

This week, we will revisit two of Darlene Dixon's Columns from February 2019.

Feb. 14, 2019

Valentine's Day, what a special day it is. It's the day you show your love and affection for that special someone in your life; wives and husbands, boyfriends to girlfriends. It's a day that long-stem roses are popular. Maybe a heart-shaped box of candy, and jewelry, Valentine cards with a special message written inside, are tokens for suitors to present to their sweethearts.

Whether you go out for a great meal, or you stay home and make the meal, I've got a delicious fudge cheesecake recipe I know your husband or boyfriend will love.

Fabulous Fudge Cheesecake

Crust:

1 C. vanilla wafer crumbs or graham cracker crumbs
1/4 C. powdered sugar
1/3 C. melted butter

Place the crumbs and powdered sugar in a small bowl; pour melted butter over, mix together. Press into bottom of a cheesecake pan.

Filling:

3 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
2 tsp. vanilla
2 C. semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
4 eggs

In a mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until creamy. Beat in the condensed milk and vanilla, add the melted chocolate, blend well. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Spoon filling over crust. Bake at 325° for 45-50 min. Cool completely. Carefully run a knife around edges. Place on serving plate. Top each piece with whipped cream.

Deluxe Macaroni & Cheese

Serves: 8-10

1/2 C. butter
1/2 C. flour
1 tsp. pepper
32 oz. carton chicken broth
8 oz. pkg. mozzarella cheese, shredded
8 oz. pkg. Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
8 oz. pkg. smoked provolone cheese, shredded
16 oz. box Ziti, cooked according to pkg. directions
1 C. shredded Colby-Jack cheese

Preheat oven to 350°. Spray a 3-quart casserole with nonstick cooking spray.

In a Dutch oven, melt butter, add flour and pepper; cook, stirring constantly. Slowly stir in broth. Stir frequently as it's cooking, for 6-8 min., or until thickened and bubbly.

Gradually stir in mozzarella, Monterey Jack and Provolone, until cheeses melt and mixture is smooth. Add cooked pasta; simmer over low heat, stirring gently to coat pasta.

Transfer to prepared casserole. Bake, covered, for 25 min. Top with Colby-Jack cheese; bake, uncovered for 10 min.

Souper Burgers

Serves: 6

1 lb. ground beef
1/3 C. diced onion
10-3/4 oz. can cheddar cheese soup
2 T. ketchup
1/8 tsp. pepper
6 hamburger buns, split and toasted

In a large skillet, over medium-high heat, cooked beef and onion until beef has browned and onion is tender; chop up to separate meat. Drain off fat. Combine the browned beef, soup, ketchup and pepper. Heat thoroughly over low heat, stirring occasionally. Serve on buns.

Red Velvet Brownie Hearts

Yield: 5 dozen

1 box (family size) fudge brownie mix
1/2 C. sour cream
2 eggs
1 oz. bottle red food coloring
2 lbs. powdered sugar (8 C.)
1/2 C. water
2 T. light corn syrup
2 tsp. vanilla extract
Red food coloring

Empty brownie mix into a large bowl. Add sour cream, eggs and red food coloring; mix well. Pour batter in a greased 9x13 inch baking pan. Bake and cool as directed on the package. Using a small heart-shaped cookie cutter, cut out and place heart-shaped brownies on a wire rack set over a baking sheet.

Combine powdered sugar, water and corn syrup in a saucepan. Cook on medium-low heat until sugar is melted, stirring occasionally. Stir in vanilla. Tint with desired amount of food coloring. Spoon icing over tops and sides of brownie hearts. If icing becomes too stiff, gently reheat to pouring consistency. Let stand until icing is set.

Use remaining icing to decorate or write on brownies. Pour a small amount of icing into a small plastic bag, snip off a tiny piece from a corner. Squeeze through hole in bag to decorate or write on brownies.

Easy Peanut Butter Truffles

1/4 C. butter
1/4 C. honey
2 C. creamy peanut butter
1-1/4 c. powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1 C. honey roasted or dry roasted peanuts, chopped

Line an 8-inch square pan with foil. Grease foil with butter. In a small saucepan, combine butter and honey over low heat, stir in peanut butter; stir until well blended. Remove from heat; stir in powdered sugar and vanilla. Spoon and spread evenly into prepared pan. Refrigerate until firm.

Place peanuts in a shallow bowl. Using foil, lift candy out of pan. Remove foil; cut candy into bite-size tiny squares (about 3 doz). Roll squares into balls; then roll into peanuts.

You can leave them plain, or melt chocolate or white almond bark (4 squares with 3/4 tsp. vegetable oil). Melt in the microwave, it melts quickly. Drizzle over candies, decorate with red Valentine sprinkles

Valentine Blox

When my children were young, this is a treat I made for them every Valentine's Day. Knox® Gelatin Blox.

3 envelopes gelatin
3 (3 oz.) pkgs. cherry or raspberry gelatin
2-1/2 C. boiling water
1 C. cold water or 1 C. heavy cream

Bring 2-1/2 cups water to a boil, add gelatin and flavored gelatin, stir cold water. For creamy look, use the cream. Pour into a 9x13 inch pan. Refrigerate. Use a Valentine-shaped cookie cutter to cut out shapes, or cut into tiny squares. Your children will love these!

"To know God puts a song in your heart, and a smile on your face."

