

Dralines and Cream Cocktail

This decadent frozen beverage is an adult version of the famous New Orleans confection. Its nutty flavors make a wonderfully rich dessert that's the perfect finish to a Louisiana-style dinner party.

MAKES 1 GENEROUS SERVING.

2 scoops vanilla ice cream
1 1/4 ounces vanilla-flavored vodka
1/4 ounce walnut liqueur
1/4 ounce hazelnut liqueur
1/4 ounce amaretto
1 tablespoon chopped pecans,
for garnish

Combine all the ingredients except the pecans in a blender and blend until thick and smooth. Pour into a stemmed glass and garnish with pecan pieces. Serve immediately with a straw or spoon since this is not a beverage that can be sipped delicately.



“Laissez les bons temps rouler”



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You're Invited



Over the past 40 years or so I've viewed many Mardi Gras parades, and depending on the locale, the food and drink have been greatly varied.

One overcast, chilly Shrove Tuesday in New Orleans I watched a full day of parades ensconced with my date at his second-story apartment at the corner of St. Charles and Washington Avenue.

Just the two of us enjoyed spicy Bloody Marys and superb cheese straws. As the day worn on, we switched to champagne, caviar, and steak tartare. By the time Comus appeared, we had devoured a bowl of strawberries swimming in rich cream along with coffee and brandy.

A few years later, the day was bright and cool and I joined a large gathering two blocks from St. Charles. There was a constant flow of people who stopped by to enjoy split pea soup and chicken gumbo that simmered over butane burners in the back yard. Numerous picnic tables also held platters of fried chicken, cold cuts, potato salad and various slaws. Huge ice chests were filled

(continued on page 14)

Bloody Mary

For lagniappe, I give you my personal recipe for Bloody Marys. Make several batches in advance and store them in airtight containers in the refrigerator.

MAKES 4 DRINKS.

4 cups good quality, thick tomato juice
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon celery salt
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
8 to 10 drops TABASCO hot sauce,
more or less to taste
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
4 to 5 jiggers vodka
Lime wedges for garnish

In a large pitcher, combine all of the ingredients except garnish and chill for at least 1 hour. Stir again before serving. Pour into tall glasses over chipped ice and garnish with lime.

Parade Parties

MARCELLE BIENVENU



Mil's Goulash

Here is my friend Milou's goulash, which is a good bet to satisfy both adults and children, and can be made in advance and frozen.

MAKES ABOUT 20 SERVINGS.

5 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 1/2 pounds lean ground pork
2 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
3 cups chopped onions
2 cups chopped bell peppers
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves
1/2 cup chopped green onions
3 (10 3/4-ounce) cans tomato soup,
undiluted
1 (10-ounce) can Ro*tel tomatoes
2 (7-ounce) cans sliced mushrooms,
with can liquid
Salt and cayenne, to taste
1 pound Velveeta cheese, cubed
2 1/2 (14-ounce) packages (#4) spaghetti,
broken into 3 to 4 inch pieces (cooked
and drained)

Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the pork and beef and cook until all pink has disappeared. Drain off any excess fat. Add the onions, bell peppers, garlic, parsley and green onions. Cook, stirring often, for about 10 minutes, or until very soft. Add the tomato soup, the tomatoes, and the mushrooms. Season to taste with salt and cayenne. Cook, uncovered, for 1 hour.

Stir in the cheese and cook until it has completely melted. Add the spaghetti and mix well. Pour into casserole dishes. The goulash can be frozen at this point.

When ready to serve, thaw and bake in a preheated 350°F oven until bubbly, about 30 to 40 minutes.

Cold Pork Loin

For something just a little different, prepare a pork loin, chill it, then slice thinly. Spread your favorite rolls (onion or potato rolls work well) with Creole or any whole-grain mustard and layer with the slices of pork. Place the sandwiches in plastic bags to pack in the old ice chest. Bring along a container of pepper jelly to dab on the sandwiches while you watch the parades.

MAKES 18 TO 20 SERVINGS.

