

“THANKSGIVING / HOLIDAY SPECIAL ISSUE”

This week's menu is designed for the big day only. With all the festivities, I figured it's easiest to just focus on your holiday menu, so you might want refer to previous issues of Real Food Weekly if you need some dinner inspiration for the other days this week. This holiday special includes a complete menu with recipes, a shopping list, and a preparation planner that takes you through your feast preparation, hour by hour, including make ahead recipes and even setting up your table. Once again, Real Food Family does the thinking and organizing so you can just enjoy the delicious, nourishing, REAL food.

We hope you enjoy a happy and blessed Thanksgiving!

-Roz Mignogna

TREATS AND DRINKS

- Candied Pecans and Holiday Chocolate Nut Brittle
- Russian Tea Cookies
- Spiced Cider and a drinks display

DINNER

- Holiday Salad with Honey Mustard and Herb Dressing
- Candied Pecan Brussels Sprouts with Garlic Butter
- Cheesy Sweet Potato and Butternut Squash Casserole
- Garlic and Herb Roasted Turkey with Holiday Stuffing
- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

DESSERT

- Classic Apple and Pear Pie
- Pumpkin Pie with Cinnamon Pecan Streusel Topping



GARLIC AND HERB ROASTED TURKEY WITH HOLIDAY STUFFING



MASHED POTATOES AND GRAVY

THANKSGIVING/HOLIDAY GUIDE: PREPARATION PLANNER

2 DAYS AHEAD:

- Begin “Crispy Nuts” recipe for “Candied Pecans” and “Russian Tea Cookies” by soaking pecans for 12 hours, then drying in a warm oven for 12 hours.

1-2 DAYS AHEAD:

- Make pie crusts for Apple and Pumpkin pies and refrigerate.
Make pie filling for “Classic Apple and Pear Pie” ahead of time, but do not place in pie dough. Keep covered in a large bowl in refrigerator.
Make streusel topping for “Pumpkin Pie with Candied Pecan Streusel Topping” and keep covered and refrigerated in a small bowl.
Make “Candied Pecans,” “Holiday Chocolate Brittle,” and “Russian Tea Cookies.”
Make and refrigerate dressing for “Holiday Salad with Honey Mustard and Herb Dressing.”
Read through menu, and plan/set out serving dishes.

DAY OF CELEBRATION

(Dinner at 5pm, adjust as needed for your dinner time.):

Morning:

Finish making apple and pumpkin pies (1 1/2 hours).

Bring turkey to room temperature (1-3 hours).

Prepare Spiced Cider and keep warm during day in a stockpot or slow cooker.

Set ½ cup butter out to bring to room temperature for turkey.

2PM:

Preheat oven to 450°F.

Prepare “Holiday Stuffing” and turkey. Place turkey in oven by 2:30pm. *(If baking stuffing in a baking dish, prepare and set in refrigerator. Place baked stuffing in oven at 4:30pm, noted below.)*

Set table with dishes, napkins, glasses, and silverware.

Start setting out drinks display by setting out tea bags, ground coffee, sugar, cream dishes, etc.

Set out serving dishes for menu items.

3PM:

Reduce oven temperature to 350°F, covering turkey if necessary.

Peel and boil potatoes until soft to make “Mashed Potatoes and Gravy.”

3:30PM:

Make “Cheesy Sweet Potato and Butternut Squash Casserole,” but do not place in oven until 4:30pm (*noted below*).

4PM

Finish setting table with butter, salt and pepper, plus any additional condiments

Make Candied Pecan Brussels Sprouts with Garlic Butter and keep covered in skillet. Heat again for 2 minutes before serving.

Finish drinks display by setting out cold drinks, hot water and/or brewed coffee, and fill cream dish.

4:30PM:

Remove turkey from oven and let stand for 30 minutes.

Finish “Mashed Potatoes and Gravy.”

Finish making “Holiday Salad with Honey Mustard and Herb Dressing” and toss with dressing, or place dressing aside

Place “Cheesy Sweet Potato and Butternut Squash Casserole” in oven.

(Place stuffing in oven if baking in a baking dish.)

5PM:

Turn your oven off and serve your Christmas feast...

HAVE A BLESSED TIME!

CANDIED PECANS AND HOLIDAY CHOCOLATE BRITTLE

Approximate time: 15 minutes.

(24 hours needed in inactive preparation time.)

