

The Holidays Start Here Cookbook



*The Ultimate Holiday
Cookbook... And More...*

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The Holidays Start Here Cookbook

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This book is dedicated to my family who has made the holidays a special time of the year.

Introduction... Preparing a holiday meal takes time, patience, and planning. This cookbook will provide you with a collection of classic recipes to make your holiday dinner a special occasion for family and friends.

My family emigrated from Sicily and Northern Europe at the turn of the 20th century. Growing up I had 20 great aunts and uncles, and literally hundreds of cousins, so the holidays were packed with people and good food.

Many of the recipes have been adapted from my own culinary skills. As a gourmet cook, I have prepared them all and they are delicious. This book contains a collection of traditional holiday favorites and a few Italian delicacies.

Enjoy! Ted and Kelly Vinci

Traditional Holiday Cooking

Roast Turkey and Herb Dressing

Recipe Ingredients:

16 – 24# turkey	2 loaves white bread
3 cubes butter	Salt
2 stalks celery stalks with leaves	Pepper
3 medium yellow onions	Thyme leaves
Fresh parsley (bunch)	Tarragon leaves
Poultry Seasoning	Rosemary leaves
Lemon juice	Heavy duty aluminum foil

Preparation of the giblets:

(Thipasta s can be done the evening before the meal)

Remove giblets from turkey including the neck

Remove all and stems and the leaves from 1 stalk of celery

Cut ½ medium onion into large cubes

1 tsp pepper

1 tbs salt

1 tsp. of poultry seasoning

Place the giblets and neck in a 2 qt saucepan and cover with 2 cups of water. Add the leaves from the celery, onion and poultry seasoning, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 1 hour.

Remove giblets preserving the liquid, place the liquid in a small container and refrigerate for later use.

Allow the giblets and neck to cool. Remove the meat from the neck bone. Cut the giblets and neck into small pieces and place in a container and refrigerate for later use.

Preparation of the Herb Dressing:

Cube – 2 loaves of bread into ½" to ¾" cubes, place in large roasting pan or foil roasting pan.

Melt 3 cubes of butter in large skillet

Add:

3 cups of coarsely chopped celery

2 medium onions chopped.

½ cup chopped parsley

½ tsp pepper

1 tsp of salt

Sauté the celery, onion, parsley, salt and pepper in melted butter about 20 minutes or until the onions and celery are soft.

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Pour the mixture over the cubed bread. With a large spoon completely saturate and mix the bread cubes with the celery and onion saute' until completely mixed.

Add:

- 1 tbs rosemary leaves
- 1 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbs thyme leaves
- 1 tbs tarragon leaves
- 1 tbs poultry seasoning
- 1/ 4 cup lime juice

Note: it is best to add spices to the bread mixture by crumbling them between your fingers releasing the spice content. Add ½ the spices, toss the mixture, then add the other ½ and toss the mixture again.

Take the chopped giblets and liquid saved earlier.

Take 2/3 of the giblets and add to the herb stuffing and toss.

Take 2/3 of the liquid and sprinkle on the mixture and toss.

(Save the other 1/3 of giblets; and 1/3 of the liquid for the giblet gravy)

Stuff the turkey (see below to prepare the turkey prior to stuffing) with the herb dressing. Place the remaining dressing in a casserole dish coated with cooking spray, cook for 1 hour and 15 minutes in a 350° oven.

Stuff the turkey just prior to roasting to prevent bacterial growth.

Preparation of the Turkey:

Rinse the turkey cavity thoroughly and dry with paper towel. Follow the safe handling of turkey meat suggested by the producer of the turkey. Stuff the turkey with the Herb Dressing.

Brine the turkey for 24 hours prior to cooking. Cover the turkey in a cooler halfway with water. Add 1 cup of salt to a 1 gallon of water, mix and dissolve thoroughly, add to the cooler and finish by adding enough water to cover the turkey. Place a bag of ice on top of the turkey in the cooler to keep it fresh. LET the turkey brine for 24 hours.

Cook the stuffed turkey as follows:

20 minutes per pound

425° for the first two hours

350° for the remaining time based on the weight.

Cook the turkey uncovered for the last 45 minutes for browning

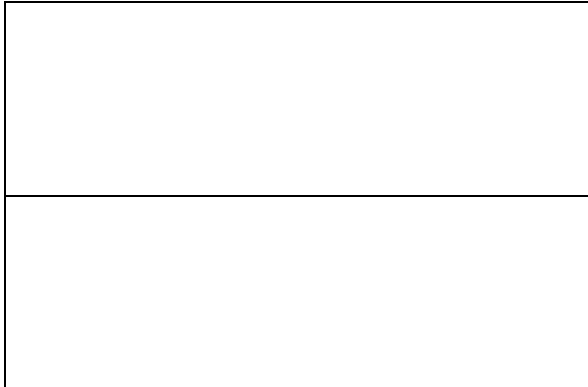
Alternative cooking method is to purchase a turkey roaster which is a much better cooking method and also frees up your oven.

After cooking for the required time, uncover and cook an additional 30 minutes to brown the turkey. Cooking times and ovens vary; follow the turkey producer instructions for more information.

Prepare 2 sheets of aluminum foil forming them into one large double sheet– join them together by folding them over several times creating a leak-proof seal.

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Repeat this process again. You will essentially have two large sheets of foil to wrap your turkey. Wrapping the turkey in foil will provide a moist and perfectly cooked turkey.



Take two pieces of heavy duty foil, approximately 4' long. Join them together creating on large (double) sheet.



This will be done twice creating two (2) pieces of foil.

DO NOT USE foil if cooking in a turkey roaster. Place the stuffed turkey on the first sheet of foil. Add:

Butter on top and on the drumsticks

1/2 tsp rosemary
1/2 tsp thyme leave
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper

Wrap seasoned turkey in foil completely sealing all sides. Wrap in second layer of foil and place in roasting pan and cook according to the directions above.

Oyster Dressing

A traditional and easy favorite of many family members. This recipe can be varied depending on your particular taste by adding mushrooms

Recipe Ingredients:

Saltine Crackers – 2 Pkgs.

1/2 cup milk

1/2 tsp salt

2 - 7 oz. cans Oysters

1/4 tsp pepper

Take canned oysters, cut into small pieces, preserving the juices.

Crush saltine crackers. Place 1/2 in casserole dish covered with cooking spray. Dot with butter. Add salt and pepper. Layer the chopped oysters on top of crackers. Add the remaining crackers, place half of the preserved oyster juice over the crackers. Add all the milk; you may need to add more to saturate the crackers as needed.

Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

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Herb Oyster Dressing

A traditional recipe that more closely resembles herb dressing. This is a tasty addition to the standard dressing.

Recipe Ingredients:

1 cup butter or margarine	1 tbs lemon juice
½ cup chopped onion	2 pkgs. (8 oz.) packaged herb stuffing mix
1-1/2 cups chopped parsley	1 tsp salt
1 6 oz. can mushrooms, drained	¼ tsp pepper
4 7 oz. cans oysters	¼ tsp nutmeg
	2 eggs, beaten

Melt butter in skillet over medium heat. Saute' onion, celery, and mushrooms, stirring, about 5 minutes.

Drain oysters well, preserving liquid. If oysters are large, chop coarsely. Add chopped oysters to skillet and saute' about 3 minutes.

In a large bowl, add the vegetable and oyster mix, stuffing mix, salt, pepper, lemon juice, nutmeg and eggs, and ½ cup of oyster juice. Toss well until mixed, add more oyster juice if mixture seems a little dry.

Place mixture in a casserole dish coated with cooking spray, bake covered for 35 – 45 minutes in a 350° oven.

Giblet Gravy

Recipe Ingredients:

Giblets and neck meat (1/3 saved from previously preparation)	Giblet liquid broth (1/3 saved from previous preparation)
¼ to ½ cup flour	1 bay leaf
1 tsp salt	½ tsp pepper
1 cup milk	

Drain small amount of drippings from the turkey and heat in a saucepan over medium heat. Add enough flour to hot drippings to thicken and whisk together until dissolved.

Add milk, giblets, liquid broth, salt, pepper, & bay leave and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer till thickened, about 10 minutes.

Serve hot, along with turkey and dressing.

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Dressing tips:

Sausage Stuffing – Follow the herb dressing recipe and add 2# fresh pork sausage crumbled and browned over low heat.

Chestnut Stuffing – Follow the herb dressing recipe and add 2 cups chestnuts.

Mushroom and wild Rice Stuffing – Follow herb dressing recipe, add 1# fresh mushrooms with the celery and onions. Cook 2 cups of wild rice according to the package instruction. Add wild rice to the cubed bread mixture.

- Day old bread is best for stuffing.
- A 1 lb. loaf makes 8 cups of dressing.
- Always stuff the turkey just prior to roasting to prevent and food contamination.

Roasted Potatoes with Parsnips

Recipe Ingredients:

2-1/2" russet potatoes
3 tbs. Rosemary
Olive Oil

6 parsnips
Salt and pepper

Peel parsnips and cube
Peel and cube potatoes

Boil potatoes until slightly softened (about 5-8 minutes) firm but not soft.

Drain potatoes, rinsing with cold Water to stop cooking. Fluff in the colander. Transfer to a greased roasting pan, add parsnips, coat with olive oil and spices.

Cook in a 400 degree oven for 1 hour – stirring once after 30 minutes.

Beef, Game and Lamb

Prime Rib Roast

Recipe Ingredients:

Prime Rib roast – 6-1/2#
1 tbs Salt and pepper
1 tbs Rosemary leaves

4-5 cloves of garlic
1 tbs Thyme leaves

A 6-1/2# Prime Rib will usually have 4 ribs, and will serve 4 people. Gauge your meat purchase based on the number of ribs and guests you are serving.

