

Spring... our reward for making it through another winter!

If you are like us, we are excited to eat more spring-like themed and colored foods.

This week, we found some foods that help you feel like spring, a new and refreshing season! Reward yourself!

Ooey-Gooey Lemon Monkey Bread

Prep Time: 20 min.

Cook Time: 45 min.

Cool Time: 10 min.

Total Time: 1 hr. 15 min.

Servings: 16

Monkey Bread

cooking spray

1 C. granulated sugar

1 packed T. grated lemon zest, plus more for garnish

2 (16.3-oz.) cans southern homestyle biscuits, cut into quarters

3/4 C. unsalted butter

1/4 C. light corn syrup

1/2 tsp. lemon extract

Lemon Drizzle

1/2 C. creamy lemony supreme frosting

1/2 tsp. vanilla bean paste (or vanilla extract)

Preheat the oven to 350°F with a rack positioned in lower third position. Grease a (12-C.) Bundt pan with cooking spray. Set aside.

Combine granulated sugar and lemon zest in a large bowl; rub sugar and zest together until fragrant. Add biscuit pieces and toss to coat each piece evenly with sugar mixture; do not shake off excess sugar.

Arrange pieces in the prepared pan.

Melt butter, corn syrup, lemon extract, and any remaining lemon-sugar mixture (scant 1/2 cup) in a small saucepan over medium heat, whisking constantly until sugar is dissolved and mixture is fully combined. Pour butter mixture evenly over biscuits in the pan.

Bake in the preheated oven until biscuits are golden brown and a thermometer inserted into the outer edges of the center biscuits registers 190 degrees F (87 degrees C), about 40 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 10 minutes before inverting onto a serving platter.

Microwave frosting in a small microwave-safe bowl until runny, 10 to 15 seconds. Stir in vanilla until smooth. Drizzle glaze evenly over Monkey Bread.

Fruit Salsa and Cinnamon Chips

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 10 min.

Additional Time: 15 min.

Total Time: 55 min.

Servings: 10

16 oz. strawberries, quartered

2 med. golden delicious apples - peeled, cored and diced

2 kiwis, peeled and diced

8 oz. raspberries

3 T. fruit preserves, any flavor

2 T. white sugar

1 T. brown sugar

Cinnamon Chips:

10 (10-inch) flour tortillas

butter-flavored cooking spray

2 T. cinnamon sugar

Salsa: Mix strawberries, apples, kiwis, raspberries, fruit preserves, white sugar, and brown sugar together in a large bowl until thoroughly combined. Cover and chill in the refrigerator while you make the cinnamon chips.

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

Chips: Stack tortillas on a work surface; use a sharp knife to cut through the stack four times making eight wedges in each tortilla. Arrange wedges in a single layer on the prepared baking sheets. Spray wedges with cooking spray, sprinkle with desired amount of cinnamon sugar, then spray again.

Bake in the preheated oven until golden and crispy, 8 to 10 min. Allow to cool approximately 15 min. on the baking sheets, then serve with chilled fruit salsa.

Chickpea Chopped Salad with Pita Chips

Total Time: 25 min.

Servings: 6

3 T. lemon juice

2 T. extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 tsp. Dijon mustard

1 sm. clove garlic, grated (about 1/4 tsp.)

1/8 tsp. cracked black pepper

1/8 tsp. salt

1 (15-oz.) can no-salt-added chickpeas, rinsed
1 C. cherry tomatoes, quartered
1 C. crumbled feta cheese
1/2 C. Persian cucumber, seeded and finely chopped
1/3 C. red bell pepper, finely chopped
1/3 C. red onion, finely chopped
1/4 C. chopped mixed fresh tender herbs (such as oregano, mint and flat-leaf parsley)
1 T. finely chopped pitted Kalamata olives
1/2 C. crushed multigrain pita chips, plus more for serving

Whisk lemon juice, oil, mustard, grated garlic, and pepper and salt, in a large bowl until combined.

Add rinsed chickpeas, quartered tomatoes, feta, chopped cucumber, bell pepper and onion, herbs and olives; toss until evenly coated. Add pita chips; toss to combine. Serve with additional pita chips, if desired.

Chicken Taco Dump Dinner

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 45 min.

Total Time: 1 hr.

Servings: 12

cooking spray
1 (16 oz.) jar thick and chunky mild salsa
1 (4 oz.) can diced green chiles
1 T. chili powder
1 tsp. ground cumin
1/4 tsp. salt
5 C. shredded cooked chicken
1 (15 oz.) can black beans, rinsed and drained
1-1/2 C. frozen fire-roasted corn
12 (6 in.) corn tortillas
3 C. shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided
taco toppings, such as shredded lettuce, chopped red onion, chopped fresh cilantro, taco sauce, sour cream, chopped avocado, or crushed tortilla chips

Preheat the oven to 375 °F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.

Combine salsa, green chiles, chili powder, cumin, and salt in a large bowl. Stir in chicken, black beans, and corn.

Place half of tortilla pieces in the bottom of the prepared dish. Top with half of chicken mixture and 1 C. cheese. Repeat layers of tortilla pieces and chicken mixture.

Cover the dish with aluminum foil. Bake in the preheated oven for 35 min.

Remove the foil and sprinkle with remaining 2 C. cheese. Continue to bake until heated through and cheese is melted and just starting to brown, about 10 min.

Top servings with desired toppers.

