

Happy Fall!

It doesn't quite feel much like fall just yet - but the signs are there. You can hear the rustling of leaves and see the color popping on the treetops. This week, we are starting to think about comfort foods. Enjoy!

Pumpkin Pancakes

Total Time: 30 Min.

Servings: 2

1/3 C. all-purpose flour
1/3 C. whole wheat flour
2 T. sugar
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
Dash salt
1 lg. egg, room temperature
1/2 C. fat-free milk
1/3 C. vanilla yogurt
1/3 C. canned pumpkin
1 T. canola oil
1/8 tsp. vanilla extract
Maple syrup

In a bowl, whisk together the first 8 ingredients. In another bowl, whisk the next 6 ingredients until blended. Add to dry ingredients; stir just until moistened. Lightly coat a griddle with cooking spray; preheat over medium heat. Pour batter by 1/3 cupfuls onto griddle. Cook until bubbles on top begin to pop. Turn; cook until golden brown. Serve with syrup.

Fish Chowder

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 30 min.

Total Time: 1 hr.

Servings: 8

2 T. butter
2 C. chopped onion
4 fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 stalk celery, chopped
4 C. chicken stock
4 C. diced potatoes
2 lbs. cod, diced into 1/2-inch cubes
1 C. clam juice
1/2 C. all-purpose flour
1/8 tsp. Old Bay Seasoning, or to taste
salt and ground black pepper to taste
2 (12 fl. oz.) cans evaporated milk
1/4 C. cooked crumbled bacon

Melt butter in a large stockpot over medium heat. Sauté onions, mushrooms, and celery in butter until tender. Add chicken stock and potatoes; simmer for 10 min. Add fish; simmer for another 10 min.

Mix together clam juice and flour in a small bowl until smooth; stir into soup and simmer for 1 min. Season with Old Bay, salt, and pepper. Remove from heat and stir in evaporated milk.

Portion into soup bowls and top with crumbled bacon.

Parmesan Chicken Bake

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 35 min.

Total Time: 50 min.

Servings: 6

2 T. olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed and finely chopped
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes, or to taste
6 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves
2 C. prepared marinara sauce
1/4 C. chopped fresh basil
1 (8 oz.) package shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
1/2 C. grated Parmesan cheese, divided
1 (5 oz.) package garlic croutons

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Coat the bottom of a 9x13-inch casserole dish with olive oil, and sprinkle with garlic and red pepper flakes.

Arrange chicken breasts in the bottom of the dish.

Pour marinara sauce over chicken. Sprinkle basil over marinara sauce, and top with 1/2 of the mozzarella cheese, followed by 1/2 of the Parmesan cheese, and croutons.

Top with remaining mozzarella cheese and remaining Parmesan cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven until cheese and croutons are golden brown and the chicken is no longer pink inside, about 35 min. to an hour, depending on the shape and thickness of your chicken breasts. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a chicken breast should read at least 160°F

Instant Pot® Pork Chops

Prep Time: 5 min.

Cook Time: 15 min.

Additional Time: 10 min.

Total Time: 30 min.

Servings: 4

4 pork chops
3 T. butter, cut into small chunks
1 (1 oz.) package dry onion soup mix (such as Lipton®)
1 C. apple juice

Place pork chops into a multi-functional pressure cooker.

Dot butter over chops, then sprinkle with onion soup mix. Pour in apple juice.

Close and lock the lid. Select high pressure according to the manufacturer's instructions; set the timer for 5 min. Allow 10 to 15 min. for the pressure to build. Release the pressure using the natural-release method according to the manufacturer's instructions, 10 to 40 min.

Air Fryer Butternut Squash Fries

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cook Time: 22 min.

Total Time: 32 min.

Servings: 4

1 lb. butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 T. extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp. bagel seasoning
1 tsp. chopped fresh rosemary

Preheat an air fryer to 400 °F. Toss butternut squash with olive oil in a large bowl. Add squash pieces to the air fryer basket. Cook until lightly browned, stirring every 3 to 4 min., about 22 min. total.

Transfer to a bowl or serving plate and sprinkle seasoning blend evenly over the top. Garnish with fresh rosemary.

