

It finally feels like fall!

Kids are back in school, we are experiencing some cooler mornings, local apples are finally ready and all of that leads to a favorite time of year to be in the kitchen.

Enjoy some fall flavors and don't forget to send in your favorite fall recipe to be included in the drawing for a Darlene Dixon Cookbook!

Submit your recipe and register to win at: clickit.entries@gmail.com

(All submissions will be entered into the drawing and need to be received by Sept. 30, 2023. Each winner will be announced and contacted. We do not ship the prizes, but are available for pick up Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 a.m. - 4p.m.)

Cheesecake-Stuffed Apples

Level: Intermediate

Total: 2 hr

Active: 1 hr

Yield: 8 servings

Two (8-oz) packages cream cheese, at room temperature
2/3 C. plus 2 T. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 lg. eggs, at room temperature, beaten
8 medium red baking apples, such as Gala
1/2 C. crushed graham crackers (about 5 whole crackers)
1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 T. unsalted butter, melted
Prepared caramel sauce, for serving
1/2 C. toasted walnuts, roughly chopped

Mix together the cream cheese, 2/3 C. sugar and vanilla with a rubber spatula in a medium bowl until completely smooth with. Add the eggs and stir until completely combined.

Arrange a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 300°F. Cut a 1/4-inch off the top of each apple and use a melon baller or teaspoon to remove the stem and core and to hollow out about 2/3 of the apple leaving 1/2-inch of flesh around the edge (reserve the removed apples for applesauce or smoothies). Fill each apple with cheesecake batter just below the rim. Wipe away any drips or spills off the outside and top of the apple before baking. Arrange apples in a 9-by-13-inch baking pan and bake until the apples are soft but still hold their shape and have not split, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

Meanwhile, pulse together the graham crackers, cinnamon and remaining 2 T. sugar in a food processor until fine crumbs. Add butter and process until combined.

Divide apples among small serving plates and top each with a generous drizzle of caramel and sprinkles or graham cracker mixture and chopped walnuts.

Turkey-Apple Swedish Meatballs

Level: Easy

Total: 2 hr

Prep: 1 hr 10 min

Cook: 50 min

Yield: 6 (about 36 small meatballs)

For the meatballs:

3 C. Packed torn pumpernickel bread
1 C. whole milk
1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
2 T. unsalted butter
1 T. vegetable oil
6 sm. shallots, chopped (about 1/2 C.)
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and grated
2 cloves garlic, minced
Pinch of ground cinnamon
salt and pepper
1-1/4 lb. lean ground turkey
1 large egg
Cooking spray

For the gravy:

2 T. all-purpose flour
1-1/2 C. low-sodium chicken broth
1-1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
Mashed potatoes, for serving (optional)
Chopped fresh parsley and/or chives, for topping

Make the meatballs: Pulse the bread in a food processor to make fine crumbs. Add the milk and Worcestershire sauce and pulse to make a paste; set aside.

Heat the butter and vegetable oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat; add the shallots and cook, stirring, until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Add the apple, garlic, cinnamon, 1 tsp. salt and pepper and cook until the apple is tender, about 3 minutes. Stir in the breadcrumb mixture and cook, stirring, until thickened, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and let cool completely.

Add the turkey and egg to the bowl and beat with a mixer on low speed until well combined, about 4 minutes. Cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 425°F and coat a baking sheet with cooking spray. Dampen your hands and form the meat mixture into 36 balls (about 1 inch each). Arrange on the prepared baking sheet and bake until lightly browned, 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the gravy: Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and whisk to make a smooth paste, about 3 minutes. Gradually whisk in the chicken broth, then add the Worcestershire sauce. Cook, whisking, until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Add the meatballs and simmer until firm and cooked through, about 10 minutes. Serve over mashed potatoes and top with parsley and/or chives.

Twice Baked Potato Casserole

Prep Time: 25 mins

Total Time: 2 hours

Yields: 8 - 10 servings

4 lb. medium sized russet potatoes, scrubbed
12 oz. bacon
1 stick butter, melted
4 oz. cream cheese, at room temperature
1 C. warm milk
1/2 C. sour cream
1-1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1 tsp. ground black pepper
8 oz. cheddar cheese
1/2 C. grated parmesan
1/4 C. chopped chives

Preheat the oven to 425°. Prick each potato with a fork 3-4 times all over, then place on a sheet tray. Roast for 55 – 70 minutes until the potatoes are tender when pressed. Remove the potatoes from the oven and lower the temperature to 375°.

