegetables as a side, and beans and rice as another side dish.

Remember to get to know your residents! The Dietitian and Director and Assistant Director of Dining Services needs to be visible on the units during meals a few times a week. Visit your more demanding residents often, and show that you are making an effort to meet their special demands. By making your relationship more "personal," the resident will be less likely to complain the few times you cannot honor every preference and be generally more content.



WHAT IS NUTRITION LINK

and What Can It
Do for Me?



Nutrition Link Services

Your Link to Wellness

“What is Nutrition Link, and what can it do for me?” This may be something you’ve wondered, especially as a Pinnacle Dietary client. It’s likely you’ve been hearing more and more about this company, Nutrition Link Services, and now we’d like to introduce you to a small company with a big mission.

Behind the scenes over the last year, Pinnacle Dietary’s President, Tonja Werkman, MS RDN, has made a concentrated push to get Pinnacle’s sister-company, Nutrition Link Services, to flourish. With the help of Annette O’Neill, Director of Outpatient Services and Roel Lopez, Executive Chef, Nutrition Link has had tremendous growth over the last year.

Nutrition Link Services is a wellness company that can provide nutrition consulting to nursing homes, hospitals, and assisted living facilities, in addition to outpatient nutrition counseling, home health, and corporate wellness programs. All programs are overseen by Annette O’Neill, the Director of Outpatient Services.

As a stand-alone company, Nutrition Link has eight outpatient locations throughout New Jersey and accepts many types of insurance for outpatient counseling. In partnership with Pinnacle Dietary, Nutrition Link Services offers value-added programs for our clients in the Long Term Care and Nursing settings. Through our dietitians, we can see a patient in the nursing home and then follow and work with them in the outpatient environment so that there’s no disruption to their care as they transition back to living at home. Additionally, Nutrition Link features Corporate Wellness programs, including group classes and individual counseling on Stress relief, Weight management, Sports Nutrition, Diabetes, and more. Nutrition Link strives to keep your patients and employees happy and healthy both inside and outside the walls of your facility. Pleased clients and employees make for a good work environment and positive facility reviews.

We encourage you to visit our new website, Nutritionlinkservices.com, to learn even more or book yourself an appointment and see what the hype is about. It is our mission to be Your Link to Wellness.

NLS Accepts the following insurances for outpatient counseling:

- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Atena
- Cigna
- Amerihealth
- Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield
- United Healthcare, and GHI/Emblem.



OUTPATIENT LOCATIONS IN:

Main Office/ Oradell
550 Kinderkamack Road
Suite 116
Oradell, NJ 07649

Iselin:
33 South Wood Avenue
Suite 600
Iselin, NJ 08830

Princeton:
103 Carnegie Center, Suite 300
Princeton, NJ 08540

Berkeley Heights:
100 Connell Drive, Suite 2300
Berkeley Heights, NJ 07922

Hoboken:
221 River Street, 9th Floor
Hoboken, NJ 07030

Jersey City:
101 Hudson Street, Suite 2100
Jersey City, NJ 07311

Paramus:
140 East Ridgewood Avenue
Paramus, NJ 07652

Redbank:
125 Half Mile Road, Suite 200
Redbank, NJ 07701

Freehold:
4400 Route 9 South, Suite 1000
Freehold, NJ 07728



Meet Nutrition Link's Director of Outpatient Services:

Annette O'Neill

Annette O'Neill, RDN is a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist and Director of Outpatient Services for Nutrition Link Services, LLC, a division of Pinnacle Dietary, where she has worked for over five years.

She is a New York City native currently residing in Flemington, New Jersey. A graduate of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, she holds a Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences; cum laude. She completed her Dietetic Residency at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Jersey where she worked for over seven years. Annette is a member of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, the American Diabetes Association, and earned a certificate of specialization in obesity intervention for children and adults. Her additional qualifications include specialization in Bariatric, Cardiac Health, Diabetes, and Medical Nutrition Therapy. Annette also provides corporate wellness presentations in all aspects of nutrition and health.

Since 2013, she has worked in doctors' offices for outpatients in areas of all disease states, including but not limited to digestive disorders, thyroid disorders, high cholesterol, hypertension, cancer, kidney disease, PCOS, eating disorders, and child obesity. Drawing on this knowledge, Annette helps clients create a completely customized "Healthy Lifestyle Plan" that suits their individual goals of physical and emotional well-being. Annette is always looking to build successful new programs to meet the needs of all her patients. Her most recent program focuses on Healing Foods and helping to mitigate overwhelming "diet confusion" that's prevalent today.

With her passion for helping people meet their wellness goals and her drive for success, we're thrilled to have Annette in the role of Director of Outpatient Services where she helps both Nutrition Link Services and our patients succeed.





