

The Recipes from Bitter Chocolate by Dawn Greenfield Ireland

Be on the lookout for the cookbook: Cooking with Dawn Greenfield Ireland and the Alcott Family Characters due out in 2020.

THE RECIPES

Chicken Salad with Fruit and Pecans

2 Gala apples, unpeeled and diced

3 cups red and/or white seedless grapes, halved; more if you eat them while preparing them

1 cup finely chopped celery

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup plain or vanilla yogurt

1/4 cup sour cream

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

2 pounds boneless/skinless chicken breasts, cooked and chopped

1 cup chopped pecans, toasted, or microwaved on high for 1-1/2 minutes

Stir together all ingredients except grapes and pecans in a large bowl. Add more mayonnaise, if required. Add grapes, tossing gently to coat. Cover and chill at least one hour. Stir in pecans just before serving.

Tuna Fish and Macaroni Egg Salad

2 cups macaroni (cooked and drained)
2 cans tuna fish, drained well
2 or 3 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
3 tablespoons sweet pickle relish (you can use dill pickle relish if you prefer... yikes!)
Mayonnaise to taste
Chopped onion
Chopped celery or celery seed, if desired

Okay, here's the deal. This is one of my favorite recipes. I could eat tuna fish and macaroni egg salad for a week and not get sick of it -- that's how much I love it.

Mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl. Add mayonnaise, onion, celery and seasonings to taste.

Cover and chill in the refrigerator for a few hours. Stir. If required, add more mayonnaise. If you eat half the bowl before you serve guests or family, oh well. ☺

Ginger Muffins

1/2 cup vegetable or coconut shortening

1/2 cup sugar

1 egg

1 cup molasses

3 cup sifted flour (all-purpose)

1-1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

1-1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

1-1/2 teaspoon ginger

1/2 heaping teaspoon cloves

1 cup hot water

These are my favorite muffins. I love gingerbread and these muffins smell so good my mouth is watering just thinking about them!

In a large bowl, cream together the shortening and sugar. Beat in the egg. Add molasses; beat.

Sift together flour, baking soda, salt and spices. Add to the wet mixture. Gradually add hot water, beating until the mixture is smooth.

Line muffin pans with paper cups and fill 2/3 full. Bake at 375 for 20-25 minutes. Test with a toothpick. If the toothpick is clean, the muffins are done.

Makes about two dozen.

To reheat muffins, wrap in foil and heat at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.

Salmon Patties

16 oz. salmon (I used raw fillets, you can use canned)

1 egg

2 stalks green onion, chopped

1/2 cup seasoned breadcrumbs

2-3 tablespoons coconut or olive oil for cooking

Latex gloves (optional)*

1 sheet of waxed paper or aluminum foil

Place the raw salmon in a food processor and chop/grind until mushy. Transfer to a medium-sized bowl. Add egg, green onion, and breadcrumbs. Mix well. If the mixture appears mushy or thin, add more breadcrumbs.

Place a sheet of waxed paper or foil on the counter. Sprinkle with bread crumbs. Put on your gloves. Scoop out a handful of the salmon mix. Form into a patty. Place on the sheet on top of the bread crumbs. Form the remaining patties and place on the sheet.

Flip the patties over to coat the other side with bread crumbs, then roll the edges in the crumbs.

Heat oil in a frying pan. Add patties. Cook approximately 5-8 minutes per side until golden brown, flipping a couple of times.

When I make these, I only get 3 patties, so adjust the size or the quantities of the ingredients.

Hint: these patties are very hot when removed from the pan so don't try the taste test right away (like some people I know who burned their mouths).

*I keep a box of latex gloves on hand because I don't like touching raw anything (meats, poultry, seafood, etc.). I also use them for removing seeds from jalapeno peppers so I don't accidentally burn my eyes when I subconsciously push my glasses up on my nose. You can get a box of latex gloves at either the drugstore or a retail store such as Target.

Horseradish Tartar Sauce

1/2 teaspoon Inglehoffer extra hot horseradish (or your favorite brand)

2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish

1/4 cup mayonnaise

Mix ingredients. Adjust as you like. I typically use much more horseradish, but you'll have to determine what your "heat index" can tolerate. Lick the spoon before rinsing 😊.

