

Recipes from *Bittersweet*

China Bayles #23

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Leatha's Venison Chili

If venison isn't available, or if you prefer, substitute beef stew meat or ground beef (chili ground).

4 tablespoons oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 tablespoons dark brown sugar
4 cups red wine
4 tablespoons red wine or balsamic vinegar
1 (6 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or more, to taste)
1/2 teaspoon chili powder (or more, to taste)
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon oregano
6-8 dried juniper berries
salt to taste
4 tablespoons oil
10 slices cooked bacon, diced
2 pounds venison stew meat, trimmed and finely diced
2 (15 ounce) cans black or red beans, with liquid

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the onion and garlic and sauté for 3-4 minutes. Stir in brown sugar, red wine, vinegar, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, cumin, cayenne pepper, chili powder, cinnamon, oregano, juniper berries, and salt. Simmer for 15-30 minutes, until reduced by about half. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Stir in the diced bacon and fry until browned. Add the venison, mixing with the bacon, and sauté until the venison is cooked through, about 15 minutes. Transfer meat to the tomato sauce. Stir in beans, mixing thoroughly. Simmer for 20-25 minutes. Serves 8.

China's Cabbage and Sausage Soup

4 tablespoons oil, divided
1 onion, diced
2 garlic cloves, sliced
1 carrot, diced
1/2 green pepper, seeded and diced
1/2 medium head cabbage, chopped
6 cups water
1 1/4 tablespoon dried juniper berries, finely crushed, or substitute 3-4 fresh whole berries
2 bay leaves
1 pound mild Italian sausage, crumbled
1/4 cup chopped parsley
salt and pepper to taste

In a medium-sized, heavy bottom pot, heat 2 tablespoons oil. Add onions, garlic, carrot, green pepper, and cabbage. Sauté until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Add water, juniper berries, and bay leaves, bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium low and simmer for 20 minutes. In a skillet, heat 2 tablespoons oil. Add crumbled sausage and brown. Add to cabbage mixture. Stir in parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for 10 minutes. Remove bay leaves and whole juniper berries (if used). Serves four.

Sue Ellen's Lemon-Rosemary Sticky Rolls

1 7.5-ounce tube refrigerated crescent rolls
1 cup granulated sugar
1/4 teaspoon allspice
zest of 2 lemons
1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 tablespoons softened butter or margarine

2 ounces cream cheese, softened
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 cup confectioner's sugar

Remove the crescent rolls from the package and open each one. Mix the sugar, allspice, lemon zest, and rosemary with a spoon or your fingers. Add the lemon juice and margarine and mix very well. Spread evenly over the opened rolls and reroll each one, not too tightly. Bake at 375° for 11-13 minutes, or until brown. Glaze with lemon-cream cheese glaze.

To make glaze: mix cream cheese, lemon juice, and confectioner's sugar. Drizzle over rolls.

Orange-Ginger Carrots

3/4 cup water
1 pound peeled baby carrots
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1/4 cup orange marmalade
1 teaspoon ground ginger
3 tablespoons candied ginger (optional)
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
Salt and pepper

In a medium saucepan over high heat, combine 3/4 cup water and carrots. Cover, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-high. Shake pan occasionally until carrots are tender, about 7-8 minutes. Drain. Return carrots to pan over medium heat. Add butter, marmalade, ginger, nutmeg, and candied ginger (optional). Cook, stirring, until marmalade mixture coats carrots, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle with parsley, and add salt and pepper to taste.

Slaw with Pickled Beets and Apples

2 cups chopped green cabbage, chopped
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and chopped
1/2 cup chopped sweet onion
1/2 cup diced sweet red bell pepper

1/2 cup chopped pickled beets
1/2 teaspoon caraway seeds, lightly crushed
1 tablespoon pickled beet juice
4 tablespoons mayonnaise

Place the first 5 ingredients in a bowl and mix well. In a separate bowl, stir together caraway seeds, pickled beet juice, and mayonnaise. Add to cabbage mixture and stir all together. Refrigerate at least half an hour before serving.

