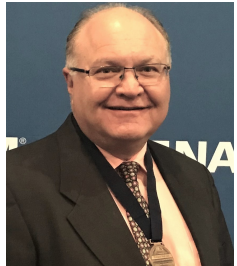


IFSEA CHRONICLES

IFSEA is a legacy organization, dedicated to further developing students, military and it's members by providing continuing education and professional certifications to the foodservice and hospitality industry leaders."

December 2024

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Richard F. Weil, MCFE, MCFP
Chairman of the Board

Happy Holidays!

Happy Holidays everyone.....this year we will be celebrating three holidays all in the same week and wishing you and yours the best for a joyous and happy holiday. Looking forward to turning the calendar in a few short week's I am reminded of all the challenges that foodservice operators have encountered this year.

Consumers had a lot to face in 2024 as inflation continued to rise and deeply impacted both grocery and restaurant menu prices. In response, restaurant owners saw a significant decline in customers dining out, necessitating new strategies to bring diners back. Thus, 2024 marked the return and rise of value promotions—and for many restaurants, particularly in the quick-serve spaces, these campaigns were successful.

The first to achieve value promotion success in 2024, [according to Nation's Restaurant News' Alicia Kelso](#), was McDonald's, particularly with the return of their \$5 Meal Deal, alongside other nods to nostalgia items. "The \$5 Meal is doing exactly what we set out to have it achieve. Those things are coming to life'," chief financial officer Ian Borden said during the company's earnings call last month. The Meal Deal swung momentum in McDonald's favor toward the end of Q3 and solidly into Q4 before an E. coli crisis squandered the company's progress."

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Food For Thought

May we pause in wonder of the Joy that resides within.

Susana



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Richard F. Weil, MCFE, MCFP
Chairman of the Board



Happy Holidays!

Continued from page 1

Following in McDonald's success, other brands began to develop value promotions, "creating plenty of 'noise, several executives pointed out, making it more difficult to perch atop minds despite the implementation of lower price points." Despite the mad rush to advertise eye-catching deals and invite customers back, there were some stand-out promotions that accomplished the goal. "Several chains were able to break through some of that noise toward the end of Q3 and into Q4, reporting sequential improvements of both sales and traffic, including Potbelly, Red Robin, Noodles & Company, Cheesecake Factory, Popeyes, Wendy's, First Watch, and Papa Johns," NRN reports.

Alongside these targeted value promotions, restaurants also refocused on loyalty programs, to achieve a similar but more consistent result. Kelso writes, "As brands jockey over more discerning consumers, loyal customers – who spend and visit more – are becoming more valuable. As such, loyalty programs have become a bigger priority of late." Whether a one-time value promotion or a rebranded and reenergized loyalty program are the better way back to customers, likely depends on the restaurant and target audience.

Overall, Kelso reports that numbers in the latest quarter are mostly "ho-hum" and restaurant owners are still hoping for the industry to stabilize after a tough year. "Let's just hope those repeatedly reported "sequential improvements" toward the latter part of the quarter and into Q4 continue to hold through the end of the year and into 2025," she writes.

Forward looking as an avid reader and student of the industry it is my belief that moving into Q2 of 2025 the economic outlook for the food service and hospitality industry performance will improve. Several Key Economic Indicators (KEI) will need to fall into place including lower interest rates, continued stability in commodities, and consumer confidence perhaps being the largest factor. To begin to prepare for 2025, consider looking at completing a full menu engineering and to develop effective advertising and value promotions to launch your business's 2025 year.

As IFSEA members and colleagues, take the time to remember the most important things with your family, friends and most importantly your valued staff. Happy Holidays everyone!



THE MANLEY METHOD

Ed Manley, MCFBD, MCFE, CHP President Emeritus



WHAT HAS IFSEA DONE WHILE WE AND OTHER ASSOCIATIONS STRUGGLED?

Happy Holidays and Happy New Years to everyone! Many people don't seem to much want to belong to professional organizations, why should they, what have associations done for them lately they ask. Well.....here is our message from IFSEA.

