

Selected from hundreds of entries, these eight finalists competed for a \$10,000 grand prize in our cook-off at Branson's Silver Dollar City theme park in Missouri.

Our 2012 recipe contest winners



Peanut Butter Buckeye Brownie Cheesecake

From Dawn Moore of Warren, Pennsylvania.

PREP 45 minutes **BAKE** 28 minutes

CHILL 4 hours

- 1 19½-ounce package brownie mix
- ¾ cup hot fudge-flavored ice cream topping, warmed
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese, softened
- 1½ cups crunchy peanut butter
- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1½ cups whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 4 chocolate-covered peanut butter cups, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chocolate-flavored syrup

1. Prepare brownie mix according to package directions, using the 13x9x2-inch pan option. Cool in pan on a wire rack. Cut into bars. Press three-fourths of the brownies into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan to form a crust. Spread with fudge topping; set aside. Crumble remaining brownies; set aside.

2. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and peanut butter with an electric mixer on medium speed until just combined. Add sweetened condensed milk; beat until just combined. In a medium bowl, beat whipping cream until soft peaks form. Add powdered sugar; beat until stiff peaks form. Reserve ½ cup of the whipped cream mixture. Fold remaining whipped cream into cream cheese mixture.

3. Spread half of the cream cheese mixture over the hot fudge topping. Sprinkle with one-half of the reserved brownie crumbles. Spread remaining cream cheese mixture over the brownies. Top with the reserved ½ cup whipping cream mixture. Sprinkle remaining brownie crumbles and chopped peanut butter cups over the top. Drizzle with chocolate syrup. Cover; chill dessert 4 to 24 hours. **Makes 16 to 20 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving (20): 552 cal, 37 g fat, 77 mg chol, 306 mg sodium, 50 g carbo, 2 g fiber, 10 g pro.

Midwest Living



Skillet Pork and Apple Mini Meat Loaves

From Patrice Hurd of Bemidji, Minnesota.

PREP 30 minutes **CHILL** 15 minutes

COOK 15 minutes

- ½ cup bottled chili sauce
- 2 tablespoons frozen apple juice concentrate, thawed
- 2 tablespoons apple butter
- 1½ tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dry ground mustard
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup apple butter
- ½ cup shredded sweet apple
- 2 teaspoons instant beef bouillon granules
- 2 teaspoons dried minced onion
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- ⅔ cup quick-cooking oats
- 1 pound fresh ground pork
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ cup water

- 1.** For glaze: In a small bowl, whisk chili sauce, juice concentrate, 2 tablespoons apple butter, vinegar and dry mustard; set aside.
- 2.** In a large bowl, stir together the egg, ¼ cup apple butter, shredded apple, bouillon, dried onion, garlic and pepper with oats. Mix in pork. Cover with plastic wrap; refrigerate for 15 to 30 minutes.
- 3.** Divide into four portions. Shape each into 4-inch oval loaf. In a large nonstick skillet, brown loaves in hot oil over medium heat, 2 to 3 minutes on each side.
- 4.** Spread 1 tablespoon glaze over each loaf. Pour ½ cup water into bottom of skillet. Cover and cook 15 minutes or until loaf centers are cooked through and reach 160°. Pour remaining glaze into the bottom of the skillet. Scrape up brown bits and simmer 1 to 2 minutes more or until glaze is thickened and bubbly. Spoon glaze over mini meat loaves. **Makes 4 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 605 cal, 30 g fat, 128 mg chol, 1,493 mg sodium, 60 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 23 g pro.

Cranberry Sausage-Stuffed Pork Chops with Pumpkin Gravy

Here's the \$10,000 winner from Linda Kay Drysdale of Riverview, Michigan.

PREP 30 minutes **COOK** 14 minutes

- 4 1½-inch-thick pork chops (9 to 10 ounces each)
- 8 ounces bulk hot pork sausage
- ½ cup herb stuffing mix
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup applesauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 cup fat-free Caesar salad dressing
- ⅔ cup pumpkin butter
- ½ cup chicken stock or broth
- ¼ cup pumpkin seeds (pepitas), toasted

- 1.** Make a pocket in each chop by cutting from fat side almost to bone.
 - 2.** In a 4- to 6-quart pressure cooker (or use oven method below), crumble pork sausage. Cook and stir until browned; drain in a colander. In a small bowl, combine the pork sausage, stuffing mix, dried cranberries, applesauce, salt and pepper. Spoon one-fourth of the stuffing into each chop. Secure pockets with wooden toothpicks.
 - 3.** In pressure cooker, brown chops in hot oil, half at a time, 2 minutes per side. Arrange all in the cooker. In a small bowl, whisk together salad dressing, pumpkin butter and chicken stock; pour over the chops.
 - 4.** Lock lid in place. Place pressure regulator on vent pipe. Over high heat, bring cooker to pressure. Reduce heat just enough to maintain pressure and regulator rocks gently; cook for 9 minutes.
 - 5.** Quickly release pressure. Carefully remove lid. Transfer chops to platter. Bring liquid in cooker to boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, 3 to 5 minutes to desired consistency, stirring occasionally.
 - 6.** Serve topped with pumpkin gravy; sprinkle with pumpkin seeds. **Makes 4 servings.**
- Oven method:** Prepare chops as above, except cook sausage in a large oven-going

