

Across the Fence
Comfort Food Recipes – March 2019

Marco Ayala's Recipes

Cheesy Pan Pasta

6 thick-cut bacon slices
12 oz. uncooked fusilli pasta
4 cups baby spinach, roughly chopped (about 4 oz.)
1 jar (15 oz.) Alfredo sauce
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
½ tsp. lemon zest (from 1 lemon)
6 oz. pre-shredded Italian six-cheese blend (about 1½ cups)
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place bacon on a wire rack set in a 10x15-inch rimmed baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. Bake in oven until bacon is crispy, 25 to 30 minutes. Roughly chop; set aside. Reserve bacon drippings in pan; remove wire rack. Increase oven temperature to 425°F. Cook pasta to al dente according to package directions. Drain, reserving ½ cup cooking water. Return hot pasta to pot. Add spinach and reserved cooking water to pasta; stir until wilted, 1 to 2 minutes. Add Alfredo sauce, tomatoes, mustard, lemon zest, and bacon; stir to combine. Spread pasta mixture in an even layer in reserved drippings in rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake at 425°F until it is melted and golden brown in spots, about 15 minutes. Garnish with parsley. **Yield:** 4 to 6 servings.

Rustic Chocolate Tart

5 oz. cream cheese, softened
6 Tbsp. butter, softened
1½ cups all-purpose flour

Filling:

2 cups fresh raspberries
2 Tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. cornstarch
⅓ cup hazelnut spread

Process cream cheese and butter in a food processor until blended. Add flour; process just until a dough forms. Shape into a disk; wrap in plastic. Refrigerate 1 hour or overnight. Preheat oven to 350°F. In a small bowl, toss raspberries, sugar and cornstarch with a fork, mashing some of the berries slightly. On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 14x8-inch rectangle. Transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Spread with hazelnut spread to within 1-inch of edges. Top with raspberry mixture. Fold pastry edge toward center of tart, pleating and pinching as needed. Bake until crust is golden brown, 45 to 50 minutes. Transfer tart to a wire rack to cool. **Yield:** 8 servings

Chipotle Pork Chili

1 medium green pepper, chopped	½ cup salsa
1 small onion, chopped	2 tsp. ground cumin
1 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, finely chopped	2 tsp. chili powder
1 Tbsp. canola oil	2 cups shredded cooked pork
3 garlic cloves, minced	¼ cup sour cream
1 can (16 oz.) red beans, rinsed and drained	sliced jalapeno pepper, optional
1 cup beef broth	

In a large saucepan, sauté the green pepper, onion and chipotle pepper in oil until tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer. Add the beans, broth, salsa, cumin and chili powder. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes or until thickened. Add pork; heat through. Serve with sour cream. **Freeze option:** Cool chili and transfer to freezer containers. Freeze up to 3 months. To use, thaw in the refrigerator. Transfer to a large saucepan; heat through, adding water to thin if desired. Serve with sour cream and jalapeno slices. **Yield:** 4 to 6 servings.

Carolyn Peake's Recipes

Bran-Raisin Muffins

1½ cups shreds of wheat bran cereal	¼ cup vegetable oil
½ cup raisins	1¼ cup all-purpose flour
½ cup boiling water	⅔ cup sugar
1 egg	1¼ tsp. baking soda
1 cup buttermilk	¼ tsp. nutmeg

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease bottoms only of 12 muffin cups or line with paper baking cups. Mix cereal, raisins and water and let stand 2 minutes. In a large bowl, beat the egg and add the buttermilk, oil and cereal mixture. Stir in the rest of the ingredients all at once. Mix just until flour is moistened; the batter will be lumpy. Fill muffin cups about ¾ full. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Immediately remove from pan. **Yield:** 12 muffins.