****If following the "Holiday Guide," read this recipe completely before you begin. You will save 2 cups of candied pecans before continuing to make "Holiday Chocolate Brittle."***

4-6 six cups pecans, roughly chopped ("*Crispy Nuts*" preferred)

1 teaspoon salt

½ cup butter

½ cup sugar

cinnamon

For Holiday Chocolate Brittle, add:

8 oz chocolate chips

5-6 tablespoons peanut butter

Parchment Paper needed for recipe

To make "Crispy Nuts," cover pecans with water in a large bowl and stir in salt. Cover and let soak for at least 12 hours. Strain nuts the spread on a large baking sheet and place in a warm oven (*no higher than 150°F*) for 12-24 hours, until nuts are dry and crispy.

****Recipe can be made with raw nuts, but "Crispy Nuts" are preferred because of the added nutritional and digestive benefit of soaking, and also a desired dry and crispy texture achieved.***

Melt butter in a large saucepan or skillet. Stir in sugar until dissolved. Stir in nuts until covered, and sauté for 8-10 minutes, stirring frequently, until sugar is dark golden brown and remove from heat.

*(*Special directions for "Holiday Chocolate Brittle" begins now. See below. Make sure to reserve 2 cups of candied pecans for "Candied Pecan Brussel Sprouts with Garlic Butter," "Christmas Salad with Honey Mustard and Herb Dressing," and "Pumpkin Pie with Cinnamon Pecan Streusel Topping.")*

Spread immediately on a large baking dish covered with parchment paper, sprinkle liberally with cinnamon, and let cool completely. A hard caramel coating should cover nuts. Break apart into small pieces for use in recipes, or as a snack.

FOR HOLIDAY CHOCOLATE BRITTLE:

Remove 2 cups of "Candied Pecans" for other recipes, finishing the recipe above. While remaining nuts are still in pan, stir in chocolate and peanut butter until melted. Spread mixture on a large baking dish covered in parchment paper, sprinkle liberally with cinnamon, and let cool completely. Place in refrigerator until chocolate hardens, then break up pieces and serve.

RUSSIAN TEA COOKIES

Approximate Time: 2 hours (1 hour, 45 minutes inactive)

Ingredients:

1 cup butter, at room temperature
 2/3 cup honey
 2 cups flour
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons vanilla
 2 cups raw, unsalted pecans, roughly chopped
 (“Crispy Nuts” preferred)
 2 cups confectioner’s sugar, plus extra for dusting

To make “Crispy Nuts,” cover pecans with water in a large bowl and stir in salt. Cover and let soak for at least 12 hours. Spread on a large baking sheet and place in a warm oven (*no higher than 150°F*) for 12-24 hours, until nuts are dry and crispy.

****Recipe can be made with raw nuts, but “Crispy Nuts” are preferred because of the added nutritional and digestive benefit of soaking, as well as the dry and crispy texture achieved.***

Cream butter and honey in food processor. Add flour and salt to food processor and pulse a few times to incorporate. Add vanilla and pecans and pulse until even dough forms. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 300°

Roll 1-tablespoon sized scoops of dough into smooth balls and place on a baking sheet. Bake cookies for 35-40 minutes, until golden brown on edges.

Place confectioner’s sugar in deep dish. Once cookies are cool enough to handle (*but still hot*), gently roll in confectioner’s sugar to coat. Place cookies on serving dish and let cool completely. Dust with extra confectioner’s sugar before serving.

SPICED CIDER

6 cups apple cider
 2 cups water
 2 oranges, sliced
 1 cup fresh cranberries
 2 cinnamon sticks
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ½ teaspoon ground cloves
 1 tiny pinch of cayenne pepper (*optional*)
 Rum, Brandy, Amaretto, or Frangelico Hazelnut Liqueur (*optional*)

Place cider, water, oranges, cranberries, cinnamon sticks, cinnamon, ground cloves, and cayenne pepper (*optional*) in a large stockpot. Simmer for at least 1 hour, then serve, adding liqueurs if desired, or keep warm all day over low heat in a stockpot or slow cooker.

HOLIDAY SALAD WITH HONEY-MUSTARD AND HERB DRESSING

Approximate Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

4 cups romaine lettuce, roughly chopped
4-6 cups other leafy green lettuce, such as Escarole, Green Leaf Lettuce, etc., chopped
1/2 cup Candied Pecans, chopped
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup apples, chopped

For Dressing:

1/4 cup basil, chopped
2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, chopped
1 tablespoon thyme, chopped
1 tablespoons rosemary, chopped
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons honey
1/2 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Salt and Pepper, to taste

Mix lettuce, pecans, cranberries, and apples in large bowl. Place dressing ingredients in a small food processor and pulse until smooth and creamy. Add salt and pepper as needed. Toss salad with dressing and serve immediately.