*IFSEA created the best in the military awards programs (Ney, Connelly, Hill, Coast Guard and heavily involved with the Hennessy awards for many years) and those continue today, but without us starting them. The Connelly was named after an IFSEA Chairman of the Board Philip A Connelly. See many photos of the Army competition over the past many years.

<https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/phillip-a-connelly-competition.html?sortBy=relevant>

*IFSEA has given many tens of thousands of dollars in scholarships given from the Worthy Goal Foundation , <https://studentscholarships.org/scholarship/10065/worthy-goal-scholarship> and also those continue with the Kae deBrent Hodges program.

*IFSEA created Certified Food Manager (CFM), we've tested over 2,000 nursing home managers and supervisors. Many have chosen the IFSEA CFM program as the alternative is a more tedious and expensive alternative. CFM is one of two approved certifications by Medicare. The CFM certification has proven to be a highly valued certification in the healthcare foodservice segment and our CFM process has provided a great service and has saved jobs.

*While managing IFSEA I created the MCFBD Symposiums, which has allowed over 6500 people to earn 12,500 certifications. That's more than the better-known associations have done. Without IFSEA and the relationship with the military, none of that would have happened.

*We're now working on the Manley Method Coaching podcasts, which will include IFSEA members as Featured Guests, and will broadly focus on the industry, which is what IFSEA does, multiples of other associations focus on a segment, we can help EVERYONE.

So, it's time for the next generation to jump in, take the prestigious top spots which look good on a resume as community service activities. You won't see much from me that doesn't include, "2nd IFSEA President Emeritus since 1901," because it's true, lol, but also it lets people know that I'm someone who volunteers for challenges. The same with anyone who has served as an IFSEA Branch President, Branch Treasurer, Symposium Host etc. I'm creating a certificate for Navy Warrant Officer Domagalski who has networked 50 or more Navy personnel 450 plus certifications – and he said yes that would be great to help me get jobs when I leave the Navy.

Merry Christmas, Wishing you a most Happy New Year. Please get in touch if you venture to the land of free money, Las Vegas. Love to see you! Bring plenty of money and stuff your return fare in your suitcase just in case. Love and hugs to all my IFSEA friends and friends I haven't met yet. Here's to perhaps a meet up at the NAFEM show in late February of this coming year in Atlanta!!!!



*The Spirit
of the Holidays
is the spirit of love,
generosity,
forgiveness and goodness.
May this
merry and magical season
light your world with love
and bring hope, peace,
happiness and joy
to your hearts
all year through!*

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Celebrating Chanukah!

Chanukah (Hanukkah) 2022 starts at nightfall on December 18, 2022 and ends with nightfall on December 26, 2022, beginning on the Hebrew calendar date of 25 Kislev, and lasting for eight days.

What Is Hanukkah?

Chanukah (also spelled Hanukkah) is an 8-day Jewish festival marking the miraculous victory of the Maccabees, Jewish freedom fighters, over the Seleucidian Greek occupiers in the year **139 BCE**. After recapturing Jerusalem's Holy Temple, which had been converted into a place of idol worship, they searched for pure oil with which to light Temple menorah. They found just enough to burn for one day, but miraculously it burned for eight days until more oil could be brought.

How is Hanukkah Celebrated?

On each of the eight nights of Chanukah, Jewish people light special menorahs (candelabras), adding another flame each night, until on the eighth night eight flames are burning brightly. The lighting takes place at home, in a doorway or near a window, and is performed after brief blessings are recited.

