



Chloe Ann's FarmLife™

RECIPES

All About Us

About Chloe

I am a farm girl who sailed the world and then returned home to the family farm. I was born in the house that is now **Big Mill Bed & Breakfast**. Growing up on this country farm was idyllic -- playing, climbing trees, fishing in the creeks, riding mules and catching fireflies.

Before returning to Big Mill as an innkeeper, I was a cook aboard a private sail boat for seven years, sailing from Maine to Guadeloupe. I have been an innkeeper for 20 years and I still love it!

About Big Mill Farm

My folks moved to the farm here at Big Mill in 1922. Through the years they farmed -- raising tobacco, peanuts, corn and soy beans. The farmhouse has seen many changes, but you can still "feel" its wonderful history.

This is a beautiful place in eastern North Carolina, with its wonderful quiet. Big Mill was, and still is, a piece of Heaven. The barns are still here, the fish still bite . . . the fireflies still fascinate.



About Chloe's Blog

Back in 2007, a guest suggested I start a blog. It's hard to believe that was over ten years ago and I'm still having fun adding new posts to Chloe's Blog.

I write about things that happen on the farm, fun things to do in eastern North Carolina, crafts, recipes and things I create. It's a nice place to visit -- I hope you will!

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Fresh Fig Bread with a Splash of Grand Marnier

I love figs - they seem so exotic. When I moved back to the farm I started planting fig trees and now I have eight. There are so many great varieties and whenever I see a new one, I dig a hole and plant it.

Figs are only in season for a short time, Every summer when the figs are ripe, I try to see how many ways I can enjoy them. I am on a mission to create as many fig recipes as I can. So far, I have recipes for Fig Bread, Fig Preserves and Candied Figs - all on Chloe's Blog.

Fig Bread with Grand Marnier

Ingredients

1/2 pound ripe figs, stemmed and chopped or mashed (1/2 cup mashed figs)

1 Tablespoon Grand Marnier or orange liqueur

1 egg

3/4 cup sugar

1/4 cup corn oil

1 cup self-rising flour

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts (reserve 1/4 cup)

Cream cheese, softened, for spreading on warm Fig Bread



Chloe's Tips

Adding a splash of Grand Marnier to this fresh Fig Bread gives it an added zing.

Instructions

Spray 3 mini-loaf pans using baking spray with flour. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Wash the figs and remove stems. Chop or mash figs and stir in the Grand Marnier; let stand 15 minutes.

Whisk egg in a large mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar and oil.

In another large mixing bowl, mix the flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.

Measure 1/2 cup of the fig-Grand Marnier mixture and gently stir this into the egg, oil and sugar. You can eat the left over figs, but don't drive!

Stir together the wet and dry ingredients.

Fold in the chopped nuts, reserving a few to sprinkle on top of the loaves.

Pour batter into 3 small well-greased loaf pans. Fill 1/2 full, NO MORE. Do not overfill. Sprinkle reserved nuts on top and bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes or until a bamboo or wooden skewer inserted into the center comes out clean. Don't use a toothpick -- it's not long enough.

This is a moist bread and it takes a while for the center to get cooked. If the tops of the bread are browning too much, place a piece of aluminum foil on top loosely, with shiny side down.

Serve with softened cream cheese.

Yield: 3 small loaves

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Honey Glazed Pecans

At **Big Mill Bed & Breakfast**, we grow pecans on the trees that my folks planted in 1922. As a child I remember picking up pecans, and it was always terribly cold. I have only been hit on the head with a falling pecan one time - that is amazing.

If you don't have a pecan tree, then look for a farmer who does. Local pecans are better because they will be this year's crop. Our hometown feed store, Martin Supply, has a pecan-cracking machine and that makes the shelling easy.

These candied pecans are great to take to parties. There won't be any left to take home!

Honey Glazed Pecans

Ingredients

3 cups shelled whole pecans halves
3 Tablespoons honey (local is best)
½ teaspoon salt plus extra for sprinkling



Instructions

Preheat oven to 250 degrees.

Spray a heavy, rimmed cookie sheet with cooking oil spray. Place pecans on cookie sheet in a single layer.

Bake pecans for 7 minutes. Remove from oven and put nuts in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Add 3 Tablespoons honey and stir to coat pecans.

Add ½ teaspoon salt and stir again.

Spray cookie sheet again and put nuts on the sheet in a single layer.

Bake at 220-250 degrees for 1½ to 2 hours, stirring several times.

Chloe's Tips

This recipe is so easy to make. If your pecans are older, shorten the roasting time.

Check the roasting pecans often, sometimes they will tend to burn. If nuts are old, shorten the roasting time.

Remove from oven and sprinkle with a wee bit of salt. Remember that the pecans will continue cooking for a bit even after you take them out of the oven.

