

Summer is full of wonderful, fresh produce!

This week, we feature a garden favorite - tomatoes!

Did you know: there is around 10,000 varieties of tomatoes? Tomatoes are technically a fruit because they form a flower and contain seeds. Still, they're most often utilized like a vegetable in cooking.

Tomato and Bacon Jam

Prep Time: 25 min.

Cook Time: 1 hr. 10 min.

Additional Time: 30 min.

Total Time: 2 hrs. 5 min.

Servings: 10

1/2 lb. smoked bacon
2 lbs. ripe tomatoes, chopped
1 yellow sweet onion, finely diced
1 C. white sugar
2-1/2 T. apple cider vinegar
1-1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1 dash hot pepper sauce (Optional)

Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, about 10 minutes. Drain bacon slices on paper towels. Crumble bacon when cool.

Stir tomatoes, sweet onion, sugar, apple cider vinegar, salt, black pepper, and hot sauce together in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly to dissolve sugar. Stir in crumbled bacon and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until the spread is very thick, about 1 hour. Adjust salt and black pepper.

Cool and spoon into a clean 1-pint glass jar with a lid; store in the refrigerator for 1 week or frozen for 2 months.

If freezing, put spread into small jars and let jars thaw in refrigerator overnight before using.

Tomato Soup

Prep Time: 5 min.

Cook Time: 30 min.

Total Time: 35 min.

Servings: 6

4 C. chopped fresh tomatoes
2 C. chicken broth
4 cloves garlic
1 lg. slice of onion
2 T. butter
2 T. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. white sugar, or to taste
1 tsp. salt, or to taste

Combine tomatoes, chicken broth, garlic cloves, and a large slice of onion in a stockpot over medium heat. Bring to a boil, and gently simmer for about 20 minutes to blend flavors.

Remove from heat and run the mixture through a food mill into a large bowl, or pan. Discard any stuff left over in the food mill.

Melt butter over medium heat in the now empty stockpot. Stir in flour to make a roux by cooking, whisking constantly, until mixture turns medium brown.

Gradually whisk in a bit of the tomato mixture to prevent lumps from forming, then stir in the rest.

Season with sugar and salt to taste.

Note: No food mill, use a food processor and strain using a sieve – like a fine mesh strainer.

Fresh Corn and Tomato Casserole

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 45 min.

Total Time: 1 hr.

Servings: 6

4 slices bacon
8 ears fresh corn
1/4 C. butter
1 tsp. salt

2 lg. tomatoes, sliced

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until crisp and evenly brown; drain. Chop bacon, and set aside.

Cut corn from cobs. There should be about 4 or 5 cups of corn kernels. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the corn, and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Stir in the bacon and salt, and remove from heat.

Spread a layer of the corn mixture into the bottom of a 2-quart casserole dish, then layer with tomatoes. Repeat layers twice, ending with tomatoes on the top.

Bake uncovered in preheated oven for 30 minutes, or until corn is tender.

Grilled Shrimp with Fresh Tomato Sauce and Angel Hair Pasta

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 10 min.

Additional Time: 30 min.

Total Time: 55 min.

Servings: 4

1/4 C. herb-infused extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 lemon, juiced

salt and black pepper to taste

1 lb fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined

1 (8 oz.) package angel hair pasta

2 tsp. herb-infused extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 red onion, thinly sliced

2 Roma tomatoes, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

1/2 C. dry white wine

1/4 C. heavy cream

1 T. chopped fresh parsley

Combine 1/4 cup olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a large resealable plastic bag. Gently squeeze ingredients in the bag to combine. Add shrimp. Remove as much air as possible, seal, and move shrimp around in the bag to coat in the marinade. Place in a tray or plate so shrimp are in a single layer. Marinate in the refrigerator for 30 to 45 minutes.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook angel hair pasta in the boiling water, stirring occasionally, until tender yet firm to the bite, 4 to 5 minutes. Drain.

Preheat an outdoor grill for medium-high heat. Place a heat-proof skillet on one side of the grill to heat with the grill. Thread shrimp onto metal skewers.

Place shrimp skewers onto the hot grate and grill until the shrimp turn white and opaque, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Remove from the grill.

Meanwhile, pour 2 teaspoons olive oil into the hot skillet and cook onion, stirring frequently, until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add tomatoes, garlic, and red pepper flakes; cook and stir for 1 to 2 minutes. Pour in wine and allow to reduce, about 4 minutes. Stir in cream. Cook and stir for 1 minute. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add cooked pasta and shrimp to the skillet and stir to combine. Sprinkle with fresh parsley and serve.

