

This time of year can leave you with less time to get supper on the table. With school in session, mornings are a rush getting the kids off to school. Then there are fall sports and other after-school activities. This week we have some recipes for those with little time.

This week, we also have a submitted recipe from Val Botzet. 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.

Two-Ingredient Easy Banana Pancakes

Level: Easy

Total: 25 min

Prep: 5 min

Cook: 20 min

Yield: 30 silver-dollar pancakes

2 lg. eggs
1 lg. banana
1/4 tsp. pumpkin pie spice, opt.

Blend the eggs, banana, and pumpkin pie spice, if using, in a blender until smooth.

Heat a large nonstick skillet or griddle over medium-low heat. Working in batches, drop silver-dollar portions of the batter (about 1 tablespoon) onto the skillet and cook until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes per side.

Cook's Note: If using a regular skillet or griddle, melt 1 tablespoon butter in the skillet before cooking the pancakes. Add additional butter if needed between batches, about 1 tablespoon more.

Cinnamon Baked French Toast

Level: Easy

Total: 13 hr

Prep: 15 min

Inactive: 12 hr

Cook: 45 min

Yield: 12 servings

French Toast:

Butter, for greasing
1 loaf crusty sourdough or French bread
8 whole eggs
2 c. whole milk
1/2 c. whipping (heavy) cream
1/2 c. granulated sugar
1/2 c. brown sugar
2 T. vanilla extract

Topping:

1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 c. firmly packed brown sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
Freshly grated nutmeg
1 stick cold butter, cut into pieces, plus more for serving
Warm pancake syrup, for serving
1 c. fresh blueberries, for serving

Special equipment: 9-by-13-inch baking pan

For the French toast: Grease the baking pan with butter. Tear the bread into chunks, or cut into cubes, and evenly distribute in the pan. Crack the eggs in a big bowl. Whisk together the eggs, milk, cream, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla. Pour evenly over the bread. Cover the pan tightly and store in the fridge until needed (overnight preferably).

For the topping: Mix the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, and some nutmeg in a separate bowl. Stir together using a fork. Add the butter, and with a pastry cutter mix it all together until the mixture resembles fine pebbles. Store in a re-sealable plastic bag in the fridge.

When you're ready to bake the casserole, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Remove the casserole from the fridge and sprinkle the topping over the top. Bake for 45 minutes for a softer, more bread pudding texture or for 1 hour or more for a firmer, crisper texture.

Scoop out individual portions. Top with butter and drizzle with warm pancake syrup and sprinkle with blueberries.

Air Fryer Steak with Garlic-Herb Butter

Level: Easy
Total: 30 min
Active: 10 min
Yield: 2 servings

1 (1 lb.) sirloin steak, about 1" thick
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper
4 T. unsalted butter, at room temp.
1 T. finely chopped fresh parsley
1 T. finely chopped fresh chives
1 sm. clove garlic, finely grated
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

Special equipment: a 3.5-quart air fryer

Allow the steak to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes before cooking.

Preheat a 3.5-quart air fryer to 400 degrees F. Season the steak on both sides with a generous pinch of salt and several grinds of black pepper. Place the steak in the center of the air fryer basket and cook until desired doneness, about 10 minutes for medium-rare, 12 minutes for medium and 14 minutes for medium-well. Transfer the steak to a cutting board and allow to rest, about 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, mash together the butter, parsley, chives, garlic and crushed red pepper in a small bowl until combined. Slice the steak against the grain into 1/4-inch-thick pieces. Top with the garlic-herb butter.

Chicken Nuggets

Level: Easy
Total: 25 min
Active: 25 min
Yield: 2 to 4 servings

1 c. all-purpose flour
1 T. seasoned salt
Salt & freshly ground black pepper
2 lg. eggs
2 c. seasoned breadcrumbs
2 chicken breasts, cut into small pieces
Vegetable oil, for frying
Ketchup, for serving

In a plastic bag, mix the flour, seasoned salt and some salt and pepper. In a bowl, mix the eggs with 2 tablespoons water. In a separate bowl, add the breadcrumbs.

Shake the chicken pieces in the bag to coat. In batches, dip them in the egg wash, then in the breadcrumbs.

Heat about 2 inches of vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat until a few breadcrumbs dropped in the oil start to sizzle immediately. Fry the chicken, in batches if needed, until golden brown and cooked through, a couple minutes per side. Drain on a paper towel and serve with ketchup.

Parmesan Fish Sticks

Level: Easy
Total: 45 min
Active: 25 min
Yield: 5 servings

2 T. olive oil
2 lbs. cod or haddock fillets
1 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 c. plain breadcrumbs
1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley leaves
4 T. salted butter, melted
1/2 c. grated Parmesan
3 lg. eggs
Ketchup, for serving

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F. Grease a sheet pan with the olive oil.