Creamy Honey-Mustard Chicken Casserole

Active Time: 35 min.

Total Time: 55 min.

Servings: 8

1 T. neutral oil, such as canola oil or avocado oil
2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
1 sm. yellow onion, chopped
3/4 tsp. salt, divided
1/3 C. all-purpose flour
2 C. half-and-half
1 C. unsalted chicken broth
2 (10-oz.) packages frozen peas and carrots
2 (8.8-oz.) packages microwaveable brown rice
1/2 C. Dijon mustard
1/4 cup honey
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
Chopped scallions for garnish

Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Heat oil in a large high-sided ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken pieces, chopped onion and 1/2 tsp. salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is beginning to brown, 8 to 10 min. Sprinkle with flour; cook, stirring constantly, for 1 min. Stir in half-and-half and broth; bring to a boil, stirring often and scraping the bottom of the pan to remove any browned bits. Boil, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened, about 1 min. Stir in peas and carrots; bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Once simmering, remove from heat.

Transfer the mixture to a large bowl; stir in rice, mustard, honey, pepper, garlic powder and the remaining 1/4 tsp. salt until evenly combined. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish; spread into an even layer.

Bake until the casserole is bubbling around the edges and the chicken is cooked through, 15 to 20 min. Let stand for 5 min. before serving. Garnish with scallions, if desired.

Nutella® Swirl Cheesecake Bars

Prep Time: 20 min.

*Cook Time: 45 min.
Chill Time: 4 hrs.
Cool Time: 20 min.
Total Time: 5 hrs. 25 min.
Servings: 16*

Crust

1-1/2 C. finely ground chocolate creme filled sandwich cookie crumbs (Oreo®)
1/3 C. chopped dry-roasted hazelnuts
2 T. firmly packed light brown sugar
1 pinch salt
4 T. unsalted butter, melted

Filling

16 oz. full-fat cream cheese, softened
1/2 C. white sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. salt
1 pinch ground nutmeg
3/4 C. heavy cream, at room temperature
1-1/2 tsp. lemon juice
1 extra-large egg, at room temperature
1/2 C. chocolate hazelnut spread (such as Nutella®)

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 9x9-inch square pan with enough parchment paper to have overhang on all sides.

Combine OREO® crumbs, chopped hazelnuts, brown sugar, and pinch of salt in a food processor; pulse until finely ground. Add in melted butter and pulse until mixture is evenly moistened. Pour mixture into the prepared pan and press firmly and evenly into the bottom of the pan.

Bake crust in the preheated oven for 10 min. Remove from oven and allow crust to cool for 10 min. Keep the oven on.

Beat cream cheese, white sugar, vanilla, 1/2 tsp. salt, and nutmeg together in a large bowl with an electric mixer until completely smooth and combined. Add in heavy cream and lemon juice and beat until smooth and combined. Add in egg and mix until just incorporated. Pour batter over crust and spread into an even layer.

Place Nutella® in a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave until slightly warmed, about 30 seconds. Place dollops of warm Nutella® randomly over cheesecake filling. Use a sharp knife to gently swirl the batters together, taking care not to go too deep and cut the crust. Tap the pan on the counter a few times to help the batter to settle again.

Bake bars in the preheated oven until edges of bars begin to turn golden, and bars still have a slight jiggle in the center, 35 to 40 min. Allow bars to cool to room temperature; then refrigerate until fully chilled, at least 4 hours.

Banana Bread Blondies

*Prep: 15 min.
Bake: 20 to 22 min.
Total: 40 min.*

3/4 C. mashed banana
2/3 C. granulated sugar
1/4 C. light brown sugar or dark brown sugar, packed
6 T. unsalted butter
1 lg. egg yolk
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
3/4 tsp. table salt
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1-1/4 C. all-purpose flour
1/4 C. chopped walnuts or pecans, toasted; optional
1/4 C. semisweet chocolate or mini chocolate chips
flaky sea salt, for sprinkling; optional

Preheat the oven to 350°F with a rack in the center. Lightly grease an 8" square pan, then line it with a parchment sling.

In a large saucepan, mash the banana with the sugars until well combined. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, then cook, stirring frequently with a flexible spatula, until shiny, syrupy, and caramelized. The mixture should be thick enough so that when it's removed from the heat and the spatula is dragged across the bottom of the pan, the line fills in after about 1 second. This will take about 4 to 8 min. of cooking, depending on the ripeness of the bananas.

Remove the pot from the heat, let cool for about 5 min., then add the butter, yolk, and vanilla. Stir until the mixture is creamy and emulsified.

Whisk in the salt and baking powder, then stir in the flour with a flexible spatula until only a few dry streaks remain. Let the batter cool for about 5 min., then work quickly to stir in the nuts and chocolate (the chocolate will melt slightly). Transfer the thick, soft batter to the prepared pan and spread into an even layer (if the batter feels too thick to spread, use damp hands or a lightly greased offset spatula). Sprinkle with flaky salt if desired.

Bake for 20 to 22 min., until the bars are set in the center, and a toothpick comes out with no raw batter.

Let cool completely in the pan (at least 2 hrs.) before transferring to a cutting board to slice and serve.

Store the banana bread bars in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 4 days. Freeze, well wrapped, for longer storage.

Quote of the Week:

“The cross shows us the cost of love, but the empty tomb reveals its eternal victory.”

~ Anonymous