

GRANDMOTHER'S SUNDAY BRUNCH RECIPES

From the children's book 'Emily's Sunday'

Emily's Grandmother's Sunday brunch, a feast of various basic recipes, has been passed on and updated for generations, and eventually, will be passed on to her. They consist of a variety of simple, healthy traditional foods that little Emily can enjoy:

Smothered Fried Chicken Breasts

8 large whole chicken breasts

1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon salt

1 teaspoon plus 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper

2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all purpose flour

1/2 cup vegetable oil

2 large onions, coarsely chopped

2 green bell peppers, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped

2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped

2 cups water

Trim the excess fat from the chicken breasts, split the whole breasts into two even portions and sprinkle them with 1 teaspoon each of the salt and pepper. Season 2 cups of the flour with the remaining 1 tablespoon each of salt and pepper. Dredge the chicken breasts in the flour until coated on all sides. Shake off any excess flour.

Heat the vegetable oil in a heavy deep skillet (cast-iron is perfect) over medium heat until the edge of a chicken piece dipped into the oil gives off a lively sizzle. Add as many chicken breasts to the skillet as will fit without touching. Fry until the pieces are browned on all sides, about 6 minutes. Adjust the heat as necessary during frying to keep a lively sizzle without overbrowning. Remove the fried chicken breasts to drain and repeat with the remaining pieces.

Pour off all but 4 tablespoons of drippings from the skillet. Reduce the heat to medium and add the onions, peppers, and celery to the skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, until brown and tender, about 10 minutes. Move the vegetables to one side of the skillet and sprinkle the 2 tablespoons of flour over the other side of the skillet. Cook the flour until golden brown, stirring constantly. Be careful not to let the flour burn. Slowly pour in the water and stir until the gravy is smooth.

Divide the chicken between two heavy skillets with lids or place them all in a large heavy Dutch oven. Top with the gravy and vegetables and cover the skillets or Dutch oven tightly. Simmer over low heat until the vegetables are tender and the chicken is cooked through, about 15 minutes. Check the seasoning and add salt and pepper as necessary. Serve the chicken, spooning some of the gravy and vegetables over each piece. Pass extra gravy.

Makes 16 servings

Sliced Smoked Turkey Breast

12 cups (3 quarts) water, divided

3/4 cup kosher salt

1 medium shallot, roughly chopped

1 medium clove garlic, smashed

Zest of 1 lemon, removed in large strips with a vegetable peeler

10 thyme sprigs

8 sage leaves

4 bay leaves

1 tablespoon allspice berries

1 6-pound boneless whole turkey breast

1 pound wood chips (about 8 cups), such as apple or hickory wood

Place 4 cups (1 quart) water, salt, shallot, garlic, lemon zest, thyme, sage, bay leaves and allspice berries in a large saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and let cool to room temperature, about 1 hour.

Pour the brine into a large bowl or clean tub; add the remaining 8 cups (2 quarts) water. Set turkey in the brine and refrigerate for 6 hours.

Two hours before preheating the grill, place wood chips in a large bowl of water to soak.

4. About 20 minutes before you are ready to grill, preheat a gas grill with all burners lit to 300°F or build a fire in a charcoal grill and let it burn down to low heat (about 300°F).

Drain the wood chips. If using a gas grill, fold a 12-by-20-inch piece of heavy-duty foil in half to create a 12-by-10-inch double-thick piece. Transfer the wet wood chips to the center of the foil and crimp up the edges to create a “basket.” (If you have a gas grill with a smoking box, place the chips directly into the box.) Set the foil basket on the grill rack directly over the heat source. If using a charcoal grill, you will add the chips directly to the coals as the turkey cooks.

If using a gas grill, turn off one burner (leaving 1 to 2 burners lit, depending on your grill). If using a charcoal grill, move the coals to one side.

Remove the turkey from the brine, pat dry and set on the unheated side of the grill rack.

If using a charcoal grill, place one-third of the wood chips on the coals. Close the lid and roast undisturbed for 40 minutes.