Hint: if you have a stuffy nose, horseradish will clear that quickly!

Mint Jelly

1 cup chopped fresh mint leaves, packed
1 cup water
1/2 cup cider vinegar
3-1/2 cups white sugar
5 drops green food coloring
1 pouch (3 oz.) liquid pectin

Equipment required:

9 half-pint canning jars with lids and rings
Cheesecloth or coffee filters
Heavy pan
Large stockpot
Wire racks for stockpot and cooling jars
Sturdy tongs

Optional: 1 pair latex gloves for food color handling, or make it on St. Patrick's Day and no one will think twice about your green fingers. 😊

Mix the mint, water, vinegar and sugar together in a heavy pan. Heat over medium-high heat to bring to a boil quickly, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat and stir in food coloring and pectin.

Return to heat and bring to a full boil for 30 seconds. Remove from heat and strain the mixture through two layers of dampened cheesecloth or coffee filters.

Sterilize the canning jars and lids in boiling water for 5 minutes. Pack the strained liquid into the hot jars, filling to within 1/4 inch

of the top. Run a knife or a thin spatula around the inside of the jars to remove air bubbles.

Wipe rims with a moist paper towel to remove any mint mixture. Top with lids and screw on rings.

Place a rack in the bottom of a large stockpot and fill the pan halfway with water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Carefully lower the jars into the pot using the tongs. Space the jars so there is a space of at least 2 inches between jars.

Add water, if necessary, until the water level is no less than 1 inch above the top of the jars. Bring the water to a full boil. Cover the pot and boil 15 minutes. Remove the jars to the cooling rack with tongs.

Filipino Chicken Adobo

4-5 lbs. chicken thighs
1/2 cup white vinegar
1/2 cup soy sauce
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
3 bay leaves

I LOVE THIS RECIPE!

Combine all ingredients in a large Ziploc® bag and marinate chicken for 1-3 hours in the refrigerator or overnight. I keep the bag in the refrigerator overnight, turning every 3 or 4 hours.

Empty the contents of the bag into a large pot. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat. Cover and let simmer 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Monitor and add water to keep the chicken covered.

Uncover and simmer until sauce is reduced and thickened, and chicken is tender, about 30 more minutes. Serve with steamed rice. Don't count on having leftovers.

Note: The first time I made this it tasted salty. The second time, I adjusted the recipe and added water. You might also want to try the low sodium soy sauce.

Sweet Potato Casserole with Pecan Topping

4 cups peeled and chopped sweet potatoes
1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons soft butter
1/2 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon organic vanilla extract

For topping:

1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1/3 cup flour
3 tablespoons soft butter
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Boil sweet potatoes until tender. Drain and mash. In a large bowl mix together the remaining ingredients (NOT the topping) until smooth. Place in a 9 x 13 greased baking dish.

In a medium bowl, mix the brown sugar and flour. Cut in the butter until the mixture looks like little pea-sized clumps. If you do not have a pastry cutter, try taking two butter knives and running them through the mix until the butter is completely cut into the flour/sugar mix. Stir in the pecans. Sprinkle the mix over the casserole. Bake for 30 minutes or until the topping is lightly browned.

If you have leftovers, you must have done something wrong. We practically had our heads in the casserole dish! I plan to double the recipe next time.

Homemade Mayonnaise

This recipe makes about one cup of mayonnaise.

1 large egg

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon dry mustard, or 1 teaspoon prepared mustard of your choice

1/2 teaspoon salt – I use kosher

1-1/4 cup olive oil or another oil of your choice

Equipment required:

Blender or food processor

The trick to a successful mayonnaise is to start with all the ingredients at room temperature: egg, juice and oil.

Place your whole egg in a bowl and let stand on the counter for 3-4 hours.

Pour the lemon juice into the blender or food processor so it can also become room temperature.

Pour the oil into 2 different measuring cups: 1/4 and 1 cup and let stand at room temperature.

When everything is all nice at room temperature, crack the egg and add to the lemon juice in the device you are using.

Add the mustard, salt and 1/4 cup of the oil. Blend for 20-30 seconds. I then switch to the puree setting for the remaining time.

This is very important! Drizzle the remaining cup of oil in the tiniest stream, very slowly and steadily until the mixture thickens.

