

Allen Family Favorites

2014

by Natalie Allen



Dedication

This book is dedicated to my mom, the best cook I know. Thank you for having dinner on the table every night when we were growing up, you have inspired me as a mom and as a cook.

Thanks for teaching me so much about life, family and love. Without your influence, I wouldn't know my way around the kitchen!

Love you,

Natalie

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Main Entrees

Making this cookbook has been a family adventure and these are the entrees I make most often for dinner. Enjoy!



Brown Sugar Spiced Tenderloin

When I made this pork tenderloin, Libby said, "Can I have this recipe when I grow up?" She loves the sauce and would lick it from her plate, if I'd let her. It is a perfect combination of sweet and spicy.

Rub Ingredients:	1 pork tenderloin (about 1- 1.5 pounds)
2 t. salt	2 T. oil
1/2 t. pepper	Glaze Ingredients:
1 t. cumin	1 cup brown sugar
1 t. chili powder	2 T. minced garlic
1 t. cinnamon	2 t. hot sauce (I use sriracha, tabasco works too)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small bowl, combine salt, pepper, cumin, chili powder, and cinnamon. Cut pork tenderloin in half (like you're cutting a loaf of bread into two equal pieces). In an ovenproof skillet (I used a Dutch Oven), heat oil over medium high heat. Rub spices on pork and then sear meat by browning it and turning on each side, about 4 minutes total. . Stir together brown sugar, garlic and hot sauce. Pat on top of each piece of pork. Roast in the middle of the oven, uncovered, for about 25 minutes. Inside of pork should register 140 degrees with a meat thermometer. Pork may be slightly pink, but it is still done. Let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes. . Slice on the diagonal and serve, spooning sauce from skillet over the top of the pork.



Chicken Corn Soup

This soup is perfect in the fall and winter. I make a big pot of Chicken Corn Soup on the weekend and eat it for lunch throughout the week. This soup also freezes well. We adapt it to our individual preferences. I eat the soup as prepared. Geoff and the kids like it ladled over hot, cooked Reames noodles for a hearty chicken noodle soup.

3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts	1 t. thyme
1 onion, chopped	1/3 cup tomato sauce (optional)
1 t. minced garlic	12 oz. can cream-style corn (this is the “secret ingredient,” it makes the soup creamy without adding a lot of fat and calories)
3 carrots, sliced	1 cup frozen corn
3 ribs celery, sliced	3 cups chicken broth
1 t. basil	Generous sprinkle of salt and pepper

Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. . Make sure chicken breasts are submerged in liquid. Cover and cook on low 8-9 hours. Shred or cube chicken before serving. . You can also make this soup in a Dutch Oven, cooking at 300 degrees for 3 hours. . Serve by itself or over hot, cooked noodles. .



Chicken Parmesan

When you're a dietitian, people give you cookbooks....and recipes....and all kinds of cooking advice. We received 50 cookbooks as wedding gifts and I love them all. I also received recipes at my bridal showers and they are some of our FAVORITE dishes! This is one of those recipes, given to me by a good friend of my parents!

4 thawed, boneless/skinless chicken breasts	1 t. basil
½ cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs	1 jar spaghetti sauce
¼ cup Parmesan cheese	2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
	Hot, cooked spaghetti noodles

Cut chicken breast in half lengthwise to make thin cutlets. . Combine bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese and basil. . Coat chicken with bread crumb mixture. . Heat ¼ inch olive oil on stove until hot and rippling. Brown chicken on both sides. . Remove from skillet and lay in flat baking dish, pour jar of spaghetti sauce over chicken (I like to use my homemade "Summer in a Jar" sauce). . Sprinkle 2 cups mozzarella cheese over chicken. . Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5-10 minutes until cheese is browned. . Serve over hot, cooked spaghetti noodles. .



Chicken Taco Soup

I use my crock pot all winter long and this soup is one of our favorite things I make in it. Warm, hearty and delicious, everyone in our family likes it.

