

Christmas Recipes

eCookbook



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Letter from the Editor

Dear Recipe4Living Member,

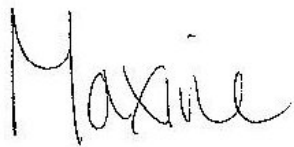
This Christmas recipe guide has every recipe you could ever want to celebrate the holidays with all the very best food and drink recipes. Whether you're hosting a large gathering with multiple courses or having a smaller, intimate Christmas dinner, these recipes will ensure that everyone in your family makes the most of the holidays!

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If you think we're missing a recipe or you want to share your own, please visit the site and submit your recipes now!

Please enjoy our Christmas eCookbook!

Happy Cooking,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maxine". The script is cursive and fluid, with a large initial 'M'.

Maxine

Editor

www.Recipe4Living.com

Blog: www.ChewOnThatBlog.com

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Appetizers

Holiday Cheese Ball

When I make this cheese ball, I make several and put them in the refrigerator and take them out one by one as I go to friends and family. Always a big hit.

Ingredients

3 Tbs. finely chopped pecans
1 package (8 oz.) Neufchatel cream cheese (room temperature)
3 green onions (finely chopped with tops, 1/3 C.)
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
¼ tsp. hot red pepper sauce
1/4 tsp. minced garlic
1 C. shredded sharp cheddar cheese (4 oz.)
1/4 C. minced parsley

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and spread out the pecans in a small pan. Bake, tossing once, for 8 minutes or until toasted. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, place the cream cheese, onions, mustard, red pepper sauce, and garlic. With an electric mixer at moderate speed, beat for 3 minutes or until well blended. Stir in the cheddar cheese. Wrap the mixture in plastic wrap, shape into a 4-inch ball, and chill for 15 minutes. On wax paper, toss the toasted pecans with the parsley. Unwrap the cheese ball and carefully roll it in the parsley mixture, coating it completely. Rewrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until time to serve. Place the ball on a serving platter and surround with an assortment of crackers.

Yield: 24 Servings. 1 Tbs. has: Calories 50, Saturated Fat 2g, Total Fat 4g, Protein 2g, Carbohydrate 1g, Fiber 0g, Sodium 72mg, Cholesterol 12mg

My Recipe Notes:

Holiday Ham and Onion Dip

This easy dip gets rave reviews and is very versatile.

Ingredients

2 C. (1 pint) sour cream
1 pkg. onion soup mix
2 4 1/4 oz. cans Deviled Ham Spread

Directions

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and mix well. Chill. Serve with chips or vegetables.

Yield: 4 cups

My Recipe Notes:

Pumpkin Cheese Spread

A festive Thanksgiving hors d'oeuvre or just a winter spread - either way you can't go wrong.

Ingredients

1 Tbs. butter
1/2 C. chopped pecans
12 oz. softened cream cheese
1/2 C. crumbled blue cheese
1 1/2 C. shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 C. canned pumpkin
2 cloves garlic, minced
2-4 Tbs. sweet or dry sherry

Directions

Line a 4-cup mold with plastic wrap. In small skillet, melt butter. Sauté pecans for 1 minute or until golden. In large bowl, beat cream cheese, cheddar cheese, blue cheese, pumpkin and garlic on medium speed until creamy. Beat in enough sherry to make desired spreading consistency. Spoon into mold. Cover and refrigerate at least 8 hours or until firm enough to hold shape. Unmold onto serving plate. Press pecans on top. Serve with crackers.

My Recipe Notes:

Bacon-Wrapped Chestnuts

Not exactly chestnuts roasting on an open fire... but it's a lot more tasty!

Ingredients

2 lb. thick cut bacon
2 8 oz. cans water chestnuts

Directions

Slice bacon in half; wrap one-piece bacon around one chestnut. Skewer with toothpick to hold in place. Broil in toaster or conventional oven, turning frequently, until the bacon is evenly cooked. Serve warm.

Yield: 24 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Cranberry Appetizer Meatballs

Impress your guests with these surprising meatballs with a cranberry and sauerkraut sauce.

Ingredients

Meatballs:

2 lbs. ground beef
1 (1 to 2 oz.) pkg. dry onion soup mix
1 C. seasoned breadcrumbs
1 egg

Sauce:

16 oz. catsup
16 oz. water
1 C. brown sugar
1 (16 oz.) can whole cranberry sauce
1 (16 oz.) can sauerkraut, rinsed/drained

Directions

Combine all meatball ingredients and form into cocktail-sized balls. Place in a large shallow roasting pan. For sauce, combine all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer 10 minutes. Pour over meatballs and bake at 350 for 1 hour. Keep warm in a covered ovenproof serving dish until serving. Serve with fancy toothpicks. These can be prepared a day or two ahead of your party and reheated/served in a crock pot.

My Recipe Notes:

Grand Cheese Stuffed Mushrooms

A delicious vegetarian meal and a tasty appetizer for anyone.

Ingredients

2 lbs. very large mushrooms, washed and stemmed

Butter

Fresh bread crumbs

Freshly grated Parmesan

Chopped fresh parsley

Stuffing mixture:

Stems from 2 lb. mushrooms

Butter

Chablis

2 cloves garlic, minced

Salt and pepper

1 lb. cream cheese, softened

1 tsp. garlic powder

1/2 C. chopped parsley

1 tsp. dill weed

1/2 C. butter

1/4 C. sour cream

Directions

Prepare stuffing mixture and set aside. For stuffing: Chop stems and sauté in butter with a splash of Chablis and minced garlic. Season to taste with salt and pepper. In mixing bowl combine cream cheese, garlic powder, chopped parsley, dill weed and 1/2 C. butter. Drain sautéed mushroom stems and add to cheese mixture with sour cream. Sauté mushroom caps in butter until soft. Allow to cool slightly. Fill caps with cheese stuffing mixture. Sprinkle with a topping of half bread crumbs and half grated Parmesan. Bake at 400 degrees until hot and golden brown. Garnish with fresh parsley.

My Recipe Notes:

Scallops Wrapped in Bacon

This is a fancy appetizer that is impressive to look at the mouth-watering to taste.

Ingredients

3 Tbs. soy sauce
1 Tbs. Mirin (Chinese Rice Wine)
1/4 tsp. hot Asian garlic chili sauce
1 tsp. grated fresh ginger
1 tsp. garlic finely chopped
1 pinch sugar
1 tsp. sesame oil
12 large sea scallops; halved
12 thin slices bacon
24 wooden toothpicks; soaked in water for 1 hour

Directions

In a bowl, combine the soy sauce, Mirin, chili sauce, ginger, garlic, sugar and oil. Add scallops and toss well. Set aside to marinate for 1/2 hour under refrigeration. Cook the bacon until lightly browned but only about half cooked. It must still be flexible enough to wrap around the scallops. Cut each piece in half. Preheat your oven to 450 degrees. Remove the scallops from the marinade and pat dry. Wrap each scallop in a piece of bacon and secure it with a toothpick. Place the wrapped scallops on a broiler pan and cook for about 6 minutes until bacon is crispy and the scallops are firm. Serve immediately.

Yield: 24 pieces

My Recipe Notes:

Fried Brie

This is a very elegant way to serve brie without tampering with the original flavor too much.

Ingredients

1 lb. brie cheese, cut into 2 wedges
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 C. fresh breadcrumbs
3 Tbs. olive oil
Toasted almonds
Crackers and French-style bread

Directions

Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Dip the cheese (including the rind) first into the egg and then into the breadcrumbs. Add to the skillet and lightly brown (about four minutes a side). Remove to a plate. Garnish with the almonds. Serve with the crackers and bread.

Yield: 6-8 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Beverages

Old-Fashioned Eggnog

It's not really Christmas until you break out the homemade eggnog.

Ingredients

6 eggs
1 C. sugar
1/2 tsp vanilla
1/4 tsp nutmeg
2 C. milk
2 C. heavy whipping cream
3/4 C. brandy
1/3 C. dark rum

Directions

Chill everything before starting, for best results. Beat eggs until frothy, then beat in sugar, vanilla and nutmeg. Slowly stir in brandy, rum, cream and milk. Chill again, and serve cold.

My Recipe Notes:

Exquisite Eggnog

What Christmas party would be complete without eggnog? Make this recipe with or without the alcohol depending on your guests.

Ingredients

4 eggs, separated (use only Grade AA)
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla extract
4 C. (1 quart) homogenized milk
1 C. bourbon or brandy, optional
Nutmeg

Directions

In large mixer bowl, beat egg yolks until thick and light. Gradually beat in sweetened condensed milk, salt, vanilla, and milk. In small bowl, beat egg whites to soft peaks; gently fold into sweetened condensed milk mixture. If desired, stir in bourbon or brandy. Chill. Pour into chilled punch bowl or serving cups. Garnish with nutmeg. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Yield: about 2 quarts

My Recipe Notes:

Irish Cream Liqueur

This makes a wonderful Christmas gift.

Ingredients

1 3/4 C. Irish whiskey
1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1 C. heavy cream
4 eggs
2 Tbs. chocolate syrup
2 tsp. instant coffee
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. almond extract

Directions

Combine all ingredients and mix in blender. Put into a fifth bottle. Keeps refrigerated up to 1 month. Stir or shake before serving and serve over ice, if desired.

My Recipe Notes:

Traditional Eggnog

This is a holiday favorite that should definitely be on your table this Christmas season.

Ingredients

6 eggs yolks
1/2 C. sugar
2 C. light or heavy cream
2 C. milk
1/8 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla
6 egg whites
Nutmeg

Directions

Beat egg yolks until light. Gradually add sugar and beat until thick. Beat in cream, milk, salt and vanilla. Refrigerate for several hours. Beat egg whites until they hold stiff peaks; fold into egg yolk mixture. Sprinkle with nutmeg.

Yield: 2 1/2 quarts

My Recipe Notes:

Reindeer Punch

This yummy strawberry/grenadine juice may to blame for turning Rudolph's nose red.

Ingredients

2 C. orange juice
2 C. lemon juice
2 C. grenadine syrup
3 qts. ginger ale
1 pt. of quartered strawberries or sliced fruit in season.

Directions

Mix all ingredients except ginger ale and fruit. Pour over block of ice to chill. Just before serving, add the ginger ale and fruit.

My Recipe Notes:

Apple Cider Punch

Depending on where you live and what the weather is like, you can serve this drink hot or cold – whether you get a white Christmas or not.

Ingredients

4 quarts apple cider
1 C. packed brown sugar
6 oz. frozen concentrated lemonade
6 oz. frozen concentrated orange juice
6 whole cloves
6 whole allspice
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
3 cinnamon sticks

Directions

Tie the whole spices in cheesecloth or a tea infuser. Add to the other ingredients in a large pan or crockpot and heat, stirring occasionally. Serve warm in punch cups or serve cold--adding ice to the punch bowl.

My Recipe Notes:

Non-Dairy Eggnog

This "eggnog" will please even those who say they don't like soymilk. It's not too thick and cloying -- a very refreshing drink any time of the year. Make the eggnog mix ahead of time, then blend with the ice cubes just before serving.

Ingredients

2 10 1/2 oz. pkg. reduced-fat, extra-firm, silken tofu
2 C. reduced-fat soymilk, or other plain, non-dairy "milk"
2/3 C. turbinado sugar, light brown sugar, or sucanat (or use 1/2 C. honey or 1 C. alternate liquid sweetener)
1/4 tsp. salt
1 C. cold water
1 C. rum or brandy or use apple juice with rum or brandy flavoring to taste
4 1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
20 ice cubes
Freshly grated nutmeg

Directions

Place the crumbled tofu and the soymilk in a blender with the sugar and salt. Blend until very smooth. Scrape this into a large bowl or pitcher, and whisk in the water, rum or brandy, and vanilla. Mix well, cover, and refrigerate until serving time. To serve, blend half of the mixture in the blender with 10 of the ice cubes until frothy. Repeat with the other half. Serve in glasses with nutmeg sprinkled on top.

Yield: 10 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Low-Fat Eggnog

Just because everyone else puts on weight during the holidays doesn't mean that you have to. Just as delicious with far less fat.

Ingredients

1 C. sugar
4 egg whites
1/3 C. water
1/4 tsp. cream of tarter
4 C. skim milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2-1 C. brandy or rum
Nutmeg

Directions

Combine sugar, egg whites, water and cream of tarter in a large non-aluminum metal bowl: whisk to blend. Set bowl over a pan of simmering water, taking care the bowl does not touch the water. Beat with an electric mixer on medium about 10 minutes, until mixture registers 140 degrees on a candy thermometer and is very thick and fluffy. Continue to beat 3 or more minutes. Remove from heat and beat until mixture has cooled slightly. Pour milk and vanilla into another large bowl. Add egg white mixture and brandy or rum; combine gently with a whisk. Serve well chilled and dusted with Nutmeg. Note: Eggnog will separate when standing, but is easily recombined by whisking.)

My Recipe Notes:

Holiday Mulled Spiced Cider

This festive beverage is perfect for warming up from the cold! Serve to guests after a dinner party to really impress them.

Ingredients

8 C. apple cider
4 bag Starbucks exotic mulling spices
Candied orange peels
Cinnamon sticks

Directions

Heat apple cider and allow to steep with mulling spices for 4 minutes. Use one bag of Starbucks exotic mulling spices for every 2 C. apple cider. Garnish with orange peel or a stick of cinnamon.

