**February - Date Night**

**Better than Sex. YES!!!**

*Ingredients:*

1 18oz box of chocolate cake (fudge cake works too)

1 can of sweetened condensed milk

1 jar of your favorite caramel or hot fudge topping

1 8oz tub of cool whip

4 Skor bars (or favorite chocolate candy of choice, Heath Bars would also be great)

Bake cake according to package directions. When cake is still warm, generously poke holes with a toothpick or chopsticks throughout the cake. Pour the can of condensed milk over cake. Pour the ice cream topping over the cake.

Set cake in fridge to cool. When ready to serve, top with cool whip and sprinkle crushed candy on top. Enjoy.

**Classic Shortbread and Chocolate Shortbread**

*Ingredients for classic shortbread:*

½ cup butter, at room temperature

1/3 cup powdered sugar

¼ tsp vanilla

1 cup flour

*Ingredients for chocolate shortbread:*

½ cup butter at room temperature

1 ½ tbsp coco powder

½ cup powdered sugar

½ tsp vanilla

1 cup flour

*Directions for both shortbreads:*

Cream butter until light. Cream in the powdered sugar, coco powder, and then vanilla. Now gradually add the flour until smooth. Remove from bowl and bread the dough on an unfloured, until smooth. Spray shortbread pan very lightly with a non-stick vegetable spray. Firmly press dough into pan. Prick entire surface with a fork. Bake at 325° for 30 to 35 minutes until edges are golden brown. Cool for 10 minutes. Loosen edges with a knife and flip and cut while warm.

**Tiramisu**

*Ingredients:*

2 large or 4 small mascarpone cheese

5 egg yolks

1 whipped egg white

About 40 savoiardi lady fingers (large bag)

1 cup sugar

Espresso coffee 2 eight cup pots

1 shot of brandy (E&J) 2 shots more if you like more liquor taste

Hershey’s cocoa natural unsweetened

Beat the egg yolks together with sugar until frothy. Stir in cheese a little at a time. Do not over mix. Fold in whipped egg white gently by hand. In a 13x9 pan line the bottom with savoiardi cookies which have been dipped in the espresso and brandy mix. Dip the cookies on both sides quickly so not to absorb too much coffee. Use half of the cream spread on the top of the cookies. Repeat the layer of cookies dipped in the coffee mix. End with the cream on top. Dust with cocoa.

**Crab Cakes Maryland**

*Ingredients:*

2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley

1 tsp dry mustard

1 tsp Worcestershire or a dash of Tabasco

2 eggs, beaten

2 tbsp mayonnaise

1 lb cooked crab, flaked or broken up

1 cup fresh bread crumbs or ½ cup unsalted cracker crumbs

Salt and pepper to taste

Flour for dredging

Put butter in the pan to fry crab cakes in. Mix the parsley, dry mustard, Worcestershire or Tabasco, eggs, and mayonnaise together. Add the crab and crumbs, and season with salt and pepper to taste. Divide the mixture into 8 cakes and dredge in flour. Pan fry them on both sides in a bit of butter.

**Ice Cream Bisque**

*Ingredients:*

1 12oz box of Nilla wafers, crushed

4oz pecans, ground

¾ cup melted butter

Half gallon of vanilla ice cream

Mix together well. Sprinkle half in 9x13 pan and pat down. Fill with ½ gallon vanilla ice cream, put in pan and spread cautiously with spatula. Sprinkle rest of crumb mixture on top. Put in freezer.

*Hot Fudge Sauce*

1 can sweetened condensed milk

1 6oz or 12oz package of semi-sweet morsels

Heat until chocolate melts. Serve over ice cream.

**Chewy Ginger-Molasses Fig Cookies**

30 Servings

*Ingredients:*

2/3 cup packed light brown sugar

½ cup vegetable oil

1 large egg

3 tbsp light molasses

1 ½ cups all purpose flour

1 ½ tsp ground ginger

1 ½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp ground cinnamon

1/8 tsp salt

1 cup stemmed, finely chopped figs

1/3 cup granulated sugar

Preheat oven to 350°. Beat brown sugar and oil in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until blended. Beat in egg white and molasses. In separate bowl combine flour, ginger, soda, cinnamon, and salt. On low speed, slowly beat in flour mixture until combined. With spoon, stir in figs. Shape 1 tablespoon portions of dough into balls. Roll in granulated sugar. Place 2 ½ inches apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Place sheet in center of the oven and bake cookies 7 to 9 minutes, until crackled on top and set around edges. Cool on wire rack.

