

Rainy Spring Days

I enjoy nothing better than a rainy spring day, especially if it's on a Sunday. That means I can kick back, relax, and do absolutely nothing. Rather than look at rainy days as a missed chance to work in the yard or garden, I try to see it as an opportunity to share some easily-prepared food with friends or family – and then enjoy an unscheduled day, doing whatever the mood dictates. Try it – you'll like it!

Roasted Chicken Nicoise Salad

How about a simple French-inspired salad that features chicken, beans, olives, egg and potatoes. Or, you could substitute cooked salmon for the chicken. Makes 4 servings, adjustable as needed.

Ingredients:

- 2 boneless skin-on chicken breasts (about 2 lbs.)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil divided salt and black pepper
- 1 lb. fingerling potatoes halved
- 1 lb. fresh green beans
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh herbs such as dill, parsley, chives
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes halved
- 4 hard cooked eggs halved
- 1/4 cup Nicoise

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Rub chicken with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil; sprinkle both sides some salt and pepper. Place chicken on a rimmed baking sheet lined with lightly oiled foil; set aside. Toss together potatoes, 1 tablespoon of the oil, a little salt, and pepper on another rimmed baking sheet lined with foil. Bake both chicken and potatoes in preheated oven 25 minutes (may use 1 large baking sheet instead if roomy enough). Toss the green beans with a little salt and the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and add them to the pan with potatoes. Stir, continuing to cook both pans until chicken is cooked through, potatoes are tender and green beans are crisp-tender, about 10 minutes. Remove pans from oven, let chicken rest 10 minutes, then slice into 1/2 to 3/4-inch slices. While chicken rests, whisk together lemon juice, vinegar, herbs, mustard and sugar; season with a little salt and pepper and whisk until combined. Arrange chicken, potatoes, beans, tomatoes, egg halves and olives on 4 plates. Drizzle each with some of the salad dressing; serve remaining dressing alongside.

Grilled Ham & Egg Sandwiches

This variation of ham and egg salad sandwich is reminiscent of the popular Croque-Monsieur battered sandwich served in many restaurants. Makes 6 servings.

Ingredients:

- 6 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 cup diced cooked ham
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon minced onion
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard salt and pepper
- 12 slices whole wheat bread

Batter:

- 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups milk
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten

Combine all egg salad ingredients except bread; spread on six slices of the bread. Top with remaining bread and set aside. In a bowl, whisk batter ingredients together until well blended. Heat a small amount of oil in a large skillet. Dip sandwiches into batter. Fry in oil for 3 minutes on each side, or until golden brown; drain on paper towels, then serve hot.

Sweet Potato Brunch Casserole

Nice to serve with a salad of mixed greens and/or fruit for lunch or brunch. If you want to make it meatless, use packaged frozen vegetarian sausage links. Makes 8 servings.

Ingredients:

- 8 oz. frozen sausage links or patties
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 lb. sweet potatoes peeled and shredded (4 cups)
- 3 tablespoons melted butter
- 8 eggs lightly beaten
- 1 (16 oz.) container small-curd cottage cheese
- 10 to 12 oz. shredded cheddar, mozzarella or Swiss cheese
- 1-1/2 cups fresh spinach leaves shredded
- 1/4 cup finely minced onion

Preheat oven to 375 degrees; lightly grease a 9x13-inch baking dish. Place sausage in a skillet with water; bring to boil,

reduce heat and cook until water is evaporated and sausage is evenly browned, 10-12 minutes. Crumble or chop sausage and set aside. Stir together shredded sweet potatoes and butter in a bowl; press evenly into bottom of prepared baking dish. Stir together eggs, cottage cheese, shredded cheese, spinach, onion, and crumbled sausage in a large bowl; spread evenly over sweet potato layer. Bake until top is golden brown and eggs are set, about 35-40 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

Cooking Corner

with Nancy Adams



Dinner-In for Two

Enjoy a classic steak house dinner for two (or four) in your own kitchen. For a festive atmosphere, prepare your favorite grilled steak and load it onto a large wooden plank or carving board with the other meal items.

Ingredients:

- grilled, pan-seared, or oven-roasted steak of choice
- pan-roasted fingerling or other small potatoes, tossed with olive oil and herbs
- salad of wedges of iceberg lettuce with chilled blue cheese dressing
- halved cherry tomatoes, mixture of red and yellow chilled shrimp with cocktail sauce

Rhubarb Pudding-Cake

Since spring is the time to enjoy fresh rhubarb, try this old-time version of pudding-cake that makes its own sauce. 8-10 servings

Ingredients:

- 5 cups sliced rhubarb
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1-1/4 cups unbleached white flour
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1-1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/4 cup butter melted
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1-1/4 cups boiling water

In a 3-qt. rectangular baking dish, mix rhubarb and 1/4 cup sugar. Mix white flour, 1/2 cup sugar, whole wheat flour, pecans, baking powder, spices, and salt. Stir in milk and butter. Spread batter evenly over rhubarb. In a bowl, mix remaining sugar and cornstarch. Add boiling water; stir until sugar dissolves. Slowly pour over batter. Bake in 375 degree oven about 45 minutes or until top tests done. (Cover the last 10 minutes to prevent over-browning if necessary.) Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream if desired.

Nancy Adams is a native of Peterborough and resides in Hancock. She and her husband, Bud, have raised four sons. She has been featured as one of Yankee Magazine's great New England cooks. Nancy welcomes suggestions – send them to: Nancy P. Adams, PO Box 23, Hancock, NH 03449.

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