

Favorite recipes for the holidays

Warming the hearth and heart with fine foods

A WONDERFUL PART of the holidays is home-cooked meals, which fill homes with enticing scents and hearts with warm feelings. *The Connection* asked Costco members for their favorite

holiday recipes using ingredients available at Costco. Featured here are a few for you to try this holiday season or anytime.

—Tim Talevich



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Potato Bread Stuffing with Baby Spinach and Feta Cheese

German Lam, Waltham, Massachusetts

MY KIDS LOVE potato bread, and I love making things that they will eat. This is a new twist on a traditional holiday stuffing—with healthier ingredients.



- 1 cup Kirkland Signature™ Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 2 cups sweet onions in small dice
- 2 cups celery in small dice
- 2 cups grated carrots
- ¼ cup chopped garlic
- 2 tablespoons ground sage
- 2 tablespoons ground thyme
- 1 pound baby spinach, washed and dried
- 1 loaf potato bread (32 ounces), cut in small cubes
- 2 cups crumbled Greek feta cheese
- 1 bunch (about 4 ounces) fresh Italian parsley, washed, dried and roughly chopped
- 32 ounces (4 cups) organic chicken broth
- 2 eggs
- Nonstick spray or parchment paper

Preheat the oven to 375 F.

In a large stockpot, heat olive oil, then add onions, celery, carrots and garlic. Cook for 10 minutes or until mixture is semisoft. Stir in sage and thyme. Add baby spinach and cook until wilted, about 5 minutes. Pour the mixture into a large bowl and add potato bread, feta cheese and parsley.

Combine chicken broth and eggs, and whip. Pour liquid into vegetable mixture, and mix until all the ingredients are blended.

Use nonstick spray or parchment paper to line two 9 x 13-inch pans and pour in the stuffing. Bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Garnish with your favorite herb. Makes 12 servings.

German Lam is a food coach, chef and hockey dad who shops at the Costco in Waltham, Massachusetts. See his website at <http://glamfoodsllc.com>.



Chocolate Cream Balls

Harry Pagancoss, Miami, Florida



THESE LITTLE BITES of chocolate cream resemble truffles—only creamier! I learned this recipe from my dear friend Lucia, but I added rum. When I don't have time to prepare a more elaborate dessert, these are always the solution, and the truth is they never fail the popularity contest.

- 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1½ tablespoons cocoa
- 1 teaspoon almond, coffee or coconut liqueur or rum
- 1 cup chopped chocolate, chopped nuts, coconut or nonpareils (sprinkles)

Mix condensed milk, cream and cocoa in a saucepan.

Cook over medium heat for 5 to 10 minutes, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and comes away from the bottom. Remove from heat. Add liqueur or rum.

Let cool and, with hands greased with butter, form mixture into small 1-inch balls. Roll the balls over the chocolate bits, nuts, coconut or nonpareils. Makes 24 cream balls.

For more of Pagancoss's creations, see his website at www.harrypagancoss.com.



Make-Ahead Mashed Potatoes

Crystal Maleski, Long Grove, Illinois



MY FAMILY LOVES mashed potatoes, but I don't always have time to make them or don't want to have to fuss with mashing and mixing right before dinner. This recipe solves both problems. It can be made several days ahead and kept in the refrigerator. If your family won't eat 5 pounds of potatoes, you can place the recipe in two casserole dishes and serve one later in the week.

5 pounds baking potatoes
½ cup (1 stick) butter
1 cup sour cream*
8 ounces cream cheese, softened*
1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

* OK to use reduced fat versions

Scrub, peel and rinse the potatoes, and cut them into 2-inch pieces. Place them in a large stockpot and cover with water. Boil until fork tender, approximately 18 to 20 minutes.

Drain the potatoes and add remaining ingredients. Mash and mix well. To thoroughly mix ingredients you may want to use a hand or stand mixer. Taste and adjust amount of salt if necessary.

Transfer mashed potatoes to a shallow baking dish and cover with foil. Potatoes can be kept warm in the oven at this point, refrigerated or frozen. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

Make-ahead tip: These can be made several days ahead and kept in the refrigerator. Preheat the oven to 350 F and bake for 30 to 45 minutes or until hot.

Crystal Maleski shops at the Costco in Lake Zurich, Illinois. See her website at www.makedinnereasy.com.

The Costco Connection

You'll find fine fresh produce and other ingredients for all your holiday meals at Costco. For more recipes featuring ingredients available at Costco, see our latest cookbook, *Smart Cooking The Costco Way*, which will be handed out free of charge in the warehouses the weekend after Thanksgiving on a first-

come, first-served basis. An electronic version of the cookbook will be posted on November 29 at Costco.com; click on "Costco Connection Magazine," then "Recipes The Costco Way."



Cousin Rhonda's Baked Brie

Alma Schneider, Montclair, New Jersey

THIS RECIPE WAS given to me by my (future) husband's cousin, Rhonda, at the first holiday event I ever attended with his side of the family. Aside from the Brie, you can have everything on hand in the pantry. I do believe this easy-to-assemble appetizer closed the deal, and we were married soon after.



¼ cup apricot jam
¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup honey
Wheel of Brie, about 6 inches in diameter
(about 20 ounces)
½ cup chopped pecans

In a medium bowl, whisk together jam, brown sugar and honey.

Slice off the top of the Brie rind. With a knife or spoon, dig a wide hole in the cheese, leaving about an inch around the sides and a half inch on the bottom. Save the removed cheese on a plate.

Fill the hole with half of the jam mixture, then place the removed cheese on top of the mixture. Top the cheese with the rest of the mixture, and top off everything with the pecans.

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Place the Brie in an ovenproof baking dish, cover loosely with foil and bake until the cheese starts melting, about 20 minutes. Remove the foil for a few minutes so pecans get a bit toasted. Serve with a knife and crackers. Makes 4 to 6 appetizer servings.

Alma Schneider blogs about overcoming obstacles to cooking for the family at *Take Back the Kitchen* (<http://takebackthekitchen.blogspot.com>). She and her husband are now busy raising four children.

