

COOK'S CORNER

Buffalo Chicken Balls are party-perfect



SLEUTH'S CORNER

Q. My grandmother was a great Southern cook and used to make a cake with fresh coconut frosting. Unfortunately, no one in the family got the recipe from her. The coconut was mixed in the frosting and it was so creamy and gooey that she inserted toothpicks to keep the layers from sliding off while it was refrigerated. I have searched online, but all of the recipes I find have a meringue-type frosting with coconut sprinkled on top. Can someone help?

Allison

Main Dish

Shrimp Scampi with Linguine

The garlic flavor is pretty subtle, so if you prefer a more pronounced punch I'd suggest using four or more cloves.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 large garlic cloves, sliced thin (or more to taste)
- 4 green onions, chopped fine
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley plus more for garnish
- 3 pounds medium shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 1 pound linguine, cooked al dente

In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Sauté the garlic and onions 2 minutes (do not allow to brown). Add the wine and cook, stirring, until liquid is reduced by half. Add the half-and-half and bring to a boil. When sauce has thickened, add parsley and shrimp. When shrimp has turned completely pink, reduce heat, add the cooked linguine and cook just long enough for pasta to warm. Toss constantly to avoid burning. Garnish with parsley and serve hot. Makes 8 servings.

Per serving: 468 calories (25 percent from fat), 13 g fat (5.1 g saturated), 4.7 g monounsaturated), 237 mg cholesterol, 32.5 g protein, 48 g carbohydrates, 2.1 g fiber, 994 mg sodium.

Appetizer

Mini Buffalo Chicken Balls

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/3 cup hot sauce such as Frank's Red Hot
- 1 pound ground chicken, preferably thigh meat
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 celery rib, minced
- 3/4 cup bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon salt

Heat the oven to 450 degrees. Drizzle the oil into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and evenly coat the entire surface. Set aside.

Combine the butter and hot sauce in a small saucepan and cook over low heat, whisking until the butter is melted and fully incorporated. Remove from heat and allow the mixture to cool 10 minutes.

Combine the hot sauce mixture, ground chicken, egg, celery, bread crumbs and salt in a large mixing bowl and mix by hand until thoroughly incorporated. Roll the mixture into 3/4-inch balls, making sure to pack the meat firmly. Place the balls in the prepared baking dish, lining them up snugly and in even rows. The meatballs should be touching one another.

Roast for 15 to 20 minutes, until the meatballs are cooked through, registering 165 degrees on an instant-read thermometer. Allow the meatballs to cool for 5 minutes in the pan before serving with celery sticks and blue cheese dressing. Makes 40 meatballs, 4 entrées or 10 appetizer servings.

Per serving (based on 4): 441 calories (61 percent from fat), 30 g fat (11 g saturated), 12.3 g monounsaturated), 174 mg cholesterol, 24.2 g protein, 16.6 g carbohydrates, 1 g fiber, 950 mg sodium.

Appetizer

Hot Broccoli Dip

- 1 cup broccoli florets, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped red bell pepper
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup light mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup light sour cream
- 1/4 cup (1 ounce) grated fresh Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1 garlic clove, pressed
- 1/8 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

Heat oven to 375 degrees. In medium bowl, combine broccoli, onion and bell pepper. Add cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream, 2 tablespoons of the Parmesan, the garlic and pepper. Mix well, and spoon into a 2- to 3-cup overproof dish.

Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until heated through. Remove from oven, sprinkle with remaining Parmesan cheese. Serve with crackers or raw vegetables. Makes 2 cups (16 servings).

Per serving: 70 calories, 6 g fat (2.5 g saturated), 15 mg cholesterol, 2 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 135 mg sodium, 0 fiber.

BY LINDA CICERO

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The Meatball Shop Cookbook (Ballantine, \$28) is a funky homage to the restaurant of the same name in Manhattan's Lower East Side, a place that attracts Wall Streeters and city workers alike.

"Our restaurant is the crossroads for one big, complicated, amazing city," write owner-authors Daniel Holzman, Michael Chernow and Lauren Deen. "Meatballs can do all that. They're the real deal. Down to earth, universally loved, they make people happy."

There are lots and lots of meatball recipes plus accompanying sauces. There are also salads, vegetables and an entire chapter of cookie ice cream sandwiches.

It is a cookbook that is as much fun to read as it is simple to cook from there are no obscure ingredients or complicated techniques. The Mini Buffalo Chicken Balls here were perfect as a game day main event — much less messy than the usual Buffalo wings — and would also make great party fare.

Q. I had a great recipe for shrimp scampi served with linguine. My dear husband managed to throw that tattered sheet out while trying to organize my recipes. Could you please see if you have it? Its main ingredients were shrimp, garlic, butter, oil, parsley, lemon and white wine. I have tried others, and they are not a patch on the one I had.

Julia Pizarro, Coral Gables

I believe this is the recipe you are seeking. It dates to 1969 and came from Dick Cam's Seashells. It isn't complicated, but it is crucial that you follow the directions carefully or the sauce will be thin.

Take care during the final cooking period, after you add the linguine, to keep the pasta from sticking while the sauce thickens. If you don't stir or toss vigorously, you'll end up with overcooked pasta or shrimp.

For those looking to cut some of the calories, I experimented using fat-free half and half and found it would not thicken enough on its own, so added a tablespoon of cornstarch dissolved in cold water.

THANKSGIVING LEFTOVERS

The test kitchen at The Pampered Chef sent out tips for Thanksgiving leftovers that I found helpful:

Use an old ice cube tray to freeze leftovers or ingredients from the prep that are too small to be of much value, and you'll have the makings for enhancing soups, stews, pot roasts and casseroles.

Once the cubes are frozen solid, pop into airtight bags or containers and label for future use. A couple cubes of vegetables, uncorked wine, broth, even chopped herbs or celery frozen with a little water would all punch up a recipe.

Mashed potatoes can be frozen this way and used to thicken soup, or form into dollops to pan fry with eggs for breakfast. You can find more tips and recipes like broccoli dip here, perfect for holiday entertaining, at www.pamperedchef.com.

TRIED AND TRUE

Gold Medal has rolled out what it calls "whole wheat flour" that adds whole grain to recipes without altering flavor and texture in baked goods. The flour has the same fiber and protein as regular whole wheat flour. When I tried it in my favorite cookie recipe — a light Key lime wafer — it did not seem any heavier than when I use white flour, and the color was very close, as well. A 5-pound bag has a suggested retail price of \$3.85.