





Holiday Recipes Submitted by Niner Nation

THE SHARED TABLE







UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

These recipes are shared as they were submitted by members of Niner Nation. Many reflect family traditions passed down through generations, complete with personal touches, familiar shorthand and a little room for interpretation.

We hope you'll enjoy making them your own, just as generations have done.

Scan this QR Code for a digital download of the Holiday Recipe Book and to watch the Shared Table Holiday Dinner video.

THE SHARED TABLE

Dear Niner Nation,

One of the things that makes UNC Charlotte special is the people who call this University home. Each of us brings unique experiences, traditions and stories that enrich our community and strengthen the connections we share.

This year, more than 40 members of our campus community submitted recipes for our Shared Table Cookbook, offering a glimpse into the meals, memories and traditions that matter most to them. From cherished family recipes passed down through generations to dishes that celebrate new traditions with friends and loved ones, each submission tells a story that extends beyond the ingredients on the page.

Earlier this fall, we gathered faculty, staff and students around a shared table to enjoy several of these dishes together. As stories were exchanged and conversations unfolded, the meal served as a reminder of something we often see at UNC Charlotte: meaningful connections can begin with the simplest invitations.

This digital cookbook reflects those connections. It is a collection of recipes, but it is also a celebration of the people, cultures and experiences that make Niner Nation so vibrant. Each page highlights the traditions we carry with us, the memories we treasure and the ways we continue to learn from one another.

As you explore these recipes, I hope they inspire you to gather with family, friends and fellow Niners this season. May they remind us that, while our paths and experiences may differ, there is much that brings us together.

Thank you to everyone who shared a recipe, a story and a seat at the table.

I wish you a joyful Thanksgiving and a season filled with warmth, gratitude and connection.

Sincerely,

Sharon Gaber
Chancellor







APPETIZERS

GUAVA AND CREAM CHEESE EMPANADAS

Submitted by: Noemi Granillo Candia, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

8 empanada dough discs
8 oz cream cheese
8 oz guava paste
1 quart vegetable or canola oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Put 1 oz of cream cheese and 1 oz of guava paste in the middle of each dough disc. Fold the dough in half and press the edges together with a fork to seal. Place the empanadas on a tray and cover them with a damp paper towel so they don't dry out. Put the empanadas in the refrigerator while heating the oil in a pot to 375°F.

Fry 2 to 3 empanadas at a time for about 2 minutes on each side until golden brown. Take out the empanadas and place them on paper towels or a wire rack to drain the oil. Repeat with the remaining empanadas and make sure the oil stays at the right temperature. Let them cool a little bit, but serve them still slightly warm.

MAIN DISHES

CUBAN CHICKEN CROQUETTES (CROQUETAS DE POLLO)

Submitted by: Keila Merino, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

2 chicken breasts
½ onion
½ red bell pepper
1 garlic clove
2 Tbsp of butter
2 cups of all-purpose flour
2 tsp of salt, or to taste
Little chicken broth (reserved from cooking the chicken)
Small amount of tomato purée
Splash of dry cooking wine
1 capful of vinegar
Parsley, to taste
Bay leaf, to taste
Oregano, to taste
Eggs, beaten
Breadcrumbs
Vegetable oil for frying



INSTRUCTIONS

Place the two chicken breasts in a pressure cooker with water and cook under pressure for about 20 minutes, or until the chicken is fully cooked and tender. Make sure to save some of the chicken broth because you will need it later. Once the chicken is ready, place it in a food processor along with half an onion, half a red bell pepper, one garlic clove, a little salt and some of the chicken broth. Blend everything until the chicken is finely chopped and all the ingredients are mixed together.

In a large saucepan, melt two tablespoons of butter over medium heat. Add the chicken mixture, salt, a little tomato purée, dry cooking wine, vinegar, parsley, bay leaf and oregano. Stir everything together and let it cook for a few minutes. I like to prepare this part almost like making Cuban chicken in sauce because it gives the croquettes so much flavor. Once everything is well combined, gradually add the two cups of flour while stirring continuously over medium heat. Keep stirring until the mixture becomes thick and forms a dough that starts separating from the sides of the saucepan. Remove the dough from the heat and let it rest for about 45 minutes so it can cool down and become easier to handle.

While the dough is resting, prepare two bowls. In one bowl, beat the eggs, and in the other, add the breadcrumbs. Once the dough has cooled, take small portions and shape them into traditional cylindrical croquettes. Dip each croquette into the beaten eggs and then roll it in the breadcrumbs until completely covered. Heat vegetable oil in a deep saucepan over medium-high heat. Carefully add the croquettes and fry them until they are golden brown and crispy on the outside. Remove the croquettes from the oil and place them on paper towels to absorb the extra oil.

MAIN DISHES

CHOLE MASALA, SERVED WITH NAAN

Submitted by: Shailesh Kumar '26 MS, AI and Data Engineer, Marketing and Communications

INGREDIENTS

2 cans chickpeas, drained (or 1 cup dried, soaked overnight and boiled)
2 onions, finely chopped
3 tomatoes, puréed
1 Tbsp ginger garlic paste
1 green chili, slit
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 bay leaf
½ tsp turmeric
1 tsp red chili powder
2 tsp chole masala (or 1 tsp garam masala plus 1 tsp coriander powder)
1 tsp amchur (dry mango powder) or juice of half a lemon
3 tbsp oil
Salt to taste
Fresh cilantro for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the oil. Add the cumin seeds and bay leaf. Cook the onions until deep golden. This is where the flavor comes from. Add the ginger garlic paste and green chili, and cook for 1 minute. Add the tomato purée and spices.

Cook until the oil separates, about 8 minutes. Add the chickpeas and 1½ cups water. Mash a few chickpeas to thicken the gravy. Simmer for 15 minutes. Finish with the amchur and cilantro. Serve hot with naan.

PROVINCIAL CHICKEN SOUP

Sergio Villanueva, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

1 yellow onion, diced
3 stalks of celery, cut into bite size pieces
2 carrots, sliced
4 Russet potatoes
1 can of green peas
1 carton of chicken broth, or stock.
2 or 3 cans of condensed soup, mushroom or celery.
1 cup of shredded chicken
salt and pepper to taste
1 sprig of rosemary and thyme
1 bay leaf

INSTRUCTIONS

In a stock pot, begin by sautéing potatoes, carrots and celery for a few minutes in olive oil. Add in onion and cook until it is a bit translucent. Pour chicken broth or stock in; just enough where your veggies are completely submerged. Not too much! Feel free to add your rosemary and thyme at this point. Add one bay leaf as well. Raise the temperature to max until it begins to boil, put a lid on and lower the stove to low. Let simmer for 10 to 15 minutes or until veggies are fork tender. Open cans of condensed soup and pour it right inside of the pot. Stir until well incorporated. Hopefully, the soup becomes a bit thick, around the texture of pudding but not quite. You could let it simmer for a bit longer. Keep stirring. Add in black pepper, salt to taste, cooked shredded chicken and drained can of green peas. Stir.

