



Celebrate the Season: Spring



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Gooseberry Patch

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Gooseberry Patch cookbooks are created with today's time-strapped, budget-conscious cooks in mind.

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March...

You'll know it the day that Spring makes its arrival. You'll be expecting to need your scarf and instead feel the sun shining down on you. Suddenly, outside is a little friendlier and it doesn't sound like such a bad idea to clear out a flower bed or maybe open a few windows for some fresh air.

It's still chilly enough for a jacket on most days and you'd better not go too far without an umbrella, but still, the change of season is just around the corner. Birds and trees know it, the last of the melting snow knows it and now you know it too. Take a deep breath...spring is finally here.



Now that the windows are open, it's the perfect time to fluff up the nest a little bit. We love these simple ideas for putting natural ingredients to use. Here are 12 ways to...

Spruce up for Springtime

 Freshen up the fridge! Clean the inside top to bottom using warm, soapy water. You can even sprinkle some baking soda into the water for a little extra scrubbing power.

 Deodorize cutting boards by rubbing with a paste of baking soda and water.

 The best window cleaner is a snap to mix up. Add 3 tablespoons ammonia and one tablespoon of vinegar to a spray bottle, then fill with cool water. To really make a window shine, wipe it down with crumpled newspaper!



 A squeaky-clean stovetop...no elbow grease required! Cover baked-on food spots with equal parts water and baking soda and let the food soak right off.

 Remove those stubborn stains from plastic food storage containers by filling with equal amounts of lemon juice and water. Let them soak for a few hours. When you're ready, add a little baking soda and give them a good scrub.

 To freshen the inside of a microwave oven, pour a tablespoon of lemon juice into a bowl of water. Heat on high setting until boiling and let stand for a few minutes with the door closed, then just wipe clean...no scrubbing!

 Blend equal parts olive oil and lemon juice to create a polish that will make wood furniture shine. Just apply with a soft cloth and buff.

 Make your own carpet freshener...it's simple! Combine one cup baking soda, one cup cornstarch and 30 drops of your favorite essential oil. Allow to dry. Shake freshener onto rugs, allow to sit for 30 minutes and then vacuum.

 Kitchen tile or linoleum floors benefit from a baking soda treatment too. Just mix 1/2 cup into your mop water and you'll see the difference.



 An old-fashioned remedy for cleaning copper pots...sprinkle salt on half a lemon and rub the pot. Rinse and wash with hot soapy water and dry well.

 Laundry that smells clothesline fresh and is so soft. Along with your detergent, add 1/4 to 1/2 cup baking soda per load.

 Vinegar in the coffeepot cleans all the nooks and crannies. Fill the pot with an equal mixture of water and white vinegar. Run the cycle as usual, following with a cycle of only water to rinse. For really stubborn stains, stop it halfway through the cycle and let it soak.

Beef & Butternut Stew



2 t. dried thyme
2 t. salt
3/4 t. pepper
5 T. cornstarch
1-1/2 lb. beef round roast, cubed
1 bulb fennel, sliced

3/4 lb. redskin potatoes, quartered
28-oz. can whole tomatoes, drained and
tomatoes halved
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded
and cubed
1 t. olive oil

Combine seasonings in a bowl; reserve one teaspoon seasoning mixture. Combine cornstarch with remaining seasoning mixture. Toss beef, fennel and potatoes in cornstarch mixture until well coated. Transfer beef mixture to a slow cooker; spoon tomatoes over top. In a separate bowl, toss squash with oil and reserved spice mixture. Layer squash on top of tomatoes. Cover and cook on low setting for 8 hours. Serves 8 to 10.

Irish Soda Bread

- 4 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 t. baking powder
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1/2 t. salt
- 3 eggs
- 2 c. sour cream
- 1 c. raisins
- 1 T. caraway seed

Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl; add eggs and sour cream and mix just until moistened. Fold in raisins; spread batter evenly in 2 greased 8"x4" loaf pans. Sprinkle loaves with caraway seed; bake at 325 degrees for one hour. Makes 2 loaves.



