

**Tried & True Meals for the
Picky Palate**

Vol. 8, 2006



Forward:

In this version of Tried & True Meals, there are a few major changes. I believe this may be due to the maturing of my taste buds: it takes more to get their attention now.

Black pepper, hot peppers, Cajun spices and Tabasco sauce abound in these recipes. We love them. My husband douses Frank's Hot Sauce on anything not already containing some kind of peppery ingredient, so I'm figuring his taste-buds have worse attention deficit mine. Adjust these flavorings to your tastes. Or, leave them out altogether.

We also discovered sandwiches as a dinnertime meal. Simple, delicious: a complete meal ... I seek more of these.

I've also included a number basic recipes that are fall-backs when we'd like something "hot, brown, and plenty of it" AKA, comfort food. This is perhaps a sign of my laziness, or excessive organization, take your pick. I am sick of looking things up in various cook books, so I have put them all in here.

Enjoy!

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CHICKEN

NANNY'S SPICY CHICKEN, PEPPERS & PASTA

Nina's Nanny, Joni D'Grillo, created this wonderful recipe. I submitted it to Bon Appetit, hoping it would be published. Not yet. It's easy to make and also tastes great as a left over.

In a large (12") frying pan put:

1/4 C oil

1/2 C white wine

2 C chicken broth

1 C balsamic vinegar

1 tsp. onion salt

1 tsp. black pepper

2 whole, raw chicken breasts, skinned, cut into bite-sized pieces

½ C. Cora's Hot Cherry Peppers in Oil

Bring all of the above ingredients to a boil. Add 1/4 C to 1/2 C Cora's Hot Cherry Peppers with oil (or more, if your stomach is lined with metal) Turn down to simmer for 20 minutes. Cook 1 lb of angel hair pasta. Drain pasta. Put the pasta back in the cooking pot, and pour the chicken mixture over the pasta and let it sit, covered, for at least five minutes before serving.

LINGUINE WITH CHICKEN IN PEPPERCORN SAUCE

4 servings. This is truly yummy.

2 tsp butter

2 tsp minced shallot

2 tsp crushed black peppercorns

2/3 C. dry white wine

2 C. whipping cream

1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg

12 oz. linguini

3 C. cooked, shredded chicken

2 TBSP chopped chives

Freshly grated Romano or Parmesan cheese

Melt butter in heavy medium skillet over medium heat. Add shallot and peppercorns and sauté 20 seconds. Add wine and boil until almost

no liquid remains in skillet, about 4 minutes. Add cream and nutmeg and boil until reduced to sauce consistency, about 5 minutes. Season sauce with salt.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Transfer to bowl.

Add sauce and turkey to pasta and toss thoroughly. Sprinkle with chives. Serve, passing Parmesan separately.

LEMON CHICKEN

1 lemon
4 chicken breast, split
½ C. flour
1 ½ tsp salt
½ tsp paprika
4 TBSP oil
2 TBSP brown sugar
1 lemon, thinly sliced
1 C. chicken broth

Grate the peel from the lemon. Cut the lemon in half and squeeze the juice over the pieces of chicken, rubbing the juice into the chicken. Shake the chicken in paper bag with flour, salt and paprika. In a skillet, brown chicken slowly in the oil. Arrange in a casserole or baking pan. Sprinkle grated peel over the chicken, add the brown sugar and then cover with the thinly sliced lemon. Pour in the broth. Cover and bake in a 350° oven about 45 minutes. Serves 10.

CAJUN CHICKEN & RICE

This is easy to make, tastes great and makes you feel as though you are eating something really healthy for yourself.

1 lb. Skinless, boneless chicken breast, cut into ½ inch pieces
1 tsp. Cajun seasoning (adjust acc. to taste)
2 tsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 ½ C. chicken broth
1 C. uncooked converted rice

½ tsp salt
3 C. baby spinach leaves
5 tsp fresh chives

Combine chicken, Cajun seasoning, ¼ tsp salt in bowl, 1 tbsp olive oil in bowl. Heat remaining olive oil in medium, non-stick pan (with lid) over medium heat (do not put lid on at this point). Add the chicken mixture and sauté 4 minutes or until done. Remove from pan.

Add garlic to pan and sauté 1 minute. Add broth, rice, and salt; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes. Return chicken and spinach to pan, cover and cook 3 minutes until rice is done. Stir in chives. Serve.

SKEWERED CHICKEN WITH LEMON BUTTER SAUCE

1/2 cup olive oil
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/8 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
6 skinless boneless chicken breast halves, cut into 1-inch pieces

3/4 cup dry white breadcrumbs
3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 2 1/2 ounces)
12 8-inch bamboo skewers, soaked in water 30 minutes

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Mix first 6 ingredients in large bowl. Add chicken; toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour.

Preheat broiler. Combine breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese in another large bowl. Remove chicken from marinade; discard marinade. Add chicken to breadcrumb mixture; toss to coat. Arrange chicken on skewers.

Broil chicken until cooked through, turning frequently, about 8 minutes. Transfer to platter.

Meanwhile, melt butter in heavy small saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat and mix in lemon juice. Drizzle butter over chicken. Serves 6.

GREEK CHICKEN & PASTA SALAD

Dressing:

2 TBSP lemon juice
2 TBSP red wine vinegar
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
2 TBSP finely chopped fresh dill
½ tsp. Black pepper
½ tsp salt
¾ C olive oil

Salad:

10 oz. Twist noodles
3 C bite sized cooked chicken
1 C (4 oz) crumbled feta cheese
½ seedless cucumber
¼ C. scallions

Cook noodles and run under cold water, drain. Mix all dressing ingredients with whisk, adding oil last. Add to salad ingredients and pasta. Garnish if desired with halved cherry tomatoes, black olives and dill sprigs. Serve.

WALNUT & WILD RICE CHICKEN SALAD

1 cup white and wild rice blend
1/2 cup sliced green onion
¼ tsp grated lemon peel
1 ½ TBSP lemon juice
2/3 cup plain yogurt
3 TBSP olive oil
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
2 cups shredded cooked chicken
1 cup chopped, lightly toasted walnuts

Cook rice according to package directions. Cool. In a large bowl, combine yogurt, green onion, olive oil, lemon peel, salt, lemon juice, and pepper. Stir in rice, chicken and walnuts. Refrigerate until serving. Makes 6 servings.

PITA CHICKEN SALAD

This makes for an impressive luncheon meal, or a light make-ahead dinner.

3 cooked, boneless chicken breasts, cubed
2 C. mozzarella, shredded
2 oz. Pimento, chopped
½ C. sliced pitted black olives
½ C. mayonnaise
¼ C. slivered almonds
¼ C. chopped celery
2 TBSP red wine vinegar
freshly ground pepper
6 rehydrated sun-dried tomatoes, chopped

Mix all ingredients well. Chill and serve on a bed of fresh greens in a pita.

CHICKEN SALAD WITH ROSEMARY, ALMONDS & GREEN ONIONS

For an elegant luncheon or dinner-party presentation, spoon each serving of this main-course salad into individual bowl-size radicchio leaves. I really liked this and it had a great taste, but Fred said that it left him feeling hungry, as though it were a dainty female dish.

6 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary or 1 1/2 teaspoons dried, crumbled
4 skinless boneless chicken breast halves
¾ cup sliced almonds (about 3 ounces), toasted
½ cup thinly sliced celery
3 large green onions, thinly sliced

Whisk oil, vinegar, and rosemary in small bowl to blend; season dressing with salt and pepper. Place chicken in shallow dish. Add 1/4 cup dressing; turn chicken to coat. Let stand 15 minutes.

Heat large skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken, still coated with dressing, to skillet. Sauté until cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer to work surface. Cool chicken 5 minutes; cut into 1/2-inch pieces.

Combine chicken, almonds, celery, and green onions in large bowl. Add remaining dressing and toss to blend. Season salad with salt and pepper. Makes 4 servings.

CASHEW CHICKEN KABOBS

This is definitely delicious and a big hit with my children. I made this one up myself.

2 lbs. chicken breasts, cubed
1 ½ C. Cashews
4 tsp. olive oil
½ tsp cayenne pepper
½ tsp paprika
½ tsp black pepper
1 tsp light brown sugar
6 C. mixed greens
Red Wine Vinaigrette

Grind ½ cup cashews in a coffee grinder until they are the size of small crumbs. Mix with seasonings. Add oil to make into a paste. Rub paste on cubed chicken and marinate 1-2 hours.

Thread chicken onto skewers and grill over medium-hot heat until just cooked through.

Mix remaining 1 C. cashews with ½ tsp cayenne pepper, and brown sugar. Melt 2 tsp butter in medium skillet. Cook cashews, turning every minute or two, until brown.

Divide mixed greens between 4 plates. Sprinkle cashews over salad greens. Place cooked chicken on greens. Pass salad dressing. 4 servings.

ALTERNATE SERVING METHOD

Preheat a grill to medium, and preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Make the spice rub in a bowl. With a small, sharp knife, score 8 drumsticks twice on each side, 1/2-inch deep. Place the chicken in a large bowl. Add the spice rub and toss to coat evenly.

Grill until marked, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to a roasting pan or baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. Roast in the oven until browned and cooked through, and the juices run clear when pierced with a fork, about 35 minutes. Remove from the oven and transfer to a plate. Cover to keep warm.

GRILLED DIXIE CHICKEN WITH CAYENNE SPICE RUB

This is absolutely fantastic. Even my kids go nuts over this meal. My Dad loves it too.

2 tablespoons salt
1 tablespoon coarsely ground black pepper
1 tablespoon (packed) golden brown sugar
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 1/2 teaspoons onion powder
1 teaspoon lemon-pepper seasoning with garlic and onion
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
2 4-pound chickens, quartered, rinsed, patted dry
1 sourdough baguette, cut on diagonal into 3/4-inch-thick slices

Combine first 9 ingredients in small bowl; whisk spice rub to blend well. Transfer 1 tablespoon spice rub to medium bowl; add butter and mix well. (Rub and seasoned butter can be made 2 days ahead. Cover separately. Chill butter. Bring butter to room temperature before using.) Sprinkle spice rub over both sides of chicken pieces. Arrange chicken pieces on waxed-paper-lined baking sheets. Cover chicken with more

waxed paper and let stand at room temperature at least 1 hour and up to 2 hours.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Reserve 4 tablespoons seasoned butter. Spread remaining seasoned butter on 1 side of baguette slices. Place bread slices on platter and cover. Place chicken on grill, skin side up. Grill 20 minutes. Turn chicken over. Grill until skin is deep golden brown, about 15 minutes. Turn chicken again and grill, skin side up, until cooked through (no red shows when chicken is cut at thigh bone), about 5 minutes longer. Transfer chicken to platter. Brush chicken with reserved 4 tablespoons seasoned butter.

Grill bread until just golden, about 2 minutes per side. Arrange toasts around chicken and serve. Makes 8 servings.

CHICKEN WITH SHERRY VINEGAR SAUCE

We love this meal. My son loves the couscous. Insert this one from New Way to Cook, p. 338 and serve over plain couscous.

SPICY PENNE & HOT PEPPER CHICKEN SALAD

12 oz. penne
8 TBSP olive oil
1 lb. chicken breast
salt and pepper
3 TBSP red wine vinegar
3 TBSP balsamic vinegar
¼ cherry peppers in oil, chopped
½ red onion, peeled and chopped
1 tsp basil

Cook penne, drain, cool slightly with cold water rinse and toss immediately with 1-2 TBSP olive oil. You can cover and cool completely in the refrigerator, 1-24 hours, or you can serve it at room temperature immediately.

In medium frying pan, over medium heat, heat 1 TBSP of the olive oil. Add the chicken and cook until golden on one side, about 4 minutes. Turn over the chicken, season with salt and pepper to taste and continue to cook until opaque throughout when pierced with a knife, 6-

8 minutes longer. Place on cutting surface and cut the chicken on the diagonal into thin strips. Set aside to cool.

In separate frying pan, cook onions in 1 tsp. olive oil until soft and beginning to brown.

In a large bowl, whisk together the remaining 5 TBSP olive oil, red wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar and basil. Add the penne, chicken, cherry peppers and red onion. Toss to mix. Serve at room temperature.

ITALIAN CHICKEN SALAD

This one I came up with for my children. This is simple and yummy. Serves 4.

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
2 eggs
1 ½ C. seasoned breadcrumbs
¾ C. finely grated Romano cheese
Olive oil

Lettuce, torn in bite-sized pieces
Black olives, halved
Tomatoes, sliced
Mushrooms, sliced
Celery, chopped
All kinds of salad dressings

Mix the breadcrumbs and cheese together in a sealable plastic bag and set aside. Beat the eggs in a large, shallow dish and set aside. Slice the chicken into thin strips, about 4" long, and moisten in the bowl with the eggs. Put olive oil in a 12" frying pan to cover the surface about ¼" deep and turn heat on medium. Shake moistened chicken strips in breadcrumb mixture and then place in heated oil. Cook until lightly browned, about 3 minutes per side. Cook in batches. Serve over a tossed salad with a selection of everyone's favorite salad dressings.

You can also use this same egg and breadcrumb mixture on skinless chicken legs. After coating them, bake the legs at 375 for 60 minutes. My kids like the legs done that way too.

CHICKEN AU GRAUTIN WITH BROCCOLI

My friend Dawn Greenfield loved this simple meal. It was one of the first (only?) things I taught her to cook.

¼ C. butter, melted
¼ C. flour
1 C. boiling chicken broth (made from bouillon)
1 C. milk
Parmesan or Romano cheese
1 head of Broccoli, cut into spears
4 chicken breast halves, cooked and torn into bite-sized pieces

Melt the butter in a medium sized pan, and add the flour. Stir until smooth and bubbly. Add the chicken broth and milk to this flour mixture and stir until thick and bubbly.

Arrange broccoli and chicken on bottom of pan. Pour sauce over. Sprinkle with Romano cheese. Bake at 350 for 15 minutes.

CHICKEN & BISCUITS

Here's another incredibly simple meal that is a variation of the previous recipe. Open a can of cranberry sauce and make a side of green beans or broccoli and you have yourself a meal.

¼ C. butter
¼ C. flour
1 small chopped onion
1 chopped celery stalk
1 C. chicken boiling broth (made from bouillon)
1 C. milk
4 chicken breast halves, cooked and torn into bite-sized pieces
Biscuits (from a mix, from scratch, from a refrigerated tube, etc.)

Melt the butter. Simmer the onion and celery 3-4 minutes in the butter. Add the flour to the butter/vegetable mix. Stir until mixed in well. Add the chicken broth and milk and stir until thick and bubbly. Add the chicken. Spoon chicken mixture over biscuits.

