

Berry Coffeecake

This coffeecake can be made the night before. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, let it warm to room temperature thirty minutes before popping it into the oven.

2 large eggs
1 cup milk
2/3 cup white sugar
1/2 cup melted butter
1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups all purpose flour
1 Tbs. Baking powder
1 cup frozen, loose-pack berries
1/3 cup softened butter
1/2 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup walnuts or pecans
1/2 cup brown sugar

Preheat oven to 375. In large mixing bowl, beat eggs, milk, sugar, butter and vanilla until smooth. Add baking powder to the flour and stir through before adding both to the wet ingredients. Break apart berries and stir through. (If you stir too much, the berries will color the dough blue.) Spray an 11x13 baking pan with cooking spray. Spread coffeecake batter into pan. In food processor, process butter, flour, oatmeal, nuts and sugar until just combined, using the pulse button. Top the coffeecake with the crumbled mixture. Bake for 35-40 minutes until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean.

Italian Dinner Rolls (2 dozen)

1 1/4 cup very warm water (not boiling—just hot tap water)
1 tbs. active dry yeast
1 tbs. malt powder*
1 tbs. high gluten flour* (*You can get both at most supermarkets.)
1/4 cup powdered milk
1/4 cup softened butter
1/4 cup sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. kosher salt
5 cups bread flour
1/2 cup melted butter
1 Tbs. Garlic powder
1 Tbs. Dried parsley flakes

In large see-through measuring cup, combine water, yeast, malt powder and high gluten flour. Let sit ten minutes until bubbly. In large bowl of a stand mixer, add powdered milk, softened butter, sugar, egg, salt, yeast mixture and four cups flour. Using dough hook, turn on low speed and add flour until dough is no longer sticky. Turn to medium and knead 7-10 minutes. (If you don't have a stand mixer or a food processor with a dough blade, combine ingredients in large bowl and hand knead fifteen minutes.) Pull dough out. Spray bowl with cooking spray and return dough to bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise one hour. Punch down. Using about 1/4 to 1/2 cup of dough at a time, roll into a thick 6 inch snake. Loop the dough around, pulling one end through, like you are tying a knot. (Or if you prefer, shape into a ball.) Place rolls on a greased cookie sheet. Let rise one hour. Bake at 375 for 15–20 minutes until the tops are golden brown. Microwave butter in large mug for thirty seconds until melted. Stir through garlic powder and parsley. With a large pastry brush, brush the tops of each roll.

Clam Chowder

8 ounces bacon, fat removed as much as possible
2 Tbs. Butter
1 1/2 yellow onions, chopped finely
1/4 cup flour
24 ounces canned whole clams (4 tuna-sized cans)
1/4 cup water
6 medium red potatoes, cut into 1/2 inch cubes with peel
black pepper and salt to taste
4 cups milk
2 cups heavy cream
1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped

Cut bacon into 1/2 inch dice. Cook bacon in a deep soup pot over medium heat until crispy and slightly browned. Drain half the fat. Add butter and onions and sauté until onions are just starting to brown. Add flour, stirring constantly over low heat for 3-5 minutes. Drain the clam's juices into the soup pot and add 1/4 cup water. Add potatoes, salt and pepper. Simmer on medium until the potatoes are tender—about ten minutes. Add canned clams and stir through. Pour in milk and heavy cream. Stir over medium heat until soup is warmed through. (Do not boil, or the soup will separate.) Add parsley right before serving. Adjust salt and pepper. Serves six.

Java Mint Brownies

3/4 cup cocoa powder
1/2 cup espresso in liquid form (or use strong coffee from the morning's brew)
3/4 cup butter
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 tsp. peppermint extract
1 cup all purpose flour
1 cup chopped nuts, optional

3 extra large packages Junior Mints

Preheat oven to 350. Microwave the first three ingredients in a large microwave safe bowl for thirty seconds, or until butter is melted. Stir until combined. Add next five ingredients, and stir with wooden spoon until just combined. Spread into a greased 9x13 glass pan and bake for 35 minutes.

