

Back to School!

Hard to believe the summer is over and the kids are back in school. This is a busy time for many families.

This week we are focusing on some simple meals for on the go and quick family meals.

Reminder:

Send in your favorite **APPLE RECIPE** (or family recipe) for a chance to **WIN** one of these cherished books: "APPLE DELIGHTS." We will share your recipe in an upcoming edition of *Now We're Cookin'* and place you in the **DRAWING**.

Submit your recipe and register to win at: clickit.entries@gmail.com

(All submissions will be entered into the drawing and need to be received by Sept. 30, 2023. Each winner will be announced and contacted. We do not ship the prizes, but are available for pick up Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 a.m. - 4p.m.)

Tortilla Breakfast Wrap

Level: Easy
Total: 10 min
Yield: 1 serving

2 lg. eggs
Kosher salt
ground black pepper
1 T. unsalted butter
One 8-inch whole-wheat tortilla
1/3 c. lightly packed baby spinach
2 slices American cheese, or favorite
2 thin slices deli Black Forest ham

Combine the eggs with a pinch of salt and pepper in a small bowl and whisk to combine.

Melt the butter in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Pour in the egg mixture and swirl the skillet to coat the bottom. Working quickly, dip the tortilla in the eggs, then flip it over and place it back in the skillet (both sides should be coated in egg). Season with another pinch of salt.

Continue to cook the eggs until they are completely set on the bottom, 1 to 2 minutes. Slide a large rubber or silicone spatula under the tortilla and flip the whole tortilla and egg over in one single motion. Scatter the spinach on the half of the tortilla that's closest to you, then top with the cheese and finally the ham. Continue to cook until the bottom is golden brown, about 1 minute more. Remove from the heat and slide onto a plate.

Starting with the side that has all the filling, start rolling the tortilla into a tight wrap or burrito. Keep the seam side facing downward so the wrap stays closed. Cut in half crosswise and serve.

Ham and Cheddar Lunch Box Muffins

Yields 1 dozen

1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 c. yellow cornmeal
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1-1/4 c. buttermilk
2 lg. eggs
7 T. unsalted butter, melted and cooled, divided
1 c. shredded sharp cheddar cheese
8 oz. thick-cut deli ham (1/2-inch thick), diced, divided
3 T. finely chopped chives, divided
Black pepper

Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 375°F. Line a standard 12-well muffin pan with papers liners or coat the wells with cooking spray.

Whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, garlic powder, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. Whisk the buttermilk, eggs, and 5 T. of the butter in a medium bowl until combined. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry and mix with a wooden spoon or rubber spatula until just combined. Some lumps are fine. Fold in the cheese, all but 1/2 c. of the ham, and 2 T. of the chives.

Spoon the batter into the muffin wells, filling each about 3/4 full. Top the muffins with the reserved ham, sprinkle with the remaining chives, and sprinkle with pepper. Top each muffin with 1/2 tsp. of the remaining melted butter.

Bake until the tops just begin to brown, and a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool the muffins in the pan for about 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack to cool completely.

Note: Leftovers can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days, or in the freezer for 3 months. Eat cold or reheat in the toaster oven for a few minutes before serving.

Homemade Cheez-Its®

12-14 dozen crackers

8 oz cheddar cheese (about 3 c. grated)
4 T. unsalted butter, chilled

1 tsp. salt
1 c. all-purpose flour
2 T. ice-cold water
1/2 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. ground mustard powder
1 tsp. cornstarch
1 egg, optional
Flaky sea salt, optional

In a food processor, pulse the cheese until finely grated. The cheese may have some larger clumps, but that's OK. They will break up as the butter gets worked into the dough later.

Transfer the cheese to a bowl with the flour, cornstarch, paprika, mustard powder, and salt. Stir until combined.

Next, using a pastry blender (or a fork), cut the butter into the flour mixture until it resembles coarse crumbs. Add the cold water and use your hands to gently work it into the dough until it starts to clump and hold together.

Transfer the dough to a clean work surface. Pat into a flattened disk (about 1 inch thick), then wrap tightly in plastic and chill for at least 1 hour, or up to 2 days.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350°F and line two sheet pans with parchment paper.

Unwrap the dough and roll out, using a rolling pin, on a lightly floured work surface. Roll until the dough is less than 1/8-inch thick. The thinner, the better!

Use a fluted pastry wheel, pizza cutter or sharp knife to trim the rolled dough into a neat square. Then, slice into 1-inch-wide strips before making perpendicular slices across the strips to create 1-inch squares.

