**March -How Novel**

**Crumb Bun Muffin**

12 muffins

*Ingredients for topping and filling:*

½ cup granulated sugar

½ cup brown sugar

1/3 cup all purpose flour

1 tbsp ground cinnamon

3 tbsp cold unsalted butter, diced

½ cup chopped pecans

*Ingredients for muffins:*

2 large eggs

1 cup sour cream or plain yogurt

2 tsp vanilla extract

1 ¾ cups all purpose flour

2/3 cup granulated sugar

1 tbsp baking powder

Pinch of salt

5 tbsp unsalted butter, at room temperature

Preheat oven to 375°. Line a muffin tin with paper liners. For filling: In food processor, combine sugars, flour, and cinnamon. Remove ¾ cup of this mixture for the filling. Add butter and pecans to the sugar mixture remaining in the processor; pulse until blended. Transfer this mixture to a bowl for the topping. For muffins: In a medium bowl, whisk eggs, sour cream or yogurt and vanilla until blended. In same food processor (no need to wash), pulse flour, sugar, baking powder and salt until combined. Add egg mixture and butter; pulse until just combined Do not over mix. Drop a heaping tablespoon of batter into each muffin cup; press batter into cup. Top with about 1 tablespoon filling. Fill cups with remaining batter, and then mound streusel over batter. Very lightly press streusel into batter to make it stick. Bake 22 minutes, until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let muffins cool in pan for 20 minutes. Transfer to wire rack to cool completely.

**Blackberry-Cornmeal Cupcakes**

*Ingredients:*

1 ¼ cups all purpose flour

½ cup fine-ground yellow cornmeal

2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

1 ¼ cups sugar

½ cup buttermilk, room temperature

2 large eggs, room temperature

7 tbsp unsalted butter, melted and cooled

1 to 2 containers (6oz each) fresh blackberries

Preheat oven to 350°. Line standard muffin tins with paper liners. Whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, and 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar. In another bowl, whisk together buttermilk, eggs, and melted butter; pour over flour mixture, whisking to combine. Fill each lined cup with scant ¼ cup butter. Top batter with blackberries (3 to 4 berries per cup), then sprinkle evenly with remaining 2 tablespoons sugar. Bake, rotating tins halfway through, until evenly browned on top, 20 to 25 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool completely before removing cupcakes. Cupcakes are best eaten the day they are baked, but will keep up to 2 days at room temperature in airtight containers.

**Esther’s Orange Marmalade Cake**

*Ingredients for the cake:*

1 cup unsalted butter, soften, more for greasing the pans

3 ¼ cups cake flour, more for dusting the pans

1 tbsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

2 2/3 cups granulated sugar

5 large eggs, at room temperature

4 large egg yolks, at room temperature

2/3 cup vegetable oil

1 tbsp grated orange zest

2 tsp vanilla extract

1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature

*For the orange syrup:*

1 cup freshly squeezed orange juice

¼ cup granulated sugar

*For the filling:*

1 (12oz) jar orange marmalade

*For the frosting:*

1 cup heavy cream, chilled

4 tbsp granulated sugar

1 cup sour cream, chilled

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly butter three 9 inch round cake pans, line them with parchment paper, then lightly butter and flour the paper, shaking out the excess. Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a large bowl. Sift a second time into another bowl. Beat the butter on medium speed until light in color, about 4 minutes. Add the 2 2/3 cups sugar in a steady stream with the mixer running. Beat until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and yolks, one at a time. After all the eggs have been added, continue to beat for 2 more minutes. Mix the oil in the mixture. In small bowl, combine orange zest, vanilla, and buttermilk. Using a rubber spatula, fold in half of the dry ingredients. Scrape the sides of the bowl and add half of the buttermilk mixture. Fold the remaining of the dry ingredients, scrape down the sides, and add the remaining buttermilk. Pour the batter and rap each pan on the counter to expel any air pockets or bubbles, and then place into the oven. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes. Use a toothpick to see if it comes out clean. Let the cakes cool in the pans for 20 minutes. For the orange syrup: In a small bowl, stir together the orange juice and ¼ sugars until the sugar is dissolved. Poke ½ inch holes in the cake layers. Spoon the syrup over the layers allowing the cake to absorb the syrup. Heat the marmalade. For the frosting: whip heavy cream with 4 tablespoon of sugar until stiff peaks form. Add the sour cream, a little at a time. To assemble the cake: Put one cake layer on a serving platter. Add 1/3 of the marmalade on the top of the layer. Continue until the third layer. Add frosting to cake where marmalade is not present.

**Almond Poppy Seed Muffins**

30 muffins

*Ingredients:*

4 large eggs

2 cups sugar

1 ¾ cups (13oz can) evaporated milk

¼ cup milk

2 cups vegetable oil

3 ½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

4 cups flour

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp almond extract

½ cup poppy seeds

Preheat the oven to 325°. Line 30 muffins cups with paper liners. In a large mixing bowl, beat together the eggs, sugar, evaporated milk, milk, and vegetable oil. Sift together the baking powder, salt, and flour. Gradually add the flour mixture to the egg mixture, beating until well combined. Add the extracts and poppy seeds, stirring only until well combined. Using a ½ cup measure, pour the batter into the muffin cups. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean.

