

This week, we have some recipes recommended by our test kitchen cooks, and two submitted recipes. Thank you for the recipes!
Let us know if there is something you would like us to put in our column, or if you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Coconut Butternut Squash Soup

Yield: 8 servings
Time: About 2 hours
Submitted by Val Botzet

1 lg. butternut squash (about 1-1/2 lbs.)
2 T. olive oil or other vegetable oil
1 lg. yellow or sweet white onion, chopped
1 med. apple, any variety, peeled & diced
2 c. prepared vegetable broth, or 2 c. water w/1 vegetable bouillon cube
2 tsp. good-quality curry powder
2 tsp. grated fresh or jarred ginger, or more, to taste
Pinch of ground nutmeg or allspice
1 (14-oz.) can light coconut milk
Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste

Garnish:

2 med. red onions, quartered and thinly sliced
1 good-size bunch kale (about 10-12 oz.)

To bake the squash, preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cut in half and place halves, cut side up, in a foil-lined, shallow baking dish and cover tightly with more foil. Bake for 30 to 50 minutes, until you can easily pierce the flesh with a knife. Scoop out and set aside.

Heat about half the oil in a soup pot. Add the onion and sauté over medium-low heat until golden, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Add the apple, squash, broth, and spices. Bring to a steady simmer, then cover and simmer gently until the apples are tender, about 10 minutes.

Transfer the solids to a food processor with a slotted spoon, in batches if need be, and process until smoothly pureed, then transfer back to the soup pot. Or better yet, simply insert an immersion blender into the pot and process until smoothly pureed.

Stir in the coconut milk and return the soup to a gentle simmer. Cook over low heat for 5 to 10 minutes, until well heated through. Season with salt and pepper. If time allows, let the soup stand off the heat for an hour or two, then heat through as needed before serving.

Just before serving, heat the remaining oil in a large skillet. Add the red onions and sauté over low heat until golden and soft.

Meanwhile, strip the kale leaves off the stems and cut into thin shreds. Stir together with the onions in the skillet, adding just enough water to moisten the surface. Cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the kale is bright green and just tender, about 5 minutes.

To serve, ladle soup into each bowl, then place a small mound of kale and onion mixture in the center.

Hawaiian Oxtail Soup

Prep Time: 8 mins
Cook Time: 3 hrs 45 mins
Total Time: 3 hrs 53 mins
Yield: 4 servings
Submitted by Val Botzet

2 lbs. oxtails
1 strip dried orange peel (zest, not the pith), see recipe note
2 whole star anise
1 (2") piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced
Salt, at least 1 T., plus more to taste
1/2 c. shelled & skinned raw peanuts (can sub roasted unsalted peanuts)
1/8 tsp. chili pepper flakes (or more to taste)
2 c. loosely packed coarsely chopped fresh mustard greens

Garnish:

Fresh cilantro, chopped
Green onions, white & green parts, sliced on the diagonal
Freshly grated ginger

Fill half a large (5-quart) pot and bring to a boil. Add the oxtails and parboil for 30 minutes. Drain the pot and rinse the oxtails in water. Trim the oxtails of any excess fat.

Return the oxtails to the pot. Cover with water by 1 inch. Add the orange peel, star anise, ginger, and salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cover and let simmer for 1 hour.

Add the peanuts and simmer for 2 to 3 more hours, until the oxtail meat is tender and falling off the bone.

At this point, you can either skim the fat off the soup and proceed to the next step, or let the soup cool, and chill it overnight in the refrigerator. The next day, the fat will have solidified and will be easy to pull up from the top of the soup. The flavors will also be absorbed by the oxtails if you let the soup sit overnight.

Bring the soup to a simmer again. Add the chili pepper flakes and mustard greens. Cook for 5 more minutes, or until the mustard greens are tender.

Garnish with chopped fresh cilantro, green onions, and freshly grated or julienned ginger. Serve with steamed white rice and a side of soy sauce for dipping. If you want, you can strip the meat off the bones before serving. We prefer the meat served bone-in, in which case, you will want to provide a bowl for the bones.

Cheesy Kielbasa Pasta

1 T. olive oil
1 lb. smoked kielbasa, sliced into 1/4" pcs.
1-1/2 c. diced yellow onion
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 c. chicken stock
1 (10 oz.) can diced tomatoes
8 oz. bowtie pasta, uncooked
3/4 c. heavy cream
1/2 tsp. sea salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1 c. cheddar cheese, shredded
1/4 c. fresh green onions, sliced thinly

Heat olive oil in a large deep sauté pan over medium high heat. Add kielbasa and diced onions and sauté for 5-6 minutes. Add minced garlic and let cook for 30 seconds to a minute. Pour in chicken stock, diced tomatoes, cream, and bowtie pasta and stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper and bring to a simmer.

Let simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until pasta is fully cooked. Remove from heat and add cheddar cheese to the pan. Cover and let sit until cheese melts.

Garnish with sliced green onions and serve.

