

story Judith H. Dern | **recipes** adapted from Mother's Bistro and participating moms
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Meet Sophia Damiani, Chef Lisa Schroeder's mom. Meet Therese Dieringer, also Lisa's mom. Meet Rose Hassin—yet another of Lisa's moms. In Lisa's opinion, you can never have too many moms; in fact, she picks up a new one every month.

"In my travels, I've discovered that the best and the most satisfying meals of a country are not found in its restaurants, but in its homes, made with love by mothers cooking for their families," Lisa says. "I felt these mothers deserve praise and recognition, and that their good home-cooked food and the memories it evokes should be honored."

That idea was an epiphany for Lisa, and ultimately provided the unifying concept for Mother's Bistro and Bar, the popular Portland, Oregon, restaurant she founded in January 2000. Twelve times a year, she celebrates a different mother—and that mom's favorite dishes—with the bistro's "Mother of the Month"



from Mother's,



(M.O.M.) award. In the process, Lisa has gained quite an extended family, and a devoted clientele that packs the restaurant's tables most every night.

The Mother's Bistro menu stars such beloved American home-cooked classics as pot roast, macaroni and cheese, chicken pot pie, hot apple crisp, and chocolate pudding. But—thanks to the moms Lisa's met—there are also traditional family dishes from home kitchens in such far-away places as Italy, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Austria, and Morocco. Any given night, the restaurant might feature *tagine*, goulash, chicken *oreganata*, pierogi, cauliflower soup, dumplings, strudel, or matzo ball soup—all traditional dishes that fill the restaurant with comforting aromas.

Many of the mothers honored by Mother's Bistro are immigrants who range in age from 50 to 80. Most have been recommended to Lisa by customers. Many now live in Oregon, a few live in nearby states. They came to America for all sorts of reasons—through marriage or family connections, for example, or to escape Europe in the aftermath of World War II. Many endured personal hardships in their voyages to the United States. But all of them held fast to their culinary traditions,



with love

At a popular Portland, Oregon,
restaurant, every day is Mother's Day.

(From left) Sophia Damiani, Therese Dieringer, Jan Boccuzzi,
Chef Lisa Schroeder, and Rose Hassin create the ultimate comfort-food menu.

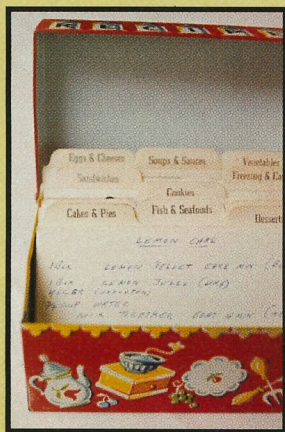
HAIR & MAKEUP: STEPHANIE FAJARDO



Lisa Schroeder brings old tastes to a new generation.

adding new flavors to America's melting pot.

Lisa says her restaurant is a “learning-as-I-go, living-it-and-working-it experience,” but this belies her 20-year background in the food business and the well-laid plans behind Mother’s Bistro. The restaurant has grown into a family affair; Lisa’s daughter, Stephanie, now manages the dining room, a light-filled, inviting space with high ceilings, ivory walls of embossed tin, and muslin lace curtains. Both women share an infectious warmth that makes diners feel welcome—as if they really have come home for dinner or lunch or breakfast to food just like Mom would make, and sometimes even better.



Food to Make a Mom Proud

When the mothers of Mother’s Bistro and Bar learned their recipes would be tested by *Cooking Light*, they were honored—but also a little concerned. Would the dishes remain authentic? Would they measure up to our standards? We approached the recipes with the same goal as Chef Lisa Schroeder: to preserve their integrity and authenticity.

To the mothers’ surprise, our Test Kitchens made very few changes to the recipes, beyond decreasing butter and oil, using leaner cuts of meat, and making minor substitutions like using 2% milk instead of whole milk. Overall, our adaptations preserve the authentic character of the dishes, making all the moms proud.