PARMESAN-CRUSTED, HONEY MUSTARD CHICKEN

Ask your butcher to butterfly the chicken breasts.

6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter, divided
3 large eggs
3 tablespoons honey Dijon mustard
2 cups panko* (Japanese breadcrumbs; about 3 1/2 ounces)
1 1/2 cups grated Parmesan cheese (about 4 1/2 ounces)
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
6 skinless boneless chicken breast halves, butterflied

1 large bunch watercress, thick stems trimmed

Preheat oven to 500°F. Butter large rimmed baking sheet with 2 tablespoons butter. Melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter in small saucepan and set aside. Whisk eggs and mustard in bowl to blend. Mix panko, Parmesan, salt, and pepper in large bowl. Dip chicken into egg mixture, then panko mixture, coating generously. Place on prepared baking sheet. Drizzle reserved melted butter over chicken. Bake chicken until browned and cooked through, turning once, about 10 minutes.

PORK

BRAISED SPARERIBS WITH RIGATONI

1/4 cup olive oil
4 pounds pork spareribs, cut into individual ribs
1 pound onions, thinly sliced
10 large garlic cloves, chopped
8 cherry peppers from jar, drained, seeded, chopped
3/4 teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
3 28-ounce cans Italian-style tomatoes in juice (or crushed tomatoes – it comes out fine with those)
1 cup canned low-salt chicken broth
1 cup dry white wine
4 large fresh thyme sprigs
2 bay leaves
1 pound rigatoni
1 1/2 cups freshly grated Parmesan
1/3 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley

Heat oil in heavy large pot over high heat. Sprinkle spareribs with salt and pepper. Working in batches, add ribs to pot and brown on all sides, about 6 minutes. Transfer ribs to bowl. Add onions, garlic, cherry peppers and crushed red pepper to pot. Sauté until onions just begin to brown, about 10 minutes. Add tomatoes with their juices. Using back of fork or potato masher, coarsely crush tomatoes. Return spareribs and juices to pot. Add broth, wine, thyme and bay leaves and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium- low. Simmer uncovered until spareribs are very tender and sauce thickens, stirring occasionally, about 2 hours. Season with salt and pepper.

Cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite. Drain and return pasta to same pot. Add cheese, parsley and some sauce from spareribs and toss to coat. Transfer pasta to large bowl. Top with spareribs and remaining sauce and serve.

PASTA WITH ITALIAN SAUSAGE & MIXED GREENS

½ C. extra-virgin olive oil
¼ C. fresh lemon juice
1 TBSP chopped garlic

1 LB Italian sausages
12 C. (about) mixed baby lettuce and greens

1 LB spaghetti
Romano Cheese

Whisk oil, lemon juice and garlic in small bowl to blend. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper. Cook sausages in heavy medium skillet over medium heat until browned and cooked through, turning frequently, about 20 minutes. Using tongs, transfer sausages to paper towels and drain; cut into ¼ thick rounds. Combine sausage rounds and greens in large bowl.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite. Drain well.

Add hot pasta to bowl with sausage rounds and greens; toss until greens begin to wilt. Mix in enough dressing to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Divide pasta among bowls. Top with cheese and serve.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

PIZZA BIANCA WITH PROSCIUTTO, RED ONION & ASIAGO

Called *bianca*, or "white," because they are sauceless, these crispy pizzas are the essence of clean flavor. This recipe makes two rectangular pizzas.

2 10-ounce cans refrigerated pizza dough
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
16 thin slices prosciutto (about 4 ounces)
2 cups shredded Asiago cheese
1 medium red onion, cut into rings
6 oz. mushrooms, sliced

Heat 2 TBSP olive oil in medium sauté pan over medium heat. Cook onions and mushrooms until just done, about 5 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray PAM or lightly grease large baking (cookie) sheets. Unroll each pizza dough on baking sheet.

Drizzle each pizza with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Sprinkle with 1 tsp. each of Oregano and Basil. Bake crust for 8 minutes.

Remove from oven and top with shredded asiago. Scatter with torn strips of prosciutto, onion rings and mushroom slices. Bake until crusts are brown, about 12 minutes. Loosen crusts from baking sheets and slide onto cutting board, dividing equally. Serve immediately with red pepper flakes and black pepper to pass.

BAKED ZITI WITH RICOTTA & SAUSAGE

My husband absolutely loves this meal. The wine flavor comes through very strong. This is a very filling dish.

5 TBSP butter
½ C. flour
2 C. chicken broth heated with
1 C. white wine
1 lb ricotta cheese
1 C. grated asiago cheese (or Romano)
1 egg, lightly beaten
2 TBSP finely chopped parsley
1 tsp salt
pepper
2 TBSP olive oil
3 sausage links, skins removed, meat broken up very fine
2/3 lb. ziti

Preheat oven to 350. In medium saucepan, melt 4 TBSP butter and add the flour. Stir and blend over medium heat 2 minutes. Add chicken stock and wine while whisking. Allow sauce to simmer 15 minutes. Set aside.

In medium bowl, combine ricotta with ½ asiago, beaten egg, 1 TBSP of parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

In medium skillet, heat oil and sauté sausage over medium heat until done.

Cook ziti for exactly 5 minutes. Drain and return to pot. Add 1 TBSP butter and toss lightly.

Butter 3 qt. casserole or baking dish. Add ¼ ziti, 1/3 sauce and 1/3 ricotta mix. Repeat, ending with ziti on top. Sprinkle with sausage and parsley. Cover loosely with foil and bake 35-40 minutes. Uncover the last 10 minutes. Pass with grated cheese.

HAM WITH CREAMY ITALIAN WINE SAUCE FOR PASTA

Here's another recipe my husband loves, loves, loves.

½ lb. cooked ham
1 C. sliced onion
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ lb. sliced mushrooms (optional)
3 ½ oz. white wine
7 TBSP ricotta
1 ¼ C milk
2 tsp cornstarch
¼ C. chopped fresh parsley (or 2 TBSP dried)
1 ½ tsp ground nutmeg (critical for the just right taste!)
¾ lb. spinach linguine (regular is ok too – but try to find spinach)

Brown ham in nonstick skillet. Add onions, pepper, garlic, mushrooms and 2 TBSP wine. Cook and stir until wine evaporates.

Combine remaining wine and ricotta, milk, cornstarch and ½ the parsley in covered blender until smooth.

Stir ricotta mixture into skillet. Cook and stir until mixture simmers and thickens. Season to taste. Spoon over hot linguini or spaghetti. Top with remaining parsley.

GREEK PORK PITA POCKETS

Quick, tasty and nutritious.

Pita Pocket bread
1 lb boneless pork loin, cut in thin strips

Marinade:

4 TBSP olive oil
4 TBSP lemon juice
1 TBSP prepared mustard
2 cloves minced garlic
1 tsp dried oregano

Sauce:

1 C. plain yogurt
1 chopped, peeled cucumber
½ tsp crushed garlic
1 tsp dill weed

Refrigerate pork strips in marinade at least 1 hour, and up to 8 hours. Meanwhile, mix together the sauce and refrigerate that too. Remove pork from marinade. Stir-fry in non-stick skillet over medium high heat 2-3 minutes. Fill pita pocket half with pork. Top with cucumber mixture, lettuce, red onion, etc.

PORK CHOPS WITH MUSTARD-CORNICHON SAUCE

This is a deliciously different way to make pork chops. It's easy to boot.

2 TBSP butter
2 TBSP olive oil
4 pork chops (1" thick)

½ C. water
2 large shallots, minced
4 TBSP minced chornichons (tiny pickles)
2 TBSP Dijon mustard
¼ C. chopped fresh Italian parsley

Melt 2 TBSP butter with 2 TBSP oil in large skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle chops with salt and pepper. Add chops to skillet and sauté until lightly browned, about 3 minutes per side. Cover skillet and cook until done, about 9 minutes. Transfer chops to warm platter; tent with foil to keep warm.

Add half of water, shallot, and garlic to each skillet. Cook until shallot is soft, scraping up any browned bits, about 2 minutes. Add any juices

from chops. Whisk in cornichons and mustard. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over chops. Sprinkle chops with parsley.

PENNE WITH SAUSAGE, MUSHROOM, & ROMANO

This is an all-time favorite – a go-to meal when I don't feel like thinking about what to make.

6 TBSP Olive Oil
Salt and black pepper
1 lb sliced mushrooms
½ c. packed Italian parsley leaves
1 TBSP fresh oregano leaves
1 TBSP fresh thyme leaves, stripped from stems
2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
1 lb. Italian sausage, casings removed
1 lb Penne (ribbed-tube shaped pasta)
¼ C. reserved pasta cooking liquid
Grated Romano cheese

Finely chop oregano, thyme, and garlic together; set aside. Chop parsley separately and save to add later. Heat 3 TBSP oil in large non-stick skillet. Add mushroom, cook, stirring, over medium high heat until mushrooms are tender and golden brown. Add chopped herb and garlic mixture; sauté, stirring, 2 min. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, transfer to side dish. Wipe out skillet.

Place sausage into skillet, cook, chopping into small pieces, over med high heat, until sausage is browned. Transfer to strainer, drain. Add to mushroom mixture and cover with foil to keep warm. Boil large pot of water. Stir in penne, salt to taste. Cook until pasta is tender. Ladle out ¼ C. pasta cooking liquid; reserve. Drain pasta.

In large, deep platter combine pasta, mushroom and sausage mixture. Stir to combine. Add chopped fresh parsley. Add pasta cooking liquid to moisten pasta. Sprinkle with cheese. Serves 4.

BARB BROWN'S BROCCOLI SALAD

Barb brought this salad to all the gatherings at Sandy Creek Wesleyan Church ... and always received many requests for the recipe. It is really, really great.

Salad:

1-2 bunches of fresh broccoli, chopped small
1 C. chopped celery
1 bunch green onions (part tops)
1 C. grated cheddar cheese
7-8 strips fried bacon (crisp), crumbled
¼ C. walnuts (optional)

Dressing:

½ C. mayonnaise
3 TBSP brown sugar
1 TBSP red wine vinegar

Toss dressing with salad. Keep refrigerated until ready to serve.

QUICK GREEN BEAN SALAD

Keep this yummy, simple meal in mind for your Easter leftovers.

¾ lb. Penne
3 cups green beans
¼ C. olive oil
6 tsp red wine vinegar
1 garlic clove, minced
1 scallion, minced
salt, pepper, and parsley
1 LB julienne strips of ham steak

Combine oil, vinegar, garlic, scallions, salt and pepper. Mix well.
Cook pasta and drain. Cook green beans and drain. Put in large bowl
with julienne strips of ham. Pour dressing over warm beans and pasta.
Add parsley. Eat warm.

FRISÉE SALAD WITH BACON, DATES, AND RED ONION

6 bacon slices, chopped
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 teaspoons honey, divided
½ cup chopped pitted dates
1 cup thinly sliced red onion
4 tablespoons Sherry wine vinegar

1 large head of frisée, torn (about 4 cups)
1 head Romaine, torn
1 head red leaf lettuce, torn
1/3 cup walnut pieces, toasted

Cook bacon in heavy small skillet over medium heat until crisp. Using slotted spoon, transfer to plate. Reserve 1 tablespoon bacon drippings in skillet. Add olive oil, 3 teaspoons honey, dates, and onion to skillet. Stir in vinegar. Season dressing with salt and pepper.

Place frisée in medium bowl; add dressing and toss. Divide salad between 2 plates. Sprinkle with cheese and nuts.

Makes 4 servings.

RAVIOLI ANTIPASTO

This is a great meal for contributing to pot-luck meal or as a drop off dinner for a new family because it is to be eaten at room temperature.

1 9-oz. package refrigerated cheese filled ravioli, uncooked
1 6 oz. jar marinated artichoke hearts
1 large ripe tomato
½ C Kalamata or pitted rip olives
4 oz. provolone or mozzarella cheese
Bottled Italian dressing
Freshly ground black pepper for garnish

Cook ravioli according to package directions. While ravioli are cooking, drain artichoke hearts, reserving marinade. Coarsely chop artichoke hearts. See and coarsely chop tomato. Chop olives. Cut cheese into ½” thick pieces. Add enough dressing to reserved marinade to equal ½ cup, or discard marinade and use ½ cup dressing. Combine artichoke hearts, tomato, olives, cheese, and dressing in a large bowl. Drain ravioli and rinse under cold water for 1 minute. Add to salad and toss well. Serve with pepper and crisp bread sticks.

SPAGHETTI CARBONARA

In Italy, this easy, filling pasta dish is made for quick suppers and lunches. Because it utilizes items with which almost every refrigerator is stocked—pasta, eggs, cheese and bacon—it is never considered

fussy or fancy. However, it is addictive, and you will probably feel like you have done something slightly naughty after devouring it.

1 lb. spaghetti
¾ lb. bacon, preferably thick-sliced
2 TBSP bacon drippings
3 eggs
½ C. grated Parmesan or Romano cheese
¼ C. finely chopped parsley
¾ tsp coarsely ground black pepper
½ tsp salt

Bring a large pot of water to boil for the pasta. Add salt and cook the spaghetti until al dente.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon in a large skillet over moderate heat until crisp, and then drain on paper towels. Reserve 2 TBSP bacon drippings. Once cooled, break bacon into bite-sized pieces. Try not to eat a bunch of it before mixing it with the pasta.

In a small bowl, whisk together the bacon drippings, eggs, cheese, parsley, pepper, and salt.

When the pasta is cooked, drain in a colander and return to the still-warm pot. Pour the egg/cheese mixture over the hot spaghetti and toss with two large spoons until the pasta is well coated with sauce. The residual heat will cook the eggs slightly. Add the bacon, toss again and serve on warm plates.

PORK MEDALLIONS WITH ROSEMARY & SCALLIONS

1 TBSP white wine vinegar
2 medium scallions, thinly sliced
1 tsp dried rosemary or 1 TBSP fresh, minced rosemary
2 TBSP butter
1 tsp black pepper
½ C. flour
2 lbs well-trimmed boneless pork loin, sliced ¼" thick
¼ C. olive oil
1 ¼ C. chicken broth
¼ C. dry white wine

In a medium bowl, toss together the flour and ½ tsp pepper. Lightly dredge the pork slices in the flour, shaking off the excess.

Heat a large, heavy skillet over moderately high heat. Add 2 TBSP of the oil. Add 1/3 of the pork to the pan and fry until the bottom edges begin to brown, about 2 minutes. Turn and fry until just cooked through, 2-3 minutes longer. Transfer with tongs to large platter, arranging the slices in a single layer. Fry the remaining pork in the same way, using 1 more TBSP oil for each batch. Set pork aside.

