

This time of year is full of cooler weather, apple orchards and football games. How exciting it is to get back into the kitchen for comfort food cooking and baking!

Take some time to explore some new recipes to add to your weekly menu.

**NOTE:** If you have a tried-and-true recipe for the holidays, send it in for an entry into our next drawing for your chance to win Darlene's "The Cookie Book!"

The winner will be featured in our 2023 Holiday Gift Guide (Nov. 19, 2023) and other recipes will appear in a future Now We're Cookin' edition.

Good luck!

Submit your recipe and register to win at: [clickit.entries@gmail.com](mailto:clickit.entries@gmail.com)

*(All submissions will be entered into the drawing and need to be received by Oct. 25, 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. - 4 p.m.)*

## Carrot Cake Banana Bread with Thick Cinnamon Cream Cheese Frosting

*Yield: 12 slices*

### Dry Ingredients:

1-1/2 C. white whole wheat flour\*  
1/2 C. quick oats  
1 tsp. baking soda  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
1/4 tsp. salt

### Wet ingredients:

2 medium very ripe bananas, mashed (3/4 C. mashed banana)  
1/2 C. brown sugar  
1 large egg  
1 tsp. vanilla  
2 T. melted and cooled coconut oil (any oil or melted butter will work)  
1/4 C. unsweetened applesauce  
1 heaping C. shredded carrots (about 2 large carrots)  
1/3 C. almond or coconut milk  
1/3 C. chopped pecans or walnuts, plus 2 T. for topping

### Optional add-ins:

1/2 C. raisins  
1/2 C. unsweetened shredded coconut

### For the frosting:

4 oz cream cheese, softened  
1/3 C. powdered sugar  
1/4 tsp. cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray 8-1/2x4-1/2-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, whisk together whole wheat flour, quick oats, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt; set aside.

In a medium bowl, mix together mashed banana, coconut sugar, egg, and vanilla until well combined and creamy. Add in applesauce and almond milk, then fold in carrots. Add wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix until just combined -- DO NOT OVERMIX. Gently fold in melted coconut oil and 1/4 C. of chopped walnuts or pecans, plus the raisins and coconut (if using).

Pour into prepared loaf pan and bake for 40-55 minutes or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean with a few crumbs attached. If you use a 9x5 inch pan, you may need to check the bread at 40 minutes.

Remove from oven and place pan on wire rack to cool for 15 minutes. Remove bread from pan and place on wire rack to finish cooling completely.

**To make cinnamon cream cheese frosting:** Beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla and cinnamon together on medium speed for a minute or until smooth. Spread over cooled bread. Sprinkle with 2 T. chopped walnuts or pecans. Cut into 12 slices and enjoy!

### Notes

\* Feel free to use a mix of 3/4 cup all purpose flour and 3/4 cup whole wheat flour instead of whole wheat flour.

To make into muffins or cupcakes: you'll need to adjust your baking time, but suggest checking them between 15-18 minutes.

Bread can be made a day or two ahead of time, just wrap in plastic wrap to seal in moisture and frost before you serve. Banana bread is always best the next day as the natural sugars release.

Feel free to add in other favorites such as: shredded coconut flakes, raisins, walnuts instead of pecans, or pineapple.

## Cheesy Wild Rice Soup

*Total Time*

*Prep/Total Time: 30 min.*

*Makes: 8 servings (2qt.)*

1 pkg. (6.2 ounces) fast-cooking long grain and wild rice mix  
4 C. 2% milk

1 can (10-3/4 ounces) condensed cream of potato soup, undiluted  
8 oz. Velveeta, cubed  
1/2 lb. bacon strips, cooked and crumbled  
Optional: Minced chives and oyster crackers

In a large saucepan, prepare rice mix according to package directions. Add the milk, soup and cheese. Cook and stir until cheese is melted. Garnish with bacon and, if desired, minced fresh chives and oyster crackers.