Country Chicken Chowder

2 Tbsp. butter	2 cups frozen corn
1½ lbs. chicken tenders, cut into ½-inch pieces	2 stalks celery
2 cans condensed cream of potato soup	2 carrots, sliced
1½ cups chicken broth	1 tsp. dried dill weed
2 onions, chopped	½ cup half & half

Melt the butter in a large skillet. Add the chicken and cook and stir until browned. Combine the chicken, soup, broth, onions, corn, celery carrots and dill weed in slow cooker. Cover and cook on LOW for 3 to 4 hours or until vegetables are tender. Turn off heat and stir in the half & half. Cover and let stand about 5 minutes or until heated through. **Yield:** 8 servings

Morning Pecan Casserole

1 pkg. (7 oz.) brown and serve sausage patties	¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
12 slices raisin bread, cubed (about 6 cups)	¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
6 eggs	1 cup coarsely chopped pecans
3 cups milk	½ cup packed brown sugar
1 tsp. vanilla	¼ cup butter, softened
	2 Tbsp. Vermont maple syrup

Lightly grease a 9x13x2-inch baking dish and set aside. Brown the sausage patties according to package directions. Cut the patties into bite-size pieces. Spread the bread pieces in the prepared pan and top with the sausage pieces. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, vanilla, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Pour the egg mixture evenly over bread and sausage. Press down on the mixture to be sure everything is moistened. Cover and chill for 8 hours or up to 24 hours. Preheat the oven to 350°F. For topping, combine pecans, brown sugar, butter and syrup in a small bowl. Mix well. Drop by teaspoonful over the top of egg mixture. Bake, uncovered, for 45 to 50 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let stand for 15 minutes before serving. **Yield:** 10 servings.

Fancy Strawberry-Nut Salad

1 pkg. (6 oz.) strawberry gelatin	1 can (20 oz.) crushed pineapple, drained
1 cup boiling water	3 medium bananas, sliced
2 pkgs. (10 oz. each) frozen sliced strawberries in syrup, thawed	1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted
	2 cartons (8 oz. each) sour cream

In a large bowl dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Stir in undrained thawed strawberries. Chill in the refrigerator about 1½ hours or until partially set (the consistency of unbeaten egg whites). Stir in pineapple, bananas, and walnuts. Spoon half the mixture into a 9x13x2-inch pan, or a three quart dish. Cover and chill in the freezer for 12 minutes or just until firm. (Let the rest of the mixture stand at room temperature so it does not set up. Spread sour cream evenly over the strawberry mixture. Spoon remaining strawberry mixture over sour cream. Cover and chill in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours or until firm. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Cooking with Frozen Fruits

Keep Frozen Fruit Frozen: Keep frozen fruit in the [freezer](#) until you are ready to work with them. Thawed fruit will add excess liquid to your ingredients, and this makes pies and desserts runny right from the start.

Add in More Thickening Agents: Thickening agents such as [cornstarch](#), [tapioca](#), arrowroot, and flour are used in most fruit pies. If your recipe calls for a thickening agent, add more than required (unless the recipe is specifically for frozen berries).

Increase Your Bake Time: Extend your baking time by 5 minutes or more to achieve the same results as a fresh fruit pie.

Italian Crescent Casserole

2 lbs. lean ground beef
½ chopped onions
2 cups spaghetti sauce
3 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
8 oz. sour cream

1 pkg. (8 oz.) pkg. refrigerated crescent rolls
(8 rolls)
2 Tbsp. butter, melted
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 375°F. Cook the ground beef and onions until the meat is cooked through. Drain off the fat. Stir in the spaghetti sauce into meat mixture and heat through. Spread the mixture in an ungreased 9x13x2-inch baking dish. In medium bowl combine mozzarella cheese and sour cream. Spoon over the meat mixture in the baking dish. Unroll crescent rolls, but do not separate into triangles. On a lightly floured surface, press dough edges together and roll out slightly to fit the baking dish. Place the dough over the cheese and sour cream layer. Brush with melted butter and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake, uncovered, 20 to 25 minutes or until top is deep golden brown. **Yield:** 12 servings.

Viewer's Recipes

Easy Banana Bread

Maria Boucher – Sutton, QC

1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup butter
2 large eggs
3 ripe bananas mashed (about 1½ cups)
1 Tbsp. milk

1 tsp. cinnamon
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Grease a 9x5-inch loaf pan (or similar size loaf pan). I also like to line the bottom of the pan with a small piece of parchment or wax paper. Cream the sugar and butter in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing after each addition. Add the mashed banana and milk and stir to combine. In another bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Add to the wet ingredients and stir everything just until combined. Pour the batter into the prepared loaf pan and bake for 1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Set aside to cool on a wire rack for a few minutes before removing the bread from the pan and allowing it to cool completely.