Feb 21, 2019

I'm sure the folks that wanted snow must be happy now. Plenty to enjoy snowmobiling, skiing, skating, all those wonderful winter activities. My daughter is taking 80 children down to Buck Hill in Lakeville. They snowboard and ski, later she serves them hot chocolate and cookies. Sure hope Wednesday evening is not too cold. She works at Celebration Church, and this is her class Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. She does have good helpers; her main-stay helper is her husband, Mike.

My favorite lunch is soup. I don't care what kind it is; I just love a hot cup of soup for my lunch.

Slow Cooker Broccoli Cheese Soup

Servings: 10-12

1 lb. frozen broccoli florets
5 C. low sodium chicken broth
1 med. onion, diced
2 carrots, finely diced
2 (10.5 oz.) cans cr. of celery soup
1/2 tsp. seasoned salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
Pinch of cayenne pepper, opt.
1-1/2 lbs. Velveeta® cheese
2 C. grated sharp cheddar cheese
Saltine crackers

Place the frozen broccoli in the slow cooker, add the chicken broth, onion, carrots, soup, salt, pepper and cayenne. Stir it all together. Place the lid on the slow cooker; cook on high for 4 hrs. The veggies will be cooked, the flavors will be marvelous.

Use an immersion blender (or potato masher) to puree the soup about three-quarters of the way. Add the cheeses. Then cover, set cooker on low, cook for 15 min. Serve with a little more grated sharp cheddar cheese on each bowlful. Saltine crackers served on the side.

You can make the same soup, just use cauliflower with Monterey Jack grated cheese.

Slow Cooker Mexican Chicken Soup

Servings: 10

3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. pepper
28 oz. can diced tomatoes w/juice
10 oz. can diced tomatoes w/green chiles
3 C. chicken broth
15 oz. can black beans, rinsed & drained
2 T. tomato paste
1 med. onion, diced
1 hot pepper, seeded & chopped, opt.
1 red bell pepper, seeded & chopped
1 yellow pepper, seeded & chopped
Juice of 1 lime
Fixins: avocado, sour cream, grated cheese, tortilla chips

Place the chicken in a slow cooker. Sprinkle on the chili powder, cumin, salt and pepper. Add the cans of tomatoes, chicken broth, black beans, tomato paste, onion, chopped peppers and lime juice.

Place the lid on the cooker. Cook on low for 8 hrs., or on high for 5 hrs. Remove the chicken to a plate; Use two forks to shred it finely. Return to the pot of soup. Serve piping hot with tortillas, cut in strips, added to soup.

Pizza Casserole

Servings: 8

2 (8 oz.) tubes refrig. crescent rolls
1-1/2 lb. lean ground beef (85%), browned in skillet
1 sm. can mushrooms, drained
1 sm. can sliced ripe olives, drained
12 oz. can tomato sauce
1 pkg. sloppy joe mix
1 tsp. oregano
1 C. shredded mozzarella cheese
1 C. shredded cheddar cheese
Small pkg. taco chips, crushed

Grease a 9x13 inch pan with cooking spray. Roll out one tube of crescent, size to fit the inside of pan. Seal edges together by pressing perforations.

Brown ground beef, add mushrooms, ripe olives, tomato sauce, Sloppy Joe mix and oregano; mix together. Spoon into crust.

Roll out second crescent, place over the top of the filling. Top with cheeses. Bake at 350° for 40 min; 5 min. before, take out of oven, sprinkle with crushed taco chips.

Cream Puff Pie

Serves: 6

1/2 C. water
1/4 C. butter
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 C. flour
2 eggs

Filling:

3/4 C. sugar
1/3 C. flour
1/8 tsp. salt
2 eggs
2 C. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
2 C. frozen whipped topping, thawed
Chocolate syrup

Bring water and butter to a boil; stir in salt and flour. Let stand for 5 min. Then add the eggs, adding one at a time, beat well until smooth. Spread in a greased 9 inch pie pan, push the batter up the sides of the pan. Bake at 400° for 35-40 min.

In a microwave bowl, mix sugar, flour, salt, eggs and milk. Cook on high; check often. Whisk until smooth and creamy. Stir in vanilla. Place plastic wrap over the top. Cool completely. Fold in a cup of the whipped topping. Put in cooled pie crust. Top the pie with whipped topping and chocolate syrup.

Butterscotch Chewies

1 yellow cake mix (reg. size)
1/2 C. brown sugar
2 T. butter, melted
2 eggs
Water
1/2 C. chopped pecans

With the back of the spoon, mash all the lumps from the cake mix right in the bowl. Add brown sugar and butter. Whisk eggs in a measuring cup; add water to fill cup to 2/3 cup. Pour into rest of ingredients. Transfer to a greased 9x13 inch pan or a 10x15 inch pan for thinner bars. Bake at 325° for 25-30 minutes.

Helpful Hints:

- When boiling eggs in water, add a dash of salt and a little vinegar before adding the eggs. This keeps them from cracking open.
- When cooking noodles, bring amount of water and a teaspoon of vegetable oil to a boil; add the noodles. Cover and let stand with the burner turned off. In twenty minutes you have perfect pasta.
- You don't have cream soup for your casserole? Melt 3 T. butter, whisk in 3 T. flour, 1/4 tsp. salt and 1 C. milk. Cook until thickened. For flavor, stir in chicken, onion or beef granules.

“God hears us when we call to Him. Not one voice is ignored; the sounds of praise, the pleas of pain, all are heard by the Lord.”

Quote of the Week:

“If we do not want to die together in war, we must learn to live together in peace.”

~ Harry S. Truman