

Wild About Florida Cookbook



**Kathleen Walls,
Martin Walls
and Friends**

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Wild About Florida Cookbook

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Here's a big thank you to our readers. Martin and I hope you enjoy this cookbook and find many recipes you want to try here.

If you do enjoy it, the best way you can say thanks is to visit our web sites and possibly purchase the books that inspired this cookbook, *Wild About Florida*.

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Seafood

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Outback Crabshack Fried Gator Tail with Tangerine Marmalade Spicy Dip

This dish is inspired by Outback Crab Shack at Six Mile Marina located just a few miles from our home. They are right on Six Mile Creek just a short distance from the Saint Johns River. You can eat inside or on the outdoor patio bordering the creek. Many times when we dined there, we were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of some playful manatees in the dock area which stretches alongside the marina almost to the river. The manatees will come very close to shore and surface among the grasses growing there. They too are dining on the greens growing wild there.

Live alligators also frequent the creek banks so be careful of putting hands or small children in the water.

Ingredients:

1lb alligator tail meat cut in strips
1 cup breading mix
Cajun Seasoning to taste
1 egg well beaten
1 cup cooking oil

Directions:

Put mix and seasoning in a bag and toss in the gator strips.
Pick out the coated strips and dip them in the egg.
Toss them back into the bag of mix and shake until fully coated.
Meantime have oil heating on stove. I like a cast iron skillet for this but any heavy one will work. You can tell if it is hot enough if it bubbles up when you put the gator meat in. (Do not put them into cold oil it will make them soggy.) Let them cook for a few minutes then turn over,
They should get nice and golden in just a few minutes per side.

Dip:

½ cup Tangerine Marmalade (See recipe in Condiment, Dips and Miscellaneous)
2 ts spicy mustard

Mix and let sit for about 20 minutes to allow the flavors to blend.

The sweet and hot combination is perfect for the crispy fried gator meat.



Blackened Gator Tail

Just like the Fried Gator Tail, Blackened Gator Tail is so very Florida. Several places now combine an alligator viewing exhibit with farm raised alligators to supply the growing demand for the tail meat.

This is one dish I advise cooking outdoors unless you have a very good venting system on your stove. If not I guarantee it will set off your smoke alarm. But it's so tasty it is worth the extra trouble. Again I suggest a cast iron skillet for this one.

Ingredients:

1 lb gator tail meat cut in small pieces.

Cajun Seasoning to taste

Blackening seasoning to taste

1 to 2 tsp peanut oil (It can handle higher temperatures.)

Directions:

Heat your skillet with just enough peanut oil in it to coat it until it smokes.

While it is heating, sprinkle the meat with blackening seasoning and enough Cajun seasoning to make it as spicy as you like.

When the pan begins to smoke, toss in the meat and stir constantly until it is golden brown. It will cook very quickly.

You can serve it on a bed of rice or all by itself.



Carrabelle Bulldozers

The Apalachicola area of Florida is the only place I have ever found Bulldozers. They are a small sweet type of Spanish lobster. I visited Carrabelle and was dining at the Tiki Hut on Timber Island. The owners, Marlene and John Denig, introduced me to the tasty crustacean. It was love at first bite! Unfortunately these little flat nosed lobsters are not marketed commercially. The Denig's acquire their seafood directly from their next door neighbor, Pirate Landing Seafood, so they can get the rarities fresh from the gulf.

However if you do visit Carrabelle (or anywhere in the Apalachicola area) some seafood markets also sell bulldozers. If you can't get bulldozers, any type of small lobster will work in this recipe. Naturally the taste will be different but it's hard to go wrong with a lobster.

Ingredients:

2 to 4 bulldozers per person (Live is considered best)

Water to cover the lobsters.

Pinch of salt in the water

¼ stick butter per serving

1 small lime per serving (Key lime is more Florida style)

Directions:

Use a large deep pot. One of those blue enamel ones for canning is perfect.

I prefer to kill the lobsters by inserting a sharp knife into the underside of the lobster where the body meets the tail but many people will toss them live into the pot of boiling water. In either case make sure the water has reached a rolling boil before you throw them in.

When the shells turn a bright red they are done. Usually about 5 to 7 minutes but if you are cooking a large number of lobsters give it a few more minutes.

Melt the butter in a tiny bowl and add the lime juice.

When the bulldozers are done serve immediately with the lime butter mixture for dipping.

You could add salt, pepper or some spicy seasoning but for me they are so perfect they need only the butter-lime juice dip.



Apalachicola Fried Oysters in Beer Batter

While you are in the Apalachicola area, make sure you sample the oysters. They are the best in the world. No matter how you fix them they are sure to be a hit. This is one of our favorites.

Ingredients:

12- 24 Oysters(in shell if you are really ambitious or shelled)
1 cup Corn meal fine ground yellow
½ cup flour (any kind)
¼ to ½ cup Beer any brand
Generous amount of Cajun seasoning
Peanut oil to cover skillet up to about ½ inch. (more is okay but not less)

Directions:

Shell oysters if in shells or drain if bought in container. Don't throw away the liquid as I am going to give you a great oyster stew recipe later. In fact, keep a few of the oysters for that also. While oysters drain, mix up the dry ingredients. No salt is usually necessary as oysters are naturally salty but if you want to salt do it immediately after they come out of the skillet. Put in as much or little Cajun seasoning as you like. Red pepper and lemon pepper mixed could be substituted.

Add the beer slowly stirring it in until the batter is just fluid enough to stick to the oyster when you dip it in.

Heat up the oil in a heavy skillet (You guessed it I use a cast iron one) hot enough to bubble up when you put in an oyster. Don't crowd them. Turn after about 2 to 3 minutes. Let both sides get a nice golden color.

Serve with lemon juice, lime juice or cocktail sauce. Or if you are really a HOT person, use datil sauce recipe I will give you later for a dip.

They will also make a great Po' Boy Sandwich on French bread with lettuce and tomatoes and lots of drippy mayo.



Coconut Grove Shrimp

Coconut Grove, a section of Miami bordering Biscayne Bay, is home to The Kampong, an 8 acre tropical garden that you can learn more about in *Wild About Florida: South Florida*. Coconut Grove is often called Miami's Food Court so you can bet you will find lots of fancy shrimp dishes there. None of them will top this quick and easy shrimp treat.

Ingredients:

1 lb. med. shrimp, cleaned
1 cup flour
1 egg (well beaten)
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon pepper
1 cups grated coconut)

Directions:

In medium bowl, combine flour, salt and pepper. Dip peeled shrimp in flour mix then in egg then again in flour mix then dredge in coconut.

