



Baked Clams Oreganate

24 fresh Littleneck, or small Cherrystone clams
1 c plain bread crumbs
2 tsp fresh chopped parsley
½ tsp dried oregano, or more according to taste
4 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/2 c clam juice
4 Tbsp Rao's extra virgin olive oil
Lemon wedges
Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat broiler. Combine bread crumbs, parsley, oregano, garlic, and salt and pepper. Add olive oil and mix until it feels like wet sand, adding more oil if necessary. (Add chicken stock. The mixture should be quite wet.) Put approximately 1 heaping Tbsp of the breadcrumb mixture on each clam. Smooth the top, making sure the edges are sealed. Pour 1/8" cold water into a broiler pan with sides (to keep the clams moist while broiling). Add clams and broil for about 7 minutes until the topping is browned and crisp. Remove clams to a serving platter and garnish with lemon wedges and parsley sprigs.

Lisa Biasi

Spicy Sicilian Chicken Soup

Olive oil
3 medium sweet onions
10 hearts celery (I estimated 8 whole stalks, but only had hearts)
8–10 medium carrots (6 large would be enough)
8 medium potatoes (maybe just 4-5 larger Idaho baking potatoes?)
10–12 garlic cloves
4 qtsTbsp chicken stock (2 from boxed broth, 2 from concentrate)
5 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 (28-ounce) cans tomatoes, 28-oz can and (I used "generic" Safeway diced petite, (1, 1)
1 c chopped parsley
white pepper (about 2 Tbsp)
black pepper (about 1.5–2 Tbsp)
salt (1.5 Tbsp (?), and then salted to taste at end)
2 lbs ditalini, as needed when serving (or stubby pasta of choice)

Add chopped parsley and return the shredded chicken to the soup. Salt to taste, and add more white and black pepper if your tongue is not twitching a bit when you sample.

Simmer while cooking ditalini (or other stubby pasta). Serve soup over cooked pasta to taste.

Note: Like many soups, this may be better made the day before and then served when needed. We will freeze some for ready-made meals and I think it will work out well. You can cut the recipe in half (which is still a lot!).

Lisa Biasi

In a large stockpot, heat olive oil over low to medium heat.

Sweat the onion, celery, green pepper, and a bit of salt (to draw off moisture) for about 30 minutes. ("Sweating" occurs at a lower temperature than browning, and makes the veggies somewhat translucent.) Cover and stir every few minutes to prevent browning.

Add carrots, garlic, some white pepper and some black pepper, and continue to sweat, mixing now and then.

Add chicken stock, chicken breasts, tomatoes and potatoes—and, of course, some more white pepper and black pepper.

Cover and simmer on low heat for 1.5 to 2 hours.

Remove chicken and let cool and stand to shred.

Pizza Egg Sandwich

1 egg

1 slice of mozzarella (reduced fat or regular)

1 English muffin (or any other bread you think might work)

Butter (or whatever version of "I can't believe it's not butter" you have instead)

Tomato sauce (if you have some lying around. If not grab the ketchup)

Pinch dried oregano (Don't leave this out. It's what makes it pizza rather than an egg sandwich with ketchup)

Toasting your English muffin.

Heat a small nonstick frying pan on high until it's hot enough that water beads when splashed on the surface.

Melt as much butter or substitute as your waistline allows. Break an egg, drop it in the pan and break the yolk. As soon as you can, flip the egg over even if it's still a little runny.

Remove the pan from the heat and reduce heat to low.

Put a spoonful of tomato sauce or ketchup on top. Sprinkle on some oregano. Place the slice of mozzarella on top. Spoon a bit more sauce and oregano on top.

Place the top of the toasted English muffin on top of everything. (This is better than putting a lid over it because the flavor of other ingredients will permeate the bread.) Place the bottom slice in the pan covering any of the egg and cheese that's sticking out.

Return the pan to the heat and cook on low until the egg is cooked through and the cheese is melted.

Remove from heat, assemble and eat. (Better grab some paper towels!)

I know this looks like something you come up with when you're hung over and all you can find to eat in the frig is low fat mozzarella, eggs and ketchup. Okay, maybe that is how it came about, but I did tweak it a bit, and it is a fun and tasty way to start your day.