Add the chicken broth, wine, vinegar, scallions, and rosemary to the skillet, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits. Bring to a boil over moderately high heat and cook until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. (If you'd like it thicker, mix 1 tsp cornstarch with 2 tsp water and add to sauce.) Return the pork slices to the pan to heat through briefly, about 30 seconds.

Transfer the pork to a serving platter or individual dinner plates. Swirl the butter into the sauce until incorporated and stir in the remaining pepper. Spoon the sauce over the pork. Serve immediately.

ROAST PORK WITH BLACK PEPPER, GARLIC AND PAPRIKA

Delicious.

Makes 4 servings

4 medium cloves garlic

1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus several sprigs for garnish

2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon hot paprika

1 tablespoon kosher salt

4-5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

One (3 1/2-pound) center-cut pork rib roast

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Puree the garlic, parsley, black pepper, paprika, salt, and olive oil in a blender to a smooth paste. Paint the entire surface of the pork loin including the bones with the paste.

Set the roast, ribs down, in a roasting pan, and cook for 1 hour. After an hour, tip the roast so the bones point straight up, baste with any pan juices, and raise the heat to 450 degrees F. Continue to cook the roast for another 20 to 25 minutes, until the internal temperature of the pork reaches 155 to 160 degrees F. on a thermometer. The roast should be golden brown and firm to the touch.

Remove the pork roast from the oven and let it rest at room temperature, loosely covered with foil, for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing. Cut the roast between the bones, lay the chops on a warm platter, garnish with parsley sprigs, and serve.

LINGUINE WITH PANCETTA AND SAUTEED CHERRY TOMATOES

Phenomenal. Addictive. Easy!

12 ounces linguine
1/4 cup olive oil
2 garlic cloves, chopped
4 ounces sliced pancetta or bacon, chopped
½ teaspoon dried crushed red pepper
1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
½ cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese
1/2 cup chopped fresh basil, divided

Cook linguine in pot of boiling salted water until tender but still firm to bite. Drain, reserving 1 cup liquid. Return pasta to pot.

Meanwhile, heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add garlic; stir 30 seconds. Add pancetta and crushed red pepper; sauté until pancetta is crisp, about 4 minutes. Add tomatoes; sauté until soft, about 4 minutes.

Transfer tomato mixture to pot with pasta. Add cheese and 1/3 cup basil. Toss over medium heat until cheese melts and sauce coats pasta, adding cooking liquid by 1/4 cupfuls if dry. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to bowl. Sprinkle with basil. Pass with cheese.

Makes 4 servings.

PROSCIUTTO & PORCINI WITH RED WINE

Emphatically rich, this sauce goes well with robust pasta shapes such as armoniche, radiatori or rigatoni. Serves 2 hungry adults, or 4 adults who are eating other courses as well. My husband loves this meal.

4 oz sliced prosciutto
3 TBSP butter, room temperature
4 TBSP finely chopped white onion
3 oz fresh porcini mushrooms, sliced (optional)
10 oz chopped plum tomatoes
6 fresh basil leaves, coarsely chopped
pepper
2/3 C dry red wine
3/4 grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

Trim fat from the prosciutto slices and reserve. Cut the lean portion into thin strips.

In frying pan over low heat, combine the prosciutto fat, 2 TBSP butter and the onion. Sauté slowly, stirring occasionally, until the onion is browned, about 10 minutes. Add the lean prosciutto and mushrooms and continue to sauté, stirring, for a couple of minutes. Add the tomatoes, basil, and pepper to taste and simmer uncovered, stirring every so often, until the liquid evaporates and the sauce is slightly thickened and creamy, about 15 minutes longer.

Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, simmer the red wine until it is reduced by half. Add the wine to the sauce. Continue to simmer until the wine almost totally evaporates, then remove from the heat, cover and keep warm.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta, drain and transfer to a warmed serving dish. Immediately add the remaining 2 TBSP butter to the pasta and toss well. Top the pasta with the sauce and serve at once. Pass the cheese at the table. We also like to sprinkle red pepper flakes on this.

UKRAINIAN KAPUSTA

This recipe is from my Dad, Bud Wydysh. I make it for the traditional Ukrainian Christmas Eve feast at my Great-Aunt Marion & Uncle

Rocky's house. All the familial Ukes love it. I score. (NB: To be truly traditional, you cannot eat the sausage part on Christmas Eve.)

2 two large bags of sour kraut
1 small head of cabbage
1 ½ lbs. polish sausage [real polish sausage made by Polish people],
4 good sized cooking onions
3 TBSP butter
2 tsp roughly ground peppercorns
salt

Rinse the sour kraut and let it drain. While it is draining, chop up the onions and then cook them in a very large frying pan with 3 TBSP of butter. When the onions begin to be translucent and slightly browned, add the chopped head of cabbage to the onions and have cook down, keeping the gas flame a little above medium.

When the cabbage appears to be cooked down, salt and pepper it and then add the sour kraut, and mix it with the cabbage and the onion. Add the peppercorns. Keep it heating until everything is a light brown color and smells delicious.

Then transfer the cooked down onions, cabbage, sourkraut to a dutch oven (or other large pot that can be placed in the oven) and mix it thoroughly. Cut up the polish sausage into two to three inch hunks and insert some into the mixture and rest over the top. Bake at least 1 ½ - 2 at 325 F.

The delicious aroma will fill the house and make Ukrainians appear out of nowhere and possibly some Polish people if they like Ukrainian kapusta.

BROCCOLI, SAUSAGE & SHELLS IN BALSAMIC SAUCE

Makes 4 main-dish servings
6 ounces conchiglie, cavatelli, or other dried shell-shaped pasta
4 cups broccoli flowerets
12 ounces hot Italian sausage links
1 tablespoon olive oil or cooking oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour

1/8-1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
1 cup chicken broth
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

In a large saucepan or pasta pot bring 3 quarts water to boiling. Add pasta. Reduce heat slightly. Boil, uncovered, for 12-14 minutes, or till pasta is al dente, stirring occasionally. Add broccoli to the pan during the last 5 minutes of cooking. (Or, cook according to package directions, adding broccoli the last 5 minutes.) Immediately drain. Return pasta and broccoli to warm pan.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet cook sausage links, covered, in 1/2 cup boiling water for 15 minutes. Drain off liquid in skillet. Add olive oil and garlic to sausages in skillet and cook, uncovered, for 4-5 minutes, turning sausages to brown them on all sides. Remove from heat. Discard garlic and reserve 1 tablespoon of the pan drippings in the skillet. Cool sausage links, then bias-slice into 1/4-inch-thick pieces.

Stir flour and crushed red pepper into reserved drippings in skillet. Add chicken broth all at once. Cook and stir over medium heat till thickened and bubbly. Cook and stir for 2 minutes more. Stir in balsamic vinegar. Pour chicken broth mixture over pasta-broccoli mixture. Add sausage and toss to mix well; heat through. Serve immediately.

BEEF

MARINATED STEAK SALAD

This has always been a crowd pleaser.

2 lb. Boneless sirloin steal (about 2" thick)
¼ C. olive oil
½ C. red wine vinegar
¼ soy sauce

Marinate the steak in the olive oil, vinegar and soy sauce for about 3 hours. Drain, pat dry and panfry over highest possible heat until medium rare (about 10 minutes per side). Slice into thick julienne pieces.

3 large boiling potatoes
1/3 chopped purple onion
1 scallion (green onion), thinly sliced
2/3 C. Garlic Dressing (see below)
1/3 C. chopped Italian parsley
lettuce leaves, washed and patted dry

Peel potatoes, chop into cubes. Transfer potatoes to a pan of salted cold water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cook until potatoes until tender but not mushy. Drain. Combine potatoes, beef, onion and scallion in mixing bowl. Pour on the Garlic Dressing and toss thoroughly. Add parsley and toss again. Arrange salad on lettuce leaves. Serve immediately. Or refrigerate, covered. Let salad return to room temperature before serving.

Garlic Dressing:

1 egg yolk
1/3 C. red wine vinegar
1 TBSP granulated sugar
1 TBSP chopped garlic
salt and fresh ground black pepper, to taste
1 C. olive oil

Combine egg yolk, vinegar, sugar, garlic, and salt and pepper to taste in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade. Process

briefly. With the motor running, slowly dribble in the olive oil. Taste, correct seasoning, if necessary, and transfer to storage container. [I have also just thrown everything together in a tight-sealing container and shook really well. That worked out fine too.]

GARLIC STEAK

1 lb beef top round steak, cut 1" thick
¼ C. A1 Steak Sauce
2 TBSP vegetable oil
1 tsp cracked black pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed

Combine steak sauce, oil, pepper and garlic. Place steak in plastic bag; add marinade, turning to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator at least 1 hour, turning once. Remove steak from marinade; place on rack in broiler pan s surface of meat is 3-4 inches from heat. Broil 15 minutes to desired doneness (rare to medium-rare), turning once. Serve with parsleyed potatoes. Makes 4 servings.

BLACKENED-STEAK SALAD

Serves 4 (first course).

For spice mixture

1 tablespoon paprika
2 teaspoons ground black pepper
1½ teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon dried thyme

For salad

¼ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
6 cups (packed) mixed baby greens
½ green bell pepper, thinly sliced
½ cup thinly sliced red onion

2 5- to 6-ounce beef tenderloin steaks, each about ½ inch thick

3 tablespoons butter, melted
6 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese (about 3 ounces)
1 tomato, quartered

For spice mixture: Mix all ingredients in small bowl. (Can be made 1 week ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.)

For salad: Whisk oil, vinegar and mustard in large bowl to blend. Season with salt and pepper. Add greens, bell pepper and onion and toss to coat. Divide salad between 2 plates.

Spread spice mixture on plate. Coat both sides of steaks with spice mixture. Dip both sides of steaks into melted butter. Heat heavy large skillet over high heat until very hot. Add steaks and cook to desired doneness, about 2 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer to cutting board; let stand 2 minutes. Thinly slice steaks crosswise. Arrange slices atop salads. Sprinkle with cheese. Garnish with tomato and serve. Makes 2 servings.

ROAST NEW YORK STRIP LOIN WITH GARLIC-HERB CRUST

New York strip loin, also called top loin of beef, is a succulent, elegant roast. If you want a lot of leftovers (they are great for sandwiches), use a seven-pound roast and multiply the seasonings by 1 1/2. Either way, have your butcher trim some of the fat, leaving about 1/4 inch for the best flavor.

4 garlic cloves
8 fresh sage leaves
4 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
4 teaspoons olive oil
4 teaspoons salt
1 1/2 teaspoons ground black pepper
1 4- to 5-pound boneless beef loin New York strip roast, fat trimmed to 1/4 inch

With machine running, drop garlic into processor; blend until finely chopped. Add sage, thyme, oil, salt and pepper; process until paste forms.

Pat meat dry with paper towels. Rub meat all over with herb paste. Cover; chill at least 3 hours. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Keep refrigerated.)

Preheat oven to 450°F. Place meat, fat side up, on rack in roasting pan. Roast meat 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F. Roast meat until instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of meat registers 130°F for medium-rare (or 140°F for medium), about 40 minutes for each pound of meat, so about 2.5 hours for a 4 lb. roast. Remove from oven; let stand 20 minutes. Cut crosswise into 1/3-inch-thick slices. Arrange slices on platter. Makes 10 servings.

STEAKS WITH HOT PEPPERS & CAPERS

This is very, truly yummy and easy to make. This recipe makes enough for 2 adults and 2 small children who eat like birds. Serve the steaks with a tossed salad and potatoes for a quick, well-rounded meal.

2 tsp. paprika
2 tsp dark brown sugar
2 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 ½ lb. steak (sirloin, strip, rib-eye, etc.)
¼ C. olive oil
1 large white onion, thinly sliced
1 TBSP drained capers
1 tsp. thyme
¼ C. chopped cherry peppers
1 tsp Grey Poupon mustard
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce

In a small bowl, mix the paprika with the brown sugar, salt, and pepper. Rub the mixture on both sides of the meat and let it sit at room temperature at least 30 minutes.

In a small skillet, heat the olive oil over moderate heat. Add the onions and capers and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in the thyme and cook for 1 minute. Add the peppers, mustard and Worcestershire; simmer over moderate heat for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile, either pan fry or grill steaks to desired doneness. Serve steaks topped with warm onion mixture.

GRILLED RIB-EYE STEAKS WITH MEDITERRANEAN RUB

This spice rub is also great with chicken.

1 tablespoons ground cumin
1 tsp salt
1 tablespoon ground paprika
1 1/2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoons ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 1-pound boneless rib-eye steaks (each about 1 inches thick), trimmed
8 lemon wedges

Blend first 6 ingredients in small bowl. Mix in oil to form smooth paste. Rub mixture over steaks. Transfer to baking pan. Cover; chill at least 3 hours or overnight.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Sprinkle steaks with salt. Grill to desired doneness, about 5 minutes per side for medium-rare. Place on cutting board; let stand 4 minutes. Cut steaks into 1/2-inch-thick diagonal slices. Transfer to platter. Sprinkle with salt. Serve with lemon. Makes 8 servings.

BARBECUED COWBOY STEAKS

Fantastic meal. The rub is enough for 4 medium-sized NY Strip Steaks. Note that while there are instructions here for the grilling purist, using a gas grill works just fine too. When it's below 30 degrees, my husband is not too keen on grilling, and we've done these in the frying pan with good results as well. It's the rub that makes them taste great. Makes 4 to 8 servings.

1 tablespoon coarse kosher salt
1 teaspoon Hungarian sweet paprika
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried ground thyme

1 teaspoon finely ground coffee beans
4 NY Strip Steaks
1 2.2-pound bag instant-light mesquite chunks
1 cup mesquite or hickory wood smoke chips, soaked in cold water at least 30 minutes

Mix first 6 ingredients in small bowl. Sprinkle spice rub over both sides of steaks, pressing to adhere. Let steaks stand at room temperature 1 hour.

Spread entire bag of instant-light mesquite chunks over 2/3 of bottom rack and prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Grill steaks over mesquite until brown on both sides, about 2 minutes per side. Remove steaks from grill. Let mesquite chunks burn until ash is gray. Drain wood chips; scatter over mesquite. Return steaks to cooler part of grill (not over mesquite). Cover barbecue with lid; grill steaks to desired doneness, about 10 minutes for medium-rare. Let steaks rest 5 minutes before serving.