My Recipe Notes:

Gingerbread Latte

Like the gingerbread man himself jumped into your coffee cup!

Ingredients

6 C. milk
6 Tbs. Starbucks gingerbread syrup
4 Starbucks espresso pods (or fresh ground coffee very fine for an espresso machine
Pinch of crushed gingerbread cookie

Directions

Steam milk according to espresso machine instructions. Using the steaming wand on your espresso machine, steam the milk until the temperature reaches 145 degrees. Set Aside. Measure 1 1/2 Tbs. gingerbread syrup into each of 4 10 oz. mugs. Pull a shot of espresso and pour in serving mug. Fill mug with steamed milk. Top with 1/4 inch foam. Garnish with a sprinkle of crushed gingerbread cookie or with light dusting of cinnamon sugar.

My Recipe Notes:

Hot Buttered Rum

A classic holiday favorite, this after-dinner drink will really warm up your White Christmas.

Ingredients

2/3 C. packed dark brown sugar
1/2 C. (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1/4 C. honey
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
Pinch salt
3/4 C. spiced rum
2 C. boiling water
4 sticks cinnamon, for garnish

Directions

Using an electric mixer, beat the brown sugar, butter, honey, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and salt in a medium bowl until blended and smooth. Transfer the mixture to a 4 C. (or larger) measuring cup. Add the rum and then 2 C. of boiling water. Stir until the butter mixture dissolves. Divide the buttered rum among 4 mugs. Garnish with the cinnamon sticks and serve.

My Recipe Notes:

Peppermint Hot Chocolate

Made from scratch, this hot chocolate could be the best recipe every. You won't be disappointed.

Ingredients

1 1/2 C. heavy cream
1 1/2 C. milk
1/4 C. sugar
1/8 tsp. salt
6 oz. bittersweet chocolate, chopped
3 drops peppermint oil
Sweetened whipped cream, for garnish
Chocolate shavings, for garnish

Directions

In a saucepan, combine the cream, milk, sugar, and salt and heat over medium-low heat. When the cream mixture just begins to steam, add the chopped chocolate, and stir, until melted. Stir in the peppermint oil. Divide the hot chocolate among mugs and top with whipped cream and chocolate shavings.

My Recipe Notes:

Brunch

Gingerbread Pancakes

Try these cookie-like pancakes during the holiday season.

Ingredients

1 1/2 C. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 egg
1 1/4 C. milk
1/4 C. molasses
3 Tbs. vegetable oil

Directions

In a small bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, soda, salt, ginger and cinnamon. Set aside. In a large bowl, beat together the egg and milk, then stir in the molasses, and then the oil. Add the flour mixture until just combined. Pour a quarter C. of batter for each pancake on a preheated grill. Cook on the first side until the batter is full of bubbles on the surface. Flip the pancake and cook until the second side is lightly browned.

Makes 12 pancakes.

My Recipe Notes:

Banana-Gingerbread Muffins

This is an easy recipe to throw together and the gingerbread flavor gives it a festive taste.

Ingredients

1 14 1/2 oz. box gingerbread cake and cookie mix
2 medium ripe bananas, mashed
3/4 C. quick-cooking oats
3/4 C. water
2 eggs

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line muffin tin with paper baking cups. Mix all ingredients until well blended. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Immediately remove from pan.

Yield: 16 muffins

My Recipe Notes:

Gingerbread Biscotti

A favorite holiday flavor mixed with a classic Italian dessert makes this the perfect cookie for dipping into your eggnog or hot chocolate.

Ingredients

1 C. blanched almonds
3/4 C. granulated sugar
1/4 lb. butter
1/2 C. dark molasses
1/4 C. fresh, minced ginger
3 eggs
3 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 Tbs. baking powder
1 Tbs. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp. ground cloves

Directions

Place the almonds in a baking pan and roast at 350 degrees for 10-15 minutes until golden. Allow the nuts to cool then chop and set aside. In a large bowl of an electric mixer, beat sugar, butter, molasses, and ginger until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Using another bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and almonds. Add to wet mixture and stir to blend.

On two greased 12x15 inch baking sheets, using floured hands, pat the dough into 4 flat loaves, spacing them evenly on sheets; each loaf should be about 1/2 inch thick, 2 inches wide and the length of the baking sheet. Bake in a 350 degree oven until just browned at edges and springy to touch, about 25 minutes. Halfway through the baking turn the pans so they bake evenly. Allow biscotti to set on baking sheets until just cooled, then cut into long, 1/2-inch thick diagonal slices.

Arrange the slices close together on the baking sheets and bake again at 350 degrees until browned, 15-18 minutes. Transfer to racks to cool completely before dipping or storing.

My Recipe Notes:

Eggnog Chocolate Chip Coffee Cake

A creative use for this favorite holiday beverage, eggnog adds its signature flavor to this dessert.

Ingredients

Dough:

3 C. all-purpose flour
1/3 C. sugar
2 1/2 oz. pkg. or 4 1/2 tsp. Fleischmann's RapidRise Yeast
1 tsp. salt
3/4 C. eggnog
1/4 C. water
1/2 C. butter or margarine
2 large eggs
3/4 C. semisweet chocolate morsels

Chocolate Nut Topping:

1/2 C. butter
2/3 C. all-purpose flour
2/3 C. sugar
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 C. semisweet chocolate morsels
1 C. chopped pecans

Directions

In a large bowl, combine 1 C. flour, sugar, undissolved yeast, and salt. Heat eggnog, water and butter until very warm (120-130 degrees). Gradually add to flour mixture. Beat 2 minutes at medium speed of electric mixer, scraping bowl occasionally. Add eggs and 1 C. flour; beat 2 minutes at high speed. Stir in chocolate morsels and remaining flour to make a soft batter. Transfer batter from bowl to greased 10-inch tube pan. Cover; let rise in warm, draft-free place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

For Chocolate Nut Topping: In medium bowl, cut butter into flour with pastry blender, until crumbly. Stir in sugar, cinnamon, chocolate morsels and pecans. Uncover dough; sprinkle evenly with Chocolate Nut Topping. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until done. Cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan; cool completely on wire rack.

Yield: 1 coffee cake, 16 slices

My Recipe Notes:

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Best Brunch Casserole

With three kinds of breakfast meat, this hearty casserole will stick with you throughout the day.

Ingredients

5 to 8 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped into bite size pieces

1/2 lb. of bacon

2 ham steaks, or 3 or 4 small ham slices

8 breakfast sausage links

salt and pepper

Cajun seasoning or anything a bit spicy

1 C. shredded cheddar cheese

Chopped onion, optional

Directions

Fry up your potatoes and the bacon in separate skillets. After you finish with the bacon, slice the sausage into bite sized pieces and toss in the bacon grease to warm up, also slice the ham into bite sized pieces and add that to the skillet also. Season the still cooking potatoes with salt and pepper and Cajun seasonings, to your taste. Break the cooked bacon into small pieces and add to the potatoes. Also add the sausage and ham in after they are warmed up. Add in the onion if you choose. When potatoes are cooked thru, transfer to a large baking dish or pan, I use a cake pan. Cover with cheddar cheese and place in the oven at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until the cheese is fully melted.

Makes 6 servings.

My Recipe Notes:

Breakfast Pie

With eggs, hashbrowns, breakfast meat, and many other tasty ingredients, this breakfast pie has everything you would want in a morning meal.

Ingredients

1 (8 count) can refrigerated crescent rolls
8 oz. chopped cooked ham or sausage
1 C. frozen hash brown potatoes
1 C. shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1/2 C. chopped onion
1/4 C. chopped green bell pepper
1 4 oz. can sliced mushrooms, drained
5 eggs
1/4 C. milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
2 Tbs. grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Unroll the roll dough. Separate into 8 triangles. Pat the dough over the bottom and up the side of an ungreased 12-inch pizza pan, pressing the edges and perforations to seal. Sprinkle with the ham, hash brown potatoes, cheddar cheese, onion, green pepper and mushrooms. Whisk the eggs, milk, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Pour over the prepared layers. Sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

My Recipe Notes:

Main Course

Christmas Goose with Raisin Stuffing

Your family will love this special recipe for the holidays.

Ingredients

1 large yellow onion, chopped
1 large tart apple, chopped
1/4 + 1/3 separate C. chicken broth
6 C. toasted fresh bread crumbs
1/2 C. chopped raisins
1/4 C. slivered almonds; toasted
1/4 C. minced parsley
1 tsp. dried sage leaves
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1 7-8 lb. goose, giblets removed

Directions

In a small saucepan, combine the onion, apple, and 1/4 C. broth. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes or until onion and apple are tender. In a large mixing bowl, combine onion mixture, breadcrumbs, currants, almonds, parsley, sage, salt, and pepper. Toss 1/3 C. broth with breadcrumb mixture. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Rinse goose; drain, and pat dry. Prick the skin on the lower breast, legs, and around the wings with a skewer. Stuff goose. Then, place goose, breast-side-up, on a rack in large roasting pan. Insert a roasting thermometer in its thigh without touching bone. Spoon remaining stuffing into a lightly greased 1 1/2-qt. casserole; cover and refrigerate. Roast goose for 2-2 1/2 hours or until the thermometer registers 175 degrees, drain fat often. Bake the covered casserole of stuffing along side the goose during the last 30 minutes of roasting. Let the goose stand for 15-20 minutes. Carve the goose and discard the skin.

Yield: 6 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Cornish Hens

Serve this glazed cornish hen recipe for a special occasion, such as the Christmas Eve dinner.

Ingredients

4 cornish hens
1/2 C. melted butter

Glaze:

1/2 C. whole cranberry sauce
1/2 C. orange marmalade
1/2 C. mandarin orange segments
3 Tbs. lemon juice
1 Tbs. finely chopped onion

Directions

Rinse hens and pat dry. Coat inside and out with butter. Place hens on rack in shallow roasting pan. Roast in preheated 425 oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375 and roast 45 minutes longer, basting occasionally. During last 20 minutes, brush hens with glaze several times. Glaze again before serving.

My Recipe Notes:

Roast Beef

Simply roast beef. Use it for sandwiches or whatever your desire.

Ingredients

8 lb. standing rib roast
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Rub roast with salt and pepper. Pre-heat oven to 450 degrees. Place roast, rib side down, on a rack in a roasting pan. Place roast beef in the oven and cook at 450 degrees for 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 325 degrees and cook an additional hour and a half. Let stand and cool for 15 minutes before carving. Serve with horseradish.

My Recipe Notes:

Roast Goose with Chestnuts and Prunes

This is a very special recipe fit for a special occasion. A sweet citrus sauce bastes this goose with prunes, Cognac and chestnuts. Ideal for your holiday feast.

Ingredients

1 16 oz. pkg. pitted prunes
3 C. beef stock or canned beef broth
1 3/4 C. dry red wine
1 1/4 C. prune juice

1 12-13 lb. goose
1 orange, quartered
1 Tbs. salt
1 Tbs. ground pepper
1 large onion, cut into 8 pieces
4 bay leaves

6 Tbs. Cognac or other brandy
1 Tbs. butter, room temperature
1 Tbs. all purpose flour
1 7 2/5 oz. jar steamed or roasted chestnuts
Chopped fresh parsley

Directions

Combine prunes, stock, 1 1/2 C. wine and 1 C. prune juice in heavy medium saucepan. Simmer 10 minutes. Remove mixture from heat. Transfer 12 prunes to small bowl, using slotted spoon.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Pat goose dry. Pull out fat from cavity. Rub inside and out with cut side of orange. Combine salt and pepper and rub inside and outside goose. Place orange, onion, bay leaves and 12 drained prunes in goose cavity. Tie legs together. Place goose on rack in roasting pan. Pierce all over with small metal skewer or toothpick.

Roast goose 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees and roast 30 minutes longer. Remove fat from roasting pan. Combine remaining 1/4 C. wine and 1/4 C. prune juice and brush some over goose. Continue roasting goose until juices run clear when pierced in thickest part of thigh, basting goose with wine mixture and removing fat from pan occasionally, about 2 hours.

Transfer goose to platter and tent with foil. Let stand 20 minutes.

Strain prune poaching liquid, reserving prunes. Degrease roasting juices. Add 1/2 C. poaching liquid to roasting pan and bring to boil, scraping up any browned bits. Transfer to heavy medium saucepan. Add Cognac, remaining poaching liquid and degreased roasting juices. Boil until

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flavors are intense, about 15 minutes. Knead butter and flour together. Whisk into sauce in small bits and simmer until thick, about 8 minutes. Add poached prunes and chestnuts and heat through. Sprinkle with parsley.

Carve goose into thin slices. Spoon sauce, chestnuts and prunes over.

My Recipe Notes:

Bagged Orange-Glazed Ham

Cooking inside the bag helps trap juice and keep the ham moist.

Ingredients

5 lb. canned ham, rinsed
3 Tbs. orange marmalade
1 Tbs. Dijon mustard
1 large oven roasting bag

Directions

Place the ham inside cooking bag. Mix together marmalade and mustard. Spread over ham. Seal bag and poke 4 vent holes in the top. Place in bottom of crockpot, cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

My Recipe Notes:

Baked Honey Ham

This makes a spicy ham glaze but it is good, if you don't mind strongly spiced ham.

