

Back to School!

Whether you have kids in school or not - the first days of September bring a common feeling of “Summer is Over.” The days are getting shorter and the feeling of needing to prepare for the next season has started.

This week, we start the first of two weeks of great “Back To School”, or those of us without kids starting school, maybe “End of Summer” recipes!

Good Morning Protein Cookies

Prep Time: 40 min.

Cook Time: 20 min.

Total Time: 1 hr.

Servings: 12

2 C. old fashioned oats
1 banana, mashed
1/4 C. pumpkin puree or apple butter
1 C. nut or seed butter of choice (ex. peanut butter, almond, cashew, or sun butter)
1/4 C. maple syrup or honey
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 T. chia or hemp seeds
1/2 C. dried raisins or cherries
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 C. milk or dark chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 325°F. Place all of the ingredients in a standing mixer or in a bowl to beat with a hand mixer and mix until thoroughly combined. Refrigerate dough for 30-60 min.

Using a 1/4 C. ice cream scoop place mixture on a parchment or silicone mat lined baking sheet and use your palm to gently press into 1 inch thick circles.

Bake cookies for 18-20 minutes or until starting to turn golden. Cool on baking sheet for 15 min. and then transfer to rack to cool completely.

Note: These cookies aren't going to spread in the oven. Make sure to flatten them out with your palm to shape them into cookies.

Lunch Box Chicken Wrap

Prep Time: 10 min.

Serving: 1

1/4 C. hummus
1 whole wheat tortilla (8 inches), room temperature
1/2 C. fresh baby spinach
1/3 C. shredded cooked chicken breast
2 carrot sticks
2 sweet red pepper strips

Spread hummus over tortilla; top with spinach. Place chicken, carrot and red pepper in a row near center of tortilla; roll up tightly. If desired, cut crosswise into slices. Wrap securely or pack in an airtight container; refrigerate until serving.

Pizza Roll-Ups

Prep Time: 20 min.

Cook Time: 15 min.

Servings: 2 doz.

1/2 lb. ground beef
1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce
1/2 C. shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
2 tubes (8 oz. each) refrigerated crescent rolls

In a large skillet, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink; drain. Remove from the heat. Add the tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese and oregano.

Separate crescent dough into 8 rectangles, pinching seams together. Place about 3 tablespoons of meat mixture along 1 long side of each rectangle. Roll up, jelly-roll style, starting with the long side lined with filling. Cut each roll into 3 pieces.

Place, seam side down, 2 in. apart on greased baking sheets. Bake at 375° for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

Spaghetti Boats

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 30 min.

Total Time: 45 min.

Servings: 6

Spaghetti

1 lb. ground beef
1 onion finely diced
3 cloves garlic
1 jar (24 oz) spaghetti sauce
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning

1/4 tsp. black pepper
8 oz. spaghetti noodles

Garlic Bread Boats

1 loaf French bread
1/2 C. salted butter softened
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. dried parsley flakes
1 C. shredded mozzarella cheese
1/4 C. Parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper or aluminum foil.

In a skillet pan, over medium-high heat, add the ground beef, onion, and garlic. Cook and crumble the ground beef. Drain the excess fat and grease from the pan.

Stir in the spaghetti sauce, salt, Italian seasoning, and pepper. Reduce the heat to low and allow it to simmer while you cook the spaghetti noodles and prepare the bread boat.

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook the spaghetti noodles according to the package directions.

When the pasta is done drain it in a colander but do not rinse it. Add the cooked spaghetti noodles into the ground beef mixture and stir to combine everything together.

While the pasta is cooking prepare the garlic bread boat. Cut a large oval around the top of your bread, leaving at least 1/2-inch border around the edge. Remove the middle section of the bread so you end up with a boat.

Mix together the softened butter, garlic powder, and dried parsley. Spread it all over the inside of the bread boat. Place the garlic bread boat onto the prepared sheet pan and cook until toasted, about 5-8 minutes.

Fill the toasted garlic bread boat with the prepared spaghetti from the skillet pan. Top it with the shredded mozzarella cheese. Bake for 10-15 minutes.

Sprinkle on the parmesan cheese, cut the spaghetti boat into large slices and enjoy!

Notes: Toasting the garlic bread first allows the bread to get a crispy exterior and become more firm so it can hold up to the spaghetti easier.

