

The CoG Cookbook

by
Force 10

This began as innocent enough post to the CoG boards shortly before Christmas 2003, with TSB asking for feedback on a recipe she was thinking of preparing. Eventually, the thread grew to ten pages. Who knew a bunch of computer geeks could be so talented in the kitchen?

The Players



Mod

TheSilverBrumby- a.k.a. TSB. She and hubby Nick Burns live in Orange County, California. She is an avid lover of horses. She is also an aspiring author of children's books. One of the few non-geeks of CoG, she has nevertheless managed to amass the second highest post count on the board.



KeepersKeeper- Hailing from Houston, Texas, the wife of the great and powerful Keeper of the CoG is herself an active participant on the boards, despite not being a geek herself, and according to Keeper has mad skills in the kitchen. The fact that she's got more than a few recipes here would tend to give credence to that claim.

Plumber- Plumber is a member of the United States Air Force and is stationed in Germany, where she makes sure her fellow servicemen and women are well supplied with water and other necessities of proper sanitation. Withhold coffee from her on pain of death.

weasled- Not much is known about this seldom-posting CoGer, other than that he lives somewhere in the Midwest and is somewhat older than your humble author.



FK27- One of the younger members of CoG, FK27 lives in Ohio and has much experience with typical college student fare such as ramen noodles, which have earned him a title on the boards.



pusslit- One of our resident Canucks, pusslit runs her own computer repair business somewhere in the wilds of western Canada. In her spare time, she likes to make fun of lusers and cook.



arachne- CoG's resident Crazy Stick Lady (which refers to her desire to whack lusers with large heavy sticks when they misbehave) lives in Wyoming and has a killer cheesecake recipe, among others. Ironically, even though her CoG moniker is "arachne", she is deathly afraid of spiders. Make sure she gets enough coffee and no one will get hurt.



Milton Fludgecow- Milton lives in North Carolina and is a former co-worker of both Lissa and Tempesta. He is best known on CoG for his thoroughly entertaining and enjoyable yarn about taking down a 15 year old punk "31337 haX0r" wannabe. The lesson here, never hide pr0n on daddy's computer and then taunt a technician by telling them they won't be able to find it. For his efforts (and the great job he did entertaining his fellow CoGers), Milton has earned the title of Pr0n Avenger.



80083r- Another of our members from the Great White North, 80083r whiles away his days somewhere near Toronto doing user support for a certain large computer retailer that rhymes with “Hell”. He cooks a mean steak, even if the other CoGers chastise him for cooking it too long. Whatever you do, never ever make fun of his kilt.



Force 10- Your humble author hails from San Diego, California and consequently will bitch and complain whenever the temperature outside drops below 60 degrees. The upside of all this warm weather, however, is that Force 10 has developed much skill with anything having to do with grilling. Also, living within a half hour driving distance of Mexico has given him a keen appreciation of Mexican food. After a careless drunken quip whilst playing pool with some other CoGers in Los Angeles, he now has one of the more colorful titles on CoG.



El Gee- El Gee resides in Dallas, Texas, or close to it anyway. He is CoG’s resident hillbilly, having been born in West Virginia and then lived in North Carolina before moving to Tejas. One of the older denizens of CoG, he has a killer recipe for gumbo. Just don’t ask him to do his Justin Wilson impression.



Idlewild- Originally from the land Down Under, Idlewild is named after a Metroid power-up, which many of the avid video gamers of CoG find amusing. Her CoG moniker is shared by a band and a town in California, among other things. She moved to the States to be with her husband, Mr. Wild (aww, how sweet) and currently lives in Boston, where she is an avid collector of all things Lord of the Rings, especially anything to do with Aragorn.



Lissa- Originally from Texas, Lissa now lives in North Carolina with her husband. She has a strange fondness for Thai food and badgers.



Hasufin- CoG’s resident swordsman, Hasufin is adept at fencing, and surprisingly at cooking as well. He currently resides near the nation’s capital (that’s Washington D.C. for all you non-American types).

OINK!



gres- We head across the Atlantic to cold shores of Sweden to find gres and his many bread recipes. Apologies for the metric measurements in his recipes, but a true geek will be able to locate a conversion program without much difficulty.

Mr. Clean- Taking his name from a popular household cleaner in the US, Mr. Clean hails from the state of Oklahoma. A frequent lurker, he is apparently skilled enough in the kitchen to come out of hiding and post in this thread.

sweetloulou- Sweetloulou hails from British Columbia, Canada and has not been seen around CoG for quite some time. She is, however, one of the longest tenured CoGers, stretching back to the days of EZBoard.

Rizak the Really Horrible- Rizak is another of CoG's resident Canucks and makes his home in the Canadian capital of Ottawa. He is most well-known for blasting onto the CoG scene with an unbelievable 150 posts on his first day. He is also infamous for his ever-changing avatars and for his undying love of bacon. He currently has the fifth highest post count on the board, despite having a much shorter tenure than many of the regulars.



neener13- Neen lives in Evansville, Indiana and is CoG's spelling and grammar Nazi (every forum has at least one). She also has many tasty recipes to share.



Amber Sparks- Everyone's favorite tennis-playing Wookiee from Montana chimes in with some recipes (it's a long story, don't ask).



dambabe32- Another of the resident non-geeks, dambabe is busy educating the future geeks of the Pacific Northwest.



Heteroskedasticity- One of the original CoG peeps from way back, sked lives in southern Ontario, Canada. She rarely posts anymore, but can often be found in IRC.



SplishFish- A relative newcomer to the boards, SplishFish makes her home in Wisconsin. In spite of this, she has yet to submit any cheese dishes.

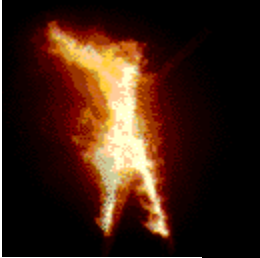


DKilroy- DKilroy hails from Detroit and is one of the four or five North American hockey fans who is not Canadian. Talk smack about the Red Wings at your own risk.





bse- One of the more recent additions to CoG bse, appropriately, comes from the UK. He works at a small foreign language school and has many stories about said school's wayward students. As a precautionary measure, we are not letting him use any beef in any of his dishes.



pj5081- A fellow resident of the southwestern US, pj is unfortunate enough to reside in Arizona. Just keep him away from any live power sources and don't ask him to fix your printer and you'll be all right.



Teknon- Another denizen of the Pacific Northwest, Teknon has an unhealthy fondness for Mountain Dew. While this yellow elixir does have many wonderful properties, having enough empty 12-packs to paper an entire wall of your living room is maybe a bit much.



Technomistress- CoG's very own vintner. We're hoping one day to be able to sample the wines she and her family make.

The Recipes

We start off with a collection of recipes by TSB, since she was the one to start this whole mess.



Crock Pot Rump Roast

Sweet-Spiced pot Roast w/ chiles (Serves 8-10)

3-3 ½ lbs. Boneless beef rump roast
½ cup dried currants
6 gloves garlic (minced or pressed)
1 large can (7 oz.) diced green chiles
1 small dried hot red chile – crushed
1 tsp. Ground cinnamon
½ tsp. Dry oregano
½ tsp. Dry marjoram
¼ tsp. Ground allspice
¾ cup beef broth
¼ cup red wine vinegar
2 tbs. Cornstarch
blended w/ 2 tbs. Cold water
salt (to taste)

I've done roast many times and it always comes out pretty good but I take the simple route with a dash of seasoning salt while it browns to get the excess grease out. Then I throw it on top of some parboiled carrots, celery, onions, and red potatoes. 1 cup of beef broth and 1 can of diced tomatoes then 10 hours later it is succulent. Okay, enough of that...

Broccoli Casserole

Broccoli casserole. The latter was quite good. You layer defrosted frozen broccoli then mix one glove garlic (minced), pepper, can of cream of celery soup, ½ cup egg substitute, and a medium onion (chopped). That is spread on top of the broccoli. It was a big hit!

1 package frozen broccoli
1 clove garlic
Black pepper (to taste)
1 can cream of celery soup
½ cup egg substitute (Egg Beaters or similar)
1 medium onion
1 package stuffing mix
2 tsp. melted butter

Defrost broccoli. Spread everything but butter and stuffing mix over broccoli. Over that goes a package of stuffing mix that has been combined with two teaspoons melted butter. Finally, top with shredded cheddar cheese and bake at 350 for 35 minutes. It sits afterwards for 10 minutes.

White Chocolate Cheesecake

1 pkg. (8 oz.) Philadelphia cream cheese (softened)
2 cups cold milk, divided
2 pkg. (4-serving size each) JELL-O white chocolate flavor instant pudding & pie filling
1 tub (8 oz.) Cool Whip whipped topping (thawed)
1 prepared graham cracker crumb crust (6 oz.)

BEAT cream cheese and ½ cup milk in large bowl w/wire whisk until smooth. Add remaining 1 ½ cup milk and pudding mixes. Beat w/wire whisk 1 minute. Stir in whipped topping until smooth and well blended. Spoon into crust.

REFRIGERATE 4 hours or until set. Garnish w/white chocolate curls made w/ baker's chocolate. Store leftover pie (snort) in refrigerator. Makes 8 servings (or one w/big spoon)

The next person to post a recipe was Plumber, who unfortunately has no avatar to post here.

Easy Honey Ham

1 whole ham
1 jar honey

Take ham, score the top in a criss-cross manner with a knife, place in crock pot, dump an *entire* jar of honey over it, put on slow heat, and cook for 3-5 hours, depending on size of ham. Go baste it with the liquid honey about every ½ hour.

Slice, eat, go back for seconds, thirds and fourths.

Works just as well in an oven.

If you are wanting fancy, put whole cloves in the score marks...but that is time consuming. Your call.

Country Fruit Bread

3 eggs
1 cup oil
2 cups sugar (I substituted baking Splenda and it worked)
1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup mashed banana OR drained crushed pineapple
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon EACH salt, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon

Beat eggs until thick; beat in oil and sugar. Stir in cottage cheese and fruit; add to sifted dry ingredients. Mix well. Spoon into two 9 x 5-inch loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees – 50 to 55 minutes (makes 2 loaves)

OR

Spoon into four 5 x 3-inch loaf pans and bake at 350 degrees – 25 to 30 minutes (makes 4 loaves)

Jambalaya

1 ½ cups diced, cooked ham
1 cup chopped onion
¾ cup sliced celery
1 medium green pepper*, cut in thin strips
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tbs. Wesson Oil
1 (10 ¾ oz.) can chicken broth
1 (15 oz.) can Hunt's Tomato Sauce
¾ cup water
1 cup chopped, cooked chicken
¾ cup uncooked rice
2 tbs. Minced parsley
1 bay leaf
¼ tsp. Leaf thyme
¼ tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/8 tsp. Cayenne

Cook ham, onion, celery, green pepper, and garlic in Wesson oil in large skillet until onion is soft. Add remaining ingredients. Bring to boil. Cover: simmer 40 minutes, stirring once or twice. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

*I prefer yellow or red peppers. Lately I have been using my small food processor and finely chopping all ingredients – not sure if it changes anything but I never cared for the larger chunks of ham, chicken, and veggies.

Sweet Potato Cream Cheese Pie

8 ounces regular or light cream cheese, softened
1 cup mashed sweet potato
½ cup light brown sugar
¼ cup granulated sugar
1 tablespoon flour
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
dash ground nutmeg
dash ground ginger
dash salt
3 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 prepared "deep dish" graham cracker pie crust, homemade or purchased

PREPARATION:
Heat oven to 350°.

Combine cream cheese, mashed sweet potato, and sugars until smooth. Blend in flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, and salt. Beat in eggs and vanilla just until blended. Pour the mixture into the pie crust.

Bake 40 minutes or until center is almost set, but still a little wobbly. Cool on a rack. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours, or overnight to chill thoroughly. Store leftover cheesecake in refrigerator.

Cookie Concoction

1 ½ cup graham cracker crumbs
1 can Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk
1 pkg. (small) semi sweet chocolate morsels (1 cup)
1 pkg. (small) butterscotch morsels (1 cup)
1 cup finely chopped walnuts (optional)

Mix well – helps to pre-mix dry ingredients before adding milk – it is very hard to stir once it's all together

Press into well-greased 9 x 11 cooking dish (grease sides as well)

Bake @ 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes.

Cool 45 minutes

Next to chime in was KeepersKeeper, with a whole load of recipes.