Meantime heat one inch of oil in a large saucepan. Fry until lightly browned. Drain on paper towels. Theses are delicious dipped in the Tangerine Marmalade Spicy Dip used with the Gator Tail.



Shrimp Piluf

Shrimp are popular all over Florida. This one is an adaptation of a style of cooking popular in 19th century Florida because of the abundance of shrimp. The other ingredients could be adapted to what was available.

Ingredients:

1 small onion, chopped
1 stalk of celery, chopped
½ small bell pepper, chopped
2 tablespoons butter
2 cups uncooked long grain white rice
6 medium tomatoes or 1 can (14 1/2 oz. size) stewed tomatoes
2 finely chopped datil peppers (Jalapeno peppers may be substituted)
Salt to taste
4 chicken thighs
2 cups of the chicken broth (From water used to cook chicken)
2 teaspoons Old Bay seasoning
1 pound medium raw shrimp
1 lb smoked sausage (cut in big slices)

Directions:

Cook chicken in pot of water until meat can be picked form bones. Retain about 2 cups of the chicken broth.

In Dutch oven or saucepan melt butter, add chopped onion, celery and bell pepper and sauté until onion is transparent and tender. add in sausage. Add uncooked rice and stir to coat rice with butter. Continue to cook and stir 1 minute on medium heat. Add tomatoes to rice (chop tomatoes, as needed if using fresh, skin tomatoes by dipping into a pot of boiling water for a few seconds. The skin then will peel off easily). Add salt, broth and seasoning to pan. Bring to a boil, stir once, reduce heat to simmer, cover tightly and cook 20 minutes.

While rice is cooking, peel and devein shrimp. Quickly remove lid from rice pan, add shrimp, and chicken meat, replace lid. If needed add a small amount of water. Rice should be tender and just dry when done not soggy. Turn stove heat off and allow shrimp to steam for 10 minutes. Shrimp should be completely pink before serving.



Smoked Mullet

Early settlers to Florida often sustained themselves with the mullet they caught in the Atlantic. With no refrigeration, smoking the fish was a good way to keep it edible.

You can enjoy their staple as a delicacy today.

Start with fresh mullet, that is cleaned and beheaded. Split the fish head to tail from the belly but leave connected at the top so that it opens like a book.

Prepare a brine solution of 4 cups pickling or kosher salt to 2 gallons of very cold water. (A few ice cubes in it help) Soak mullet for 30 minutes, remove and rinse thoroughly.

Repeat the brining process only this time add about 1 cup brown sugar to 1 gal. Water. Soak fish for 1 hour. Remove, rinse and Let air dry.

Heat a smoker or grill to 170-180 degrees and add green wood (fruit or citrus tree wood is best) to a large bed of smoldering coals. Place fillets on the grill and maintain temperature until fish are firm - 6-8 hours.

Shrimp Rose

Why should flowers just be to look at. Some like rose petals are perfectly safe to eat. Just be sure you always use organically grown flowers to be sure there are no chemical residues or pesticides on or in them. This rule applies to any flower you use in a food recipe.

Ingredients:

1 Lb. shrimp (peeled)
1/2 small onion chopped fine
1 stalk of celery chopped fine
1/4 bell pepper chopped fine
2 cloves garlic chopped very fine (Use more if you like)
2 tsp. Basil chopped fine
4 TBS butter
3 TBS flour
2 cups milk
Salt Pepper and Cajun Seasoning to taste
Petals from one large rose
1/2 lb. angel hair pasta

Directions:

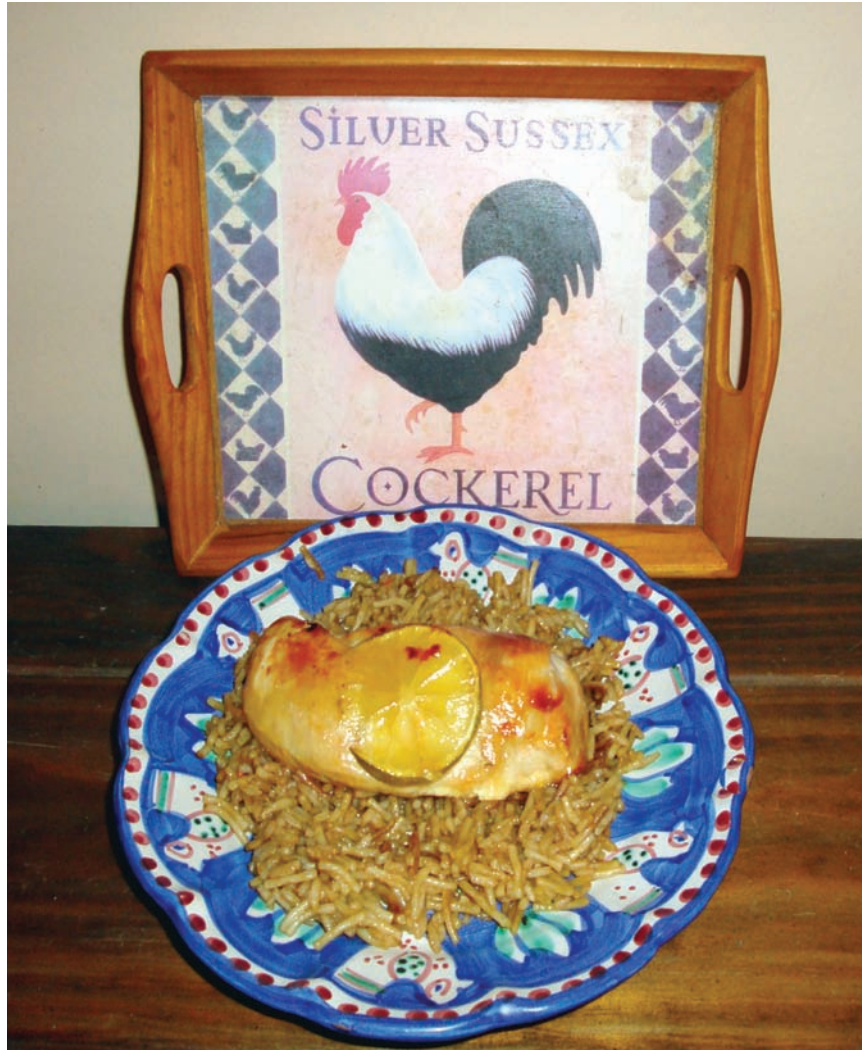
Toss peeled shrimp in boiling water for just about 5 minutes then take out and rinse with cold water

Melt butter in large saucepan over medium-low heat. Sauté onions, bell pepper and celery until translucent. Add garlic and stir.