1 onion, chopped	1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed	1 can chicken broth
1 cup frozen corn, thawed	2 cans petite diced tomatoes, undrained
1 small can chopped green chiles	1 package taco seasoning
½ red pepper, diced (optional)	4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts (fresh or frozen)

Place onion, beans, corn, tomato sauce, chicken broth and diced tomatoes in slow cooker. Add taco seasoning, stir to combine. . Lay chicken breasts on top of the mixture, pressing down slightly until just covered by other ingredients. . Cover and cook on low heat for 7-8 hours. . Remove chicken from soup and shred. Add the shredded chicken back into the soup and dinner is ready! . Serve topped with sour cream and cheddar cheese, if desired. We like to scoop the soup with tortilla chips. .



Garlic Chicken

This recipe is another quick option when I have failed to get a dinner plan together. Zach and Libby love it. Depending on how you cut the chicken, you can make homemade "nuggets" or an entire chicken breast. I usually serve it with baked potatoes and a vegetable.

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts

2 t. fresh minced garlic

1/4 cup olive oil

1/2 cup bread crumbs

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line a baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray. . Combine oil and garlic, microwave for 20 seconds to blend flavors. . In a separate bowl, combine bread crumbs and cheese. . Brush chicken with garlic oil. Then, dip in bread crumb mixture. Place on baking sheet. . Bake for 25 minutes, until no longer pink and juices run clear. .



Hot Oven Sammies

These little sandwiches are delicious! And addictive! And amazing! They great served as an appetizer or with a bowl of soup. Use any combination of meat and cheese you prefer, but provolone with ham is the Allen family favorite.

12 Hawaiian Rolls, sliced in half	1 t. onion powder
1/2 c. butter, melted	1 t. Worcestershire sauce
1 t. ground mustard	1 package provolone cheese
	1 package thinly sliced ham

Line a jelly roll pan with foil. . Layer ham and cheese on sliced rolls. . Mix butter, ground mustard, onion powder and Worcestershire sauce and spoon over sandwiches (soaking the bun and all). . Cover with foil and let set several hours or overnight in refrigerator. . Bake, in foil, at 350 degrees for 15 minutes. Serve warm. .



Lasagna

Everyone needs a good lasagna recipe and this is mine. It comes together quickly, since you do not cook the noodles in advance. I make it for big Allen family gatherings, as it feeds a crowd.

1 pound ground beef	15 oz. ricotta cheese
1 t. onion powder	1 egg
1 t. basil	1 jar (26 oz) spaghetti sauce
2½ cups shredded Mozzarella cheese, divided	2 T. sugar
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese	1 cup water
	12 lasagna noodles, uncooked

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. . Brown ground beef over medium high heat. Sprinkle beef with onion powder and basil, while it's cooking. . Drain the fat off the cooked meat and add spaghetti sauce. Pour water into empty sauce jar; cover and shake well. Add watery sauce to the meat sauce. Add sugar and mix well. . Mix 1¼ cups Mozzarella cheese, ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, ricotta cheese, and egg until blended. Set aside. . Spray 9x13 pan with cooking spray. Spread 1 cup meat sauce onto the bottom of the baking dish. Top with a layer of uncooked noodles. Noodles will expand to fit the dish during baking. Spread 1/3 of ricotta cheese mixture and 1 cup meat over noodles. Repeat two more layers. . Sprinkle with remaining Mozzarella and Parmesan cheese. Cover tightly with foil. Bake 45 minutes. . Remove foil and continue baking 15 minutes or until heated through. Let stand 15 minutes before cutting to serve. .



Mini Meat Loaves

I always think of sweet Libby when I make these meat loaves. She LOVED them when she was a baby. For her first birthday, she ate mini meat loaf instead of cake (only a dietitian's kid). This recipe is my go-to for people when delivering a meal in those "life situations" like a new baby or recovering from illness. The sweetness of the Crispix and ketchup is a perfect combo, making a moist meat loaf.