Healing Foods



ZUCCHINI MUFFINS



SALMON WITH FRESH VEG

NS

GINGERBREAD COOKIES



SALMON SWISS QUICHE



EGGPLANT ROLL-UPS





SWEET POTATO PIE

TURKEY TACOS



ASPARAGUS SOUP



CHEF ROEL





Cooking Celebrations:

**BRINGING HOLIDAYS TO THE
DINNER TABLE**





Many would say the best part about celebrating holidays with family and friends is the food served! We all come from different backgrounds, each with our own traditional foods we eat during the holidays.

Our elders residing in the homes we support are no different. They have a wealth of life experiences and knowledge to share with us, as do your coworkers. Scheduling holiday food programs would be a memorable activity that Directors of Dining Services could do in conjunction with the Activities teams.

Meet with your residents and plan a celebration using the stories they share with you and the information below.



New Year's Day (Jan. 1)

Cultural Ideas:

- **Greek/Greek Orthodox** – Vasilopita (bread that has a hidden coin in it). The bread is broken into pieces for all family members of the house, the house itself, and then the extended family members there. Whoever receives the piece with the coin in it has good luck for the year. If the house itself gets the coin, then the house will have good luck for the year.
- **Filipino** – A basket of twelve different round fruits is displayed to symbolize prosperity in each of the coming 12 months.
- **Spanish** – It is customary to have 12 grapes at hand when the clock strikes midnight. One grape is eaten on each stroke. If all the grapes are eaten within the period of the strikes, it means good luck in the new year.

Chinese New Year (aka the Spring Festival in Modern China)

This holiday starts on the 23rd day of the 12th month of the Chinese lunar calendar. It begins with the new moon that occurs between the end of January and the end of February. The celebration focuses primarily on family/ancestors and the home. On New Year's Eve, a feast is consumed with eight individual dishes, as eight is a symbol of good fortune. However, if there was a death in the family during the proceeding year, seven dishes are served. Foods include chicken, pork, duck, Chinese sausage, and seafood. Fish is served but not entirely consumed; some is left as a symbol of abundance in the new year. Long noodles are eaten as a symbol of a long life. On the 15th day (the Lantern Festival), round dumplings (full moon shape) are enjoyed as a sign of the family unit and perfection.



Carnival

A Western Christian and Greek Orthodox festive season that occurs before the liturgical season of Lent (the period of time six weeks/40 days prior to Easter) which begins in February or early March. Carnival ends at midnight the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday (first day of Lent). Pancakes are associated with the day preceding Lent ("Shrove Tuesday") because they are a way to use up rich foods such as eggs, milk, and sugar before the fasting season of the 40 days of Lent. The liturgical fasting emphasizes eating simpler food and refraining from food that would give undue pleasure: in many cultures, this means no meat, dairy products, or eggs.

Cultural Ideas:

- Afro-Trinidadian dishes include Pelau – a rice and pigeon pea pilaf served with coleslaw.
- In Iceland, they eat salted meats and peas; in Finland and Estonia, they consume green pea soup.
- Omelets made with sausage or pork fat are eaten in Spain.
- Many countries consume a dessert made in some fashion of fried dough and sugar and/or jam: the people of the Portuguese island of Madeira make malasadas; in Poland they eat paczki or farworki; in Sweden it is fastlagsbulle or semia; in Finland laskiaispulla; and in Estonia it is vastiakukkel — to name a few.

St. Patrick's Day (March 17)

This holiday celebrates the Irish in general, on the date of St. Patrick's death.

Cultural Ideas:

- While in America we traditionally serve corned beef, those in Ireland celebrate with ham along with cabbage and potatoes.
- "Drowning the shamrock" or "wetting the shamrock" is popular: At the end of the celebrations, a shamrock is put into the bottom of a cup, which is then filled with whiskey, beer, or cider. It is then drunk as a toast to St. Patrick, Ireland, or those present. The shamrock would either be swallowed with the drink or taken out and tossed over the shoulder for good luck.

St. Joseph's Day (March 19)

This holiday celebrates the patron saint of Sicily/many Italian communities.

Cultural Ideas:

- Gratitude is given to St. Joseph for preventing a famine in Sicily during the Middle Ages. The fava bean was the crop which saved the population from starvation and is a traditional part of the day. It is also common to eat a Neapolitan pastry known as a zeppola (or zeppole).

- Meals are often meatless since this occurs during Lent.
- Pasta with a fennel-sardine sauce made with pine nuts and sprinkled with breadcrumbs. The crumbs represent saw dust, as St. Joseph was a carpenter.