Just a word on one of the benefits of living in Wisconsin. When you love cheese as much as I do and you realize that the only cheese you can eat anymore on a regular basis is reduced-fat; there's no better place to be than Wisconsin. We have reduced fat cheese here that's better than a lot of regular cheese you get at the supermarket.

Rich Trotto

Curry Chicken and Squash

1 can coconut milk, regular or lowfat, shaken
2 tsp curry base, more or less, to taste (about two thirds of a small can, available in Asian grocery stores.)
1 tsp sugar
2 Tbsp fish sauce (also available in Asian grocery stores, if not in the supermarket)
1–2 green onions, sliced
Fresh basil or cilantro to taste, chopped
1 or 2 yellow squash (depending on size) cut into 2-inch chunks
1 red bell pepper, chopped (optional)
Chicken stock (preferable) or water
2–3 chicken breasts, boned and skinned

Servings: 2. Serve with rice. If you start the rice first, this dish should be finished by the time the rice is done.

(Note: for four servings use four chicken breasts, one small can of curry paste, and 1-1/2 to 2 cans of coconut milk. Increase other ingredients accordingly.)

Rich Trotto

Pour the coconut milk into a medium sauce pan or large skillet. Mix in the curry paste, sugar, and fish sauce and bring to a slow boil. Add the white part of the green onions and some of the basil/cilantro.

Add the red pepper (if using) and cook for about 3 minutes. Add the squash and cook another 2–3 minutes.

Taste for spice. If it tastes a little bland, add some more fish sauce.

Add the chicken and cook until tender, 3–5 minutes. (If it begins to thicken too much add water or a little chicken stock, if available.)

When the chicken is cooked, remove from heat and stir in the remaining basil/cilantro and green onion tops before serving.

Linguini and Fish Sauce

1 lb. (or less) cod or other light fish
1 14-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 small to medium onion, chopped
2–3 cloves garlic
¼ c white wine (optional)
1 8-oz. bottle of clam juice (water or chicken stock will work if you don't have clam juice)
8 oz. or less linguini (You can use spaghetti or capellini, but avoid that if you're making it for an Italian.)
Fresh or dried thyme, marjoram, parsley (Bay leaf, optional)
Red pepper flakes

Fill a large pot with water and bring to boil. While the water is heating, heat a 12" (or so) frying pan on medium heat, and add the olive oil.

When the oil heats, add the chopped onion and cook for 5–7 minutes, until the onion is translucent. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds.

If you're using the wine, add it and scrape the pan to deglaze it. Cook about 2 minutes until the alcohol evaporates. Add the tomatoes and mash them up a bit to get rid of as many chunks as you can.

Add the red pepper flakes (optional) to taste. Add the spices (your call on how much—I eyeball this stuff, so it's hard to say), and about half a bottle of clam juice.

Cook for 15–20 minutes. (Speaking of eyeballing, this part is a little tricky because you want the sauce to be fairly thin so as not to mask the flavor of the fish, but not watery. It should lightly coat the pasta. If it starts getting too thick add some more clam juice. If it's too runny, increase the heat and cook it down.)

When the water boils, salt the water, put in the linguini and cook until *al dente*.

After you start the pasta, put the fish in the sauce and cook until it flakes, usually about 6–8 minutes. Just before the fish is done, taste the sauce and add salt and pepper to taste.

Drain the pasta when it's done and put it on a serving platter. When the fish is done, pour the sauce and fish over the linguini.

This is an old world Italian fish dish that my mother used to make. It's simple and fast enough that you can make in just about the time it takes to boil the water and cook the pasta. This dish is usually made with cod, snapper, or any other light whitefish. The sauce is versatile and can be used with other seafood. I sometimes make it with a mixed bag of shrimp, calamari, and scallops that I buy at Trader Joe's. The red pepper flakes are optional, but the sauce is best with a bit of a bite to it. This is actually an easy recipe; it just looks complicated written down.

The timing is a little tricky here. If the fish is done first, don't leave it in the sauce. Remove it from the pan and put it on a plate and cover it.

