

TOO BUSY TO COOK?

Puree first 9 ingredients in blender.

Heat oil in heavy large skillet over high heat. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Add chicken to skillet; sauté until brown, about 2 minutes per side. Add sauce from blender. Reduce heat to medium. Simmer uncovered until chicken is cooked through, turning chicken over once, about 10 minutes. Using tongs, transfer chicken to work surface. Continue to simmer sauce until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes longer. Season sauce with salt and pepper.

Cut chicken crosswise into thin slices. Return to sauce and heat through.

SWEET CORN PUDDING

8 SIDE-DISH SERVINGS

- 4 cups frozen corn kernels (about 19 ounces), thawed
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup whipping cream
- ½ cup whole milk
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter 8x8x2-inch glass baking dish. Blend all ingredients in processor until almost smooth. Pour batter into prepared dish. Bake pudding until brown and center is just set, about 45 minutes. Cool 10 minutes; serve.

FRUIT AND NUT STRUDEL COOKIES

MAKES ABOUT 24

- 1¼ cups all purpose flour
- ½ cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- ½ cup chilled whipping cream
- 2 cups apricot preserves
- 2 cups flaked sweetened coconut
- 2 cups chopped walnuts
- 1 cup raisins

Using on/off turns, blend first 3 ingredients in processor until moist clumps form. Gather dough into ball; divide in half. Flatten each dough piece into thin rectangle. Wrap in plastic; chill until firm

enough to roll, about 15 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Roll out 1 dough piece on lightly floured surface to 14x10-inch rectangle. Spread with 1 cup preserves, then sprinkle with 1 cup coconut, 1 cup walnuts and ½ cup raisins. Starting at 1 long side, roll up dough jelly-roll style, enclosing filling. Push ends in to compress log to 12-inch length; seal ends. Transfer strudel to baking sheet, seam side down. Repeat with remaining dough and filling.

Bake strudels until golden, about 45 minutes. Slide spatula under hot strudels to loosen from sheet. Let cool on sheet. Cut strudels crosswise into ¾-inch-thick slices. (Store airtight for up to 3 days.)

GOOD
DBL. RECIPE MAKE) OVAL WHITE CASSAROLE (DO 2 BATCHES)
LUDY HARMON
Norcross, Georgia

I'm putting together a cookbook for busy people—like my two daughters—who heat up frozen dinners every night because they don't know how to cook.

Of course, I haven't always known how to cook either. My mother was terrible in the kitchen, so I had to learn on my own after getting married. Looking back, I realize that I've always been an adventurous cook, even when I was just a beginner. Armed with my Betty Crocker cookbook, I once fearlessly made duck à l'orange for my husband's boss before I'd ever even roasted a chicken.

Now I'm experienced enough to prepare meals from scratch, but because of my work schedule I still use shortcuts like mixes and bottled sauces to save time. And I'm also just as daring as ever when it comes to the kitchen.

SALMON, DILL AND CREAM CHEESE SPREAD

Use leftover poached or baked salmon. Canned red salmon that has been drained, skinned and boned also does the trick.

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

- 1½ cups flaked cooked salmon (about 6 ounces)
- 4 ounces cream cheese
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon prepared white horseradish

- 4 ounces smoked salmon
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- Thinly sliced baguette rounds

Combine first 4 ingredients in processor. Blend until just smooth, occasionally scraping down sides of work bowl. Add smoked salmon and dill. Using on/off turns, blend just until smoked salmon is finely chopped. Season spread with salt and pepper. Transfer to small bowl. Serve with baguette rounds.

BLUE CHEESE AND PECAN CRACKERS

Like savory shortbread, these are wonderful when paired with wine, salads or soups.

MAKES ABOUT 32

- 1 cup crumbled blue cheese (about 4½ ounces), chilled
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- ½ cup pecans, lightly toasted, coarsely chopped
- Pecan halves

Preheat oven to 350°F. Using mixer, beat cheese, butter and pepper in medium bowl until just blended (some cheese should still be in separate pieces). Using rubber spatula, mix in flour, and chopped pecans. Form dough into 1-inch balls. Arrange rounds on ungreased baking sheets. Flatten to 2½-inch round. Press pecan half onto each. Bake until golden on bottom and at edges, about 10 minutes. Transfer to racks and cool.

MEAT LOAF WITH BARBECUE SAUCE

The leftovers make outstanding sandwich

4 SERVINGS

- 1 pound lean (15% fat) ground beef
- 1½ cups fresh breadcrumbs made from French bread
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1¼ cups bottled barbecue sauce

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