Ingredients

2 C. honey
2 C. brown sugar
1/3 C. cider vinegar
2 tsp. nutmeg
2 tsp. cinnamon
2 tsp. cloves
5-6 lb. bone-in ham, or 3-4 lb. boneless ham

Directions

Combine honey, brown sugar, vinegar, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Bake bone-in ham at 350 degrees for 1 hour to heat through, basting with honey sauce occasionally. If desired, bake another 10 minutes at 450 degrees to glaze the top.

To cook boneless ham, slice half way through at 1/4-inch intervals, then tie with string. Place in roasting pan. Heat honey sauce and pour over ham to marinate for 24 hours before baking. Then bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour or until heated through. If desired, bake another 10 minutes at 450 degrees to glaze the top.

Yield: 6-8 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Ultimate Holiday Pot Roast

This perfect pot roast is worthy of your holiday table. Seasoned with wine, berries, allspice and rosemary, it's aromatic and tender meat will have everyone asking for more.

Ingredients

Roast:

2 Tbs. canola oil
1 beef pot roast, about 6-8 lb. trimmed
Coarse sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

For braising:

1 bottle cabernet sauvignon or shiraz wine
2 onions, peeled and sliced
6 C. light poultry or vegetable stock
2 Tbs. whole black peppercorns
2 Tbs. whole juniper berries
1 Tbs. whole allspice
1 bunch fresh rosemary
3 Tbs. butter

Directions

Preheat oven to 500 degrees. Rub the pot roast with oil. Season generously with salt and pepper. Position in large, oven-proof skillet. Place on lower rack of oven, cooking until thoroughly browned on all services, about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Carefully remove from oven.

While meat roasts, prepare your cooking liquids. In large pot, add wine and onion, bring to boil over high heat cooking until reduced by half, about 10 minutes. Add the stock and bring to boil. Season generously with salt. Reduce heat to keep warm.

Add the peppercorns, juniper, allspice and a few sprigs of rosemary. When the browning stage is completed, cover roast with the hot stock. Bring to boil over high heat. Place a large sheet of aluminum foil, dull side up, over surface of the liquids, up the sides to the top of the edge of the skillet and seal by crimping. Place lid on the skillet and transfer to lower rack of oven.

Cook until tender, about 1 1/2-2 hours as tested by inserting a skewer without resistance. Remove from oven and allow to cool. Transfer about half of the cooking liquid through a fine sieve into a medium sauce pan. Bring to boil over medium-high heat, cooking until reduced to coat the back of a spoon, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in the butter.

To serve, position the glorious pot roast in center of a warmed serving platter. Garnish with the remaining fresh rosemary. Serve by slicing across the grain with a sharp knife. Spoon the sauce over.

Yield: 8 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Baked Bourbon-Glazed Ham

Whole cloves, bourbon and oranges add a spicy-sweet flavor to this ham dish.

Ingredients

1 12-14 lb. smoked ham, processed, precooked variety
3/4 C. bourbon whiskey
2 C. dark brown sugar
1 Tbs. dry mustard
1/4 C. whole cloves
2 navel oranges, peeled and sectioned

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Place ham fat side up on a rack set in a shallow roasting pan large enough to hold the ham comfortably. Bake in the middle of oven, without basting, for 2 hours, or until the meat can be easily pierced with a fork. For greater cooking certainty, insert a meat thermometer in fleshiest part of ham before baking it. It should register between 130-140 degrees when ham is done.

When ham is cool enough to handle comfortably, cut away rind with a large, sharp knife. Then score ham by cutting deeply through fat until you reach meat, making incisions 1/2" apart lengthwise and crosswise. Return ham to rack in the pan and raise temperature to 450 degrees. With a pastry brush, paint ham on all sides with 1/2 C. of whiskey.

Combine sugar and mustard and 1/4 C. of whiskey, and pat mixture firmly into scored fat. Stud the fat at intersections or in center of each diamond with a whole clove, and arrange orange sections as decoratively as you can on top of ham with toothpicks or small skewers to secure them. Baste lightly with drippings on bottom of pan and bake ham undisturbed in hot oven for 15-20 minutes, or until sugar has melted and formed a brilliant glaze.

Substitutions: 1/4-1/2 tsp. ground cloves may be used in place of whole cloves, added to brown sugar mixture. Also, pineapple slices and marashino cherries may be used in place of orange slices.

Yield: 12-14 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Sage and Apple Ham

Dried sage adds an herbal quality to this simple recipe.

Ingredients

1 ham
Dried sage
1 C. apple cider or juice
Apple jelly

Directions

Rub dried sage over the entire ham. Place in roasting pan; add cider or juice. Bake according to directions on ham; basting occasionally with juice. The last 20 minutes of cooking spread a thick coating of apple jelly over the surface of the ham.

My Recipe Notes:

Holiday Chicken Wreath

This adorable dish is just cute as a button. Perfect for the holiday season, it works as an appetizer or as a main dish.

Ingredients

2 pkg. Pillsbury Dinner Crescent Rolls
1 large can chicken
1 16 oz pkg. shredded cheddar cheese
1 can cream of chicken mushroom soup
1 pkg. frozen spinach, thawed and drained
1 small can water chestnuts
Scallions cut into small pieces
Salt and pepper to taste
Garlic salt (optional)

Directions

Mix all ingredients in a bowl except crescent rolls (no liquid needed in soup).

Open packages of Crescent Rolls and place one at a time on a circular cookie sheet or baking stone (stone works best). Arrange the rolls into a circle, with bottom edges just barely overlapping each other, will look like a giant starburst when finished with the top of the roll facing outward. Take one Tbs. of the mixture and place one spoonful on each roll at the bottom. Then take top of roll and tuck down covering the mixture crisscross as you go around the circle. When finished the Roll will look like a big wreath, which can be decorated with parsley or other condiments for a festive look. Bake in oven at 350 degrees for approximately 20-25 minutes or until golden brown.

Yield: 6-8 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Grilled Boneless Provencal-Style Leg of Lamb with Grilled Tomatoes

Wolfgang Puck

I like to grill larger items that call for the indirect-heat method of grilling. By that, I mean the technique by which you turn the grill into a sort of outdoor oven, arranging the fire bed, whether charcoal, wood or gas-fueled, so that the heat source is under only half of the cooking area - either arranged around the perimeter or under just one-half of the bed. That way, you can first quickly sear whatever you're cooking directly over the heat; and then, once its surface is browned, move it off to the side and close the grill, so that the heat circulates around it, cooking it all the way through to your liking without excessively charring the exterior. One of my favorite things to cook slowly this way on the grill is a butterflied leg of lamb, as I do in the recipe that follows.

Ingredients

1 butterflied boneless leg of lamb, 5 to 6 lb. (2.5 to 3 kg) total weight
1/2 C. (125 ml) extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for tomatoes
1/4 C. (60 ml) fresh lemon juice
1/4 C. (60 ml) balsamic vinegar
1/4 C. (60 ml) chopped scallions
1 Tbs. chopped garlic
1 Tbs. minced thyme leaves
1 Tbs. herbes de Provence
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
Kosher salt or coarse sea salt

Directions

Rinse the leg of lamb under cold running water. Pat it thoroughly dry with paper towels and place it in a roasting pan. In a mixing bowl, stir together the olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar, scallions, garlic, thyme, herbes de Provence and pepper. Pour this marinade over the lamb and turn the meat a few times to make sure it is thoroughly coated. Cover the pan and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or as long as overnight. In a charcoal or gas grill, prepare a fire for indirect-heat cooking, with the coals or flames under the perimeter or one side of the cooking grid.

While the fire heats, remove the meat from the refrigerator and the marinade, transferring it to a tray or platter. When the fire is hot, season the meat all over with salt. Place the meat directly over the heat and sear it well, about 15 minutes per side. Move the meat over the cooler part of the fire bed, cover the grill, and continue cooking until the lamb is done medium, 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on the size and thickness of the meat. Transfer the meat to a carving board, cover with aluminum foil, and let it rest for about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, rub the tomato halves generously with some olive oil, sprinkle them with salt and pepper, and grill them directly over the heat until tender and nicely browned, 3 to 4 minutes per

side. To serve, use a sharp knife to cut the meat across the grain and at a slight angle into slices about 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick. Accompany the carved lamb with the grilled tomato halves.

Yield: 6-8 servings

(Chef Wolfgang Puck's new TV series, "Wolfgang Puck's Cooking Class," airs Sundays and Wednesdays on the Food Network. Write Wolfgang Puck in care of Tribune Media Services Inc., 2225 Kenmore Ave., Suite 114, Buffalo, NY. 14207.)

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My Recipe Notes:

Eric Boardman's Christmas Shrimp Curry

Festive and spicy, this curry dish is a holiday favorite!

Ingredients

5 Tbs. butter
1/2 C. minced onion
6 Tbs. flour
2 1/2 tsp. curry powder
1 1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. sugar
1/2 tsp. powdered ginger
1 C. chicken broth
2 C. milk
4 C. cleaned, cooked shrimp (3 lb. raw)
1 tsp. lemon juice

Directions

Melt butter in a double boiler. Add onion. Simmer until tender. Stir in flour and other dry ingredients. Gradually stir in chicken broth and milk. Cook over boiling water, stirring until thickened. (Could be 10 minutes). Add shrimp and lemon juice. Heat to serving temperature. (Be sure not to heat too long or shrimp will over-cook and turn to rubber.)

Serve over fluffy rice with 2 or more accompaniments on top: chutney, shredded coconut, diced bananas, sliced avocado, pineapple chunks, bacon bits, salted almonds, Spanish peanuts, or currant jelly.

Yield: 6 generous servings

My Recipe Notes:

Roasted Free-Range Turkey with Pear-Chestnut Stuffing

Add an autumn flair to your Thanksgiving table with Pear-Chestnut stuffing that everyone will love!

Ingredients

12 Tbs. (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter
6 stalks celery, strings removed, cut into 1/4-inch dice
2 large onions, cut into 1/4-inch dice
1/4 C. fresh thyme leaves, finely chopped
1 tsp. finely chopped fresh sage leaves
1 Tbs. coarsely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/2 lb. roasted chestnuts, shelled and chopped
27 slices stale white bread, crusts removed and cut into 1/4-inch dice, lightly toasted
1 1/4 C. Homemade Turkey Stock, or low-sodium canned chicken broth, skimmed of fat
4 unripe Anjou pears, cored, peeled, and cut into 1/2-inch dice
1 Tbs. salt
1 12-14 lb. free-range turkey

Directions

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Make stuffing in a large skillet. Melt 4 Tbs. butter over medium heat. Add celery and onions; cook, stirring, until translucent, about 10 minutes. Stir in 2 Tbs. thyme, and sage, parsley, chestnuts, and bread. Add stock, 1/2 C. at a time, until bread becomes moist. Stir in pears; remove from heat. Place remaining 1 stick butter, remaining 2 Tbs. thyme, and 1 tsp. salt in food processor. Pulse until well combined; set aside.

Wash turkey, and pat dry. Place, breast side up, on a roasting rack set in a large roasting pan. Season turkey cavity with remaining 2 tsp. salt. Fill cavity loosely with stuffing. Tie legs together with kitchen string. Fold neck flap over; secure with skewers. Rub thyme-butter mixture all over turkey.

Roast for 2 1/2 hours, basting often. Continue baking 30-45 minutes more, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh reads 180 degrees. If turkey becomes too brown, tent it with aluminum foil. Let cool for 20-30 minutes before removing the stuffing and carving.

Note: The stuffing may also be baked separately in a buttered casserole at 375 degrees until heated throughout, 30-45 minutes.

Yield: 8-10 servings

My Recipe Notes:

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Sides and Stuffing

Yams with Cranberries and Apples

Try this sweet potato dish, sweetened with orange juice and maple syrup, at your holiday feast

Ingredients

4 large yams, peeled
1 green apple, peeled and diced
1 C. raw cranberries
1/2 C. raisins
2 Tbs. maple syrup
1/2 C. orange juice

Directions

Cut peeled yams into 1/2 inch chunks and spread in a large baking dish. Top with apples, cranberries and raisins. Sprinkle with maple syrup and orange juice. Cover and bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Yield: 4 servings.

My Recipe Notes:

Hot Mashed Stuffing

My aunt always makes her "special stuffing" and brings it to both our Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner. I absolutely LOVE this recipe and I cannot imagine another dinner without it. She is 92 and I was thrilled that she wanted me to keep the legacy alive in our family. I do not know the entire history of the recipe but I DO KNOW that it is a fantastic taste and everyone loves it!

Ingredients

2 C. hot mashed potatoes
1 egg, well-beaten
4 C. dry bread cubes
3 Tbs. butter or margarine
1/4 C. chopped parsley
1/2 C. chopped onion
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. poultry seasoning
1/4 tsp. lemon juice
Pepper to taste

Directions

Combine potatoes and egg. Sauté bread cubes in butter. Combine potato mixture with bread cubes. Stir in remaining ingredients; mix well. Makes 6 1/2 C. stuffing for a 6-lb. turkey.

My Recipe Notes:

Chestnut Soup

This seasonal soup makes a marvelous first course. For an added festive touch, serve the soup in hollowed out small "Boo" Pumpkins.