MAIN DISHES

AUNT STACY'S SEAFOOD GUMBO

Submitted by: Dacien Montford, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

½ cup vegetable oil
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 lb smoked Andouille sausage, sliced
1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 to 3 cleaned blue crabs
1 medium onion, diced
1 green bell pepper, diced
2 celery stalks, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
6 cups seafood or chicken stock
1 cup sliced okra (optional)
2 bay leaves
1 Tbsp Cajun or Creole seasoning, adjusted to taste (don't be afraid to be heavy handed)
1 tsp paprika
½ tsp dried thyme
Salt, black pepper and hot sauce to taste
Cooked white rice

INSTRUCTIONS

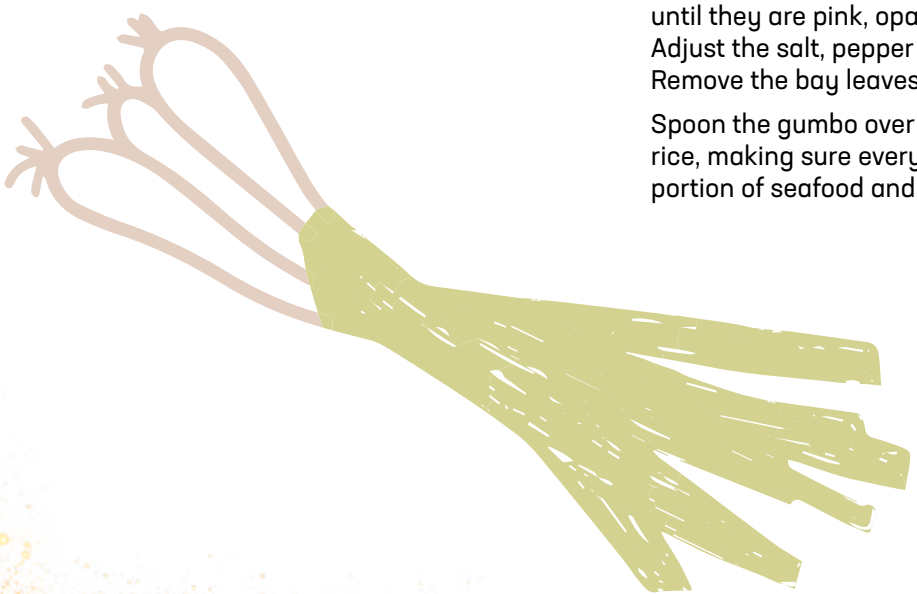
In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, combine the vegetable oil and flour over medium-low heat. Stir continuously for approximately 25 to 40 minutes until the mixture becomes a deep chocolate-brown color. This is the foundation of the gumbo's rich flavor, so patience is key!

Stir in the onion, bell pepper and celery, often called the "Holy Trinity" of Southern cooking. Cook for about 5 minutes until softened, then add the garlic. Stir in the sliced Andouille sausage, Cajun seasoning, paprika, thyme and bay leaves.

Gradually pour in the stock while stirring to combine it with the roux. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer.

Place the cleaned crabs into the pot, along with the optional okra. Simmer gently for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, allowing the seafood, sausage, vegetables and seasonings to develop a rich flavor. During the last 5 to 7 minutes of cooking, add the shrimp and cook until they are pink, opaque and fully cooked. Adjust the salt, pepper and hot sauce as desired. Remove the bay leaves.

Spoon the gumbo over a serving of warm white rice, making sure everyone gets a generous portion of seafood and sausage.



SIDE DISHES

CORNBREAD DRESSING

Submitted by: Jay Skipworth, Director of Student Professional Development, College of Computing and Informatics

INGREDIENTS

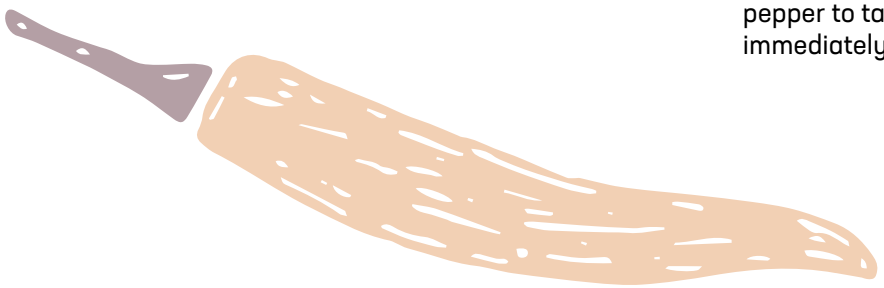
Chicken
Cornish Hens
Dozen Eggs
Cornbread Mix
White Loaf bread
Ground Sage
Minced Onion
Minced Celery
Margarine/butter
Chicken Broth

For Gravy
2 cups chicken beef, or turkey stock
2 beef or chicken bouillon cubes
4 Tbsp unsalted butter
¼ cup all purpose flour
1 tsp onion powder
¼ tsp dried thyme
½ tsp dried sage
1 tsp dried rosemary
Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Boil chicken, reserve broth. Roast two to four Cornish Game Hens (based on how meaty you want). Cook one large skillet of cornbread. Crumble into a large mixing bowl. Add 2 or 3 slices of white loaf bread, crumbled; ground sage, 3 to 4 tablespoons or to taste; ½ cup of minced onion; ½ cup of minced celery; 3 boiled eggs, sliced; 1 raw egg; 1 stick of margarine (or butter) to broth. Shred chicken and hen meat and mix in with other ingredients. Add broth to mix to a pourable state (may use canned chicken broth). Reserve 2 or 3 cups of broth for gravy. Reserve 2 or 3 cups of unbaked dressing mix for gravy. Bake dressing over separated chicken in a large casserole pan at 350 degrees until brown for 35 to 40 minutes.

For the gravy, combine the stock and the bouillon cubes in a microwave safe bowl or measuring cup. Heat for 1 minute and stir. Repeat until the bouillon is dissolved. Melt the butter in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the flour, onion powder, thyme, sage and rosemary and cook for 1 minute to cook the flour. Slowly whisk in the stock until smooth and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook, whisking, until smooth and thick, about 1 minute. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove from heat and serve immediately.



