

Leap Year!

Did you know that Leap Year babies are called "Leaplings?"

Another tale is that the 29th of February wasn't recognized by English Law, so the day had no legal status - it was a day that didn't legally exist. Well, we decided that if that day doesn't "legally exist," neither do the calories consumed on that day! Leap Year for the WIN!

Sunflower Seed & Honey Wheat Bread

Prep: 40 min+ rising

Bake: 35 min

Servings: 3 loaves

2 pkg. (1/4 oz. each) active dry yeast
3-1/4 C. warm water (110° to 115°F)
1/4 C. bread flour
1/3 C. canola oil
1/3 C. honey
3 tsp. salt
6-1/2 to 7-1/2 C. whole wheat flour
1/2 C. sunflower kernels
3 T. butter, melted

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add the bread flour, oil, honey, salt and 4 C. whole wheat flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in sunflower kernels and enough remaining flour to form a firm dough.

Turn onto a floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic, 6-8 minutes. Place in a greased bowl, turning once to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down; divide into 3 portions. Shape into loaves; place in 3 greased 8x4-in. loaf pans. Cover and let rise until doubled, about 30 minutes.

Bake at 350°F until golden brown, 35-40 minutes. Brush with melted butter. Remove from pans to wire racks to cool.

Honey Almond Butter

Prep: 10 min. + chilling

Servings: 1-1/2 C.

1 C. butter, softened
1/4 C. honey
1 T. brown sugar
1/2 tsp. almond extract

In a small bowl, beat the butter, honey, brown sugar and extract until light and fluffy. Transfer to a sheet of plastic wrap; roll into a log. Refrigerate until chilled. Unwrap and slice or place on a butter dish.

Lasagna Flatbread

Prep Time: 25 min

Cook Time: 15 min

Total Time: 40 min

Servings: 6

1 (15 oz.) container ricotta cheese
1 (8 oz.) package shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
1 (3 oz.) package Parmesan cheese
1 egg
2 tsp. Italian seasoning
1 lb. sausage
1/2 (26 oz.) jar marinara sauce
6 flatbreads

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Combine ricotta cheese, 1/2 of the mozzarella cheese, Parmesan cheese, egg, and Italian seasoning in a bowl.

Cook sausage in a skillet over medium heat until no longer pink, 5 to 10 minutes; drain. Stir in marinara sauce.

Spread 1/6 of the cheese mixture evenly on each flatbread; cover with sausage mixture. Top with remaining mozzarella cheese.

Bake in the preheated oven until cheese is melted and bubbly, 10 to 15 minutes.

Broccoli Slaw

Total Time: 15 minutes

Servings: 8

Salad dressing

3 T. red wine vinegar
1/4 C. extra virgin olive oil
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. smooth Dijon mustard
1 tsp. maple syrup
1/4 tsp. dried thyme

Salad

12 oz. pkg. broccoli slaw
1/2 C. dried cranberries
1/3 C. crumbled feta cheese
1 C. crumbled pita chips (whole wheat or plain)

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the salad dressing ingredients until combined.
Add the salad ingredients to the salad dressing. Gently toss in the salad dressing until covered. Serve!

Sheet-Pan Chipotle-Lime Shrimp Bake

Prep Time: 10 min
Bake Time: 40 min
Servings: 4

1-1/2 lbs. baby red potatoes, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
1 T. extra virgin olive oil
3/4 tsp. sea salt, divided
3 med. limes
1/4 C. unsalted butter, melted
1 tsp. ground chipotle pepper
1/2 lb. fresh asparagus, trimmed
1/2 lb. Broccolini or broccoli, cut into small florets
1 lb. uncooked shrimp (16-20 per pound), peeled and deveined
2 T. minced fresh cilantro

Preheat oven to 400°. Place potatoes in a greased 15x10x1-in. baking pan; drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon sea salt; stir to combine. Bake for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, squeeze 1/3 cup juice from limes, reserving fruit. Combine the lime juice, melted butter, chipotle and remaining sea salt.

Remove pan from the oven; stir potatoes. Arrange asparagus, Broccolini, shrimp and reserved limes on top of potatoes. Pour lime juice mixture over vegetables and shrimp.

