

Zesty Pork Loin with Apricot Sauce

3 to 4 pound pork loin roasts
1 ¼ cups marinade
½ teaspoon freshly cracked pepper
1 jar of apricot preserves

Marinade:

½ cup soy sauce
3 Tbsp lime juice
¼ cup olive oil
4 Tbsp water
4 Tbsp honey
2 Tbsp minced garlic
1 Tbsp powdered ginger
¼ tsp crushed red pepper

Whisk together all ingredients

Place pork roast in a large zip-lock bag and add marinade, turning to coat. Seal and chill at least 6 hours and up to 24 hours.

Remove pork from marinade (reserve marinade). Sprinkle roast evenly with pepper. Place on a lightly greased rack in an aluminum foil-lined roasting pan.

Bake at 400 degrees for 50 minutes to 1 hour or until meat thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 155 degrees. Remove pan from oven and cover with foil; let stand 10 minutes or until thermometer registers 160 degrees.

While roast is cooking, bring reserved marinade to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Allow marinade to reduce, then add apricot preserves. Stir until preserves are completely dissolved and continue to simmer.

Slice roast into desired thickness pieces and serve with apricot reduction sauce.

Yield: 8 servings

Succotash in Peppers

1 pound smoked sausage, diced
1 cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup chopped green bell pepper
3 tsp minced garlic
3 medium zucchini, chopped
1 (10 oz.) package frozen lima beans, thawed
1 (10 oz.) package frozen niblet corn, thawed
1 (10 oz.) can diced tomatoes with chilies
½ tsp hot sauce
¼ tsp salt
6 red bell peppers, halved lengthwise, seeds and membranes removed
½ cup Italian breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a large rimmed baking sheet.

In a large skillet, cook sausage over medium heat for 4 or 5 minutes, until lightly browned. Add onion, celery, bell pepper, and garlic. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring often. Stir in zucchini, lima beans, corn, tomatoes, hot sauce, and salt; cover and cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover; cook 8 minutes, stirring frequently. Spoon mixture evenly into red peppers. Place peppers on baking sheet; sprinkle evenly with breadcrumbs. Bake for 30 minutes.

Yield: 12 servings

Roasted Green Beans and Potatoes with Creamy Tarragon Dressing

1 lb. frozen or fresh green beans
1 ½ lbs. new potatoes
1 ½ Tbsp olive oil, divided
1 tsp salt, divided
¾ tsp fresh cracked pepper, divided
Creamy tarragon dressing

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Cut potatoes into halves or quarters depending on size, place in large bowl. Toss with 1 Tbsp olive oil, ½ tsp salt, and ½ tsp pepper. Place potato pieces on a jelly-roll pan. Toss green beans with remaining oil, salt, and pepper, and place in another jelly-roll pan.

Bake potatoes at 425 degrees for about 30 minutes, until tender and browned. Remove from oven.

Bake green beans at 425 degrees for about 12 minutes.

Place cooked potatoes and beans into a large bowl. Drizzle with tarragon dressing and carefully toss. Serve warm.

Creamy Tarragon Dressing:

¼ cup buttermilk
2 Tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
¾ tsp salt
¼ tsp fresh cracked pepper
½ cup olive oil
2 Tbsp finely chopped green onion tops
1 Tbsp chopped fresh tarragon or dried tarragon

Whisk together first 6 ingredients in a bowl until well combined. Gradually whisk in oil in slow, steady stream, whisking constantly until smooth. Whisk in green onion and tarragon. Use immediately or store in an airtight container in refrigerator up to 2 days. If chilled, let dressing stand 30 minutes at room temperature before using.

Yield: 8 servings

Molten Chocolate Surprise

4 squares Baker's semi-sweet baking chocolate
½ cup (1 stick) butter
2 whole eggs
2 egg yolks
1 cup powdered sugar
1/3 cup flour
12 small chocolate chip cookies (homemade or store bought)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Microwave chocolate squares and butter in large glass bowl on High for 2 minutes or until butter is melted. Stir with wire whisk until chocolate is completely melted and mixture is well blended. In another bowl, beat whole eggs, egg yolks, sugar and flour with wire whisk until well blended. Gradually add to chocolate mixture, beating constantly until well blended.

Place 12 foil muffin cup liners into muffin pan. Place one cookie, upside-down, on the bottom of each cup. Cover each cookie evenly with batter.

Bake 8 minutes or until cakes are firm around edges, but still soft in centers. Let stand at least one minute. Carefully remove cakes from muffin pan. Invert onto dessert plates; remove foil liners. Serve warm with ice cream or whipped cream.

Yield: 12 servings