Ingredients

8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter
4 C. whole roasted Delmarvelous chestnuts (or about 1-1/2 lb.)
1 carrot, peeled and sliced
1 parsnip, peeled and sliced
1 C. celery
7 1/2 C. chicken stock or canned low-salt broth
1/2 C. Madeira wine
2 fresh parsley sprigs
Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Sour cream
Cayenne pepper

Directions

In a heavy saucepan, melt 4 Tbs. butter over medium heat. Add chestnuts and sauté until heated through, about 5 minutes. Set aside. Melt remaining 4 Tbs. butter in heavy large pot over medium heat. Add carrot, parsnip and celery root and sauté until soft, about 7 minutes. Add chicken stock and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low. Add the chestnuts, Madeira wine, parsley, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Continue to simmer another 15 minutes. Puree soup in batches in a food processor or blender. (Can be prepared 2 days ahead; cover and refrigerate). Transfer pureed soup to a large saucepan, and reheat, stirring frequently. When heated through, ladle into bowls. Top with dollop of sour cream and sprinkle with cayenne. Serve.

Yield: 6 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Braised Chestnuts

This recipe is a wonderful addition to the fall menu. This can be served as a side dish or as an elegant hors d'oeuvre with a glass of wine or a cocktail.

Ingredients

2 lbs. Delmarvelous chestnuts - whole shelled
1/2 C. onion, finely chopped (you can use any onion, Vidalia is a good choice)
1 C. port wine
thyme (I use fresh or fresh dried--not ground)
3 C. chicken stock
2 Tbs. oil
2 Tbs. butter
salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Heat a heavy saucepan, and add the oil, butter and chopped onions. When onions turn slightly brown, glaze with port wine. Add thyme, chestnuts, chicken stock and a little salt and pepper. Cover and cook until chestnuts are tender and the chestnuts have absorbed most of the liquid. This will take an hour or so. Serve as whole-braised chestnuts or pass through a ricer to make a wonderful chestnut puree.

Yield: 6 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Baked Cranberry Apples

Cranberries are a staple of the Canadian diet, we drink them in juice form, as a side dish for Turkey and in our muffins and desserts, enjoy this wonderful variation on the baked apple.

Ingredients

1/2 C. dried cranberries
1 Tbs. grated orange zest
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 Tbs. Calvados
1/4 C. chopped walnuts
4 large Golden Delicious apples
1/2 C. maple syrup
1 C. apple cider
1 C. fresh cranberries
2 Tbs. butter

Directions

In a small bowl, combine the dried cranberries, orange zest, cinnamon and Calvados, or liquor of your choice; allow to stand for 15 minutes, then stir in the walnuts. Meanwhile, using a melon baller, generously core apples almost to bottom, leaving base intact. cut off 1-inch wide strip of peel around core at top. Place the apples in 9-inch square baking dish. Stuff dried cranberry mixture into the top of the apples. Pour maple syrup over the top of the apples. Pour cider into the baking dish, and sprinkle fresh cranberries around apples. Spread softened butter over the apples and bake apples, uncovered, at 375-F for 40-45 minutes or until tender, basting every 15 minutes. Serve apples in bowls, using some of the cider sauce and cranberries as a garnish by pouring it over the apples.

My Recipe Notes:

Candied Sweet Potatoes

My mom used to make this. It is sweet and my family loves it. Very easy to make!

Ingredients

5-6 sweet potatoes or yams
1 lb. butter
brown sugar (as much as needed)

Directions

Cook potatoes in a large pot with skins on for several hours until almost done (slightly firm). Set potatoes in cold water and peel off skins. Slice sweet potatoes into semi-thick slices. In a large oven-proof pan (cake pan works well) place one layer of potato slices and sprinkle with brown sugar. Melt butter in microwave. Pour a little over potatoes and sugar. Continue layering until all potatoes are used. Top with brown sugar and butter. Bake 1 hour or until meal is ready to serve.

My Recipe Notes:

Holiday Sweet Potato Bake

Your family will gobble up this tried and true Thanksgiving bake.

Ingredients

4 C. mashed cooked sweet potatoes (about 3 large)
1/2 C. margarine, softened
3 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 Tbs. lemon juice
1 C. sugar
1/2 C. evaporated milk
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 C. chopped pecans
1/2 C. flaked coconut
2 C. miniature marshmallows

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 F. Combine sweet potatoes and margarine in a large bowl; mix until well blended. Add eggs, vanilla, lemon juice, sugar, evaporated milk, cinnamon and salt; mix well. Stir in pecans and coconut. Grease a large baking dish. Spoon sweet potato mixture into prepared baking dish. Bake sweet potato mixture for 20 minutes or until heated through. Arrange marshmallows over top. Bake for about 3 minutes or until marshmallows are puffed and golden brown. Serves 6.

My Recipe Notes:

Christmas Tree Bread

Try this adorable tree-shaped bread for your next Christmas dinner. It's a really cute presentation on the dinner table and tastes great too!

Ingredients

2/3 C. milk
1/2 C. granulated sugar
1 large egg, yolk and white separated
3/4 C. diced dried fruit mix
2 1/2 C. all-purpose flour
1 Tbs. baking powder
1 1/2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice or 3/4 tsp ground cinnamon and 3/4 tsp ground cloves
1/2 tsp. salt
1 stick cold, unsalted butter, cut to small pieces
Granulated sugar

Directions

Check to see that one rack is in bottom third of oven and heat oven to 425 degrees. Measure milk in a 2 C. measure, add sugar and egg yolk, stir to mix well. Stir in dried fruit. Let stand until ready to use. Put flour, baking powder, spice, and salt into a large bowl, stir to mix well. Add butter and cut in with pastry blender or rub in with fingers, until mixture looks like fine granules. Stir milk mixture and pour over flour mixture. Stir with a fork until a soft dough forms. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and give 10 kneads. (If very sticky, let stand 3 or 4 minutes or add a little more flour.)

Cut off about one-fourth of the dough. Put remaining dough on an ungreased cookie sheet at least 16 inches long. Using both rolling pin and fingers, pat and roll dough into a flat triangle about 12 inches tall and 9 inches wide across the bottom. With scissors, make about ten diagonal cuts down each long side of the triangle, cutting to within about 1 inch of the center. Shape a small piece of reserved dough into a trunk at bottom of tree and remaining dough into a "pot." Dough may now be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for a couple of hours or frozen for up to 2 weeks. Bake tree 10 minutes. Beat egg white with a fork until broken up. Brush over hot bread, sprinkle with sugar. Bake 5 to 8 minutes longer, until light brown. With two spatulas, carefully transfer tree to a wire rack. If possible, cool at least 2 hours before serving. Let guests break off small pieces.

Yield: 10-12 small servings

My Recipe Notes:

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Parmesan-Black Pepper Mashed Potatoes

Add some parmesan cheese and lots of black pepper to this recipe and you'll have a real flavorful side dish. This is a very easy and quick recipe to follow.

Ingredients

4 Russet potatoes
1 C. shredded parmesan cheese
Course grind black pepper
2 tsp. salt
4 Tbs. butter
1/2 C. milk or cream or sour cream

Directions

Peel potatoes and cut into 1-inch wide disks. (They'll look like little white hockey pucks.) Put them in a pan and cover with tap water. Make sure the water line is about 1/2-inch or more above the potatoes. Bring the potatoes to a boil. Cook them on a low boil for 15 to 20 minutes. You can tell when they are done by poking them with a sharp knife. If it slides through easily, you're ready to drain them. Drain the water out. Add the cheese and add pepper to taste (just so you see the black spots; about 2 tsp should do it), the salt, the butter, and the milk, cream or sour cream. Mash the potatoes with your mixer. Quit when you have them to the consistency you like.

Serves 4 to 6.

My Recipe Notes:

Rustic Garlic Mashed Potatoes

These slow-cooked mashed potatoes really absorb the flavor of butter and garlic.

Ingredients

2 lbs. baking potatoes with peel, 1/2-inch cubes
1/4 C. water
2 Tbs. butter, 1/8-inch pieces
1 1/4 tsp salt
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/4 tsp black pepper
1/2 to 1 C. milk

Directions

Place all ingredients, except milk, in crockpot; toss to combine. Cover and cook on LOW 7 hours or on HIGH 4 hours. Add milk to crockpot. Mash potatoes with potato masher or electric mixer until smooth.

My Recipe Notes:

Sweet Potato Crisp

This festive dish is perfect for your holiday table! Cinnamon, apples, sugar and cranberries will make this a family favorite in no time.

Ingredients

1 8 oz. pkg. Philadelphia Cream Cheese, softened
1 40 oz. can cut sweet potatoes, drained
3/4 C. firmly packed brown sugar, divided
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 C. chopped apples
2/3 C. chopped cranberries
1/2 C. flour
1/2 C. old-fashioned or quick-cooking oats, uncooked
1/3 C. cold butter or margarine
1/4 C. chopped Planters Pecans

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat cream cheese, sweet potatoes, 1/4 C. of the sugar and cinnamon with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Spoon into 1 1/2-quart casserole dish; top with apples and cranberries. Mix flour, oats and remaining 1/2 C. sugar in medium bowl; cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in pecans. Sprinkle over fruit mixture. Bake 35-40 minutes or until heated through.

My Recipe Notes:

Holiday Yams

This has been a favorite of my family and friends for over 55 years. I make it every Thanksgiving and Christmas. Makes a very attractive dish.

Ingredients

3 yams or sweet potatoes, baked
large marshmallows (enough for each ball)
chopped pecans or walnuts (for rolling)

Directions

Mash potatoes and roll into balls. Roll balls into chopped nuts. Place in baking dish (a round one is best for presentation). Place one marshmallow on top of each ball. Bake at 350 degrees until marshmallows are golden brown.

My Recipe Notes:

Green Bean Casserole

A classic recipe that's a breeze to put together.

Ingredients

2 cans green beans
1 can cream of mushroom soup
6 slices of Velveeta cheese
1 can French fried onions

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a 9 x 13-in. cake pan, mix the green beans, cream of mushroom soup, Velveeta cheese, and half the French fried onions. Put mixture in oven for 30 minutes or until cheese melts. Sprinkle remaining French-fried onions on top of casserole; continue baking for an additional 5 minutes or until French fried onions are browned. Serve hot.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Crunchy Green Bean Casserole

This vegetable casserole is flavored with crisp bacon and crunchy French friend onions.

Ingredients

1 can (10 3/4 ounce) cream of mushroom soup
4 strips of crisp-fried bacon, crumbled
1 small can Water Chestnuts, chopped
3/4 C. milk
2 packages (9 oz. each) frozen cut green beans, thawed, or 2 cans (14.5 oz. each) cut green beans, drained
1 1/3 C. French fried onions
ground black pepper

Directions

In a 1-1/2 qt. casserole mix soup, milk, and pepper. Stir in bacon, water chestnuts and green beans. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 30 minutes (45 minutes if using thawed green beans) or until heated through, stir. Top with French fried onions. Bake 5 minutes more or until the onions are golden.

My Recipe Notes:

Chestnut Stuffing

This stuffing is perfect for a holiday turkey, or simply prepared as a side item.

Ingredients

1-1/2 lb. Delmarvelous Chestnuts, peeled and chopped
1 lb. homestyle bread with crust removed, lightly toasted
1 lb. sausage cooked & crumbled
1/2-3/4 C. chicken or turkey stock
2 large onions, minced
2 Tbs. oil
1/4 stick unsalted butter
1 C. minced celery
3 Tbs. fresh sage
2 Tbs. fresh parsley

Directions

Put toasted bread crumbs in a large bowl. Sauté onion and celery in oil and butter until soft. Add sausage and fresh sage. Stir thoroughly and cook a few minutes to combine flavors. Add the cooked mixture to the bread crumbs. Stir in the Delmarvelous Chestnuts, parsley and enough stock to moisten. Place the stuffing in the turkey and cook according to the directions for the turkey. Stuffing can also be placed in a buttered baking dish and baked, covered in a 350 degree oven for about an hour. Remove the cover during the last 20 minutes of baking. Stuffing will fill a 12-15 lb. bird.

My Recipe Notes:

Festive Cranberry Stuffing

Two great tastes of Thanksgiving combined

Ingredients

1 can (14 oz.) chicken broth (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ C.)
Generous dash pepper
1 stalk celery, coarsely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ C. fresh or frozen cranberries
1 small onion, coarsely chopped
4 C. herb seasoned stuffing

Directions

Mix broth, pepper, celery, cranberries and onion in saucepan. Heat to a boil. Cover and cook over low heat 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add stuffing. Mix lightly. Serves 5.

My Recipe Notes:

Christmas Ham & Cheese Casserole

The delicious combination of ham and cheese baked up in a perfect casserole!

Ingredients

8 slices cubed bread (Pepperidge Farm)
3/4 lb. Swiss and cheddar cheeses
1 stick butter
10-12 oz. ham, cubed
8 eggs
1/2 tsp. onion salt
3 C. milk
1/2 tsp. dry mustard

Directions

Butter casserole dish. Layer bread cubes, butter, cheese and ham. Mix milk, onion salt, dry mustard and eggs together. Pour over mixture and let stand overnight.
Bake in 350 degree oven for 1 hour.

My Recipe Notes:

Desserts

Cookies

Gingerbread People

Great for kids to decorate and fun to cut out and bake as well.