Rosemary Stuffing

This recipe makes enough to stuff a 10-12 pound turkey. It can be doubled, for a larger bird.

4 tablespoons butter
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery
2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage
2 sprigs minced fresh thyme
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
2 teaspoons minced (very fine) fresh rosemary
1 additional teaspoon olive oil, if needed
1 loaf sliced bread, cubed
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
2 - 2 1/2 cups chicken broth
Salt and pepper, to taste

In a large skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. Add onion and celery and sauté for about 5 minutes. Add the herbs. If the mixture seems dry, add olive oil.

Put cubed bread in a large bowl. Add sautéed mixture and toss. Add about half of the chicken broth and toss to coat as much as you can. Add the dried cranberries and the nuts and toss. Gradually add most or all the remaining broth until the stuffing begins to hold together but isn't soggy. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Stuff the bird loosely and bake. Place remaining stuffing in an oiled casserole dish, cover with foil, and bake at 350° for 20 minutes. For a crispy top, remove foil and bake 10-15 minutes longer.

Leatha's Peach Pie

The bourbon cream topping is tasty on any fruit pie, cobbler, compote, or crisp.

Unbaked shell and top crust for 2-crust 9" pie
4 cups sliced peaches
1 1/2 tablespoons flour
3/4 cup brown sugar
1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
1 egg, beaten
1 tablespoon raw sugar

Bourbon cream

1 cup whipping cream
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon bourbon

Preheat oven to 400°. In a bowl, gently mix peaches, flour, brown sugar, lemon juice, and rosemary. Place in pie shell, cover with top crust, and crimp to seal. Brush top crust with beaten egg, sprinkle with raw sugar. Transfer the pie to the oven and place a baking sheet in the bottom to catch any drips. Bake at 400° for 30 minutes. Reduce to 375°, cover the pie's edges with foil, and bake for about 40 minutes longer. Serve warm with Bourbon Whipped Cream.

To make Bourbon Whipped Cream, use an electric mixer to beat all ingredients together until cream is thickened.

Herb Quiche

9-inch unbaked pie shell
3 eggs, slightly beaten
2 cups warm milk
3/4 cup grated Swiss cheese
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1/2 cup cooked, drained, chopped spinach
1/2 cup sautéed mushrooms
3 tablespoons fresh snipped chives
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, minced
1 teaspoon fresh parsley, minced
salt and pepper to taste
leaves of fresh greens (kale, arugula, lettuce) and fresh chive blossoms for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Spread the grated cheese evenly in the bottom of the pie shell. Mix the spinach, mushrooms, and herbs and spoon over the cheese. Pour the milk-and-egg mixture over all. Dot the top with butter or margarine. Place the pie plate on a cookie sheet and bake until set, about 30-35 minutes. Remove when the outside is set and the middle still jiggles when shaken. Let stand 10-15 minutes before slicing.

Cass's Chai Tea Cookies

“Chai” (or “masala chai”) is a term that describes black tea brewed with a variety of aromatic spices and consumed in Asia and Africa. For this recipe, you may use any chai mix you prefer, purchased or homemade. If you use bags, just cut the bags open. The added cardamom, cinnamon, and allspice will lend additional flavor and fragrance, but may be omitted.

1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup powdered sugar
1 tablespoon ground chai tea mix
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom, optional
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, optional
1/4 teaspoon allspice

1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened

In a mortar and pestle or herb grinder, grind the chai tea mix. (If you use bags, you may need to open 2-3). In a bowl, combine the ground tea, flour, sugar, powdered sugar, and salt and mix thoroughly. Add the vanilla and butter and mix until a dough forms. (Your electric mixer will make short work of this job.) Form the dough into a log 8 to 9-inches long and wrap in waxed or parchment paper. Freeze or chill for at least 30 minutes.

To bake, preheat oven to 375°F. Slice dough into cookies 1/3" thick. Place on parchment-lined baking sheet and bake until the edges begin to brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks. Store in an airtight container. Makes about 30 cookies.