

The DISH



VICKI RASMUSSEN

FOOD COLUMNIST
vickir@windomnews.com

I'm one of the first to admit . . . I love kitchen gadgets, tools, appliances, etc. — and I own my fair share of them! But the one thing I didn't have yet was a cast iron skillet. I've been told I'll either love it or hate it. So, I wanted to try it out for myself and got one for Christmas from my mom. I've made several dishes in it and I have to say, I like it so far. I've done some pretty basic recipes and am looking for more to test out. So, this week I'm including a few recipes I'm looking forward to trying.

Bacon Cheeseburger Bomb

- 1 lb. ground beef, cooked
- 1½ lbs. bacon
- 1 bag Tater Tots
- 16 oz. cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Lay bacon in your cast iron pan so the edges are laying out of the pan. Cook ground beef until crumbled and brown, set aside.

Layer Tater Tots on top of your bacon. Add a layer of ground beef. Top with cheddar cheese. Top with more Tater Tots and cheese. Close the bacon over the top of your mixture. Bake for 1 hour or until the bacon is golden brown.

Note: A 12-inch cast iron skillet did take a little more Tater Tots and bacon. If you use the standard 10-inch cast iron pan, it should be fine for one bag of tots.

Pancake Breakfast Pizza

- 1½ cups complete pancake mix
- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. butter, melted
- 6 eggs, cooked
- 2 cups shredded cheese, divided
- ¾ cup cooked bacon crumbles, about 11 slices
- 8 Tbsp. maple syrup

Whisk together pancake mix and water until the

large lumps disappear. Do not over mix. (You can substitute your favorite pancake mix and the ingredients called for on the box. Or use homemade pancake batter.)

Pour 2 Tbsp. melted butter into a large cast-iron skillet or baking pan and spread to coat. Pour pancake batter into the skillet and spread it out. Bake at 425 degrees for 6 to 9 minutes.

Remove the pancake from the oven and top with one cup of the shredded cheese.

Next, add the scrambled eggs, the remaining shredded cheese and the crumbled bacon. Return to the pan to the oven and bake for an additional 3 to 4 minutes to melt the cheese and warm the toppings. Serve with maple syrup drizzled on top.

Cast Iron Skillet Apple Crisp

APPLE CRISP FILLING:

- 6 Granny Smith apples
- ¼ cup light brown sugar (lightly packed)
- ¼ cup granulated white sugar
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter — if butter is salted, omit extra salt
- 2 tsp. pumpkin pie spice (or equal parts, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove)
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt

APPLE CRISP TOPPING:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour

- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar (packed)
- ½ cup chopped pecans (opt.)
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ cup unsalted butter (room temp or melted) — if butter is salted, omit extra salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees (set rack in center).

Peel, core and slice apples. In a large bowl, combine sliced apples, brown sugar, white sugar, pumpkin pie spice, salt, lemon juice and melted butter. Mix well. Pour apple mixture into cast iron skillet.

Apple Crisp Topping: In large bowl, combine flour, oats, brown sugar, pecan and salt. Mix well. Add melted butter. Hand mix until crumbs form. Evenly sprinkle apple crisp crumble topping over apples in skillet.

Bake cast iron skillet apple crisp in oven for approximately 40 to 50 minutes. Serve warm, topped with vanilla ice cream and caramel sauce (optional).

Confetti Kielbasa Skillet

- 1 Tbsp. canola oil
- 7 oz. smoked turkey kielbasa, cut into ¼-inch slices
- 1 medium onion, halved and sliced
- ½ cup sliced baby portobello mushrooms
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
- ¾ tsp. Mrs. Dash Garlic & Herb seasoning blend
- 15-oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 8.8 oz. pkg. ready-to-serve brown rice
- 1 cup frozen corn
- ½ cup chopped roasted sweet red peppers
- 4 tsp. minced fresh cilantro

In a large cast iron skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add kielbasa, onion and mushrooms; cook and stir 4-6 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer.

Add broth and seasoning blend, stirring to loosen browned bits from pan. Bring to a boil; cook 2-3 minutes or until liquid is almost evaporated. Stir in remaining ingredients; heat through.

Rotel Southwest Chicken Skillet

- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts or tenders, cut into small pieces

- 1 tsp. salt, to taste

- 1 tsp. pepper, to taste

- 1 tsp. Montreal Chicken seasoning, to taste

- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes, to taste

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil

- 1 cup white rice, uncooked

- 10 oz. can Rotel diced tomatoes & green chilies

- 8 oz. can tomato sauce

- 1 cup water

TOPPINGS:

- ½ cup shredded Mexican cheese, to taste

- Sour cream

Cut your chicken into small (about 1-inch) pieces and season with salt, pepper, Montreal chicken seasoning and red pepper flakes (or whichever seasonings you prefer).

Heat a large cast iron skillet over medium high heat and coat with the olive oil. Once hot, add in the seasoned chicken and cook until no longer pink. Stir in the uncooked rice, can of Rotel, can of tomato sauce and water. Bring to a boil then cover.

Reduce heat to low and let cook for 10 minutes or until rice is tender. After 10 minutes, stir to prevent the rice from sticking, then re-cover and cook another 10 minutes.

Once the rice is done, stir the mixture and top with a handful of shredded cheese. Turn off heat and cover for 5 minutes or until the cheese melts. Top with a dollop of sour cream and serve.