Make a roux by adding the flour and cooking to a creamy consistency. Do not brown it. When it is well blended add milk slowly. Stir until thickened. Add cooked shrimp and seasonings. Mix it into the cooked pasta and top with the chopped basil and chopped rose petals.

Meat recipes

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Lime Chicken

This recipe blends the Florida taste of lime and honey with baked chicken breasts. Hard to resist.

Ingredients:

4 fresh boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 lime, juiced
3/4 cup apple juice
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 chicken bouillon cubes
1 Tbs honey
Olive oil for baking pan

Directions:

In a mixing bowl combine lime juice, apple juice, cornstarch, honey and bouillon cube.

Rub a large baking dish with olive oil. Place chicken in dish. Pour lime mix over chicken. Bake covered in preheated 350° oven about 45 minutes. Open and baste the chicken with the sauce a few times during baking. Then remove the cover and bake until chicken is lightly browned.



Azema's Stuffed Peppers

This was my mother-in-law's favorite stuffing recipe. Although she made it in Louisiana, it adapts perfectly to Florida using locally grown bell peppers and Apalachicola oysters.

Ingredients:

1 lb ground chuck
½ lb chicken liver (chopped in small pieces)
8 large or 12 small oysters (chopped in small pieces)
1 small onion chopped
1 stalk of celery
6 large bell peppers
1 clove garlic chopped
½ cup bread crumbs
½ cup cooked rice
2 Tbs cooking oil
Salt and pepper to taste
Cajun seasoning to taste.
½ cup water

Directions:

Cut top half inch off bell peppers and a tiny sliver off bottom to make them stand flat. Clean seeds and membrane from inside of pepper. Parboil the peppers in a large pot of water. Reserve the cut off pieces to chop and add to the stuffing.

Brown ground chuck and chicken liver in large skillet until browned then add onion, bell pepper and celery stir until they are soft and translucent then add garlic. Cook one more minute then add oysters. Cook about a minute then add water, cooked rice, bread crumbs and seasonings to taste. Stir all together until well blended.

Put stuffing in cooled peppers and bake in oven for 45 minutes. This also makes a great turkey stuffing.



Hank's Gumbo

This is similar to a recipe from my first cookbook. It relates to a scene in my book *Last Step*. Although it is traditionally a Cajun dish, most of the ingredients are also native to Florida. Here is the scene it relates to:

Setting the Scene:

Vickie, a distraught mother searching for answers to her daughter's drug-related death, has become friends with Hank, an addict turned drug counselor. Hank has promised to cook her a Cajun gumbo in his apartment over his rehab center. The cooking has been interrupted when Hank stops to register a young addict wanting help in the center.

Excerpt from LAST STEP:

After answering a few more of Annie's questions, he took her back to Hilda to start her classes. He then escorted Vickie back to his apartment.

"Sorry to have our day interrupted like that but that girl needed help. I hope she makes it."

"She seems so sincere," Vickie replied.

"We'll do our best. The rest is up to her." He changed the subject.

"Let's start that gumbo. I'm starved. Make yourself useful, woman. I'll peel the shrimp; you cut up the okra and onions."

He got out a cutting board and knife for her. When their fingers touched, Vickie felt the familiar tingle. She knew he did, too, but he turned away and busied himself getting a large black iron pot and setting it on the stove.

The meal was delicious. They carried on a conversation about Saturday's plans. Both were conscious of the contained feelings in the room. Vickie knew that Hank had only to make a slight move in her direction and they would end up in bed. Hank restrained himself. He took her back to the hotel but made no move to accompany her to her room.

Ingredients:

1 lb fresh shrimp
1 lb crab meat (whole boiled, cleaned crab or crab claws can be substituted)
1 lb chicken pieces (Thighs or breasts are best)
1 lb fresh okra (frozen cut okra can be used)
1 medium onion
1 medium bell pepper
2 stalks of celery
2 cloves garlic
1 tsp Cajun Seasoning
1 tsp File (if available)
3 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped (a can of cooked tomatoes can be substituted)
16 oz can tomato sauce
Salt to taste
3 Tbs olive oil
4 cups water (more can be added if gumbo becomes too thick)

Directions:

Peel shrimp. Cut okra into slices. Chop onion, bell pepper and celery coarsely. Brown chicken parts and cook until fairly done in oil in large pot (old cast iron pot is best). Sauté onions, peppers and celery . When onions start to become translucent, add okra. Cook until it loses its sliminess then add shrimp. Peel and chop garlic and add to pot. When shrimp turn pink, add tomatoes, sauce, water and seasoning. Bring to boil and then simmer about 20 minutes. Add crab. Simmer 5 more minutes.

Serve over fluffy white rice in a bowl. This thick rich soup is a winter favorite in Cajun country. This is an adaptable meal; oysters can be added when you add the crab. Some people also add sausage. A Cajun host always offers food, so if unexpected company comes, just add water to stretch this gumbo.

Fruit and Veggies

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Robert is Here Salad

This salad is inspired by one of my favorite produce stands. We discovered it many years ago enroute to the Everglades. We had stopped at the Fruit and Spice Park and were intrigued by the exotic fruit. Both places are featured in *Wild About Florida: South Florida*.

The picture is a collage of Robert is Here. It has one of his exotic birds that used to grace the interior of the stand. I believe the bird has been exiled to the small zoo area behind the stand. The produce and Robert's special shakes are famous throughout Florida and beyond. Some of the fruit may be difficult to obtain in other states but as healthy eating is taking front and center of the culinary stage, more exotic produce is becoming more universally available. You can even order directly from Robert. The beauty of this salad is you can mix and match. Use as many of the fruits as you desire.

Ingredients:

1 Carambola (star fruit)
1 Mango
1 banana
1 Kiwi
1 Pineapple
1 Small bunch of seedless grapes (any color or mixed)
A handful of berries, strawberries, raspberries or blackberries all work fine)
1 Carton of yogurt. (Vanilla is my choice but any fruit flavor works)
Use as many or as few of the fruits as you wish. You can't go wrong with this one.

Diredtions:

Carambola is not peeled just sliced from end to end in about 1/4 to 1/2 inch slices to show off the classic star shape.

Mango is peeled and the fruit sliced like a peach to get as much fruit as possible from around the large seed.

Kiwi is best peeled thinly as the skin is hairy. Then slice it in 1/4 to 1/2 inch rounds.

