

Food for Thought

By Leslie Barnes

Here are two dinner choices without meat and two choices with meat, well...the soup can go either way. Any of these selections make for a hearty, satisfying meal.



BLACK BEAN PUMPKIN SOUP

3 - 15.5 oz cans black beans (about 4-1/2 cups), rinsed and drained
1 cup drained canned tomatoes, chopped
1-1/4 cups chopped onion
1/2 cup minced shallot
4 garlic cloves minced
1 T plus 2 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper

1/2 stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter
4 cups beef broth or vegetable broth
16-oz can pumpkin puree (about 1-1/2 cups)
1/2 cup dry Sherry 1/2 lb cooked ham, cut into 1/8-inch dice (omit ham for vegetarian option)
3 to 4 T Sherry vinegar
Garnish: sour cream and coarsely chopped, lightly toasted pumpkin seeds

In a food processor coarsely puree beans and tomatoes.

In a 6-quart heavy kettle cook onion, shallot, garlic, cumin, salt, and pepper in butter over moderate heat, stirring, until onion is softened and beginning to brown. Stir in bean puree. Stir in broth, pumpkin, and Sherry until combined; simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 25 minutes, or until thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.

Just before serving, add ham and vinegar; let simmer, stirring, until heated through. Season soup with salt and pepper.

Serve soup garnished with sour cream and toasted pumpkin seeds.

LENTIL LOAF

This vegetarian staple features a crunchy bread crumb topping.

1-1/8 cups green lentils 2-1/4 cups water
6 slices white bread, torn into small pieces 2 eggs
1 cup vegetable broth 2 T tomato paste
1/2 tsp dried basil 1/4 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp ground black pepper 1 tsp dried parsley
1 T olive oil 1 packet dry vegetable soup mix
1/3 cup dry bread crumbs

Combine lentils and water in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer until tender, about 40 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F (205°C). Grease a 9x5 inch loaf pan.

In a large bowl, mix together 2 cups cooked lentils, bread, eggs, broth, tomato paste, basil, garlic powder, black pepper, parsley, olive oil and dry soup mix. Spread into prepared pan.

Bake for 40 minutes. Sprinkle top with dry bread crumbs, and continue baking another 10 minutes. Let sit for 10 minutes before serving.

Serves 6.

MEATLOAF MUFFINS WITH BARBECUE SAUCE

Smashed Potatoes and Cream Cheese (see following recipe) is a great side to go with this recipe.

1-2/3 to 1-3/4 lbs ground sirloin 1 medium onion, cut into chunks
2 ribs celery from the heart of the stalk, cut into 2-inch pieces
1 green bell pepper
1 large egg plus a splash of milk, beaten
1 cup plain bread crumbs
2 T grill seasoning (such as McCormick's Montreal Steak Seasoning)

1 cup smoky barbecue sauce 1/2 cup tomato salsa
1 T Worcestershire sauce

Vegetable oil or extra-virgin olive oil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Put ground beef into a big

bowl. Put onion and celery into a food processor. Cut the bell pepper in half, remove the seeds, cut the pepper into a few pieces and add to the food processor. Pulse the processor blades to finely chop the vegetables into very small pieces then add them to the meat bowl. Add egg beaten with milk, bread crumbs and grill seasoning to the bowl.

In another bowl, combine the smoky barbecue sauce, salsa and Worcestershire sauce. Pour half the sauce mixture into the bowl with the meatloaf mix. Mix the meatloaf together with your hands. Brush a 12-muffin tin (1/2-cup each) with vegetable oil or extra-virgin olive oil. Use an ice cream scoop to help place meat into each tin. Top each meat loaf with a spoonful of extra sauce. Bake about 20 minutes. Cut open 1 muffin to test that the middle is cooked through.

Serves 6.

SMASHED POTATOES AND CREAM CHEESE

2-1/2 lbs small red or baby Yukon gold potatoes 1/2 cup half-and-half or whole milk
8 oz plain cream cheese or veggie cream cheese, cut into pieces
10 chives or 2 scallions, chopped or snipped with kitchen scissors
Salt and pepper to taste

Boil potatoes until tender, 15 minutes. While the potatoes are cooking, you can be working on the meatloaf recipe (above).

When the potatoes are tender, drain and return to the hot pot to let them dry out a bit. Mash potatoes with half-and-half or milk using a potato masher. Add cream cheese and smash until the cheese melts into the potatoes. Then add chives and scallions, and season with salt and pepper, to your taste.

Serves 6.

PULLED PORK FOR SANDWICHES

Pulled pork is the perfect slow-cooking winter dish, warm and spicy.

1 large onion, chopped 6 garlic cloves, peeled
1 pickled jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped 2 tsp Chipotle chile powder
1 T tomato paste 2 T Dijon mustard 3/4 cup distilled white vinegar
1 tsp paprika 1/3 cup ketchup 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1/4 cup light brown sugar 1 bay leaf Salt
3 lbs pork butt shoulder roast, trimmed of excess fat Hamburger buns

Puree all of the sauce ingredients (everything except the bay leaf, pork and buns) in a blender until smooth. If you have extra time, marinate the pork in the sauce overnight or for several hours before cooking.

Put sauce, bay leaf, and pork into a large pot and add 1 quart of water. Bring mixture to a boil and simmer, covered, turning frequently, for 2 hours or until the meat pulls apart easily with a fork.

Remove from heat and cool pork in the sauce. When cool, remove pork and shred into small pieces. Set aside.

Reduce the sauce by two thirds. Add pork back into the sauce. Salt to taste. Remove bay leaf before serving. Serve hot over open-face hamburger buns.

Serves 6 to 8.

Church Directory

NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH

Gary Taylor, Pastor
Grant & North Streets, Vernonia
503 429-5378
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Nursery available
Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.

VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

Carl Pense, Pastor
850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-1103
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.
Children's Sunday School

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Marc Farmer, Branch President
1350 E. Knott Street, Vernonia
503 429-7151
Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m.
Sunday School & Primary 11:20 a.m.
Relief Society, Priesthood and
Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Gary S. Walter, Pastor
2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia
503 429-8301
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.
Sabbath School 9:30 a.m.

ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Wayne and Maureen Marr
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,
503 429-0373
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Evangelist
410 North Street, Vernonia
503 429-6522
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Every Wednesday:
Ladies' Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Ladies' Worship 10:00 a.m.
Children's Choir 3:00 p.m.
Family Bible Study 7:00 p.m.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

359 "A" Street, Vernonia
503 429-4027
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator
960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-8841
Mass Sunday 12:00 Noon
Religious Educ. Sunday 10:30 a.m.

VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Grant Williams, Pastor
957 State Avenue, Vernonia
503 429-6790
Sunday Breakfast 9:00 a.m.
Morning Worship 9:45 a.m.
Children and Nursery 10:00 a.m.
Youth Group 6:00 p.m.
Preschool Mon. & Wed. 9:00 a.m.
Wednesday Prayer 6:00 p.m.
Tues. & Fri. Adult Volleyball 7:00 p.m.