

Sandwiches are Betty Thompson's bread and butter

NORFOLK—While sandwiches take their name from John Montague, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, he would be surprised today at the endless variety of sandwiches that make up part of our daily menu. In fact, almost anything that spreads or slices can be made into a sandwich as nourishing or as elegant as one desires.

"In our country, sandwiches have become an institution. We consume millions every day," said Betty J. Thompson, product development manager of Stewart Sandwiches, Inc., which has its headquarters in Norfolk. The company distributes about one million sandwiches weekly throughout the east, into Michigan and Texas, and recently to a new franchise in San Diego, Calif.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner—anytime is sandwich-time. "Start off the day with a sausage or ham biscuit. . . lunch on a chicken filet sandwich. . . have a char-broil and cheese sandwich for dinner," Betty suggested. The Stewart line of sandwiches features over 40 varieties and regional preferences are high.

"The major challenge of my job is keeping all the regions happy. Here, for example, in the south, baking-powder biscuits go over well, but in the north they demand a yeast product. What does well in North Carolina won't do well in Michigan," she said. Betty, a native of North Carolina, came to Stewart two years ago when her current position was created. Previously she had worked in the test kitchens of Betty Crocker and Quaker Oats in Chicago, Ill.

Where you find Stewart Sandwiches—convenience stores, gas stations, mom-and-pop stores, country clubs, schools, offices—you also find a microwave oven to quickly heat the sandwiches. The sandwiches have been shipped frozen from the local assembly plant.

Betty is also responsible for creating a new sandwich every four weeks—it's featured as the sandwich of the month. It's a real challenge to make these creations different, yet wholesome and appetizing.

"I must consider regional preferences, availability of quality ingredients, keeping quality of the sandwich, and good combination of ingredients that complement each other," she said. Stewart's own bakery is unable to meet all the demands for bread, rolls and biscuits, and depends on outside suppliers for additional bread products as well as all other sandwich ingredients.

As a part of the growing fast-food industry, Stewart is expanding its product line. "More and more people are eating sandwiches. Today, how many



What's cooking?

By Rachel Ailread

children identify with McDonald's?" she asked. Betty is working on eight new items including a ham-egg-and-cheese omelet patty for those individuals who eat breakfast on the run.

Though sold as a sandwich, this handful of food is a convenient package of good nutrition. How often have you eaten a sandwich with cheese, meat, tomato, and lettuce? Did you ever stop once to think that recommended foods from the basic four food groups are right there in your hand. Imagine that, something that tastes so good is actually good for you.

Because we eat foods that appeal to taste, the nutritive contributions often goes without notice. In this case it is well worth noting. Many of the nutrients that are short in our normal diet are well supplied in sandwiches, Betty noted.

Betty is currently testing a new low-cal sandwich (chicken or turkey?) and the use of more whole grains sandwich breads—cracked-wheat, rye, pumpernickel, whole-wheat, oatmeal.

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—Betty Thompson

"No matter how many whole grain breads we offer, there's always some who insist on white," added Betty. Creation of a new sandwich may take four months from the moment Betty gets an inspiration until the moment it can be purchased at retail.

She suggests a new-fangled sidewinder for lunch or your next cookout. This sandwich was recently developed in recognition of the accomplishments of Fighter Squadron 41 stationed at Oceana Naval Base. Sidewinder is the name of a missile.

Banana cream cheese bonanza, a hot open-face sandwich, is recommended for a nutritious before-school breakfast. "Double the cream cheese filling and store in the refrigerator so you can prepare breakfast very quickly the next morning," Betty said.

Don't let extensive meal planning diminish the pleasures of early autumn. After all, you can do just as well with America's and Betty's favorite submarine.

"Today, almost anything goes between slices of bread or in a roll. The bigger the submarine the more fun it is to make," said Betty. "A yard long loaf of bread filled to overflowing is always a big hit."

And if you're an avid gardener, all the better. Why not serve the last of your harvest in pocket bread? Tomatoes, zucchini, and onion add character and crunch to the vegetable filling. At this time of year, sandwiches are especially good because when the ingredients are vine-ripened they taste fresh and have all the goodness possible from mother nature.