Cut the sprouting end and outer peeling from the pineapple and dig out any eyes. Then slice it either with the core which you need to cut out before eating if you want to achieve a result similar to commercially canned pineapple or just cut slivers from the outside in until you come to the core. Slivering is the easier way.

You all do know how to peel and slice the banana in rounds.

Toss the cut fruit with the grapes and berries and coat it all with the yogurt.



Spring Greens with Basil Flowers Salad

One of the first fruits of a garden can be tender mixed greens and herbs. Early in spring the first shoots are tenderer than the full sized vegetables will ever be.

Toss together a mix of Spring Greens, Red Top lettuce, Basil leaves and Basil Flowers. Garnish with slivered almonds. For the Basil Flowers, pick the individual flowers from a basil plant that has begun to bolt. Basil will grow easily in the garden or a container in the kitchen window. Serve with simple vinaigrette dressing.

Vinaigrette

1/4 cup apple cider vinegar

1/4 cup olive oil

Just be sure they have never had pesticides or chemicals applied to them.

Ingredients:

1 tsp. Finely chopped basil leaves

1 tsp. Finely chopped oregano

Salt and pepper to taste

Shake well and toss in salad



Begonia Fruit Cup

Why should something as pretty as a flower be just to look at? Actually lots of flower pedal are edible. Just be sure they have not had pesticides or chemicals applied to them. Here I mixed some begonia petals into a delicious fruit salad. This desert is as light and fresh as a new spring day.

This will work with any combination or amount of fruit you have available.

Ingredients:

Fresh strawberries
Fresh star fruit
Fresh or canned pineapple
Begonia petals
Fresh Mint chopped fine

Directions:

Slice the fruit into a serving dish or cup, Sprinkle with the chopped mint and tiny begonia petals. Splash some pineapple juice over it and garnish with mint leaves.



Florida Fried Green Tomatoes

Although Fried Green Tomatoes are usually thought of in connection with Georgia, Florida grows tons of tomatoes. Ruskin in Hillsboro County celebrates the Florida tomato heritage every May with the Ruskin Tomato Festival. (More about that in *Wild about Florida: Central Florida*.)

Our garden usually produces more than we can eat from April until August heat devastates our tomatoes. We often get a second crop starting in late September until the first frost. Occasionally we can nurse a plant and bring it inside to get patio tomatoes all year. So with that abundance why not fry up a batch of the green ones? Green or red, try to get your tomatoes from a produce stand as the ones you find in groceries have been gassed, shipped across country, and in general abused until they bear little or no resemblance to a *real* tomato.

Ingredients:

2 firm green tomatoes that have reached full size but have not yet begun to show any reddish color.

1 egg

1 cup of cornmeal breading. (you can use same mix as in Apalachicola Oysters without the beer)

peanut oil to fill ½ inch in skillet

Directions:

Slice the tomatoes about ½ inch thick. Dip lightly in breading mix then in flour and again in breading to coat thoroughly.

Fry in fairly hot oil until golden brown on each side. It will brown very quickly.

Salt as soon as you remove from skillet.

You can use the same general recipe to fry many Florida vegetables.



Florida Fried Eggplant

Eggplant is another vegetable that thrives in Florida. In fact, we had a few plants that survived the inter outside and produced more the second spring that they did originally.

They can be fried similar to the green tomatoes but they need a few extra steps.

Ingredients:

1 firm eggplant. purple, lavender or white all work great.
1 egg
1 cup of cornmeal breading. (You can use same mix as in
Apalachicola Oysters without the beer)
Vegetable or peanut oil to fill ½ inch in skillet

Directions:

Peel the eggplant and slice the it about ½ inch thick. Salt the slices liberally. Put the slices flat on a double layer of paper towels and cover with another double layer of paper towels. Put a cutting board or other flat weighty object on top of the covered eggplant slices. Let it sit for at least half an hour.

Rinse the salt off, Dip each slice lightly in breading mix then in flour and again in breading to coat thoroughly.

Fry in medium hot oil until golden brown on each side. It will take a about 2 to 3 minutes per side.

Salt as soon as you remove from skillet.



Stuffed Banana Pepper

These tasty mild peppers grow well in Florida. They are delicious in many ways but one of the simplest is to just stuff them to make a wonderful snack or appetizer.

Ingredients:

12 banana peppers
1 pk cream cheese
2 slices of bacon cooked well and crumbled

Directions:

Cut off top of peppers. Sometimes it is easier to stuff small ones if you cut off a tiny piece of the bottom end to avoid compressing the air in them when pushing the stuffing in the pepper.

Mix cream cheese and bacon crumbles. Force mixture into pepper from top end. Bake in 350° oven for just a few minutes until pepper begins to brown.

Condiment , Dips and Miscellaneous

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Mango Salsa

When we first moved to Florida, back in the 60's, we explored along the Indian River in Brevard County and found, among many other wild growing edibles, a Hayden mango tree. This was my first taste of mangos. I will always think of Florida whenever I eat a mango or fix any recipe with mango in it.

This one is delish! It uses mangoes, fresh jalapenos, onions, green peppers and lime juice I don't cook it. Just let it sit about an hour after mixing to let the flavors marry. It is great on corn chips with sour cream.

Ingredients:

1 just ripe mango

1 small green pepper (You can use red or yellow or a combination)

½ onion

1 Tbs lime juice

Directions:

Peel and chop mango. Add chopped jalapeno, pepper and onion.

Mix and add lime. Put in sealed container and shake to get the lime juice and other ingredients together. Store in fridge for about an hour turning the container once or twice to mix flavors.

Fresh Tomato Salsa

Unlike the traditional cooked salsa this recipe keeps all the natural flavors of these delicious Florida grown ingredients

Ingredients:

1 firm large tomato
1 small green pepper (You can use red or yellow or a combination)
½ onion
1 Tbs lime juice

Directions:

Chop tomato. Add chopped jalapeno, pepper and onion. Mix and add lime. Put in sealed container and shake to get the lime juice and other ingredients together. Store in fridge for about an hour turning the container once or twice to mix flavors.

Tangerine Marmalade

We have a tangerine tree that often produces more fruit then we can eat fresh. This is a great way to savor our tangerines all year long. They make great gifts too.

Ingredients:

12 tangerines
6 cups sugar

Instructions:

Wash tangerines. Remove peel from tangerines in very small pieces and reserve. Remove seeds from sections and white membranes. Chop peel in food processor

Combine all in a large kettle. Place over moderate heat and bring slowly to a boil, stirring frequently. Boil gently for about 35 minutes, stirring frequently until the mixture passes the jelly test by reaching 220F on a candy thermometer and sheeting from a metal spoon.

