Hope you were able to visit the Wright County Fair. As always, it's enjoyable seeing what the local youth can do when walking through the 4-H buildings, especially in the baking categories. Seeing all the homemade goodies hopefully encourages visitors to go home and make and bake all sorts of treats. Take time to enjoy some locally grown produce and fruits and try a new recipe or two!

Let us know if there is something you would like us to put in our column, or if you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Pork Shepherd's Pie

Prep: 30 min.
Bake: 45 min.
Makes: 6 servings

Pork layer:
1 lb. ground pork
1 sm. onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 c. cooked rice
1/2 c. pork gravy or 1/4 c. chicken broth
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. dried thyme

Cabbage layer:
1 med carrot, diced
1 sm. onion, chopped
2 T. butter or margarine
6 c. chopped cabbage
1 c. chicken broth
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Potato layer:
2 c. mashed potatoes
1/4 c. shredded cheddar cheese

In a skillet over medium heat, brown pork until no longer pink. Add onion and garlic. Cook until vegetables are tender; drain. Stir in rice, gravy, salt and thyme. Spoon into a greased 11x7-in. baking dish.

In the same skillet, sauté carrot and onion in butter over medium heat for 5 minutes. Stir in cabbage; cook for 1 minute. Add broth, salt and pepper; cover and cook for 10 minutes. Spoon over pork layer.

Spoon or pipe mashed potatoes on top; sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350° until browned, about 45 minutes.

Cheesy Green Beans

Prep: 2 min
Cooking: 25 min
Makes: 4 servings

2 c. green beans
1-1/2 c. mozzarella cheese
1 clove garlic, minced
2 T. parmesan cheese
2 T. olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425°F. Line baking tray with baking paper
Add olive oil, parmesan, garlic, salt, and pepper to a bowl. Stir through thoroughly
Add the green beans to the bowl and stir to cover the green beans with the oil mixture
Arrange green beans on the baking tray
Bake the green beans for 20 minutes
Take the baking tray out of the oven and sprinkle the mozzarella cheese over the beans
Set the oven to broil (or grill) and return the tray into the oven for 5 minutes or until melted
Serve immediately

Watermelon and Spinach Salad

Prep/Total Time: 30 min.
Makes: 8 servings

1/4 c. rice vinegar or white wine vinegar
1 T. grated lime zest
2 T. lime juice
2 T. canola oil
4 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot
2 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. sugar
1/4 tsp. pepper
Salad:
4 c. fresh baby spinach or arugula
3 c. cubed seedless watermelon
2 c. cubed cantaloupe
2 c. cubed English cucumber
1/2 c. chopped fresh cilantro
2 green onions, chopped

In a small bowl, whisk the first nine ingredients. In a large bowl, combine salad ingredients. Drizzle with dressing and toss to coat; serve immediately.

Hot Dog Casserole

Prep: 20 min.
Bake: 70 min.
Makes: 8 servings

3 T. butter
2 T. all-purpose flour
1 to 1-1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 to 1/2 tsp. pepper
1-1/2 c. 2% milk
5 med red potatoes, thinly sliced
1 package (1 pound) hot dogs, halved lengthwise and cut into 1/2-inch slices
1 med onion, chopped
1/3 c. shredded cheddar cheese
Chopped green onions, optional

Preheat oven to 350°. In a small saucepan, melt butter. Stir in the flour, salt and pepper until smooth. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened and bubbly, about 2 minutes.

In a greased 2-1/2-qt. baking dish, layer with a third of the potatoes, half the hot dogs and half the onion. Repeat layers. Top with remaining potatoes. Pour white sauce over all.

Bake, covered, for 1 hour. Uncover; sprinkle with cheese. Bake until potatoes are tender, 10-15 minutes longer. If desired, garnish with green onions.

Dill Garden Salad

Prep/Total Time: 15 min.
Makes: 6 servings

3 c. chopped English cucumbers
1 lg. tomato, seeded & cut into 1/2” pcs.
1 sm. sweet red pepper, chopped
2 T. chopped sweet onion
3 T. reduced-fat mayonnaise
4 tsp. olive oil
2 tsp. sugar
2 tsp. rice vinegar
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. pepper
2-1/2 tsp. snipped fresh dill

In a large bowl, combine cucumbers, tomato, red pepper and onion. In a small bowl, whisk mayonnaise, oil, sugar, vinegar, salt, garlic powder and pepper until blended. Stir in dill. Spoon dressing over salad; toss to coat.

Carrot and Pineapple Cake

Level: Intermediate
Total: 1 hr 10 min
Prep: 10 min
Cook: 1 hr
Makes: 8 servings

For the cake:
2 c. granulated sugar
1-1/3 c. vegetable oil
3 extra-large eggs, at room temperature
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
2-1/2 c. plus 1 T. all-purpose flour, divided
2 tsp. ground cinnamon

2 tsp. baking soda
1-1/2 tsp kosher salt
1 c. raisins
1 c. chopped walnuts
1 lb. carrots, grated
1/2 c. diced fresh pineapple

For the frosting:
3/4 lb. cream cheese, at room temperature
1/2 lb. unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 lb. confectioners' sugar, sifted

For the decoration:
1/2 c. diced fresh pineapple

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

Butter 2 (8-inch) round cake pans. Line with parchment paper, then butter and flour the pans.

For the cake: Beat the sugar, oil, and eggs together in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment until light yellow. Add the vanilla. In another bowl, sift together 2-1/2 cups flour, the cinnamon, baking soda, and salt.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Toss the raisins and walnuts with 1 T. flour. Fold in the carrots and pineapple. Add to the batter and mix well.

Divide the batter equally between the 2 pans. Bake for 55 to 60 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Allow the cakes to cool completely in the pans set over a wire rack.

For the frosting: Mix the cream cheese, butter and vanilla in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment until just combined. Add the sugar and mix until smooth.

Place 1 layer, flat-side up, on a flat plate or cake pedestal. With a knife or offset spatula, spread the top with frosting. Place the second layer on top, rounded side up, and spread the frosting evenly on the top and sides of the cake. Decorate with diced pineapple.

Blueberry Bars

Prep Time: 10 min
Total Time: 4 hrs 25 min
Makes: 16 servings

For the Crust and Topping:
3 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 c. granulated sugar
2 sticks unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

For the Filling:
1/2 c. granulated sugar
4 tsp. cornstarch
3 1/2 c. fresh blueberries
1/2 c. blueberry jam
2 tsp. lemon zest
2 T. fresh lemon juice
Pinch of salt

Preheat the oven to 375° with the rack positioned in the lower third of the oven. Spray a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line the pan with parchment paper.

To make the crust and topping: Whisk together the flour, salt, cinnamon, and sugar in a medium bowl until combined. Add the butter. Using a pastry blender or your fingertips, work the butter into the flour mixture until well combined and the mixture is the texture of wet sand (the mixture should hold together when squeezed). Press half of the mixture into the prepared pan in an even layer. Bake until lightly browned, about 15 minutes.

To make the filling: Whisk together the sugar and cornstarch in a medium bowl. Add the blueberries, jam, lemon zest and juice, and salt, tossing to combine. Spread the filling in an even layer over the warm crust in the pan.

Sprinkle the remaining crust mixture over the top of the blueberry filling in an even layer, leaving some larger clumps. Bake until golden brown on top and the filling is bubbly around the edges and in the center, about 1 hour. Remove from the oven and let cool completely in the pan on a wire rack, about 3 hours. Cut into bars and serve.

"Families are the tie that reminds us of yesterday, provide strength and support today, and give us hope for tomorrow."
~Bill Owens