

More kid-friendly recipes for packing in lunches or an afternoon snack this week.

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.

Peach Pie Smoothie

Level: Easy

Total: 5 min

Prep: 5 min

Yield: 1 serving, 2 c.

1/2 c. nonfat or 1% lowfat milk
1/2 c. nonfat plain yogurt
1 c. frozen unsweetened peaches
1 T. honey, plus more to taste
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract
1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
Pinch ground nutmeg
Pinch ground ginger

Put all ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth.

Air Fryer Mozzarella Sticks

Yield: 4 - 6 servings

Total Time: 20 mins

8 mozzarella string cheese sticks
3 large eggs
1 tbsp. water
1/2 c. breadcrumbs
1/2 c. panko breadcrumbs
1 tsp. Italian seasoning blend
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. smoked paprika
1/3 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
Nonstick cooking spray
Marinara sauce, to serve

Cut the cheese sticks in half, crosswise. Set aside.

Whisk together the eggs and water in a small bowl. In another small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, panko, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and paprika, stirring well. In a third bowl, combine the flour, salt, and pepper, stirring well.

Dip each of the cheese sticks into the eggs, then dredge in the flour mixture. Dip back into the eggs, then dredge in the bread crumb mixture, pressing to coat well.

Place the sticks on a small parchment-lined baking sheet. Freeze for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, dip each of the sticks back into the eggs, then dredge in the breadcrumb mixture, pressing to coat well. Freeze again for 30 minutes.

Preheat the air fryer to 390°, if required. Spray the fryer basket with cooking spray. Generously coat the frozen sticks with cooking spray. In 2 batches, place the sticks in the basket in a single layer. Cook 6-7 minutes or until browned and crispy. (Keep an eye on them so they do not overcook or the cheese will start to bubble out.)

Serve immediately with warm marinara sauce.

Chocolate and Strawberry Stuffed French Toast

Level: Easy

Total: 23 min

Prep: 15 min

Cook: 8 min

Yield: 4 servings

3 eggs
1-1/4 c. nonfat milk
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 c. part-skim ricotta cheese
8 slices of whole-wheat sandwich bread, crusts removed
1 (8 oz.) container strawberries, hulled & sliced
4 tsp. bittersweet chocolate chips
Cooking spray
2 tsp. confectioners' sugar

In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk and vanilla. Set aside.

Place 1 tablespoon of ricotta in the center of 4 of the pieces of bread and spread around slightly. Top with about 6 slices of strawberries and a teaspoon of chocolate chips. Cover each with another piece of bread to make a "sandwich."

Spray a large nonstick skillet or griddle with cooking spray and preheat. Carefully dip each of the "sandwiches" into the egg mixture until completely moistened. Then place on the skillet and cook over a medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes per side, until the outside is golden brown and the center is warm and chocolate is melted.

Transfer to serving places. Top with remaining strawberries and sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

Muffin-Tin Lasagnas

Prep/Total Time: 30 min.

Makes: 1 doz.

1 lg. egg, lightly beaten
1 carton (15 oz.) part-skim ricotta cheese
2 c. shredded Italian cheese blend, divided
1 T. olive oil
24 wonton wrappers
1 jar (24 oz.) garden-style pasta sauce
Minced fresh parsley, opt.

Preheat oven to 375°. In a bowl, mix egg, ricotta cheese and 1-1/4 cups Italian cheese blend.

Generously grease 12 muffin cups with oil; line each with a wonton wrapper. Fill each with 1 tablespoon ricotta mixture and 1-1/2 tablespoons pasta sauce. Top each with a second wrapper, rotating corners and pressing down centers. Repeat ricotta and sauce layers. Sprinkle with remaining cheese blend.

Bake until cheese is melted, 20-25 minutes. If desired, sprinkle with parsley.

Pigs in a Blanket

Yield: 6 - 8 servings

Prep Time: 10 mins

Cook Time: 15 mins

Total Time: 25 mins

For the Pigs In A Blanket:

1 (8 oz.) can refrigerated crescent roll dough
1 (14 oz.) package cocktail-sized smoked sausages, patted dry
1 lg. egg
Everything bagel seasoning (opt.)

For the Spicy Mayo Dipping Sauce (opt.):

3/4 c. mayonnaise
1/4 c. chile-garlic sauce or Sriracha

For the Maple-Dijon Dipping Sauce (opt.):

3/4 c. Dijon mustard
1/4 c. genuine maple syrup

For the Quick Ranch (opt.):

3/4 c. sour cream
1/4 c. pickle juice (from jar)
1 tbsp. fresh chives, chopped

Preheat the oven to 375°. Working quickly while cold, unroll the crescent dough sheet on a lightly floured surface and separate the perforated dough into 8 triangles. Cut each dough triangle into three equal skinny triangles.

Place one cocktail sausage on the wide base of one skinny triangle. Roll the sausage toward the pointed end of the triangle, allowing the dough to overlap and wrap around the sausage. Place the rolled sausage on a parchment-lined baking sheet, point-side down. Repeat with the remaining dough triangles and sausages.

Whisk together the egg with 1 teaspoon water in a small bowl until smooth. Brush the egg wash over the dough and sprinkle with the everything bagel seasoning, if desired. Bake at 375° until the dough is puffed and golden brown, 12 to 15 minutes.

Make the dipping sauces (optional): For the Spicy Mayo Dipping Sauce, stir together the mayo and chile-garlic sauce in a small bowl until smooth. For the Maple-Dijon Dijon Dipping Sauce, stir together the mustard and syrup in a small bowl until smooth. For the Quick Ranch, stir together the sour cream, pickle juice, and chives in a small bowl until smooth.