SIDE DISHES

SWEET POTATO SOUFFLE

Submitted by: Jennifer Campbell, Executive Assistant, Financial Services

INGREDIENTS

3 cups mashed sweet potatoes
2 eggs
1/2 cup milk
1 cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 stick (1/2 cup) margarine

Topping
1 cup brown sugar
1/3 cup self-rising flour
1/2 to 1 cup chopped pecans
6 Tbsp (3/4 stick) margarine

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix first six ingredients, and pour into a buttered 9-inch by 13-inch pan. Mix together brown sugar and flour; sprinkle on top of sweet potatoes. Put broken pecans on top. Melt margarine, and pour over other ingredients. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

GREEK CYPRIOT PILAFI POURGOURI

Submitted by: Angeliki Evripidou, Visiting Scholar, Psychological Science, College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences

INGREDIENTS

14 oz can chopped/diced tomatoes
Hot water
1 Tbsp tomato puree tomato paste
2 vegetable or chicken stock cubes bouillon
Olive oil
1 white onion finely chopped
4 to 6 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
1 oz vermicelli noodles or spaghetti broken into small pieces
7 oz bulgur wheat
Salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Pour the tomatoes into a measuring jug or bowl. Fill the empty can with hot water and add to the tomatoes. Add the tomato puree/paste and crumble in the stock cubes. Stir together and set to one side. Heat a little olive oil in a large heavy-based pan, then gently sweat the onions and garlic until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the vermicelli and the bulgur wheat to coat in the onion and garlic mixture. Pour in the tomato sauce and stir. Season with more salt if you need to. Bring to a boil and lower to a simmer for 10 minutes with the pan lid on. Stir from time to time to prevent the bulgur from catching on the bottom of the pan. Switch the heat off, remove the lid and cover it with a clean tea towel. Replace the lid and leave it to steam.

It is ready when the liquid is absorbed, and the wheat has softened, but still has a little bite to it. If you need to, you can always add more water whilst cooking. Serve hot or cold.

SIDE DISHES

UKRAINIAN/RUSSIAN OLIVIER SALAD

Submitted by: Olesia Angelova, Business Services Coordinator, Philosophy and Religious Studies, College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences

INGREDIENTS

Salad
4 medium potatoes
3 medium carrots
5 eggs
1 cup cooked chicken breast
4 to 5 dill pickles
1 cup of peas
1 small onion
1 green apple chopped (Granny Smith)
fresh dill

Healthy Boiled-Egg Mayonnaise
2 hard-boiled eggs
1 cooked egg yolk
2 Tbsp Greek yogurt
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
1 Tbsp Lemon juice
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp black pepper
1 to 2 tsp water (if needed)

INSTRUCTIONS

For the salad, wash the potatoes and carrots. Boil them whole with the skins on until tender (carrots about 20 minutes, potatoes about 30 minutes). Drain and cool completely. Place eggs in a pot and cover with water. Bring to boil, turn off the heat, cover and let stand for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool in ice water and peel. Peel the cooled potatoes and carrots. Dice potatoes, carrots, eggs, pickles and meat into small, even cubes. Finely chop the onion and dill. Mix the salad. Add potatoes, carrots, eggs, meat, pickles, peas, onion and dill to a large bowl. Gently mix.

Stir in mayonnaise gradually until everything is lightly coated. Season with salt and black pepper. Mix gently to avoid mashing the potatoes. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Garnish with fresh dill. Serve cold.

For the healthy mayonnaise with boiled eggs, Peel the hard-boiled eggs and place them in a blender or food processor. Add Greek yogurt, mustard, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Blend until smooth. Slowly add the olive oil while blending. If the mixture is too thick, add 1 teaspoon of water at a time until it reaches a mayonnaise-like consistency. Taste and adjust: add more lemon juice for tanginess and more salt if needed. Refrigerate for 30 minutes before using.

Use about ¾ cup of this mayonnaise for one large bowl of Olivier salad. Add 1 teaspoon of pickle juice from your dill pickles to the mayonnaise before mixing it into the Olivier salad. It adds a subtle tang that pairs perfectly with potatoes, peas and eggs.

SIDE DISHES

CAULIFLOWER

Submitted by: Michael Lang, Associate Director, Conferences, Reservations and Events Services

INGREDIENTS

¼ lb butter (unsalted)
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 oz prosciutto
1 large cauliflower, cut in ¼ lengthwise slices
1 ½ cup whipping or heavy cream
1 ½ cup grated Swiss
Cayenne pepper (optional)
½ cup fresh parsley
Salt and pepper to taste
2 Tbsp flour

INSTRUCTIONS

Melt butter; add garlic and saute 2 minutes. Stir in prosciutto and saute for 2 minutes. Add cauliflower. Cook until it loses crispness (3 to 4 minutes). Stir in flour, then cream and blend well. Season with Cayenne pepper, salt and pepper to taste. Heat to boiling and immediately remove from heat. Put the mixture into a shallow baking dish. Top with cheese and parsley. Bake until lightly brown and bubbly, approximately 30 minutes.

PARTY SALAD

Submitted by: Sebastian Wai, Clinical Assistant Professor of Economics, Belk College of Business

INGREDIENTS

20 oz can crushed pineapple in Juice
3 oz package lime jello
1 cup water
10 large marshmallows (adjust if less sweetness is desired)
1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup whipped cream
1 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Use a strainer to separate the pineapple from the juice. Set aside the pineapple pieces. Combine juice with Jello mix and water in a saucepan. Boil this mixture for 2 minutes. Add marshmallows and let them melt into the Jello. Remove from heat and let cool. Add cottage cheese, whipped cream, pineapple and walnuts (if using). Mix thoroughly and chill until set. To avoid the solid ingredients sinking to the bottom, stir after 30 minutes of chilling.

SIDE DISHES

POTATO-LEEK GRATIN

Submitted by: Gabriella Vari, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

8 Tbsp unsalted butter, plus for greasing
2 lbs of Yukon Gold potatoes
1 big leek
Salt
2 tsp of grated lemon zest
2 tsp ground coriander
2 tsp of black pepper
2 tsp of minced fresh rosemary leaves
1 and a half cups of heavy cream
2 Tbsp of apple cider vinegar
4 oz of grated sharp cheddar cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Lightly grease a 9x13 inch baking dish with butter. Peel the potatoes, then using a mandoline or a sharp knife, very thinly slice the potatoes. Add the potatoes to a bowl of cold water. Slice the white and light-green parts of the leek into half inch thick pieces. You should have around 7 to 8 cups of sliced leeks. Wash them very well, then drain them.

In a large saute pan, melt 7 tablespoons of the butter over medium heat. Add the leeks and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until they're golden color and soft (about 10 minutes). Reduce the heat to medium-low, move the leeks to the side of the pan and add remaining butter to the center. Once it's melted, add the lemon zest, coriander, black pepper and rosemary and fry them in the butter until fragrant (about 2 minutes). Add the cream, vinegar and another pinch of salt, and stir to combine. Remove the pan from heat.

