



BOB KANNRY offers a sample of Italian Wedding Soup for Jan's final approval. Jan and Bob own Gandalf & Co. Restaurant and Seashore Cafe on the Beach Road in Nags Head. Their atmosphere may be casual, but when it comes to their cuisine both are, admittedly, "extremely picky."

(Photo by Dominick Cross)

# Less time cooking means more time for having fun

## In season

by Liz Blum

Summer, i.e. "The Season," is upon us and the order of the day is "making it simple."

That includes meals. Though we might want to set an elegant table full of culinary delights to impress and savor, let's be real. Who has the time?

Residents are busy gearing up for the summer, visitors have better things to do. But the fact remains that people have to eat and fast food fare wearies the palate quickly.

I consulted with my favorite chefs and culinary (among other subjects) mentors. Bob and Jan Kannry, proprietors of Gandalf & Company Restaurant and Seashore Cafe, and weasled a few of their prized recipes from them — dishes that are simple to prepare and imminently impressive to serve. (Besides, they're test-driven.)

Gandalf's has acquired quite a reputation among residents and visitors for serving food above and beyond the normal fried fish fare. Plus, an atmosphere of comfort, leisure and camaraderie makes the cafe a nice place to just sit and visit. However homey an atmosphere they've created, their energies are put into the preparation of good food with an unusual twist. Their motto of having a place "where there are no strangers; just friends we've yet to meet" and Middle Earth decor and behavior have found a following that increases steadily. The food and "fireside" atmosphere is enough to make a hobbit curl his hairy toes in delight.

Bob and Jan gave me the following recipes (albeit reluctantly) that they serve, with much success, and take little preparation. Several can be made ahead of time and served at will.

### ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP (Festival Soup)

Jan's mom's grandmother's recipe

This soup, as its name implies, is traditionally served on Italian holidays, anniversaries and birthdays. The "little old ladies" would count the number of meatballs served in the soup — the more meatballs, the wealthier the family.

This is better served the second day, Jan said. Adjust quantities to achieve desired consistency. It can be served as a meal in itself with a salad and light wine, or as an excellent appetizer for pasta dishes.

#### Ingredients

- 3 quarts water
- 1 can chicken broth, base or bouillon (non-salted)
- 2-3 celery stalks, chopped finely
- 2-3 handfuls of chopped carrots
- 1/2 medium onion, diced finely
- 2 cups cooked and cut endive
- 2 1/2 to 3 cups boned, cooked and pulled (shredded) chicken
- 15-20 Italian seasoned meatballs (Bob says find your own recipe; their's is a secret)
- 2 raw eggs
- 1/4 to 1/3 cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese

Bring to a boil water, carrots, celery, onions and chicken base. Cut in endive. Add shredded chicken and meatballs. Bring back to a boil. Take off flame.

Mix eggs and cheese together. Drop into soup and sift through with a fork (as in egg drop soup). It's ready to eat but if you can wait 24-48 hours, it'll be at its peak.

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