

Summer days seem to go by in fast forward. We are always looking for a way to provide a shortcut or a time-saving option when it comes to meals and menu planning... all without compromising great taste!

Hopefully, we can help provide some new options for your menus, so you can find more time for other summer fun!

Cinnamon Swirl French Toast Casserole

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 50 min.

Additional Time: 8 hrs.

Total Time: 9 hrs. 5 min.

Servings: 8

1 stick butter, softened
1 (16 oz.) loaf cinnamon swirl bread (such as Pepperidge Farm®)
1-1/2 C. milk
4 lg. eggs
1/4 C. white sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/4 tsp. salt

Butter 6 slices cinnamon swirl bread, then place them butter-side down into a casserole dish. Butter 6 more bread slices and place them butter-side down on the other slices.

Mix together milk, eggs, sugar, vanilla, and salt in a bowl until smooth and pour over bread in the casserole dish. Cover and place in the refrigerator for 8 hours to overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Place the casserole dish inside a larger pan; pour water into the outer pan, making sure not to get water in casserole.

Bake in the preheated oven until a knife inserted into the center comes out mostly clean, about 50 min.

Donut Muffins

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 15 min.

Additional Time: 10 min.

Total Time: 40 min.

Servings: 24

1/2 C. white sugar
1/4 C. margarine, melted
3/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/2 C. milk
1 C. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder

Finishing:

1/4 C. margarine, melted
1/2 C. white sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 375 °F. Grease a 24-cup mini muffin tin.

Muffins: Mix sugar, margarine, and nutmeg together in a large bowl. Stir in milk, then mix in flour and baking powder until just combined. Spoon batter into the prepared muffin cups, filling each 1/2 full.

Bake in the preheated oven until the tops are light golden brown, 15 to 20 min. Remove from the oven and transfer to a wire rack.

Finishing: Place melted margarine in a bowl, and mix sugar and cinnamon together in another bowl.

Dip the top of each warm muffin in melted margarine, then dip in sugar mixture to coat. Let cool for 10 min. before serving.

Savory Summer Cheesecake

Prep Time: 20 min.

Cook Time: 1 hr. 10 min.

Add'l Time: 2 hrs. 45 min.

Total Time: 4 hrs. 15 min.

Servings: 10

Filling:

3 T. olive oil
1-1/2 C. diced bell peppers
1/2 C. diced yellow onions
1 pinch salt
2 cloves garlic, crushed, or to taste
4 lg. eggs
1/4 C. all-purpose flour
1-1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper
1 pinch cayenne pepper
1 T. white sugar

1 C. creme fraiche (see recipe below)
3 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese, at room temperature
1/2 C. grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
3 T. chopped fresh parsley
3 T. chopped fresh tarragon
2 T. chopped fresh thyme

Herb Cracker Crust:

4-1/4 oz. plain crackers, finely crushed
1/4 tsp. dried Italian herb blend
3 T. melted butter

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Butter a 9-inch springform pan well.

Filling: Heat olive oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Sauté peppers and onions with a large pinch of salt until onions just start to turn translucent, about 5 min. Stir in garlic and cook for 2 more min. Turn off heat and allow to cool to room temperature.

While the pepper mixture is cooling, prepare the crust: Combine crushed cracker crumbs, dried Italian herbs, and melted butter in a mixing bowl. Stir until crumbs are coated.

Transfer the buttered crumbs into the prepared springform pan and press down into an even layer. Set aside until needed.

Continue the filling: Combine eggs, flour, kosher salt, black pepper, cayenne pepper, and sugar in a large mixing bowl and whisk until smooth. Add the creme fraiche, cream cheese, and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, and mix until smooth. Stir in parsley, tarragon, thyme, and cooled pepper mixture until evenly combined.

Transfer cheese mixture into the prepared springform pan. Tap the pan gently to settle the contents and place on a baking sheet.

Bake in the lower center of the preheated oven until a skewer poked into the center comes out clean, 60 to 75 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 30 minutes. Run a knife around the edges and carefully remove the ring.

Cheesecake should be thoroughly chilled in the refrigerator before serving, about 2 hours.

Crème Fraiche

Prep: 5 min.

Active: 1 min.

Resting Time: 12 hrs.

Total: 12 hrs. 5 min.

Serves: 16

Makes: 2 cups

1 pint (16 oz.) heavy cream
2 T. (1 oz.) cultured buttermilk (or yogurt)

Combine buttermilk and heavy cream in a non-reactive container. Cover and allow to rest at room temperature until thickened to desired texture, about 12 hours. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Sour Cream Burgers

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cook Time: 15 min.

Additional Time: 15 min.

Total Time: 40 min.

Servings: 8

2 lbs. ground beef
1 C. sour cream
1/2 C. dry bread crumbs
1 (1 oz.) envelope dry onion soup mix
1/8 tsp. pepper

Mix ground beef, sour cream, bread crumbs, onion soup mix, and pepper in a large bowl with your hands until thoroughly combined. Cover and refrigerate until flavors have blended, about 15 min.

Meanwhile, preheat an outdoor grill for medium heat and lightly oil the grate.

Form beef mixture into eight patties.

Cook on the preheated grill until no longer pink in the center, 6 to 8 min. per side. An instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should read at least 160°F

Grilled Cauliflower

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cook Time: 25 min.

Total Time: 35 min.

Servings: 4

1 head cauliflower, cut into thick slices
1 T. olive oil
1 T. brown sugar
2 tsp. seasoned salt (such as Lawry's®)

Preheat an outdoor grill for medium-high heat and lightly oil the grate.

Sprinkle cauliflower slices on both sides with olive oil, brown sugar, and seasoned salt.

Cook cauliflower on the preheated grill until char marks appear, 2 to 3 min. per side. Transfer to a grill-safe pan with a lid, cover, and continue cooking on the grill until tender, about 20 min.

Strawberry Icebox Cake

Prep Time: 20 min.

Cook Time: 1 min.

Additional Time: 4 hrs.

Total Time: 4 hrs. 21 min.

Servings: 12

2 (8 oz.) tubs fat-free whipped topping
1 (14.4 oz.) package graham crackers
3 lbs. fresh strawberries, sliced
1/4 C. chocolate chips

Spread some whipped topping on the bottom of a 9x13-inch pan. Place 5 graham cracker sheets in the center. Break up 2 more sheets to cover the edges.

Cover the top of the crackers with more whipped topping and then some sliced strawberries. Repeat layers 3 more times, ending with strawberries on top.

Place chocolate chips in a resealable plastic bag and microwave at 10-second intervals until melted. Snip off 1 corner of the bag and drizzle melted chocolate over the strawberries. Refrigerate until flavors combine, at least 4 hours.

Note: The longer it stays in the fridge, the more cake-like the crackers become. It will keep in the fridge for up to 5 days.

Root Beer Float Pie

Total Time: 15 min. + freezing

Servings: 8

1 carton (8 oz.) frozen whipped topping, thawed, divided
3/4 C. root beer
1/2 C. whole milk
1 pkg. (3.4 oz.) instant vanilla pudding mix
1 graham cracker crust (9 inches)
Maraschino cherries, optional

Reserve and refrigerate 1/2 cup whipped topping for garnish. In a large bowl, whisk together root beer, milk and pudding mix for 2 min. Fold in half of the whipped topping. Spread into graham cracker crust.

Spread remaining whipped topping over pie. Freeze at least 8 hours or overnight.

Dollop reserved 1/2 C. whipped topping over each serving. If desired, top each serving with a maraschino cherry.

Quote of the Week:

“Sun is shining. Weather is sweet. Make you wanna move your dancing feet.”

~ Bob Marley