Drain the sliced potatoes and place them in the baking dish. Salt and pepper them. Pour the creamy leek mixture over the potatoes. Mix it, then sprinkle the cheese all over it. Tightly cover the pan with aluminium foil. Bake for about 1 hour, until the potatoes are very tender. Carefully remove the foil and return the pan to the oven and bake until the top and edges develop a golden crust (another 25 minutes). Let it cool for about 10 minutes and serve hot.

SIDE DISHES

SWEET POTATO SOUFFLE

Submitted by: Alicia Bartosch '05, '06, '25, Bursar

INGREDIENTS

3 cups sweet potatoes, mashed
1 cup sugar
½ tsp salt
2 eggs
½ cup melted margarine
½ cup milk
½ tsp vanilla

For the Topping
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup flour
1 cup chopped peanuts
⅓ stick of margarine

INSTRUCTIONS

Sprinkle topping over potato mixture and bake at 350 for 30 minutes.

PINEAPPLE CASSEROLE

Submitted by: Melinda Pierce, Simulation and Interdisciplinary Practice Coordinator, Senior Lecturer, School of Nursing

INGREDIENTS

2 20 oz cans pineapple tidbits, drain and save the juice
¾ cup sugar
6 Tbsp flour
6 Tbsp pineapple juice from drained pineapple
½ cup melted butter
2 cups sharp shredded cheddar cheese
1 cup Ritz crackers, crushed

INSTRUCTIONS

Drain pineapple juice and save. Mix sugar, flour and 6 tablespoons of pineapple juice. Add pineapple, butter, cheese and crackers. Mix well. Put in a 2-quart casserole dish and bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes, or until brown on top.

VEGETABLE MEDLEY

Submitted by: Jennifer Howe, Director of Campus and Community Communications, Marketing and Communications

INGREDIENTS

16 oz bag frozen broccoli, carrots and cauliflower, thawed and drained
10 oz can condensed cream of mushroom soup
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
⅓ cup sour cream
¼ tsp pepper
1 can fried onions

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine vegetables, soup, ½ cup of cheese, sour cream, pepper and ½ can of fried onions. Pour into a 1 quart casserole dish. Bake covered at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Top with remaining cheese and fried onions and bake uncovered for 5 minutes.

SIDE DISHES

TEXAS HASH

Submitted by: Hattie Rose Hamrick, Undergraduate

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs ground beef
1 green pepper diced
1 onion diced
1 cup rice
1 can tomato soup
1 can Rotel
1 cup water
Worcester sauce
Minced garlic
Seasoning salt, garlic powder, onion powder
Parsley, salt, pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Brown ground beef. Sauté green pepper, onion, seasoning and minced garlic. Add beef, peppers and onions to the casserole dish. Add remaining seasoning and Worcester's sauce to taste. Add tomato soup and Rotel. Add rice and 1 cup of water. Bake covered for 50 minutes and then take the top off for the last 15 to 20 at 350 to 375 degrees for 75 minutes. Can add jalapenos and hot sauce to make it spicy. Can add cheese at the end on top. If the rice is dry towards the end of baking you can add liquid, to plump.

CRISPY PANEER FRIED RICE

Submitted by: Kanika Kumar, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

3 cups cooked basmati rice, chilled overnight
200 g paneer, cubed
2 Tbsp cornstarch
1 cup mixed vegetables (carrot, beans, bell pepper, cabbage)
4 spring onions (whites and greens kept separate)
5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 inch ginger, finely chopped
2 green chilies, chopped
2 Tbsp soy sauce
1 Tbsp chili garlic sauce or Schezwan sauce
1 tsp rice vinegar
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp garam masala (the desi twist)
3 Tbsp oil
Salt to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Toss the paneer in the cornstarch and a pinch of salt. Pan-fry until crisp and golden on all sides, then set aside. Heat the oil on high. Add the garlic, ginger, chilies and spring onion whites. Stir for 30 seconds. Add the vegetables. Stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes so they stay crunchy. Add the rice, soy sauce, chili sauce, vinegar, pepper and garam masala. Toss on high heat for 3 minutes. Fold in the crispy paneer and spring onion greens. Serve hot.

SIDE DISHES

SOUTHERN FRIED CORN

Submitted by: Michelle Embry, Facilities Planner, Planning Design and Construction, Facilities Management

INGREDIENTS

8 to 10 ears fresh sweet corn
2 Tbsp bacon grease
4 Tbsp butter
salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

With your corn shucked and cleaned, place it standing up in a large bowl or pan in your sink. Run a sharp knife down the cob cutting the kernels off. Next, scrape all the starch out of the remaining kernels. Simply turn the back of your knife nearly perpendicular to the cob and scrape down the sides.Heat a skillet (preferably cast iron) over medium heat and add bacon grease and two tablespoons of butter (or 4 tablespoons of butter if you're not using the bacon grease – but you should use the bacon grease). Once melted, add corn. Salt and pepper to taste. Reduce the heat to medium low and stir frequently, cooking for 20 to 30 minutes or until it's cooked to your liking. Immediately before removing from heat, add remaining butter and stir until melted. To make this dish even creamier, a few splashes of heavy cream right at the end can be added and if corn is not sweet, you can add a bit of sugar.

CHUKAUNI

Submitted by: Samyoga Bhattarai, Graduate Student

INGREDIENTS

1 cup yogurt
¼ cup of water
1 small onion sliced
1 boiled potato sliced in cubes
1 to 2 green chillies chopped
4 Tbsp chopped coriander leaves
1 tsp coriander powder
salt per taste
½ tsp turmeric powder
½ tsp cumin powder
1 Tbsp mustard oil
1 tsp fenugreek seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

In a bowl add some yogurt and ¼ cup of water and whisk until there are no lumps. Then add sliced onion, boiled and sliced potato cubes, chillies, salt, coriander powder and cumin powder and mix them well. Next, heat a pan and add mustard oil. Once the mustard oil is hot add fenugreek seeds. Wait until the fenugreek seeds turn reddish from brown, then turn off the flame and add the turmeric. As soon as you have added the turmeric, pour this to the yogurt mixture bowl and mix well. The turmeric, if heated too much, gives a bad taste.Turn off the flame before you put turmeric in the hot oily pan. Add some coriander leaves to garnish.

SIDE DISHES

CRANBERRY SAUCE

Submitted by: Glenn Moglen, Professor, Chair, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, William States Lee College of Engineering

INGREDIENTS

4 cups cranberries
2 cups water
2 cups white sugar
2 cups raisins
1 cup walnuts
4 Tbsp brandy

INSTRUCTIONS

Cook cranberries and water on low until boiling. Add sugar and raisins, cook for 10 minutes. Add walnuts and brandy. Cool, then refrigerate, stirring every once and a while.