**Corn Muffins with Raspberries or Blackberries**

*Ingredients:*

1 1/3 cups yellow cornmeal

1 cup all purpose flour

1/3 cup granulated sugar

1 tbsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

1 cup plus 2 tbsp buttermilk

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

2 tbsp molasses

1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk, lightly beaten

1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries or blackberries, thawed

Preheat oven to 375°, lightly coat a standard muffin tin with cooking spray. In a large bowl, whisk cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Using a wooden spoon, fold in buttermilk, melted butter, molasses, and beaten eggs until blended. Let mixture stand 10 minutes to absorb liquid. Gently fold in raspberries and or blackberries. Drop batter into prepared muffin cups. Bake for 15 minutes, until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool pan 5 minutes. Run a knife around the muffin edges to release from pan. Transfer to wire rack to cool.

**Asparagus Frittata**

8 Servings

*Ingredients:*

8 large eggs

2 tbsp heavy cream

Salt and pepper to taste

2 tbsp unsalted butter

2 leeks, thinly sliced and well rinsed

1 bunch asparagus (about 1 pound), trimmed and cut into ½ inch ling slices

4oz Fontana or Arnsberg cheese, cut into small cubes about 1 cup

Preheat boiler. In medium bowl, whisk eggs, cream, salt, and pepper. Melt butter in a 10 inch nonstick oven proof skillet. Add leeks, cook for 4 minutes, until tender, stirring. Pour the eggs mixture over the vegetables in the pan. Cook 3 minutes, until the eggs start to set. Sprinkle on the cheese. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook for 6 minutes. The frittata will almost set, but the top is set and golden. Run a spatula around the edges of the skillet to loosen the frittata. Slide the frittata onto the platter, cheese side up.

**Lasagna Bolognese for a Crowd**

10 Servings

*Ingredients:*

1 tbsp olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped

2 medium carrots, thinly sliced

4 cloves garlic, minced

8oz lean ground beef

8oz spicy Italian sausage, castings removed

8oz sweet sausage, castings removed

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 28oz can crushed tomatoes with puree

1 15oz can diced tomatoes

1 6oz can tomato paste

2 tbsp dried oregano

1 bay leaf

15 lasagna noodles (about 12oz)

2 15oz containers part-skim ricotta cheese

1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 large eggs

5 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (about 1 ¼ pounds)

Warm oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add onion and carrots; cook 6 minutes, until softened, stirring often. Stir garlic; cook 1 minute. Add beef, both sausages, salt, and pepper; cook 8 minutes, stirring and using a wooden spoon to break up meat. Add crushed and diced tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar, oregano, and bay leaf. Cover; bring to a simmer. Simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf. Meanwhile, cook noodles according to package directions. Drain. In a large bowl, combine noodles and cold water to cover. Ina medium bowl, whisk ricotta, Parmesan, and eggs until blended. Season with salt and pepper. Preheat oven to 350°. Spread ½ cup of the meat sauce in the bottom of a deep 9 by 13 inch glass baking dish. Remove noodles from water; lay 5 noodles on top of sauce, overlapping noodles. Spread half of the ricotta mixture over noodles; sprinkle 2 cups of mozzarella over ricotta. Spread 2 ½ cups of meat sauce over mozzarella. Layer 5 more noodles, remaining ricotta, 2 cups of mozzarella, and 2 ½ cups meat sauce, and remaining mozzarella. Cover pan with foil. Bake for 40 minutes. Remove foil and bake for 30 minutes, until bubbling. Let sit 10 minutes before serving.

**Bleak House Bars**

32 bars

*Ingredients:*

¾ cups pecan halves

8oz (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature

½ cup dark brown sugar, firmly packed

2 cups all purpose flour

¾ tsp salt, divided

1 ¼ cups sweetened condensed milk

3 cups semisweet chocolate chip, divided

8oz cream cheese, at room temperature

1/3 cup granulated sugar

1 large egg

½ tsp vanilla

½ cup seedless raspberry jam

In a large sauté pan, toast the nuts for about 10 minutes, until they are slightly brown and emit a nutty scent. Remove them from the heat, cool, and coarsely chop. Preheat the oven to 350°. Butter a 9 by 13 inch baking pan. In the large bowl of an electric mixer, beat the butter until it is very soft and creamy. Keeping the mixer on medium speed, beat in the dark brown sugar. Remove the beater from bowl and scrape it. Stir in the flour, ½ tsp of salt, and nuts into the butter mixture until very well combined. Measure out 2 ¼ cups of this mixture and set the rest aside. Wash and dry the bowl and beaters. Press the 2 ¼ cups of butter into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake for about 10 minutes or until the edges are golden brown. While the crust is baking, combine the condensed milk with 2 cups of the chocolate chips in a heavy saucepan. Cook, stirring, over low heat until the chocolate is melted. Remove the crust from the oven and immediately pour the chocolate mixture over the hot crust. In the large bowl of the electric mixer, beat the cream cheese until it is very smooth. Add the granulated sugar and beat once more until smooth. Finally, add the egg, vanilla, and remaining ¼ tsp of salt and beat until very smooth. In a small bowl, stir the jam until smooth. Sprinkle the remaining butter-nut mixture over the chocolate. Using a soup spoon, ladle the jam evenly over the butter-nut mixture. Using another soup spoon, ladle the cream-cheese mixture over the jam layer. Finally, sprinkle the remaining cup of chocolate chips over the cream cheese. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the cream cheese layer is set and no longer liquid in the middle. Cool on rack.