

FOOD

The Estherville Daily News is proud to bring you the Food page every Tuesday. If you know anyone who should be featured on this page, please send their names and why you think they should be featured to: Managing editor, 10 N. Seventh St., Estherville, 51334 or editor@esthervilledailynews.com

E – Elegance with ease

BY MARY ANN MENENDEZ
STAFF WRITER

From eggs to eggplant to Éclairs - there's no other way to describe today's recipes except to say they are effortless and elegant.

One egg has 13 essential nutrients including high-quality protein, choline, folate, iron and zinc, in a 75-calorie package. Eggs also play a role in weight management, muscle strength, healthy pregnancy, brain function and eye health. Featured is the Italian Egg Bake which subtly infuses the distinct tastes of sausage, potatoes and cheese with spinach, tomatoes, onions and mozzarella cheese.

From there we move on to eggplant which is probably the most understood vegetable there is. It is naturally low in calories and unpeeled, provides some fiber. There is also some folate and potassium. For me, Eggplant Parmesan is a trip down Memory Lane.

Rounding out the recipes are two desserts Easy Éclairs and Easy Éclair Puff. The latter involves a bit more time in the kitchen and a whole host of calories. Eat smart!



Glorified Eggplant

- 1 jar spaghetti sauce
 - 1 eggplant, chopped (peeled or unpeeled)
 - 2 tomatoes, chopped coarse
 - 2 small zucchini, sliced
 - 1 green bell pepper, cut in one-inch pieces
 - 1 large onion, chopped
 - 3 cloves garlic minced
 - 1 teaspoon basil leaves
 - 1 teaspoon oregano
 - Red pepper flakes, to taste
- In large bowl, combine all ingredients; mix well. Pour into slow cooker. Cover; cook on LOW for 8-10 hours. Good hot or cold. Toast Italian or French bread slices in the broiler with a large dollop of hot eggplant mixture on them until bubbly. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese if desired.

Eggplant Dip

- 1 medium eggplant
 - 3 medium green onions; finely chopped
 - 1 large tomato, peeled and chopped
 - 1 small clove garlic, finely chopped
 - 1/2 stalk celery, finely chopped
 - 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice/vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- Prick whole eggplant in several places with a fork. Place in a baking pan and bake in 400-degree oven for 30 minutes. Cool, peel and chop finely. (A blender or food processor can be used but avoid over processing. Dip is best when it has some crunch.) Combine eggplant, onions, tomato, garlic and celery. Add lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Cover tightly and refrigerate for several hours to blend flavors. It's good with raw vegetable dippers, crisp toast or crackers.

Eggplant Parmesan

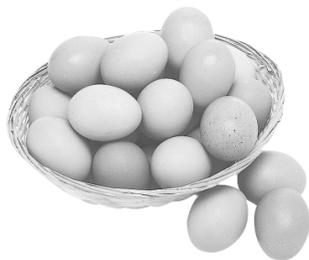
- Olive oil
 - 1 large eggplant; (1.5 pounds) sliced in 12 rounds
 - 1/2 cup plain bread crumbs
 - 1/4 cup grated Romano cheese
 - 1 jar spaghetti sauce
 - 4 ounces part-skim mozzarella cheese (1 cup), shredded
- Heat oven to 425 degrees. Lightly coat a cookie sheet with nonstick cooking spray and have ready an 8- or 9-inch square baking dish. Arrange eggplant in a single layer on prepared sheet. Spray eggplant lightly with cooking spray. Bake 15 minutes or until tender and bottoms of slices are golden



brown. Remove from oven. Reduce oven heat to 375 degrees. Mix bread crumbs and Romano cheese in a small bowl. Spread two-thirds cup spaghetti sauce in baking dish. Arrange 4 slices eggplant on sauce. Top eggplant with two-thirds cup sauce, 1/4 cup bread-crumbs mixture and one-third cup mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers on top of each stack. Top stacks with the remaining eggplant, sauce and crumb mixture. Bake 15 minutes or until sauce bubbles. Sprinkle with remaining mozzarella cheese and bake 5 minutes longer or until cheese melts.

namon. ■ Use chocolate graham and chocolate pudding instead of the regular graham crackers and vanilla pudding. Use chocolate frosting and white chocolate curls for a pretty dessert.

■ Add instant coffee to the vanilla pudding and use chocolate wafers. Sprinkle top with chopped hazelnuts.



Italian Egg Bake

- 1 pound bulk Italian sausage
- 4 cups frozen hash-brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup frozen cut leaf spinach, thawed and drained
- 1/4 cup sliced tomatoes
- 1/4 cup diced onions
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 4 eggs
- Three-fourths cup milk
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons shredded fresh Parmesan cheese

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 8-inch square (2-quart) baking dish. In large non-stick skillet, cook sausage over medium-high heat until browned, stirring occasionally. Drain. In medium bowl, combine potatoes and cheddar cheese. In greased baking dish, layer half of the potato mixture, all of the sausage mixture, spinach, tomatoes and onions, remaining potato mixture, and all of the mozzarella cheese. In medium bowl, beat eggs slightly. Add milk, salt and pepper; beat well. Pour evenly over potato mixture. Cover with foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Uncover; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake uncovered for an additional 15 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. Let stand about 5 minutes before serving; cut into squares.



