

Kristin Madden's
Pagan Celebrations Cookbook



Festival
Feasts

Lavender May Wine

May wine is a very old tradition for this time of year, and it can be a challenge to find good May wine in the States. The key to making this aromatic wine is really sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), and it is wise to be careful with this plant. Don't add too much or you may have an unpleasant reaction. The additions of lavender and champagne are certainly not traditional, but they add a delightful fragrance and celebratory feel that will surprise and enchant your guests.

Prep Time: 4 hrs, 10 minutes
Serves: 4-8

Cook Time: NA

1 liter Riesling or other white wine
1 liter champagne or sparkling wine
2 tsp. dried Provence lavender buds
6 g. sweet woodruff
2 pints fresh strawberries

large punch bowl with serving spoon
small strainer

1. Combine the white wine and champagne in a large punch bowl. Add woodruff and lavender and allow to steep for at least 4 hours.
2. Using the strainer, scoop out the majority of plant material.
3. Slice the strawberries in half and float on top of the wine.
4. Serve at room temperature.

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By Kristin Madden

Festival Feasts

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About the Author

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Her work has appeared on websites and in publications throughout North America and Europe, and she has been a guest on radio shows throughout North America.

Festival Feasts

Pagan Celebrations Cookbook

by

Kristin Madden

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And to the Spilled Candy family, I love you all. It is always a joy to work with you on a book and to play with you at a festival.

Cooking Notes

Please keep in mind that these recipes were all developed at nearly 6000 feet above sea level. If you live below 5000 feet, you may need to make some of these adjustments:

Increase the amount of baking soda slightly.

Lower oven temperatures about 20°F or slightly reduce baking time for cakes and cookies.

Decrease the liquid amounts slightly when baking.

Remember that your cooking times are likely to be shorter than mine. Water boils at only about 200°F here so things like pasta, beans, and other foods need to cook longer.

Chapter One

Feasting and More

Celebrations bring joy to our lives. Even in the darkest of times, choosing to celebrate allows a sense of gratitude and appreciation to return to our consciousness. Celebrations have a way of moving us beyond our mundane lives and into a place of happiness and love. And feasting has always been an important part of celebration.

Historically, feasts have been symbols of wealth and abundance. Shared feasts can initiate relationships and strengthen the bonds of community. Offering a feast, particularly when it is a bit of a sacrifice to do so, honors the people and the spirits and speaks to an abiding trust in Life and the gods. And it is traditional to partake in some sharing of food and drink at the Pagan festivals.

How many sabbat potlucks have you attended where there are 5 bottles of soda or wine, store-bought cookies, and 3 lasagnas? Lasagna is one of my favorite foods but no one wants one favorite all the time. Two author friends of ours stayed with us after a book tour of the Southeast United States. They were ecstatic to find no lasagna on the menu at our house. They had been living on it for weeks as they bounced around from Pagan household to Pagan event!

Festival Feasts

Because our feasts should reflect the importance of these special days, we offer you the very best recipes we know of and you might just find a twist on the traditional lasagna in here, too. You may well find some of these dishes on the menus in the finer restaurants, yet they are simple enough that anyone can make them. Other dishes are an interesting twist on the usual feast and potluck fare. Some are fast and easy while others take a bit of time to prepare, but they all require only the usual kitchen tools and the ingredients can be found nearly anywhere.

Mealtimes can become quality time to sit down and talk with friends and family, unless of course, like many modern people, you eat in front of the television. The preparation of food is a sacred thing. In our family, we make a great game out of preparing foods together, particularly on the weekends. There is something for everyone to do and our son has learned valuable lessons about safety, creativity, and independence in the process.

Then, to sit down for an entire meal without distraction and talk to one another is very special. We focus fully on one another and everyone is encouraged to join in the discussion. After telling the stories of the day, we can discuss more philosophical, political, or spiritual topics. With an upcoming holiday, we may go over the meanings of the holiday and what plans we are making. At a festival potluck, the community shares stories, life events, jokes, and more, bringing us all closer together and filling the space with joy.

Crafting a Feast

Even a potluck feast requires some thought and preparation. Our son will tell you that I gripe every time I need to participate in a potluck during a meeting. I just want to do the meeting and get home. A feast is not

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something to be taken lightly, even a simple potluck. It is a sharing of food and energy, a special event that nourishes all involved in a myriad of ways.

When we feast at our home, particularly when we have guests, we make sure that it is an event that will satisfy, entertain, and delight. While we don't always break out the china, we do fill the meal with beautiful colors, tastes, and textures. We also craft it in such a way that it is comfortable and delicious for everyone.

Planning

The process of crafting a fabulous feast begins with the planning. First and foremost, you need to know your audience. Is this a simple coven or grove potluck? Will it serve the larger community, perhaps for an open ritual or Pagan Pride Day? Can you expect children, vegetarians, or anyone with food allergies? All of these variables must be taken into consideration.

The next thing to do is to plan your menu. If you are participating in a potluck, you might want to suggest that someone take a bread, another person takes a main dish, another takes a dessert, etc., so you don't end up with soda and candy and nothing else. For an at-home feast, plan an appetizer, a soup or salad, a main dish, side dishes, and dessert. I also recommend choosing appropriate beverages for each course. Keep these three areas in mind when making your final plans.

Aesthetics:

Does the meal offer a pleasing array of colors and perhaps even designs?

Is it beautiful to look at?

Have you also planned your table settings and decorations to complement the meal?

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Taste and texture:

Do the tastes and textures of each element complement each other?

Is it too bland, too spicy, or too sweet?

Do you have too much of any one food?

Special needs:

Does each meal element reflect the theme of the festival or this particular feast?

Have you planned options for those that have special dietary requirements?

Once you have your basic menu planned, take another look at it and decide if it is something you can handle. Do you have just one stove to handle all of this? Do you have any cooking assistants or is it all up to you? Do you have enough pots, pans, and storage for this feast?

Also think about clean up. Cooking can be loads of fun and we all like to feast. But clean up is another story and, if you're doing all the cooking, you should not have to do all the clean up, too. Think of it in terms of fairness, an equal exchange of energy, if you will. Most Pagans know all too well that when it comes to celebrations, there tends to be a core group of individuals that do everything while the rest pretty much just come, have fun, and go home. That type of feast honors no one. Get everyone else involved in helping in some way. If they can't do clean up, perhaps they might do the shopping for you.

Cooking

If you are used to doing this, the cooking part has become almost automatic. But for the rest of us, and certainly for new feast crafters, this can be the most

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frustrating part of all. It takes some Virgo in handy placements, or a timeline or chart, to juggle all the different food preps and cooking times. Having to wash the whipping cream bowl four times so you can do the prep for each part of the main course gets old fast. You don't want your mashed potatoes sitting around for 45 minutes waiting for the chicken. And when you are cooking for a group, that big pot of water takes a lot longer to reach boiling than the small pot you use for just you and your family. Trust me, if there is anything that sends a feast chef into downing the cooking wine, it's all of this.

Actually, the chart or timeline idea is a good one, particularly for those of us who tend to get a little scattered or sidetracked. For each course, write down just how long each piece should take, include prep time and cooking time. This will give you an idea of what to start first and what can sit and simmer while you are doing something else. For example, we made chicken marsala at home last night.

The chart for that meal is below.

Dish	Prep Time	Prep Needs	Cooking Time	Stove/Oven	Pot Size
chicken marsala	15 min.	cutting board, knife, 2 bowls, bread-ing, egg,	30 min.	stove – 1 burner	large sauté pan
garlic mashed potatoes	15 min.	cutting board, knife, potato peeler	30 min.	stove – 1 burner	large pot
Italian green beans	10 min.	cutting board, knife	20 min.	stove – 1 burner	medium sauté pan

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As you can see, if we started everything at once, the green beans would have needed to be kept warm for at least 15 minutes before the rest of the meal was ready. And with a large group, we would have needed to use two large sauté pans. Knowing that in advance can save you a serious bit of aggravation later.

About Ingredients

The biggest advice I can give you about the selection of your ingredients is "Read the label!" Check to be sure that you are getting what you think you are, and that you are not getting a whole lot of other garbage you neither want nor need. Below you will find some of my thoughts and suggestions regarding the choices I make. But only you can decide what is right for you and yours.

Organic:

Although this may seem like a logical choice these days, there is some controversy you might want to consider. Yes, organic often tastes better and our souls are satisfied with the lack of pesticides added to the environment by supporting an organic market. But you might think about whether or not it is really the best choice if your pears come all the way from Chile to Maine for your meal. What about the energy costs and fuel consumption that goes into that? Organic and local is an ideal choice, if you can find it.

Processing and packaging:

One of my reasons for cooking as much from scratch as I have time for is to cut down on packaged foods that may taste good but lack far too many healthy nutrients.

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This can also reduce the trash I produce. Even if you don't always cook this way, try to choose bulk foods or ones that don't come with a ton of pretty but useless packaging.

Seasonal:

While many of these recipes are based on what is available seasonally in most areas, it is true that you may need to buy a few out-of-season fruits and vegetables, depending on where you live. Frozen ingredients are often a possibility, if you really want to avoid the energy costs of buying fresh ingredients. But there are few recipes in this book that will require very many out-of-season ingredients that are not easily stored or frozen.

Balsamic vinegar:

Fabulous in marinades and sauces, this vinegar can be simmered for quite some time without breaking down and it keeps well in the bottle for years. Traditional balsamic vinegar is made only in Modena, Italy, but good balsamic can come out of other areas. Just be sure to read the label. Don't buy the stuff that is nothing more than white vinegar and caramelized sugar. It won't taste the same and it won't act the same in your cooking.

Olive oil:

There are many different grades of olive oil internationally, mainly based on acidity and amount of refined oil in the bottle. Unfortunately, the United States has a questionable stance on labeling grades. As a result, the label "extra virgin," which should indicate an acidity of no more than 0.8% with no refined oil, can be applied to virtually any grade. Still, virgin or extra virgin is preferred as is cold-pressed, meaning that the original chemistry of the oil should be intact.

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Fresh vs. dried herbs:

Many herbs will lose quite a bit of their flavor and certainly some of their volume when dried. But since that is what most people have on hand, the recipes in this book call for dried herbs, unless specifically stated otherwise. If you prefer to use fresh herbs, multiply the amount called for by 3, and add them nearer to the end of the cooking process than you would with dried herbs.

Ritual of Feast Creation

For us, another important part of cooking is the energy that goes into it. When we cook a festival feast, the preparation and cooking becomes a ritual in and of itself. This imbues the space, the utensils, those involved, and the food with all that we intend for the feast. This need not be an elaborate ritual, but creating a festival feast in sacred space brings a whole new level of spirituality and magick to the table.

You will need:

Everything required to create your feast

Cleaning supplies

Incense or smudge (pine, cedar, sagebrush),

or essential oils (eucalyptus, lavender, citrus)

1. Purify the kitchen, pantry, and yourself using the incense, smudge, or essential oils.
2. Invite in the ancestors, spirit guides, and deities that work with you and your guests. Also invite in any specific spirits that may be of assistance to you in creating this feast (perhaps Hestia, Annapurna, Dionysus, or Ekekeko). Ask for their blessings on the entire process.

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3. If you are cooking with someone else, hold hands and visualize an easy cooking process and a fabulous feast.
4. Clean the kitchen, especially any surfaces you will be using for prep or cooking. If you like to sing or chant, this is a good time to do so, focusing the energy into a happy, spiritual place.
5. Hold your hands out with palms open to your cooking tools, take a deep breath, and visualize your intent for this feast flowing through your hands into tools. See and feel this energy filling the room.
6. Continue to hold this sacred space until you are finished preparing the feast. When you have finished cleaning up after the feast, give thanks to all who joined you and blessed your work.

Blessing the Feast

To begin a meal with a blessing makes it a sacred event. It focuses your energies and charges the meal with appreciation and love.

For our family, meal prayers begin with a prayer of thanks to the Great Spirit.

Great Spirit,

Thank you for the blessings of this meal.

Thank you for bringing us all here together.

Thank you for the blessings of this day.

(take a moment to review those events with appreciation)

Thank you for all the blessings of this life.

(take a moment to review this with appreciation)

May all those whose lives, energies, and bodies went into bringing us this meal be forever blessed.

Festival Celebrations

Of course, we all know there is more to the festivals than feasting. The feast is really the culmination of this sacred and joyful time. Most of us at least try to fill these days with meditation, ritual, decorating, games, and the making of special crafts. For that reason, each of the following chapters also includes suggestions for making your feasts a complete sensory experience. But even those who cannot carve out the time for all of this merrymaking can find a simple, yet delicious, recipe within these pages and honor the Pagan feast days in their own simple ways.

Chapter Two

New Moon

A time of new beginnings, personal growth, and healing, this is the time when the moon is beginning to emerge back into the light of the sun. During this period, we are emerging from the darkness and may need to allow our emotions to settle and re-balance after the inner explorations of the Dark Moon. It is important to remember that the light is returning and we have a renewed opportunity to create strength and joy in our lives.

This is often one of the more simple of lunar celebrations. Many people will privately observe the phases of the moon, but there are also plenty of us who gather together for ritual or drumming circles. The menu for this celebration is obviously focused on the image and light of the crescent moon as well as the idea of new beginnings.

Menu for New Moon Celebrations

Appetizers:	Basil Mozzarella Crescents Sausage Bites
Salad:	Baby Greens and Cashew Salad with Roasted Cashew and Bacon Dressing
Soup:	Southwestern Minestrone
Main dish:	Shrimp Scampi Supreme Four Cheese Macaroni
Beverage:	Vanilla Mint Lemonade
Dessert:	Pêches à la Vanille

Festival Feasts

Basil Mozzarella Crescents

These crescents start off your celebration right, with their new moon shape and creamy filling. If you want just one simple offering to take to a community potluck, this would be our suggestion. It's hearty enough to please everyone and yet it contains no meat.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 6

2 c. shredded mozzarella

2 Tbsp. chopped basil

2 Tbsp. cream cheese

8 oz. can crescent rolls

small bowl

mixing spoon

baking pan

1. Preheat oven to recommended cooking temperature for the rolls.
2. Mix cheeses and basil in a small bowl.
3. Separate crescent dough and split each roll in half.
4. Put $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ c. of mixture in the center of each roll and form into a crescent shape.
5. Bake as recommended by dough manufacturer until golden brown.

Sausage Bites

Quick, easy, and a favorite of the meat-eaters at your table, this recipe combines the sweet taste of sausages with the tangy and tart taste of mustard and vinegar. It will make you salivate just preparing it, and I dare you to get it to the table without taking a taste for yourself!

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 15-30

6 sweet Italian sausages
2 Tbsp. olive oil
½ c. Dijon mustard
¼ c. Balsamic vinegar
¼ c. heavy cream

large saucepan
medium bowl
wire whisk
knife and cutting board

1. Poach sausages in a large saucepan for 7 minutes.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the mustard, cream, and vinegar.
3. Drain water and cut sausages into bite-sized pieces.
4. Heat the olive oil in the saucepan. Return sausages and brown.
5. Add mustard mix and reduce liquid by half.

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Baby Greens and Cashew Salad with Roasted Cashew and Bacon Dressing

This fabulous salad could easily become a meal. The cashews are reminiscent of the crescent moon and add a unique taste and texture to any salad.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4-6

Salad

4 c. baby greens

¼ c. radishes, cut in half or slivered

½ c. sweet onions, sliced and cut in half

2/3 c. cashews

¼ c. crumbled bleu cheese

large salad bowl

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Keep cold until ready to serve.

Dressing

½ lb. bacon

1 c. minced red onion

2 cloves chopped garlic

¼ c. Balsamic vinegar

¼ c. olive oil

1 c. roasted cashew halves

salt and pepper to taste

large saucepan

knife and cutting board

New Moon

blender
food processor

1. In a food processor, chop the cashews into small pieces.
2. Cook the bacon until crispy in a large saucepan. Remove and chop bacon into small pieces.
3. Add the garlic and onion and sauté for 1 minute.
4. Add the cashews and cook for 30 seconds. Remove and keep warm.
5. In a blender, puree the garlic, onion, bacon grease, bacon, and vinegar.
6. Add the olive oil in a slow stream and blend well.
7. Add cashews and salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm.

