

In the Kitchen – Good Bites – by Marcy Lytle

It's April already. Do your tastes change when spring is here and do you then change what you prepare to eat? I do. And sometimes, I just want something simple to make that's tasty to eat, and even fun. Here are a few ideas for April bites, and they're good!

Fried Pickles and Shakes

There are some specific tips for getting the fried pickles to turn out just right. And there's a shake we keep making on repeat. These two make for a great meal – when nothing else sounds good.

- Dill pickle spears
- Flour
- Egg and milk
- Canola oil
- Ice cream
- TJ's chocolate covered strawberries (freezer)
- Milk

For the pickles:

First, pour the oil in a skillet and start to heat it. That's the first tip, the oil needs to be hot for that first pickle when it hits the pan. Mix one egg with milk in a bowl, place flour in another, and start the double dip. Twice in each bowl. Place them carefully in the hot oil, so as not to crowd the pan. They cook and brown quickly. Remove to a paper towel lined bowl, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Serve with Ranch or Ranch mixed with salsa (my fave).

For the shakes:

In a blender, place vanilla ice cream, the strawberries and some milk, and blend to the consistency you like. That's it!

BLT Turkey Salad

This was easy to put together and one of the most tasty salads. I halved it for the two of us. And it was perfect.

- ½ c plain yogurt
- ½ c mayo
- 2 T sugar
- 2 T red wine vinegar (or balsamic)
- ½ t garlic powder
- 6 c torn romaine lettuce
- 4 c cubed turkey
- 1 ½ c chopped tomatoes
- 1 ½ c shredded mozzarella
- 1 ½ c shredded cheddar
- 10 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
- ½ c chopped green pepper
- ½ c chopped red onion

- ½ c chopped cucumber

In a large salad bowl, whisk the first 5 ingredients. Add the remaining, and toss to coat! That's it!

A Tray of Snacks

If you have a long tray or a charcuterie or cutting board, just use it as your base for whatever you have in the fridge that night! Here's what we had.

- Leftover pimiento cheese
- Can of biscuits
- Fritos
- Leftover taco dip
- Pickles
- Jam

All of that lined up on a tray, looked pretty and inviting, and it was perfect for a night at home while we watched a good movie. The biscuits were so good with the cheese and jam! And the fritos were perfect for the dip.

Skillet Nachos

I made this in a cast iron skillet and it not only looked pretty, it was easy to serve just as it was, in the pan, with the chips alongside in a big bowl.

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes undrained
- 1 c fresh or frozen corn, thawed
- ¾ cup uncooked instant rice
- ½ c water
- 1 envelope taco seasoning
- ½ t salt
- 1 cup shredded Colby Jack cheese
- 1 pkg 16 oz tortilla chips
- Toppings like sour cream, fresh jalapeno slices, shredded lettuce and lime wedges

In a large skillet, cook the beef until no longer pink, crumbling, and drain. Stir in tomatoes, corn, rice, water, taco seasoning and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer covered until rice is tender and mixture is slightly thickened, about 8-10 minutes. Enjoy with the chips and toppings as desired.

Steak Bites

We had these with a salad and they were delish. I think the only way I'll eat steak now...

- 1 lb beef sirloin steak or beef tenderloin
- 2 T lemon juice
- 1 T olive oil
- 1 T Worcestershire sauce
- 1 T apple cider vinegar
- 1 t onion powder

- 1 t garlic powder
- 1 t salt
- ½ t black pepper

Dice steak into bite-sized pieces. Trim off any excess fat or sinew. Place steak bites into a gallon-sized resealable plastic bag or a shallow bowl for marinating. Add in lemon juice, olive oil, Worcestershire sauce, vinegar, onion powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Toss to coat, cover or seal, and refrigerate. Let marinate 1 to 8 hours.

Use tongs to add half the steak to a skillet, leaving behind the marinating liquid. Cook, stirring a bit, til bites are seared and browned. Remove and set aside. Then cook the other half. Don't crowd the meat. Return previously cooked bites and add butter and crushed garlic to the skillet. Let the garlic toast 1 minute.