Remove from heat. Skim off foam and ladle immediately into hot jelly jars or canning jars. Fill to within 1/8 inch from top; screw cap hand tight.

Place in boiling water bath and simmer for 10 minutes. Be sure each jar lid is secure by hearing a pop or other indicator that lid is sealed.

Datil Sauce

This is one of Martin's favorites. He puts it on almost everything.

Ingredients:

1 #10 can tomato ketchup
8 to 12 datil peppers (finely chopped) (You can make this with other peppers but it won't be exactly the same)
1 onion (chopped)
1 bell pepper (chopped)
¼ cup brown sugar

Directions:

It is easy to chop the peppers and onion in a food processor but do not breath the fumes form the datil as they are strong. Also if you chop the peppers by hand, wear gloves and do not rub eyes as they will burn.

In large pot heat all ingredients (add a few datil peppers at a time to achieve desired degree of hotness.) to a boil turn heat to simmer and cook to desired thickness.

Put into mason jars and hand tighten lids. Put jars into a boiling water bath for about 10 minutes then take out and let cool. Be sure each lid pops or is airtight and store in cupboard. It will keep indefinitely.

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Wild Florida Oyster Stew

This is great when you fry oysters. It gives you something to do with that juice you drain from the oysters. Just save a few of the oysters for it too.

Ingredients:

4 – 6 oysters
½ cup of juice drained from oyster jar
1 cup of evaporated milk
1 cup water
¼ cup chopped onions
¼ cup chopped bell pepper
1 stalk celery chopped
1 tbs flour
3 tbs butter
Pepper to taste

Direction:

Sauté onions, bell peppers and celery in 2 Tbs butter until soft and tender. Add flour and stir to make a roux when flour is just slightly browned add water and oyster juice. Add oysters. Bring to just under a boil. Lower heat and simmer for just about 3 minutes add milk and pepper and simmer about one more minute. (You won't need salt as the oyster juice is salty) When done top with the other tbs of butter. Serve with crackers.



Minorcan Clam Chowder

This is a real Saint Augustine variation on traditional clam chowder. It's spicy and really warms you up on a cold day.

Ingredients:

3 slices bacon chopped fine
½ large onions chopped
1 small bell pepper chopped
1 stalk celery (chopped)
2 cans chopped clams (6.5 Oz)
1-2 datil peppers, minced (Unless you have a cast iron stomach,
1 datil is enough) Can substitute habanera pepper if you can't get
datil.
3 cups canned or fresh peeled tomatoes (chopped)
1 can condensed tomato soup
4 soup cans water
1 large potatoe (diced)
3 carrots (diced)

Sauté bacon in large pot over medium heat until fat is rendered.
Remove meat and set aside. Add onions, bell pepper, and celery
and cook until softened. Add clams, and clam juice, datil peppers,
tomatoes, tomato soup, seasonings and reserved bacon. Bring to a
boil. Reduce heat and simmer one hour. Add potatoes and carrots
and cook 30-45 minutes more. Add additional stock or clam juice
if too thick. This is best if left until the next day. The flavors get
better.

Saint Augustine Chili

Take an old fashioned favorite like chili and add some pepper native to the Saint Augustine area and some Florida grown tomatoes. Suddenly you have a spicy twist to everybody's favorite winter food.

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons cooking oil
- 1 pounds ground chuck
- 1 pounds hot Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 small green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 small red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 skinned chopped tomatoes or 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 1 can tomato sauce
- 2 (15 ounce) can chili beans beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 datil peppers or 4 chili peppers
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 cup corn meal
- 4 cups water

Directions:

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat; cook the meat, onion, peppers, in the pot until the onions and peppers are soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic at the last minute. Add the corn meal to thicken the chili. Add the water, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, and chili beans; bring to a boil. Stir in the chopped datil or chili peppers, chili powder, Reduce heat to low and slow cook about 2 hours. Add water as needed to maintain the consistence you like best.

Chicken Vegetable Soup

This is the perfect recipe to use all the little odds and ends of your Florida vegetable garden as fall sets in.

Ingredients:

2 lb chicken pieces with bone (thighs or breast are best)
½ onion (chopped)
½ bell pepper (chopped)
1 stalk celery (chopped)
1 carrots (sliced)
1 potatoe (peeled and chopped)
1 to 2 cups of whatever vegetable you have handy (my choices are fresh or frozen peas, limas, corn, zucchini or yellow squash, mushrooms and green beans. Any kind of vegetable or beans go well in here but if you use dried beans adjust cooking time for them. They need to go in the pot much sooner.)
6 or 7 peeled chopped tomatoes (you can use canned tomatoes)
1 small can V8 juice
Pinch each of oregano, basil, salt, pepper and Cajun seasoning if you like things spicy
½ cup uncooked rice
Water to fill large pot

Directions:

Put chicken pieces in large pot (You can use this one in a Crockpot if you have a lot of time) and fill with water. Cook about an hour until chicken seems to be beginning to separate from the bone a little bit.

Add to water in pot: any fresh vegetables that will take longer to cook such as carrots, fresh green beans or lima beans, potatoes, V8 juice and tomatoes then add water to an inch or so below rim. Season now. Simmer about 30 minutes. Pick out bones and break up the chicken to bite sized pieces. Add rice and more tender vegetables like mushrooms and peas. Cook until rice is done, about 20 minutes.



Chicken Noodle Soup

This one will do wonders for that Florida cold you catch when the weather changes from near boiling to near freezing in the same day.

Ingredients:

5 to 6 chicken thighs

½ onion (chopped)

½ bell pepper (chopped)

1 stalk celery (chopped)

4 or 5 carrots (sliced)

1 cup uncooked noodles

Chicken bullion cube or 2 cups chicken stock

Pinch each of oregano, basil, salt, pepper and Cajun seasoning

Water to fill large pot

Directions:

Put thighs in large pot (You can use this one in a Crockpot if you have a lot of time) and fill with water. Boil until meat can be removed from bones easily. Keep meat out of pot after separating. Add to water in pot: onions, pepper, celery, carrots, seasonings and either chicken stock or a bullion cube (If you use a bullion cube remember it has a lot of salt so decrease your salt amount) and add water to an inch or so below rim. Cook until vegetables are almost tender about 10 to 15 minutes. Add noodles and chicken meat and cook for the number of minutes noodles require.