Southwestern Minestrone

Minestrone is the stereotypical Italian soup, though there are as many variations on it as there are cooks. Originally, a mainstay of the *cucina povera* (poor kitchen), minestrone has historically been made from whatever is on hand to create a filling and inexpensive meal. Ours has a bit of a Southwestern twist to it, but we still love it served with crusty Italian bread.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Serves: 6-8

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 chopped red onion
2 chopped zucchini
4 cloves chopped garlic
2 large chopped carrots
¼ lb. thinly sliced pancetta
1 c. chopped spinach
3 c. cooked black beans
1 large chopped potato
1 c. elbow macaroni
½ c. stewed tomatoes
¼ c. green chile (or 2 Tbsp. red chile)
4 c. water
2 c. chicken stock
¼ c. herb blend: rosemary, thyme, parsley
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper
grated parmesan cheese

large soup pot
food processor

New Moon

1. Heat the oil in a large soup pot. Add the onion, zucchini, garlic, carrots and pancetta and cook until soft.
2. Add the pasta, potato, water, broth, tomatoes and herbs. Simmer for 20 minutes.
3. In a food processor, puree 1 ½ c. of the beans and add to the soup.
4. Add the remaining beans and chile. Simmer for 8 minutes.
5. Add the spinach and cook for 2 minutes.
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste and garnish with parmesan cheese.

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Shrimp Scampi Supreme

We used to sauté our shrimp scampi before we tried this is mouth-watering dish. It is surprisingly simple to make and has become a weekly favorite now. It is so rich and creamy that we can't imagine making scampi any other way. We love it served over baked potatoes or basmati rice.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Bake Time: 35 minutes

Serves: 6

5 c. cooked, de-shelled shrimp

4-5 Tbsp. butter

15 Tbsp. olive oil

3 small chopped onions

6 Tbsp. chopped garlic

3 c. broccoli

1 c. green pepper

3/4 c. red pepper

1 c. mushrooms

3/4 c. grated parmesan cheese

two 1 ³/₄ quart casserole dishes with covers

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and coat the bottom and sides of two 1 ³/₄ quart casserole dishes with olive oil.
2. Add all ingredients to the casserole dishes and mix.
3. Slice the butter on top and drizzle with a little extra olive oil.
4. Cover and bake for 35 minutes.

Four Cheese Macaroni

Are there really people in this world who don't think of mac and cheese as comfort food? We absolutely love this dish, and it's become a traditional offering when we get together with our best friends. Of course, Kristin prefers to add just a touch of green chile to hers.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 5-6

4 c. elbow or cappelletti pasta
3 pinches salt
2 c. heavy cream
1 c. shredded Cheddar cheese
1 c. shredded Parmesan cheese
2/3 c. shredded Asiago cheese
1 c. shredded Romano cheese
1 Tbsp. salt and pepper

large and medium sauce pans
colander
wire whisk

1. Add 3 pinches of salt to a large pan of water and bring to a boil.
2. Add the macaroni and cook about 10 minutes. Drain. Set aside.
3. While macaroni is cooking, add cream, salt, and pepper to medium saucepan and bring to a boil.
4. Simmer for about 5 minutes.
5. Lower heat to low and whisk in the cheeses.
6. Add macaroni and mix well.

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Vanilla Mint Lemonade

This is a nice twist on the usual lemonade, and it adds a refreshing new taste to a New Moon celebration. It is also easily adapted for those who want a little kick to their celebratory beverages.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 5-6

Cook Time: NA

9 fresh mint leaves
½ c. sugar
2 tsp. grated lemon zest
3 c. water
1 c. fresh lemon juice
1 tsp. vanilla extract
Optional: 1c. vodka or lemon liquor

2-quart pitcher

1. Bruise mint leaves gently and place in a 2-quart pitcher, preferably glass.
2. Add sugar, lemon zest, lemon juice and vanilla.
3. Stir well and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
4. Strain and add optional ingredients before serving.

New Moon

Pêches à la Vanille

Baked vanilla peaches are just sweet enough, just smooth enough, and just delightful enough for your New Moon gathering. This is something you don't see every day, and your guests will love it!

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4-8

Honeyed whipped cream

2 oz. cream cheese

2 Tbsp. honey

½ c. whipped heavy cream

medium bowl

wire whisk

spatula

Whisk the cheese and honey together until smooth and fold in the whipped cream.

4 peaches, cut into quarters

3 Tbsp. butter

1 vanilla bean

4 Tbsp. honey

1 ¼ c. white wine

honeyed whipped cream

medium baking dish

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1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Coat the inner sides and bottom of a medium baking dish with butter.
2. Place peaches in pan.
3. Cut vanilla bean open and spoon out seeds. Add seeds and pod to the dish.
4. Pour wine over peaches.
5. Top each peach with a dollop of honey.
6. Bake for 35 minutes.
7. Top with whipped cream and serve warm.

Chapter Three

Full Moon

At the Full Moon, Earth is between the moon and sun, allowing us to see the entire lunar disk bathed in light. The Full Moon is generally believed to last for three days before the exact point of fullness and three days after. This can be a time of fullness when the moon's energy is at its peak, but it can also be an intense time when the light is perhaps a bit too obvious and revealing.

Because this energy is commonly directed outward in social ways, people like to get together for drumming circles and prayer vigils on the Full Moon. Active celebrations have a beautiful way of working out that intense energy and bringing us balance and calm. Even so, emotions may be running high, so not only are the foods I offer you in this chapter reminiscent of the light and roundness of the Full Moon, but they are also fun, comfort foods.

Menu for Full Moon Celebrations

Appetizers:	Full Moon Poppers Albondigas
Salad:	Cucumber Salad
Soup:	Cream of Mushroom and Broccoli Soup
Main Dish:	Parmesan-crusteD Scallops Quiche
Beverage:	Black and Tan
Dessert:	Personal Cheesecakes

Festival Feasts

Full Moon Poppers

Speaking of fun, poppers are tasty finger foods that seem to go perfectly with joyful gatherings. They are the ideal thing for popping into your mouth to regain some energy while drumming or dancing!

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Serves: 8-12

1 c. rice flour

2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour

1 c. cold seltzer water

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt

1 egg yolk

3-4 c. olive oil

optional centers (makes 20-25):

**shrimp, your favorite cheese, jalapeno peppers,
Pepperoni**

optional batter spices (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.):

**curry, ground red chile, wasabi powder,
cayenne pepper**

medium bowl

mixing spoon or whisk

paper towels and plate

electric fryer

slotted spoon

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1. Heat the oil to 375°F. This temperature is critical.
2. Mix dry ingredients in a bowl.
3. Gradually mix in egg and water.
4. Check to be sure your oil is at the correct temperature then dip into the batter. It tends to work best if you dip half of the popper in first, then turn it to brown the whole popper.
5. Immediately deep fry in oil until golden-brown. Only fry 3-4 centers at a time to prevent the oil temperature from dropping too much.
6. Drain on a plate covered with paper towels.
7. Try one or two of the dipping sauces in Chapter Thirteen: Extras.

Festival Feasts

Albondigas

Albondigas (meatballs) are often served with other *tapas* (covers), various Spanish appetizers. It is said that the original tapas were simply slices of bread used to keep flies out of sweet drinks in Spain. But clever bartenders always come up with something special and began adding toppings to the bread slices. Today, tapas can come in a great many forms including cheese, bread, fruit, meat, and more. Albondigas are one of our favorite tapas for festival pot-lucks, and they do seem to be well-received, judging by the empty serving plates we bring home.

Prep Time: 25 minutes
Serves: 8-12

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Meatballs

1 lg. onion
1 egg
¼ c. plus 2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 ½ lbs. ground beef
½ lb. ground pork
2/3 c. bread crumbs
2 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. cumin
¼ c. fresh parsley leaves
½ tsp. cilantro
¼ tsp. ground red chile
¼ tsp. black pepper

large frying pan
electric mixer
large bowl with cover

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1. Finely chop onion and lightly beat the egg.
2. Cook onion in 2 Tbsp. olive oil over medium heat until transparent.
3. Add onions, meat, bread crumbs, and spices to a large bowl and mix well.
4. Form mixture into small balls.
5. Heat 1 Tbsp. olive oil in frying pan over medium-high heat. Do not allow the oil to smoke. Brown the meatballs, turning often to prevent them from burning or sticking. Add additional olive oil as needed.
6. Transfer browned meatballs to large covered bowl.

Sauce

4 lg. garlic cloves

1 Tbsp. olive oil

1 lg. can cubed tomatoes, including juice

3/4 tsp. dried oregano

large sauce pan with cover

1. Mince garlic.
2. Cook garlic in olive oil over medium heat in a large sauce pan for about 30 seconds.
3. Add tomatoes, juice, and oregano and simmer for about 3 minutes.

* Add meatballs to sauce pan and cover. Simmer about 25 minutes until sauce thickens, stirring occasionally. Serve warm.

Cucumber Salad

The first time I ever encountered cucumber salad was at dinner with my in-laws. Oma used to make it for holidays, and the thought was not at all appealing to me. What a surprise when I finally consented to give it a try! It's cooling and tangy and delicious. I prefer a more Italian dressing than the traditional German one for this salad, so that is what I offer you here.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 3-5 minutes

Chill Time: 3 hours

Serves: 6-8

3 cucumbers

2 Roma tomatoes

1 c. white wine vinegar

½ c. olive oil

¼ c. sugar

½ tsp. pepper

1 tsp. salt

dash oregano

dash basil

medium sauce pan

large bowl with cover

1. Peel cucumbers and slice cucumbers and tomatoes into thin slices. Place in large bowl.
2. Combine everything except cucumbers in a medium sauce pan and cook over medium heat until sugar melts. Mix thoroughly.

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3. Pour mixture over cucumbers and tomatoes. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours (stirring halfway through) before serving.

Cream of Mushroom and Broccoli Soup

Regular cream of mushroom soup is a bit boring for me, so I added broccoli and cheese and spiced it up with a splash of wine. Now it's a soup that holds my interest for every mouth-watering, savory spoonful!

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Serves: 6-8

5 Tbsp. butter
1 bunch green onions
3 cloves garlic
½ lb fresh mushrooms
4 Tbsp. flour
4 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
4 c. chicken broth
salt and pepper to taste
1 ½ c. heavy cream
¼ c. parsley
¼ c. chives
splash of Marsala wine

large soup pot with cover

1. Finely chop the garlic, chives, and parsley. Chop the green onions and slice the mushrooms.
2. Heat butter in large soup pot and sauté green onions with garlic until well coated and slightly transparent. Add fresh mushrooms and broccoli. Cover and cook a few minutes more.
3. Add flour to mushrooms and broccoli, blending well. If mushrooms seem too dry after a minute or so, add a small amount of butter.

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4. Add chicken broth and stir, scraping the bottom to mix in all the flour and cheese.
5. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 20 min. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Add cream, Marsala wine, chopped parsley and chives just before serving.

* Soup may be prepared ahead of time up to step 4 and refrigerated. Warm and finish with step 5 just before serving

Parmesan-cruste*d* Scallops

We love parmesan-cruste*d* seafood. It's a fabulous way to prepare salmon, catfish, and even shrimp. Even kids who don't normally eat fish will chow down on it if it's coated in a healthy version of those store-bought fish sticks. Here I offer you a tasty and simple dish that fits in with any Full Moon celebration.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 6

1 lb. scallops

1 Tbsp. olive oil

½ c. bread crumbs

¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese

1 clove garlic

¼ tsp. paprika

1/8 tsp. lemon peel zest

½ Tbsp. butter

large bowl

buttered cookie sheet

1. Preheat oven to 425°F. Mince the garlic.
2. Mix all ingredients but the butter.
3. Coat scallops evenly in the cheese mixture and place on buttered cookie sheet.
4. Bake for 8-10 minutes.

Full Moon

Crustless Quiche

This is my mom's recipe for a delicious and low-carb quiche. Not only does this bring in the image of the Full Moon, but it is also something that just about anyone can eat, so it is likely to be an easy one-dish crowd pleaser.

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Cook Time: 50 minutes

Serves: 6-8

2 tsp. olive oil

½ small onion

1 c. cream

4 lg. eggs

¾ c. cheddar cheese

¼ c. Swiss cheese

½ c. water

1 bunch broccoli

¼ tsp. each:

thyme, oregano, rosemary, salt, pepper

¼ c. red pepper

optional:

3 slices bacon, crumbled, ¼ c. mushrooms

small sauté pan

medium bowl

wire whisk

10-inch pie plate

Festival Feasts

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly brush the inside of the pie plate with olive oil.
2. Chop the onion and broccoli. Grate the cheese.
3. Sauté the onion and peppers until transparent. Remove from heat and place in medium bowl.
4. Add eggs to the bowl and mix. Whisk in cream, spices, water, and ½ c. of cheddar cheese.
5. Cover the bottom of the pie plate with the broccoli and mushrooms.
6. Pour the egg mixture over the broccoli.
7. Sprinkle the top with the remaining cheese.
8. Bake for approx. 50 minutes until a knife inserted into the center comes out clean and the quiche looks golden brown.

Full Moon

Black and Tan

Obviously, this is for adults only, but what a smooth, rich taste and texture it has! I much prefer to use the Guinness Draught for this. This drink is made to be savored as you consider the balance in all things and how the cycles of the moon influence your life.

½ pint Guinness Stout

½ pint amber ale, like Bass or Harp

pint glass

1. Fill the glass halfway with Guinness.
2. Place the teaspoon upside down in the opening to the glass, above the Guinness.
3. Very slowly, pour the ale over the back of the spoon into the glass.

Festival Feasts

Full Moon Cheesecake

What better reminder of the fullness and light of the Full Moon than to end your feast with a special cheesecake, baked just for your loved ones by you. And if you don't have a springform pan, don't worry about the cost of buying one. Mine cost only \$4 at a local grocery store.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Serves: 10-12

15 Graham crackers

1 Tbsp. butter

4 (8 oz.) packages cream cheese

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. milk

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar

4 eggs

1 c. sour cream

1 Tbsp. vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{4}$ c. all-purpose flour

9-inch springform pan

small sauce pan

small and medium bowls

blender or food processor

pan of water

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and butter the inside of the springform pan.
2. Melt the butter over medium heat.
3. Crush the Graham crackers in a small bowl.
4. In the medium bowl, mix the Graham crackers and the melted butter.

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5. Press the cracker mixture onto bottom of spring form pan.
6. In a blender or food processor, blend the cream cheese for about 30 seconds. Then add the sugar and blend until smooth. Do not over-blend on any of these steps.
7. Blend in the milk. Then add the eggs one at a time, blending just until mixed.
8. Add sour cream, vanilla and flour and blend just until smooth.
9. Pour into spring form pan.
10. Bake for 1 hour in the center of the oven, with the pan of water on the bottom shelf. Turn oven off and let cake sit in oven with door slightly open for about an hour.
11. Chill in refrigerator until ready to serve.

Chapter Four

Dark Moon

The dark of the moon is a period of renewal and self-analysis for many of us, when the moon is between the earth and sun. Many of us use this time for going within and taking advantage of the energies of high intuition that frequently accompany this phase. The recipes provided in this chapter reflect that darkness while reminding us that the light and spice of life may be hidden at times, but it can always be found again.

Celebrations at the dark of the moon tend to be more subdued than Full or New Moon revels. Dark Moon gathering decorations also have a way of surrounding participants in silence and darkness. But many people also include reminders of the returning light, just as I have with many of these recipes.

Menu for Dark Moon Celebrations

Appetizer:	Swedish Meatballs Pesto Cheese Spread
Salad:	Spinach and Bleu Cheese Salad with Balsamic Garlic Dressing
Soup:	Black Bean Soup
Main dish:	Chicken Pasta Molé Seitan in Garlic Herb Sauce
Beverage:	Café Mocha
Dessert:	Dark Moon Torte

Swedish Meatballs

These are so rich and creamy that they add an interesting touch to your moon celebrations. And of course, the meatballs are reminiscent of the moon in its dark phase. If you want a more authentic Scandinavian taste, try it with lingonberry jam and boiled potatoes.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Bake Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 6-10

Sauce

¼ c. flour

¾ c. sour cream

1 tsp. paprika

2 c. water

salt and pepper to taste

medium sauce pan

1. In a medium sauce pan, cook water, flour, and spices over medium-high heat until the sauce thickens.
2. Reduce heat to medium and add sour cream. Cook about 3 minutes, stirring well. Do not allow to boil.

