

Thanksgiving is a perfect holiday - it is about getting together with friends and family and... great food!
Congratulations to our October winner of Darlene Dixon's Cookie Book: Owen T, with his recipe for Toasted Coconut Chocolate Cookies. Watch for this recipe and the other submissions in our upcoming Holiday Gift Guide that will be out on Nov. 19th!
Don't forget to send in your recipes for a chance to win a Darlene Dixon cookbook prize package!
Submit your recipe and register to win at: clickit.entries@gmail.com
(All submissions will be entered into the drawing and need to be received by Dec. 18, 2023. Please include: Name and phone number/email address. Winner will be announced and contacted. We do not ship the prizes, but are available for pick up Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.)

Butter-Blanketed Turkey

Level: Easy
Total: 3 hr 50 min
Active: 20 min
Yield: 10 to 12 servings

One 12- to 14-pound turkey
salt and ground black pepper
3 sprigs fresh thyme
2 sprigs fresh rosemary
1 lemon, cut into wedges
1 large yellow onion, cut into 6 wedges
3 sticks (1-1/2 C.) unsalted butter, melted, plus 4 T., at room temperature
1/2 tsp. paprika
3 stalks celery, broken into thirds
3 medium carrots
1-1/2 C. chicken or turkey broth

Special equipment: cheesecloth; a roasting pan with a rack; a turkey baster; an instant-read thermometer

Position an oven rack in the lowest position (with room above to fit the turkey) and preheat the oven to 450° F.

Remove any turkey parts from the cavity and reserve for another use if desired. Dry the turkey well with paper towels inside and out. Sprinkle the cavity with 1 tsp. salt and 1/2 tsp. pepper. Stuff with the thyme, rosemary, lemon wedges and half of the onion wedges.

In a small bowl, mix together the 4 T. room temperature butter with the paprika to make a smooth, spreadable mixture. Using your hands, carefully separate the skin from the flesh of the turkey from the breasts toward the legs, making sure not to tear the skin. Spread about half of the butter mixture evenly between the skin and flesh on one side. Do the same on the other side using the remaining butter mixture. Any residual butter on your hands or in the bowl can be rubbed on the outside of the turkey. Sprinkle the outside of the turkey with 2 tsp. salt, making sure to get it all over the surface.

Scatter the celery pieces, whole carrots and remaining onion wedges in the bottom of a roasting pan. Place the roasting rack in the pan, making sure it is level. Pour the broth into the pan. Transfer the turkey to the rack, tuck the wings back under the body and tie the legs together with butcher's twine.

Cut a 20-inch piece of cheesecloth and fold twice, creating 4 layers. Submerge the cloth in the melted butter, making sure it is completely saturated with it. Gently squeeze the cloth, then re-form so there are 4 layers and place on top of the turkey, covering it completely. Use a turkey baster to baste the cheesecloth with some of the remaining melted butter.

Roast for 30 minutes, then lower the oven temperature to 350° F. Baste the turkey with the pan juices and more of the melted butter. Continue to roast, basting with butter and pan drippings every 30 minutes, for an additional 2 hours.

Very gently remove the cheesecloth from the turkey, taking care not to tear the skin (see Cook's Note). Baste one more time, then return the turkey to the oven with the breasts facing towards the back and roast until a thermometer inserted in the thickest part of a thigh measures 165° F, about another 30 minutes. Let rest for 30 minutes before carving.

Cook's Note: The skin can stick to the cheesecloth, so make sure it is basted very well. If it does stick at the end of cooking, just baste the spots that are stuck with more butter or pan drippings and slowly pull away the cheesecloth.

Brussels Sprouts Gratin

Level: Easy
Total: 40 min
Prep: 15 min
Cook: 25 min
Yield: 6 servings

2 T. unsalted butter, cut into pieces, plus more for the dish
1 lb. Brussels sprouts, outer leaves and stems removed
Pinch of red pepper flakes
salt & pepper
1/2 C. heavy cream
1/2 C. grated white cheddar cheese
1/2 C. breadcrumbs

Preheat the oven to 400° F and butter a 2-quart baking dish. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the Brussels sprouts and cook until tender, 8 to 10 minutes.

Drain the Brussels sprouts and coarsely chop. Transfer to the prepared baking dish and toss with the red pepper flakes, and salt and pepper to taste, then spread out evenly. Pour the cream on top, sprinkle with the cheese and breadcrumbs and dot with the butter pieces.

Bake the gratin until bubbly and golden brown, about 15 minutes.

Duo Tater Bake

Prep Time: 40 min.

Bake Time: 20 min.

Yield: 2 casseroles (10 servings each)

4 lbs. Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 lbs. sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 cartons (8 oz. each) spreadable chive and onion cream cheese
1 C. sour cream
1/4 C. shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
1/3 C. 2% milk
1/4 C. shredded Parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

Topping:

1 C. shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese
1/2 C. chopped green onions
1/4 C. shredded Parmesan cheese

Place russet potatoes in a Dutch oven and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook until tender, 10-15 minutes.