Separate any nuts that have clumped. Cool and store pecans in an air-tight container. Nuts will keep fresh for at least a week. This makes a perfect hostess or holiday gift.

Yield: 3 cups

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Old Fashioned Pull Candy

My mother called this wonderful confection Pull Candy or stewed sugar. Some folks call it taffy. When she described a child's pretty blond hair she would say it was the color of stewed sugar -- a gorgeous translucent white color with a faint golden tint.

She told me that when she was growing up, folks in the neighborhood would have Candy Pulling parties and the whole neighborhood came.

This is an old recipe. I haven't seen or heard of it in many years. It also is very inexpensive to make, which may explain why it was so popular in its day. If you are going to try this, remove your rings or else they will become a sticky mess.

You should only make this candy on a cold day and not on a rainy day.

Old Fashioned Pull Candy

Ingredients

2 cups sugar
¼ cup water
¼ cup cider vinegar
Soft butter for greasing hands and
cooling surface

Instructions

You will need a candy thermometer for this recipe.

Stir together the sugar, water and vinegar in a heavy saucepan. Clip candy thermometer onto pan and don't let it touch the bottom of the cooking pan.

Slowly heat the sugar syrup until the candy thermometer reaches the hard ball stage or 260-265 degrees. Don't stir while it is cooking.

Slowly pour the syrup onto a buttered surface like an extra large cutting board. Be very careful — this is a molten mass of hot syrup.

DO NOT scrape the bowl. Just let whatever candy comes out, come out. Allow candy to cool for a few minutes.

Chloe's Tips

Only make this candy when it is COLD outside. And don't make it if it's raining.

As soon as the syrup is slightly cooled, scrape it into a large ball. If you are going to add any flavorings like vanilla or peppermint, now is the time to do this. Flip the ball of candy over several times using some sort of scraper like a candy scraper.

When it is cool enough to handle, gather the ball of candy into your well-greased hands and pull the candy using both hands until you have reached as far as you can. Fold the pulled part over and repeat. Do this for about 4-5 minutes or until the candy is getting stiff and has turned a beautiful white color.

Once this happens, pull out a long rope of candy about ½-inch thick. You can twist this if you want a twisted look for your candy. Lay it out on waxed paper to cool.

When it has thoroughly cooled, break into pieces. Wrap each piece of candy in waxed paper and store in an airtight container.

Yield: 50 pieces about 2 " long

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Fried Peach Jacks are a Southern Favorite

I remember eating fried Peach Jacks whenever I went to Dinner on the Ground at a small country church in eastern North Carolina. Dinner on the Ground all over the south celebrated the end of revival – they called it Homecoming. Like Peach Jacks, these celebrations are a fading tradition.

A great southern treat, these jacks are made from stewed, dried peaches and fried in a crust in lard. Well, you can fry these in canola oil if you choose, but they just aren't as tasty.

I gathered up my dried peaches and visited friend Nancy and we made peach jacks. I only had four jacks and they went fast!

Don't even think about using canned peaches.

Fried Peach Pies

Ingredients

1 six-ounce package of dried peaches
1 ½ - 2 cups water (Add more water if it cooks out before peaches are soft)
1 cup sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup lard or shortening
½ cup milk
Extra flour for dusting cutting board and rolling pin.
½ - 1 cup lard for frying

Instructions



Chloe's Tips

I declare these Peach Jacks are better If they are fried in lard. And don't even think of using canned peaches.

To make the filling:

Make the filling the day before and store in the refrigerator.

Simmer peaches and water in a small saucepan for 45 minutes to an hour until peaches are soft. Be careful, they tend to stick. Add water if needed. Add the sugar and cook 15 minutes more, stirring often. Remove from heat and refrigerate overnight. You will have 2½ cups peaches. Peaches should be thick and not runny.

To make the dough:

Stir together the flour and salt. Using two forks, cut in the shortening. Add milk and stir. Separate into 8 to 10 portions. Using the extra flour and a rolling pin, roll each dough piece into a 6" round. Roll dough as thin as you can without tearing dough.

To Cook the Jacks:

Put 2 Tablespoons cooked peaches in the center of the rolled dough. Fold the edges over to make a half circle. Crimp edges with a fork. Trim off excess dough. Continue until you have used all the peaches.

Melt lard in a medium-size frying pan. Fry jacks in hot grease until they are golden in color. Turn and brown the other side. Remove from heat and drain on paper towels. Continue until all jacks are cooked.

The sweet, tangy taste of Peach Jacks is a treat. They are good cold but, oh, so good when they are hot. Yum!

Yield: 6-8 jacks

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Easy Blueberry Jam Recipe with Cinnamon & Lime Zest

When I was a child, I used to pick wild blueberries -- we called them huckleberries. They grew in the edges of the pine forests. There are not any wild blueberries around here any more and that saddens me.