SICILIAN CELERY SALAD

Submitted by: Susan Messina, Director of Strategic Content, Marketing and Communications

INGREDIENTS

1 full stalk (bunch) of celery
1 to 2 cups of green (pitted) Sicilian olives
Olive oil
Red wine vinegar
Large jar of roasted red peppers
1 lb Soppressota (a type of salami), thinly sliced
Capers (for garnish)

INSTRUCTIONS

Chop the celery stalks and leaves into very small pieces and place in a large bowl. Chop the olives into small pieces (or use a mini food processor); add to the celery. Mix enough oil and vinegar together to make a moist salad; add to the mixture with salt and pepper to taste.

Slice the roasted red peppers into thin strips. Roll the slices of Soppressota individually. Alternate the red pepper slices and rolled Soppressota slices around the edge of a platter. Transfer the celery and olive mixture to the center of the platter (filling the space created by the circle of red pepper and Soppressota). Pour several capers into a strainer and scatter them on top of the celery mix. Refrigerate until time to serve.

The celery, olives and dressing can be mixed a day in advance. Soppressota is easier to roll than regular salami and more likely to remain rolled.

SIDE DISHES

MASHED CAULIFLOWER

Submitted by: James Conrad, Professor, Department Chair, Electrical and Computer Engineering, William States Lee College of Engineering

INGREDIENTS

2 large heads of cauliflower, cut into florets
8 oz cream cheese, softened
6 Tbsp butter
Salt and freshly cracked black pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Place a steamer insert into a large pot with an inch of boiling water. Add the cauliflower florets, cover with a tight lid and steam until they are very tender and easily pierced with a fork (about 12 to 15 minutes). Drain the cauliflower well. Transfer the warm, dried cauliflower to a food processor or high-powered blender.

Add the softened cream cheese and butter. You may need to do this in two batches. Puree until smooth - process the mixture on high until completely smooth, velvety and free of any tiny, grain-like bits. If necessary, pause to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Taste the mash and season generously with salt and pepper.

CRANBERRY SALAD

Submitted by: Trish Delacruz, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

1 lb fresh cranberries - washed, dried and chopped a lil more than coarse
1 can crushed pineapple drained very well squeeze juice out
1 diced apple small
1 can mandarin oranges, drained
1 cup chopped pecans
1 cup granulated sugar
Mini marshmallows
Cool whip

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix the above ingredients in a large bowl and refrigerate. Add mini marshmallows (about 2/3 bag) and 1 container of cool whip, thawed. Refrigerate salad and mix with the cool whip just before serving. Only using cool whip to the amount of cranberry salad you're mixing up just before serving.

SIDE DISHES

PALAK PANEER

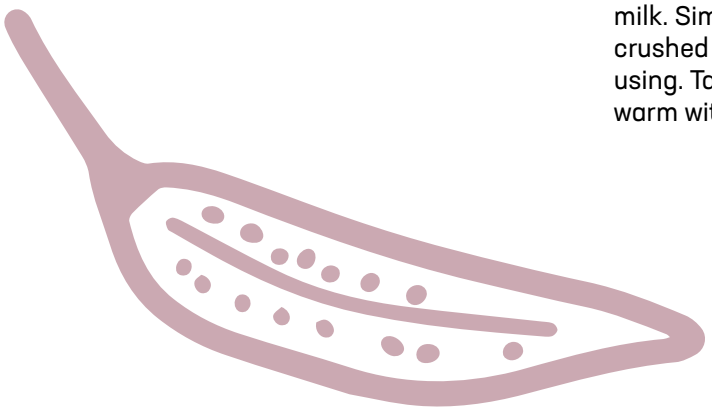
Submitted by: Medha Ashesh Jani, Graduate Student

INGREDIENTS

10 oz (about 280 g) fresh spinach, washed (or 10 oz frozen spinach, thawed)
200 to 250 g paneer, cut into bite-sized cubes
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 medium tomatoes, chopped (or ½ cup tomato purée)
1 Tbsp ginger-garlic paste
1 green chili, slit or chopped (optional; adjust to taste)
2 Tbsp oil or ghee
½ tsp cumin seeds
¼ tsp turmeric
½ tsp ground coriander
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp garam masala
Salt, to taste
2 to 4 Tbsp water, as needed
2 Tbsp cream or ¼ cup milk (optional)
1 tsp kasuri methi (dried fenugreek leaves), crushed (optional)
A squeeze of lemon juice, to finish (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add the spinach and blanch for 1 to 2 minutes, just until wilted. Transfer it to a bowl of cold water, then drain well (if using thawed frozen spinach, skip blanching). Blend the spinach with the green chili and a splash of water until smooth or slightly textured, depending on your preference. Set aside. Warm 1 tablespoon of oil or ghee in a pan. Lightly sear the paneer cubes for 1 to 2 minutes per side until lightly golden. Remove and set aside. For softer paneer, soak the cubes in warm water for 5 minutes instead of searing. In the same pan, add the remaining oil or ghee and cumin seeds. When they begin to sizzle, add the onion and cook until soft and lightly golden, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the ginger-garlic paste and cook for 30 seconds. Stir in the tomatoes, turmeric, ground coriander, ground cumin and salt. Cook until the tomatoes soften and the mixture thickens, about 5 minutes. Add the spinach purée and a little water to reach your preferred consistency. Simmer gently for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Avoid boiling vigorously to keep the spinach green. Stir in the paneer, garam masala and optional cream or milk. Simmer for another 2 to 3 minutes. Add crushed kasuri methi and a squeeze of lemon, if using. Taste and adjust the salt and spice. Serve warm with roti, naan or basmati rice.



DESSERTS

NINER PISTACHIO DELIGHT

Submitted by: Sharon Horinka '11, Associate Director of Annual Giving

INGREDIENTS

3.4 oz package instant pistachio pudding mix
8 ounce can crushed pineapple, with juice
1 cup miniature marshmallows
½ cup chopped walnuts
4 oz frozen whipped topping, thawed
Chopped pistachios and maraschino cherries for garnish (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

In a large serving bowl, combine the crushed pineapple with its juice, pistachio pudding mix, miniature marshmallows and chopped walnuts. Mix until well combined. Gently fold in the thawed whipped topping until creamy and evenly combined. Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours before serving. If desired, garnish with chopped pistachios and maraschino cherries for a festive finishing touch.

HEMI'S SWEET POTATO PIE

Kristina Peck, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

8 oz cream cheese
1 cup brown sugar
¼ tsp salt
3 egg yolks
1 cup heavy cream
½ stick butter
½ tsp cinnamon
1 tsp vanilla
2 cups of fresh mashed sweet potatoes
2 pie crusts

INSTRUCTIONS

Peel sweet potatoes, add to a pot of water and boil until tender (fork inserts easy). Preheat the oven to 350. Add cooked sweet potatoes to the mixing bowl. Whisk until no lumps. Add in all the ingredients, mix until smooth. Pour into pie shell. Bake in a preheated oven until a knife inserted comes out clean and the crust is brown. Cool on the counter, until the pie dish is no longer warm then in the freezer until firm.