SPICED BEEF PATTIES WITH COUSCOUS

My son loves this meal, and is enamored with couscous. There's another recipe in here in which I use couscous – it's the

1 1/3 pounds lean ground beef (20% fat)
1 large onion, minced (about 2/3 cup)
3 tablespoons water
4 teaspoons olive oil
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 10-ounce package plain couscous, prepared according to package instructions
Chopped fresh cilantro

Mix first 9 ingredients in medium bowl to blend well. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour and up to 1 day.

For each patty, shape 1/4 cup mixture into 3/4-inch-thick round. Heat heavy large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add patties to skillet and cook to desired doneness, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare.

Mound couscous in center of platter and surround with patties. Sprinkle with cilantro and serve. Makes 4 servings.

EMPENADAS DE PICADILLO

½ lb. Ground beef
¼ C. finely chopped onion
1 tsp. Flour
½ tsp paprika
¼ tsp garlic salt
2 TBSP chopped pimiento-stuffed olives
2 TBSP chopped almonds
2 TBSP water
Double-Crust Pastry
1 egg
1 TSP water
Sour cream and salsa

In a medium skillet cook ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink and onion is tender. Drain off fat. Stir in flour, paprika, and garlic salt until blended. Stir in olives, almonds and 2 TBSP water. Cook and stir 5 minutes. Cool.

Roll out pastry on a lightly floured surface to about 1/16" thick. Cut into 3" circles. Roll, cut, reroll and cut as necessary to make about 36 circles.

In small bowl, beat together egg and the 1 TBSP water. Place several of the dough circles on a flat surface. Lightly brush around edges with the egg mixture. Place a rounded tsp. Filling on each circle. Fold dough in half over filling, bring edges together. Press edges with a fork to seal. Use a fork to prick or sharp knife to make slits in the top of each empanada. Lightly brush tops with egg mixture. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Cover and chill up to 4 hours, if desired. Bake in a 400° oven about 12 minutes or until golden brown. Serve warm with sour cream and salsa. Makes 36 appetizers.

SWEDISH MEATBALLS

1/3 C. finely chopped onion
2 TBSP butter
1 beaten egg
3/4 C. half-n-half
1 C. Italian bread crumbs
1/4 C. finely snipped parsley
1 1/2 lb. ground beef
2 TBSP flour
2 beef bouillon cubes
1/2 tsp instant coffee crystals

In mixing bowl, combine egg and half-n-half; stir in onion, bread crumbs, parsley, salt and pepper. Add ground beef; mix well. Shape meat into 3/4 to 1" balls.

Brown meatballs in the butter (in batches, depending on the size of the pan). Meanwhile, dissolve bouillon in 2 1/4 cups of boiling water. Add coffee crystals to dissolved bouillon and set aside. Remove meatballs from skillet.

Stir flour into pan drippings. Add coffee/bouillon mixture. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. (Now here I do something that probably I shouldn't have to, but I do it anyway. I dump the whole liquid mixture from the pan into the blender and mix it. Then I put the meatballs back in the pan (before I add the liquid) and then pour the liquid from the blender into the pan with the meatballs.) Cover pan, simmer about 20 minutes, basting occasionally. Serve over oriechette or any pasta that holds a sauce well.

STEAK SALAD WITH SHALLOTS & RED WINE

This is quite delicious. We love eating it. If you like a lot of warm sauce (salad dressing) on your salad, you may want to increase the amount of red wine, vinegar and brown sugar in this recipe. I have already increased it from the original recipe.

1 1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
1 tsp lemon-pepper
2 boneless top-loin or strip steak (10 oz each)

½ lb. large shallots (10-12), thinly sliced lengthwise (2 cups)
2/3 C. dry red wine
1/3 C. red-wine vinegar
1 ½ TBSP packed dark brown sugar
1 TBSP butter
mixed lettuces (romaine, leaf, escarole) – 6 cups

Stir together salt, pepper and lemon pepper in a small bowl. Pat steaks dry and sprinkle spice mixture evenly on both sides, rubbing to adhere.

Heat oil in a 12 inch heavy skillet over moderate heat until hot, but not smoking, then cook steaks, turning over once, until done – about 12 minutes total.

Transfer steaks to a cutting board and let stand, loosely covered, 10 minutes. Add shallots to skillet and cook over moderate heat, stirring frequently until just softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in wine, vinegar, and brown sugar and cook 3 minutes. Add butter and cook, whisking constantly, until butter is incorporated and sauce is slightly thickened.

Cut steaks into thin slices and serve over lettuces. Spoon shallots and sauce over steak.

MEAT LOAF WITH BABY BELLAS

Add this recipe from p. 340 of New Way to Cook

BLACK PEPPER-CRUSTED ROAST BEEF

We had this the first time for Easter 2003, and it was splendid. I served it with baked asparagus. Yum. We eat it as frequently as we can/should now.

6 garlic cloves, 4 minced and 2 thinly sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 1/2 tablespoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons cracked black peppercorns
1 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary
3 1/2 pound boneless rib-eye beef roast

In a blender, combine the minced garlic with the olive oil, soy sauce, kosher salt, peppercorns and rosemary and process to a paste. Make fifteen 1-inch-deep cuts in the top and bottom of the roast and insert a thin slice of garlic in each cut. Set the roast on a rack in a roasting pan and rub it all over with the salt-and-pepper paste. Let stand at room temperature for 2 hours.

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees F. Roast the meat for about 10 minutes, or until the crust begins to brown. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees F. and cook the roast for about 1 1/4 hours longer, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part of the meat registers 125 degrees F. for medium-rare. Transfer the roast to a carving board and let rest, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Carve the roast into 1/2-inch-thick slices.

SERVE WITH: Roasted shallots and mixed baby vegetables, such as potatoes, beets and carrots, or baked asparagus.

RAGU BOLOGNESE

Do I really make this, even though it takes hours? Yes. It is my husband's favorite sauce and I accommodate him at least once a year. It is very tasty and worth the effort.

6 TBSP butter
1 C. chopped onion
½ C. chopped celery
¼ C. chopped carrot
½ lb. beef chuck, ground
¾ lb. pork chuck, ground
½ C. dry white wine
1 C. milk
2 C. chopped tomatoes (canned) + 1 C. water
1 tsp chopped fresh parsley
salt and pepper

Melt butter in 2 qt. pan. Add vegetables and cook, stirring frequently for about 10 minutes to brown vegetables. Add ground meat and mash to get rid of lumps. It needs to be very fine. Cook about 3 minutes. Add wine, and bring to boil, stirring constantly. Cook until wine has almost completely evaporated, about 20 minutes. Stir in milk and cook

until milk has almost evaporated, about 30 minutes. Add chopped tomatoes and water and bring sauce to boil again. Then reduce heat to low. Half cover pan and simmer sauce for 3 hours, stirring occasionally. Add parsley. Taste for additions of salt and pepper. Serve over rigatoni.

CLASSIC SAUERBRATEN

I've made this twice. It is really good.

2 1/4 cups water
1 cup cider vinegar
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
1 lemon, cut into 8 wedges
2 bay leaves
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
1/2 teaspoon whole cloves
1 4 1/2-pound top round roast
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1/4 cup all purpose flour
1 cup canned beef broth
1/3 cup (packed) dark brown sugar
1/3 cup gingersnap cookie crumbs

Combine first 8 ingredients in large saucepan and bring to boil. Cool.

Place beef in bowl slightly larger than beef. Pour marinade over. Cover and chill 2 days, turning beef twice daily.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Remove beef from marinade and place in roasting pan; reserve marinade. Roast beef until tender, about 2 hours. Transfer beef to carving board; cool. Pour any accumulated juices from roasting pan into marinade. Strain marinade (do not clean roasting pan).

Mix 1/4 cup oil and flour in heavy large skillet. Stir over medium heat until dark brown, about 10 minutes. Gradually mix in 2 cups marinade (discard any remaining marinade) and broth. Boil until thick, stirring often, about 10 minutes. Mix in sugar and cookie crumbs. Pour into

roasting pan and place over medium-high heat. Bring to boil, scraping up any browned bits. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Slice beef and arrange in large baking dish. Pour sauce over meat. (Can be prepared 1 day ahead. Cover and chill).

Preheat oven to 400°F. Bake beef until heated through, about 15 minutes. Serves 8.

CUBE STEAKS WITH DIJON

Using pre-tenderized steak (labeled "cube steak" at the meat counter) makes this bistro-style dish extra succulent. Serve with: Hash browns and steamed broccoli. Dessert: Warm apple pie.

2 12-ounce cube steaks
2 tablespoons (1/4 stick) butter
1/3 cup finely chopped shallots
1 teaspoon dried rubbed sage
1/3 cup dry vermouth
1/2 cup whipping cream or half and half
2 tablespoons whole grain Dijon mustard

Sprinkle steaks with salt and pepper. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add steaks in single layer and cook until browned, turning once, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer to work surface; cut each steak in half.

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in same skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots and sage; sauté until soft, about 30 seconds. Add vermouth; boil until slightly reduced, about 30 seconds. Stir in cream and mustard. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer until slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper. Divide steaks among plates, spoon sauce over, and serve.

SHRIMP & FISH

We seem to have sort of lost our taste for shrimp this year. We haven't eaten it much at all. And unfortunately, with the fish, it's just so much easier to get one of the umpteen Friday fish specials that are so popular here in Buffalo.

SHRIMP WITH LEMON-BASIL & SUN-DRIED TOMATOES

12 jumbo shrimp (3/4 lb), shelled and deveined
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1/3 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 tablespoons chopped sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil
6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
1/2 cup shredded fresh basil

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Season shrimp with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking and sauté shrimp 1 minute per side. Transfer shrimp to a baking dish and bake in middle of oven until just cooked through, about 7 minutes.

While shrimp bakes, add garlic to skillet and cook, stirring, over moderate heat 15 seconds, then stir in wine, juice, and tomatoes. Boil, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced by two thirds. Swirl in butter and basil over low heat and season with salt and pepper. Serve shrimp with sauce.

LINGUINI W/ SCAMPI

1/2 C. Butter
10 oz shrimp
4 lg. Garlic cloves, minced
2 TBSP lemon juice
Fresh lemon wedges
3 TBSP fresh or 2 tsp dry parsley
Ground Romano cheese
12 oz linguine

Preheat oven to 400. Pat butter in 13x9x2 glass baking dish and place in oven until butter melts. Add shrimp, garlic and lemon juice to butter and stir to blend. Return dish to oven and bake shrimp 3 minutes. Mix in parsley and bake 2 minutes longer.

Mound linguine in lg. bowl. Spoon shrimp mixture over and toss to combine. Serve immediately with fresh lemon wedges.

SALMON CAKES WITH CILANTRO-LIME MAYO

The sauce for this dish is phenomenal. You'll be scrounging through your refrigerator to find things to dip in it and eat. My children love this meal as much as my husband and I.

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup finely chopped onion
4 cans of Bumble Salmon, squeezed
1/2 cup chopped fresh chives
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons all purpose flour
1 tablespoon minced peeled fresh ginger
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 large egg, beaten to blend
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon grated lime peel
3/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Cilantro-Lime Mayonnaise
Buttered New Potatoes with Chives
Whole fresh chives
Fresh cilantro sprigs

Heat olive oil in medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until tender, about 8 minutes. Cool. Transfer drained salmon and flake like tuna fish into a large bowl. Stir in onion, chopped chives, parsley, flour, ginger, lime juice, egg, salt, lime peel, and pepper. Form salmon mixture into eight 1/2-inch-thick patties, each about 3 to 3 1/2 inches in diameter. Place salmon cakes on baking sheet. Cover and chill 1 hour. (Can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Keep chilled.)

Preheat oven to 450°F. Heat peanut oil in large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add salmon cakes to skillet and cook until browned, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer cakes to baking sheet. Place in oven and bake until cooked through, about 7 minutes.

Place 2 scallop cakes on each of 4 plates. Top with Cilantro-Lime Mayonnaise. Place Buttered New Potatoes with Chives alongside. Garnish salmon cakes with whole chives and cilantro sprigs.

Makes 4 servings.

PERCIATELLI WITH SHRIMP & GARLIC BREADCRUMBS

This is a dry presentation, so if you do not like food smothered in a creamy sauce (which I do not), you will love this tasty, healthy recipe.

8 tablespoons olive oil, divided
2 cups fresh breadcrumbs made from French bread
8 garlic cloves, minced, divided
1 1/4 pounds uncooked peeled, deveined large shrimp
1/2 cup chopped fresh Italian parsley, divided
6 tablespoons drained capers
4 teaspoons (packed) grated lemon peel
12 ounces freshly cooked perciatelli (long hollow pasta), 1 cup pasta cooking water reserved

Heat 3 tablespoons oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add breadcrumbs and half of garlic; sauté until crumbs are golden and crisp, about 10 minutes. Transfer to medium bowl.

Sprinkle shrimp with salt and pepper. Heat remaining 5 tablespoons oil in same skillet over medium-high heat. Add shrimp and remaining garlic to skillet; sauté until shrimp are just opaque in center, about 3 minutes. Stir in 1/4 cup parsley, capers, and lemon peel. Add cooked pasta and 1/2 cup reserved pasta cooking water. Mix in 1 cup garlic breadcrumbs, adding more pasta cooking water if dry. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with remaining garlic breadcrumbs and parsley.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

SANDWICHES

REUBEN SANDWICHES

1/3 C. Thousand Island Dressing
12 slices Rye bread
6 oz. Swiss cheese (Jarlsberg is great)
¾ lb. Cooked Corned beef, thinly sliced
1 can (16 oz.) sauerkraut, drained
Butter, softened

Spread dressing on six slices of bread. Arrange cheese, corned beef and sauerkraut on dressing; top with remaining bread slices. Spread top slices of bread with butter.

Place sandwiches, butter sides down, in skillet. Spread top of bread with butter. Cook uncovered over low until bottom is gold brown, about 10 minutes. Turn, cook until golden brown and cheese is melted, about 8 minutes longer.

Rachel Sandwiches: Substitute coleslaw for the sauerkraut and thinly sliced cooked turkey breast or roast beef for the corned beef.

MUFFALETTA SANDWICHES

1 C. chopped pimiento-stuffed green olives
1 C. chopped black olives
¾ C. chopped banana peppers
½ C. olive oil
¼ C. fresh parsley
2 TBSP white wine vinegar
4 garlic cloves, mashed
1 loaf of ciabatta
4 oz. thin-sliced coppacola
4 oz. thin-sliced salami
6 oz. thin-sliced provolone

Mix first 7 ingredients in a large bowl. Set olive mixture aside. Cut bread in half. Spoon ¾ C. olive mixture over cut sides of each bread half. Layer meats and cheese over live mixture in bottom half of bread. Place other half of bread, olive side down, atop sandwich. Wrap in foil. Place on large plate. Top with another large plate and weight

with heavy skillet. Chill at least 1 hour and up to 6 hours. Cut into wedges and serve.

