

EasterDayDinner
By Adlen W. Robinson

Easter Sunday is almost here and if you are like most families, after church you plan on having a big Easter Day meal and possibly a family Easter Egg hunt. If cooking a big meal intimidates you, then this is the menu for you! Most everything can be assembled and/or prepared ahead of time, and believe me, children and adults alike will appreciate your efforts. Have a wonderful Easter everybody!

You can also use a spiral sliced ham for this recipe, which makes serving a breeze. If you do use a spiral sliced one, do not worry about scoring the ham.

Glazed Ham

1 large onion, quartered, root end intact
1 (5 to 7-pound) smoked ham (shank end)
3/4 cup apricot jelly
1/4 cup water
8 sprigs fresh thyme, stripped
3 tablespoons mustard
4 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 teaspoons molasses
1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
Pinch ground cloves
1 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Score the ham with a cross hatch pattern through the thick layer of skin and fat. Arrange the onions in the center of a foil lined sheet pan large roasting pan and set the ham on top of them. Bake for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, stir together the apricot jelly, water, thyme leaves, mustard, 3 tablespoons of the vinegar, the molasses, Worcestershire,

allspice, and cloves in a saucepan. Whisk over medium heat until the jelly has dissolved and sauce is smooth, about 4 minutes. After the ham has been baked for 1 hour, brush with the apricot mixture every 15 minutes for another 45 minutes or until nicely glazed. Transfer the ham to a serving platter, tent with foil and set aside while making the sauce.

Discard the onions, remove foil and pour the sauce into a skillet. Add the broth and bring to a boil over high heat. In a small bowl, mix the butter and flour together until you form a paste. Whisk into the pan juices and let sauce simmer until thickened like gravy. Finish with the remaining tablespoon of vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste.

Thinly slice the ham and serve with the sauce.

Glazed Carrots

1 (1-pound) bag baby carrots
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup maple syrup
2 tablespoons orange juice
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon salt

Place all the ingredients in a medium, heavy saucepan.

Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the carrots are tender and the sauce becomes a shiny glaze, about 15 minutes.

Using an oven mitt or pot holder, remove from the heat and serve.

Broccoli and Cheese Casserole

2 tablespoons butter, plus 2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
3 tablespoons flour
1 1/2 cup hot milk
1 1/2 cups grated sharp cheddar
2 heads broccoli, cut into 2-inch pieces, quickly steamed
1 1/2 cups crushed butter crackers
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Melt 2 tablespoons of butter in medium saucepan over medium high heat. Add in onions and cook until translucent, about 4 minutes. Stir in flour and stir to coat onions. Cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and whisk in hot milk. Return to heat and bring to a simmer. Stir in cheese by the handful. Add broccoli to the cheese sauce and pour into buttered casserole dish.

Melt remaining butter in a small skillet and stir in cracker crumbs. Cover the broccoli casserole with the buttered cracker crumbs. Bake until bubbly and lightly browned, about 20 minutes

Macaroni and Cheese

4 cups (1 pound) elbow macaroni
5 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 cups milk
1/2 medium onion, stuck with 1 clove
4 cloves garlic
1 bay leaf
3 sprigs fresh thyme
1 teaspoon dry mustard
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 cups grated Cheddar, plus 1 cup in big chunks
1/2 cup grated Parmesan
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
Cook the macaroni in a large pot of boiling salted water until done, about 5 to 7 minutes. Drain and toss it with 2 tablespoons butter; set aside.

Heat the oven to 350 degrees.

Coat a large baking dish with 1 tablespoon butter and set it aside. Put the milk into a saucepan and add the clove studded onion, garlic, bay leaf, thyme, and mustard. Warm over medium low heat until the milk starts to steam, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the flavors infuse while you make the roux. In a large pot over medium heat add 2 tablespoons butter and the flour. Cook, stirring, for about 2 to 3 minutes; don't let the roux color. Strain the infused milk onto the roux, whisking constantly to avoid lumps. Cook, stirring often, for about 5 minutes until the sauce is thick. Remove from the heat and add 1/2 the grated Cheddar and 1/2 the Parmesan; stir until it is melted and smooth. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Pour this over the macaroni, add the chunks of Cheddar, and mix until well blended; put this into the prepared baking dish. Sprinkle the remaining Cheddar and Parmesan cheeses evenly over the top. Bake until the top is golden and crusty, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Ambrosia

2 cans chunky pineapple
2 cans fruit cocktail
2 cans tropical fruit cocktail
4 cans mandarin oranges
1 large container sour cream
1 bag miniature marshmallows
1 small jar Maraschino cherries

Drain the liquid from all the cans of fruit. Thin the sour cream with whichever fruit juice you would like. Mix all the ingredients together with the thin sour cream.

Limeade Punch

1 (5 or 6-ounce) can pink frozen lemonade concentrate
1 (5 or 6-ounce) can frozen limeade concentrate
1 bottle Champagne or sparkling wine, chilled (or use a lemon/lime soda)

Chopped mint leaves, plus sprigs for garnishing

8 small slices honeydew melon

Place limeade and lemonade concentrate in a pitcher or punch bowl. Add Champagne and chopped mint and stir. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Pour into individual glasses and garnish each glass with a sprig of mint and a slice of honeydew.

*For the kids, make a big batch of sugar cookie dough and store it in the refrigerator. Let the kids roll out cookies, cut out eggs, bunnies, ducks, etc. Use store bought vanilla frosting (you can use food coloring to brighten up the white frosting) and then let everybody decorate the cookies with various candies and colored sugars. There are so many adorable cookie cutter shapes, as well as numerous candies and sugars for Easter.