

Recipes from

# BLACKBERRY CRUMBLE

A CULINARY MYSTERY BY

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## *Blueberry Muffin Tops*

½ cup shortening  
¼ cup butter  
1 egg  
1 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1½ teaspoons lemon zest (can use 1 teaspoon lemon juice instead)  
2 tablespoons milk  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
1½ teaspoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 cup fresh blueberries, or frozen blueberries (no need to thaw)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, cream the shortening, butter, egg, sugar, vanilla, lemon zest, and milk. In a separate bowl, combine dry ingredients. Add to shortening mixture until just mixed. Fold in blueberries, careful not to crush the berries. The batter might be a little crumbly.

Drop by teaspoonfuls (or 1-inch scoops) onto parchment or silicone-mat baking sheet (blueberries stick like crazy).

Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until muffin tops are golden brown. Cool on cookie sheet for two minutes before moving to a rack to cool. Makes 3 dozen.

### Optional glaze

1½ tablespoons butter  
1 cup powdered sugar  
2 tablespoons lemon juice

Mix all ingredients together. Drizzle over cookies while cookies are still warm.

Note: A streusel topping might taste really good too!

### *Gayle's Potato Salad*

10 fist-sized red potatoes

10 eggs

¼ teaspoon salt

1½ cups chopped dill pickles

1¾ cups mayonnaise

1½ tablespoons to 2 tablespoons mustard (to taste and consistency)

2 tablespoons to ¼ cup pickle juice (to taste and consistency)

½ cup finely diced green or white onions (optional; Jack insists that the onions are NOT optional)

Salt (to taste)

Pepper (to taste)

Wash potatoes well and boil (with skins on) until a knife cuts through the potato easily. Drain, refill pan with cool water, and set aside. Potatoes can be cooked the night before, drained, and refrigerated.\*

Put eggs in a 2-quart saucepan. Cover with water and add ¼ teaspoon salt. Cook eggs on high heat until the water comes to a boil. Boil eggs one minute. Remove pan from heat, cover, and let sit for 9 minutes. Drain pan and refill with cool water. Repeat after two minutes. (This will cool the eggs quickly and keep them from getting the green layer around the yolk, which is due to overcooking.) When cool, peel the eggs. (Eggs can be boiled in advance and refrigerated, but don't peel them until ready to use.)

Mix pickles, mayonnaise, mustard, pickle juice, onions, salt, and pepper together in a small bowl.

Dice the cooled, unpeeled potatoes and place in a large bowl. (Use a small knife and cut them carefully in your hand over the bowl; boiled potatoes are messy on a cutting board). Dice the cooled, peeled eggs and add to the potatoes. Add pickle and mayo mixture. Use a large spoon or rubber scraper to mix potatoes, eggs, and mayo mixture together.

Adjust flavors and thickness of sauce by adding more pickle juice (don't be shy with the pickle juice if the sauce needs it). Salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate until serving. Serves 10 to 14.

\*Gayle always flavors her potatoes first: Drain the potatoes on a dish towel to absorb most of the water. After dicing the potatoes, pour additional pickle juice directly on them so they absorb the juice and have an even better flavor.

## *Easy Crab Dip*

1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, softened

¼ cup cocktail sauce

1 (4.25-ounce) can lump crab meat

Lemon juice (to taste)

Crackers

Celery sticks

Place softened cream cheese in the middle of a medium-sized dinner plate or similarly sized platter. Using the back of a spoon, smooth cream cheese evenly across the surface of the plate. Spread a layer of cocktail sauce over the cream cheese.

Open canned crab meat, drain, and use a fork to fluff the meat. Spread crab meat evenly over the cocktail sauce.\* (Drizzle lemon juice over crab for additional yumminess—but use sparingly!)

Use a firm cracker or celery stick to scoop up the layered dip.

\*Breanna likes this dip with a drained can of tiny shrimp instead of the crab.

### *Cherry Chocolate Chip Cookies*

1 (10-ounce) jar maraschino cherries (chopped, should yield  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup shortening (Breanna uses butter-flavored shortening)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup brown sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

3 tablespoons reserved cherry juice

2 eggs

$2\frac{1}{2}$  cups flour

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon baking soda

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup mini semisweet chocolate chips\*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Drain jar of cherries but reserve the juice. Chop cherries and set aside.

Cream butter and shortening, add sugars and beat until fluffy. Add vanilla, cherry juice, and eggs. Mix well. Add flour, salt, baking powder, and baking soda. Mix until combined. Add chopped cherries and chocolate chips. Mix until combined.