Cheesy Crock pot Chicken

4-6 chicken breast (boneless, skinless)
2 cans of condensed cream of chicken soup
1 can cheddar cheese soup
¼ tsp salt, pepper, & garlic powder each

Throw all in crock pot on Low 6-8 hours. Serve on bed of rice or noodles.

Cranberry Turkey

Turkey Breast or Turkey Legs, white or dark meat, whichever you prefer
1 can of whole berry cranberry sauce
1 package of dry onion soup mix
½ cup of orange juice
salt and pepper to taste

Put turkey in crock pot, mix rest of ingredients and pour over turkey. Cook on low for 6-8 hours. You can also make gravy out of the sauce and put over mashed potatoes.

Teriyaki Chicken

2 to 4 pounds of chicken
Mix up the following in a small bowl:
½ cup soy sauce
½ cup sugar
¼ tsp garlic powder
¾ tsp ground ginger
1 ½ TBSP red wine vinegar
2 TBSP oil (olive is better)

Place chicken in crock pot and pour sauce over. Cook on low for at least 6 hours- longer won't hurt it on low. Serve over rice. (This has a hint of Chinese-food flavoring that can be emphasized with soy sauce on the rice, chow mein noodles, etc.)

Easy, Easy Pork chops

- 1 package of pork chops
- 1 can jellied cranberry sauce
- 1 can of apple sauce

Place all three in the crock pot and cook on low all day. Serve over rice and add a salad.

Creamy Crock pot Chicken

- 6 chicken breasts
- 1 can cream of (mushroom, chicken, or celery) soup
- 16 oz container of sour cream
- 1 envelope Lipton onion soup mix

Combine soup, sour cream, and soup mix. Set aside. Spray crock pot with cooking spray and put in chicken. Pour soup mixture over the chicken. Cover and cook on low 6-8 hours. Serve over noodles or rice. Can also use low-fat/no fat soup and sour cream.

Easy Swiss Chicken in the Crock pot

- 4 chicken breast halves
- 1 package stuffing mix- including the seasoning packet
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup (low fat is ok)
- ¼ pound Swiss cheese, sliced (about 8 slices)
- ½ cup chicken broth
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Spray crock pot with Pam and place chicken breasts in bottom. Cover with Swiss cheese slices (or provolone, or fresh spinach and then cheese.) In a bowl, combine the soup, stuffing mix, and broth. Spoon mixture over chicken in crock pot. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese. Cook on high for 4 hours, or on low for 8. Serve with more Parmesan cheese if desired. Chicken will be well done, but moist and delicious.

Mediterranean Chicken

- 3-4 pounds chicken (Whatever kind you like)
- 1 can Rotel Tomatoes (We were told generic brands don't work as well with this recipe. I made it just a little spicy by using Rotel diced tomatoes with green peppers instead of just the diced tomatoes)
- 1 can olives, any size (you can drain them if you want, but I didn't so it would be a little salty)
- Cooked Rice

Dump the olives into the crock pot, push them to the sides and put the chicken in the middle, then empty the can of Rotel over the chicken. Cook 8 hours on low or 4 hours on high. Serve over rice (I made instant brown rice with chicken broth [instead of water] just before we were ready to eat, and that was really good with this recipe).

KK's Special Cola Pot Roast

1 beef chuck, shoulder or rump roast
1 can Coca-Cola or Dr. Pepper
1 16 oz. Bottle of ketchup

In morning, dump roast into crock pot. Mix one can of your favorite soda (I used Dr Pepper; just don't use diet anything) with a 16-oz. bottle of ketchup and pour over roast cover and set on low eat at dinnertime.

You can cut up potatoes and carrots and add it to the crock pot for your side dishes. But damn, just try this!!! Also, it works well with any cut of roast, even the cheap ones.

Joanna's Yummy Green Beans (aka Yay for Joanna Experimenting in the Kitchen so I Don't Have to):

1 lb. bag frozen whole green beans or about 1 lb. fresh green beans
1 TBSP olive oil
1 tsp lemon juice
½ tsp. oregano
½ tsp. basil
1/8 tsp. garlic
1/8 tsp. pepper

1. Place green beans into a covered, microwave-safe dish, like Corningware. Microwave for 2 minutes, stir, microwave for another 2 minutes.
2. Drizzle all other ingredients onto the green beans. Stir.
3. Microwave another 2 minutes. Remove, stir well, and serve.

Depending on how crunchy you like your green beans, you may want to microwave fresh ones a couple more minutes.

The Only Meatloaf Keeper Likes:

2 lbs lean ground beef
2 fork-beaten eggs
3 TBSP of ketchup, chili sauce OR salsa, depending on what you like
1 envelope of beef/steak seasoning (beef stew also works)
1 envelope of onion soup mix

3 more TBSP of ketchup, chili sauce OR salsa for topping

Mix it all together and mush into a meatloaf-shape in the crock pot, not letting the edges touch the crock pot. Spread the 3 additional TBSP of your topping choice over the top.

Cook on low 6-8 hours, or on high 3-4 hours. Serve with additional ketchup.

Variation: Put half the meatloaf into the crock pot, spread with 1-2 cups shredded cheese, mush the rest of the meatloaf on top, then cook.

That KK sure loves her crock pot. The next one to pipe up was weasled, who also has no avatar.

Italian Beef

1 Sirloin tip roast
3 cans Campbell's French onion soup.
2 cans stewed tomatoes .Or I like to use fresh garden tomatoes.
Oregeno, salt & pepper, to taste.

1 cayenne pepper (for heat of course)

Put everything in the pot at about 7PM, at about 7 the next morning cut up the meat, it is shredding at this point.

Cook for another 12 hours.

Take a loaf of French bread and split it. Put the meat on the bread and put mozzarella cheese on the top. Wrap in tinfoil, and cook at 325 for about 15 minutes.

Next up was FK27, with that staple of the college diet, nachos.



FK27's Simple Nachos

1 bag tortilla chips
1 tube of sausage
1 green and 1 red bell pepper
1 onion
1 box Velveeta
1 cup milk

Precook Sausage, peppers, and onions. Melt Velveeta and mix in milk. Stir in sausage, peppers, and onions, then pour over chips.

Mandarin Orange Jell-O

Make orange Jell-O
Drain can of Mandarin oranges
Put Mandarin oranges in Jell-O
Eat with whip cream

Spanish Rice

Chicken Breast per person cubed
1 medium onion diced
Lots of Chili powder
1 Red or yellow pepper diced
1 clove garlic
1 can of chicken broth
1 cans tomatoes 24 oz
1-cup rice
Lots of sour cream
Tortilla chips

Add chicken to your big skillet. Once they start cooking add some chili powder. Once the chicken is done remove from skillet. Add onion red/yellow pepper and garlic. Cook onions till translucent. Add the chicken broth, tomatoes and rice. Add more chili powder and other seasonings to taste. Stir them all together then add the chicken then cover.

Want it to cook till most of the liquid is absorbed and have a nice sauce going. Serve with sour cream and tortilla chips.

And now we move to the Great White North with pusslit's broccoli salad.



Broccoli Salad

Several heads of broccoli
1 red onion
Apples if you like
Grated cheddar cheese

Dressing:

Mayonnaise (I use Hellmans Lite and don't tell anyone – they don't notice!)
White vinegar
Brown sugar
mix mayo & brown sugar (approx 2:1 ratio)
2 tablespoons vinegar

Mix to taste, shouldn't taste sugary. Toss so that broccoli is thoroughly coated, not soggy.

Next up is arachne, a.k.a. Crazy Stick Lady. Batter up!



Easy Crock pot Pork Roast

1 pork roast – whatever size you feel like using
1 large onion
Salt & pepper to taste
Minced garlic
Raspberry wine

Trim visible fat from roast and place in crock. Add garlic, salt & pepper. Slice onion and put in crock. Pour ~ ¼ cup wine over roast. Cover and cook on low about 8-10 hours. Potatoes may be baked in the crock with the roast (if you cut the potatoes in half, they soak up the yummy juices from the roast).

Ricotta Cheesecake

6 large eggs
2/3 cup sugar
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
Two 15-ounce containers whole-milk ricotta cheese*
2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
Confectioners' sugar for dusting

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Spray the springform pan with cooking spray. Separate the eggs, placing the whites in one of the large bowls and the yolks in the work bowl of a food processor. Add the sugar and vanilla to the work bowl of the food processor and process until thick and light yellow, about 1 minute. Add the ricotta and zest and process until smooth, another 30 seconds. Scrape the mixture into the other large bowl.

Beat the whites on high speed with the mixer until they hold stiff peaks. Fold the whites into the ricotta mixture and scrape into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with the spatula.

Bake until the cake is deep golden brown and the sides begin to pull away from the pan, about 1 hour and 20 minutes. Transfer to the rack to let cool completely. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until serving, at least 6 hours and up to 1 day. To serve, release the sides of the springform pan, dust with confectioners' sugar using the strainer, and cut into wedges.

Variations:

For more lemon flavor, double the amount of lemon zest and reduce the amount of vanilla by half.

For more vanilla flavor, omit the lemon zest and use double-strength vanilla.

*Getting ricotta that's not overly grainy will result in a cheesecake with a better texture than the regular supermarket brands. Specialty markets carry better ricotta than the supermarket.

Roasted Broccoli – (many other fresh veggies taste great this way too)

Spread fresh* broccoli florets on baking sheet

Spritz with olive oil (you can drizzle the olive oil over the broccoli and then toss to coat)
sprinkle with salt and pepper

Bake at 375° for ~20 minutes. Some of the broccoli will be just shy of burning. (that's the point really)

*don't use frozen broccoli, or it will end up mushy

Lemon chicken

flour, salt

2 lemons

2Tbsp olive oil

3Tbsp brown sugar

4 chicken breast halves (chicken can be doubled w/o changing anything else)

14oz chicken broth (canned will work okay, but homemade is best)

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Juice 1 lemon into shallow dish. Pour flour into another shallow dish, and season with salt. Dip chicken into lemon juice and dredge in flour. Using skillet that can be put into oven, brown chicken on both sides in olive oil. Remove from heat. Sprinkle brown sugar over chicken. Thinly slice 2nd lemon, and place lemon slices on chicken. Pour chicken broth over chicken.

Bake for 1 hour. For extra-tender chicken, lower heat to 200°F and continue baking for additional hour.

The broth thickens during cooking, and is good served over rice.

Hide the pr0n. CoG's own Pr0n Avenger is in the house, with his killer beef roast recipe.



Santa Maria Tri-Tip Roast

Tri-tip is also called "bottom Sirloin butt".

1 beef tri-tip (1 ½ to 2 pounds)

Santa Maria Rub

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon dried parsley

1 ½ teaspoon pepper

1 ½ teaspoon garlic powder

OR

1 package of McCormick's Grill Mates Zesty Herb Mix

Substitute White wine for water

Substitute Virgin Olive for Vegetable oil

Cooking Instructions

Trim all fat from tri-tips. Combine rub ingredients in small bowl until blended. Spread on beef just before cooking or up to 5 hours in advance. Barbecue over medium-hot coals, turning occasionally about 25 minutes or until desired doneness (normally, 8 to 16 minutes per side). To serve, cut tri-tip across the grain into thin slices. Serves 8-10

You can Vacuum seal the Tritip w/marinade overnight. This will cause the Marinade to penetrate fully.

And again we travel north to Canada. Who the hell wants to live in this cold? 80083r does!



Steak a la 80083r

Cook steak (anywhere from brown on the outside to a little shy of medium rare, you'll be cooking it more in a few minutes)

In pan (cast iron would be ideal) that you cooked the steak in, pour in about a cup of brandy of choice. Measure nothing. Measuring sucks.

Add whole peppercorns to brandy... a half a handful is about perfect. As Brandy is sort of boiling off, add ½ cup or so of cream.

Let it simmer on medium heat for about 2 minutes, then thicken to taste with cornstarch (I find about 2 forkfuls is perfect). Make sure you mix the cornstarch with some cold cream before adding to the hot brandy/cream mixture.

After the sauce is thickened as you like it (I like mine pretty thick), put the steak back in and simmer over low heat for about 5 minutes.

Yes, it should be good for those on Atkins, no it's not good for heart patients.