Meanwhile, working in two batches, cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat until golden and crispy, 6-8 minutes. Let the cooked bacon drain on a paper towel lined plate. Once cool, crumble or chop into small pieces.

Place the melted butter, cream cheese, warm milk, and sour cream in a large bowl. Once the potatoes are cool enough to handle, cut them in half lengthwise, and scrape the flesh out of the skins and into the bowl. Tear or chop up three of the potato skins and add them to the bowl. Mash everything together with a potato masher. Fold in 1/2 of the bacon, 1/2 of the cheddar cheese, parmesan, and 1/2 of the chives.

Grease a 3-quart casserole dish with butter. Transfer the potato mixture to the baking dish. Cover and bake for 35 minutes until the edges are bubbly. Top with the remaining bacon and cheese. Bake for 15-20 more minutes until warmed through and lightly golden on top. Let rest 10 minutes, then top with the remaining chives and serve.

Apple-Oat Cookies

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr

Prep: 50 min

Cook: 10 min

Yield: 24 cookies

2-1/4 C. all-purpose flour
1 C. old-fashioned oats
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
3/4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. ground allspice
1-1/2 sticks unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
1/2 C. packed light brown sugar
1/2 C. granulated sugar
2 lg. eggs
1 Fuji or Gala apple, coarsely grated
2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 C. confectioners' sugar
2 T. milk

Position racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven; preheat to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Whisk the flour, oats, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt and allspice in a medium bowl. Combine the butter, brown sugar, granulated sugar and eggs in a separate bowl; whisk until smooth. Stir in the grated apple and vanilla, then stir in the flour mixture until just combined.

Scoop heaping tablespoonfuls of the dough onto the prepared baking sheets, about 1 inch apart. Bake until just set around the edges, 10 to 12 minutes, switching the baking sheets halfway through. Let cool 5 minutes on the baking sheets, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

Make the glaze: Whisk the confectioners' sugar and milk in a bowl; drizzle on the cookies.

Homemade Apple Butter

Level: Easy

Total: 3 hr 30 min

Prep: 10 min

*Cook: 3 hr 20 min
Yield: about 2 C.*

4 lb. assorted apples, peeled and chopped
2 C. apple cider
1 C. packed light brown sugar
Kosher salt
1 T. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Pinch of ground cloves

Preheat the oven to 250°F. Combine the apples, apple cider, brown sugar and 1/2 tsp. salt in a large oven proof pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Bring to a simmer, partially cover and cook until the apples are soft, about 20 minutes.

Remove from the heat and stir in the lemon juice, cinnamon, vanilla and cloves. Puree the mixture in a blender in batches until smooth (or use an immersion blender).

Return the mixture to the pot and bake, uncovered, stirring every 30 minutes, until thickened and deep amber, 2-1/2 to 3-1/2 hours (the timing will depend on the kind of apples you use). Remove from the oven and let cool completely, then transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate up to 5 days.

Try it on: Pancakes, waffles, yogurt, oatmeal, grilled cheese, PB&J, biscuits, cornbread or pork chops

Apple Butter Bread

*Prep Time: 15 mins
Cook Time: 40 mins
Additional Time: 10 mins
Total Time: 1 hr 5 mins
Yield: 1 (8x4-inch) loaf*

1-1/2 C. all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp. ground cloves
1/3 C. butter, softened
1 C. sugar
1 egg
1-1/4 C. apple butter
1/2 C. raisins
1/2 C. chopped walnuts (Optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 °F. Grease an 8x4-inch loaf pan.

Mix flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, nutmeg, and cloves in a bowl.

Beat butter and sugar with an electric mixer in a separate large bowl until smooth. Add egg and apple butter; continue beating until smooth. Mix in flour mixture until just incorporated. Fold in raisins and walnuts, mixing just enough to evenly combine. Pour into prepared loaf pan.

Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 40 to 50 minutes. Cool in the pan for 10 minutes before removing to cool completely on a wire rack.

Quote of the Week:

“The best teachers are those who show you where to look, but don’t tell you what to see.”

~ Alexandra K. Trenfor