Mother's Cioppino

When Lisa Schroeder opened Mother's Bistro and Bar, she looked for "inherently motherly" seafood dishes. Cioppino, a stew created by West Coast Italian immigrants, uses readily available seafood and is as homey as you can get. Although Lisa uses homemade tomato and fish sauces at the restaurant, we simplified the recipe with store-bought pasta sauce and clam juice.

CROSTINI:

- 1 (1-pound) loaf French bread baguette, cut into 16 slices
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

CIOPPINO:

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- ½ to 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 cups clam juice
- 1 cup water
- ½ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried basil

- ¼ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 (26-ounce) bottle tomato-and-basil pasta sauce (such as Bertolli)
- 16 littleneck clams
- 16 small mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 pound cod or other lean whitefish fillets, cut into 1-inch pieces
- ½ pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2 cups torn spinach

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. To prepare crostini, place bread slices on a large baking sheet; brush with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Bake at 350° for 15

minutes or until lightly browned.

3. To prepare cioppino, heat 2 teaspoons oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add crushed red pepper and garlic; sauté 30 seconds. Stir in clam juice and next 5 ingredients (clam juice through pasta sauce.) Add clams and mussels. Cover and cook 10 minutes or until shells open. (Discard any unopened shells.) Add wine and next 4 ingredients (wine through shrimp); simmer 5 minutes or until fish and shrimp are done. Stir in spinach. Serve with the crostini. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1¼ cups cioppino and 2 crostini).

CALORIES 467 (24% from fat); FAT 12.4g (sat 1.7g, mono 4g, poly 3.6g); PROTEIN 31g; CARB 53g; FIBER 9.8g; CHOL 89mg; IRON 9.3mg; SODIUM 1,182mg; CALC 87mg





Thick bucatini pasta adds substance to Sophia's pastitsio, a homey casserole perfect for a crowd.



Rich in Many Ways: Sophia Damiani

Sophia Damiani grew up in Greece's Thessaloniki region—a culture where there is constant cooking—with five brothers and two grandmothers. Sophia's mother died when she was born, so she learned to cook by watching her grandmothers, using taste and feel to master their traditional recipes. "The foods we ate were rich," she says, "sauces, cheeses, game, lots of vegetables, a little lamb and chicken on special days and holidays, and always pastries."

Her eyes sparkle as she tells her immigration fairy tale—how she married Anthony Damiani, an Italian American from Portland, three days after meeting him and moved to the United States. It was love at first sight, and their long marriage was happy.

In Portland's Greek community, Sophia is famous for the custard-filled phyllo pastry and crispy baklava she makes for Greek Orthodox Church bazaars. She also loves to prepare such dishes as stuffed eggplant, pastitsio, and Greek salads.

◀ Pastitsio

We lightened Sophia's version of this Greek lasagna with a few changes to the white sauce: omitting the butter and a couple of egg yolks, and using low-fat milk in place of whole. Bucatini are long, hollow strands of pasta, slightly thicker than spaghetti. Sophia likes to freeze and reheat individual squares of this dish in the microwave.

FILLING:

- 1 pound uncooked bucatini pasta or spaghetti
- 1 pound ground sirloin
- ½ cup finely chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

WHITE SAUCE:

- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups 2% reduced-fat milk
- 2 large eggs
- 2 large egg whites
- 5 tablespoons shredded kasseri or aged white cheddar cheese, divided
- Cooking spray
- ¼ cup (1 ounce) grated fresh pecorino Romano cheese

1. To prepare filling, cook pasta according to package directions, omitting salt and fat. Rinse with cold water; set aside.
2. Cook beef, onion, and garlic in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until browned; stir to crumble. Add wine, tomato sauce, ½ teaspoon salt, nutmeg, and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes or until thick.
3. Preheat oven to 350°.
4. To prepare white sauce, place flour and ½ teaspoon salt in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Gradually add milk, stirring constantly with a whisk until blended; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes or until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; set aside. Combine eggs and egg whites in a large bowl. Gradually add hot milk mixture to egg mixture, stirring constantly with a whisk. Stir in 1 tablespoon kasseri cheese until blended.
5. Spread 1 cup beef mixture in bottom of a 13 x 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Arrange half of pasta over beef mixture. Top with 1½ cups beef mixture. Repeat layers with remaining pasta and beef mixture. Top with white sauce. Sprinkle with 4 tablespoons kasseri and Romano cheese. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before serving. Yield: 8 servings.