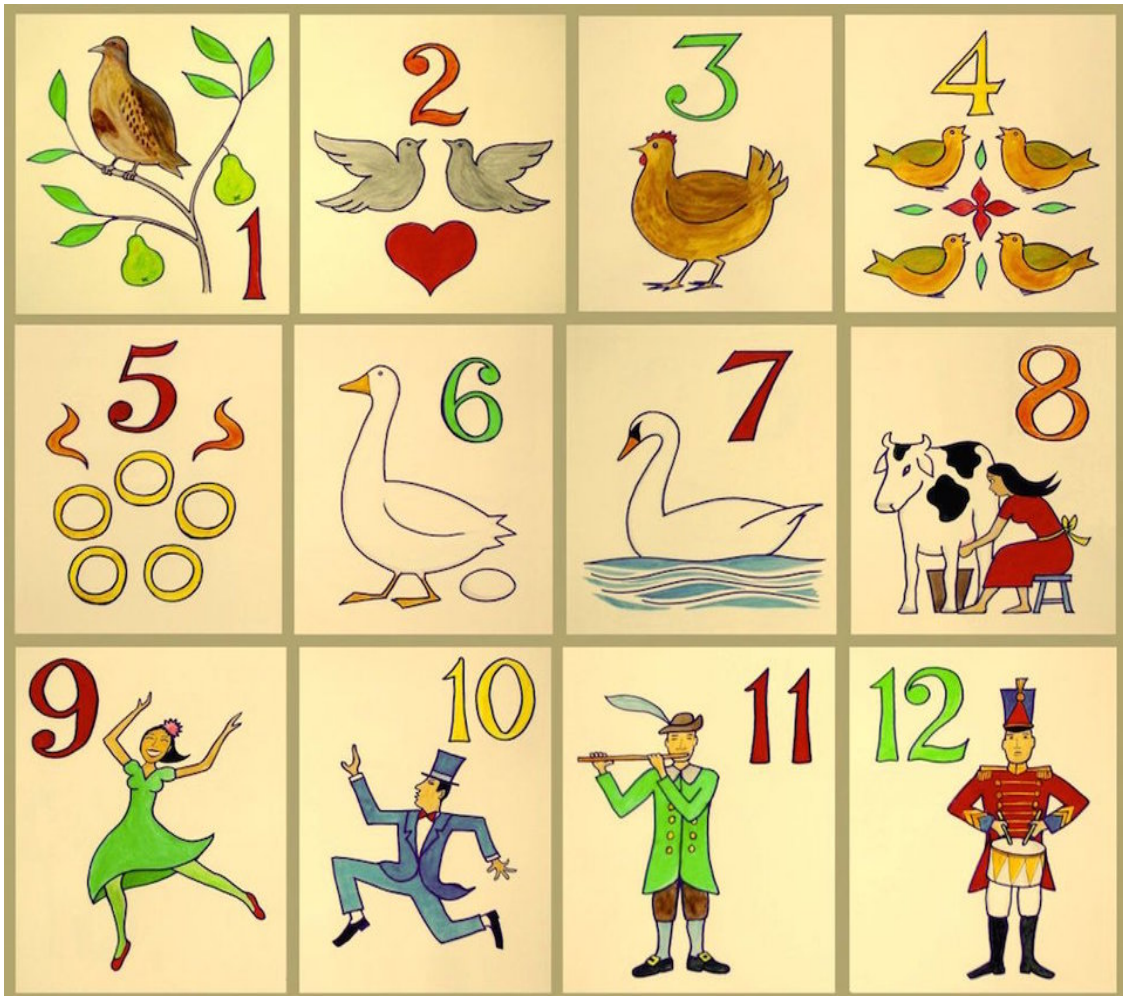
On Chanukah, it is customary to play with dreidels, tops upon which four Hebrew letters, nun, gimme, hay, and shin, are written.

In modern times, communal menorah lightings are often held in public squares, sharing Chanukah's message of the triumph of light over darkness and freedom to worship God.

To commemorate the miracle, which involved oil, oily foods are enjoyed on Chanukah. Since the Middle Ages, doughnuts (sufganiyot) have been a Chanukah favorite. Among Ashkenazim, potato pancakes (latkes) are also a classic.

Did You Know?

12 Days of Christmas



Every year, PNC calculates the real-world prices of all the gifts in the "12 Days of Christmas" carol.

Their so-called Christmas Price Index has again risen, driven by higher costs of pear trees, more demand for gold rings, and higher wages for Lords-a-leaping.

While it's frivolous, PNC's index mirrors some of the underlying trends in the US economy.

A partridge in a pear tree and all the other 11 gifts would set you back approximately 46,729.86 this year.

That's slightly more expensive than the previous year, according to PNC's annual index of the 12 Days of Christmas. Too early to tell what it all will cost in 2025!

