

I think Spring has finally arrived! Spring means the start to busy school/activity schedules and the official start to grilling season. This week I also included the start of a new portion of our column where we will occasionally add tips and tricks for new cooks/bakers or for those that need a refresher.

If you have a great tip or trick to share with our readers, we'd love to hear it!

Enjoy the weather!

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

## Blueberry Coffee Cake Muffins

*Level: Easy;  
Total: 37 min;  
Prep: 12 min;  
Cook: 25 min;  
Yield: 16 muffins*

12 T. (1-1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1-1/2 cups sugar  
3 extra-large eggs, at room temperature  
1-1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
8 oz (about 1 c.) sour cream  
1/4 c. milk  
2-1/2 c. all-purpose flour  
2 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. kosher salt  
2 half-pints fresh blueberries, picked through for stems

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Place 16 paper liners in muffin pans.

In the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. With the mixer on low speed, add the eggs 1 at a time, then add the vanilla, sour cream, and milk. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. With the mixer on low speed add the flour mixture to the batter and beat until just mixed. Fold in the blueberries with a spatula and be sure the batter is completely mixed.

Scoop the batter into the prepared muffin pans, filling each cup just over the top, and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, until the muffins are lightly browned on top and a cake tester comes out clean.

## Grilled Lemon Chicken

*Prep: 5 min.  
Grill: 40 min.  
Makes: 12 Servings*

3/4 c. thawed lemonade concentrate  
1/3 c. soy sauce  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1 tsp. seasoned salt  
1/2 tsp. celery salt  
1/8 tsp. garlic powder  
2 broiler/fryer chickens (3 to 3-1/2 pounds each), cut up

In a bowl, whisk the first 6 ingredients until combined. Pour half into a shallow glass dish. Cover and refrigerate remaining lemonade mixture.

Dip chicken into lemonade mixture, turning to coat; discard lemonade mixture. Grill chicken, covered, over medium heat for 30 minutes, turning occasionally. Brush with reserved lemonade mixture. Grill 10-20 minutes longer, brushing frequently, until a thermometer reads 165°.

## Rice Pilaf with Green Beans and Carrots

*Yield: 8 -10 servings*

2 T. olive oil  
1-1/2 c. uncooked converted long-grain white rice  
1/2 c. sliced carrot  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. lemon-pepper seasoning  
1 c. water  
1 can (14 oz) chicken broth with roasted garlic  
1-1/4 c. frozen cut green beans (from 1-lb bag), thawed  
2 medium green onions, sliced (2 T.)

In 12-inch skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add rice, carrot, salt and lemon-pepper seasoning; cook 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently, until rice is golden brown. Add water and broth; heat to boiling. Remove from heat.

Meanwhile, spray 3- to 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray.

Pour rice mixture into slow cooker. Stir in thawed green beans and onions (make sure all rice is under liquid and not sticking to side of slow cooker).

Cover; cook on Low heat setting 2 to 2 1/2 hours. If desired, keep rice mixture warm on Low heat setting up to 2 hours, stirring occasionally.

**Tips:** To thaw frozen green beans, place in colander or strainer; rinse with warm water until thawed. Drain well. If chicken broth with roasted garlic is unavailable, use regular chicken broth, and add 2 cloves minced garlic.

## Yummy Banana Oat Bars

*Yield: 8 servings*

2 c. quick-cooking rolled oats (not instant)  
1/2 c. unsweetened shredded coconut  
1/2 c. raisins or chopped dates  
1/4 c. chopped walnuts  
2 large ripe bananas, mashed  
3/4 c. finely chopped apple  
2 T. ground flax seeds

Preheat oven to 350° F. Mix all the ingredients in a large bowl until well combined. Press into a 9-by-9-inch baking pan and bake for 30 minutes. Cool on a wire rack. When cool, cut into squares or bars.

**Note:** For Banana Oat Spice Bars, mix in:

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. allspice  
1/4 tsp. ground cloves  
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg  
1/8 tsp. black pepper

## Churro Cupcakes

*Yield: 24 cupcakes*

### Cupcakes

2-1/2 c. all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1/2 tsp. baking soda  
1/2 tsp. salt  
3 large eggs  
2 c. sugar  
1 c. vegetable oil  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
1 c. sour cream

### Frosting

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature  
12 oz. cream cheese, room temperature  
2 tsp. vanilla extract  
6 c. powdered sugar  
2 tsp. cinnamon  
cinnamon & sugar mixture

Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl and set aside.

In a large bowl, beat the egg and yolk and sugar until thickened and lightened to a cream color, about 2 min.

Add the oil and vanilla and mix until blended.

Mix in the sour cream, then the flour mixture. Mix until the batter is smooth.

Pour into 24 regular size muffin tins lined with cupcake liners.

Bake at 350° 18-23 min.

Cool completely.

Prepare frosting by combining butter, cream cheese, and vanilla in a large bowl. Beat on low speed until smooth, about 1 min.

Add the powdered sugar and cinnamon, mixing until smooth, about 1 min, then beat on medium speed for 1 min. to lighten frosting.

Spoon into a piping bag and frost cupcakes as desired.

Sprinkle generously with cinnamon and sugar. 24 cupcakes

## Greek Pasta Salad

*Yield: 6 - 8 servings;*

*Prep time: 15 mins;*

*Total time: 25 mins*

1 (16oz) box bow tie pasta  
1/2 c. olive oil  
1/3 c. red wine vinegar  
Juice of 1 lemon  
2 tsp. kosher salt

1 tsp. ground black pepper  
1 tsp. dried oregano  
1 pt. grape tomatoes, halved  
1/2 c. chopped red onion  
1 c. chopped marinated artichokes (from jar)  
1-1/2 c. chopped cucumber  
1 c. pitted kalamata olives, chopped  
1/4 c. capers, drained (optional)  
1/2 c. chopped fresh herbs, such as mint, dill or parsley  
1/2 c. crumbled feta cheese

Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain, rinse with cold water, and let cool.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice, salt, black pepper, and dried oregano. Add the tomatoes and red onions and let sit for 10 minutes. Add the cooled pasta, artichokes, cucumbers, olives, capers, and herbs. Gently mix well to combine.

Top with crumbled feta cheese.

## When to Use Unsalted Butter

Unsalted butter is most commonly called for in baking recipes. Unsalted butter has a very neutral, creamy flavor—a great base for many baked goods.

In baking, precise measurements are key for achieving the right flavor and texture. This even extends to small amounts of ingredients like salt. Because you can't be sure of the exact level of salt in each brand of butter, baking recipes are typically formulated with unsalted butter in mind and then require you add a particular measurement of salt.

That means whether you use European butter, generic butter or whatever brand you choose—as long as it's unsalted—the recipe will turn out the same.

In general, if you see a baking recipe that calls for an unspecified type of butter and salt, it's safe to assume you should opt for unsalted butter.

You can definitely use salted butter and unsalted interchangeably. If a recipe calls for unsalted butter and additional salt, just use a little less of the salt that the recipe calls for. That's the only tweak you need to make! (*Taste of Home*)

## Quote of the Week:

***“Spring is when you feel like whistling, even with a shoe full of slush.”***

***~ Doug Larson***