

*Love* for my  
Living Letters

A collection of family recipes

**2013**

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# Breakfast Ideas

## **KATIE'S CHEESE GRITS**

6 cups water  
1 1/2 cup grits (not instant)  
4 cups sharp cheese, shredded  
3 eggs  
1 1/2 sticks butter  
3 tsp seasoned salt  
1 tsp garlic  
2 dashes Texas Pete (optional)

Bring water to boil and add grits. Stir in the cheese. Beat eggs and add to grits. Add butter and seasoning. Pour into casserole dish (I use 2 8x8's or similar size) Bake for 45 minutes to an hour at 350. Can freeze before baking.

## **MARY'S AND BETSY'S CHEERIO BARS**

2 1/4 cups marshmallows (small or large - doesn't matter)  
1/3 cup peanut butter (I use crunchy - the nuts in my family like nuts)  
1/4 cup butter

Melt these ingredients over low heat, stirring frequently  
Then add 2 1/2 cups cheerios. Stir in 1/4 cup raisins. Let it cool for a few seconds and then add about 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips. (If you don't let it cool, it becomes Cocoa Puff bars but my family likes it that way, too)  
Press into 8x8 greased pan. Cool and cut into bars. Or give a spoon to each child and let them eat the entire pan. Been there. Done that.

## **EGG MCMUFFINS- CHAMBERS' STYLE**

Butter an English muffin. Toast slightly. While it is browning, fry an egg. Or scramble it, whatever. Put cooked egg on browned muffin, top with cooked bacon strip and some cheese. Top with other half of muffin. Warm. Eat. Be blessed.

## **CHIP'S OATMEAL SCONES**

2 cups plain flour  
1 cup oats  
1/4 cup sugar plus 2 TBS sugar, divided  
1 TBS baking powder  
1/4 tsp salt  
1/2 cup butter, chilled and cut into pieces  
3/4 cup milk  
1 egg, slightly beaten  
1 tsp vanilla  
1/2 cup pecans, chopped  
2 tsp cinnamon

Heat oven to 400. Spray cookie sheet with cooking spray. Combine flour, oats, 1/4 cup sugar, baking powder, salt; mix well. Cut in butter with pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. In separate bowl, combine milk, egg, vanilla. Blend well. Add to dry ingredients and stir until moistened. In another bowl (this recipe messes up a bunch of bowls but my boy loves it so he gets to have it!) Combine remaining 2 TBS sugar, cinnamon and pecans. Sprinkle over dough and gently swirl it in, not blending completely. Pat the dough onto the greased cookie sheet into a large circle. Use pizza cutter to cut into slices - no need to separate, just make the lines. Bake 10-15 minutes. We like it chewy like our oatmeal cookies. Make whatever glaze you like on cinnamon rolls - we use about 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tsp vanilla, and a couple of tsp milk. Drizzle glaze on top and then use the pizza cutter to recut along the lines scored previously.

## **SAUSAGE APPLE BREAKFAST CASSEROLE**

2 cans apple pie filling  
1 lb sausage browned (not Italian sausage)  
1 ½ cup sharp cheese

Layer these ingredients in above order in 2 8x8 casserole pans. Top with 1 package jiffy pie crust and ½ cup brown sugar. Dot with butter. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes. I assemble these and then wrap and freeze to cook later for company breakfast.

## **BAKED OATMEAL**

I tasted this at a delightful bed and breakfast place in North Carolina. I ooohed and aahed over it so much that the owner brought me the recipe. My travel companions seemed a bit embarrassed.....the recipe was worth it.

Combine 3 cups rolled oats and ¼ cup water. Then add  
¼ cup applesauce    ¼ cup oil    1 cup milk    2 eggs  
¾ cup brown sugar    2 tsp baking powder    ½ tsp salt    ½ tsp cinnamon

The rest of the recipe is my own adaptation. I stir in ½ cup mini chocolate chips and a bunch of chopped pecans. Spoon into greased 9x13 dish and bake for 30 minutes at 350. Since it's oatmeal – it's healthy. So I often eat half of it myself. Yummy.

## **GRANOLA**

Bake 6 cups old fashioned oatmeal at 350 for 10 minutes

Stir in

½ cup walnuts

½ cup coconut

½ cup wheat germ

½ cup powdered milk

Add 2/3 cup honey and 2/3 cup oil and 1 tsp vanilla

Stir well. Bake 10-15 minutes. Remove from oven and add about 1 cup raisins.