CALORIES 416 (19% from fat); FAT 8.9g (sat 4.1g, mono 2.7g, poly 0.9g); PROTEIN 27g; CARB 54g; FIBER 2.4g; CHOL 97mg; IRON 4mg; SODIUM 790mg; CALC 207mg

WINE NOTE A red wine with earthy flavors and good acidity would make a wonderful counterpoint to this baked casserole. One of the earthiest reds around is Chianti. Try Fonterutoli Chianti Classico 2000 (about \$26), which has flavors of earth, dried leaves, and espresso.

—Karen MacNeil

Chicken Oreganata

This dish of Sophia's is flexible—marinate the chicken overnight, then bake it or pop it on the grill.

- 1 cup fresh lemon juice (about 5 lemons)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ tablespoons minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken thighs (about 8)

Cooking spray

- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper

1. Combine first 4 ingredients in a zip-top plastic bag; add chicken. Seal and marinate in refrigerator 3 hours or overnight, turning occasionally.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. Remove chicken from bag; discard marinade. Place chicken in a single layer on a broiler pan coated with cooking spray; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until chicken is done. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 2 thighs).

CALORIES 356 (40% from fat); FAT 15.6g (sat 3.1g, mono 7.7g, poly 2.8g); PROTEIN 45g; CARB 8g; FIBER 1.0g; CHOL 188mg; IRON 2.8mg; SODIUM 342mg; CALC 40mg

Fashoulakia

This classic Greek green bean side is traditionally served at room temperature. It's great for barbecues or with sandwiches, according to Sophia.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- ⅓ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh mint
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh or 1 teaspoon dried dill
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 pounds green beans, trimmed
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 (14.5-ounce) cans stewed tomatoes, undrained

1. Heat oil in a stockpot over medium-high heat. Add onion; sauté 3 minutes. Add herbs and garlic; sauté 4 minutes. Add beans and remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes or until beans are tender. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 cup).

CALORIES 105 (34% from fat); FAT 3.7g (sat 0.5g, mono 2.5g, poly 0.4g); PROTEIN 3.5g; CARB 17.5g; FIBER 5.4g; CHOL 0mg; IRON 2.4mg; SODIUM 382mg; CALC 93mg

leaving a 2-inch border. Fold short edges of phyllo to cover 2 inches of apple mixture on each end. Starting at long edge with 2-inch border, roll up jelly-roll fashion. (Do not roll tightly, or strudel may split.) Place strudel, seam side down, on a jelly roll pan coated with cooking spray. Repeat the procedure with remaining phyllo dough, cooking spray, and apple mixture.

5. Melt 2 tablespoons butter, and brush over strudels. Bake at 375° 25 minutes or until golden. Cool on a wire rack 20 minutes before serving. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 [3-inch] slice).

CALORIES 302 (18% from fat); FAT 6.1g (sat 3.1g, mono 2.0g, poly 0.5g); PROTEIN 3.1g; CARB 61g; FIBER 2.7g; CHOL 11mg; IRON 1.2mg; SODIUM 223mg; CALC 25mg

Cauliflower Soup

Rose, the mother of one of Chef Lisa Schroeder's friends, was one of the first moms honored at Mother's Bistro. Her soup is best eaten the same day it's made.