Ingredients

2 Tbs. dark molasses
1 Tbs. water
1 large whole egg
3 1/4 C. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/2 C. lightly packed light brown sugar
1 1/2 Tbs. grated orange zest
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 Tbs. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. ground cloves
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 C. (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cold, cut into pieces

Directions

Using a whisk, vigorously stir the molasses, water and egg together in a small bowl or cup and set aside. Blend the flour, baking soda, salt, brown sugar, orange zest and all the spices. Distribute the butter over the flour mixture and blend until the dough resembles coarse meal. Pour the molasses mixture over the flour mixture, and blend until the dough comes together. Place the dough on a work surface and knead it for several seconds. Divide the dough into two slabs, wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for one to two hours.

When you're ready to make the cookies, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line several baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove one slab of dough from the refrigerator and place it between two new pieces of plastic wrap. Roll it out 1/8" thick. Remove the top piece of plastic wrap, and using a 5" cookie cutter, cut out as many "people" as you can. Using a spatula, place the cookies on a prepared baking sheet, leaving about 1" between them. Place currants for eyes and little cinnamon candies for buttons and the mouth, pressing them down slightly into the dough. Repeat with the second slab, then put the scraps together, roll and repeat the process. Place the cookies in the oven and bake until firm, 12-14 minutes. Cool completely on the baking sheet or on wire racks. While the cookies are cooling, prepare icing, then finish decorating. (Yield: about 15 5" gingerbread people)

My Recipe Notes:

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Holiday Sugar Cookies

Simple and easy! Make the dough ahead of time and pop them in the oven whenever.

Ingredients

1 C. butter or margarine
3/4 C. firmly packed light brown sugar
3/4 C. granulated sugar
2 eggs
2 Tbs. milk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
4 C. all purpose flour
2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt

Directions

Combine butter and sugars, beat until fluffy. Add eggs, milk and vanilla; beat well. Combine flour, baking powder and salt; stir into batter. Cover and chill 3-4 hours. Roll out about 1/3 of the dough to 1/8th thickness on lightly floured board. Cut into desired shapes. Bake at 375 degrees on ungreased cookie sheet for 8-10 minutes or until done. Cool, decorate. I use the decorator frosting in the tubes, spread it out and then dip into colored sugar sprinkles.

My Recipe Notes:

Spiced Honey Cookies

These thick, cake-like cookies are a German Christmas tradition.

Ingredients

2 Tbs. butter
2 1/4 C. plus 2 tbsp. flour
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. cloves, cinnamon
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 C. ground almonds
2 Tbs. chopped candied orange peel
2 Tbs. chopped candied lemon peel
2 eggs
1/2 C. sugar
1 C. honey
1/2 C. milk

Almond glaze:

1 C. icing sugar
1/2 tsp. almond essence
1 tsp. lemon juice
2 Tbs. cold water

Directions

Coat bottom and sides of jelly roll pan with soft butter. Sprinkle 2 Tbs. flour evenly over butter. Tip pan from side to side to coat surface evenly. Sift 2 1/4 C. flour, baking powder, cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg in bowl. Stir in almonds and peel. Beat eggs and sugar until mixture is thick. Beat in honey, milk and flour mixture a little at a time. When batter is smooth, spread in pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 12-15 minutes. Stir icing sugar, almond extract, lemon juice in bowl. Add water 1 tsp. at a time. Brush on cake while still warm. Cut cake into cookies 2 1/2" long and 1 1/2" wide and place on a pretty decorative plate.

My Recipe Notes:

Chocolate Bourbon Balls

These grown-up cookies are perfect for a Christmas party.

Ingredients

2 1/2 C. vanilla wafer crumbs (Nilla Wafers or similar cookie)
1/2 C. confectioners' sugar, sifted
1 C. pecan halves, finely ground in food processor
6 oz. semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, broken into pieces
1/2 C. bourbon (See note)
3 Tbs. light corn syrup
Granulated sugar

Directions

Place cookie crumbs, confectioners' sugar, and ground pecans in a large bowl and stir to combine. Melt the chocolate in microwave or in top of double boiler over simmering water. Stir in bourbon and corn syrup. Add chocolate mixture to dry mixture and stir well to combine. Let sit for 30 minutes. Place granulated sugar in a small bowl. Roll mixture between your palms into 1-inch balls, then roll in sugar to coat evenly. Place balls in airtight container, separating layers with aluminum foil or waxed paper, and allow flavors to develop by sitting at room temperature at least overnight. You may first place them in small fluted paper C., if desired.

Yield: 40 balls

Note: For different flavors, substitute either dark rum, Grand Marnier or Kahlua for the bourbon.

My Recipe Notes:

Holiday Cherry Squares

Cherries, coconut, peanuts and marshmallows melt together for this festive dish that's great for Christmas or Valentine's Day!

Ingredients

1 1/2 C. corn flake crumbs
1/2 C. margarine; softened
4 Tbs. sugar
1 1/3 C. flaked coconut
3/4 C. maraschino cherries, chopped
1 can Eagle Brand Condensed milk
1 C. pecans, chopped
2 C. miniature marshmallows

Directions

In 13x9x2 inch baking pan, combine cornflake crumbs, butter and sugar. Press down firmly with back of spoon. Sprinkle coconut, marshmallows, pecans and cherries evenly over crumb crust. Pour sweetened condensed milk over all evenly. Bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes. Cool completely before cutting into squares. Store in tin box between layers of wax paper.

My Recipe Notes:

Candy Cane Cookies

Perfect for holiday time, these cookies look gorgeous on a platter! Pick a time to do these cookies when you're feeling creative and have patience. It's fun and they are yummy! The end product is worth the trouble.

Ingredients

2 C. butter
1 1/2 C. sugar
4 single egg yolks
2 tsp. vanilla
4 1/2 C. unbleached flour
1/2 tsp. salt
3 Tbs. peppermint candy
1 red food coloring

Directions

Cream together butter and sugar. Add egg yolks and vanilla and mix well. Sift flour and salt together and beat into butter mixture until well mixed. When ready, divide dough in half. To one half, add 1/2 tsp. red food coloring. Using about a Tbs. of dough, roll a 4" strip of each color (no fatter than a pencil). Place the two colored rolls side-by-side and press lightly together. Gently twist like a rope and place on an ungreased cookie sheet 1" apart. Curve the top like a candy cane and bake in a pre-heated oven at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes; do not brown. Sprinkle with crushed peppermint candy before cool.

Yield: 20-30 medium cookies

Note: It is easier to take each Tbs. of cookie dough and roll in hands to form rough cylinder. Then put on flat surface vertically. Using fingers and palm in same direction, gently roll left and right until the size of a pencil.

My Recipe Notes:

Persimmon Christmas Cookies

Try this fruity twist on a classic spice cookie this holiday season.

Ingredients

1 C. shortening
2 C. sugar
2 whole eggs, beaten
2 tsp. baking soda
4 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. nutmeg
1/3 tsp. ground cloves
2 C. persimmon pulp
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. vanilla
4 C. flour, divided
2 C. chopped nuts
1 C. mixed candied fruit
1 C. shredded coconut

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease baking sheet. Cream shortening and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, blending thoroughly. Add baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, persimmon pulp, lemon juice and vanilla.

Mix 1 C. flour with nuts, candied fruit and coconut. Add remaining flour to persimmon mixture, blending thoroughly. Add nut mixture, blending thoroughly. Add nut mixture. Mix well. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto prepared sheet. Bake for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

Yield: 4-5 dozen

My Recipe Notes:

Other Sweets

Traditional Christmas Pudding with Brandy Sauce

A classic recipe that never goes out of style

Ingredients

8 oz. Currants
4 oz. Sultanas
4 oz. Raisins
4 oz. Chopped candied peel
1 oz. Skinned and chopped almonds
4 oz. Whole-wheat flour
1/2 tsp. Salt
1/2 tsp. Grated nutmeg
1/2 tsp. Ground ginger
1 1/2 tsp. Mixed spice
8 oz. Brown sugar
4 oz. Whole-wheat breadcrumbs
8 oz. Vegetable suet
1 Lemon, juice and rind
1 Tbs. Molasses
5 Tbs. Water and rum mixed

Directions

Grease a 2 pt. pudding basin and use a large saucepan to hold the basin. Wash currants, sultanas and raisins in warm water and pat dry. Put fruit in large bowl with candied peel and almonds. Sift flour, salt and spices into bowl, and add sugar, breadcrumbs and suet. Mix well. Stir in lemon juice, rind and molasses with enough of the water and rum mixture to make a soft mixture. Turn into the basin, cover with waxed paper and aluminum foil and put basin into pot. Pour enough water into the pot to reach halfway up the side of the basin. Bring to a boil, cover saucepan and let pudding steam gently for 4 hours, watching the water level and topping up with boiling water if necessary. When cooked, cool the pudding and store in a cool dry place for up to 2 months. Before serving, steam pudding again for 3 hours. Turn out onto a serving platter and flame with brandy if you desire. Yield: 8 servings.

My Recipe Notes:

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Yule Log

This festive dessert will become a family favorite in no time. Homemade whipped cream filling and creamy cocoa frosting make this a sweet treat perfect for the holiday season.

Ingredients

Powdered sugar
4 eggs, separated
3/4 C. sugar, divided
3/4 C. ground blanched almonds
1/3 C. all-purpose flour
1/3 C. Hershey's cocoa
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 C. water
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. almond extract

Whipped Cream Filling:

1 1/2 C. cold whipping cream
1/3 C. powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Creamy Cocoa Log Frosting:

3 1/2 C. powdered sugar
1/2 C. Hershey's Cocoa
1/2 C. (1 stick) butter or margarine, softened
2 Tbs. light corn syrup
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/3 C. milk

Directions

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Line 15 1/2x10 1/2x1-inch jelly-roll pan with foil; generously grease foil. Sift powdered sugar onto clean towel. Beat egg yolks in medium bowl 3 minutes on medium speed of mixer. Gradually add 1/2 C. sugar, beating another 2 minutes until thick and lemon-colored. Combine almonds, flour, cocoa, baking soda and salt; add alternately with water to egg yolk mixture, beating on low speed just until blended. Stir in vanilla and almond extracts.

Beat egg whites in large bowl until foamy. Gradually add 1/4 C. sugar, beating until stiff peaks form. Carefully fold chocolate mixture into beaten egg whites. Spread batter evenly into prepared pan. Bake 16-18 minutes or until top springs back when lightly touched. Cool in pan on wire rack 10 minutes; remove from pan onto prepared towel. Carefully remove foil. Cool completely.

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Cut into four equal rectangles approximately 3 1/2x10 inches. Chill layers while preparing filling and frosting. Place one cake layer on serving plate. Spread one-third (about 1 C.) Whipped Cream Filling evenly over cake layer; top with another cake layer. Repeat with remaining cake and filling, ending with cake layer. Refrigerate about 1 hour before frosting. Generously frost loaf with Creamy Cocoa Log Frosting. Swirl frosting with spatula or score with fork to resemble bark. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before serving. Garnish with shaved chocolate and holly, if desired. Cover; refrigerate leftover dessert.

To make whipped cream filling, combine whipping cream, powdered sugar and vanilla in large bowl. Beat until cream is stiff. (Do not over-beat.) Makes about 3 C. filling

To make creamy cocoa frosting, combine powdered sugar and cocoa. Beat butter, 1/2 C. cocoa mixture, corn syrup and vanilla in medium bowl until smooth. Add remaining cocoa mixture alternately with milk, beating until smooth and of spreading consistency. Makes 2-1/2 C. frosting

Yield: 10-12 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Candy Cane White Fudge

A festive fudge for the holidays and a great way to use up all those leftover candy canes!

Ingredients

12 oz. white chocolate, coarsely chopped
1 14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
1/4 C. coarsely chopped peppermint candies

Directions

Butter an 8-inch square baking pan; line bottom and sides with foil allowing foil to extend over sides of pan by about 1 inch. Butter foil. Over medium-high heat in top of double-boiler or heatproof bowl set over pot of hot water combine white chocolate and condensed milk. Cook, stirring frequently, until melted and smooth, 5 minutes. Pour mixture into pan; sprinkle candy over top. Using knife lightly swirl candy into chocolate mixture. Refrigerate until firm, about 6 hours or overnight. Cut into 1 inch squares, diamond shapes or rectangles. Store in refrigerator.

Yield: 64 pieces

My Recipe Notes:

Christmas Mocha Nut Butter Balls

These festive balls will be a hit at your next holiday party.

Ingredients

1 C. butter; softened
1/2 C. sugar
2 tsp. vanilla
2 tsp. instant coffee powder
1/4 C. cocoa
1 3/4 C. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
2 C. pecans; finely chopped

Directions

Cream butter, sugar, and vanilla until light. Add instant coffee, cocoa, flour, and salt. Mix well. Add pecans. Shape into 1" balls and place on ungreased sheets. Bake at 325 degrees for about 17-20 minutes. Roll in powdered sugar while warm. Store in tin box between layers of wax paper.

My Recipe Notes:

Jingle Balls

This recipe makes about 120 chocolate covered jingle balls. A batch this large is perfect to give as gifts to all your friends. If you want to make these just for yourself, cut this recipe in half or into thirds.