## **OVERNIGHT COFFEE CAKE**

18 frozen rolls

4 tablespoons dry butterscotch or vanilla pudding mix (I use about ½ envelope)

1/2 cup melted butter

2 tablespoons cinnamon

1/2 cup brown sugar

chopped nuts

Place frozen rolls in buttered bundt pan. Sprinkle with 4 tablespoons dry butterscotch pudding mix (not instant). Mix melted butter, cinnamon, brown sugar and nuts. Pour butter mixture over rolls. Cover with foil and let set overnight. Do not refrigerate.

In the morning, bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and invert to plate or 13x9 pan.

## **CINNAMON TOAST CAKE**

Heat oven to 350. Melt one stick butter in microwave.

Mix in bowl: 2 cups flour, 1 cup sugar, 2 tsp baking powder, 1 tsp salt, 1 cup milk, 1 tsp vanilla, and 2 TBS of the melted butter. (Don't worry – you get to use the rest for the topping!) Spread batter in greased 9x13 pan.

On top of batter, pour the rest of the melted and sprinkle ½ cup sugar and 1 ½ tsp cinnamon. Bake 20-25 minutes. OH YES it is good!

# Appetizers

## **ALICE'S SAUSAGE BALLS**

I suppose that technically these are appetizers but we eat them for breakfast, snacks, whenever Alice comes to visit. They freeze well which is good because I have to hide them in the freezer so the kids won't eat the entire batch in the first 15 minutes.

3 cups Bisquick

1 lb sausage (we like it hot)

2 cups grated sharp cheese

½ cup water, as needed

Mix all ingredients together and form into small balls. Bake at 350 for 25 minutes.

## **SPINACH ARTICHOKE DIP**

2 10 oz pkgs frozen spinach, squeezed dry

4 TBS melted butter

1 8 oz pkg cream cheese, softened.

Beat together until smooth.

Add 1 tsp lemon juice, ½ tsp garlic salt, 1 can artichoke hearts, drained and chopped. Spread mixture into 9x13 pan and bake at 350 for 20 minutes. Serve with pita chips or bagel chips. Variation: Halve and core 8 medium tomatoes and stuff them with this mixture. Bake 20 minutes and serve for an elegant side dish.

## **SPINACH DIP**

1 package frozen chopped spinach, squeezed dry

1 16 oz carton sour cream

1 cup mayonnaise

1 package Knorr vegetable soup mix

1 small can water chestnuts, chopped and drained

3 green onions chopped

Mix all ingredients and chill in fridge for at least a couple of hours. Serve with crudité's (that's a fancy culinary term for celery and carrot sticks. Are you impressed with my vocabulary???)

### **HOT SPINACH DIP**

1 pkg frozen spinach, squeezed dry

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup parmesan cheese

Mix all ingredients and bake in shallow dish at 350 for 30-40 minutes.

Serve with corn chips or tortilla chips.

### **PEGGY KELLY'S BLACK BEAN SALSA**

1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

2 cans shoepeg white corn, drained

1 bunch tomatoes on the vine, chopped

1 bunch green onions, chopped

1 can diced green chiles, drained

1 TBS olive oil

1 TBS red wine vinegar (I use a dash more just cause I am sassy)

Some minced garlic

Juice of 1 lemon or about ¼ cup

As much salsa/picante sauce as you want

Some cilantro (except for Jon)

Mix together and chill for several hours. Oh this is so good!!



# Dinner Options

(When nobody made reservations somewhere else)

## CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS

This will make enough for 4-5 meals. Very economical.

In large stock pot, put whole chicken (take out the stuff that is wrapped and stuck inside the bird. I've missed that before. Not good), 5-6 chicken bullion cubes, 1 cup longcooking rice, some chopped celery and carrots. I like a lot of celery and carrots – tastes good, adds veggies, and the color looks pretty. I stick in some celery tops, too. Adds flavor. Add a bay leaf. I don't know how much difference this makes but it makes me feel like a great cook to add a bay leaf ☺ Cover with water A lot. And add some black pepper to taste. I like a lot.

Bring to a boil and cook for about 4 hours. Seriously. The chicken will fall apart (that's a good thing). Remove it (and all the skin – ugh) with a slotted spoon and set aside in a bowl. Dig around and find the bay leaf and the celery tops. Remove those, too. But they can go in the trash. When the chicken is cool enough to handle, take it off the bone. Trash the bones and the skin and then return the chicken to the stock. Your house will smell soooooo good.