Let cool.

Microwave Junior Mints in glass bowl for thirty seconds. Stir. Microwave again for thirty seconds. Stir. Repeat until mint mixture is fully melted and is easily pourable. Pour onto cooled brownies. Spread evenly. Serve with vanilla bean ice cream. Makes 12.

Marinated Flank Steak over open flame

I find the simplest things taste the best. This easy marinade works well for all red meat, particularly steaks and kabobs.

1-2 pound flank steak
1 Tbs. Montreal steak seasoning*
5 Tbs. Soy sauce
¼ cup red wine
Dash worcestershire sauce

Place flank steak and marinade in zippered plastic bag. Marinate all day. Heat grill to medium high. Cook 5-8 minutes per side until middle is pink, not red. Slice vertically at a 45-degree angle very thinly. An electric knife slices a flank very nicely. Serve with roasted potatoes and a tossed green salad.

*You can find Montreal steak seasoning at most grocery stores in the spice aisle. This spice is the best thing you can find to season a steak.

Side note: Our favorite cut of steak is tri-tip. Beef tri-tip is a boneless cut of meat from the bottom sirloin. It also is called "triangular" roast because of its shape. Most grocery stores on the west coast have it. If you can't find it, ask your butcher to cut it for you. This well marbled and very flavorful beef cut has been one of the beef industry's best-kept secrets. It's cheaper and more tender than a New York cut. Marinate the tri-tip in the above marinade and grill on high, about 3-5 minutes per side for medium rare.

Pound cake layered with raspberries

1 large pound cake (found in frozen food section of grocery store)
1 ½ packages cream cheese
¾ cup powdered sugar
1 tsp. Vanilla
3 Tbs. Butter, softened
½ cup Nutella (a European chocolate hazlenut spread found on the peanut butter aisle)
2 cups fresh raspberries

Using a serrated knife, cut the pound cake horizontally into four slices (3 cuts). Combine cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and butter in a stand mixer and mix until well combined. On each layer (except top) spread ½ of the Nutella, followed 1/3 of the cream cheese mixture and top with 1/3 of the berries. Do this for the two middle layers. On the top, spread the remaining 1/3 of the cream cheese mixture and top with remaining 1/3 raspberries. To serve, cut the cake vertically and place on dessert plate so the layers show. Top with whipped cream, if desired. Makes 6-8 servings.

Mediterranean Sausage Pasta

2 cups finely chopped tomatoes
2 cloves pressed garlic (from jar)
4 green onions, chopped finely
2 Tbs. Capers
½ tsp. Sea salt
Dash of ground pepper
¼ cup olive oil
2 Tbs. Lemon juice, fresh
¼ cup chopped fresh basil
15 Calamata olives, chopped, (Buy the pitted ones to save time.)
1-2 pounds Italian sausage
1 bag ready-to-eat salad spinach
1 pound linguine
½ cup grated parmesan cheese

Combine first ten ingredients in a non-reactive bowl. Cover with plastic and let marinate while you're at work. At dinner time, cook sausage until done, then boil linguine according to package directions until al dente. Drain. Toss pasta, tomato mixture, spinach and parmesan. Serves six.

Crepes

I've been making these crepes nearly twenty years now. Forget the gimmicky crepe makers—all you need to make crepes successfully is a sturdy, non-stick pan and cooking spray. Our favorite way to eat them is Parisian style—rolled up with a smearing of Nutella inside.