Make your own sensational sandwiches often. But should you need some inspirations or new and exciting ideas, let these favorites of Betty Thompson supply what you haven't got, or don't feel like thinking about. Every super sandwich is a mealful.

Banana cream cheese bonanza

- 3 T. cream cheese, softened
- 1 T. chopped nuts
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 slices enriched raisin bread, toasted
- 1 medium banana, sliced
- 2 T. honey

Combine cream cheese, nuts and cinnamon; spread half the mixture on each slice of toasted raisin bread. Layer banana slices evenly over cream cheese mixture; drizzle each sandwich with 1 tablespoon of honey. Broil 3-inches from source of heat about 1 minute or until honey is bubbly. Makes 1 or 2 servings. Note: 1 medium peach, pear, or apple, peeled and sliced, may be substituted for the banana.

Party-time submarine

- 1 large (13 inches long) loaf french bread, split
- Savory spread (recipe below)
- Shredded lettuce
- Onion rings
- Green pepper rings
- Tomato slices
- Assorted luncheon meats
- Swiss and cheddar cheese slices

Open bread, spread cut surfaces with savory spread. Place lettuce on bottom loaf and arrange remaining ingredients attractively. Cover with tops of loaf. Cut into 6 sandwiches. Note: Bologna, pickle loaf, turkey, ham, and salami may be used as



Staff photo by Chris Hartman

Betty Thompson creates party-time submarine, a perfect crowd pleaser. The skyscraper-stacked sandwich is filled with sliced ham, turkey, bologna, cheese, tomato, onion, green pepper, and shredded lettuce. It's a must for casual fall get-togethers.

luncheon meats. Also, hot pepper rings may be added.

Savory spread

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 2 T. prepared mustard

- 1 tsp. lemon-pepper
 - 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- Combine all ingredients and mix until well blended. Makes about 1/2 cup spread. Imitation mayonnaise may be used for lower calorie count

Sidewinder

- Hot dog rolls
 - Smoked sausage links, cooked
 - Hot taco sauce
 - Shredded cheddar cheese, optional
- For each sandwich, place sausage inside hot dog roll; top with taco sauce and sprinkle with cheese.

Cheesy vegetables in pocket bread

- 1 pkg. active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 cups warm water (105 to 115 degrees)
- 1 T. vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. sugar
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 1/2 to 2 cups all-purpose flour
- Cornmeal
- Cheesy vegetable filling (recipe below)

Dissolve yeast in warm water in large bowl; stir in oil, salt, sugar, and whole wheat flour; beat until smooth. Mix in enough all-purpose flour to make dough easy to handle. Knead on lightly floured surface until smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turn greased side up, cover and let rise in warm place until double in bulk, about one hour. Punch dough down; divide into 6 parts. Shape each part into a ball. Cover and let rise 30 minutes; sprinkle 3 ungreased baking sheets with cornmeal. Roll each ball into a 6 1/2-inch circle on lightly floured surface. Place 2 circles on each baking sheet, cover and let rise 30 minutes. Bake circles at 450 degrees about 12 minutes until puffed and light brown, cool. Cut bread in half crosswise and enlarge pockets if necessary. Fill pockets with cheesy vegetable filling. Serve hot. Makes 6 sandwiches.

Cheesy vegetable filling

- 1 medium-size onion, thinly sliced
- 1 T. vegetable oil
- 4 medium-size zucchini, coarsely chopped (about 4 cups)
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/4 tsp. basil leaves
- Dash of pepper
- 1 medium-size tomato, chopped
- 1 cup (4 oz.) shredded natural swiss cheese

In 10-inch skillet saute onion in oil, add zucchini, garlic salt, basil, and pepper; cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, 3 to 5 minutes or until zucchini is crisp-tender. Add tomato, continue cooking about 1 minute. Remove from heat; sprinkle cheese over vegetables. Fill split pocket breads with mixture. Serve at once.

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