You now have basic stock which you can dilute slightly for some yummy chicken soup. Or you can put it in several casserole dishes, cover and freeze til time for chicken and dumplings. When ready to cook, thaw the chicken stock. Make a recipe for dumplings that is found on the side of the Bisquick box, and plop onto the chicken mixture. Bake at 350 for about 15 minutes until the mixture is bubbly and the dumplings are brown. This is so good. Oh, it's so good!!!!

## CHIP'S ROAST

1 eye of round roast

Some kind of marinade – I mix up salt, pepper, garlic salt, oil, red wine vinegar, Worcestershire sauce and a bit of honey.

Let roast soak in this for a couple of hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 500. Cook roast uncovered for 7 minutes per pound.

Turn oven off but DO NOT OPEN DOOR. Let roast remain in oven for 3 hours. Slice thin.

## **RAVIOLI SOUP**

- 1 lb. ground beef browned and drained
- 1 ½ cup diced onions cooked with the ground beef
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- ¼ cup Italian bread crumbs
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese
- 1 28 ounce crushed tomatoes
- 1 6 ounce tomato paste
- 3-4 beef bullion cubes
- 3 cups water
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 ½ tsp Italian seasoning

Combine all ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes. At this point, I put it in containers for freezing. To serve, thaw and heat for 30-40 minutes or 2-4 hours in crockpot.

Prepare 1 12 ounce package frozen ravioli according to directions and add to sauce. Serve with additional parmesan cheese. Recipe triples well for freezing.

## **TACO SOUP**

Mix together in crockpot:

- 1 lbs ground beef, browned and drained and cooked w/ 1 chopped onion
- 2 cans kernel corn, undrained
- 2 cans kidney beans, undrained
- 2 cans chili beans, undrained
- 2 cans ro-tel tomatoes, undrained

Taco seasoning (equivalent to about 2 packets)

Ranch dressing powder (equivalent to 1-2 packets)

Simmer most of the day. Serve with Fritos. Leftovers freeze well.

# Desserts

## **CHAMBERS' CHOCOLATE CHIP PIE**

1 unbaked regular(not deep dish) pie shell

1 stick butter, melted

1 cup sugar

½ cup plain flour

1 egg, beaten

1 tsp vanilla

Some chocolate chips – I guess about 1 cup

Mix everything except chocolate chips together. Then stir in the chocolate chips. Spoon into pie crust. Lick the bowl repeatedly. It's so good. Bake for 40-45 minutes at 350. Doubles and freezes great.

## **PEACH POUND CAKE**

Cream 1 cup butter and 3 cups sugar

Add 6 eggs, 1 at a time

Combine 3 cups plain flour, 1/4 tsp baking soda, 1/4 tsp salt and add to creamed mixture, alternating with 1/2 cup sour cream and 2 cups chopped peaches. Works best if you have peaches from my hometown. Just sayin Stir in 1 tsp vanilla extract and 1 tsp almond flavoring.

Pour batter into greased and floured tube pan. Bake 75 minutes at 350.

### **MARY'S INCREDIBLE BARS**

3/4 cup melted butter

2 cups graham cracker crumbs (you can buy this as crumbs – you don't have to smash graham crackers ---- but you could!!)

1 12 ounce jar chunky peanut butter (it can be cheap pb)

2 cups powdered sugar

2 cups semisweet chocolate chips

Pour melted butter over graham cracker crumbs in large bowl. Mix well. Add peanut butter and sugar; mix well. Spread in 9x13 dish. Melt chocolate chips and pour over top. Chill for 1 hour or until firm. Slice and lick the knife and gobble up all the pieces that crumble. Those have ZERO calories because they are not a complete bar. It's really cool how all the calories fall out that way. I highly recommend eating all cookies, etc in this manner. Tremendous way to save calories. Just look at how well it works for me.

### **CHOCOLATE POUND CAKE**

Cream 2 sticks butter, 1/2 cup solid shortening, and 3 cups sugar.

Beat in 5 eggs, 1 at a time

Sift 3 cups flour, 1/2 cup cocoa, 1 tsp salt, 1/2 tsp baking powder and add to creamed mixture, alternating with 1 1/4 cup milk

Stir in 1 TBS vanilla

Pour batter into greased and floured tube pan. Bake at 325 for 1 hour 45 minutes (I usually do a little less than this because we like it a tad bit gooey)

## **BETSY'S CHOCOLATE CAKE CAKE**

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

2 cups sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ cup buttermilk

2 sticks butter

4 HUGE tablespoons cocoa powder (I added about 6)

In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar and salt. Stir together and set aside.

