

Let's eat all things green!

Green is symbolic of the shamrock, which is a three-leaf clover, that is said to represent the Holy Trinity. Wearing, eating, and "living" green on St. Patrick's Day is a way to show Irish Pride and to honor St. Patrick.

AND as an extra bonus - wearing green has a mythical belief that if you wear green, it makes you invisible to leprechauns!

Cream of Asparagus Soup

Prep Time: 20 min

Total Time: 35 min

Servings: 4 - 6

1 bunch asparagus (about 1 lb.), ends trimmed
1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
3 T. salted butter
1/2 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
3 T. all-purpose flour
2 C. half-and-half
1/2 tsp. ground coriander
Black pepper, to taste

Fill a large pot with 2 C. water and fit with a steamer basket. Bring to a boil. Add the asparagus and steam until tender, 3 to 4 min. Remove the asparagus to a cutting board and pour the water from the pot into a large measuring cup; add more water if needed to equal 2 C. Set the pot aside.

When the asparagus is cool enough to handle, trim off the tips and halve lengthwise; toss with a pinch of salt. Save these pieces for garnish. Add the remaining asparagus pieces to a blender with 1 C. of the reserved steaming water and blend until very smooth.

Melt the butter in the pot over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until it begins to soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds more. Sprinkle in the flour and stir to combine.

Slowly whisk in the half-and-half and remaining 1 C. reserved steaming water until smooth. Season with 1 tsp. salt and the coriander. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture starts to thicken, 10 to 15 min.

Stir in the asparagus puree. Taste and adjust the seasonings (add more salt if it needs it!) and let the soup heat through. Ladle into bowls and garnish with the asparagus tips. Season with pepper.

Spinach-Parm Casserole

Prep/Total Time: 25 min

Servings: 6

2 lbs. fresh baby spinach
5 T. butter
3 T. olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 T. Italian seasoning
3/4 tsp. salt
1 C. grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400°. In a stockpot, bring 5 C. water to a boil. Add spinach; cook, covered, 1 min or just until wilted. Drain well.

In a small skillet, heat butter and oil over medium-low heat. Add garlic, Italian seasoning and salt; cook and stir until garlic is tender, 1-2 min.

Spread spinach in a greased 1-1/2-qt. or 8-in. square baking dish. Drizzle with butter mixture; sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, until cheese is lightly browned, 10-15 min.

Cilantro Lime Chicken and Rice

Prep Time: 15 min

Cook Time: 25 min

Total Time: 40 min

Servings: 4 people

Chicken

4 chicken cutlets
2 T. olive oil
2 T. fresh squeezed lime juice (juice from 1 lime)
2 cloves garlic minced
1 T. honey
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1/2 tsp. cumin
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 bunch cilantro, chopped

Avocado salsa

1 avocado chopped
1/2 small red onion diced
1/4 bunch cilantro finely chopped
1 T. lime juice (juice from half a lime)
1/2 tsp. salt

Rice

1 C. jasmine rice
1-1/4 C. water
1 tsp. butter
1 pinch salt
1 T. lime juice (juice from half a lime)
1/4 bunch cilantro finely chopped

Add everything under the chicken heading to a zip top bag or baking dish, mixing well to combine. Let chicken marinate for at least 15 min and up to 24 hours. Meanwhile, add rice, water, butter and salt to a rice cooker or pot on the stove and cook until the liquid has absorbed. When rice is done, stir in lime juice and cilantro.

Meanwhile, mix ingredients under the avocado salsa heading together in a bowl and set aside.

Heat a large skillet over med-high heat. Add chicken and half the marinade to the skillet, sautéing for 5 min. per side. Remove from heat. Sprinkle cilantro overtop, then serve chicken overtop of cooked rice. Top with avocado salsa and enjoy!

Green Beans Amandine

Prep/Total Time: 20 min

Servings: 4

1 lb. fresh or frozen green beans, cut into 2-inch pieces
1/4 C. slivered almonds
2 T. butter
1 tsp. lemon juice
1/4 tsp. seasoned salt, optional

Place beans and 1/2 C. water in a large skillet or saucepan. Bring to a boil. Cover and cook until beans are crisp-tender, 10-15 min; drain and set aside. In a large skillet, cook almonds in butter over low heat. Stir in lemon juice and, if desired, seasoned salt. Add beans and heat through.