Chicken Noodle Casserole

Yield: 8

Prep Time: 10 min

Cook Time: 30 min

Total Time: 40 min

5 T. butter, melted (divided)
12 oz. uncooked extra broad egg noodles
2 cans (10.5 oz. ea.) cream of chicken soup
1 c. sour cream
1 c. whole milk
1 T. Italian seasoning
4 c. chopped cooked chicken
1 c. (4 oz.) fresh shredded Cheddar cheese
2 c. (about 12 oz.) frozen corn, thawed
2 c. (about 12 oz.) frozen peas and carrots, thawed
1 sleeve Ritz crackers (about 34 crackers), crushed
1 tsp. dried parsley

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Prepare a 13x9-inch (3-quart) baking dish with 1 tablespoon melted butter, reserve the remaining 4 tablespoons for the cracker topping.

Cook and drain egg noodles thoroughly according to the package directions. Set aside.

Meanwhile: in a medium mixing bowl, combine the cream of chicken soup, sour cream, milk, and Italian seasoning. Whisk to combine.

Add the chicken, cheese, thawed vegetables, and cooked egg noodles to the casserole dish. Pour the soup over top and stir until completely combined.

Crush the Ritz crackers. They should look like coarse bread crumbs, it's okay to have bigger chunks of the crackers in there too.

Combine the cracker crumbs, remaining 4 tablespoons of melted butter, and dried parsley in a small mixing bowl.

Sprinkle the cracker topping over the casserole evenly.

Bake for 25-30 minutes until the top is lightly browned and the edges are bubbly.

Cinnamon Roll Poke Cake

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Total Time: 50 minutes

Yield: 15 slices

Cake:

1 box vanilla (white) cake mix prepare as directed on the box

Filling:

5 T. butter
1/2 c. light brown sugar packed
3 tsp. ground cinnamon
2-1/2 tsp. clear vanilla extract
14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk

Frosting:

8 oz. cream cheese softened

8 T. butter softened (1/2 c.)
2 tsp. clear (or reg.) vanilla extract
2-1/2 c. powdered sugar
2 tsp. half & half

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 9 x 13 baking dish with a baking spray.

Prepare the cake as directed on the cake box. Some white cake box recipes give the option of 2-3 eggs using the whole egg or only the egg whites. Either works for this recipe, so it's personal preference. These box cakes are almost always done baking several minutes before the suggested bake times on the back of the box so keep an eye on them in the oven! After baking, allow the cake to cool until it is still just slightly warm to the touch.

Using the end handle of a silicone spoon or spatula or a wooden handled spatula, poke holes in the cake. Spread the holes approximately 1/2 inch apart.

In a heat-safe bowl, add the 5 tablespoons of butter, light brown sugar, ground cinnamon, vanilla extract and sweetened condensed milk. Whisk until all the ingredients are combined. Place the bowl in the microwave and heat on high for 1 minute, remove and stir. Heat for another minute and stir. Stir and make sure all brown sugar clumps have been removed. Return to the microwave for 30-second increments until all lumps are removed.

Carefully ladle the butter mixture evenly over the top of the cake.

Using a stand mixer or a handheld mixer and a medium-sized mixing bowl, on medium to medium high speed, cream the butter and cream cheese together. Scrape down the sides of the mixing bowl.

Reduce the mixer speed to low then add the clear vanilla flavoring, heavy cream, and the powdered sugar 1/2 cup at a time. Return the mixer speed to medium and continue mixing until the frosting is smooth.

Spoon all of the frosting on the cake, and using a silicone spatula smooth the frosting. Any leftovers can be stored in an airtight container.

Snickerdoodle Bread

Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 30 mins

Total Time: 40 mins

Yield: 12 slices

1 c. butter, softened
1-1/2 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
3 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
3/4 c. sour cream
2-1/2 c. flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 c. mini chocolate chips (or cinnamon chips)
3 T. sugar
3 tsp. ground cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and grease 5 mini loaf pans or 1 large pan.

In a medium bowl, cream together the butter, sugar, salt, and cinnamon. Add in the eggs, vanilla, and sour cream. Add in the flour and baking powder stirring until just combined. Fold in the chocolate chips (optional). Pour batter (it will be thick) into the prepared loaf pans, filling about 2/3 full.

In a small bowl, combine the 3 tablespoons sugar with 3 teaspoons ground cinnamon. Sprinkle mixture evenly on top of batter.

Place pans in oven and bake 30-35 minutes if mini loaves, or 60-65 minutes if large loaf pans. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly before removing from pan and serving.

5-Ingredient Salted Caramel Crumble Bars

Prep Time: 10 min

Total Time: 2 hr 15 min

Yield: 16 servings

1 roll (16.5 oz.) refrigerated sugar cookie dough
1/2 c. caramel topping
2 T. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. coarse sea salt
1/2 c. chopped pecans

Heat oven to 350°F. Spray 8-inch square pan with cooking spray.

Break up cookie dough in pan. Reserve 1/2 cup of the dough. Press remaining dough evenly in bottom of pan.

Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in small bowl, stir caramel topping and flour until well blended. Pour over crust in pan; carefully spread to within 1/4-inch from edge. Sprinkle salt and 1/4 cup of the pecans over caramel.

In small bowl, mix remaining dough and remaining pecans until well blended. Crumble over bars in pan.

Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 1 hour. For bars, cut into 4 rows by 4 rows.

Quote of the Week:

“Love has nothing to do with what you are expecting to get — only with what you are expecting to give — which is everything.”

