

Food for Thought

by Leslie Barnes



FLANK STEAK STIR FRY WITH ASPARAGUS AND RED PEPPER

- 3 T vegetable oil
 1/2 lb asparagus, trimmed, cut on the diagonal into 1-1/2 inch lengths (about 1 1/2 cups)
 1 lb flank steak, sliced in half lengthwise (along the grain), then cut into thin strips, 2 inches long and 1/4 inch wide (The steak will be easier to slice if you put it in the freezer for 15 minutes before slicing.)
 1 red bell pepper, seeded, de-ribbed, and cut into thin strips 2 inches long and 1/4 inch wide
 2 tsp cornstarch dissolved in 3 Tablespoons water

All Purpose Stir Fry Sauce

- 3 T soy sauce (use gluten-free soy sauce for gluten-free version)
 1 tsp finely chopped, peeled, fresh ginger
 1 small clove garlic, minced
 1 green onion, including green tops, chopped
 1/2 tsp chili oil

While chopping the ingredients in preparation, bring a small saucepan of water to boil. Parboil the asparagus pieces for 2 minutes, drain, rinse in cold water, drain again and set aside. If you plan to serve this dish with rice, prepare 2 cups of white rice in a separate pan, following the instructions on the rice package.

Prepare the All Purpose Stir Fry Sauce by combining the ingredients in a small dish, and set aside.

Stir-fry the asparagus in a wok (or a thick-bottomed pan with at least 2" sides that can take high heat) in 1 T of oil, on high heat, for about 2 minutes until lightly browned. Remove asparagus from pan and set aside.

Add another 1 T of oil to the pan and stir fry the beef strips in 2 batches, for 2-3 minutes until browned but still pink inside. Return the first batch of beef to the pan and add the bell pepper. Stir and toss over high heat until just beginning to wilt, 1-2 minutes.

Quickly stir the cornstarch liquid and add it to the pan along with the stir fry sauce. Cook until sauce thickens, 1-2 minutes. Return asparagus to the pan, toss to evenly coat, and serve with white rice (unless you are going low-carb, in which case, leave out the rice).

Serves 4.

MEATBALLS WITH RICOTTA IN TOMATO SAUCE

- 10 oz ground pork shoulder
 10 oz sweet Italian sausage, casing removed
 2 oz prosciutto or pancetta, minced (Easier to cut if put in the freezer for 15 min.)
 4 cups cubed white bread, crusts removed
 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
 1 tsp dried oregano
 1 tsp fennel seeds
 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
 1-1/2 tsp Kosher salt
 2/3 cup ricotta cheese
 3 eggs, lightly beaten
 Olive oil
 1 28-oz can crushed tomatoes (high quality, either San Marzano or Muir Glen)
 1/4 cup chiffonaded* fresh basil leaves (If fresh basil is not available, add a tablespoon of dried basil to the tomatoes before adding to the meatballs.)
 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
 *To chiffonade basil leaves, stack leaves on top of each other, then roll up leaves lengthwise like a cigar, slice thinly starting at the end.

In a large bowl, combine the pork, Italian sausage, prosciutto or pancetta, bread cubes, parsley, oregano, fennel, red pepper flakes, and salt. Use your hands to mix until the ingredients are evenly distributed. Do not over-work.

Whisk beaten eggs and ricotta together in a separate bowl until there are no more large clumps of ricotta. Pour into the bowl of with meat mixture. Mix with your hands until just incorporated.

Again, do not over-mix.

If you want to test the seasoning, form a small bit of the mix into a patty and heat in a small skillet on the stovetop until cooked through. Adjust seasoning to taste, adding more herbs, chili, or salt, as preferred. Keep meat mixture in refrigerator while doing this.

Preheat oven to 425°F. Coat the bottom of a large roasting pan with olive oil. Form meatballs in your hand, about 1-1/2-inches in diameter, using about 3 T of the mixture to form each meatball. Arrange in pan so there is some space between them. If too crowded they will steam and not brown.

Roast meatballs in the oven for about 30 minutes, turning the meatballs after about 20 minutes, until they are beginning to brown.

Remove pan from oven. Use a metal spatula to dislodge meatballs from sticking to the pan. Add crushed tomatoes and carefully cover the pan (it's hot!) with aluminum foil. Return pan to the oven. Lower the heat to 300°F. Cook for an additional one to 1-1/2 hours.

Sprinkle basil into sauce before serving.

Makes about 24 meatballs. Top with grated Parmesan.

Serves 5-6.



ENCHILADA PIE

- 1 lb ground chuck
 1 (14.5 oz) can cream of mushroom soup
 1 (14.5 oz) can whole tomatoes, crushed
 olive oil
 2 cups shredded Colby jack cheese

- 1 onion, chopped
 2 small cans diced green chilies
 1 (14.5 oz) can tomato sauce
 6 corn tortillas

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Brown the meat and onion together, drain. In a saucepan, cook the soup, chilies, crushed tomatoes, and tomato sauce. Add the browned meat and simmer on low heat. In a frying pan heat a little olive oil and heat the corn tortillas until they are warm but still soft. Place 4 of the warmed tortillas in the base of a casserole dish and top with 1/2 of the meat mixture. Sprinkle with 1/2 of the cheese. Repeat the layers, starting with the final 2 tortillas, meat mixture and remaining cheese. Bake for 30 minutes.

Serves 5-6.

Church Directory

VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

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

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Larry Gibson, 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.

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.

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.

PIONEER BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

John Cahill, Pastor
 939 Bridge Street, Vernonia
 503-429-1161
 Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
 Sunday Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
 Wednesday Prayer 7:00 p.m.

VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Minister
 410 North Street, Vernonia
 503 429-6522
 Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
 Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.
 (meets in Youth & Family Center)
 Home Group Meeting throughout
 the week at various locations

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.