3 pounds lean ground beef	3 cups Crispix cereal, crushed
1 cup ketchup	2 T. Worcestershire sauce
3-4 T. brown sugar	2 t. onion powder
1 T. mustard, or 2 t. ground mustard	1/2 t. garlic powder
2 eggs, beaten	Sprinkle of salt and pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. . In large bowl, combine ketchup, brown sugar and mustard. Remove 1/2 cup for topping and set aside. . Add eggs, Worcestershire sauce, Crispix, and seasonings to remaining ketchup mixture. Mix well and let stand for 5 minutes. . Combine beef and ketchup mixture. Press meat into 18 greased muffin cups (about 1/3 cup each). . Bake at 375 degrees for 18-20 minutes. Drizzle with reserved ketchup mixture and bake 10 minutes longer or until no longer pink. . Meat loaves freeze well.



Slow Cooker Spaghetti Sauce

This sauce simmers all day and the flavors blend, making a great "homemade" sauce. Use it over noodles, in lasagna or for spaghetti pie.

1/2 pound ground beef	1 (14.5 oz) can Italian-style diced tomatoes, undrained
1/2 pound sausage	1 t. basil
1 onion, diced	1 t. fresh, minced garlic
1 (16 oz) jar of your favorite marinara sauce	Cheese tortellini
	Mozzarella and Parmesan cheese for topping

Saute onion in skillet. Add ground beef and sausage, cook until no longer pink. . Add cooked meats and onion to crock pot. Stir in marinara sauce, tomatoes, and spices. Cook on low for 4-6 hours. . We like this best served over cheese tortellini and topped with mozzarella. .



Spicy Honey Chicken

This is another go-to recipe when I have not planned ahead...it requires no forethought, no marinading, no chopping. You can prepare this chicken on the grill (our favorite) or in the oven using the broiler.

2 lbs skinless, boneless chicken breasts	1 t. onion powder
To make the rub, combine the following:	Glaze:
1 package taco seasoning	1/2 c. honey
1 t. cumin	1 T. lime juice
1 t. smoked paprika	1 T. cider vinegar

Wash and dry chicken breasts. Drizzle with olive oil and rub with hands to lightly coat chicken. Then toss chicken in spice rub to coat all sides well. This is messy, but worth it! . Grill chicken for 4-7 minutes on each side, until cooked through. . While chicken is grilling, prepare glaze. Warm honey in microwave for a few seconds so it's not so thick. Add vinegar and lime juice. Combine well and reserve 2 T. for later. . When chicken is done, but still on grill, brush glaze on both sides of chicken. Be careful, as the honey will drip and make a hot mess, but it's worth it. Leave on grill for 1-2 minutes to make a crusty, sweet glaze on chicken. . Remove from grill and serve with reserved glaze for dipping. .



Summer in a Jar Spaghetti Sauce

This summer, Libby decided she wanted have a garden. I left this little adventure up to her and Geoff and we were all excited when we got a few edible vegetables. What we had in great quantity were tomatoes. Lots of tomatoes and they all seemed to be ripe at the same time (August). Since it was unlikely we are going to consume 30 fresh tomatoes in a week, I had to find another plan....enter this pasta sauce. It's delicious. Your house smells heavenly and it uses a LOT of tomatoes. Perfect way to capture the summery tomato taste and enjoy it in winter.

6-7 tomatoes, quartered into fairly even chunks,	1 T. garlic
no need to peel them	1 T. oil
2 carrots, peeled and cut into 1 inch chunks	½-1 cup beef broth
1 white or yellow onion, quartered	Herbs and sugar to your taste preference

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Line a jelly roll pan with foil, spray with cooking spray. . In large bowl, combine tomatoes, onion and carrots. Toss with olive oil and garlic and pour onto jelly roll pan in single layer. Generously salt and pepper. . Place in oven and slow roast for 2-3 hours. The juices evaporate, flavors intensify and sugars caramelize. Delicious! . Allow to cool for about 30 minutes (or more, it doesn't really matter). Scrap everything from jelly roll pan (veggies, browned bits, oil) into blender. . Add ½-1 cup beef broth (varies depending on how thick you want the sauce to be, I use ½ cup). Add herbs, I use rosemary, oregano, basil and more garlic. I also add about 1 T sugar, as we like a sweeter sauce. . Pulse in your blender until desired consistency. You can make a smooth sauce, or a chunky one, your choice. .



