

February 2015: Meat and Potatoes!

Chicken Fried Steak & Milk Gravy

2 cups lard or vegetable oil (for frying)
4 beef cube steaks (about 2 pounds total)
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup buttermilk
Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 cup all-purpose flour

Gravy

1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1 quart milk
Salt and pepper to taste
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh sage leaves

In a large, heavy skillet, heat 1/2 inch shortening to 350-360°.

While the shortening, lard, or oil is heating, prepare cutlets. First, season the steaks with seasoning salt and pepper on both sides. Then in a shallow bowl, beat together egg, buttermilk, salt and pepper.

In another shallow dish, mix together garlic powder, seasoning salt, pepper and 1 cup flour. Dip cutlets in flour, turning to evenly coat both sides. Dip in egg mixture, coating both sides, then in flour mixture once again. Allow coated meat to sit for 5-10 minutes on wax paper.

Place cutlets in heated shortening, lard, or oil. Cook until golden brown (about 4-5 minutes), turning once. Transfer to a plate lined with paper towels. Repeat with remaining cutlets.

Milk Gravy:

Drain fat, reserving 1/2 cup. Using the reserved drippings in the pan, prepare gravy over medium heat. Blend in 1/4 cup flour form a paste. Gradually add milk to desired consistency, stirring constantly. For thicker gravy add less milk; for thinner gravy, stir in more. Heat through and season with salt and pepper to taste. Stir in sage leaves just before serving. Serve over chicken fried steak.

I always serve chicken fried steak with mashed potatoes at dinner or home fries at breakfast.

Note: To make it Sawmill gravy, drain all the fat from the pan. Add 1 pound bulk breakfast sausage to the pan. When cooked, add the flour and cook for a couple of minutes until the flour is cooked, then continue with adding the milk as directed above.

Makes 4 Servings

Yukon Gold Home Fries with Bacon

4 Yukon Gold potatoes (about 2 pounds), peeled and cut into a 3/4-inch pieces
Kosher salt
5 slices bacon (about 4 1/2 ounces)

3 tablespoons vegetable oil, like soy, peanut, or corn
1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley leaves, optional
Pinch cayenne pepper, optional

Put the potatoes in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water by about 2 inches. Season with salt. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer until just tender, about 6 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Cook the bacon in a large cast iron skillet over medium heat until crisp, about 4 to 5 minutes. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Pour all but 1 tablespoon of the bacon drippings into a small bowl and set aside. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until golden brown, about 8 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.

Wipe out the skillet and return to medium-high heat. Heat the remaining bacon fat and 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in the skillet. Add the potatoes, season with salt and pepper to taste, and arrange in a single layer. Cook, without stirring, until well browned on 1 side, about 4 minutes. Using a spatula, turn the potatoes in small sections, and continue cooking, turning occasionally, about 6 minutes or until well browned. Stir in the onions, heat through, and sprinkle with the parsley and cayenne, if desired. Transfer to a warm platter and crumble the bacon on top, serve.

Makes 4 to 6 Servings

Indulgent Garlic Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes

2 pounds Yukon gold potatoes, washed and quartered
4 cloves garlic
Kosher salt
1 1/2 cups heavy cream, warm
1 stick cold butter, cut into 9 pats

Place the potatoes and garlic in a large sauce pan. Cover with 1 to 2 inches cold water and season generously with salt. Bring the pot of water to a boil and cook until the potatoes are fork-tender, about 20 to 25 minutes. Drain the potatoes and garlic well and pass through a food-mill or ricer.

While ricing the potatoes, bring the heavy cream to a boil in a small saucepan. Once the cream has come to a boil remove from the heat.

While the potatoes are still hot add 1/3 of the cream and butter and stir vigorously into the potatoes. Repeat this process 2 more times until all of the cream and butter has incorporated. Taste the potatoes for seasoning and add salt, if needed. Serve immediately or cover with foil and keep warm in an oven on low heat.

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Shepherd's Pie

For the potatoes:

- 1 1/2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes
- 1/4 cup half-and-half
- 2 ounces unsalted butter
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 egg yolk

For the meat filling:

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 carrots, peeled and diced small
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 1/2 pounds ground lamb
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons freshly chopped rosemary leaves
- 1 teaspoon freshly chopped thyme leaves
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen English peas

Peel the potatoes and cut into 1/2-inch dice. Place in a medium saucepan and cover with cold water. Set over high heat, cover and bring to a boil. Once boiling, uncover, decrease the heat to maintain a simmer and cook until tender and easily crushed with tongs, approximately 10 to 15 minutes. Place the half-and-half and butter into a microwave-safe container and heat in the microwave until warmed through, about 35 seconds. Drain the potatoes in a colander and then return to the saucepan. Mash the potatoes and then add the half and half, butter, salt and pepper and continue to mash until smooth. Stir in the yolk until well combined.

Preheat the oven to 400°.

While the potatoes are cooking, prepare the filling. Place the canola oil into a 12-inch saute pan and set over medium high heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the onion and carrots and saute just until they begin to take on color, approximately 3 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and stir to combine. Add the lamb, salt and pepper and cook until browned and cooked through, approximately 3 minutes. Sprinkle the meat with the flour and toss to coat, continuing to cook for another minute. Add the tomato paste, chicken broth, Worcestershire, rosemary, thyme, and stir to combine. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer slowly 10 to 12 minutes or until the sauce is thickened slightly.

Add the corn and peas to the lamb mixture and spread evenly into an 11 by 7-inch glass baking dish. Top with the mashed potatoes, starting around the edges to create a seal to prevent the mixture

from bubbling up and smooth with a rubber spatula. Place on a parchment lined half sheet pan on the middle rack of the oven and bake for 25 minutes or just until the potatoes begin to brown. Remove to a cooling rack for at least 15 minutes before serving.

Makes 8 Servings

Stuffed Eggplant with Lamb and Pine Nuts

- 4 medium eggplants, halved lengthwise
- 6 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1-1/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1-1/2 Tablespoons sweet paprika
- 1 Tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 1 pound ground lamb
- 7 Tablespoons pine nuts
- 1 ounce flat leaf parsley, chopped
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 3 teaspoons sugar
- 2/3 cup water
- 1-1/2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon tamarind paste
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 425°.

Place the eggplant halves, skin side down, in a roasting pan large enough to accommodate them snugly. Brush the flesh with 4 Tablespoons of the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast for about 20 minutes, until golden brown. Remove from oven and allow to cool slightly.

While the eggplants are cooking, make the stuffing. Heat 2 Tablespoons olive oil in a large frying pan. Mix together the cumin, paprika and ground cinnamon. Add half of this spice mix to the pan, along with the onions. Cook over medium-high heat for about 8 minutes, stirring often. Add the lamb, pine nuts, parsley, tomato paste, 1 teaspoon of the sugar, and salt and pepper. Continue to cook and stir for another 8 minutes, until the meat is cooked.

Place the remaining spice mix in a bowl and add the water, lemon juice, tamarind, remaining 2 teaspoons sugar, cinnamon stick and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Mix well.

Reduce the oven temperature to 375°. Pour the spice mix into the bottom of the eggplant roasting pan. Spoon the lamb mixture on top of each eggplant. Cover the pan tightly with foil, return to the oven and roast for 1-1/2 hours. The eggplants should be completely soft and the sauce thickened. Twice during the cooking, remove the foil and baste the eggplant with the sauce, adding water if the sauce dries out.

Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes 4 Servings