

Merry Christmas!

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season full of family, friends, fun and great food!

Holiday Herb-Cheese Rolls

Prep: 45 min. + rising

Bake: 20 min.

Servings: 2 dozen

4 to 4-1/2 C. all-purpose flour
1/4 C. sugar
2 T. mashed potato flakes
1 pkg. (1/4 oz.) active dry yeast
2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. dill weed
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
2 C. water
4-1/2 tsp. butter
1 C. old-fashioned oats
1 lg. egg, room temperature
3/4 C. shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

Topping

2 T. fat-free milk
4-1/2 tsp. grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. dill weed
1/2 tsp. dried basil

In a large bowl, combine 1-1/2 cups flour, sugar, potato flakes, yeast, salt, dill and garlic powder. In a small saucepan, bring water and butter just to a boil.

In a small bowl, pour boiling liquid over oats. Let stand until mixture cools to 120°-130°, stirring occasionally. Add to dry ingredients; beat just until moistened. Add egg; beat until smooth. Stir in enough remaining flour to form a firm dough (dough will be sticky).

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, 6-8 min. Knead in mozzarella cheese. Place in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, turning once to coat the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1-1/4 hours.

Punch dough down. Turn onto a lightly floured surface; divide into 24 pieces. Shape each into a ball. Place in a 13x9-in. baking pan coated with cooking spray; brush milk over rolls.

In a small bowl, combine the remaining ingredients; sprinkle over tops. Cover and let rise until nearly doubled, about 45 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375°. Bake 20-25 min. or until golden brown. Remove from pan to a wire rack. Refrigerate leftovers

Honey Baked Ham with Cloves

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 2 hrs.

Servings: 10

1 C. honey
1/3 C. butter
3 T. dark corn syrup
3/4 tsp. dry mustard
2 T. orange juice
1/4 C. whole cloves
1 ham of choice

Score ham with a sharp knife in a diagonal pattern. Repeat scoring, diagonally, in the opposite direction to create a crossing pattern. Insert whole cloves at the crossings.

Preheat oven to 325°F.

Place ham in roasting pan fat side up; the melting fat will baste your ham. Turn ham over halfway through baking to avoid uneven salting from the brine in the meat. If roasting a ham that is not precooked, bake for approximately 20-30 minutes per pound. If the ham is precooked, follow the label directions for cooking times.

While ham is roasting, combine all ingredients in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat and bring to a full boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat and cook one minute.

Remove ham from oven prior to the last 30 minutes of baking. Cover ham with glaze. Glaze ham every 10 min. during last 30 min. of baking.

Serve remaining glaze with ham.

Note: Baste ham with pan drippings while glazing.

Smashed Potatoes

Prep: 25 min.

Bake: 35 min. + cooling

Servings: 8

6 garlic cloves
1 tsp. olive oil

2 lbs. small red potatoes
1/2 C. butter, softened
4 oz. cream cheese, softened
1/4 to 1/3 C. 2% milk
1/2 C. Stilton cheese
6 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
3 T. minced fresh parsley, divided
1 tsp. coarsely ground pepper
1/2 tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 400°. Cut stem ends off unpeeled garlic cloves. Place cloves on a piece of foil. Drizzle with oil; wrap in foil. Bake until cloves are soft, 35 min. Meanwhile, place potatoes in a Dutch oven; add water to cover. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cook, uncovered, until tender, 15-20 min.

Unwrap garlic cloves; cool 10 minutes. Squeeze garlic from skins. Mash with a fork.

Drain potatoes; return to pan. Coarsely mash potatoes, gradually adding butter, cream cheese, garlic and enough milk to reach desired consistency. Stir in Stilton cheese, bacon, 2 T. parsley, pepper and salt. Sprinkle with remaining parsley.

Cheesy Bread Wreath w/ Marinara

Cook Time: 20 min.

Prep Time: 15 min.

Servings: 8

8 oz. bocconcini (small fresh mozzarella balls)
1lg. egg
1/4 C. unsalted butter, melted
1/2 C. grated parmesan
1 T. fresh parsley
1 T. chopped basil
1 T. chopped rosemary
Marinara sauce, for serving

Portion pizza dough in half into two equal pieces. On a floured surface, stretch and roll each piece of dough into a long rectangle, followed by cutting the dough into 2-inch squares (around 30 pieces).