Cut the garlic into thin slivers. Make small slits in the meat with a knife and insert the garlic slivers into the meat.

Mix the salt, pepper, rosemary and thyme together in a small bowl. Liberally rub all over the roast and let the roast rest for 1 hour.

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Preheat the oven to 450°

Place the roast into a roaster on a rack in the oven for 30 minutes.

Reduce the temperature to 350° and roast for 16 minutes per pound. To test the meat, internal temperature should be 140° for a medium-rare rib roast.

Let stand for 15 minutes before carving.

Osso Bucco

A favorite Italian dish, Osso Bucco features veal shanks braised with tomatoes, stock, onions and other aromatics.

Recipe Ingredients:

4 veal shanks, 4 to 5 #

Salt and pepper to taste

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. all-purpose flour

Olive oil

1 yellow onion chopped

3 carrots peeled

4 clove garlic

3 celery stalks diced

1 bay leaf

4 fresh thyme sprigs

1 can diced tomatoes

3-1/2 c. beef stock

1-1/2 c. pinot noir

Season the veal shanks with salt and pepper. Put the flour in a large bowl and dredge the veal shanks in the flour shaking off any excess.

In a large sauté pan, over medium to high heat, brown all sides of the veal shanks in olive oil. Transfer to a slow cooker or Dutch oven.

Add olive oil to the sauté pan, and reduce the heat to medium. Add the carrots, onion, celery and garlic and season with salt and pepper. Cook until the vegetables are softened and lightly browned. Transfer to the slow cooker and add the bay leaf, thyme, tomatoes, stock and wine. Cover and cook for 12 hours.

Serve with polenta (see below) and sautéed spinach (with pine nuts and raisins)

Polenta with Tomatoes and Mozzarella

To prepare polenta:

4 c milk

$\frac{1}{3}$ c butter

1 c parmesan cheese

4 Roma tomatoes (sliced $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick)

2 c yellow corn meal

1-1/2 tsp. salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ c mozzarella cheese

10 basil leaves finely chopped

Heat milk (never boil) add butter and salt. Slowly whisk in the corn meal in a slow stream. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until thickened controlling the heat to hot but not bubbly, about 15 minutes.

Layer $\frac{1}{2}$ of the polenta in a 9x9 greased baking dish; place the Roma Tomatoes on top of the Polenta, then the mozzarella cheese. Finish with the basil and a final layer of polenta.

Cook, covered with foil) in a 350 deg. Oven for 30 minutes.

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Cornish Hens with Walnut Stuffing

Recipe Ingredients:

Stuffing:

3 tbs olive oil
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery - fine
3 cups bread crumbs
1 cup chopped walnuts – coarse
2 tsp salt
1 tsp thyme
1 tsp rosemary
6 – 1# Cornish Game Hens

Sauce:

½ cup butter
½ cup white wine
2 cloves garlic crushed
2 tsp salt
1 tsp sage

Saute' onions and celery in olive oil until softened.

Meanwhile, in a bowl combine bread crumbs, walnuts and spices. Pour onion and celery mixture into bowl and toss to mix together.

Stuff Cornish game hens with stuffing mix.

Sauce:

Melt butter in a skillet, add white wine, garlic, salt, and sage. Mix together and saute for 2 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°, bake for 1 hour basting with sauce occasionally.

Elegant Salads & Side Dishes

Molded Cranberry Sauce

A staple for all holiday meals that family members love. This easy recipe can be prepared a few days before and placed in your favorite mold.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
1 pkg of fresh cranberries

2 tbs grated orange peel
Dash salt

In a 6 qt. kettle, combine sugar with 2 cups of water. Bring to a boil stirring to dissolve sugar. Let boil (lightly) uncovered 10 minutes to form a syrup.

Meanwhile, wash cranberries, drain and remove ant stems.

Add cranberries, orange peel, and salt to syrup. Bring back to a low boil, uncovered for 10 – 20 minutes or until thickened and cranberries are clear.

Pour into a mold and let cool at room temperature for 1 hour. Refrigerate until ready for dinner.

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Christmas Salad

A very unusual combination of sweet and sour Jell-O salad, with sweet pickles, walnuts and pimentos that your family will love; this dish will become part of your family recipes for years to come. This recipe looks beautiful served in a Christmas tree or wreath mold.

Recipe Ingredients:

3 cups sugar	1 cup white vinegar
2 lg. pkgs. Of Lemon Jell-O (4 small)	1 cup water
4 jars pimentos	1 16 oz. jar baby sweet pickles
2 cups chopped walnuts	1 cup water for Jell-O

In a 6 qt. sauce pan, mix sugar, with 1 cup water and 1 cup of vinegar. Bring to a boil until sugar is dissolved and clear.

Meanwhile, dissolve Jell-O in 1 cup of water in a large bowl and set aside.

Chop pickles into small pieces, add drained pimentos and chopped walnuts.

Add sugar and vinegar mixture to the jell-O mixture and let cool for 30 minutes. Pour 1/3 of mixture into your favorite mold, let set about 15 minutes. Add the pickles walnuts, and pimentos on top of this layer. Add the remaining Jell-O mixture on top. Refrigerate for 24 hours.

To serve: Take mold from the refrigerator, place mold in a 1" sink of hot water to loosen, and turn onto an ice cold platter. This can also be served directly form the mold.

Candied Apples

Recipe Ingredients:

8 Granny Smith apples	1 cup of sugar
2/3 cup water	1 pkg. red hots

Peel and core apples. Cut into wedges from top to bottom.

Combine water, sugar and red hots in a large kettle. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and melt red hots over low heat stirring constantly, about 15 to 20 minutes. Simmer on low for about 10 minutes once the red hots have dissolved.

Add apples and cook until soft and coated. Stir occasionally to coat apples with mixture.

Let cool, place apple mixture in a glass bowl and refrigerate. This recipe can be made days in advance.

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Eight Layer Jell-O Salad

A beautiful Jell-O that will impress guests. This must be served in a clear casserole dish to appreciate the beauty of this recipe. However, this recipe takes time to make.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 (13 oz) cans evaporated milk	2 - 3 oz. pkgs. of orange Jell-O
2 - 3 oz. pkgs. of lime Jell-O	2 - 3 oz. pkgs. of lemon Jell-O
2 - 3 oz. pkgs. of cherry Jell-O	Cool Whip topping

Use a 9x13 inch clear casserole dish greased with oil (Pyrex is best).

Bottom layer: Dissolve 1 package orange Jell-O in 1-1/2 cups boiling water, let set in casserole dish.

Second layer: Dissolve 1 package orange Jell-O in $\frac{3}{4}$ cups boiling water, cool to room temperature and add $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of evaporated milk, pour on top of first mixture and let set.

Third layer: Dissolve 1 package of lime Jell-O in 1-1/2 cups boiling water, let cool and pour onto second layer and let set.

Fourth layer: Dissolve 1 package of lemon Jell-O in 1-1/2 cups boiling water, let cool and pour onto third layer and let set.

Fifth layer: Dissolve 1 package of Cherry Jell-O in 1-1/2 cups boiling water, let cool and pour onto fourth layer and let set.

Sixth Layer: Second layer: Dissolve 1 package lime Jell-O in $\frac{3}{4}$ cups boiling water, cool to room temperature and add $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of evaporated milk, pour on top of first mixture and let set.

Seventh layer: Dissolve 1 package of lemon Jell-O in 1-1/2 cups boiling water, let cool and pour onto third layer and let set.

Eight layer: Dissolve 1 package of Cherry Jell-O in 1-1/2 cups boiling water, let cool and pour onto

Place Cool Whip over top of Jell-O when set. This recipe can be served in the glass dish or cut into pieces and served on a platter.

Mom's Famous Noodles

Egg noodles are a beautiful and tasty side to any festive occasion. This recipe is elegant and will compliment your holiday menu.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 cups flour - sifted	2 eggs
4 tbs canned milk	1 tsp salt
3 cans chicken broth	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp pepper

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Sift flour in a large bowl. Heap the flour in pile and create a cavity in the center, place the 2 eggs in the cavity. Begin mixing the eggs together with a fork, once mixed; begin mixing the flour into the egg mixture together.

Turn the mixture onto a flour covered wooden cutting board. Begin kneading the dough into a ball until smooth. Add more milk if necessary. Let the dough rest for about 20 minutes.

Roll out dough thin with flour on both sides. Once the desired thickness is attained, cover with a thin layer of flour and roll the dough up. Cut the dough into ½" slices, starting from the center and working out. Unroll the sliced dough and cut into 6" strips. Dust lightly with flour and let the dough dry at room temperature overnight.

In a 6 qt. saucepan, add 2 cans of chicken broth and bring to a boil. Add salt the noodles and begin stirring constantly with a wooden spoon until a creamy broth begins to form.

Add salt and pepper and cook over medium heat until noodles are soft. Add more chicken broth as necessary because the noodles will absorb the broth as they cook, DO NOT let the noodles stick, and they must be monitored and stirred constantly.

Serve immediately.

Stewed Tomatoes

A nice and light dish that goes great with turkey and ham.

Recipe Ingredients:

4 slices bread toasted

Lg. can stewed tomatoes

Salt to taste

Small onion

4 tbs butter

Pepper to taste

In a 13" casserole dish, coat with cooking spray.

Take toasted bread and cut into ½" cubes.

Take the onion and grate approximately ¼ of it with a cheese grater.

Layer ½ of the toast on the bottom of the casserole dish.