Sweets

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Here are two easy recipes using a simple cake mix and adding the touches that make it special.

Plant City Strawberry Cake

No place produces strawberries like Plant City, Florida. They showcase their favorite crop in a 10 day festival each year.

Ingredients:

1 package of yellow cake mix
1/2 package strawberry gelatin
1 quart strawberries

Icing:

2 cups powdered sugar
4 Tbs butter
1/2 package strawberry gelatin
1 to 3 tsps evaporated milk

Directions:

Follow directions on package except add in 1/2 package gelatin.
Bake in two round pans.

When done let cool before frosting.

For icing:

Let butter sit until it comes to room temperature. Cream sugar into butter. Heat 2 tbs of milk and add the rest of the gelatin to it. Mix into butter-sugar mixture. Mix until a good spreading consistency. You may need to add a little more milk to get the right consistency.

When the cake is cooled, slice most of the strawberries and place between layers. Frost with icing mixture and then decorate with a layer of sliced strawberries on top.



Mango Cake

Mango was one of my first culinary discoveries when I moved to Florida. I am still trying to get enough of this luscious fruit.

Ingredients:

- 1 package of yellow cake mix
- 1 can of mango nectar except for 3 tsps reserved for icing
- 1 mango (firm and not overly ripe)

Icing:

- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 4 Tbs butter
- 3 tsps mango nectar
- 2 tbs powdered cocoa (use real cocoa not hot chocolate mix)

Directions:

Follow directions on package except add in mango nectar. Bake in two round pans.

When done let cool before frosting.

For icing:

Let butter sit until it comes to room temperature. Cream sugar into butter. Mix mango nectar into butter-sugar mixture. Mix until a good spreading consistency. You may need to add a little milk to get the right consistency.

When the cake is cooled, frost between layers, put together and then frost top and sides with icing mixture and then decorate with a layer of sliced mango on top.



Mango Key Lime Pie

How can you go wrong combining two of Florida's best fruits with a touch of chocolate thrown in for good measure?

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 2 tsbs grated lime zest
- 3 egg yokes
- 1 - 14 ounce can sweetened condensed milk
- 1 mango (just ripe not soft)
- 1 tsp corn starch

Crust:

11 graham crackers
3 tablespoons granulated sugar
2 tablespoons real cocoa (not the hot chocolate mix)
5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Directions:

Crust:

Crush graham crackers in a food processor until small crumbs. Mix graham cracker crumbs, cocoa and sugar in a bowl. Add butter and stir with a fork until well blended. Pour this mixture into a 9-inch pie pan and press over the bottom and up the sides of the pan. Flatten with a measuring cup to make sure the graham cracker mixture forms a firm crust on the bottom of the pie pan. Bake on the center rack for about 15 minutes until the crust is lightly brown, remove and let cool to room temperature

Filling:

Slice about 4 or 5 thin slices off the mango then cut the rest of the fruit off the seed and put in food processor to crush.

Whisk the egg yolks and lime zest together in another bowl. Beat in milk, then juice and crushed mango and set aside at room temperature till it thickens.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

Pour the lime filling into crust, spread evenly, and then bake for 15 minutes until the center sets, but still wiggles a little bit when shaken.

Remove from oven and cool to room temperature.

Top with mango slices that have been lightly coated with lime juice to keep from discoloring.

Refrigerate for at least two hours until well chilled.



Strawberry Pancakes

This is a really enjoyable way to get some of your daily requirement of fruit. You can also do this one with other berries like blueberries or blackberries. They also will grow in Florida.

Ingredients:

1 cup biscuit mix
1/2 quart strawberries (washed and sliced)
1/2 cup sugar
2 Tbs butter
1 egg
1/2 cup evaporated milk
1 tsb vanilla
1 to 2 Tbs cooking oil

Syrup:

1/2 quart strawberries (washed, sliced and lightly crushed)
1/2 cup sugar

Directions:

Cream butter and sugar in bowl. Add eggs and beat well. Add biscuit mix and milk alternately stirring until a nice smooth consistency. Add sliced strawberries and vanilla. Fold in.

Heat griddle or large frying pan at medium heat and add cooking oil.

Pour in serving spoon sized dollops of the mix and cook until it begins to bubble. Flip and let that side brown to a nice golden consistency.

Meantime, mix remaining sugar and strawberries in a microwave safe bowl and cook at 1 minute segments until it forms a syrup mix.

Pour over the pancakes for the best breakfast you ever ate.



Everything but the Kitchen Sink Bread Pudding

This is the best way I know to use up stale bread.

Ingredients:

3 Tbs butter

½ cup sugar (you can use either brown, white or mixture of both)

Dash cinnamon

2 eggs

1 can of evaporated milk (could take more or less depending on the bread)

2 oz apple or pineapple juice

¼ cup wine (any kind will work)

1 small loaf stale bread (any kind will work, raisin bread is wonderful, bagels or just plain white or French bread works great)

1 banana or apple

½ cup dried raisens, cherries, apples, cranberries and chopped nuts
(any combination of fruits and nuts)

Directions:

Set oven to 300%.Lightly grease baking dish with butter. Cream sugar and butter in baking dish, add eggs and beat until mixed. Add milk, juice and wine and mix well. Slice banana or apple and mix up into dish. Add remainder of fruit and cinnamon. Crumble bread into tiny crumbly pieces and add to mixture stirring it in as you go. When all the bread is in the mix should have a wet layer over the top and be wet anywhere you depress with a spoon. If it is too dry add more milk if too wet add more bread.Cook 45 minutes or until top is golden



Pecan Pralines.

Florida produces between 5 and 10 million pounds of pecans annually. There is even a tiny community named Pecan just north of Palatka in Putnam County. It is located just across the river from Cow Creek and not far from Rice Creek and Fish Creek. The taste of these little treats is bigger than the entire community.

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
1 stick butter
1 cup cream
1 tsp. vanilla (you can substitute a good bourbon here)
pinch of salt
¼ cup sugar
24 pecans

Directions:

Put cream, 2 cups sugar, ½ of the butter and a pinch of salt in large heavy pot. Bring to boil.

At same time put ¼ cup sugar in cast iron pan and caramelize. Put caramelized sugar into boiling milk, sugar pot. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly until it reaches the soft ball stage. (225 to 235° at sea level, slightly lower as the altitude gets higher). Add rest of butter and beat until mixture thickens. Add pecans, vanilla and mix in.

Drop by teaspoon on greased surface. They will spread out and flatten. You can decorate each with a pecan half. Allow to cool.