Traditional Scottish Shortbread

(2 tbsp) 1 part cornstarch
(1/4 cup) 2 part sugar (confectioners for choice)
(1/2 cup) 4 part butter
(3/4 cup) 6 part flower... 😊

Cream the butter and sugar... add the rest, stir, roll, use a cookie cutter, or cook as a brownie-type thing and then cut. I think it's 20 minutes at 325 or so. Cook until just barely starting to turn golden brown on the top. For best results cook on a stone.

Mmm... short!

80083r's vegetarian* spaghetti sauce in 15 minutes.

*not really vegetarian - I only say this because, well... bacon is a vegetable.

Brown 1 pound of bacon (see what I mean?), chopped as fine as you like. Leave the grease in the pot with the bacon.

Add 1 clove (or more, preferably more, you know garlic really IS a vegetable), squeeze.

Add mushrooms if you like them.

Add fresh oregano (about 1/8 of a cup after it's chopped) if you have it, or a good sprinkle of the dried stuff.

Add 1 large can of crushed tomatoes - this is important for consistency.

Add 1 can of cream of tomato soup.

Add a dash of sweet barbeque sauce (I like diana sauce, original, but any chicken n' rib or original sauce will do - pick your favourite).

Add some onion powder to taste (fresh onions would be better if you have them, add them with the bacon)

Salt to taste.

It's good - try it. You can add ground beef if you like, but I would have had to thaw it first, and I was lazy and in a hurry.

Steak Marinade

1/4 cup oil (I used corn, but Olive should be fine)

4 tbs vinegar (wine vinegar for preference)

Dash of rosemary

Dash of Basil

Dash of white pepper (careful, it's more potent than black pepper)

Salt to taste

2 cloves garlic, squeezed (or pressed, if you're that kind of person)

1/4 cup orange juice

just a little bit of brown sugar.

Put the steak (I used round steak - and it actually came out pretty tender) in a ziploc bag with the marinade for a few hours (or overnight) and turn the bag over and smooch the liquid around occasionally.

Cook steak as normal (be careful on the bar-b-que, you'll have a few more flare ups than normal, the oil is flammable.) Medium is perfect for this kind of steak.

From the cool air of Canada to the warm climate of SoCal, your humble author chimes in.



Force10's Yummy Grilled Shrimp

1 lb. 16-20 count or larger black tiger or Mexican white shrimp
1 stick of butter or margarine
3-4 limes
garlic powder (garlic salt works too, but isn't as good)

Peel and devein all shrimp

Put stick of butter in bowl and microwave till melted

Squeeze the juice from 2 of the limes into butter

Add garlic powder to taste

Dip shrimp into butter/ lime juice/ garlic powder mix and make sure they get a liberal coating.

Put shrimp onto skewers (if you're using the wooden kind, be sure to soak them in water first).

Hold onto the rest of the butter mix, you'll need it later

Let grill heat up (leave on medium to high if cooking on gas, heat is important).

Place a sheet of foil over the grill and spray with cooking spray or melt some butter onto it.

Fold up sides of foil so that liquid butter stays on foil rather than running off the sides. This will help cook the shrimp faster as well as give them more flavor.

Place shrimp skewers onto foil and pour some of the melted butter over them.

Cook ~4-6 minutes, flipping skewers occasionally. When you flip them, pour more butter over the top.

Also during this process, squeeze the juice from the third lime over the shrimp. You can also shake more garlic powder on at this point.

When shrimp are cooked (you just have to kind of know, but they'll turn an opaque white color and be much more firm), remove from grill.

Crack open the Mexican beer of your choice. If it's Corona or Sol, this is where the fourth lime comes in. Slice it up and squeeze into your beer. If no lime is necessary (Dos Equis, Pacifico, Negra Modelo, Bohemia, Tecate, or any other Mexican beer), skip this step and proceed to the next, which of course is to enjoy your nice, cold beer.

This dish is best enjoyed when dining al fresco. I find a nice rare to medium rare rib eye or New York strip steak complements it well.

Next up is our lovely mod, Idlewild, with a recipe for ramen. Australian for noodles?



Really Edible Ramen Noodles

Dice a couple or a few cups of vegetables of choice. Dice an onion, roughly chop as many cloves of garlic as you like.

Boil a big pot of water. While it's coming to the boil, toss a few tablespoons of vegetable oil, a tablespoon of sesame oil, a couple of generous slugs of soy sauce, about half a cup of ponzu juice (comes in a bottle, substitute lime juice if you can't get it), 2-3 tablespoons brown sugar (even better if you can get palm sugar), and 2 tablespoons chili-garlic sauce (if you can't get this, substitute finely chopped chilis to taste – this stuff is magic though, it comes from Vietnam and has a rooster on the jar) into a wok.

Heat the sauce in the wok a bit then toss all the veggies, onion and garlic in. Let that simmer while the water is coming to a boil. When the water's boiling, toss in a couple of packets of ramen (don't bother with the flavor sachets.) If you want to be fancy you can use any kind of noodle you want, but this is a great way to tart up ramen. Give the ramen about 1 ½ minutes boiling, then drain them and toss them in the wok with the sauce and veggies. Turn the heat up and fry around until the noodles are well coat. Toss it all in a bowl and you're good to go.

Crock pot Coq Au Vin

2 ½ lb. chicken, cut-up

1-4 cloves garlic, crushed (to taste. Recipe said one, I use more like 4.)

1 t. salt

¼ t. pepper (I used white pepper.)

½ t. dried thyme leaves

6 bacon slices, diced

2/3 C. sliced green onions

8 small white onions, peeled

1 C. Burgundy wine (Used whatever red wine was in the freezer for cooking with.)

½ lb. whole mushrooms

chopped parsley

8 small new potatoes, scrubbed

In large skillet, sauté diced bacon and green onions until bacon is crisp. Remove and drain on paper towel.

Add chicken pieces to skillet and brown well on all sides. Remove the chicken when it has browned and set aside. (At this step I tossed in a couple of tablespoons of the wine and deglazed the pan, and added that to the crock pot, so as not to waste all that lovely flavour.)

Put peeled onions, mushrooms, potatoes, and garlic in crock pot. Add browned chicken pieces, bacon and green onions, salt, pepper, thyme, potatoes and chicken broth.

Cover and cook on Low 6 to 8 hours. (High: 3 to 4 hours). During last hour, add Burgundy and cook on High. Garnish with chopped parsley.

Preserved Lemon

6 lemons, plus juice of 3 lemons
3 cups/675 g kosher salt
1 bay leaf
pinch of black peppercorns
pinch of coriander seeds

Scrub each lemon under hot running water to remove wax and other impurities from the skin. Cut each lemon in half through its equator, then make two deep perpendicular cuts through each half, stopping short of cutting the pieces apart. The effect is that of creating deep canyons through the lemons' flesh.

In a mixing bowl, combine the lemon juice, salt, bay leaf, peppercorns, and coriander seeds. Place a 1-inch/2.5cm layer of this mixture in the bottom of a crock or Mason jar, then add a layer of lemons. Repeat the process until you have added all of the salt mixture and all of the lemon halves. Pack everything tightly so that each lemon half is surrounded by curing mixture. Cover tightly and let cure for 30 days.

The lemons will keep for 6 months at room temperature or 1 year in the refrigerator.

Tunisian Orange-Olive Oil Tea Cake **Gâteau à l'Orange de Madame Mahjoub**

This unusual cake, made with olive oil and whole ground oranges, is a recipe from the Mahjoub family of olive growers in Tébourba, Tunisia. There it's made with a particular blood orange called malse de Tunisie, which gives the cake a beautiful red blush of color, but I've also made it with small, sweet Florida juice oranges. (Thick-skinned navel oranges won't work.) It's important to use organically raised oranges, since the whole fruit, skin and all, is called for; otherwise, scrub oranges very thoroughly with warm soapy water to get rid of any pesticide residue or wax.

Makes 8 to 10 servings.
Butter and flour for a 9-inch cake pan
4 small blood oranges
1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
4 large eggs
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

½ teaspoon almond extract (optional)
Confectioners' sugar (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350oF. Butter and flour a 9-inch cake pan. A springform pan works best. Slice off the tops and bottoms of each orange where the skin is very thick, and discard. Cut the oranges into chunks, skin and all, discarding the seeds, which will make the cake bitter. In a food processor, process the oranges to a chunky puree. Add the oil, pouring it through the feed tube while the processor is running to mix thoroughly. In a bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a separate large bowl, beat the eggs until very thick and lemon-colored, gradually beating in the granulated sugar. Add the vanilla and almond extract, if using, and mix well. Using a rubber spatula, fold about a third of the flour mixture into the eggs.

Then fold in about a third of the orange mixture, continuing to add and fold in dry and liquid mixtures until everything is combined in a batter. Pour the batter into the prepared cake pan. Bake for 60 minutes, or until the cake is brown on top and has pulled away from the sides of the pan. Remove the cake from the oven and let it sit about five minutes on a cake rack. Then invert the cake onto the rack and leave to cool. When thoroughly cooled, dust lightly, if you wish, with confectioners' sugar.

Idle editorializes: Now me, I like it better soaked in an orange syrup — just sugar, water, orange juice, boiled up a bit and poured over the top. It's much tastier that way.

Poached Pear With Chocolate Sauce

2 whole, ripe pears, peeled
Enough water to cover pears
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
1 cinnamon stick

For the sauce:

~1 cup good quality chocolate chips
½ cup liquid of choice — you can use cream or liqueur or even good coffee

Put pears in a medium size saucepan, standing upright, and cover with water. Add the sugar, vanilla and cinnamon. Put a lid on and bring it to a boil before lowering it to a simmer. Simmer for 15 minutes then start the sauce.

Put the chocolate chips in a small bowl or saucepan, and sit it over a second saucepan filled with water. Bring the water to a simmer (making sure none of it gets in the bowl with the chocolate.) When the chocolate starts to melt, carefully stir in the liquid.

When the sauce is done, the pears ought to be ready. Plate the pear standing upright, and pour sauce over it. You can serve this with ice cream if you want to be fancy or garnish it with mint.

Raspberry Chocolate Chip Cake

½ cup butter
½ cup white sugar
¼ cup brown sugar
~1 cup bittersweet chocolate chips
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla essence
~1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries
1 cup all purpose flour

1 ½ tsp baking powder
2 tbsp cocoa powder (unsweetened)
½ cup milk/soy milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F and grease a silicon bundt pan. (If you don't have one, use a shallower flat cake pan. The cake isn't very deep and I'm not sure how well it'd turn out of a standard metal bundt pan.)

Cream together butter, sugars, chocolate chips and vanilla essence. Beat until butter is fluffy. Beat in eggs and raspberries. Continue beating until raspberries are blended with mixture. Continue to beat as you add in the dry ingredients and then the milk. Beat until smooth. The batter should have a silky texture.

Pour batter into pan and bake for ~30-35 minutes. My oven runs hot, so it may need a little more time. I tested with a skewer and a light press of the fingers to the top of the cake. The skewer may not come totally clean but the cake should spring back when pressed. Cake will be fudgy and moist in the middle. Allow to cool a bit in the pan before turning out onto a cooling rack.

Yummy but way rich!

Heston Blumenthal's Millionaire's Shortbread

For the shortbread
100g butter, softened
60g caster sugar
Pinch salt
3 egg yolks
250g flour

For the caramel

1 x 397g tin condensed milk
120g unsalted butter
120g demerara sugar

For the chocolate topping

100g milk chocolate (or plain — depending on personal preference)

To make the shortbread, cream together the butter and sugar. Add the salt and egg yolks, then stir in the flour, using your hands to mix it thoroughly until a soft dough is formed. Wrap the dough in clingfilm and leave to rest in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.

Line a baking tray (about 20cm x 24cm in size) with baking parchment. Once chilled, roll out the dough to a thickness of about 0.5cm and press into the prepared tray.

Chill in the refrigerator for a further hour. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 160C/ 325F/Gas Mark 3. Bake the shortbread for about 20 minutes until golden brown. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool in the tin.

While the shortbread is cooking, you can tackle the caramel. Put the unopened tin of condensed milk in a saucepan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer gently for 4 hours, being careful not to let it boil dry. Set aside to cool. Do not open the can while still warm.

Melt the butter in a small pan over a gentle heat, then stir in the demerara sugar. Leave to simmer until the sugar is completely dissolved. Whisk in the condensed milk until the mixture is completely smooth, then pour it over the cooled shortbread base. Spread out evenly, and set

aside to cool completely.