Homemade Tomato Sauce

Servings: About 1 quart (enough for 1½ pounds of pasta)

4 lbs. plum tomatoes (or two 28-ounce cans whole peeled plum tomatoes)

6 T. unsalted butter

4 T. olive oil

2 med. yellow onions, peeled and cut in half

4 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed

1-1/4 tsp. salt

1 tsp. sugar

2 T. chopped fresh basil

If using fresh tomatoes: Bring a large pot of water to a rolling boil. Fill a large bowl halfway-full with ice cubes and cold water. Using a sharp knife, cut a 1/4 inch deep X on one end of each tomato. Place the scored tomatoes into the boiling water and cook until you see the skin starting to wrinkle and split, 1 to 2 minutes (be careful not to cook too long, or the tomatoes will become soft and difficult to handle). Using a slotted spoon, lift the tomatoes out of the pot and plunge them into the ice-cold water bath. Let sit for a few minutes to cool, then

transfer the tomatoes to a cutting board and, using your hands, peel off their skins. Cut the tomatoes into 1/2 inch chunks (discard the cores at this point) and transfer them, along with all of their juices, into a Dutch oven or saucepan.

To the chopped tomatoes, add the butter, olive oil, onions, garlic, salt, and sugar. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for 1-1/2 to 2-1/2 hours, stirring occasionally and mashing the tomatoes, until the sauce is no longer watery. Remove and discard the onions. Using a wooden spoon or potato masher, mash any large chunks of tomatoes and garlic to make a slightly chunky and thick sauce. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Before serving, stir in the basil.

Make-Ahead Instructions: The sauce can be refrigerated for up to 4 days or frozen in an airtight container for up to 3 months.

Fresh Tomato Spice Cake

For the cake:

Just under 2 pounds ripe tomatoes

4 eggs

2 C. sugar

1/4 C. molasses

1 C. vegetable oil

4 C. flour

2 tsp. baking soda

1-1/2 tsp. salt

2-1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

2-1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg

1-1/2 tsp. ground ginger

For the glaze:

1 C. powdered sugar

2+ T. strained lemon juice

a few dashes cinnamon and nutmeg

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 9 by 13" cake pan with parchment paper; grease parchment and inner sides of pan. Wash the tomatoes and cut the stem spot off each of them, then slice into fourths and place in food processor. Puree until liquidy and even in consistency; little flecks of colored skin are welcome. Measure out 2 and 2/3 cups; set aside. (Use remainder as you wish.)

In a large bowl, beat the eggs, sugar and molasses until smooth and even in color. Beat in the oil until incorporated. Sift all remaining dry ingredients over the egg mixture. Begin to fold in the dry ingredients, gradually adding the measured tomato puree. Scrape sides and bottom of bowl with spatula; mix until batter is even.

Pour into prepared pan, smoothing the surface with spatula. Bake for 35-45 minutes, until center tests clean with a toothpick and no longer jiggles. Let cool completely in pan, then transfer to a large plate or cutting board, removing parchment.

While a dusting of spiced powdered sugar or decadent cream cheese frosting are equally delicious, I like to opt for the easy, pretty glaze noted above doing the following: Sift powdered sugar and spices into a bowl. Whisk in lemon juice and mix until smooth, adding more lemon juice by the teaspoon if too thick. Drizzle diagonally over cake using a pastry bag, plastic bag with a small hole cut in its corner, or a spoon or fork. Let icing dry before serving.

Tomato Cheesecake

Prep Time 30 min.

Cook Time 35 min.

Tomato Jam Cooking Time: 10 hrs.

Total Time: 11 hrs. 5 min.

Servings 8

For the crust:

1/2 C. butter

2 C. fresh basil

5 oz. graham crackers or biscuit-style cookies

For the filling:

5 oz. sugar

4 egg yolks

1 tsp. extra virgin olive oil

1 lb. ricotta cheese

zest of one lemon

pinch of salt

For the topping:

1 stalk celery

6 oz. pureed tomatoes

1/4 C. water

1 T. sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. unflavored gelatin

For the tomato jam:

35 oz. San Marzano peeled tomatoes
10 oz. sugar
2 tsp. salt
20 basil leaves

For the crust: Using an electric mixer, cream the butter and basil together. Crush the graham cracker or biscuits and mix thoroughly with the butter and basil. Press into a 9-inch springform cheesecake pan. Set aside.

For the filling: In a medium bowl, whip the sugar with the egg yolks and the teaspoon of extra virgin olive oil. Whisk the ricotta and add it to the yolk mixture. Pour the mixture onto the base and bake in a preheated oven at 350°F for about 20 minutes. Set aside to cool.

For the topping: Finely dice the celery and add to a small saucepan with the pureed tomatoes. Cook for 8 minutes over medium heat. Strain the mixture; then add water, sugar, salt, and gelatin. Return the mixture to the saucepan, boil for five minutes and then set aside to cool for 10 minutes. Sieve the topping onto the cheesecake and chill the cheesecake in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Serve with prepared tomato jam.

For the tomato jam: Place tomatoes, sugar, salt, and basil leaves in a baking dish. Cover with parchment paper and cook at 210°F for at least 10 hours. The jam should be thick and sweet.

Note: Given that the tomato jam takes a while to make, you should plan to make it beforehand. Also important to note: You can store the tomato jam in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Quote of the Week:

“Life handed him a lemon, as life sometimes will do. His friends looked on in pity, assuming he was through. They came upon him later, reclining in the shade, in calm contentment, drinking a glass of lemonade.”

~ from **The Rotarian**,
magazine of Rotary

International, 1940