

Did you know ... Every St. Patrick's Day, an unknown powder is used to turn Chicago's river green. Only members of 2 Irish/American families; The Butlers and the Rowens, know the recipe for the powder and are allowed on the boat crew that distributes it!

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.

Mint Julep Mocktail

Total Time: 5 minutes; Servings: 2

Mint syrup **

1 c. water
1/2 c. sugar
1 c. mint

For the julep mocktail

1 c. ginger ale or non-alcoholic bourbon
Crushed ice
Mint sprigs to garnish (optional)

**To make the mint syrup, combine sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir until the sugar dissolves.

Add mint and increase the heat until the mixture comes to a gentle boil, stirring occasionally.

Reduce heat to low, replace the lid and simmer for 10 minutes.

Remove from the heat and leave covered until the mixture cools (the longer you leave it, the stronger the mint flavor will be).

Leave to cool, then strain.

Fill your cups with crushed ice. Add 1/2 c. of ginger ale or non-alcoholic bourbon to each cup, then 1/4 cup of mint syrup.

Stir gently and garnish with a mint sprig.

Everything-Green Soup

2 T. extra virgin olive oil
2 c. leeks, chopped
1 tsp. minced garlic
2 c. asparagus, chopped
1 c. celery, chopped
2 c. fresh baby spinach
4 c. frozen peas
2 zucchinis, chopped
1 c. chopped fresh dill
10 c. chicken or vegetable stock
salt and pepper to taste
1/2 tsp. turmeric (optional)

Sauté leeks and garlic in olive oil for five minutes.

Add the rest of the vegetables and mix gently for five more minutes.

Add stock and spices and bring to a boil.

Lower heat and cook for 30 minutes. Blend and enjoy!

Cabbage Soup

Yields: 6 - 8 servings

Prep Time: 25 mins

Total Time: 45 mins

3 T. olive oil
1 med yellow onion, chopped
2 med carrots, sliced
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1/2 tsp. ground fennel seeds (optional)
1 small (2-lb.) head green cabbage, chopped
4 garlic cloves, chopped
4 c. vegetable broth
2 15-oz. cans diced tomatoes, undrained
2 bay leaves
2 15-oz. cans white beans, drained and rinsed
Chopped parsley, for garnish

In a large Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, carrot, salt, pepper, and fennel seeds, if using. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are slightly softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add the cabbage and the garlic to the pan and stir to combine. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage is slightly softened, about 5 minutes.

Add the broth, tomatoes, and bay leaves. Bring to a simmer; cover, and cook until the cabbage is tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in the white beans and simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes. Remove the bay leaves.

Serve in soup bowls topped with parsley.

Irish Pizza

Yields: 8 servings

Prep Time: 1 hr 15 mins Cook Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 1 hr 25 mins

For the dough:

3-1/2 c. Unbleached All-purpose Flour
1/2 c. Instant Mashed Potatoes
2 T. Softened Butter
2 1/4 tsp. Instant Yeast
2 tsp. Salt
1 tsp. Sugar
1-1/2 c. Warm Water
Olive Oil, As Needed

For the topping:

6 Med Yukon Gold Potatoes
8 slices Bacon, Cut Into Pieces
3 Leeks, Sliced
2 cloves Garlic, Minced
Salt and Ground Pepper
2 c. Grated Cheddar Cheese
Cornmeal, As Needed
1/4 c. Snipped Chives, For Garnish

In the bowl of an electric mixer, combine all-purpose flour, potato flakes, softened butter, yeast, salt, sugar and water. Mix until combined. Switch to a dough hook attachment and knead until smooth, about 5 minutes. Dough may be kneaded by hand until smooth, 5–10 minutes. Place dough in a bowl and cover with an olive-oil-covered piece of plastic wrap. Let dough rise for about 1 hour.

Place a pizza steel or pizza stone on an oven rack on the lowest setting in the oven. Preheat oven to 500°F.

Meanwhile, peel potatoes. Use a mandoline or a sharp knife to slice the potatoes very thinly, about 1/16 inch thick. Place slices in a bowl of warm, salted water. Set aside.

Place sliced leeks in another bowl of water. Swish to dislodge any dirt or grit and let it fall to the bottom of the bowl. Remove leeks and dry well.

Cook bacon pieces in a pan until crispy. Remove from pan and blot on paper towels. Discard all but 2 tablespoons bacon grease. Add washed and dried leek slices to pan and sauté until soft, seasoning with a few pinches of salt and pepper. Add minced garlic and cook about 1 minute more. Remove from pan.

