

Good Morning

Menu and recipes by Lucia Watson. Lucia was the owner and Chief for many years at Lucia's in Uptown and a presenter at last year's retreat.

Let's start with priorities: Sleep in or up and at 'em to start cooking a big breakfast before we get started on Saturday. Here are some ideas for both scenarios....

I want to sleep in!

All you have to do is some prep the day before, stumble into the kitchen, turn on the oven, make coffee, fire up your zoom and enjoy the good kitchen smells! Here are three recipes:

Baked French Toast

Serves 3 but is easily doubled or tripled.

6 slices cinnamon raisin bread
1/2 stick (4 Tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted
2 whole eggs
1 egg yolk
1/3 cup sugar
1 1/2 cups milk
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
powdered sugar
Mixed berries

Preheat oven to 350

Brush both sides of bread with the butter and arrange in slightly overlapping rows in a 9 in. square (or similar size) baking pan.

In a large bowl beat together the eggs and yolks. Whisk in the sugar and beat until combined. Add the milk, cream and vanilla.

Pour the custard over the bread slices making sure that each piece is evenly moistened.

Place the pan with the French toast in it into another larger roasting pan and pour in enough water to come up halfway on the baking dish (a double boiler type set up).

Bake in upper third of the oven for 25 minutes, or until top is lightly browned and custard is set.

Let rest 15 minutes, cut into squares and serve sprinkled with powdered sugar and mixed berries. You can assemble the night before and store overnight in the fridge. Don't use a pyrex pan for this method.

Currant Scones

Makes 6

1 cup flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoons sugar, plus extra to sprinkle on top
1/2 cup currants or any berry: blueberry, raspberry etc.
About 1 cup heavy cream, plus a little more to brush on top

Preheat the oven to 350.

In a mixing bowl combine the flour, baking powder, salt, sugar and currants. Using a big spatula, mix dry ingredients well. Add the cream, gently mixing the batter and adding just enough to make a cohesive dough. There shouldn't be any dry flour in the bottom of the bowl. The dough might be a little sticky.

Lightly flour a clean work surface. Form the dough into a cohesive ball. Don't overwork the dough. Gently pat into a 6" circle about 3/4" thick. Place dough on a greased or non-stick baking sheet. Brush the circle of dough with a little more cream and if desired a sprinkle of sugar. Cut the round into 6 wedges. Pull the wedges apart a little bit, leaving them in a circular pattern.

At this point you can wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Bake about 25-30 minutes, until golden and baked all the way through, without any wet dough in the center. If for some reason you don't eat all the scones, you can freeze them well wrapped for later.

Overnight Oatmeal

Serves _____

This is an easy and fast recipe for a no cook oatmeal that we use for camping trips when we need to get up and go without cooking in the morning. Soaking grains overnight makes a chewy, nutty cereal. You can vary the recipe endlessly: Use a 5-grain cereal or thick cut oats for a chewier texture. Use almond, keifer or other milk. Add a blob of peanut or almond butter. Use honey, maple syrup or vanilla sugar. Use any nuts to top and add any seeds: flax, sunflower, hemp, chia. Add grated ginger, lemon or orange zest.

1/2 cup oats, I like Bob's Old-Fashioned Rolled Oats
1/2 cup milk or oat milk
1 teaspoon chia seeds
1 tablespoon greek yogurt
Drizzle maple syrup
1/4 cup chopped nuts of your choice
Mixed fresh fruit

Combine everything, except the nuts and fruit, in a glass jar and stir to combine. Sprinkle nuts on top. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Top with fruit and eat.

I love getting up early and cooking up a storm!

These recipes are a little more time consuming, but make a delicious start to your day.