Sweet & Spicy Shredded Pork

This meat is so tender, it falls apart. I make it for BBQs, trips to the lake, and football parties. You need a Dutch oven or sturdy roasting pan to make it.

5-7 pound pork loin	2 t. smoked paprika
1 cup brown sugar	1 t. onion powder
3 T. fresh minced garlic	2 t. ground mustard
2 T. cumin	1 onion, coarsely chopped
1 T. salt	1 cup beef broth
	1 cup sugary soda, such as root beer, coca-cola, or Dr. Pepper (do not use diet)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Rinse and dry the pork loin. Depending on the size and shape of your pot, you may need to cut the loin in multiple pieces. Mix together the brown sugar and spices. Rub the mixture generously over the pork loin. Use all of the mixture and make sure all meat is coated. . In large roasting pan or Dutch oven, place chopped onion on bottom. Pour beef broth and soda over the onion. Placed seasoned pork, fat side up, into the liquid. You want the roast to be about half covered in liquid, not fully immersed. Roast for 4-6 hours, checking the liquid level every 1-2 hours. Remove from oven and let it sit for about 15-30 minutes. Skim fat off the top, shred and mix with juices in roasting pan.



Sweet and Sticky Chicken

Without a doubt, this is our favorite dinner recipe. Both kids LOVE it and it's super easy, making it a staple in our house. I sometimes double the sauce, as we like extra to pour over rice or noodles. You can stir-fry vegetables with the chicken too.

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into small pieces	1/2 c. lite soy sauce
2 T. vegetable oil	2 t. fresh, minced garlic
2 T. brown sugar	2 t. ginger
4 T. honey	1 T. hot sauce

Mix together brown sugar, honey, soy sauce, ginger and hot sauce in a small bowl. . Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add chicken and brown on both sides, until almost completely cooked through. . Pour sauce over the chicken. Simmer uncovered until the sauce thickens, about 10 minutes. If you double the sauce, you'll need to let it simmer longer to thicken. . Serve over hot noodles or rice.



Sweet Paprika Chicken

This is another one of my go-to recipes when I haven't planned ahead. It's a quick, easy way to fix chicken. Libby likes it served with "BBQ sauce with a kick!" To make this "special" BBQ sauce, add a sprinkle of smoked paprika and a generous pinch of brown sugar to the sauce, stir, and magic happens!

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut thinner lengthwise to form 8 thin cutlets	2 T. smoked paprika
2 T. oil	1 ½ t. salt
2 T. packed light brown sugar	½ t. pepper
	1 t. garlic powder

In a small bowl, combine the brown sugar, paprika, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels and pat the spice mixture onto the chicken breasts, rubbing it into the chicken to create an even coating. In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat until hot and rippling. . Add the chicken in a single layer (you may need to do separate batches) and cook for 4-5 minutes on each side depending on the thickness of the chicken. . Do not overcook, as chicken will dry out. I usually squeeze a lime over the chicken and serve with rice and pineapple. .



Tasty Mexican Chicken

This recipe was given to me by an MSU athlete who said, "This is the only recipe I can make and the it is delicious!" She was right, it's easy and versatile. And, as a bonus, it is low-fat and low-calorie.

4-6 chicken breasts, thawed or frozen	1 can mild Rotel, undrained
1 cup mild salsa (I like to use peach salsa, but any flavor is fine)	1 T. cumin
	1 T. smoked paprika

Combine salsa, Rotel and spices. Placed chicken in crock pot and cover with salsa mixture. Spoon salsa over chicken to make sure it's all coated. Cover and cook on low for 6 hours. Remove chicken from crock pot and shred, add about 1-2 cups salsa mixture back to the shredded chicken to add flavor and moisture. . Note: The spices and flavor intensifies as the chicken cooks all day. I'd recommend using mild salsa, as the flavors can get very HOT! . Use the chicken is a variety of ways:. 1. Mexican gumbo....layer rice, black beans, corn salsa, chicken, cheese. . 2. Quesadillas. 3. Tacos. 4. Nachos. 5. Leave chicken breasts whole (do not shred) covered with salsa as a sauce and serve with Spanish rice. . 6. Taco cups (see picture below).