CANDIED PECAN BRUSSEL SPROUTS WITH GARLIC BUTTER

Approximate Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

4-6 cups brussel sprouts
salt and pepper
1/2 cup butter
2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 cup "Candied Pecans", chopped

Bring large stock pot of water to a boil and season with a handful of salt. Boil brussel sprouts for 6-8 minutes, until soft and bright green. Strain with a colander. Return stock pot to stove and heat butter. Saute garlic for 2-3 minutes, then stir in brussel sprouts for 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, as needed, and sprinkle with candied pecans to serve.

CHEESY SWEET POTATO AND BUTTERNUT SQUASH CASSEROLE

Approximate Time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

3 cups sweet potatoes, skinned and cut into 1-inch to 2-inch chunks
3 cups butternut squash, skinned and cut into 1-inch to 2-inch chunks
salt and pepper
1/4 cup cream
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
2 cups milk
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 cups Gruyere cheese, grated
2 cups sharp white cheddar cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 350°

Place potatoes in large stockpot and fill with water to rise 2 inches above potatoes. Bring to boil and let boil for 8-10 minutes until soft, but not mushy. Transfer cooked potatoes to food processor with slotted spoon, season liberally with salt and pepper and pulse while adding heavy cream until smooth puree forms.

Meanwhile, heat butter in saucepan. Whisk in flour and cook for 2-3 minutes until smooth paste forms. Whisk in milk, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and continue cooking, whisking often, until smooth and thick enough to coat a spoon, then remove from heat.

Spread half of potato mixture on bottom of square baking dish. Pour 1 cup white sauce over potatoes, then sprinkle with 1 cup Gruyere cheese and 1 cup cheddar cheese. Spread remaining potato mixture over cheese and top with remaining white sauce and cheeses. Place in oven and bake for 20 minutes until top is slightly golden and bubbly. Let stand for 5-10 minutes before serving.

GARLIC AND HERB PUREE

2 cups finely chopped herbs, such as basil, rosemary, and sage
4-5 cloves of garlic
2 teaspoons salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 cup extra virgin olive oil

Puree ingredients in a food processor until smooth.

GARLIC AND HERB ROASTED TURKEY

Approximate Time: 3 hours

1, 10-14 pound turkey
1/2 cup butter
4 tablespoons "Garlic and Herb Puree"
Salt and pepper
Chicken Stock
Kitchen Twine

Preheat oven to 450°F.

Place turkey, breast side up, in roasting pan on a roasting rack. (*Place neck and giblets in a pot of simmering water to make stock for other recipes.*) Fill inside cavity with "Holiday Stuffing," if desired. Rub turkey evenly with butter and Garlic and Herb Puree. Tie bottom of legs together with kitchen twine, after tucking tail piece under legs. Sprinkle with additional salt and pepper, and pour 1-2 cups of chicken stock in bottom of roasting pan. Place in oven for 30 minutes, then reduce heat to 350°F and continue roasting for about 1 hour for every 4-5 pounds of meat, basting with cooking liquid every 30-45 minutes, and making sure that the bottom of pan has liquid at all times. If outside gets too dark too quickly, cover with aluminum foil while cooking. Turkey is done when skin is dark brown and crispy, and internal temperature of breast meat reads about 165°-170°F with a meat thermometer. Let set for 20-30 minutes before slicing to serve.

HOLIDAY STUFFING

Approximate Time: 20 minutes preparation, 3 hours or 30-45 minutes cooking time

4 cups dry bread, cut into small cubes
1 cup dry bread crumbs (*can be made using extra bread ground in a food processor*)

2 cups apples, chopped

2 cups onion, chopped

Additional options:

dried cranberries or raisins

nuts

chopped celery and/or carrots

chopped cooked sausage

mushrooms

3 tablespoons "Garlic and Herb Puree"

2 eggs

salt and pepper

butter

Parmesan cheese (*optional*)

Toss bread, bread crumbs, apples, onions, and additional options (*if desired*) in a large bowl. Whisk "Garlic and Herb Puree" and eggs in a bowl and stir into bread mixture. Add a small amount of additional salt and pepper. Scoop stuffing into turkey cavity and cook with turkey, or place in a buttered baking dish and top with freshly grated Parmesan cheese and bake in a 350°F oven for 30-45 minutes, until beginning to brown. Serve immediately.

