

Even though Minnesota is far from New Orleans, the spirit Mardi Gras is still celebrated this far north. This week's recipes are just a sampling of all the good eats one can find in Louisiana.

Let us know if there is something you would like us to put in our column, or if you have a recipe to share, please submit to ads@thedrummer.com.

Bananas Foster

Hands On Time: 10 mins

Total Time: 10 mins

Yields: 4-6 servings

4 med.-size ripe bananas
1/2 c. butter
1 c. packed light brown sugar
Dash of ground cinnamon
1/4 c. banana liqueur
1/2 c. rum
Vanilla ice cream

Cut bananas in half crosswise, then lengthwise. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add brown sugar, and cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes. Add bananas to skillet, and sprinkle with cinnamon. Remove skillet from heat. Stir in liqueur and rum, and carefully ignite the fumes just above mixture with a long match. Let flames die down.

Return to heat and cook 3 to 4 minutes or until soft. Serve over ice cream.

Crawfish Dip

Hands On Time: 15 mins

Total Time: 1 hrs

Yield: Serves 10

2 T. salted butter
1/2 c. diced green bell pepper
1 small yellow onion, diced (about 1 c.)
1/2 c. diced celery
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1 jalapeno chile, diced
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. black pepper
2 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. cayenne pepper
1-lb. frozen peeled crawfish tails, thawed according to package directions
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
2 c. grated extra-sharp Cheddar cheese (about 8 oz.)
1/4 c. heavy whipping cream
2 T. Creole mustard
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
2 tsp. hot sauce (adjust more or less to taste)
2 T. fresh lemon juice
2 T. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
Crackers, toasted baguette slices

Melt butter in a large sauté pan or skillet over medium. Add bell pepper, onion, celery, garlic, jalapeño, salt, and black pepper, and cook 6 minutes. Add paprika and cayenne pepper and cook 1 more minute.

Place crawfish, cream cheese, Cheddar cheese, and cream in a 6-quart slow cooker. Stir in bell pepper mixture, Creole mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and hot sauce. Cover and cook on HIGH 45 minutes. Reduce heat to WARM. Stir in lemon juice and parsley; serve with crackers or toasted baguette slices.

Chicken Jambalaya

2 T. butter
1/3 c. chopped celery
1/4 c. chopped onion
1/4 c. chopped green bell pepper
1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes
1-1/2 c. chicken broth
2/3 c. white rice
1 tsp. dried thyme
1/2 tsp. garlic salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce (adjust more or less to taste)
1 bay leaf

2 c. cooked, cubed chicken meat

Melt butter or margarine in a large skillet over medium low heat. Add celery, onion, and green bell pepper and sauté until tender. Stir in tomatoes, broth, rice, thyme or basil, garlic salt, ground black pepper, hot pepper sauce and bay leaf.

Bring all to a boil; reduce heat, cover skillet and simmer for about 20 minutes or until rice is tender. Stir in chicken or turkey and cook until heated through. Discard bay leaf and serve hot. Serves 4.

Grits 'N' Sausage Casserole

Prep Time: 30 min.

Bake Time: 1-1/4 hours

Yield: 12 servings.

3 c. water

1 c. quick-cooking grits

3/4 tsp. salt, divided

2 pounds bulk pork sausage, cooked and drained

2 c. shredded cheddar cheese, divided

3 large eggs

1-1/2 c. whole milk

2 T. butter, melted

Pepper to taste

In a saucepan, bring water to a boil. Slowly whisk in the grits and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.

In a large bowl, combine grits, sausage and 1-1/2 cups cheese. Beat the eggs and milk; stir into grits mixture. Add the butter, pepper and remaining salt.

Transfer to a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Bake, uncovered, at 350° until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, about 1 hour. Sprinkle with remaining cheese; bake 15 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand for 5 minutes before cutting.

Shrimp, Sausage, and Black Bean Pasta Recipe

Active: 40 mins

Slow-Cook: 6 hrs

Total: 6 hrs 40 mins

Yield: Serves 6

1 lb. dried black beans

3-1/2 T. canola oil, divided

2-3/4 c. chopped yellow onion, divided

2 c. chopped red bell pepper, divided

3 thick-cut bacon slices (about 4 oz.), chopped (opt.)

5 tsp. chopped garlic, divided

1 jalapeño chile, halved lengthwise

6 c. lower-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth

2-1/4 tsp. kosher salt, divided

1 tsp. light brown sugar

1 tsp. ground cumin

1/2 tsp. black pepper

1/2 tsp. chopped fresh oregano

8 oz. andouille sausage, diced

1 lb. peeled and deveined large raw shrimp

1 tsp. Cajun seasoning

12 oz. uncooked casarecce pasta

4 T. unsalted butter

2 T. fresh lemon juice

1/4 cup sliced scallions

Rinse and sort beans according to package directions. Heat 1-1/2 teaspoons canola oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add 1-3/4 cups chopped onion, 1 cup chopped bell pepper, and, if desired, bacon; cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are tender, about 8 minutes. Add 3 teaspoons chopped garlic, and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 30 seconds.

