

Bowl Food

Written by Debbi Covington
Tuesday, 17 January 2012 16:00



Bowl food? What's bowl food? Bowl food is the new comfort food for people on the move. In a nutshell, bowl food is relaxed eating. Depending on your mood, you can slow simmer a fiery curry, put together a luscious pasta or simply toss together a few fresh ingredients in a wok. All that remains is to lift your fork and eat with pleasure.

Our schedules seem to be busier than ever these days but our families still need to be fed. Just coming up with an idea for a main dish can be a huge dilemma. Every busy cook knows that the actual cooking of a meal is only half the battle --- the other half is creativity. This week's recipes are all bowl food. Every single one is both time saving and delicious! All can easily be paired with a fresh salad, bread and a quick dessert. Think of the extra time that you'll be able to spend with your family enjoying the dinner hour together. (These recipes will work for friends, too!) Happy cooking!

Caramelized Onion and Parsnip Soup

2 tablespoons butter
3 large onions, halved and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons firmly packed light brown sugar
1 cup dry white wine
3 large parsnips, peeled and chopped
5 cups vegetable stock
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup cream
Fresh thyme leaves, to garnish

Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Add the onions and sugar and cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Add the wine and parsnips and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes or until the onions and parsnips are golden and tender. Pour in the stock, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Cool slightly, then place in a blender or food processor and blend in batches until smooth. Season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with a little cream and sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves over the top. Serves 4.

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Creamy Chicken and Peppercorn Papparadelle

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons butter
1 onion, halved and thinly sliced
2 tablespoons drained green peppercorns, slightly crushed
½ cup white wine
1¼ cups cream
½ pound pappardelle pasta or extra-wide egg noodles
1/3 cup sour cream
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

Cut the chicken in half so that you have 4 flat fillets; season with salt and pepper. Melt the butter in a frying pan, add the chicken and cook for 3 minutes on each side or until lightly browned and cooked through. Remove from the pan, cut into slices; keep warm. Add the onion and peppercorns to the same pan and cook over medium heat for 3 minutes or until the onion has softened slightly. Add the wine and cook for 1 minute or until reduced by half. Stir in the cream and cook for 4 to 5 minutes or until thickened slightly; season with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a large saucepan of boiling water until al dente; drain. Mix together the pasta, chicken, any juices and the cream sauce. Divide the pasta among serving bowls; top with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkle with cheese. Serves 4.

Linguine with Ham, Artichokes and Lemon Sauce

1 pound linguine
1 tablespoon butter
2 large cloves garlic, chopped
2/3 cup marinated artichokes, drained and quartered
5 ounces sliced ham, cut into strips
1¼ cups cream
2 teaspoons coarsely grated lemon zest
½ cup fresh basil, torn
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cook the pasta in a large pot of boiling water until al dente. Drain; return to the pot. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large frying pan, add garlic and cook over medium heat for 1 minute or until fragrant. Add the artichokes and ham and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the cream and lemon zest, reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes, gently breaking up the artichokes with a wooden spoon. Pour the sauce over the pasta. Add the basil and Parmesan; toss well until pasta is evenly coated. Serves 4.

Risotto with Scallops and Minted Peas

4 cups vegetable stock
2¾ cups frozen baby peas
2 tablespoons sour cream
Salt
Freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons finely shredded fresh mint, divided

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1 tablespoon olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2/3 cup arborio rice
16 sea scallops
1 tablespoon grated fresh Parmesan cheese
4 fresh mint leaves, to garnish
Lemon wedges, to garnish

Bring the stock to a boil and add the peas. Simmer for 1-2 minutes or until the peas are tender. Remove peas; keeping stock at a low simmer. Blend 1¾ cups of peas with sour cream in a food processor until smooth. Season with salt and pepper; stir in 1 tablespoon mint. Place oil in a shallow saucepan and cook the onion over low heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until soft. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Stir in the rice to coat. Increase the heat to medium. Add 1 cup stock to the rice mixture and cook, stirring constantly, until the liquid has evaporated. Add the stock, ½ cup at a time, until rice is tender and creamy. This will take approximately 20 minutes. Meanwhile, season the scallops and heat a griddle or skillet. Add the scallops and sear on both sides until cooked through. Fold the pea puree into the risotto with the peas and Parmesan. Divide the risotto among serving bowls and top with the scallops. Sprinkle with the remaining mint, garnish with a mint leaf and serve with a wedge of lemon. Serves 4.

Sweet Chili Shrimp

2 tablespoons medium shrimp
2 tablespoons peanut oil
1-inch piece ginger, peeled and julienned
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
5 scallions, cut into 1-inch pieces
1/3 cup chili garlic sauce
2 tablespoons tomato sauce
2 tablespoons Chinese rice wine
1 tablespoon Chinese rice wine vinegar
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon light brown sugar
1 teaspoon cornstarch mixed with ½ cup water
Finely chopped scallions, to garnish

Peel and devein shrimp; leave tails intact. Heat a wok until very hot. Add oil and swirl to coat. Heat over high heat until smoking; quickly add ginger, garlic and scallions. Stir-fry for 1 minute. Add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes or until they are just pink and starting to curl. Remove shrimp from wok. Place chili garlic sauce, tomato sauce, rice wine, rice wine vinegar, soy sauce, brown sugar and cornstarch paste in a small bowl and whisk together. Pour sauce into the wok and cook; stirring, for 1 to 2 minutes or until it thickens slightly. Return the shrimp to the wok for 1 to 2 minutes or until heated and cooked through. Garnish with the finely chopped scallions. Serve with rice noodles or egg noodles. Serves 4.

Madras Beef Curry

1 tablespoon butter
1 onion, chopped

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3 to 4 tablespoons Madras curry paste
2 pounds boneless beef chuck steak, trimmed and cut into 1-inch cubes
¼ cup tomato paste
1 cup beef stock

Heat the butter in a large frying pan, add the onion and cook over medium heat for 10 minutes or until browned. Add the curry paste and stir for 1 minute or until fragrant. Add the meat and cook, stirring until coated with the curry paste. Stir in the tomato paste and beef stock. Reduce heat and simmer, covered for 75 minutes and then uncovered for 15 minutes or until meat is tender. Serves 4.

Cypriot Pork and Coriander Stew

1½ tablespoons coriander seeds
1¾ pounds pork tenderloin, cut into 1-inch cubes
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
¼ cup olive oil, divided
1 large onion, thinly sliced
1½ cups red wine
1 cup chicken stock
1 teaspoon sugar
Salt

Fresh cilantro sprigs, to garnish

Crush the coriander seed in a a mortar and pestle. Combine the pork, crushed seeds and 1 teaspoon cracked pepper in a bowl. Cover and marinate overnight in the refrigerator. Combine the flour and pork and toss. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a frying pan and cook the pork in batches over high hear for 1 to 2 minutes or until brown. Heat the remaining oil, add onion and cook over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes or until just golden. Return the meat to the pan, add the wine, stock and sugar. Season with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 1 hour. Remove the meat. Return the pan to the heat and boil over high heat for 3 to 5 minutes or until reduced and slightly thickened. Pour over the meat and top with the cilantro sprigs. Serves 4 to 6.

The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of the cookbook, Dining Under the Carolina Moon. Debbi's new cookbook, Celebrate Everything! will be released in May 2012. Debbi's website address is www.cateringbydebbicovington.com . She may be reached at 525-0350 or by email at dbc@cateringbydebbicovington.com.

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