Bake until shrimp turn pink and vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes longer. Sprinkle with minced fresh cilantro.

Confetti Goopy Butter Cake

Level: Easy
Total: 2 hr
(includes cooling time)
Active: 20 min
Servings: 10-12

Nonstick cooking spray, for the pan
One (15.25 oz.) box white cake mix
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
3 lg. egg whites
8 T. unsalted butter, melted and cooled

Filling:

One (8 oz.) package cream cheese, at room temperature
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
3 lg. egg whites
4 T. unsalted butter, melted and cooled
3 C. confectioners' sugar, plus more for dusting
1/2 C. multicolored sprinkles, plus more for garnish
Vanilla ice cream, for serving

For the crust: Preheat the oven to 350°F. Spray a 13-by-9-inch glass baking dish with cooking spray.

Combine the cake mix, vanilla and egg whites in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium speed until smooth, about 1 minute. Add the butter and mix just until combined. Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared baking dish.

For the filling: Beat the cream cheese in a clean mixer bowl with the paddle on medium speed until light and smooth, scraping the sides occasionally, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the vanilla and egg whites and beat until smooth. Add the butter and beat until smooth. Add the confectioners' sugar and beat on low speed to incorporate, and then beat on medium until light and smooth, about 1 minute. Stir in the sprinkles. Pour over the cake layer and smooth the top with a spatula.

Bake until the edges are puffed and golden brown and the center is just set, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool on a rack. Dust with confectioners' sugar and a scattering of sprinkles. To serve, cut into squares and top each serving with a scoop of ice cream.

Lemon Sour Cream Pound Cake

Prep Time: 20 min

Bake Time: 55 min. + cooling

Servings: 12

1 C. butter, softened
3 C. sugar
6 lg. eggs, room temperature
5 T. lemon juice
1 T. grated lemon zest
1 tsp. lemon extract
3 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. salt
1-1/4 C. sour cream

Icing:

1/4 C. sour cream, room temperature
2 T. butter, softened
2-1/2 C. confectioners' sugar
2 to 3 T. lemon juice
2 tsp. grated lemon zest
additional grated lemon zest, optional

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in lemon juice, zest and extract. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; add to the creamed mixture alternately with sour cream. Beat just until combined.

Pour into a greased and floured 10-in. fluted tube pan. Bake at 350° until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean, 55-60 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely.

For icing, in a small bowl, beat the sour cream and butter until smooth. Gradually add confectioners' sugar. Beat in lemon juice and zest. Drizzle over the cake. If desired, top with additional grated lemon zest. Store in the refrigerator.

Healthy Taco Popcorn

Level: Easy

Total: 20 min

Active: 15 min

Four 2-cup servings, plus leftover spice blend

Taco Spice Mix:

20 lg. sun-dried tomatoes (not oil-packed; about 3 ounces), cut into 1/4-inch strips
2 T. nutritional yeast
2 tsp. chili powder
2 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. dried oregano
Pinch cayenne pepper
Kosher salt

Popcorn:

1 tsp. olive oil
3 T. unsalted butter, melted
1/2 C. popcorn kernels

Make the Spice Mix: Put half the tomato strips in a single layer on a microwavable plate. Microwave in 30-second increments, checking the texture in between, until they begin to harden but are still red and slightly pliable, 1 to 2 minutes. (They may begin to brown and taste bitter if cooked too long.) Let sit until cool and completely hardened, about 2 minutes. Repeat with the remaining tomato strips.

Transfer the cooled tomato strips to a spice grinder, and grind to a powder. Discard any pieces that won't grind. Add the nutritional yeast, chili powder, cumin, oregano, cayenne and 1 teaspoon salt, and grind to a fine powder.

Make the taco popcorn: Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the popcorn kernels. When one pops, cover the pot, and cook, shaking the pot constantly, until the popping subsides to 1 pop every 20 seconds. Pour in the melted butter, and toss to coat. Add 2 heaping T. of taco spice and 1/2 tsp. salt, and toss again to coat.

Store the remaining taco spice blend at room temperature in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks. (You'll have enough to make 3 more batches of popcorn.)

Quote of the Week:

"I realized I had everything I ever wanted, but nothing I really needed."

~Amy Adams, 'Leap Year' (movie)