Cut the fish fillets into 2-1/2-inch-long and 1-inch-wide strips.
Combine the flour, salt, and pepper in a shallow bowl. Set aside.
Combine the breadcrumbs, parsley, and butter with a fork in a separate shallow bowl. Add the Parmesan and stir to combine.
Beat the eggs in a third bowl.
Bread the fish by giving the strips a good coating of the seasoned flour. Tap off any excess. Dip in the beaten eggs until coated. Roll the egg-coated fish in the crumb mixture. If need be, press the breadcrumbs into the fish. Place on the oiled sheet pan.
Bake for 10 minutes, then flip the fish sticks and continue cooking until the breading is deep golden and the fish is cooked through, about another 8 minutes.
Serve with ketchup.

Pork and Vegetable Bowl

Level: Easy
Total: 25 min
Active: 25 min
Yield: 4 servings

2 T. olive oil
3 med. carrots, shredded (about 1 c.)
3 scallions, thinly sliced, white & green parts separated
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp. finely grated peeled fresh ginger (from a 1" pc.)
1 lb. ground pork
1/2 c. chicken broth
4 T. honey
3 T. rice wine vinegar
2 T. low-sodium soy sauce
2 pinches crushed red pepper flakes
2 c. finely shredded Napa cabbage (about 4.5 oz.)
2 c. finely shredded red cabbage (about 6 oz.)
Black & white sesame seeds, for serving
Sriracha, opt., for serving

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the carrots, scallion whites, bell pepper, 1 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of black pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables just start to soften but are still bright in color, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook, stirring occasionally, until just softened, about 1 minute. Add the pork, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of black pepper and cook, breaking up the pork with a spoon and stirring occasionally, until no longer pink, 5 to 6 minutes.

Stir in the chicken broth, 2 tablespoons of the honey, 2 tablespoons of the vinegar, soy sauce and 1 pinch of red pepper flakes, then gently fold in the cabbages and bring to a simmer. Continue to cook, stirring carefully so that the cabbage doesn't fall out of the pan, until the liquid is completely absorbed and the cabbage is wilted and softened, 4 to 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, mix the remaining 2 tablespoons honey, 1 tablespoon vinegar and pinch of red pepper flakes together in a small bowl. Divide the pork mixture among 4 bowls and spoon 1 tablespoon honey sauce over the top. Sprinkle with the scallion greens and sesame seeds and drizzle with sriracha if using.

Refrigerator Pickled Beets

Prep Time: 10 min
Chill: 1 day
Total Time: 1 day 10 min
Yield: 8 servings
Submitted by Val Botzet

4 med. roasted beets, cooled, peeled, & sliced
1 c. cider vinegar
1 c. water
1/3 c. granulated sugar
1 tsp. kosher salt
1/4 tsp. (dry) ground mustard
5 whole black peppercorns

Bring the vinegar, water, sugar, salt, and mustard to a boil in a medium saucepan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Simmer for a few minutes; take off the heat and allow to cool a bit.

Add peppercorns and beets to a clean glass jar with a tight-fitting lid. (This particular recipe fits nicely into a 1-liter sized jar.) Pour the brine in, covering all the beets.

Cover and set aside for several hours (or up to 24), then transfer to the refrigerator.

Chocolate Cake in a Mug

Level: Easy

Total: 15 min

Active: 10 min

Yield: 1 serving

3 T. all-purpose flour
3 T. sugar
2 T. cocoa powder
1/4 tsp. baking powder
Pinch of salt, opt.
3 T. milk
3 T. vegetable oil
Splash vanilla extract, opt.
3 T. chocolate chips

Special equipment: a 12-ounce microwave-safe ceramic mug and a microwave oven

Put the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder and salt, if using, in a 12-ounce microwave-safe ceramic mug. Blend thoroughly with a fork. Add the milk, vegetable oil and vanilla, if using, and blend until smooth. Stir in the chocolate chips.

Microwave on high for 90 seconds. Do not overcook or the cake will be dry. Let cool for 2 to 3 minutes before eating.

Apple Bread

Level: Easy

Total: 2 hr 20 min (includes resting and cooling times)

Active: 30 min

Yield: 8 to 10 servings

5 sm. McIntosh apples, peeled & cut into rough 1/4" chunks (about 4 c.)
1-1/2 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
Cooking spray
2 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
1/2 tsp. fine salt
2/3 c. vegetable oil
2 lg. eggs
1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Special equipment: a 10-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pan

Work the apples, sugar, and lemon zest together in a large bowl with your hands until the sugar feels like wet sand. Let the mixture sit, tossing occasionally, for 30 minutes (the sugar will have started to melt but will still be gritty).

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Generously coat a 10-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Sift the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt together onto a large piece of parchment. Whisk together the oil, eggs, and vanilla in a medium bowl.

Once the apples are ready, add the flour mixture to them, and fold until combined. Pour in the oil mixture, and fold until just combined (it's OK if there are a few lumps). Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan. Tap the pan on the counter a few times to settle and even out the batter.

Bake the bread until the top is golden brown and bounces back when pressed (if you insert a toothpick into the center, it's OK if there are a few crumbs), 55 to 60 minutes. Let cool in the pan on a cooling rack until cool enough to handle. Invert the bread out of the pan and serve warm or at room temperature.

Quote of the Week:

"I cannot make my days longer, so I strive to make them better."

- Henry David Thoreau

(End of summer quote)