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Emerald Isle Cupcakes

- 1-3/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 2/3 c. sugar
- 3.4-oz. pkg. instant pistachio pudding mix
- 1-1/2 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1-1/4 c. milk
- 1/2 c. oil
- 1/2 t. vanilla extract
- few drops green food coloring
- 16-oz. container cream cheese frosting
- Garnish: candy sprinkles

In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, dry pudding mix, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, beat eggs, milk, oil and vanilla; add to flour mixture and mix until well blended. Fill paper-lined muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes, until a toothpick tests clean. Cool in tin on a wire rack. Add a few drops of food coloring to the frosting and frost the cupcakes. Garnish with sprinkles. Makes 1-1/2 dozen.



After the dry cold air of the last few months, our skin could use a little pampering, right? Here are two recipes that are easy to make in an afternoon and they make enough to treat friends too! It's been a long winter...

Treat Yourself!

Gentle Oatmeal Body Scrub

This simple mix will leave skin glowing. Tie on a new bath pouf for the perfect pampering gift.

1 c. quick-cooking oats, uncooked
Optional: 1 T. dried lavender petals
24 drops of essential oils, in desired combination
such as orange, lavender, rosewood and chamomile

Process oats in a food processor until very fine. In a bowl, mix oats with dried lavender, if using; add essential oils drop by drop, stirring constantly to avoid clumps. Store in an airtight jar; use within 6 months. Makes about 1 cup.



Instructions for use:

Mix one to 2 tablespoons of Gentle Oatmeal Body Scrub with enough water to form a paste. Apply to wet skin in a circular motion. Rinse well with warm water and pat dry.

Pepperminty Lip Balm

So cool and refreshing, this balm is a sure-fire way to lift your spirits. Fun to make with friends, it's a great project to make on a girls' night in...everyone can take some home!



6 T. almond oil
2 t. honey
4 t. beeswax, grated
5 drops vitamin E oil
5 drops peppermint essential oil
8 1/2-oz. lidded pots

In a double boiler, melt almond oil, honey and beeswax together. Remove from heat, allowing mixture to cool slightly. Add vitamin E and peppermint oils; stir until well blended. Spoon into pots and allow to cool before covering. Makes 8 pots.

Classic Corned Beef & Cabbage



2 to 3 onions, chopped
1-1/4 lbs. baby carrots
3-lb. corned beef brisket with seasoning packet
1/2 c. malt vinegar

Optional: 1/4 c. Irish stout
1-1/4 lbs. redskin potatoes
1 to 1-1/2 heads cabbage, cut into serving-size wedges
Garnish: coarse-grain mustard, Dijon mustard

Place onions, carrots, corned beef, seasoning packet, vinegar and stout, if using, in a large stockpot. Add enough water to just cover beef. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 2-1/2 to 3 hours, until beef is tender. Add potatoes and cabbage. Increase heat to high; cover and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and simmer an additional 15 minutes, or until potatoes are tender. Remove vegetables to a serving dish; place beef on a cutting board. Let rest 3 minutes; slice against the grain. Serve with vegetables and mustards. Serves 6 to 8.

The Best-Yet Buffalo Wings

3 lbs. chicken wings
seasoned salt to taste
2-oz. bottle hot pepper sauce
1 c. brown sugar, packed
1 c. water
1 T. mustard seed

Arrange chicken wings on a lightly greased 15"x10" jelly-roll pan. Sprinkle with seasoned salt. Baked at 400 degrees for 20 minutes; turn wings. Bake for 20 to 30 more minutes, until golden and juices run clear when chicken is pierced with a fork; drain. Arrange on serving platter. Combine remaining ingredients in a saucepan; bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to low; cook until mixture caramelizes and become a dark burgundy color, stirring occasionally. Pour sauce over wings before serving or serve on the side for dipping. Makes about 3 dozen.