Apricot Glazed Carrots

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 10 min.

Total Time: 25 min.

Servings: 8

2 lbs. carrots, peeled and diagonally sliced
3 T. butter, melted
1/3 C. apricot preserves
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. orange zest
2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
chopped fresh parsley for garnish

Add carrots to a pot of lightly salted water, and bring to a low boil. Simmer until carrots are tender. Drain.

Put melted butter in a bowl, and stir in apricot preserves. Stir in nutmeg, salt, orange zest, and lemon juice. Add carrots, and stir well to coat. Sprinkle with chopped parsley.

Toaster Pastry Cookies

Prep Time: 40 min.

Cook Time: 10 min.

Chill Time: 1 hr.

Total Time: 1 hr. 50 min.

Servings: 45

Dough

1/2 C. butter, softened
1 C. white sugar
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 C. sour cream
1 lg. egg
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
2-2/3 C. all-purpose flour

Brown Sugar-Cinnamon Filling

1/4 C. softened butter
1/2 C. packed dark brown sugar
4 tsp. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/8 tsp. salt

Glaze

1 C. confectioner's sugar
1 T. milk, plus more as needed
1/4 tsp. vanilla extract
food coloring
sprinkles or sanding sugar

Beat butter in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed 30 seconds. Beat in sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Beat in sour cream, egg, and vanilla. Beat in as much flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in remaining flour. Divide dough in half. Chill, covered, until easy to handle, 1 to 2 hrs.

Preheat the oven to 375°F.

On a well-floured work surface, roll half of dough at a time to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut out squares with a 2-inch cookie cutter. Place half of squares on ungreased cookie sheets.

Filling: Beat butter in a small bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed 30 seconds. Add dark brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, and salt. Beat until combined.

Spoon 1/2 tsp. filling onto center of each. Top with remaining squares. Seal edges using floured fork tines.

Bake until edges are firm and bottoms are very lightly browned, 6 to 8 min. Transfer cookies to a wire rack; cool.

Glaze: whisk confectioner's sugar, milk, and vanilla extract together in a small bowl. For brown sugar-cinnamon variation, add a dash of ground cinnamon.

Tint glaze with a few drops of food coloring as desired; spread on cooled cookies, leaving a 1/2-inch border. Add desired sprinkles or sanding sugar. Let stand until set.

Different Variations

Wild Berry:

For filling, bring 1 C. frozen mixed berries to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, mashing occasionally, until softened, about 2 min. Stir together 1/4 C. sugar and 1 T. cornstarch in a small bowl; add to berry mixture. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened and bubbly, about 5 min. (mixture will go from cloudy to translucent, and purple color will deepen once starch is fully cooked). Transfer mixture to a small bowl; chill until fully cooled, about 30 min. Tint 1/3 of glaze teal and tint remaining glaze purple. Spread cookies with purple glaze and drizzle with teal glaze.

Strawberry:

For filling, simmer 1 C. chopped strawberries in a small saucepan over medium heat. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, mashing occasionally, until softened, about 5 min. Stir together 1/4 C. sugar and 1 T. cornstarch in a small bowl; stir into strawberries. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 5 min. (mixture will go from cloudy to translucent, and red color will deepen once starch is fully cooked). Transfer mixture to a bowl; chill until cooled, about 30 min. Spread pastries with untinted glaze.

Hot Fudge Sundae:

For dough, in Step 1, reduce flour to 2-1/2 C. Add 2 T. unsweetened cocoa powder to dough along with flour.

For filling, beat 4 oz. softened cream cheese in a small bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed 30 seconds. Add 1/4 C. powdered sugar and 1 tsp. vanilla. Beat until smooth. Spread cookies with untinted glaze and drizzle with hot fudge ice cream topping.

Quote of the Week:

“Up until Prohibition (1920-1933), an apple grown in America was far less likely to be eaten than to wind up in a barrel of cider.” (“Hard” cider is a twentieth-century term, redundant before then since virtually all cider was hard until modern refrigeration allowed people to keep sweet cider sweet.)

~ Michael Pollan