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups finely chopped onion
- 4½ cups cauliflower florets (about 1 head)
- 3 cups diced peeled baking potato
- ½ cup finely chopped carrot
- 1 teaspoon caraway seeds
- 6 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Melt butter in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat; add onion. Cook 4 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Add the cauliflower, potato, carrot, and caraway seeds. Cook 6 minutes or until cauliflower begins to brown, stirring frequently. Add broth; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir in salt and pepper. Yield: 6 servings (serving size: 1½ cups).

CALORIES 166 (33% from fat); FAT 5.7g (sat 3g, mono 1.1g, poly 0.3g); PROTEIN 6.6g; CARB 24g; FIBER 4.2g; CHOL 14mg; IRON 0.8mg; SODIUM 371mg; CALC 52mg



From Hungary to Oregon: Therese Dieringer

Making gossamer-thin sheets of strudel is Therese Dieringer's specialty. Light as a feather, her strudels are filled with grated apple, cottage cheese, or sour cherries. Roast duck, goulash, and sauerkraut are also part of her Hungarian culinary heritage. Her repertoire draws her extended family of 50 to her home for Christmas dinner year after year, no matter the weather in central Oregon.

Therese grew up during World War II, first in Hungary, then in Germany—she was forced to escape from Dresden to American-occupied Germany when Allied firebombs destroyed the city. During those difficult years, she often accompanied her mother in search of food to feed their family of five. They

were always hungry, she says, but thanks to her mother's inventive cooking, they survived. In 1952, when Therese was 15, the family moved to Los Angeles; all their possessions fit into three suitcases.

Ten years later, Therese moved to a farm in Scotts Mills, Oregon, where she taught herself to milk cows and to make butter and cheese. She also worked as head cook in the cafeteria of the local elementary school, treating students to many Hungarian dishes. Now retired and a grandmother, Therese is intent on passing down Hungarian culinary traditions to the younger generations of her family.

Chicken Paprikas

Therese makes this dish for family get-togethers. It's great to make ahead and reheat. Lisa Schroeder's customers loved this dish so much that she kept it on the menu for two months.

- 2 chicken breast halves (about 1 pound), skinned
- 2 chicken drumsticks (about ½ pound), skinned
- 2 chicken thighs (about ½ pound), skinned
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, divided

Cooking spray

- 2 cups chopped onion
- ½ cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- 1½ tablespoons Hungarian sweet paprika
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup low-fat sour cream
- 4 cups cooked medium egg noodles (about 2¾ cups uncooked pasta)

1. Sprinkle chicken with ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Heat a Dutch oven coated with cooking spray over medium-high heat. Add chicken;

cook 6 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove chicken from pan.

2. Add onion; sauté 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Return chicken to pan. Stir in broth and paprika; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes or until chicken is done. Remove from heat.

3. Place flour in a small bowl. Add sour cream, stirring well with a whisk. Gradually stir sour cream mixture, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper into chicken mixture. Cook over low heat 5 minutes or until thick, stirring occasionally. Serve over noodles. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: about 4 ounces chicken, ½ cup sauce, and 1 cup noodles).

CALORIES 600 (20% from fat); FAT 13g (sat 6g, mono 2.3g, poly 2.0g); PROTEIN 62g; CARB 54g; FIBER 3.4g; CHOL 229mg; IRON 3.3mg; SODIUM 573mg; CALC 141mg

WINE NOTE Paprika is bold and piquant, but not hot. Dishes with the spice work well with red wines that have a lot of fruit to cushion it. Try Wolf Blass "Red Label" Shiraz/Cabernet 1998 (South Australia, Australia; about \$12). With juicy ripe blackberry flavors, it's easy and perfect.

—KM



My Table Is Your Table: Jan Boccuzzi

There are always extra seats around the table at Jan and Tony Boccuzzi's home in Portland, Oregon. Friends and extended family are drawn by Jan's reputation as a great cook. One of the first moms honored at Mother's Bistro, Jan's homemade sausage, lasagna, and sauce are legendary. "If you don't have good food at the table, people won't sit," she says.