skillet; brown chops in same skillet. Add salad dressing mixture. Cover; bake in 350° oven 40 minutes. Remove lid. Bake 10 minutes more or until chops are cooked through (145° to 160°). Transfer chops to a serving platter; lightly tent with foil. Carefully return skillet to stove top. Boil gently, uncovered, for 3 to 5 minutes to desired consistency. Serve as above.

Nutrition facts per serving: 1,051 cal, 55 g fat, 237 mg chol, 2,110 mg sodium, 66 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 70 g pro.

\$10,000 winner!





Sweet and Sassy Walleye Chowder in Bread Bowls

From Linda Rohr of Darien, Connecticut.

PREP 15 minutes **COOK** 37 minutes

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut in $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cubes (3 cups)
- 1 cup finely chopped onion
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 28-ounce can crushed fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1 16-ounce jar salsa
- 4 ears fresh sweet corn, kernels cut from the cob (2 cups)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon snipped fresh dillweed or 1 teaspoon dried dillweed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups whole milk
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless walleye fillets, whitefish or shrimp, cut in 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup whipping cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 6 small sourdough bread rounds

- 4 ounces cheddar cheese, finely shredded (1 cup)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sour cream (optional)

- 1.** In a Dutch oven, heat butter and oil over medium heat. Add sweet potatoes, onion and garlic. Cook 10 minutes or until nearly tender. Add undrained tomatoes, salsa, corn, salt and dillweed. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, 5 minutes. Add milk and return to simmer. Add walleye, cream and cilantro; return to simmer. Cook, uncovered, 3 to 5 minutes or until fish flakes when tested with a fork.
 - 2.** Slice off tops of bread rounds; hollow out center to make bowls. Place bread bowls on baking sheet with tops alongside, cut side up. Sprinkle tops with cheese. Bake 3 to 5 minutes to warm bowls and melt cheese.
 - 3.** Ladle chowder into bowls. Garnish with sour cream and additional cilantro, if you like. Serve with cheese bread tops. **Makes 6 servings.**
- Nutrition facts per serving:** 996 cal, 33 g fat, 221 mg chol, 2,246 mg sodium, 119 g carbo, 9 g fiber, 56 g pro.

Roasted Tomato Chicken Crostata

From Gloria Piantek of West Lafayette, Indiana.

PREP 30 minutes **BAKE** 30 minutes

STAND 5 minutes

- $1\frac{1}{4}$ pounds ground raw chicken
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 large red tomatoes, thinly sliced
- 1 large yellow tomato, thinly sliced
- 4 cups fresh Italian bread crumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh basil leaves
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil-packed dried tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 8 ounces shredded Monterey Jack cheese with jalapeño peppers (2 cups)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ of a 15-ounce package rolled refrigerated unbaked pie crusts (1 crust)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons snipped fresh parsley
- 1 to 2 tablespoons crumbled farmer or goat cheese

- 1.** In a 12-inch oven-going skillet, cook chicken, onion, salt and pepper in 2 tablespoon hot olive oil over medium heat for 10 minutes or until onion is tender and chicken is no longer pink, stirring frequently; drain and return to skillet. Stir in the brown sugar, vinegar and water. Cook and stir over medium heat for 5 minutes more. Remove meat mixture from skillet; set aside.
- 2.** In the same skillet, heat the unsalted butter and 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat until butter is melted, tilting skillet to coat bottom with melted butter mixture. Remove from heat. Arrange red and yellow tomato slices in the bottom of the skillet, overlapping slices as needed.
- 3.** In a food processor, combine bread crumbs, basil leaves, dried tomatoes and garlic. Cover and process until basil is

- chopped and mixture is combined. Layer bread crumb mixture over tomatoes in skillet, pressing down lightly. Spoon cooked chicken mixture over bread crumb mixture. Sprinkle with shredded cheese.
- 4.** Unroll the piecrust and, if necessary, roll to diameter large enough to cover mixture in skillet. Lay piecrust on top of the other layers in the skillet.
 - 5.** Bake the crostata in a 425° oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until golden brown. Remove the skillet from the oven. Let stand 5 minutes on a wire rack. Loosen edges; invert skillet over a large serving plate. Garnish with parsley and crumbled cheese. Serve warm. **Makes 6 to 8 servings.**
- Nutrition facts per serving:** 645 cal, 37 g fat, 128 mg chol, 1,032 mg sodium, 43 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 29 g pro.