Antipasto Kabobs

1/3 c. olive oil
1/3 c. balsamic vinegar
1 T. fresh thyme, minced
1 clove garlic, minced
1 t. sugar
9-oz. pkg. cheese-filled tortellini, cooked
5-oz. pkg. thinly sliced salami
12-oz. jar artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
5-3/4 oz. jar green olives with pimientos, drained
1 pt. cherry tomatoes
16 6-inch skewers, soaked in water

Combine oil, vinegar, thyme, garlic and sugar; set aside. Thread remaining ingredients onto skewers alternately in order given. Arrange skewers in a single layer in a glass or plastic container; drizzle with marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours, turning occasionally. Drain and discard marinade before serving. Makes 16 servings.

Planning to watch the basketball tournament with family & friends?
Here are 9 game-day get-together tips for...

March Madness



All kinds of colorful, fun items for table decorating, serving and party favors are as near as your neighborhood dollar store. Look for solid plates and cups in your team's colors...better pick up some confetti too!



Serving bite-size snacks? A good rule of thumb for appetizers: plan on 6 to 8 per person if you're also serving a main dish. If it's snacks only, plan on 12 to 15 per guest.



Scooped-out mini rounds of bread are just right for individual servings of soups, stews and salads. Less dishes to wash after the party!



Make it easy for guests to mingle and chat. Set up food at several tables instead of one big party buffet. Place hot foods on one table, chilled foods on another, sweets on yet another...be sure your guests can see the game from all three too.



A tray of warm, moistened towels is a must when serving sticky barbecue ribs or chicken wings! Dampen fingertip towels in water and a dash of lemon juice, roll up and microwave on high for 10 to 15 seconds. Set out as guests are finishing up so they'll still be warm.



When it comes to game-day dippers, serve up lots of variety...hearty crackers, pretzel rods, crisp veggies or thick slices of sourdough or pumpernickel bread. All are just right for creamy dips and spreads.



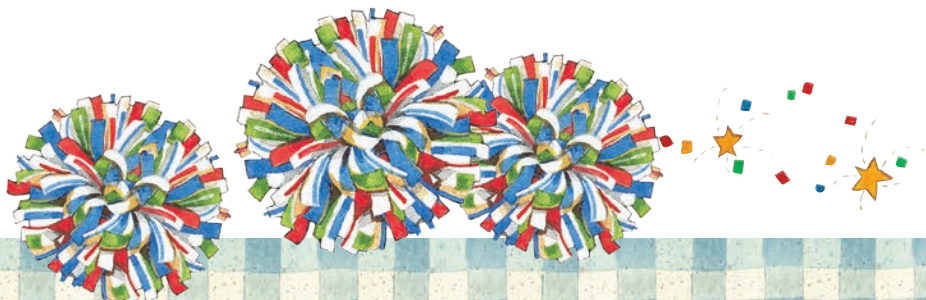
Try serving "light" dippers with hearty full-flavored dips and spreads. Fresh veggies, pita wedges, baked tortilla chips and multi-grain crispbread are all sturdy enough to scoop yet won't overshadow the flavor of the dip.



Easily warm sandwich buns for a crowd. Fill a roaster with buns, cover with heavy-duty aluminum foil and cut several slits in the foil. Top with several dampened paper towels and tightly cover with more foil. Place in a 250-degree oven for 20 minutes. Rolls come out hot and steamy.



For a party or potluck, roll up sets of flatware in table napkins and place in a shallow tray. An easy do-ahead for the hostess...guests will find it simple to pull out individual sets.





April

With April's arrival, you can practically watch the return of green everywhere you look. The leaves are a little bigger, the sprouts are a little taller and the sun is starting to peek out from behind the rain clouds. Enjoy the sunnier afternoons and take the opportunity to plant something new...maybe even share some sprouts with friends.

