



Check out these go-to recipe recommendations from our very own EPL Staff!

STAFF PICKS: HOLIDAY RECIPES



STAFF PICKS: HOLIDAY RECIPES

Check out these go-to recipe recommendations from our very own EPL Staff!

FRENCH ALMOND CAKE

FOR THE GLAZE:

- 1 tsp finely grated orange zest
- 3 Tbsp fresh orange juice
- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp almond extract

FOR THE CAKE:

- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 3/4 cup plain yogurt or Greek yogurt
- 1 1/2 cups of granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup almond flour
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp almond extract
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup sunflower oil



1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F. Spray 9-inch round cake pan with baking spray. Line bottom of pan with parchment and spray paper lightly. Set aside.
2. Spread a single layer of almonds in a separate small baking pan and bake for 15 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes. Remove from oven and set aside to cool.
3. Combine glaze ingredients and stir with a whisk until smooth. Cover and set aside.
4. In a large bowl, combine yogurt, sugar, and eggs, stirring until well-blended.
5. Add all-purpose flour, almond flour, baking powder, salt, and extracts and stir.
6. Add oil and stir well until smooth (2-3 minutes).
7. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 35-45 minutes until cake feels springy and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool cake on wire rack for 10 minutes, then turn it out of the pan onto rack.
8. While cake is warm, gently pat all the glaze over the cake with a pastry brush. Sprinkle toasted almonds over the top and allow to cool. Sprinkle powdered sugar and serve.

"This is one of my favorite cakes!" - Mary Beth



CROCKPOT MAC & CHEESE

- 2 cups elbow macaroni (uncooked)
- 10.5 oz can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 3 cups freshly shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup freshly shredded Gruyère cheese
- 1/2 cup of mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp mustard powder
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

1. Boil macaroni 1-2 minutes less than package's recommended time, then drain and rinse under cold water.
2. Combine all ingredients in a 4 quart slow cooker and cook on low for 3 hours.
3. Stir and serve hot!

"This dish is always a hit and the convenience of a one-pot recipe is a total time-saver when you're hosting." - Eva

SPARKLING PINK PUNCH

- 2 liters of Sprite or 7-Up
- 1 container of raspberry sherbet
- 1 carton of fruit punch
- Fresh fruit (optional garnish)

1. Scoop the sherbet into a punch bowl or pitcher.
2. Add the fruit punch.
3. Follow with the Sprite/7-Up.
4. Let sit for 20 minutes until the sherbet melts before serving.
5. Garnish with fresh fruit to make it even more festive!

"I like to make it because it's easy to remember the ingredients and always turns out sweet and delicious." - Sherri

CAULIFLOWER WHITE BEAN SOUP



FOR THE SOUP:

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 sweet onion diced
- 4 garlic cloves minced
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp dried rosemary
- 5-6 cups cauliflower florets
- 1 (15 oz) can white beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- Salt and pepper

FOR THE CROUTONS:

- 3-4 cups of sourdough bread chunks
- 3 Tbsp butter, melted
- 2 Tbsp dijon mustard

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat olive oil in a large stock pot over medium heat.
2. Add onions, garlic, rosemary, thyme, and big pinch of salt and pepper.
3. Cook until onions soften, about 5 mins, then add cauliflower, beans, and stock.
4. Bring mixture to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cover and simmer 15-20 mins.
5. While soup is simmering, place bread chunks on baking sheet.
6. Whisk together the melted butter and mustard. Drizzle over bread and toss.
7. Sprinkle bread with salt and pepper. Roast until golden and toasty (10-12 mins).
8. Transfer soup mixture to blender, purée until smooth. Serve warm w/cROUTONS!

"Don't skimp on the croutons, the crowning glory to this satisfying soup!" - Carol

STAFF PICKS: HOLIDAY RECIPES

Check out these go-to recipe recommendations from our very own EPL Staff!

BUTTERMILK POUND CAKE



1/2 cup unsalted butter (room temp)
1 2/3 cup sugar
3 eggs
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 cup buttermilk
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

1. Pre-heat oven to 325°F. Grease and flour a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition.
4. In a separate bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, and salt.
5. Add one-third of the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and then add half the buttermilk and combine well.
6. Repeat this process, ending with one-third of the dry ingredients.
7. Mix in the vanilla.
8. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 35-45 minutes or until golden brown and the top bounces back when touched.
9. Cool the finished cake in the pan, then turn out on a wire rack to finish cooling.

