Rosh Hashanah, one of the most important Jewish holidays, begins next Sunday evening and ends on Tuesday evening.

It is the Jewish New Year and a time for prayer and reflection. It is also a time for the familiar aromas of traditional recipes.

SWEET POTATO & CARROT TZIMMES

1 pound carrots

6 sweet potatoes

1/2 cup pitted prunes (optional)

1 cup orange juice

1/2 cup honey or brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

2 tablespoons margarine

1 (20-oz.) can pineapple chunks, drained

1 (11-oz.) can mandarin oranges, drained

Peel carrots and cut into 1-inch slices. Peel and slice sweet potatoes into 1/2-inch slices.

In a 3-quart saucepan, cook carrots and sweet potatoes in boiling, salted water to cover, until tender but firm. Drain carrots and sweet potatoes and place in 3-quart casserole with prunes. Combine gently.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Mix orange juice, honey, salt and cinnamon. Pour evenly over casserole. Dot top with margarine. Bake covered for 30 minutes. Uncover, stir gently, add pineapple chunks and mandarin oranges, and bake another 10 minutes.

Variation: Cook ingredients listed, in pot, using juice from pineapple and mandarin oranges in place of water. Serves 8.

JERUSALEM KUGEL

1-1⁄2 cups sugar

1⁄2 cup vegetable oil plus extra for greasing the pan

2 teaspoons salt

1⁄2 teaspoon black pepper

6 ounces fine noodles, like vermicelli

6 ounces wide noodles, like fettuccine

4 large eggs, well beaten.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place 1/2 cup sugar and 1/2 cup oil in a heavy 6-quart saucepan. Stir constantly over medium heat until caramelized, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Let harden and cool for 15 minutes.

Pour 5-1/2 cups water into pan with the sugar mixture and bring to boil.

Add salt, pepper and remaining sugar. When water boils, add noodles. Cook until water is almost evaporated.

Cool slightly and stir in eggs. Mix well and pour into a greased 10-inch-round baking pan.

Bake kugel for 1 hour. Run a knife around kugel, turn out onto a plate and serve. Serves 12.

HERB-ROASTED BEETS

1-1/2 pounds golden or red beets, trimmed and cut into 1-inch wedges

4 teaspoons olive oil

2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, such as marjoram, oregano or rosemary

1 teaspoon freshly grated lemon zest

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground pepper

1 tablespoon lemon juice, (optional)

Position rack in lower third of oven; preheat to 450°F.

Combine oil, herbs, lemon zest, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add beets; toss to coat with seasoning mixture. Spread beets evenly on a rimmed baking sheet.

Roast, stirring once or twice, until the beets are tender and browned, 20 to 25 minutes. Toss the roasted vegetables with lemon juice, if using. Serves 4.

MATZO BALL SOUP

3 large eggs

3 tablespoons rendered chicken fat or vegetable oil

1-1/2 teaspoons salt

3/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons matzo meal

10 cups chicken stock

3 medium carrots, sliced into 1/2-inch-thick rounds

2 medium parsnips, peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch-thick rounds

Fresh dill, for garnish

In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs and chicken fat or oil until combined. Whisk in 1/2 cup water and salt. Add matzo meal, and whisk until combined. Cover and refrigerate batter until firm, 2 to 4 hours.

Line a baking pan with parchment. Bring chicken stock to a boil in a large, wide saucepan and reduce heat to a simmer.

Slightly dampen your fingertips, and form 2 heaping tablespoons of batter into a 1-1/2-inch ball, being careful not to compress the mixture too much. Place ball on the prepared pan. Repeat process with remaining batter.

Using a large spoon, slide the matzo balls into the simmering stock. Once all the balls have been added, cover and cook for 10 minutes. Add carrots and parsnips, cover, and continue cooking for 20 to 25 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and the matzo balls are cooked through.

To test if the matzo balls are done, remove a ball from the water and slice in half. The color should be light throughout. If the center is darker, cook 5 to 10 minutes more.

To serve, fill the soup bowls evenly with soup and vegetables, allotting each person one or two matzo balls. Garnish with fresh dill and serve immediately. Yields 4 to 6 servings.

CLASSIC HONEY CAKE

3 eggs

1-1/3 cups honey

1-1/2 cups sugar

1 cup strong black coffee

2 teaspoons baking powder

3 tablespoons margarine, softened

1 teaspoon baking soda

4 cups flour

1 teaspoon cinnamon

 Preheat oven to 325°F. Grease and flour a 9-by-13-inch cake pan.

In a large mixer bowl, beat eggs and honey together. Add sugar and mix again. Mix coffee with baking powder, and then add with margarine to the egg mixture. Add baking soda, flour and cinnamon, and beat together well.

Pour into greased cake pan. Bake for 55 minutes to an hour. Yields 1 cake.