

# 6-day weather forecast

THURSDAY Oct. 22

38° | 62°



Partly Cloudy

FRIDAY Oct. 23

41° | 63°



Sunny

SATURDAY Oct. 24

44° | 67°



Mostly Cloudy

SUNDAY Oct. 25

43° | 67°



Poss. Showers

MONDAY Oct. 26

45° | 62°



Poss. Showers

TUESDAY Oct. 27

45° | 62°



Mostly Cloudy



BY BETTY KAISER  
For the Sentinel

Decisions, decisions, decisions. I've noticed that the older I get the harder it is to decide what's for dinner. Sometimes my husband rescues me from this responsibility by whipping up one of his famous avocado and cheddar cheese omelets. But most of the time, dinner decisions are mine. Right now I need some inspiration.

I'm sure you have those days too. We want something that tastes deliciously homemade but takes less time than picking up fast food from the drive-in! I can make a pot of really tasty homemade soup in an hour or so, but sometimes I don't want to! Today's first recipe is one of those desperate last-minute wonders.

The meat ingredients can be pre-cooked chicken simmered in chicken broth or roast beef leftovers simmered in beef broth. The canned beans can be varied. I often use chili beans. If you like a little spice, add some chili powder, cumin and a dash of Tabasco sauce. I always have small boxes of corn muffin mix on hand. I add a dash of oil and some cheese to the ingredients and bake to go with the soup.

Sometimes, though, I want something totally different...but easy to prepare. Fortunately, I have a shelf full of Kraft foods "food & family" magazines dating back to the turn of the century. I can always find something interesting among their ideas. They arrive quarterly and are divided into seasons (spring, summer, winter and fall) so that the menu suggestions make use of seasonal items.

The remainder of today's recipes all come from the fall 2012 edition of "food & family." I was particularly intrigued with the "Easy Eggplant Parmesan." Back in the day we were taught to salt and let the eggplant drain before cooking. It took forever! This recipe you just slice, bake and serve. The Stromboli is similar to a turnover or healthy Calzone. It is simplicity itself. And

# Cook's Corner

## Desperate dinner decisions

I really like the idea of creamy chopped chicken topped with dumplings. Enjoy!

### BETTY'S LAST MINUTE HOMEMADE SOUP

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 small diced onion
- 2 large carrots, peeled and sliced
- 2 cups beef broth
- 2 cups water
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper
- 2 beef bouillon cubes or 2 teaspoons Mrs. Dash seasonings
- 1 can 14-1/2 ounces diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1/2 cup shell pasta (add more if you like)
- 1 can drained and rinsed navy or pinto beans
- 1/2 cup fresh arugula
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup fresh basil
- Parmesan cheese

In a large soup pot, sauté the ground beef, onion and carrots. Drain. Add the broth, water, red pepper, bouillon cubes and tomatoes. Bring to a boil and simmer about 20 minutes (or more). Add the beans and pasta; bring to a boil, cover and simmer until pasta is just tender. Add the arugula and heat through. Taste for seasonings. Top with Parmesan cheese and basil leaves.

Note: Add more liquid if the pasta soaks up too much.

### CHEESY TURKEY STROMBOLI

- 1 can refrigerated pizza dough (or fresh dough found in deli case)
- 6 Slices Colby jack Cheese
- 1/2 pound thick sliced, deli, smoked turkey breast, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped

- roasted red peppers
- 1 tsp. dried basil leaves
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water

Heat oven to 375°F.

Unroll pizza dough on lightly floured surface. Roll out or pat into 12-inch square; top with cheese, turkey, peppers and basil, leaving 1/2-inch rim around all sides. Roll up; pinch seam and ends together to seal.

Place, seam side down, on foil-covered baking sheet. Beat egg and water; brush onto dough. Bake 22 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 10 min. before slicing. Serve with warm with a marinara dipping sauce on the side.

### SKILLET CHICKEN & DUMPLINGS

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 can (14 oz.) fat-free reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1/2 cup chive & onion Cream Cheese Spread
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) frozen peas and carrots
- 1 cup all-purpose baking mix (Bisquick-type)
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan Cheese, grated
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped

Heat oil in large deep skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook and stir 4 minutes or until no longer pink. Transfer to bowl.

Add broth gradually to flour in small bowl, whisking constantly until blended. Add to skillet; cook and stir on medium heat 2 minutes or until thickened. Add cream cheese spread; cook and stir 3 minutes or until melted.

Remove from heat; stir in chicken and vegetables.

Stir baking mix, sour cream and milk just until baking mix is moistened. Spoon into 6 mounds over mixture in skillet; cook on medium-high heat 2 minutes. Cover skillet; cook on low heat 15 minutes or until chicken is done and toothpick inserted in dumplings comes out clean. Top with Parmesan and parsley. Serves 6.

### EASY EGGPLANT PARMESAN

- 1/2 cup Panko bread crumbs
- 3/4 cup shredded Italian; Five Cheese Blend
- 1/4 cup Seasoned Grated Parmesan Cheese Rosemary and Garlic
- 1 large eggplant (1-1/2 lb.), ends trimmed, peeled and cut crosswise into 6 slices
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 jar (24 oz.) marinara sauce
- 1/2 lb. spaghetti, uncooked (more as needed)

Heat oven to 400°F.

Cover baking sheet with foil; spray with cooking spray. Combine bread crumbs and cheeses in shallow dish. Dip eggplant slices, 1 at a time, in egg then in cheese mixture, turning to evenly coat both sides of each slice. Place on prepared baking sheet.

Bake 12 min. or until lightly browned. Meanwhile, heat sauce and cook spaghetti as directed on package, omitting salt.

Drain spaghetti. Serve topped with eggplant and sauce. Serves 4-5.

Keep it simple and keep it seasonal! Betty Kaiser's Cook's Corner is dedicated to sharing a variety of recipes that are delicious, family oriented and easy to prepare. Contact her at 942-1317 or email [bchatty@bettykaiser.com](mailto:bchatty@bettykaiser.com)

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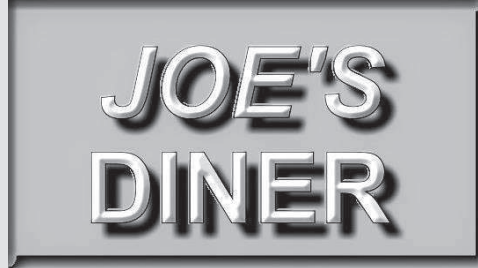
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