

cream into the sauce and cook just until it is heated through; do not allow it to boil. Season with salt and pepper. Pot roast also makes excellent hot sandwiches. Slice the roast and serve it along with plenty of the saucy onions on crusty rolls.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma *Comfort Food*, by Rick Rodgers (Oxmoor House, 2009).

Apple-Roasted Pork Chops with Roast Applesauce

This recipe offers a delicious twist on an old-time favorite comfort food—pork chops and applesauce. The apple cider tenderizes the meat, while the thyme, garlic and onion add flavor.

To marinate the pork chops, place the chops in a large, heavy-duty sealable plastic bag or a large nonreactive dish. Add the apple cider, olive oil, onion, thyme, garlic and peppercorns. Press out the air and seal the bag securely, or cover the dish with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours or up to 24 hours, turning occasionally.

Preheat an oven to 400°F.

Remove the chops from the marinade, pat dry with paper towels, and season with salt and pepper. Discard the marinade. Peel, core and slice the fresh apples.

In a large sauté pan over high heat, melt the butter with the olive oil. When the foam subsides, add the chops and sear, turning once, until browned, about 2 minutes per side.

Meanwhile, scatter the fresh and dried apples and onion slices in a baking dish large enough to hold the chops in a single layer. Set the browned chops on top of the apples and onion, pour the apple cider around the chops and cover the dish.

To make the applesauce, in a large baking dish with a lid, combine the quartered apples, water and salt. Place both baking dishes in the oven.

Roast for 10 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 350°F and cover the baking dish holding the applesauce. Continue to cook the chops until nearly tender, about 25 minutes more. Uncover and baste with the Calvados. Continue to roast until the juices run clear and the chops are tender, about 10 minutes more. At the same time, cook the apples, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 30 minutes more.

Remove from the oven. Working in batches, pass the roasted apple quarters through a food mill placed over a bowl; discard the skins and seeds. (Alternatively, puree in a food processor, then pass the puree through a sieve into a bowl. Press with a spatula to push as much applesauce through as possible.) Sweeten the applesauce with the sugar. You should have about 4 cups. Transfer the sauce to a warmed bowl and sprinkle the cinnamon on top.

Serve the pork chops directly from the dish. Pass the applesauce alongside. Serves 6.

Adapted from Williams-Sonoma Lifestyles Series, *Everyday Roasting*, by Janeen Sarlin (Time-Life Books, 1998).

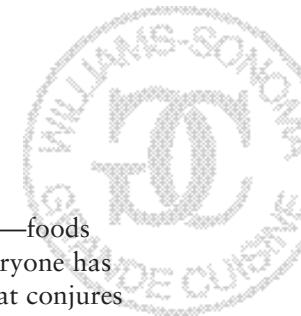
February 21, 2010

Notes

Visit [williams-sonoma.com](#) to search our extensive recipe collection, find menus and tips for entertaining, and browse an expanded selection of products in every category.

WILLIAMS-SONOMA

Technique Class: Cooking Up Comfort



Winter is the perfect time for preparing wholesome home-cooked meals—foods that comfort us and, quite simply, fill us with a sense of well-being. Everyone has their own answer to the question, “What is comfort food?” It’s food that conjures up happy memories of childhood and gives both our bodies and our minds a sense of satisfaction.

Comfort food can be anything from a hearty bowl of warm oatmeal to a favorite snack of homemade chocolate chip cookies and, of course, the ever-popular meat loaf and mashed potatoes. It might also be a special family dish that is prepared for celebrations. One thing is certain—comfort food has no limit and includes whatever nurtures and satisfies you and lifts your spirits. Here we offer recipes for some popular comfort foods to prepare and enjoy with family and friends.

Popular Cooking Methods for Comfort Food

Several types of cooking methods are ideal for preparing traditional comfort food. Many dishes involve slow cooking, in which inexpensive meats (homey cuts) cook slowly, allowing the flavors to intensify. Slow-cooked foods often combine proteins, starches and vegetables to form a complete meal, providing a feeling of fullness.

Roasting is also a popular cooking method for comfort food. One of the oldest and simplest cooking techniques, roasting is a dry-heat method of oven-cooking foods in an uncovered pan. Roasting need not be limited to a turkey or beef for a holiday dinner but can also be used for making homey dishes like meat loaf and pork chops.

One of the most appealing qualities of roasted foods is the beautiful and delicious brown crusts that develop in the oven. Contact with heat causes the sugars and proteins in food to form compounds on the surface similar to caramel, creating a flavorful crust. Simultaneously, the steady oven heat slowly penetrates to the center of the food, which remains juicy. This irresistible counterpoint of caramelized crust and tender interior makes roasting a favorite cooking method. When the pan is deglazed after roasting, the caramelized drippings provide a flavorful foundation for a pan sauce or gravy.

Ingredients for Meat Loaf

1 Tbs. olive oil
1 yellow onion, chopped
2 celery stalks, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
3 or 4 slices white bread
½ cup milk
1 lb. ground beef chuck
½ lb. ground pork shoulder or butt
½ lb. ground veal shoulder or leg
8 oz. tomato sauce
1 egg, lightly beaten
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
¼ cup ketchup

Meat Loaf

Meat loaf is best when made from freshly ground meat. You can grind it yourself using an electric or hand-cranked meat grinder, or ask your butcher to grind the meat fresh for you. If ground veal is not available, use more pork or beef.

Preheat an oven to 350°F.

In a large fry pan over medium-high heat, warm the olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the onion, celery and garlic and sauté, stirring occasionally, until tender and translucent, 6 to 8 minutes. Set aside.

