



MARY'S MEMO

Recipes • Menu Ideas • Shopping • Cooking Tips

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ENOUGH ALREADY!

In case you haven't noticed, most bags of Kraft and Sargento shredded cheese now contain 1¾ cups of cheese instead of 2 cups. So if you need 2 cups (8-ounces), and most brunch recipes do, you're forced to buy two packages of cheese to have enough for your recipe. There are also bricks of cheese that are 7-ounces now. Consumers who don't read labels may assume that they have 2 cups when they don't. I've said it before and I'll say it again: I would rather pay a little more for the size package I am accustomed to buying instead of paying the same price for a product that weighs less. If you agree, call the companies and tell them how you feel. Otherwise they may cut the size even more like ice cream makers have done. In the last few years some brands have gone from ½ gallon to 56 ounces and now to 1½ quarts!

ABOUT CHEERIOS

It may surprise you to know that plain Cheerios is a cereal that was around when I graduated from Purdue. At the time General Mills touted it as a whole grain ready-to-eat cereal and it's still that! However the company has mixed some fiction with fact about the cereal's health benefits in recent times. It would take more than a bowl a day to lower cholesterol as much as they say it does and its honey wheat kind will not make you thin because it's "whole grain." I still buy original Cheerios and have a bowl for breakfast with sliced banana or blueberries several mornings a week but not because of miracle claims an advertising agency conjures up but simply because it's a whole grain cereal that is good for my general health.

WELCOME FALL WITH A HEARTY SKILLET MEAL

I'm not sure when I clipped this recipe from a magazine or what publication it was in but I'm sure glad that I tried it! The recipe said it serves 4 people but it easily made 5 servings for me. Although the zucchini was best the first day, it was still good reheated and I froze a couple servings for later. Do pre-measure ingredients because actual cooking takes less than 15 minutes. If you want to "kick it up a notch" use hot sausage.

SMOKED SAUSAGE AND ORZO

- 1 lb. cooked sausage, halved lengthwise and cut into 2-inch chunks
- 1 tablespoon canola or olive oil
- 1 cup dried orzo pasta

- 14-ounces low sodium beef stock
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 2-1/2 cups zucchini, halved lengthwise and cubed (about 2 medium)
- 2 bunches scallions, cut in 1-inch slices
- 1/3 cup chopped red bell pepper
- Salt and pepper to taste

In a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat, brown sausage in hot oil for 2 minutes; stir in orzo. Cook and stir 1 minute. Stir in beef broth, water and Italian seasoning. Bring to boil; reduce heat. Simmer, covered, for 8 minutes or until the orzo is tender. Add zucchini, scallions and red bell pepper. Cook an additional 2 minutes or until zucchini is crisp-cooked. Don't overcook! Season with salt and pepper to taste. Recipe makes 5 servings.

A SWEET TREAT

Specialty food magazines cost too much but even so, I weakened and bought Betty Crocker's \$9.99 *Halloween and Thanksgiving* cookbook now available at Chief and Rays. It does have some fun recipes such as Halloween Buddies. I'm not crazy about pretzels so this recipe really appealed to me. Who says you have to wait until next month to enjoy this tasty snack? Recipe can easily be doubled.

HALLOWEEN BUDDIES

- 4-1/2 cups Corn Chex cereal
- 1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 12 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 cup candy corn
- 1 cup salted cocktail peanuts

In 1-quart glass bowl microwave chocolate chips, peanut butter and butter uncovered on high 30 seconds; stir. Microwave about 15 seconds longer or until mixture can be stirred smooth. Stir in vanilla. Pour mixture over cereal, stirring until evenly coated. Transfer to a gallon food-storage plastic bag. Add powdered sugar. Seal bag; shake until well coated. Add candy corn and peanuts. Spread on waxed paper to cool. Store in airtight container in the refrigerator. Recipe makes (30) 1/4-cup servings (120 calories).

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