This process may take about 3 minutes. Be patient. It may feel like your arm is falling off, but if I can do it, you can do it! This is no time to wimp out.

I use my old Oster blender. When the mayonnaise starts to emulsify, you may hear the change in the mixing sound.

It's hard to explain, but when the mixture is thickening, the sound is different.

Please note that extra virgin olive oil is not a good choice. It is too strong and you won't like the taste of your mayo. You may need to experiment with oils until you find the right oil for your taste buds.

I like hazelnut oil and sesame oil for the 1/4 cup and a light olive for the 1 cup.

I store my mayo in a Ball canning jar in the refrigerator. You can get them in every size imaginable at the grocery store.

Flan

Flan is a traditional Mexican dessert and there are many versions. This recipe is prized for its simplicity. If you've never made flan before, now is the time to try this recipe.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Total Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup and 1/2 cup sugar

6 large eggs

1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk

2 13-oz. cans evaporated milk

1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. You will need 6 dishes—ramekins or other specialty flan cookware—and a large glass or ceramic baking dish to put them in.

Pour 1 cup sugar in warm pan over medium heat. Constantly stir sugar until it browns and becomes caramel. Quickly pour approximately 2-3 tablespoons of caramel in each ramekin, tilting the dish to swirl the caramel around the sides. Reheat caramel if it starts to harden.

In a mixer or with a whisk, blend the eggs together. Mix in both the condensed and evaporated milk. Slowly mix in the 1/2 cup sugar, then the vanilla. Blend smooth after each ingredient is added.

Pour the custard into caramel-lined ramekins. Place the ramekins in the baking dish and fill with about 1 or 2 inches of hot water. Bake for 45 minutes in the water bath. Check with a knife just to the side of the center. If knife comes out clean, it's ready.

Remove and let cool. Put the ramekins in the refrigerator for 1 hour to cool further. Invert each ramekin onto a small plate. The caramel sauce will flow over the custard.

BEVERAGES

Mango Iced Tea

1-1/2 quarts cold water
6 tea bags – your choice
2 cups mango nectar
Sugar* to taste
1/4 cup fresh mint leaves
Thinly sliced mango

Bring water to a boil; remove from heat. Add tea bags and let steep about 5 minutes. Remove tea bags, add mango nectar and add sugar, to taste. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Pour into the pitcher and add mint leaves. Pour over ice and add mango slices.

Note: You can replace the mango with your favorite fruit.

*Sugar, too. Use healthy organic cane sugar—not the fake stuff.

Berry Mineral Water

1-1/3 cups raspberries, blackberries or your favorite berries

3 tablespoons sugar

1/2 cup lime juice

2-3 cups mineral water (whatever it takes to fill the glasses)

Place berries in a food processor or blender. Add the sugar and lime juice. Mix until blended but still pulpy. If you do not have a food processor or a blender, place in a medium-sized bowl and mash with the back of a wooden spoon. Let sit for 10 minutes. Strain the mixture to remove the seeds and set aside.

Fill 4 large glasses with ice and pour 1/4 cup of your fruit syrup in each glass. Add 3/4 cup sparkling water to each glass and stir.

For an added zing, you can add a shot of vodka to each glass, stir, and top with 1/2 cup of sparkling water. Garnish glasses with fresh berries and lime wedges.

Get to AA if you skip the mineral water and go for just vodka!

Kahlua Café Mocha

2-1/2 heaping teaspoons organic hot cocoa Mix
1/2 - 1 teaspoon instant coffee or 1/4 cup prepared coffee
1 coffee cup
Boiling water*
Kahlua

Add cocoa mix to cup. Add instant coffee or prepared hot coffee. Heat water to boiling. Fill cup with desired amount of water. Add Kahlua (to your taste).** Stir. Lick spoon.

*For a richer beverage, use half water and half milk.

** Okay, let's get real here. Don't drink this at work. If you find you're drinking 12 cups of Kahlua café mocha every day, staggering around, or accidentally wear your robe to work, get to an AA meeting immediately! 😊

Chocolate Martini

2 ozs vodka

1/2 oz crème de cacao

Pour into a shaker filled with ice. Swirl it around. Pour into a martini glass.

If you wrote down the number and location for the AA meetings from the Kahlua Café Mocha, keep it handy if you find yourself drinking too many of these martinis.