

## “FUN FOOD”

*“This week is about fun food- particularly for kids. Even if you aren’t feeding kids, know that there is a kid inside you that wants to eat all of this delicious food, too. My daughter keeps asking me for fun foods, and I’ve been cooking more sophisticated foods lately, so I decided to spend a week on fun, yet delicious, foods. Besides the steak and portabello mushroom recipe (which is more sophisticated, but very easy), you will probably find a childlike smile on your face when you’re eating...not only because it’s fun food, but it’s all healthy versions of these recipe. Have fun!”*



CRISPY RICOTTA-FISH BALLS



SHRIMP AND CHIPS



ONE-DISH MARINATED STEAK, PORTABELLA MUSHROOMS AND ZUCCHINI

### WHAT'S FOR DINNER

- One-Dish Marinated Steak, Portabella Mushrooms and Zucchini
- Crispy Ricotta-Fish Balls
- Shrimp and Chips
- Parmesan Chicken Tenders with Broccoli Rabe

### EXTRAS

- Cake Pops
- Salad Dressing ~ Homemade Ranch Dressing

### NOURISHING ADDITIONS

- Lacto-Fermented Ketchup

### SUGGESTED EXTRAS

*(Recipes and shopping list items not included.)*

- A Simple Side Salads with lettuce, cut veggies and this week's salad dressing is recommended for the “Crispy Ricotta-Fish Balls”

### PLANNING NOTES

- If you'd like to make the Lacto-Fermented Ketchup this week, give yourself a few days for it to ferment before eating.
- Consider making the Homemade Ranch Dressing at the beginning of the week so you can have easy salads in a flash.
- The Cake Pops are time intensive and require specialty shopping at a craft store. They are a super treat, though, so make it a party!



CAKE POPS



HOMEMADE RANCH DRESSING



**MY NOTES:**

**EGGS AND DAIRY:**

Butter  
Parmesan cheese

Ricotta cheese

Cheddar or mozzarella cheese

**For Homemade Ranch Dressing:**

Sour cream

Buttermilk

**For Lacto-Fermented Ketchup:**

Whey-made from separating raw milk or yogurt

**For Cake Pops:**

Extra butter and milk

*\*Consider extra milk, yogurt, eggs, cheeses, etc., for drinks, snacks and additional recipes*

**PANTRY:**

Salt and pepper

Extra virgin olive oil

Organic lard, tallow or other high heat frying fat

Arrowroot powder (*buy in bulk at health food stores to save money*)

Dry breadcrumbs

Dried oregano

**For Homemade Ranch Dressing:**

Anchovy filets (*packed in oil*)

**For Lacto-Fermented Ketchup:**

Tomato paste (*organic*)

Maple syrup

Cayenne pepper (*optional*)

**For Cake Pops:**

Cake mix

Powdered Sugar

Vanilla extract

*\*Consider extra items for breakfast, lunches, snacks, and additional recipes such as tortillas for tacos, etc.*

**SPECIALTY:**

**For Cake Pops:**

2 pounds melting candy/chocolate

*(craft stores sell Wilton brand, but I recommend finding a professional baking supply store and buying quality dipping chocolate)*

Rounded popsicle sticks (*available at craft stores*)

Course Styrofoam block (*available at craft stores*)

Desired toppings and decorations, such as nuts, candy shapes, crushed candy-canes, etc.

## **ONE-DISH MARINATED STEAK, PORTABELLA MUSHROOMS AND ZUCCHINI**

Total Time: 25 minutes

### *Ingredients:*

Steak, such as rib-eye, New York or sirloin (*as much as needed*)  
salt and pepper  
2-4 Portabella mushrooms, sliced into strips  
3-5 zucchini, thinly sliced on an angle into medallions  
¼ cup Butter  
2 cloves of garlic, minced

Preheat broiler in oven.