Ingredients

3 C. creamy peanut butter
1 C. powdered sugar
2 C. softened butter
4 tsp. vanilla
3 12 oz. pkg. chocolate chips
6 Tbs. parawax

Directions

Mix peanut butter, sugar, butter and vanilla together in a bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. Melt chocolate chips w/ parawax over low heat. Make peanut butter mixture into balls about the size of a quarter. (It's best to work with small amounts of the mixture, keeping the rest refrigerated until you're ready to form and dip. The mixture gets gooey and messy very quickly.) Using toothpicks or small forks, dip the balls into the chocolate. Set on wax paper and refrigerate.

My Recipe Notes:

Chocolate Kiss Trees

This is a festive activity to make with the kids and you can get as creative as you'd like.

Ingredients

1 6x3" Styrofoam cone
1 box round toothpicks
1 13 oz. bag of foil-wrapped chocolate kiss candies
Aluminum foil (optional)

Directions

If desired, wrap cone tightly in aluminum foil. Beginning at the bottom of the cone, cover cone with kisses. Insert one end of a toothpick into candy kiss, then push the other end into the cone. Overlap the kisses slightly for best effect. Continue covering the cone from bottom to top.

Tips: As you move toward the top of the cone, snap toothpicks in half before inserting them into the kiss. Shorter picks are easier to insert as the cone narrows. Use round toothpicks rather than flat ones. The pointed end of the round toothpick is easier to push into the chocolate kiss, and round toothpicks are stronger and easier to work with than the flat variety.

Get creative with color! Alternate stripes of silver and gold kiss candies for an elegant tree, or create a zigzag pattern to simulate bargello needlework. Decorate completed trees with ribbon bows or small ornaments.

Warning: Chocolate kiss trees are fun to make, but don't eat them afterward! Toothpicks may splinter and pose a hazard.

My Recipe Notes:

Chocolate Fruit Cake

Try this holiday favorite with a chocolate-twist.

Ingredients

3/4 C. packed light brown sugar
1/2 C. (1 stick) butter, softened
4 1 oz. squares unsweetened chocolate, melted
2 large eggs
1/3 C. milk
2 C. unsifted all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1 C. golden raisins
1 C. coarsely chopped macadamia nuts
1/2 C. coarsely chopped crystallized ginger
1/4 C. bourbon

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a 9" tube pan. Beat together brown sugar, butter, chocolate, eggs and milk in large bowl with electric mixer large bowl until fluffy. Add flour, baking powder and salt; beat until combined. Fold in raisins, macadamia nuts and crystallized ginger. Transfer mixture to greased tube pan. Bake 1 hour or until golden brown and surface springs back when gently pressed. Cool to room temperature on wire rack. Wrap in cheesecloth soaked in bourbon; rewrap tightly and refrigerate at least 1 week before cutting.

My Recipe Notes:

Swirled Pumpkin and Caramel Cheesecake

This is a fancy cheesecake that is definitely worthy of the Thanksgiving or Christmas table. You can make most of it ahead of time, so you won't be rushing to get everything on the table.

Ingredients

Crust:

- 1 1/2 C. ground gingersnap cookies
- 1 1/2 C. toasted pecans
- 1/4 C. firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/4 C. (1/2 stick) unsalted butter, melted

Filling:

- 4 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 2/3 C. sugar
- 1 1/2 C. canned solid pack pumpkin
- 9 Tbs. whipping cream
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground allspice
- 4 large eggs
- 4 Tbs. purchased caramel sauce
- 1 C. sour cream

Directions

To make crust, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Finely grind crushed cookies, pecans and sugar in processor. Add melted butter and blend until combined. Press crust mixture onto bottom and up sides of 9-inch-diameter springform pan with 2 3/4-inch-high sides.

To make filling, using electric mixer, beat cream cheese and sugar in large bowl until light. Transfer 3/4 C. mixture to small bowl; cover tightly and refrigerate to use for topping. Add pumpkin, 4 Tbs. whipping cream, ground cinnamon and ground allspice to mixture in large bowl and beat until well combined. Add eggs 1 at a time, beating just until combined. Pour filling into crust (filling will almost fill pan).

Bake until cheesecake puffs, top browns and center moves only slightly when pan is shaken, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Transfer cheesecake to rack and cool 10 minutes. Run small sharp knife around cake pan sides to loosen cheesecake. Cool. Cover tightly and refrigerate overnight. Bring remaining 3/4 C. cream cheese mixture to room temperature.

Add remaining 5 Tbs. whipping cream to cream cheese mixture and stir to combine. Press down firmly on edges of cheesecake to even thickness. Pour cream cheese mixture over cheesecake, spreading evenly. Spoon caramel sauce in lines over cream cheese mixture. Using tip of knife,

swirl caramel sauce into cream cheese mixture. Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.

Release pan sides from cheesecake. Spoon sour cream into pastry bag fitted with small star tip (do not stir before using). Pipe decorative border around cheesecake and serve.

Yield: 10 Servings

My Recipe Notes:

Fast 'N Fabulous Fruitcake

Don't show up to Christmas dinner empty handed. Spread your good cheer with this easy fruitcake.

Ingredients

2 1/2 C. flour
1 tsp. baking soda
2 eggs, slightly beaten
2 2/3 C. mincemeat
1 can sweetened condensed milk
2 C. mixed candied fruit
1 C. walnuts, coarsely chopped
Glazed cherries, optional

Directions

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Grease a 9 inch tube pan; line with waxed paper and grease again (or use generously greased and floured 10 inch bundt pan.) Sift together flour and baking soda; set aside. In large bowl, combine eggs, mincemeat, sweetened condensed milk, fruit, and nuts. Add dry ingredients; blend well. Pour into prepared pan. Bake 1 hour and 50 minutes or until toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool 15 minutes. Turn out of pan. Remove waxed paper. If desired, garnish with glazed cherries.

Tip: To store cake, cool thoroughly; wrap well in aluminum foil and refrigerate or freeze.

My Recipe Notes:

Christmas Cupcakes

Like mini chocolate brownie cheesecakes, these cupcakes are festive and fabulous. You won't be able to have just one!

Ingredients

2 3 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/2 C. sugar
1 large egg
1 C. milk chocolate morsels
1 18 1/2 oz. pkg. Swiss chocolate cake mix or devil's food cake mix
1 16 oz. container home style vanilla frosting
1 16 oz. container chocolate fudge frosting
Decorator sprinkles (optional)

Directions

Beat cream cheese at medium speed with an electric mixer until smooth; add sugar, beating well. Add egg, beating just until blended. Stir in chocolate morsels. Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Place baking cups in muffin pans. Spoon batter into cups, filling 2/3 full.

Spoon a scant Tbs. cream cheese mixture in center of each cupcake. Bake at 350 degrees for 19-21 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted off center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and cool completely on wire racks.

Frost cupcakes with desired flavor frosting. Or swirl frostings together with a knife or thin metal spatula, if desired. Decorate with sprinkles, if desired.

Yield: 2 1/2 dozen

My Recipe Notes:

Butterscotch Gingerbread Cookies

These cookies have the gingerbread taste, but are not best for cookie cutter gingerbread men. Still delicious, but perhaps not as exciting for the little ones.

Ingredients

3 C. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking soda
1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
3/4 tsp. ground cloves
1/2 tsp. salt
1 C. (2 sticks) butter or margarine, softened
1 1/2 C. packed brown sugar
1 large egg
1/3 C. mild molasses
1 2/3 C. Butterscotch Flavored Morsels

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and salt in small bowl. Beat butter, sugar, egg and molasses in large mixer bowl until creamy. Gradually beat in flour mixture until well blended. Stir in morsels. Drop by rounded Tbs. onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake for 9-11 minutes or until cookies are lightly browned. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

My Recipe Notes:

Santa's Favorite Cake

This is a red velvet cake with a peppermint twist, and a delicious peppermint cream cheese frosting.

Ingredients

1 18 1/4 oz. pkg. white cake mix
3 egg whites
1 1/3 C. buttermilk
2 Tbs. vegetable oil
1 9 oz. pkg. yellow cake mix
1/2 C. buttermilk
1 egg
1 1/2 Tbs. unsweetened cocoa powder
2 Tbs. red food coloring
1 tsp. cider vinegar
1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 C. margarine, softened
2 16 oz. pkg. confectioners' sugar
2 tsp. peppermint extract

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour three 9 inch round cake pans. In a large bowl, combine white cake mix, 3 egg whites, 1 1/3 C. buttermilk, and 2 Tbs. vegetable oil. Mix with an electric mixer for 2 minutes on high speed. In a separate bowl, combine yellow cake mix, 1/2 C. buttermilk, 1 egg, cocoa, red food coloring, and vinegar. Use an electric mixer to beat for 2 minutes on high speed.

Spoon white batter alternately with red batter into the prepared cake pans. Swirl batter gently with a knife to create a marbled effect. Bake in preheated oven for 22-25 minutes, or until a wooden pick inserted into the centers comes out clean. Let cool in pans for at least 10 minutes before turning out onto a wire rack to cool completely. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and margarine until smooth. Gradually blend in sugar until incorporated and smooth. Stir in peppermint extract. Spread peppermint cream cheese frosting between layers, and on top and sides of cake.

Yield: 12 servings

My Recipe Notes:

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Peppermint Brittle

A Christmastime treat! This holiday confection is gobbled up quickly by guests, and it is so easy to make. The cool crunch of peppermint with creamy white chocolate is a divine combination.

Ingredients

2 lb. white chocolate
30 small peppermint candy canes

Directions

Line a large jellyroll pan with heavy-duty foil. Place white chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat in microwave on medium setting for 5-6 minutes. Stir occasionally, until chocolate is melted and smooth. Place candy canes in a plastic bag, or between two pieces of waxed paper. Using a mallet or rolling pin, break the candy canes into chunks. Stir peppermint into melted white chocolate. Spread evenly in pan, and chill until set, about 1 hour. Break into pieces by slamming pan on counter.

Yield: 36 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Cranberry Nut Fudge

This festive fudge makes a great holiday gift idea.

Ingredients

1 package fresh cranberries (12 oz.)
1/2 C. light corn syrup
2 C. white chocolate chips
1/2 C. confectioners' sugar
1/4 C. evaporated milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 C. walnuts or pecans chopped

Directions

Line the bottom and sides of an 8-inch square pan with plastic wrap. Set aside. In a medium saucepan, bring the cranberries and corn syrup to a boil on high for 5 to 7 minutes. Stir occasionally until the liquid is reduced to about 3 Tbs. Remove from heat. Immediately add the chocolate chips and stir until they are completely melted. Add confectioners' sugar, evaporated milk, vanilla extract and nuts. Stir vigorously until the mixture is thick and glossy. Pour into the pan. Cover and chill until firm.

My Recipe Notes:

Sugar Plum Cake

This classic Christmas cake brings back childhood memories and helps start new family traditions.

Ingredients

Cake:

2 C. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
1 Tbs. baking powder
2 C. sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground cloves
3/4 C. vegetable oil
2 6 oz. jars strained plum or plum-apple baby food
3 large or extra-large eggs, beaten
1 C. chopped pecans

Glaze:

1 C. plus 2 tsp. confectioners' sugar
1 4 oz. jar strained plum-apple baby food
2 Tbs. milk

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 10-inch tube pan. In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, baking powder, sugar, cinnamon and cloves. Stir in the oil, baby food and eggs. Fold in pecans. Pour batter into prepared tube pan. Bake for 50-60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely. In a small bowl, combine glaze ingredients until smooth. Drizzle over top and sides of cooled cake.

Yield: about 16 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Mama's Christmas Cake

Crushed peppermint sticks bring that special touch of Christmas spirit.

Ingredients

1 box yellow cake mix
1 can crushed pineapple
1 jar maraschino cherries
1 large peppermint stick crushed
1 bag coconut

Directions

Make by directions on box and let cake cool. Poke holes in cake and pour some of the juice from pineapple and cherries over top. Use egg white icing, and top with coconut, cherries, peppermint, and pineapple. Keep refrigerated.

My Recipe Notes:

Easy Light Fruitcake

Fruitcake can get a bad wrap for its dense quality and weight, but try this lighter version and surprise everyone with the updated taste.

Ingredients

1 lb. candied cherries, halved
5 candied pineapple rings, finely chopped
6 C. golden raisins
1 1/2 C. candied mixed fruit peel
1 C. almonds
1 C. all-purpose flour
2 C. butter, softened
2 C. white sugar
6 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 C. orange juice
5 C. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
6 almonds, split

Directions

Preheat oven to 275 degrees. Line the bottom and sides of two greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pans, and 1 round 4 1/2 inch x 3 inch deep pan with brown paper. Grease the paper. In a large bowl, stir together cherries, pineapple, raisins, mixed peel, 1 C. pecans, and 1 C. flour. Mix until fruit is coated with flour.

In another large bowl, cream the butter or margarine and sugar together. Beat in eggs 1 at a time. Mix in orange juice and vanilla. Combine 5 C. flour, baking powder, and salt; stir into the creamed mixture. Stir in floured fruit and nuts. Mix. Spoon batter into prepared pans. Fill each pan 3/4 full. Arrange split almonds over tops. Bake for about 3 hours, until toothpick comes out clean. Cover with foil if top gets too dark while baking.

My Recipe Notes:

Snowballs

This recipe is a favorite treat for Dancer. As Santa delivers gifts around the world, he often visits places too warm for snow. Dancer often brings around this treat to remind us of home.