Transfer onion mixture to a 6-quart slow cooker; add beans, jalapeño, chicken (or vegetable) broth, 1-1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, brown sugar, cumin, pepper, and oregano. Cover and cook on LOW until beans are tender, about 6 hours.

Heat 1 tablespoon canola oil in a large skillet over medium-high and cook sausage until browned, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer sausage to a plate. Add 1 tablespoon canola oil, shrimp, and Cajun seasoning to skillet. Cook until shrimp are opaque, 1 to 2 minutes per side. Remove shrimp to plate with sausage.

Cook pasta in salted water according to package directions; drain. Meanwhile, add 1 tablespoon canola oil; 2 teaspoon chopped garlic, 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt; and 1 cup chopped yellow onion and 1 cup chopped red bell pepper to skillet, and cook until tender, about 6 minutes. Remove from heat.

Add sausage, shrimp, 1-1/2 cups drained and rinsed black beans, hot cooked pasta, unsalted butter, and fresh lemon juice. Toss until butter is melted and pasta is evenly coated, about 3 minutes. Garnish with sliced scallions.

Mini King Cake Cupcakes

*Prep: 15 mins
Rise: 1 hr 30 mins
Bake: 20 mins
Total: 2 hrs 5 mins
Yield: 1 dozen*

1/2 c. warm whole milk (110°)
2 (1/4-oz.) packages dry yeast
1/3 c. sugar, divided
1/2 c. unsalted butter, melted
3 egg yolks
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
1/2 tsp. lemon zest
3 tsp. fresh lemon juice, divided
1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 c. cake flour
1 T. ground cinnamon, divided
1/4 tsp. kosher salt
1 large egg, lightly beaten
1 c. powdered sugar
1-1/2 T. hot water
Purple, green, and yellow sugar sprinkles

Combine milk, yeast, and 1/4 cup sugar in a bowl. Stir well, and set in a warm place for about 10 minutes. In another bowl, combine butter and next 3 ingredients; stir in 2 teaspoons lemon juice.

Combine flours, 2 teaspoons cinnamon, and kosher salt in a large mixing bowl. Add milk mixture and butter mixture, and beat, adding 1 to 2 tablespoons flour if dough is too sticky, until dough is smooth and forms a shaggy mass. (It should remain soft.)

Place dough in a well-greased bowl, turning to grease top. Cover with a kitchen towel, and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down, and place on a lightly floured surface. Roll dough into a 12-x 8-inch rectangle. Combine remaining 1 teaspoon cinnamon and 4 teaspoons sugar, and sprinkle evenly over dough. Roll dough into a log, and cut into 12 equal pieces. Place pieces into paper baking cups in a muffin pan; let rest 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 375°. Brush cupcake tops with beaten egg, and bake 20 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool on wire rack. Combine powdered sugar, water, and remaining 1 teaspoon lemon juice in a small bowl. Drizzle over cooled cupcakes, and top with sprinkles. Makes 1 dozen.

Mini Muffulettas

*Hands-On: 25 mins
Total: 25 mins
Yield: Makes 12 servings*

2 (16-oz.) jars mixed pickled vegetables
3/4 c. pimiento-stuffed Spanish olives, chopped
2 T. bottled olive oil-and-vinegar dressing
12 small dinner rolls, cut in half
6 Swiss cheese slices, cut in half
12 thin deli ham slices
12 Genoa salami slices
6 provolone cheese slices, cut in half

Pulse pickled vegetables in food processor 8 to 10 times or until finely chopped. Stir in olives and dressing.

Spread 1 heaping tablespoonful pickled vegetable mixture over cut side of each roll bottom. Top each with 1 Swiss cheese slice half, 1 ham slice, 1 salami slice, 1 provolone cheese slice half, and roll tops. Cover with plastic wrap. Serve immediately, or chill until ready to serve.

New Orleans Beignets

1 (1/4-oz.) envelope active dry yeast
1-1/2 c. warm water (105° to 115°), divided
8 T. granulated sugar
1 c. evaporated milk
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 tsp. salt
4 T. vegetable shortening
7 c. bread flour
Vegetable oil
Sifted powdered sugar

Yeast Mixture: In stand mixer bowl, mix together 1 packet of yeast with 1/2 cup warm water. Add granulated sugar, stir, and let sit for 5 minutes until foamy. Add eggs, salt, evaporated milk, and sugar.

Dough: In a separate bowl, mix together shortening and hot water until melted. Add shortening mixture to yeast mixture along with 4 cups bread flour. Using hook attachment, mix until smooth. Gradually add 3 cups more bread flour, and beat until a sticky dough forms. Transfer to a lightly greased bowl, turning dough to grease entire surface. Once complete, cover and refrigerate for 4 to 24 hours.

Beignets: Fill Dutch oven with 2 to 3 inches of vegetable oil. Heat to 350°F to 360°F. Roll dough to 1/4-inch thickness, cut into 2-1/2-inch squares, and fry in oil until browned and puffy (2 minutes each side). Drain on paper towels. Immediately dust with powdered sugar.

Quote of the Week:

“History teaches that war begins when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap.”

~ Ronald Reagan