Friends Section

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Collard 'N' Corn Skillet Pie

My mother, Lillie Bell Graves, was a true Southerner and an outstanding gardener and cook. Collards was just one of her many specialties. Mom created this recipe, which was included in the Ponce de Leon Florida Extension Homemakers Club cookbook, "New Leaves From An Old Town, Collard Cookery". Years ago, Ponce de Leon had a Collard Festival on the 4th Saturday in November that celebrated collard greens and Southern cooking. Contributed by James Graves, www.jagwriter.com

Aftermath I: The Fight For Survival and

Aftermath II: The Deadly Game

Ingredients:

2 cups collards, cooked and drained
½ cup milk
1 cup grated cheese
1 cup while kernel corn, drained
1 egg, beaten
Salt to taste

Crust:

1 cup cracklins
1 ½ cup cornmeal, fine
1 teaspoon salt
1 ½ cup water

Heat oven to 400 degrees.

Grind cracklins; mix with meal, salt and water to make a stiff batter. Press into a cast iron skillet.

Bake for 30 minutes.

Mix corn, collards.

Beat egg, add milk and pour over collard mixture. Put into crust and top with cheese. Bake for 20 minutes more.

Serve hot.

Florida Rum Bran Muffins

Forget going to the beach and getting a little action from the bikini clad bimbos.

For most of the denizens of Florida a little action means going to the restroom, facilities, bathroom, WC, or latrine.

I found that to be true as I get on in life and while I love looking at the cute bimbos I found that a little action is far more important.

This muffin recipe is my favorite and I try to eat one every day so I don't walk around feeling all stuffed up.

I'm going to show you two ways to make them, one is the original and two is the lazy way I prefer

These recipes are from Wayne Rutland, a retired Special Forces combat veteran, who writes adventure novels under the name WW Rutland. His Empire of the Wolf series, *Princess of the Empire* (now available) and *Warlord of Tarna* (coming soon) will transport you to a new world. Besides writing science fiction books he hunts, sails and races sail boats. He lives in Tampa with his poor long suffering wife Brenna, the Dobermans and boats. He invites you to check out the book blog and buy a book.

<http://wwrutland.wordpress.com>

Original Rum Bran Muffins

Ingredients:

One cup of bran cereal
½ cup Fiber One cereal
One cup dried tropical fruit and nuts
One Florida egg (with or without shells)
3 spoons oil (who cares what kind?)
1/3 cup of Florida honey
One cup flour (Whole grain preferred)
One spoon baking powder
¾ cup milk
½ cup Florida rum (Others OK too)
½ cup Irish Cream liquor

How to make 'em (Prepare);

Mix everything but the Irish cream in a bowl
Preheat oven to 400 degrees
Mash the flakes down so the mix is a mush
If too soupy add some flakes.
If too dry add more rum
Spray the muffin pan with cooking oil
Put in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes
Pour the Irish cream over the muffins after taking out of the oven.
Let cool for 10 minutes
You can add blueberries and nuts instead of tropical fruits for a change of pace.
You can add flavored rums like, banana, coconut, spiced, and dark.

Now you're asking –Where am I going to get all this crap? I buy most of it at Wal-mart super stores and you will find Florida produce and products available all over the state.

Now I promised you an easy way to do this and it's cheaper too!

Ingredients:

One pack of Martha White Honey bran muffin mix (\$.75)

1/2cup Fiber one cereal

1/2cup Bran flakes (cheap store brand)

One splash of oil (olive is best)

1/2 cup milk

1/2 cup fruit and nuts (Sam's tropical trail mix)

1/2 cup of wheat bran

1/2 cup of rum

1/2 cup Irish Cream

Mix and mash 'em

400 degree oven

Spray the muffin pan

Makes 6 big bold muffins or 12 sissy little ones

Bake for 17 or 18 minutes

Pour the Irish cream over the warm muffins after cooking and let them breath for 10 minutes or so

Again you can use blueberries and nuts for a change

You should have a mouthy, chunky muffin that is not a kiddy cupcake and is best served with a coffee and Irish cream in the morning, one of those tropical drinks with a Florida orange peel on the glass, or a rum toddy in the afternoons.

I've noticed I seem to be surrounded by fruits and nuts in Florida so they should not be hard to find. Honey is produced in Tampa (Yes in Tampa) and many places in Florida. There are rum companies and importers all over Florida. This is about a 200 calorie muffin with almost 10 grams of fiber (yippee!)

After eating these for a few days, you should be walking with a spring in your step and feeling good about yourself.





French Madeleines

For 4 people

Ingredients:

3 full fresh eggs
175 grams ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) of white granulated sugar
10 cl ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) of whole milk
250 grams (1 cup) of flour
5 grams ($\frac{1}{10}$ cup) of yeast
125g ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of melted butter

Phase I « preparation »

- Step 1 Mix flour and yeast
- Step 2 Add to step 1 during mixing sugar and eggs and milk
- Step 3 Always mixing add the melted butter
- Step 4 Mixing until homogeneous
- Step 5 let all the mixture sit covered two hours minimum in the fridge

This preparation can be used up to five days

Phase II baking

Take a Madeleine mold (pan) (you can find these at any kitchen supply store), butter the mold with a cooking paintbrush

Preheat the oven at 392 Fahrenheit

Lay down a soup spoon of the preparation in each part of the mold, bake 9 minutes at 392 Fahrenheit

It's ready to serve hot with ice cream and also perfect cold with tea or coffee.

This recipe provided by
BISTRO DE LEON
12 Cathedral Place
St. Augustine
904-810-2100
Chef Jean-Stephane Poinard

Laughing Shrimp on Oriental Zucchini Carpaccio

~ a wonderfully cold and easy summer salad ~
Serves 4

PART I: Ingredients for Zucchini Marinade:

1 Cup virgin olive oil
2 T. honey
½ T. ground coriander seeds
1 Cup finely chopped cilantro leaves
2 large zucchini – sliced in thin rounds
2 limes – juice only
Sprinkle of salt & pepper

Combine all marinade ingredients and marinate sliced zucchini overnight in refrigerator.

PART II: Ingredients for Laughing Shrimp

2 Pounds peeled and deveined raw shrimp
Bouquet Garni (bundle of tied herbs to include parsley, thyme, bay leaf)
Sprinkle of salt & pepper

Poach shrimp in water with bouquet garni, salt & pepper until done – approximately 2 minutes. Remove from liquid and chill in refrigerator.