Take the can of stewed tomatoes and crush ½ of the tomatoes with your hand into the casserole.

Add ½ the onion.

Add another layer of toast, tomatoes and onion.

Add ½ of the remaining juice from the tomatoes.

Salt and pepper.

Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Sweet Potato Casserole

The holidays are not complete without sweet potatoes. This recipe is easy to prepare, can be made in advance, refrigerated and cooked before dinner.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 lg. cans canned yams	1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup butter softened	¼ cup milk
2 large eggs	1 tsp vanilla extract
¼ tsp salt	¼ cups chopped pecans
3 tbs brown sugar	1-1/2 cups miniature marshmallows

Beat mashed potatoes, sugar, butter, milk, eggs, vanilla, and salt with a electric mixer until smooth. Spoon potato mixture in a 11x17 baking dish coated with cooking spray. Cover with brown sugar and pecans.

Bake at 350° for 30 minutes, cover with marshmallows and cook for another 10 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Roasted Red Potatoes

Recipe Ingredients:

5# Red potatoes	3 tbs olive oil
2 Medium onions	2 tbs rosemary
1 tsp each of salt and pepper	1 tbs thyme

Preheat oven to 450°

Prepare a 9x13 baking dish coated with cooking spray.

Peel potatoes and cut into 1" squares.

Finely chop onions

In a large bowl, combine potatoes, onions and olive oil. Toss well to coat potatoes evenly. Add spices, a little at a time and toss to mix together, repeat until all potatoes are covered evenly.

Transfer to baking dish.

Add up to ½ tsp of each spice to top of mixture if desired and you like a more robust taste.

Bake for 45 minutes.

Appetizers and Starters

Stilton Cheese Mushroom Caps

Recipe Ingredients:

24 large fresh mushrooms (1-1/2 diameter)	6 hard cooked eggs finely chopped
¼ cup bread crumbs	¼ cup stilton blue cheese
2 tbs finely chopped green onions	1 tbs dry white wine
2 tbs melted butter	1 tbs chopped parsley
1 tbs minced garlic	Paprika
Salt and pepper to taste	

Remove stems from mushrooms and set aside.

In a medium bowl, stir together eggs, bread crumbs, cheese, onion, wine, butter, parsley and garlic until well blended. Season with salt and pepper.

Fill each mushroom cap with 1 rounded spoon of mixture.

Place caps on greased baking sheet.

Sprinkle with paprika if desired.

Bake at 450° degree oven for 8-10 minutes.

Chili Con Queso

This is a family favorite for snacking and entertaining guests that everyone will love; it has a unique flavor not found anywhere! This will be a family favorite.

Recipe Ingredients:

1 cup butter	1 onion finely chopped
1 block Velveeta Cheese (cubed)	Small can green chilies
Small jar pimentos	2 tbs Worcestershire Sauce
2 tbs garlic powder	¼ cup whiskey
Tortilla Chips	

Saute' onion in garlic until clear.

In a double broiler, add Velveeta cheese, sautéed onions, green chilies, pimentos, Worcestershire sauce, and garlic powder. Cook until cheese is melted and all ingredients are blended together.

Add ¼ cup whiskey and let cook for another 10 minutes.

Serve in a fondue pot hot with blue and white tortilla chips.

Hearty Soups and Stews

Green Chili Stew

Green Chili stew is a wonderful and spicy dish to serve over the holidays to special guests, or on Christmas Eve while wrapping last minute gifts or entertaining special friends.

Recipe Ingredients:

1-1/2 – 2# pork tenderloin

2 large yellow onions

1 16 oz. jar Salsa

6 oz. can tomato sauce

¼ cup chili powder

1/8 cup flour

Flour Tortillas

Optional:

1 pkg of roasted Anaheim Chiles (8 oz) Canned chilies will work as well.

6 cloves garlic - minced

5 cans chicken broth

1 tbs salt

½ tsp pepper

3 tbs. olive oil

Tamales

Cube pork tenderloin into ½" to ¾" cubes

Dice onions

In a large stock pot, place olive oil, pork tenderloin, onions and 3 cloves of garlic. Brown meat and onions together until cooked.

Drain fat from pan and discard.

Dissolve flour in ¼ cup of water and add to mixture stirring until flour covers the meat and onions and cooking lightly, about 2 minutes.

Add chicken broth, salsa, tomato sauce, chili powder and remaining 3 gloves of garlic, bring to a boil.

Chop green chilies, and add to stew with salt and pepper.

Reduce heat, and simmer (covered) for 2 hours.

Serve with warm flour tortillas and Tamales for a wonderful and spicy holiday treat that will warm your hearts and palate.

Minestrone Soup

Recipe Ingredients:

½# sweet Italian sausage

1 cup diced onion

1 cup diced carrots

2 small zucchinis - sliced

2 10 oz. can beef broth

1 lg. can white kidney beans

½ cup rice

8 oz. grated parmesan cheese

½ tsp salt (or to taste)

1 tbs olive oil

3 cloves garlic - minced

1 tsp basil

1 16 oz. can Diced tomatoes

2 cups finely chopped cabbage

1 lg. can garbanzo beans

½ cup red wine

¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

½ tsp pepper (or to taste)

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Ahead of time: Slice sausage crosswise, brown in olive oil in deep sauce pan or Dutch oven. Add onion, garlic, carrots and basil, and then cook for 5 minutes.

Add zucchini tomatoes (with liquid), beef broth, cabbage, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce and simmer for 1 hour.

Add the beans with their liquid, rice and wine, then cook for another 20 minutes or until rice is done.

Serve in bowls with grated parmesan cheese and parsley.

This recipe can be made in advance and refrigerated. Simply reheat and serve when ready.

Crabmeat Bisque

Recipe Ingredients:

16 oz. fresh or canned crabmeat

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped onion

2 cups light cream

Dash pepper

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour

3 tbs butter or margarine

4 cups milk

2 tsp salt

$\frac{3}{4}$ cups sherry

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped parsley

Drain crabmeat if canned, reserve liquid.

Melt butter in 6 qt. saucepan. Add onion, crabmeat, and reserve liquid, simmer for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat milk with cream in separate pan until bubbles form around edge of pan.

Stir into crabmeat mixture along with salt and pepper.

Mix sherry with flour mixture in a small bowl and whisk well.

Add sherry and flour mixture to the crab mixture and bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.

Shrimp Etouffee

Recipe Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cc oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ c flour

2 medium onions (chopped)

2 c celery (chopped)

2 green peppers (chopped)

2 cloves garlic

2# shrimp

1 cube butter

2 tbs. Cajun seasoning

$\frac{1}{2}$ c green onions

$\frac{1}{4}$ c parsley (finely chopped)

3-4 tsp Tabasco

2 – 8 oz. clam juice

1 – 14- $\frac{1}{2}$ oz can Rotel Diced tomatoes

1# oysters (canned)

White Rice

Roux Base - In a Dutch oven, heat oil, add flour and whisk constantly (15-20 min) until mixture becomes caramel colored.

Add onions, celery and green pepper, and garlic, cook until all vegetables until soft. Add pepper seasoning and parsley and cook about 2 minutes.

Add clam juice, Rotel tomatoes, Tabasco, green onions, and cook 1 hour.

Add shrimp, oysters and butter 15 minutes before serving.

Cook white rice, serve over rice and garnish with green onions

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French Onion Soup (Slow cooking method)

Recipe Ingredients:

3-4# Yellow Sweet onions – thinly sliced	1/3 C brandy
2 Tbs. butter – melted	¼ C balsamic vinegar
2 Tbs. Olive oil	8 C beef broth
2-1/2 tsp kosher salt	Baguette bread
½ tsp pepper	2 C Gruyere cheese
2 sprigs fresh Thyme	

1. Place onions in a slow cooker with butter, olive oil, salt, pepper.
2. Cook 10-12 hours on medium
3. Add beef broth, balsamic vinegar, cook an additional 6-8 hours
4. Season with salt and pepper and add brandy

Serve in a bowl, top with bread and cheese
Bake 20-30 minutes in 350° oven
Broil for 3-4 minutes

Clam Chowder with Scallops and Corn

Recipe Ingredients:

3 cans clams – 2 drained, 1 with liquid	½ C butter
2 slices of bacon	2 yellow onions - diced
1 lg. bag frozen corn	1 clove garlic
1 green pepper diced	3 potatoes diced
3 celery stalks	1# scallops – quartered
1 lg. heavy cream	2 C milk
1 bayleaf	Salt and Pepper
2 tbl. flour	

1. Melt butter, cook onions till tender, with bacon and garlic
2. Add green pepper, celery and potatoes, sweat until tender
3. Add flour, cook 2 minutes
4. Add milk and cream, clams, cook 30 minutes
5. Add scallops and corn, cook 15 minutes

Breakfast and Starters

Chili Relleno Egg Casserole

Great recipe for a casual morning. Serve with sweet rolls or biscuits, your favorite breakfast meat and Mimosas.

Recipe Ingredients:

1 lb. grated jack cheese	1 lb. grated cheddar cheese
2 cans whole chilies	8 eggs
1 small can evaporated milk	

Spray 13" square casserole dish with cooking spray.
Place ½ of the jack cheese and ½ of the cheddar cheese in the bottom of the dish.
Layer the green chilies on top of the cheese.
Place the remaining cheese on top of the green chilies.

Beat eggs in small bowl, and add milk, mix well. Pour over cheese mixture.
Bake in 1 350° oven for 45 minutes or until lightly brown on top.

This recipe can be served whole as a casserole or cut up into small squares and served with toothpicks as an appetizer.

