

Brilliant Brunch 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 but you may want to fill in the little details.

Now go and host a brunch!

The Brunch Plan

	Citrus Water Punch	Strawberries and Cream Scones	Make-Ahead Sausage and Egg Breakfast Bake	Cinnamon Swirl Bread	Salty Sweet Granola	Fresh Fruit with Honey Yogurt Dip
Up to a Month Advance				Prepare, bake, cool and freeze the bread.	Up to 2 weeks before the brunch make the granola. After it cools, store in an airtight container.	Up to 4 days before the brunch make the dip and refrigerate.
24 Hours in Advance		Prepare the scones, bake, cool and store in an airtight container.	Prepare and weight the breakfast casseroles. Refrigerate until ready to cook.			
8-10 Hours Before Serving				Take the frozen bread out to thaw.		
4 hours Before Serving					Portion the granola into individual muffin cups or plastic appetizer cups.	
1-2 Hours Before Serving	Add sliced fruit and ice to the punch.	Just before serving, reheat very briefly in the microwave, or for 5 to 10 minutes, tented with aluminum foil, in a preheated 350°F oven.	Let casseroles stand at room temperature while the oven is heating. Remove weights, unwrap casseroles, and bake until the edges and centers have puffed and the top is golden brown.	Slice up the bread, and arrange on a serving platter. Put softened butter, jam, honey or any other topping of choice by the sliced bread.	Consider serving the granola with flavored yogurt or having small cups for guests to make their own granola/yogurt parfaits.	Cut up the fresh fruit of your choice to serve with the dip.

The Recipes

Citrus Water Punch

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons citric acid (you can find this at most pharmacies or natural food stores)
- 10 quarts water
- 4 cups sugar
- 4 tablespoons pure lemon extract
- 6 sliced lemons
- 6 sliced limes
- Crushed ice

Directions

1. In 2 large pitchers or punch bowls, stir water, sugar, citric acid, and lemon extract together.
2. Add sliced fruit and ice

Make-Ahead Sausage and Egg Breakfast Bake

Ingredients

- 2 (14-inch) loaf Italian bread, ends trimmed
- 3 pounds bulk pork sausage
- 2 small onions, chopped fine
- 6 cups shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- 24 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 8 cups 1% milk
- 3 teaspoons table salt
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 2 tablespoons hot sauce

Directions

1. Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat the oven to 400 degrees F. Slice each bread in half lengthwise then slice each half into ½ inch-thick slices. Spread the bread in single layers on four rimmed baking sheets and bake until golden, 10-15 minutes, flipping bread and switching and rotating sheets halfway through (or bake one sheet pan at a time). Take care not to let the bread burn - it should be golden brown and toasted. Let the bread cool for 15 minutes.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the sausage and onion until the pork is no longer pink, breaking the meat into bite-sized pieces as it cooks.
3. Lightly coat 2 9X13-inch baking dishes with cooking spray. Shingle 1/2 of the bread in each of the prepared pans so that the edges overlap slightly (a couple of times when I've made this, my slices weren't long enough to shingle so I just placed the bread in a single layer and it worked fine). Top with half of the sausage mixture and 1 cup cheese. Repeat with remaining bread, remaining sausage mixture, and remaining cheese for each 9X13.
4. In a large bowl, whisk eggs, milk, salt, pepper, and hot sauce together. Pour half of the mixture evenly over the assembled casseroles. Place the casseroles rimmed baking sheets and wrap the casseroles with plastic wrap, pressing the plastic wrap lightly on the top of each casserole. Fill 2 more 9X13-inch dishes with cans of food (beans, fruit, whatever) and nest the weighted dish on top of the assembled casseroles. You'll be glad you placed the assembled casserole on a rimmed baking sheet at this point as there may be a bit of spillage over the sides as the casserole compacts. This will help the bread soak up the egg mixture. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 24 hours.
5. When ready to bake, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees F. Let the casseroles stand at room temperature while the oven is heating. Remove weights, unwrap casseroles, and bake until the edges and center have puffed and the top is golden brown, about 1 hour. Let it cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Strawberries and Cream Scones

Ingredients

Scones:

- 1 cup diced fresh strawberries
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons half-and-half or whipping cream
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 12 tablespoons cold butter, cut into 24 pieces
- 2 large eggs
- 4 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3-4 drops pure orange extract, optional
- 1 1/3 cup diced fresh strawberries

Glaze:

- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons water

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Lightly grease (or line with parchment) four baking sheets.
2. For the scones, in a blender or food processor, process the 1 cup diced strawberries with the sugar and half-and-half or cream until the mixture is smooth. Set it aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, salt, and baking powder. Using a pastry blender, forks or your fingertips, work in the butter to the dry ingredients until the mixture is unevenly crumbly with the largest crumbs about the size of a pea.
4. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the blended strawberry/cream mixture, the egg, the vanilla extract, and the orange extract, if using.
5. Add the wet mixture to the dry ingredients, stirring with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon until the dough just barely starts to come together. Add the diced strawberries, gently folding them in, using your hands, if necessary, to pull the dough together into a cohesive mass. Take care not to overmix - it will make the scones tough. It's ok to have a shaggy mess of dough as long as it is holding together for the most part.
6. Lightly sprinkle your work surface/countertop with flour and divide the dough into four pieces. Take one piece and gently press the dough into a thick circle on the floured surface, about 6-7 inches in diameter. Use a sharp knife or bench scraper to separate the dough into six equal triangles. Place each scone on the prepared baking sheet(s), spacing them about 2 inches apart. Repeat with the remaining dough. Alternately, you can make smaller scones by dropping tablespoon-ful sizes of the dough onto the prepared baking sheets.
7. Make the glaze by stirring together the sugar, water, and vanilla in a small bowl until smooth. If the mixture seems too dry, add a teaspoon of water gradually at a time until the mixture reaches the consistency of a thick syrup. Drizzle some of the syrup over the top of each scone.
8. Bake the scones until they are just beginning to turn golden brown around the edges, 13-16 minutes. When properly baked, they should be moist (but not gummy) at the center.
9. Serve the scones warm or at room temperature. The scones can also be cooled completely and stored in an airtight container at room temperature. Just before serving, reheat very briefly in the microwave, or for 5 to 10 minutes, tented with aluminum foil, in a preheated 350°F oven.