Drop by rounded teaspoons (or use a 1-inch scoop) onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8 to 12 minutes or until the edges begin to brown slightly. (The center of the cookie may still appear uncooked.) Cool on pan for 2 minutes before moving to cooling rack. Makes 3 dozen.

\*Milk chocolate chips work, too, but they have a higher tendency to scorch, so don't overcook. I prefer white chocolate chips; they keep the cherry flavor center stage.

### *Annie's Triple-Berry Summer Salad*

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup candied walnuts

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup sugar

Salt

5 cups (6 to 8 ounces) baby spinach

2 cups fresh berries of your choice (blackberries, boysenberries, blueberries, sliced strawberries, etc.)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup red onion, sliced thin (Jack likes lots of onions on his salad)

1 cup of your favorite sweet dressing (poppy seed, raspberry vinaigrette, etc.)

To candy walnuts, preheat frying pan on medium-low heat. Add walnuts and cook for about 3 minutes, until you start to smell them, stirring constantly. Sprinkle sugar and a dash of salt over the nuts. Continue to stir quickly until the sugar melts. Toss nuts until sugar is no longer grainy and nuts are coated in the melted sugar; about five minutes. (A little smoke is normal, but be careful not to burn them.) Once the nuts are coated, spread them out on a sheet of wax paper and let cool while you assemble the rest of the salad.\*

For the salad, toss together all ingredients except the dressing. Add cooled walnuts and dressing. Toss to coat salad. Serve immediately. Serves 6 to 8.

\*Gayle insists that candied walnuts are impossible to make at home, so she uses walnuts straight from the bag.

### *Salmon and Wild Mushroom Casserole*

- 1 (12-ounce) package wide egg noodles
- ½ cup butter, plus 2 tablespoons butter, divided
- 1 (14-ounce) can salmon\*
- 1 onion, chopped
- 5 celery ribs, diced
- 4 to 8 ounces wild mushrooms (oyster, shiitake, etc.), washed and sliced (quantity should be based on how much you like mushrooms)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon double mustard powder
- 1 cup milk
- 1 (14-ounce) can chicken broth
- 1 cup crushed oyster or saltine crackers

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 2-quart casserole dish. Cook the noodles according to package directions (don't forget the salt). Drain, then return to the pot and toss with 2 tablespoons of butter. Set aside.

While the noodles are cooking, open and drain the can of salmon. Remove any round bones and discard them. (Other bones are soft enough to mix with the fish.) Mash the salmon meat with a fork. Set aside.

Melt 6 tablespoons of butter in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add the onion and celery and sauté until translucent, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the mushrooms and salt. Cook, stirring often, until the mushrooms give up their juices, about 4 minutes.

Add flour to the skillet and stir well. Add mustard powder. Stir until combined. Cook 2 minutes. Slowly add the milk and chicken broth, stirring constantly (remember to scrape up any browned flour on the bottom of the pan for more flavor). Stir until mixture is thick and bubbly. Add the salmon. Turn off the heat. Salt and pepper to taste.

Pour the vegetable-salmon mixture over the buttered noodles and mix until well combined. Pour into buttered casserole dish.

Melt remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and toss with crackers. Spread buttered crackers over the top of the casserole dish. (A little garlic salt tossed with the oyster crackers is yummy, too.) Bake 30 minutes. Serves 6 to 8.

\*Could use canned chicken in place of salmon.

### *Loaded Bread Dip*

- 1½ cups mayonnaise
- 1½ cups sour cream
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, mashed
- 1 cup cooked, crumbled bacon
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 round loaf artisan bread\*

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except the bread. Hollow out a round loaf of artisan bread, reserving the bread removed from the center. Spoon the dip into the bread and bake on a cookie sheet for 40 minutes.

When done, use the bread you removed to eat the dip. Serves 4.

\*Use smaller rounds of bread for individual dips.



## *Bacon Ice Cream*

6 slices of bacon  
2 to 4 tablespoons brown sugar  
2 quarts heavy whipping cream  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 to 4 cups sugar, to taste  
Milk to the fill line, about 4 inches from the top of the ice cream container

To candy the bacon, line 6 slices of bacon on a jelly-roll pan covered with either aluminum foil or a silicone mat. Sprinkle approximately 1 teaspoon brown sugar on each bacon slice, keeping as much sugar on the bacon as possible (or put bacon and sugar in a zip-top bag to coat).