DESSERTS

ITALIAN "ANGINETTI" COOKIES (AKA LEMON RICOTTA COOKIES)

Submitted by: Sharon Horinka '11, Associate Director of Annual Giving

INGREDIENTS

1 lb ricotta (whole milk)
2 cups of sugar
2 sticks of melted butter
3 eggs
1 lemon (zest of the lemon)
½ cup of orange juice
4 cups of all-purpose flour (adjust if needed)
1 tsp of baking soda
2 tsp of baking powder
Pinch of salt

For Frosting
2 cups of powdered sugar
2 to 3 Tbsp of milk
1 tsp of lemon juice
Rainbow shots for decoration



INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat your oven to 350F (175C). Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the eggs and sugar. Pour in the melted butter, lemon zest and orange juice. Stir to combine. Add the ricotta cheese until smooth and creamy.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture in several additions, mixing gently. The dough will be soft and slightly sticky, this is normal.

Using a tablespoon or small cookie scoop, drop rounded mounds of dough onto the baking sheets, leaving space for them to puff. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until the bottoms are lightly golden and the tops look set. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack.

Add frosting and rainbow shots after they have cooled completely (next day is the best). Quickly add rainbow shots before frosting sets.

In a bowl, whisk the powdered (confectioners sugar) sugar, milk and lemon juice (1 lemon) until smooth. Adjust consistency as needed: too thick: add a few drops of milk; too thin, add a little powdered sugar.

DESSERTS

SHOLEHZARD

Submitted by: Mahla Behrooz, Graduate Student

INGREDIENTS

1 cup short-grain rice (Jasmine or broken Basmati work best)
6 cups water (plus extra if needed)
2 cups granulated white sugar
¼ cup rose water
¼ cup butter (unsalted, at room temperature)
½ tsp ground saffron (bloomed in 3 tablespoons of hot water)
¼ tsp ground cardamom
¼ cup slivered almonds (optional, for folding into the pudding)
Garnish: ground cinnamon, slivered pistachios and extra slivered almonds

INSTRUCTIONS

Rinse 1 cup of short-grain rice thoroughly until the water runs clear. Soak the rice in cold water for at least 2 to 3 hours (ideally overnight). Drain before cooking. Grind your saffron threads with a pinch of sugar. Pour 3 tablespoons of boiling water over it, cover the cup and let it steep while you cook.

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, combine the drained rice and 6 cups of water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Skim off any foam that rises to the top. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot with a lid slightly cracked and let it simmer for 45 to 60 minutes. The rice grains should completely break down, mash easily and look like a thick porridge. Do not stir too much during this phase to avoid burning.

Stir in the 2 cups of sugar and cook for another 10 to 15 minutes on low. The sugar will liquify the rice mixture slightly. Do not add sugar before the rice is fully cooked, or the grains won't break down properly. Stir in the bloomed saffron water, ground cardamom and butter. If using slivered almonds inside the pudding, fold them in now so they soften slightly. Stir in the rose water. Cover the pot tightly with its lid (wrapping the lid in a clean kitchen towel helps trap moisture, similar to steaming rice). Cook on the absolute lowest heat setting for another 15 to 20 minutes until the pudding thickens to a glossy, cohesive texture.

DESSERTS

SHAHI TUKDA

Submitted by: Sharon Perumandla, Program Specialist

INGREDIENTS

For the Rabri (Thickened Milk)
1 liter full-cream milk
¼ cup sugar (adjust to taste)
¼ tsp Cardamom powder
10 to 12 Saffron strands (kesar)
1 Tbsp chopped nuts (almonds and pistachios)

For the Sugar Syrup (Chasni)
½ cup sugar
½ cup water
2 Cardamom pods (crushed)
few drops of Rose water or Kewra water (optional)

For the Toast and Garnish
5 to 6 slices White bread (edges removed, cut diagonally into triangles)
½ cup Ghee (clarified butter) for frying
Garnish (optional): slivered almonds, pistachios, edible silver leaf (vark) and dried rose petals.

For the Mango Twist (Optional add-on)
1½ cups fresh mango puree (Alphonso or Kesar work best)

½ cup finely diced fresh mangoes (for garnish)

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare the Rabri: Pour the milk into a wide, heavy-bottomed pan and bring it to a boil.

Reduce the heat to medium-low. Let the milk simmer, stirring occasionally. As a layer of cream (malai) forms on top, gently push it to the sides of the pan. Cook until the milk reduces to one-third of its original volume (about 30-35 minutes). Add the sugar, saffron, cardamom powder and chopped nuts. Scrape the collected cream from the sides back into the milk. Simmer for another 5 minutes until thick and creamy, then turn off the heat. Let it cool (it will thicken further).

Make the Sugar Syrup: In a separate saucepan, combine the sugar, water and crushed cardamom. Bring it to a boil and let it simmer for about 5 to 7 minutes on medium heat until it reaches a sticky consistency (just before a one-string consistency). Stir in the rose or kewra water and turn off the heat. Keep it warm.

Fry the Bread: Heat ghee in a shallow frying pan over medium heat. Place the bread triangles in the pan and fry until they turn an even, deep golden brown and crispy on both sides. For a lighter version, use an air fryer, but frying in ghee adds a richer, more authentic flavor. Remove and drain excess ghee on paper towels.

Assemble the Shahi Tukda: Dip each crispy fried bread slice into the warm sugar syrup for about 10 to 15 seconds so it absorbs the sweetness but doesn't get soggy. Arrange the soaked bread slices on a serving platter. Pour the thick, cooled Rabri generously over the bread slices, covering them completely. Garnish with plenty of slivered almonds, pistachios, dried rose petals and a touch of silver leaf for that authentic royal look. For the best contrast in textures, serve it immediately while the bread is slightly warm and crispy underneath the chilled, creamy Rabri. However, some prefer to enjoy it after refrigerating for a softer, more set texture.

Turn this classic dessert into a Mango Shahi Tukda: Make the rabri as directed but let it cool completely to room temperature. Do not skip this, or the mango will curdle the hot milk! Whisk the 1½ cups of mango puree directly into the cooled rabri until smooth. Pour this vibrant mango-rabri over your syrup-soaked bread, and scatter the diced fresh mangoes on top along with the nuts.