In another bowl mix the buttermilk, eggs, vanilla and baking soda mix with a fork and set aside. In a medium saucepan melt the butter and add the cocoa. Whisk together to combine; meanwhile bring one cup of water to a boil. When the butter is melted pour the boiling water in the pan allow to bubble for a moment. Then turn off the heat. Pour the chocolate mixture into the flour mixture. Stir together for a moment to cool the chocolate then pour in the egg mixture.

Stir together until smooth then pour into large casserole pan (11x14)

Bake for 30-40 minutes at 350 and keep checking it.

**WHILE THE CAKE IS BAKING MAKE THE ICING**

Melt 1 ¾ sticks butter in a saucepan over medium-low heat. Add 4 TBS (heaping) cocoa powder and stir until smooth. Add 6 TBS milk and 1 tsp vanilla. Slowly add 1 lb. powdered sugar and stir together. Dump in ½-1 cup chopped pecans (optional) and stir together. Immediately after removing cake from oven pour warm icing over top. Avoid spreading.

### **MIMI'S CHOCOLATE COOKIES**

I prefer to refer to these as "righteousness" cuz the more you eat, the more you want!

2 cups sugar

½ cup cocoa

½ cup milk (evaporated milk works best)

1 stick butter or margarine

Combine above ingredients and heat until boiling. Boil for at least 1 minute, preferably a little bit longer so the cookies will "set" later. Remove from heat and add

½ cup crunchy peanut butter

1 TBS vanilla

3 cups oatmeal

Blend well and drop by spoonfuls onto waxed paper. Devour.

### **ALICE'S ICE CREAM**

3 cups sugar

1 tsp vanilla

1 can evaporated milk

1 carton whipping cream

Milk to the fill line on the ice cream canister

Variation – add 1 package frozen peaches from Alice, chopped and squished

Churn in ice cream maker with plenty of ice and rock salt.

### **OATMEAL COOKIES**

¾ cup butter or Crisco

1 cup brown sugar

½ cup white sugar

1 tsp vanilla

1 egg

Mix above ingredients until creamy.

Add 3 cups oatmeal

1 cup plain flour

½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

1 cup raisins

Drop by spoonfuls onto greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 for 10-12 minutes. Hide cookies from Chip or there won't be any left.

## **BLUEBERRY SQUARES**

Dough:

6 cups plain flour

1 lb Crisco shortening

1 ½ tsp salt

1 cup sour cream

Cut shortening into flour until it looks like coarse crumbs. Add salt and sour cream. Mix into a smooth ball and chill at least one hour.

Mix about 6 cups blueberries, 1 ¾ cup sugar, 1/3 cup flour and dash of cinnamon.

Divide chilled dough into two parts and roll out one part to fit into 9x13 or 11x15 pan. Trim evenly around edges. Sprinkle bottom with ½ cup graham cracker crumbs and then fill with the blueberry mixture. Dot with butter, roll out rest of dough and fit it over fruit. Brush a little milk or cream over crust. Bake until golden brown and then top with glaze of powdered sugar & milk. Freeze half of this or else you will eat the entire thing and be terribly sick. It is that good.

## **PEANUT BUTTER FINGERS**

1 cup butter

1 cup white sugar

1 cup brown sugar

Cream together above ingredients.

Add 2 eggs, 1 tsp vanilla, 2/3 cup crunchy peanut butter, and 2 eggs. Blend well.

Then add 2 cups plain flour, 1 tsp baking soda, 1/2 tsp salt. Stir well. Stir in 2 cups oatmeal. Mix well. Spread in greased 9x13 pan and bake 25-30 minutes at 350. Freezes well

# Side Dishes

## **ALICE'S CREAMED CORN**

2 packages frozen white shoepeg corn (HAS to be shoepeg)

1-2 sticks butter, melted

Milk, salt and pepper as needed

Puree one package of corn in food processor. Add some milk to keep it from sticking. Mix other package and melted butter with it. Pour in enough milk to make it soupy and season with salt and pepper. You'll need a large casserole dish for this. Bake for 1 hour at 350. Stir occasionally.

Chip's Pineapple Casserole

2 cans pineapple tidbits, drained and reserve juice

1 cup sugar

¼ cup plain flour

1 cup sharp cheese, grated

1 sleeve Ritz crackers, crushed

1 stick butter

Mix pineapple, sugar, flour together. Place in 9x13 casserole dish. Pour some of the juice over the mixture. Give the rest to Betsy to drink. Sprinkle cheese over this, then Ritz crackers. Slice butter over crackers. Can be refrigerated to bake later or baked right now. 25-30 minutes at 350.

