

LIFE TIME LEARNING PROUDLY PRESENTS - SPRING BRUNCH-2022

It's more than breakfast, but not quite as large as lunch. So what is it? It's Brunch! And it can be almost anything your heart desires. There are no limitations as to the types of food you can serve. There are however, several things you need to consider which will enable you to pull off a perfect brunch event.

First and foremost, when are you going to do this? How much lead time are you giving yourself? Then, who is coming? Is it mostly adults or are there going to be children too? Once you have your guest list, be sure to check it or inquire as to any dietary considerations and/or allergies that must be addressed.

As you go about setting up your menu recognize your cooking and food preparation limitations. Tried and true works best here - this is not the time for presenting new, untried recipes without first testing them. As you outline your menu, keep the following in mind. Is this going to be an inside or outside event? Will it be a sit down or more casual stand-up type affair? Are you thinking of using china verses paper? If using paper, be sure to have adequate trash receptacles available. Remember to arrange the furniture to accommodate the event, be it inside or outside.

Arrange your shopping list into two parts, goods and items that can be purchased before the event, namely non-perishable items, and then the purchase of perishable items. While thinking of this, remember to clean the refrigerator so you have ample space to store items prior to and after the event. Think of using ice chests for keeping cold items cold. Consider using the oven and/or ovens and the microwave to keep things warm or to cook those items that need last minute cooking. Warming trays and electric griddles work well here.

If you are going to have flowers and if you are going to take them from your garden, remember to check them over, you don't want any uninvited guests. If this is an outdoors event, make sure the yard is clear of any pet waste.

Finally, when presenting dishes, if it is on the dish it should be eatable. And little place cards describing each dish is a big plus, prevents you have having to stand near the food to let everyone know what it is they are eating. And last but by no means least, be sure to have fun. After all, that's why you started this whole Brunch thing.

Now here are some fun recipes for you to use at your next Brunch....

Chef Cal

A note about the recipes: Depending on the number of guests you are having, you may need to make two batches of a recipe. That is fine, since you can replenish the brunch table. Also, not everyone is going to want to try everything. Common sense dictates here, the larger the crowd, the more food you are going to need. Offering a nice variety of food items wins the day.

SPRING BRUNCH – 2022 RECIPES

Tangy Poppy-Seed Fruit Salad

1 can (20 oz.) unsweetened pineapple chunks, drained
1 pound fresh strawberries, quartered
2 cups fresh blueberries
2 cups fresh raspberries
2 medium navel oranges, peeled and sectioned
2 medium kiwifruit, peeled, halved and sliced

Dressing:

2 to 4 Tbsp. honey
½ tsp. grated lime peel
2 Tbsp. lime juice
2 tsp. poppy seeds

Place all the fruit in a large bowl, toss to ensure even distribution. In a small bowl, whisk dressing ingredients. Drizzle over the fruit, toss gently again to combine. You can serve this in a single large bowl or you can divide it up into smaller containers. This should provide 10 servings.

Mushroom & Smoked Salmon Tarts

1 pkg. (14.1 oz.) refrigerated pie pastry – two crusts per package
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
4 cups sliced fresh mushrooms (about 10 oz.)
1 Tbsp. butter
2/3 cup smoked salmon or lox
½ cup crumbled feta cheese
8 eggs
4 tsp. drained capers
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. black pepper

2 tsp. snipped fresh dill (optional)

Unroll pastry sheets into two 9-in. fluted tart pans with removable bottoms; trim edge. Refrigerate 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400-degrees.

Line unpricked pastry with a double thickness of foil. Fill with pie weights, dried beans or uncooked rice; bake on lower oven rack 10-15 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Remove foil and weights; bake 2-4 minutes longer or until bottom is golden brown. Cool on wire rack. Reduce oven temperature to 375-degrees.

In a skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onions; cook and stir 5 – 7 minutes or until tender and lightly browned. Remove from pan. Add mushrooms with butter to pan, cook and stir 6-8 minutes or until tender.

Place tart pans on separate baking sheets. Divide onion and mushrooms between crusts; top with salmon and cheese. In a bowl, whisk 4 eggs, 2 tsp. capers and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. each salt and pepper. If desired, stir in 1 tsp dill. Pour over one of the tarts. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Bake 15-20 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center of the tart comes out clean. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting.

Note: If using pie weights, be sure they are cool prior to storing them. Beans and rice may be reused as pie weights but not used for cooking/eating.

Orange Glazed Ham

1 bone-in, spiral-cut ham about 10 lbs.

