

Baked Macaroni & Cheese

Yield: 8 servings.

- 1 (16-ounce) box elbow macaroni**
- 1 stick salted butter**
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- 2 cups half-and-half, warmed**
- 1 cup 2% milk, warmed**
- 8 ounces cream cheese, cut into small cubes**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard**
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese**
- 2 cups shredded sharp Cheddar cheese, divided**

Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare a deep, 9 x 13-inch casserole dish with 1 tablespoon softened butter.

In a stockpot, cook pasta per instructions until just tender. Drain pasta and return to the pot.

In a heavy saucepan, melt remaining butter over low heat. Add flour. Increase heat to medium and stir with a wooden spoon until roux is frothy. Gradually add half-and-half and milk, stirring constantly. Just before liquid begins to boil, reduce heat. Add cream cheese and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes or until cream cheese melts, stirring constantly. Stir in salt, mustard, pepper, and nutmeg. Remove from heat.

While stirring cheese sauce, gradually add beaten eggs, then Monterey Jack cheese and 1 cup of sharp Cheddar. Continue stirring until the cheeses melt.



Pour cheese sauce over cooked pasta and toss until well combined and pasta is covered with sauce. Pour into the prepared casserole dish and sprinkle the remaining sharp Cheddar over the top. Bake for 30 minutes or until bubbling and golden brown.

Our State eats

Baked Beans

Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

- 3 (28-ounce) cans baked beans**
- 1 small onion, sliced thin**
- 2 teaspoons yellow mustard**
- 3 tablespoons ketchup**
- 3 tablespoons molasses**
- ¼ cup brown sugar**

Preheat oven to 350°. Drain 2 of the 3 cans of beans. Do not rinse.

In a bowl, mix beans and all other ingredients (except onions). Pour bean mixture into a 2-quart baking dish. Place onions on top of beans. Bake beans, uncovered, 30 to 40 minutes.



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Our State eats

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Ham Hocks & Collard Greens

Yield: 4-6 servings.

- 6 slices thick-cut bacon**
- 4 bundles fresh collard greens (approximately 6 cups leaves)**
- 1 small onion, chopped**
- 4 cups chicken broth**
- 4 cups water**
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 2-3 ham hocks**
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar**

Cook bacon in skillet until crispy. Remove bacon from pan and set aside. Save drippings.

Remove stem from each collard leaf. This can be done by cutting the stem out or by tearing the leaves away from the stem. Wash collards thoroughly to remove all sand, grit, and dirt. Stack leaves on top of each other and roll. Cut collards in 2-inch-wide strips.

Heat skillet with bacon drippings, and add cut collards and chopped onion. Sauté collards and onions for 5 to 10 minutes.

In a heavy stockpot, add chicken broth, water, vinegar, salt, ham hocks, and brown sugar. Add collards and onions. Simmer for 1 to 2 hours or until collards are tender. Serve with crumbled bacon.



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Our State eats

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Country Coleslaw

Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

- ½ cup Duke's mayonnaise**
- 3 tablespoons apple cider vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon black pepper**
- 2 teaspoons celery seed**
- 1 head cabbage, shredded**
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 cup sweet onion, chopped**
- 1 large carrot, shredded**

Mix mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, and celery seed. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, add shredded cabbage, bell pepper, onion, and carrot. Pour mayonnaise dressing over cabbage mixture and toss until the dressing has coated the vegetables. Refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. Toss slaw just before serving.



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Refrigerator Pickles

Yield: 4 pints.

- 2 pounds pickling cucumbers, sliced ¼-inch thick**
- 2 sweet white onions, thinly sliced**
- 4 cups distilled white vinegar**
- 4 cups sugar**
- ½ cup kosher salt**
- 1½ teaspoons turmeric**
- 1½ teaspoons celery seed**
- 2 teaspoons dry mustard**

Toss sliced cucumbers and onions in a bowl, then add the mixture to 4 pint jars, filling each to the top.

In a saucepan, heat vinegar, sugar, salt, turmeric, celery seed, and dry mustard until sugar is dissolved. Pour liquid over cucumbers to cover. Place lid on jars and tighten. Wipe jars with a clean, warm cloth, then refrigerate overnight. Serve cold. Keep all opened pickles in the refrigerator. Reserve leftover liquid for salad dressing or coleslaw.