Blueberry French Toast

Recipe Ingredients:

12 slices French bread – crust removed	2 – 8 oz pkgs. cream cheese
2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries	12 eggs
2 cups milk	1/3 cup maple syrup or honey (best)
1 cup sugar	1 tbs butter
2 tbs corn starch	1 cup water

Cut bread into 1" cubes with the crust removed. Place ½ the bread in a 9x13 baking dish coated with cooking spray.

Place cubed cream cheese over top of bread.

Top with 1 cup of blueberries.

Place remaining bread on top of mixture.

Beat eggs, add milk and syrup or honey and pour over bread mixture.

Cover and chill for 4 hours.

Remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before baking.

Bake in a 350° oven for 30 minutes covered with foil.

Remove foil, and bake for another 25 – 30 minutes or until golden brown in the center.

Sauce:

In a medium saucepan, add 1 cup water, 1 cup sugar, and 1 cup of blueberries and 2 tbs of corn starch. Bring to a boil for 3 minutes, stirring, then simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in 1 tbs of butter and serve over French toast.

Old Fashioned Cinnamon Rolls

Recipe Ingredients:

4-3/4 to 5-1/4 cup all purpose flour	3 eggs
1 pkg. active dry yeast	3 Tbs butter – melted
1 cup milk	2/3 cup sugar
1/3 cup butter	2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/3 cup sugar	1/2 tsp salt
Glaze:	
1-1/4 cups sifted powder sugar	1 tsp corn syrup
1/2 tsp vanilla	Light Cream

In a large bowl, combine 2-1/4 cups flour and yeast.

In a saucepan, heat and stir milk, 1/3 cup granulated sugar, and salt until just warm and butter melts.

Add to bowl with flour mixture, add eggs. Beat on low speed for 30 seconds, beat on high speed for 3 minutes, stir in as much of the remaining flour as possible.

On a lightly floured surface, kneed in enough of the remaining flour to make a soft dough that is smooth and elastic. This will take 3-5 minutes. Shape into a ball, place in a greased bowl coating the ball on all sides, cover with a towel and let rise in a warm place about an hour.

Punch the dough down. Turn it on a lightly floured surface, divide in half. Cover and let rest 10 minutes.

Lightly grease two (2) 9" square baking pans.

Roll each half of the dough into a 12x8 rectangle.

Brush with melted butter.

Combine the 2/3 cups sugar and cinnamon together and sprinkle over rectangles.

Starting with the long side, roll each rectangle into a spiral.

Seal seams, cut each spiral into 12 slices.

Place in a pan, cut sides down.

Sprinkle top with more cinnamon.

Cover with plastic wrap, chill for 2 to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 375°. Bake for 20 – 25 minutes or until golden brown.

Drizzle with glaze while hot.

Glaze:

Mix powdered sugar, corn syrup, and vanilla. Stir in enough cream (1-2 tbs) to make a drizzling consistency.

Holiday Dessert Time

Pizzelle Cookies

Italian waffle cookies are one of the most delicate and special cookies made for the holidays. First you will need to purchase a Pizzelle iron from a specialty kitchen shop or online. I recommend the CucinaPro which can be purchased for about \$50.00, this is an investment which will yield years of enjoyment and family memories.

Recipe Ingredients:

4-1/2 to 5 cups flour	9 eggs
3 cubes butter - softened	1-1/2 cup sugar
1 tbs vanilla extract	2 tbs Anise seed

In a large bowl with an electric mixer or a stand mixer:

Beat eggs until smooth

Add softened butter, sugar and vanilla, mix until combined.

Add flour until smooth.

Add anise seed and mix for another 2 minutes.

Spoon (golf ball) sized portions of dough onto Pizzelle iron, close iron and cook for 30 seconds.

Cook until the Pizzelle cookies are just beginning to turn golden brown.

Remove from iron and place on a cookie sheet, trim off excess dough with a knife and then place cookies on a paper towel to cool. Once cooled they can be stacked on top of each other as you make more cookies.

This recipe will make approximately 4 dozen cookies, these are so good you will yourself making them several times during the holidays because your family and guests will make them disappear.

Variations on serving your Pizzelle Cookies:

You can shape the warm Pizzelles over a custard dish to make small bowls. Once cooled, you can melt chocolate bits to coat the inside of them and serve ice cream, custard or fruit.

You can form them into miniature ice cream cones.

Chocolate Pizzelle – Omit vanilla and anise seed, add 9 tbs of cocoa.

Chocolate Fudge

A holiday staple loved by kids and adults from all walks.

Recipe Ingredients:

1 16 oz. jar marshmallow cream	2 pkgs. (6 oz.) chocolate chips
4 Hershey Bars	1 cup chopped walnuts
4-1/2 cups sugar	1 tall can evaporated milk
1/2 cube butter	

In a large mixing bowl, add marshmallow cream, chocolate chips, Hershey bars and chopped nuts.

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In a 6 qt. saucepan, add evaporated milk, sugar, and butter, bring to a boil, reduce to medium low heat and cook for exactly 5 minutes.

Pour hot mixture into mixing bowl and combine ingredients until mixed and smooth.

Pour into a 9x13 pan coated with cooking spray, let cool and refrigerate to get hard.

Peanut Butter Fudge

Recipe Ingredients:

1/2 cup butter	2-1/4 cups brown sugar
1/2 cup milk	3/4 cup peanut butter
1 tsp vanilla extract	3-1/2 cups confectioners sugar

Melt butter in 6 qt. saucepan over medium heat.

Stir in brown sugar and milk, bring to a boil and boil over medium low heat for 2 minutes.

Remove from heat, stir in vanillas and peanut butter.

Place confectioners sugar in a large bowl and pour mixture over sugar. Mix with a large spoon until smooth.

Pour into a 8x8 dish, chill, and cut into squares.

Walnut Potica Bread

This is a true European delicacy that is a holiday tradition in many households. This recipe is not easy to make, but once you have mastered the technique, you will fall in love with this true gourmet desert. This can be served as a breakfast sweet, or for desert with coffee or cappuccino. Learn to make this bread, your family will forever love you! If you love to bake, this recipe is challenging and delicious.

Recipe Ingredients:

Dough:

4 cups all purpose flour sifted (approx)	1-3/4 cups hot tap water
2 pkgs. active dry yeast	1 egg
1/2 cup sugar	2 tsp salt
1/4 cup canola oil	

Filling:

1 # walnuts ground in a food processor	1 cube of melted margarine
1 tbs ground cinnamon	1-3/4 cups sugar
1 – 2 cups whole milk +/-	

Dough:

Mix together water and yeast with a fork until yeast is dissolved.

Add egg, sugar, salt and oil and mix together until consistent.

Add flour until the mixture becomes a sticky dough mixture.

Place in a floured bowl, cover with a towel and let the dough rise for 1-1/2 hours in a warm place.

Filling:

Grind walnuts in a food processor into fine pieces.

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Add 1 cup of milk and margarine into a 6 quart saucepan, warm until margarine is dissolved. Add cinnamon, walnuts and sugar and cook for 5 minutes, stirring as it cooks. Add more milk to create a smooth mixture that will spread on the dough.

Meanwhile, melt 1 cube of butter in a small saucepan and let cool.

Place a flat bed sheet on a table and cover the sheet with a light dusting of flour. After the dough has risen, DO NOT touch.

Dump the dough on the flour covered sheet, sprinkle flour on top of the dough and begin rolling the dough into a thin sheet. Roll it out as thin as possible without tearing the dough. NOTE: For experienced pastry chefs, you can continue to stretch the dough with your hands by covering your hands with flour, and gently placing your hands underneath the dough and stretching until thinner (this requires patience and experience).

Brush the melted (cooled butter) on the dough and spread with your hands if necessary. Spread the walnut mixture on the dough, if needed you can add more milk to make it spread-able. Spread the mixture with your hands evenly all over the dough. Sprinkle the entire mixture with a light dusting of ground cinnamon.

Roll the dough into a spiral and cut into three loaves.

Place the loaves into a greased pan lined with parchment paper or wax paper.

Bake at 350° for 1 hour, immediately flip the loaves out of the pan when removed from the oven. Let them cool completely, wrap with saran wrap and foil.

NOTE: For the experienced pastry chefs, once the dough is rolled out, you can stretch it from below with your hands to make it thinner and more of a delicacy.

Italian Specialties

Rib Sauce (Sugo di Rossa Pomodoro)

Recipe Ingredients:

3# Bone-In Pork Ribs

Garlic (4-6 cloves) crushed & divided

3 large Cans Tomato Sauce

1 small can tomato Paste

Olive Oil

Tsp. baking soda

2 tbsp. Brown Sugar

1 cup Chianti wine (or Red Wine)

Salt and Pepper to taste

2 tbsp. Fresh Oregano (finely chopped)

1 tbsp. Dried Oregano

Brown ribs in olive oil with 1/3 of garlic.

Add tomato sauce, tomato paste, wine, oregano (both), remaining garlic, stir to mix well and bring to a slow boil.

Add baking soda (removes tart from sauce) brown sugar, salt and pepper. Cook over simmer for 3-4 hours with ribs in sauce. Add meatballs or Italian sausage if preferred.

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Serve over your favorite pasta. The ribs in this sugo flavor the sauce and when cooked are moist and tender and can be served as a side dish. This is a traditional Italian favorite with a very unique flavor.

This recipe can be varied to suit your taste. A marinara sauce can be prepared by substituting tomato sauce with fresh or canned tomatoes. In either case, this is a delicate but robust sauce.