My mom might freak if she knew I now use whole wheat pasta instead of Ronzoni, but if you get the good stuff (I get the imported from Italy), it'll be perfectly fine. Another thing that might make my mom squirm a bit is something I picked up from TV and cookbooks. Instead of trying to time everything, cook the pasta until is almost done but still has a bit of a bite. Remove the fish from the pan and keep warm. Drain the pasta well, mix it into the sauce and let it finish cooking there to absorb some of the sauce. Oh, and one last thing, Put down that parmesan cheese. It doesn't belong in fish sauce, at least not this one. Enjoy!

John Senger

Mexican Lasagna

3-4 c cooked chicken (I usually use more; see note below)

1 package taco mix

1 8-oz can tomato sauce

1 Tbsp brown sugar

3 Tbsp vinegar

2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce

1/2 c ketchup

1 c water/chicken stock

6 tortillas

1 c grated cheddar cheese

1 c sour cream

Preheat oven to 350°.

In a saucepan combine chicken, taco mix, tomato sauce, brown sugar, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, ketchup, and water. Bring to a boil and simmer 30 minutes.

Pour one third of the sauce into a 9x13 baking dish, cover with tortillas, cheese, and more sauce. Repeat layers, ending with tortillas. Spread sour cream over surface Bake at 350° oven for 25 minutes.

Notes: For the chicken I boil it until done and then reserve some of the broth to use instead of water. I then drain the chicken and put it in the fridge to cool. Once cool I pull the chicken apart by hand. I like that better then cutting into cubes. I actually do step one the day before and leave the mixture in the fridge. Then on the day of serving, I just warm up the mixture up a bit so it will spread better for step 2, and then back into the fridge once the layers are done until it is time to cook.

Kevin Boland

Cream Cheese Pound Cake

*8-oz pkg cream cheese
2 sticks butter, softened
3 c sugar
6 large eggs, room temperature
3 c sifted cake flour
2 tsp vanilla
2 Tbsp powdered sugar*

Beat cream cheese and butter. Add sugar and beat until mixture is light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating about 1 minute after each additional egg. Add vanilla. fold in flour. Pour mixture into greased and floured Bundt cake pan. Place in cold oven. Turn oven on to 325° and bake for 70 minutes (or 65 minutes if in 2 loaf pans). Cool in pan for 5 minutes. Dust with powdered sugar.

Kevin Boland

Peach Glazed Grilled Pork Chops

10-oz jar peach preserves

2 Tbsp lemon juice

1 tsp Dijon mustard

1/4 tsp ground cardamom

6 pork chops

Mix ingredients together and stir over low heat until preserves melt. Brush onto pork chops (both sides) just before pulling off the grill.

Kevin Boland

Dense and Rich NY Cheesecake

Six 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese (3 lbs)

1 c light cream or half-and-half

1-1/2 c sugar

3 eggs

1 1/2 Tbsp lemon juice

1 Tbsp vanilla

Cream cream cheese till smooth. Fold in by hand 1 c light cream (or half-and-half)

Preheat oven to 450° while you prepare the crust.

Graham Cracker Crust

1 1/2 c ground graham crackers (about 1 sleeve)

1/2 stick of melted butter or margarine

2 Tbsp sugar

Mix graham crackers with sugar and add the butter/margarine until moist. Spread mixture on the bottom of a springform pan and press down with the back of a spoon. Pour the cream cheese mixture into the pan. Place in oven at 450°. After 15 minutes, turn the oven temperature down to 350°. Check cake every 10 minutes until an inserted knife comes out clean, about 30 minutes. Turn the oven off and let the cake cool in the oven. Refrigerate overnight.

Kevin Boland

French Onion Soup

3 lbs peeled onions (5 lbs unpeeled)
6 oz butter
2 Tbsp paprika
3/4 c flour
1 c white wine
1-1/2 tsp ground pepper
1/2 tsp salt
1 bay leaf
3 quarts canned beef boullion (6 16-oz cans)
Kitchen Bouquet
French bread, sliced 1/4–1/2" thick
Swiss cheese (preferabl Ementhaler)

Slice onions 1/8–1/4" thick. Sauté in melted butter very slowly (about 1-1/2 hours). Add all other ingredients except the boullion and sauté for 10 more minutes. Add boullion and simmer for 2 hrs. Add kitchen bouquet to adjust color to taste. Refrigerate overnight.

To serve: Heat soup. Fill oven-safe casserole or soup crock with 1 c soup. Top with 3 slices (1/4–1/2" thick) French bread. Top with 1-1/2 oz Swiss cheese (Ementhaler works best) and broil until cheese browns (about 5 minutes). Serve with buttered french bread on the side.

