

At Sea – Day 44 Nov. 10:

We had been traveling south and east since leaving Fremantle yesterday so daylight came early today at 4:30am. The Amsterdam was gently pitching with almost no roll so we had a good night's rest and were up early. Outside temperature was in the low 60s so we put on long sleeve shirts and were comfortable with that.

Orlin's head cold is a thing of the past but many other passengers now seem to be affected with hacking and coughing nearly everywhere we go. With plenty of hand disinfectant around the ship and attention to hygiene we hope to get through this affliction soon.

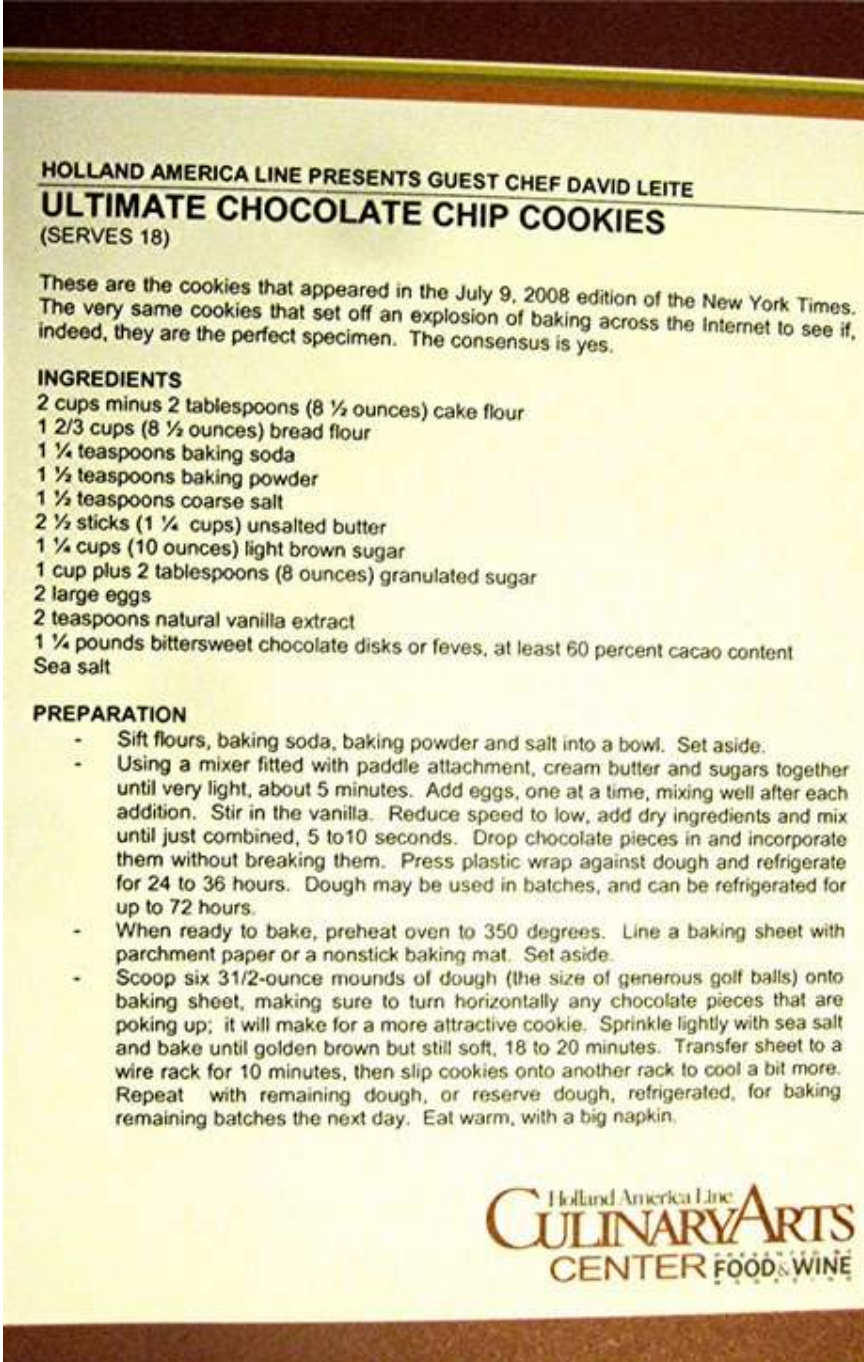
The first thing on Barbara's list this morning was to attend the "Good Morning Amsterdam" TV show put on by Cruise Director Gene and Hostess Adele at 9am. The guests this morning were Kim and Das from the Pinnacle Grill. Kim is the dining room manager and Das is the Pinnacle Chef. The interview covered their outside activities and responsibilities of their jobs. This series of Good Morning Amsterdam staff interviews have been interesting and useful in getting to know and feel at home on the Amsterdam.