Ingredients

2 1/4 C. chocolate sandwich cookie crumbs
1 C. pecans, toasted, finely chopped
1 1/2 C. confectioners' sugar, sifted and divided
1/3 C. coconut flakes
1/4 C. light corn syrup
1/4 C. strawberry preserves

Directions

Combine cookie crumbs, pecans, 3/4 C. powdered sugar, and coconut in a bowl. Stir well. Add corn syrup and preserves; stir well. Shape mixture into balls, using 1 Tbs. of mixture for each. Roll balls in remaining 3/4 C. powdered sugar; roll again to coat well. Store in an airtight container up to 4 days.

Yield: 28 cookies

My Recipe Notes:

Jif Glitter Balls

These festive treats are an adorable to dessert to serve around Christmastime. Edible red and green glitter help them to really sparkle – and they taste great too!

Ingredients

1 1/2 C. Jif Peanut Butter
1/2 C. (1 stick) butter or margarine, softened
1 16 oz. box confectioners' sugar
1 12 oz. pkg. white chocolate chips
1 Tbs. Crisco Shortening
Edible glitter in festive colors (such as red and green)

Directions

In a large bowl, combine Jif Peanut Butter and butter until blended. Add confectioners' sugar, 1/2 C. at a time, stirring after each addition. Line a baking sheet with foil. Using your hands, shape peanut butter mixture into 1-inch balls. Place the balls on the prepared baking sheet. Chill until firm, about 1 hour. Place white chocolate and shortening in a large microwave-safe bowl.

Microwave, stirring at 30-second intervals, until chocolate is melted and smooth, about 2 minutes. Line the baking sheet with waxed paper. Using a spoon, dip each peanut butter ball into the melted chocolate, spooning it over the ball to coat, if necessary. Once covered, sprinkle each ball with edible glitter. Use multiple colors to create a festive gift. Transfer the snowballs to the baking sheet. Chill 30 minutes.

My Recipe Notes:

Chocolate Chestnut Mousse

Whether at Christmas time, with roasted chestnuts, or anytime, this mousse is delicious.

Ingredients

2 lb. of Delmarvelous Chestnuts, peeled
12 Tbs. of sugar, or to taste
4 Tbs. of cocoa
4 Tbs. of amaretto
16 oz. heavy whipping cream

Directions

Put chestnuts in water to cover and simmer until tender. Drain, and add sugar, cocoa and Amaretto. Process in a food processor until smooth and well combined. Beat heavy cream until stiff. Fold into chestnut puree. Divide among desert glasses. Chill until set-up. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream and chocolate shavings.

Yield: 10 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Southern Pecan Roll

Unbelievable dessert. You have to taste it to believe it!

Ingredients

1 box vanilla wafers
1 can condensed milk
3 C. pecans, chopped

Directions

Crush vanilla wafers into fine crumbs (save 1/2 C. crumbs to roll finished pecan roll in). Mix milk, crumbs and pecans together. Shape into rolls (any size and length you want) and roll in saved crumbs. Wrap in non-stick foil and put in freezer to set. Leave in freezer at least 1 hour before slicing. It can be eaten frozen or left out a few minutes for a softer consistency.

My Recipe Notes:

White Chocolate Holiday Bark

Pistachios and dried cranberries make this Christmas candy even more festive.

Ingredients

1 lb. finely chopped white chocolate
1 1/2 tsp. nut or plain oil
1/2 C. dried cranberries
1 1/4 C. shelled pistachio nuts, toasted and papery coating peeled

Directions

Tempering the chocolate for the bark requires a double boiler. If you don't have a double boiler, improvise one by using a saucepan and a stainless steel bowl. Nestle the bowl into the saucepan, allowing a few inches of space to remain between the bottom of the bowl and the bottom of the saucepan. Keep an extra bowl of a similar size on hand to transfer the chocolate for cooling. Rest the chocolate thermometer on a towel. Line a baking sheet with foil.

Pour a couple inches of water into the bottom half of the double boiler and heat over medium-low to just below a simmer. Put the chocolate in the top half of the double boiler and set over the hot water. Slowly melt the chocolate, stirring with a heat-resistant rubber spatula. As the chocolate melts, check the temperature periodically to make sure it stays between 82 and 86 degrees. If it starts to rise above this temperature, quickly transfer the chocolate to the bowl on reserve and stir briskly to reduce heat. Return bowl to double boiler to maintain heat between 82 and 86 degrees.

Remove bowl from over the hot water just before all the chocolate melts. Stir vigorously until the chocolate melts completely. Check temperature again. Stir in the oil until evenly blended. Chocolate is now tempered and ready to use. Keep within the 82-86 degree range, returning bowl briefly to the double boiler if necessary.

Quickly stir the fruit and nuts into the chocolate. Spread chocolate mixture out on the prepared baking sheet so it's about 1/2-inch thick and the fruit and nuts are coated. Set bark aside at room temperature to harden. Break into angled pieces. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.

Yield: About 1 1/2 lb.

From: Food Network Kitchens

My Recipe Notes:

**You can find this recipe and more than 20,000 others at www.Recipe4Living.com.
Browse our collection and submit your own favorites!**

Chocolate Chestnut Filling for Cream Puffs

This is a great recipe to include chestnuts into a holiday party.

Ingredients

1 1/3 C. peeled Delmarvelous chestnuts, about 20 (use microwave peeling method)
1 C. milk
1 C. granulated sugar
4 oz. semi-sweet chocolate
2 Tbs. rum or brandy
1 1/4 C. heavy cream
Confectioners' sugar for dusting or small amount of melted chocolate

Directions

In a small saucepan, combine the peeled chestnuts, milk, and granulated sugar. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Simmer for 30 minutes, or until the chestnuts are tender. While the chestnuts are simmering, melt the chocolate in a microwave for 30 seconds to 1 minute, or melt in a double boiler. Puree the cooked chestnuts, milk, chocolate, and rum or brandy in a food processor until smooth. Cool slightly.

Whip the cream to soft peaks and then gently fold it into the chestnut-chocolate mix. The mixture will soft so refrigerate for at least 1 hour. When ready to assemble, cut a third of the top off of the cream puffs, pipe or spoon the chocolate-chestnut mixture into the cream puffs. Replace the tops and dust with confectioners' sugar or drizzle with melted chocolate.

My Recipe Notes:

Chocolate Chestnut Mousse

Whether at Christmas time, with roasted chestnuts, or anytime, this mousse is delicious.

Ingredients

2 lb. of Delmarvelous Chestnuts, peeled
12 Tbs. of sugar, or to taste
4 Tbs. of cocoa
4 Tbs. of amaretto
16 oz. heavy whipping cream

Directions

Put chestnuts in water to cover and simmer until tender. Drain, and add sugar, cocoa and Amaretto. Process in a food processor until smooth and well combined. Beat heavy cream until stiff. Fold into chestnut puree. Divide among desert glasses. Chill until set-up. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream and chocolate shavings.

Yield: 10 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Pink Peppermint Pie

This is a festive pie for many different occasions. The peppermint extract and candies add a holiday flair, but the reddish color of the pie make it perfect for Valentine's Day too!

Ingredients

Graham Cracker Crust:

1 1/4 C. graham cracker crumbs, about 16 squares
2 tsp. sugar
1/4 C. melted butter

For filling:

24 large white marshmallows
1/2 C. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1/8 tsp. salt
6 drops peppermint extract
6 drops red food coloring
1 C. chilled whipping cream
2 Tbs. crushed peppermint candy

Directions

To make crust: Heat oven to 350 degrees. Mix crumbs, sugar and butter. Press mixture firmly against bottom and sides of an 8-inch pie plate. Bake for 10 minutes and cool.

To make filling: Heat marshmallows and milk in saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly, just until marshmallows have melted. Remove from heat and stir in vanilla, salt, peppermint extract and food coloring. Refrigerate, stirring occasionally, until mixture mounds slightly when dropped from a spoon. Beat whipping cream in chilled bowl until stiff. Stir marshmallow mixture until blended and fold into the whipped cream. Pour into crust, refrigerate for at least 12 hours. Just before serving, sprinkle with crushed candy.

Yield: 1 8-inch pie

My Recipe Notes:

Cranberry Pecan Pie with Cornmeal Crust

Instead of pumpkin or mince pie, offer this colorful dessert at Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, and top it off with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. The refreshingly tart filling, made by combining cranberries and fresh apples, dried apricots, pecans, and maple syrup, tastes like a crunchy cranberry relish. In fact, if the flour is omitted, the fruit and nut mixture can be served as a condiment with poultry or ham.

Ingredients

Pastry:

1 C. flour
2/3 C. yellow cornmeal
2 Tbs. sugar
3/4 tsp. salt
4 Tbs. chilled butter, cut into pieces
3 Tbs. chilled vegetable shortening, cut into pieces
4 to 5 Tbs. ice water

Filling and Glaze:

3 C. cranberries
2 medium Granny Smith or other tart green apples, unpeeled and finely chopped
3/4 C. dried apricots, chopped
3/4 C. chopped pecans
1/3 C. maple syrup
1/4 C. flour
1 egg yolk beaten with 1 Tbs. milk
1/3 C. orange marmalade

Directions

Make the pastry: In a large bowl, combine the flour, cornmeal, sugar, and salt. With a pastry blender or two knives, cut in the butter and shortening until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle 2 Tbs. of the ice water over the mixture and toss it with a fork. The dough should be just barely moistened, enough so it will hold together when it is formed into a ball. If necessary, add up to 3 Tbs. more water, 1 Tbs. at a time. Form the dough into a flat disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to a 12 inch circle. Fit the dough into a 9 inch glass pie plate. Trim the overhang to an even 1/2 inch and fold it under, crimp the dough to form a decorative border. Prick the pastry with a fork. Place the pie shell in the freezer to chill for at least 15 minutes before baking. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Make the filling: In a food processor, pulse the machine on and off, coarsely chop the cranberries. Transfer the cranberries to a large bowl, add the apples, apricots, pecans, maple syrup, and flour, and stir until well blended; set aside. Line the pie shell with foil and fill it with pie weights or dried beans. Brush the pie border with the egg yolk mixture and bake for 10 minutes. Remove the pie shell from the oven and reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees. Remove the foil and weights from the pie shell and spoon the filling into the shell, spreading it

evenly with a spatula. Return the pie to the oven and bake it for another 20 minutes, or until the crust is golden; set aside to cool slightly. In a small saucepan, warm the marmalade over low heat until it is pourable. Spoon the warmed marmalade over the cranberry filling.

Makes one 9 inch pie.

My Recipe Notes:

Date Pudding Cake with Sticky Toffee Sauce

Wolfgang Puck

Delicious dates are widely available, abundant and reasonably priced at the perfect moment for our celebrations. As holiday baking recipes go, this one is fairly easy. The results, however, will taste like you've spent hours in the kitchen preparing a special grand finale for the celebration.

Ingredients

DATE PUDDING CAKE:

9 oz. (280 g) chopped pitted dates
1 C. (250 ml) plus 2 Tbs. water
1/3 C. (80 ml) orange juice
6 Tbs. unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 C. (180 ml) tightly packed light brown sugar
1/2 C. (125 ml) granulated sugar
1 Tbs. grated orange zest
3 eggs, at room temperature
2 C. (500 ml) all-purpose flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/8 tsp. salt

STICKY TOFFEE SAUCE:

1 C. (250 ml) plus 2 Tbs. light brown sugar
1 1/2 C. (375 ml) heavy cream
1/3 C. (80 ml) milk
2 Tbs. corn syrup
1 1/2 Tbs. unsalted butter
1 vanilla bean, split and scraped

Directions

First, prepare the cake: Preheat the oven to 350 degrees (180 C). (Use a regular oven, not a convection oven.) Butter and flour a 9-inch (23-cm) round cake pan. In a 2-quart (2-l) saucepan, combine the dates, water and orange juice. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the dates have absorbed all the liquid and pull away from the side, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Meanwhile, in the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, or in a mixing bowl with a handheld electric mixer, cream together at medium speed the butter, sugars, and orange zest for 5 minutes. Scrape down the bowl. One at a time, beat in the eggs until smoothly incorporated, scraping down after each addition. Continue to mix at medium speed for 5 minutes. In another mixing bowl, sift together twice the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add the date

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mixture and dry ingredients to the butter mixture. Mix at low speed just until the dates and dry ingredients are completely incorporated.

Fill the cake pan with the batter, which should come about two thirds of the way up its side. Bake for 20 minutes, then rotate the pan a half turn and continue to bake until the cake gives slightly to the touch and a skewer inserted into its center comes out clean, 8 to 10 minutes more. As soon as the cake goes into the oven, prepare the sauce: In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar, cream, milk, corn syrup and butter. With a small, sharp knife, cut the vanilla bean lengthwise in half. With the knife tip, scrape the vanilla seeds from each half into the pan.

Over medium heat, cook the ingredients, stirring frequently, until they form a golden-brown sauce that registers 230 degrees (110 C) on a candy thermometer inserted in the pan, about 10 minutes. When the cake is done, transfer the pan to a serving plate. With a skewer, prick the top of the cake deeply several times all over its surface so the sauce will be able to seep inside. Pour half of the sauce over the cake and pour the rest into a sauceboat or serving bowl. Cut the cake into wedges, transferring them to individual serving plates. Serve warm, passing the remaining sauce alongside.