Once dough has risen, turn out onto a floured surface. Cover with oiled plastic wrap and let rest for 10 minutes.

Remove potato slices from water and dry well.

Liberal coat a pizza peel with cornmeal. Stretch one dough half into a crust to cover the peel. Top with half of the cheese, then layer on half of the potato slices in a single layer, or just barely overlapping. Top with half of the leek mixture, then bacon.

Slide pizza onto heated pizza steel or stone and bake for about 10 minutes, or until golden. Use pizza peel to remove from oven onto a cutting board. Sprinkle on half of the snipped chives.

Let pizza rest for 5 minutes before slicing. Meanwhile, re-coat pizza peel with more cornmeal and repeat for second pizza.

Serve hot, warm, or at room temperature.

Stout Slow Cooker Corned Beef and Veggies

Prep Time: 30 mins

Cook Time: 6 hrs

Total Time: 6 hrs 30 mins

1-1/2 (12 fluid ounce) cans or bottles Irish stout beer (such as Guinness®), divided
1 (4 lb) corned beef brisket
1-1/2 c. brown sugar
3 sweet potatoes, cut into chunks
1 head cabbage, cored and coarsely chopped
2 large, sweet onions, chopped
6 large carrots, chopped
3 red potatoes, cut into chunks

Pour 1 bottle Irish stout beer into a slow cooker.

Rinse corned beef brisket and pat dry. Rub with brown sugar, including the bottom, and gently place brisket into the slow cooker with the stout beer.

Arrange sweet potatoes, cabbage, onion, carrots, and red potatoes on and around the brisket in the slow cooker.

Pour remaining 1/2 bottle Irish stout beer on and around brisket and vegetables to moisten the brown sugar. Cover the cooker and cook on Low until corned beef is tender, 6 to 8 hours. Allow brisket to stand 5 minutes before slicing.

Reuben Casserole

Prep Time: 15 mins
Cook Time: 30 mins
Total Time: 45 mins

6 slices rye bread, cubed
1 (16 ounce) can sauerkraut, drained and rinsed
1 lb deli sliced corned beef, cut into strips
¾ c. Russian-style salad dressing
cooking spray
2 c. shredded Swiss cheese

Preheat the oven to 400° F. Spray a 9x13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Spray one sheet of aluminum foil with cooking spray.

Spread bread cubes in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Layer bread cubes with sauerkraut and beef strips, then pour dressing over top. Cover with the aluminum foil, sprayed-side down.

Bake in the preheated oven for 20 minutes. Remove and discard foil; sprinkle Swiss cheese over casserole. Continue baking until cheese is melted and bubbly, about 10 more minutes.

Spicy Whiskey BBQ Sliders

Yields: 6 servings
Prep Time: 15 mins
Cook Time: 15 mins
Total Time: 30 mins

2 lb. ground meat (beef, bison, turkey)
Salt and pepper
4 T. butter
1 whole large onion, diced
½ c. Irish whiskey
1 c. barbecue sauce
¼ c. jarred jalapeño slices (more to taste)
12 whole slider buns or dinner rolls, split

Form the meat into 12 (or so) miniature patties and salt and pepper them on both sides. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium-high heat and cook the patties until just about done in the middle, approximately 3-4 minutes per side. Remove the patties from the skillet and set aside. Drain off all but 2 T. of grease, then return the skillet to the stove.

Throw the diced onions in the skillet and stir to cook, about 3 minutes. Pour in whiskey (be careful if you're cooking over an open flame; turn it off momentarily to be extra careful) and stir. Allow the whiskey to reduce by half, about 2 to 3 minutes, then stir in jalapeños and the barbecue sauce.

Reduce the heat to low and place the patties in the barbecue sauce, turning to coat. Allow the patties to simmer in the sauce until everything's hot and bubbly.

Place the patties on individual buns and be sure to spoon extra sauce (with the jalapeños!) over the top of each one before topping with the other half of the bun.

St. Patrick's Day Green Velvet Layer Cake

Total Time: 1 hr 45 min
Inactive Time: 1 hr 15 min
Cook Time: 30 min
Yield: 10 servings

Cake:

2-1/2 c. all-purpose flour
2 T. unsweetened cocoa powder (not Dutch process)
1 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. fine salt
1-1/4 c. buttermilk, well shaken
1 T. green liquid food coloring
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
2 c. granulated sugar
1 c. (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3 large eggs, lightly beaten

Frosting:

½ cup all-purpose flour
1-1/2 cups milk
1-1/2 cups (3 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
1-1/2 cups granulated sugar
4 tsp. pure vanilla extract
Pinch fine salt
Green liquid or gel food coloring, optional
Green candies and sanding sugar for decorating, optional

For the cake: Preheat the oven to 375° F. Butter three 8-inch round cake pans, line with parchment and butter the parchment; set aside. Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl; set aside. Whisk the buttermilk, food coloring and vanilla in a spouted measuring cup; set aside.

