

Easter is just a few weeks away, and if you are an Easter morning or dinner planner, these next two weeks will have some new ideas for your menu. This week, we will focus on an Easter Brunch menu. Enjoy!

Bunny Mary

*Prep Time: 10 min.
Total Time: 10 min.
Servings: 1*

1 lime wedge
1/4 tsp. celery seed
4 fl. oz. carrot juice
2 fl. oz. vodka
1 tsp. freshly squeezed lime juice
2 dashes Worcestershire sauce
2 dashes hot sauce, such as Tabasco®
1/2 tsp. prepared horseradish

Place celery seed on a plate. Moisten the rim of a glass with a lime wedge. Dip rim in celery seed until coated. Set aside.

Fill a shaker with ice. Add carrot juice, vodka, lime juice, Worcestershire sauce, Tabasco, and horseradish. Shake until well combined. Pour into the prepared glass.

Overnight Blueberry French Toast

*Prep Time: 15 min.
Cook Time: 55 min.
Additional Time: 8 hr. 30 min.
Total Time: 9 hr. 40 min.
Servings: 10*

French Toast Casserole:

12 slices day-old bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 C. fresh blueberries
12 lg. eggs, beaten
2 C. milk
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1/3 C. maple syrup

Blueberry Sauce:

1 C. white sugar
1 C. water
2 T. cornstarch
1 C. fresh blueberries
1 T. butter

Casserole: Lightly grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Arrange 1/2 of the bread cubes in the dish and top with cream cheese cubes.

Sprinkle blueberries over the cream cheese, then top with remaining bread cubes.

Whisk eggs, milk, vanilla extract, and syrup together in a large bowl until well-combined; pour over the bread cubes. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Remove casserole from the refrigerator about 30 min. before baking. Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Bake casserole in the preheated oven, covered, for 30 min. Uncover, and continue baking until center is firm and surface is lightly browned, about 25 to 30 min.

Meanwhile, prepare blueberry sauce: Mix sugar, water, and cornstarch together in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil and cook, stirring constantly, 3 to 4 min. Stir in blueberries, reduce heat to low, and simmer until all the blueberries burst, about 10 min. Stir in butter.

Serve portions of casserole on plates and pour warm syrup over top.

Overnight Slow Cooker Breakfast Casserole

*Prep Time: 20 min.
Cook Time: 6 hr.
Total Time: 6 hr. 20 min.
Servings: 8*

12 lg. eggs
1 C. heavy cream
1 tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1 (20 oz.) pkg. refrigerated hash brown potatoes
8 oz. shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
1 (5 oz.) package mild sausage links, sliced into coins
4 oz. shredded Parmesan cheese, divided
1/2 C. chopped sun-dried tomatoes, divided
1/2 C. chopped fresh basil, divided

Coat slow cooker with cooking spray.

Whisk eggs and cream together in a medium bowl until well combined; season with onion powder, salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes while whisking until completely combined. Set aside.

Combine hash browns and 1/2 each mozzarella cheese, sausage, Parmesan cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, and basil in a slow cooker. Gently toss with fingers until combined. Pour egg mixture over top; smooth top (using a spatula) if necessary.

Set aside 1/2 remaining mozzarella cheese (about 2 oz.). Sprinkle remaining each mozzarella cheese, sausage, Parmesan cheese, sun-dried tomatoes, and basil over top.

Cover slow cooker. Cook on Low until center is cooked through and an instant-read thermometer inserted into center reads 160°F, 6 to 8 hrs.

Sprinkle casserole with remaining mozzarella cheese, then serve.

Pancake Casserole

Prep Time: 15 min.

Cook Time: 25 min.

Total Time: 40 min.

Servings: 8

2 C. baking mix (such as Bisquick®)
2 C. shredded cheddar cheese, divided
1 C. milk
5 T. maple syrup
2 lg. eggs
1-1/2 T. white sugar
12 slices cooked bacon, crumbled

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.

Mix baking mix, 1 C. cheddar cheese, milk, maple syrup, eggs, and sugar together in a bowl; pour into prepared pan.

Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 20-25 min. Sprinkle bacon and remaining 1 C. cheddar cheese over casserole; return to oven until cheese is melted, about 5 more min.

Cake Mix Cinnamon Rolls

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 20 min.

Additional Time: 1 hr. 10 min.

Total Time: 2 hr.

Servings: 16

2-1/2 C. warm water
3 (.25 oz.) pkg. active dry yeast
1 (15.25 oz.) pkg. white cake mix
4-1/2 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 C. butter, softened
1/2 C. brown sugar
2 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 C. butter, melted
1/3 C. white sugar
1/4 C. chopped pecans, or to taste

Pour warm water into a bowl; add yeast and let stand until creamy, about 10 min.

Combine yeast mixture, cake mix, and 3 C. of flour in a large bowl; stir well. Add remaining flour, 1/2 C. at a time, stirring well after each addition until dough pulls together. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 min.

Lightly oil a large bowl; place dough in the bowl and turn to coat with oil. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume, about 30 min.

Deflate dough and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface. Roll the dough into a 10x16-inch rectangle. Spread softened butter over the rectangle; sprinkle on brown sugar and cinnamon. Starting from one of the long sides, roll up the rectangle and cut into 1-inch wide rolls.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking pan.

Pour melted butter into a small bowl. Mix the white sugar and pecans in another small bowl. Dip the top of each roll in melted butter, then in sugar and pecan mixture, then arrange rolls snugly in the prepared pan. Cover rolls with a damp cloth and let rise until doubled in volume, about 30 min.

Bake in the preheated oven until golden brown, about 20 min.