Rotate the turkey 180 degrees, add half the remaining wood chips to the coals if using a charcoal grill, cover and continue roasting for 40 minutes.

Rotate the turkey 180 degrees one more time, add the remaining wood chips if using a charcoal grill, cover and continue roasting until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the meat without touching bone registers 165°F, 40 minutes to 1 hour more. Transfer the turkey to a clean cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes before carving.

Brown Rice Pilaf, with peas and carrots

1 1/2 c. water

1/2 t. salt

3/4 c. uncooked brown rice

3 T. butter

1 1/2 c. chopped onion

1 clove garlic, minced

2 carrots, diced

2 c. fresh sliced mushrooms

1 can peas

Freshly ground black pepper

1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley

Bring 1-1/2 cups water to boil, add rice. Bring contents back to a boil, cover the pot and simmer for 45-50 minutes, or until rice is tender.

Approximately 20 minutes before rice is finished cooking heat the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Stir in onions and saute them, stirring frequently until they soften. Add the garlic and carrots and continue stirring for 5 minutes.

Place mushrooms inside of skillet and cook until mushrooms begin to brown, about 10 minutes. Add the peas and cook 1 more minute.

When the rice is finished, remove the skillet from the heat, stir in pepper and parsley.

Spoon the cooked rice into the skillet and stir well. Serve the pilaf hot with soy sauce on the side for added flavor.

Baked Potato, with an assortment of toppings

Large baking potatoes are pre-cooked and kept warm until serving time.

This is perfect for a mixed group of children and adults or for meat eaters and vegetarians. It is also makes for a delicious meal where individual tastes and special diets can be accommodated.

Large baking potatoes (2 per person)

Butter

Sour cream

Chopped chives or green onions

Parmesan cheese

Various gourmet cheeses, melted or shredded

Grated cheddar cheese

More Ideas for Potato Toppings

Sliced olives (black or a gourmet assortment)

Chopped green peppers

Diced tomato chunks

Broccoli

Salsa

Chopped chicken

Cooked mixed vegetables

Chili (meat and/or vegetarian)

Cheese sauce

Bar-be-cue sauces

Gravy

Mixed Stir Fried Collard and Turnip Greens, with diced Chicken Breast

2 pounds of collard and turnip greens each

2 cups of chicken stock

1/2 cup apple juice

1/4 cup lime juice

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

4 chicken breast, diced

3 tablespoons Canola oil

2 tablespoons hot sauce

1/2 cup red onions sliced

1/2 cup red bell peppers sliced

Wash, remove stems, and slice greens. Place greens in large pot of boiling chicken stock. Boil 5 minutes; drain. Cut chicken into 1-inch pieces. Heat oil in large skillet and add chicken and red onions. Toss over medium heat for 3 to 5 minutes until nearly done. Add greens apple juice, lime juice, apple cider vinegar and hot sauce. Toss until greens are heated through and coated with chicken juices. Yields 8 servings.

Macaroni and mixed Three Cheese Casserole

3 cartons elbow macaroni (cooked and drained)

1 can Cheddar cheese soup

1 carton milk

1/4 tsp. kosher salt (optional)

1/4 tsp. pepper

1/2 c. shredded Swiss

1/2 c. shredded Cheddar

1/2 c. grated Parmesan

1 can French fried onions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In 1 1/2 quart casserole, mix hot macaroni, soup, milk, seasonings and 1/4 cup of each Swiss, Cheddar and Parmesan. Add 1/2 can fried onions. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until heated through.

Top with remaining cheese and onions. Bake uncovered 5-8 minutes until cheeses are golden brown. Makes 4-6 hearty servings

Buttered Honey and Molasses Candied Yams

½ pound of Butter (2 sticks)

1 pound of Dark Brown Sugar

1 Cup of Pancake Syrup

1 Cup of Molasses

2 Cinnamon Sticks

1 teaspoon of Salt

In a good-sized saucepan over a low flame, warm the pancake syrup, molasses, brown sugar, butter and cinnamon sticks until everything is liquefied and hot. Stir gently as things melt. DO NOT BOIL. And don't leave the pan unattended while the flame is on. Once everything is melted and blended, turn off the flame.