## Spaghetti Alla Carbonara Tradizionali

*Prep Time: 5 mins*  
*Cook Time: 22 mins*  
*Total Time: 27 mins*  
*Servings: 4*

1 (14 oz.) package spaghetti  
5 oz. guanciale (cured pork cheek) or pork chop, cut into small cubes  
3 egg yolks  
1 egg  
3/4 C. grated Pecorino-Romano cheese (or parmesan)  
salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook spaghetti in the boiling water, stirring occasionally until tender yet firm to the bite, about 12 min. Drain. Heat a skillet over medium heat; cook and stir guanciale until crisp, 5 to 10 min. Whisk egg yolks and egg together in a bowl just until mixed; add Pecorino-Romano cheese, salt, and pepper and whisk well. Stir in guanciale. Add spaghetti and toss until evenly coated.

**Note:** If the egg mixture becomes too thick, add a little of the cooking water from the pasta to dilute the sauce.

## Maple & Bacon Glazed Brussels Sprouts

*Prep: 15 min.*  
*Cook: 20 min.*  
*Makes: 4 servings*

5 bacon strips, chopped  
1 lb. fresh Brussels sprouts, trimmed  
3 T. butter  
1/2 C. chicken broth  
1/4 C. chopped pecans  
1/4 C. maple syrup  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. pepper

In a small skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove to paper towels with a slotted spoon; drain. Meanwhile, cut an "X" in the core of each Brussels sprout. In a large skillet, sauté sprouts in butter until lightly browned, 4-5 minutes. Stir in the broth, pecans, maple syrup, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Uncover; cook and stir until Brussels sprouts are tender, 8-10 minutes longer. Sprinkle with bacon.

## Crock Pot Wild Duck

*Serves 4 to 6*

3 to 4 ducks, cut up  
3/4 C. diced onion  
1/2 C. diced celery  
1/2 C. diced carrot  
1 tsp. dried rosemary  
1 (10-3/4 oz.) can cream of celery soup  
1 (10-3/4 oz.) can cream of chicken soup  
1-1/2 soup cans of water

Place all ingredients with duck pieces into crock pot in the morning before work. Cook on high for 8 hours. It is really great and easy!

## Apple Fries

*Level: Easy*  
*Total: 45 min*  
*Active: 45 min*  
*Yield: 4 servings*

Vegetable oil, for frying  
4 Granny Smith apples, peeled  
1/2 C. cornstarch  
1/2 C. plus 2 T. granulated sugar  
1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
2/3 C. heavy cream  
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Heat 1-1/2 inches of vegetable oil in a large wide pot over medium heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 300° F. Cut the apples into 1/2-inch-wide sticks to look like fries.

Working in two batches, toss the apples in the cornstarch until well coated, shaking off the excess. Fry in the hot oil until softened but still pale, about 2 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and transfer to a rack set over a rimmed baking sheet in a single layer; let cool. Let the oil return to 300° F between batches.

Mix 1/2 C. sugar and the cinnamon in a shallow bowl; set aside. Beat the heavy cream, vanilla and remaining 2 T. sugar in a medium bowl with a mixer until medium peaks form.

Increase the oil temperature to 375°F. Working in about three batches, re-fry the apples until crisp and lightly browned, about 1-1/2 minutes. Remove to paper towels to drain briefly, then toss in the cinnamon sugar until well coated. Serve warm with the whipped cream for dipping.

## Slow Cooker Pumpkin Spice Latte

*Prep Time: 10 mins*  
*Slow Cook Time: 4 hrs*  
*Total Time: 4 hrs 10 mins*

1/2 C. canned pumpkin  
1/4 C. pure maple syrup  
1 T. pumpkin pie spice  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper  
8 C. sweetened vanilla almond milk\*  
2 C. brewed coffee  
Whipped cream  
Pumpkin pie spice or ground cinnamon

In a 4- to 6-quart slow cooker thoroughly combine the pumpkin, maple syrup, 1 T. pumpkin pie spice, salt, and black pepper. Gradually stir in the almond milk and coffee until combined. Cover and cook on HIGH for 2 hours or LOW for 4 hours. Garnish each serving with whipped cream and additional spice.

\*Can also use regular milk, just add 2 T. additional maple syrup and 1 T. vanilla.

### Quote of the Week:

***“To me, the smell of fresh-made coffee is one of the greatest inventions.”***  
***~ Hugh Jackman***