Make sure that you are not cutting too much out of the center of the bread. You want to have at least 1/2-inch on each side of the boat and a substantial amount left in the bottom. You're not trying to hollow out the bread, but rather cut out a boat shape while still maintaining plenty of bread on the bottom and sides.

Crock Pot Pulled Pork Tacos

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cook Time: 8 hrs.

Total Time: 8 hrs. 10 min.

Servings: 8

1 T. cumin
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. oregano
1 T. kosher salt
3.5 - 4 lb. pork shoulder or pork butt
1 16-oz. jar mild salsa
1 pkg. corn or flour tortillas

Place the first 7 ingredients in a bowl and mix.

Place the pork in the slow cooker and rub all over with the seasoning mixture. Pour the jar of salsa around the pork. Cook on low heat for 8-10 hours.

Remove the pork to a large bowl and, using 2 forks, shred into bite size pieces. Remove the visible pieces of fat.

Pour a scoop or two of the juices from the slow cooker into the shredded pork and stir to combine. (If you want to remove the excess fat from the juice you will use, pour it into a cup and refrigerate it until the fat solidifies and can be easily scooped out. Only the juices will remain.)

Serve pulled pork in tortillas with toppings of choice.

Peanut Butter Granola Pinwheels

Prep Time: 10 min.

Servings: 16 pinwheels

4 T. creamy peanut butter
2 flour tortillas (8 in.)
2 tsp. honey
1/2 C. granola without raisins

Spread peanut butter over each tortilla; drizzle with honey and sprinkle with granola. Roll up; cut into slices.

Nuts and Bolts

Prep Time: 10 min.

Cook Time: 1 hour

Servings: 8 cups

2 C. Cheerios®
2 C. bite-sized shredded wheat

2 C. pretzel sticks
1-1/2 C. salted peanuts
1/4 C. butter, cubed
3 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/2 tsp. celery salt
1/2 tsp. onion salt
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/2 tsp. paprika

Preheat oven to 250°. In a large bowl, combine cereals, pretzels and nuts. In a small saucepan, melt butter; stir in sauce and seasonings. Pour over cereal mixture; toss to coat. Spread in an ungreased 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 15 min. Cool completely. Store in an airtight container.

Chocolate Chip Granola Bars

*Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 30 min.
Total Time: 40 min.
Servings: 30 bars*

4 C. old fashioned oats
1/4 C. whole wheat flour (or any flour will do)
1/2 C. shredded unsweetened coconut
1/3 C. brown sugar
1 C. chocolate chips (You can substitute raisins or other dried fruit for the chocolate chips.)
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 C. vegetable, canola, avocado or other oil of choice
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 C. honey

Preheat oven to 325°F.

Combine the first 6 ingredients in a bowl.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the remaining ingredients.

Pour the wet ingredients over the oat mixture and stir thoroughly to combine.

Place granola mixture on a parchment lined baking sheet and shape into a rectangle, about 13 x 9 x 1 inch thick. Press firmly so that the granola sticks together.

Bake for 30-40 min.

Allow to cool completely, then cut into 3 x 1 inch bars.

Note: To freeze these chocolate chip granola bars, add them to an airtight container and store in the freezer for up to 4 months. Just make sure to let them thaw for about 20 min. before you eat them!

Banana Peanut Butter Roll Ups

*Prep Time: 10 min.
Total Time: 10 min.
Servings: 2*

2 bananas, peeled
1/4 C. peanut butter, divided (you could also use almond or sunflower butter)
2 tortillas

Place one tortilla on a flat surface and spread 2 T. of peanut butter on the tortilla to evenly coat.

Place one banana near the edge of the tortilla and roll it up.

Slice into 1/2 inch rounds and serve.

Honey Poppy Seed Fruit Salad

*Prep Time: 10 min.
Servings: 8*

2 med. firm bananas, chopped
2 C. fresh blueberries
2 C. fresh raspberries
2 C. sliced fresh strawberries
5 T. honey
1 tsp. lemon juice
3/4 tsp. poppy seeds

In a large bowl, combine the bananas and berries. In a small bowl, combine the honey, lemon juice and poppy seeds. Pour over fruit and toss to coat.

Quote of the Week:

“I’ve learned that anything in life worth having comes from patience and hard work.”

~ Greg Behrendt