Kevin Boland

Citrus Glazed Salmon

2-lb salmon filet, skin removed
salt and pepper to tast
3/4 c orange marmalade
2 green onions, sliced (about 1/4 c)
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tsp dry white wine
1 tsp grated fresh ginger
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
1//8 tsp five-spice powder

Season fish with salt and pepper. Stir together remaining ingredients and spoon over salmon. Bake uncovered until done

Kevin Boland

Shrimp Gumbo

*1 c butter (2 sticks), plus 1 Tbsp
3/4 c all-purpose flour
1/2 yellow onion, chopped
1/4 c chopped celery
1/4 c chopped green bell pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 c sliced fresh okra
3 c shrimp stock
2 c bottled clam juice
1 c chopped canned tomatoes with juice
3 bay leaves
1 Tbsp dried parsley flakes
1 Tbsp Cajun seasoning
1 tsp dried thyme leaves
1 tsp dried basil leaves
1/2 tsp finely ground black pepper
1-1/2 c cooked smoked sausage (andouille is best),
sliced diagonally
2 lbs shrimp, cleaned and deveined*

In a large heavy saucepan, over low heat, melt 1 c the butter. Add the flour, and cook on low heat until the roux is brown (like the color of a new penny), about 30 to 45 minutes, stirring constantly. Note: "brown" does not mean "burnt"; if you burn the roux, throw it out and start again.

Add the onions, celery, peppers and garlic and sauté until translucent.

Mix in the okra, the remaining 1 Tbsp of butter, and the remaining ingredients except the shrimp, and simmer over medium-low heat until thick, about 1 hour. Add the shrimp before the end; cook for about 3 minutes, or until shrimp are pink.

Before serving, remove the bay leaves. Transfer to a serving bowl and serve over white rice, if desired. Add a dash or two of tabasco to taste.

Serving suggestion: Cooked white rice

Kevin Boland

La Bête Noire

For the cake

3/4 c sugar

9 Tbsp (1 stick + 1 Tbsp) unsalted butter, diced

*18 oz bittersweet or semisweet (not unsweetened)
chocolate, chopped*

6 large eggs

Ganache

1 c heavy whipping cream

*8 oz bittersweet or semisweet chocolate (not
unsweetened) chopped*

For cake

Preheat oven to 350°. Butter 10-inch springform pan. Line bottom of pan with parchment round; butter parchment. Wrap 3 layers of heavy-duty foil around the outside of the pan, bringing foil to the top of the rim. Combine 1 c water and the sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Simmer 5 minutes, and remove from heat.

Melt butter in large saucepan over low heat. Add chocolate and whisk till smooth. Whisk sugar syrup into chocolate; cool slightly. Add eggs to chocolate mixture and whisk until well blended. Pour batter into prepared pan. Place cake in a large roasting pan. Add enough hot water to the roasting pan to come halfway up the side of the cake pan.

Bake cake until center no longer moves when pan is gently shaken, about 50 minutes. Remove from water bath; transfer to rack. Cool completely in pan.

For Ganache

Bring whipping cream to a simmer in small saucepan over medium heat. Add chocolate and whisk until smooth. Pour over top of cake still in pan. Gently shake pan to distribute ganache evenly over top of cake. Refrigerate cake in pan until ganache is set, about two hours. The ganache can be made up to two days in advance.

Run knife around pan sides to loosen cake; release sides. Cut cake into wedges and top with whipped cream. If this isn't enough chocolate for you, drizzle the cake with Hershey's syrup before adding the whipped cream.

This phenomenal take on a classic flourless chocolate cake lives up to its translation, "The Black Beast." My wife calls it "The Chocolate Bomb."

Bob Loy

Gioza

1 lb ground beef
1 lb sausage
Several cloves garlic
1–2 tsp fresh ginger, minced or ground
1 head cabbage
Wonton wrappers
Butter
Soy sauce

Brown ground beef and sausage. Drain fat, add garlic, ginger, and one head cabbage. Continue to cook till cabbage breaks down.

Use as a stuffing to fill wonton wrappers. Wet the edges of each wrapper and press together. (We usually sit at the table and do this as a family.)

