

In the Kitchen – December is Here! – by Marcy Lytle

I can't believe it, we're in the last month of the year! And even though we're busy buying and wrapping, we still have to eat! These recipes we just had this last month, and they're keepers! Enjoy.

Bundt Pan Nachos

I saw this on Instagram and tried it. I think I'd use a stouter chip next time, and be sure to drain all the ingredients well before layering in the pan! But it was easy and cool to make!

- Tortilla Chips
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can corn, drained and rinsed
- 1 can rotel with green chiles, drained
- Colby Jack grated
- Ground meat, cooked, drained and seasoned.

Spray the bundt pan so it won't stick. Start with cheese on the bottom and then layer the chips, and the rest of the ingredients. Do this twice. Bake in the oven at 400 degrees for 10 minutes. Turn it over onto a plate, and serve with diced avocado and salsa. A tiny jar fits right in the hole, where you can place the avocado or guacamole.

Vermont Maple Granola

You know I'm a fan of homemade granola, and this is a new recipe for me. It's easy, makes a lot, and is oh, so tasty.

Ingredients:

- 4 c old fashioned rolled oats
- 1 c shredded coconut, unsweetened (or sweetened)
- 1 c sunflower seeds
- 1 c pumpkin seeds
- 1 c slivered almonds
- 1 c pecans, roughly chopped
- 1 cup pure Vermont maple syrup (grade A dark color with robust taste is best)
- ½ c extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 1 c sweetened dried cranberries

Preheat oven to 325. Combine oats, coconut, both seeds, almonds, pecans in a large bowl. Pour maple syrup and olive oil into bowl and mix thoroughly. Sprinkle with a generous pinch of salt, and pour mixture onto large baking sheet (I lined with parchment), creating a uniform layer.

Bake granola, stirring every 15-20 minutes til golden brown, about 1 hour. Let cool completely and sprinkle cranberries on top, and enjoy. (I add a few dark chocolate chips as well!)

Raspberry Blueberry Crisp

I'm sure you've made a crisp before, but maybe you need a bright holiday-inspired red crisp for your guests this season! This one is so easy and yummy. Don't forget the ice cream!

Ingredients:

- 3 c raspberries
- 1 c blueberries
- ¼ c maple sugar (I used brown sugar)
- 1 T lemon zest
- 2 T flour

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- ½ c old fashioned rolled oats
 - 3 T flour
 - 1/3 c almonds
 - 4 T maple sugar (used brown)
 - ½ t cinnamon
 - Pinch salt
 - 4 T Butter

Preheat oven to 375. Combine filling ingredients (first five) in bowl, and pour into a buttered 8" square or 9" round baking dish.

Combine oats, flour, almonds, sugar, cinnamon and salt in a bowl. Add the butter and combine ingredients into a crumbly mix of pea-sized pieces. Sprinkle the topping over the berry mix in an even layer.

Bake for about 45 min or until the crisp topping is browned. (Serve with ice cream!)

A Side to Die For

This side dish was so delicious and easy to make, it will be a staple in my rotation of recipes for sure!

Ingredients:

- 3 slices thick cut bacon, diced
- 6-8 medium carrots peeled, halved and cut into 1 ½ " pieces
- 1 lb Brussels (I got a bag of the shredded version) or you could trim and quarter
- 2 T pure Vermont Maple syrup (preferably Grade A dark robust)
- 1 t kosher salt

Place bacon in large pan over medium heat, stir periodically. Once bacon has rendered fat, add the carrots and cover, stirring or shaking pan occasionally. After 6-8 minutes, add brussels and cover stirring occasionally.

When the carrots are browned, and sprouts are soft and golden brown, drizzle in syrup and add the salt. Stir to combine.

Easy Tasty Quesadilla

It's a little different than the norm, but it's also so tasty and simple.

Ingredients:

- ½ lb boneless skinless chicken breast
- 1 t ground cumin
- ¼ t salt, ¼ t pepper
- 2 T olive oil
- 1 medium white onion sliced
- 1/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 T lime juice
- 8 8-inch flour tortillas
- 2 c shredded mozzarella cheese

Place the ½ lb chicken breast between plastic wrap or parchment, and pound to an even thickness. (I just bought the small breast tenders instead and skipped this step.) Season both sides of chicken with cumin, salt and pepper.

Heat 2 T olive oil over med-hi heat in a skillet. Swirl oil to coat pan, and place chicken in skillet. Cook about 5 min per side, or until chicken is 165 degrees internally. Set aside to rest 5 minutes before slicing or dicing.

Meanwhile, don't wipe out skillet and add the sliced onion, cooking over med-hi heat until soft and translucent, about 7 minutes or so, stirring often. Transfer onions to a bowl and add the cilantro and lime juice. Stir.

Heat a heavy pan (I used cast iron) to med heat. Assemble quesadilla with tortillas – ¼ c cheese, ¼ of onion mix, lay ¼ chicken on top, and another ¼ c cheese, and another tortilla. Assemble four of these.

Carefully slide into skillet and cook 2-3 min (spray with nonstick cooking spray) – flip and cook another 2-3 minutes till cheese melts. Serve immediately, after slicing into fourths.

Serve with sour cream, guacamole or salsa, too.