**ROAST BEEF & ROASTED RED ONION & LEMON
MAYONNAISE**

3 large red onions (about 2 1/2 pounds), each cut through stem into 8 wedges, peeled
7 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar

1 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil (2 TBSP dried)
1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 1/4 teaspoons grated lemon peel

6 4x3-inch pieces ciabatta,* halved horizontally
16 ounces thinly sliced roast beef
2 cups arugula (or other lettuce)
8 oz. provolone (optional)

Preheat oven to 325°F. Line large rimmed baking sheet with foil. Gently toss red onions, 5 tablespoons oil and vinegar in large bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Arrange onions in single layer on prepared sheet. Bake onions until brown at edges and just tender, about 25 minutes. Cool.

Mix mayonnaise, basil, lemon juice, lemon peel and 2 tablespoons oil in small bowl. (Onions and mayonnaise can be made 2 days ahead. Cover separately and chill.)

Spread mayonnaise over cut sides of bread. Place bottom halves on plates. Top with roast beef, onions, provolone and arugula. Cover with top halves of bread.

*Ciabatta is an oval-shaped flat Italian bread available at many bakeries and supermarkets nationwide. Makes 6 sandwiches.

TURKEY BURGERS WITH APPLES, ONIONS & SAGE

Add this one from p.348 of New Way to Cook

TURKEY BURGERS WITH PEPPER SAUCE

3/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons minced red onion
2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill or 1 tsp. dried dill
1 tablespoon hot chopped peppers (Sandwich Toppers)
1 tablespoon drained capers

1 pound ground turkey
½ cup seasoned bread crumbs
4 whole wheat hamburger buns, split
4 red onion slices
8 plum tomato slices
2 bunches arugula (about 1 ounce)

Whisk first 6 ingredients in small bowl. Season with salt and pepper.
(Sauce can be made 2 days ahead. Cover and chill.)

Prepare frying pan or barbecue (medium heat). Form ground turkey into four 1/2-inch-thick patties. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Grill burgers until cooked through, about 5 minutes per side. Grill buns until just toasted. Spread 1 tablespoon sauce on bottom half of each bun. Top each with 1 burger, then 1 more tablespoon sauce. Top each with 1 onion slice, 2 tomato slices, then 1/2 bunch arugula. Cover with bun tops. Serve, passing remaining pepper sauce separately. Makes 4 servings.

SOPPRESSATA AND PEPPER PANINI

We're addicted to this. We try to keep it to twice per month. If at all possible, do not substitute another green for the arugula. The arugula is perfect. However, in a pinch, I once used baby spinach leaves.

One Tuscan Garlic Bread loaf (or other lightweight Italian Bread loaf such as Ciabatta – do not use something like sourdough)
24 thin slices of coppa or soppressata (~6 oz)
1/3 C hot cherry peppers in oil, chopped
Bunch of arugula leaves
8 tsp. olive oil
Balsamic vinegar, for drizzling
Salt and fresh ground pepper

Cut off a very thin layer from the top and bottom crusts. Cut the bread crosswise into 2 even pieces. Halve each bread horizontally; arrange coppa slices on the bottom half of each sandwich, then top with chopped cherry peppers and arugula. Drizzle a little oil and vinegar over the arugula and season with salt and pepper. Close the sandwiches.

Heat 4 tsp olive oil in each of 2 large cast-iron skillets (or use 1 skillet and cook 2 sandwiches at a time). Add 2 of the sandwiches to each skillet and weight them down with smaller cast iron skillet, or a lid with soup cans on it. Cook over moderately high heat until browned and crisp, 2 minutes per side. Cut the panini in half and serve hot.

WESTSIDE BRUSCHETTA

Technically, this is an hors d'oeuvre, but we like it so much that I make it for dinner.

1 baguette with sesame seeds
4-6 TBSP olive oil
1 TBSP minced garlic
1 TBSP Romano cheese
¼ tsp. Ground pepper
2 plum tomatoes, cut into ¼-inch slices
3 green onions cut into ¼-inch slices
½ C. shredded mozzarella or asiago cheese
4 oz. mushrooms, cut into 1/8-inch slices
4 oz. prosciutto, cut into ½-inch strips
Freshly grated pecorino Romano cheese

Slice the baguette lengthwise into halves. Place cut-side up on a backing sheet. Combine the olive oil, garlic, 1 TBSP Romano, and pepper in a bowl and mix well. Spread over the cut sides of the bread halves. Arrange tomatoes and green onions on each bread half. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Top with the mushrooms and prosciutto.

Bake at 350 degrees for 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese melts. Broil for 2 to minutes or just until the cheese begins to brown. Cut each baguette half in half and serve.

Makes 2 servings. OR cut into 2" wide slices and serve as an appetizer for 4-6 people.

STEAK SANDWICH WITH WILD MUSHROOMS AND SHALLOTS

Serves 4

There's something very satisfying about a hearty steak sandwich, and I think you'll enjoy this recipe. The shallots or green onions give a more subtle flavor than onions, which are typical accompaniments to steak sandwiches, and the mushrooms complement both the flavor and texture of the beef.

For Mushrooms and Shallots:

1 tablespoon olive oil
10 shallots, finely sliced, or green onions, chopped fine
2 tablespoons butter
6 ounces wild mushrooms (such as chanterelles or shiitakes), sliced
3 tablespoons dry white wine

For the Sandwiches:

4 top sirloin steaks, prime or choice grade, about 6 ounces each and 1/2 inch thick
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon olive oil
4 multigrain rolls, sliced in half crosswise (or 8 slices multigrain bread), toasted
1/4 cup Dijon mustard, or mayonnaise or to taste

TO PREPARE MUSHROOMS AND SHALLOTS: Heat the olive oil in a nonstick saucepan and sauté the shallots over medium heat for about 7 minutes, until lightly browned. Add the butter and the mushrooms and sauté for about 6 minutes longer, until soft. Turn down the heat, add the wine, and reduce until the mixture is thick and moist and most of the liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste and keep warm.

TO PREPARE STEAKS: Season the steaks with salt, pepper, and Worcestershire sauce. Heat the olive oil in a skillet set over medium-high heat and sear the steaks for about 1-1/2 minutes on each side.

Turn down the heat to medium and sauté for 1 minute longer for medium-rare, about 1-1/2 to 2 minutes for medium, or to the desired doneness. (Or grill the steaks.) Slice the steaks in half lengthwise, and then into thin slides so they will be bite sized on the sandwich.

TO SERVE: Spread each side of the rolls with mustard or mayonnaise. Place the steak on the bottom half and top with the warm mushrooms and shallots. Salt and pepper to taste.

TEXAS-STYLE STEAK ON TOAST

1 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon dark brown sugar
1 tsp cayenne
1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
1 1 1/2-pound top sirloin steak (about 1 inch thick), trimmed
1/2 cup coarsely chopped seeded tomatoes
1/4 cup pitted Kalamata olives or other brine-cured black olives
3 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoons red wine vinegar
1 tablespoons minced red onion

8 1-inch-thick slices French bread
2 bunches watercress, thick stems trimmed

Mix chili powder and brown sugar in small bowl to blend. Rub mixture over steak. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Combine tomatoes, olives, 2 tablespoons oil and vinegar in processor. Using on/off turns, blend just until olives are coarsely chopped. Transfer to bowl. Stir in onion. Season relish with salt and pepper. (Steak and relish can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Cover separately; chill.)

Heat 2 teaspoons oil in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add steak and cook to desired doneness, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer steak to plate. Let stand 5 minutes. Wipe out skillet.

Brush 1 side of each bread slice with remaining 3 tablespoons oil. Heat same skillet over medium heat. Add bread, oiled side down, to skillet and cook until golden, about 2 minutes per side.

Cut steak across grain into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Spread relish generously over oiled side of 4 toasts. Top with watercress, then steak slices. Top with a bit more relish, then remaining toasts. Makes 4 servings.

SORRENTO'S CHICKEN SALAD

3 coked, boneless chicken breasts, cubed
2 C. mozzarella, shredded
2 oz. pimento, chopped
½ C. sliced pitted black olives
½ C. mayonnaise
1 tsp. dried savory
¼ C. slivered almonds
¼ C. chopped celery
2 tsp red wine vinegar
freshly ground pepper
6 rehydrated sun-dried tomatoes

Mix all ingredients together. Chill and serve in pita bread or on a bed of Boston lettuce leaves.

DIANE'S CHICKEN SPREAD

4 chicken breast halves
2 stalks of celery
½ cup chopped onion
1 cup of Hellman's mayonnaise
½ tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 tsp lemon pepper

Bake chicken breast halves until cooked through. Then, place cooked breasts in a food processor, and pulse breasts until the consistency of flaked tuna fish.

Finely chop celery and onion. Place in large mixing bowl and sprinkle with seasonings. Add processed chicken and mayonnaise and mix thoroughly.

Serve on wheat rolls with lettuce, or serve as an hors d'oeuvre with crackers to spread it on

CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICHES WITH PICKLED VEGETABLES

I actually like this better when you make the salad and then mix it with pasta (gemelli) instead of serving it on bread. But feel free to decide which you like best.

2 1/2 cups diced cooked chicken (from purchased roast chicken)
1 cup chopped drained spicy giardiniera from jar
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup (packed) chopped fresh basil
1 tablespoon giardiniera juices
1 teaspoon dried salad herbs
8 slices egg bread, toasted
4 Boston lettuce leaves

Combine chicken and next 5 ingredients in medium bowl; stir to blend well. Season salad with salt and pepper. Place 1 bread slice on each of 4 plates. Top each slice with 1/4 of chicken salad, lettuce leaf and second bread slice.

Makes 4 sandwiches.

PHILLY BEEF SANDWICHES

2 medium onions, sliced
2 TBSP butter
6 hoagie rolls, split and toasted
1 1/4 lb. Thinly sliced cooked roast beef
2/3 lb. Sliced mozzarella cheese

Cook and stir onions in butter until tender, about 10 minutes. Set over control to broil and /or 550 degrees. Place bottom halves of buns on ungreased cookie sheet; top with onions and beef. Cut cheese slices into halves; place 4 halves on each sandwich. Broil tops 4 to 6 inches

from heat until cheese is melted, 2 to 3 minutes. Top each with remaining bun half.

STEAK SALAD SANDWICHES WITH CAPERS

Here's a great way to use leftover grilled steak. The arugula adds a peppery finish. My husband loves this sandwich.

2 cups 1/2-inch cubes cooked steak (about 1 pound)
2 tablespoons drained capers
2 tablespoons chopped cornichons or gherkin pickles
2 tablespoons minced red onion
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
5 tablespoons mayonnaise

8 1/2-inch-thick slices olive or rosemary country-style bread (each about 3x5 inches)
8 large tomato slices
2 small bunches arugula, trimmed

Combine cooked steak, capers, cornichons, red onion, Dijon mustard, and 2 tablespoons mayonnaise in medium bowl; toss to blend. Season salad with salt and pepper. (Can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Cover and refrigerate.)

Arrange bread on work surface. Spread slices with remaining 3 tablespoons mayonnaise. Divide steak salad among 4 bread slices. Top salad on each with 2 tomato slices and 1/4 of arugula. Press second bread slice, mayonnaise side down, onto each sandwich. Cut sandwiches diagonally in half and serve. Makes 4 servings.

NAPA VALLEY CABERNET BURGERS

This has great flavor. Yes, 750 ml is an entire bottle and it does boil down nicely to 3/4 C. I made the dried tomato focaccia mix from Williams Sonoma to go along with this and it was excellent and not difficult to make either. Makes 4 servings.

1 750-ml bottle Cabernet Sauvignon
1/4 cup minced shallots
9 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature

2 teaspoons golden brown sugar
1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
1 1/2 pounds ground beef (15% fat)
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
Vegetable oil
1 cup (packed) coarsely grated extra-sharp white cheddar cheese
4 4 1/2-inch squares focaccia, cut horizontally in half
8 large tomato slices
2 cups arugula

Boil wine and shallots in medium saucepan until reduced to 3/4 cup, about 20 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon butter and brown sugar; whisk until butter melts and sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Mix remaining 8 tablespoons butter and rosemary in small bowl. Set aside.

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Mix beef, salt, pepper, and 1/4 cup wine-shallot mixture in bowl. Form meat into four 5-inch squares or rounds. Brush grill rack with oil. Grill burgers until brown on bottom, about 3 minutes. Turn burgers and brush with wine-shallot mixture. Continue grilling burgers until cooked to desired doneness, turning and brushing occasionally with wine-shallot mixture, about 4 minutes longer for medium-rare. Sprinkle with cheese after last turn and grill until cheese melts.

Spread cut sides of bread with rosemary butter. Grill, cut side down, until golden, about 2 minutes. Arrange bread, grilled side up, on plates. Top bottom halves with burgers, then tomatoes and arugula. Cover with top halves of bread.

TORTILLA ROLL-UPS

Prep: 10 min

Mayo mixture:

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup chopped fresh basil (2 TBSP dried)

1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

2 1/4 teaspoons grated lemon peel

12 8" flour tortillas

12 ounces sliced cooked roast beef

12 oz. provolone (optional)
8 oz. field mix lettuce
toothpick

Spread lemon-basil mayo over tortillas. Arrange roast beef, provolone and a layer of lettuce over sauce. Roll up tortillas and secure with a toothpick. Cut tortilla rolls in half

Use this rollup idea for making other rollups – corned beef, Swiss, thousand islands and coleslaw, or ham, mustard and sauerkraut. Be creative.

ONION MUFFULETTA SANDWICH

Vidalias star in a nice version of the relish that is essential to this New Orleans specialty. Try the relish on grilled halibut, too. Can be prepared in 45 minutes or less but requires additional unattended time.

1 cup chopped Vidalia onion
1/2 cup drained small Spanish pimiento-stuffed green olives
1/4 cup olive oil (preferably extra-virgin)
1/4 cup sliced fresh basil or 1 tablespoon dried
2 tablespoons drained capers
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon chopped fresh oregano or 1/2 teaspoon dried
1 24-inch long French or sourdough baguette, split lengthwise
12 ounces assorted sliced deli meats and cheeses (such as ham, mortadella, salami, provolone cheese and mozzarella cheese)

Combine first 7 ingredients in processor and chop finely. Transfer to bowl. Let stand 1 hour at room temperature.

