

Make a Hawaiian feast

Hawaii is celebrating its 25th anniversary of statehood this year. But whatever state you call home, you can join in the festivities right in your own backyard with a tropical party menu featuring easy, make-ahead recipes.

These economical dishes will put a spark into any patio picnic. And because you prepare everything in advance, you can enjoy the exotic taste of the islands in minutes.

Maybe you can't travel to Hawaii this summer to join in the statehood celebration. But with these easy, make-ahead recipes, you'll enjoy the taste of the tropics.

Get things off to a cool start with chilled Hawaiian Chicken Salad.

HAWAIIAN CHICKEN SALAD
 2 Cups cooked rice (do not add butter/margarine when cooking rice)
 2 cups chopped cooked white chicken
 1 cup fresh pineapple chunks
 1 cup strawberry halves
 1 cup celery slices
 1 tablespoon lemon juice
 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 1/4 teaspoon pepper
 1/2 cup plain yogurt
 1/4 cup almond slices

Allow cooked rice to cool. In a large mixing bowl combine rice, chicken, pineapple, strawberries, celery, seasonings and lemon juice; mix lightly. Store mixture in airtight sealed bowl in refrigerator. Prior to serving, add yogurt and almonds to mixture; mix lightly. Garnish with additional strawberries and pineapple. Makes 4-6 servings. Serve individual portions on lettuce leaves or in pineapple shells.

TROPICAL CREAM CHEESE SPREAD
 1 8-oz. package soft cream cheese
 2 tablespoons apricot preserves

1/4 cup crushed pineapple
 2 teaspoons honey
 1/2 cup flaked coconut

Combine cream cheese, preserves, crushed pineapple and honey, mixing until blended. Add coconut and mix well. Chill. Serve with Banana Nut Bread slices. Makes 1 1/2 cups.

BANANA NUT BREAD
 1 cup sugar
 1/2 cup shortening
 2 eggs
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 cup ripe bananas, mashed
 2 cups flour
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
 1 cup chopped macadamia nuts

In a large mixing bowl cream sugar and shortening, add eggs and vanilla, beat until fluffy. Add bananas. In medium mixing bowl combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, nutmeg and cinnamon; add to banana mixture. Stir in nuts. Pour into greased 9" x 5" loaf pan (for smaller loaves, use two pans). Bake at 350 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes or until done. Cool in pan 10 minutes then turn onto rack and cool thoroughly.

Serve with Tropical Cream Cheese Spread.

TANGY LIME TEA
 1 6-oz. can of frozen limeade concentrate
 1/2 cup unsweetened pineapple juice
 4 teabags
 4 cups boiling water
 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

In a 2-qt. pitcher, mix limeade concentrate with 4 cans of water; add pineapple juice and stir to blend. Place teabags in 4 cups of boiling water; steep for 5 minutes. Remove teabags; add ginger while stirring tea.

Combine tea with fruit juice mixture; stir until well mixed. Chill at least 2 hours in refrigerator before serving.

Serve in tumblers over ice; garnish with lime slices. Makes eight 8 oz. servings. Variation: prepare beverage using orange spice tea.

COCONUT CUSTARD PIE
 2 cups milk
 4 eggs
 1/2 cup sugar
 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
 1/4 cup butter or margarine, cut-up
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1 cup flaked coconut
 ground nutmeg
 1/4 cup toasted coconut
 1/4 cup toasted sliced almonds

In blender container, combine milk, eggs, sugar, flour cut-up butter or margarine, vanilla and salt. Cover; blend about 10 seconds until well mixed (do not overblend). Stir in flaked coconut. Pour egg mixture into greased 9" pie plate. Sprinkle a little nutmeg atop filling. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or till knife inserted near center comes out clean. (As pie bakes, it forms its own soft crust.) Cool. Cover and chill to store. When serving, garnish with toasted almonds and toasted coconut. Makes 8 servings.

TIP: After you've baked a custard pie for the recommended time, gently shake the pie to test for doneness. If the area that still appears to be liquid is smaller than the size of a quarter, the pie is done.

TOASTED COCONUT
 Spread 1/4 cup coconut evenly in shallow baking dish. Place in 325 degree oven for 10-15 minutes, stirring frequently.

TOASTED ALMONDS
 Spread 1/4 cup sliced almonds in shallow baking dish. Place in 300-degree oven for 5 minutes or until golden.



Pictured, clockwise from left, are Banana Nut Bread with Tropical Cream Cheese Spread, Coconut Custard Pie and Hawaiian Chicken Salad in pineapple boats.

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