1 ½ cups flour
1 tsp. sugar
5 eggs
1 ½ cup milk
1/3 cup water
1 tsp. vanilla
3 Tbs. Melted butter
cooking spray

In food processor or blender, add ingredients in order. Process 30 seconds until smooth. Pour into large measuring cup with a pouring spout. Heat heavy-bottomed non-stick frying pan over medium high heat. Spray with cooking spray. Pour a six-inch dollop of batter into the middle of the pan. Tilt the pan in a circular motion until the six-inch dollop spreads, creating a ten-inch crepe. When the sheen is gone and the crepe's surface bubbles have popped, flip over the crepe in one smooth motion with a non-metal spatula. Let cook 30-40 additional seconds. Place crepe on ovenproof plate and keep in a 250 degree oven. If your pan is heated up, each crepe should take no longer than a minute and a half. Repeat process until batter is spent. Place warmed crepes on table. Serve with fresh berries, whipped cream, Nutella, powdered sugar, maple syrup, or anything else your breakfast crowd desires. Makes 16 ten-inch crepes.

Tortilla Soup

1 Tbs. olive oil
1 yellow onion, chopped finely
3 cloves garlic, pressed
1 small can green chilies
1 can (14.5 ounce) diced tomatoes
1 can black beans, drained (You may also use red kidney beans)
1 cup frozen corn kernels
5 cups chicken stock
1 cup shredded chicken
1 Tbs. Taco seasoning
salt and pepper to taste
12 yellow corn tortillas
¼ cup peanut oil
1 tsp. kosher salt
2 cups shredded jack cheese
Sour cream, for serving

Sauté onions and garlic in a large soup pot over medium heat until onions are translucent. Add chilies, tomatoes, beans, corn, chicken stock, chicken and taco seasoning. Stir through on high heat until soup boils. Reduce to low. Add salt and pepper to taste. Simmer one hour. With a sharp knife, cut tortillas into ¼ inch strips, stacking them four at a time to save time. Place all tortilla strips on a cookie sheet. Top with oil and salt. Toss the tortillas gently with your hands until they are all coated and the salt is evenly distributed. Spread in an even layer. Place in a 350 degree oven for thirty minutes until slightly brown and crisped. Ladle soup into bowls. Top with a dollop of sour cream, a handful of jack cheese. Place a haystack of tortillas on top. Makes eight servings.

The Best Zucchini Bread

3 eggs
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup white sugar
1 cup oil
2 cups shredded zucchini
1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
¼ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
1 Tbs. Cinnamon

Combine eggs, sugars, oil, zucchini and vanilla in stand mixture until smooth. Stir soda, powder, salt and cinnamon into flour. Pour flour into wet mixture and mix over low speed until well combined. Pour into two 9x5 greased loaf pans. Bake at 350 for one hour.

Sweet and Sour Chicken

1 Tbs. Cornstarch
¼ cup sugar
2 Tbs. Soy sauce
3 Tbs. Ketchup
¼ cup red wine vinegar
½ cup chicken broth

Combine above ingredients in a lidded jar and shake until combined. Set aside.

1 red onion, chopped finely
2 cloves garlic, pressed
1 tsp. Sesame oil
2 Tsp. Canola oil
4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, cut into one inch cubes
1 red bell pepper, cut into strips
¾ cup sugar snap peas
½ cup chopped carrots

In wok, or non stick skillet, sauté onions and garlic on medium high heat in oils until onions are transparent. Add chicken, peppers, peas and carrots and cook until chicken is no longer pink, about 8 minutes. Add sauce to mixture and cook through until sauce thickens, about two minutes. Serve with sticky rice. Serves 4.

Beef Stew

1 Tbs. Butter
1 Tbs. Olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
1 ½ pounds beef chuck, cubed into 1 ½ inch cubes
2 cloves garlic, pressed
2 Tbs. All purpose flour
1 tsp. Sea salt
1 tsp. Freshly ground pepper
2 cups carrots, peeled and cut into ½ inch dice
5 medium red potatoes, cubed
¼ cup chopped Italian parsley (or 3 Tbs. Dried)
1 Tbs. Dijon mustard
3 Tbs. Ketchup
1 cup red wine
1 ¼ cup beef broth
3 Tbs. Red wine vinegar

In large nonstick skillet, sauté onions over medium heat until caramelized. Add beef and brown on all sides. Add garlic, flour, salt and pepper and stir through. Remove from heat. In a large crock-pot or stew pot, add carrots, potatoes, parsley and meat mixture. Combine mustard, ketchup, red wine, broth and vinegar in a small bowl and whisk until well mixed. Pour over stew. Let simmer all day over very low heat. Serves four very hungry people, or an average-sized family.