Meatballs

1 ½ lbs. lean ground beef

½ medium onion

¼ tsp. pepper

½ tsp. parsley

1 tsp. salt

1 egg, beaten

½ c. cream

3 Tbsp. butter

Dark Moon

**large sauté pan
casserole dish**

1. Preheat oven to 300°F. Finely chop the onion.
2. Mix meatball ingredients, except butter, together and form into small balls.
3. In the sauté pan, brown the meatballs in butter over medium-high heat.
4. Remove from heat and place in casserole dish.
5. Pour sauce over meatballs and bake for 30 minutes.

Pesto Cheese Spread

Pesto is a rich basil sauce with an equally rich history. Meaning "to pound or crush," pesto has been known since Roman times and may have been imported to Rome from Africa. The sauce is fabulous over pasta, and this spread is truly excellent with crusty Italian bread or crackers. Basil is a magickal herb, bringing in the energies of protection, love, and wealth.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 4-6

2 c. fresh basil leaves

½ c. freshly grated Parmesan cheese

½ c. olive oil

1/3 c. pine nuts

3 garlic cloves

salt and pepper to taste

food processor

dessert dish

1. Chop basil and pine nuts in food processor.
2. Add garlic and chop again.
3. Add the olive oil in a constant stream while the food processor is on
4. Add the grated Romano cheese and blend.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste.
6. Place in a small dessert dish and serve with bread or crackers.

Dark Moon

Spinach and Blue Cheese Salad with Balsamic Garlic Dressing

Dark leafy greens are not only delicious and hearty, but they are also packed with calcium, vitamins A and C, folate, and a host of other immune-supporting nutrients. The dark sweetness of Balsamic vinegar is rich and complex, a perfect balance to the creamy blue cheese and other elements in this fabulous salad.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4-6

4 c. fresh spinach
6 Tbsp. olive oil
2 Tbsp. garlic
½ c. red onion
¼ c. Balsamic vinegar
1 c. blue cheese, room temperature
2 Tbsp. sour cream
1 ½ c. ground sunflower kernels

medium sauté pan
2 large bowls
wire whisk
paper towels

1. Mince the garlic and chop the onion.
2. In a medium sauté pan, cook the onions in 3 Tbsp. olive oil until transparent. Add 1 ½ Tbsp. garlic and sauté for 30 seconds.
3. Transfer to a large bowl and whisk in vinegar. This is your dressing.

Festival Feasts

4. In the other bowl, combine cheese, sour cream, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. garlic and mix well.
5. Form cheese mixture into balls or cakes the size of quarters or half dollars.
6. Roll each ball in the ground sunflower seeds then fry in the remaining olive oil until browned all the way around, about 4 minutes.
7. Remove and drain on paper towels.
8. Toss spinach with dressing and top with the cheese balls.

Dark Moon

Black Bean Soup

Black bean soup is a staple in New Mexico. Not only are black beans good for you, but they also make a rich, creamy soup that is perfect for a Dark Moon celebration. With the addition of a little chile and a dollop of sour cream, you can bring in the spice and light that is a subtle yet powerful part of these celebrations.

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 2 hours 5 minutes
Serves: 6-8

1 lb. black beans, rinsed and drained
2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion
1 carrot
1 tsp. cumin
1 head garlic
2 bay leaves
2 tsp. dried cilantro
8 c. water
2 tsp. kosher salt
¼ c. dark rum
1 tsp. balsamic vinegar
1/8 – ¼ c. green chile
or 2 Tbsp. ground red chili powder

meat-lovers option:

1 ½ lb. boneless ham or bacon, cubed
garnishes: sour cream, cheddar cheese

large saucepan
large soup pot
blender

Festival Feasts

1. Rinse and drain the beans. Dice the onion and carrot. Chop the garlic.
2. In a large saucepan, completely cover the beans with cold water. Boil for 5 minutes.
3. Remove beans from the heat. Cover and let sit for 1 hour, then drain and hold to the side.
4. In a large soup pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic, and carrots. Cook about 10 minutes until just browned.
5. Add bay leaves, oregano, beans, salt, and water. Add meat, if you choose.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 1 ½ hours, until beans (and meat) are tender).
7. Remove 1 ½ cupfuls of soup and puree in a blender.
8. Return puree to pot. Add sherry and vinegar and mix well. Simmer for another 10-20 minutes. Serve with garnishes.

Chicken Mole'

A variety of sauces are described by the term "molé" but all involve chocolate and spices. Molé poblano, from the Mexican state of Puebla, combines dried chile peppers, ground nuts or seeds, spices, Mexican chocolate, and other ingredients to create a rich and supremely delicious sauce. The Big Three chiles used for molé are ancho, mulatto, and pasilla (sometimes chipotle) so if you can find them, use them, roasted and powdered, in place of the chili powder. Because these are not so easy to find in all areas, I've created a molé sauce that anyone should be able to make without requiring pilgrimages to special groceries or placing Internet orders. This exotic and mysterious dish is ideal for Dark Moon celebrations.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 6-8

4 chicken breasts

water

½ c onion

½ c. garlic

2 Tbsp. olive oil

¼ c. almonds

¼ c. sunflower kernels

¼ c. peanuts

1/8 tsp. ground cloves

¼ tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. anise

3 medium tomatoes

1 oz. unsweetened (or bittersweet) chocolate

1 tsp. sugar

salt and pepper to taste

Festival Feasts

2 Tbsp. chili powder

1 c. chicken broth

2 Tbsp. butter

large sauce pan with cover

food processor

large bowl

large frying pan

wire whisk

1. Chop the onion and mince the garlic.
2. Place the chicken in a large sauce pan and cover with water. Cook until poached all the way through. Chicken will be tender and white. Cover and set aside for later.
3. In a food processor, grind the almonds, peanuts, and seeds. Add the cinnamon, cloves, anise, and chili powder and mix well.
4. Peel the tomatoes. Remove the seeds and chop them. Then add to the food processor and puree. Remove and set aside in a large bowl.
5. Melt the butter in the frying pan over medium heat and add the puree. Stir constantly for 5 minutes.
6. Reduce heat to low. Add chicken broth, chocolate, sugar, salt, and pepper. Whisk until chocolate is melted and the sauce has the consistency of heavy cream.
7. Pour sauce over chicken and serve.

* If you can get Ibarra or Abuelita Mexican chocolate, use that in place of the unsweetened chocolate and sugar.

* The sauce can be refrigerated for up to a week. You may need to add some additional chicken stock to bring it back to the consistency of heavy cream when reheating.

Seitan in garlic herb sauce

Seitan can be found in just about every natural foods store and even some regular grocery stores. Made from wheat gluten, it is an excellent meat substitute because the texture when cooked is very close to that of meat. This delicious alternative should please your vegetarian friends and you might be surprised at how many carnivores like it, too.

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 6 minutes

Serves: 6-8

Seitan

1 lb. seitan

2 tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. onion powder

2 Tbsp. olive oil

large sauté pan

1. Cut the seitan into strips and coat with onion powder.
2. Sauté in olive oil over medium-high heat for 6 minutes.

Sauce

2 heads of garlic

2/3 c. plus 1 tsp. olive oil

½ c. parsley

½ c. basil

2 Tbsp. capers, drained

1 Tbsp. lemon peel, grated

small glass baking dish

medium bowl

Festival Feasts

food processor
aluminum foil
small bowl

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Cut the top ¼ inch off of the garlic heads. Place in glass baking dish and drizzle with 1 tsp. olive oil. Cover with foil and roast for 1 hour.
3. Remove from oven and allow to cool for a few minutes. Squeeze the garlic from the skin into a small bowl and mash with a fork.
4. In a food processor, mix garlic, parsley, basil, capers and lemon peel. Gradually add 2/3 c. olive oil. This can be refrigerated for a day, if needed.
5. Pour sauce over seitan and serve.

Cafe Mocha

It's pretty commonly known that I have a serious weak spot for good café mochas. And if you know me at all, you know that I really should just own stock in Starbucks. But that gets pricey so I set out to create a fabulous café mocha at home with the simplest possible materials in the least amount of time. Well, I finally got it right...really right! And the only thing I used that may not be in everyone's kitchen was a stovetop espresso maker.

Now if you can afford a fancy electric espresso maker and a milk steamer, then you are ahead of the game. But most of us just can't justify that kind of expense, and I wanted this to be a beverage that was accessible to nearly everyone. Starbucks stores often have espresso-making kits for sale. Also, Bialetti (<http://www.bialetti.com/>) makes a 3-cup Moka Express stovetop espresso maker for only \$20. And if you just can't do that, you can make a hearty espresso roast in a regular coffee maker.

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 15-20 minutes
Serves: 2

2 Tbsp. chocolate or unsweetened cocoa powder
1 c. half & half
1 tsp. sugar
espresso shot (1 oz.)
½ c. whipping cream
¼ tsp. vanilla extract
Optional: chocolate syrup

small sauce pan
whisk
coffee maker

Festival Feasts

electric mixer
medium bowl

1. Start cooking your espresso. If you are using a standard coffee maker, make just one cup if possible. With my stove top cooker, I use the equivalent of 2 single-shot espresso pods.
2. While the espresso is cooking, make your whipped cream and let that sit until you're ready for it. Whip together whipping cream and vanilla on high speed until soft peaks form.
3. Combine the chocolate powder, sugar, and half & half in a small sauce pan. Bring to a low boil over medium-high heat and stir quickly with a whisk for 30-40 seconds.
4. Pour one shot of espresso into each mug. Pour the chocolate milk mixture over the espresso.
5. Spoon in whipped cream and drizzle a little chocolate syrup on top if you like.

Dark Moon

Dark Moon Torte

You do know that dark chocolate is rich in antioxidants, don't you? That means that it is heart-healthy and may lower high blood pressure. So really, this dessert is health food! And it is a lot easier to make than you might think. You can take nice long breaks after steps 2, 4, and 9.

Prep Time: 45 minutes Chill Time: 30 minutes
Cook Time: 30 minutes Cool and Stand: 4 hours
Serves: 14-16

Torte

5 oz. chocolate (at least 88% cocoa)
½ c. butter
6 egg whites
6 egg yolks
1 ½ tsp. vanilla
2/3 c. flour
½ tsp. baking powder
1 ¼ c. sugar
1 jar blackberry fruit spread (10-20 oz.)
silver or gold sprinkles

medium sauce pan
2 large bowls
9-inch springform pan
1 small bowl
electric mixer
wire rack
flexible rubber spatula
wire whisk

Festival Feasts

1. In a medium sauce pan, melt chocolate (break it up first) and butter over low heat. Transfer to a large bowl and allow to cool.
2. In a very large bowl, let egg whites stand for at least 30 minutes. Set egg yolks aside until you are ready for the next step.
3. Stir egg yolks and vanilla into the chocolate mixture and set aside.
4. In a small bowl, sift together flour and baking powder.
5. Beat egg whites on medium speed until soft peaks form. Turn mixing speed to high and gradually add sugar, beating for about 4 minutes until stiff peaks form.
6. Fold 1/3 of egg white mixture into chocolate mixture with a flexible rubber spatula. Then fold chocolate mix into remaining egg white mixture.
7. Sift 1/3 of flour mix over the egg white-chocolate mixture and gently fold it in. Repeat twice until all of the flour mix has been folded in.
8. Spread batter into a greased and lightly floured 9-inch springform pan.
9. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
10. Cool completely on wire rack. While you are waiting, prepare chocolate ganache.
11. When torte is completely cool, loosen sides and bottom with a knife and remove from the pan.
12. Cut the torte horizontally into two layers. Be careful on this step to cut both sides to nearly the same size.
13. Place the bottom layer, cut side up, on a serving platter and spread with the blackberry fruit spread.
14. Place top layer, cut side down, over the first layer. Pour chocolate ganache over torte, glazing top and sides.

Dark Moon

15. Add a few sprinkles to the top, to remind everyone of the light that comes after the dark.
16. Chill until glaze sets, at least 30 minutes.

Chocolate Ganache

6 oz. chocolate (70-77% cocoa)

½ c. whipping cream

medium sauce pan

1. In a medium sauce pan, boil cream over medium-high heat for 30 seconds. Then set aside.
2. Break up chocolate, add to cream, and allow to stand for 5 minutes.
3. Stir until smooth and cool for 10 minutes.

Chapter Five

Imbolc

Usually celebrated at the beginning of February, Imbolc is the time when the first stirrings of life may be seen in lands that are beginning to emerge from winter's grip. Many people use this time to reflect on the previous year and decide what "seeds" they want to plant in the new year. The foods of this time combine the last of the root vegetables that our ancestors may have stored for the winter, some of the remaining meat, cream from the newly lactating sheep, and some delicious ingredients of white and red, in honor of the goddess Brighid's feast day

Menu for Imbolc Celebrations

Appetizer:	Marinated Mushrooms Roasted Garlic Hummus
First course:	White Bean Salad Carrot Soup
Main dish:	Buttermilk Pot Roast Fettuccine with Marsala Alfredo
Beverage:	Kristin's Famous New Mexican Hot Chocolate
Dessert:	Strawberry Bread Pudding

Marinated Mushrooms

There is something about marinated mushrooms that makes my mouth water just thinking about them. They're just the perfect combination of sweet, tart, light, and full bodied. And they are a great finger food for feasts or potlucks!

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 15 minutes

Chill Time: overnight

Serves: 10-20

1 lb. fresh mushrooms
juice of 1 lemon
2 cloves garlic
3/4 c. olive oil
2 Tbsp. parsley
2 shallots
salt and pepper to taste

large sauce pan with cover
large casserole dish

1. Mince the garlic. Chop the shallots.
2. Combine all ingredients in covered sauce pan and simmer for 15 minutes.
3. Remove from heat, transfer to casserole dish, and refrigerate overnight.

Imbolc

Roasted Garlic Hummus

Let me warn you before you try this recipe: hummus is addictive and this hummus is seriously good. So proceed with caution unless you are ready to be a slave to the fabulous taste!

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 6-8

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Roasted Garlic
2-3 cloves garlic
2-3 tsp. olive oil

aluminum foil

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Peel away the garlic “paper,” leaving only the skin covering the individual cloves.
3. Cut off the stem end of each clove, exposing the top ¼ inch or so of the garlic itself and place in a small piece of aluminum foil, approximately 3 inches square.
4. Coat the cut top of each clove with a small amount of olive oil and drip a small amount over the rest of the cloves, rubbing it in gently with your fingers.
5. Bake for 45 minutes or until cloves feel soft.
6. Remove from heat and cut the skin of each clove. Very gently squeeze or pull out each clove.

Festival Feasts

Hummus

2 cans garbanzo beans: 1 drained, 1 undrained

½ c. tahini (sesame seed paste)

juice of 1 lemon

roasted garlic

pinches salt, pepper, cumin

Process everything in food processor until smooth

Imbolc

White Bean Salad

This is another fabulous salad that can easily be a meal for anyone who doesn't need meat at each meal. White is the color of the remaining winter, of the new snowdrops and crocuses preparing to push through into the light, and it is a traditional color for celebrations at this time of year.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 4-6

Dressing

3 Tbsp. olive oil

juice of 1 lemon

1 ½ Tbsp. red wine or champagne vinegar

2 tsp. garlic

1 tsp. honey

salt and pepper to taste

Salad

2 cans cannellini beans

1 c. toasted walnuts

1 c. cherry tomatoes

¼ c. green onions

½ c. red pepper

2 c. baby spinach

¼ c. crumbled cheese (bleu, goat, feta)

blender

baking pan

large salad bowl

salad spoon

Festival Feasts

1. Toast walnuts in oven at 350°F for 5-10 minutes.
2. Wash and drain beans and spinach. Mince garlic. Chop green onions and pepper.
3. Combine dressing ingredients in blender and mix well.
4. Combine salad ingredients in salad bowl and gently toss with dressing.
5. Top with crumbled cheese and toasted walnuts.