Serve the pigs in a blanket warm with Spicy Mayo, Maple Dijon, or Quick Ranch Dipping Sauces.

Pizza Pockets

Level: Easy

Total: 31 min

Prep: 15 min

Cook: 16 min

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

(makes about 16 pcs.)

1 T. olive oil
8 oz. Italian turkey sausage
1 c. tightly-packed arugula (about 1 oz.)
4 oz. cream cheese, room temp.
1/3 c. grated Parmesan,
plus 1/4 c.
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
1 (13.5 oz.) pkg. of store-bought pizza crust
All-purpose flour, for rolling out pizza dough
1 egg, beaten (for egg wash)
1-1/2 c. marinara sauce, store-bought or homemade

Heat the olive oil over medium-high heat in a medium-sized, heavy skillet. Add the sausage and cook until crumbled and golden, about 5 minutes. Add the arugula and cook until wilted. Turn off the heat and let cool about 10 minutes. Add the cream cheese, 1/3 cup Parmesan, salt, and pepper and stir to combine. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Roll out the pizza dough on a lightly floured surface to a thin 20 by 12-inch rectangle. Cut the rectangle in half lengthwise. The cut each half into 8 equal rectangles.

Spoon topping onto 1 side of each of the rectangles. Using a pastry brush, brush the edges of the rectangle with egg wash. Close the rectangle of pizza dough over the topping. Use a fork to seal and crimp the edges. Place the pizza pockets onto a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Brush the top of each pizza pocket with egg wash. Sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan. Bake until golden, about 15 to 17 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the marinara sauce over low heat in a medium saucepan. Serve the hot pizza pockets with the marinara sauce alongside for dipping.

Peanut Butter Granola Pinwheels

Prep/Total Time: 10 min.

Yield: 16 pinwheels

4 T. creamy peanut butter
2 flour tortillas (8 inches)
2 tsp. honey
1/2 c. granola without raisins

Spread peanut butter over each tortilla; drizzle with honey and sprinkle with granola. Roll up; cut into slices.

Yogurt Parfait

Yield: 6 servings

Prep Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 35 mins

For the Granola Crunch:

2 c. oats
1 c. chopped pecans
3/4 c. light brown sugar
1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1 stick salted butter, melted
1 egg white, beaten

For the Fruit:

4 c. fresh fruit, such as strawberries, blackberries, and blueberries
2 T. granulated sugar
1 T. lemon juice

For the Yogurt:

4 c. whole milk vanilla yogurt
1/2 c. sour cream

For the granola crunch: Preheat the oven to 350°. Stir together the oats, pecans, brown sugar, flour, melted butter, and egg white in a medium bowl until well combined. Spray a rimmed baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray; add the oat mixture in an even layer. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely.

For the fruit: Meanwhile, stir together the fresh fruit, sugar, and lemon juice. Set aside.

For the yogurt mixture: Stir together the yogurt and sour cream in a medium bowl.

To assemble the parfaits, place a few spoonfuls of fruit in each glass. Top the fruit with 2 to 3 tablespoons granola, then about 1/4 cup yogurt. Repeat layers as desired. Top with more granola and fruit, if you like.

Fruit Leather Roll-Ups

Level: Easy
Total Time: 3 hrs 45 min
Prep Time: 45 min
Cook Time: 3 hrs

1-1/4 lbs. chopped fruit (see below for suggested flavors)
3/4 c. sugar
1 to 2 T. fresh lemon juice

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees F. Combine the fruit and sugar in a blender. Add the lemon juice to taste (use 2 tablespoons for apples or bananas) and puree until smooth.

Transfer the pureed fruit to a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook, stirring occasionally at first and then more often toward the end, until most of the liquid evaporates and the mixture is very thick, 35 to 45 minutes. Be careful: The mixture may splatter.

Line a 12-by-17-inch rimmed baking sheet with a silicone mat or nonstick foil. Use an offset spatula to spread the fruit on the mat or foil into a thin layer. Bake until barely tacky, 3 hours to 3 hours, 30 minutes.

Transfer the baking sheet to a rack and let the fruit leather cool completely. Peel off of the mat or foil. If the leather is still moist on the underside, return it to the oven, moist-side up, until dry, about 20 more minutes. Lay the leather smooth-side down on a sheet of wax paper and use kitchen shears to cut it into strips on the paper. Roll up the strips and store in zip-top bags for up to 1 week.

Plum: 5 medium, unpeeled, chopped

Peach or nectarine: 5 medium, unpeeled, chopped

Apple: 3 large (Gala or Granny Smith), peeled and chopped

Strawberry: 4 cups, hulled and chopped

Raspberry: 5 cups

Grape: 3-1/2 cups (preferably Concord), seeded if necessary

Banana: 5 medium, peeled

Mango: 2 large, peeled and chopped

Raspberry-Vanilla: 5 cups raspberries plus the seeds from 1/2 vanilla bean

Strawberry-Banana: 3 cups strawberries, hulled and chopped, plus 2 medium bananas, peeled

Apple-Ginger: 3 large apples, peeled and chopped, plus 1-1/2 teaspoons grated ginger

Spicy Mango: 2 large mangoes, peeled and chopped, plus 1/8 teaspoon each salt and cayenne pepper

Quote of the Week:

“Before the reward there must be labor. You plant before you harvest. You sow in tears before you reap joy.”

- Ralph Ransom