Traditional Lasagna

Recipe Ingredients:

Prepare Sugo Sauce in previous recipe

Lasagna noodles

1# Ricotta Cheese

1# Mozzarella Cheese (grated or fresh)

½ cup parsley

Parmesan Cheese

3 eggs

Prepare lasagna cheese mixture by combining ricotta cheese, mozzarella cheese, parsley and egg and mix together well.

Spray a lasagna pan with non-stick cooking spray.

Cover the bottom of the pan with sauce (two large ladles).

Place a layer of dry (non-cooked) lasagna noodles on top of sauce

Place ½ of the cheese mixture on top of noodles.

Place 2 ladles of sauce

Place a layer of noodles

Place the remaining cheese mixture on top of the noodles

Place 2 ladles of sauce

Place a final layer of noodles.

Cover with foil and bake covered for 1 hour, uncovered for 15 minutes in a 350 degree oven.

Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Finish with Fresh Parmesan Cheese.

Pumpkin Lasagna

This is a recipe that everyone will love, especially around the holidays. It has a unique taste and texture that will keep everyone in the family satisfied.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 medium onions

3 gloves garlic

4 eggs

1 c Red wine

1# Mozzarella cheese

2 tbs. Oregano

1 tsp. Baking soda

Italian Sausage (casing removed)

pumpkin puree (organic is best – Whole foods)

lasagna noodles (uncooked)

2 – 28 Oz cans diced tomatoes

1# ricotta cheese

Brown sugar

Salt and pepper to taste

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½ c chopped parsley

1 c parmesan cheese

Prepare red sauce:

Combine Italian sausage (casing removed), garlic and onions, cook until sausage is browned. Add canned tomatoes, red wine, brown sugar, oregano, baking soda, salt and pepper. Cook for 30-45 minutes until thickened.

Prepare Cheese Sauce:

In a large bowl, combine, ricotta cheese, mozzarella cheese, eggs, parsley, pumpkin puree, salt and pepper. Stir until well mixed.

Layer Lasagna:

In a large casserole dish (deeper is better), spray bottom with non-stick cooking spray.

Place ¼ of the red sauce on the bottom of the casserole dish. Place a layer of (uncooked) lasagna noodles, and ½ of the cheese mixture.

Place a layer of red sauce (1/2 of the mixture) a layer of lasagna noodles.

Finish by placing the remaining cheese sauce, a third layer of noodles, and the remaining red sauce. Sprinkle the top with parmesan cheese

Cook covered with foil in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes and uncovered for an additional 15 minutes.

Spicy Clam Marinara over linguine

Recipe Ingredients:

Olive oil

4 cloves garlic minced (divided)

1 yellow onion (medium)

2 14 oz. cans fire roasted tomatoes

1 can tomato sauce

1-1/2 tsp. dry oregano

1-1/2 tsp. dry basil

5 leaves fresh basil

2 tbsp. crushed red peppers (to taste)

3 cans whole baby clams

¼ c. clam juice

Salt and pepper to taste

Linguine

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium to high heat. Sauté ½ of the garlic and onions until translucent. Add remaining ingredients and the other ½ of garlic, bring the sauce to a simmer and cook for about 30 minutes.

Cook pasta, serve and garnish with parmesan cheese.

Tomato and Basil Bruschetta

Recipe Ingredients:

Baguette Bread

½ small red onion, diced

3 cloves minced garlic

Parmesan cheese thinly sliced

8-10 Roma Tomatoes (seeded)

20 basil leaves

Olive oil

Salt and Pepper to taste

Slice baguette bread at an angle and toast under broiler until golden brown. Brush the top of the toasted bread with a light coating of olive oil. Set aside

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Take the parmesan cheese and make paper thin slices, enough to cover all the Bruschetta you are preparing.

Dice the tomatoes and place large mixing bowl, add diced onion. Coarsely chop the basil and add to bowl. Salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle the mixture with ample olive oil.

Spread mixture on toasted bread just before serving and top with parmesan cheese slices.

Sugar and Walnut glazed Baked Brie

Recipe Ingredients:

¼ C brown Sugar

1 Tbl Whiskey or Cognac

1 Brie wheel

1# seedless grapes

1 pkg. Table water crackers

¼ C chopped walnuts

1 baguette bread

2 apples cut into wedges

1 lg Crescent roll dough package

Combine brown sugar, chopped walnuts and whiskey in small bowl, mix thoroughly

Unroll crescent roll dough package, seam together creating two (2) dough crusts. Place the brie on top of one and cover with the other. Completely seal all edges and make sure that the dough is covering the brie completely moving from side to side to inspect that the dough covers the brie cheese.

Place brie and dough on cookie sheet, spread sugar and walnut mixture on top.

Bake in 375 degree oven until golden brown.

Serve with sliced baguette bread, crackers, apples, and grapes.

Creamy Corn and Clam Chowder

Recipe Ingredients:

48 clams or 3 cans clams

1 bay leaf

2 cups milk

½ Cube butter

Salt and pepper to taste

¼ C flour

3 onions minced

4 potatoes, diced

2 cups heavy cream

1 pkg, frozen corn

6 celery stocks – thinly sliced

1 can chicken broth

If you are using fresh clams, rinse them well, place them in a large pan of water, bring to a boil cook for 10 minutes. Cool the clams and discard any clams that have not opened. Remove the clams from the shells, and chop them coarsely.

In a large stock pot, cook onions in butter until clear. Add celery, and potatoes, cook for another 3-4 minutes. Add clams (canned with liquid from 1 can only and other 2 Cans that have been drained) or fresh clams with ¼ C of water.

Remove a ladle of liquid from pot and place in a small bowl with flour. Make a paste and return to the pot, cooking and stirring mixture for another two minutes.

Add milk, chicken broth and cream. Lower heat, add bay leaf, salt and pepper. Cook at low heat for 2-3 hours. CAUTION – it is easy to burn milk, make sure this does not boil but simmer.

30 minutes before serving, add frozen corn

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Napolitano Marinara Sauce

Recipe Ingredients:

1 Large Yellow onion (diced)	1-1.5# ground sirloin
3 large cans of crushed tomatoes	1/4cup olive oil
2 Tbl. Basil	6 cloves garlic (diced and crushed)
Salt and Pepper to taste	2 Tbl Oregano
1 C. Mushrooms sliced	

In a large Deep skillet, sauté the sirloin with oil, and ½ of garlic, then add onions as beef begins to slightly brown and cook until beef is brown and onions are warmed. Add the crushed tomatoes, mushrooms, the other ½ of garlic, oregano, basil, salt and pepper. Cook over medium heat for 30 minutes or longer to med all the flavors.

Serve in lasagna, over pasta, Manicotti crepes, or with any Italian favorite.

Napolitano Manicotti Filling

Recipe Ingredients:

1 large container Ricotta Cheese	3 eggs beaten
¾ C Parmesan Cheese	½ C Fresh Parsley (minced)
Salt and Pepper	1-1/2 C Mozzarella cheese divided

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl with 1 C of mozzarella cheese, mix well and set aside. Use remaining mozzarella to top mixture.

If you are making manicottis from store bought manicotti shells, prepare the manicottis according to package directions. Once cooked, strain in a colander and cool immediately with cold water. Set aside

Take a large baggie (1 gallon size), place manicotti filling in baggie. Cut a small corner of the baggie with scissors (about ½" opening). Remove the cooled manicottis from the colander, and squeeze filling into the end until full. You may need to do this from both ends but this is a very easy way to fill the manicotti shells (tubes).

Place Manicottis in greased baking dish.

Cover with remaining mozzarella cheese and Napolitano Sauce

Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes in 350 deg oven. Uncover and bake for an additional 15 minutes.

Napolitano Cheese filled Crepes

Recipe Ingredients:

6 eggs beaten	1-1/2 C Water
1-1/2 C Flour	Dash salt
Canola Oil	

In a large bowl, combine beaten eggs and water, add flour and salt and mix well. Set aside and refrigerate for one hour, covered.

Heat ¾ tsp of canola oil in 8" skillet.

Pour a scant 3 Tbl spoon of mixture in pan. Tilt pane to cover bottom with mixture.

When they appear to be dry, turn and cook for an additional 15 – 20 seconds

Remove and let cool on Wax paper.

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Coat large casserole dish with cooking spray
Fill each crepe with Manicotti cheese filling, roll and place in casserole dish.
Cover the center of each crepe line with Napolitano Marinara Sauce
Cook in 350 degree oven for 45 – 50 minutes.
Serve with Sauce

Mafalde Florentine Sauce (Michelangelo)

This sauce was inspired by Michelangelo when he lived in Florence. It is documented that this was one of his favorite dishes.

Recipe Ingredients:

Fettuccine Noodles	Olive Oil
Raisins (white work best)	Fresh Spinach
Pine nuts	Ricotta cheese
Parmesan Cheese	1 clove garlic (minced)
Fresh Pepper	

In a large skillet, place 2 Tbl. of olive oil and sauté the pine nuts until slightly brown to release the flavors. Set aside when done.

Place the raisins in a small bowl and cover with water. Always prepare raisins in this manner because it removes all the excess sugars preventing them from sticking and the water enhances the flavor making them more succulent.

Place ¼ c of olive oil in pan and sauté the spinach with garlic until tender, add the ricotta cheese and cook until the ricotta becomes smooth and is nicely combined with the spinach. Add more olive oil as needed. Add the drained raisins and pine nut and set aside.

Prepare the fettuccine according to the package directions and undercook by about two minutes. Do not strain the noodles in a colander but rather take them from the water with thongs.

Bring the Florentine sauce to low heat, add the fettuccine noodles coating them completely with the sauce, and add ½ to ¾ of a ladle from the noodle water to the sauce. Cook the noodles in the pan with the sauce for another 5 minutes until al dente.