1 cup orange marmalade

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground cloves

1 tsp. ground mustard

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. garlic powder

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground black pepper

Place the ham on its side in roasting pan. Mix marmalade and spices in small bowl until well blended. Brush $\frac{1}{2}$ of the marmalade mixture over the ham, gently separating the slices so mixture can reach middle of ham. Cover loosely with foil

Bake in preheated 325-degree oven 1 hour, basting occasionally. Remove foil. Brush with remaining marmalade mixture; bake an additional 45 minutes longer. Serve ham with pan drippings. Makes 24 servings

Carrot Zucchini Bread

1 cup unsweetened applesauce
¾ cup shredded carrots
¾ cup shredded and peeled zucchini
½ cup sugar
½ cup egg substitute
1 ½ tsp. pumpkin pie spice
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
½ tsp. ground nutmeg
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
¾ cup orange juice

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. In a large bowl, combine the first 8 ingredients. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; add alternately with orange juice to carrot mixture.

Pour into 2 greased and floured 8x4-in. loaf pans. Bake until bread tests done, about 45 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes; remove from pans to a wire rack to cool completely. Makes 2 loaves, 16 pieces each.

Spinach-Chicken Frittata

½ cup julienned sweet red pepper
½ cup chopped onion
2 Tbsp. olive oil
3 large eggs
½ cup milk, either whole or 2%

1 cup shredded cooked chicken
1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
½ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper

In a large skillet, sauté red pepper and onion in oil until tender. In a large bowl, beat the eggs and milk. Stir in chicken, ½ cup spinach, mozzarella and Parmesan cheese, salt and pepper (save the remaining spinach for another use). Add to the skillet.

Cover and cook over medium heat until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, 7-10 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve. Makes 4 -6 servings

Tomato Galette with Basil Pesto and Feta

2 Roma tomatoes, sliced 1/8-inch thick
1 pint grape tomatoes, halved
¾ tsp. salt
2 Tbsp. prepared pesto
1 Tbsp. mayonnaise
Dough for single-crust pie – recipe follows
½ cup crumbled feta cheese, divided
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
½ tsp. pepper
1 large egg
1 Tbsp. water
1 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
Fresh basil leaves, for garnish

Place tomatoes on a double layer of paper towels, sprinkle with salt. Cover with additional paper towels. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir together pesto and mayonnaise. Preheat oven to 375-degrees. On a floured sheet of parchment, roll dough into a 12-inch circle. Transfer to a baking sheet or pizza stone.

Spread pesto mixture over crust to within 2-inches of edge, top with ¼ cup feta. Arrange tomato slices over feta; arrange cherry tomatoes on top, cut sides up. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup feta, Italian seasoning and pepper. Fold crust edge over filling, pleating as you go and leaving center uncovered. In a small bowl, whisk egg and water; brush edge of crust with the egg wash and sprinkle with Parmesan.

Bake until crust is golden brown, 35-40 minutes. Cool 10 minutes before slicing. If desired, top with basil leaves before serving. Makes 6 – 8 servings

Dough for Single-Crust Pie:

Combine 1¾ cups all-purpose flour, 1½ tsp. sugar and ¼ tsp. salt; cut in 6 Tbsp. cold butter and 1/3 cup shortening until crumbly. Gradually add 4-5 Tbsp. ice water, tossing with a fork until dough holds together when pressed. Wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Hash Brown Quiche Cups

4 eggs – divided
¼ tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
2 cups frozen shredded hash brown potatoes
¼ cup shredded Asiago cheese
1 Tbsp. minced fresh chives
1/3 cup shredded Colby-Monterey Jack Cheese
½ cup sliced baby spinach
2 cooked and crumbled bacon strips

Preheat oven to 400-degrees. Grease 8 muffin cups. In a bowl, whisk 1 large egg, salt and pepper, the hash browns and the Asiago cheese. To form crusts, press about ¼ cup potato mixture into bottom and up sides of each prepared muffin cup. Bake until light golden brown, about 14 – 17 minutes.

For the filling, in a small bowl whisk remaining 3 eggs and minced chives until blended; stir in Colby-Monterey Jack Cheese and baby spinach. Spoon into cups

and top with crumbled bacon. Return to oven and bake 6 – 8 minutes or until a knife inserted into the center of each cup comes out clean. Makes 8 cups

Easy Cheesy Cauliflower Breakfast Casserole

1 lb. bacon strips, chopped
1 cup chopped sweet onion
½ large sweet red pepper, chopped
½ large green pepper, chopped
9 large eggs, lightly beaten
1½ cups whole milk ricotta cheese
4 cups frozen riced cauliflower, thawed
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
1 cup shredded Swiss cheese
½ tsp. pepper
¼ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 350-degrees. In a large skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp, stirring occasionally. Remove with a slotted spoon, drain on paper towels. Discard drippings, reserving 1 Tbsp. in pan.