Imbolc

Carrot Soup with Crème Fraîche

Few people would think to serve something so unusual as carrot soup. And probably fewer would consider actually making crème fraîche. Not only is this dish in keeping with what our ancestors might have had available in early February, but it is so uniquely delicious that you are sure to get compliments on this one.

Prep Time: overnight plus 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Chill Time: 5 hours

Serves: 6-8

Crème Fraîche

1 c. heavy whipping cream

(pasteurized, not ultra pasteurized)

1 Tbsp. buttermilk at room temperature

medium sauce pan

meat thermometer

large bowl

plastic wrap

1. Warm the cream over low heat to 105°F.
2. Remove from heat and add buttermilk. Mix well.
3. Transfer mix to bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Allow to stand in a warm place for at least 24 hours (it may take up to 36 hours), stirring and testing every 6-8 hours.
4. It is ready when thick but pourable. It should have a slightly sour, nutty taste.
5. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 5 hours.
6. This may be stored in the refrigerator for 10 days.

Festival Feasts

Soup

2 Tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion
2 lbs. carrots, peeled and chopped
2 cloves, garlic
2 celery stalks
½ small fennel bulb
4 tsp. thyme
3 whole star anise
½ c. dry white wine
3 c. chicken broth
1 Tbsp. honey
salt and pepper to taste
8 oz crème fraiche

large sauté pan
large spoon
blender
electric mixer
soup ladle

1. Peel and chop carrots. Chop celery and fennel. Dice onion and garlic.
2. Sauté onions in oil until transparent.
3. Add carrots, garlic, celery, fennel, thyme and star anise. Cook for about 6 minutes.
4. Add wine and swirl or stir several times.
5. Add chicken broth and honey and cover. Simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Let cool for a few minutes and puree in a blender until very smooth.
7. Season with salt and pepper and top with crème fraiche.

Imbolc

Buttermilk Pot Roast

By February, many of our ancestors were getting short on winter food stores. Game animals, or one of the remaining livestock animals, would be likely to make a fine feast in honor of the returning life and making it safely through the winter. Since game is often tough and strong-tasting, our European ancestors would marinate it in yogurt or buttermilk to tenderize and ease the strong flavors. This pot roast is a tasty experiment in honor of all our ancestors.

Prep Time: 5 ½ hours Cook Time: 4 ½ hours
Serves: 6-8

Buttermilk Marinade

2 c. buttermilk
1 ½ c. butter
1 c. flour
1 tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper

medium bowl

Combine all ingredients and mix well.

Pot Roast

buttermilk marinade
3 ½ lb. boneless chuck roast
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 large onion
4 cloves of garlic
½ c. dry red wine
1 tsp. each: salt, pepper, oregano, rosemary, thyme

Festival Feasts

optional:

4-5 carrots, 2 small potatoes, other vegetables

large soup pot

Dutch oven or heavy roasting pan

with tightly-fitting lid

1. Chop onion, garlic, and any other vegetables you want to use.
2. In a large soup pot, pour marinade over meat and allow to sit for at least 5 hours. You may refrigerate this overnight.
3. Heat oil in Dutch oven or heavy roasting pan over medium-high heat. Remove roast from marinade and rub with salt, pepper, oregano, rosemary, thyme. Brown roast in oil, several minutes on each side.
4. Lift roast to place onions, garlic, and red wine on bottom of pan. Replace roast and cover.
5. Bring to boil then reduce to simmer. Simmer for 4 hours, until meat is tender. If you are including vegetables, add them at the final 10 minutes of cooking.

Imbolc

Fettuccine with Marsala Alfredo

The addition of Marsala wine brings in a touch of sweetness and light to the traditional parmesan and cream sauce. Ever since I first tried this experiment, my son hands me the Marsala while I'm cooking, or he adds it to his sauce when he cooks. Your Imbolc guests are sure to ask how you make such a light and sweet Alfredo.

Prep Time: NA
Serves: 4-6

Cook Time: 25 minutes

2 c. fettuccine
3 c. water
1 c. butter
1 c. heavy cream
grated Parmesan cheese
1 Tbsp. Marsala wine

large sauce pan
medium sauce pan
wire whisk
large serving bowl

1. Bring 3 c. water to a boil in a large sauce pan. Add fettuccine and boil on medium heat for 10-12 minutes.
2. While fettuccine is cooking, melt butter over medium-high heat.
3. Add cream and reduce heat to medium.
4. Gradually add Parmesan, whisking in as it melts. Stir constantly.
5. Add Marsala wine and mix well.
6. Drain fettuccine and transfer to serving bowl.
7. Add Alfredo sauce and toss evenly with pasta. Serve immediately.

Kristin's Famous New Mexican Hot Chocolate

I first created this recipe for a Tempest Smith Foundation (www.tempestsmithfoundation.org/) auction many years ago. Since then, it has delighted friends and family every time the temperatures drop. Since it is so thoroughly good for the spirit, it doesn't add pounds. No, really. So drink up! If you want to add a touch of alcohol, try a half shot of coffee liquor in your mug. Be warned: this is a truly rich concoction that is best savored while warm so you might want to use small mugs.

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4-6

½ c. water

½ c. sugar

1/3 c. unsweetened cocoa

½ tsp. cinnamon plus a pinch

¼ tsp. ground red chile

3 c. heavy cream

½ tsp. vanilla extract

medium saucepan

1. Combine water, sugar, cocoa, cinnamon, and chile in a medium saucepan.
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until cocoa dissolves completely.
3. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Add cream and simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently.
5. Stir in vanilla and simmer another 2 minutes.
6. Pour into mugs and sprinkle with a touch of cinnamon.
7. Serve immediately.

Imbolc

Strawberries & Cream Bread Pudding

Okay, so our ancestors probably didn't have strawberries in February. But since we are blessed to live in modern times and since red and white are sacred to the goddess Brighid, this is most definitely an appropriate (and yummy) dessert for this festival.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Serves: 12

2 Tbsp. butter

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. fresh strawberries, chopped

7 slices day-old bread, torn into small pieces

3 eggs

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. milk

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. cream

$\frac{1}{4}$ c. strawberry preserves

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

8-inch square pan

large bowl

electric mixer

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease the inner sides and bottom of the pan with butter.
2. Toss strawberries and bread in a large bowl then scoop into pan.
3. Beat the eggs, milk, cream, strawberry preserves, sugar, and vanilla until frothy.
4. Pour egg mixture over the strawberries and bread. Let it sit until the bread has absorbed the liquid.
5. Bake for 45 minutes. Top should spring back lightly when tapped.

Chapter Six

Spring Equinox

Celebrated around the world for millennia, the Spring Equinox is the first time of astronomical balance in the new year, with day and night of equal length. For that reason, we use the energies of the Spring Equinox to aid us in finding greater balance within ourselves and in our lives. As a spring festival, we also enjoy the magic of new beginnings and life in its youth. Foods of this season include fresh eggs, spring greens, root vegetables, and all things fresh and light.

Menu for Spring Equinox Celebrations

Appetizer:	Devilled Eggs Portobello Mushroom Pizzas
Salad:	Asian Romaine Salad
Soup:	Potato Leek Soup
Main dish:	Roast Lamb Stuffed Baked Potatoes Hollandaise
Beverage:	Chai Tea
Dessert:	Egg Custard

Devilled Eggs

Let your inner devil out to balance your angelic side at this time of balance! What better way to honor that than with "devilled" eggs? This is an easy and tasty appetizer for your spring potlucks, and it is another low-carb snack for those who are counting carbs.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Chill Time: overnight

Serves: 6-12

6 hard-boiled eggs

¼ c. mayonnaise

½ teaspoon dry mustard

½ teaspoon white wine vinegar

salt, pepper, and paprika to taste

small bowl

long, flat plastic container with a cover

or baking dish and plastic wrap

1. Peel the eggs and cut them in half, lengthwise.
2. Remove the yolks and mash them with a fork in the bowl.
3. Add mayonnaise, mustard powder, vinegar, salt and pepper and mix well.
4. Fill the holes in the egg whites with the mixture. Sprinkle with paprika.
5. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Spring Equinox

Portobello Mushroom Pizzas

You won't believe how good these mini "pizzas" are! And they have far less fat and carbs than regular pizzas. This is an extra special offering to your guests any time you decide to bring these pizzas out.

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 2-3 minutes
Serves: 4-8

4 whole Portobello mushroom caps
mozzarella cheese
1 large tomato
2 Tbsp. olive oil
½ tsp. basil
½ tsp. oregano
½ tsp. garlic powder
optional: pepperoni, sausage, and other toppings

large baking pan

1. Remove the stems on the mushrooms. Turn them smooth side down on the baking pan.
2. Sprinkle the spices over the top of each mushroom.
3. Top with sliced mozzarella cheese, tomatoes, and other toppings.
4. Drizzle with olive oil.
5. Broil at 500° or High for 2-3 minutes. The cheese should bubble and brown but not burn

Festival Feasts

Spring Salad with Honey Mustard Dressing

Fresh greens, vibrant colors, and a sweet but spicy dressing. Now that is a spring salad! This salad will delight the senses and leave your guests feeling revitalized and satisfied.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 6-8

Dressing

3 Tbsp. honey

1 ½ Tbsp. white wine vinegar

¼ c. mayonnaise

1 ½ tsp. Dijon mustard

1/8 tsp. sesame oil (olive oil can be substituted)

blender

medium bowl

Blend together until smooth and creamy

Salad

½ head romaine lettuce

½ bunch fresh spinach

1 red bell pepper

1 yellow bell pepper

½ cucumber

4 green onions

3 roma tomatoes

4-5 mushrooms

large salad bowl

Spring Equinox

1. Remove the stems from the spinach and tear both greens into a large salad bowl.
2. Chop the other ingredients and toss with the greens.
3. Top with dressing.

Potato Leek Soup

This is a quick and easy soup that can just as easily be done in a crock pot, if you have one. It is so meaty that it could easily serve as a main course with some crusty French bread. If you want a unique and hearty soup but don't have a lot of time, this is the one for you. To save yourself even more time, chop and wash the leeks the night before.

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 30-35 minutes
Serves: 4-6

3 large leeks
2 Tbsp. olive oil
4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
½ c. dry white wine
2 lbs. baking potatoes
salt and pepper to taste
¼ tsp. each of rosemary, marjoram, basil, and bay leaf

large soup pot
bowl
blender

1. Remove the green tops from the leeks. Then cut them into chunks, approximately 1-inch.
2. Soak the leeks in cold water for 5 minutes and rinse under cold water to remove all the dirt between the layers.
3. Peel and cube the potatoes.
4. In a large soup pot, heat the oil over medium heat.
5. Add leeks and spices. Cook for 5 minutes until leeks are translucent. Do not allow leeks to brown!

Spring Equinox

6. Add wine and cook for an additional 3-4 minutes, reducing the liquid by half.
7. Add broth and potatoes and bring to a boil.
8. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, until potatoes are tender.
9. Remove about half the soup and puree in a blender. Return to pot and simmer for another 2-3 minutes.

Festival Feasts

Roast Lamb

There are few meats so tender and juicy as lamb. Cooked correctly, the meat practically falls right off the bone. This is a perfect spring dinner for the meat-eaters in your life.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Marinade Time: at least 4 hours Cook Time: 1 ½ hours

Serves: 8-10

Marinade

½ c. orange juice

1 c. white wine

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 tsp. thyme

1 Tbsp. rosemary

½ c. buttermilk

2 Tbsp. olive oil

salt and pepper to taste

large bowl

wire whisk

2 large food-grade plastic bags

1. Whisk ingredients together well.
2. Place lamb in the bag and pour marinade over top.
3. Squeeze the air out of the bag and seal. Wrap in 2nd bag and seal.
4. Marinate for at least 4 hours in the refrigerator.

Spring Equinox

Lamb Roast

6 lb. leg of lamb, bone-in preferred

salt and pepper

2 roasting pans

paper towels

meat thermometer

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Remove lamb from marinade bags and pat dry with paper towels.
3. Salt and pepper all sides of the meat.
4. Place in roasting pan with fattiest side up. Insert meat thermometer into thickest part and be sure it is not touching the bone.
5. Place on middle rack in oven. Place 2nd roasting pan on bottom rack to catch drippings and speed cooking time.
6. Roast for 20 minutes. Reduce heat to 325°F and cook for an additional hour until meat thermometer read 135°F. Do not overcook or it will be dry.
7. Remove from oven and let sit for 10 minutes before carving.

Stuffed Baked Potatoes Hollandaise

Have you ever had real, restaurant Hollandaise? It is so rich and creamy and tangy that I'm salivating just thinking about it. The annoying thing about Hollandaise sauce is that it can curdle if you overcook it just a little and, frankly, it requires a lot of attention. If you are like me, you don't need to spend a ton of time and energy on one delicate sauce when you are getting ready for a festival celebration. That's why I offer you a delicious faux Hollandaise in this recipe. It takes no time at all and is pretty darned close to the real thing in taste and texture.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1 ½ hour

Serves: 6-8

Sauce

6 egg yolks

4 Tbsp. lemon juice

2 Tbsp. sour cream

¼ tsp. salt

pinch cayenne pepper

1 c. butter

blender

small sauce pan

1. Melt butter over medium-high heat to bubbling. Do not allow to brown.
2. Blend all ingredients except butter in blender for 5 seconds.
3. Slowly add the butter in a steady stream while blending.
4. Blend for another 10-15 seconds. Serve immediately.

Spring Equinox

Potatoes

4 baking potatoes

4 Tbsp. olive oil

2 broccoli crowns

1 red bell pepper

1 small red onion

Optional: cooked, crumbled bacon or grilled chicken

Cutting board and knife

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Rub a small amount of oil into each potato and poke a few small holes in them before placing on the center rack in the oven and baking for 1 – 1 ¼ hour.
3. Chop the vegetables and sauté in oil over medium heat.
4. When potatoes are done, cut them in half lengthwise and squeeze the sides slightly to break up the inside. Spread them open and top with vegetables. Pour sauce over top and serve.

Chai Tea

I remember the first time I had chai tea. My mother, son, and I were sitting in an outdoor dining area in the Jemez Mountains of New Mexico at a fairly trendy restaurant. We had no clue how to pronounce it, but my mom ordered a mug so we could try it. It's one of our favorite drinks now. So, of course, we had to find a way to make it at home. This is the result.

Did you know that chai (pronounced *chigh*) is simply the word for *tea* in Asia, parts of Africa, and Eastern Europe? In India and parts of the Middle East, chaiwalas (street vendors) sell chai, just as we have ice cream, hot dog, and coffee vendors in the States.

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4-6

3 c. water

½ c. cream or milk

18 whole cloves

3 tsp. ginger

2 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. cardamom

½ tsp. nutmeg

3 tsp. sugar

½ c. black tea

medium sauce pan

strainer

medium bowl

Spring Equinox

1. In a medium sauce pan, bring water and spices to a boil.
2. Remove from heat, add tea and cover for 5 minutes.
3. Remove tea bags and strain into bowl.
4. Return tea to pan and cook over medium-heat until hot.
5. Add cream and sugar. You may find that the amounts need to be adjusted according to your taste.

Egg Custard

Ah, egg custard! This brings up more family memories for me. My maternal grandmother used to make egg custard and serve it warm in thick dark brown mugs. It always meant warmth and comfort and family to me. I hope it brings a safe and comfy feeling to your spring celebrations!

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Chill Time: 1+ hour

Serves: 4-6

1 ½ c. heavy cream

6 egg yolks

¼ c. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla extract

medium sauce pan

medium bowl

electric mixer

1. In the medium sauce pan, bring milk or cream to a boil.
2. Remove from heat and add the vanilla extract. Allow to sit for 10 minutes.
3. In a medium bowl, beat the egg yolks until creamy.
4. Add egg yolks to milk gradually, while mixing on low.
5. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until mixture thickens.
6. Refrigerate for at least an hour before serving.

Chapter Seven

Beltane

Hot and spicy, then cool and sweet. That's what I think of when I think of Beltane foods. Best known as a fertility festival, Beltane is also a time when youth blossoms into young adulthood. Both weather and passions are warming up, and all of life seems to be bursting with vitality.