Jan and Tony came to Portland from a small town on the east coast of Italy, seeking a better life for themselves and their four daughters. Through the many changes in her life—including the addition of grandchildren—Jan credits cooking as her anchor. Making dishes from home always brought her comfort and revived old memories.

She sought plum tomatoes in Portland before they were popular, searched for the freshest ingredients, and "always made double." Jan likes to think big: Each summer she cans 2,000 pounds of locally grown Roma tomatoes into bright red ragù seasoned with fresh basil and red wine—and coveted by friends and family alike.

Jan's Ragù ▶

Italian moms are known to have a pot of "gravy" simmering on the stove for Sunday supper. And Jan Boccuzzi is no different. Her simple, but classic, version is rich with wine, herbs, beef, and pork.

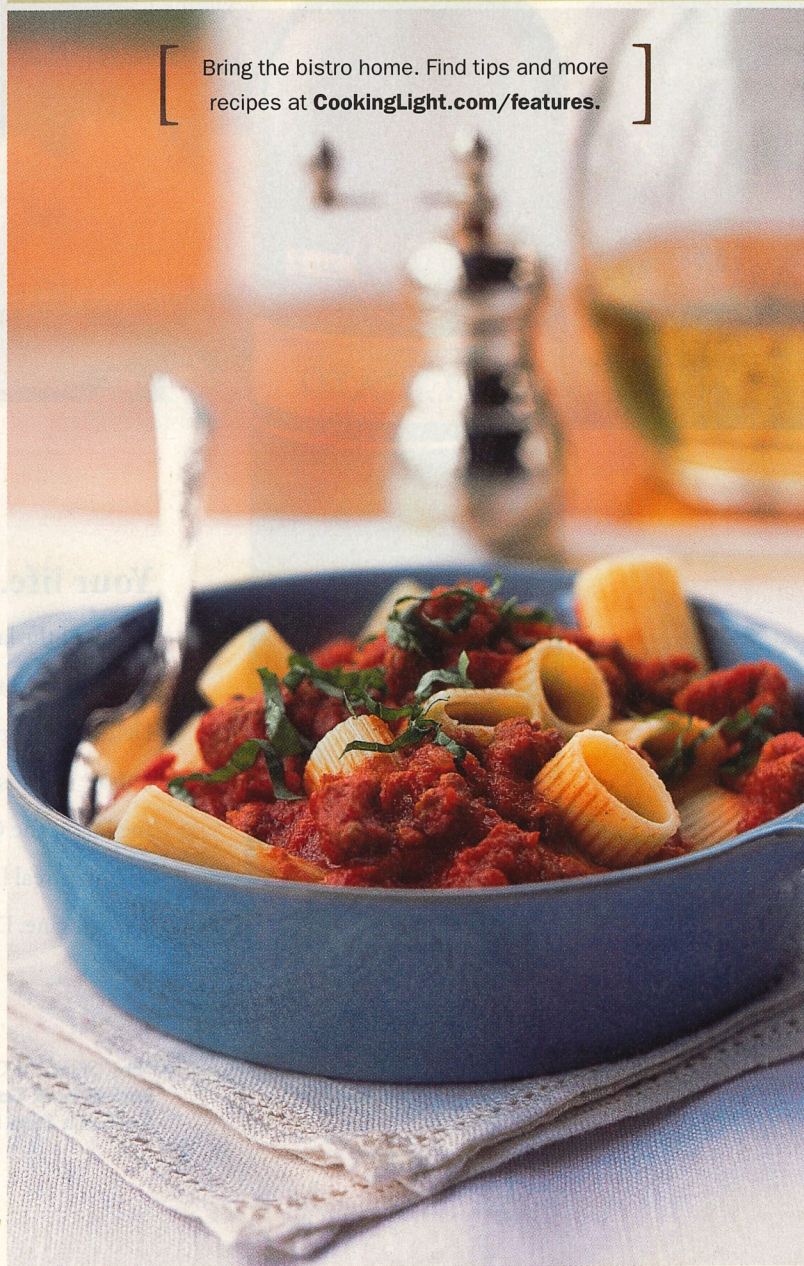
- 1 pound boneless Boston Butt pork roast, cut into ½-inch pieces
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 pound ground sirloin
- ¼ cup dry red wine
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes, undrained
- 8 cups hot cooked rigatoni (large tube-shaped) pasta