Put pan in a cold oven and set heat to 325 degrees. Bake for 25 minutes. While the bacon is cooking, prepare ice cream base (see below). After 25 minutes, turn bacon over. Continue turning bacon every three minutes until bacon is crispy and the brown sugar gives it a candy coating.

Remove pan from oven and move bacon to a cooling rack, if using foil. (Bacon can cool directly on the silicone mat.) Once cooled, chop bacon into very small pieces. Store chopped bacon in refrigerator or freezer until ready to add to the ice cream base.

To prepare ice cream base, use a standard 4-quart ice cream maker.\* Add whipping cream, then sugar. (You want it quite sweet, since the sweetness will mellow as the ice cream freezes.) Add milk to the fill line of the container (usually 4 inches from the top). Add more sugar if necessary. Mix and chill in the refrigerator for about an hour.

When bacon has cooled, add the chopped, candied bacon pieces to the chilled ice cream base. Freeze according to ice-cream maker directions. (Adding the bacon a few minutes before the freezer is finished will keep the "candy" from dissolving into the base as much.) Final result should be a soft, toffee-flavored ice cream with bits of bacon, which give it a salty flavor and are similar in texture to bits of toffee. Serve immediately.

\*Adjust ingredients accordingly if your freezer has a different capacity.

## *Marvelous Bran Muffins*

3½ cups All-Bran® cereal  
1 cup boiling water  
½ cup butter  
1 cup white sugar  
½ cup brown sugar  
2 eggs  
2 cups buttermilk  
2½ cups flour  
2½ teaspoons baking soda  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
½ teaspoons salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line muffin cups. Soak 1 cup of All-Bran cereal in 1 cup boiling water and stir until evenly blended. Set aside. Cream butter and sugar. Beat eggs in one at a time, then add buttermilk and soaked bran. Mix. Add flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Blend just until batter is moist. Fold in remaining All-Bran cereal. (If desired, mix in up to 2 cups of suggested additions.\*)

Spoon batter into muffin cups, filling each to the top. Bake 30 to 35 minutes, or until cake tester comes out clean. Makes 2 dozen.

### *\*Suggested Additions*

Mix-and-match up to 2 cups of any of the following ingredients:

1½ cups blueberries (fresh or frozen)  
1 cup chocolate chips—any type  
½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans  
1 cup Craisins®, raisins, or dried cherries  
1 cup chopped dates  
1 cup chopped fresh cranberries  
1½ cups chopped apples  
½ cup coconut  
1 cup pineapple tidbits, drained

## *Blackberry Crumble*

6 cups fresh or frozen blackberries (or any kind of frozen berry)  
2 tablespoons flour  
3 tablespoons sugar  
½ cup butter  
½ cup flour  
½ cup rolled oats  
½ cup brown sugar  
½ teaspoon nutmeg  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix berries, 2 tablespoons flour, and 3 tablespoons sugar together in large bowl. Spread in an 8x8 pan. In a mixing bowl, combine remaining ingredients; adjust spices to taste. Use a pastry cutter to cut ingredients together until pea-sized crumbles form. Sprinkle over the top of the berry mixture. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes or until crumb topping is browned. Let cool slightly. Serve warm topped with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, if desired. Serves 6.

Note: Karri recommends adding a little lemon zest to the topping. Sounds delicious!

### *Second-Chance Baked Potato Soup*

½ cup butter

½ cup flour

5 cups milk

4 to 5 large, leftover baked potatoes, peeled and mashed (or 3 cups mashed potatoes)\*

1 teaspoon salt (don't be afraid to add more to taste)

½ teaspoon pepper

4 green onions, chopped and divided

12 slices bacon, cooked, crumbled and divided

1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided

1 (8-ounce) package sour cream

Melt butter in a heavy kettle over low heat. Add flour, stirring until smooth. Cook for about 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Increase heat to medium and gradually add milk, stirring constantly until mixture is thick and bubbly.

Add potatoes, salt, pepper, half of the green onions, half of the bacon, and 1 cup of cheddar cheese. Cook until thoroughly heated. Stir in sour cream (add extra if necessary for desired thickness).

Serve soup with remaining portion of onions, bacon, and cheese sprinkled on top. Serves 6.

\*To make soup from scratch rather than with leftovers: Wash raw potatoes and bake in the oven at 400 degrees for about 1 hour or until done. Be careful not to overcook them and make them too mushy. Let potatoes cool before cutting. Scoop out insides of potatoes and set aside. Then follow the recipe using the freshly baked potatoes.