**White Chocolate Kissed Gingerbread Cookies**

5 dozen cookies

*Ingredients for cookie dough:*

3 cups flour

2 tsp ground ginger

1 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) butter, softened

¾ cup firmly packed brown sugar

½ cup molasses

1 egg

Mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg, and salt in large bowl. Beat butter and brown sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add molasses and egg; beat well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into a thick flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

*Ingredients for White Chocolate Kissed Gingerbread Cookies:*

1 recipe Gingerbread Cookie Dough

60 white and milk chocolate swirled kiss-shaped candies

Prepare 1 recipe Gingerbread Cookie Dough as directed. Shape dough into 1 inch balls. Roll in granulated sugar. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake in preheated 350° oven 8 to 10 minutes or until edges of cookies just begin to brown. Immediately press a chocolate candy into center of each cookie. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. Store cookies in airtight container up to 3 days.

**Boston Cream Pie**

*Ingredients:*

1 white cake mix (18.25oz)

1 small package instant vanilla pudding

1 ¾ cups milk

1 cup sugar

½ cup butter

1/3 cup milk

½ cup semisweet chocolate morsels

Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Use whole eggs instead of egg whites. Pour into 2 greased tiara pans. Bake per package directions. Let cool for 5 minutes and then invert onto serving dishes. Cool for 15 minutes. Whisk pudding and milk together in a bowl. Let it set up for a couple of minutes. Spoon evenly onto top of each cake. In a saucepan combine sugar, butter, and milk. Bring it to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil 1 minute, stirring often. Remove from heat; stir in morsels. Let it cool for a few minutes. Pour evenly onto top of each cake (you will have some left over). Cover and refrigerate enjoy.

**Kids Vegetable Soup**

*Ingredients:*

1 1/2 ground burger, cooked and drained

3 medium potatoes, peeled and diced

1 large can diced stewed tomatoes

1 medium can tomato sauce

1 can tomato soup

2 envelopes dry onion soup mix

1 bag frozen mixed vegetables

1 can yellow beans, drained

6 to 7 cups water, more if too thick

Salt and pepper to taste

In soup pot cook until heated through. In crock pot 6 to 8 hours on low. Put all ingredients in pot, heat until potatoes are tender. Reheats and freezes well. Use more or less of any ingredients as you like, or add other veggies if desired.

**Hot Beef Dip**

*Ingredients:*

8oz sour cream

2 8oz blocks cream cheese, softened

2 tbsp milk

4.5oz bag or jar dried beef, rinsed, drained, and chopped

1/4 to ½ cup yellow onion, diced

¼ to ½ green pepper, diced

Pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients in casserole until blended. Bake at 350° ½ hour until heated through and bubbly. Serve with favorite crackers, pita chips, or tortilla chips. Can make ahead, refrigerate and bake before serving.

**Cinnamon Coffee Bars**

2 dozen bars

*Ingredients:*

¼ cup shortening\*

1 cup brown sugar, packed\*

1 egg

½ hot coffee

1 ½ cups all purpose flour

1 tsp baking powder

¼ tsp baking soda

¼ salt

½ tsp cinnamon

½ cup raisins

¼ chopped nuts

Icing

\*In place of shortening and brown sugar use 1 tbsp of unsalted butter, ½ cup applesauce, and 1/3 cup brown sugar, packed

Heat oven to 350°. Mix together shortening, sugar, and egg. Stir in coffee. Measure flour by dipping method or by sifting. Stir dry ingredients together; stir in. Blend in raisins and nuts. Spread in greased and floured oblong pan, 13x9 ½ x2 inches. Bake 18 to 20 minutes. Cut into 3x 1 ½ bars. Frost while warm with thin coating of icing.

**Cincinnati Chili**

8-10 Servings

*Ingredients:*

2 tbsp peanut oil

1 lb lean pork, coarsely ground

1 lb hamburger

4 yellow onions, peeled and chopped

6 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped

1 tbsp whole cumin seeds

4 tbsp hot chili powder, commercial

3 whole bay leaves

2 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp allspice

2 tsp Tabasco

4 tbsp cocoa powder

2 tbsp Worcestershire

4 tbsp white vinegar

1 can (28oz) tomatoes pureed

1 tbsp oregano

2 lbs kidney beans, soaked and cooked

Salt to taste

Heat a12 quart heavy stock pot and add the oil. Sauté the pork, hamburger, onions, garlic, cumin seeds, chili powder, and bay leaves until the meat is barely and the onions clear. Drain the fat and discard. Add the ingredients, including the beans, and bring to a simmer. Cook, covered, for 1 ½ hours or until the beans are very tender. You may need to add salt to taste.