



GET TOGETHER

Easy eats to serve a crowd

Words and photos by ROBYN McCLOSKEY

In this issue of Heartland, I am sharing recipes that I not only hope you will find tasty, but easy to prepare and serve at a bridal or couple's shower. Or really any get together! In addition to these recipes, you might consider rounding out your spread with a charcuterie board featuring artisan cheeses, fruit and honey or mini crab cakes with remoulade sauce. Mini lemon tarts, chocolate dipped strawberries and chocolate mousse cups are also great choices for something sweet.

APPLE GORGONZOLA SALAD WITH CHAMPAGNE VINAIGRETTE

I just love gorgonzola or blue cheese combined with dried and fresh fruit. It makes for such a tasty tart, sweet and creamy bite. The champagne vinegar also helps to elevate this recipe to new heights.

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SALAD

6 ounces mixed baby greens or spring mix	2 ½ ounces gorgonzola cheese
½ cup candied pecans	1 granny smith apple, diced
½ cup dried cranberries	

FOR THE DRESSING

4 tablespoons champagne vinegar	2 tablespoons honey
4 tablespoons olive oil	½ teaspoon salt
	¼ teaspoon black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine the salad ingredients in a large bowl.
2. In smaller bowl or mason jar, add dressing ingredients and shake or whisk to combine.
3. Pour dressing over the salad, mix well to combine and serve immediately.

EASY CANDIED PECANS

INGREDIENTS

2 cups pecan halves	½ teaspoon vanilla extract
6 tablespoons brown sugar	1 ½ tablespoons water or more if needed
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon	Pinch cayenne pepper, optional
½ teaspoon fine sea salt	

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Add the brown sugar, cinnamon, salt, vanilla, water and cayenne pepper to medium skillet.
3. Place the skillet over medium heat and cook, stirring often or until the brown sugar melts into bubbling sauce.
4. Stir in the pecans so that the brown sugar sauce coats them. Cook, stirring the entire time until the pecans look candied or about 2 to 3 minutes. As the nuts heat up in the pan, the sauce will slowly coat them and turn shiny.
5. Transfer nuts to the prepared baking sheet and spready them out in one layer.
6. Allow the nuts to cool and break them up, if necessary, before serving.



ROASTED BABY POTATOES WITH CRÈME FRAICHE, BACON AND CHIVES

These baby potatoes are easy to make ahead and help round out any meal. They are also pretty!

INGREDIENTS

1 pound baby red potatoes, unpeeled, scrubbed and halved
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, minced
Nonstick vegetable cooking spray
3 slices of coarsely chopped bacon
Cup crème fraiche or ¾ cup sour cream
Chopped fresh chives

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Toss potatoes, olive oil and rosemary in large bowl to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, toss again.
3. Coat large rimmed baking sheet with nonstick spray. Transfer potatoes, cut side down, and roast for about 15 minutes. Turn potatoes over and roast until tender or for another five to 10 minutes. (Can be made up to four hours ahead. Let stand on baking sheet at room temperature and then reward in 400-degree oven for five minutes before continuing.)
4. Cook bacon in a medium skillet over medium heat until crisp. When done, transfer to a paper towel-lined plate to drain.
5. Place potatoes cut side up on a platter and top each with a dollop of crème fraiche, bacon crumbles and chopped chives.
6. Serve warm or at room temperature.



MAKE AHEAD BEEF TENDERLOIN SANDWICHES

I first had these amazing sandwiches at a bridal shower for my daughter hosted by a very dear friend. They were incredible! I think everyone in attendance asked for the recipe. I have made this recipe many times and it always turns out delicious.

INGREDIENTS

2 to 3 pounds tenderloin

FOR THE BASTING MIXTURE

½ cup melted butter **1 teaspoon dry mustard**

1 teaspoon garlic powder

FOR THE BUN SPREAD

½ pound butter, softened **1 teaspoon celery salt**

1 ½ teaspoons garlic powder **Slider buns**

1 teaspoon thyme

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bake tenderloin in 200-degree oven for 2 hours, turning and basting with basting mixture every 20 minutes. The meat will cook to medium-rare or 145 degrees internal temperature.
2. While roasting, spread both inside sides of the buns with the spread mixture.
3. When meat is done, let rest at least 30 minutes. Using an electric knife, slice meat into thin slices, piling several slices onto each bun and then add the top bun. Put buns on a jelly roll pan lined with parchment paper.
4. Cover the buns with foil and put in the refrigerator until ready to cook.
5. When ready to bake, put a clean, damp towel over the buns. Remove foil before you do this and then bake in a 350 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and enjoy! I do like to brush a bit of the spread mixture on the bun tops after they are finishing baking as a finishing touch. If you like, serve with horseradish cream on the side.

ROASTED ASPARAGUS WITH LEMON, BUTTER AND PARMESAN

Asparagus and lemon are not only delicious together, but they combine for a beautiful presentation at the table.

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds asparagus or two bunches

1 lemon (half juiced and half sliced into rings)

4 tablespoons butter, cut into pats

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon sea salt or add to taste

½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste

½ cup shredded parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Rinse both bunches of asparagus and break off the ends.
2. Place asparagus in a large rimmed baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roll asparagus to lightly coat in oil and seasonings.
3. Squeeze ½ of the lemon evenly over the asparagus.
4. Line the top third of the asparagus with lemon slices from the second half of the lemon.
5. Thinly slice 4 Tbsp. of butter and line the center of the asparagus with butter.
6. Bake or roast in the oven at 400 degrees for 10 minutes or until asparagus is tender. Remove asparagus from the oven and set oven to broil.
7. Sprinkle the center of the asparagus with parmesan cheese and then return to the center of the oven and broil two to three minutes or until cheese is melted and golden.





POUND CAKE

This pound cake is moist and delicious. I like to serve it with strawberries and a touch of whipped topping but it's delicious on its own or with your favorite topping.

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cups unsalted butter, softened	1 teaspoon baking powder
3 cups sugar	¼ teaspoon salt
5 large eggs	1 (5-ounce) can evaporated milk
3 cups all-purpose flour	⅔ cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons vanilla extract	
1 teaspoon almond extract	

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 10-inch tube pan. Set aside.
2. Place butter in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat at medium speed for 6 minutes, until light and fluffy.
3. Gradually add sugar and beat for an additional minute.
4. Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until the yolk disappears.
5. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Combine evaporated milk and heavy cream.
6. Add one third of the flour mixture and one half of the cream mixture to

the butter mixture in the stand mixer at slow speed. Add the next third of the flour mixture and the second half of the cream mixture and beat on slow until combined and then add the remaining third of the flour mixture. Once combined, add in the vanilla and almond extract.

7. Pour batter into the prepared pan.
8. Bake for 60 to 75 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.
9. Cool in pan on wire rack for one hour. Remove from pan and continue cooling on wire rack until completely cool.