



pilot light
Greg Melikov

Sauce is just 'a little something'

I love picnics, but my favorites are held in back yards, not necessarily mine.

During the summer, Anita and I traveled to Carmel, N.Y., just west of Danbury, Conn., to enjoy a Fourth of July picnic in her son's back yard.

Tony took charge of the barbecue and had two grills going faster than it takes me to get one hot. I prepared the barbecue sauce and was pressed to get it ready before 10 pounds of pork ribs were cooked.

The barbecue sauce was a little something I threw together, sort of a composite of several recipes. We basted the pork just slightly and the ribs turned out juicier than usual.

There was enough sauce to go around for about 15 people.

Did we eat. There was chicken, plus hot dogs and hamburgers. My daughter-in-law, Mikle, made macaroni and potato salads, a neighbor prepared another, and I came up with the fourth. The neighbor also brought over two pans of baked large shells filled with three Italian cheeses. There was baked beans, too.

We forgot about the corn, but made up for it. The neighbor's husband showed off his electric ice cream maker and we had vanilla. The topper: chilled, sweet watermelon.

That wasn't all. We piled into two cars for a short trip to Lake Carmel and watched the traditional town fireworks display. When we returned, we had coffee and homemade yellow walnut bundt cake, compliments of the neighbor.

I love away-from-home back yard outings, partly because when you're a guest you're not expected to help clean up after the picnic is over. I didn't disappoint.

BARBECUE SAUCE FOR 25

1 large onion, chopped
1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 1/4 cups ketchup

1 cup chili sauce
1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce
1/4 cup beer
1/4 cup cell mustard
1/4 cup lemon juice
3 tbsp. brown sugar
1/4 tsp. each garlic salt
1/4 crushed red pepper
black pepper and paprika

In medium saucepan, saute onion in hot oil until limp. Off heat, add rest of ingredients, stirring. Cook sauce on medium heat 5 minutes; reduce to medium low and cook 10 minutes, occasionally stirring. Keep warm on low heat.

Try a taste of Sweden at the Westin

Tired of hamburgers, quiche and salad for lunch? Try the International Swedish favorite Lax Pudding, a layer of salmon, potatoes, onions and dill baked in egg and cream and served with melted butter.

This salmon dish will be one of several selections from Sweden's finest culinary creations headlining the menu during the third Swedish Foods Festival, in conjunction with Swedish Heritage Week, Friday, Sept. 28 through Tuesday, Oct. 9, at the Summit restaurant in the Westin Hotel.

All dishes will be made from fresh food ingredients flown in from Sweden via SAS airlines.

"This festival has been tremendously successful in the past and its popularity increases each time we host this event," said Uwe Christiansen, director of food and beverage for the Westin. "We will prepare the most popular entrees from past festivals, and we have added several new items to the menu, ranging from appetizers to desserts."

Swedish chef, Per Nilsson, returning as guest chef for the third time, will work with Westin chefs in the preparation of the Swedish dishes. Per Nilsson trained under the celebrated master, Tore Wretman, culinary adviser to the Royal Court of Sweden and founder of the Swedish Gastronomic Society.

LAX PUDDING

8 medium potatoes, boiled and sliced

1 pound sliced salmon, salted

1 onion, sliced

5 fresh eggs

1 pint milk

1 ounce dill weed, chopped (1/4 tsp dried)

1/2 tsp salt and pepper

2 ounces butter

Line a buttered earthenware dish alternately with a layer of potato slices, onions and salmon until dish is almost full, finishing with a potato layer.

Combine beaten eggs, milk, dill, salt and pepper and pour into layered dish until covered. Bake in medium hot oven for 40 minutes, mixture should be firm. Serve with melted butter. 6 servings.

Pretty up good food with paprika

From a sprinkling to a spoonful, paprika is the spice that makes food look pretty. When a dish tastes great but looks a bit blah, give it a few shakes from the paprika container and it's bathed in a rosy glow. The two dishes below will look all dressed for a party, yet are very simple to prepare.

Hungarian seasonings flavor the Chicken and Vegetable Pasta Salad, a satisfying, hearty dish. If possible, make it the day before so the seasonings in the dressing are fully absorbed by the chicken chunks and the rotelle (a pasta which looks festive and holds the dressing nicely). The starring dressing is rich with paprika, caraway seed, onion powder and ground black pepper. Serve along with thick chunks of tomato and cucumber, and French bread with lots of crust.

Paprika Sour Cream Party Dip makes a fine welcome. The mixture is deliciously savory, and if there's any left (you're lucky) add some tuna or hard-cooked eggs for a sandwich filling. It takes off from a sour cream and mayonnaise base with a lift from instant minced onion, ground black pepper, lemon juice, dried green pepper and good bit of bright red paprika.

CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE PASTA SALAD

1/4 cup dairy sour cream
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. caraway seed
1/2 tsp. onion powder
1/18 tsp. ground black pepper
4 cups cooked pasta (such as rotelle, elbow, shells)*
2 cups finely diced sweet red or green peppers
2 cups diced cooked chicken
1/2 cup diced celery
1/2 cup shredded carrot

In a medium bowl combine sour cream, mayonnaise, oil, salt, paprika, caraway, onion powder and black pepper. Add pasta, red peppers, chicken, celery and carrot. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight.
*3 cups uncooked

PAPRIKA SOUR CREAM PARTY DIP

1/4 cup dairy sour cream
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup diced green pepper
2 tbsp. instant minced onion
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. lemon juice
Pinch ground black pepper

In a medium bowl combine sour cream, mayonnaise, green pepper, onion, salt, paprika, lemon juice and black pepper. Cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour before serving. Spoon into a serving bowl. Sprinkle with parsley flakes and additional paprika, if desired. Serve with vegetable sticks. Can also be used as a dressing for tuna or egg salad.

Yield: about 1 1/2 cups

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