



Kitchen Chatter

by Nancy Winfrey

"Cold" Is Good This Time Of Year. . .

RICE SALAD

1 cup uncooked white long grain rice
2 large fresh tomatoes, peeled
1-1/2 cups frozen green peas
1 green bell pepper, chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped green onion
1/2 cup mayonnaise
1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh mint
1/4 salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
1 small can sliced black olives, well drained

BEET BORSCHT

2 cans (16-ozs. Each) sliced beets and juice
1 cup cold water
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
4 teaspoons sugar or 2 packets sugar substitute
1 teaspoon salt
Sour cream or plain yogurt
Finely diced cucumber

Place all ingredients, except the sour cream or yogurt and cucumbers, in a blender and process until beet slices are pureed. Mixture will be rather thick. Chill. When ready to serve top with sour cream or plain yogurt and diced cucumbers. Serves 10.

CURRIED CHICKEN SALAD WITH NUTS

2 or 3 cups cooked, cubed chicken breasts
1 cup finely chopped celery
1/2 cup walnuts or toasted pine nuts, finely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon black or white pepper
3 teaspoons curry powder
1 cup mayonnaise, more if desired

Combine the chicken, celery, nuts, salt and pepper. Dissolve the curry powder in the mayonnaise and blend into the chicken mixture. Chill until ready to serve. Serves 6.

CREAMY TOFU DRESSING:

1/4 pound firm tofu
1-1/2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/4 cup canned chicken broth
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1-1/2 tablespoons fresh minced basil or dill

In a food processor, combine the tofu, vinegar, garlic and mustard and process until smooth. Combine the chicken broth with the oil and add slowly to the puree mixture in blender. Add the salt and pepper and blend. Store in refrigerator until ready to serve. Just before serving, add the basil or dill. Makes 1 cup.

GREAT BLEU CHEESE-CAKE

Great to serve with a vegetable or seafood salad or as an appetizer.

1/2 pound Bleu cheese, crumbled
3 packages (8-ozs. each) cream cheese, room temperature
1/2 cup breadcrumbs, lightly toasted
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 pound bacon slices
1 medium onion, finely chopped
3 ounces prosciutto
4 eggs
1/3 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon salt
Several drops Tabasco sauce or other hot sauce

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Generously butter a 9-inch springform pan - set aside. In a small bowl, combine the toasted breadcrumbs and the Parmesan cheese. Sprinkle the mixture over the bottom and sides of the prepared pan, turning and tilting to coat. Refrigerate until set - about 25 minutes. In a skillet, fry the bacon until crisp, drain and crumble. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon of the bacon drippings in the skillet and add the onions-cover-and cook over low heat until onions are translucent - about 8 to 10 minutes. Chop the prosciutto. Combine the cream cheese and bleu cheese in a blender and process until smooth. Add the eggs, heavy cream, salt and Tabasco and process until smooth. Add the crumbled bacon, chopped prosciutto and onions and process just long enough to combine. Place the filling into the prepared pan and bake for 1 hour and 20 minutes. Turn oven off and let the cheesecake cool in the oven with the door slightly open for about 1 hour. Remove to a wire rack to cool before removing from the pan and cutting into wedges. Keep refrigerated. This may be prepared four days ahead of time. Slice into about 12 wedges - it's rich!

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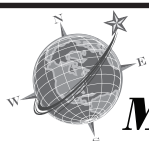


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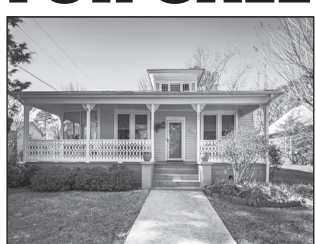
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6 slices bacon
1 cup yellow cornmeal
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1-1/4 cups buttermilk
1 large sweet Vidalia onion (or other sweet onion) cut into 1/2-inch thick slices
1 package (10-ozs.) frozen whole kernel corn, thawed
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 large tomato, thinly sliced
2 cups grated 4-cheese blend

In a skillet, cook the bacon until crisp, remove from skillet, drain and crumble and reserve the drippings. Combine the cornmeal, flour and baking soda in a medium bowl. Stir in the buttermilk and 2 tablespoons of the reserved drippings. Blend well and pour into a generously greased 12-inch cast-iron or ovenproof skillet. Bake in 425 degree oven for 15 minutes. Cook the onions in remaining bacon drippings for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the corn, red bell peppers, salt and pepper and cook and stir for about 10 minutes or until onions begin to brown. Stir in bacon. Arrange the tomatoes over the cornbread and sprinkle with 1 cup of the cheese. Top with the onion mixture and sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake in 425 degree oven for 10 minutes longer or until cheese melts. Serves 4.

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