Brown filled wrappers in butter in a frying pan, then add a Tbsp of water and a lid to steam for one minute.

Serve with soy sauce.

Bob Loy

“Easy Wind” Toffee

2 c (1 lb) unsalted butter

1-1/2 c raw sugar plus 1/2 c vanilla sugar (or 2 c sugar)

1 vanilla bean

1/2 tsp salt

Sliced or slivered almonds as desired 1/2 to 2 C

1 bag milk chocolate, or dark/bitter sweet chocolate chips, don't go cheap here.

1 Tbs sea salt (fleur de sel)

In a two-quart sauce pan melt butter over low to medium heat.

Scrape the vanilla bean pod and add both the scrapings and the bean husk. Add the sugar and salt.

Line a cookie tray with parchment paper and sprinkle with the almonds.

Increase heat to medium and bring to a boil. Using a candy thermometer, raise the temperature to about 285°F, until the color becomes a bit darker and the toffee smell is evident. (Don't quit too soon; it may require raising the temperature slightly to 300°.)

Pour over prepared tray and sprinkle with chocolate chips. Let cool slightly for 2–3 minutes and use a rubber scraper to spread chocolate evenly.

Place in refrigerator to speed cooling.

Sometime before chocolate completely sets sprinkle with a good sea salt (such as fleur de sel).

Cut into bite-sized or bigger pieces.

JR Fishman

Steamed Mussels and Scallops in Red Sauce

8 cloves of garlic, chopped
1/2 c parsley
2 lbs mussels, rinsed in cold water and drained
6 large scallops, cut into quarters
16 oz tomato puree
1 can chopped clams (in broth)
Oregano/Italian seasoning
Salt
Olive oil

Heat 2–3 Tbsp olive oil in a large pasta pot. Add garlic and sauté until brown. Add tomato puree and chopped clams. Season with salt, oregano and other Italian spices as preferred.

Continue to sauté on mild heat

When sauce/base starts to boil, add mussels and turn flame up to medium-high. When most mussels have opened (3–4 minutes), add the scallops. Heat for 3 minutes.

Remove from heat and serve.

Serving Suggestion: Prepare 16oz of spaghetti or capellini and serve mussels and scallops over pasta.

JR Fishman

Lemon Lush (a fruit dip)

2 eggs

1 c sugar

1/3 c lemon juice (or ReaLemon juice in bottle)

1/2 c water

1 tsp vanilla

1/3 Tbsp cornstarch

1 c heavy cream

Beat eggs with a mixer. In a sauce pan over low heat, combine eggs and sugar. Add lemon juice and beat another minute. Mix in corn starch and add water, beat for one minute more. Cook, stirring until the mixture thickens. (It should look like lemon pudding.)

Add the vanilla and cool completely.

Whip the cream, and fold in the lemon mixture.

Refrigerate four hours, and serve with your favorite fruit.

Margie Pitoscia

Slow Cooker Posole

1 Tbsp canola oil
1 boneless pork loin roast, about 2 lbs, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 14.5-oz. cans enchilada sauce (such as Hatch Green)
2 15.5-oz. cans white hominy, drained
1 onion, sliced
1/2 c green chiles, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 tsp cayenne pepper, or to taste
2 tsp dried oregano
1/4 c cilantro, chopped
1/2 tsp salt

Heat the canola oil in a skillet over high heat. Add the pork; cook and stir just until meat is browned on all sides, about 5 minutes.

Place the meat in a 4-quart slow cooker. Pour the enchilada sauce over the meat. Top with the hominy, onion, chilies, garlic, cayenne pepper, and oregano. Pour in enough water to fill the slow cooker.

Cover, and cook on high for 6 to 7 hours. Stir in the cilantro and salt. Cook on low for 30 minutes.

Serve with chopped cilantro.

Serves 8.

Jeff Saulters

Crab Bisque

1 medium Vidalia onion, chopped
1 Tbsp oil
1 can cream of asparagus soup (Campbell's)
1 can cream of mushroom (Campbell's)
1-1/2 c milk
1 pt. heavy cream
1/2 pt. sliced baby bellas
1/2 tsp tarragon
1/2 tsp sea salt
1 tsp cracked pepper
2 c or more snow crab meat, or any kind of crab meat

Sauté chopped onion in the oil, cooking until translucent. Add mushrooms, salt, and pepper. Continue to cook a few more minutes, stirring continually.