Easter Breakfast Casserole

Prep Time: 25 min.

Cook Time: 1 hr. 15 min.

Total Time: 1 hr. 40 min.

Servings: 12

1 lb. bacon
8 lg. eggs
2 C. milk
3 C. shredded cheddar cheese
1/4 C. diced onion
1/4 C. diced green bell pepper
1 (16 oz.) pkg. frozen hash brown potatoes, thawed

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a 7x11-inch casserole dish.

Fry bacon in a large, deep skillet over medium-high heat until evenly browned, about 10 min. Drain on a paper towel-lined plate. Crumble.

Beat eggs and milk together in a large bowl; mix in cheese, bacon, onion, and green pepper. Stir in thawed hash browns. Pour mixture into prepared casserole. Cover with aluminum foil and bake in preheated oven for 45 min. Uncover and bake until eggs have set, another 30 min.

Hard-Boiled Egg Casserole

*Prep Time: 20 min.
Cook Time: 30 min.
Total Time: 50 min.
Servings: 8*

1/4 C. butter
1/4 C. all-purpose flour
2 C. half-and-half
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 tsp. dry mustard
1 C. shredded Gruyère cheese
8 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and halved
1/2 C. freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter a 9-inch square baking dish.

Melt butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add flour and whisk until dissolved, 2 to 3 min. Gradually add half-and-half and whisk until sauce is thick and smooth, about 5 min. Season with salt, pepper, garlic powder, and mustard. Stir in Gruyère cheese until melted and smooth.

Arrange eggs, cut-side down, in the prepared baking dish. Pour sauce over eggs and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven until bubbly and golden brown, 20 to 25 min.

Biscuits and Gravy Casserole

*Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 40 min.
Total Time: 50 min.
Servings: 6*

1 (10 oz.) can refrigerated biscuit dough (such as Pillsbury Grands®)
1 (1 lb.) bulk pork sausage
1-1/2 C. shredded cheddar cheese, divided
6 lg. eggs
1/2 C. milk
salt and black pepper to taste
1-1/2 C. cold water, or more as needed
1 (1.5 oz.) pkg. pork gravy mix

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.

Line the bottom of the prepared baking dish with biscuits.

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook and stir sausage in the hot skillet until browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 min.; drain and discard grease. Scatter sausage over biscuit layer and top with 1 C. shredded cheddar cheese.

Whisk eggs, milk, salt, and pepper together in a bowl until well combined; pour over cheese layer.

Mix water and gravy mix together in a saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until gravy is thickened, 1 to 2 min., adding more water for a thinner gravy. Pour gravy over egg layer. Sprinkle remaining 1/2 C. cheddar cheese over casserole.

Bake in the preheated oven until eggs are fluffy and cheese is bubbling, about 30 min.

Italian Easter Bread (Anise-Flavored)

*Prep Time: 15 min.
Cook Time: 20 min.
Additional Time: 1 hr. 25 min.
Total Time: 2 hr.
Servings: 10*

3 C. all-purpose flour, divided
1/4 C. white sugar
1 tsp. salt
1 (.25 oz.) pkg. rapid rise yeast
2/3 C. milk
1 tsp. anise extract
2 T. butter at room temperature
2 lg. eggs
1 egg, beaten
1/2 T. colored candy decorating dragees, or as desired

Mix 1 C. of flour with sugar, salt, and yeast in a bowl; stir well. Place milk and anise extract into a small saucepan over low heat; warm to about 110°F. Make a well in the center of flour mixture with your hand, and pour in milk mixture; swirl with your hand in a circular motion to combine flour mixture with milk mixture. Mix in butter and eggs, one at a time, then mix in remaining flour until dough begins to pull together.

Turn the dough out onto a floured work surface, and knead until soft but elastic, about 8 min. Cover with a damp cloth, and let dough rest for 10 min.; cut dough into halves.

On floured work surface, roll each half into a ball, then shape the balls into 2 long pieces, about 1-1/2 inches thick and 18-20 inches long. Pinch the 2 top ends together, and loosely twist the pieces to form a twisted loaf; pinch the bottom ends together, and tuck the two ends underneath the loaf. (Alternately, form the twist into a ring, and pinch the ends together.)

Grease a baking sheet; lay the loaf onto the prepared sheet and cover with a damp towel. Let dough rise until doubled, about 1 hr. Brush loaf with beaten egg, and sprinkle with colored decorating dragees.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bake the decorated loaf in the preheated oven until golden, 20 to 25 min. Watch closely towards the end of the baking time that the bread does not begin to burn. Transfer to wire rack immediately after baking to cool.

Strawberry Cheesecake Sliders

Prep Time: 5 min.

Cook Time: 25 min.

Total Time: 30 min.

Servings: 12

5 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/2 C. confectioners sugar, plus more for topping
1 lg. egg
1 (12-ct. pkg.) Hawaiian rolls
1 (21 oz.) can strawberry pie filling
3 T. butter, melted

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Combine cream cheese and powdered sugar in a large mixing bowl. Using a hand mixer on medium speed, mix until well combined. Add egg to mixture and beat until light and fluffy.

Slice rolls in half horizontally, without separating them. Place the bottom layer back into the cardboard packaging; set package onto a baking sheet.

Spoon cream cheese filling onto bottom layer. Top with strawberry pie filling. Place top half of rolls on and brush with melted butter. Cover with foil.

Bake in the preheated oven for 20 min., then uncover and cook until toasted, 5 to 8 min. more. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.

Quote of the Week:

“You can cut all the flowers, but you cannot keep spring from coming.”

~ Pablo Neruda