

Our focus this week, and next, will be on recipes for that Valentine's Day dinner with your special sweetheart(s). If you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Snickertini

Chocolate sauce, to coat glass
Caramel sauce, to coat glass
1-1/2 oz. caramel vodka
1/2 oz. amaretto
1/2 oz. Irish cream
1/2 oz. chocolate liqueur
1 tsp. heavy cream

Drizzle thin lines of caramel and chocolate sauce on the inside of a rocks glass and set in the refrigerator to chill
Add the caramel vodka, amaretto, Baileys, chocolate liqueur and heavy cream into a shaker with ice and shake until well-chilled.
Pour unstrained into the prepared glass.

Feta Shrimp Skillet

Prep/Total Time: 30 min.
Yield: 4 servings

1 T. olive oil
1 med. onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp. dried oregano
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 tsp. salt
2 cans (14-1/2 oz. ea.) diced tomatoes, undrained
1/4 c. white wine, optional
1 lb. uncooked shrimp (31-40 per lb.), peeled & deveined
2 T. minced fresh parsley
3/4 c. crumbled feta cheese

In a large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook and stir 4-6 minutes or until tender. Add garlic and seasonings; cook 1 minute longer. Stir in tomatoes and, if desired, wine. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 5-7 minutes or until sauce is slightly thickened.
Add shrimp and parsley; cook 5-6 minutes or until shrimp turn pink, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat; sprinkle with cheese. Let stand, covered, until cheese is softened.

Italian Chicken Stew

Total Time: 20 min.
Yield: 4 servings

1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cubed
4 med. potatoes, peeled & cut into 1/4" cubes
1 med. sweet red pepper, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 to 2 T. olive oil
1 jar (26 oz.) meatless spaghetti sauce
1-3/4 c. frozen cut green beans
1 tsp. dried basil
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
Pepper to taste

In a Dutch oven, cook the chicken, potatoes, red pepper and garlic in oil until chicken is no longer pink and vegetables are tender. Stir in the remaining ingredients; cook and stir until heated through.

Raspberry Pork Medallions

Total Time: 25 min.
Yield: 4 servings

1 pork tenderloin (1 lb.)
1 T. canola oil
2 T. reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 garlic clove, minced
1/2 tsp. ground ginger

1 c. fresh raspberries
2 T. seedless raspberry spreadable fruit
2 tsp. minced fresh basil
1/2 tsp. minced fresh mint, opt.

Cut tenderloin crosswise into eight slices; pound each with a meat mallet to 1/2-in. thickness. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add pork; cook 3-4 minutes on each side or until a thermometer reads 145°. Remove from pan; keep warm.

Reduce heat to medium-low; add soy sauce, garlic and ginger to pan, stirring to loosen browned bits from pan. Add raspberries, spreadable fruit, basil and, if desired, mint; cook and stir 2-3 minutes or until slightly thickened. Serve with pork.

Sesame Salmon with Wasabi Mayo

Prep Time: 15 min

Bake Time: 20 min

Yield: 6 servings.

2 T. butter, melted
3 T. sesame oil, divided
1 salmon fillet (2 lbs.)
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/3 c. mayonnaise
1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. prepared wasabi
4 green onions, chopped
2 T. sesame seeds, toasted

Drizzle butter and 2 tablespoons oil into a 13x9-in. baking dish; tilt to coat bottom. Place salmon in dish; brush with remaining oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Bake, uncovered, at 425° until fish just begins to flake easily with a fork, 18-22 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the mayonnaise, lemon juice and wasabi. Sprinkle salmon with onions and sesame seeds. Serve with sauce.

Tenderloin Steak Diane

Prep/Total Time: 30 min

Yield: 4 servings

4 beef tenderloin steaks (6 oz. ea.)
1 tsp. steak seasoning
2 T. butter
1 c. sliced fresh mushrooms
1/2 c. reduced-sodium beef broth
1/4 c. heavy whipping cream
1 T. steak sauce
1 tsp. garlic salt with parsley
1 tsp. minced chives

Sprinkle steaks with steak seasoning. In a large skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add steaks; cook until meat reaches desired doneness, 4-5 minutes on each side. Remove steaks from pan.

Add mushrooms to skillet; cook and stir over medium-high heat until tender. Add broth, stirring to loosen browned bits from pan. Stir in cream, steak sauce and garlic salt. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until sauce is slightly thickened, 1-2 minutes.

Return steaks to pan and turn to coat; heat through. Stir in chives.

