

December sure snuck up quickly on us, didn't it? This is such a busy time of the year that I think some really quick dinner recipes are in order. For those of you who use slow cookers, here are a couple of recipes with few ingredients so it's easy to get them ready before you head out the door in the morning (or if it's easier, prepare the night before as you clean up dinner and refrigerate overnight).

### **Creamy Clam Chowder**

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook: LOW for 6 or more hours plus 1 hour on HIGH

Makes 6 servings (9 cups)

3 (6 and 1/2 oz.) cans minced clams  
3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into bite-size pieces  
1 (10 and 3/4 oz.) can cream of onion soup  
1/2 tsp. dried dill weed  
2 cans evaporated milk (24 ounces) \*  
\*to limit fat use at least one can of evaporated SKIM milk

Drain clams, reserving liquid. Cover clams and chill in refrigerator until needed. Add water to clam liquid to make 1 and 3/4 cups. In slow cooker, combine clam liquid and potatoes. Stir in soup and dill weed. Cover and cook on LOW setting. After at least 6 hours, turn to HIGH setting. Stir in clams and evaporated milk. Cover and cook for 1 more hour.

### **Apple Butter-Sauced Pork Chops**

Prep time: 10 minutes Cook: at least 6 hours on LOW

Makes 6 servings

6 boneless pork chops (smoked are best) or about 1 pound  
1 cup apple butter (find with jellies in grocery store)  
1 tsp. quick-cooking tapioca  
1/2 tsp. dried sage, crushed  
2 large red cooking apples

Trim chops well and place in slow cooker. For sauce, in small bowl combine apple butter, tapioca and sage. Pour sauce over the chops. Core apples and cut into quarters. Place on top of chops in slow cooker. Cover and cook on LOW setting for 6 or more hours (or on HIGH for 3-4 hours). This would be tasty served over couscous, brown rice or a brown rice-wild rice pilaf.

Here is a quickie chicken recipe you fix on the stovetop.

### **Chicken with Rosemary Sauce**

(4 servings)

1 tsp. olive oil  
4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves  
1/4 tsp. salt  
1/8 tsp. black pepper  
1/2 cup chopped green onions  
1/4 cup dry white wine  
1 tsp. minced fresh rosemary (use 1/2 tsp. if using dried form)  
1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth (mix cubes or granules at half-strength)  
1/2 cup evaporated milk\*  
\*To reduce fat and calories, use evaporated skim milk

Heat olive oil in large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Add chicken to pan. Cook 3 minutes on each side. Add green onions, wine and rosemary. Cook 30 seconds. Stir in broth and cook 2 more minutes. Add milk and cook 2 more minutes.

And now for those of you doing early holiday preparations, here is healthier cookie dough for rolling out and cutting out with cookie cutters. This is one the children/grandchildren can help

make and the house will smell wonderful while they are baking! Half of the fat is canola oil with primarily monounsaturated fat and there is whole wheat flour to add to the nutritional content.

### **Christmas Spice Cookies**

Makes 4 to 5 dozen

1 cup packed brown sugar

2 cups molasses

½ cup margarine or butter

½ cup canola oil

2 tsp. ground ginger

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 cups whole wheat flour

5 tsp. baking soda

1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon

2 tsp. ground cloves

Beat sugar, molasses, butter/margarine and oil together. Add 2 cups of the flour and the baking soda, cloves, ginger and cinnamon. Mix in the remaining flour 1/2 cup at a time until the dough is stiff. Flatten and cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. On a lightly floured surface roll dough out to 1/4 inch thick and use cookie cutters to cut into desired shapes. Place cookies on baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes.

Next week, I'll throw out some suggestions for your holiday dinner menu!

Eat healthy and enjoy!

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