Plate the pasta in a deep plate with additional parmesan cheese and fresh ground pepper.

Eggplant Parmesan

This dish is excellent year round and great for quests.

Prepare the your favorite Marinara sauce, pork sugo sauce or Napolitano Marinara sauce

Recipe Ingredients:

2 – 3 large eggplant (peeled)	Olive oil
1 C flour	2 C Italian breadcrumbs
6 eggs beaten	1 C mozzarella cheese
½ C parmesan Cheese	Salt and pepper

Prepare marinara sauce in advance and set aside.

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Peel the eggplant and cut into $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick slices. Place the sliced eggplant on a double paper towel and salt the tops. Place another paper towel, and layer the eggplant slices between paper towels to allow the moisture to be removed from the eggplant. Let them sit for about 20 minutes.

Place flour on a plate with salt and pepper.

Beat eggs in a bowl.

On a separate plate, place Italian breadcrumbs.

Place an ample amount of olive oil in a heated skillet.

Dredge the eggplant slices in flour, dip them in the egg batter, and coat them in the breadcrumbs.

Place them in the skillet and cook them until golden brown turning as necessary and making sure the eggplant is tender.

Once cooked, place the eggplant in a baking dish sprayed with cooking spray. Layer the eggplant on top of each other allowing them to overlap each other by about one half.

Cover the eggplant with sauce, a layer of mozzarella cheese and finish with parmesan cheese.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes, remove foil and continue baking for another 15 minutes.

Serve with a side of sauce and asparagus for a perfect Italian dish.

Parmesan Wheels

This is a great little appetizer and goes perfectly with the asparagus and prosciutto ham as an appetizer.

Recipe Ingredients:

1 C Parmesan cheese grated

On a non stick cookie sheet, place a silver dollar sized pile of parmesan cheese, broil a few minutes until golden brown. Remove with spatula and set aside.

Roasted Asparagus and Prosciutto ham

This is a great side dish or appetizer. When served as an appetizer, serve it with the Parmesan Wheels for added pizzazz.

Recipe Ingredients:

1# fresh asparagus

Salt and Pepper to taste

$\frac{1}{2}$ cube melted butter

1# prosciutto ham

Parmesan Cheese

Prepare asparagus by cutting the tough end away and discarding. A good rule of thumb is to take a single asparagus spear, bend it and where it breaks, this is where to cut the remaining bunch. This will insure that best part of the vegetable is used.

Cook the asparagus in a pot of boiling water for about 3-4 minutes of just beginning to get tender. Remove from water and cool under cold water.

Take three to 4 asparagus spears, and 2 pieces of prosciutto ham. Sprinkle this with a light dusting of parmesan cheese. Roll the asparagus with the prosciutto ham.

Place the rolled asparagus in a baking dish sprayed with cooking spray.

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When all have been placed in the dish, brush each one with a little butter and spread a light dusting on parmesan on top.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Cook in over for 20 minutes and cheese is melted.

Potato Gnocchi

Everyone loves Gnocchi. They are hard to make but one mastered, will become a family favorite.

Serve them plain with butter and chees, a pesto sauce or marinara sauce.

Recipe Ingredients:

6 large Idaho or russet potatoes

2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon salt

Fresh ground pepper

2 eggs beaten

4 C flour

Parmesan Cheese

Boil the potatoes in their skins about 40 minutes, until easily pierced with a skewer. When cool enough to handle, peel and rice the potatoes, and set them aside to cool completely, spreading them loosely to expose as much surface as possible to air.

Bring 6 quarts of water and 2 tablespoons of the salt to a boil in a large pot. On a cool, preferably marble work surface, gather the cold potatoes into a mound, forming a well in the center. Stir the remaining 1 tsp. salt and the white pepper into the beaten eggs, and pour the mixture into the well. Work the potatoes and eggs together with both hands, gradually adding 3 cups of the flour and scraping the dough up from the work surface with a knife as often as necessary. (Incorporation of the ingredients should take no longer than 10 minutes--the longer you work it, the more flour it will require and the heavier it will become).

Dust the dough, your hands, and the work surface lightly with flour and cut the dough into six equal parts. (Continue to dust as long as the dough feel sticky.) Using both hands, roll each piece of dough into a rope 1/2" thick, then slice the ropes at 1/2" intervals. Indent each dumpling with a thumb, or use the tines of a fork to produce a ribbed effect. (This helps the sauce stick to the gnocchi).

Drop the gnocchi into boiling water a few at a time, stirring gently and continuously with a wooden spoon, and cook for 2-3 minutes, until they float up to the surface. Remove the gnocchi from the water with a slotted spoon or skimmer, transfer them to a warm platter, adding a little sauce of choice. Add freshly ground white pepper to taste and, if appropriate, grated cheese, and serve immediately.

Napa Style Sole Veronique

This recipe is from one of my favorite chefs: Michael Chiarello

Recipe Ingredients:

2 Tbl plus 1 Tsp olive oil

1# Sole Fillet

Salt and Freshly ground Pepper

1/2 C all purpose flour

2 Tbl minced shallots

1 Tsp. Thyme finely chopped

3/4 C White (chardonnay) grape juice

2/3 C seedless red grapes

2 Tsp unsalted butter

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In a large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium-high heat until just smoking. While the oil is heating, season the sole with salt and pepper and dredge in the flour. Pat to remove excess flour.

Carefully place the fish in the hot oil, skinned side up. Cook about 4 minutes, or until golden brown, then carefully turn the fish over and cook for another thirty seconds. Transfer the fish to a warm plate.

Add a teaspoon of olive oil to the pan, adjust the heat to medium and add the shallots. Saute about two minutes until lightly caramelized, then add the thyme. Add the grape juice and stir with a wooden spoon, scraping the bottom of the pan. Reduce the heat and simmer until the juice is reduced by half.

Add the grapes to the sauce to warm. Swirl in the butter and season with salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the grapes and sauce over the warm fish fillets. Serve immediately.

Limoncello (Italian Liqueur)

Limoncello is a sweet, lemon-flavored Italian liqueur. Unlike many liqueurs, it's very easy to make at home, requiring only the most basic of ingredients and tools. Doing so is easy but rewarding--from a scientific perspective for the chemistry involved in the process, and from a culinary perspective for the simple joy of drinking something you made from scratch.

One of the interesting things about limoncello is that it isn't sour at all (if it's made properly). This is because there's no lemon juice in it. The lemon flavor comes from lemon zest--the very outside of the lemon peel, where the essential oils are most concentrated.

This is a long-form of the Limoncello recipe that omits no details or explanations. If you plan to make Limoncello at home and have never tried it before, you should read this very closely.

Step One:

The first step is actually to select your lemons. Whenever possible, select organic lemons because it's actually the skin you use in making Limoncello and that's also where all the pesticide is. You will need approximately 17 – 28 lemons, enough to make 2 oz. (55 grams) of lemon zest.

Organic lemons also aren't waxed, which is more crap that ends up in your liquor. Try to choose thick-skinned lemons with smooth skin. The reason for this is that it's a heck of a lot easier to zest a lemon with smooth skin. And it kind of goes without saying that you should pick ones that don't have stickers on them if possible.

Step Two:

Wash the lemons. You'll need to do this whether they are organic but if they aren't organic it's more of an ordeal. You need to scrub them under very warm water with a vegetable brush or some other plastic scrubber. Remove all stickers or stamps and as much of the wax as possible. Then dry them with a paper towel.

lemon cello zest

Step Three:

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Zest the lemons. Doing this step quickly and doing it well requires a Microplane Zester because anything else just doesn't work in my experience. I like to put a cutting board or a large piece of aluminum foil down to catch all the zest. Then you just use the zester to remove a thin layer of zest from the whole lemon.

If you get even a little bit of the white pith just below the zest, it will make your Limoncello bitter. Don't take chances, if the lemon is bumpy and you can't get all the zest without hitting the pith elsewhere, let it go. The lemon in the picture on the left has been zested. Notice how it is still yellow because I just removed the outer skin without touching the pith anywhere. This step is all about quality over quantity.

My recipe calls for 2 more lemons than what you typically see (~55 grams of zest) because it is so important not to worry about not having enough zest here and digging into the lemon for more is not allowed. This step used to take me nearly two hours when I used other types of zesters or peelers but with the Microplane I can zest all 17 lemons in about half an hour.

Step Four:

Filter the liquor. This should actually be done simultaneously with the zesting to save time. I use a Brita pitcher that I bought for this purpose but any similar water filtration pitcher will do. I pour one bottle in, let it filter, pour it into a regular clean pitcher, then back in the top and I repeat the filtration four times for each bottle of liquor.

I'm still testing how worthwhile this is and how many filtrations are optimal but four is my current standard. I filter regardless of what kind of liquor I use. My standard recipe calls for 1,500 ml of liquor and many people have loved this recipe over the years but I'll admit that it is very strong. If you're using 151 proof grain alcohol like I do, then 750 ml is more than enough for most people. Better yet is to use my alcohol percentage calculator (which factors in the strength of your alcohol) and target 30% as the final alcohol percentage. Adjust from there to taste.

Speaking of that, whenever possible I use grain alcohol for authenticity. It's difficult to get because many states don't allow it to be sold. I've found though that vodka has a flavor of its own that is imparted to the Limoncello and I'm not a big fan of that. However, it is much better than nothing so the next best thing is 100 proof, mid-grade Vodka. If you must, use the 80 proof but more alcohol is better for making Limoncello to a certain point. Use my alcohol percentage calculator to get it right on the first try.

