

Recipes from *Cat's Claw*

China Bayles #20

By Susan Wittig Albert

China Bayles' Curry and Cardamom Cookies

This is another of those much-requested recipes from the series. A basic sugar cookie with a cardamom-curry twist. You can cut this recipe in half if you don't want to be tempted by six dozen cookies in your cookie jar. Or take them to the nearest party. You won't bring any home.

1 cup butter
2 cups brown sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
3 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons curry powder (sweet or hot)
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 cup pecans, chopped

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs and vanilla and beat until incorporated. Sift dry ingredients together. Add to creamed mixture, a third at a time. Stir in nuts. Divide dough into four rolls and wrap each in waxed paper. Refrigerate at least 4 hours, or freeze and bake when you have more time.

To bake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Slice each roll into 1/4-inch slices and place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake until golden brown, 12-14 minutes. Let cookies cool for 2 minutes on baking sheet, then remove to a rack to cool thoroughly. Yields approximately 6 dozen

Ramona's Corn Chowder with Sausage

Easy, tasty Saturday-night supper. This is one of those staple chowders that you will come back to again and again.

1 pound bulk pork or turkey sausage (mild)
1 cup coarsely chopped onion
4 cups peeled and cubed potatoes
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon minced dry rosemary
1/2 teaspoon ground marjoram
1/8 teaspoon ground pepper
2 cups water
1 can cream style corn
1 can whole kernel corn, drained
1 can evaporated milk or 1 1/2 cup milk (non-fat okay)
Garnish: about 6 tablespoons yogurt, chopped parsley

In Dutch oven or kettle, cook sausage and onion till sausage is brown and onion is tender; drain on paper

towel. Return sausage to Dutch oven with cubed potatoes, salt, rosemary, marjoram, pepper and water. Bring to boil; reduce heat and simmer just until potato is tender, about 15 minutes. Add cream style and whole kernel corn and milk and mix well. Garnish with yogurt and chopped parsley. Serves 6.

McQuaid's Favorite Breakfast Burritos

1/2 pound bulk pork sausage (mild or hot)
2 large potatoes, peeled and grated
1 green pepper, chopped
1/2 cup chopped onion
8 eggs, beaten
8 flour tortillas (8-inch)
1 cup taco sauce
2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
Taco sauce

Cook sausage until browned. Drain and set aside, reserving drippings in skillet. Add potatoes, pepper, and onion to skillet, and cook until potatoes are browned. Add eggs; cook, stirring occasionally, until eggs are firm but still moist. Stir in the sausage.

Warm tortillas in oven or microwave. Spoon 1/8 of the egg mixture in a strip in the center of each tortilla. Distribute 1/8 cup of taco sauce and 1/4 cup shredded cheese on top of the egg mixture and roll up. Tightly wrap each tortilla in plastic wrap and place in a plastic bag. May be refrigerated or frozen.

To serve: Heat individual burritos in microwave until hot. Rewrap in foil for breakfast on the go.

Sheila's Garlic & Herb Potato Salad

A very simple salad with a complex flavor.

8-10 small red potatoes, unpeeled, scrubbed
2 tablespoons lemon juice
a dash of white wine (optional)
4 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons minced garlic
2 tablespoons mixed herbs, chopped fine (rosemary, parsley, chervil, chives, thyme)
salt and pepper to taste

In a small bowl, mix the herbs and olive oil. Set aside and let the flavors infuse while you prepare the potatoes. Cut into halves or quarters. Cook for 10 minutes, or until the potatoes are just tender but still firm. Drain potatoes and return to pot, away from the heat. Cover with a dry towel and let them steam for 10-15 minutes. (Potatoes should be tender, yet firm and unbroken.)

Place in a large bowl and splash with dressing. Toss carefully. Cover and refrigerate to allow the flavors to blend. Serve cold, at room temperature, or warm (microwave briefly).

To make the dressing: Whisk together the lemon juice, wine (if you're using it), garlic, salt and pepper. In a cup, stir herbs into oil and slowly add to the lemon juice mixture, blending well.

Sheila's Creole Baked Beans

An overnight stay in the refrigerator mellows and enhances the flavors of this bean dish.

- 1 pound small red or white beans, cleaned and soaked overnight in cold water
- 6 slices bacon, diced
- 1 cup diced onion
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 4-6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon Creole Spice Blend (see recipe below)
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 can tomatoes, crushed, or 1 cup seeded, chopped fresh tomatoes
- 4 chicken stock, or 4 chicken bouillon cubes dissolved in 4 cups water
- Salt

Preheat oven to 300°F.

In a large heavy pot, fry bacon over medium heat until bits are crisp. Remove bacon and reserve. Add the onion, celery, and pepper; cook until softened and lightly browned. Add garlic, bay leaf, red pepper flakes, and Creole Spice Blend; cook 2 minutes. Stir in the beans, brown sugar, molasses, mustard, tomatoes, reserved bacon, and water. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat and cover pot tightly. Alternatively, transfer to a lidded casserole.

Bake for 1 1/2 to 2 hours; check the stock regularly and add more if necessary. Cook until the beans are tender and most of the stock is absorbed. Remove bay leaf. Add salt to taste. Serves 4-6 as a main dish, 6-8 as a side dish.

Creole Spice Blend

- 1 teaspoon fennel seed
- 1 teaspoon coriander seed
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 1/2 teaspoon whole white peppercorns

Combine all the ingredients in a coffee grinder or spice mill. Process until smooth and uniform. Store in a tightly lidded jar in a dark place. Good for anything that needs a bit of a boost: beans, seafood, rice, meats, soups, and stews.