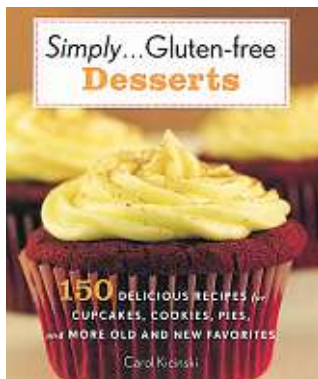


# The Record Better Living

## IN YOUR KITCHEN



Judging by the number of cookbooks delivered to my desk every week, it is clear that people are hungry for recipes and stories about food and cooking. For this weekly column I make one or more of the recipes in my home kitchen – from the most intriguing of these cookbooks – and offer my take on both the book and the recipes.

“Simply ... Gluten-free Desserts,” by Carol Kicinski (Thomas Dunne Books – St. Martin’s Press) \$26.99

## SALTED PEANUT-CARAMEL BROWNIES



TED AXELROD/SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Most of us have become familiar with the label “gluten free” on supermarket shelves and increasingly, on restaurant menus. Celiac disease – the body’s inability to process gluten – affects about 1 in 100 people and May is National Celiac Awareness Month.

Gluten-free cookbooks have been surfacing in increasing numbers, especially those that focus on desserts and baking. Since people with celiac can’t have any form of wheat, it’s a challenge to come up with flour substitutes that don’t change the taste and texture of cakes and breads. Among the gluten-free baking books I’ve seen lately, Carol Kicinski’s “Simply ... Gluten-free Desserts” made a great first impression with its enticing photographs and out-of-the-ordinary recipes.

When reading, it’s generally a good idea to start at the beginning. But that’s not the case with cookbooks. You should be able to open to any recipe and jump right in. I found lots of things I wanted to bake right away: chocolate marmalade cake, carrot cake cookies, fig and goat cheese tarts; coconut-mango panna cotta.

A colleague on a gluten-free diet, who has raised my awareness, advised me to choose something chocolate – gluten-free desserts made with chocolate taste the best, she said – so I set about baking Kicinski’s Salted Peanut-Caramel Brownies. For the first ingredient, the recipe lists “sweet rice flour blend.” Unable to find a product by that name at Whole Foods, I substituted brown rice flour – and the result was fine. Then, I perused the cookbook further and toward the front found a long description of “sweet rice flour blend” – not at all a product you buy, but a mix of five ingredients: brown and white rice flour, potato starch, tapioca starch and xanthan gum. Shame on me, perhaps, for not starting at the beginning, but it would have been a good idea for the author to include a note or star next to “sweet rice flour blend” in her recipes to “see page 14.”

As delicious as the brownies made with plain brown rice flour were, I imagine they would be even better with the blend, which is the result of Kicinski’s research into making gluten-free baked goods. Having been diagnosed with celiac herself, she is a fine example of the new breed of cooks who refuse to treat dietary restrictions as a reason to deny yourself the pleasures of the table, but who celebrate the challenge to be creative in the kitchen.

**RECIPE ON PAGE 2**



Northwest Bergen homes, museums opening for a one-day special event

FILE PHOTO

# HISTORY CALLING

By KARA YORIO  
STAFF WRITER

For one day, eight Bergen County historical homes and museums will be open together at one price, offering residents a chance to take in some local history, admire 18th- and 19th-century architecture and learn a little bit more about the people behind the names that are synonymous with the area’s past.

The special event was suggested by Sheila Brogan, who was looking for a way to bring people out to these sites. Brogan, the president of the Ridgewood Historical Society, envisioned what she called “a kitchen tour” and took her idea to the Coalition of Northwest Bergen History Societies last fall.

“We’re all wanting people to come and enjoy our sites, and we all have trouble attracting people just because life is very busy these days,” says Brogan. “But we don’t want to lose the history.”

So Brogan suggested everybody open the same day and offer one ticket to visit any or all of the sites. The coalition embraced the idea and worked to make it happen.

On Saturday, some of the houses will have people dressed in period costume, and some will do demonstrations. At the Hopper-Goetschius House Museum in Upper Saddle River, for example, people will be making lace and quilting. There will also be open hearth cooking in the outdoor kitchen and tours of the Dutch barn and tenant house.

Tickets can be purchased through the individual history societies, at The Schoolhouse Museum in Ridgewood, at Abma’s Farm in Wyckoff or at the Ho-Ho-Kus Inn and Tavern in Ho-Ho-Kus. Hot dogs and soda will be

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MARION BROWN/STAFF

The Hermitage in Ho-Ho-Kus, above, hosted George Washington for several days in 1778. Top, the Hopper-Goetschius House Museum will have demonstrations and tours for History Day.

**WHO:** Coalition of Northwest Bergen History Societies.  
**WHAT:** NW Bergen County History Day Tour.  
**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.  
**WHERE:** Throughout northwest Bergen County.  
**HOW MUCH:** \$10, children under 12 free.



Mike Shirota, director of the Japanese Choral Harmony choir, will co-conduct a benefit concert for Sendai, Japan, at Carnegie Hall.

**WHO:** Japan Choral Harmony, The HAGI Choir, The Alexandria Harmonizers, Men’s Glee Club of Tokyo & Kansai, Men’s Glee Club of New York, White Pine Glee Club of Detroit.

**WHAT:** “East Meets West Through Choral Harmony.”

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Friday.

**WHERE:** Carnegie Hall, Stern Auditorium, 881 Seventh Ave., Manhattan; 212-247-7800 or [carnegiehall.org](http://carnegiehall.org).

**HOW MUCH:** Free (ticket required); donations suggested.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** [Japanuschorus.org/event\\_eng.html](http://Japanuschorus.org/event_eng.html)

## Concert becomes benefit for Japan earthquake victims

By JIM BECKERMAN  
STAFF WRITER

When Paramus conductor Mike Shirota began, in 2009, working on a program of Japanese choral music for Carnegie Hall, the catastrophic March 11 earthquake and tsunami that killed more than 15,000 people was still two years in the future.

Now that Friday’s “East Meets West Through Choral Harmony” multi-choir show has become a benefit for Sendai, the city closest to the disaster’s deadly epicenter, selections like “The Poem of the Sea” and “Bridge over Troubled Water” are going to have a sad new meaning, Shirota concedes.

“The first thing we decided to do is not change our program,” Shirota says. “Because once you start changing something, then some people will say, ‘No, I want to change that part,’ and then it ends up all changed.”

His own group, the 70-member New York-based Japan Choral Harmony, will be joined by The Alexandria Harmonizers, Men’s Glee Club of Tokyo & Kansai, Men’s Glee Club of New York, the White Pine Glee Club of Detroit and a group of Japanese 4th through 9th grade students.

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