Season steak liberally with salt and pepper and place on one side of a large baking dish. Place sliced mushrooms and zucchini on the other side of the baking dish and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Melt butter with minced garlic, then evenly pour all over steak and vegetables. Place under broiler for 3-5 minutes, then remove and carefully flip steak and toss vegetables. Place back under broiler for an additional 3-6 minutes, until steak is fully seared on both sides and vegetables are soft and have begun to brown. Serve immediately.

## **CRISPY RICOTTA-FISH BALLS**

Total Time: 30 minutes

*\*A simple side salad with this week's dressing is recommended with this recipe.*

### *Ingredients:*

½ onion, roughly chopped  
2 garlic cloves, roughly chopped  
¼ cup flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped  
¼ cup basil, roughly chopped  
1 pound soft white fish, such as sole or haddock  
½ cup ricotta cheese  
salt and pepper  
cheddar or mozzarella cheese, cut into small cubes  
2-4 cups frying fat, such as organic lard, tallow or other high heat fat

Place onion, garlic and herbs in a food processor and puree. Place mixture in large bowl with the fish, ricotta cheese, and a liberal amount of salt and pepper. Break up fish with a wooden spoon and stir to evenly mix. Scoop mixture into small balls and stuff each ball with a cube of cheese. Make sure to cover cheese completely with mixture. Place balls on a platter or cookie sheet lined with wax or parchment paper.

Meanwhile, heat frying fat over medium-high heat until food sizzles when placed in oil, then sustain heat over a low-medium flame. Fry fish balls until deep golden brown on all sides and transfer to a paper towel using a slotted spoon. Sprinkle with salt. Finish remaining fish balls, then serve with a side salad, if desired.

## **SHRIMP AND CHIPS**

Total Time: 30 minutes

### *Ingredients:*

4 sweet potatoes, peeled and finely sliced into chips  
(*using a mandolin, food processor, or fine slicer on side of a box grater*)

2 cups organic lard or other frying fat

salt and pepper

½ cup butter

2-3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1-2 pounds raw shrimp, peeled and deveined

2 cups peas (*frozen and thawed, okay*)

2 tablespoons flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

Preheat oven to 250°F.

Prepare sweet potatoes while heating frying fat over medium-high heat in a medium pan. In batches, fry a handful of sweet potato chips until curled and beginning to brown. Use a slotted spoon to transfer chips to a large dish in the oven to keep warm. Finish with remaining “chips”.

In a large saucepan, sauté garlic in butter for 2-3 minutes, then add shrimp and peas, stirring until shrimp are pink and curled. Season as needed with salt and pepper, then add parsley and serve with sweet potato chips.

## **PARMESAN CHICKEN FINGERS WITH BROCCOLI RABE**

Total Time: 30 minutes

### *Ingredients:*

2 pounds chicken tenders (*or breast meat cut into thin strips*)

salt and pepper

2 eggs

¼ cup arrowroot powder

½ cup dry breadcrumbs

½ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated

2 teaspoons dried oregano

¼ cup butter, plus extra as needed

extra virgin olive oil

2-3 stalks of broccoli rabe per person

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Beat eggs with salt and pepper in a small dish. Whisk arrowroot, breadcrumbs, and Parmesan in another dish. Grease a large baking dish with butter. Toss chicken pieces in egg mixture, then coat with dry mixture, shaking to remove excess. Place chicken tenders in baking dish, and repeat with remaining chicken. Drizzle liberally with oil, then bake for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

When chicken is 10-15 minutes from being done, fill a saucepan with an inch of water and bring to a boil. Add a handful of salt, then add broccoli for 5-7 minutes until bright green and tender. Strain water, then add broccoli back to pan and stir in butter until melted. Toss to coat broccoli with butter. Season as needed, and serve with chicken.