Menu for Beltane Celebrations

Appetizers:	Tortilla Chips and Guacamole Curried Shrimp
Salad:	Southwestern Pasta Salad
Soup:	Spicy Chickpea Soup
Main dish:	Chiles Relleno Casserole Quesadillas
Beverage:	Lavender May Wine
Dessert:	Zucchini Muffins with Lavender Cream Frosting

Festival Feasts

Tortilla Chips and Guacamole

My husband is a fantastic cook, and his guacamole is the best I have ever tasted. This is his special recipe, along with mine for homemade tortilla chips. The combination of crispy, salty chips with smooth, creamy yet spicy guacamole is not to be missed!

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 5 minutes

Serves: 8-20

Tortilla Chips

4 corn tortillas

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. olive oil

salt to taste

medium frying pan

slotted spoon

paper towels on plate

1. Cut tortillas into 8 wedges each.
2. Heat oil in a medium frying pan until a drop of water pops and bubbles.
3. Cook wedges in oil until golden brown.
4. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle with salt.

Beltane

Guacamole

4 avocados

¼ c. onions

1 medium tomato

2 Tbsp. green chile sauce

1 clove garlic

1 tsp. lemon juice

dash of cilantro

*** you can substitute 1 Tbsp. chili powder if you can't find green chile or green chile sauce**

medium bowl

1. Mince onion and garlic.
2. Peel and core avocados.
3. Mash avocados with a fork and stir in remaining ingredients.

Curried Shrimp Bites

Once denigrated as being high in cholesterol, shrimp is back in favor. Not only has it been proven not to increase cholesterol, it can decrease triglyceride levels, it does not contribute to inflammatory conditions, and it is low in fat, and low in calories. It also contains Omega-3, B12, niacin, iron, copper and zinc. Okay, it doesn't have chocolate in it, but apart from that, it's a pretty perfect food and it cooks up quickly! Just the thing for holiday get-togethers.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 6-8

Cook Time: 50 minutes

2 lbs. shrimp, peeled
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
2 c. canned tomatoes
2 tsp. ground ginger
2 garlic cloves
2 medium onions
3 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 tsp. curry powder
1 ½ Tbsp. garam masala powder or:
1 ½ tsp. ground coriander, 1 ½ tsp. ground cumin, 1
tsp. ground red (chili) pepper, ½ tsp. ground cloves,
and ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon

large sauté pan with cover
toothpicks or mini-forks

Beltane

1. Chop onions and garlic.
2. Heat oil in sauté pan over medium heat. When warm, add butter and melt.
3. Add onions and brown slightly.
4. Add garlic, ginger, curry, and garam masala mix. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring frequently.
5. Add tomatoes and lemon juice.
6. Cover and cook for 30 minutes, until sauce thickens.
7. Add shrimp and cook for another 5 minutes. Serve with toothpicks or mini-forks.

Southwestern Pasta Salad

Pasta salad is something we always try to have on hand in the summer. It's cool and quick, and you can add so many deliciously healthy ingredients to it. It's perfect for celebrations, lunches, snacks, you name it.

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 10-12 minutes

Chill Time: overnight

Serves: 6-10

2 c. pasta
1 can black beans
1 large tomato
½ red onion
2 cloves garlic
1 Tbsp. green chile
1 tsp. cilantro
1 Tbsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin
1 c. bell peppers
1/3 c. olive oil
1 Tbsp. lime juice

Large stock pot
medium bowl
large bowl with cover

1. Boil the pasta for 10-12 minutes. Drain and set aside in a large bowl.
2. Dice the tomato, onion, and garlic. Cube the bell peppers.

Beltane

3. In the medium bowl, mix together the olive oil, lime juice, chili powder, green chile, cilantro, cumin, and garlic.
4. Add to pasta then stir in beans, onion, tomato, and bell peppers.
5. Refrigerate overnight. Serve cold or at room temperature.

Spicy Chickpea Soup

Just spicy enough to engage your senses, yet hearty enough to give you plenty of energy to jump the bale fires, this soup is a real treat for vegetarians and omnivores alike. It's the perfect thing to eliminate the chill of May nights and get you back out to the drum circle.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 1 hour

Serves: 6-10

¼ c. olive oil
1 lg onion, diced
8 cloves garlic, diced
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. cumin
1/8 tsp. cayenne
1 tsp. curry
14 ½ oz. chopped tomatoes
45 oz. chickpeas, cooked and drained
1 qt. vegetable or chicken broth
1/8 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. black pepper
5 oz. baby spinach
water

large sauce pan
measuring cups/spoons
fork

1. Sauté onion and garlic in oil until onions turn translucent.
2. Add cinnamon, cumin, cayenne, and paprika and sauté 1-2 minutes.

Beltane

3. Add tomatoes, chickpeas, broth, salt, and pepper. If chickpeas are not covered with liquid, add just enough water to cover them. Stir well and simmer 45 minutes.
4. Remove from heat and use a fork to mash some of the chickpeas.
5. Add spinach and cook for 1 minute.

Chiles Rellenos Casserole

Chile rellenos are in my top five all-time favorite foods. In my area, you can order them just about anywhere but making them at home can be time-consuming and messy, not to mention frustrating until you get the hang of it. This casserole is the ideal option for a festival celebration. It is still mouth-wateringly delicious, plus it is quick and easy.

Prep Time: 35 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 6-8

8 fresh Poblano or Anaheim green chiles

4 Tbsp. olive oil

1 ½ c. onion

3 cloves garlic

1 lb. ground beef

½ c. flour

6 large eggs

½ lb. Monterey Jack cheese

Optional garnishes:

½ c. sour cream

¼ c. chopped chives

½ c. diced tomatoes

cookie pan

sealable plastic bags

large sauté pan

2 large bowls

3-quart, deep casserole dish

Beltane

1. Roast the chiles under a broiler until the skin is brown and blistered on both sides. Place chiles immediately into a plastic bag and seal for 10-15 minutes until cool. You may peel them now or put them in the freezer until you are ready. Slice them each in half, lengthwise.
2. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
3. Dice the onions and garlic. Shred the cheese.
4. Cook the onions and garlic in 3 Tbsp. olive oil over medium-high heat until transparent. Add beef and cook until browned.
5. Split the egg yolks and whites into 2 bowls. Beat the whites until stiff peaks form. Beat the yolks until creamy. Gently, fold the yolks into the whites.
6. Grease a casserole dish with the remaining olive oil. Layer the bottom of the dish with 4 chiles. Top with beef and pour half the egg mixture over top. Repeat the layering and top with shredded cheese.
7. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes.
8. Garnish and serve warm.

Quesadillas

So easy to make and so adaptable, quesadillas can be made to please every guest, no matter their age or eating habits. These are another of our favorites to make at home and they are so easy that our son was making his own by age 9.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 50 minutes

Serves: 6

4 tortillas

½ lb. cheddar cheese

½ lb. Monterey Jack cheese

½ c. olive oil

Optional:

grilled chicken, shrimp, or steak; sliced vegetables

large frying pan

paper towels

1. Layer cheese and any other ingredients on one tortilla, then top with a second tortilla to make a sandwich.
2. Heat the olive oil in the pan over medium-high heat until a drop of water bubbles in the oil.
3. Gently place the tortilla sandwich in the oil. Be careful when doing this. Hot oil can spit and burn.
4. Cook for 3-5 minutes then flip.
5. Cook for another 2-3 minutes. Then remove and drain on paper towels before serving.

Beltane

Lavender May Wine

May wine is a very old tradition for this time of year, and it can be a challenge to find good May wine in the States. The key to making this aromatic wine is really sweet woodruff (*Galium odoratum*), and it is wise to be careful with this plant. Don't add too much or you may have an unpleasant reaction. The additions of lavender and champagne are certainly not traditional, but they add a delightful fragrance and celebratory feel that will surprise and enchant your guests.

Prep Time: 4 hrs, 10 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 4-8

1 liter Riesling or other white wine
1 liter champagne or sparkling wine
2 tsp. dried Provence lavender buds
6 g. sweet woodruff
2 pints fresh strawberries

large punch bowl with serving spoon
small strainer

1. Combine the white wine and champagne in a large punch bowl. Add woodruff and lavender and allow to steep for at least 4 hours.
2. Using the strainer, scoop out the majority of plant material.
3. Slice the strawberries in half and float on top of the wine.
4. Serve at room temperature.

Zucchini Muffins with Lavender Cream Frosting

I started making these muffins without the frosting to get vegetables into my son. He used to subscribe to the usual Kid Code of avoiding evil things that grow in the ground. But he has always loved these muffins, whether I make them with zucchini, carrots, or bananas. When I decided to add the lavender cream frosting for a Beltane celebration, it was a big hit with moms and kids alike.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 12

Muffins

1 c. all-purpose flour

½ cup rice flour

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. baking powder

½ tsp. baking soda

1 ½ tsp. cinnamon

¼ tsp. nutmeg

2 large eggs

¼ c. olive oil

¼ c. unsweetened applesauce

½ c. plain yogurt

¼ c. honey

1 c. shredded zucchini

1 tsp. vanilla extract

¼ c. raisins

2 Tbsp. butter

Beltane

Frosting

12 oz. cream cheese at room temperature

½ lb. butter at room temperature

2 Tbsp. lemon juice

1 Tbsp. dried lavender buds

1 tsp. vanilla extract

4 ½ c. baker's or confectioner's sugar

2 large bowls

medium bowl

sifter

electric mixer

wire rack

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Butter 24 muffin cups.
2. Sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a medium bowl.
3. In a large bowl, beat the eggs, olive oil, applesauce, yogurt, honey, and vanilla on medium speed.
4. Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and mix well.
5. Fold in zucchini and raisins.
6. Fill muffin cups and bake for 18-20 minutes, until a knife or toothpick inserted in to the center of a muffin comes out clean.
7. Cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack before frosting.

Frosting

1. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except sugar. Beat on medium until smooth.
2. Gradually add sugar and continue beating until smooth and creamy.

Chapter Eight

Summer Solstice

The longest day of the year is when the energy of the god is at its height. From this point on, we move into the realm of the goddess and the dark half of the year. Midsummer revels invite fairies to play and will hopefully get everyone outside to enjoy some fresh air. Foods of this season are rich and fresh, with unique combinations of fruits, vegetables, and staples like meat and fish.

Menu for Summer Solstice Celebrations

Appetizers:	Crudités Mozzarella & Prosciutto Melons
Salad:	Pear Goat Cheese Salad
Soup:	Corn Chowder
Main dish:	Swordfish with Pineapple Salsa Asiago Cheese and Spinach Pies
Beverage:	Margaritas
Dessert:	Blueberry Crisp with Ice Cream

Crudites

Crudités (crew-dee-tays) are usually small vegetables served with a dip as an appetizer. They are great for vegetarian guests, and they are a healthy way to fill up on fiber before the main meal if you are watching your weight.

Now, crudités can be an easy appetizer, but they can be kind of boring and common if you don't put any thought into them. When you plan to serve crudités, consider using a variety of colors, textures, and shapes, along with a dip that is guaranteed to please and one or two that are unusual and go well with the vegetables you've chosen.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 10-15

pinch of salt

ice

water

¼ c. broccoli*

¼ c. cauliflower*

5 of each:

cherry tomatoes, halved

baby carrots

mushrooms

baby corn

asparagus*

radishes

*** These vegetables really should be blanched before serving raw as a crudité.**

Summer Solstice

large sauce pan

large bowl

slotted spoon

serving platter

1. Slice and separate vegetables into 2-3 inch pieces.
2. Fill the sauce pan with salted water and bring to a boil. Add vegetables to be blanched in small bunches. After 1 minute, remove and place in bowl of ice water. Drain when completely cooled.
3. Arrange vegetables on serving platter and serve with your choice of dipping sauces.

Mozzarella & Prosciutto Melons

Meat, cheese, and melons may sound like an odd combination, but you will be surprised at just how tasty this is. It balances the yin and yang of each ingredient, giving you longer lasting energy than just fruit alone as it cools and refreshes. It is perfect for a summer gathering.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 8

1 medium cantaloupe or honeydew melon

8 oz. mozzarella cheese

2 Tbsp. capers

1 tsp. pepper

8 thin slices of prosciutto

medium bowl

toothpicks

1. Cut melon into eighths and discard seeds.
2. Mix goat cheese, capers, and pepper in a medium bowl.
3. Slice the cheese into bite-sized pieces to fit on the melon slices.
4. Top each melon piece with cheese mixture, then prosciutto. Hold each together with one toothpick.

Summer Solstice

Pear Goat Cheese Salad

While you are getting creative with fruit and cheese this summer, why not add a delicious pear and goat cheese salad to your offering? Refreshing and revitalizing, this is a clever twist on the usual fruit salad.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4-6

2 large Bosc pears
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
olive oil cooking spray
2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 c. butter lettuce
4 c. spinach
1 oz toasted pine (pinon) nuts
4 oz. goat cheese
¼ c. Balsamic vinaigrette

cookie sheet
aluminum foil
large salad bowl

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Cover cookie sheet with foil and spray with olive oil.
3. Peel and core pears. Cut into halves and brush with lemon juice and olive oil.
4. Bake for 25 minutes until tender. Allow to cool slightly.
5. Combine greens in the salad bowl.
6. Slice pears and gently toss into greens.
7. Crumble goat cheese on top and add toasted pine nuts. Serve with vinaigrette.

Festival Feasts

Shrimp Gazpacho

Gazpacho is a cold soup, and this one is reminiscent of Mediterranean fare. I know, you're thinking, "Cold soup? I don't think so." Give it a try and you are likely to be pleasantly surprised. Serve it with some crusty bread, and your gathering will have a unique and healthy dish to share in.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 4-6

Chill Time: 12 hours

2 celery stalks
1 medium red onion
2 red bell peppers
6 cloves garlic
1 bunch cilantro
28 oz. can stewed tomatoes
5 oz. can tomato paste
1 c. tomato juice
½ c. red wine vinegar
pinch cayenne pepper
½ c. olive oil
1 c. water
salt and pepper to taste
7-8 green onions
¼ lb. cooked shrimp
¼ cup breadcrumbs

large bowl
food processor

Summer Solstice

1. Chop all the vegetables and place them in a large bowl. Add everything except the bread crumbs, green onions, and shrimp.
2. Allow to sit for at least 2 hours in the refrigerator.
3. Add to a food processor and chop well.
4. Return to bowl and top with bread crumbs, green onions, and shrimp.

Festival Feasts

Swordfish with Pineapple Salsa

We could all stand to eat more fish, with all the fabulous Omega-3 oils it contains. At Midsummer, the spicy, tangy sweetness of a pineapple salsa is just the thing to add to a meaty swordfish steak. If swordfish isn't your thing, try substituting tuna steaks.

Prep Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4-6

1 medium red onion
½ c. plus 2 Tbsp. rice vinegar
¼ c. soy sauce
¼ c. brown sugar
2 Tsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. Caribbean jerk seasoning
4 swordfish steaks
2 c. diced pineapple
½ c. onion
½ c. cilantro
2 tsp. lime juice
1 jalapeno pepper

blender
medium bowl
plastic wrap
baking sheet and broiler or grill
deep tray large enough to hold fish

Summer Solstice

1. Chop the red onion and place it in the blender. Add ½ c. vinegar, soy sauce, brown sugar, olive oil, and jerk seasoning. Blend well.
2. Place fish in tray and pour blender ingredients over top. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
3. Finely dice the other onion. Seed and finely dice the jalapeno. Dice the pineapple if you haven't purchased a can of it already diced.
4. In a medium bowl, combine pineapple, onion, cilantro, lime juice, jalapeno, and 2 Tbsp. vinegar. Let stand for 30 minutes.
5. Grill or broil the swordfish for 8-10 minutes and serve with the salsa.

Festival Feasts

Asiago Cheese and Spinach Pies

I went through an Asiago-addicted phase not too long ago and adapted all sorts of recipes to fit my addiction. This was my spanakopita (Greek spinach pie) version, and I still like them better than the original Greek version. These individual pies were a big hit, particularly since they are so easy and portable. They are perfect for dinner at home, a picnic, or a camping festival.