Shirred Eggs with Spinach and Croutons

Two Servings: Two 12 ounce ramekins

1 cup cubed (crouton size) bread
2 tablespoons Olive oil
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 teaspoon fresh thyme, chopped
Salt and pepper
1 cup raw washed spinach
1 cup heavy cream
4 eggs
2 tablespoons parmesan cheese
About 1 tablespoon butter for the ramekins

Butter the ramekins and preheat the oven to 350. Put the cream on the stove with one of the cloves of garlic, the thyme, some salt and pepper. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat to a simmer. Let cook for about 4-5 minutes or until slightly reduced. Taste the cream, it should be well seasoned. Set aside and let cool.

Make the croutons: Toss the cubed bread in the olive oil, one of the garlic cloves, salt and pepper. Toss together thoroughly. In a hot skillet, fry the bread until crispy and browned, about 5 minutes. Add more oil to the pan as necessary. Taste for seasoning and set aside.
-Put half the spinach into each buttered ramekin. Drizzle with half the cream. Break two eggs on top of the spinach. Place half the croutons on top and the other half of the cream. Sprinkle with the parmesan.
-Bake the eggs for about 10-12 minutes (depending on how soft you like your eggs) and serve at once.

Mexican Baked Eggs

Serves 3-4

This is a great dish you can vary with different cheeses or beans. Adapted from the Smitten Kitchen blog.

12 small (6 in) corn tortillas, quartered and fried crisp, or about 4 cups good tortilla chips
1 1/2 cups Mary's Red Chile sauce (recipe follows)
2 cups black beans, either canned or homemade, seasoned with salt, chile powder and cumin
2 cups shredded cheese, I like a mix of cheddar and spicy cheese or jack
6-8 eggs
Chopped Scallions, chopped cilantro, sour cream and diced avocado for garnish

Heat oven to 375°F.

Break the eggs into a bowl and set aside. Coat a baking dish with oil. Layer 1/4 of tortillas in bottom of dish then 1/4 of the Chile sauce, then black beans and cheese. Repeat 3 times.

Bake for 15 minutes, until cheese is melted and tortillas have softened a little. Remove from oven and pour the eggs over the mixture. Season the eggs with salt and pepper and return casserole to the oven. Bake until the whites of the eggs are opaque but not fully set. About 8-10 minutes

Remove from oven and let rest on a rack for (about) 4 to 8 minutes, after which the whites should be fully set but the yolks still runny. Eat with lots of garnishes.

Mary's Red Chile Sauce

4 cloves garlic, chopped
5 tablespoons vegetable oil
5 Tablespoons flour
5 Tablespoons good red chile powder
1 tablespoon oregano
1 Tablespoon ground cumin
5 cups water
Salt

Brown the garlic in oil. Add the flour and the Chile and cook a little, being careful not to burn. Add the oregano and cumin.

Add the water a little at a time, stirring as you go. Save the last cup until the sauce has cooked for a little and then add only enough to get the consistency you want. Season with the salt.

SOURCES

My rule of thumb on purchasing food is to always buy locally produced food whenever possible. I rely heavily on my local co-op (when farmers markets are not open) for eggs, whole grains, well sourced meats and produce. .

1. Minnesota has many wonderful co-ops to buy high quality local healthy food:
Linden Hills Co-op, Mpls.

Lakewinds co-op, Minnetonka, Richfield and Chanhassen

The Wedge Co-op, Minneapolis

In Duluth is the Whole Food Co-op

2. I rely on Penzys for spices and seasoning. Get Vietnamese Cinnamon and Bourbon Vanilla extract as well as vanilla and cinnamon sugars

<https://www.penzys.com/shop/spices/>

3. If you like to bake you must use Bakersfield flour! Local, fresh, and makes everything rise and taste delicious!

<https://bakersfieldflour.com>

4. Horner's Corner maple syrup is yummy! Available at the Mill City Farmers Market:

<https://www.hornerscorner-wi.com>

5. For good wild rice and other native products:

<https://redlakenationfoods.com>

6. For some incredible local hazelnuts and delicious hazelnut oil try this:

<https://www.americanhazelnutcompany.com>