

Low-fat blintzes perfect for Shavouth

Shavouth, the Jewish Feast of Weeks, will be celebrated beginning at sundown on May 26. As it is customary to eat dairy foods, Shavouth offers a perfect opportunity to not only enjoy a favorite dairy recipe — cheese-filled blintzes — but to rediscover why dairy dishes play such an important role in this spring festival.

A look into history uncovers several reasons for the custom of eating dairy foods at Shavouth. Perhaps the simplest is the fact that during the spring, cows, goats and sheep began to graze more and produce more milk so cheese production increased.

Other explanations are more biblical in nature. Mount Sinai, the mountain upon which Moses received the Ten Commandments, is called by six different names in Psalm 68:16-17. One of those names, gavaunim, means "gibbous, many-peaked." It has the same root as gavinah, which in Hebrew means cheese. In this context, Mount Sinai could be called Cheese Mountain and the eating of cheese on Shavouth a reminder of the giving of the Law.

According to another rabbinic source, the Israelites who had

fasted during their journey to receive the Ten Commandments were so hungry when they returned home, they drank milk rather than take the time to prepare a meat meal. And then there's a second more practical explanation. By the time the Israelites had returned from the mountain, their milk had turned sour, which is the first step in cheese-making.

Regardless of the exact reason, cheese-filled blintzes are popular during Shavouth. Very Berry Cheese Blintzes, developed in the Quaker Kitchens, lend themselves to either a dairy brunch or supper. And, just a few simple ingredient substitutions make them considerably lower in fat and higher in fiber than traditional recipes.

First, to reduce the fat and cholesterol, skim milk and egg whites are used in the blintz batter. The blintzes are cooked in a non-stick skillet, and a combination of non-fat dairy products — ricotta cheese, cream cheese and sour cream — give the cheese filling all of the creamy richness you expect without the fat.

Second, to increase the fiber, wheat germ is substituted for part

of the flour in the batter and added to the cheese filling. Because it is the "heart of the wheat," wheat germ contains protein and essential vitamins and minerals in addition to two grams of dietary fiber per two-tablespoon serving. Serve the blintzes topped with fresh berries or your favorite no-sugar-added fruit spread and a dollop of nonfat sour cream.

VERY BERRY CHEESE BLINTZES

Batter
4 egg whites or ½ cup egg substitute
1 cup skim milk
¼ teaspoon salt (optional)
1 tablespoon sugar
½ cup wheat germ
½ cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons margarine, melted
Filling
1 cup nonfat ricotta cheese or nonfat cottage cheese
½ cup nonfat cream cheese
¼ cup nonfat sour cream
¼ cup wheat germ
2 tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon margarine, melted

2 cups fresh or frozen mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries or raspberries)
Nonfat sour cream (optional)
For batter, combine all ingredients in blender or food processor; cover. Blend about 1 minute or until smooth. Pour batter into bowl; let stand 10 minutes to thicken slightly.

Heat 7- to 8-inch non-stick skillet over medium-high heat; grease lightly. For each blintz, pour scant ¼ cup batter into hot, prepared pan; immediately tilt pan to coat bottom evenly with thin layer.

Cook 45 seconds or until top looks dry. Turn; continue cooking about 20 seconds. Stack blintzes between sheets of waxed paper. (Blintzes may be wrapped securely and frozen up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in refrigerator.)

Heat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly spray 13 by 9-inch baking dish with non-stick cooking spray or grease lightly. For filling, combine all ingredients; mix well. Spoon about 2 tablespoons filling onto center of each blintz. Fold 2 sides over filling; fold up ends to form rectangle. Place blintzes in prepared dish.



KRETSCHMER WHEAT GERM

Cheese blintzes: Lower in fat and higher in fiber than traditional cheese blintzes, Very Berry Cheese Blintzes make a healthful as well as delicious addition to a Shavouth brunch or supper menu.

Brush lightly with melted margarine. (At this point, filled blintzes may be covered tightly and refrigerated several hours or overnight until ready to bake. Uncover; proceed as recipe directs.)

Bake 10 to 15 minutes or until heated through. Top each blintz with fresh fruit. Top with additional nonfat sour cream and wheat germ, if desired. Makes 12 blintzes.

