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It's A Great Day For The IRISH

On March 17th, everyone is Irish. The tribute to St. Patrick makes Hibernians of us all. This year, why not celebrate the day by inviting a few friends to join in a special feast?

Put a few Irish airs on the record player and sing along as you create some dishes that St. Patrick himself would relish. The main course could be a lovely, shamrock-shaped meat loaf in honor of the Emerald Isle — a delicious concoction of corned beef enlivened with horseradish and the piquance of orange juice. This is a man's dish that warms the heart. It will also please the cook, for it can be prepared early in the day, refrigerated and then baked before serving. Rosie's Slaw with Raisins makes a fine accompaniment.

Sauerkraut Bites with Orange-Mustard Dip are irresistible. Sauerkraut and cream cheese are rolled into balls and fried a golden color. The creamy mixture, wrapped in a crisp-crunchy casing, is dipped into a delightful, pungent Orange-Mustard Dip. Put them out for starters, watch them disappear and expect compliments that would bring a blush to a colleen's cheeks.

Oranges O'Brien are a triumph of natural goodness. In a celebration of the fruit, O'Brien bakes them, sauces them in a delightful orange syrup flavored with Irish whiskey, and then flambés them. This ends a meal with a flourish of trumpets — a worthy finale for this grand occasion. Erin Go Bragh!

CORNED BEEF SHAMROCK

- 2 pounds cooked corned beef (do not trim off fat)
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 2 1/2 cups orange juice, divided
- 1 cup packaged dry bread crumbs
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped (1/2 cup)
- 1/4 cup finely chopped parsley, divided
- 2 to 3 tablespoons bottled horseradish
- 4 teaspoons cornstarch
- Watercress for garnish
- Orange slices

In food processor, food grinder, or electric blender process corned beef, using small amounts at a time, until finely ground. In a large mixing bowl combine eggs, 1 cup orange juice, bread crumbs, onion and 2 tablespoons parsley. Mix in ground corned beef with hands (2 to 3 minutes) until very well-blended. Shape mixture on a flat baking sheet to resemble a shamrock; refrigerate at least 30 minutes. Meanwhile, in small saucepan combine remaining 1 1/2 cups orange juice with cornstarch until blended; stir in horseradish. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Brush top and sides of loaf generously with sauce. Bake in a preheated 350°F. oven 40 minutes, until lightly browned. Remove loaf carefully with wide metal spatulas, to serving platter. Garnish with watercress and orange slices. Heat remaining orange sauce and serve with loaf.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.



ROSIE'S SLAW WITH RAISINS

- 8 cups finely shredded cabbage (about 1 3/4 pounds cabbage)
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup elder vinegar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/3 cup golden raisins

Shred cabbage on coarse grater, or coarse shredding blade of food processor, or with very sharp knife into fine shreds. In large bowl blend mayonnaise, vinegar, milk, dill, salt, and pepper. Add shredded cabbage and raisins. Cover. Chill several hours before serving.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

SAUERKRAUT BITES WITH ORANGE-MUSTARD DIP

- 1 bag (14 ounces) sauerkraut or 1 can (16 ounces) sauerkraut, drained, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons packaged dry bread crumbs
- 1 package (3 ounces) cream cheese, softened at room temperature
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 egg beaten with 2 tablespoons milk

Squeeze chopped sauerkraut very dry between paper toweling. In a medium-size bowl combine sauerkraut, 2 tablespoons bread crumbs, cream cheese, garlic powder and pepper; blend well with wooden spoon. Using palms of hands, roll mixture into 3/4-inch balls. Cover; chill at least 30 minutes. Set out flour, egg mixture and remaining 1/2 cup bread crumbs in three shallow dishes. Roll balls in flour, then in egg mixture, then in bread crumbs. In a small skillet, fry 6 balls at a time in 1/2-inch hot oil (370°F.), 2 to 3 minutes, until golden brown, turning once. Remove with slotted spoon; drain on paper towel. Serve hot with Orange-Mustard Dip.

Yield: About 18 hors d'oeuvres.

*ORANGE-MUSTARD DIP

- 1/2 cup sweet orange marmalade, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 cup frozen concentrated orange juice, thawed, undiluted
- 2 tablespoons Dijon-style mustard

In small bowl combine all ingredients; stir until blended. Serve at room temperature.

Yield: 2/3 cup.

ORANGES O'BRIEN

- 6 large oranges, peeled
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup plus 6 teaspoons granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 cups Florida orange juice, divided
- 1/2 cup Irish whiskey, divided
- Fresh mint leaves for garnish (optional)

Arrange oranges in a shallow baking dish, such as a 10-inch glass or ceramic pie plate. Place 1 teaspoon butter on top of each orange; sprinkle each with 1 teaspoon sugar. Pour in 1/2 cup orange juice. Bake in a preheated 400°F. oven 10 minutes, or until oranges begin to brown on top. Meanwhile, in small saucepan combine remaining 1 cup orange juice, remaining 1/3 cup sugar, and 1/4 cup Irish whiskey; simmer over low heat until slightly syrupy, about 3 minutes. Remove oranges from oven and arrange on a serving dish. Pour orange-whiskey mixture into baking dish, scraping and stirring any browned bits on the bottom; pour over oranges. Heat remaining 1/4 cup Irish whiskey in a metal ladle; ignite with a match; pour over oranges. Serve warm. Garnish with fresh mint leaves, if desired.

Yield: 6 servings.