(Chef Wolfgang Puck's new TV series, "Wolfgang Puck's Cooking Class," airs Sundays and Wednesdays on the Food Network. Write Wolfgang Puck in care of Tribune Media Services Inc., 2225 Kenmore Ave., Suite 114, Buffalo, NY. 14207.)

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My Recipe Notes:

Vegetarian

Lentil and Nut Roast

Fantastically hearty and flavorful vegetarian dish.

Ingredients

Roast:

2/3 C. red lentils
1 C. hazelnuts
1 C. walnuts
1 large carrot
2 celery stalks
1 large onion
4 oz. mushrooms
4 Tbs. butter
2 tsp. mild curry powder
2 Tbs. tomato ketchup
2 Tbs. Worcestershire sauce
1 egg, beaten
2 tsp. salt
4 Tbs. fresh parsley, chopped
2/3 C. water

Vegetarian Gravy:

1 large red onion, sliced
3 turnips, sliced
3 celery stalks, sliced
4 oz. mushrooms, halved
2 whole garlic cloves
6 Tbs. sunflower oil
6 C. vegetable stock or water
3 Tbs. soy sauce
Good pinch of granulated sugar
Salt and ground black pepper

Directions

Roast: Soak the lentils for 1 hour in cold water then drain well. Grind the nuts in a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade until quite fine but not too smooth. Set the nuts aside. Chop the carrot, celery, onion, and mushrooms into small chunks, then pass them through a blender or food processor fitted with a steel blade until they are finely chopped. Fry the vegetables gently in the butter for 5 minutes, then stir in the curry powder and cook for a minute. Cool.

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Meanwhile, mix the soaked lentils with the nuts, vegetables, ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, egg, salt, parsley, and water. Grease and line the base and sides of a long 2 lb. loaf pan with waxed paper or a sheet of foil. Press the mixture firmly into the pan and smooth the surface. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Bake for about 1-1 1/4 hours until just firm, covering the top with a butter paper or piece of foil if it starts to burn. Allow the mixture to stand for about 15 minutes before you turn it out and peel off the paper. It will be fairly soft when cut as it is a moist loaf. Serve with vegetarian gravy.

Vegetarian Gravy: Cook the vegetables and garlic on a moderately high heat with the oil in a large saucepan, stirring occasionally until nicely browned but not singed. This should take about 15-20 minutes. Add the stock or water and soy sauce and bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for another 20 minutes. Purée the vegetables, adding a little of the stock, and return them to the pan by rubbing the pulp through a sieve with the back of a ladle or wooden spoon. Taste for seasoning and add the sugar. Freeze at least half of the gravy to use later and reheat the rest to serve with the lentil and nut roast.

Yield: 1 3/4 pints gravy

Tip: An excellent celebration dish which can be served with all the trimmings, including vegetarian gravy. Garnish it with fresh cranberries and French parsley for a really festive effect.

Yield: 6-8 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Stuffed Eggplant Halves

Cinnamon and raisins give this vegetarian dish a sweet spice.

Ingredients

3 Tbs. olive oil
2 medium onions, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 medium eggplants
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/3 C. golden raisins
Juice of two large lemons
6 Tbs. fresh mint, minced
6 Tbs. fresh parsley, minced
4-5 dashes Worcestershire sauce
1 C. diced or shredded mozzarella
Salt and ground pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large skillet heat olive oil over medium-low heat, add onions and garlic. Cook, covered, for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Soften, don't brown. Cut eggplants in half crosswise. Trim the ends slightly to allow them to stand up. Scoop out eggplant with a spoon, leaving a 1/4-inch layer of shell. Set aside empty skins. Chop the removed eggplant coarsely. Add eggplant, cinnamon, raisins and lemon juice to the skillet with onions. Cover, and cook for 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat for a minute or so, then fold in the mint, parsley, Worcestershire and cheese. Add the salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the mixture loosely into the eggplant shells, and arrange upright on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake in a 325-degree oven for 10 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Oh Soy Good Meatless Meatloaf

Soy product is the perfect meat-substitute to still make a loaf.

Ingredients

1 lb. Morningstar Farms(r) ground meatless, thawed
1/2 medium onion, chopped fine
1 1/2 C. bread crumbs, seasoned
3/4 C. Morningstar Farms(r) scrambled egg product, thawed
1/4 C. Wonderslim fat/egg substitute
2 tsp. garlic powder
2 tsp. seasoned salt
1 tsp. pepper
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
1 envelope Lipton onion soup

Directions

In a large mixing bowl, combine grated onion, breadcrumbs, scramblers, seasonings and soup mix. Blend well. Add ground meatless and blend well. Form into a loaf, place in a sprayed loaf pan. Bake 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Yield: 6 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Artichoke and Chick Pea Pilaf

Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are a great source of fat-free protein and certainly delicious in this vegetarian dish.

Ingredients

½ C. sun-dried tomatoes (dry packed)
1 C. boiling water
1 C. uncooked quinoa
9 oz package frozen no-salt added artichoke hearts, thawed
1 tsp olive oil
1 medium clove garlic, minced, or ½ tsp bottle minced garlic
1 tsp dried oregano, crumbled
½ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
15.5 oz can no-salt added chick-peas (garbanzo beans), drained
3 oz feta cheese, rinsed

Directions

Put tomatoes in a small bowl and add boiling water. Set aside for about 10 minutes to soften. Drain tomatoes, saving liquid in a 2-C. measuring C. Chop tomatoes and set aside. Add enough water to tomato liquid to equal 2 C.. Pour into a medium saucepan. Rinse quinoa under cold water; drain. Stir into saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until all liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, chop artichokes. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add oil and swirl to coat bottom. When oil is hot, add artichokes, garlic, oregano, and red pepper flakes. Cook for about 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in chick-peas and heat through, about 5 minutes. Combine tomatoes, quinoa, and chick-pea mixture. Spoon onto a large serving platter. Crumble feta on top.

My Recipe Notes:

Pumpkin and Goat Cheese Lasagna

Wolfgang Puck

The recipe makes a beautiful first impression when served as an appetizer. Just be sure to wait 10 minutes after you take it from the oven before cutting and serving it, to give the layers time to settle so you can dish them up more neatly. Larger squares of the lasagna make an excellent casual weekend supper, accompanied by a mixed green salad and some crusty bread. One taste, and you'll never look at a Jack-o'-lantern the same way again.

Ingredients

1 lb. dried lasagna noodles

GOAT CHEESE BECHAMEL SAUCE:

1/4 C. unsalted butter

1/4 C. all-purpose flour

3 C. whole milk

2 oz. fresh creamy goat cheese, freshly grated Parmesan cheese, or mascarpone

1/2 tsp. salt

Pinch freshly grated nutmeg

PUMPKIN AND GOAT CHEESE FILLING:

29-oz. can pumpkin puree

1 Tbs. chopped fresh thyme leaves

1 Tbs. chopped fresh sage leaves

1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

1/2 C. breadcrumbs

1/2 C. mascarpone

1/4 C. freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1/4 C. brown sugar

2 Tbs. fresh creamy goat cheese

1 Tbs. salt

1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

FOR LASAGNA ASSEMBLY:

1/2 C. breadcrumbs

1/2 C. grated Parmesan cheese

Directions

First, prepare the lasagna noodles: Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil and fill a large mixing bowl with ice and water. Boil the noodles until al dente, tender but still very chewy, about 8 minutes. Drain them and immediately transfer to the bowl of ice water. Lightly oil a

baking sheet with some olive oil. Drain the noodles from the ice water and arrange them in a single layer on the baking sheet, not overlapping. Set aside.

While the noodles are cooking, start the Goat Cheese Bechamel Sauce: In a large saucepan over low heat, melt the butter. Stirring continuously with a wire whisk, sprinkle in the flour; continue cooking, stirring constantly, for 5 minutes. Whisking briskly, slowly pour in the milk. Stir in the goat cheese, salt and pinch of nutmeg. Bring to a gentle simmer and continue cooking, stirring frequently, until thick and creamy, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

To make the Pumpkin and Goat Cheese Filling: In a large mixing bowl, combine the pumpkin puree, thyme, sage, nutmeg, 1/2 C. breadcrumbs, mascarpone, 1/4 C. Parmesan, brown sugar, goat cheese, salt and pepper. Stir with a wooden spoon until thoroughly combined. For the Lasagna Assembly: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly coat the inside of a 13-by-9-by-3-inch lasagna pan with nonstick cooking spray. Spread a third of the pumpkin mixture on the bottom of the pan. Cover with a layer of lasagna noodles, placed lengthwise side by side. Spread another third of the filling over the noodles, and top with 3/4 C. of Bechamel. Top with another layer of pasta, the remaining filling, and another 3/4 C. of Bechamel. Cover with a final layer of noodles and all the remaining Bechamel. Evenly sprinkle with the 1/2 C. each of breadcrumbs and Parmesan. Spray a sheet of aluminum foil with nonstick spray and place it sprayed side down over the lasagna pan, folding the edges over.

Bake until the lasagna is heated through and bubbling, about 40 minutes. Remove the foil and bake until the topping is golden brown, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven and let the lasagna settle for 10 minutes. With a sharp knife, cut it into rectangles or squares. Use a spatula to transfer them from the pan to serving plates.

Yield: 10 as an appetizer, 6 as a main course

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My Recipe Notes:

Barley Herb Casserole

With lots of fabulous protein and grains, this casserole dish is filling and flavorful.

Ingredients

1 tsp. vegetable oil
1 medium onion, chopped
1 C. diced pared butternut squash
3 3/4 oz. pearl barley
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 medium tomato, diced
4 oz. drained cooked chick-peas (garbanzo beans)
3 Tbs. minced, fresh, flat-leaf parsley
1 tsp. minced, fresh, rosemary leaves
2 C. low-sodium vegetable broth

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In large nonstick skillet, heat oil; add onion and squash. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, 6-7 minutes, until onion is lightly browned. Add barley, salt and 1/4 tsp. of the pepper; cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute, until mixture is thoroughly combined. Remove from heat; stir in tomato, chick-peas, parsley, rosemary and remaining 1/4 tsp. pepper. Transfer barley mixture to 1 1/2-qt. baking dish; add broth. Bake, covered, 1 hour; bake uncovered, 15 minutes, until liquid is absorbed and mixture is heated through. Divide evenly among 4 plates and serve.

My Recipe Notes:

Double Crust Bean Pie

Try these easy black bean and vegetable pie for a meat-less dinner choice.

Ingredients

1 Tbs. vegetable oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 small green bell pepper, chopped
1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained
1/3 C. salsa
1/4 C. chopped red bell pepper
3/4 tsp. chili powder
1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
2 (9 in.) unbaked 9 inch pie crusts
1 1/2 C. shredded Cheddar cheese

Directions

Preheat oven to 325F. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Sauté onion and green pepper until tender. Stir in beans, salsa, red bell pepper, chili powder, cayenne and black pepper. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes. Spoon half of the mixture into one of the pie crusts and cover with half of the cheese. Repeat with remaining beans and cheese. Top with remaining crust. Bake in preheated oven for 1 hour.

My Recipe Notes:

Roasted Red Bell Pepper Casserole

Sweet bell peppers are the life of this casserole.

Ingredients

13 eggs
1/3 C. flour
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
Dash salt
2/3 tsp. dry mustard
1 tsp. thyme
20 oz. cottage cheese
16 oz. shredded cheddar cheese (about 4 C.)
1 1/2 roasted red bell peppers
1 1/2 medium zucchini squash

Directions

In a large mixing bowl, lightly beat the eggs. Add the flour, baking powder, salt, mustard and thyme and blend well. Add the cheeses, chopped bell pepper and the zucchini and mix until just blended. Spray a large (11x17") or medium (9x9") baking dish with cooking oil and pour in the mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes and then reduce the heat to 350 degrees and bake for a further 20-30 minutes. Be careful not to overcook.

Yield: 16 servings

My Recipe Notes:

Zucchini "Crab" Cakes

Prepared in the same way as crab cakes, these zucchini cakes are actually vegetarian.

Ingredients

2 1/2 C. grated zucchini
1 egg, beaten
2 Tbs. butter or margarine, melted
1 C. seasoned bread crumbs
1/4 C. minced onions
1 tsp. Old Bay Seasoning (may add more)
1/4 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 C. vegetable oil (for frying)

Directions

In a large bowl, combine zucchini, egg, butter or margarine. Stir in seasoned bread crumbs, minced onion and seasonings. Mix well. Shape mixture into patties. Dredge in flour. In a medium skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot. Fry patties until golden brown on both sides.

My Recipe Notes:

Lentils Italiano

This flavorful dish could be served as a hearty side dish or a light meal.

Ingredients

3/4 C. chopped onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 Tbs. olive oil
2 C. vegetable broth or 1 14 oz. can beef or vegetable broth
3/4 C. dried lentils, washed
1 16 oz. can diced tomatoes with juice
1/4-1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp. salt
1 Tbs. chopped fresh basil, or 1 tsp. dried basil
1 Tbs. chopped fresh oregano or 1 tsp. dried oregano
1/4 tsp. freshly ground pepper

Directions

In a heavy saucepan, sauté the onion and garlic in the olive oil for 5 minutes, until the onion is tender. Add the broth and lentils. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the tomatoes with their liquid, 1/2 C. water, and the remaining ingredients; simmer over low heat, uncovered, for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add water if the mixture becomes too dry.

Yield: 6 servings

My Recipe Notes:

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