Add all other ingredients except crab meat. (Do not add water to the soup mixes.) Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for an additional 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Set aside for 10 minutes, then add crab meat. Serve.

Gerry Janicek

Momma Janicek's New York Style Cheese Cake

1/2 package of Oreo cookies
1/2 c (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted,
plus 2 Tbsp (1/4 stick)
2 packages of cream cheese (16 oz. total), softened
1 pt small curd cottage cheese
1 pt sour cream
1-1/2 cups sugar
4 eggs, lightly beaten
1/3 c corn starch, sifted
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp lemon zest
1 tsp vanilla

Note: A baker's trick... The roasting pan full of water prevents the cake from cracking on the edges, since the water cannot rise above 212°.

Gerry Janicek

Fill a roasting pan with water and place on baking rack at bottom shelf of the oven. Preheat oven to 325°.

In a food processor or blender, process the Oreo cookies until finely chopped. Add 1/2 cup of melted butter and press into the bottom of a lightly greased 12" springform pan.

Strain cottage cheese through a wire strainer into a medium bowl. Add cream cheese, and beat at high speed until creamy. Add sugar and eggs, mix medium until creamy. Add corn starch, lemon juice, zest, and vanilla, and blend at mixer's low speed.

Add 2 Tbsp melted butter and sour cream, and blend at low speed.

Pour slowly into the springform pan, and place the pan into the full roasting pan in the oven. Bake for 70 minutes until edges are slightly brown. Do not open the oven door while baking!

Turn off oven and let cake sit in oven for 2 more hours, Remove cake and cool completely on a wire rack. Refrigerate until chilled, then remove the springform pan and serve.

Kiflis (Czechoslovakian Horn Cookies)

For the dough

7 c flour, sifted, divided

1 c plus 1 tsp sugar

1 tsp salt

4 sticks unsalted butter, room temp

2 packages of dry yeast

1 egg, lightly beaten

1 can sweetened condensed milk

In a large bowl mix 6 cups of flour, 1 cup of sugar, and the salt. Add butter and mix well.

Dissolve the yeast with 1/4 cup of warm water (105–110°) and 1 tsp sugar. When it starts to foam, add it to the flour mixture, along with the egg and the condensed milk. Mix well (it will be very sticky), and slowly add additional flour until the mixture is no longer sticky. (Use your hands to knead it.)

Refrigerate for an hour.

Walnut mixture

1/2 stick unsalted butter

1 tsp cinnamon

3/4 c sugar

milk

4 c walnuts, chopped very fine in food processor

Melt the butter over low heat. Add sugar and cinnamon, and a little milk. Cook slowly. When the sugar starts to dissolve, add walnuts and stir. Keeping the heat on low, add enough milk to make a paste. (Do not add so much that the mixture becomes a liquid.) Remove from heat and set aside.

Assembly

Adjust baking rack to middle shelf, and preheat oven to 325°.

Using flour to prevent dough from sticking, and using dough sparingly, roll out about 1/8 inch of dough in a square on baking sheets. Cut into smaller squares, about 3 inches each.

Using about 2/3 tsp of the walnut mixture for each square, fill from one corner to the opposite corner, and fold the empty corners together, overlapping on top of the walnut mixture.

Cook for 12–14 minutes, depending on your oven. (Check after about 10 minutes to gauge your time.) Cookies should be lightly browned.

by: Anna Janicek (Gerry's grandmother)

Fried Mozzarella

About 5 cups vegetable oil

1 lb drained marinated bocconcini (small mozzarella balls), patted dry

3 large eggs, beaten

1 c plain fine dry bread crumbs

Equipment: a deep-fat thermometer

Accompaniment: warm homemade or bottled spicy tomato sauce

Heat about 1 1/2 inches oil to 360°F in a 3 1/2- to 4-qt heavy saucepan.

Meanwhile, double-coat bocconcini by dipping in eggs, then in bread crumbs, and repeating. Transfer to a sheet of wax paper.

Working in batches of 10, lower balls into oil with a slotted spoon and fry, turning occasionally, until golden brown, about 30 seconds per batch. Transfer to paper towels to drain and season with salt.

(Return oil to 360°F between batches.)