Winter Soup

Winter soup reminds me of my dad, who loves it. This soup is a favorite during football games and on cold days. It's so easy and comes together quickly. It freezes well too.

1 pound ground beef, cooked and drained	1 can green beans, drained
1 small onion, chopped	1 cup frozen corn, thawed
1/2 red or green pepper, chopped	8 oz tomato sauce
1/2 t. minced garlic	2 cans beef consommé soup
1/2 t. basil	1 T. Worcestershire sauce
1-16 oz. can petite diced tomatoes	1 can pinto or black beans, washed and drained

Brown ground beef with onion, pepper, garlic and basil. . Add rest of the ingredients to big soup pot and bring to a boil. . I often serve this soup with grilled cheese sandwiches or cheesy biscuits. .



Yummy Honey Marinade

This quick, easy marinade is delicious on chicken or pork. It's my go-to marinade, as the ingredients are usually in my pantry. Zach, Libby and even their friends request this chicken. The longer you let it marinate, the more intense the flavor. I usually allow four hours of marinating or even overnight.

1-2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breasts	1/3 c. honey
OR	1/3 c. soy sauce
1-2 pounds pork chops	1/4 t. pepper
1/4 c. oil	1/2 t. garlic powder

Mix all ingredients. Marinate 1-2 pounds chicken for 4-6 hours, then grill.



Other Family Favorites

Our favorite treats, side dishes and desserts....



Banana Bread

One of Geoff's favorite treats is banana bread. It reminds me of my Grandma Edith, who would make it for us often, slathered in butter, of course. This recipe is simple and delicious.

1 cup mashed, ripe bananas (about 2 whole bananas)	1/2 t. salt
	1 t. vanilla
1 stick butter, softened	1 t. baking soda mixed in 1/3 cup hot water
1/2 cup sugar	1 1/2 c. flour
1 egg	

Combine butter and sugar. Add egg and vanilla. Add flour and salt. Add baking soda and water. When well combined, fold in mashed bananas. . I prefer to make four mini loaves, but you can also make one dozen banana muffins or one large loaf. . Bake at 350 degrees. For mini loaves, bake 25-30 minutes. For muffins, bake 20 minutes. For large loaf, bake 50-60 minutes. .



Blueberry Kuechen

This delicious baked good is my "go to" when we have overnight guests. It's perfect in the summer with fresh blueberries, but frozen work well too. I like to serve it topped with Cool Whip. Geoff loves the kuechen, so I usually double the recipe and make it in a 9x13 pan.....it never goes to waste.

1 stick butter or margarine

1 t. vanilla

2 eggs

1 cup flour

1 cup sugar

1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Turn oven to 375 degrees. Place unwrapped margarine in 8x8 glass pan and put it in oven to melt. As it is melting, combine the sugar, eggs, vanilla, and flour. . Take melted margarine out of the oven and swirl to coat pan. Add melted margarine to the other ingredients and mix well. Gently fold in blueberries (if using frozen, do not thaw). . Bake for 30-35 minutes, until golden brown on top. .



Christmas Morning Cinnamon Rolls

It's not Christmas morning in the Allen House without these cinnamon rolls. They are quite a treat and the best part is that if your kids arise around 4:00 am (like ours) all you have to do is turn on the oven and breakfast is ready!

1 package of 12 Rhodes frozen cinnamon rolls	1/2 cup white sugar
6 T. softened butter	1/2 cup brown sugar
	1/2 cup melted vanilla ice cream

Before bedtime, place 12 frozen rolls in a LARGE, lightly greased foil pan. I use a disposable pan and by large, I mean large...the rolls really expand. Place rolls touching in center of foil pan. . Pour mixture over the frozen rolls. Put in oven overnight, uncovered. In the morning, turn oven to 350 degrees and bake for 20-25 minutes. Let set for 5 minutes and then add cream cheese icing that comes with the rolls. .



