

Kids in the Kitchen

Driving in to the office today I watched a farmer doing one of those “after touchdown” dance things along one of his fields and surmised that rain must be on the way. It’s great to know that even Hurricane Dennis has some unforeseen benefit at some point. Let’s hope the weather guys & gals got it right this time.

If we get the predicted “several” days of rain showers you can count on one thing for sure; the kids are coming in and they’ll need something to do. Now my boys would have me believe that the hand/eye coordination they can hone to perfection from playing video games will translate into a 6-figure income one day. I’m not buying it.

For at least part of your day there’s great fun and future benefit in introducing our children to the miracle of the modern kitchen. They may even realize that it’s actually politically correct to prepare their own munchies from time to time and give mom or dad a break. But before we get to recipes let’s start out with a few ground rules:

1. Always ask an adult for permission before using the kitchen.
2. Organize your ingredients so they’re all ready before you start.
3. Toasters, stovetops, ovens, grills and even microwaves get hot and can burn you.
4. Knives are sharp and *demand* your respect.
5. Wash your hands before you touch food.
6. Wear an apron or towel so your clothes stay clean.
7. Always clean up when you are finished.

Now, a note to the responsible adult in this mix; taking the time to teach our youngsters proper behavior in the kitchen often translates into something very special in the future. Remember the old saying, “fish for them and they’ll eat for a day; teach them to fish and they’ll eat for a lifetime.”

Quick Quiche

(serves 6)

4 eggs
1 cup Bisquick
2 cups milk
1 teaspoon salt & pepper

Combine all of the above ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix with a wire whisk until everything is smooth. Mix the following ingredients in a 9” quiche dish or a similar sized pie pan:

1/3 cup chopped sweet onions (optional)
4 ounces shredded cheese (Swiss, Colby, American or Monterey Jack work fine)
1 cup sliced mushrooms (optional)
1 small chopped bell pepper (optional)

4 ounces chopped ham or turkey

(Chef's note: Should you opt not to use at least two of the optional dry ingredients adjust the cheese, ham or turkey quantities up to 6 to 8 ounces each.)

Carefully pour the milk mixture into the dry ingredients in the quiche dish and bake 30 to 35 minutes in a preheated 400°F oven. Have someone assist you with these last steps if needed and allow the quiche to cool about 10 to 15 minutes before cutting and serving.

Here's a special dessert for the whole family that the kids can prepare earlier in the day for dinner:

Cannoli Cones for Kids

(makes ten desserts)

15 ounces part-skim ricotta cheese
2/3 cup confectioners' sugar
½ teaspoon grated orange peel
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons miniature chocolate chips
10 sugar ice cream cones

In a large bowl with an electric mixer at low speed, beat ricotta cheese, sugar, orange peel and vanilla extract just until smooth. Stir in chocolate chips. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

To serve, either spoon mixture directly into ice cream cones or into a decorating bag without a tip. You can then pipe your filling into the cones.

Summertime is a great time for those little "pick-me-up" snacks, particularly when the kids are running fast and furious. Have your young chefs create this one.

Wild Jungle Bananas

(serves 8)

8 wooden skewers
4 large bananas, halved
¾ cup peanut butter
½ cup butterscotch morsels
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cups crushed cereal (use your imagination...Coco Puffs, Fruit Loops, Honey Nut Cheerios, etc.)

Insert a skewer in each banana half. Melt peanut butter, butterscotch morsels and oil over low heat in a saucepan. Pour into a tall glass. Dip banana halves and roll into cereal. Place bananas in the freezer and allow to freeze until ready to serve.

Your children are growing up in a world that is filled with thrilling gadgets and the blender has a lot of curb appeal to them right off the bat. Watch their little eyes as they use it and you'll know what I'm talking about. Here are two great blender treats:

Orange Juliette

(makes 4 drinks)

1 cup powdered milk
1 small can frozen orange juice concentrate
3 cans water
2 cups crushed ice
1/3 cup granulated sugar

Mix in blender and serve immediately. You can adjust thickness of your drinks by adding ice to thicken and water to thin.

Whipped Fruit Smoothies

(serves 4)

2 large, ripe sliced bananas
2 cups frozen sliced strawberries
2 cups frozen sliced peaches
2 cups strawberry banana lowfat custard yogurt
2 cups milk

Before starting assembly in the blender, slightly defrost your frozen strawberries and frozen peaches in the microwave only long enough that you can break up the block a tad. In half batches, combine all ingredients in your blender and blend on high until smooth. The frozen fruits add froth and make your smoothies extra cold.

Hope that you have a ton of family fun in the kitchen this summer and if you have questions be sure to call us at (888) 288-0668 or visit us online at www.winedog.com. Cheers.