1 pork loin, about 6 pounds
2 teaspoons dried leaf thyme
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons dry sherry,
in all
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon soy sauce, in all
2 tablespoons ground ginger
3 garlic cloves, crushed
8 ounces currant or apple jelly

Rub the loin with the thyme and mustard. Combine 1/2 cup of the sherry, 1/2 cup of the soy sauce, the ginger and the garlic and pour over the loin. Marinate overnight. Remove the meat and reserve the marinade. Bake at 325°F for 25 minutes per pound, or until a meat thermometer reaches 175°F, basting often with the marinade.

In a saucepan melt the jelly over medium heat. Add the remaining soy sauce and sherry, mixing well. Cool. Place the roast on a rack in a shallow pan. Spoon the jelly glaze over the roast. The mixture will run off, but continue spooning the glaze over the roast to build up a coating. Refrigerate for 6 to 8 hours before slicing.





Mardi Gras Pasta Salad

MAKES 6 SERVINGS.

- 1 pound fusilli pasta
- 1/2 cup shredded purple cabbage
- 1 cup whole kernel corn
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup finely chopped green onions
- 1 cup mayonnaise (more or less to taste)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon-style mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon dried leaf basil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Cook the pasta in boiling water according to package directions. Drain thoroughly and place in a large mixing bowl. In a skillet, melt the butter and sauté the corn for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the corn, cabbage and green onions to the pasta. Add the mayonnaise, a little at a time and toss to coat evenly. Add the mustard, basil, salt and pepper. Toss gently. Serve at room temperature or chilled. This can be easily packed in airtight containers and brought along to eat along the parade routes. Instead of plates, serve it in paper cups.

(continued from page 13)

with bottled water, beer, wine and soft drinks.

One year, chili and hot dogs, grilled burgers and roast beef po' boys were offered at a party in Lafayette along the parade route.

As you can imagine, anything goes for parade watching and it's never too early to begin organizing your Mardi Gras meal whatever your plans.

Get your ingredients and supplies (paper plates, napkins, cups) early on so there's no last-minute scrambling and dodging parade routes. Prepare as much in advance as possible. Dig out your Carnival beads and decorations and get to it! **LC**

Marcelle Bienvenu was born into a large Acadian family for whom good cooking was almost as large an article of faith as the Catholic religion. In addition to operating her namesake restaurant, Chez Marcelle, she has written a food column since 1984, is the author of several of her own cookbooks and has co-authored three of Emeril Lagasse's cookbooks.

Parade Sandwich

This French bread version of a muffaletta should be made the night before to give the ingredients time to marinate in the olive oil and blend aromatically. It also gets the work done ahead of time. Next morning, unwrap and slice the sandwich into 3-inch pieces. Rewrap the whole loaf tightly in foil. Make several to pack in the ice chest or to set out when guests begin arriving.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS.

- 1 loaf French bread
- 2 ounces ham, thinly sliced
- 2 ounces hard salami, thinly sliced
- 1 Kosher dill pickle, thinly sliced
- 4 black olives, chopped
- 1 green onion, chopped
- 2 to 3 thin slices of cheese
(Swiss, cheddar, provolone)
- 1/2 jalapeño pepper, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped bell peppers
- 2 tablespoons chopped tomatoes
- Olive oil
- Salt and black pepper, to taste

Slice the loaf of French bread in half lengthwise. Layer the ingredients and sprinkle liberally with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Wrap tightly in foil and refrigerate overnight. The sandwich will keep for 2 to 3 days in the refrigerator.

Split Pea Soup

This pea soup is rich and hearty, perfect if the weather is bone-chilling cold. It's ideal to serve after a cold day on the streets. Accompany it with Mardi Gras Pasta Salad and either cornbread or French bread.

MAKES 8 TO 10 SERVINGS.

- 1 pound dry split peas
- 1 ham bone, or 2 cups cubed ham
- 3 quarts chicken broth
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped onions
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1 teaspoon leaf thyme
- 2 teaspoons salt, more or less
to taste
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground
black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cup dry sherry

Combine all of the ingredients, except the sherry, in a large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for about 2 hours. Add the sherry and simmer for another 30 minutes. Adjust seasonings. Serve hot.