Christmas Toffee

This toffee is one of my favorite treats to bring to Christmas treat exchanges or share with a neighbor during the holiday. This recipe is easy and delicious. It's unique as the base is toasted almonds, which are smothered in crisp, buttery toffee and covered in smooth chocolate. Perfection!

1 cup whole almonds (skin-on, salted or unsalted are both fine)	¼ t. salt
1 cup butter (not margarine)	½ t. vanilla
1 cup sugar	1 (12 oz) package milk chocolate chips, about 2 cups...I use Ghiradelli
	¼ cup finally chopped pecans, optional

Toast almonds by spreading them in a single layer on a plate and microwaving on high for 2-3 minutes. Stir after each minute. On foil-lined baking sheet, arrange almonds in a single layer, covering about a 9x13 area. In a heavy saucepan, combine butter, sugar, vanilla and salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or spatula that can withstand high heat. Stir until butter melted. Then, continue cooking on high and stirring for about 7-10 minutes or until candy thermometer reaches "soft crack" stage, about 285 degrees. The candy will be done when it is the color of the brown skin on the almonds. . You need to work fast now....immediately pour candy over almonds, covering all nuts. Sprinkle chocolate chips over hot candy. Wait one minute and spread melted chocolate until it is smooth. If desired, sprinkle with chopped pecans. Let cool and break into pieces. Store in tightly covered container. .



Cream Corn

A favorite at all holiday gatherings, this cream corn is delicious! When Libby got her braces on, this was all she wanted to eat. This recipe is best prepared in an electric skillet, but you could also make it on the stovetop in a heavy skillet with a lid. Feel free to adapt the amount of corn in this recipe, as it makes a lot, but we love the leftovers, so I usually prepare a big batch!

5 bags FROZEN corn

1/4 cup sugar

1 stick butter

1 t. salt

1/2 cup milk or cream (my mom uses cream, I use skim milk) :)

Melt stick of butter in electric skillet over medium/low heat. . While butter is melting, grind half of the corn in a blender or food processor. In order for corn to grind, it must be frozen. Pulse in blender or food processor for about a minute, until coarsely ground. . Add corn to skillet and continue to grind about 2 1/2 bags. It's OK if you have a few "whole" kernels left in the ground corn. Add the rest of the frozen, whole corn to the electric skillet. Stir to coat with melted butter, cooking for about 5 minutes. . Add milk, sugar and salt. Mix well and cover with lid. Allow corn to simmer for about 10 minutes, adding more butter or milk, if you'd prefer it to be creamier. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Taste before serving and adjust salt and sugar to your preference. .



Grandma Golda Cake

When I think of family gatherings with my cousins, I think of this cake. The recipe is my great grandma's and my mom or Aunt Libby would always make it. The Grandma Golda cake can be adapted to be chocolate or caramel. It makes a lot, which is probably why it appeared on the picnic table at family BBQs, because we have a big family and everyone loves it!

2 cups sugar	2 1/2 cups flour
2/3 cup Crisco shortening	1 cup boiling water
2 eggs	For chocolate cake add:
1 t. vanilla	1/2 cup cocoa
1 cup buttermilk with 2 t. baking soda mixed in	For caramel cake add:
	additional 1/2 cup flour

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream sugar and shortening. Add eggs, vanilla and buttermilk + baking soda. Mix in flour and cocoa, if desired. Stir in boiling water. Pour into greased jellyroll pan. Bake 30 minutes and while baking, prepare frosting. .



Grandma Golda Frosting

The Grandma Golda cake is good by itself, but even better with smooth, creamy frosting. I like this frosting on the caramel cake, as the brown sugar adds a rich flavor. Frost the cake while it's hot and the frosting seeps down it, delicious!