Tear the bread slices into small pieces, transfer to a food processor and pulverize the bread into crumbs. In a large bowl, combine the bread crumbs and milk and stir until blended. Let stand for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the onion-celery mixture to the bread mixture and stir until blended. Add the beef, pork, veal, tomato sauce, egg, salt and pepper and gently fold together until blended. Transfer the mixture to a 2½-lb. loaf pan and, using your hands, shape the mixture into an oblong loaf. Spread the ketchup evenly over the top. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the meat loaf registers 165°F, about 1½ hours. Serves 4 to 6.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Ingredients for Cheesy Meat Loaf

4 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil
2 carrots, cut into ¼-inch dice
2 celery stalks, cut into ¼-inch dice
1 yellow onion, cut into ¼-inch dice
½ oz. dried wild mushrooms, soaked in 1 cup hot water, chopped, soaking liquid reserved
3 garlic cloves, minced
2½ cups fresh bread crumbs
1 Tbs. plus ¼ cup minced fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 oz. mozzarella cheese, shredded, plus 6 oz., cut into ½-inch cubes
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
2 lb. ground beef (80% lean)
2 eggs, lightly beaten
½ tsp. minced fresh thyme
Mashed potatoes for serving

Cheesy Meat Loaf

This meat loaf includes a delicious surprise: cubes of mozzarella cheese are blended into the meat mixture, while shredded cheese is combined with bread crumbs and herbs to create a sublime topping. Use your hands to mix the ground beef and other ingredients, being careful not to overmix, as the meat loaf can become dense.

Position a rack in the lower third of an oven and preheat to 350°F. Coat the bottom of a roasting pan with 1 Tbs. of the olive oil.

In a deep sauté pan over medium-high heat, warm 2 Tbs. of the olive oil. Add the carrots, celery and onion and sauté until starting to caramelize, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the mushrooms and garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Cool 10 minutes.

In a bowl, combine 1½ cups of the bread crumbs and ¼ cup of the mushroom soaking liquid and soak for 5 minutes. In another bowl, combine the remaining ¾ cup bread crumbs, the 1 Tbs. parsley, the remaining 1 Tbs. olive oil, shredded cheese, salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, using your hands, gently mix together the ground beef, soaked bread crumbs, vegetable mixture, eggs, the ¼ cup parsley, thyme, cubed cheese, salt and pepper. Transfer the mixture to the prepared pan and shape into a 10-by-5-inch loaf. Cover the top and sides of the meat loaf with the cheese-bread crumb mixture. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the meat loaf registers 165°F, about 1 hour and 10 minutes. Let the meat loaf rest for 5 minutes before slicing. Serve with mashed potatoes. Serves 8.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Classic Mashed Potatoes

The potato ricer, a staple in German and East European kitchens, was introduced into this country by Williams-Sonoma in the early 1960s. It does an excellent job of mashing potatoes smoothly, in one pressing. Then butter and half-and-half are beaten in with a spoon until the desired consistency is reached.

Put the potatoes and the 2 tsp. salt in a large pot, add water to cover the potatoes by 3 inches and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and gently cook the potatoes until they are tender when pierced with a fork, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain well in a colander.

Set a potato ricer over the pot and pass the potatoes through in batches. Alternatively, return the potatoes to the pot and mash them with a potato masher. Add the butter and gradually add the half-and-half, beating constantly with a large spoon, until the potatoes are smooth and creamy. Season with salt and white pepper and transfer to a warmed serving dish. Serve immediately. Serves 8 to 10.

Williams-Sonoma Kitchen

Ingredients for Classic Mashed Potatoes

5 lb. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces
2 tsp. salt, plus more, to taste
8 Tbs. (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
1¼ cups half-and-half, heated
Freshly ground white pepper, to taste

Ingredients for Mom's Home-Style Pot Roast

3 yellow onions
1 beef chuck roast, about 2½ lb.
¾ tsp. kosher salt, plus more, to taste
½ tsp. freshly ground pepper, plus more, to taste
¼ cup all-purpose flour
3 Tbs. rendered bacon fat or canola oil
4 garlic cloves, chopped
1 tsp. sweet paprika, preferably Hungarian or Spanish
1½ cups beef stock or broth
1½ cups canned plum tomatoes, drained and chopped
2 Tbs. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, plus more for garnish

Mom's Home-Style Pot Roast

Every mom seems to have her own secret on how to transform a modest chuck roast into a scrumptiously tender pot roast supper. Some add lots of carrots, while others favor parsnips or sweet potatoes. In this recipe, thickly sliced onions and paprika boost the flavor. You'll have lots of sauce, so make mashed potatoes for soaking it up.

Halve the onions through the stem and cut the halves into ½-inch-thick half-moons. Set aside.

Season the chuck roast with the ¼ tsp. salt and the ½ tsp. pepper. Spread the flour on a plate. Coat the roast with the flour, shaking off the excess.

In a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, warm 2 Tbs. of the bacon fat. Add the roast and cook, turning occasionally, until browned on both sides, about 5 minutes total. Transfer to a plate.

Add the remaining 1 Tbs. bacon fat to the pot and heat over medium-high heat. Add the onions, cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions soften, about 6 minutes. Stir in the garlic and paprika and cook until the garlic is fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in the stock, tomatoes and the 2 Tbs. parsley. Return the beef to the pot, nestling it in the onions. Bring the liquid to a boil, reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until the beef is fork-tender, about 2 hours.

Transfer the pot roast to a deep serving platter. Season the onion mixture with salt and pepper. Skim off any fat from the surface. Spoon the onion mixture around the roast and garnish with parsley. Serve immediately. Serves 4 to 6.

Variation: To make beef paprikash, simply add sour cream to the sauce: Transfer the pot roast to a platter and skim the fat from the sauce as directed. Stir 1 cup sour

Continued on next page