

Bread Pudding

Serves 6-8.

Ingredients:

Half a loaf of stale French bread

2 eggs

2 cups whole milk

½ cup sugar

Raisins, optional

Brown sugar

Cinnamon

Directions:

Ideally, assemble the bread pudding and refrigerate the night before you intend to bake it.

Cut bread into bite-sized pieces and place them in a buttered casserole dish. Mix eggs and milk together, and pour over the bread pieces. Stir the bread pieces until they have all been soaked. Pour the sugar over the top of the bread pieces and stir again to mix. Add raisins if using, and stir again. Sprinkle brown sugar and then cinnamon over the entire top. Cover dish with aluminum foil.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Bake for 30 minutes, then remove the foil and bake for 15 more minutes. Check to see that practically all of the liquid has been absorbed by the bread; if not continue to bake, checking every 5 minutes until there is very little to no liquid at the bottom of the dish. Remove from oven and allow to rest for about 15 minutes before serving.

Jambalaya

Adapted from the recipe for Poorman's Jambalaya in Chef Paul Prudhomme's Louisiana Kitchen

Makes 4 to 6 main course-size servings

Ingredients:

4 small bay leaves
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon white pepper
1 teaspoon dry mustard
½ teaspoon cayenne, or more to taste
1 teaspoon filé powder, optional
½ teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon dried thyme

4 tablespoons vegetable oil
6 ounces tasso (preferred) or other smoked ham, diced, about 1-1/2 cups
6 ounces andouille sausage (preferred) or other smoked sausage, diced, about 1 heaping cup
1-1/2 cups chopped onions
1-1/2 cups chopped celery
1 cup chopped green bell peppers
1-1/2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 cups uncooked rice (I use medium grain)
4 cups chicken, beef, or pork stock

Directions:

Thoroughly combine the seasoning mix ingredients together in a small bowl and set aside.

In a large, heavy pot, heat the oil over high heat. Add the ham and sausage and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the onions, celery, green pepper, garlic, and the seasoning mix. Stir well and cook until browned, about 10-12 minutes. Be sure to stir occasionally and scrape the bottom of the pot well when you stir. Turn down the heat to medium and stir in the rice and cook 5 minutes, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pot occasionally. Add the stock, stirring well. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about 15-20 minutes or until rice is done; stir occasionally toward the end of the cooking time. Remove the bay leaves and serve.

“Ça c'est bon!”

Stuffed Mirlitons

Adapted from Mrs. La Vonne Owens's recipe in Talk About Good! published by the Service League of Lafayette, Inc. 1967

Ingredients:

3 mirlitons (chayote squash)
3 slices of white bread, crusts removed
2 tablespoons rendered bacon fat
1 tablespoon chopped onion
6 tablespoons bread crumbs
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 egg, lightly beaten
Cayenne pepper to taste (at least a dash)
Salt and black pepper to taste (you will want to be generous)
1 tablespoon chopped parsley
½ cup chopped cooked shrimp

Directions:

Boil the whole mirlitons in salted water which covers them by about 1 inch over medium-high heat for 45 minutes, or until tender. Drain and cool. Cut in halves horizontally. Discard the seeds (if not using for another recipe) and scoop out the pulp. Chop the pulp coarsely. Moisten the bread with water, then squeeze the water from the bread.

Heat the bacon fat in a pan, and when hot add the mirliton pulp, onion, and bread. Mash these together with a fork while they are cooking and stir constantly. When lightly brown, transfer to a mixing bowl to cool.

Melt butter in the same pan over medium heat. Add in the bread crumbs and stir until they are golden brown. Remove from the heat.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and prepare a greased baking dish. When stuffing ingredients are cool, mix in the beaten egg, cayenne, and salt and pepper, then add the parsley and shrimp. Use all of the stuffing to fill the 6 mirliton halves, then distribute the breadcrumbs to cover their tops. Bake for 20 minutes.