## CAKE POPS

*\*These are surely the craze lately! I'll tell you how to make them, but they are a total treat! There is nothing nourishing or healthy about these fun treats. I also do not claim to have a perfect original cake recipe. I would make cake from scratch but I've found a wonderful locally made cake mix with "real food" ingredients. If you'd like to bake from scratch, there are many delicious recipes online.*

### Ingredients:

Cake Mix (*or ingredients for a "from scratch" recipe*), plus ingredients needed, such as:

Eggs

Butter, melted (*use instead of vegetable oil*)

Water

½ cup butter, at room temperature

1 pound powdered sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2-4 teaspoons milk, as needed

2 pounds melting candy/chocolate

*(craft stores sell Wilton brand, but I recommend finding a professional baking supply store and buying quality dipping chocolate)*

Rounded popsicle sticks (*available at craft stores*)

Course Styrofoam block (*available at craft stores*)

Desired toppings and decorations, such as nuts, candy shapes, crushed candy-canes, etc.

Prepare cake and bake as directed. (*There is no need to worry about the shape or appearance of the cake.*) Let cool, then dump in a large bowl. Crumble with your hands or a large spoon (*or let the kids do this part*).

Meanwhile, beat butter and powdered sugar together with an electric mixer (*start slowly to avoid a cloud of powdered sugar*). Add vanilla and as much milk as needed to get frosting ingredients to incorporate. (*Do not add too much milk or frosting will become too soft.*) Whip for several minutes until frosting is smooth and fluffy. If frosting is too thick, add more sugar.

Spoon half of the frosting into the crumbled cake. Stir until evenly mixed and test a cake ball by rolling a tablespoon of the mixture into a ball. Ball should be very moist. Add more frosting, if needed. When consistency is correct, make balls and place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment or wax paper. Place balls in freezer for 10-30 minutes, until firm.

Create a double-boiling system by placing a glass or metal bowl over a small pot of water, filled with a few inches of water. Ensure that bowl does not touch the water. Place melting candy or chocolate in the bowl and bring water to a steady simmer. Stir candy or chocolate until melted and smooth.

Place popsicle sticks into cake balls and carefully dip in melted candy/chocolate until completely covered. Gently tap pops on side the side of the bowl to smooth and shake of excess coating. Stand cake pop in the Styrofoam block and decorate before coating dries.

*\*If cake pops are too large, they will be too heavy and fall off of the stick. If melting candy or chocolate is too chalky, add melted butter or vegetable oil until smooth.*

## **HOMEMADE RANCH DRESSING**

### *Ingredients:*

1 garlic clove, roughly chopped  
¼ onion, roughly chopped  
small handful of flat-leaf parsley  
a few pinches of other fresh herbs, such as thyme  
or rosemary  
4-5 anchovy filets  
salt and pepper  
2 cups sour cream  
buttermilk

Place garlic, onion, herbs and anchovy filets in a small food processor and pulse into a smooth puree. Place mixture in a mixing bowl and season with a liberal amount of salt and pepper. Stir in sour cream then add enough buttermilk to achieve a smooth desired texture. Season, as needed, with salt and pepper then serve immediately or store refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.

## **LACTO-FERMENTED KETCHUP**

*\*Salt is used to start the fermentation process, but fresh (not dried) whey made from fresh raw milk or quality yogurt will reduce the amount of salt needed, as well as reduce the amount of time needed to ferment and help ensure successful preservation.*

### *Ingredients:*

3 cups organic tomato paste  
¼ cup whey  
1 tablespoon salt  
½ cup maple syrup  
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (*optional*)  
3 cloves of garlic, mashed

Blend ingredients well using a food processor or blender, then continue with Basic Method, without adding any water.

Place ingredients into a mason jar. Close the jar very tightly with an airtight lid. Place at room temperature for 2-4 days, then transfer to a dark cool spot, such as the top shelf of a refrigerator, a wine cellar, or other area kept at around 40°F. Flavor and beneficial bacteria will increase with time, but fermented ketchup can be eaten immediately after the initial days of fermentation.

*\*Sometimes lacto-fermented foods can get bubbly or develop spots or white foam on top. This is no cause for concern, simply remove with a spoon. A failed fermentation will result in a putrid smell that would be too awful to consider eating. Successful lacto-fermentation will result in vegetables and fruits with a pleasantly soured taste that remain preserved for several weeks or months in cold storage.*