Orange-Laced Blueberry-Rhubarb Cobbler with Almond Biscuits

From *Barbara Estabrook of Rhinelander, Wisconsin*. Look for almond flour in large supermarkets or online.

PREP 30 minutes **BAKE** 25 minutes

- 1½ cups sliced fresh or frozen rhubarb, thawed
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup orange marmalade
- 2 teaspoons finely shredded orange peel (set aside)
- 3 tablespoons orange juice
- 1½ tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
- 6 tablespoons butter
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 3½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup almond flour
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup whipping cream
- ¾ teaspoon almond extract
- 3 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons turbinado (raw) sugar
- Vanilla ice cream (optional)

- 1.** Dice rhubarb. In large, nonstick oven-going skillet, combine rhubarb, ¼ cup sugar, marmalade, orange juice, tapioca and 1 tablespoon of butter. Cook and stir until bubbly. Stir in spices and blueberries; cook and stir just to boiling. Remove from heat.
- 2.** In a bowl, whisk flours, ⅓ cup sugar, baking powder, orange peel and salt. Using pastry blender, cut in remaining butter until pea sized. In a bowl, mix cream and extract; stir into flour mixture. Drop in eight mounds over filling; sprinkle with almonds and sugar.
- 3.** Bake in 375° oven 25 to 28 minutes or until a wooden toothpick inserted into biscuit comes out clean. Cool on wire rack. Serve warm or at room temp. If you like, serve with ice cream. **Makes 8 servings.**

Nutrition facts per serving: 372 cal, 18 g fat, 43 mg chol, 326 mg sodium, 51 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 4 g pro.

Dark Chocolate-Walnut-Cranberry Mousse Pie

From *Bernice Janowski of Stevens Point, Wisconsin*.

PREP 40 minutes **BAKE** 26 minutes

COOL 1½ hours **CHILL** 2 hours

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- ¼ cup ground walnuts
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 9 tablespoons cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 1½ cups dark chocolate-flavored ice cream topping
- 2 cups fresh or frozen (thawed) cranberries
- ⅔ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- Cranberries and fresh mint (optional)

- 1.** In a large bowl, stir together the flour, powdered sugar, ground walnuts, cocoa powder and salt; cut in butter until mixture is crumbly. Press mixture onto the bottom and up the sides of a 9-inch pie plate.
- 2.** Bake in a 350° oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until just set; remove to a wire rack. Increase oven temperature to 375°. In a medium bowl, combine ¾ cup of the chocolate ice cream topping, the 2 cups cranberries and the chopped walnuts; spoon into the hot pie shell. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until cranberries just begin to pop open. Cool completely on wire rack.
- 3.** In a chilled medium mixing bowl, beat whipping cream to soft peaks; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth; gradually beat in ½ cup chocolate ice cream topping; fold in whipped cream. Spoon over pie. Chill at least 2 hours.
- 4.** To serve, drizzle remaining ice cream topping* over pie. Garnish with cranberries and mint, if you like. **Makes 8 servings.**

***Note:** If necessary, place the ¼ cup topping in a small microwave safe bowl and heat on 100% power (high) for 10 seconds.

Nutrition facts per serving: 705 cal, 50 g fat, 107 mg chol, 329 mg sodium, 63 g carbo, 5 g fiber, 7 g pro.



Spiced Sweet Potato Cake with Maple Whipped Cream Cheese

From Deborah Biggs of Omaha.

PREP 45 minutes **BAKE** 55 minutes **COOL** 2 hours

- Nonstick spray for baking
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 29-ounce can cut sweet potatoes in syrup
- 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon imitation maple flavor
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 3 eggs
- 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups spiced pecans, coarsely chopped
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup whipping cream
- 3 tablespoons powdered sugar
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon imitation maple flavor

1. Coat 10-inch fluted tube pan with nonstick spray. In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder, soda, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and 1 teaspoon salt. Drain sweet potatoes, reserving 2 tablespoons liquid. Process potatoes and reserved liquid in food processor until smooth, scraping sides as needed.

2. In a large mixing bowl, beat potato puree, sugar, 1 teaspoon maple flavor and oil with electric mixer until smooth. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in pecans by hand.

3. Pour into pan. Bake in 350° oven 55 to 60 minutes or until toothpick inserted in cake comes out clean. Lay foil over top of pan the last 10 minutes of baking to prevent overbrowning. Cool in pan 10 minutes; invert onto cooling rack. Remove pan; cool 2 hours.

4. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese with mixer to lighten. Add cream, powdered sugar, maple syrup and 1 teaspoon maple flavor; beat until stiff peaks form. Dust cake with additional powdered sugar. Top with whipped cream cheese. Sprinkle with additional cinnamon. **Serves 10 to 12.** **MW**

Nutrition facts per serving: 774 cal, 43 g fat, 98 mg chol, 576 mg sodium, 93 g carbo, 4 g fiber, 8 g pro.