When Easter arrives on the 20th, keep your fingers crossed for sunshine and welcome the day with egg hunts, overflowing baskets and a delicious Sunday dinner. We love to set a pretty table, welcome family & friends and share recipes like the ones Grandma made...won't you join us?

Growing fresh herbs is an easy way to add a little green to your kitchen when it's still too cold outside for starts and sprouts. Not familiar with using or keeping these tasty plants? We're here to help.

8 Tips for Fresh Herbs



Herbs are happy growing in a sunny windowsill. Tuck them into Mason jars, Grandma's teacups or cream pitchers for a fresh look...a clever way to keep them right at your fingertips while cooking!



It's easy to swap fresh for dried herbs in any of your favorite recipes. Here's how the math works: for one teaspoon of a dried herb, simply substitute one tablespoon of the fresh herb. Simple!



Rosemary has a woody stem, so the next time you're grilling, try using a whole sprig as a skewer for veggies. Use a wooden skewer to pre-poke your kabobs and then thread onto the rosemary for delicious flavor.



If you need to cut back fast-growing herbs like basil and oregano, you can still keep them fresh in the fridge. Just wrap them in paper towels and store in unsealed plastic bags in the refrigerator.



Another clever way to use fresh chopped herbs is to freeze them in olive oil. Add leaves to an ice cube tray and cover with olive oil. Freeze and store them in a plastic bag. When ready to use, melt in a warm skillet for instant flavor.



Refrigerate a bunch of fresh parsley in a water-filled tumbler covered with a plastic bag. It will keep its just-picked flavor for up to a week, ready to snip into soups and salads.



Simple garnishes dress up main dishes all year 'round! Fresh mint sprigs add coolness and color to light dishes, while rosemary sprigs and thyme add a festive touch to heartier fare.



Herbal vinegars are a great way to preserve and reinvent the fresh-picked flavors of fresh herbs. Look for bottles with rubber seals or lids that screw on tightly. Place a few sprigs of tarragon, rosemary or chives inside and cover with white vinegar. Refrigerate for 2 weeks and enjoy on salads and in marinades...a great springtime gift too!



Garden-Fresh Frittata



©Oxmoor House

3 egg whites
1 egg
2 T. fresh chives, chopped
1/8 t. salt
1/8 t. pepper
1/2 c. redskin potatoes, cubed

1/2 c. broccoli flowerets
1/4 c. yellow pepper, chopped
1/3 c. water
1/2 t. canola oil
Garnish: chopped fresh chives, diced tomatoes,
shredded Cheddar cheese

Beat together egg whites, egg, chives, salt and pepper until thoroughly combined; set aside. Add potatoes to a lightly greased oven-proof skillet; sauté 5 to 6 minutes, until golden. Add broccoli, yellow pepper and water; cover skillet with lid. Cook 3 minutes, or until potatoes are tender; remove cover and allow liquid to evaporate. Add oil to skillet, thoroughly coating all vegetables. Pour egg mixture over vegetables; allow to set slightly and then stir. Cover skillet and cook frittata 3 minutes, until eggs are set but not dry. Remove lid from skillet and place skillet under broiler, allowing the top to brown. Garnish as desired. Serves 4.

Maple Ham & Egg Cups

1 T. butter, melted
6 slices deli ham
1 T. maple syrup
1 t. butter, cut into pieces
6 eggs
salt and pepper to taste
English muffins, toast or biscuits

Brush 6 muffin cups with melted butter; line each cup with a slice of ham. Pour 1/2 teaspoon maple syrup over each ham slice; top with one pat of butter. Crack one egg into each ham cup; season with salt and pepper as desired. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes, or until eggs are set. Remove muffin cups from oven. Use a spoon or gently twist each serving to loosen. Serve on English muffins, with toast or on split biscuits. Serves 6.



