

Spanakopita

This is a recipe I modified from several, for convenience. Most Spanakopita recipes call for stacks of buttered filo sheets. I discovered that puff pastry works just as well and is a lot quicker.

1 pkg. fresh spinach
1 box puff pastry (in the frozen section at the grocery store, comes in 2 large sheets)
1 T olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
pinch of thyme
salt and pepper to taste

5 large eggs
1 pound feta cheese
1/2 cup grated parmesan or mixed Italian cheeses
1/4 cup parsley
garden herbs: fresh basil and oregano as desired or 1 t each dried basil and oregano

Heat the tablespoon of olive oil in a skillet and sauté the onion and garlic until the onion is tender. Chop spinach and herbs and add to pan. Cover and steam until spinach is just wilted. Let cool slightly and add remaining ingredients.

Pour spinach mix in buttered 9 x 13 glass dish. Lay pieces of puff pastry across top of mixture until mixture is completely covered. (If you are using a smaller dish, you may have enough puff pastry to also cover the bottom of the dish before adding the spinach mixture.)

Bake at 375 degrees for 50 minutes, until the crust is puffed and golden. Serve immediately.

Deb Bars

This is a recipe I got years ago from a neighbor, and the students have renamed them Deb bars. We made them in India and they were called "Deb bahs." They are especially good when served while still warm.

Cream together:

¾ C soft butter
¾ C sugar

¾ C firmly packed dark brown sugar
1 t vanilla

Add one at a time beating after each: 3 eggs

Add this mixture:

2 C flour
2 t baking powder
1/2 t salt

Add: 12 oz. (2 C) Nestle chocolate chips.

Spread into well-greased 15x10x1 baking dish. Bake at 350⁹ for 25 minutes. Makes 35 2-inch square bars. Add 1 C coconut or nuts, if desired.

Char's Cookies

Char, the parent of an alum, often travels from Rochester, MN, to bring us a mother lode of cookies, bars and breads, which we are able to share with lots of students. Her homemade cookies are always a hit. The original recipe was from a church cookbook.

1 C butter, softened	2 t baking soda
1 C peanut butter	½ t salt
1 cup white sugar	2/3 milk chocolate chips
2/3 C packed brown sugar	2/3 C semi-sweet chocolate chips
2 eggs	2/3 C peanut butter chips
1t vanilla	2/3 C vanilla chips
1 C old-fashioned oats	2/3 C butterscotch chips
2 C flour	

In a mixing bowl, cream butter, peanut butter and sugars. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla. Combine flour, oats, baking soda and salt; gradually add to the creamed mixture. Stir in chips. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls 2 inches apart onto ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool for one minute before moving to wire racks. Yield: 4 ½ dozen.

Sugar-Cookie Shortbread

This was an experiment that went over well. This isn't a true shortbread because it's sweeter and moister. For a drier, more shortbread-type cookie, try one stick of butter.

1 package Betty Crocker sugar cookie mix
1 ½ sticks of butter (¾ cup), softened

Mix well and use your fingers over waxed paper to press dough into the bottom of a glass 9 x 13 pan. Sugar the bottom of a glass or a cookie stamp and press designs into flattened dough. The sugar will give the cookies a slight sheen. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until golden. Cut into small squares and serve warm. Buttery!