Add onion and chopped peppers to drippings; cook and stir over medium-high heat until tender, 6 – 8 minutes. In a large bowl, whisk eggs and ricotta. Stir in the riced cauliflower, shredded cheeses, bacon, onion mixture, pepper and salt. Pour this mixture into a greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Bake uncovered, until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean, 40 – 45 minutes. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serves 12

Sausage/Apple & Pancake Bake

1 lb. bulk pork sausage
2 cups biscuit/baking mix
1½ cups milk
2 large eggs
¼ cup canola oil
2 medium apples, peeled and thinly sliced

2 Tbs. cinnamon sugar
Maple syrup for serving

Preheat the oven to 350-degrees. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook and crumble sausage until no longer pink, 5 -7 minutes; drain. Mix biscuit mix, milk, eggs and oil until blended; stir in sausage. Transfer biscuit mixture to a greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Top with the apples, sprinkle with the cinnamon sugar. Bake until set, 30 – 45 minutes. Serve with the maple syrup.

Note: Prep it early

Cover and refrigerate the prepped bake several hours or overnight. To use preheat oven to 350-degrees; remove casserole from refrigerator; uncover and let stand while oven heats. Bake the casserole as directed, increasing time as necessary until a knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Collards Quiche

1 sheet refrigerated pie crust
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 cup frozen chopped collard greens, thawed and drained
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
¼ tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
2 cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack Cheese
1 cup cubed fully cooked ham
6 large eggs
1 cup milk

Preheat oven to 375-degrees. Unroll crust into a 9-inch ovenproof pie plate, flute edge. Chill while preparing filling.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat. Add collard greens and onion; cook and stir until onion is tender, 5 – 7 minutes. Add garlic, cook 1 minute longer. Stir in salt and pepper. Cool slightly; stir in cheese and ham; spoon into crust.

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs and milk until blended. Pour over the top of the collard/onion mixture. Bake on lower oven rack until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean, 35 – 40 minutes. Cover edge loosely with foil during the last 15 minutes if need to prevent overbrowning. Remove foil, let stand 10 minutes before cutting.

Freeze Option:

Cover and freeze unbaked quiche. To use; remove the frozen quiche from the freezer 30 minutes before baking - do not thaw. Preheat oven to 375-degrees; place quiche on a baking sheet and bake as directed, increasing cooking time to 50-60 minutes.

Greek Salad with Capers & Feta

4 Plum tomatoes
1 English cucumber
1 (8 oz.) pkg. chunk feta
1 (3 oz.) pkg. capers drained
¼ cup Greek dressing – Ken’s Greek Dressing works well here

Slice the tomatoes lengthwise into 4 wedges each
Slice the cucumber in half lengthwise and cut into 1/2-inch chunks
Cut the feta into ½ inch chunks

In a large bowl, combine the tomatoes, cucumbers, and capers. Toss to mix everything together.

Add the dressing and toss to combine and then top with the feta. This serves 4; however, if using for a large Brunch, you can double the recipe.

Mini Chicken Pot Pies

Vegetable cooking spray
1 ½ cups cubed cooked chicken
1 can (10 ¾ oz.) can Campbell’s Condensed Cream of Chicken Soup

½ of a package frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
All-purpose flour
1 package (12 oz.) refrigerated biscuits (10 biscuits count)
½ cup shredded cheddar cheese

Heat oven to 350-degrees; spray 12 cup size muffin pan with the cooking spray.
Note: you will only use 10 of the cups. Stir the chicken, soup and vegetables in a medium bowl.

Sprinkle the flour on the work surface. Roll or pat the biscuits to flatten slightly. Press the biscuits into the bottoms and up the sides of 10 of the muffin pan cups. Spoon about 1/3 cup of the chicken mixture into each biscuit cup. Lightly press the chicken mixture down in so its level. Top each cup with about 2 teaspoons of the cheese.

Bake for 15 minutes or until the biscuits are golden brown and the cheese is melted. Let the pot pies cool in the pan on a wire rack for 5 minutes prior to serving. This recipe makes 10 mini chicken pot pies.

No Brunch would be complete without a French toast recipe. This is the recipe I served my customers for over 10 years and it was always a big hit. I hope you enjoy it.