1/2 cup butter	1/4 cup milk
1 cup brown sugar	2 cups powdered sugar

Melt butter on stovetop and add brown sugar. Boil two minutes on low heat, stirring constantly. Add milk and stir until returns to a boil. Remove from heat and add powdered sugar, whisking until smooth. Pour onto hot cake.



Libby's Secret Ingredient Bread

This bread is magic. It is not the best tasting bread I've ever had, but it may be the coolest because you make it with ice cream. And, you can make it anyway you like...chocolate ice cream with peanut butter chips, chocolate chip ice cream with chopped candy bars...the possibilities are endless. Libby loves to make this bread and her favorite combination is cinnamon sugar with vanilla ice cream. It takes like a warm cinnamon roll and is just fun to make.

2 cups softened vanilla ice cream	2 1/4 t. baking powder
1 1/2 cups flour	2 t. cinnamon
3/4 t. salt	Cinnamon and sugar mixture for topping (2 T sugar, 1/2 t. cinnamon)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix softened ice cream and flour. Stir in cinnamon (or any add-ins you'd like). Pour into greased loaf pan. Sprinkle cinnamon/sugar mixture on top. Bake about 35-40 minutes, until knife inserted comes out clean. . Viola, magic bread made with ice cream...don't tell people how you made it and have them guess the "secret" ingredient.



Peanut Butter Cookies

Students in my Medical Nutrition Therapy class make foods to try for someone on a "special" diet. I often bake these when we discuss celiac disease and a gluten-free diet. They are moist, soft and chewy, delicious the next day too. I promise you won't miss the flour.

1 cup smooth peanut butter	1/4 t. salt
3/4 cup brown sugar	3/4 t. baking soda
1 egg	1/2 c. dark chocolate chunks (optional)
1 t. vanilla	Sugar for rolling

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat peanut butter and brown sugar until creamy. Add vanilla, egg, baking soda, and salt. Beat for about 1 minute. If desired, add chocolate chunks (I like dark chocolate best). Shape into balls and roll in sugar. Flatten with a criss cross pattern with a fork. Bake for about 8-9 minutes, do not overbake. Let them sit on cookie sheet for a few minutes before transferring to cooling rack.



Strawberry Pretzel Salad

Hands-down, this is my most requested recipe. EVERYONE likes it. My father-in-law requests it as his "birthday cake." Zach eats it straight out of the pan. I make it for every special occasion in the Allen household. This recipe is not hard, but does require time, so plan accordingly.

Crust:	8 oz. cream cheese
1 cup crushed pretzels	8 oz. Cool Whip, thawed
4 T. sugar	1 cup powdered sugar
1 c. finely crushed pecans	Top:
1 stick butter or margarine	1 large box raspberry jello
Middle layer:	2 cups boiling water
	16 oz. strawberries in sugar, frozen

Spray a 9x13 glass pan with non-stick cooking spray. . Melt butter, mix with pretzels, sugar and pecans. Pat into bottom of 9x13 pan. Bake 15-17 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool. . Beat cream cheese and powdered sugar. Fold in Cool Whip. Gently spread onto pretzel crust. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes. . Dissolve jello in boiling water. Add frozen strawberries and stir until strawberries thaw and gelatin slightly thickens. Gently pour over cream cheese layer. Refrigerate at least 4 hours. Cut into squares to serve. .



Zach's Favorite Chocolate Chip Cookies

These are Zach's favorite cookies and I make them often for him and his friends. On his birthday, Zach wants these cookies instead of a cake. They are nothing fancy, just a great chocolate chip cookie. The "secret" ingredient is the cream of tartar.

1 c. butter, softened	3 cups flour
1 c. brown sugar	1 t. salt
1 c. sugar	1 t. baking soda
2 eggs	1/2 t. scant cream of tartar
2 t. vanilla	1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter and sugars. Add eggs and vanilla. Mix in flour, salt, baking soda, cream of tartar. Blend well, add chocolate chips. Drop heaping in heaping tablespoons onto cookie sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes. Do not overbake.



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