"My family eats this cake with ice cream, whipped cream, fresh fruit, or just plain with a cup of tea. It goes with everything!" - Maryam



BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP



FOR THE SOUP:

2 Tbsp olive oil
1 large yellow onion, chopped
1/2 tsp salt
Black pepper, freshly ground
1 (3 lb) butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cubed
3 garlic cloves, chopped
1 Tbsp fresh sage, chopped
1/2 Tbsp fresh rosemary, minced
1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
3-4 cups vegetable broth

FOR SERVING:

Parsley, chopped
Toasted pepitas
Crusty bread

1. Heat olive oil in a large stock pot over medium heat.
2. Add onion, salt, and several grinds of fresh black pepper.
3. Sauté until onions soften, about 5-8 minutes.
4. Add squash. Cook until it starts to soften, stirring occasionally, about 8-10 minutes.
5. Add garlic, sage, rosemary, and ginger. Stir and cook until fragrant, about 1 min.
6. Add 3 cups of broth and bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to a simmer.
7. Cook until squash is tender, about 20-30 minutes.
8. Let cool slightly, then transfer soup mixture to blender, blend until smooth.
9. Add up to 1 cup more broth for desired consistency.
10. Season to taste and serve with parsley, pepitas, and crusty bread.

"This soup tastes great served with a dollop of yogurt or sour cream." - Carol

CHICKEN BROCCOLI CASSEROLE



4 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
2 cups frozen chopped broccoli, cooked per directions and drained
1 lb rotini pasta, cooked per directions and drained
10 oz can condensed cream of chicken soup
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup of mayonnaise
2 Tbsp lemon juice
8 oz cheddar cheese, grated

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. Grease and flour a 9 x 13-inch glass pan.
3. Mix chicken, broccoli, soup, sour cream, mayonnaise, lemon juice, and grated cheese.
4. Spread pasta in pan. Cover with chicken mixture.
5. Cover with foil and bake until bubbly, about 40 minutes.
6. Remove foil, sprinkle with cheese. Cook for another 5-10 minutes.

- Sharon



STAFF PICKS: HOLIDAY RECIPES

Check out these go-to recipe recommendations from our very own EPL Staff!

COURTNEY'S SPAGHETTI TETRAZZINI WITH CHICKEN, BROCCOLI, AND MUSHROOMS



4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
Cornstarch (enough to coat chicken)
Oil for cooking
1 lb sliced mushrooms
Goya Sazonador with Pepper seasoning (to taste)
4 (14.5 oz) jars roasted garlic Parmesan pasta sauce
1 lb frozen chopped broccoli, thawed
1 lb spaghetti noodles, cooked according to package
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (for topping)

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. Chop chicken into 1-inch cubes and place in a Ziploc bag.
3. Sprinkle chicken with cornstarch until fully coated.
4. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to help coating set.
5. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat.
6. Add chicken and mushrooms, and season with Goya Sazonador to taste.
7. Cook until the chicken is fully cooked and the mushrooms are tender.
8. Add all 4 jars of pasta sauce to skillet with the chicken and mushrooms. Simmer for a few minutes until heated through.
9. Turn off heat and stir in thawed broccoli.
10. Mix sauce mixture with cooked spaghetti noodles, then transfer to a greased 9 x 13-inch baking dish.
11. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella cheese generously over the top.
12. Bake until cheese is melted and bubbly, about 30-40 minutes.

"This recipe is a fan favorite at my house. It's simple to make and good for families who don't have a lot of time for prep and cleanup. The leftovers heat up quite nicely the next day too." - Courtney

GLUTEN-FREE PEANUT BUTTER COOKIES



10 Tbsp sugar
1 cup smooth peanut butter
1 egg (room temp)
1/8 tsp baking powder
1/4 tsp salt

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. In large bowl, cream together sugar, peanut butter, and egg
3. Stir in baking powder and salt.
4. Spoon onto cookie sheet covered in parchment paper, smash down with fork to create criss-cross pattern.
5. Bake 8-10 minutes.

"These cookies are quick, easy, and naturally gluten-free. Perfect for a crowd!" - Jez

CAJUN-STYLE SHRIMP

1 turkey kielbasa
2 cups cooked shrimp (tails off)
1 red bell pepper, diced
2 yellow bell peppers, diced
4 Tbsp dried parsley
4 Tbsp Cajun seasoning
1/2 cup olive oil
2 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp soy sauce
4 Tbsp lemon juice
White or brown rice for serving



1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Slice kielbasa length-wise, then in 1/2-inch rounds.
3. Place kielbasa, shrimp, and bell peppers into a 9 x 13 glass baking dish.
4. Sprinkle with parsley and Cajun seasoning.
5. In small bowl, combine olive oil, honey, soy sauce, and lemon juice.
6. Whisk until well combined and pour over meat and peppers.
7. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes.
8. Serve over rice.

- Sharon

STAFF PICKS: HOLIDAY RECIPES

Check out these go-to recipe recommendations from our very own EPL Staff!

