

Cooking with the Club

by our own
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Send Us Your Recipes!

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A Cake Fit for a King

Already it's February 2005. We are in the second month of the year. My question is how? The months just seem to fly by faster than I can cook a 20-minute meal.

February is not just any month. It's a month filled with some great food-related events including Mardi Gras, the Super Bowl (instead of the traditional last week of January), and Valentine's Day.

Knowing full well that you have been keeping up with my recipes, I have given you some awesome Super Bowl recipes and hopefully you not only followed the recipe directions, but that you made sure to follow the basic cleanliness, time, and temperature concepts. These concepts will be touched on throughout the year because good food is safe food.

Mardi Gras is a time for food in New Orleans like no other. Seafood including gulf shrimp is used for po' boy sandwiches and jambalaya. In all actuality, seafood is a major component to many of the Mardi Gras dishes. I have included a shrimp jambalaya recipe for you try. The deserts are amazing as well. Try the famous king cake known here as King Burnes Cake, brought to us from *Alive!* editor John Burnes.

This King Cake a Creole cake whose history is the history of the famous New

Orleans carnivals celebrated in song and stories. The "King's Cake," or Gateau de Roi, is inseparably connected with the origin of the city's now world-famed carnival balls. In fact, they owe their origin to the old Creole custom of choosing a king and queen on King's Day, or Twelfth Night.

You can also add a small plastic baby to the mix before baking. Whoever selects the cake piece containing the baby is charged with bringing the King Cake next year. Placing this baby, of course, is optional. So if you can't find one at your local party headquarters, don't worry. New Orleans is all about no worries!

Valentine's Day is another great food day. It seems that this

day is one that is synonymous with red wine, chocolates and roses. Although there are recipes that call for roses as an ingredient, I have instead included Sicilian Spaghetti Meatballs, Garlic Merlot Steak, and Cupid's Chicken Skewers for those of you who want to impress.

There are so many other recipes that can be made, so experiment but don't make your Valentine's Day dinner date your guinea pig for your new meal.

King Burnes Cake

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds flour
- 12 eggs
- Milk or water
- One cup sugar
- One pound butter
- 1/2 ounce yeast
- 1/2 ounce salt
- Candies to decorate
- Icing colored purple, green and gold/yellow
- Plastic baby, if you can find one.



DIRECTIONS

Take a pound and a half of the flour, and put it in a wooden bread trough. Make a hole in the center of the flour, and put in a half ounce of yeast, dissolved in a little warm water. Add milk or tepid water to make the dough, using milk if you want it to be very rich and delicate, and water if you have not the milk. Knead and mix the flour with one hand, while adding milk or water with the other. Make a dough that is neither too stiff or too soft, and when perfectly smooth set the dough to rise in a moderately warm place, covering with a cloth. Remember that if you use milk to make the dough it must be scalded, that is, must be heated to the boiling point, and then allowed to grow tepid.

Let the dough rise for five or six hours, and, when increased to twice its bulk, take it and add the reserved half pound of flour, into which you will have sifted the salt. Add six eggs, beaten very light with the sugar and butter, and mix all well together, kneading lightly

with your hands, and adding more eggs if the dough is a little stiff.

Then knead the dough by turning it over on itself three times, and set to rise again for an hour or three-quarters of an hour. Cover with a cloth. At the end of this time take it up and work it again lightly, and then form into a great ring, leaving of course, a hole in the center. Pat gently and flatten a little. Have a baking pan ready, with a buttered sheet of paper in it, and set the central roll in the middle.

Cover the pan with a clean, stiff cloth, and set the cake to rise for an hour longer. When well risen, set in an oven a few degrees cooler than that used for baking bread (360°); let bake for an hour and a half; if medium, an hour, and if very small, a half hour. Glaze the brioche lightly with a beaten egg, spread lightly over the top before placing in the oven. Decorate with small candies, caramels, etc. If you want to add an icing, use purple, green and gold/yellow food colorings for the proper Mardi Gras touch.

Shrimp Jambalaya

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cup onions, chopped
- 1/2 cup green peppers, chopped
- 1 cup celery, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt to taste
- Cayenne pepper to taste
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 2 pounds raw shrimp, peeled
- 1 12-ounce can whole tomatoes
- 1 4-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2 cups rice, uncooked



DIRECTIONS

In a heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat, heat the vegetable oil; add the flour and let it cook, slowly, stirring constantly, until golden brown. You're making a roux.

Add onions, pepper, celery, garlic, bay leaf and salt. Cook slowly until vegetables are transparent, stirring often.

Add the cayenne pepper, tomatoes and tomato sauce; cook until the oil rises to the top. Stir in the rice, shrimp and 2 1/2 cups water.

Cook, covered, over low heat until rice is tender. Add more oil and water if the jambalaya appears too dry.

Garnish with fresh parsley, if desired.

Cupid's Chicken Skewers

INGREDIENTS

- 2 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, sliced into long strips
- Wooden skewers

Marinade:

- 1 cup honey
- 2 sticks butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 oz. Southern Comfort
- Juice of 1 lime
- 3 oz. balsamic vinegar

Dipping Sauce:

- 1 cup Chinese sweet chili sauce
- 2 oz. Southern Comfort
- 2 sprigs of cilantro (chopped)
- 1 lime (juiced)
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 3 oz. honey
- 1 oz. sesame oil



DIRECTIONS

Combine marinade ingredients in a bowl, and set aside.

In a separate bowl, combine dipping sauce ingredients, and set aside.

Slide the skewers lengthwise through each piece of chicken breast. Place the skewered breasts in marinade and let stand 1 hour. Grill the chicken until done or lightly browned on each side. Remove from the grill and serve with the dipping sauce. Serves 4.

Garlic Merlot Steak

INGREDIENTS

- 1 12 - 14 oz. sirloin steak
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic or more to taste
- 6 teaspoons Merlot
- 3/4 cup beef stock or canned broth
- 3 teaspoons unsalted butter



DIRECTIONS

Sprinkle steak with salt and pepper. Heat oil in heavy large skillet over high heat. Add steak and cook until brown, about 1 minute per side. Reduce heat to medium and cook steak to desired doneness, about 3 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer steak to plate; tent with foil.

Add garlic to same skillet and sauté over medium-high heat 1 minute. Add Merlot; boil until reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Add stock; boil until syrupy, about 8 minutes. Remove skillet from heat. Add butter and whisk until melted. Season with salt and pepper. Cut steak into 2 pieces; place on plates. Spoon sauce over and serve. Serves 2.