Prep Time: 35 minutes Bake Time: 30-40 minutes
Serves: 9

3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 large onion
1 bunch green onions
2 cloves garlic
2 lbs. spinach
¼ c. chopped fresh parsley
2 eggs
½ c. ricotta cheese
1 cup Asiago cheese
9-12 sheets phyllo dough
olive oil cooking spray

large sauté pan
medium bowl
electric mixer
waxed paper
9 ramekins or small ovenproof bowls

Summer Solstice

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray ramekins lightly with olive oil.
2. Chop onion, spinach and green onions. Mince garlic.
3. In sauté pan, heat 3 Tbsp. olive oil over medium heat. Cook onion, green onions, and garlic until lightly browned.
4. Add spinach and parsley and cook for another 2 minutes. Allow to cool.
5. In medium bowl, lightly beat eggs.
6. Add Ricotta and Asiago cheese and mix well. Stir in spinach mixture.
7. On a sheet of waxed paper, lay out one sheet of phyllo dough. Lightly spray with oil and cut a square to fit your ramekins. Be sure to leave enough dough to fill each ramekin to the bottom and come up to cover the entire top.
8. Gently place a dough square in each ramekin and repeat the process until you have 4-5 squares layered in each ramekin.
9. Fill each ramekin with the spinach and cheese mixture. Fold the excess dough over the top and lightly spray with oil.
10. Bake for 30-40 minutes until the tops are golden brown. Serve warm.

Festival Feasts

Margaritas

Our friend Oz turned us on to these dangerously yummy margaritas more than ten years ago. They are cooling and tangy but be warned – the delicious taste hides the alcohol really well so it's easy to have one or two too many!

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4-6

Crushed ice
lime juice
Tequila
Cointreau
Kosher salt
water

Pitcher
2 small plates
glasses

1. In a large pitcher, combine
2. Add a small amount of water to one small plate. Dip the edge of each glass in the water and allow the excess to drip off.
3. Dip the glass in the salt to coat the edge. Add margarita and serve.

Summer Solstice

Blueberry Crisp with Ice Cream

When I was a kid, we could start picking wild blueberries around Midsummer. What fun it was to find them and feast! Very few made it home for pies or anyone else. Blueberries now top many of the lists of "Superfoods," being high in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Who knew we were hunting for health food out in the woods! Blueberry crisp topped with ice cream is not only reminiscent of the season, but it is a fabulous dessert for your Midsummer feasts.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4-6

1/3 c. sugar
2 Tbsp. cornstarch
3 pints blueberries
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
³/₄ c. oats
1/2 c. brown sugar
1/3 c. flour
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
4 Tbsp. butter

2 large bowls
2 1/2 qt. casserole dish

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. In one bowl, mix sugar and cornstarch well. Add blueberries and lemon juice and mix until coated.
3. Pour mixture into casserole dish.

Festival Feasts

4. In other bowl, mix oats, brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon. Add butter and work in with your fingers until crumbly.
5. Spread oat mixture over top of casserole dish.
6. Bake for 35-45 minutes until brown and bubbly.

Chapter Dine

Lughnasadh

Lugh's feast in honor of his stepmother, Tailtiu, is a time of feasting and games. This is also the grain harvest, when we have breads and muffins to go along with our fresh fruits and veggies. Foods at this time of year cannot be too heavy, since most of us are enjoying the hottest month of the year, but we do like to grill outside. Besides, keeping it light and hearty will give you more energy for all those games.

Menu for Lughnasadh Celebrations

Appetizers:	Mushroom Caviar Carrot Zucchini Muffins
Salad:	Garden Salad with Bleu Cheese and Sun-Dried Tomato Dressing
Soup:	Corn and Crab Bisque
Main dish:	Beef Satay Shish-Ke-Babs
Beverage:	Peach Smoothie
Dessert:	Cherry Clafouti

Mushroom Caviar

Okay, so it isn't really caviar. But it tastes great and it isn't salty fish eggs, which are pretty gross in my opinion, not to mention that many of these fish are harvested simply for their eggs.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Chill Time: 1+ hour

Serves: 4

3 Tbsp. butter

½ lb. mushrooms

½ c. shallots

1 Tbsp. dry white wine

2 garlic cloves

2 Tbsp. pinon nuts

2 Tbsp. sour cream

½ Tbsp. parsley

large sauté pan

small sauté pan

medium bowl

1. Mince shallots and garlic.
2. In a large sauté pan, cook mushrooms and shallots in butter on high heat for 5 minutes.
3. Add garlic and 1 Tbsp. white wine. Cook for 1 minute.
4. Toast pinon nuts in a small sauté pan on high heat. Do not let them burn. When they are lightly toasted, remove from heat and set aside.
5. Combine mushroom mixture and pinons in a medium bowl. Allow to cool for 5 minutes.
6. Add sour cream and parsley and mix well. Refrigerate for at least an hour.

Lughnasadh

Carrot and Berry Muffins

The bounty of the harvest, all in one delicious hand-held package! Not only are these muffins yummy, but they are healthy. Grab one after a running race or before a dance for some extra stamina.

Prep Time: 15 minutes
Serves: 18-24

Cook Time: 20 minutes

2 c. flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. oat flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
3 eggs
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. olive oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. unsweetened applesauce
1 c. plain yogurt
1 c. honey
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 c. berries
2 c. carrots, shredded
stick of butter
optional:
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. raisins, $\frac{1}{2}$ c. chopped walnuts

24 muffin cups
flour sifter
2 large bowls
electric mixer

Festival Feasts

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Lightly grease muffin cups with butter.
3. Grate or shred carrots.
4. In one bowl, sift together flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg.
5. In the other bowl, add eggs, olive oil, applesauce, yogurt, honey, and vanilla. Beat on medium-high with mixer.
6. Add flour mixture to egg mixture and mix well.
7. Fold in berries, carrots, and optional ingredients.
8. Spoon into muffin cups and bake for 20 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Lughnasadh

Garden Salad with Bleu Cheese and Sun-Dried Tomato Dressing

Now *this* is a summer harvest salad. Filling and light, it is packed with the bounty of the season. It even has tomatoes dried by the summer sun. What more could you ask for?

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Serves: 6-8

Cook Time: 10 minutes

1 head red-leaf lettuce
4 tomatoes
1 med. onion, sliced
1 med. green pepper
1 med. red pepper
1 med. cucumber
1 lg. carrot
½ head broccoli florets
¼ loaf crusty brea
5 Tbsp. olive oil
½ tsp. rosemary
½ tsp. basil

small sauté pan
large salad bowl

1. To make easy homemade croutons, lightly brown bread cubes in oil, rosemary, and basil. Set aside to cool.
2. Cube tomatoes and bread. Slice onion, cucumber, and peppers. Julienne carrots but cutting into thin match-stick-sized pieces.

Festival Feasts

3. Combine vegetables in salad bowl. Top with dressing and homemade croutons.

Dressing

½ c. sour cream

1 c. crumbled bleu cheese

¼ c. red wine vinegar

¼ c. olive oil

salt and pepper to taste

½ c. sun-dried tomatoes

blender

measuring cup

medium bowl

mixing spoon

1. Drain and dice tomatoes.
2. Combine sour cream, vinegar, olive oil, salt, and pepper in a blender and mix until creamy.
3. Transfer to a medium bowl and add bleu cheese and sun-dried tomatoes.
4. Mix and refrigerate.

Lughnasadh

Corn and Crab Bisque

This is an easy bisque, honoring the corn harvest, that complements the lighter fare of this festival well. Combine this with the salad, and you could easily make a meal of it.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Serves: 6-8

2 Tbsp. butter
1 onion
1 head cauliflower
2 cans cream of mushroom soup
2 cans cream of celery soup
6 c. frozen corn
2 ½ c. cream
1 lb. crab meat
2 lbs. tail-off shrimp
2 cloves garlic
2 Tbsp. Creole seasoning
1 tsp. ground red chili pepper
3 green onions

large soup pot
large bowl
blender

1. Chop onion, garlic, and green onions.
2. Boil cauliflower for 10-15 minutes until soft. Drain and mash with a fork.
3. Melt butter in soup pot over medium-high heat. Cook onion until transparent.
4. Add soups, corn, and cauliflower. Cook for 5 minutes.

Festival Feasts

5. Add cream, crab, shrimp, green onions, and spices. Cook for 20 minutes, stirring frequently.
6. Remove 1/3 of soup and puree in blender. Return to pot and simmer for another 5 minutes.

Beef Satay

In honor of the grilling season, I offer this fantastic beef dish. It has Indian flavors that do not overpower the seared meat. Instead, they give it a slightly spicy, creamy taste that has to be tried to be fully appreciated. This is an easy dish to prepare ahead of time and cook at a picnic or camping festival.

Prep Time: 2 hours, 10 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes
Serves: 6-8

1 lb. beef tenderloin or filet mignon

1 tsp. ginger

1 c. plain yogurt

1 Tbsp. curry powder

2 cloves garlic

¼ c. lemon juice

1 tsp. cumin powder

2 Tbsp. cilantro

8-10 steel skewers

large bowl

plastic wrap

deep tray large enough to hold beef

1. Mince the garlic and grate the ginger.
2. Cut the beef into chunks place in tray.
3. In the bowl, mix together yogurt, ginger, garlic, curry, cumin, and lemon juice.
4. Pour over the beef. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours.
5. String beef onto skewers and grill for 3-5 minutes on each side.
6. Garnish with cilantro before serving.

Festival Feasts

Shish-Ke-Babs

More traditional shish-ke-babs can easily be adapted for your vegetarian family and friends. We love grilled fish and veggies in the summer, and this is another easy dish for your picnics or camping festivals.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 8 minutes

Serves: 8-10

1 pt. cherry tomatoes

4 medium onions

2 zucchini

2 carrots

¼ head cauliflower

8-10 mushrooms

3 bell peppers, various colors

optional: 1 lb. scallops or shrimp

8-10 steel skewers

barbecue grill

1. Cut vegetables into 3-inch chunks.
2. Fill skewers, alternating vegetables and shrimp or scallops.
3. Over flame or medium heat, grill for 8 minutes, rotating on all sides.

Lughnasadh

Peach Smoothie

Imagine yourself lounging with your friends, sitting back in the warm summer heat sipping a cool, sweet, and healthy peach smoothie. You watch the games and toast to Lugh, Tailtiu, and your own community. Now that is a Lughnasadh delight!

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 4-6

5 peaches

½ c. vanilla yogurt

2 Tbsp. honey

1 tsp. vanilla extract

optional:

¼ c. of berries or bananas cut into small chunks

blender

1. If your peaches are fresh, you will need to peel, pit, and freeze them overnight. Chop them into smaller pieces before proceeding.
2. Puree yogurt, honey, and vanilla extract.
3. Drop peach pieces (and other fruits) in, one at a time, and puree until smooth and creamy.

Cherry Clafouti

Kind of like an easy cherry cake. I first tried this interesting dessert at a homeschool potluck. As always, I played with it until I had a version that was just right for me. This is a great Lughnasadh offering since fresh cherries are often available locally at this time of year.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Serves: 6-10

2 Tbsp. plus ½ tsp. butter

2 c. fresh cherries, pitted

¼ c. sugar

4 large eggs

1 c. cream

½ c. flour

¼ tsp. salt

¼ c. cocoa powder

9-inch deep-dish pie plate

blender

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and set the butter out to soften.
2. Remove the pits from enough cherries to fill 2 cups without the pits.
3. Butter the inside of the pie plate and fill with cherries,
4. Blend sugar, cream, eggs, flour, salt, and butter until smooth.
5. Pour mixture over cherries.
6. Bake for 30 minutes.
7. Dust with cocoa powder and serve warm.

Chapter Ten

Autumn Equinox

Also known as Mabon, this time when night and day are of equal length is a period of balance, rich in history, legend, and tradition. We seek reflection and harmony as we move into the dark half of the year. A time of cooling temperatures, luxurious colors, and dramatic change in the natural world, this is also the apple and grape harvest. The foods of this season are rich and luxurious, reflecting both the harvest and the colors of the time.

Menu for *Autumn Equinox Celebrations*

Appetizers:	Shrimp with Cocktail Sauce Bruschetta with Roasted Red Peppers
Salad:	Pasta Primavera
Soup:	Apple Squash Soup
Main dish:	Roast Turkey Corn & Bean Casserole
Beverage:	Autumn Spice Cordial
Dessert:	Apple-berry Purses

Festival Feasts

Shrimp with Cocktail Sauce

This was always a favorite of mine, reminding me of fancier parties and restaurants. Then I learned about how healthy shrimp are and how easy it is to prepare! Now it's a frequent addition to our potluck and festival offering list.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 6

¾ c. chili sauce

2 Tbsp. horseradish

½ tsp. Kosher salt

2 Tbsp. green onion

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

2 Tbsp. lemon juice

4 drops Tabasco sauce

2 cloves garlic

24 cooked, peeled shrimp

optional: 2 fresh lemons

small bowl with cover

2 serving bowls and toothpicks

optional: martini or dessert glasses

1. Mince the garlic and thinly slice the green onion.
2. Combine all ingredients in small bowl.
3. Cover and refrigerate at least overnight. Can be made up to 2 weeks in advance.
4. Serve shrimp with toothpicks and a bowl of sauce.

Autumn Equinox

5. To make it a little more special, spoon a small amount of sauce into glasses. Cut the lemons into quarters. Cut along the center of each lemon slice and place 1-2 on the rim of each glass. Run a lemon slice around the glass to line it with lemon juice and hang 6-8 shrimp along the edge of the glass.

Bruschetta with Roasted Red Peppers

Mouth-wateringly good and rich in the colors of the season, this is another fairly simple yet elegant touch for your festival feasts. I must warn you about the addictive nature of this dish though. It can be difficult to eat just one or two!

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 5 minutes
Serves: 10-12

1 loaf Italian bread
2 Tbsp. olive oil
16 oz. jar of roasted red peppers
3 cloves garlic
1 tomato
1 c. basil
1 onion
3 Tbsp. Balsamic vinegar

broiling pan
basting brush
medium bowl

1. Chop onion and garlic. Seed and chop tomato.
2. Cut 1-inch thick slices of bread.
3. Brush both sides of the bread with olive oil.
4. Broil on high until golden.
5. In the bowl, combine peppers, garlic, basil, and onion. Mix well.
6. Spoon onto slightly cooled toast and drizzle with vinegar. Serve immediately.

Autumn Equinox

Pasta Primavera

If I could live on pasta without getting fat, I would eat this every day. It is so versatile that it can be a seasonal dish all year round, simply changing the vegetables you add and perhaps mixing in a different sauce or oil mixture. This one is nice and light, but just a little spicy for your Mabon festivals. It is cheap and easy and perfect for potlucks or feasts.

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Chill Time: Overnight

Serves: 6

1 large carrot
1 yellow squash
½ red bell pepper
½ green bell pepper
½ c. broccoli
1 red onion
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 c. creamy Italian dressing
½ pt. cherry tomatoes
1 Tbsp. sunflower kernels
½ lb. pasta (rotelle or elbow)
4 c. water

large sauté pan
large sauce pan
colander
large bowl with lid

Festival Feasts

1. In the sauce pan, bring water to a boil. Add pasta and cook according to directions, usually 8-12 minutes.
2. Peel squash and carrots. Chop onions, broccoli, and squash. Slice carrots and peppers.
3. In the sauté pan, heat olive oil. Then add onion and cook until transparent.
4. Add broccoli, carrot, squash, peppers and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Drain pasta. Add pasta and dressing to vegetables for 1-2 minutes.
6. Transfer to large bowl. Add tomatoes and refrigerate overnight.

Autumn Equinox

Apple Squash Soup

Just writing this recipe makes my mouth water! It really is an unusual combination, but it is so delicious that your family and your guests are sure to compliment you on it. If you've never tried fried sage leaves, you really must offer them as an option when you serve it. And best of all, it's good for you.