Fresh basil (optional)

1. Heat a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, add pork. Cook 3 minutes, browning on all sides. Add onion; cook 4 minutes. Add beef; cook 3 minutes or until beef loses its pink color, stirring to crumble. Add wine; cook 7 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates.
2. Add water and next 4 ingredients (water through tomatoes); bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes. Uncover and cook 1 hour or until pork is tender. Serve with pasta. Garnish with basil, if desired. Yield: 8 servings (serving size: 1 cup pasta and 1 cup sauce).

CALORIES 449 (29% from fat); FAT 14.2g (sat 4.7g, mono 5.7g, poly 1.9g); PROTEIN 30g; CARB 51g; FIBER 6.7g; CHOL 107mg; IRON 5mg; SODIUM 556mg; CALC 59mg

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Mother's Souvlakia ►

Lisa Schroeder developed this Greek recipe for the lunch menu at Mother's Bistro. Serve with a side of rice.

MARINADE:

- ½ cup thinly sliced onion
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons fresh lemon juice
- 1½ teaspoons finely chopped fresh parsley
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pound skinless, boneless chicken breast, cut into 32 bite-sized pieces

SKEWERS:

- ½ red onion, cut into 8 (1-inch) pieces
- ½ large green bell pepper, cut into 8 (1-inch) pieces
- 8 button mushrooms
- 8 large cherry tomatoes
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- Cooking spray

1. To prepare marinade, combine first 6 ingredients in a large zip-top plastic bag; add chicken. Seal and marinate in refrigerator 3 hours; turn occasionally.

2. Prepare grill.

3. Remove chicken from bag; discard marinade. Thread 4 chicken pieces, 1 piece each red onion and bell pepper, 1 mushroom, and 1 tomato alternately onto each of 8 (10-inch) skewers. Sprinkle with salt and black pepper.

4. Place kabobs on grill rack coated with cooking spray; grill 12 minutes or until chicken is done, turning once. Serve with Tzatziki Sauce. Yield: 4 servings (serving size: 2 skewers and 2 tablespoons Tzatziki Sauce).

(Totals include Tzatziki Sauce) CALORIES 143 (31% from fat); FAT 4.8g (sat 0.9g, mono 2.9g, poly 0.5g); PROTEIN 16.5g; CARB 8.5g; FIBER 1.7g; CHOL 35mg; IRON 1mg; SODIUM 277mg; CALC 69mg

TZATZIKI SAUCE:

- 1 cup finely chopped seeded peeled cucumber
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 (8-ounce) carton plain low-fat yogurt
- 1½ teaspoons chopped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon olive oil
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 garlic clove, minced



1. Place cucumber in a colander over a bowl; sprinkle with salt. Toss gently to coat. Cover and chill 1 hour. Rinse with cold water; drain well. Squeeze until barely moist.

2. Spoon yogurt onto several layers of heavy-duty paper towels; spread to ½-inch thickness. Cover with additional paper towels; let stand 5 minutes. Scrape into a bowl using a rubber spatula.

3. Combine cucumber, yogurt, parsley, and remaining ingredients in a bowl. Serve with Mother's Souvlakia. Yield: 1 cup (serving size: 2 tablespoons).

CALORIES 21 (29% from fat); FAT 0.6g (sat 0.3g, mono 0.2g, poly 0g); PROTEIN 1.5g; CARB 2g; FIBER 0.1g; CHOL 3mg; IRON 0.1mg; SODIUM 91mg; CALC 53mg

Judith H. Dern is a freelance writer in Seattle.