Fruitcake

Love it or Hate it

The action of Truman Capote's 1956 short story "A Christmas Memory" is set into motion when a nameless sixty-something woman looks out her kitchen window and exclaims, "Oh my, it's fruitcake weather." Thus, she and her dearest friend, her 7-year-old, live-in cousin Buddy, begin amassing supplies for a seasonal four-day baking spree—which involves everything from snitching fallen nuts from a neighbor's pecan grove to procuring a quart of bootleg whiskey. However, on learning how his spirits are going to be used, the bootlegger flippantly remarks, "That's no way to waste good whiskey."

In spite of the goodwill and Christmas cheer fruitcakes are intended to embody, they are the running joke of the modern holiday season. Late-night comedian Johnny Carson got his digs in with lines like: "There is only one fruitcake in the entire world and people keep passing it around." In English slang the word has come to mean someone who is eccentric or flat-out insane, while in Manitou Springs, Colorado there is an annual fruitcake toss where unwanted loaves are bid adieu by medieval means—namely, catapults. There seems to be a cultural expectation that we collectively loathe this token baked good.

But can fruitcake really be as bad as all that? That's hard to believe given its staying power, culturally speaking. The ancient Romans made a mishmash of barley, pomegranate seeds, nuts and raisins as a sort of energy bar; however the modern fruitcake can be traced back to the Middle Ages as dried fruits became more widely available and fruited breads entered Western European cuisine. But variations on the fruitcake started springing up: Italy's dense, sweet-and-spicy panforte (literally, "strong bread") dates back to 13th century Siena; Germany's stollen, a tapered loaf coated with melted butter and powdered sugar that's more bread-like in consistency, has been a Dresden delicacy since the 1400s and has its own annual festival; and then there's black cake in the Caribbean Islands, a boozy descendant of Britain's plum pudding where the fruit is soaked in rum for months, or even as long as a year. The tradition of making fruitcakes for special occasions such as weddings and holidays gained in popularity in the 18th and 19th centuries and due to the cost of the materials, it was a grand indulgence. But, as with many traditions, how this confection came to be exclusively associated with Christmas season is a mystery.

Another mystery is the point at which the fruitcake fell from grace. Perhaps one nail was driven into the coffin in the early 20th century when mass-produced mail-order fruitcakes became available, creating the regrettably classic image of a dry, leaden cake encrusted with garish candied fruits and pecans. But since some of the companies producing these things have been in business for decades, this isn't an entirely satisfactory answer. They must be doing something right, right?

Personally, I'm a fan of the homemade stuff. This time of year I enjoy remembering people through food, and I crack out the family recipes that distinguished the Christmas season. Among them is Great Grandma Reamer's fruitcake, and although I never knew her personally, I know this one dish of hers and every year her guarded, liquor-kissed blend of dried fruits and miniature marshmallows is thrown together in my kitchen. And this holiday season I made my first attempt at making panforte, mainly because every year the Italian side of my family always remarks on how hard it is to find that particular fruitcake in the stores. We'll see if mine passes muster come Christmas morning.

You may have to employ the scientific method of trial and error before you find a fruitcake recipe that pleases your palette, but I dare you to give it a try. With all the international and regional variations out there to try—and even a recipe championed by Good Eats chef Alton Brown—you may end up creating a positive fruitcake tradition of your own.

Let's Get Cooking!

War Fruitcake *

Yields 2 8" X 4" loaf cakes



- 4 cups Hot Water
- 1 LB Raisins
- 2 cups Brown Sugar
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 1 tsp Ground Cloves
- 4 TBLSP shortening
- 2 tsp Baking Soda
- 4 cups Flour
- 6 oz. Walnuts (Optional)
- 24 oz. Candied Fruitcake Fruit Mix
- 8 oz. Red Candies Cherries for top of cakes

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium saucepan bring water, raisins, brown sugar, cinnamon, cloves and shortening to a hard boil. Boil for 5 minutes. Let cool for 20-30 minutes. DO NOT DISCARD WATER. Add baking soda and stir well. Add flour, nuts (if using) and mixed fruit. Stir until well blended and pour into two greased 8 inch X 4 inch loaf pans. DO NOT FILL PANS TO THE TOP. Arrange red candied cherries on top of cakes and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool completely before serving.