Break the chocolate into a bowl, and place the bowl over a pan of boiling water. Stir until all the chocolate has melted. Pour the chocolate over the cooled caramel, smoothing it with the back of a knife. Put the tray in the refrigerator to allow the chocolate to set.

When you are ready to serve, cut the caramel block into your desired portion sizes and indulge.

Idlewild's notes For goodness sake start the milk simmering before you do the shortbread. 4 hours is a long time to wait around and the recipe takes a while to assemble too when you're done so don't waste time faffing around making shortbread and THEN start the caramel. Heston has a professional kitchen full of helpers and doesn't have to worry his pretty little head about obvious timesaving steps like this.

I had virtually no success rolling out the chilled dough before its second chilling — much better luck pressing it into the baking pan like a cracker crumb and then smoothing it using a drinking glass dredged in flour as a makeshift teeny rolling pin. Or you could try to make the dough less crumbly with an additional yolk or a little cold water if you're a happy baking substitution person.

Don't try and cut this while the chocolate is icy cold or you will get a mess like I did. I am going to try while it is only just set this time. When the chocolate is really hard it cracks when you cut it, while the caramel squishes down and oozes out and ruins the presentation!

Sautéed Spinach with Aromatics

1 bag spinach
1 onion
3 or 4 cloves garlic
1 carrot
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
salt
pepper

Rinse spinach really thoroughly and set aside in a colander to dry. (It doesn't have to be perfectly dry when you're ready for it.)

Dice carrot and onion fairly finely. Chop garlic roughly. In a large heavy bottomed pan (needs to be large enough to contain all the spinach in its uncooked bulk) heat the olive oil on a low heat. Gently sweat the onion, garlic and carrot with salt and pepper to taste for about ten minutes and then turn the heat up just enough to get a bit of a brown on everything — watch it carefully at this step, you don't want your garlic getting too dark.

Deglaze the pan with the tablespoon of vinegar. I am way too cheap to own any real balsamic and way too finicky to own any fake balsamic so this was just plain ordinary astringently delicious red wine vinegar. Store brand to be precise. It will balance and complement the sweetness of the carrot and onion.

Toss in the spinach and press it into the pot with your spatula and then let it cook for a couple of minutes until it starts to wilt. At this point, stir the aromatics through the spinach and allow it to finish cooking to your preferred state of mushiness or otherwise. The carrot should still be crisp enough to provide a bit of contrast.

We served this over a nice fluffy brown rice but it'd also be good in an udon noodle bowl with a light broth over it. It'd probably also make a charming side dish for your protein of choice.

Sausage and Legume Casserole

This can be quite flexible and tasty! I am giving the specifics of the version I cooked then the expert substitutions to taste in brackets.

1lb sausages (the big fat uncooked European kind, not patties or links or anything like that. Think bratwursts.) I used chicken with herb and cheddar but you can use any raw sausage you like.
2 tablespoons olive oil (or your fat substitute of choice. Goosefat, PAM, I don't care.)
2 onions (I used a yellow and a red. If you think you'd rather the delicate hint of a shallot, knock yourself out. It's all about complementing the sausage, baby.)
1/2 -1 bell pepper (up to you how much you like.)
2 sticks celery
3 large carrots
3 cloves garlic
1 tablespoon vinegar (or acid of choice. Whatever suits your flavour.)
1 potato (you could use at least 2, but our potatoes were being bad. Here is where you add any other root vegetable you are in love with, too. Parsnips with duck sausage could be neat.)
1 small can legumes (I used chickpeas. They were excellent with the chicken sausage)
1 large can tomatoes (I used plain whole tomatoes, you could use diced with basil, or rotel, or whatever goes with your sausages.)
Herbs and spices to taste (I used about two teaspoons of hot red pepper flakes, a bay leaf, and an obligatory pass of the oregano shaker)

salt to taste

Preheat oven to 350F (if you are adept at crock potting, everything after the sauté stage could be done in the crock pot.)

Cut the sausage into bite sized chunks and set aside.

Heat olive oil in a heavy bottomed pan over a medium heat -if you own a cast iron Dutch oven, you can do the whole thing from start to finish in it.

Cut the onions into chunky-width half-rings and start them sautéing.

Dice the bell pepper, discarding seeds. Toss in with onion.

Cut the celery into fingertip sized chunks. Toss into the sauté.

Cut the carrots into pieces the size of your sausage bites. You know what to do with it.

Smack the garlic. Peel the skin off but don't bother cutting it into anything finer than it falls apart into after a good whack with the side of the knife blade. Into the fray with it. Give the whole lot a good stir around with a wooden spoon if you haven't already out of compulsion or habit.

By this stage your onion should be browning up with the rest of the sauté veg getting a bit of a sweat on too. Add the sausage pieces and let them brown gently on the outside. Don't poke them too much or they'll fall apart, but you can stir the veg up a bit. When the sausage has got a bit of brown on it, toss in the vinegar and go "whoa, instant tear gas!" scrape it around the bottom of the pan to deglaze and get all the yummy browned stuff up.

OK. Now if you have a Dutch oven, everything stays put in there. Otherwise, transfer from your pan to a casserole dish. (or crock pot)

Toss in the potatoes, drained legumes and tomatoes. I added half a can of water here as well and got a soupy end result which was great over rice, but that's up to your preference. Add your spices and salt as appropriate for your choice of sausage and legume.

Put a lid on it and whack it in the oven for a couple of hours. Seriously, a couple. Two. Two and a half. Three. Whatever. As long as it's on a nice low heat you can't go wrong. (If you're crock potting, you figure it out. I dunno.)

Serve over a starch of choice. Very tasty on rice, yes yes!

Idle's Could It Be Any Easier Steak and Mushroom Pie with Lots of Cheating.

Ingredients

Pastry

2 tbs (approx) olive oil

1lb stewing steak

2 onions

2 cups mushrooms

1/2 bottle beer

3 tbs (approx) flour

Herbs

Salt

Pepper

First, get pastry. I recommend puff pastry right out of the freezer section. Set it out to defrost. Do not skip this step or you will cry later. If you want to be schmancy you can make your own pastry, it'd taste just fine with a good home-made shortcrust, but then it wouldn't be cheating.

Then:

Slice two onions into wide half rings and set them sautéing in a couple of tbs of olive oil. Cut

about a pound of your choice of stewing steak into bite sized chunks, trimming visible fat as you go. Add that to the olive oil and brown on all sides of the meat. Add a whole lot of black pepper, salt to taste, and key ingredient here for authentic Aussie cuisine, some kind of dried herb that has probably lost all its flavour. We learned to cook from the English! I used about a teaspoon of dried thyme.

Grab a container of sliced mushrooms from the store (OK, you can definitely cut up your own, but again with the not cheating. Why do you hate America?) about 2 cups in quantity. Toss in with the browning meat. Sprinkle three or four tablespoons of flour over the whole lot and stir it in. Keep browning for a bit. Then add about a half bottle of tasty beer. Not some domestic macrobrew crap. I used Smuttynose Old Brown Dog Ale.

Whack a lid on that and let it simmer for a couple of hours until the meat is tender. If you're not cheating (for shame!) this'd be a great time to whip up your pastry and let it rest in the fridge.

Heat the oven to 375ish. Put bottom sheet of pastry in pie dish. Throw delicious meat and gravy in. Put top sheet on. Squish edges together. Trim if you're fancy. Poke holes in top with a fork. Stick it in the oven for 25-30 minutes and you're golden.

Restoration Chicken

(serves 2)

1/2 pound skinless chicken breast or thigh, cut into wide strips
1 tablespoon Indian curry paste (I used a mild paste)
2 tablespoons mango chutney
1 6oz tub plain yogurt

Mix curry paste, chutney and yogurt. Place chicken in ovenproof dish and cover with sauce mix. Marinate in fridge for at least 30 minutes. Take out of fridge for long enough for ovenproof dish to come to room temperature while preheating oven to 375F. Bake chicken in oven for 20 minutes, serve with sauce over couscous, and vegetables of choice.

Rugelach

2 cups all purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup (2 sticks) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
6 ounces chilled cream cheese, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

Filling:
Jam.

Make dough using your preferred method for pastry (but note that there is no liquid added - it will come together without it.) Keep the ingredients as cool as possible as you work with them. If you don't have a preferred method, mine is to rub the butter and cream cheese into the combined flour, sugar and salt with only the very tips of your fingers (stay cool, man) and then gently work the dough together into a ball once almost all the chunks of butter are disappeared into the flour. Minimize your handling as much as possible.

Divide dough into four equal pieces, flatten into disks. No, don't skip this step. You actually have to do this. Seriously.

Refrigerate - a few hours or overnight.

Assemble:

Option 1

Roll out 1 dough chunk on floured pastry board to 9-inch round. Cut dough into 8 wedges. Spread 3 tablespoons jam over dough, leaving a border on each wedge. Put more jam up near the end you're going to roll from.

Roll from base of wedge to tip. Arrange on baking sheet. Repeat for other chunks of dough.

Option 1.5 (easier crescents)

Roll out 1 dough chunk on floured pastry board to form a rectangle. Cut adjacent triangles from the rectangle, spread jam over each triangle leaving a border and using more at the wide end.

Roll from base of wedge to tip. Arrange on baking sheet. Repeat for other chunks of dough.

Option 2

Roll out 1 dough chunk on floured pastry board to form a rectangle. Spread jam. Roll length-wise. Cut off raggy ends and cut the rest into 8 even pieces. Arrange on baking sheet. Repeat for other chunks of dough.

Place baking sheet in freezer 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 375, bake for 20 minutes. Original recipe said 40. Author was smoking crack.

If you read both recipes you may wonder why I bothered writing down my adaptation, but I don't like the method used in the original and I saw no need to keep a recipe with a filling I wouldn't use - we like plain jam. I also wanted to include the sundry assembly methods and a few notes about what is vital and what you can wing. I skipped the dividing and flattening section of the recipe because it seemed like excessive handling, but then I just had to do it anyway later.

And now, we travel to Texas, where El Gee makes us a big pot of gumbo.



El Gee's Louisiana Style Gumbo

Shrimp Stock:

- 1 ½ pounds jumbo shrimp, with heads and shells
- 1 onion, halved
- 2 bay leaves
- 5 sprigs fresh thyme
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- 2 tablespoons Old Bay seasoning
- 2 lemons, halved and squeezed

Gumbo:

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 yellow onions, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 pound okra, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon cayenne
- ½ teaspoon Old Bay seasoning
- 1 (15-ounce) can chopped tomatoes, drained
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 fresh thyme sprigs, leaves striped from the stem
- 2 quarts Shrimp Stock
- 1 ½ pounds reserved peeled shrimp
- 1 lb crawfish tails **
- 3 cups cooked long-grain white rice
- Chopped flat-leaf parsley and green onions, for garnish

To make the shrimp stock: Peel the shrimp, and toss the heads and shells into a large stock pot; refrigerate the peeled shrimp until ready to cook in the gumbo. Add the onion, bay leaves, thyme, cayenne, Old Bay, and lemons to the pot. Cover with 2 ½ quarts of cold water. Allow the liquid to slowly come to a boil, and then lower the heat. Gently simmer for 45 minutes, uncovered, skimming any foam that rises to the top. Strain the stock into a heatproof container or another pot to remove the chunky solids; at this point you should have about 2 quarts of flavorful broth to use in the gumbo. Cool until needed.

To make the gumbo, you must start with a roux base: Melt the butter over medium-low heat in a Dutch oven or other large, heavy pot. Just as the foam subsides, add the flour, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or whisk to prevent lumps – it may lock-up like cake frosting but just keep stirring through it. Cook the roux until it's the color of a walnut and smells equally as nutty, this

should take about 15 minutes.

Add the onions, celery, bell pepper, garlic, and okra (if it ain't got okra, it ain't gumbo!); season with salt, cayenne, and Old Bay. Mix in the tomatoes, bay leaves, and thyme. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring now and then, until the vegetables are soft. Pour in the cooled shrimp stock and stir to combine. Bring the mixture to a boil, and then reduce the heat. Simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the gumbo is dark and thick. Toss in the shrimp and crawfish, cook about another 15 minutes; adjust seasoning.

To serve: Ladle the gumbo into shallow bowls and pile some rice in the center. Sprinkle the parsley and green onions over the top.