Spread 1/2 cup muffuletta relish over each cut side of bread. Place meats and cheeses on bottom half of bread. Cover with top half of bread. Cut diagonally into 4 sandwiches. Serves 4.

VEGETARIAN MAIN DISHES

BASIL PESTO (AKA YODA PASTA OR DAGOBAH SNAKES)

My kids love this meal. Joel came up with the Star Wars references.

2 C. fresh basil leaves
¾ C. walnuts, toasted
6 TBSP grated Romano
2 TBSP minced garlic
1 C. olive oil
1 lb. Spinach fettuccine

Use a food processor to finely grind basil, nuts, Romano, and garlic. Gradually add 1 C. oil and process until pesto is well blended. Transfer to bowl. Season with salt and pepper. Mix with cooked fettuccine.

FRESH TOMATO & MOZZARELLA SALAD WITH SUN-DRIED TOMATO DRESSING

6 TBSP olive oil
½ C. drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
¼ C. red wine vinegar
1 TBSP drained capers (optional)
1 garlic clove, minced

1 LB fusilli pasta
12 oz. fresh tomatoes, coarsely chopped
8 oz. mozzarella cheese, cut into ½ inch pieces
2 tsp. Basil leaves
½ C. chopped black olives (optional)
½ C. Romano Cheese

Blend first five ingredients in processor until tomatoes are coarsely chopped. Set dressing aside. Cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Transfer to large bowl. Add dressing to hot pasta; toss to coat. Cool for five minutes, stirring occasionally. Add chopped tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, Romano and olives; toss. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes 8 side servings.

ZITI WITH BROCCOLI & POTATOES

My husband likes this meal without the potatoes. I like it with. He says potahto, I say potayto, let's call the whole thing off. It's simple and good.

¾ LB peeled, diced potatoes.
4 C broccoli florets
2 TBSP olive oil
1 lg onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
12 oz. ziti
¾ tsp salt
½ tsp sage
½ tsp fresh ground pepper
¼ tsp dried majoram
1/3 c. Romano

Simmer potatoes 5 minutes. Drain, reserving 2 cups liquid. Cook broccoli; transfer and drain, reserving water for pasta. In skillet, heat oil. Add onion and garlic. Stir in potatoes, salt and pepper and cook until potatoes are brown, about 7 minutes. Add broccoli and one cup of pasta liquid; cook about 2 min. Cook ziti Drain. Mix all together. Add one cup potato liquid. Toss. Sprinkle with Romano and serve. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

PENNE CAPRESE

12 oz. penne
6 TBSP olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
4 plum tomatoes, chopped
1 diced cucumber
1/3 C. diced red onion
3 TBSP chopped fresh basil
3 TBSP chopped fresh parsley
½ tsp dried tarragon
½ tsp salt
6 oz. mozzarella cheese, diced
¼ C. chopped black olives

Cook and drain penne. Heat 4 TBSP of oil in small nonstick skillet over low heat. Add garlic and cook 4 minutes. Transfer garlic and oil to large bowl. Add the tomatoes, cucumber, onion, basil, parsley, tarragon, and salt, and toss to coat. Stir in the mozzarella and olives. Add penne and toss again. Add 2 additional TBSP olive oil. Serve at room temperature.

SPINACH LASAGNA

Spinach filling:

1 lb. fresh spinach or 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen spinach
1 clove garlic, minced
1 TBSP chopped fresh parsley
1 TBSP chopped fresh basil
1 tsp dried oregano
1 C. seasoned bread crumbs (or ½ C. wheat germ)
1 C. tomato sauce

Cheese filling:

1 ½ lb. ricotta cheese
½ tsp. black pepper
2 TBSP chopped fresh parsley

1 lb. box lasagna noodles, cooked
½ C. grated Parmesan cheese
12 oz. mozzarella cheese, sliced
1 C. tomato sauce

To make the spinach filling: Cook or steam spinach until tender. Drain well, then place in a blender. Add garlic, parsley, basil, and oregano and process until mixed but not liquefied. Combine bread crumbs (or wheat germ), tomato sauce and tomato paste in medium-sized bowl. Add spinach mixture and stir to blend.

To make the cheese filling: Mix ricotta, pepper and parsley together in a small bowl.

Preheat oven to 375. Butter bottom of a 9 x 13 baking pan.

Arrange 3 lasagna noodles side by side in baking pan. Using 1/3 of each amount, add a layer of spinach filling, ricotta filling, Parmesan,

and mozzarella, in that order. Place 3 more noodles on top and repeat process until all ingredients are used, ending with the mozzarella. Pour remaining 1 cup tomato sauce over all. Bake for 30 minutes, or until heated through. Allow to stand at least 5 several minutes before serving, to set layers.

PASTA SALAD WITH MOZZARELLA, SUN-DRIED TOMATOES AND OLIVES*

Here's a summer salad with robust flavors.

- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup drained oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon drained capers
- 1 garlic clove, minced

- 1 pound fusilli pasta
- 12 ounces tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 8 ounces fresh water-packed mozzarella cheese, drained, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 cup (packed) fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 3 ounces)
- 1/2 cup minced pitted oil-cured black olives

Blend first 5 ingredients in processor until tomatoes are coarsely chopped. Set dressing aside.

Cook pasta in large pot of boiling salted water until just tender but still firm to bite, stirring occasionally. Drain. Transfer to large bowl. Add dressing to hot pasta; toss to coat. Cool, stirring occasionally. Add chopped fresh tomatoes, mozzarella, basil, Parmesan and olives; toss. Season to taste with salt and pepper. (Can be made 6 hours ahead. Cover; chill. Bring to room temperature before serving.) Makes 8 servings.

SIDE DISHES

NEW POTATOES WITH PEPPERCORN BUTTER

1 1/2-ounce can low-salt chicken broth
2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns
1/4 cup brandy
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, room temperature
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 tablespoon chopped shallot
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

2 pounds small red-skinned new potatoes
2 green onions, thinly sliced

Combine broth and peppercorns in small saucepan. Cover and simmer 30 minutes. Uncover and simmer until mixture is reduced to 1/4 cup, about 15 minutes. Add brandy; simmer until mixture is reduced to 3 tablespoons, about 10 minutes. Cool. Blend peppercorn mixture, butter, lemon juice, shallot and thyme in processor until peppercorns are finely chopped. (Can be made 2 days ahead. Chill. Use at room temperature.)

Cook potatoes in pot of boiling salted water until tender, about 25 minutes. Drain. Quarter potatoes. Place in large bowl. Add onions and 1/4 cup peppercorn butter (reserve remaining peppercorn butter for another use); toss gently. Season to taste with salt. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

WARM MUSHROOM SALAD

Sautéed mushrooms are a classic steakhouse side dish. My husband loves this.

1 1/2 ounces pancetta
3 large shallots
1 pound fresh baby portabella mushrooms
6 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons Sherry wine vinegar

1 4- to 5-ounce bag Field Green lettuce mix

Chop pancetta. Thinly slice shallots.

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pancetta and shallots; sauté until beginning to brown. Add 2 more tablespoons olive oil, then the mushrooms. Sprinkle with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Sauté until the mushrooms are just tender, about 5 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon Sherry wine vinegar and boil until evaporated, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

Pour lettuce mix into a shallow salad bowl. Add 2 tablespoons olive oil and toss. Add 2 teaspoons Sherry wine vinegar, season with salt and pepper, and toss again. Add the mushroom mixture; toss lightly and serve immediately.

ROASTED ASPARAGUS & WILD MUSHROOM FRICASSEE

Roasting the asparagus intensifies its flavor and is easy to do. It's a nice way to cook the asparagus, even if you don't want to do the mushroom fricassee.

1 pound medium asparagus, tough ends trimmed
2 teaspoons olive oil
3 tablespoons butter
1 large shallot, minced
12 ounces assorted wild mushrooms (such as crimini, oyster, chanterelle, and stemmed shiitake), sliced
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon minced fresh Italian parsley
1 teaspoon minced fresh tarragon

Preheat oven to 475°F. Arrange asparagus on rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle oil over and turn to coat. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Roast until just tender, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, melt butter in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallot; sauté 1 minute. Add mushrooms; sauté until beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Cover; cook until mushrooms are tender, about 3 minutes. Add wine; cook uncovered until wine is absorbed,

about 2 minutes. Stir in parsley and tarragon. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Divide asparagus among 4 plates. Top each serving with mushrooms.
4 Servings

ANGEL HAIR PASTA WITH BROCCOLI & HERB BUTTER

¼ C. butter
2 TBSP fresh basil
2 TBSP fresh parsley
1 garlic clove, minced
2 tsp. olive oil
8 oz. angel hair pasta
2 C. small broccoli florets
Grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

Mix first 4 ingredients in a small bowl.

Bring large pot of salted water to boil. Add 2 tsp olive oil. Add pasta and cook until almost tender, about 3 minutes. Add broccoli and boil until pasta is tender but still firm to bite and broccoli is crisp-tender, about 1 minute longer. Drain pasta and broccoli: transfer to large serving bowl. Add herb butter and toss well to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve, passing cheese separately, if desired.

GRILLED POTATO & ONION PACKAGES

Be careful not to burn these. The taste is great and this is an easy accompaniment to burgers or other simple grilled foods.

2/3 cup olive oil
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme or 1 tablespoon dried
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 pounds white-skinned potatoes (about 4 large), peeled, sliced 1/4 inch thick
2 large red onions, halved, sliced 1/2 inch thick
Nonstick vegetable oil spray
Fresh thyme sprigs (optional)

Combine oil, mustard, thyme, salt and pepper in large bowl. Whisk to blend well. (Can be prepared 6 hours ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.)

Prepare barbecue (medium-high heat). Add potatoes and onions to mustard oil. Toss to coat. Set six 18 x 9-inch sheets of heavy-duty aluminum foil on work surface. Spray foil with nonstick vegetable oil spray. Divide vegetables among foil sheets, placing in center of left half of each. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Fold right half of foil over vegetables. Fold edges of packages together to seal tightly.

Place packages on grill. Grill until potatoes are tender and golden brown, turning occasionally, about 25 minutes. Remove packages from grill. Slit top of foil and fold back. Garnish potatoes with thyme sprigs, if desired. Serves 6.

LITTLE BEAN CAKES

These look like tater tots after they are cooked, so you can fake out your kids to get them to try one. They are great. My husband and I can devour this entire batch in one sitting, sharing none with the kids.

1 can Goya White Kidney Beans, drained
1 onion, chopped
2 egg yolks
2 tbsp. milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 cup flour
Goya Corn Oil for frying
Flour for rolling bean balls

Mash beans; combine with remaining ingredients. Shape into balls (about the size of a walnut) and roll in flour. Chill 1 hour or more. Saute in oil until brown and crisp. Serves 20 bean cakes

PERFECT WHITE RICE

Rice is a staple of Latin cuisines. Hispanic cooks try to impress upon people that it's a sin to use converted or instant rice. It's got to be "real" rice, and preferably long-grain. Avoid flavoring rice, for that will detract from the flavors of the foods you're serving the rice with.

2 cups long-grain rice
2 1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 teaspoons salt
1 quart water

Rinse the rice in a colander under cold, running water until the water runs clear. Drain.

Place the rice, oil, salt, and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Allow the rice to boil, uncovered, until almost all of the water has evaporated, 10 to 12 minutes.

Stir the rice, cover, and reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 8 to 10 minutes.

Remove from the heat and fluff with a fork just before serving. Makes approximately 4 cups.

KUGELIS

This is a giant, yummy hash-brown.

4 large potatoes
½ lb. bacon, cooked & crumbled
1 onion, minced
3 eggs, beaten slightly
3 tsp salt
1 C. sour cream
¼ C. half and half

Grate potatoes. Mix with the remaining ingredients. Bake in a 13 x 9 x 2 inch pan in a 400° oven for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 350° and bake 50 minutes more or until potatoes are brown.

HORS D'OEUVRES

MINIATURE TOURTIERES

These are tiny, tasty pork pies. It makes about 24. I cheat and use pre-made pie-crust, but for those of you who like to make your own, I included the crust recipe.

For filling

1 lb lean ground pork
1 medium onion, finely chopped (3/4 cup)
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 teaspoon dried savory, crumbled
1/2 tsp nutmeg
1/2 tsp cloves
1 tsp red pepper flakes
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

For pastry

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons cold vegetable shortening
2 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup whole milk
Special equipment: a 3-inch round cookie cutter; a 1 1/4- to 1 1/2-inch leaf-shaped cookie cutter (preferably maple*); 2 mini-muffin pans, each with 12 (1/8-cup) muffin cups
Accompaniment: **spicy tomato cranberry preserves**

Make filling:

Cook pork with onion, garlic, and spices in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over moderate heat, stirring frequently and breaking up lumps with a fork, until pork is no longer pink, 5 to 7 minutes. Sprinkle with flour and cook, stirring, until thickened, 3 to 4 minutes. Cool filling completely.

Make pastry while filling cools:

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.

Whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Blend in shortening and butter with a pastry blender or your fingertips until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add milk and stir with a fork just until a dough forms. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead 10 to 12 times. Roll out dough on lightly floured surface with a floured rolling pin into a rough 18-inch round (1/8 inch thick), dusting with just enough additional flour to keep dough from sticking. Cut out 24 rounds with 3-inch cutter and 24 leaves with leaf-shaped cutter. Make decorative lines on leaves with tip of a sharp paring knife. Fit each round into a muffin cup and fill with a rounded tablespoon of filling. Arrange leaves on filling.

Bake pies until crusts are golden, 15 to 17 minutes. Lift pies out of muffin cups and transfer to a rack. Cool to warm, about 15 minutes.

Cooks' notes:

- Filling can be made 1 day ahead and chilled, covered. Bring to room temperature before using.
- Pies can be assembled and baked 6 hours ahead and cooled, uncovered, then chilled, uncovered. Serve at room temperature or reheat in preheated 350°F oven until warm, about 15 minutes.

SAUSAGE-STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Perfect for Thanksgiving, these warm hors d'oeuvres can be assembled a day ahead and chilled, then baked before serving.

3 Italian hot sausages, casings removed
1 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 3 ounces)
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 8-ounce package cream cheese, room temperature
1 large egg yolk
Olive oil
24 large (about 2-inch-diameter) mushrooms, stemmed
1/3 cup dry white wine

Sauté sausage and oregano in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat until sausage is cooked through and brown, breaking into small pieces with back of fork, about 7 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer sausage mixture to large bowl and cool. Mix in 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic powder, then cream cheese. Season filling with salt and pepper; mix in egg yolk.