Passover (Pesach)

This is a Jewish holiday celebrated as a commemoration of their liberation by God from slavery in ancient Egypt and their freedom as a nation under the leadership of Moses. It begins on the 15th day of the month of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar; typically in March or April.

Cultural Ideas:

- No chametz (yeast), as the Jews did when leaving Egypt without time to bake their bread. Matzo (unleavened flat bread) is consumed.
- Traditional foods can vary and include the following: Matzah Brei (matzo softened in milk or water and fried with egg and fat; served either savory or sweet); Matzo Kugel (a kugel made with matzo instead of noodles); Charoset (a sweet mixture of fruit, fresh, dried, or both; nuts, spices, honey, and sometimes wine); Chrain (horseradish and beet relish); Gefilte fish (fish patties or fish balls); chicken soup with matzah balls (matzah dumplings); Passover noodles (made from potato flour and eggs, served in soup); Kafeikas di prasa (fried balls made of leeks, meat, and matzo meal); lamb or chicken leg, Mina (a meat pie made with matzos); and spring green vegetables such as artichokes, fava beans, and peas.
- The Seder meal follows a specific ritual with specific blessings, questions, and story. Foods include wine or grape juice, karpas (parsley, celery, raw onion, or boiled potato), matzo, bitter herbs, and for dessert, the afikoman (made from part of the matzo broken earlier).
- Passover cake recipes call for potato starch or Passover cake flour, made from finely granulated matzo instead of regular flour, and a large amount of eggs to achieve fluffiness. Cookie recipes use matzo farfel (broken bits of matzo) or ground nuts as the base. For families with Eastern European backgrounds, borsht, a soup made with beets, is a Passover tradition.
- Vegan – Varies depending on whether one follows the Ashkenazic stricture of not eating kitniyot (legumes) or Sephardic/conservative movement who do eat kitniyot.

PASSOVER (PESACH)



ST. PATRICK'S DAY



Easter Sunday

Also called Pascha (Greek, Latin) or Resurrection Sunday, Easter is a holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The date is usually the first Sunday after the first Full Moon occurring on or after the March equinox (Spring). Meals are often a splurge after the Lenten fast.

Cultural Ideas:

- **Afro-Trinidadian** – Dishes vary, but it's always a lavish spread of numerous proteins: fish, ham, pork, beef, chicken, lamb, and goat; with sides including calaloo (a green leafy vegetable sautéed with onions, scallions and thyme), stewed pigeon peas, macaroni pie (similar to baked macaroni & cheese, but includes eggs), potato salad, and more.
- **Italian** – An appetizer of artichokes stuffed with breadcrumbs, garlic, and Romano cheese; fresh fennel. For the main course, lasagna or ravioli and ham or lamb.
- **Sicilian** – Easter bread baked in a ring with colored eggs incorporated in the top.
- **English/Dutch** – Breakfast includes Hot Cross Buns (representing the cross of Jesus) and colored eggs.

- **Greek/Greek Orthodox** – Attend Midnight Mass on Easter Eve after fasting with no meat for the 40 days of Lent, then return to the house and have Magiritsa (a soup made with lamb organs). Easter Sunday dinner is lamb served with tzatziki sauce, oven browned potatoes with lemon and oregano, romaine and dill salad with scallions, red eggs (hard boiled eggs are dyed red representing Jesus' blood) for cracking (a game played before dinner), tsoureki (Easter bread that has a red egg in it), and spanakopita (spinach pie).
- **Slovak** – Special foods are prepared and blessed on Holy Saturday at a service in the church to be consumed for breakfast on Easter Sunday. These foods include ham, kielbasa, colored eggs, cidek (a cheese made from scrambled eggs), babka (also known as Pascha) bread.

Cinco de Mayo (May 5)

This is a day commemorating the victory of the Mexican Army over the French at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. Within Mexico it is a minor holiday, but in the United States it has come to be a celebration of Mexican culture, emphasizing alcoholic beverages such as margaritas and consuming Americanized Mexican foods such as tacos.

Ramadan

This is the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the dates change annually depending on the new moon. Observers fast from sunrise to sunset for the entire month, although the elderly (amongst others) are exempt from this. Fasting is one of the five pillars (primary obligations) of Islam. It is also a time to reflect on one's life.