Beat the granulated sugar and butter in a stand mixer (or a large bowl if using a hand mixer) on medium speed until very light and fluffy, about 5 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. With the mixer still running, slowly add the eggs and beat until fully incorporated. Reduce the mixer speed to the lowest speed; with it running, add 1/3 of the flour mixture, then 1/2 of the buttermilk mixture, then 1/2 of the remaining flour mixture, then the remaining buttermilk mixture, then the remaining flour mixture. Scrape down the sides and beat until well mixed. Divide the batter evenly among the three prepared pans. Bake until slightly puffed and a toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the center, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes in the pan, then turn out to cool completely.

For the frosting: Put the flour in a small saucepan. Vigorously whisk in about 1/2 c. of the milk, making sure to get the whisk into the edges of the pan, until you have a smooth, thick paste. (This step keeps the flour from clumping.) Slowly whisk in the remaining milk until fully incorporated and the mixture is smooth. Cook over medium heat, whisking continuously, until the mixture is very thick, about 5 minutes. (Toward the end of the process, the mixture will become a thick paste; it may seem to be forming lumps, but whisk vigorously and the lumps will disappear.) Scrape the frosting into a bowl, press plastic wrap onto the surface and refrigerate until cool, about 45 minutes.

Using a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment (or a hand mixer), beat the butter and granulated sugar on medium speed until very light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the cooled flour mixture a tablespoon at a time and beat until smooth. Switch to the whisk attachment (or continue with the hand mixer), add the vanilla, salt and 3 to 5 drops food coloring if using and whip until very light and fluffy, like thick whipped cream, up to 10 minutes with a stand mixer or 12 minutes with a hand mixer.

To assemble: Place one layer on a cake plate, spread frosting on top and repeat with the 2 remaining layers. Frost the sides and decorate with candies and sanding sugar if using.

Cook's Note: This recipe can instead be baked in two 9-inch layers or as 24 cupcakes.

Irish Apple Cake with Custard Sauce

For the Cake:

3 c. flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1/8 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. cloves, ground
1/4 tsp. nutmeg, ground
6 oz. butter, (cold)
3/4 c. sugar
4 large Granny Smith or Golden Delicious apples
2 eggs
3/4 c. Milk
2 T. sugar (for sprinkling on top of cake)

For the Custard:

6 large egg yolks
6 T. sugar
1-1/2 c. whole milk
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla

For the Cake: Grease and flour an 8" or 9" round springform pan. Using an 8" pan will give you a taller cake.

Preheat the oven to 375°.

Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, cloves and nutmeg into a large mixing bowl. Make sure the bowl is very large to allow room for the apples to be folded in.

Cut the butter into the flour using your fingers or a pastry cutter until the mixture resembles fine crumbs.

Add the 3/4 C. sugar to the flour mixture and mix in.

Peel the apples and slice them into uniform pieces. This cake works best and gets that 'chunky apple look' if the slices are about 1/4" wide and then cut into 3 pieces.

Toss the apples into the flour mixture and combine them thoroughly.

In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and milk together. Add to the apples and flour and mix in with a large spatula until just combined. Batter will be thick and dough-like.

Transfer the dough into the prepared cake pan and flatten the top surface using the back of your spatula.

Sprinkle the sugar over the top of the cake.

Bake for 45-50 minutes. Test the center for doneness. The top of the cake should be golden brown. Serve slices with custard sauce.

For the Custard Sauce:

*Note that this sauce is not a thick, pudding like sauce. It should have a pour-able, just thickened consistency when done.

Place the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl and whisk until pale yellow, 2-3 minutes. Place the milk in a medium saucepan and bring just to a boil. Slowly whisk the hot milk into the egg/sugar mixture. Transfer the mixture back to the saucepan and stir over medium heat until custard thickens, about 4 minutes. Custard should be thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Mix in the vanilla. Transfer to bowl or serving saucer. Serve warm or cold over apple cake. Serves 12

Quote of the Week:

"May love and laughter light your days and warm your heart and home. May good and faithful friends be yours, wherever you may roam. May peace and plenty bless your world with joy that long endures. May all life's passing seasons bring the best to you and yours!"

~ An Irish Blessing