Brush 15x10x2-inch glass baking dish with olive oil to coat. Brush cavity of each mushroom cap with white wine; fill with scant 1 tablespoon filling and sprinkle with some of remaining 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese. Arrange mushrooms, filling side up, in prepared dish. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake uncovered until mushrooms are tender and filling is brown on top, about 25 minutes.

DILL DIP

This recipe was created by my paternal Grandmother, Jennine Korsh Wydysh. It is marvelous with raw veggies or cubed round rye bread.

1 pint mayonnaise
1 ½ TBSP Beau Monde seasoning
1 C. sour cream
2 TSP parsley
2 TSP dill weed
2 TSP minced onion

Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate until ready to use.

CROSTINI WITH MUSHROOMS, PROSCUITTO & ASIAGO

This sophisticated appetizer is a great party hit.

3 tablespoons butter
1/2 pound fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed, caps chopped
4 ounces crimini mushrooms, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup half-and-half
1/2 cup asiago or Romano cheese (about 2 ounces)
1/2 cup chopped thinly sliced prosciutto (about 2 1/2 ounces)

18 1/2-inch-thick diagonal bread slices cut from 1 sourdough baguette
Chopped fresh parsley

Melt butter in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add all mushrooms and garlic and sauté until mushrooms are cooked through and brown, about 10 minutes. Add cream and boil until liquid is completely absorbed, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add asiago cheese and stir until cheese melts. Mix in prosciutto. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Transfer mushroom topping to bowl. (Mushroom topping can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and refrigerate.)

Preheat oven to 375°F. Arrange bread slices on baking sheet. Bake until just golden, about 5 minutes. Mound 1 generous tablespoon mushroom topping on each slice. Return to oven; bake until topping is heated through, about 6 minutes. Sprinkle with chopped parsley. Makes about 18

PEPPERONI & ASIAGO PINWHEELS

These hors d'oeuvres are light, flaky and absolutely addictive. They are also simple to prepare and make a big impression — just what you want in party food. Additional bonus: kids love these.

1/2 cup grated asiago cheese
3/4 teaspoon dried thyme
3/4 teaspoon dried oregano
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 sheet frozen puff pastry (half of 17.3-ounce package), thawed
2 tablespoons honey-Dijon mustard
2 ounces packaged sliced pepperoni (about twenty-four 1 1/2-inch-diameter slices)
1 large egg, beaten to blend
Nonstick vegetable oil cooking spray

Mix first 4 ingredients in medium bowl. Cut puff pastry crosswise in half to form 2 rectangles. Spread 1 tablespoon mustard over 1 puff pastry rectangle, leaving 1-inch plain border at 1 long edge. Place half of pepperoni in single layer atop mustard. Top pepperoni with half of cheese mixture. Brush plain border with egg. Starting at side opposite plain border, roll up pastry, sealing at egg-coated edge. Transfer pastry roll, seam side down, to medium baking sheet. Repeat with remaining

pastry rectangle, mustard, pepperoni, cheese mixture, and egg. Chill rolls until firm, about 30 minutes, or wrap and chill up to 1 day. Preheat oven to 400°F. Line 2 baking sheets with foil. Lightly spray with vegetable oil spray. Cut each pastry roll into about thirty 1/4-inch-thick rounds. Transfer pinwheels to prepared sheets. Bake until golden, about 15 minutes. Transfer to platter; serve.

SOUPS & SAUCES

DOROTHY'S BEEF & BARLEY VEGETABLE SOUP

1 lb ground beef
1 C chopped onion
1 minced garlic
1 can kidney beans, rinsed
1 C. sliced carrots
1 TBSP parsley
1 C. frozen French-cut green beans
1 C. sliced celery
1/3 C. barley
2 16oz cans stewed tomatoes (or diced tomatoes)
3 ½ C. water
5 beef bouillon cubes
¼ tsp dried basil
Tabasco sauce

Cook beef, onion, and garlic in large soup pot, drain. Add every except green beans. Simmer for 40 minutes. Add green beans, simmer 10 minutes. Serve with a dousing of Tabasco sauce, if desired. This soup freezes well.

OLD FASHIONED CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

Everyone has their favorite recipe for Chicken Noodle Soup. This is mine. One difference is that we serve it with Acini di Pepe, which is a type of pasta that looks like a tiny ball. My kids love it.

5-6 lb chicken, skinned (yes, we skin it), rinsed, salted & peppered inside and out
8 C. fat-free chicken broth
8 C. water
1 large onion, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 large carrots, cut into "coins"
1 bay leaf
1 1/12 tsp. dried thyme
3 TBSP poultry seasoning, mixed well with 1 C. hot broth
¾ tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper

In a large soup pot put chicken, water and broth. Bring to boil on high heat, reduce to medium and cook, uncovered, 10 minutes. Skim off foam (there won't be much if you skin the chicken). Add the onion, celery and bay leaf and cook, partially covered, over low heat 30 minutes.

Remove the chicken carcass. Chop the meat into bite-sized pieces and add it back to the pot. Add the thyme, poultry seasoning, carrots, salt and pepper to the pot. Partially cover the pot and cook gently about 30 minutes.

Before serving, cook up some Acini di Pepe in a separate pot, figuring about 2 oz. per person, and when it is cooked and drained, put it in the bottom of each person's soup dish and spoon the chicken soup over top the pasta.

Nina's Nanny, Joni, also puts spinach in her chicken soup, which I really love, but my kids think is slimy seaweed. Peas are also good, but I don't put them in because my kids think they are green, floating eyeballs. Fred doesn't care for peas either.

CHEDDAR CHOWDER

Everyone to whom I served this soup either lied to me, or loved it immensely.

2 C. water
2 C. diced potatoes
½ C. diced carrots
½ C. diced celery
¼ C. chopped onion
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper

White sauce:

¼ C. butter
¼ C. flour
2 C. milk
2 C. grated cheddar cheese
1 C. cubed ham

Combine water, potatoes, carrots, celery, onion, salt & pepper in a large kettle. Boil 10-12 minutes. Meanwhile, in a smaller saucepan, make white sauce by melting the butter. Add flour and stir until smooth (about 1 minute). Slowly add milk; cook until thickened. Add grated cheese to white sauce; stir until molted. Add white sauce and cubed ham to vegetables that HAVE NOT been drained. Heat through and serve. Yield: 6 servings.

CHICKEN & DUMPLING SOUP

My favorite memory of making this soup was one winter when a bunch of us young married couples went up to a cabin the mountains for a weekend. We froze, played games, hung out and took turns cooking.

BROTH:

1 Fryer chicken, cut up (3 lb)
6 C. cold water
3 chicken bouillon cubes
6 peppercorns
3 whole cloves

SOUP BASE:

1 can (10 ¾ oz.) chicken broth
1 can (10 ¾ oz.) Cream of Chicken soup
1 can (10 ¾ oz.) Cream of Mushroom soup
1 C. chopped celery
1 ½ C. chopped carrots
½ C. chopped onions
1 C. chopped potatoes
1 bay leaf
1 C. fresh or frozen peas
Cooked fryer, cut in bite-sized pieces.
Reserved chicken broth, strained
1 tsp seasoned salt

FEATHER DUMPLINGS:

2 C. flour
1 tsp salt
4 tsp baking powder
¼ tsp white or black pepper

1 egg, well beaten
2 TBSP melted butter
2/3 C. milk

Place fryer, water, bouillon, peppercorns, and cloves in kettle and bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer until chicken is tender (about 1 ½ hours). Cool chicken just slightly; cut into bite-sized pieces and set aside. Strain and skim chicken broth.

Put reserved chicken and broth in large kettle. Add cans of broth, cream of chicken and mushroom soups, celery, carrots, onion, potatoes, bay leaf, peas and seasoned salt. Put cover on kettle. Simmer soup on low heat for 2-3 hours.

About 30 minutes before serving, mix up feather dumplings by sifting dry ingredients together. Add eggs, melted butter and enough milk to make moist, stiff batter. Drop by teaspoons into boiling liquid. Cook, covered, and without “peeking” for 18-20 minutes.

Yield: 10 servings

BROWN SAUCE

We love this on burgers and fries.

2 TBSP butter
2 TBSP flour
1 ½ tsp instant bouillon granules
1 ½ C. hot water

In a small saucepan, melt butter. Stir in flour. Dissolve bouillon in hot water. Add to flour mixture. Bring to boil, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer about 20-25 minutes, stirring frequently, until mixture is thickened and reduced to about 1 cup.

BREAKFAST

SPANISH CINNAMON MUFFINS

I don't know if I've convinced anyone else to make these yet, but these are really, really, really good. I've been making and eating them for 10 years. Trust me!

3 C. all purpose flour
3 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
3 tsp cinnamon
10 TBSP butter at room temperature
1 C. sugar
2 eggs
1 C. milk
1-2 C. diced dates (or, raisins or chopped dried apple)

Sift dry ingredients together. Cream butter until fluffy. Beat in sugar until creamy. Add eggs; beat well. Add milk and beat again. Stir in dry ingredient mix. Stir in dates. Spoon batter into lined muffin tins. Bake at 400 degrees 25-30 minutes. Makes 18-20 muffins

ZUCCHINI-CARROT BREAD WITH DATES

This is the best zucchini bread recipe I have ever had, and my husband agrees. This was also my grandfather's favorite.

3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 C. vegetable oil
1 ½ C. brown sugar, packed
1 C. zucchini, grated and drained
1 C. carrots, grated
2 tsp. vanilla
2 ½ C. flour
½ C. bran cereal (I have substituted rolled oats and it came out ok)
1 tsp each baking powder, baking soda, & salt
3 tsp. cinnamon
1 C. dates
1 C. chopped nuts (optional)

Stir the eggs, oil, sugar, zucchini carrots and vanilla together in a large mixing bowl and set aside. Sift the flour, bran cereal, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon together in a separate bowl. Combine the flour mixture with the zucchini mixture. Stir in dates and nuts.

Separate mixture into 2 buttered, floured bread tins and cook at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Cool 10 minutes. This bread freezes well.

WHITE CHOCOLATE CRANBERRY-ORANGE SCONES

My friend Elise gave me this mix as a Christmas present in Dec. 2004. It is marvelous. For a fancy breakfast you can make the dry mix the night before and in the morning add the butter and orange juice and pop it in the oven.

3 C. flour
2 TBSP baking powder
6 TBSP sugar
2/3 C. Craisins
2/3 C. white chocolate
6 TBSP cold butter cut into pieces
1 C. orange juice

Mix first 5 ingredients together in a large bowl. Cut or rub butter in until mixture resembles coarse crumbles. Stir in juice to make a large dough ball. Turn dough onto floured surface and knead lightly. Divide dough into 3 balls and pat each into a 5" diameter dome. Cut each piece into 4 wedges. Place scones on greased baking sheet on parchment paper. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown.

GREAT WAFFLES

This is great. Really. You ought to try this.

1 2/3 C. all purpose flour or 1 3/4 C. cake flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 tsp salt
3 eggs yolks
1 C. milk
1 tsp vanilla extract
5 TBSP melted butter

3 egg whites
1 5-oz can macadamia nuts, finely chopped (optional)

Combine the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the eggs yolks and milk; beat with an electric mixer until smooth. Blend in the vanilla. Pour in the butter, mixing well. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until stiff and fold gently into the batter. Add the nuts. Bake in a hot waffle iron. Makes 4 to 6 waffles.

Note to self: cook each waffle in iron for 3:00 minutes.

COMPANY FOR BREAKFAST EGG MUFFINS

This is another recipe created by my paternal Grandfather, Nester Wydysh's girlfriend Dorothy Mankowski (after his wife passed away, of course). The cool thing about this breakfast, besides the fact that it tastes great, is that everyone can eat at once as opposed to eating in shifts. Serve this with a fresh fruit salad on the side and you will be known as "the hostess with the mostest." Serves 6.

12 eggs, hard boiled
1 lb center cut bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled
2 C. shredded cheddar cheese
1 package Thomas' Original English Muffins
½-¾ C. milk
Butter

Use my Grandfather's method for boiling eggs: put all the eggs in a pot, cover with cold water, and turn the heat on high. As soon as it comes to a boil, shut it off immediately and put the lid on. Let the eggs sit there in the water for 20 minutes. They will all be cooked, and none be cracked. Now, toast the English muffins, split them apart, butter them lightly and set the halves face up on cookie sheets. Set them aside. (The toasting/buttering part is a good thing to let one of your helpful overnight guest or enthusiastic youngsters do while you make the egg sauce.)

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. Crack, peel and chop coarsely all the boiled eggs and put them in a sauce pot. Turn the heat on medium and add ½-¾ C. milk. Stir until sauce thickens and mixture is warm. Add the bacon pieces to the mixture and stir in well.

Spoon the egg-bacon mixture over the English muffin halves. Sprinkle the muffins with cheddar cheese. Bake in the oven until cheese melts, about 5-8 minutes. Serve hot.

FRUIT SMOOTHIE

½ C. strawberries
½ C. raspberries
½ small apple, cored and cut into pieces
½ C. plain yogurt
¼ C. orange juice
¼ C. ice
¼ C. milk (or rice milk or soy milk)

Place all ingredients in a blender, blend. Taste for sweetness, add equal parts juice, milk and ice to thin it down. Add fruit or yogurt to thicken. If you like it sweeter, add a little sugar or honey. Blend again and serve!

APPLE HARVEST PANCAKE

¾ C. flour
3 TBSP sugar
¼ tsp salt
3 eggs
¾ C. light cream
2 TBSP butter, melted
2 large apples, thinly sliced
2 TBSP brown sugar, firmly packed
½ tsp cinnamon
2 TBSP butter, melted

Mix the flour, sugar, salt, eggs, cream and 2 TBSP of melted butter together in a 2-quart mixing bowl. Heat a 10-inch ovenproof skillet and brush with oil to prevent sticking. Pour in the batter all at once and cook until set over medium heat. Lay apples over the top, completely covering the surface. Combine brown sugar and cinnamon; sprinkle over the apples. Pour the remaining 2 TBSP of butter over all. Bake in a 400 oven for 6 to 8 minutes. Serve warm. Serves 3 to 4.

DESSERTS

NEVER FAIL CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

This recipe comes from my best friend, Pastor Alma Thompson. It doubles very well, and always comes out terrific.