Two meals are served: Suhoor (eaten before dawn) and Iftar (eaten after sunset). Both meals consist of halal (prepared according to Muslim law) meats, cheese, bread, vegetables, fruit, and sweets. Many break their fast at night by taking sips of water and eating dates first, then snacks or the meal. The end of Ramadan is celebrated with a festival called Eid al-Fitr. Some Ramadan foods from different countries include the following:

- **Dahi vadey** – Lentil dumplings soaked in a spicy yogurt sauce (India)
- **Fattoush** – A salad made of vegetables and pita bread (Lebanon and Arab countries)
- **Ful medammes** – Fava beans cooked with garlic and spread on bread (North Africa)
- **Ramazan Kebabi** – Made with lamb, onions, yogurt, and pita bread (Turkey)
- **Kolak** – Fruit dessert made with palm sugar, coconut milk, pandanus leaf, with fruits such as jackfruit, banana, or mung beans (Indonesia)



Diwali

This is a five-day religious festival in Hinduism occurring during the months of Ashvina and Kartika in the Indian lunar calendar (usually occurs in late October and November). It is also known as the Festival of Lights. The fourth day of the festival is the main day and marks the beginning of the New Year. Many sweets are eaten during this time. Indian sweetmeats — called mithai — made of chickpea flour, rice flour, semolina, various beans/lentils/grains, squashes, carrots, and thickened condensed milk or yogurt are the base to which nuts or raisins and sweet spices, such as cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, or nutmeg, are added. Different foods are cooked on different days of the festival, and these foods also depend on the region.

Chanukah

A Jewish holiday commemorating the rededication of the holy temple in Jerusalem when the Maccabees revolted against the Seleucid Empire. The dates are determined by the Hebrew calendar, generally in December.

Cultural Ideas:

- Eating fried foods such as potato pancakes (latkes, deruny, or boxties) and surganiyah (jelly donuts, though now other fillings are common) made with oil as a symbol of the Maccabi's oil lasting for eight days instead of only the one it should have lasted for.
- Some have a tradition of eating cheese and other dairy products to commemorate the heroism of Judith.

Christmas Eve (Dec. 24)

Cultural Ideas: for some, this is a fast day and there is no meat allowed.

- **Italian** – A variety of seafood is served; at least seven (sometimes including octopus and squid) but there can be more served in different ways — fried, in sauce/over pasta, etc.
- **Slovak** – Mushroom potato soup, oplatky (a rectangular sheet of communion wafer) with honey, and fish. After attending midnight mass, a second dinner would be served with ham, kielbasa, red horseradish, and Champagne.

Christmas Day (Dec. 25)

This holiday celebrates the birth of Jesus.

Cultural Ideas:

There are numerous foods served this day, depending on the ethnic background of the people and could be an article unto itself. A sampling of some cultures and the foods eaten follows, though there are many more:

- **Italy** – Numerous courses including Italian wedding soup; antipasti; pasta such as lasagna made with mini meatballs and sausage; meat, salad, and nuts such as roasted chestnuts. After a long break, dessert is served, including Panettone.
- **Germany** – Christstillen (a fruitcake), herring salad, Weisswurst (veal and bacon sausage), Gluhwein (hot mulled wine).
- **Jamaica** – Curry goat, rice and peas, black cake (a heavy fruitcake made with dried fruit, wine, and rum).
- **Mexico** – Ham, seafood, roasted pig, Christmas salad (made with apples, raisins, pecans, and marshmallows), Capirotada (bread pudding).
- **France** – Smoked salmon, quince cheese, fougasse (bread), and 13 desserts (a ritual with 13 dessert items representing Jesus and the 12 apostles).

Kwanzaa (Dec. 26 to Jan. 1)

This holiday was established in 1966 and celebrates seven principles to strengthen the African-American culture.

The Karamu feast is held on New Year's Eve and includes fruits and vegetables (the word Kwanzaa is from the Swahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza," which means "first fruits of the harvest") as well as meats such as Groundnut Stew (made with chicken, lamb, beef, or fish), Cajun catfish, Jerk chicken, and sides such as cheesy grits, Hoppin' John, collard greens, and okra.

It is my hope this article sparks a discussion among Dining Service team members and the elders they serve. Perhaps a cooking demonstration or holiday party could incorporate some of these ideas throughout the year. Happy eating!

Thanks to my Pinnacle and Llanfair House coworkers for sharing their holiday food traditions. Information on the backgrounds of the holidays was accessed on the internet while researching this article.



A purple-bordered callout box with rounded corners. On the left, there is a purple silhouette of a person's head and shoulders inside a yellow-bordered frame, with a white question mark on the head. A purple arrow points from the text to the silhouette. To the right of the silhouette, the text "ATTENTION:" is in orange, underlined. Below it, "THIS COULD BE YOU!" is in purple, with "THIS" and "YOU!" underlined in orange. Three horizontal purple lines are positioned below the text.

ATTENTION:
THIS COULD BE YOU!

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTRIBUTE PICTURES, RECIPES, FAVORITE DISHES
(WITH PICTURES), STORIES, ETC. TO

MORGANL@PINNACLEDIETARY.COM