PART III: Assemble Cold Plate

Arrange drained zucchini on a white dinner plate – using 3 t. of marinade as drizzle.
Cut shrimp in half and dunk briefly into remaining marinade with a sprinkle of curry powder.
Arrange shrimp on top of zucchini Carpaccio.
Serve cold!

Chef Jean-Stephane Poinard of Bistro de Leon

Tomoto Caprese

Ingredients:

1 large ripe tomato
4 oz. fresh whole mozzarella cheese
Fresh basil to taste
Drizzle of olive oil
Drizzle of heavy cream
Salt & Pepper

Directions:

Remove the skin of the tomato, empty it, re-stuff it with mozzarella oil basil and spices. Slice tomato and mozzarella in thin rounds, alternating layers with fresh basil leaves. Drizzle olive oil and cream. Salt & pepper to taste. Present on large plate.

Chilled Summer Zucchini Consomme

Ingredients:

6 zucchini (pre-cooked in 1 quart chicken stock)
1 Cup crème fraiche
2 T. curry powder
Salt & Pepper

Directions:

Puree zucchini, Add crème fraiche and curry powder. Salt & pepper to taste. Chill before serving in large shallow soup bowl.

These recipe provided by
BISTRO DE LEON
12 Cathedral Place
St. Augustine
904-810-2100

Chef Jean-Stephane Poinard



Key Lime Coconut Coffee Cake
(The Inn on Charlotte Street's signature coffee cake)

Here is the story of how it came to be.

Angela Guzewicz from Newton, New Jersey had never entered a national cooking contest until she read about the 'Coffeecake Challenge' hosted by the Inn on Charlotte in St. Augustine, Florida. *"I saw the contest in my local paper and spent lots of time researching WHAT makes a coffeecake. I'm speechless about winning the Grand Prize trip to St. Augustine and it sounds like a great place to visit"* Guzewicz admitted. *"It was a fun thing to do but I never thought I'd win. It's a nice legacy to know that my Keylime Coconut Coffeecake is going to be enjoyed at the Inn... and I created it".*

As cherished coffeecake recipes and fond cooking memories are disappearing from the table of family and friends in America today, the Inn on Charlotte launched its *Coffeecake Challenge* recipe contest early 2008 – offering a Grand Prize of a luxurious St. Augustine vacation at the Inn on Charlotte (*circa 1918*). Owner Lynne Fairfield prepares a signature 2-course gourmet breakfast

daily for her guests, taking pride in the fresh fruits, grains and seasonal vegetables for her entrees. BUT it's always the cake that wins her guests' admiration and request for recipes.

With cooking for her family of 4 on a 'short list', Guzewicz enjoys gardening with her husband Joe, a physics teacher in Morris County, New Jersey and children Bridget (7) and Matthew (4). *"As a stay-at-home-mom, I'm really a Personal Assistant to two CEO's ~ the children! I grew up in Long Island, New York where good food was an important part of any family celebration ~ shopping for ingredients, learning about cooking in the Girl Scouts and in my parents' kitchen ~ that influenced my cooking talents. Bridget and Matthew love our garden's fresh fruits, herbs and vegetables; when you taste homemade jam, you just can't go back to the supermarket".*

What was Angela's most challenging task of crafting a prize-winning recipe? *"Creating my recipe was more difficult than reading someone else's ~ what bowls and utensils to use, proportions, even getting the key limes in order to shred them. It took a lot of organizing and thinking through the process. But after my family tasted it, I thought 'Hey, I made a coffeecake'. This is good".*

(In celebration of Henry M. Flagler's extension of the Southern Railroad to the Florida Keys!!!)

Ingredients:

Group 1

2 Cups	All-Purpose Flour
½ Cup	Granulated Sugar
1 Tbs	Baking Powder
¼ tsp	Salt

Group 2

1 ea	Egg, beaten
½ Cup	Milk
½ Cup	Vegetable Oil
2 tsp	Freshly Shredder Lime Peel
1/3 Cup	Key Lime Juice
½ Cup	Sweetened Flaked Coconut

Group 3

½ Cup	Packed Light Brown Sugar
2 Tbsp	All-Purpose Flour
1 tsp	Cinnamon
2 Tbsp	Butter, cubed into small pieces

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375

In a large bowl, Sift together the ingredients in Group 1 and set aside.

In a separate large bowl, Stir together the ingredients in Group 2.

Group 2

Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients and add the entire bowl of wet ingredients to the flour mixture.

Stir just until all ingredients are blended, (batter will be thick.)

Grease a 9" X 9" X 2" pan, spread the combined mixture evenly in this pan

In a medium bowl combine the first 3 ingredients in Group 3.

Use a pastry blender to 'cut' in the cubed butter until mixture is crumbly. Sprinkle this mixture over the batter
Bake at 375 for 30 minutes or until tester comes out clean

Serve warm, Makes 12 servings



This special recipe is presented by
INN ON CHARLOTTE
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St. Augustine, Florida 32084
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www.innoncharlotte.com

CORN BREAD – A Pioneer Food

Corn bread, corn pones, and corn dodgers were foods of the pioneers. Made of ground corn, they sustained the early settlers whether they lived in Florida, where Katy writes, or New England, where my story, Sarah Jane's Daring Deed and upcoming picture book take place.

Here's a recipe from 1873 that I found in my aunt's cooking notebook. It dated back to her grandmother and beyond. Sarah Jane's mother (in my story) could have made a recipe like this, whether in Florida or some other part of the country.

As I read the recipe, I recalled my mom repeating the jingle when I was a child. (I added the words in parentheses as a way of clarification.)

Mary Emma Allen enjoys searching through family cookbooks and discovering recipes that may accompany her stories. Beth Mastin provided the photos.

TALES OF ADVENTURE & DISCOVERY, an anthology of Mary Emma Allen's children's stories and illustrations contains Sarah Jane's Daring Deed, about a pioneer girl's adventure. This story was published in several children's magazines before it appeared in the anthology. Mary Emma currently is developing it into a picture book. She's also drawing the pictures.

Visit her web site: Sarah Jane – Pioneer Girl (<http://sarahjane-pioneergirl.blogspot.com>).

2 cups Indian (corn meal)
1 cup wheat (flour)
1 good egg that you well beat.
½ cup molasses, too
With one (table)spoon of butter, new
Salt and baking soda, each a spoon,
Mix up quickly and bake it soon.



Modern Variation: You may want to decrease molasses to 1/4 cup and then add whatever milk you need to make a corn bread consistency batter.

(Pour into greased and floured 8-inch square pan and bake at 375 degrees F. until tests done, about 15 minutes.)