Peel the yams and cut them crosswise into good, ½" thick slices.

In a 9" by 13" baking pan (cake pan), or larger -- with sides at least 2" deep -- arrange the yam slices

Ladle the hot syrup mixture very carefully over the yam slices. Make sure the yams are completely coated by the mixture. There should be enough syrup to fill the pan about halfway.

Roast the yams for anywhere from 4 to 6 hours at about 325 degrees Fahrenheit, basting any exposed yam surfaces every couple of hours. Make sure that the pan is never boiling rapidly, or else it might foam up or boil over. A slight simmer is acceptable. You can very loosely cover the pan with foil if the yams brown too much. You may find that as the liquids evaporate over the hours spent in the oven that you can reduce the temperature slightly, to about 300 degrees, or even 275. This will help avoid burning, scorching or smoking. But the pan should never bake dry.

The yams are done when the slices have shrunk a bit, and their exposed edges are browned and somewhat crusty. The center of most of the slices should look as if the syrup has thoroughly penetrated them, and their color will have deepened and bronzed. When done, the sweet potatoes may be gently transferred to a warmed dish or platter for serving.

Mixed Garden Salad

3 cups loosely packed mixed torn greens, such as romaine, red or green leaf lettuce, washed and dried

1/2 red bell pepper, seeded, halved, and thinly sliced

1/2 yellow bell pepper, seeded, halved, and thinly sliced

snaps peas, blanched or steamed

1 small jar of mushrooms, finely minced

5 broccoli florets, blanched or steamed, quartered

1 small jar of sliced black olives

2 scallions, white and green parts, chopped

1 medium carrot, julienne sliced

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Salad dressing of your choice

1 large tomato, cut into thin wedges

In a large serving bowl, toss together the lettuce leaves, bell peppers, snap peas, black olives, broccoli, minced mushrooms, scallion, and carrot and season with salt and pepper to taste. Lightly dress with the salad dressing. Season the tomato wedges with salt and pepper and arrange around the inside edge of the bowl. Serve.

Pears, peeled and sliced, Orange wedges and seedless Grapes

Kid friendly, healthy treats to nibble on while deserts are served. Just rinse and prepare.

Iced Green Tea, with lime juice, sweetened with natural raw sugar

1/2 lime, juiced

6 large mint leaves

1/3 cup chilled brewed green tea

2 table spoons of raw sugar

(Optional for the adults: 2 tablespoons white rum per drink.)

Pour the lime juice into a highball glass. Add the mint and crush with a spoon. Fill a glass with ice and add the tea,raw sugar (and rum). Stir well and garnish with a mint leaf, if desired.

And to celebrate Emily's first brunch, her Grandmother bakes smaller, child- sized servings of Emily's favorite deserts:

Mocha Cake

2 1/2 c. cake flour (not self-rising)

2 tsp. baking soda

1/2 tsp. salt

1 c. vegetable oil

1 c. buttermilk

1 3/4 c. sugar

3 lg. eggs, at room temperature

1/2 c. cocoa powder

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Lightly grease two 9 x 1 1/2 inch layer cake pans; dust lightly with flour; tap out

On waxed paper sift together flour, baking soda and salt. In 2 cup glass measure combine vegetable oil and buttermilk.

In large bowl with electric mixer at high speed, beat sugar and eggs until light and fluffy. At low speed, blend in cocoa. Beat in flour mixture alternately with buttermilk mixture, beating after each addition until smooth and creamy. Scrape sides of bowl down with rubber scraper after each addition. Pour batter into prepared pans.

Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until the centers spring back when they are lightly pressed with fingertip or a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool layers in pans on wire racks 15 minutes; loosen around edges with knife; turn out onto wire racks; cool completely. Put layers together with Chocolate Mocha Frosting; frost sides and top with remaining frosting. Makes one 9 inch two-layer cake.