©Oxmoor House

Special Deviled Eggs

1 doz. eggs, hard-boiled and peeled
3 to 4 T. coleslaw dressing
1/8 to 1/4 t. garlic salt with parsley
Garnish: paprika, snipped fresh chives

Slice eggs in half lengthwise; scoop yolks into a bowl. Arrange whites on a serving platter; set aside. Mash yolks well with a fork. Stir in dressing to desired consistency and add garlic salt to taste. Spoon or pipe yolk mixture into whites. Garnish as desired; chill. Makes 2 dozen.



Even if you have to wait until Mothers' Day to put out your tomato starts, April is a great time to get out in the garden. Here are two fun projects to get you started. Go ahead and...

Play Outside!



Salad Gardens

Want to grow some salad greens without the commitment of a whole garden? Cool-weather veggies like lettuces and spinach are easy to start indoors (cabbage too!), especially if you get them started in these clever containers.

Add a fresh coat of paint to old wooden drawers and line them with plastic. Next, add a layer of gravel for drainage and fill with a few inches of potting mix. Plant early seedlings inside.

Once the days start to warm up, you can take the drawers outside. Set them on the porch or patio where they can get enough sun and water them regularly. When planted early enough, you might even have time to put in another crop before the weather heats up.

Flowerpot Birdbath

Give the sweet songbirds in your yard a place to take a dip...it's easy!

Gather some sturdy terra cotta pots and an oversized tray. Don't have a stockpile in your potting shed? Check out garden centers, hardware stores or even yard sales for these clay pots in graduated sizes. Turned on their tops, they'll stack easily and make a sturdy base.

Pick up a tray made to fit an oversized pot and use it as your birdbath top. Get creative with paint and then spray with sealant to protect it from the weather. Cover the drainage hole in the tray with a flat rock and fill with water...the birds will love it!



Baked Ham in Peach Sauce

7-lb. cooked ham
1 t. whole cloves
2 16-oz. cans sliced peaches, drained
10-oz. jar apricot preserves
1 c. dry sherry or apple juice
1 t. orange zest
1/2 t. allspice

Place ham in an ungreased 13"x9" baking pan. Score surface of ham in a diamond pattern; insert cloves. Combine remaining ingredients in a blender or food processor. Process until smooth and pour over ham. Cover ham with aluminum foil. Bake at 325 degrees for 30 minutes, basting occasionally with sauce. Uncover and bake for 30 more minutes; continue to baste. Remove ham to a serving platter; slice and serve with sauce from pan. May be served hot or cold. Serves 10.



©Oxmoor House

Double-Cheese Scalloped Potatoes

5 c. potatoes, peeled and sliced
2 c. small-curd cottage cheese
1-1/2 c. sour cream
1/2 c. onion, chopped
1/2 t. salt
1/2 t. garlic salt
1 c. shredded Cheddar cheese

Mix all ingredients except Cheddar cheese in a large bowl; spoon into a greased 13"x9" baking pan. Sprinkle with Cheddar cheese; bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 30 to 40 minutes. Serves 12.



Easter Ice Cream Sandwiches



17-1/2 oz. pkg. sugar cookie mix
assorted food colorings

1 pt. vanilla ice cream, softened
Optional: 2 c. sweetened flaked coconut

Prepare cookie dough following package instructions. Reserve one cup of dough. Roll out remaining dough on a floured surface 1/4-inch thick. Use a 3-inch egg-shaped cookie cutter to cut dough. Divide reserved dough into thirds; tint with food coloring as desired. Form colored dough into small balls and ropes and arrange on half the cookies. Place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 7 to 9 minutes. Cool on baking sheets one minute; remove cookies to cool completely on a wire rack. Position plain cookie on bottom, spread with ice cream and top with decorated cookie. Gently press together; freeze on a baking sheet until serving time. If desired, mix a few drops of green food coloring and coconut; let dry on wax paper. Fill a platter or ramekins with coconut. Arrange sandwiches on top. Makes about one dozen.