Recipes from Giveaway Book: Pasta

Fusilli with Zucchini & Lemon

6 Tbsp. olive oil
1 small onion, very thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, very finely chopped
2 Tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
1 tbsp. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

1 lb. zucchini, cut into 1½-inch pieces
grated rind of 1 lemon
1 lb. fusilli pasta
salt and pepper
grated Parmesan cheese, to serve

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-low heat. Add the onion and cook gently, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes, or until golden. Raise the heat to medium-high. Add the garlic, rosemary, and parsley. Cook for a few seconds, stirring. Add the zucchini and lemon rind. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the zucchini are just tender. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Remove from the heat. Bring a large saucepan of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the pasta, bring back to a boil, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, or until tender but still firm to the bite. Drain and transfer to a warmed serving dish. Briefly reheat the zucchini sauce. Pour over the pasta and toss well to mix. Sprinkle with the Parmesan and serve immediately. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Macaroni with Sausage & Olives

1 Tbsp. olive oil	2 tsp. dried oregano
1 large onion, finely chopped	½ cup chicken stock or red wine
2 garlic cloves, very finely chopped	1 lb. dried macaroni
2 cups pork sausage, peeled, coarsely chopped	12 to 15 pitted black olives, cut into quarters
1 hot red pepper, drained and sliced	⅔ cup grated cheese
1 can (14 oz.) chopped tomatoes	salt and pepper

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 5 minutes, until softened. Add the garlic and cook for a few seconds, until just beginning to color. Add the sausage and cook until evenly browned. Stir in the hot pepper, tomatoes, oregano, and stock. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, then simmer over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cook the macaroni in plenty of boiling salted water for 8 to 10 minutes, or until tender but still firm to the bite. Drain and transfer to a warmed serving dish. Add the olives and half the cheese to the sauce, then stir until the cheese has melted. Pour the sauce over the pasta. Toss well to mix. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings

Penne with Turkey Meatballs

12 oz. ground turkey	1 carrot, finely chopped
1 small garlic clove, finely chopped	1 can (14 oz.) tomatoes, drained
2 Tbsp. finely chopped fresh parsley	1 fresh rosemary sprig
1 egg, lightly beaten	1 bay leaf
all-purpose flour, for dusting	12 oz. penne pasta
3 Tbsp. olive oil	salt and pepper
1 onion, finely chopped	grated Parmesan cheese, to serve
1 celery stalk, finely chopped	

Put the turkey, garlic, and parsley in a bowl and mix well. Stir in the egg and season to taste with salt and pepper. Dust your hands lightly with flour and shape the mixture into walnut-size balls between your palms. Lightly dust each meatball with flour. Heat the olive oil in a pan. Add the onion, celery, and carrot and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, until softened. Increase the heat to medium, add the meatballs, and cook, turning frequently, for 8 to 10 minutes, until golden brown all over. Pour in the drained canned tomatoes, add the rosemary and bay leaf, season to taste with salt and pepper, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, cover, and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, for 40 to 45 minutes. Remove and discard the herbs. Shortly before the meatballs are ready, bring a large pan of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta, bring back to a boil, and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until tender but still firm to the bite. Drain and add to the pan with the meatballs. Stir gently and heat through briefly, then spoon onto individual warmed plates. Sprinkle generously with Parmesan and serve immediately. **Yield:** 4 servings.

Spaghetti with Tuna & Parsley

1 lb. spaghetti
2 Tbsp. butter
1 can (7 oz.) tuna, drained
1 can (2 oz.) anchovies, drained
1 cup olive oil
1 cup coarsely chopped fresh
flat-leaf parsley
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sour cream or yogurt
salt and pepper

Bring a large, heavy-bottom pan of lightly salted water to a boil. Add the spaghetti, return to a boil, and cook for 8-10 minutes, or until tender but still firm to the bite. Drain the spaghetti in a colander and return to the pan. Add the butter, toss thoroughly to coat, and keep warm until needed. Flake the tuna into smaller pieces using 2 forks. Place the tuna in a food processor or blender with the anchovies, olive oil, and parsley and process until the sauce is smooth. Pour in the sour cream and process for a few seconds to blend. Taste the sauce and season with salt and pepper, if necessary. Shake the pan of spaghetti over medium heat for a few minutes, or until it is thoroughly warmed through. Pour the sauce over the spaghetti and toss quickly, using 2 forks. Serve immediately. **Yield:** 6 servings.

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