** War cake is an eggless, milkless, butterless cake recipe that helped keep dessert on the table during the shortages and rationing periods of World War I, II, and the Great Depression.*

Miniature Party Fruitcakes

Yields about 5 dozen



- 1/2 cup light molasses
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 package (15 ounces) raisins
- 1 pound candied fruit, chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 cup chopped nuts

In a small saucepan, combine molasses and water; add raisins. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in candied fruit and vanilla. Cool.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add 1 eggs at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine the flour, baking soda and spices; add to the creamed mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition. Add fruit mixture, mixing well. Fold in nuts.

Fill paper-lined miniature muffin cups almost full. Bake at 325° for 22-24 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pans to wire racks to cool completely. Store in airtight containers.



Walnuts



Walnuts have a rich history dating back thousands of years. Walnuts are the oldest tree food known to man, dating back to 7000 B.C. The Romans called walnuts *Juglans regia*, “Jupiter’s royal acorn.” Early history indicates that English walnuts came from ancient Persia, where they were reserved for royalty. Thus, the walnut is often known as the “Persian Walnut.” Walnuts were traded along the Silk Road route between Asia and the Middle East.

Caravans carried walnuts to far off lands and eventually through sea trade, spreading the popularity of the walnut around the world. English merchant marines transported the product for trade to ports around the world and they became known as “English Walnuts.” England, in fact, never grew walnuts commercially. The outer shell provided a natural protective layer helping to maintain the quality of the nut. Today the nut trade continues to be a well-established, ordered, and structured business, and the California walnut is well known as the top quality walnut for the world.

California Origins

The walnut was first cultivated in California by the Franciscan Fathers in the late 1700s. The earliest walnuts to enter California were known as “mission” walnuts. Unlike today’s walnuts, these first entries were small with hard shells. The trees flourished in the Mediterranean-like climate zones of California, and by the 1870s modern walnut production had begun with orchard plantings in southern California, near Santa Barbara. In the next 70 years the center of California’s walnut production shifted with successful plantings in the central and northern parts of the state. Many of today’s improved cultivars are descendants of early plantings.

Luther Burbank is credited with early research in California walnut cultivation.

California Walnut Industry

The first commercial plantings began in 1867 when Joseph Sexton, an orchardist and nurseryman in the Santa Barbara County town of Goleta, planted English walnuts. For several years, walnuts were predominantly planted in the southern areas of California, accounting for 65% of all bearing acreage. Some 70 years after Sexton’s first planting, the center of California walnut production moved northward to the Central Valley area in one of the most dramatic horticultural moves in history. Better growing areas, improved irrigation, and better pest control methods in the north resulted in greater yields, which gradually increased each year. Today, the Central Valley of California is the state’s prime walnut growing region. Its mild climate and deep fertile soils provide ideal growing conditions for the California walnut. California walnuts account for 99 percent of the commercial US supply and half of world trade.



Holiday Cheer

Hot Buttered Rum



Hot buttered rum is a festive favorite in almost every US household. Dating back to the mid-19th century, the drink first appeared due to the rum trade passing through New England – and from this, hot buttered rum was born.

For the recipe: muddle together 1 teaspoon of brown sugar, one tablespoon of butter, and a dash each of ground cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and vanilla extract in a heat-proof glass. Once well-combined, add 2 oz of dark or spiced rum, and top with hot water. Serve, and enjoy!

For a non-boozy version, use rum extract instead of the rum – no alcohol, but still the same great taste.

Mulled Wine



Mulled wine is the perfect Christmas drink for people across Britain – and with its spicy, warming taste, it's easy to see why.

Mulled wine was created by Romans, looking to warm their bodies against the winter cold by warming their wine. In the UK, it started to become more popular in the Victorian era, leading to it becoming a holiday favorite.

For mulled wine, pour a bottle of red wine into a pan. Add two cinnamon sticks, a few star anise, four cloves, and an orange and lemon, both sliced. Add about 6 tablespoons of brown sugar, and then heat until the pan gently steams, for about 8 minutes or so.

To make a non-alcoholic version, try it with cranberry juice and omit the sugar. Or, make it with a non-alcoholic apple cider.

RANdom STuff