DESSERTS

SNOWBALL COOKIES

Submitted by: Rachelle Brewster, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

1 cup of softened salted high-quality butter (Kerrygold or Amish)
¾ cup of powdered sugar
1 tsp of high-quality vanilla extract (Preferably Spice Islands Pure Vanilla Extract)
2 cups of fresh all-purpose flour (needs to be fresh from the store)
1 cup of chopped walnuts or pecans (normally walnuts)
½ cup of powdered sugar for rolling before and after
½ Tbsp of milk (to keep moist)

INSTRUCTIONS

Cream the butter and add the powdered sugar, then the vanilla, then the flour, then add the nuts. Roll the dough into 1-inch balls on ungreased cookie sheets. Roll the dough balls in powdered sugar. Bake at 375 for 10 to 12 minutes. Roll the cookies that have just come out of the oven in the powdered sugar again.

BANANA BREAD

Submitted by: Keira Moore, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

2 bananas
93g white sugar
1 stick of butter
65g brown sugar
1 egg
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp baking powder
salt
200g flour (King Arthur's gluten free all purpose flour)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Take a stick of butter and make brown butter (slice into cubes, cook on medium heat until the butter turns brown and flaky, make sure you stir the entire time).
In a large bowl mash two bananas, add brown butter, 93g white sugar, 65g of brown sugar, 1 egg, cinnamon (measured with heart) and vanilla extract (measured with heart) to a bowl and stir.
In a separate bowl add 200g of flour, ¼ tsp of salt and ½ tsp of baking soda and mix. Add flour to wet ingredients and fold in desired additions. Add to a greased bread pan and cook for 40 minutes.

DESSERTS

PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

Submitted by: Himaja Goda, Graduate Student

INGREDIENTS

For the Cake
100g to 150g flour (just enough for the cake part of it)
2 large eggs
100g sugar (I use brown)
2 tsp brown sugar (for sprinkling on the bottom of the pan)
100g butter (I prefer salted)
4 canned pineapple slices (if you are using a small cake pan)
Cherries - just enough to fill in the middle of pineapple rings and any other open area after arranging the rings in cake pan
1.5 tsp baking powder
Pinch of baking soda
1 or 2 tsp pineapple juice (from the can, to get the flavour)
1 tsp vanilla or pineapple essence

Ingredients for the Syrup
1 to 2 Tbsp pineapple juice from can
1 to 1.5 tsp corn starch

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions for Cake: Preheat the oven to 180 C or 350 F. In a food processor (I use a simple mixer), powder the sugar. Add butter to the powdered sugar and process (let all ingredients be at room temperature, especially the butter. Once the butter and sugar are mixed well, add 1 egg at a time and mix. Sieve Flour, baking powder and baking soda at least 2 times to ensure the baking powder and baking soda are evenly spread across the flour. This is the key to get a crack free cake on top. To the butter, sugar and egg mixture gradually add the flour mix. Once the flour mix is done add pineapple/vanilla essence and the pineapple juice (if you like) and process one more time. First sprinkle sugar on the cake pan. You can choose to butter and dust the sides of the cake pan with flour for easy removal of the cake.

Instructions for Syrup: Simmer the pineapple juice on a small saucepan for 1 to 2 minutes and gradually add the corn starch. Keep stirring the syrup while adding. Once done adding the corn starch, let the syrup thicken to a consistency that you love. This should take not more than 5 mins.



DESSERTS

SWEET PUMPKIN (KABAK TATLISI)

Submitted by: Hania al-Shamat, Assistant Teaching Professor, Political Science and Public Administration, College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs pumpkin peeled and cut into large pieces (around 3 inches squares)
1 cup sugar
Tahini (Sesame seed paste)
Walnuts
Slivered Almonds

INSTRUCTIONS

Arrange the pumpkin pieces in a single layer in a baking dish. Pour the sugar evenly over the top. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and let it sit for 8 hours or overnight. Turn the pieces occasionally so every side is coated as the pumpkin releases its juices. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Remove the plastic wrap and place the dish on the middle rack. Bake for 30 minutes, turning the pieces once halfway through. Increase the heat to 420°F and bake for about 10 minutes more, until the edges of the pumpkin are lightly browned. The pumpkin is done when a fork goes through with slight resistance.

Let cool completely, then refrigerate until cold. To serve, drizzle each piece with some of the syrup from the dish and a generous ribbon of tahini. Top with chopped almonds and walnuts.

NOVELLA'S TIRAMISU

Submitted by: Elizabeth Nicole Lavizzari, Undergraduate Student

INGREDIENTS

3 large eggs at room temperature
3 Tbsp of sugar
Pinch of salt
8 oz mascarpone (regular)
2 packages (or 3 rows) of lady fingers
2 cups of coffee
3 to 4 shots of marsala or 2 to 3 shots of marsala
1 shot port or sweet whiskey

INSTRUCTIONS

Separate egg whites and yolks in separate containers. In 1 bowl mix egg whites and salt until fluffy cloud/whipped. In 1 bowl mix sugar and egg yolks, once mixed, add mascarpone and mix until creamy. Add fluffy egg white mixture to mascarpone mixture and slowly fold in the egg white mixture (do not mix). Add shots of marsala to coffee and stir. Dip lady fingers quickly in coffee mixture and put in a dessert container. Put a few scoops of egg mixture (should all be in one bowl now) on top of lady fingers and then repeat. Top it off with the rest of the egg mixture and then sprinkle dark chocolate powder on-top and refrigerate for at least 3 to 4 hours; overnight for best results.

DESSERTS

ANZAC COOKIES

Submitted by: Jeffrey Williams, Stock Clerk, Financial Services

INGREDIENTS

1 cup shredded coconut
1 cup all purpose flour
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup rolled oats
2 tbsp honey
½ tsp salt
½ tsp baking soda
½ stick unsalted butter
Cooking spray

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine coconut, flour, sugar and oats in a bowl. Stir together then set aside. Melt butter in a saucepan on low temperature. Whisk honey into melted butter. Add baking soda. Blend well. Remove from heat. Pour honey butter into dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly. Scoop tablespoons of dough onto a parchment paper lined baking sheet. Press to flatten. Bake at 350° for 10 to 13 minutes. Remove from the oven. Drop pan forcefully onto the countertop. Allow to cool in place.

NANNY'S BANANA PUDDING

Submitted by: Adam Houston, Graduate Student

INGREDIENTS

3 small Jello instant vanilla pudding
4 cups of whole or 2% milk
8 oz sour cream
17 oz Cool Whip
Package of Nilla vanilla wafers
Bananas

INSTRUCTIONS

Mix 3 small Jello instant vanilla pudding (or 2 large) with 4 cups of whole or 2% milk. Let it set up and thicken in the fridge. Stir in 8 ounces of sour cream and 16 ounces of Cool Whip. Layer with Nilla vanilla wafers and bananas.



DESSERTS

CHERRY CRUNCH

Submitted by Pamela Erickson, Program Development and Education Manager, Finance and Business Operations

INGREDIENTS
1 white cake mix
1 can cherry pie filling
½ stick of butter, melted
¼ tsp lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS
In a 9 x 13 baking dish, spread the cherry pie filling, edge-to-edge. Sprinkle it with lemon juice. In a mixing bowl, combine the cake mix with the melted butter, using a fork. This will form a rough mixture. Spread the cake mixture evenly over the cherry filling. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until the top is light brown.

