

Bountiful Blessings

Dried Apricot Delight
Best Pumpkin Soup
Pork Tenderloin with Molasses and Mustard
Butternut Squash Gratin with Rosemary Breadcrumbs
Apple Cake with Hot Caramel Sauce



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Dried Apricot Delight

36 dried apricot halves
1 cup orange juice
1 cup pistachios (chopped)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ lb soft goat cheese

Toss apricots with juice and let stand approximately 20 minutes (toss occasionally). Drain on paper towel. Top each with a small chunk of cheese and sprinkle with nuts. Arrange on platter. (Can be assembled ahead of time and chilled).

Best Pumpkin Soup

The night before Thanksgiving can be hectic with all of the guests arriving and last minute preparations for the big feast the next day. My favorite meal for guests that night is pumpkin soup and freshly cracked Dungeness crab with warm San Francisco sour dough bread. It's hard to beat for flavor and it only takes about 10 minutes to prepare for a crowd!

You can't discern the taste of the curry in the finished soup. It is the secret ingredient that makes the pumpkin more savory and not so cloying in taste. This is the best pumpkin soup I have ever had!!

Serves 10

- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 29 ounces pumpkins, canned
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 4 cups chicken stock

With the slicing disk in place, slice onion using moderate pressure on pusher of food processor. Melt the butter in a skillet, add the onion and sauté until limp. Sprinkle with curry powder and sauté an additional minute or two. With the metal blade in place, add curried onions, pumpkin and salt to the beaker. Process until mixed, about 10 seconds. Transfer pumpkin puree to a large sauce pan and heat slowly with chicken stock. Thin to desired consistency with more chicken stock. Makes about 2 1/2 quarts.

Per serving: 79 Calories, 5g Total Fat, 3g Saturated Fat,
12mg Cholesterol, 908mg Sodium, 43 Calories from Fat,
8g Carbohydrate, 2g Dietary Fiber, 2g Protein

Pork Tenderloin with Molasses and Mustard

Serves 6

½ cup molasses
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
¼ cup Dijon mustard
¼ cup coarse-grained mustard
2 ¾ pound pork tenderloins (1 ½ pounds total)

Whisk molasses, ¼ cup vinegar, mustards in small bowl. Pour over pork marinade in plastic container or heavy plastic bag in refrigerator for 4 – 24 hours.

Drain marinade into sauce pan, add the remaining 2 Tbsp. vinegar and simmer until thickened to sauce consistency – about 5 minutes.

Bake pork in 350 degree oven for 40 minutes, turning occasionally, until center registers 150 degrees. Alternatively, you may grill on outside grill approximately 20 minutes. Cover with foil and let rest 10 minutes to allow the pork to continue to cook to 160 degrees.

Cut pork crosswise on slight diagonal. Drizzle with sauce.

Butternut Squash gratin with Rosemary Breadcrumbs

10 servings

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1/2 stick unsalted butter)
- 4 cups thinly sliced onions (about 1 pound)
- 2 1/2 pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cubes
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground black pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup canned low-salt chicken broth
- 2 cups fresh breadcrumbs made from soft white bread (about six slices of bread)
- 2 cups (packed) grated sharp white cheddar cheese
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter 13x9x2 inch glass baking dish. Melt butter in heavy large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions; saute until onions are light golden, about 8 minutes. Add squash; sauté 4 minutes. Sprinkle sugar, salt and pepper over vegetables; sauté until onions and squash begin to caramelize, about 5 minutes. Spread vegetable mixture in prepared dish. Pour chicken broth over. Cover tightly with foil and bake 45 minutes. (*Squash mixture can be made 1 day ahead. Cool, then cover and refrigerate. Take out of refrigerator 1 hour prior to baking uncovered for 30 minutes*)

Increase oven temperature to 400 degrees. Mix breadcrumbs, cheese, rosemary and thyme in medium bowl. Sprinkle over gratin. Bake uncovered until top is golden brown and crisp, about 30 minutes.

Apple Cake with Hot Caramel Sauce

½ cup walnuts (or pecans)
½ cup butter at room temperature
1 cup sugar
2 eggs room temperature
1 cup flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. ground nutmeg
2 large or 3 small McIntosh or Granny Smith apples, peeled and cored and finely chopped, plus apple for garnish
2 cups whipping cream, whipped with powdered sugar for garnish

Hot Caramel Sauce

½ cup unsalted butter
1 cup packed light brown sugar
½ tsp. salt
1 ½ tsp. vanilla
½ cup evaporated milk

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9 inch round cake pan. In a blender or food processor, grind walnuts until fine.

In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar together until fluffy. Add the eggs and beat until well blended. In a medium bowl, stir the flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg together. Stir the dry mixture into the wet mixture just until blended. Fold the apples and nuts in until blended.

Spread the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top. (*Do not put all of the batter in because the pan will over flow, you can make cupcakes with the extra batter) Bake for 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let cool on a wire rack and then remove from pan. The center may sink a bit.

To Make Sauce:

In a small saucepan, melt the butter with the brown sugar and salt over medium heat. Bring to a boil, whisking constantly. Remove from heat and whisk in the vanilla and milk. Set aside and keep warm. To make ahead, let cool and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat over barely simmering water.

To Serve: Cut cake into 8 wedges. Ladle a large spoonful of the hot caramel sauce onto the center of each plate. Place a wedge of cake on top of the sauce. Garnish with a spoonful of whipped cream and an apple slice and drizzle with more caramel sauce.