

Local

Warm comfort foods



Homemade Goodness
By Eileen Driver

You have probably noticed but it is really, really cold outside!

This of course means that we need warm comfort foods to counteract that cold. One of my favorite comfort food meals as a kid was tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches. I still love it today, but as an adult I need just a little more zing.

This version of tomato soup is creamier and zingier than that stuff you get out of a can and is loaded with comfort and homemade goodness.

Parmesan Basil Tomato Soup

3 pounds ripe red tomatoes chopped (can substitute 2, 15-ounce cans diced tomatoes and 1, 10-ounce can tomato sauce)

¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped

3 teaspoons minced garlic

1 tablespoon salt

1 teaspoon pepper

1 medium white onion diced

1 cup heavy cream

4 cups vegetable or chicken broth

2 cups fresh shredded parmesan cheese

Roux

3 tablespoons butter

¼ cup flour

1 cup heavy cream

Place tomatoes, basil, garlic, salt, pepper, onion, cream and broth in crockpot.

Cover and cook 2 hours on high or 48 hours on low.

30-40 minutes before serving use hand blender to puree till smooth.

Prepare roux in medium sauce pan by melting butter over medium high heat.

Whisk flour into melted butter until clumps.

Slowly whisk in heavy cream until mixture is thickened and smooth.

Add roux and parmesan cheese to crockpot, stir together. Cook another 20-30 minutes till cheese is melted, give it a good stir and serve.

It takes a little more work to make this from scratch but it is well worth it and you won't want to open cans of tomato soup ever again. You can either have a regular grilled cheese sandwich with the soup, which is good, or you can have this kicked up version. Since you have time to make this while the soup is cooking you might as well give it a try.

Spinach and Artichoke Melts

Makes 4+ sandwiches

1 tablespoon butter

1 clove garlic minced

1 tablespoon flour

½ cup milk

1 ounce cream cheese

½ cup shredded mozzarella

½ cup grated parmesan

½ cup greek yogurt

½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

½ teaspoon pepper

½ cup frozen chopped spinach, thawed and water squeezed out

1, 6.7 ounce jar marinated artichokes chopped

8 slices sourdough bread butter for grilling

Melt butter in a skillet over medium high heat

Add garlic and cook a few minutes.

Whisk in flour until it makes a paste.

Cook over medium low heat a minute or two, whisk in milk, stir and cook 1 minute.

Add cheeses and stir till melted. Remove from heat and add remaining ingredients.

Stir till smooth. (Will be thick so use those muscles)

Heat a griddle or skillet over medium low heat.

Butter the outside of each bread slice then spread a good amount of filling to the inside of half of them and top with second slice.

Cook on each side, flipping gently, until golden and crisp and cheese is melted.

I love dipping my grilled sandwich in my soup and enjoying the two together.

Makes my mouth water just thinking about it.

And for my vegetarian friends who have been requesting recipes to spice up their meal times, these would be perfect for you.

If you are a meat lover you can add chopped grilled chicken to the sandwich spread and be in heaven.

For those of you who haven't escaped the cold

and flu season this year, this next recipe is for your comfort and hopefully will speed you on the way to good health.

It tastes great too.

Creamy Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

3 tablespoons butter

4 medium carrots, peeled and diced

4 celery stalks, diced

1 small onion finely diced

1 pound raw chicken cut into bite size pieces

½ teaspoon salt black pepper

4 cups chicken broth

1 cup wild rice or rice blend, uncooked

3 tablespoons flour

2 cups milk

Melt butter in large stock pot over medium heat. Add carrot, celery and onion.

Stir, cover and saute. Add chicken and spices and stir fry 35 minutes till outside of chicken is mostly cooked.

Sprinkle with flour and stir to coat.

Slowly stir in broth ½ cup at a time until smooth.

Bring to a boil and stir in rice. Reduce heat to medium low, cover and cook for about 30-40 minutes.

When rice is done (taste to make sure) stir in milk and return heat to medium.

Bring to a low boil and cook a few more minutes till heated through.

Tips: if you like a thicker soup reduce broth to 3 cups.

If you like a clear soup, omit flour and milk and add more broth

This soup is wonderful with crackers or a crusty bread. It will make you feel better in no time.

Volunteers needed for book sale

Friends of the Baker County Library are looking for volunteers to help sort books on Thursday, January 21st, to work as cashiers during the first weekend of the Winter Book Sale, January 22-24th, to neat and re-stock during the week of January 25-31st, and to pack up books on February 1st. New volunteers will be paired with an experienced volunteer on each shift.

Volunteers can sign up at the circulation desk at the library, 2400 Resort Street, or by calling 541-523-6419.

Shots fired at patrol car in Umatilla

On January 2, 2016 at approximately 1:17 a.m. an Oregon State Trooper attempted to stop a 1992 Honda Accord on Fulton Road near milepost 2 in Umatilla County for speeding.

The vehicle attempted to elude troopers at a high rate of speed.

The pursuit continued on rural roads where a trooper successfully deployed spike strips flattening at least one tire. The vehicle continued to elude and entered the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Once on the reservation, the vehicle came to a stop and a female passenger got out of the vehicle. The driver drove off at a high rate of speed, continuing to elude troopers. While eluding, it is believed the suspect fired a firearm at a pursuing patrol car striking it twice.

