

Mardi Gras is a time to feast

It's carnival time in New Orleans. Festivities are at their peak when, suddenly, a hideous crime takes place, and one of the revelers falls dead.

This is a scene from the interactive murder mystery, "Murder at the Mardi Gras," which will be presented Saturday at Maplewood Community Center in Garden City.

Guests are asked to come in costume, and enter into the Mardi Gras spirit.

The murder takes place in a five-star Louisiana restaurant owned and operated by the world-renowned chef, Ritzard De Lafitte, played by Richard Underwood, a Garden City School teacher.

The plot revolves around his award-winning recipe for a dessert known as Rambo Rhumbo, a delightfully rich concoction of rum cake, pineapple, coconut, cream and cherries that is "hot to die for."

If you can't get to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras this year, then the dinner and play in Garden City is the next best thing. If you can't even get to the play, then you may wish to sample a few of the dishes served at home.

The menu consists of seafood gumbo, ham jambalaya, roast beef, Deep South salad, baked sweet potatoes, plantains, fried dill pickles and real sangria punch — as well as sugar-free, non-alcoholic sangria-flavored punch for those who prefer it. And, of course, Rambo Rhumbo for dessert.

Here are a few of the recipes being used. I've scaled them down in size for home use.

For further information about the murder mystery or the recipes, call Gundella at 427-1072.

RAMBO RHUMBO
6 plain, unfrosted yellow cupcakes, baked in paper liners (use your own favorite recipe, or make them from a box mix)
6 slices pineapple
whipping cream
coconut flakes
9 maraschino cherries
18 tablespoons pineapple-flavored rum (available in most liquor stores)

Leave the cupcakes in their paper liners, and place them in a tin or plastic container with an airtight cover.

Using a soda straw, make several holes in each cupcake. Pour 2 tablespoons of rum into the holes of each cupcake. Cover tightly, and allow to sit at least 24 hours. (These may be made several days ahead.)

When ready to serve, place 1 pineapple ring on each individual serving dish. Turn 1 cupcake upside down on each pineapple ring. Remove the pa-

per liner, and drizzle 1 more tablespoon of rum over the cake.

Top with a dab of whipped cream, a cherry, and sprinkle with toasted coconut. (To toast the coconut, spread it on a cookie sheet or pie plate, and place in the oven just long enough for it to brown lightly.)

FRIED DILL PICKLES
dill pickles, sliced into circles (hamburger dill chips)
flour
hot oil

Pat pickle chips dry with paper towel. Dredge with plain flour. Deep fry in hot oil until golden brown. Drain on paper towel, and serve hot.

SANGRIA PUNCH
Mix together well, making sure that the sugar is dissolved:
1 bottle red wine
1 small can frozen orange juice
2 cups other fruit juice (such as mango or pineapple)
2 cups sugar
1 orange, sliced
1 lemon, sliced
1/2 cup pineapple chunks (fresh is best, but canned will do)
rum to taste (optional)

Allow mixture to sit and blend for at least 1 hour. Just before serving, add 2 quarts ginger ale.

SUGAR-FREE NON-ALCOHOLIC SANGRIA-FLAVORED PUNCH
Mix together:
2 quarts sugar-free tropical fruit drink (such as Crystal Light, or sugar-free Kool Aid)
1 small can frozen orange juice
artificial sweetener, to taste



kitchen witch

Gundella

If you can't get to New Orleans for the Mardi Gras this year, then the dinner and play in Garden City is the next best thing.

Just before serving, add two quarts of ginger ale, sugar-free. Garnish with fresh fruit slices.

OLD SOUTH TOMATO AND PEPPER SALAD
6 medium green peppers
salt
4 small tomatoes (cubed)
10 large Spanish olives (coarsely chopped)
4 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 clove garlic (crushed)
1 tablespoon fresh minced parsley
1/2 teaspoon cumin
salt and pepper to taste

Roast the peppers. Then peel, core and seed them. Slice into strips. Place pepper strips on a platter and sprinkle with salt. Arrange tomatoes on top and sprinkle with the chopped olives.

For the dressing, whisk together in

a bowl, the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, parsley, cumin, and salt and pepper. Drizzle over the salad.

HAIR JAMBALAYA

(Jambalaya is a highly seasoned, strong-flavored rice dish made with any combination of beef, pork, ham, sausage, fish or fowl. It is pronounced Jum-buh-lye-yah.)

1 pound ham, cut into cubes
1 1/2 cups chopped onions
1 1/2 cups chopped celery
1 green bell pepper, chopped
1 1/2 teaspoons minced garlic
4 tablespoons margarine
2 cups uncooked rice
4 cups chicken or beef stock
4 bay leaves
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (ground)
1/2 teaspoon cumin

Combine seasonings and set aside. Melt margarine in a large skillet. Add the ham and cook 5 minutes. Add the onions, celery, peppers, seasoning mixture and garlic. Stir, and continue cooking about 10-12 minutes. Transfer to a large pot. Add rice and stock and bring to a boil. Simmer until rice is tender and absorbs the liquid, about 20 minutes.

Gussy up veggies for change of pace

AP — Vegetables have come up in the world. We are eating more of them than we did five years ago, and we are being urged by nutrition experts to eat still more — at least five servings of vegetables and fruits a day. Here are some easy dress-ups for your family's favorite vegetables.

HEFDED VEGETABLES

• To fix up frozen vegetables, cook 1/4 cup chopped onion and teaspoon dried thyme, oregano, basil, marjoram, or rosemary, crushed, or dillweed in 1 tablespoon margarine or butter until onion is tender. Cook one 9- or 10-ounce package (about 2 cups) frozen vegetables according to package directions. Drain. Add onion mixture and toss.

VEGGIES ON THE GRILL

• Fold an 18x36-inch piece of heavy foil in half to make an 18-inch square. Bring up sides to make a pouch, using your fist to form corners. Place contents of one 10-ounce package frozen vegetables in the pouch. Season to taste with margarine and salt and pepper.

Bring two oppositesides of foil together. Fold edges to seal securely, leaving space for steam to build. Seal ends. Grill directly over medium-hot coals about 25 minutes for peas or small vegetables, about 30 minutes for larger vegetables, or until tender. Turn often.

HANDY GADGETS

• Use kitchen shears to snip parsley, cut green onions and cut up canned tomatoes.
• An egg slicer can also be used for cooked potatoes and fresh mushrooms.
• Hollow out vegetables for stuffing with a melon baller or graperuit knife.

FAST SAUCES

• For a speedy cheesy sauce, stir some cheese spread, cold-pack cheese food, or soft-style cream cheese into well-drained, cooked vegetables. Cook and stir until the cheese melts and is heated through. Add a few dashes bottled hot pepper sauce, if desired.
• Heat a can of undiluted condensed cream of mushroom, cream of celery, cream of chicken, cream of shrimp, cream of onion, or cheddar cheese soup. Pour over hot cooked vegetables.

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