Our State eats

Published in the March 2011 issue of Our State

Corn Pudding

- 4 cups corn, drained
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons green pepper, chopped
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- ½ cup butter or margarine

Mix corn, flour, sugar, seasonings, and green pepper. Beat eggs until light. Add to corn mixture. Add milk. Melt butter in 2-quart casserole as you preheat oven to 350°. Tilt casserole dish to coat sides with butter. Stir in corn mixture. Bake for 1 hour or until firm in center.



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Our State eats

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Green Beans *with* Cheese Casserole

- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1 tablespoon flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup milk
- ½ teaspoon grated onion
- ½ cup sour cream
- 2 (14½-ounce) cans snap green beans, drained
- 1½ cups grated cheese

In a small saucepan, melt margarine, and thoroughly blend in flour, salt, pepper, and sugar. Cook, stirring until bubbling. Blend in milk. Remove from heat. Stir in onion and sour cream until well mixed. Combine sauce with green beans and cheese; turn into buttered 1 1/2-quart casserole dish. Cover with aluminum foil, and bake for 30 minutes at 350°.



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Our State eats

Published in the September 2015 issue of Our State

Fresh Corn & Honey Cornbread

For the cornbread:

- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup self-rising cornmeal
- 1 cup self-rising flour
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 (8.5-ounce) can creamed corn
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup honey
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup (about 2 ears) fresh, raw corn

For the glaze:

- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon honey

Preheat oven to 375°. Place butter in an 11 x 7-inch baking dish and put into oven to melt while oven is heating. Once melted, let butter brown to a light golden color.

In a bowl, combine cornmeal and flour. In a separate bowl, mix together eggs, creamed corn, buttermilk, honey, and black pepper. Fold into dry mixture.

Pour batter over browned butter and scatter with fresh corn. Return to oven and bake about 30 minutes, until golden brown on top. Meanwhile, to make the glaze, stir together butter and honey. Brush cornbread with glaze and serve warm.



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Jalapeño Hush Puppies

Yield: 25-30 hush puppies.

- 1 box Jiffy cornbread mix**
- 6 tablespoons buttermilk**
- ½ teaspoon onion powder**
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- 1 egg, slightly beaten**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 3 tablespoons self-rising flour**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 teaspoon black pepper**
- 2 slices white bread, crumbled**
- 2 tablespoons jalapeño peppers,
seeded and finely chopped**
- About 2 quarts vegetable oil, for frying**

Mix all ingredients just until they are wet. Refrigerate mixture for 30 minutes and up to 5 hours.

In a Dutch oven, heat oil to about 350-375°. Use a thermometer if possible.

Use a tablespoon to form the hush puppies, dipping the spoon into cold water between each hush puppy to keep the batter from sticking. Spoon hush puppies in hot oil for a few seconds, allowing them to release from the spoon.



Repeat this process with each hush puppy, until you have 6 or 7 in the hot oil. Do not crowd the pot.

As the hush puppies cook, they will appear golden and may roll themselves over in the oil. If your oil is the correct temperature, the hush puppies should be golden on the outside and cooked on the inside. (**Note:** If oil is too hot, hush puppies will be browned on the outside and gummy on the inside; if oil is not hot enough, the hush puppies will be greasy.)

When golden on one side, the hush puppies may automatically turn themselves over. If not, carefully give them a nudge to make them turn over.

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Picnic Penne Pasta Salad

Yield: 6 servings.

- 1 (16-ounce) box penne pasta, cooked al dente
- 1 orange bell pepper, finely chopped
- 3 green onions, sliced
- ½ cup sliced green olives with pimentos
- ¼ cup fresh dill, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons olive juice
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 cup Duke's mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon white pepper

Drain pasta and rinse with cold water. Place pasta in a large mixing bowl and add bell pepper, green onions, olives, and dill. Toss all ingredients and set aside.

In a separate mixing bowl, combine lemon juice, olive juice, and sugar. Whisk until sugar is dissolved. Stir in mayonnaise, salt, and pepper.