At 11am there was a show in the Culinary Arts Center (Wajang Theater) where Guest Chef David Leite was interviewed by Hostess Adele. The main feature of the interview was a demonstration of how to make the ultimate chocolate chip cookie. The key step in making the cookies is that the dough must be “aged” in the refrigerator (not frozen) for about 36 hours before the cookies are baked but never longer than 72 hours. David’s recipe for the cookies was published in the New York Times on July 9, 2008 and set off an intensive discussion about the article across the Internet. The picture on the right shows David cautioning the audience to only bake the amount of cookies you plan to eat while they are still warm out of the oven.



Here is David's recipe for making the "ULTIMATE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES".



HOLLAND AMERICA LINE PRESENTS GUEST CHEF DAVID LEITE
ULTIMATE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES
(SERVES 18)

These are the cookies that appeared in the July 9, 2008 edition of the New York Times. The very same cookies that set off an explosion of baking across the Internet to see if, indeed, they are the perfect specimen. The consensus is yes.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups minus 2 tablespoons (8 ½ ounces) cake flour
- 1 2/3 cups (8 ½ ounces) bread flour
- 1 ¼ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 ½ teaspoons coarse salt
- 2 ½ sticks (1 ¼ cups) unsalted butter
- 1 ¼ cups (10 ounces) light brown sugar
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (8 ounces) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons natural vanilla extract
- 1 ¼ pounds bittersweet chocolate disks or feves, at least 60 percent cacao content
- Sea salt

PREPARATION

- Sift flours, baking soda, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Set aside.
- Using a mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter and sugars together until very light, about 5 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Stir in the vanilla. Reduce speed to low, add dry ingredients and mix until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Drop chocolate pieces in and incorporate them without breaking them. Press plastic wrap against dough and refrigerate for 24 to 36 hours. Dough may be used in batches, and can be refrigerated for up to 72 hours.
- When ready to bake, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or a nonstick baking mat. Set aside.
- Scoop six 3 1/2-ounce mounds of dough (the size of generous golf balls) onto baking sheet, making sure to turn horizontally any chocolate pieces that are poking up; it will make for a more attractive cookie. Sprinkle lightly with sea salt and bake until golden brown but still soft, 18 to 20 minutes. Transfer sheet to a wire rack for 10 minutes, then slip cookies onto another rack to cool a bit more. Repeat with remaining dough, or reserve dough, refrigerated, for baking remaining batches the next day. Eat warm, with a big napkin.

Holland America Line
CULINARY ARTS
CENTER FOOD & WINE

Early in the afternoon we were walking around the 5th Deck and saw the TV screen giving an indication of where the Amsterdam was located. The picture below shows that we are making good progress across “The Great Australian Bight” towards Melbourne. As part of this eastward travel we had to adjust our clocks today. At 2pm this afternoon the ship’s clocks were all advanced one hour to 3pm.



Our big event of the day was when we were treated to dinner in the Pinnacle Grill by Steve and Bobbie. The Pinnacle Grill is a gourmet restaurant on Deck 4 that features food a little fancier than in the main dining room and service that is seamlessly ever-present but not obtrusive. These extras come at a nominal fee of \$10 for lunch and \$25 per person for dinner. In the interview she gave in the “Good Morning Amsterdam” show this morning the Pinnacle manager, Kim, had emphasized the care that is given to the menu, food selection and training of the staff. It sure was obvious this evening as we enjoyed dinner with our friends, shown in this picture on the right.



An added bonus of the Pinnacle meal was when we discovered they had “Baked Alaska” on the dessert menu. This dessert has always been near and dear to Orlin’s heart ever since first having one in a Hong Kong restaurant back in his youthful U.S. Navy days. Although the others opted for alternative delicacies, Orlin went for the baked Alaska. There has long been a cruising tradition of having the stewards parade dishes of baked Alaska dessert around the main dining room on the last dinner of a cruise. In the “old” days it was very dramatic with the dining room darkened and each dish of baked Alaska flaming as the brandy burned away. In recent years the ceremony has deteriorated somewhat because the open flames can trigger fire safety devices. Now, instead of flaming brandy on the baked Alaska we have seen 4th of July type sparklers inserted into the dish and they give off their sparks during the parade around the room. It can be exciting but it’s just not as satisfying as the baked Alaska pyrotechnics of our early cruising days. Tonight we were in for a real treat as Anita poured Kirschwasser cherry brandy onto the baked Alaska, as shown on the right, and served it to Orlin still flaming.



After the wonderful meal in the Pinnacle we visited the casino for a moment that was brief because our Lady Luck seemed to have missed this boat. Then we walked around the promenade decks for a while to visit with friends before turning in for the night. The Amsterdam was riding easily through the sea so we slept well during the night.