Creme de Menthe Cupcakes

Prep: 30 min

Bake: 15 min + cooling

Makes: 1 dozen

3/4 C. butter, softened
1 C. sugar
2 lg. eggs, room temperature
1/2 tsp. mint extract
1-1/2 C. cake flour
1-1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
2/3 C. 2% milk
2 T. white (clear) creme de menthe
Green paste food coloring

Frosting:

1 carton (8 oz.) mascarpone cheese
1/3 C. heavy whipping cream
1/4 C. confectioners' sugar
4 tsp. white (clear) creme de menthe
Green paste food coloring

Preheat oven to 350°. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 min. Add the eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Add mint extract. In another bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk and creme de menthe, beating well after each addition. Transfer 2 C. batter to a separate bowl. Mix food coloring paste into remaining batter.

Cut a small hole in the tip of a pastry bag; insert a #12 round tip. Spoon the batters alternately into bag. Pipe batter into 12 paper-lined muffin cups until three-fourths full. Bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 15-20 min. Cool 10 min; remove from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

Frosting: stir the mascarpone and whipping cream together until smooth. Add the confectioners' sugar and creme de menthe; stir until blended. Transfer half the frosting to a separate bowl and mix food coloring paste into remaining frosting. Stir each portion vigorously until stiff peaks form (do not overmix).

Cut a small hole in the tip of a pastry bag; insert a #12 round tip. Spoon the frostings alternately into the bag. Pipe frosting onto cupcakes. Refrigerate leftovers.

Shamrock Shake Fudge

Prep Time: 5 min

Cook Time: 5 min

Total Time: 10 min

Servings: 16

1 jar vanilla frosting
12 oz. white chocolate candy melts
green gel coloring
1 tsp. peppermint extract
sprinkles (optional)

Line an 8x8 pan with foil.

Microwave the frosting on 50% power until slightly runny (about 30-40 seconds). Stir in peppermint extract and gel coloring. You want to make the frosting a little darker than you want the fudge as the chocolate melts will lighten it.

Microwave the candy melts on 50% power stirring every 30 seconds until almost completely melted.

Gently stir the melts and the frosting together and spread into prepared pan. Add sprinkles if desired. Refrigerate 30 min and cut into squares or with cookie cutters.

In this size pan, the fudge pieces are about 5/8" thick. If you'd like a thicker fudge, you can double the recipe.

St. Patrick's Day Popcorn

Prep: 15 min. + cooling

Makes: 6 qts.

4 qts. popped popcorn
1 C. sugar
1/2 C. packed brown sugar
1/2 C. water
1/2 C. light corn syrup
1 tsp. white vinegar
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 C. butter
8 to 10 drops green food coloring

Place popcorn in a large roasting pan; keep warm in a 250° oven. Meanwhile, in a large heavy saucepan, combine the sugars, water, corn syrup, vinegar and salt. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until a candy thermometer reads 260° (hard-ball stage).

Remove from the heat; stir in butter until melted. Stir in food coloring. Drizzle over warm popcorn and toss to coat. Cool. Break into pieces. Store in an airtight container.

Candy Thermometers: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Holiday Pistachio Dessert

Prep: 30 min. + chilling

Servings: 15

1-1/4 C. biscuit/baking mix
1/2 C. chopped walnuts
1 T. brown sugar
6 T. cold butter
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1 C. plus 1 T. confectioners' sugar, divided
1 C. heavy whipping cream, whipped, divided
2-1/2 C. cold 2% milk
2 pkgs. (3.4 oz. each) instant pistachio pudding mix
Chocolate curls, optional

In a small bowl, combine the biscuit mix, walnuts and brown sugar. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

Press into an ungreased 13x9-in. baking pan. Bake at 375° until lightly browned, 10-12 min. Cool on a wire rack.

In a small bowl, beat cream cheese and 1 C. confectioners' sugar until fluffy. Fold in half of the whipped cream; spread over crust. Stir remaining confectioners' sugar into remaining whipped cream; refrigerate until serving.

In another bowl, whisk milk and pudding mixes for 2 min. Let stand until soft-set, about 2 min. Spread over cream cheese layer. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours before serving.

Garnish with sweetened whipped cream and, if desired, chocolate curls.

Quote of the Week:

"May love and laughter light your days and warm your hearth and home."

~Irish Blessing