Pour dressing over pasta and toss until ingredients are evenly coated. Refrigerate for 2 hours before serving.



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Chunky Potato Salad

Yield: 8 to 10 servings.

- 1 cup Duke's mayonnaise**
- 2 teaspoons dill pickle juice**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 1 teaspoon black pepper**
- 1 teaspoon celery seed**
- 4 large russet potatoes**
- 2 stalks celery, sliced**
- 1/3 cup sweet onion, finely chopped**
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, coarsely chopped**

In a bowl, mix mayonnaise, pickle juice, 1 teaspoon salt, pepper, and celery seed. Refrigerate while potatoes are cooking.

Wash and quarter potatoes. Leave the skin on. Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with cold water. Add remaining salt. Let potatoes come to a boil, then adjust heat to medium. After 10 minutes, test potatoes with a fork for doneness. Do not overcook.

When potatoes are just fork-tender, remove from heat and drain in sink. Let potatoes sit to reach room temperature. Remove skin from potatoes and cut into large chunks (about 1 inch). In a large mixing bowl, add potatoes, celery, onion, and eggs. Pour mayonnaise dressing over potato mixture and toss well. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours before serving.

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Broccoli & Cauliflower Salad

Yield: 8 servings.

- 4 cups fresh broccoli florets**
- 2 cups fresh cauliflower florets**
- 1 cup raisins**
- 3 green onions, sliced**
- 1 cup Duke's mayonnaise**
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar**
- 2 teaspoons sugar**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup salted sunflower seeds, hulled**

In a large bowl, combine the broccoli, cauliflower, raisins, and onions. In a small bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, vinegar, sugar, and salt, until the sugar has dissolved. Pour the dressing over the broccoli-cauliflower mixture; toss to coat. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Toss in sunflower seeds before serving.

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Tangy Three-Bean Salad

Yield: 6 servings.

- ½ cup apple cider vinegar**
- ¼ cup sugar**
- ¼ cup canola oil**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon black pepper**
- 1 can kidney beans, rinsed and drained**
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained**
- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed and drained**
- 1 can white shoepeg corn, drained**
- 1 green bell pepper, finely chopped**
- ¼ cup fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped**
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped red onion**

In a small mixing bowl, whisk together vinegar and sugar until sugar dissolves. Continue whisking and slowly add canola oil. Whisk in salt and pepper, and set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, combine kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas, corn, bell pepper, parsley, and onion. Pour dressing over beans and toss. Refrigerate for a minimum of 4 hours before serving. After 2 hours, toss again so that dressing coats all the ingredients.



Prized Pineapple Pig Pickin' Cake

Cake:

- 1 box butter golden cake mix
- 1 (11-ounce) can mandarin oranges,
chopped into smaller pieces (Do not drain)
- 4 large eggs
- ¼ cup vegetable oil

Frosting:

- 1 (16-ounce) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 (3.4-ounce) box instant vanilla pudding
- 2 (8-ounce) containers whipped topping, thawed

For the cake: Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour 3 8-inch cake pans with vegetable shortening.

In a large bowl, combine the cake mix, eggs, oil, and mandarin oranges with their juice.

Divide batter between pans. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean.

Turn the cake out of the pan and place onto a wire rack. Let cool to room temperature.



For the frosting: In a large bowl, stir together the drained pineapple and pudding mix. Once combined, fold whipped topping into pineapple mixture.

Frost each layer and sides of the cake. Serve soon or loosely cover and refrigerate for up to 4 hours.

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Chocolate Chess Pie

Yield: 8 servings.

- ½ cup salted butter, melted**
- 1 cup sugar**
- 4 tablespoons cocoa powder**
- 3 eggs**
- 1 (5-ounce) can evaporated milk**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 1 (9-inch) deep-dish pie shell (unbaked)**
- Whipped cream (optional)**

Preheat oven to 325°. In a bowl, combine butter, sugar, cocoa, eggs, evaporated milk, and vanilla. Mix well. Pour the mixture into the pie shell and spread it evenly along the edges. Bake for 45 minutes. Serve with whipped cream (optional).



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