

Planning means less hectic cooking time

Whether you are trying to determine the menus for the upcoming week or organizing a special "company" dinner, careful planning will help you make the most of a limited amount of time.

By organizing your kitchen time effectively and coordinating related cooking projects, the food preparation process can be streamlined and the last-minute rush to decide what to make for dinner can be averted.

Although it may be unrealistic to plan to spend several uninterrupted hours in daily meal preparation, devoting some time to planning ahead and cooking during weekends (or whenever you choose during the week), will not only be beneficial in the days to come but will also allow you to have the pleasurable freedom of cooking under a less pressured schedule.

Not every part of every meal can be adapted to be of the ideal "make-ahead" variety. But, for each meal, there is generally something that can be prepared in advance, or a special touch that can be added with little extra fuss, provided it has been prepared previously.

There may be occasions when you'll have more time in the morning or during the middle of the day for food preparation than you'll have immediately before the meal is to be served. Or, if you prefer to spend more time socializing with your guests and less time in the kitchen, entrees which can be made several hours ahead of serving time may be the answer.

The recipe below for Fish Fillets in Mustard

Sauce is ideal for these occasions. The recipe and accompanying serving suggestions are reprinted from "Make-Ahead Meals," one volume of the "Cooking with Bon Appetit" series from The Knapp Press.

FISH FILLETS IN MUSTARD SAUCE

Six 6-to-7-oz. fish fillets
1 cup chicken broth
Salt and freshly ground pepper
2 tbsp. (1/4 stick) butter
1 tsp. flour
1 tsp. dry mustard
1 cup whipping cream
4 to 6 tsp. Dijon mustard
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Pat fish dry with paper towels. Place in a single layer in two 9x13-inch baking dishes. Pour broth over and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake covered 10 to 15 minutes, or until fish loses its translucency. Transfer cooked fillets to platter.

Pour poaching liquid into small saucepan and bring to boil over high heat. Continue cooking until liquid has reduced to 1/4 cup.

Melt butter in medium skillet over medium heat. Add flour and dry mustard and cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add reduced liquid, stirring until smooth and well blended.

Combine cream with Dijon mustard and stir into sauce. Return to burner and stir until thickened.

Add salt and pepper to taste. Return fillets to baking dish and cover with sauce. Dish may be covered and refrigerated up to this point. Remove from refrigerator and let stand 2 hours before reheating. Just before serving, preheat oven to 400 degrees. Bake uncovered 6 to 8 minutes, or until sauce is bubbly and fish is heated through.

ADVISE THE EDITORS of "Make-Ahead Meals" "Set off this tangy offering with thick slices of tomato masked with mayonnaise that has been mixed with some finely chopped onion and Parmesan cheese, then broiled until puffed and golden. Tender green peas and hot buttered rolls followed by fruit and cheese for dessert could round out the menu. Choose a vigorous dry white wine like a Pinot Blanc or Pouilly-Fuissé."

The goulash recipe below is a hearty and easy-to-prepare main course. It can be prepared ahead and reheated before serving. It goes well with boiled potatoes dusted with fresh dill, a salad of romaine with thin slices of sweet red onion and a loaf of warm brick bread.

GOULASH WITH WINE-BRAISED SAUERKRAUT

8 servings

2 lbs. sauerkraut (fresh, canned or packaged)
2 tsp. vegetable oil
2 onions, chopped
3 to 4 tsp. Hungarian sweet paprika
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 cup dry white wine
3 1/2 lbs. boneless pork stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 1/2 tsp. caraway seed
1/4 cup tomato paste
2 cups chicken broth
1/4 cup whipping cream
1/4 cup sour cream
2 tbsp. all purpose flour
Salt and freshly ground pepper
Minced fresh parsley (optional garnish)

Thoroughly rinse sauerkraut under cold running water and drain well. Transfer to large bowl. Cover

with cold water and let stand 20 minutes, changing water as possible and set aside.

Heat oil in Dutch oven or large flameproof casserole over medium heat. Add onion and paprika and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is limp and pale gold, about 10 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 to 2 more minutes. Stir in 1/4 cup wine and bring mixture to boil. Add pork. Place sauerkraut over pork. Sprinkle caraway seed over top. Combine tomato paste and remaining wine in small bowl and whisk well. Stir tomato mixture and broth into pot. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally and adding more liquid if necessary, 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

Remove pork and sauerkraut from pot and keep warm. Combine cream, sour cream and flour in small bowl, blending well. Whisk cream mixture into sauce and cook over low heat, stirring constantly, 10 minutes. Return pork and sauerkraut to pot, blending well. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Ladle goulash into shallow bowls or rimmed plates. Sprinkle with parsley if desired and serve.

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This Memorial Day barbecue hamburgers

What better way to celebrate Memorial Day than with a barbecue featuring hamburgers? To top off your burgers, add a zesty, flavorful sauce.

All-American Barbecue Sauce is a blend of condensed tomato soup spiced with mustard, horseradish and Worcestershire sauce. It's mellowed with honey and textured with chopped celery and onions.

Eat, drink and sit back and enjoy the first great taste of the outdoors.

ALL-AMERICAN BARBECUE SAUCE

1/4 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
2 tbsp salad oil
1 can (10 1/2 ounces) condensed tomato soup
1/4 cup water
1 tbsp prepared horseradish
2 tsp prepared mustard
2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp honey
1 tsp lemon juice

In saucepan, cook celery and onion in oil until tender. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer a few minutes to blend flavors. Stir occasionally. Makes about 1 1/2 cups.

Hamburgers (Outdoor Method): Shape 2 1/2 pounds seasoned ground beef into 10 patties.

Place on grill 4 inches above glowing coals. Cook

Chocolate: Dream stuff

Chocolate! It's irresistible! It's bliss in every imaginable kind of dessert — fabulous fudge cake, chewy brownies, superb sauces, sumptuous souffles — glamorous finales for any meal. Chocolate, in fact, is what memories are made of throughout our lives. Remember Mom's mouthwatering chocolate birthday cakes? What about the homemade chocolate sauce that made Saturday ice cream parties so very special?

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LACY CHOCOLATE CRISPS

1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1 pkg. (6 oz.) German sweet chocolate
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
1 cup unsifted all-purpose flour

1/2 cup angel flake coconut
Bring corn syrup to a boil in saucepan. Add butter and chocolate; cook and stir over low heat until mixture is smooth. Remove from heat; stir in sugar, flour and coconut. Drop from tablespoon, about 3 inches apart, onto lightly greased baking sheets. Bake at 300 degrees for 15 minutes, or until wafers are bubbling vigorously and have developed lacy holes throughout. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove carefully, using a thin spatula. (If wafers become too difficult to remove, return to oven to soften, about a minute or two.) Cool on rack. Makes about 30 large wafers.

Note: Cookies may be shaped over aluminum foil cones or rolled over handle of wooden spoon while still warm. Fill cooked cookies with ice cream or whipped topping.

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