MASHED POTATOES AND GRAVY

Approximate Time: 30 minutes

8-10 potatoes, peeled and chopped, then boiled until soft

½ cup butter

½ cup milk and/or cream, plus more as needed
salt and pepper

¼ cup fat/pan drippings from

"Garlic and Herb Roasted Turkey"

¼ cup flour

4 cups chicken stock, or stock made from simmering turkey giblets in water for 2-3 hours.

Using a potato masher or food processor, blend potatoes with butter and milk as needed to achieve desired consistency. Season liberally with salt and pepper, as needed.

Heat fat in a large saucepan. Whisk in flour for 2-3 minutes, then whisk in stock until blended. Simmer until gravy is smooth and thick. Season with salt and pepper, as needed, and serve with potatoes.

CLASSIC APPLE AND PEAR PIE

Approximate Time: 2 ½ hours (2 hours inactive)

For Crust:

2 1/2 cups flour, plus extra for dusting
pinch of salt
1 cup butter, chilled and cubed
1/3 cup iced water

For Filling:

3 cups apples, peeled, cored and chopped
2 cups pears, peeled, cored and chopped
½ cup sugar, plus extra
1 tablespoon arrowroot powder (*use cornstarch as a substitute*)
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon, plus extra

For Crust:

Place flour and salt in food processor and pulse a few times to blend. Add butter, 1 cube at a time, until moist crumbs form. Add water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until moist clumps form and dough sticks together when pinched. Discard extra water. Transfer dough to lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Form into disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat oven 350°F.

Break 1/3 of dough and set aside. Roll larger piece of dough onto lightly floured surface, into 14-inch disk and transfer to pie pan. Pinch down edges to form uniform crust.

Mix apples and pears in a large bowl. Blend sugar, arrowroot, and flour in a large bowl with a whisk, then stir into apples and pears. Place mixture in pie pan over pie crust. Roll remaining 1/3 of pie dough over a lightly floured surface into a 12-inch disk. Place disk over pie and pinch edges with bottom crust. Sprinkle with extra cinnamon and sugar, then bake 45 minutes to 1 hour, until crust is lightly golden brown. Let cool before serving.

PUMPKIN PIE WITH CANDIED PECAN STREUSEL TOPPING

Approximate Time: 2 ½ hours (2 hours inactive)

For Crust:

2 1/2 cups flour, plus extra for dusting
pinch of salt
1 cup butter, chilled and cubed
1/3 cup iced water

For Filling:

30 ounces pure pumpkin puree (*roasted sugar pumpkin or jarred/canned*)
5 medium eggs
1 cup whole milk
1 ½ cups cream
1/2 cup sugar
1 cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon cinnamon
2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice, optional (*clove, nutmeg, cardamom, ginger, etc.*)
1 teaspoon orange zest

For Streusel Topping:

½ cup flour
½ cup sugar
½ cup butter, at room temperature
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup “Candied Pecans,” roughly chopped

For Crust:

Place flour and salt in food processor and pulse a few times to blend. Add butter, 1 cube at a time, until moist crumbs form. Add water, 1 tablespoon at a time, until moist clumps form and dough sticks together when pinched. Discard extra water. Transfer dough to lightly floured surface and knead until smooth. Form into disk, wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 1 hour. Roll dough onto lightly floured surface into a thin disk and transfer to pie pan. Pinch down edges to form uniform crust, then slice extra dough off the edges. ***Bake strips of extra dough with a sprinkle of cinnamon and sugar for easy shortbread cookies!**

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Using an electric mixer, beat pumpkin puree, adding eggs one at a time until smooth, then add remaining filling ingredients until smooth. Pour mixture into pie pan over dough. (*Pour extra filling in a buttered baking dish and bake like a custard aside the pie, if desired.*) In a small bowl, mix streusel ingredients, except “Candied Pecans,” with a fork until moist crumbs are formed, then stir in pecans. Place in oven and bake for 30 minutes. Carefully remove pie from oven, then sprinkle streusel topping evenly over pie. Place back in oven on lower rack and bake for 20-30 more minutes, until pie filling is set (*jiggles a little when shaken*) or a knife inserted into filling comes out clean. Let set for at least an hour before slicing to serve.