Fresh Tomato Basil Soup

This soup is especially nice with homemade garlic-olive oil croutons and a dollop of crème fraîche or sour cream.

1/2 red onion, chopped finely
6 cloves garlic, pressed
1 Tbs. Olive oil
4 cups fresh Roma tomatoes, chopped (Or you can use two cans of canned, chopped plum tomatoes . . . just be sure they are uncooked, not stewed.)
2 cups chicken broth
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
1 cup heavy cream
salt and pepper to taste

Sauté onion and garlic over medium heat in soup pot until onions are starting to brown, about five minutes. Add tomatoes, broth and basil. Cook over medium heat until tomatoes are cooked through, fifteen minutes. Add cream. Cool soup to room temperature. In batches, puree soup in blender. (To eliminate the cooling step, puree the hot soup with a hand held blender.) Return soup to pan and add salt and pepper to taste. Simmer on low until ready to serve. Serves four.

Mexican Strata

This is actually better if you make it the night before. Because you use day-old white bread, this is a thrifty entertainer's dream!

1/2 loaf day-old Italian or French bread, crusts removed, torn into pieces
2 7-ounce cans chopped mild green chilies
1 medium tomato, cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1/2 cup green onions, chopped
1 Tbs. Taco seasoning
1/2 tsp. salt
pepper to taste
1 tsp. Tabasco sauce
6 large eggs
1 1/2 cups milk
2 cups grated cheddar or jack cheese

Spray a 9x13 pan with cooking spray and arrange torn bread over bottom until no pan is showing. In large bowl, combine chilies, tomato, onions, seasonings, Tabasco, eggs and milk until mixed through. Add 1 1/2 cup of cheese. Pour over bread. Top with remaining 1/2 cup cheese and refrigerate overnight. Preheat oven to 350. Bake for one hour, until eggs are completely done. Serves 8.

Homemade Granola

My children love this breakfast granola. Store in an airtight container for up to three months in your pantry. You can also use it to top ice cream, muffin batter or yogurt.

10 cups rolled oats (I like steel-cut oats. Buy them in bulk in the bulk section of your grocery store.)
1 cup chopped almonds or hazlenuts or both
1 cup dry-roasted sunflower seeds
1/2 cup cornmeal
1 cup wheat bran
1/4 cup sesame seeds
3/4 cup honey
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/3 cup molasses
1 tsp. Salt
1/2 cup water
3/4 cup canola oil

Preheat oven to 225. Combine oats, almonds, sunflower seeds, cornmeal, bran and sesame seeds in a very large bowl. In a medium saucepan over medium low heat, combine honey, brown sugar, molasses, water, salt and canola oil. Whisk until warm and mixed through. Pour mixture over oats and stir through. Spray two large jelly roll pans with cooking spray and divide granola between them. Bake on two different racks for fifteen minutes. (Be sure to set your timer.) Stir. Alternate racks. Repeat process until granola is browned and crunchy, about one and a half hours. Makes 5 quarts.

Moroccan Crockpot Chicken

2 Tbs olive oil
1 whole chicken, cut up (or more if you have a bigger family), skin off
1 onion, chopped
2 Tbs. ras el hanout spice mix (or you can use really good curry powder)
a few saffron threads
1 cup chicken stock
1 can chopped tomatoes
2 cups dried halved apricots
1 tablespoon honey
1/4 cup orange juice
salt and pepper

Saute onions and chicken in skillet in olive oil until browned. Add to crockpot. Add everything else, stir and cook on low for the day. Serve with rice or cous cous.