## **MARY'S BROWN RICE**

Mary was so sad to find out that that "healthy brown rice everyone raves about" was not the same as our brown rice recipe! No matter, we eat it anyway and figure that if you smile while you are eating it, it's heart healthy!!

Melt one stick butter in 9x13 casserole dish.

Add 1 cup long cooking WHITE rice ☑

2 ½ cups water with 1 package Lipton Onion soup mix and 4-5 beef bullion cubes

Bake for 30-40 minutes. Slurp it up and love the butter!



### **KATIE'S GREEN BEAN FRIES**

These are named after Katie, not just because she loves them but because I learned about them from her. Her Jon calls them "fries" ☺ but I suppose they are really just roasted green beans. Katie does the same thing with broccoli, cauliflower, and brussel sprouts. We rely on our drug dealers to encourage some healthy eating. I love these veggies and serve them a lot. Followed by chocolate chip pie.

A mess of fresh green beans, washed and patted dry

Toss beans in 3-4 TBS olive oil and then sprinkle with garlic salt or other seasoning. Bake on cookie sheet at 400 for about 20 minutes. YUMMY. For real.

### **AUNT LESLIE'S SALAD**

1 package cabbage for cole slaw or one head cabbage, chopped

4 tsp slivered almonds or sesame seeds or both!

Mix together. Add 2 packages crushed ramen noodles (save flavor packet)

Just before serving, pour this mixture over slaw –

1 cup oil

5 tsp red wine vinegar

4 tsp sugar

1 packet ramen noodle flavoring

2 tsp salt

1 tsp pepper

### **BROCCOLI SALAD**

1 bunch broccoli chopped fine (I use mostly the flowerlets but it's ok to put some stems in there)

1 red onion, chopped (has to be red onion)

¾ cup each raisins and pecans

7-8 slices crispy bacon, chopped (or use REAL bacon bits)

Combine above ingredients. In separate bowl, mix well 1 cup mayonnaise, 4 TBS red wine vinegar and ¼ cup sugar (sometimes I use sugar substitute but DO NOT tell Daddy). Pour over broccoli mixture just before serving.

# Miscellaneous

## **CHAMBERS CHRISTMAS JAM**

This is one of my trademarks. One of my signature recipes. It simply would not be Christmas without this. If you make it, please remember to call it Chambers Christmas Jam. ☺

2 12 ounce packages fresh cranberries, coarsely chopped

4 10 ounce packages frozen sliced strawberries, in juice, thawed

8 cups sugar

2 3 ounce packages liquid pectin

Combine cranberries, strawberries and sugar in dutch oven. Bring to a boil and cook 1 minute, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and add liquid pectin. Return to boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and skim off the foam. Quickly pour jam into sterilized jars (I run the mason jars through the dishwasher to sterilize them), leaving ¼ inch head-space. Cover jars with lids and process in boiling water bath for 5 minutes. Perfect on homemade biscuits. Perfect.

## **CARAMEL CORN**

A bunch of air popped popcorn. Like about 20 or 30 cups. Seriously. Set aside in some big bowls.

In large saucepan, cook 2 cups brown sugar, 1 ½ sticks butter, ½ cup Karo syrup (the white kind) and ¼ tsp salt. Bring to a rolling boil. Stir and let it boil for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add 1 ½ tsp baking soda. It will bubble up like a volcano science project – this is so cool!!! Anyway, quickly pour it over all that popcorn and blend thoroughly. You can either transfer the popcorn to greased cookies sheets and bake at 250 for 20-30 minutes or you can eat it just like this. You are going to want to eat it. Just sayin.

### **ALICE'S SPICED TEA MIX**

2 cups Tang

½ cup instant tea, flavored with lemon

½ cup lemonade mix

1 tsp ground cloves

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 cup sugar

Mix all ingredients together and store in airtight container. To prepare cup of tea, mix 3-4 heaping TBS of mix to cup of hot water. Recipe doubles well. Great for teacher gifts at Christmas!

### **YEAST ROLLS**

1 cup boiling water

1 cup solid shortening

1 cup sugar

1 ½ tsp salt

Pour boiling water over next three ingredients. Blend and cool.

Add 2 beaten eggs.

Dissolve 2 pkgs (or 4 tsp) yeast in 1 cup lukewarm water. Combine with egg mixture.

Gradually add in 6 cups plain flour and blend well. Cover and place in fridge for at least 4 hours, preferably overnight. When ready to bake, roll dough out into rectangle and cut out rolls. Place on greased cookie sheets and allow to rise at room temp. for about 3 hours. Bake at 425 for 12-15 minutes. Serve immediately or let cool and then freeze for later use.