If you can pick the berries they are the best, but farmer's market berries are good too.

I also like to use a mixture of different berries for my jams. Just use the same amount of fruit and add blackberries or raspberries. I have even added plums.

Easy Blueberry Jam Recipe with Cinnamon & Lime Zest

Ingredients

4 pints blueberries (about 8 cups) You'll need 4 cups of mashed fruit
6 cups sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon butter, to reduce foaming (optional)
1 Tablespoon lime zest
1½ ounce liquid pectin like Certo (½ pouch) - Be sure to check the expiration date
You will also need 7 half-pint canning jars with lids and rings,
wide-mouth funnel, canner and jar tongs

Instructions



Chloe's Tips

DON'T DOUBLE THE RECIPE!
I don't know why, but it will fail.
If Irma in The Joy of Cooking
says, "Don't double," then I
won't even try it.

Blueberries don't need as much pectin as other fruits to make jam. I use half the amount of pectin for blueberry jam as I do for strawberry jam.

Sterilize the jars and lids. Fill the canner about half full of water and start heating the canner so that it will be hot when you finish cooking the jam.

Wash blueberries, drain and put berries into a medium-sized mixing bowl. Chop and then mash blueberries until juice runs. Measure out 4 cups of mashed berries and juice.

Measure 6 cups of sugar and put into a large stainless steel or enamel saucepan. Add berries, cinnamon and butter. Stir to mix.

Grate the lime zest and add to the berry-sugar mixture.

Bring berries and sugar to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Pay careful attention to the pot. It will boil over in a heartbeat and you don't know what a mess is until you boil over blueberry jam.

Stir in the ½ package of Certo. Return the mixture to another full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Boil this for exactly 1 minute. I count, "One-one-thousand, two-one-thousand, etc."

Remove jam from heat and ladle into sterilized jars using a wide-mouth funnel. Fill each jar to ½ inch from the top. Wipe the top of each jar and add a sterilized lid to each jar. Screw the lid rings onto each jar.

Using the tongs place all the filled jars into the hot water canner, making sure they are covered by the water. Bring water to a slow boil and boil for 5 minutes. Remove jars using the tongs and cool jam on drying rack, away from drafts.

Yield: 7 half-pints of jam plus some for tasting.

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Southern Molasses "Pudding" Cake

Molasses is a real southern treat -- luckily it's good for you. If you like molasses, you will love this recipe.

When my mother was a child, they grew all of their food including the sugar cane that they used to make their own molasses.

When I was young it seemed everybody's mother made Molasses Pudding and it was always a treat. In some parts of the country, it might be called Molasses Cake, but southerners call it Molasses Pudding. Once you add the Bourbon Sauce, it does seem more like a pudding.

Southern Molasses Pudding

Ingredients for Cake

½ cup dark raisins
¼ cup bourbon
¼ cup molasses
1 small egg
4 Tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted
¼ cup buttermilk
¼ cup white sugar
1 cup self-rising flour
¼ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon



Chloe's Tips

Southerners consider this dish as a Pudding. My northern friends don't agree.

Ingredients for Bourbon Sauce

4 Tablespoons (½ stick) butter
¼ cup white sugar
¼ cup brown sugar
3 Tablespoons cream
1/3 cup Bourbon
Pinch of salt
1/3 cup chopped pecans

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9 x 13-inch baking dish.

Put raisins and ¼ cup bourbon into glass Pyrex dish or measuring cup and microwave for 30 seconds. Set aside to steep.

In medium-sized mixing bowl, stir together the molasses, egg, melted butter and buttermilk. Add the ¼ cup white sugar, flour, baking powder and cinnamon. Stir to mix. Drain raisins. Add drained raisins to the batter. Stir to combine.

Pour batter into the baking dish and bake for 15-20 minutes, or until a bamboo or wooden skewer inserted into the center of the batter comes out clean.

To Make Bourbon Sauce

In a small saucepan on low heat, add the 4 Tablespoons butter, ¼ cup white sugar, ¼ cup brown sugar, cream, 1/3 cup bourbon and salt. Heat on low until all is dissolved and slightly thickened. Add chopped pecans and continue to keep warm. Pour over each piece of Molasses Pudding.

Bourbon sauce should be served warm or it becomes grainy. Do not cook too fast or too long; sauce will become grainy. This makes 1 cup sauce.

Serve Molasses Pudding with warm Bourbon Sauce and whipped cream.
Yield: 12 pieces

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Chloe's Blog
from Big Mill

More Recipes on Chloe's Blog

There are dozens more recipes on my blog. Here are a few favorites. Just click on the recipe name below and it will take you to the recipe on the blog.



Bourbon Pecan Pie



Barney's Killer Salsa



Candied Figs



Chloe's Cranberry Liqueur



Berry Wash with Vinegar



Rockfish Stew

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