ZOE'S SUPER SECRET RECIPE FOR SALTED CHOCOLATE CHIP TAHINI COOKIES

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp fine salt
1 stick unsalted butter (room temp)
1/2 cup tahini
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips or chunks
Thick sea salt



1. Pre-heat oven to 375°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking soda, and fine salt. Set aside.
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat the butter and brown sugar on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy.
4. Add tahini, egg, and vanilla and beat until incorporated.
5. Reduce speed to low and add in the dry ingredients, beating until combined.
6. Fold in the chocolate using a spatula.
7. Use a 1-inch scoop to scoop out dough into balls onto prepared baking sheet, keeping 2 inches between each cookie. Repeat with remaining dough and then sprinkle thick sea salt over the cookies.
8. Transfer to pre-heated oven. Bake until brown around edges, about 12-15 mins.
9. Let cookies cool on pan for 10 minutes and then serve.

"This recipe is a hit every time! It's the perfect balance of sweet and salty. Be warned: if you make these cookies, people will ask you to bake them again and again in the future." - Zoe



EVAN'S FAVORITE BBQ RIBS

2-3 racks of baby back ribs to fill a crockpot
2 cups of Catalina dressing
2 cups of BBQ sauce

1. Slice racks in groups of 3 ribs and place in crockpot.
2. Mix Catalina dressing and BBQ sauce together.
3. Pour sauce over ribs and cook on low until meat falls off the bones, about 8 hours.

"The leftovers make great sandwiches." - Sharon

TORTELLINI SOUP

1 1/2 lbs Italian sausage
1 onion, chopped
7 cups beef broth
1/2 cup red wine
1 (28 oz) can diced tomatoes
2 cups carrots, sliced
1 cup celery, sliced
1 cup ketchup
1 Tbsp Italian seasoning
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 pounds cheese tortellini, cooked per directions
1/2 cup parsley, chopped

1. Remove casings from sausage if necessary, then form into 1-inch balls.
2. Cook on high in slow cooker for 1 hour.
3. Add remaining ingredients except tortellini and parsley. Cook on low for 7-8 hours.
4. In the last 5 minutes, add parsley. Serve over tortellini.

- Sharon



CHOCOLATE PEANUT BUTTER PIE

1 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
1 package chocolate pudding mix
2 graham cracker crusts

1. Cream together peanut butter and butter.
2. Mix in vanilla and powdered sugar.
3. Spoon mixture into graham cracker crusts and refrigerate.
4. Make chocolate pudding according to package instructions.
5. Spoon pudding onto peanut butter. Refrigerate until solid.
6. Serve with whipped cream.

"This pie is by far my most-requested dish to bring to parties!" - Jez



STAFF PICKS: HOLIDAY RECIPES

✂ Check out these go-to recipe recommendations from our very own EPL Staff!

S'MORES PIE



"This s'mores pie is an indulgent crowd pleaser that will bring the carefree summer and cozy autumn vibes into the frigid Chicago winters. If you have extra Ganache, scoop it with pretzels to feel happiness." - Bryan

FOR THE CRUST

- 12 graham cracker sheets
- *(sub 1 package of Schar gluten-free honey grahams)
- 6 Tbsp melted butter
- *(sub 6 tbsp vegetable shortening if dairy-free)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp honey

FOR THE CHOCOLATE GANACHE

- 2 cups semisweet or dark chocolate chips
- 1 cup almond milk (any milk will do)

FOR THE TOPPING

- 1/2 bag of miniature marshmallows
- *(sub large marshmallows cut in half)

1. Pre-heat oven to 375°F.
2. Mix graham crackers and sugar in a food processor.
3. Add melted butter and honey, pulse to mix well.
4. Transfer mixture to a greased pie dish and press flat with the bottom of a measuring cup.
5. Bake until edges of crust are well-crisped, about 5-10 minutes.
6. Heat milk on the stove in a small pot until just before boiling (about 190°F).
7. Place chocolate chips in a medium glass mixing bowl. Pour heated milk over chocolate chips, just enough to barely submerge them. Let sit until chocolate melts, about 10 minutes.
8. Whisk chocolate and milk until smooth to make Ganache.
9. Pour still warm Ganache into pie crust, fill to about 3/4 of an inch from brim.
10. Gently place marshmallows on top of the Ganache to cover the entire surface.
11. Roast marshmallows in the broiler.
 - a. Place pie in still warm oven and set broiler to medium or high.
 - b. Watch pie carefully. Turn on the light, sit on the floor, and eagerly watch your pie like an excited child.
 - c. Remove promptly when marshmallows are roasted to your liking.
12. Refrigerate overnight. Cut with a sharp knife while cold.

MISCHA'S FAVORITE DOG BISCUITS

- 2/3 cup canned pumpkin
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup creamy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup packaged crumbled cooked bacon pieces
- 2 1/3 to 2 1/2 cups whole wheat flour

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°F.
2. In a large bowl, beat the pumpkin, eggs, and peanut butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth.
3. Beat in bacon and as much of the flour as you can with the mixer. Stir in enough remaining flour until the dough is no longer sticky.
4. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/4-inch thickness.
5. Cut into shapes using 2-inch cookie cutter. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheets.
6. Bake until crisp and lightly golden, about 30-35 minutes.



"Once cooled, you can store in an air-tight container for up to one month. My dog Mischa's favorite treat!" - Sharon