** Substitute Sausage and/or chicken for crawfish, if desired.

French Toast Casserole

1 loaf French bread (13 to 16 ounces)
8 large eggs
2 cups half-and-half
1 cup milk
2 tablespoons granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
Dash salt
Praline Topping, recipe follows
Maple syrup

Slice French bread into 20 slices, 1-inch each. (Use any extra bread for garlic toast or bread crumbs). Arrange slices in a generously buttered 9 by 13-inch flat baking dish in 2 rows, overlapping the slices. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, half-and-half, milk, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt and beat with a rotary beater or whisk until blended but not too bubbly. Pour mixture over the bread slices, making sure all are covered evenly with the milk-egg mixture. Spoon some of the mixture in between the slices. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

The next day, preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Spread Praline Topping evenly over the bread and bake for 40 minutes, until puffed and lightly golden. Serve with maple syrup.

Praline Topping:
½ pound (2 sticks) butter
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1 cup chopped pecans
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and blend well. Makes enough for Baked French Toast Casserole.

From a Texas resident to a Texas native, we travel to North Carolina to see what Lissa has in store for us.



Strawberry Sour Cream Pie

1 9 inch pie shell – unbaked
1 quart fresh strawberries
1 ½ cups sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup sour cream
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar

Preheat oven to 450

Sort, rinse and halve strawberries. Place berries even in pastry shell.

Sift flour, sugar and salt together in a medium-sized bowl.

Add sour cream and stir well.

Pour mixture over berries and spread evenly. Sprinkle reserved sugar over the top.

Bake for 10 minutes.

Reduct oven to 350 and bake another 30 minutes, or until crust is a golden brown.

Blueberry Pie

5 cups fresh blueberries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 (15 ounce) package refrigerated pie crusts
1 cup sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour
1/8 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 large egg, lightly beaten with a few drops of water
1 teaspoon sugar

1. Sprinkle berries with lemon juice; set aside.
2. Fit half of pie crust pastry in a 9-inch pie plate according to package directions. (To prevent a soggy bottom crust, you can brush it with a beaten egg white before filling.)
3. Combine 1 cup sugar and next 3 ingredients; add to berries, stirring well.
4. Pour into pastry shell, and dot with butter.
5. Unfold remaining pastry and place it over filling; seal and crimp edges.

6. Cut slits in top of crust to allow steam to escape.
7. Brush top of pastry with beaten egg, and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon sugar

Bake at 400° for 35 minutes or until golden.

NOTE: Cover edges with aluminum foil to prevent overbrowning, if necessary.

The original recipe called for 1/3 cup flour, but I increased it to 1/2 so it wouldn't be too runny. Also, let it sit for a couple of hours after baking to allow the filling to set, or it will be too runny.

Chicken with Cashew Nut **(Gai Pad Met Ma-Muang Himmaphan)**

1/4 cup peanut oil
1/4 cup chicken stock
4 garlic cloves
1 1/2 lb boneless, skinless chicken tenders, cut into bite-sized pieces
4 tbs fish sauce
4 tbs oyster sauce
4 tbs honey
1/4 tsp white pepper
5 dried red chilies (broken in half)
1/2 tsp chili paste (can also use red curry paste or panang curry paste)
1 onion, sliced (I cut slices into quarters)
5 green onions, chopped
1 1/2 to 2 cups roasted, unsalted cashews
Jasmine rice, cooked

Heat a wok or large skillet on medium-high to high heat.

Add oil, chicken stock, and everything except green onions and cashews.

Stir fry until chicken is cooked thoroughly. (If you prefer a thicker sauce, you can thicken with a corn starch and water mixture.)

Reduce heat, mix in the cashews and green onions, and heat for another minute or two. Serve over jasmine rice.

Important: Remove red chilies before eating. They're fiery hot if bitten into!

Pad Woon Sen

3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
6 cloves garlic, chopped
1/2 small onion, peeled and sliced into thin strips
5 1/2 cup chicken, cut into tiny pieces
8 oz. bean threads, soaked in hot water, then drained and cut into 4" lengths
2 eggs
1 cup bean sprouts
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup julienne carrots
4 Roma tomatoes, sliced and cut into wedges
4 scallions, white & green portions sliced on diagonal
2 Tbsp. fish sauce

1/4 cup chopped roasted peanuts or cashews
1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper

Heat oil and sauté garlic until golden.

Add onions and stir-fry until wilted (about 3 min.)

Add meat and cook until tender

Add noodles and toss

Make a hole in center of mixture and break the eggs

Slowly stir the eggs only until set, and then break them up and mix with the noodles

Stir in the sprouts, celery, carrots, tomatoes and scallions, and cook until heated

Season with fish sauce and pepper

Garnish with chopped nuts

We move up the coast a bit to get some recipes from Hasufin. Make sure you check out his sword collection.



Yellow Thai Curry

1-2 tbsp yellow curry powder (the real stuff, ideally purchased from an oriental or Chinese food store — I take no responsibility if you use supermarket stuff.)
2 tbsp cooking oil
1 chicken breast
1 large or 2 medium potatoes
1 onion
1 sweet bell pepper
1 carrot (optional)
½ can coconut milk

- 1) Peel the potatoes. Slice the potatoes, onion, carrot, and pepper into large chunks.
- 2) Cut the uncooked chicken into small pieces.
- 3) Put the oil in a small pot over medium heat. After you have heated the oil, add 1 tsp of curry powder to the oil and stir constantly for no more than 30 seconds or until it turns brown, whichever comes first. Add the chicken and onion, stirring constantly until chicken is cooked and onions are tender.
- 4) Add the pepper, carrot, and potatoes. Pour in the coconut milk and stir in the remaining curry powder. Simmer for 30 minutes, until potatoes are soft.

Serve over rice (ideally jasmine). Makes two servings.

Leftovers can be kept in the fridge for three days, but the sauce will turn progressively more green.

Strawberry Lavender Cream

2 pt fresh strawberries
15 oz Fat free sour cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/3 cup powdered sugar*
1/2 cup half and half

*Instead of powdered sugar, Hasufin substituted lavender syrup.

Slice strawberries and mix with sour cream
Process briefly with a food processor or blender
Add vanilla and powdered sugar* process until smooth
Pour into bowl and add half and half, stirring until well blended.

*I suspect he added the lavender syrup at that point.

Lavender Syrup:

Ingredients:

1/3 cup of water

1/3 cup of confectioners sugar

1 1/2 tablespoon lavender, slightly mashed

Combine in a sauce pan, stir over low heat until sugar is dissolved

Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly

Continue to boil for 1-2 minutes

Allow to cool, strain lavender from syrup.

Rice Pilaf

Simple rice pilaf, but my method of making it involves a rice cooker, because... well, I have one.

Ingredients:

3 cups medium-grain rice

6 cups chicken broth

~3-5 tbsp olive oil

2 bay leaves

1 tbsp rosemary

1 tsp marjoram

1 tsp parsley

1 tsp thyme

2 shallots

Sauté the uncooked rice in a frying pan with the olive oil until all the rice is coated.

Finely cut the shallots.

Add all ingredients to the rice cooker, combine, and start.

Come back later to plenty of tasty rice pilaf!

Now we head across the pond to Sweden for gres and his mad baking skills.



Gres' Bread Bits

Excellent to make during power failures, but scale it down to make kneading easier.

1) Combine

50 g yeast
800 ml water
70 g honey
1325 g bread flour

and knead it for a few minutes. Let it rise until it falls down by itself.

2) Add

50 g sugar
30 g salt (2 tablespoons)
400 ml water
50 g wheat germ
850 g bread flour
50 g shortening or vegetable oil

and knead until smooth. Let the dough rest for 10 minutes.

3) Cut into 32 equal size pieces, and roll them to balls. Let them rest for five minutes. Then shape them to round discs, much like you shape a pizza.

4) Bake at 230 centigrade on a heated sheet pan (put it on the bottom of the oven) for a few minutes, flip the disc, bake the other side, or if you have no electricity, use your gas stove and fry the breads without fat in a cast-iron skillet.

EDIT: If you let the dough rest in a cold place for a few days (< 4 centigrade, the yeast will hibernate), and use a rolling pin to make about 3 mm thick disks, you'll get excellent Pita)

Janssons frestelse — a classic Swedish xmas dish.

You need potatoes, cream, milk, onions, and anchovies.

Peel and julienne the potatoes, enough to fill an oven pan of suitable size and depth.

Grease the pan, put about half the potatoes in the pan, add a thin layer of onion rings.

Now there are two options, the Classic or the Edible variants.

Classic: put anchovies on top of the onions, cover with the rest of the potatoes.

Edible: Put the anchovies in part of the milk/cream mixture. Use a blender until the anchovies are dissolved. Put the rest of the potatoes on top of the onions, pour the anchovy mixture on top of the potatoes.

Add milk/cream to half the height of the potatoes. Bake in oven (200 centigrade) until potatoes are soft, cover with aluminum foil if necessary to prevent burning.

You will need additional salt when eating this. Serve with sausages or Swedish meatballs.

Swedish Lenten Buns

This is a classical Swedish bun eaten the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

Makes 32 buns, may be scaled down to 8 without affecting the quality. 32 buns is really a lot, I once ate four while watching the star wars movies (the original ones) and that was a little too much. It is scalable up to 4x32 as well.

Recipe is from "The Professional Pastry Chef" by Bo Friberg, which is one of my favorite books together with its companion "The Advanced Professional Pastry Chef".

A) Rich cardamom yeast dough (5 pounds)

2 ounces fresh compressed yeast
1 pint warm whole milk (105 to 115 F)
6 ounces granulated sugar
1 tablespoon salt
2 tablespoons ground cardamom
4 eggs
2 pounds 10 ounces bread flour
7 ounces melted unsalted butter

1) Dissolve the yeast in the milk in a mixer bowl. Add the sugar, salt, cardamom, and eggs. Reserve a few ounces of the flour, mix in the remainder. Mix in the butter.
2) Using a dough hook, knead the dough for a few minutes, then adjust by adding the reserved flour, if necessary, to make the dough firm enough. Continue to knead until smooth and elastic, about 6 minutes. Cover and rest 10 minutes before using.

B) Lenten buns, yields 32 buns

1 batch "rich cardamom dough"
12 ounces almond paste
2 ounces pastry cream (or substitute heavy cream if you don't have pastry cream in the fridge. Most people don't)
3 cups heavy cream
4 teaspoons granulated sugar (For the whipped cream, if desired)
powdered sugar for decoration

1) After the dough has rested, divide it into 2 pieces. Use a scale. Form each piece into a rope about 20 inches long. Cut each rope into 16 pieces. Form the pieces into round rolls by rolling them while pressing them against a surface, they are supposed to stick slightly to the surface to form a kind of skin, and you should press rather heavily.

- 2) Place the rolls on sheet pans covered with paper. Let rise until doubled in volume.
- 3) Bake at 400F until brown and baked through, about 15 minutes. Set aside to cool.
- 4) Soften the almond paste by mixing in pastry cream/heavy cream until spreadable.
- 5) Whip the heavy cream, with added sugar if desired, until stiff peaks form. Place in a piping bag with a star tip (or just use spoons to decorate if you don't have any piping bags)
- 6) Use a serrated knife to cut off the top of the buns, about ½ inch thick. Reserve the removed tops.
- 7) Either spread almond paste on the flat surface, or make a pit with a knife or scissors, then fill it with as much almond paste as desired (reduces the negative impact of any stray healthy fibres in the buns).
- 8) Pipe a ring of whipped cream, about ½ inch high, around the edge of the bun. Place the reserved tops on top of the cream, and sift powdered sugar lightly on top of the buns.

Eat as is ("semla"), or serve in a bowl with warm milk and cinnamon ("hetvägg", literally translated to "hot wall").

Exceptionally Simple Madeira Sauce.

Serve with a huge t-bone steak.

1 dl red wine
0.5-1 tablespoon chopped shallots
cracked black pepper
sprig of rosemary

in a sauce pan. Boil until reduced by half. Strain and discard the spices.

Add red currant jelly to taste, and thicken with a corn starch syrup.

Hamburger buns (24) or hot dog buns (36)

Step 1:

1,5 ounces fresh compressed yeast
1 quart warm milk (approx 110 F)
1 ounce sugar
2 ounces honey
2 pounds 2 ounces bread flour

Combine in mixer bowl, mix until smooth, about 3 minutes. Cover and let rise in warm location for 1-2 hours, or until it starts to collapse.

Step 2:

Add 1 pound 4 ounces flour, 2 tablespoons salt and knead for 1 minute. Then add 1/3 cup vegetable oil and continue kneading 8-10 minutes.