Step Five:

Combine the zest and the filtered liquor into a very clean one gallon glass jar and screw the lid on tight. If the lid isn't tight enough, put a piece of plastic wrap on the top before screwing on the lid. You can use any glass jar of sufficient size and I have different ones for different purposes. The one on the left in the image is a stylish but smaller jar that I use for test batches that are half of a normal batch. I got it and others like it at Home Goods.

The one on the right that's full of Limoncello is a basic one that holds an entire batch. I got it at Wal-Mart for a couple bucks. I've also found good jars at Marshall's and online. Put a label on the jar that tells you at least the date of when you made it, if not other details about how you made it. I use a label maker to number my batches and track in an Excel sheet what I do differently each time but that's probably more anal than most people need to be.

Step Six:

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Wait. I tend to keep each batch in my kitchen for the first week to ten days and I shake it up about four times during that initial period. Some people say that isn't necessary but I like to do it. After that I put it in my basement because of the "out of sight, out of mind" factor.

It's easier to wait if you don't see it sitting there all the time. I let the mixture sit and infuse for a minimum of 45 days, longer if I can stand it or if I forget about it. This is where all of the lemon flavor comes from so don't short-change yourself here. If you absolutely must have it sooner, reduce wait times from later steps first.

Step Seven:

Filter the infusion. This is one of the most important steps and by far the most laborious. My process is to filter less than some people recommend but I've found that it's enough to get the job done and this is one job you'll want to keep as short as possible. However, you should never skip it. I've skipped the filtration and the result resembles dirty bath water more than Limoncello. The filtration actually gives it the color, clarity and flavor you expect from Limoncello.

My first filtering pass is with a flat-bottom permanent coffee filter that you can buy at the grocery store. I put it right in the funnel and the funnel in the pitcher or whatever container I'm using. Then I ladle the Limoncello out of the storage jar and through the filter. This first pass removes all of the zest and other large debris. Then comes the tough part. I take flat-bottom disposable coffee filters, the ones with the fluted edging, and put them inside the permanent filter. This is basically double-filtering and I repeat this step a second time. Then on the last pass I just put it through the permanent filter by itself just in case any debris or zest gets back in there during the filtration process. So, that makes two filtrations with just the permanent filter and two filtrations with the permanent plus disposable filters.

When filtering, you want to be patient and preserve as much of the liquid as possible but there will come a point when it looks like there's more liquid at the bottom but no more liquid is dripping through. Do NOT try to salvage that liquid. Throw it away along with the filter (or wash the filter) because that stuff is exactly what you're filtering in the first place. There's some great info on filtering liquors here.

Step Eight:

Add the simple syrup. My standard recipe is to bring 5 cups of water just to a boil and then remove it from the heat and stir in 3.5 cups of white sugar. You then let it sit until it comes down to room temperature. I use filtered water for this and I now always use regular white sugar. I don't attempt to calculate the exact proportions needed. Sugar and water are cheap and simple syrup has many uses so I just make too much and measure out what I need.

I've tried other types of sugar but raw sugars tend to have subtle flavors of their own (most notably molasses) that will show up in the final product. If that sounds ok to you, give it a whirl, but I didn't like it. I've also heard that you should not stir the sugar but rather let the low boil mix the two instead. I've tried it both ways and never noticed a difference. Once the simple syrup cools down (completely, to room temperature) you can just add it to the lemon/liquor infusion, screw the lid back on and shake the jar. Mark on the label the date you mixed the infusion with the simple syrup.

Step Nine:

Wait some more. I now put the mixture back in the basement and wait for at least another 45 days. The longer the mixture rests, the smoother the flavor of the final product. I am convinced of this fact. Though I'll leave this step in as the official recipe, in practice I usually filter and then let it sit longer in the bottle.

Step Ten:

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Bottle the Limoncello. Because I'm anal about this, I wash, dry and then sterilize the bottles first. You can sterilize them by putting aluminum foil over the top and baking them in the oven at 350 degrees for an hour. Then just don't take off the aluminum foil until they are ready for use. This isn't necessary for Limoncello (it is for beer) but it makes me feel like the bottles are clean enough. I use either the bottles the liquor came in (if it's for my own use) or some 500ml bottles with swing caps (if I want to give bottles away).

You can find any kind of bottle you want by searching for glassware or brewing supplies on Google. I've also heard that if you give it away you should put on a label saying that it is a gift and not intended for resale to pacify the ATF guys. I've yet to give much away outside of the family so it hasn't been an issue for me. At the left are two swing top examples, the one on the left I bought online and it holds 500ml of liquor. The one on the right I got at a Crate & Barrel outlet store and it holds about 250ml of liquor. They both cost around \$2.50-\$3 each. If I'm bottling Limoncello for my own use, I usually just clean and use the bottles that the vodka/everclear originally came in.

You're done! A few bonus tips for you though. In my experience the Limoncello mellows a lot in the first week. I realize this is torture but if you're not in a tremendous hurry, I recommend doing the first tasting a week or so after bottling. The longer Limoncello sits, the smoother it gets. This is more important if you're making it with grain alcohol than vodka but it still holds true. I taste a given batch at one week, six months and one year of age. Never has a batch been around longer than that or I'd taste it at later intervals as well. Enjoy!

Everyday Favorites, Appetizers, Vegetables, and Entrees

Parmesan Crusted Tilapia

A family favorite that is easy to prepare and goes well with asparagus and rated red potatoes.

Recipe Ingredients:

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2# Tilapia Fillets
4 eggs beaten
1 C grated parmesan cheese

1 C flour
Salt and Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Prepare a baking dish sprayed with non stick cooking spray. On the bottom on the dish spread a thin layer of parmesan cheese.

Place flour on a plate.

Beat eggs in a separate bowl.

Dredge tilapia in flour and then dredge in the beaten eggs. Place in the baking dish. Salt and pepper the top of the tilapia to taste and cover with a thick layer of grated parmesan cheese.

Bake in oven for 30 to 45 minutes until the fish is cooked through and cheese is crusted,

Roasted Barley and Mushroom Risotto

This recipe is also taken from one of my favorite chefs: Michael Chiarello

Recipe Ingredients:

1-3/4 C pearl barley

5 C water

8 brussel sprouts separated into leaves

1/2 Tsp salt

1/2 large onion cut in half

3 Tsp butter

1 Tsp minced garlic

2 Tsp Arborio rice, ground to fine powder

1/2 C mascarpone

5 C chicken stock (or canned broth)

1 bay leaf

2 carrots cut in half

2 celery stalks cut in half

2 Tbl olive oil

4 C diced mushrooms (shitake etc)

2 C mixed vegetables (squash, leeks, etc)

1 Tsp thyme

3/4 C grated Parmesan Cheese

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Toast the barley in a dry, ovenproof skillet in the oven or over moderate heat for about 12 minutes, until lightly browned and fragrant. Toss occasionally so the barley toasts evenly. Set aside.

Meanwhile: In a large pot, combine the chicken stock, water, and bay leaf, and bring to a boil. Add the brussel sprout leaves and cook about 1 minute, to set color. Remove the leaves with a strainer, scatter on a baking sheet to cool, and reserve.

Add the carrots, celery, and onion to the stock. Add the barley and salt. Simmer about 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender. When they are, pull the vegetables and bay leaf out with a pair of tongs, and discard.

Drain the barley over a pot, reserving the cooking liquid, and spread the barley on a baking sheet to cool. In a large pot, heat the olive oil and 2 tablespoons of the butter. Add the mushrooms and do not move them until they begin to color on their undersides, about 1 minute. Continue to sauté about 5 minutes, until browned. Add the garlic and sauté briefly until light brown. Add the mixed vegetables, reduce the heat to low, and sweat for about 5 minutes, until very tender.

Add the rice powder, stir well, and return the heat to medium-high. Add 3 cups of the reserved cooking liquid and bring to a boil. Add the barley and stir until well mixed and warm. Add the remaining cooking liquid as needed to maintain a brothy consistency. Bring back to a boil. Add 2 teaspoons of thyme, the remaining butter, 1/4 cup of mascarpone, the reserved brussel sprout leaves, and 1/2 cup Parmesan. Mix to incorporate.

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Top each portion with a dollop of mascarpone, and a sprinkling of the remaining thyme, and grated Parmesan.

Spinach with Raisins and Pine Nuts

Recipe Ingredients:

2/3 C golden raisins

8 Tbl olive oil

1 Tsp salt

6# fresh spinach – stems discarded

4 garlic cloves – minced

2/3 C Pine nuts

Soak raisins in warm water for 10 plus minutes, drain and set aside.

Toast pine nuts in oven till golden brown. Careful – it is easy to burn them.

Thoroughly wash spinach. Steam spinach over med to high heat until tender. Drain cool and pat dry.

Heat olive oil in large skillet, add garlic and sauté until gold, add spinach and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender. Add salt, pine nuts and raisins and cook about 3 minutes.

Serve Immediately.

Red Wine Reduction Sauce

This sauce is perfect with lamb chops, roasted pork tenderloin of your favorite cut of red meat including steaks.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 C red wine

1/4 Cube butter

1/2 c dried cherries

2 fresh bay leave

2 whole cloves of garlic

2 fresh rosemary sprigs (Whole)

Salt and pepper to taste

In a large saucepan, add red wine, garlic cloves, rosemary sprigs, dried cherries and bay leaves.

Bring to a boil over medium heat, until liquid has reduced to a cup about 10 minutes.

Remove garlic, bay leaves and rosemary. Whisk in butter and set aside, keeping warm.

Serve with your favorite roasted or grilled meat. Perfect sauce!