Serve warm over vanilla ice cream or add whipped topping.

CRANBERRY JELLO MOLD

Submitted by Tisha Greene, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Teacher Preparation, Cato College of Education

INGREDIENTS
1 large box of strawberry or cherry Jello
1 can of cranberry sauce
1 can of dark red pitted cherries
1 can of crushed pineapple (drained)
1 package of knox gelatin

INSTRUCTIONS
Mix Jello and cranberry sauce and then add 1 cup of hot water. Stir to combine and add 1 cup of cold water and the remaining ingredients. Pour into a greased ring jello mold and refrigerate overnight.

CREAM CHEESE POUND CAKE

Submitted by: Benavia Jenkins, Head Volleyball Coach

INGREDIENTS
8 oz package cream cheese
12 oz (3 sticks) butter or margarine (softened)
3 cups sugar
6 large eggs
1 tsp vanilla
1 tsp almond extract
1 tsp butter flavoring
3 cups Swan's Down brand cake flour

INSTRUCTIONS
Set the oven to 325 degrees, then grease and flour a bundt pan or a tube pan. Cream the butter and cheese together until fluffy. Blend in sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, blending well. Mix in flavorings, then cake flour. With an electric mixer, beat for 3 minutes; If by hand, mix for 300 strokes. Pour into the pan and bake for 90 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

DESSERTS

PUMPKIN CUPCAKES WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Submitted by Amanda Stevens, Assistant Director of Academic and Career Coaching, Niblock Student Center, Belk College of Business

INGREDIENTS

For Cupcakes
1 cup all-purpose flour
¾ tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
1 Tbsp ground cinnamon
1½ tsp ground nutmeg
1 tsp ground ginger
½ tsp ground cloves
¼ tsp salt
½ cup firmly packed light brown sugar
¼ cup vegetable oil
1 large egg, room temperature
1 cup pumpkin purée
¾ tsp vanilla extract (I add an extra splash because I love the vanilla taste)

For Cream Cheese Frosting
8 oz of full fat brick cream cheese, softened to room temperature
½ cup (8 tbsp) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
3 cups of confectioners sugar (keep another ¼ cup extra on hand if needed)
1 tsp vanilla extract
⅛ tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

For Cupcakes: Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Line 9 wells of a cupcake pan with cupcake liners. Set aside. In a large bowl, lightly mix the flour, baking powder, baking soda, pumpkin pie spice, cinnamon and salt.In a smaller bowl, whisk together the brown sugar and vegetable oil until smooth. Add the egg, pumpkin purée and vanilla extract and whisk again until everything is combined. Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir gently with a spatula until just combined. Do not over mix. Spoon batter evenly into the cupcake liners filling ½ to ⅔ of the way full. A small ice cream scoop can help with this, the mixture will be thick. Bake the cupcakes for 18 to 20 minutes or until a toothpick or cake tester inserted in the center comes out mostly clean. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely on a wire rack before decorating with frosting.

For Cream Cheese Frosting: Combine butter and cream cheese in the bowl of a stand mixer (or you may use an electric mixer) and beat until creamy, well-combined, and lump-free. Add vanilla extract and salt and stir well to combine. With the mixer on low, gradually add powdered sugar until completely combined. You can sift your powdered sugar after your initial measuring if you want a smoother texture. Use to frost completely cooled cupcakes.

DESSERTS

MAGNOLIA'S PECAN PIE

Submitted by: Janaka Lewis, Associate Dean of Curriculum and Student Success, College of Humanities & Earth and Social Sciences

INGREDIENTS

1 stick (½ cup) unsalted butter (real butter, not margarine)
¾ cup granulated sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
¼ tsp salt
4 large eggs
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
1½ cups pecans (halves or pieces)
1 ready-made 9-inch pie crust

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the ready-made pie crust into a 9-inch pie pan, if it isn't already in one. Spread the pecans evenly across the bottom of the unbaked pie crust. Set aside.

In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, melt the unsalted butter. Add the sugar and stir until thoroughly combined with the melted butter. Add the light corn syrup and salt. Continue stirring gently until the ingredients are well incorporated and the butter is no longer visibly separating from the sugar and syrup mixture. Remove the saucepan from the heat and allow the mixture to cool slightly. Do not allow the mixture to boil vigorously. You want everything smooth and well combined.

Crack all four eggs into a separate mixing bowl and whisk until completely blended. Slowly drizzle a small amount of the warm butter and sugar mixture into the beaten eggs while whisking constantly. Continue gradually adding the warm mixture to the eggs, whisking continuously to prevent the eggs from scrambling. Once the eggs are tempered, slowly whisk in the remaining butter and sugar mixture. Mix thoroughly until the filling is smooth and completely incorporated. Stir in the vanilla extract.

Make sure the pecans are evenly distributed across the bottom of the pie crust. Slowly pour the prepared filling over the pecans. Using a spoon, gently move and turn the pecans to ensure they are completely coated with the butter, sugar and syrup mixture. The pecans will naturally rise toward the top of the filling. Coating the pecans thoroughly helps create that beautiful, shiny, caramelized pecan topping once the pie is baked.

Place the pie on a baking sheet and transfer it to the preheated oven. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325°F, leaving the pie in the oven. Continue baking for approximately 35-50 additional minutes, or until the filling is set.

Estimated total baking time: 50-65 minutes. If the edges of the pie crust begin browning too quickly, cover them with strips of aluminum foil or a pie crust shield to prevent burning.

The center of the pie should have a gentle, Jello-like jiggle, but it should not look liquidy, runny or slosh around. The outer edges of the filling should be fully set, and the pecans should have a beautiful golden-brown, glossy finish. If the top of the pie begins to crack, the filling is completely set. Remove the pie from the oven to prevent overbaking. The filling will continue to firm up as the pie cools. Allow the pie to cool at room temperature for approximately 2 hours, then cover and refrigerate. For best results, refrigerate the pie overnight before slicing. The pie is best served chilled or at room temperature. If serving at room temperature, remove it from the refrigerator approximately 30 to 60 minutes before serving. Store it in the refrigerator and keep leftovers refrigerated.

There's a special feeling that comes from sitting down together to share a meal.

A dinner table becomes a common ground where we can connect with family, old friends and those we've yet to know.

We pass dishes. We trade recipes. We laugh and reminisce. And on that common ground, we share pieces of who we are and what makes our journey in this world unique.

A shared table unites us like few things in this world can. It gives us a reason to slow down. To try something new. To connect across any divide.

It's a reminder that, at its best, life is meant to be shared.

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