

In the Kitchen – Oranges and Apples and Smells, Oh My! – by Marcy Lytle

Fall smells. I started them back in August, because they're my fave. And fall colors. All my faves... So for the month of September, we're plating colors and smells and tastes that will make us just want more while the new season arrives. These are all so tasty and not hard at all!

Baked Potato Deluxe

He loves sweet potatoes and I love russet baking potatoes. So for lunch, I packed us both one. Yes, in a thermos because you can cut them in fourths and stack them in!

- Veggies
- Onion
- Sausage
- Pesto
- Potatoes
- Farm Dust (seasoning)

Bake the potatoes while you prepare the toppings. Stir fry the seasoned veggies and onions and sausage, all cut into bite size pieces, in a little butter, until browned and tasty. Stir in the pesto. Open the hot potatoes and top. Eat then, or pack in a thermos for later.

Orange Zested Granola

The smell as this granola cooks, from the orange zest, is the best. And the flavor it adds is so good, as well. If you're not making your own granola, why not?

- 2 teaspoons orange zest (from about 1 1/2 oranges, preferably organic)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 4 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 1/2 cup raw almonds
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup honey or maple syrup (I used syrup)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup raisins, preferably golden

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. In a small bowl, combine the orange zest and sugar. Use your fingers to rub the zest into the sugar until it's bright orange and very fragrant.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats, almonds, salt, cinnamon and orange sugar. Stir to combine. Pour in the olive oil, honey and vanilla, and mix well.

Pour the granola onto your prepared baking sheet. Spread the granola into an even layer. Bake for 19 to 23 minutes, stirring halfway, until the granola is turning lightly golden in color. The granola will crisp up as it cools.

Let the granola cool (completely) before stirring in the raisins and breaking up the granola into chunks as necessary. (I added dark chocolate chips too)

An Apple Flower

This looks good on a plate, and we ended up dipping our popcorn in the caramel sauce as well!

- Large honey crisp apple(s)
- Caramel ice cream topping
- Dark chocolate chips

Cut the apple into slices and fan out on a plate in a circle. Drizzle the caramel sauce and top with chocolate chips. Serve with popcorn for movie night at home.

Smells on the Stove

It's an easy end of the summer season potpourri with just three ingredients, and is great for kitchen aroma as you start your day.

- Rosemary (4 sprigs)
- 2 lemons sliced
- 1 T vanilla

Just place all of the above in water in a pan, and heat to boil, then turn back to simmer.

Steak Bites and Gnocchi

I just subscribed to Stay At Home Chef's meal plan, and this is one of the recipes. So easy, and absolutely delicious. Recipe below is for two, you can adjust for more.

- 6 oz sirloin steak
- 2 t lemon juice
- 1 t olive oil
- 1 t worcesterhire sauce
- 1 t apple cider vinegar
- 1/3 t onion powder, and garlic powder and salt
- 1/4 t black pepper
- 10 oz package dried gnocchi
- 2 t butter
- 2/3 clove garlic crushed
- 2 T parmesan cheese, grated

Dice steak into bite sized pieces. Place in a resealable plastic bag or shallow bowl for marinating. Add in lemon juice, oil, sauce, vinegar and seasonings...toss to coat. Cover or seal and place in fridge for 1-8 hours.

Bring pot of water to boil. Heat a large skillet over med high heat. Cook gnocchi according to package directions, drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, use tongs to add half of steak to skillet, leaving liquid behind. Cook and stir til seared and browned. Remove from skillet and cook the rest of the steak, then return all to skillet.

Add butter and garlic with the steak, let garlic toast 1 minute. Add gnocchi and saute 3-5 min til lightly browned.

Serve hot with the Parmesan cheese for sprinkling.

Corn Dip

This is the recipe from Pioneer Woman and it's easy and so very tasty. We loved it so much. I halved the recipe for just the two of us...

- 8 oz cream cheese room temp
- ½ c sour cream
- ½ c mayo
- 2 10oz pkgs frozen fire roasted corn
- 2 4.5oz cans chopped green chiles
- ½ c jarred jalapenos, chopped
- ½ c jarred salsa
- Salt and black pepper
- 3 c Monterey Jack Cheese, grated
- ¼ c fresh cilantro leaves
- Corn chips for serving

Preheat oven to 375. Stir cream cheese, sour cream and mayo in large bowl til combined. Add the corn, chiles, jalapenos, salsa, s and p, and half the grated cheese, and stir. Place in 9X13 dish and sprinkle remaining cheese. Bake till bubbly and golden about 20 minutes. Sprinkle on cilantro and enjoy with the chips!