

The air is cooling, the pumpkins are ready - it is Fall. This is a great time for making soup to ward off the chill. We also have a few recipes for the Fall produce.

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.

Crock Pot Zuppa Toscana

Total Time: 6 hrs. 20 min.

• Yield: 6 servings

Drummer Test Kitchen Recipe

5 slices thick cut bacon, chopped into ½" pieces
1 (20 oz.) package hot Italian sausage, casings removed
1-1/2 c. chopped yellow onion (about 1/2 of a jumbo onion)
1 T. freshly minced garlic
1 (32 oz.) container chicken broth
2 c. water
4 med. russet potatoes (about 1-1/2 lbs.), peeled & cut into about 1" pieces (or unpeeled by cleaning, rinsing and cut into 1" pieces)
1 tsp. salt (more or less, to taste)
1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper (more or less, to taste)
2 tsp. granulated sugar
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
2 c. heavy cream
3 c. tightly packed chopped kale with large stems removed
Freshly grated Parmesan for topping, if desired

Fry bacon and sausage in a large skillet over medium high heat until cooked and sausage is browned (about 7-8 minutes), crumbling sausage as it cooks. Add onion and garlic and cook for an additional minute.

Drain off grease. Transfer mixture to 6 quart slow cooker insert. Add chicken broth, water, potatoes, salt, pepper, sugar and nutmeg. Stir to combine. Cover and cook on high for 3-4 hours or low for 5-6 hours.

Add heavy cream and kale and stir to combine. Cover and cook on high for an additional 30 minutes.

Serve topped with freshly grated Parmesan, if desired.

Beanless Beef Chili

Level: Easy

Total: 2 hr

Cook: 2 hr

Yield: Serves 4

2 T. canola oil
1 (2-1/2 lb.) beef chuck roast, cut into 1/2" cubes
2 med. chopped yellow onions
1 T. chili powder
1/2 tsp. red pepper flakes
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 sm. chopped jalapeno pepper
1 T. chopped garlic
1 (28 oz.) can chopped tomatoes
1 c. beef broth
Kosher salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste

Spiced Sour Cream:

1/2 c. sour cream
1 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. lime juice
1 tsp. hot sauce
2 scallions, sliced
2 T. chopped fresh cilantro

Put a deep heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat and add the oil. Put in the beef, season with salt and pepper, and cook until it is well browned, about 10-15 minutes. Remove the meat to a bowl with a slotted spoon and discard the fat from the pan. Pour half the broth into the pan and scrape up any browned bits.

Pour this into the bowl of a slow cooker. Add the onions and put the meat on top. Add the chili seasoning, red pepper flakes, cinnamon, jalapeno, and garlic.

Add the tomatoes with their juice and the remaining broth. Cover and cook on low for 4-6 hours. Taste, and adjust the seasoning. Serve garnished with spiced sour cream.

Chicken Pot Pie Soup with Pie Crust Crackers

Prep: 15 min

Cook: 30 min

*Total: 45 min
Yield: 6 servings*

Pie Crust Crackers:

1 single pie crust or store-bought pie crust
2 T. butter melted
Maldon sea salt flakes or coarse kosher salt

Chicken Pot Pie Soup:

2 T. unsalted butter
2 T. olive oil
3 med. carrots peeled and diced
2 celery ribs diced
1 sweet yellow onion peeled & minced
2 cloves garlic minced
4 c. chicken stock or broth low sodium or unsalted
1/4 c. white wine semi-dry or dry
1 c. frozen petite or baby peas thawed
2 c. frozen shredded hash browns, thawed
3 c. rotisserie chicken meat cubed
1/4 c. heavy cream or half 'n half
1/2 to 1 teaspoon kosher salt or to taste
1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
2 bay leaves
1 tsp. Herbs de Provence
1/2 tsp. dried basil or 1 T. minced fresh basil
1/2 tsp. dried thyme or 1 T. minced fresh thyme

For the Pie Crust Crackers: Preheat oven to 400°F. Allow piecrust to warm to room temperature, 15-20 minutes. Unroll crust and use the spiked surface of a meat tenderizer (or something comparable) to lightly press a dotted design into the dough. Small cookie stamps would work well, too.

Cut the dough into 2-inch discs and place on a rimmed baking sheet. Brush the topside of each disc with butter and sprinkle lightly with flake or coarse salt. Bake the crackers on the middle rack of a 400°F oven until golden brown and crispy, 6-8 minutes. Set aside until ready to serve.

For the Pot Pie Soup: Heat butter and oil, in a Dutch oven, over medium-high heat until it shimmers but before the butter browns. Add diced carrots and celery and cook for 3 minutes. Add minced onions and cook until onion is translucent. Add minced garlic and cook 30 seconds.

Stir in chicken stock and scrape the bottom of the pan to deglaze the pan. Stir in the white wine, peas and hash browns and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook the soup 10 minutes. Reduce heat to low and add chicken and cream. Stir.