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Serves: 10-12

Cook Time: 1 ½ hour

2 medium butternut squash
1 medium onion
1 stalk celery
2 Tbsp. olive oil
5 medium apples
4 c. chicken broth
4 c. water
salt and pepper to taste
optional:
10-20 fresh sage leaves
½ - 1 c. olive oil
small frying pan

cookie tin
aluminum foil
large bowl
large soup pot with cover
blender
small frying pan
paper towels

Festival Feasts

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.
2. Cut squash in half and remove strings and seeds. Place, cut-side down, on cookie sheet lined with aluminum foil.
3. Bake for 45 minutes, until very tender. Allow to cool slightly.
4. Scoop out squash from the skin and place in the large bowl.
5. In a large sauce pot, cook onion and celery in oil over medium heat. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Add apples. Cover again and cook for 15 minutes.
7. Add chicken broth, water, squash, salt, and pepper. Cover again and bring to a boil.
8. Reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
9. Add mixture to blender and puree. Pour pureed portions into large bowl until you have finished this step.
10. Return to soup pot and warm over medium heat.
11. Heat oil in a small frying pan until a drop of water sizzles in it. Add a few fresh sage leaves at a time and stir gently for just a few seconds. Remove leaves and drain on paper towels. Cool completely before serving.

* This step can be done a day in advance. Just keep the leaves at room temperature in a sealed container until ready to serve.

Autumn Equinox

Roast Turkey

My "Big Bro" and scary author guy, M.R. Sellars, was the first to introduce me to brined turkey. That was years ago, and I haven't cooked a turkey since without brining it first. It really does make a world of difference. The turkey is so much juicier and flavorful when you brine it first.

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Chill Time: overnight

Bake Time: 2-4 hours

1 c. Kosher salt

½ gal. chicken broth

½ gal. apple juice

1 Tbsp. sage

1 Tbsp. rosemary

1 gal. ice water

whole turkey (up to 15 lbs)

large stock pot

turkey roaster bag

rubber bands or wire ties

large roasting pan with metal rack

aluminum foil

1. In stock pot, bring broth, juice, salt, rosemary, and sage to a boil. Boil, stirring often, until salt dissolves. Allow to cool completely.
2. Remove innards and place turkey in roaster bag. Add broth mixture and press out excess air. Seal the bag tightly with rubber bands or wire ties.
3. Place bag in the roaster pan and fill the pan halfway with ice water. Refrigerate overnight.

Festival Feasts

4. Drain brine and pat turkey dry.
5. Preheat oven to 325°F.
6. Place turkey on rack in roasting pan, breast down. Tent turkey with aluminum foil. Bake for 1 ½ hours.
7. Remove turkey and discard the foil. Turn it over so the breast is facing up. Baste with juices from the bottom of the pan and return for remainder of cooking time. Times will vary according to the weight but the internal temperature of the meat should be 180°F and the juices should run clear when it is done. A 12-16 lb turkey should be ready in 2 – 2 ½ hours.

Corn and Bean Casserole

Rich, hearty, and warm, this is a fabulous autumn meal. It can be made with or without meat and is delicious either way. And it is just as good warmed up as leftovers as it is fresh out of the oven! This is my favorite way to prepare it, but make it your own by substituting your favorite beans, meat, or meat substitute.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 6

1 lb. ground turkey
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 medium onion
¼ c. Parmesan cheese (or corn meal)
½ tsp. dry mustard
3 cloves garlic
1/8 tsp. cumin
½ tsp. chili powder
1/8 tsp. coriander
2 bell peppers
2 c. corn kernels
19 oz. black beans
16 oz. diced tomatoes
1 c. Cheddar cheese

large sauté pan
casserole dish

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Chop the onion and peppers. Drain the beans and tomatoes.

Festival Feasts

3. In the sauté pan, heat 2 Tbsp. of oil over medium heat and cook onion until transparent. Add garlic and turkey and cook until turkey is browned.
4. Add peppers, beans, corn, tomatoes, and spices and simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Spoon off most of the fat and add the Parmesan cheese. Stirring constantly, cook for 1 minute.
6. Oil the casserole dish, then add the mixture.
7. Top with Cheddar cheese and bake for 20 minutes.

Autumn Equinox

Autumn Spice Cordial

At my house, we have a special adult beverage for every season. We have at least 2 special beverages for fall and winter. This one is really special because of the time it takes to age to perfection. It is just perfect for sitting outside after dinner in the chilly air...or for the hard-working chef, working in the kitchen for a festival feast.

Prep Time: 1.5-2 months

Cook Time: 25 minutes

Serves: 6

2 ½ lbs. apples
2 c. vodka
2 c. cognac
1 ½ c. sugar
4 sticks cinnamon
10 whole cloves
1 tsp. cardamom
¾ c. water

plastic wrap
cheesecloth
large bowl
medium saucepan
2 large jars (at least 2-c. capacity) with screw tops
glass bottle with screw top or cork,
at least 5-c. capacity

1. Coarsely chop the apples. Put approximately half in each jar.
2. Pour in vodka and cognac. Cover jars with plastic wrap and screw on the tops.

Festival Feasts

3. Set aside in a cool, dark place for 2-4 weeks. You may want to test two different batches the first time to determine what taste you like best.
4. Strain through cheesecloth into large bowl.
5. Boil the water with sugar in the sauce pan until the sugar dissolves and the mixture thickens. Allow to cool completely.
6. Pour the liqueur from jars and syrup from the pan into the bottle. Cap tightly and set aside in a cool, dark place for 4 weeks.

Autumn Equinox

Apple-berry Purses

Everyone does baked apples or apple pies at Mabon parties. Delight your guests with these unique pastry purses filled with the fruits of the season! If served warm, they go really well with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Serves: 6

Cook Time: 25 minutes

3 phyllo dough sheets
olive oil cooking spray
3 medium apples
½ c. fresh berries
3 Tbsp. butter
½ Tbsp. cinnamon
¼ tsp. nutmeg
¼ tsp. ground cloves
½ c. heavy cream

sharp knife
medium sauce pan
baking sheet

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Peel and cube the apples.
3. In a medium sauce pan, melt the butter. Then add the spices and cream. Cook over medium-high heat for about 1 minute.
4. Add apples and cook for a few more minutes until apples become soft.

Festival Feasts

5. Placing one phyllo sheet at a time on a clean surface, spray lightly with cooking spray. You can also lightly brush it with melted butter but when you're cooking for a crowd, short cuts like cooking spray can be lifesavers. Place each sheet of phyllo directly on top of the one you just sprayed until you have a 3-sheet sandwich.
6. Slice the phyllo into 6 equal squares.
7. In the middle of each square, place 2 Tbsp. of the apple mixture and 3 berries.
8. Bring the corners of the phyllo together and pinch tightly to seal the "purse."
9. Place purses on ungreased baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes until golden brown.

Chapter Eleven

Samhain

Happy Halloween! That is what this period of time is best known as these days. Even though we may be honoring our ancestors, exploring death and rebirth along with all that may mean to us, and skipping along the edges of the Veil between worlds, many of us still celebrate the fun and abandon that is Halloween.

Menu for Samhain Celebrations

Appetizers:	Black Bean and Tuna Crostini Sweet Potato Chips
Salad:	Tarragon Tuna Pasta
Soup:	Pumpkin Chili
Main dish:	Pork Chops with Caramelized Pears Veggie Lasagna
Beverage:	Warm Spiced Cider or Wine
Dessert:	Pumpkin Mousse

Festival Feasts

Black Bean and Tuna Crostini

Mmmm, dark and mysterious. This crostini combines the crunchiness of toasted Italian bread with the smooth earthiness of black beans and the unique taste of tuna. It is delightful and good for you. It makes for a clever and creative Samhain appetizer.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 4-6

One 15-oz can black beans
one 6-oz can tuna, drained
1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
salt and pepper to taste
4-6 slices Italian bread, toasted

medium bowl

1. Mash black beans with a fork in a medium bowl.
2. Add tuna, olive oil, salt, and pepper to beans and mix until smooth.
3. Spoon onto bread slices and serve.

Sambain

Sweet Potato Chips

With all the sugar and chocolate going around at this time of year, why not add a touch of salt and healthy sweetness as you create an appetizer full of the deep orange colors we love at this time of year? These are so good that they will certainly surprise your friends.

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 35-40 minutes
Serves: 8-12

1 Tbsp. olive oil
½ tsp. sea salt
8 sweet potatoes
1 Tbsp. butter

baking sheet
large bowl

1. Preheat oven to 400°F and grease a baking sheet.
2. Slice the potatoes either lengthwise to form spears or across the width to form “chips.”
3. Mix olive oil and salt in the bowl. Add the potatoes and stir to coat well.
4. Butter the baking sheet and place potatoes on top.
5. Bake for 35-40 minutes.

Tarragon Tuna Pasta Salad

I've always been a big fan of pasta salad so when I discovered this lovely dish at a local restaurant, I just had to come home and figure out my own version of it. This is a simple and easy salad that is perfect as a side to other feast offerings or as a bribe to get some real food into kids before trick-or-treating.

Prep Time: 10 minutes (25 if including veggies)

Cook Time: 12 minutes Chill Time: 4+ hours

Serves: 4-6

2 c. penne pasta

¼ c. tarragon

¼ c. mayonnaise

one 12 oz. can tuna in spring water, drained

Optional: ½ c. chopped and sautéed vegetables

1. Completely cover the pasta with water in a large pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat slightly and cook uncovered at a low boil for 12 minutes.
2. While the pasta is cooking, break up tuna with a fork in a large bowl.
3. Add mayonnaise, tarragon, and veggies to bowl and mix well.
4. Drain cooked pasta and toss gently into mixture.
5. Chill for at least 4 hours before serving.

Sambain

Pumpkin Chili

No, I'm not kidding! Pumpkin chili. The addition of pumpkin to chili brings a cooling sweetness to what is often a fairly spicy dish, and it adds vitamins and minerals to the usual meat and bean fare. It is a delicious taste that I will bet your guests have never enjoyed.

Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 1 hour, 15 minutes
Serves: 6-8

2 lb. ground beef or turkey
3 Tbsp. olive oil
1 green bell pepper
1 lg. onion
1 can stewed tomatoes
2 cans black beans
1 Tbsp. chili powder
½ c. pumpkin puree
¼ tsp. nutmeg
¼ tsp. cinnamon
optional:
¼ c. green chile
½ c. sour cream
½ c. grated Monterey Jack cheese

large sauce pan

1. Dice the onion and pepper. Drain the beans.
2. Brown the meat over medium heat in olive oil.
3. Add onion and pepper and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add beans, tomatoes, and pumpkin. Mix well.
5. Add spices and chile, then simmer for 1 hour.
6. Garnish with sour cream and cheese before serving.

Pork Chops with Caramelized Pears

This is a dish that will grace the table of a fine feast just as well as offering a tasty twist on the usual potluck menu. What's more, it offers a touch of sweetness from what may have once been the last of the remaining fruits of the year to a festival celebrating the heart of the dark half of the year.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Serves: 6

6 pork chops
2 Tbsp. olive oil
2 Tbsp. butter
¼ c. packed brown sugar
2 medium Bosc pears
1/8 tsp. ground cloves
water

large frying pan with a cover
medium frying pan

1. Peel, core, and cut the pears into medium cubes
2. In the large frying pan, brown the pork chops over medium-high heat, 2 minutes per side.
3. Reduce heat to medium and cover. Cook for another 10-15 minutes, until juice is clear.
4. In medium frying pan, melt the butter over medium heat.
5. When butter begins to bubble, sprinkle sugar and a few drops of water over it. Stir and cook until sugar dissolves.

Sambain

6. Add pears and cook until mixture turns a caramel color and the pears begin to release their juices.
7. Gently fold in cloves and keep warm.
8. By the time your pears are done, the pork chops should be ready. Serve pears on top of pork chops.

Festival Feasts

Veggie Lasagna

All my life, I've been wavering between full-blown carnivore and vegetarian for a huge variety of reasons. But even in my meat-loving phases, I savored this dish and made it for festival potlucks. The best part for you may well be that carnivores can rarely tell the difference until you enlighten them. So you can take it to a feast and please everyone!

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 65 minutes

Serves: 6-8

1 lb. meat substitute*

1 medium onion

1 medium green bell pepper

2 medium Roma tomatoes

28 oz. pasta sauce

2 Tbsp. oregano

1 Tbsp. basil

2 tsp. parsley

2 tsp. cumin

4-5 cloves garlic

9-10 dry lasagna noodles

5-6 c. water

2-3 Tbsp. olive oil

1 lb. Ricotta cheese

³/₄ lb. Parmesan cheese

1 ¹/₂ lb. Mozzarella cheese

*** I prefer Gimme Lean® beef or sausage**

Sambain

large sauté pan

large sauce pan

medium sauce pan

glass or stainless lasagna pan

(13" x 9" or equivalent volume)

aluminum foil

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Dice onion. Remove seeds and veins, then dice pepper.
3. In the medium sauce pan, simmer the pasta sauce and spices while you are preparing the other ingredients.
4. In the sauté pan, cook onions over medium heat until transparent. Add garlic, tomatoes, and pepper. Cook for 1-2 minutes.
5. Add the meat substitute and cook until browned. Simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Bring the water to a boil in the large sauce pan. Turn off heat.
7. Place lasagna noodles in water, turning them so the complete noodle is wet and begins to get soft.
8. Oil the lasagna pan. Place one layer of noodles on the bottom. Top with some of the meat mixture. Layer the sauce mixture over that. Top with Ricotta and Parmesan cheese.
9. Place another noodle layer over that and repeat the process. You should be able to fit 2-3 layers in your pan.
10. Top the entire lasagna with the remaining Ricotta and Parmesan. Cover with Mozzarella and any remaining sauce.
11. Cover with foil, tenting the foil up off the surface a bit. Bake for 50 minutes.

Warm Spiced Cider

Is this not just the ideal beverage for the season? We start enjoying this at Autumn Equinox in honor of the apple and grape harvest and relish it nearly up to Winter Solstice. It is warming and mouth-wateringly delicious. And it is easily portable. It always finds its way to both our favorite Mabon campout and the annual Samhain party.

Prep Time: 1 minute
Serves: 6-10

Cook Time: 15 minutes

1 gal. apple cider
1 liter dark rum
3 cinnamon sticks
1 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. whole cloves
1 tsp. allspice

large sauce pot

1. Warm the apple cider over medium heat for about a minute. Add the spices and simmer for 15 minutes.
2. Add a shot or more of rum to your mug and pour in the cider.

*Apple cider can be frozen for up to one year.

Sambain

Pumpkin Mousse

Pumpkin is so versatile that a multitude of delicious foods have been created for delightful and upscale fall dining. Pumpkin mousse is one of our favorites. Light and rich, this is a wonderful alternative to the traditional pumpkin pie.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Chill Time: Overnight

Serves: 6-8

3 large eggs

1 c. cream

¾ c. honey

½ c. milk

1 package gelatin (0.25 oz)

1 ½ c. pumpkin puree

1 tsp. cinnamon

¼ tsp. cloves

¼ tsp. mace

¼ tsp. nutmeg

¼ tsp. ginger

2 tsp. vanilla extract

gingersnap cookies

1 c. whipping cream

small bowl

electric mixer

2 medium bowls

large saucepan

refrigerated metal or ceramic bowl

Festival Feasts

1. In a small bowl, sprinkle gelatin over ½ c. milk and set aside.
2. Separate eggs into 2 medium bowls.
3. In a large saucepan, combine cream, honey, and spices over medium heat until honey dissolves.
4. Add milk and gelatin and stir until dissolved.
5. Add egg yolks, whisking constantly for 1 minute. Cook until nearly boiling. The mixture should thicken.
6. Add pumpkin puree, stirring frequently, for 2 minutes until smooth.
7. Remove from heat and whisk in 1 tsp. vanilla extract.
8. Beat the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Gradually fold into the pumpkin mixture.
9. Pour into the cold bowl and refrigerate overnight.
10. Whip cream and vanilla extra until soft peaks form. Crush cookies.
11. Spoon mousse into ramekins or wine glasses. Top with crushed cookies and whipped cream.

Chapter Twelve

Winter Solstice

After this longest night of the year, the light returns as days grow longer. This is the power of shadow at its height, but with that glimmer of returning light and life to come. Many traditions place conception or the birth of a Child of Light at this point on the Wheel of Life. Most of us celebrate with parties, gift giving, and feasts. The foods of this season are warming, rich, colorful, and ideal for the busy holiday rush.