1 C. butter, room temperature
1 C. white sugar
1 C. brown sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
3 C. flour
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
12 oz. bag semi-sweet chocolate chips

Preheat the oven to 350. Mix butter and sugars together until they are smooth and creamy. Add eggs and mix in well. Mix in vanilla. Beat in flour, 1 cup at a time. When you put in the first cup of flour, also add the baking soda and salt. Stir in the chocolate chips. Spoon out heaping teaspoonfuls on ungreased cookie sheets. Bake at 350 for 9 to 10 minutes. Cool on cookie rack.

CHOCOLATE STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

Sauce
2/3 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons (packed) golden brown sugar
6 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
1 tablespoon brandy
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Biscuit
2 cups all purpose flour
5 tablespoons sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

3 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped
2/3 cup plus 2 tablespoons buttermilk

Filling

2 pounds strawberries, hulled
5 tablespoons sugar
1 1/3 cups chilled whipping cream
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

For Sauce:

Combine cream and sugar in heavy small saucepan. Stir over medium-high heat until mixture comes to boil. Remove from heat. Add chocolate and stir until chocolate melts and sauce is smooth. Mix in brandy and vanilla. (Can be prepared 2 days ahead. Cover and chill.)

For Biscuit:

Preheat oven to 375°F. Butter 9-inch-diameter cake pan with 1 1/2-inch-high sides; dust with flour. Combine 2 cups flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in large bowl; whisk to blend. Add butter and rub in with fingertips until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add chopped chocolate. Gradually add 2/3 cup buttermilk, stirring with fork until dough forms.

Transfer dough to cake pan; press gently to level top. Brush dough with 2 tablespoons buttermilk, then sprinkle with 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake biscuit until cooked through and golden on top, about 25 minutes. Cool biscuit in pan on rack (biscuit will be 1 to 1 1/2 inches high.)

For Filling:

Reserve 8 berries for garnish. Slice remaining berries into large bowl. Add 4 tablespoons sugar and toss to coat; let stand until berries begin to release juices, about 30 minutes. Combine whipping cream, vanilla and 1 tablespoon sugar in medium bowl. Whip to soft peaks. Cover and chill cream until ready to serve.

Rewarm sauce over low heat, stirring often. Cut around pan sides to loosen biscuit. Turn biscuit out onto work surface. Using long serrated knife, carefully cut biscuit in half horizontally. Using large spatula as aid, place biscuit bottom on platter. Spoon sliced berries with their juices over. Drizzle with some chocolate sauce. Spoon all but 1/2 cup

whipped cream over; cover with biscuit top. Drop reserved whipped cream in dollops onto biscuit. Garnish with reserved whole strawberries. Cut into wedges and serve, passing remaining chocolate sauce separately. Serves 8.

CHOCOLATE TRUFFLE COOKIES

4 oz. unsweetened chocolate
6 TBSP butter
12 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips
½ C. flour
2 TBSP unsweetened cocoa powder
¼ tsp. Salt
½ tsp baking powder
1 C. sugar
1 ½ tsp vanilla extract
3 eggs

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Chop unsweetened chocolate. Cut butter into pieces. Melt chopped chocolate, butter and 1 C. chocolate chips in small pan in oven, stirring occasionally. Cool. Combine flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt in a bowl. In separate bowl, beat sugar and eggs about 2 minutes. Beat in vanilla. Stir in chocolate mixture, then flour mixture and finally the remaining 1 C. chocolate chips into the sugar/egg mixture. Cover and chill until firm, at least 3 hours. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Using teaspoons, spoon into small mounds. Bake on ungreased cookie sheets, until puffed, about 7-8 minutes.

BROWNIE CUPCAKES WITH PEANUT BUTTER FROSTING

For kids of all ages, this dessert is dense and chocolaty, and comes in a cute package. When was the last time you had a cupcake with chocolate sprinkles on top?

Cupcakes

6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
1 ¼ cups semisweet chocolate chips (about 8 ounces)
3 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
½ cup (packed) golden brown sugar
⅓ cup sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup all purpose flour
1/3 cup walnuts, toasted, chopped
1/4 teaspoon salt

Frosting

½ C powdered sugar
¼ C. + 2 TBSP cup creamy peanut butter (do not use old-fashioned or freshly ground)
¼ stick unsalted butter, room temperature
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons (about) whipping cream (optional)
Chocolate shavings or chocolate sprinkles

For cupcakes:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 10 standard (1/3-cup) muffin cups with paper liners. Combine butter, 1/2 cup chocolate chips, and unsweetened chocolate in top of double boiler set over simmering water. Stir until mixture is melted and smooth. Remove from over water. Whisk both sugars into chocolate mixture, then whisk in eggs 1 at a time. Whisk in vanilla, then flour, walnuts, salt, and remaining 3/4 cup chocolate chips. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups (about 1/4 cup for each). Bake cupcakes until tester inserted into center comes out with moist crumbs attached, about 20 minutes. Transfer cupcakes to rack and cool completely.

For frosting:

Put powdered sugar and next 3 ingredients in medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat until mixture is smooth, adding whipping cream by teaspoonfuls if frosting is too thick to spread. Spread frosting in swirls over top of cupcakes. Sprinkle with chocolate shavings or chocolate sprinkles. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Store in single layer in airtight container at room temperature.)

Makes 10 cupcakes. These would also be good made as mini-cupcakes.

WOLFGANG'S CHOCOLATE CAKE

This is a flourless chocolate cake, one that tastes fabulously rich and decadent. As my son hates frosting, he insists on this cake for each of his special occasions, and whenever he can convince me to make it.

You can either serve it with nothing more than a sprinkling of powdered sugar and whipped cream to make an exciting finish to a great meal, or if you'd like a more glamorous presentation, use semi-sweet chocolate syrup to create a zig-zag design each serving plate, place the slice in the middle, and then scatter cut strawberries around it.

8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, cut into small pieces
4 ounces unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
5 large eggs, separated
Pinch of salt
2/3 cup sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Butter, flour and line the base of a 10-inch round cake pan (or spring form pan) with parchment. Combine chocolate and butter in a bain marie or in a bowl over simmering water. Whisk together the egg yolks and all but 3 tablespoons of the sugar. Stir melted chocolate into egg yolks until thoroughly combined. With an electric mixer, on medium speed, beat egg whites and salt until soft peaks form. Gradually beat in the remaining sugar and continue to whip until egg whites are stiff but not dry. Carefully fold chocolate mixture into egg whites. Pour into prepared pan. Bake for about 45 minutes. Set on a rack immediately. As the cake cools, the center will sink and crack - do not worry. Once it is completely cool, flip over cake into a serving platter, remove parchment

DINKI BROWNIES

This recipe was created by Lori Dinki, a nutritionist and mother of 5 in the Buffalo area. They are the simplest, yummiest brownies I have ever made and consumed.

12 oz. semi-sweet chips
1/3 C. butter
3/4 C. white sugar
2 TBSP water
1 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
3/4 C. all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt

Do this first: Split a 12 oz. bag of semi-sweet chips in half
Place half (1 C.) semi-sweet chips in the freezer

Bring butter, sugar and water to a boil in a small pot. Remove from the heat and add the other ½ (1 C.) of semi-sweet chocolate chips (not the ones from the freezer) and 1 tsp. vanilla. Stir well until chips are completely melted.

Combine in a separate bowl: flour, baking soda and salt.

Add the melted chocolate mixture to the flour mixture and stir well. Stir in the chocolate chips from the freezer. Bake at 325 for 30 minutes in a 9 x 7" pan.

TURTLE CAKE

This recipe comes from Fred's college roommate, Dr. Daniel Zerbe, who now has a family practice in Perry, NY. I've put it in here verbatim from the 3x5 card he sent us years ago, to give you a flavor of what it was like to live with him.

Melt in Double Boiler:

14 oz. caramels

½ C. evaporated milk

¼ C. butter

Mix together:

1 German Chocolate Cake mix

¾ C. butter

½ C. evaporated milk

Oven: 350. Grease 9x13 pan. Spread half the cake mixture. Bake for 12 minutes. Spread the caramel mixture on top of that. Sprinkle that with 1 C. semi-sweet chocolate chips and 1 C. chopped pecans. Spread on top the remaining cake mixture. Bake 25 minutes. It will not look or taste done. Don't panic or doubt. Let it cool 8-12 hours. Gain weight.

KATHY'S POPPY SEED BUNDT CAKE

This cake is easy, fast and delicious. It's one of those cakes for which you should always have the ingredients on hand, just in case.

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
1 small pkg. coconut pudding mix
½ C. vegetable oil
1 C. water
4 eggs
4 TBSP poppy seeds

Mix all of the above ingredients and pour into an ungreased bundt pan.
Bake at 350 for 45-60 minutes or until toothpick tests clean.

PETITE PAINS AU CHOCOLAT

These delicious small pastries are easy to make, and they are sure to disappear quickly.

2 sheets of frozen puff pastry (one 17.3-oz. package), thawed, each sheet cut into 12 squares.
1 large egg beaten to blend with 1 TBSP water (for sealing & glaze)
4 3.5 oz. bars imported semi-sweet or milk chocolate, each cut into six 2 3/4 –inch pieces or 12 oz. semi-sweet or milk chocolate chips
Sugar
Raspberry pie filling

Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Brush top of each puff pastry square with egg glaze. Place 1 chocolate piece or ¼ C. chocolate chips on edge of 1 pastry square. Roll up dough tightly, enclosing chocolate. Repeat with remaining pastry and chocolate. Place pastry rolls on baking sheet, seam side down. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover pastries with plastic wrap and refrigerate. Cover and refrigerate remaining egg glaze.)

Preheat oven to 400 degree. Brush tops of pastry rolls with remaining egg glaze. Sprinkle lightly with sugar. Bake until pastries are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, warm up raspberry pie filling by either heat over low temperature on the stove, or microwaving. Serve chocolate bundles warm or at room temperature with a few tablespoons of warmed up raspberry pie filling on the side. Makes 24.

TRIPLE CHOCOLATE COOKIE ICE CREAM SANDWICHES

Bake and freeze the Triple-Chocolate Cookies a day before filling them with ice cream. Purchased ice cream (softened slightly at room temperature until spreadable) also works in these sandwiches.

16 frozen Triple-Chocolate Cookies

10 ounces bittersweet (not unsweetened) or semisweet chocolate, chopped

1/2 cup plus 2 teaspoons all purpose flour

3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature

3 large eggs

1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

6 ounces (1 cup) semisweet chocolate chips

Position rack in center of oven and preheat to 350°F. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Stir chopped chocolate in top of double boiler set over simmering water until melted and smooth; remove from over water. Cool melted chocolate 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, sift flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat sugar and butter in another medium bowl until crumbly. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Continue to beat until mixture is light, pale, and creamy, about 5 minutes. Add lukewarm melted chocolate and vanilla and beat just until blended. Fold in dry ingredients, then chocolate chips.

Drop chocolate cookie batter by 1/4 cupfuls onto prepared baking sheets, spacing 2 inches apart. Bake cookies, 1 baking sheet at a time, until tops are evenly cracked but cookies are not yet firm to touch, about 16 minutes. Cool cookies completely on baking sheets. Using metal spatula, carefully transfer 4 cookies to each of 4 large resealable plastic bags, arranging in single layer. Freeze cookies overnight. (Can be made 3 days ahead. Keep frozen.) Makes about 16.

Place 1 frozen Triple-Chocolate Cookie flat side up on work surface. Place 1/2 cup ice cream atop cookie. Using offset spatula or butter knife, gently spread ice cream to cover cookie; top with another cookie,

flat side down, and press gently to adhere. Repeat with remaining ice cream and cookies, making 8 ice cream sandwiches total. Wrap and freeze until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight. Let ice cream sandwiches stand at room temperature 5 minutes before serving. Makes 8.

CHOCOLATE KAHLUA CAKE

You can leave out the kahlua if you must. Or not. Fred and I once devoured the entire cake in one weekend. Afterward, in a fit of guilt, he asked me only to make the cake once a year.

Cake:

1 pkg. 1 lb. chocolate cake mix (to make two layer chocolate cake)

½ C. grated semi-sweet chocolate

1 tbsp ground espresso coffee

Butter cream:

1 ½ C. butter, softened

4 C. confectioners' sugar

6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, melted

2 TBSP vanilla

½ C. Kahlua

Cake: Prepare cake mix as directed on package. Stir in chocolate and coffee. Pour batter into 2 9" greased and floured round cake pans. Bake as directed on package. Allow cake layers to cool completely on cooling rack. Using a sharp knife, slice each cake layer into two even layers.

Butter cream: Beat butter until light and fluffy. Add confectioners' sugar a cup at a time and beat gently until sugar is thoroughly incorporated. Mix in the melted chocolate and vanilla.

To assemble: Place one cake layer on serving plate, sprinkle with 2 TBSP Kahlua. Spread with butter cream. Repeat Kahlua and buttercream steps for next 3 layers. Refrigerate cake until served. Allow cake to come to room temperature for 1 hour before serving.

DUMP CAKE

I just needed this recipe in a handy spot for the twice a decade when I feel like making it. This version of dump cake has a lot less butter than others I have made in the past, and tastes just as good.

1 16-oz can crushed pineapple
1 21-oz can cherry pie filling
1 18 1/4 oz package deluxe yellow cake mix
1 C. pecans, chopped
2 TBSP butter, thinly sliced

Dump the undrained pineapple into a butter 13x9-inch baking pan and spread evenly over the bottom of the pan. Dump the cherry pie filling and spread. Dump the dry cake mix onto the cherry layer; spread evenly. Sprinkle pecans over the top and dot with butter slices. Bake in a 350 oven for 45 to 50 minutes. Serves 12.

CARMEL APPLE CUPCAKES

1 package butter-recipe yellow cake mix plus ingredients to prepare
1 C chopped dried apples*
Carmel Frosting
Chopped, toasted pecans (optional)

Preheat oven to 350. Line 24 regular size (1 1/2 -inch) muffin pan cups with paper muffin cup liners. Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Stir in apples. Spoon batter into prepared muffin pans. Bake 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted into centers comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove to racks; cool completely. Prepare Carmel Frosting. Frost cupcakes. Sprinkle cupcakes with nuts, if desired.

*Tip: to keep the dried apples from sticking to the knife while chopping them, spray the knife with nonstick cooking spray before you begin.

Carmel Frosting:

3 TBSP butter
1 C. packed brown sugar
1/2 C. evaporated milk
1/8 tsp. salt

3 ³/₄ C. powdered sugar

³/₄ tsp vanilla

Melt butter in 2-quart saucepan. Stir in brown sugar, evaporated milk and salt. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; cool to lukewarm. Beat in powdered sugar until frosting is of spreading consistency. Blend in vanilla.