Buried Strawberry Cheesecake

Level: Easy

Total: 4 hr (includes cooling and chilling times)

Active: 30 min

Yield: 12 to 14 servings

Nonstick cooking spray, for greasing the pan
1 (18.4 oz.) box brownie mix (plus required ingredients)
45 to 50 medium strawberries (about 2-1/2 lbs.), stemmed
2 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, at room temp.
1 c. sugar
4 c. heavy cream
1 c. sour cream
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
2 (1/4 oz.) pkgs. unflavored gelatin
Warm chocolate fudge sauce, for drizzling

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly spray the bottom and sides of a 9-by-13-inch metal baking pan with cooking spray. Line the pan with parchment, leaving at least a 2-inch overhang on all sides.

Prepare and bake the brownies in the prepared pan according to the package directions for a 9-by-13-inch baking pan. Let cool completely on a rack, about 1 hour.

Meanwhile, slice 5 to 6 strawberries into 1/8-inch-thick slices - you will need enough to fit around the edges of the pan; set aside. Leave the remaining strawberries whole.

Beat the cream cheese, sugar and 3-1/2 cups of the heavy cream in a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed until stiff peaks form, 3 to 4 minutes. Fold in the sour cream and vanilla until smooth.

Bring the remaining 1/2 cup heavy cream to a boil in a small saucepan, then whisk in the gelatin. Continue to whisk off heat until the gelatin is dissolved, 2 to 3 minutes. Fold the gelatin mixture into the cream cheese mixture until well combined.

Stand the sliced strawberries upside down around the perimeter of the pan with the flat/cut sides touching the side of the pan, cutting an extra strawberry or two if needed. Pour 3 cups of the cream cheese mixture on top of the brownies and use an offset spatula to spread and smooth it out. Press the remaining whole strawberries into the cream cheese upside down (pointed ends up); you should have about 8 rows of 5. Spread the remaining cream mixture on top of the strawberries and smooth out the top with an offset spatula. Chill until set, at least 2 hours and up to overnight.

When ready to serve, use the parchment overhang to remove the dessert from the pan and place onto a serving platter (trim the parchment from around the edges). Drizzle the top with chocolate fudge sauce and cut into bars.

Valentine's Day Sugar Cookies

Level: Easy

Total: 5 hr 15 min

(includes setting time)

Active: 30 min

Yield: about twenty 3" & twenty 1-1/2" cookies

Cookies:

2-1/2 cups all-purpose flour (see Cook's Note), plus more for dusting

1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. kosher salt

1-1/2 sticks unsalted butter (12 T.), at room temp.

3/4 c. granulated sugar

1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1 lg. egg

Icing:

3 c. confectioners' sugar

1/4 c. plus 2 T. milk

1-1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Red gel food coloring

Pink gel food coloring

Sprinkles, opt.

Special equipment: heart-shaped cookie cutters in various sizes (suggested sizes: 3-inch and 1-1/2-inch)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

For the cookies: Combine the flour, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl and set aside. In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar and vanilla on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the egg and mix until fully incorporated, about 1 minute. Reduce the speed to low, add the flour mixture and mix until well combined, scraping down sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed, about 2 minutes.

Divide the dough into 2 equal pieces. Working with 1 piece at a time, roll the dough on a lightly floured piece of parchment paper until it's about 1/8-inch thick. Using heart-shaped cookie cutters, cut the dough and place the cookies on the prepared baking sheets about 1 inch apart (a small off-set spatula is really helpful when transferring the cookies). After both pieces of dough have been rolled out and cut, combine the dough scraps and re-roll and cut to utilize as much of the dough as possible.

Bake until the cookies are just barely golden around the edges, rotating halfway through, 12 to 14 minutes. Transfer the cookies to wire racks to cool completely.

For the icing: Meanwhile, whisk the confectioners' sugar, milk and vanilla in a medium bowl until smooth. The consistency should be similar to that of slightly thinned yogurt and should coat the back of a spoon. Adjust with additional confectioners' sugar or milk, if needed.

Place 2 tablespoons of icing into each of 2 small bowls. Add 4 drops of red gel food coloring to one bowl and 2 drops of pink gel food coloring to the other and stir until fully incorporated. Using a small spoon, drizzle a small amount of each color over the white icing and then repeatedly drag a toothpick through the icing until you create a marbled effect.

Working with one cooled cookie at a time, carefully dip it face-side down into the icing and allow any excess to drip off before placing the cookie back on the cooling rack. Add additional red and pink icing to the bigger bowl of icing as needed to maintain the marbling effect. Decorate with sprinkles (if using) before allowing to the icing to fully set, about 4 to 5 hours.

Cook's Note: When measuring flour, we spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level off the excess. Scooping directly from the bag compacts the flour, resulting in dry baked goods. If you prefer a softer cookie, reduce the baking time by 2 to 3 minutes.

Quote of the Week:

"Live in the present and make it so beautiful that it's worth remembering."

~ Arnold H. Glasow