Cover, place in warm location. Let the dough rise until double in volume. Punch it down, let it rise to double size again.

Turn out on table, do not punch down. Divide in 4 equal pieces, make ropes of the pieces. Cut each rope in six pieces, and shape them into round rolls.

Place the rolls on sheet pans and let them rest for 10 minutes, then press the rolls flat using the bottom of a pot or other firm round object. Proof until double size, then spray with water and Chinese sesame seeds on top.

Bake at 400F for approx. 15 minutes or until golden brown.

BBQ sauce

One finely diced medium onion
¼ cup olive oil
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
lemon juice
1 cup ketchup
¼ cup dark brown sugar
2 tablespoons orange marmalade
3 pressed garlic cloves
2 tablespoons Worcestershire
1 teaspoon dried chili flakes
1 tablespoon red chili paste
liquid smoke

Combine oil and onions in sauce pan, sauté for five minutes. Add vinegar and let it cool. Add the remaining ingredients. Adjust the amount of chili if necessary. Add liquid smoke if desired. I usually replace the chili paste and liquid smoke with chipotle tabasco sauce.

Rabbit in Almond and Olive Sauce (“Conejo Aurora”)

3 ounces pitted green olives, cut in half
1.5 ounces blanched almonds
2.5 — 3 pounds rabbit, cut in serving pieces
salt
flour for dusting
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
1 large onion, finely chopped
0.75 cup dry white wine
0.5 cup chicken broth
ground pepper

Put olives in small saucepan with water to cover. Boil 5 minutes, drain and reserve olives.

Place almonds on oven-safe cookie tray, brown in 350 F oven (about 5 minutes). Cool and transfer to food processor or mortar.

Sprinkle rabbit with salt and dust with flour. Heat oil in a shallow casserole and brown rabbit on all sides. Remove to warm platter.

In the same oil, lightly brown the garlic. Add garlic to almonds. Mash almonds and garlic to a paste.

Add onion to casserole and sauté 2 minutes, then add rabbit, wine, broth, salt and pepper, olives, and almond mixture. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer for 1.5 — 2 hours.

Poulet en cocotte Champeaux (serves four)

Haven't tried it myself, but it looks good. I'd probably add some more boiled or fried vegetables when serving; carrots, broccoli, ...

4 lb chicken
½ pint jus lié (see below)
¾ lb button onions
1 lb potatoes, cut to large olive size.
¼ pt white wine
¼ lb butter or sunflower margarine
"seasoning" (unspecified)

- 1) Truss the chicken. Tie the top of the wings and legs to the body of the chicken.
- 2) In a sufficiently large pot, colour the chicken in the butter. Add the wine, jus lié, replace the lid, and cook until done. (White liquid from meat, meat comes off bones easily, etc)

I'd do the cooking part in an oven, 175 degrees centigrade (whatever that is in Fahrenheit... 😊), it is more controlled than on the stove top. About an hour, or so, probably, for a 4 lbs bird. Check the progress periodically. If it is finished too early, wrap it in aluminum foil and let it rest.

The chicken can be divided into pieces before cooking, if the space is scarce.

- 3) Glaze the onions and fry the potatoes.
- 4) Recover chicken from pot. Remove as much fat as possible from sauce, thicken and season

as necessary.

5) Garnish chicken with potatoes and onions.

Glazing onions: Combine 1 quart of water, juice of one lemon, and 2 tablespoons of flour in a pot, heat until boiling, use a whisk to prevent clogging. Boil the onions until done. Remove onions. Continue boiling the liquid until reduced and thickened. Pour some liquid on onions to glaze them evenly.

Jus lié, makes 1 quart:

This looks like a lot of work, but it is not. It basically makes itself, and it is worth the effort, the taste is improved significantly.

1.5 qt brown veal stock (I'd use prefabricated extract beef stock for simplicity)

4 oz meat trimmings (Probably not that important, if you have it, use it, if not, don't)

2 oz diced onions

2 oz diced carrots

0.5 oz diced bacon

thyme, parsley, bay leaf to taste (I'd use 1 bay leaf, about a teaspoon of each of the thyme and parsley)

0.5 lb fresh mashed tomatoes or 0.25 pt tomato puree

1.5 oz arrowroot (or other thickener)

12 crushed peppercorns

1 oz mushroom peelings (I use dried shredded black fungi, it keeps well in the cupboard)

1) Fry bacon to extract fat

2) Add diced meat to frying bacon, if you use it. Let it brown.

3) Add vegetables, colour slightly

4) Strain off excess fat, if possible

5) Add the stock and bring to a boil. Skim, if necessary.

6) Add spices, tomato, and mushrooms.

7) Simmer for 45 minutes, skim if necessary

8) Dilute thickener with water and add to the jus. Bring to a boil and strain.

Metric Apple/Cinnamon Muffins

Makes 12.

215 g all-purpose wheat flour (not self-raising)
10 g (10 ml / 2 teaspoons) double-acting baking powder
160 g unsalted butter
120 g granulated sugar
3 ml salt (almost a teaspoon, omit if using salted butter)
120 g eggs (2-3 eggs, depending on size)
120 g milk (or 120 ml milk)
15 ml (1 tablespoon) cinnamon
1 large apple

Heat oven to 200 centigrade.

Peel and remove core from apple. Cut into small pieces suitable to decorate muffins.

Mix the dry stuff in a mixing bowl, using a balloon whisk.

Cream the butter, sugar, salt with a food processor or electric whisk. Incorporate the egg to the butter mix. Add the milk and the flour mix. Continue blending until everything is mixed smoothly.

Grease muffin tins. Distribute the batter evenly, then put apple pieces on top.

Bake for approximately 20 minutes in 200 centigrade, center of oven.

Kolakakor

Though the name translates to "caramel cookies," there's nothing caramel-like about them. They're similar in taste to buttery sugar cookies.

- * 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- * a bit less than 1/2 cup sugar
- * 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- * 1 Tbsp. light corn syrup
- * 1 cup flour
- * 1 tsp. baking powder

Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Cream together the butter and the sugar, then add the remaining ingredients (mix the baking powder together with the flour before adding). Work it quickly into a dough.

Roll the dough by hand into three "ropes" that are as long as a cookie sheet. Put them on a cookie sheet and flatten them a little.

Bake them in the middle of the oven for 10-12 minutes. Cut the lengths at an angle into cookie-sized pieces (I use a pizza cutter) while still hot. Cool completely and store in an airtight container.

Chocolate Balls

- * 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- * 1/2 cup sugar
- * 3 Tbsp. cocoa
- * 2 cups oats
- * 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- * 2-3 Tbsp. water
- * Chocolate sprinkles or coconut flakes

Cream together butter and sugar then stir in cocoa, oats, and vanilla. Add enough water so that the mixture sticks together well.

Form balls somewhat smaller than golf balls. Roll in chocolate sprinkles or coconut flakes to coat them, and refrigerate until firm.

Hallongrottor

These cookies are similar to the kolakakor but have a raspberry-jam center from which they get their name: raspberry caves.

- * 1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
- * 1/3 cup sugar
- * 3/4 - 1 cup flour
- * 1/4 cup corn or potato starch
- * 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- * slightly less than 1 tsp. baking powder
- * 1/4 - 1/2 cup firm raspberry jam or preserves

Heat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Cream together butter and sugar.

Mix dry ingredients and add them to the butter mixture, stirring into a dough.

Roll the dough into a "rope" and cut into 24 pieces. Roll each piece into a ball and place each ball into a muffin paper on a cookie sheet (alternatively, place the balls 2 inches apart on a cookie sheet). Press an indentation into each ball and spoon a small amount of jam into it.

Bake in the middle of the oven for 10-12 minutes.

Cool the cookies completely and sprinkle them lightly with confectioners' sugar, if desired

Kokoskakor

These coconut cookies are very easy to make, and even easier to eat! Dip the bottoms of the cooled cookies in melted chocolate and let cool on wax paper for an even tastier treat.

- * 1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted
- * 2 medium-sized eggs
- * slightly less than 1/2 cup sugar
- * 2-2 1/4 cups coconut flakes

Heat the oven to 350°F (175°C).

Stir together eggs and sugar (*Do NOT beat; otherwise cookies will spread out instead of rising well.) Stir in coconut and melted butter.

Let batter sit for ten minutes so that coconut will soak up the moisture.

Spoon teaspoonfuls of batter in high mounds on a greased cookie sheet. Bake in the middle of the oven for approximately 10 minutes. Loosen cookies from the bottom of the cookie sheet before cooling.

The Pig-Keeper's Pasta Sauce

- Some large tomatoes, or a can of whole canned tomatoes.
- One garlic, chopped. Yes, a whole GARLIC
- 0.5 cup cheap olive oil

Heat oil. Add chopped garlic. Add tomatoes. Add dried herbs, oregano, thyme, basil, to taste.

Boil in oil until tomatoes are mushy and oil separates from tomatoes.

Keeps in the fridge almost indefinitely, unless you are scared of germs or just can't keep things clean

Serve on three minute elbow macaronis. Shake or stir before serving to mix oil with tomato goo.

Back to the States now for some of Mr. Clean's chocolate Frito pie.

Frito Chocolate Pie

1 — 10.5oz bag of Fritos
1 cup — white granulated sugar
1 cup — creamy peanut butter
1 cup — white corn syrup
11 Hershey bars

Place Fritos in 9x13 dish.

On stove, in saucepan, combine sugar & syrup over medium and heat until boiling. Once boiling, remove from heat and add peanut butter. Pour this mixture over the Fritos, stirring, making sure Fritos are covered.

In a double boiler, melt all 11 Hershey bars. Once melted, pour over contents in dish (Fritos and sugar stuff).

Let cool overnight on counter top (or a couple hours in fridge if you just don't have any self control)

And now back to the Great White North for some recipes by sweetloulou.

Browned Onion Kugels

6 oz medium egg noodles (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups)
1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter
3 cups chopped onions (2 large)
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups sour cream
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups small-curd cottage cheese (10 oz)
1 tablespoon poppy seeds
4 large eggs
1 teaspoon salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper

Cook in a muffin tin with 12 (1/2-cup) muffin cups.
Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F.

Cook noodles in a 6- to 8-quart pot of boiling salted water until al dente, about 5 minutes. Drain in a colander and rinse under cold water, then drain well.

Melt butter in a 12-inch heavy skillet over moderate heat and brush muffin cups with some of butter. Add onions to skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until well-browned, about 20 minutes. Transfer onions to a large bowl and stir in noodles, sour cream, cottage cheese, and poppy seeds. Lightly beat eggs with salt and pepper, then stir into noodle mixture until combined well.

Divide mixture among muffin cups and bake until puffed and golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Loosen edges of kugels with a thin knife and cool kugels in pan 5 minutes before serving.

Makes 6 to 8 main-course

Spanikopita

1 ½ hours preparation time
8 servings
375 degree oven

2 cups crumbled feta cheese
5 eggs
2 Tbs flour
3 Tbs butter
1 cup chopped onion
1 tsp. basil
salt, pepper
2 cups (1 lb.) cottage or pot cheese
½ tsp oregano
2 lbs fresh spinach

Clean, stem and chop the spinach. Salt it lightly, and cook, adding no water, for five minutes.

Cook the onions in butter, salting lightly. When soft, combine with remaining ingredients and spinach.

* * * * *

To Assemble:

Have on hand: a 1 lb package defrosted filo dough
½ lb melted butter

Spread melted butter on a 9 x 13 baking pan. Place strudel leaf in the pan (it will outsize the pan. Let the edges climb the sides.) and brush generously with butter. Keep layers of dough coming one on top of another, brushing each with butter. When you have a pile of 8 leaves, spread on half the filling. Continue with another stack of 8 or so leaves (don't skimp on the butter), then apply the remaining filling, spreading it to the edges. Fold the excess filo down the edges, making little tidy corners.

Pile as many more layers of filo and butter as your baking pan will equivalent. Butter the top most leaf and sprinkle with a tablespoon of whole anise or fennel seeds, if you have some on hand.

Bake uncovered, about 45 minutes—till golden.