CHOCOLATE MOCHA FROSTING:

3/4 c. (1 1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

1 pkg. (1 lb.) 10X (confectioner's powdered) sugar

1/4 c. cocoa powder

1/3 c. cooled espresso or strong coffee

In large bowl with electric mixer at medium speed, beat butter until fluffy-light. At low speed, add sugar and cocoa powder alternately with cooled espresso or coffee until creamy-smooth. Use to fill and frost Chocolate Cake. Makes 2 1/2 cups.

Mini Sweet Potato Pies

3/4 pound sweet potato, peeled and diced

1 (9 inch) refrigerated pie crust

3/4 cup evaporated skim milk

2 egg whites

1/4 cup white sugar

2 tablespoons brown sugar

3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

1/4 cup halved cranberries (optional)

Place the sweet potato in a saucepan with just enough water to cover. Bring to a boil, and cook until fork tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and mash with a fork or potato masher.

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C). Divide the pie crust into 24 small balls. Press them into the cups of two 12 cup mini muffin pans to make tartlet shells. Set aside.

Spoon the sweet potato into a blender or food processor, and add the evaporated milk, egg whites, white sugar, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Puree until smooth. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of this mixture into each tart shell.

Bake for 10 minutes in the preheated oven, or until a toothpick inserted into one of the tarts comes out clean. Cool in the pans over a wire rack. Garnish each tart with a cranberry half before serving.

Mini Pecan Pies

1 (3 oz.) pkg. Philadelphia cream cheese

1/2 cup butter

1 cup sifted flour

Cream cheese and butter together. Mix in flour and blend well.

FILLING:

1 egg

1 carton brown sugar

1 tsp. butter

1 tsp. vanilla

1 dash salt

1 can chopped pecans

Beat egg, sugar, butter, vanilla and salt until smooth; then add pecans. Bake mini pies at 325 degrees for 25 minutes.

Peanut butter Cookies

1 1/4 cups flour, sift or stir before measuring

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 cup shortening

1/2 cup peanut butter

1/2 cup granulated sugar

1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1 egg

Sift together flour, salt, and baking powder; set aside. Cream shortening, peanut butter, and sugars; beat in vanilla and egg. Stir in flour mixture, blending well. Shape mixture into 3/4-inch balls; place on greased baking sheets. Flatten each cookie with the tines of a fork; dip fork in flour periodically to keep it from sticking to the peanut butter cookie dough. Bake peanut butter cookies at 375° for about 10 to 12 minutes.

Chocolate Macadamia Oatmeal Cookies

1/2 cup butter, softened

1/2 cup white sugar

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 1/2 cups rolled oats

1 cup chopped white chocolate

1 cup chopped macadamia nuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease cookie sheets.

In a large bowl, cream together the butter, white sugar, and brown sugar until smooth. Beat in the egg, then stir in the vanilla. Combine the flour, baking powder, and baking soda; stir into the creamed mixture. Mix in the oats, white chocolate, and macadamia nuts until evenly distributed. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheets.

Bake for 10 to 12 minutes in the preheated oven, or until edges are toasted. For crisper cookies, bake longer. If you leave the cookies on the cookie sheet for a few minutes before transferring to cool on wire racks you will have a softer bottomed cookie.

Butter Vanilla Tea Cakes

2 1/2 c. sugar

2 eggs

2 sticks butter

4 c. plain flour

1/2 c. buttermilk

Scant tsp. soda

1 rounded tsp. baking powder

Dash salt

1 tsp. nutmeg or vanilla

Beat butter and sugar until creamy. Add eggs and beat. Add flour that has been sifted together with soda, baking powder, and salt. Alternating with additions of buttermilk. Add flavoring and stir. Roll out on floured surface and cut rather thick. Bake at 350 degrees about 10 minutes. (For softer teacake use 2 cups sugar).