

Chicken & Andouille Gumbo

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

1/2 cup vegetable oil
meat from one rotisserie chicken
1 pound andouille sausage, sliced 1/4 " thick
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 large onion, finely chopped
1 large green bell pepper, finely chopped
4 celery stalks, finely chopped
8 garlic cloves, finely chopped
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
4 sprigs thyme
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons Louisiana hot sauce
Cooked white rice and sliced scallions (for serving)

Directions

Heat oil in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Cook sausage, stirring occasionally, until beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer sausage to a plate.

Whisk flour into oil in a pot and cook, whisking constantly, until roux is the color of a brown paper bag and smells nutty, about 15 minutes. Low and slow.

Add onion, bell pepper, celery, and garlic to roux; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes.

Add 2 quarts chicken stock, chicken, sausage, thyme sprigs, and bay leaves to pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer until liquid is slightly thickened and vegetables are soft, about 1 hour.

Add hot sauce to gumbo, season with salt and pepper, and simmer for 30 minutes to let flavors meld; discard thyme sprigs and bay leaves. Serve gumbo over rice topped with scallions.

Pimento Cheese Spread

Makes 3 cups

Ingredients

2/3 cup Duke's Mayonnaise
2 tablespoon cream cheese, softening
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire Sauce
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 pound of yellow sharp cheddar cheese
1/3 cup pimentos, patted dry and minced

Directions

Combine mayonnaise, cream cheese, lemon juice, Worcestershire, and cayenne together in a large bowl.

Shred 8 oz cheddar on large holes of box grater. Shred remaining 8 ounces of cheddar on the small holes of the box grater.

Add cheese and pimentos to mayo mixture. Will keep well for 1 week refrigerated.

Banana Pudding Parfaits

Makes 6 large parfaits

FOR THE PUDDING

- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Heaping 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 egg yolks
- 3-1/2 cups whole milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon dark rum (optional) or 1 tsp rum extract

FOR THE SWEETENED WHIPPED CREAM

- 1/2 cup heavy cream, cold
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar

FOR ASSEMBLING

- 3-4 large bananas, very ripe but not mushy, sliced
- 1-1/2 boxes vanilla wafer cookies, broken into 1/4-inch pieces

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a medium saucepan, stir together the sugar, cornstarch, salt and yolks. Whisk in the milk and bring to simmer, stirring frequently, over medium heat (it will take 5-8 minutes). When the mixture starts to bubble, turn the heat down to low and continue cooking, whisking constantly, for 1-2 minutes until the mixture thickens. Remove the pan from the heat and immediately whisk in the butter, vanilla and rum. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and place a piece of plastic wrap directly over the pudding to prevent a film from forming.
2. Chill in the refrigerator until cool, a few hours. (To hurry it up, you can place the bowl in an ice bath and whisk occasionally until cold.)

3. Once the pudding is cold, place the heavy cream in a medium mixing bowl. Using an electric mixer, whip on medium-low speed until the whisk or beaters begin to leave tracks in the cream. Add the confectioners' sugar and whip until the cream holds medium, silky peaks. Go slowly towards the end; if it gets grainy or curdled, you've gone too far. Use a rubber spatula to fold the whipped cream into the cold pudding.
4. Spoon a large dollop of the pudding mixture into the bottom of each parfait glass. Top with one layer of cookie pieces and one layer of sliced bananas. Repeat once and top with a final layer of pudding. Crumble some of the cookie pieces and sprinkle over top. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

*Do not slice the bananas until you are ready to assemble the parfaits. Parfaits are best when made 3-4 hours ahead of time.