These bite-size mozzarella balls have a crisp outer shell and a perfectly gooey center. For an even creamier texture, make your own fresh mozzarella. Makes about three dozen.

Lisa Biasi

Baked French Toast Casserole with Maple Syrup

Bread mixture

1 loaf French bread (13 to 16 oz)

8 large eggs

2 cups half-and-half

1 c milk

2 Tbsp granulated sugar

1 tsp vanilla extract

1/4 tsp ground cinnamon

1/4 tsp ground nutmeg

Dash salt

Praline Topping, recipe follows

Maple syrup

Slice French bread into about 20 slices, 1-inch each. (Use any extra bread for garlic toast or bread crumbs). Arrange slices in a generously buttered 9-by-13-inch flat baking dish in two rows, overlapping the slices.

In a large bowl, combine the eggs, half-and-half, milk, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt and beat with a rotary beater or whisk until blended but not too bubbly. Pour mixture over the bread slices, making sure all are covered evenly with the milk-egg mixture. Spoon some of the mixture in between the slices. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight.

The next day, preheat oven to 350°. While the oven heats, make the praline topping.

Praline Topping

1/2 pound (2 sticks) butter

1 c packed light brown sugar

1 c chopped pecans

2 Tbsp light corn syrup

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp ground nutmeg

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and blend well. Makes enough for Baked French Toast Casserole.

Spread praline topping evenly over the bread and bake for 40 minutes, until puffed and lightly golden. Serve with maple syrup.

Total time: 9 hours. Active prep time: 20 minutes. Cook Time: 40 minutes.

Level: Easy

Serves: 6 to 8

Lisa Biasi

Copypcat Carrabba's Pollo Rosa Maria

4 butterflied chicken breasts
4 slices prosciutto
1/2 c Fontina cheese
1/2 c clarified butter
3 garlic cloves
1/2 sweet onion, diced
1/4 c dry white wine
4 Tbsp unsalted butter
1/2 tsp white pepper
Dash of salt
8 ounces sliced cremini mushrooms
1-1/2 tsp fresh basil, chopped
Juice of 1 lemon

Warm a platter in the oven.

Open chicken breasts and lay open side down on a hot grill. Grill 3-5 minutes on each side until cooked. Remove from grill.

Stuff one of the butterflied sides with 1 slice prosciutto and 1/8 c cheese and fold to sandwich the filling inside. Hold breast folded with wooden picks. Set on the warmed platter and cover.

In a large skillet sauté the onions and garlic in the butter until tender. Deglaze the pan with the white wine.

Add the butter, salt, and pepper, and mushrooms and cook until tender. Add basil and lemon juice and swirl pan to combine.

I had this at Carraba's... really good! I made a few alterations

Chris Gilliland

Blueberry Cobbler

*2 cups blueberries (frozen berries work best)
1-1/2 cups granulated sugar, divided
1 heaping Tbsp brown sugar
1 stick butter
3/4 c flour, sifted
2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 c milk (skim, 2%, or whole)
1 egg, beaten
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla
Juice of 1 lime (do not use lemon)
Dash of ground cloves
Dash of ground ginger*

Preheat oven to 325°. Put the butter in a 2-quart casserole and place in the oven until butter is melted, then remove casserole dish.

Combine blueberries, 3/4 cup of sugar, and lime juice in a small bowl, then add the cinnamon, ginger, cloves and brown sugar and stir together gently. Let the blueberries thaw slightly as you stir them into the mixture. (It will produce a small amount of juice.) Do not let blueberries thaw completely or they will break apart.

Combine the remaining granulated sugar, flour, salt and baking powder in a large bowl. Add the milk, the egg, and the vanilla and mix into a smooth batter, but do not over-mix.

Carefully pour batter over melted butter, but do NOT stir. Spoon blueberry mixture over the batter. Again, do not stir.

Bake for 45–55 minutes, or until the batter is golden brown and cracked. Great hot or cold, but better if not refrigerated.

The recipe is the same for fresh sliced peaches or pears, but use 4 cups of fruit (3 large peaches or pears) and combine them in a sauce pan over low heat and stir together with the sugar, lime juice, and spices so they are tender before adding them to batter. (It produces a few tablespoons of juice, which you should be sure include when you add the fruit to the batter.)