Stir-fried Duck With Sugar Snap Peas And Asparagus

4 x 200g/7oz duck breasts
2 teaspoons five-spice
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons sunflower or groundnut oil
2 large handfuls of thin asparagus, trimmed
2 large handfuls of sugar
snap peas or mangetouts
4 cloves of garlic, finely sliced

1-3 fresh red chillies, deseeded and finely sliced
4 oranges, zested and segmented
1 tablespoon honey
a handful of fresh mint, leaves picked
4 tablespoons soy sauce

Lots of people have woks, but so many people get it wrong because they do not really understand the principle of stir-frying, i.e.: you get a pan really hot and you do not overcrowd it with veg so that it starts boiling and not stir-frying. You could make this breast of chicken instead, if that takes your fancy, or slices of pork. There are many ways you can vary this using different vegetables: try bean sprouts, water chestnuts, spinach, courgettes or baby corn.

Method

First of all, score the skin of the duck with a sharp knife. Then dust the breasts all over with the five-spice and a good pinch of salt. Put the duck breasts skin side down in a cold wok, then bring it slowly up to a medium low temperature so the white fat turns into wonderful thin, crispy, golden crackling. Cook for around 12 minutes, then turn the breasts over and cook for a further 5 minutes. By which time they will be cooked medium, so remove them to a plate and pour away the duck fat.

Get all your veggies and flavourings ready to go and wipe your wok. Now you want to get it really hot. If you want to open the window (and cover the fire alarm... joke!), then do. You may need to cook it all in smallish batches depending on the size of your wok.

Add a couple of tablespoons of sunflower or groundnut oil to your hot wok. Carefully swill the oil around so that it covers the whole pan. Add your asparagus and sugar snap peas or mangetouts and toss around, then add the garlic, chilli and ginger. Continue stir-frying on the highest heat for a couple of minutes, until the asparagus has softened a little but still has a nice crunch. By all means have a taste. Remove the veg to a plate.

Slice up your duck breasts into little slivers and put these back into the wok with any resting juices and maybe an extra pinch of five-spice. Cook until nice and crispy.

Put all your vegetables back into the wok, and turn down the heat. Add the oranges, honey, half the mint and the soy sauce, and serve straight away on a large plate, sprinkled with the rest of the mint. Serve with rice or noodles, as a starter or main course.

From west to east, we drop back down into the US and head to Delaware, where Captain Caveman mixes us up some crawfish etouffee. Dude, Louisiana's much further south.



Crawfish Etouffee

6 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons flour
2 cups chopped onions
½ cup chopped celery
½ cup chopped bell pepper
6 cloves garlic, minced
2 bay leaves
2 sprigs fresh thyme
2 ½ cups fish or shrimp stock
1 cup peeled, seeded and diced tomatoes
1 ½ teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
Hot pepper sauce
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
2 pounds crawfish tails, with the fat
½ lemon, juiced
1 cup chopped green onions
¼ cup chopped parsley

Cooked white rice, for serving

In a large, heavy saucepan, melt 4 tablespoons of the butter and whisk in flour to combine well. Continue to cook, stirring constantly, until roux is a peanut butter color.

Add onions, celery, bell pepper, garlic, bay leaves, and thyme and cook until vegetables are soft, about 6 to 8 minutes. Add stock, tomatoes, salt, red pepper, hot sauce, and Worcestershire sauce and bring to a boil.

Skim surface, reduce heat to a simmer, and cook uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add crawfish tails and fat, lemon juice, green onions, and parsley and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add remaining butter and stir to combine well. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary. Serve over hot rice.

Yield: 8 servings

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

Difficulty: Medium

You can pretty much swap in any different kind of meat, such as chicken or sausage, and I've always made it with chicken.

Also, instead of shrimp stock you can use a light chicken broth, which is what I use.

Obviously, if you like it spicier or whatever, you can add more hot sauce or anything. Jalapeno flavored hot sauce goes quite well in it.

And now we head back north, for some recipes from Rizak. Inexplicably, there are one or two that don't include bacon.



Rizak's Best Shortbread Ever

1 cup brown sugar
2 cups butter, softened
4 cups flour (white AP)

Simple to remember. Sugar, butter, flour. Each one is twice as much as the last. Sugar, butter, flour.

- 1) Soften the butter in a large bowl with a wooden spoon.
- 2) Add the sugar and smooth. You can add it all at once if you want, but I usually do it half/half.
- 3) Add the flour a cup at a time and mix thoroughly each time. By the time you've added it all you're going to think that this is never going to work. It's way too dry. You're wrong. The flour is there to hold everything together. Once the butter melts it will be fantastic!
- 4) Spread this mess out on 2 cookie sheets to a uniform thickness. Prick the top all over with a fork so that it doesn't lift and burn.
- 5) Bake at 350° for 12-15 minutes. I suggest waiting the full 15 minutes, but some people have hot ovens. The idea is that it will be slightly chewy, but cooked all the way through.
- 6) Remove from oven and cut into bars a couple of inches thick by twice that wide. I like to use a plastic spatula so I don't damage my cookie sheets. Let cool in the pan. After 10 minutes or so you can remove them to a plate and enjoy the rich, goodness with a nice glass of milk.

Simple Sugar/Syrup

- # Put one cup of water in a small saucepan.
- # Add two cups of sugar.
- # Heat to a boil while stirring.
- # Reduce heat and continue to stir until the sugar dissolves.
- # Cool to room temperature.
- # Find a clean container that will hold at least a cup and a half.
- # Using a funnel, pour liquid into container.
- # Seal and store in refrigerator indefinitely.
- # Use whenever a recipe calls for simple sugar or simple syrup.

It might be too late in the year for this, but I found this to be the perfect way to make lemonade. Squeeze ½ lemon into a glass, put the lemon half into the glass, put in a bit of the syrup, fill with ice and water, shake/stir.

I often found that when I did this with granulated sugar, the sugar just sank to the bottom. That forces you to make the face where all of your features are trying to touch your nose. You know the one. The syrup takes care of that problem.

Stuffed Pork Tenderloins

2 pork tenderloins - 3/4 lb (350g each)
2 tbsp (30 mL) butter
1 onion finely chopped
1 cup (250 mL) breadcrumbs, well packed
1 tsp (5 mL) sage leaves, crumbled
1/2 lemon peel, grated
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) pepper
flour
1 egg
2 bacon slices, chopped
1 tbsp (15 mL) kneaded butter
1 1/2 cups (375 mL) beef stock

Preheat oven to 350 F. (175 C)

- Split each tenderloin lengthwise, without separating completely, then spread open and rub lemon over meat. Set aside
- In a skillet, melt butter and saute, but do not brown, onions over medium heat.
- Remove from heat. Add breadcrumbs, sage, lemon peel, salt, and pepper. Stir, then add egg.
- Spoon stuffing onto a pork tenderloin, cover with the other, tie with string and coat lightly with flour.
- In a stove-top casserole, melt chopped bacon. Cook pork tenderloins on both sides until golden, cover then bake for 40 minutes.
- Remove tenderloins from casserole, place in a serving dish and keep warm.
- Add 1 tbsp (15 mL) butter to cooking juice and stir, then pour beef stock over mixture and reduce liquid to half or until the sauce reaches desired smoothness.
- Pour sauce into a gravy boat and serve with stuffed pork tenderloins.

MMMMmmmmmmMMMMM! Bacon AND butter? How can this meal possibly go wrong? Some nice mashed potatoes and green beans compliment the meal nicely.

Baked Spinach Pie w/cheese

in 2 tablespoons olive oil
fry 1 cup onions
add 2 pounds spinach, chopped
add 1/4 cup dill, 1/4 cup parsley, salt, pepper
remove from heat
add 1/3 cup milk, 4 eggs, 3/4 pound (minimum) feta cheese, crumbled (or ricotta)
bake in battered casserole for 1 hour at 350°F

We just use our standard pie crust for this. Mmmmmmm. Lard.

A good trick is to make up some sticky rice and line a pie plate with that, then pile the ingredients on top and bake. It makes a nice change.

Neen is our resident spelling and grammar Nazi and makes her home in southern Indiana. We go there now to see what's cooking in her kitchen



Paprika Chicken

Cook together for 10 minutes:

2 TBL butter
2 large red onions

stir in:

1-2 TBL Paprika (to taste...I like 2)

cook for 5 minutes, then add

4 boneless skinless chicken breasts (or equivalent chicken parts)
1 tsp vinegar
¼ tsp sugar
1/8 tsp salt

Cover and cook on low for 20 minutes.

Sprinkle with 1 TBL flour

add ½ to 1 cup chicken stock (depending on how thick/runny you want the sauce at the end)

Cover and cook on low for another 20-30 minutes.

Remove the chicken and strain the sauce back into a large pan. Stir in ½ cp sour cream. Add the chicken back to the pan and heat thoroughly.

Serve over Noodles or Rice.

Sea Bass in Miso Soup with Shitakes and Udon

6 cups cold water
1 (9 or 10 inch) piece dried kelp (kombu), wipe with damp cloth to remove dirt
¾ cup dried bonito flakes
1 tablespoon light miso
4 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, halved
1 (6-ounce) center-cut sea bass fillet, skin on
Salt (I use Kosher) and freshly ground black pepper
1-inch piece fresh ginger
1/2 of a handful fresh cilantro
1 head baby bok choy, halved lengthwise

1/2 pound fresh udon noodles
1 green onion, white and green part, chopped

To make the dashi (Japanese soup stock): Combine the water, kelp, and bonito flakes in a 2 to 3-quart saucepan and place over medium-low heat. Allow the water to slowly come to a simmer; this should take about 5 or 6 minutes. Turn off the heat immediately just as the stock reaches a boil. Let the stock sit for 1 to 2 minutes and then strain out the solids. Reserve around 4 cups of the dashi to use in the future as a base for soups and stews (it will keep for 1 week in the refrigerator or frozen for several months), and use the remaining 2 cups to prepare the miso soup.

Pour the dashi into a wok (or your stock pot) and place over medium heat. Whisk the miso into the dashi, stirring until smooth. Toss in the mushrooms.

Lightly coat the bottom of a 12-inch bamboo steamer (or the steamer insert) with non-stick cooking spray. Season both sides of the fish fillet with salt and pepper; lay it in the steamer, skin-side up. Cut the ginger lengthwise in strips and put it on top of the fish so the flavor can permeate; put the cilantro on top. Nestle the bok choy in the steamer, side by side, and place the steamer on top of the soup and cover with the lid. Steam for about 12 to 15 minutes until the fish is cooked. Carefully remove the steamer and add the udon noodles and green onions into the soup. Cook for 1 minute or until the noodles are tender.

To serve: Ladle the miso soup into a wide shallow bowl, scoop the noodles into the soup and lay the bok choy and fish on top of that. Garnish with more cilantro if you like. I found something great at that market and use it here also, it's a chile-sesame salt, and it's marvelous on this as well as other things as well.

Since the recipe was written for the bamboo steamer, I presume some of the steam escapes and the soup cooks down some, so I left the lid of my pot a little tilted, so a very little steam would escape, and the soup would reduce slightly. Obviously, this recipe was just for 1, but it doubles or triples easily as long as you take into account that a slightly longer cooking time would be needed for more fish and bok choy. And I'm sure that any fairly firm fish would also do.....the Bass at the store just happened to look the best yesterday morning.

And now we head to Montana, where our favorite Wookiee Secretary has some crock pot recipes for us.



Crock Pot WhatYaGot Stew

1 lb stew meat, cut into bite-size chunks (I used antelope cos it's What!Got)
4-5 cups beans (canned or dried, but make sure to overnight soak dried ones first)
2 small cans tomato soup
1 packet brown gravy mix
4 cups water
2 tbsp liquid smoke
2 tbsp minced garlic
1 tbsp olive oil (or whatever oil, but I don't recommend crude)
2-4 tbsp salt (to your preference of saltiness)

Throw everything into the crock pot on low for 8-10 hours. If your beans are the canned variety, don't add them until a half hour or so before you're ready to serve.

For me just throwing stuff into the crock pot yesterday morning, this actually turned out REALLY GOOD.

Bastardize at will.

Now to the land of no sun (a.k.a. Seattle), where dambabe teaches us how to cook the Washington state way.



Cream of Broccoli Soup

5 cups chopped broccoli
2 cans chicken broth
5 T butter
4 T flour
2 cups half and half
2 cups cubed cheese
salt and pepper to taste

Cook broccoli in 1 can broth and 1 can water. Simmer 5 minutes. Remove some pieces to leave whole. Puree the rest with the water and broth. Melt butter in pan and blend in flour. Stir in half and half. Cook until thick. Add broccoli (puree and whole pieces) and other can of broth. Simmer and stir in cheese. Salt and pepper.