Simple Yogurt Smoothie

1 1/2 cups nonfat plain yogurt (buy the big tubs of this to keep costs down)
1 Tbs. or less, honey
1 handful of frozen mixed berries (I buy mine at Costco to save \$)
1/2 banana, frozen
1/4 cup crushed ice

Throw in a blender and blend. It's filling and yummy!

Another note: whenever you have leftover fruit (not apples or grapes), throw them in a bag, then toss them in the freezer. My favorite shake uses frozen peaches, berries and bananas.

Apple Pumpkin Soup

1 medium-sized pumpkin, seeds removed and cut into 8ths
2 apples, cored and peeled and sliced
1 shallot, minced
1 tbs. olive oil
2 cloves garlic
5 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup white wine
Salt and pepper to taste
3/4 cup heavy cream

Cook pumpkin in 400 degree oven one hour until tender. Saute apples, shallots and garlic in olive oil until shallots and apples begin to brown. Add baked pumpkin (scrape into soup, careful to not let any skin in), chicken stock and wine. Add salt and pepper. Cook 1 hour. Let cool. In batches, puree soup in blender. Return to pan. Add cream and stir until smooth. Serve with a dollop of creme fraiche, caramelized onions and roasted hazelnuts on top.

Orange Cinnamon Rolls

1 1/4 cup very warm water
1 packet yeast
1 Tbs. sugar
3 1/2 cups white flour
1 cup wheat flour
1/4 cup white sugar
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup powdered milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1 egg

In clear container, combine water, yeast and sugar. Stir. Let sit five minutes until the top foams and is bubbly. In large bowl, combine the remaining ingredients. Add yeast mixture. If you don't have a Kitchenaid, combine with a spoon and then knead five minutes. If you do, just attach the dough hook and let it combine and knead the dough for five minutes. Spray bowl with cooking spray. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand one hour until double. Roll out dough into a long rectangle (probably 12 inches by 20 inches). Pour 1/4 cup melted butter over the surface and spread evenly. Sprinkle cinnamon and sugar (you determine the amount) over that. Beginning from the long end, roll up the dough. To cut, use sewing thread. Move the thread under the dough, about an inch in, and then pull each end of the thread together. Place on greased cookie sheet. Cover with plastic wrap and keep cool (in the fridge) overnight. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes.

*Glaze: 1 package cream cheese, 1/4 cup orange juice, zest from one orange, 1 tsp. vanilla
2 cups powdered sugar. Combine ingredients until smooth. Pour glaze over cinnamon rolls.*

The Most Delicious Pear Dessert Ever!

5 pears, halved, cored and peeled
3 Tbs. butter
5 Tbs. raspberry jam
3/4 cup chocolate chips
3 Tbs. powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 Tbs. butter
1/4 cup heavy cream

slivered almonds for garnish

Saute pears in butter in non-stick pan until they are browned. In the meantime, spread a dollop of raspberry jam in a 5 inch circle on a dessert plate. Place chocolate, powdered sugar, vanilla, butter and cream in microwavable container. Microwave on high for 30 seconds. Stir. Microwave 30 more seconds. Stir. Repeat until melted through. Place two pear halves on top of jammed plates. Drizzle chocolate over. Top with nuts.

Whole wheat corn bread

2 eggs
1 cup milk
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup oil
1/4 tsp. salt
1 cup corn meal
3/4 cup wheat flour
1 Tbs. baking powder

Mix eggs, milk, sugar, oil, and salt in medium bowl. Combine flour, corn meal and baking powder in large mixing cup. Pour into wet mixture and whisk until smooth. Pour in 9x11 greased pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 25 minutes or until a toothpick poked in the middle comes out clean.

Serve with honey butter:

1/4 cup butter, softened
7 Tbs. honey

Très Vite Cinnamon Rolls

(For those of you who aren't très French, très vite means very fast)

5 Tbs. shortening
3 cups flour
2 tsp. baking powder

Combine above ingredients by cutting with two knives until the shortening is in pea-sized crumbles.