When setting a table, the sweetest, simple touch can make a difference. What better time to get out Grandma's dishes than for big family celebrations? Here are 8 easy ways to make your table special for...

Easter Sunday Dinner



Pretty posies make for an old-fashioned welcome on a front door. Large blooms like peonies or lilacs can be tucked into water-filled vintage-style bottles, then wrapped in wide ribbon and secured to a wreath hanger.



A can't-go-wrong mix of vintage and new tableware is always a fun and different way to serve up dinner... so go ahead and choose all your favorites.



Look for vintage-style seed packets next time you're at the flea market or garden store. Cut a small hole in the top and bottom and thread onto short twigs. Poke down into tiny terra cotta pots and hold in place with a little potting soil. They'll make great place markers or, when grouped together, a clever centerpiece!



Fill a few different sized jars with colorful jellybeans or pastel candies and then nestle a tea light inside for a warm glow. Works great with dried beans or rice too for a natural look.



Eggshell plantings take a little planning ahead, but what better way to welcome spring? Carefully empty the eggs into a bowl, being sure to leave most of the shell intact. A spoon tapped on top is an easy way to accomplish this. Once empty, rinse and dry the shells. Fill with a few spoonfuls of potting mix and some grass seed. They'll sprout in just a few days and by the time Easter's here, they'll be ready to sit in the center of your table.



Kids coming for dinner? Set up a separate table for them and use a sheet of butcher paper for the tablecloth. Place a bucket filled with markers, crayons and stickers in the middle...they'll have a blast!



Use mini cookie cutters to cut toasted bread into charming shapes to serve alongside savory dips, spreads and salads. A fun way to cut cucumber slices too!



If you're setting a long table for a big family gathering, several small centerpieces will break up the length. Tuck in mini baskets holding a colored egg or a bunny peeking out from behind candlesticks. A sprinkle of jelly beans down the center is a whimsical touch.





May

With cloudless blue skies and golden sunshine giving everything a little extra sparkle, our favorite front porch rocking chair never looked more welcoming than in May. Maybe it's the the school year drawing to a close or the beginning of summer edging ever closer, but everything seems just a little more relaxed this month, doesn't it?

It's the perfect time to gather with friends and not do much of anything. Maybe throw some burgers on the grill, sip some frosty lemonade and soak up these lovely May days while they last. It's the warmest part of springtime and by the last few weeks, we're looking forward to the next season already. Before it gets too hot, spread out a blanket and enjoy a picnic in the shade...save us a spot too!

Daisies and daylilies always seem to sprout up faster than we can count them, while summertime herbs multiply quicker than the days fly by. Share the wealth with some good friends and host a...

Plant Swap

To host your own plant swap, all you need are a few seedlings to trade, some fellow garden buffs and a picnic table in a shady spot. The more, the merrier!

When you invite your friends, ask them to bring at least as many plants as they'd like to take home. 5 to 10 plants each is a good number. For easy transport, you can put the sprouts in little pots to trade, but brown paper lunch sacks work pretty well for short-term storage.

When the big day arrives, just have everyone set out their offerings on the table and trade away!

For the bigger bunches of hostas and irises sure to make an appearance, have a few creative containers on hand to separate them for easy transport. These containers also make a great take-home gifts for guests...a fun way to say thanks for coming. We've made a list of our favorites below to inspire you.



Creative Container Ideas

- vintage teacups
- paper lunch bags
- galvanized pails
- enamelware mugs
- vintage measuring cups
- paper take-out boxes
- berry buckets
- pressed glass jelly jars
- muffin tins
- custard cups

The best part (besides the visiting with friends, of course!) is chatting with the gal who brought your plant to swap. She'll know just what kind of light and how much water it likes...what a terrific trade-off!