Near the intersection of South Market and Tutuilla Church Road both the suspect and his vehicle were intentionally struck by two Oregon State Police patrol vehicles.

The adult male suspect was seriously injured and was transported to St. Anthony's Hospital in Pendleton, then transported by air ambulance to a Portland Area Hospital. The troopers were uninjured.

This incident is being investigated as a Deadly Physical Force incident. As per protocol of Deadly Physical Force Incidents and Senate Bill 111, the Oregon State Police has requested the Pendleton Police Department lead the investigation.

Three Oregon State Police Troopers have been placed on paid administrative leave which is standard practice in deadly physical force incidents.

This is an ongoing investigation and no further information will be released at this time.

Agencies assisting in the investigation and at the scene include the Oregon State Police Criminal Services Division, Pendleton Police Department, Umatilla Tribal Police Department, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Names released in train / Jeep collision

Oregon State Police (OSP) is continuing the investigation into a fatal collision involving a train and SUV south of Union in Union County. The names of the three occupants were released following confirmation of family notifications.

Preliminary information indicates that on December 29, 2015 at approximately 2:54 p.m., a Union Pacific Railroad train was traveling eastbound and approaching the Curtis Road and Miller Lane crossing when for unknown reasons, a blue Jeep Cherokee was traveling east on Curtis Road and turned left onto Miller Lane, in the path of the train. The train struck the Cherokee and all three occupants, as well as a dog, were ejected and pronounced deceased at the scene.

The occupants of the blue 1998 Jeep Cherokee were Clayton Forrest Colpitts, age 43, Penny Jo Colpitts, age 40, from Union, and James Austin Johnston, age 20, from Chiloquin. It is still undetermined who was driving the vehicle at the time of the crash.

The rural area train crossing displayed crossing signs with a stop sign but did not have crossing gate arms. The train did not derail and no injuries were reported aboard the train.

OSP was assisted by Union County Sheriff's Office, Union Fire and Ambulance, La Grande Ambulance, and Union Pacific Railroad representatives.

Hammonds Imprisoned

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The congressman continued quoting the judge, who said, "When you ask, you know, what if you burn sagebrush in the suburbs of Los Angeles, and there are homes up the ravines, it might apply. Out in the wilderness here, I don't think that is what the Congress intended. In addition, it just would not meet any idea I have of justice proportionality. It would be a sentence which would shock the conscience, to me."

Walden added, "Senior Judge Mike Hogan, when he did the original sentencing. But, you see, under this 1996 law under which they were charged and convicted, it turns out he had no judicial leeway. He could not mete out a sentence that was proportionate to what the crime was.

"So yesterday, Dwight and Steve went to prison again. Dwight will be 79 when he gets out. Steve will be about 50.

"Meanwhile, in Harney County, on the ranch, Susie will continue to try and survive; 6,000-acre ranch, she needs grazing permits to make this happen. It would be a cruel and unjust act, by the way, if access to those grazing permits that allow that ranch to work were not extended. What possible good could come out of bankrupting a grandmother that was trying to keep a ranch together, while the husband sits in prison, her

son sits in prison? What possible good?

"They will serve their sentences. There is nothing, short of clemency that only the President can offer, that we can do. But we can change that law, and we should, so that nobody ever is locked in like that for a situation like this, where a senior judge, literally, on his final day on the bench, says this goes too far, it goes too far. They appealed that, by the way, and lost. But I believe that the judge was right.

"We have to listen to the people. We have to understand why events like this are taking place in our communities. They are taking place in cities. We have witnessed that, and we try and get our heads around it.

"There are more people from the cities, so there are more Members from the cities. There aren't many of us that represent these vast, wide-open, incredibly beautiful, harsh districts-like the one I do.

"The people there love the land. It was the ranchers who came up with the concept of the cooperative management. It was the ranchers who loved Steens Mountain that know that for them to survive they have to take care of the range. They are good people. Their sons and daughters, by a higher proportion, fight in our wars and die, and I have been to their funerals. So to my friends across eastern Oregon, I will always fight for you. But we have

to understand there is a time and a way. Hopefully the country through this understands we have a real problem in America: how we manage our lands and how we are losing them."

Walden concluded, "There is a better solution here. The President needs to back off on the monument. The BLM needs to make sure Susie Hammond isn't pushed into bankruptcy and has her ranch taken by the government and added to those that

"It is not too late. We can do this. It is a great country. We have the processes to do it right."

Rep. Greg Barreto of Cove responded, "I want to thank Congressman Greg Walden for his forthright message on the tyranny of the current agencies.

"I agree with Rep. Walden that in no way do I agree with the armed protest that is going on, but do understand the anger toward the federal government. We in Oregon have witnessed this time and again with the BLM, the ESA, the EPA and the USFS. The recent 'Town Hall Meetings for citizens participation' were no more than lip service.

The 1,296 miles of roads scheduled for destruction, roads built with taxpayer dollars and now taxpayer dollars will be used to destroy them, was decided before any meetings took place.

"Rep. Walden is right, enough is enough! We need to be better at hearing people from all walks of

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