Easy Éclairs

- 1 box graham crackers
 - 1 large pkg. vanilla instant pudding
 - 2 and 1/2 cups milk
 - 8 ounces whipped topping
- Mix pudding with milk. Let stand 15 minutes. Fold in whipped topping. Line 9-x-13 inch baking dish with a layer of graham crackers. Cover with half of pudding mixture. Add another layer of crackers. Cover with remaining pudding. Top with another layer of crackers. Topping: Mix 1/2 box of powdered sugar, 2 tablespoons cocoa and one-third stick butter. Spread over last layer of crackers. Chill overnight before serving.
- Variations:
- Instead of vanilla pudding, substitute butterscotch. Omit the chocolate frosting.
 - Use the Cool Whip on top as the last layer.
 - Add a cup of canned pumpkin to the vanilla pudding and substitute cinnamon graham crackers. Replace chocolate frosting with vanilla and lightly dust top with cin-



Easy Éclair Puff

- 1 cup water
 - 1/2 cup butter
 - 1 cup flour
 - 4 eggs
- Heat oven to 400 degrees. In a saucepan, bring water and butter to a rolling boil over medium heat. Reduce heat to low. Add flour, stirring vigorously over low heat until mixture forms a ball (about 1 minute). Remove from heat. Beat in eggs thoroughly, 1 at a time. Beat until smooth. Drop from spoon onto ungreased baking sheet into mounds 3 inches apart. Bake 45-50 minutes or until puffed, golden brown and dry. Allow to cool slowly, away from any drafts. Cut off tops and scoop out soft dough. Using a pastry bag or plastic baggie with corner snipped off, pipe in filling. Replace caps and top with chocolate frosting or powdered sugar.
- Filling:
- Cook and Serve vanilla pudding (or homemade pudding)
 - 1 container whip cream
- Cook pudding according to directions. Cook completely. Mix pudding with whip cream and chill until ready to use.

Other uses for dryer sheets

There is a common household product found in your laundry room that has versatile uses in other parts of your home to make life a bit easier.

It is the dryer sheet, whether it is the economical variety or not. We use it primarily to soften and scent our laundered garments as they tumble around in the warm dryer.

North Carolina State University in the city of Raleigh, believe it or not, has a nonwovens cooperative research center with its main focus, it seems, is to study the dryer sheet. The director said the dryer sheets contain positively charged ingredients "that are released by heat and movement," hence the need for the dryer. He explained the ingredient will adhere loosely to any negatively charged fabric surface filled



A MOMENT WITH MARY ANN

with static cling. "This neutralizes the charge and acts as a lubricant."

So you and I now know how that works!

But there are other uses for the sheets, including:

- ★ If you run a threaded needle through a dryer sheet before you begin sewing, chances are your thread won't tangle as much.
- ★ Wipe the surface of clothing, hair, TV screens and computer monitors to remove static.
- ★ Place an unused sheet on the bottom of a dirty pan. Fill with lukewarm water

and let sit in the sink overnight. You will be amazed at how much easier the pan will be to clean the next day.

★ Rub a sheet over the area where Fido or Fifi left fur. This is safe to use on flooring and furniture.

★ Insert a dryer sheet into each shoe to freshen overnight.

★ To clean your blinds close them and wipe them with a clean dryer sheet using an up-and-down motion.

★ Use a dryer sheet to pick up minuscule wood particles after woodworking chores are done.

★ Stick dryer sheets between the pages of your favorite books to avoid any musty smell.

★ Dresser drawers can smell fresh and sweet by placing a dryer sheet on the bottom.



Fareway Fare

Strawberries are here

By MARY ANN MENENDEZ

Spring is barely on the horizon but the taste of summer is available at your Estherville Fareway Store this week at the lowest price this year.

If you are craving the sweet and juicy taste of scarlet red ripe strawberries, head to the produce counter where the seeded berries are a mere 99 cents a pound this week.

Just last week strawberries were being purchased at \$2.69.

What a tasty bargain!

Mark Almquist, store manager said, "These strawberries are just the thing to bring some sunshine here."

In addition to being pretty and tasting good, strawberries have very high levels of vitamin C, fiber, folate and potassium.

Select the plump and most fragrant berries that are firm, bright and fresh looking with no mold or bruises and fresh green caps. The caps should be bright green, fresh looking and fully attached. Berries should be dry and clean.

Remember the medium to small berries have better eating quality and that the fruit does not ripen after it has been harvested.

Strawberries & Cream Treat

- 1 14ounce can sweetened condensed milk
 - 1 1/2 cups cold water
 - 3 1/2 ounces instant vanilla pudding
 - 2 cups whipping cream, whipped (1 pt.)
 - 1 12 ounce loaf pound cake, cut into cubes
 - 4 cups sliced fresh strawberries
 - 1/2 cup strawberry preserves
 - Berries for garnish and toasted slivered almonds
- In large mixing bowl, combine condensed milk and water; mix well. Add pudding mix, beat until well blended. Chill 5 minutes. Fold in whipped cream. Spoon 2 cups of pudding mixture into 4 quart round glass serving bowl, top with 1/2 of cake cubes, 1/2 strawberries, 1/2 of preserves and 1/2 of remaining pudding mixture. Repeat layering, ending with pudding mixture. Garnish with strawberries and almonds. Chill 4 hours or until set.

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