Glazed Strawberry Tart



1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 c. almonds, ground
1/3 c. sugar
1/2 t. salt
6 T. chilled butter, sliced
1 egg

1 t. almond extract
3/4 c. strawberry jam
1 t. lemon juice
2 pts. strawberries, hulled and halved
Optional: whipped topping and whole strawberries

Combine flour, almonds, sugar and salt in a large bowl; cut in butter with a pastry blender or 2 forks until mixture is crumbly. Whisk together egg and almond extract in another bowl; add to flour mixture, stirring until a dough forms. Shape into a flattened ball; wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Place dough in center of a greased and floured baking sheet. Pat into a 10-inch circle; form a 3/4-inch-high rim around the outside edge. Prick bottom of dough with a fork; bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until golden. Cool 10 minutes on baking sheet on a wire rack; remove crust from baking sheet and cool completely on wire rack. Heat jam and lemon juice in a small saucepan over low heat until spreadable; spread 1/2 cup jam mixture over crust. Arrange berry halves on top, cut-sides down; brush with remaining jam mixture. Serve with whipped topping and whole strawberries, if desired. Serves 8.

Eggs Benedict

8 slices Canadian bacon
1 t. lemon juice or white vinegar
8 eggs
4 English muffins, split and toasted
3 T. butter, softened and divided
1 c. Hollandaise sauce, divided
3 T. fresh chives, chopped

Brown bacon in a skillet over medium heat. Meanwhile, fill a large saucepan with 2 inches of water and lemon juice or vinegar; bring to a simmer. Crack each egg into a shallow bowl and slip them, one at a time, into the water. Poach for about 3 minutes, until whites are set and yolks are soft. Remove eggs with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Top each toasted muffin half with one teaspoon butter, one slice of bacon, one egg and a drizzle of Hollandaise sauce. Sprinkle with chives. Makes 8 servings.



Shrimp-Stuffed Tomato Poppers

2 pts. cherry tomatoes
1/2 lb. cooked shrimp, peeled and finely chopped
8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/4 c. mayonnaise
1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese
2 t. prepared horseradish
1 t. lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste
Garnish: chopped fresh parsley

Cut a thin slice off the top of each tomato; scoop out and discard pulp. Place tomatoes upside-down on a paper towel; let drain for 30 minutes. Combine remaining ingredients except parsley; blend until smooth. Spoon into tomatoes; sprinkle with parsley. Makes about 16 servings.



Vintage fabric scraps conjure up good memories and now you can turn your favorites into this sweet jewelry pouch. Perfect for Mothers' Day or to surprise a dear friend this spring.

Patchwork Jewelry Pouch

You'll need:

- 1/4 yard print fabric
- vintage-style hankies and fabric scraps
- assorted trims, like rick rack, lace and crocheted edgings
- scallop-edged scissors or pinking shears
- buttons



Cut two 8" x 16" fabric pieces for the pouch and lining. Arrange and pin pieces cut from hankies and fabric scraps on the pouch fabric. Trim the pieces to fit. Cover the raw edges of some of the pieces and trims. Topstitch the pieces and trims to the pouch fabric, using straight or zigzag stitches.

Matching right sides and straight edges, sew an 8" trim length to one short end of the pouch fabric for the edge of the flap. We sewed crocheted trim to ours.

Matching the right sides and using a 1/2" seam allowance, sew the lining to the pouch along the short ends. Turn right-side out and press.

For the pocket, fold the end opposite the flap 6" to the wrong side. Using a 1/4" seam allowance, sew along the long edges of the pouch, securing the pocket. Scallop or pink the edges, being careful not to clip the stitching. Sew buttons to the pouch as desired.

Grilled BBQ Chicken with White BBQ Sauce



©Oxmoor House

3 lbs. chicken thighs and drumsticks
1 T. dried thyme
1 T. dried oregano
1 T. ground cumin

1 T. paprika
1 t. onion powder
1/2 t. salt
1/2 t. pepper

Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Combine remaining ingredients; rub mixture evenly over chicken. Place chicken in a large plastic zipping bag. Seal and chill 4 hours. Remove chicken from bag, discarding bag. Grill chicken, covered with grill lid, over medium-high heat (350 to 400 degrees) for 8 to 10 minutes on each side, or until a meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 165 degrees or to desired doneness. Serve with White BBQ Sauce. Serves 5.