Meanwhile, place sweet potatoes in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook until tender, 10-15 minutes. Drain; mash with half the cream cheese and sour cream and the 1/4 C. shredded cheese.

Drain russet potatoes; mash with the remaining cream cheese and sour cream. Stir in the milk, Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper.

Spread 1-1/3 C. russet potato mixture into each of 2 greased 11x7-in. baking dishes. Layer each with 2 C. sweet potato mixture. Repeat layers. Spread with remaining russet potato mixture.

Bake, uncovered, at 350° until heated through, about 15 minutes. Combine topping ingredients; sprinkle over casseroles. Bake until cheese is melted, 2-3 minutes longer.

Apple-Cranberry Relish

Prep: 15 min. + chilling. Yield: 16 servings (8 cups)

2 medium navel oranges
2 bags (12 oz. each) fresh or frozen cranberries
2 medium apples, peeled and cut into chunks
2 celery ribs, cut into chunks
3 C. sugar

Grate peel of oranges and set aside. Peel and discard white membrane. Separate orange into sections and place half in a food processor or blender. Add half of the cranberries, apples, and celery. Process until coarsely chopped.

Transfer to a bowl; repeat with remaining oranges, cranberries, apples, and celery. Stir in sugar and reserved orange peel. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Ciabatta Stuffing with Chestnuts and Pancetta

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr 30 min

Prep: 20 min

Cook: 1 hr 10 min

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

6 T. (3/4 stick) butter
8 oz. pancetta, cut into 1/4-inch dice
2 lg. onions, finely chopped
2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped
3 celery stalks, finely chopped
2 T. chopped fresh rosemary leaves
3 garlic cloves, chopped
2 (7.4-oz) jars roasted peeled whole chestnuts, coarsely broken
1/4 C. chopped fresh Italian parsley leaves
1 lb. day-old ciabatta bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2/3 C. freshly grated Parmesan
1 C. (or more) canned low-salt chicken broth
Salt and black pepper
2 large eggs, beaten to blend

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Butter a 15 by 10 by 2-inch glass baking dish. Melt 2 T. of butter in a heavy large skillet over medium heat. Add the pancetta and saute until crisp and golden, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pancetta to a large bowl. Melt the remaining butter in the same skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onions, carrots, celery, rosemary, and garlic. Saute until the onions are very tender, about 12 minutes. Gently stir in the chestnuts and parsley. Transfer the onion mixture to the large bowl with the pancetta. Add the bread and Parmesan and toss to coat. Add enough broth to the stuffing mixture to moisten. Season the stuffing, to taste, with salt and pepper. Mix in the eggs.

Transfer the stuffing to the prepared dish. Cover with buttered foil, buttered side down, and bake until the stuffing is heated through, about 30 minutes. Uncover and continue baking until the top is crisp and golden, about 15 minutes longer.

Pumpkin Gingersnap Cheesecake with Salted Caramel Sauce

Level: Intermediate

Total: 6 hr 45 min (includes chilling, standing and cooling times)

Active: 40 min

Yield: 10 to 12 servings

Pumpkin Gingersnap Cheesecake:

12 oz. gingersnaps
1/2 C. pecans, finely chopped
6 T. salted butter, melted
2 T. packed brown sugar
Dash of salt
Three (8-oz.) packages cream cheese, softened
One (15-oz.) can pumpkin puree
3 lg. eggs, at room temperature
1/4 C. sour cream, at room temperature
1-1/2 C. granulated sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg

Salted Caramel Sauce:

1 C. packed brown sugar
1/2 C. heavy cream
4 T. (1/2 stick) salted butter
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. kosher salt
Whipped cream, for serving
Chopped pecans, for serving

For the pumpkin gingersnap cheesecake: In a food processor or blender, grind the gingersnaps until fine. Pour into a bowl and stir in the pecans, melted butter, brown sugar and salt. Press into the bottom and sides of a 10-inch springform pan and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

To make the filling: beat the cream cheese in a stand mixer until soft, scraping the sides once. Mix in the pumpkin, scraping the sides once or twice. Add the eggs 1 at a time, allowing them to mix in, then add the sour cream and mix. With the mixer on low, add the granulated sugar, cinnamon, vanilla and nutmeg. Thoroughly scrape the bowl and mix to ensure everything is smooth and mixed in.

Pour the filling into the pan, smoothing the top. Set the pan on a baking sheet and bake until the filling is no longer soupy but still slightly jiggly, about 50 minutes. Turn off the oven, open the door just a hair and let the cheesecake sit in the oven for 15 more minutes. Remove from the oven and allow it to cool for 30 minutes, then cover it with plastic wrap and put it in the fridge to chill for at least 4 hours or overnight.

For the salted caramel sauce: Mix the brown sugar, heavy cream, butter, vanilla and salt in a medium saucepan over medium-low to medium heat. Cook, while whisking gently, until thickened, 5 to 7 minutes. Let cool, then refrigerate until needed. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Slice the cheesecake and top with the salted caramel sauce, whipped cream and chopped pecans.

Quote of the Week:

“May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please but as the opportunity to do what is right.”

~ Peter Marshall