Crème Brulee French Toast

1 stick (1/2 cup) unsalted butter
1 cup packed brown sugar, light or dark
2 tablespoons corn syrup
5 large eggs
1 loaf Brioche or Chula bread, sliced
1½ cups half and half
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. Grand Marnier
½ tsp. salt

In a small heavy saucepan melt butter with brown sugar and corn syrup over moderate heat, stirring until smooth. Pour into a 9 x 13-inch baking dish. Cut six 1-inch thick slices from center portion of bread, reserving ends for another use, and trim crust. Arrange bread slices in one layer in baking dish, squeezing them slightly to fit.

In a bowl whisk together eggs, half-and-half, vanilla, Grand Marnier, and salt until combined well and then pour this evenly over the bread. Chill bread mixture, covered, at least 1 hour or up to 1 day.

Preheat oven to 350-degrees and bring bread to room temperature. **It is very important that the bread mixture be brought to room temperature PRIOR to being put into the oven.**

Bake bread mixture, uncovered, in middle of oven until puffed and edges are a pale, golden brown, 34 – 40 minutes. Serve hot dusted with powdered sugar.
Serves six

Original recipe from Gourmet Magazine – July 1998

The following recipes are included just for fun!

Cajun Bacon

12 slices bacon, smoked if available
½ - 2/3 cup brown sugar, light or dark
3 – 6 tablespoons Cajun seasoning

Preheat the oven to 300 – degrees. Place a strip of non-stick aluminum foil on a rimmed baking sheet so that the bacon does not stick during the cooking process. The rimmed baking sheet is important because you will render some bacon fat and sauce from the brown sugar while cooking. You don't want this to get on the oven bottom.

Mix sugar and seasoning in a wide bowl. Dredge bacon on both sides in sugar mixture and press to make sure it adheres. Lay spiced bacon on foil lined sheet

pan. To get more bacon on one baking sheet or to give a candied look, hold the ends of the bacon and twist a number of times, then place on the baking sheet. Bake bacon for 30 minutes

When removing the bacon afterward use tongs as the sugar can become quite hot and cause a serious burn. Allow the bacon to cool on the pan for a few minutes prior to trying to remove. Do not eat or serve the bacon straight from the oven. The bacon will crisp a bit as it cools in the open air. Wahoo, great with eggs and hot sauce. Serves four – three slices per person.

Bacon Breakfast Cookies

½ cup butter, softened
¾ cup sugar
1 large egg
1 cup all-purpose flour
¼ tsp. baking soda
10 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled
2 cups cornflakes
½ cup raisins

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5 – 7 minutes. Beat in egg. Combine flour and baking soda, gradually add to creamed mixture. Stir in bacon, cornflakes and raisins.

Drop by rounded tablespoons 2 inches apart onto ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350-degrees until lightly browned, 15 – 18 minutes. Cool for 2 – 5 minutes before removing to wire racks. Store any uneaten cookies in the refrigerator. This recipe makes about 2 dozen cookies.

Crudités Snack Board with Sweet Lemon Ginger Fruit Dip

This crudité snack board – a colorful array of fruits and veggies, tasty treats and a decadent lemon ginger fruit dip – is the perfect start to a spring brunch and a delightful center piece for your table.

Sweet Lemon Ginger Dip

8 oz. cream cheese softened
½ cup plain Greek yogurt
½ cup powdered sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. fresh grated ginger root
1 Tbsp. lemon zest, plus more for garnish, if desired.

Combine all fruit dip ingredients in a medium mixing bowl; Mix until smooth and creamy. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before servings. Sprinkle dip with additional lemon zest, if desired.

Additionally:

You will need an assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables; sweet bell peppers, apple slices, red and green seedless grapes, clementine's, red plums, kiwi, English cucumber, avocado and small grape tomatoes.

Also crackers, plain and wheat, breadsticks, small pretzel sticks, assorted cheeses, pickles, hummus, and nuts, both cashews and almonds.

Use a red, orange or yellow bell pepper, trim off the top third and then clean out the seeds and membranes. Stuff the pepper bottom with hummus. Peel, seed, slice and segment fruits, vegetables and add-on items in clusters or containers so that the surface looks colorful, bright and bountiful. This easily serves 8 – 10 depending on the side of the board/platter used.

Use small bowls to hold the nuts, a small mason jar to stand up the bread sticks, another small container to hold up the pretzel sticks. Wash and dry the grapes and place them all around. Slice the English cucumber into ¼ inch slices and

arrange on the platter. Slice the apples and dip them in lemon water to prevent them from turning brown. Peel the kiwi and slice. Add some small pickles, like Gherkins, in a small bowl. Arrange at least two large wedges of cheese, like a Blue and Brie; maybe a Swiss and/or Cheddar also. Sprinkle sliced strawberries all around, maybe some blueberries too. Use your imagination; this will serve anywhere from 6 to 12 depending on how much food you place on the display board.