Bomboloni di Nutella (6 SERVINGS)

For The Donuts

2 jars Nutella (13 ounces each)
1 pound ricotta cheese
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 teaspoons baking powder
2 cups all purpose flour
4 eggs
2 quarts Canola oil
granulated sugar

1. To make donuts: In a large mixing bowl, combine 1 jar Nutella, ricotta, salt, vanilla, baking powder, flour and eggs. Mix until smooth to form dough.
2. Drop heaping spoonfuls of dough into hot oil at 375° and cook for 3 to 4 minutes.
3. Remove donuts from hot oil, drain on paper towels for a moment, roll in granulated sugar, and fill with Nutella. Serve immediately.

French Chicken

1 jar French dressing
1 pkg onion soup mix
1 can cranberry sauce
lots of garlic

Mix all together. Pour over frozen chicken parts and bake at 350 about an hour. Serve with rice.

Man, there sure are a lot of Canucks on CoG. Are they planning an invasion or something? We now return to southern Ontario where sked cooks us breakfast.



Scotch Eggs

1 cup fine breadcrumbs
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 raw large eggs + 6 large, peeled, hard-cooked eggs
1 lb (450 g) pork sausage meat
2 tbsp finely chopped parsley
1/2 tsp each: dried thyme, ground sage
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp pepper
Vegetable oil for frying

Put breadcrumbs on large plate. Put flour on medium plate. Break raw eggs into medium bowl; beat lightly.

In large bowl, blend meat, parsley, thyme, sage, salt and pepper. Divide into six balls. Moisten hands. Place 1 ball of meat in palm and pat into circle. Put 1 egg on top of meat. Use fingers to spread meat completely and evenly over egg. Roll in flour, then egg, then breadcrumbs to coat lightly. Roll gently on work surface to even out coating. Repeat with remaining eggs. Discard leftover breadcrumbs, flour and raw eggs. Refrigerate coated eggs 1 hour.

Pour oil to 1-inch depth in large skillet. Heat on medium until shimmery or until temperature reaches 350F. Fry in batches 10 minutes, or until coating is cooked through, turning to cook evenly. Reduce heat to medium-low if eggs brown too quickly.

Drain on paper towels. Serve hot or cold.

Makes 6.

And now to Wisconsin, where we should have cheese dishes, but have cake instead.



Apple Cake

4 c apples, peeled and chopped (you can use more apples per cake up to ~8 cups. I recommend at least 6 cups.)

1 1/2 cup sugar (may be reduced to 1 cup, even if using more apples)

2 eggs

1/2 c oil

2 tsp vanilla

2 c flour

2 tsp baking soda

2 tsp cinnamon

1/2 c chopped nuts (optional)

1/2 tsp salt (optional)

Combine apples and sugar and let sit at room temperature 12-24 hours. Stir the apples occasionally to make sure they are all coated with sugar.

After apples and sugar have soaked long enough:

Beat the eggs with the oil to ensure that the yolks are broken.

Mix eggs, oil, and vanilla with apples and sugar.

Add the dry ingredients.

Stir by hand until well mixed.

Pour batter into greased 9x13 pan (a glass pan works well).

Bake at 350° 30-45 minutes. Cake is done when a toothpick comes out clean.

Tips:

Use a juicy apple like Macintosh or Cortland.

The longer the apples soak with the sugar, the better.

More apples make the cake more spongy.

You can top it with a lemon glaze frosting, but I prefer it plain.

And now to the Motor City, where DKilroy cooks us up a big pot of chili. Go Red Wings!



Kilroy's "Screw you, real chili doesn't have beans in it" Chili

2 pounds stewing beef, diced into 1/2-inch cubes
1 large yellow onion, chopped
6 cloves garlic, finely minced
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/3 cup mild chili powder
1 1/2 teaspoons oregano leaves
1 1/2 teaspoons basil leaves
1 1/2 teaspoons cumin powder
1 teaspoon dried cilantro leaves
1 bay leaf
2 (14.5-ounce) cans diced tomatoes, undrained
1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (7-ounce) can diced green chilies
2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
2 teaspoons kosher or coarse salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 teaspoon Tabasco Brand sauce -
2 bottles or cans of beer, 12 oz, Miller Genuine Draft works well, or whatever is in the fridge

1. In small bowl mix chili powder, oregano, basil, cumin, cilantro and bay leaf. Set aside.
2. Brown beef in large cooking pot over medium-high heat; drain fat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until onion has softened. Push the beef/onion mixture to one side of the cooking pot. Add the oil to the empty side, then add the spice mixture and cook for 30 seconds over medium heat, stirring constantly, then combine with the beef. Add the tomatoes, tomato sauce, green chilies, brown sugar, salt, pepper, vinegar, Tabasco sauce and the beer.
3. Bring to a boil; cover and reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 3 to 4 hours, leave uncovered last 30 minutes
- 4) Drink 2nd beer while chili simmers

I will make a batch, then portion into smaller amounts and freeze.

Pierogi's

I finally got around to asking my Mom for her pierogi recipe, and 'borrowed' the fillings recipe from my brother.

Dough:

4 cups flour
5 eggs
5 heaping tablespoons sour cream

1 teaspoon salt
vegetable oil

Beat eggs until well mixed. Add salt and sour cream. Mix well.

Add in flour and mix.

knead dough, adding flour until dough no longer sticking to your hands.

Roll out a portion (or half portion, if space is limited) of the dough on a floured surface as thinly as possible

Put about a tablespoon of filling on the dough and use a large plastic cup (a big gulp-type cup works really well) to cut a circle around the filling. Dampen half of the circle with a bit of water on your finger and fold into a dumpling. Boil the dumplings a dozen at a time in a big pot of salted water until they float -- no more than 3 minutes. Remove from boiling water, and drop in cold water for a second or so, place on towel to dry. Use vegetable oil to cover lightly, so pierogis don't stick together.

Fillings:

Sauerkraut filling:

1 stick butter

1 large onion, diced

32-ounce canned or fresh kapusta (sauerkraut) , rinsed and drained

1 oz dried mushrooms

1 cup water

Soak the dried mushrooms in the water until soft; about an hour. Drain, reserving liquid. Chop the mushrooms up. Saute onion in butter until just soft. Add sauerkraut, mushrooms and the liquid from soaking the mushrooms. Cook until the water is evaporated. Allow time for the filling to cool before assembling pierogi otherwise they will fall apart when cooked. If making more than one filling, this one can cool while you prepare the others.

Cheese filling

1 pound farmer's cheese, or ricotta

2 eggs

Salt

1 tablespoon sugar

Mix well.

Potato/Onion

4 cups cold, mashed potatoes

2 large onions, diced

4 tbs butter or margarine

salt and pepper to taste

Cook the onions in the butter until caramelized. Mix the onions with the potatoes. Season with salt and pepper (important!).

And now we put up an agricultural quarantine so that bse may grace us with his culinary creations.



Roast Duck with shallots poached in red wine

I had this last night. I love a good roast, and this is just the weather for it. Crank up that oven and get the house nice and warm.

Roast potatoes

I'm sure everyone's got their own method for these, but here's mine.

Peel and cut up the potatoes. I tend to cut them quite small these days so that they don't need too long to cook, given the insane price of gas these days. Parboil them. When they're partly cooked, drain them in a sieve. Bounce them up and down a bit in the sieve to break the surface up a bit - this will help them go nice and crispy in the oven. Transfer to a roasting tin and smother them with fat! Goose fat is the best, but it's expensive so I usually use butter. I know it's bad for me and I don't care; they just aren't as nice if you use olive oil. Cooking time will depend on how big you cut the pieces; turn half way.

My oven slopes down slightly so I need to make sure I put the potatoes in the back-left corner so that they're actually sitting in the butter!

Duck

As this was just for me, I used a breast, with skin on. If you're cooking for the family, maybe you can use a whole bird.

I like to crisp the skin a bit in a frying pan first - I've got a cast iron Le Creuset which is ideal for this. Just fry until the skin is nice and brown, then transfer to the roasting tin with the potatoes. Pour any fat which came off the duck onto the potatoes. Yummy! You might like to layer some pancetta over the duck.

Shallots

Top-and-tail and peel your shallots and poach them in a pan with a mixture of half-and-half red wine and vegetable stock. Just use enough to cover the shallots. Don't let the liquid boil, just let it simmer away on a low heat. They only need about five minutes.

And now the most important part - gravy

I believe that gravy-making is a form of black magic which can only be acquired through long practice and many lumps, but I will do my best to set you on the path.

Serve up everything that was in the roasting tray - the potatoes and duck - and the shallots. Put the roasting tray on the stove, on the lowest heat possible. All those lovely juices from the duck and the butter will bubble nicely. Put in about a tablespoon of flour (judging how much flour to use is one of the hard things about making gravy - practise, practise, practise!) and mix it in with the fat using a fork. Make sure that all the flour is mixed in with no dry flour left over. Mash it up with the fork - you won't get rid of all the lumps but try to get it as smooth as possible. Now add the wine that the shallots cooked in (again, it's difficult to judge how much to use). I usually chuck in a splash of Worcestershire Sauce at this point. Stir thoroughly with that fork, making sure to pick up

any crispy bits of duck and potato from the bottom of the roasting tray. It should slowly thicken up so when it reaches the consistency that you like, serve and enjoy.

Time to get in and out of the Valley of the Sun before it really starts to warm up out there. Pj5081 brings us some recipes from the Grand Canyon State.



Beef Burgundy

Serves appx. 2. Takes appx. 1/2 hour.

Ingredients:

1lb of lean beef (I generally use London Broil, but even lean stew meat will do)

1 Small to medium green bell pepper (or whatever color you'd like; not hot)

1 Small white onion

1/2 bag of brown gravy mix (they sell these for appx. 59 cents at your local grocery and just about any brand is fine)

1/2 cup burgundy wine (I generally use burgundy cooking wine, but I'm told you can use any flavorful red wine)

1/2 cup water (or, of course, more wine)

Directions:

Chop meat into small, bite-sized strips. Say, an inch or so long and 1/4" thin. Brown thoroughly in non-stick pan or wok (yes, you can use a little stir-fry oil or vegetable oil, if you'd like). Drain. Set the meat aside.

Chop pepper and onion into bite size pieces. Brown pepper and onion. When they look brown enough, add the meat.

Sprinkle gravy mix on the meat & vegetables. Add your wine (or water and wine). Reduce heat to a simmer. Stir often.

When gravy is dark and thick, it's ready to be served. If it still looks too thin after about 20 minutes, add more mix, increase the heat a bit and keep stirring.

I generally serve it over rice or egg noodles.

Hide the Mountain Dew. Teknon's in the house, cooking with another Pepsi product.



Pepsi Pork Chops

3-4 Pork Chops

4 Tbsp of margarine/ butter

1 12oz can of cola (the name specifies Pepsi, but I usually use Coke. I've used Shasta and RC - worked well, but I liked Coke the best)

1 18oz bottle of BBQ sauce (different flavors do add a little so feel free to play with it to see what you like the best)

Melt margarine/butter in large skillet (big enough for the meat to lay in and not overlap)

Lay meat in skillet, making sure that there is no overlap

Pour BBQ sauce over meat, followed by can of cola

Cover and cook on med (350 deg if using electric skillet) for 35 min - NO PEEKING

Other meats work as well. Chicken is one that we commonly use, as it is often cheaper than pork chops. Boneless, skinless Chicken breasts work well as they are easy to eat, but kids really like drumsticks - just make sure you have lots of napkins handy

We often serve with white rice and a vegetable (Green beans, Corn, on the cob or off, asparagus, peas, ect). The sauce can be drizzled over the meat and rice to add flavor.

The wine's not ready yet, but we'll go visit Technomistress anyway for some lovely dessert.



Lemon Pineapple Mousse

- 1 14 fl. oz. can crushed pineapple
- 2 envelopes Dream Whip Topping powder
- 1 brick Philadelphia Cream Cheese (I use the Light cream cheese)
- 1 cup boiling water
- 1 box lemon Jell-O powder

Drain pineapple well and set aside.

Make up Dream Whip as per the instructions on the envelopes (1 cup milk - I use 1%, 1 tsp vanilla & envelope contents) and set aside.

Mix/melt cream cheese in boiling water until totally liquid and then stir in Jell-O powder.

Fold Dream Whip into cream cheese mixture. Gently fold in drained pineapple.

Pour into a mould or bowl and chill until set.