

Got to be an NC Thanksgiving

The holidays are upon us and that means getting together with friends and family to celebrate and enjoy good times and good food with one another. I wanted to share a variety of dishes this month from a gift giving idea to the turkey. If Brian and I can cook a turkey then just about anyone can cook a turkey. All these recipes also have that wonderful North Carolina down home goodness baked right in. So try to relax and enjoy the cooler weather, the changing of the leaves and time spent with those you love.

Apple and Blueberry Crisp

Unsalted butter, for baking dish
2 ½ to 3 pounds NC Apples (Gala or Braeburn), peeled, cored, and diced
12 ounces blueberries (fresh or frozen)
¾-cup sugar
3 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 Tablespoon cornstarch
1 tsp. vanilla extract
¼ tsp. grated orange zest, plus 1 Tablespoon fresh orange juice
½ tsp. lemon juice

Crisp Topping

¾ stick unsalted butter (6 Tablespoons)
⅔-cup all-purpose flour
⅔-cup rolled oats
¾ cup packed light-brown sugar
¼ cup NC pecans, chopped
½ tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground nutmeg
¼ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Butter a 9 X 13 inch baking dish. In a large bowl, combine apples, blueberries (no need to defrost if using frozen), sugar, flour, cornstarch, vanilla, orange zest, juice and lemon juice. Transfer to baking dish and sprinkle with topping.

Topping- In a large bowl, combine cold butter, cut into small pieces, flour (spooned and leveled), oats, brown sugar, pecans, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Using an electric mixer beat on low until coarse crumbs form.

Bake until topping is browned and juices are thick and bubbling around edges, 55 to 60 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes before serving.

PERSONAL Note: This is a great Thanksgiving dessert with a twist using the blueberries. You could substitute cranberries in place of the blueberries as well. It would

also be a great spring dessert when fresh NC blueberries are available. Adding some whipped cream or vanilla ice cream wouldn't hurt.

Turkey with Apple Pan Drippings

NC Turkey

Oven Bag

Olive Oil

Salt and Pepper

1 Tablespoon flour

2 shallots

5 small or 4 large NC Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and quartered

1 can (14.5 oz.) low sodium chicken broth

2 cups apple cider

2 tsp. cider vinegar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove package and plastic bags containing neck (in body cavity) and giblets (in neck cavity). Drain juices, rinse and dry with a paper towel.

Cover the turkey on both sides, inside and out with Olive Oil, Salt and Pepper. For even cooking, flip the tips of the wings under the bird and tie up the legs. Shake the flour in your oven bag. Place bag in a roasting pan that is at least 2 inches deep. Then put the shallots, apples, chicken broth, apple cider and vinegar into the bag. Place your turkey on top of those ingredients breast side up. Cut six ½ inch slits on top of the bag. Bake until a meat thermometer reads 180 degrees. For cooking times, refer to the chart that comes with the oven bag according to the poundage of your turkey.

PERSONAL Note: Buy your turkey several days in advance so it can thaw in the refrigerator or check with your butcher to be sure you can get a fresh turkey. You will normally buy a pound per person. Also, use the pan drippings as a sauce or blend them up and make gravy.

Scalloped Sweet Potatoes

4 medium sized sweet potatoes, cooked and peeled (you can par-boil them)

6 slices pineapple, cut in halves

¾ cup pineapple juice

½ cup brown sugar

¼ cup butter

Slice potatoes; arrange alternating layers of potatoes and pineapple in an 8 X 8 baking dish. Heat pineapple juice, brown sugar, and butter together in a saucepan. Boil for 3 minutes. Pour over potatoes and pineapple, and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

PERSONAL Note: My Mama (grandmother McCauley) used to make this dish and it was always a hit. This is a very easy side dish and you could easily increase the ingredients to make it in a 9 X 13 pan if you needed too.

Sugar and Spice Pecans

1 Tablespoon butter, melted
1 egg white, stiffly beaten
2 cups NC pecan halves
½ cup sugar
1 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
¾ tsp. ground nutmeg
¾ tsp. ground allspice
½ tsp. salt

Mix butter and beaten egg white. Add nuts; coat thoroughly. Mix sugar and spices in separate bowl. Line your baking sheet with parchment paper. Lightly cover the parchment paper with a portion of sugar mixture. Coat pecans with remaining sugar mixture, doing a few at a time. Place on a baking sheet; sprinkle with any remaining sugar. Bake at 300 for 20 minutes. Separate with a fork; cool.

PERSONAL Note: These are great to take to a family function during the holidays especially as a hostess gift. Guest can enjoy them before dinner and then they have plenty leftover.