1 cup milk

Combine milk and flour mixture with a wooden spoon until stiff, but don't over stir. Form into a ball. Flour a cutting board. Roll the ball into a 18x10 inch rectangle. Sprinkle the rectangle with:

1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup melted butter
1 Tbs. cinnamon

Roll lengthwise (from one long end to the other long end.) Using a long thread of dental floss (not used!) slide the floss under the roll at one-inch intervals. Cross the floss over the top of the rolls and pull down like you are tying a shoe (this cuts it without having it compacted). Place each roll on a 9x13 greased pan. Bake at 375 for 20-25 minutes.

Wheat Bread with a Kick

This is a VERY easy and fast way (no rising) to make bread for dinner.

1 cup wheat flour
2 cups white flour
1/4 cup honey
1 tsp. salt
4 tsp. baking powder
1 cup light-colored beer
1/2 cup milk

Throw all ingredients in large bowl. Stir until combined. Pour into a greased loaf pan. Bake at 350 for one hour. Simple!

To make cheesy bread:

*Omit wheat flour (3 cups white instead)
Add 1 cup grated cheddar cheese*

Yummy Broccoli Salad

1 large head of broccoli, cut up into very small pieces
1/2 cup pine nuts
3/4 cup white raisins (or use 1 cup halved red grapes, or 1/2 cup raisins)
1/3 cup mayo
2 Tbs. red wine vinegar
2 Tbs. sugar

Toast the pine nuts by putting them in a nonstick pan and heating over medium until they turn brown (be sure to keep stirring them otherwise they will burn). Toss with broccoli. Add raisins. In another bowl, combine mayo, vinegar and sugar. Whisk until blended. Pour over salad. Makes 5-6 servings.

Orange Coffee Cake

1 cup butter (yep, not for those calorie/fat counters out there!)
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup sour cream
Grated rind of 1 orange
1/2 cup orange juice
2 cups flour
Pinch of salt
1 tsp. Soda
1/2 tsp. Baking powder

Cream together butter and sugar. Add eggs, sour cream, and orange rind & juice. Beat well. Stir together flour, salt, soda and powder. Add to wet mixture. Beat until just combined. Pour into bundt cake form or two loaf pans. Bake at 350 for one hour.

While cake is still warm, blend 1 cup powdered sugar with 1/4 cup orange juice. Pour over cake and serve.

Chinese Noodle Salad

1/4 cup sesame oil
1/4 cup soy sauce
1 Tbs. Sugar
1 tsp. Chile oil
3 Tbs. Balsamic vinegar
1 pound spaghetti
1/4 cup toasted sesame seeds
1/2 cup green onions

Combine first five ingredients in bottom of salad bowl. Boil noodles until al dente. Run cool water over them until they're cold. Pour into salad bowl. Toss. Marinate several hours in the fridge. To serve: toss noodles again. Add sesame seeds and green onions. Toss again. Serves six. This is a great salad to bring to a potluck.

Tartiflette

We had this in Southern France. It's easy to make and sooooo yummy.

6-8 medium red potatoes or Yukon Golds
1 package bacon, cut into small pieces
1 yellow onion
1 Tbs. butter
1/4 cup heavy cream
1 1/2 cups white wine
Strong white cheese, (In France they use Reblochon. You can try muenster, jack or swiss cheese) 8-16 ounces, cut into thick pieces

Boil potatoes until tender. Cool slightly so they don't burn you when you cut them. Cut into thick rounds. Chop onion. Saute in butter until translucent. Add bacon. Cook until bacon fat is rendered and onions begin to brown. Butter a large 9x13 pan. Put half of the potatoes on the bottom. BE SURE TO SALT AND PEPPER each layer of potatoes. Top with half the onion mixture Repeat for last layer. Pour wine and cream over the top. Place slabs of cheese over the top until the potatoes and onions are completely covered. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes until heated through.



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