Season with salt, and add the pepper, bay leaves, Herbs de Provence, basil, and thyme. Stir well and cover. Simmer the soup, over low heat, 30 minutes. *See note.

Discard the bay leaves. Serve with the pie crust crackers, and enjoy!

***NOTE:** If the soup is too thin, combine 2 tablespoons cornstarch with 2 tablespoons cold milk or water and stir to combine. Bring soup to a low boil, stirring occasionally, and cook a few minutes or just until soup thickens.

Curried Sweet Potato-Apple Soup

*Level: Easy
Total: 55 min
Prep: 20 min
Cook: 35 min
Yield: 4 servings*

3 med. sweet potatoes
3 T. unsalted butter
1 sm. onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, smashed
1 (2") pc. ginger, peeled & grated
1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg, plus more for garnish
1-1/2 tsp. curry powder
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
2 c. low-sodium chicken broth
1-1/4 c. chunky applesauce
1 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1 T. apple cider vinegar
1 to 2 T. chopped fresh cilantro

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Peel and dice 2 1/2 sweet potatoes. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in the ginger, nutmeg, 1 1/4 teaspoons curry powder, and salt and pepper to taste and cook until toasted, 1 more minute.

Add the diced sweet potatoes, chicken broth and 2 cups water to the pot, cover and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium low and stir in the applesauce. Simmer, covered, until the sweet potatoes are soft, about 20 minutes. Puree the soup with a blender until smooth. Season with salt and pepper; keep warm.

Meanwhile, peel and thinly slice the remaining 1/2 sweet potato and toss with the olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake until crisp, 7 to 10 minutes.

Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add the remaining 1/4 teaspoon curry powder and cook, stirring, until browned; remove from the heat and add the vinegar. Top with the curry butter, cilantro and sweet-potato chips.

Warm Kale Antipasto Salad

Level: Easy
Total: 30 min
Prep: 15 min
Cook: 15 min
Yield: 4 servings

2 red onions, halved & sliced
2 sm. Japanese eggplants, halved lengthwise & sliced
12 baby bell peppers (any color), halved
1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
3 T. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper
1 (5 oz.) pkg. baby kale or 8 c. chopped kale leaves
1 romaine lettuce heart, chopped
2 T. balsamic vinegar
1 crusty whole-wheat roll, cubed
2 oz. deli-sliced soppressata or salami (about 8 slices), cut into strips
2 oz. pecorino romano cheese, shaved

Preheat the broiler. Arrange the red onions, eggplant, bell peppers and tomatoes on a baking sheet; drizzle with 2 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Broil, turning halfway through, until the vegetables are soft and slightly charred, about 12 minutes. Combine the kale and romaine in a large bowl with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and the vinegar. Add the broiled vegetables and toss.

Make the croutons: Spread the bread cubes on the same baking sheet, season with salt and pepper and broil until golden, turning once, 1 to 2 minutes.

Divide the salad among bowls. Top with the soppressata, pecorino and croutons, drizzle with olive oil and gently toss.

Cheesecake-Stuffed Pumpkin Bread

Level: Easy
Total: 3 hr 45 min (includes cooling time)
Active: 25 min
Yield: 1 loaf

Cheesecake Swirl:

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, at room temp.
1/3 c. granulated sugar
1/4 c. sour cream
1 lg. egg

Pumpkin Bread:

Nonstick cooking spray
1-1/3 c. all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting the pan (see Cook's Note)
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
3/4 c. granulated sugar
1 c. pumpkin puree
1/3 c. vegetable oil
1 tsp. pumpkin pie spice
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 lg. egg
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

For the cheesecake swirl: Position an oven rack in the bottom third of the oven and preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Combine the cream cheese, granulated sugar, sour cream and egg in a large bowl and beat with a mixer until well combined; set aside.

For the pumpkin bread: Generously spray a 9-by-5-inch loaf pan with nonstick spray and dust with flour. Whisk together the flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl and set aside. Whisk together the granulated sugar and pumpkin puree in a large bowl, then whisk in the oil, pumpkin pie spice, vanilla and egg. Whisk in the flour mixture until just combined.

Reserve 1 cup of the pumpkin batter. Spread the remaining batter in the bottom of the prepared loaf pan. Spoon the cream cheese mixture over the pumpkin batter, then put the reserved pumpkin batter in a line down the center of the pan. Insert the tip of a paring knife into the batter and drag it through and up to swirl 5 to 6 times.

Bake until the top is cracked and a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean, 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 20 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 30 minutes, then carefully invert onto a platter or cake stand and flip upright. Let cool completely, at least 1 1/2 hours. Dust with confectioners' sugar and serve.

Cook's Note: When measuring flour, we spoon it into a dry measuring cup and level off the excess. (Scooping directly from the bag compacts the flour, resulting in dry baked goods.)

Quote of the Week:

“ I inherited that calm from my father, who was a farmer. You sow, you wait for good or bad weather, you harvest, but working is something you always need to do.”

- Miguel Indurain