White BBQ Sauce:

1-1/2 c. mayonnaise
1/4 c. white wine vinegar
1 clove garlic, minced
1 T. coarsely ground pepper

1 T. spicy brown mustard
2 t. horseradish
1 t. sugar
1 t. salt

Stir together all ingredients until well blended. Store in an airtight container in refrigerator at least 2 hours and up to one week. Makes about 1-3/4 cups.

Grilled Sweet Corn with Lime-Chive Butter

8 ears corn in husks

Garnish: Lime-Chive Butter

Gently pull back corn husks and remove corn silk; press husks back into place. Soak corn in ice water for 30 minutes; drain well. Grill over medium to medium-high heat for 15 to 20 minutes, turning occasionally, until husks are charred and corn is tender. Serve with Lime-Chive Butter. Makes 8 servings.

Lime-Chive Butter:

1/2 c. butter, softened

1/3 c. fresh chives, finely chopped

2 t. lime juice

1 t. lime zest

1/2 t. salt

1/4 t. paprika

1/8 t. cayenne pepper

Blend together all ingredients; chill. Makes about 2/3 cup.



Dilly Blue Cheese Potato Salad

1 c. mayonnaise

1 c. sour cream

2 t. lemon juice

1 bunch green onions, chopped

5 stalks celery, chopped

1/2 c. fresh dill, chopped

1/2 c. crumbled blue cheese

3 lbs. new redskin potatoes, quartered and cooked

1 t. salt

pepper to taste

Blend together mayonnaise, sour cream and lemon juice in a large bowl. Add onions, celery and dill; fold in blue cheese and potatoes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Chill overnight. Makes 10 servings.

Finally warm enough for a backyard barbecue? Here are 10 tips to make your next outdoor gathering even more fun.

Let's Cook Out!

-  The night before your cookout, create some fruit-filled ice cubes to keep drinks chilled. Add quarter slices of lemons and limes or even a few raspberries to silicone mini muffin tins. Fill almost full with water or lemon-lime soda and freeze. They'll be ready by morning!
-  Getting together for the whole day? Plan some family-favorite activities like horseshoe toss, softball games, three-legged races and more...don't forget to leave lots of time for catching up with friends too.
-  Fresh fruit is a natural at warm-weather parties. Make single servings easy by providing sweet waffle cones to hold watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes and strawberries!
-  Put your favorite Mason jars to use as sturdy glasses at your backyard gathering. Tuck a bandanna napkin and silverware inside empty jars and guests can pick it up before they head over to fill their plates.
-  Meeting friends away from home for a cookout? Keep meat, salads and perishables icy cold by packing them in a separate cooler from drinks. You'll only have to open a few times for grilling and serving so everything will be nice and chilled.
-  Homemade salad dressings are a cinch to serve outdoors when you put your Mason jars to work. Easy to pass, pour and seal up when everyone's had some! Keep them cool in a big galvanized tub with ice...guests can help themselves!
-  Have little guests coming to your party? Break ears of corn in half and add a wooden skewer...easier for buttery fingers to hold.



-  Want to keep frosty beverages extra cold? Fill a kiddie pool or a wheelbarrow with ice and nestle in bottles or cans. Parked in a shady spot, they're sure to stay cold all day.
-  Make s'mores without getting too close to the flame. Just make our simple bar version. Layer graham crackers, chocolate bars and mini marshmallows on a baking sheet. Pop them under the broiler for a minute or two until toasty, then remove, cool and cut to serve. So simple and just as tasty!

-  Add a magical glow to after-dark gatherings. Attach a strand of cool-burning lightbulbs to the underside of a patio table umbrella or along a backyard fence to create an enchanting effect.

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