Transfer the squares to parchment-lined baking sheets. Then use a toothpick or skewer to poke a hole through the center of each.

If desired, brush the crackers with a little beaten egg wash to give them some shine.

Sprinkle the crackers lightly with flaky sea salt, then bake for 15-18 minutes, until crisp and golden around the edges. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely on the baking sheet before serving.

Note: Start with cold butter and water and chill the dough thoroughly before baking. This is important for Cheez-Its®, so don't skip or rush the process. Cold ingredients help make the crackers crisp and flaky, and chilling the dough ensures the crackers hold their shape. When mixing the dough, it should act like wet sand where it's crumbly but holds its shape when pressed together. It may be tempting to skip poking a hole into every cracker before baking, but the little holes serve an important purpose. They allow steam to escape while the crackers bake, preventing the crackers from puffing too much and helping develop that signature crispiness.

Homemade Cheez-Its® can be stored at room temperature for up to a week. Note that if they're tightly sealed, they'll start to lose some of their crunch by day two or three.

Summer Vegetable Cavatelli with Fresh Corn "Cream"

4 servings

Corn "Cream"

2 ears fresh white corn, or other sweet corn
2 c. chicken broth or water

Pasta

1 T. olive oil
4 oz. diced bacon
1/2 c. diced sweet red pepper
1-1/2 c. diced zucchini
salt and pepper to taste
1 pinch cayenne pepper
2 c. cavatelli pasta
1-1/2 cups corn "cream," or as needed
1 c. halved sweet cherry tomatoes
1 T. chopped Italian parsley
1 T. finely sliced fresh basil leaves
1 T. grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, or more to taste

Remove corn kernels from cob and scrape cob with dull edge of knife to remove as much of the corn as possible. Place corn in blender with chicken broth. Blend on high until completely smooth, about 2 minutes. For a smoother mixture, strain through a fine strainer (straining is optional).

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add bacon; cook until bacon is cooked but not crisp, about 3 minutes. Remove some of the grease from the pan. Add zucchini and red pepper to pan. Sauté just until zucchini begins to soften, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Season with salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil; add cavatelli and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender yet firm to the bite, about 11 minutes or 1 minute less than recommended on the package. Drain well.

Transfer the drained pasta to the skillet with the vegetables. Pour in corn cream. Cook and stir on medium-high heat until sauce begins to thicken, about 3 minutes. Stir in cherry tomatoes, basil, parsley, and grated cheese.

Note: Two ears of corn may yield more corn "cream" than you need in this recipe.

Super easy dump meal

1 (32 oz.) bag of hashbrowns frozen
Kielbasa, diced
Small onion, diced
2 c. cheddar cheese
1/2 c. sour cream

1/2 c. milk
1 (10 oz.) can of cream of mushroom or chicken soup
salt and pepper to taste
Minced garlic (opt.)
Onion powder (opt.)

Put meat, hash brown, onion and cheese in a greased slow cooker. Then mix soup, milk, sour cream together, add things like salt and pepper, minced garlic, onion powder to the mixture if you want, then pour over kielbasa etc. Sprinkle about 1/2 cup more cheese on top. Cook on low for 6 hours or high for about 3-4 hours. Serve with salad, or roasted veggies for a complete meal.

Weeknight Skillet Slaw with Ground Turkey

Prep Time: 15 mins

Cook Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 25 mins Servings: 4

1 T. chipotle hot sauce
1 T. rice vinegar
1 T. soy sauce
1-1/2 tsp. minced ginger
1 tsp. agave syrup (Substitute, white sugar)
1 T. olive oil
1 T. sesame oil
1 lb. ground turkey
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 T. ground black pepper
1 (8 ounce) package coleslaw mix (red cabbage and carrots for maximum color and vegetable variety)
1/2 red bell pepper, diced
2 green onions, chopped, or more to taste
2 cloves garlic, minced (Substitute, ginger paste)
1 T. sesame seeds

Mix chipotle hot sauce, rice vinegar, soy sauce, ginger, and agave syrup together in a small bowl to make sauce.

Heat olive oil and sesame oil in a wok or large skillet over medium heat. Add ground turkey; cook, stirring to break up clumps, until juices run clear, about 6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Transfer to a bowl, reserving juices in the wok.

Combine coleslaw mix, red bell pepper, green onions, and garlic in the wok; cook and stir over medium heat until slaw is slightly wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Add sauce; mix to combine, about 1 minute. Return turkey to the wok and stir until heated through, 2 to 3 minutes.

Sprinkle sesame seeds over slaw before serving.

Quote of the Week:

“Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are often stiffened.”

~ Billy Graham