Cinnamon Swirl Bread

Ingredients

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 1/2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 2 1/2 cups warm milk (about 110 degrees or warm to the touch, but not hot)
- 6 tablespoons melted butter
- 3 large eggs
- 8 cups all-purpose flour (see note above)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons instant yeast
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Spray bottle filled with water
- 2 tablespoons melted butter for brushing the top of the bread

Directions

1. In a small bowl, mix together the granulated and brown sugar. Mix in the cinnamon. Measure out 4 tablespoons and set it aside for sprinkling on the bread.
2. In a large liquid measuring cup or bowl, whisk together the milk, melted butter and eggs. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook (or in a large bowl if making by hand), combine 6 cups of the flour, yeast, salt and 1/2 cup of the cinnamon/sugar mixture. With the mixer on low speed, add the milk mixture and mix until the dough comes together. Increase the speed to medium, adding more flour as necessary so the dough clears the sides of the bowl but remains slightly sticky. Knead the dough (in the mixer or by hand) until the dough is smooth and elastic, about 6-8 minutes (you'll need to knead upwards of 15 minutes by hand to achieve the same consistency).
3. Place the dough in a large, lightly greased bowl and cover with greased plastic wrap. Let it rise until doubled in size, about 1 to 1 1/2 hours.
4. Grease three 8 1/2-inch by 4 1/2-inch bread pans. Turn the dough onto a lightly greased work surface and separate the dough into three equal pieces. Working with one piece at a time, press the dough into an 8-inch by 14-inch rectangle. Very lightly spray the surface of the dough - only 1-2 light sprays. You don't want the water to puddle on the dough; you want a very fine mist of water across the dough. Sprinkle the dough with 1/3 of the remaining cinnamon/sugar mixture, leaving a 1/2-inch border along one of the short edges. Gently press the cinnamon/sugar mixture into the dough. Again, lightly spray the top of the dough (now sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar) with water. Don't let the water puddle, just spray a very fine, light mist across the top, 1-3 sprays.
5. Roll the dough into a tight cylinder starting with the short edge without the border. The key is to roll the dough as tightly as possible to avoid any gaps in the swirl (I don't get this perfect every time so don't worry if there are a few gaps after baking). Pinch the seam closed once it is rolled up all the way. Place the loaf, seam side down, in one of the prepared pans and repeat with the remaining pieces of dough. Cover the pans with lightly greased plastic wrap and let rise until nearly doubled in size, about an hour.
6. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Brush the loaf very gently with melted butter and sprinkle the reserved cinnamon/sugar mixture over the tops of the loaves (dividing evenly). Bake for 40-60 minutes until baked through. If the bread seems like it is overbrowning on top too quickly, place a piece of tin foil tented lightly over each loaf to finish baking. Cool the loaf in the pan for 10 minutes (too long and it will stick to the pan!) and then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Salty Sweet Granola

Note: This granola is much better if left to sit, covered, for 12-24 hours - the flavors meld and the olive oil aroma dissipates. Also, the different ingredients are variable - add the type of nuts you prefer. You could also add dried fruit after the granola bakes and cools. Consider serving the granola with flavored yogurt or having small cups for guests to make their own granola/yogurt parfaits.

Ingredients

- 6 cups rolled oats
- 2 teaspoons coarse kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon cardamom
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 1/3 cups unsweetened or sweetened flaked coconut, lightly chopped
- 1 1/3 cups macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped
- 1 1/3 cups raw almonds, coarsely chopped

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine the oats, salt, cardamom, and cinnamon.
3. In a liquid measuring cup or small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, maple syrup, and vanilla extract until combined. Spoon out 1-2 tablespoons of the mixture and set aside to use later.
4. Stir the large portion of the wet ingredients into the oat mixture, tossing to coat evenly.
5. Divide the granola between the two baking sheets. Bake for 20 minutes, stirring and flipping half way through.
6. Toss the nuts and coconut with the reserved olive oil mixture.
7. Add the nut mixture to the granola after it has baked for 20 minutes and bake for an additional 7 minutes.
8. Remove from the oven and cool completely. Store in an airtight container for up to two weeks. This granola tastes better if left to sit for a day or two before eating.

Honey-Yogurt Dip

Ingredients

- 4 cups plain or vanilla Greek yogurt
- 1 cup honey (decrease to 1/2 cup if using vanilla yogurt)
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Assorted fresh fruit like apples, pineapple, strawberries, bananas, etc

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine the yogurt, honey and cinnamon. Stir well. Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour. Serve on a platter with fresh fruit. The dip keeps well in the refrigerator for 3-4 days.