Wrap each square of dough around each mozzarella ball, forming a tight seal. Transfer balls seam-side down on lined baking sheet in the shape of a Christmas wreath or tree (sides should be touching).

Whisk egg with 1 T. water and brush egg wash over dough balls.

Bake until golden, 18 to 20 min.

Combine melted butter, Parmesan and fresh herbs. Brush on baked pizza balls right after they come out of the oven. Serve warm with marinara sauce for dipping.

Millionaire Shortbread Cookies

Level: Intermediate

Total: 3 hrs. 25 min.

Prep: 15 min.

Inactive: 2 hrs. 30 min.

Cook: 40 min.

Servings: 36 bars

Cookie Butter Layer

1-1/2 C. sweetened condensed milk
1/2 C. light brown sugar (not packed)
3 T. cookie butter, such as Biscoff or Speculoos
1 tsp. fine salt

Chocolate Layer

4 oz. dark chocolate, chopped
2 tsp. vegetable oil
Flaky salt, such as fleur de sel

Shortbread Layer

12 T. unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes, plus extra melted for coating the pan
2 C. all-purpose flour, plus extra for coating the pan
1/3 C. granulated sugar

Shortbread layer: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Using a pastry brush, butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and coat with flour, tapping off excess.

Put the flour, sugar and salt in a food processor and pulse. Add the butter and pulse until the dough just comes together. Press the shortbread mixture into the prepared pan and bake until golden brown around the edges, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool completely.

Cookie butter layer: In a 5-quart saucepan over moderately-low heat, combine the sweetened condensed milk, brown sugar, cookie butter and salt. Slowly bring the mixture to a boil, stirring continuously. Continue stirring over the heat until the mixture becomes thick and amber in color, about 15 minutes. Pour the mixture over the cooked shortbread and spread evenly using an offset spatula. Cool to room temperature.

Chocolate topping: In a bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water, melt the chocolate with the oil. Once the chocolate has melted, pour it over the cooled caramel layer. Cool at room temperature for about 10 minutes, and then put in the refrigerator to cool completely, allowing the chocolate to slightly harden but not too hard. Cut into 2-inch pieces. Garnish with flaky salt before serving.

Poinsettia Pinwheel Cookies

Level: Intermediate
Total: 4 hrs. 30 min.
Active: 55 min.
Servings: 18 cookies

One (8 oz) pkg. cream cheese, at room temperature
1 C. unsalted butter, at room temperature
3 T. granulated sugar
2-3/4 C. all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1/2 tsp. fine salt
Red /White/ Green coarse sanding sugars, for decorating
18 to 20 yellow candy-coated chocolates

Beat the cream cheese, butter and granulated sugar in a large bowl on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes, scraping down the bowl with a rubber spatula as needed.

Reduce the mixer speed to low and beat in the flour and salt until combined. Divide the dough between 2 large pieces of plastic wrap. Flatten each into a 1/2-inch-thick disk and wrap. Refrigerate until firm, at least 1 hour and up to overnight.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment.

Roll out 1 disk of dough on a lightly floured surface until about 1/8 inch thick, dusting with more flour as needed.

Cut out 3-inch squares using a sharp paring knife or a 3-inch square cutter (you should be able to get 6 or 7 squares). Lift the cutouts using an offset spatula and arrange 2 inches apart on one of the prepared baking sheets. Re-wrap and refrigerate the dough scraps while you shape the pinwheels.

Cut a 1-1/2-inch slit in all four corners of each dough square to form 8 points. Fold over every other point and press into the center of the square. Refrigerate while you make the leaves.

Cut enough leaves out of the scraps using a sharp paring knife or a leaf-shaped cutter, making 2 leaves for each pinwheel. Arrange the leaves on the other prepared baking sheet. Lightly brush with water and sprinkle with green sanding sugar. Set aside in the refrigerator.

Lightly brush the pinwheels with water and sprinkle half with red sanding sugar and half with white sanding sugar. Brush the end of 2 leaves and tuck underneath a pinwheel on opposite sides. (No need to press the dough; it will meld together as it bakes.)

Bake, rotating the baking sheet halfway through, until the cookies are puffed and the edges are golden, 20 to 25 min. Immediately press a chocolate candy in the center of each warm cookie. Let cool 5 min., then transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.

Quote of the Week:

“Christmas enters, streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope, and singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.”

~ Maya Angelou, “Amazing Peace”