

Balsamic Glazed Pork Menu

From Mel's Kitchen Cafe

www.melskitchencafe.com

All the recipes have been modified to feed groups of about 20. Keep in mind, this is just an average number. You'll want to adjust the recipes accordingly if you are feeding more than that or if the 20-ish people are big eaters/little eaters. Use the table and the recipes together – all make-ahead instructions are in the table. I didn't include a recipe for fresh pineapple or steamed vegetables. The idea is to keep parts of the menu simple; so keep those parts simple!

Have fun!

The Plan

	Balsamic Glazed Pork	Baked Mashed Potatoes	Lion House Rolls	Fresh Pineapple	Steamed Vegetables	Caramel Apple Cheesecake Bars	Oreo Cheesecake Bites
Up to a Month Advance							Prepare oreo cheesecake bites. Let cool Freeze in an airtight container.
24 Hours in Advance	Prepare glaze for pork.	Prepare potatoes up until baking. Cover and refrigerate.	Make the roll dough, let it rise, shape and place on prepared pan(s). Cover with lightly greased plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.			Prepare and bake bars. Cool and refrigerate (store caramel sauce separately – warm slightly before serving).	Put oreo bites from freezer into the refrigerator to thaw. Alternately, if you didn't freeze in advance, you can make the oreo bites today and refrigerate.
8-10 Hours Before Serving	Prepare pork in slow cooker.						
4 hours Before Serving			Take rolls out of refrigerator and let rise until doubled. Bake.	Cut pineapple; refrigerate.			
1-2 Hours Before Serving		Bake potatoes and keep warm.			Prepare vegetables.		

The Recipes

Balsamic Glazed Pork Loin

**You will need two 5-quart slow cookers or you might be able to make it work with one large slow cooker (7-8 quart).*

Ingredients

Pork:

- 8 pounds boneless pork loin roast, trimmed of large fat pockets
- 4 teaspoons ground sage
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, finely minced or crushed
- 2 cups water

Glaze:

- 2 cups brown sugar, light or dark
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 cup balsamic vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 8 tablespoons soy sauce

Directions

1. In a bowl, combine the sage, salt, pepper and garlic. Rub the spices all over the roast. Place the pork roast in the slow cooker and pour in the 1/2 cup water. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours. Near the end of the cooking time for the roast, combine the ingredients for the glaze in a small saucepan and bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce and let the mixture simmer, stirring occasionally, until it thickens.
2. Remove the pork from the slow cooker, shred and place on a platter or plate. Drizzle the glaze over the pork and serve.

Baked Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients

- 15 pounds russet, red or yukon gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 24 ounces light or regular cream cheese
- 8-10 green onions, chopped
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons salt (plus more to taste)
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 12 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups whipping cream

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Lightly grease a 9X13-inch baking dish and a 9X9-inch baking dish and set aside.
2. Place the cut potatoes in a large pot (or two pots) and cover with water by one inch. Add 1 teaspoon salt to each pot and boil the potatoes for about 10 minutes or until they are tender.
3. Drain the potatoes and return them to the pot. Mash them a few times and add the rest of the ingredients. Mash and mix well to desired consistency. Scoop the potatoes into the prepared baking pans. Dot with 1-2 tablespoons butter. Bake for 45 minutes (if refrigerated; bake 20-24 minutes if the potatoes weren't prepared in advance) until the potatoes are lightly browned on top and heated through.

Lion House Rolls

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons active dry yeast
- 2 cups warm water
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup butter, softened
- 1 egg
- 2 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 2/3 cup nonfat dry milk
- 5-6 cups flour

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine the yeast and water. Let stand 5 minutes (no need to do this if using instant yeast – just add the yeast and water together with the other ingredients). Add sugar, butter, salt, dry milk, 2 cups flour and egg. Beat together until very smooth. Add remaining flour gradually (about 1/2 cup at a time) until a soft but not sticky dough is formed. Knead the dough for at least five minutes if using an electric mixer and for at least 10 minutes if mixing the dough by hand. When the dough is smooth, supple and elastic, place it in a lightly greased large bowl covered with greased plastic wrap and let it rise until doubled.
2. Separate the dough into two portions. Roll each section out to an 11X14-inch rectangle. Brush the top with melted butter. Using a pizza cutter or sharp knife, cut the dough into two pieces, the long way (see photos below). Then slice the dough into five or six strips across so you end up with 10 to 12 small rectangles. Roll each small rectangle up like a snail and place on a silpat-lined or lightly greased baking sheet with the roll resting on it's open edge. Repeat with the second portion of dough.
3. Cover the rolls with lightly greased plastic wrap and let them rise until doubled. Bake at 375 degrees for 12-14 minutes until they are nicely browned.

Caramel Apple Cheesecake Bars

Ingredients

Apples:

- 3 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Streusel Topping:

- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup quick cooking oats
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened

Base:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
- Cream Cheese Layer:
- 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Caramel Sauce:

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- ½ cups half-and-half or cream
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a small bowl, stir together chopped apples, two tablespoons sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Set aside.
3. For the streusel, in a medium bowl, combine all the streusel topping ingredients and mix until crumbly. Set aside.
4. For the base, in a medium bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, salt and cinnamon. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or two forks until mixture is crumbly but combined. Press evenly into a 9X13-inch baking pan lined with aluminum foil. Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly browned.
5. For the cream cheese layer, while the crust is baking, in a large bowl, beat cream cheese with 1/2 cup sugar until smooth. Then add eggs, one at a time and then the vanilla. Mix well. Pour over the warm crust.
6. Spoon the apple mixture evenly over the cheesecake layer. Sprinkle the streusel topping over the apples. Bake for 30 minutes until the filling is set.
7. Cool the bars to room temperature. Drizzle with the caramel topping (or plate individual slices and drizzle with topping one by one).
8. For the caramel sauce, mix butter, brown sugar, half-and-half or cream, and salt in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Bring the mixture to a simmer and cook while whisking gently for 5 to 7 minutes, until thickened slightly. Add the vanilla and cook another minute to thicken further. Turn off the heat and pour the sauce into a jar. Refrigerate until cold. If the caramel sauce has cooled in the fridge long enough to harden, warm slightly before drizzling on bars.

Oreo Cheesecake Bites

Ingredients

- 36 Oreo Cookies, divided
- 1/4 cup (4 tablespoons) butter
- 4 packages (8-ounces each) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 4 large eggs
- 4 ounces semisweet chocolate
- 4 ounces white chocolate

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F.
2. Line a 9×13-inch baking pan with foil, with ends extending over sides. Finely crush 24 Oreo cookies. Melt 1/4 cup butter; mix with crumbs. Press onto bottom of prepared pan.
3. In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese and sugar with mixer until blended. Add sour cream and vanilla; mix well. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each just until blended. Chop remaining cookies. Gently stir into batter; pour over crust.
4. Bake the cheesecake for about 35-40 minutes or until the sides are set and the center is almost set. Cool completely on a wire rack in the pan.
5. When the cheesecake is completely cooled, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. When chilled, remove the cheesecake using the foil overhang and cut the cheesecake into bite-sized pieces. Place the cheesecake bites on a wax or parchment paper-lined baking tray. Melt the semisweet chocolate and white chocolate in separate bowls (I use the microwave on 50% power, stirring frequently). Pour the melted chocolate into a ziploc bag, one for the semisweet chocolate, one for the white chocolate. Snip a small corner off the corner of the bag and drizzle the chocolate over the cheesecake bars. Chill the bars until ready to serve. Alternately, the drizzled bites can be frozen in an airtight container for up to a month. Let them defrost in the refrigerator and serve chilled.