Nutrition information: One blintz (with cheese filling and fruit) Calories 140, Calories from fat 36, Protein 10g, Carbohydrate 16g, Total Fat 4g, Cholesterol 0mg, Dietary Fiber 2g, Sodium 160mg

Ginger adds Oriental flair to grilled turkey with salsa

AP — Once upon a time, salsa meant traditional Mexican ingredients — hot peppers, onions, tomatoes, tomatoes and cilantro — period. Now, anything goes. You'll see what we mean when you try the zesty salsa with turkey below. It's made with fresh ginger and Oriental flavorings.

GRILLED TURKEY WITH GINGER SALSA

¼ cup vinegar
2 tablespoons dry sherry
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon grated gingerroot
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon seeded and finely chopped dried red chili pepper or 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
4 turkey breast tenderloin steaks (about 1 pound to

1 lb)
1 medium tomato, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 green onion, sliced
¼ cup chopped green sweet pepper
1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro
Four 6-inch flour tortillas (optional)
For marinade, in a medium mixing

bowl combine vinegar, sherry, soy sauce, gingerroot, garlic and red pepper. Set 2 tablespoons of the mixture aside. Pour the remaining marinade into a plastic bag set in a bowl. Rinse turkey steaks; place in the bag. Close bag; refrigerate for 1 hour, turning once.

For salsa, in a small mixing bowl combine the 2 tablespoons

reserved marinade, tomato, green onion, green pepper and cilantro. Cover and chill until serving time.

Drain turkey, reserving marinade. Grill on an uncovered grill directly over medium coals for 12 to 15 minutes or until no longer pink, turning once and brushing often with the reserved marinade. To heat tortillas, place in a

single layer on the grill rack about 1 minute or until warm. Serve turkey with chilled salsa and warm tortillas. Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition per serving: 145 cal., 1 g fat, 71 mg chol., 27 g pro., 5 g carbs., 1 g fiber, 563 mg sodium. RDA: 10 percent iron, 23 percent vit. C, 12 percent riboflavin, 62 percent niacin.

COOKING CALENDAR

To get your classes or events listed in this column, send items to be considered for publication to: Keely Wygonik, Taste Editor, The Observer & Eccentric, 3225 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150, or fax 591-7279

■ **CHEF JEFFREY GABRIEL**
Chef Jeffrey Gabriel, director of the culinary arts department at Schoolcraft College, will teach cooking classes at the Farmington

Hills Kroger's on Twelve Mile and Halstead, noon to 1:30 p.m. and 2:30-4 p.m. Saturday, June 6. There is no charge for this class. Chef Gabriel will present a low-calorie, low-cholesterol menu of easy-to-prepare items. Complimentary coffee, menus and recipe cards will be available for class participants.
■ **HUDSON'S**
Summer recipes presented by Weight Watchers noon to 1:30

p.m. May 25 Twelve Oaks Hudson's, May 26 Oakland Hudson's, and May 27 Fairlane Hudson's.
■ **SUPERIOR FISH COMPANY**
Cooking demonstrations start 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, June 12, at Superior Fish, 309 E. 11 Mile Road, Royal Oak, featuring Executive Chef Gordon Bowman of Beaumont Hospital — Heart Healthy Seafood. For information, call 641-4632.

Canned goods don't last forever

"Canned foods that are stored for several years may become poor in quality and nutritional value," said Sylvia Treitman, area economist for the Oakland County Cooperative Extension Service. "Spring is a good time to check the pantry shelves, to see what has been forgotten and is no longer good to keep." Generally, canned goods have the best shelf life of one year

stored in a cool dry area of about 67 degrees. The nutritional value of canned goods lessens with time, so it is wise to use canned goods quickly and not keep them for many years. "If you notice a bulging can, this is a definite sign of spoilage, and the can should be thrown away," said Treitman. Make sure that it is safely disposed of so that no one else may accidentally find and use it. Any

leaking, or badly dented, cans should also be thrown out. If you suspect that a can is bad — do not taste it — it could be very dangerous. To use canned foods wisely, here are some safety tips: ■ Store canned foods in a clean dry place below 85 degrees — 67 degrees is ideal. ■ Date canned goods when purchased and rotate supply, using oldest first.

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