Sautéed Beets

This is an elegant dish, easy to prepare and goes with just about any entrée.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 bunches (6) red beets

1/4 c butter or olive oil

Oregano

Olive oil

Salt and Pepper

Remove tops and bottoms of red beets, cut in half. Boil for about 20 minutes until tender.

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Remove the beets to a colander, cool with cold water. Peel the skins from the beets and cut into cubes.

Sauté the beets in the butter or olive oil, salt and pepper to taste and oregano. Sauté until tender and delicious.

Brisket Tacos with Mango Salsa

Recipe Ingredients:

6-8# Lean brisket	2 large onions (diced)
3 tbl. Chipotle seasoning	1 can beef broth
Cilantro	Tomatoes
Shredded cheese	Corn tortillas
Salt and Pepper to taste	Olive oil

Trim excess fat from brisket, cube into 2" square pieces. In a crockpot, combine brisket rubbed with chipotle seasoning, place excess seasoning with brisket in pot. Add 1/2 of cilantro, salt and pepper, and cook over high heat in crock pot for 8-10 hours.

Dice the tomatoes, combine with other half of cilantro. Serve brisket tacos with tomato cilantro mixture and cheese and garnish of your choice.

Add a nice Spanish rice side dish as the perfect compliment.

The perfect garnish is a mango salsa, where you simply take a peeled and diced mango, combine it with a small diced onion, 1/4 diced red bell pepper, 1 tsp chili powder, green onion diced, 1 Tbl spoon lime juice, 1 Tbl spoon lemon juice.

Carnitas

Recipe Ingredients:

4-6# Pork Shoulder (cubed and boned)	2 Tbl Chili Powder
2 cans Beef Broth	Salt and Pepper to Taste
1 jar chunky Salsa	2 large onions (cut into lg. pcs.)
Corn Tortillas	

In a slow cooker: Add pork shoulder, chili powder, beef broth, salt and pepper to taste, and the jar of chunky salsa. Cook over high heat 8-10 hours.

When meat is cooked and tender, remove from slow cooker and place in metal baking pan, roast in 450 deg. oven for 20 minutes.

Serve with corn tortillas, Pico de Gallo, cheese and any other condiment enjoyed by your family.

Gourmet Chili

Recipe Ingredients:

Olive Oil	2-21/2# ground Turkey
2 Red Onions diced	2 Tsp cumin

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1 Jalapeno diced and seeded
3 cloves garlic finely chopped
2 cans black beans
1 Tsp paprika
4 celery stick diced

1 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
1 can Kidney Beans
2 cans beef broth
¼ to ½ C chili powder (to taste)

In a large stock pot, cook olive oil, turkey, ½ of the garlic and onions until turkey is browned and onions are soft.

Add remaining ingredients with the other ½ of garlic to stock pot. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 2 hours.

Chili Pie

Additional Recipe Ingredients:

Original Frito chips
Cheddar Cheese

Onion finely diced
Warm flour tortillas

Prepare Gourmet chili, In each soup bowl, place a handful of Frito original chips, cover with Gourmet Chili, top with cheese and onions. Serve with warm flour tortillas.

Gourmet Mac-n-cheese with caramelized onions

Recipe Ingredients:

2 large onions thinly sliced
1 cube butter
1 C yellow cheddar cheese (shredded)
½ C parmesan cheese Shredded)
6 eggs
¼ C pecans finely chopped

4 tbl sugar
Package of elbow macaroni
1 C White cheddar cheese (shredded)
1 pkg saltine crackers
4 C milk
Salt and Pepper to taste

Melt butter in large sauce pan, add onions and begin to sauté until soft. Add sugar and cook over med – high heat until the onions caramelize (about 15 – 20 minutes)

Prepare elbow macaroni according to package directions, drain and set aside.

Crush saltine crackers into small pieces with rolling pin.

Combine eggs with milk and whisk until well blended. Add salt and pepper to mixture.

In a deep casserole baking dish, coat with cooking spray.

Add ½ of the cooked elbow macaroni, and then layer the caramelized onions on top.

Add 2/3 of the yellow cheddar cheese, and 2/3 of the white cheddar cheese.

Top this mixture with the saltine crackers.

Add the remaining elbow macaroni or enough to top off the casserole dish.

Top with remaining yellow and white cheddar cheese, plus parmesan on top.

Pour milk and egg mixture over entire casserole.

Top with pecans.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and cook on a cookie sheet to prevent spillover.

Cook covered with foil for 45 minutes.

Remove foil and cook and additional 15 minutes.

Remove and let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

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This is a killer Mac-n-Cheese everyone will love!

Black Bean Tostados with Roasted Tomatillo Salsa

Recipe Ingredients:

Tostado Shells

Arugula Lettuce

2 white onions diced

5 garlic cloves diced

Diced Avocado

Whole Black Beans

8 Roma Tomatoes (cubed)

2 seeded and diced Jalapeno's

Parmesan cheese thinly sliced

Roasted Tomatillo Salsa

- Prepare roasted tomatillo salsa by spraying glass baking dish with cooking spray, add Roma tomatoes, onions, garlic and jalapeno, salt and pepper, roast ingredients in middle of oven with broiler on for about 45 minutes or until roasted.
- When done, remove from oven and mash all ingredients together with a potato masher, set aside and let cool.
- Heat black beans in pan and simmer until cooked, keeping warm.
- Warm tostado shells in microwave.

Prepare tostados by spreading black beans on shell, tomatillo mixture, arugula lettuce, parmesan cheese and avocado slices.

Elegant dish served on a platter with a side of Spanish rice or seasoned basmati rice. This is a delicious dish everyone will love and it is easy to prepare

Roasted Butternut Squash

Recipe Ingredients:

1 Lg butternut squash – peeled de-seeded and cut into 1" dices

Olive oil

Thyme

Salt and Pepper to taste

Heat oven to 400°

Place squash in a baking dish

Add olive oil, thyme, salt and pepper

Roast till tender, 40 to 50 minutes

More Desserts

Blackberry Cobbler

Any fruit can be substituted for blackberries

Recipe Ingredients:

2 large (4 cups) packages blackberries

1 C granulated sugar

Lemon juice

Garnish: mint leaves

2 large eggs

1 C flour

6 Tbl butter

Top: Whipping cream or ice cream
(optional)

Preheat oven to 375

Place fruit in lightly greased square baking dish

Stir together flour sugar and egg in bowl until it resembles a coarse meal.

Sprinkle the coarse meal over fruit

Place butter pats on top

Drizzle with lemon juice

Cook for 45 minutes or until golden brown on top.

Coconut Caramel Pecan Cream Cheese Pie

Any fruit can be substituted for blackberries

Recipe Ingredients:

2 pkgs. Softened cream cheese

8 oz. package pecans cut into 1/4" chips

1 stick butter

Caramel topping

8 oz. can evaporated condensed milk

Package of coconut flakes

1 8 oz. container cool whip

2 graham cracker crust

- Sauté Pecans and coconut with butter until slightly browned, set aside and let cool.
- In a mixer, add evaporated condensed milk, cream cheese and mix until firm. Do not mix until runny; make sure the mixture stays firm.
- Remove mixer blades, fold in cool whip.
- Place mixture in graham cracker crust, cover with sautéed coconut and pecan mixture, drizzle the top with caramel topping and place in freezer. Remove from freezer 30 minutes before serving.

This is an incredibly decadent desert that is easy to make and everyone will love.

Tiramisu

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This recipe was taken from Lidia's Italy and is one of the most delectable versions I have ever prepared.

Recipe Ingredients:

2 1/2 C Strong warm espresso	30 Savoiardi (Italian ladyfingers)
6 egg yolks	3/4 C plus 1/3C sugar
1 1/4 C Mascarpone cheese	2 C Heavy Cream
1-1/2 T Dark Rum	2 oz. chopped chocolate
Cocoa for dusting	

A few at a time, dip the first eighteen ladyfingers in the espresso and line the bottom of the 12 x 9 x 2 inch pan with them. Sprinkle half of the chopped chocolate and a generous dusting of the cocoa on the ladyfingers. Set aside.

Combine the yolks and 3/4 C sugar and mix on high with a mixer approximately 10 minutes. By hand, mix in the mascarpone until incorporated and relatively lump free. Set aside.

In a mixer or by hand, whip the cream, 1/3 C sugar and rum until stiff peaks are formed. Add the mascarpone mixture and whip again until homogenous. This is the completed filling.

Spread half of the filling on the ladyfingers in the pan. Soak the remaining ladyfingers and make a second layer (with spaces in between the ladyfingers). Sprinkle with the remaining chopped chocolate and then the cocoa. Spread the remaining filling evenly over the ladyfingers and lightly sprinkle with cocoa. Wrap, refrigerate, and chill for four to six hours--overnight is best.

Before serving, sprinkle again with a light dusting of cocoa. Slice and serve with a spoon or spatula.

Pineapple Upside Down Cake

Recipe Ingredients:

1 stick unsalted butter	1 jar maraschino cherries
1 C packed brown sugar	1 box Betty Crocker super moist Yellow cake mix
1 can (20 oz.) sliced pineapple	Reserved pineapple liquid

1. Heat oven to 350° (325° for dark non-stick pan) – Spray pan with cooking spray
2. Melt butter in pan in oven
3. Remove pan and sprinkle brown sugar in bottom evenly
4. Arrange pineapples and maraschino cherries in bottom of pan
5. Make batter to directions, except substitute pineapple juice for water – if recipe calls for 1 C water, use all the pineapple juice and add enough water to get to 1 Cup
6. Bake 44-53 minutes (dark), 42-48 minutes for glass pan.
7. Run knife immediately around edges, turn upside down to cool.