Menu for Winter Solstice Celebrations

Appetizer:	Antipasto Roll-ups Pickled Beets
Soup:	Potato Cheese Soup
Salad:	Feta Lentil Salad
Main dish:	Winter Pie Artichoke Bean Pasta
Beverage:	Egg Nog
Dessert:	Rice Pudding

Antipasto Roll-ups

The perfect snack or appetizer for the family on-the-go, it is quite possible that our ancestors would have had the "fixins" for this dish available to them. And if your December is anything like mine, you are all about quick, easy, and healthy foods at this time of year.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: NA

Serves: 6

12 pepperoni slices

½ lb. sliced salami

8 oz. provolone cheese slices

8 oz. Colby cheese

1 green pepper

½ c. olive oil

½ c. balsamic vinegar

12 pieces baby spinach

optional: pepperoncini

toothpicks

small bowl

wire whisk

1. Thinly slice the pepper and Colby cheese.
2. Placing a slice of provolone down as a base, layer the salami, Colby, pepperoni, and pepper on top. Add the pepperoncini last if you include it.
3. Whisk together the oil and vinegar. Then drizzle over the top of the layers.
4. Roll up and secure with a toothpick. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Pickled Beets

Pickled beets are a winter favorite in Scandinavian households. My earliest memories of winter holidays all include pickled herring and pickled beets. They are bright and tangy sweet and add a festive taste to any meal. Best of all, they are good for you, too! Beets are high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Vinegar has long been used for medicinal purposes. You can even cook the beet greens as you would any leafy green vegetable.

Prep Time: 20 minutes
Chill Time: 7 days
Serves: 4-8

Cook Time: 50 minutes

6 medium beets
2 Tbsp. rosemary
2 large shallots
2 tsp. olive oil
1 onion
1 c. tarragon vinegar
1 ½ tsp. Kosher salt
¼ c. sugar
1 c. water

aluminum foil
large bowl
2 one-qt jars with lids
small sauce pan

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Cut greens from beets, leaving about an inch of stem. Peel shallots.

Festival Feasts

3. Cut 2 large rectangles of aluminum foil. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ the beets and shallots on each rectangle. Sprinkle with rosemary and drizzle with olive oil. Fold foil to create a sealed packet.
4. Roast for 45 minutes and allow to cool just enough to handle.
5. Remove the skin from the beets. It's often easiest to do this under running cold water.
6. Slice beets and onions.
7. In the sauce pan, bring vinegar, salt, sugar, and water to a boil.
8. Layer beets and onions in the jars. Pour vinegar mixture into jars while still very hot.
9. Tightly seal jars and store in refrigerator for one week before serving.

Winter Solstice

Potato Cheese Soup

Now this is just the thing to take the chill out of holiday celebrating and shopping! Rich and hearty, this is another soup that makes a tasty meal when combined with some thick, crusty bread. With the addition of red and green bell peppers, it is sure to make a festive holiday offering.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 4-6

3 large potatoes

1 clove garlic

1 medium onion

2 c. cream

½ red bell pepper

½ green bell pepper

2 c. shredded Cheddar cheese

2 Tbsp. butter

Optional: 6 slices Canadian bacon or ham

large soup pot

large bowl

cheese grater

blender

1. Mince garlic. Chop onion, potatoes, and peppers.
2. In the large soup pot, boil the potatoes until they crush easily with a fork. Drain and blend ½ of the potatoes until smooth. Set other potatoes aside in large bowl.

Festival Feasts

3. In the soup pot, sauté the onion, garlic, peppers, and bacon or ham in the melted butter until onions are golden.
4. Return potatoes to the pot. Add cream and cheese. Stir well and simmer for 5-10 minutes until cheese is melted.

Feta Lentil Salad

I love lentils but was never a fan of feta cheese until our son discovered it at a Persian-Greek restaurant that we used to go to every Winter Solstice with my parents. He loved sitting the floor and listening to the music so he was willing to try just about anything. What a fortuitous encounter that was because feta cheese has a tangy tartness that can really make a dish when combined in the proper amounts.

Marinate Time: 30 minutes Cook Time: 25 minutes
Serves: 4-6

2 c. lentils
2 Tbsp. lime juice
2 tsp. fresh mint
2 tsp. olive oil
¼ tsp. sea salt
1/8 tsp. black pepper
2 Tbsp. feta cheese crumbled.

large sauce pan
large bowl with cover

1. In the pan, cover the lentils with about an inch of water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 25 minutes. Drain and allow to cool slightly in bowl.
2. Add lime juice, mint, oil, salt and pepper and stir well. Cover and marinate for 30 minutes at room temperature.
3. Crumble feta cheese and add to mixture just before serving.

Winter Pie

I can imagine our ancestors feasting on a dish like this in the heart of winter, coming together as a community to share the best of the stored meats and vegetables to honor the returning light. It is so versatile that you can add nearly anything you like to accommodate vegetarians and folks with food allergies alike.

Prep Time: 1 hour

Bake Time: 40 minutes

Serves: 6-8

2 lbs. ground beef, lamb, or turkey

1 Tbsp. olive oil

2 medium onions

2 tomatoes

1 c. beef stock

½ tsp. thyme

¼ tsp. sage

1 Tbsp. parsley

5 medium potatoes

2 ½ Tbsp. butter

½ c. cream

salt and pepper to taste

large soup pot

electric mixer

large frying pan

casserole dish

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Chop the onions and tomatoes.
3. Chop the potatoes and boil them until tender, about 25 minutes.

Winter Solstice

4. Drain water. Add 1 Tbsp. butter and the cream. Mash with an electric mixer and set aside.
5. In a large frying pan, brown the beef in olive oil then set aside.
6. Drain most of the remaining oil from the pan. Sauté onions until translucent.
7. Add tomatoes and cook on medium heat for 3 minutes.
8. Add beef stock, thyme, sage, and parsley. Mix in well.
9. Add browned meat and cook for another 5 minutes.
10. Butter the bottom and sides of the casserole dish.
11. Cover the bottom of the casserole dish with the ingredients in the frying pan.
12. Top with the mashed potatoes. Slice the remaining butter and top the mashed potatoes with pieces of butter.
13. Bake for 40 minutes.

Artichoke Bean Pasta

This is another wonderful pasta salad that will keep you going if you don't have time for a real meal. Definitely not the usual beans and pasta, this one has a range of delightful tastes and textures that are sure to please.

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 50 minutes

Serves: 6

4 cloves garlic

1 ½ lb. pasta (penne, rigatoni)

2 Tbsp. olive oil

¼ tsp. basil

¼ tsp. oregano

1/8 tsp. cumin

6-7 cherry tomatoes

1 can black beans, drained

2-3 artichokes

¼ c. grated Parmesan cheese

vegetable steamer

large sauce pot

large sauté pan

1. Boil the pasta in a large pot for 10-12 minutes.
2. Steam the artichokes for 10 minutes. Peel meat from leaves and set aside.
3. Sauté garlic in oil over medium heat for one minute.
4. Add tomatoes, black beans, spices, and simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Add artichokes for one minute.
6. Remove from heat and mix in to drained pasta.
7. Top with grated Parmesan cheese.

Winter Solstice

Egg Nog

Fattening, maybe...but I love egg nog! It just isn't the winter holidays without it. And it needs to have at least a shot of dark spiced rum in it for me. The thing about most homemade egg nog recipes is that they call for raw eggs. Unless you are certain you are getting very fresh eggs, this just isn't a good idea. So I use a version of a Mexican recipe for Rompopo. It is unique and it is far better than anything you can buy in a carton at the grocery store.

Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 25 minutes
Chill Time: 2 days
Serves: 4-6

½ qt whole milk
½ qt. cream
½ c. sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 c. ground almonds
12 egg yolks
2 c. dark rum

large sauce pan
electric mixer
wire whisk
grinder or food processor
2 qt. bottle with lid

Festival Feasts

1. In a sauce pan, bring the milk, cream, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, and almonds to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Allow to cool completely.
2. Beat the egg yolks until thick then whisk into the milk mixture.
3. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly for 5-10 minutes, until mixture thickens enough to stick to the spoon. Allow to cool completely.
4. Stir in rum then transfer to bottle and seal lid. Refrigerate for 2 days before serving.

Winter Solstice

Rice Pudding

This is a traditional Scandinavian dessert at this time of year. In our family, a raisin would be hidden in one serving. The person that had the raisin would find love or good fortune in the coming year.

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Serves: 6

Cook Time: 50 minutes

½ cup uncooked rice
2/3 cup sugar
4 cups half-and-half
¼ tsp. nutmeg
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
cinnamon

double boiler
serving cups or mugs

1. Cook the rice in a double boiler, using half-and-half in place of water.
2. Add remaining ingredients to the rice and cook until thick.
3. Sprinkle with cinnamon and serve warm.

Chapter Thirteen

Extras

This final chapter contains all those little extras that will help you expand on the recipes in this book. Please use this section to experiment and adapt my recipes and any that you may come across. Make your cooking your own. Make it unique and personal. Enjoy yourself as you play and taste and use your family like guinea pigs!

Sauces and Other Toppings

With the same basic staple, usually either pasta or protein, you can have a month's worth of meals just by changing the manner of cooking and the topping. Ask anyone that has shared a meal with me and they will tell you that I am big on toppings. For the most part, I consider the salad, meat, fish, or pasta to really only exist to carry the topping.

Kristin's Béchamel

Béchamel is really just a basic white sauce, usually made with flour as the thickener. But in my opinion, if you're going to be getting carbs, they should be really yummy carbs. So I use cheese, usually grated Parmesan, in place of the flour.

Prep Time: 2 minutes Cook Time: 5 minutes
Serves: 3-4

5 Tbsp. butter
1 c. cream
2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese
¼ tsp. salt

1. Melt the butter over medium-high heat in a small saucepan.
2. Add cream and cook for 1 minute.
Add salt and grated parmesan. Stir until cheese has melted completely.

The real beauty of a béchamel is that it can become so many different sauces.

Add **2 tsp. of lemon juice** for a light sauce that is perfect on any fish (our son even likes it as a dipping sauce for his steak from time to time).

Add **1-2 tsp. of garlic powder** for a killer, creamy scampi sauce that is fantastic over shrimp.

Add **up to ½ c. of your favorite cheeses** for a fabulously thick cheese sauce

Experiment with mustard and honey, salsa, Balsamic vinegar, and whatever sounds good to you!

Extras

Mayonnaise Plus

Trendy restaurants are known for offering gourmet sandwiches with flavored mayonnaise. Playing with interesting combinations can make the difference between a bland, boring sandwich or appetizer and a unique and exciting one. This is far too easy to ignore so I encourage you to spend an afternoon experimenting.

To 1 cup of mayonnaise, add:

2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce and 1 tsp. chipotle pepper powder
4 tsp. Dijon mustard
1 tsp. ground cumin and 1 tsp. curry powder
3 Tbsp. orange juice and a pinch of nutmeg
2 tsp. grated garlic

Roasted Garlic Puree

Roasted garlic has a gentler, creamier taste than raw or even sautéed garlic. This is a wonderful addition to any sauce or salad dressing and many dips. Just stir or blend it in for a really interesting taste. It's even good on toast! And the puree can be kept in a refrigerator for up to 2 weeks so you can make it when you have time and use it later.

10 garlic heads
¼ c. olive oil

baking sheet
aluminum foil
medium bowl

Festival Feasts

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Line the baking sheet with foil.
2. Cut off the top of each head of garlic, so the inner cloves are exposed. Drizzle the cut side with olive oil. Rub the oil lightly in with your finger.
3. Turn the cut side down on the baking sheet.
4. Bake 1 hour and 15 minutes, until cloves are soft and golden.
5. Allow to cool then squeeze the garlic into a bowl. Mash with a fork.

Dips

I have the same sentiment when it comes to chips and crackers as I do for raw vegetables: they're really just there to carry a delicious dip. These are some of our favorite dips. Try one or two for your next potluck and see how well they go over.

Dill Dip

- 1 Tbsp. dried dill leaves**
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice**
- 1 ¼ c. sour cream**
- 2 shallots**

Mince the shallots and mix in with the rest of the ingredients. Chill for at least an hour before serving.

Honey-Mustard Dip

- 1 c. honey**
- ½ c. Dijon mustard**

Mix together and serve at room temperature.

Extras

Ginger Dip

1 c. plain yogurt
¼ c. green onions, finely chopped
½ tsp. garlic, minced
2 tsp. fresh ginger, minced

Combine all ingredients and chill for at least an hour before serving.

Cayenne Dip

1 ¼ c. sour cream
1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and chill for at least an hour before serving.

Marinades

Marinades both tenderize meat and enhance the flavor. A basic marinade won't add flavor, but it will bring out the fullest natural flavors in anything from steak to chicken to salmon to shrimp. Simply whisk all the ingredients together, add the meat, and soak for at least an hour. They are also a great way to add some unique flavors to tofu, seitan, and other meat-replacement products. And to be honest, sometimes we use them as sauces.

Festival Feasts

Kristin's Basic Marinade

½ c. olive oil
1 c. milk
½ tsp. celery salt
2 Tbsp. white wine
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
2 Tbsp. Balsamic vinegar

Dijon Marinade

2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
¼ c. Worcestershire sauce
¼ c. red wine vinegar
¼ c. minced garlic

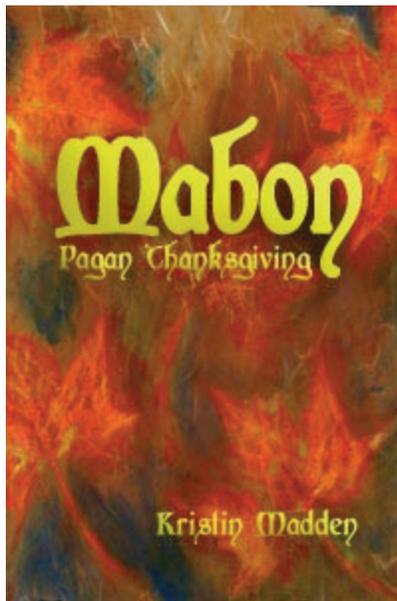
Oriental Marinade

1 c. soy sauce
1 c. sake or vodka
½ c. brown sugar
1 Tbsp. grated ginger root
2 tsp. minced garlic

French Marinade

2 c. olive oil
1 c. Balsamic vinegar
1 tsp. each: rosemary, thyme, basil, lavender
salt and pepper to taste

*Also from Kristin Madden
and Spilled Candy Books*



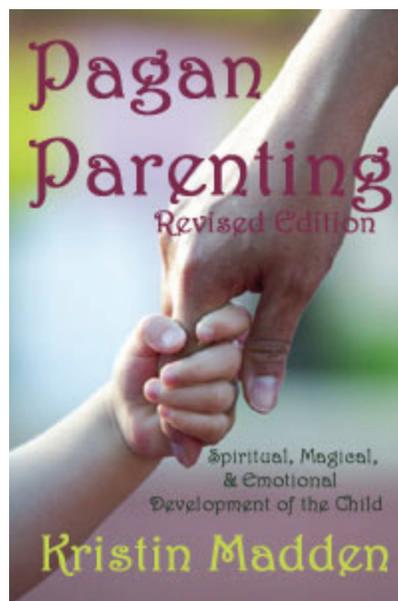
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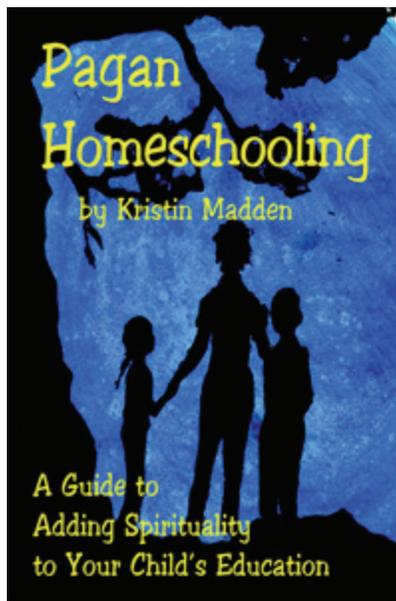


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