

I had never used a true, defined recipe to make meatloaf, but when a friend gave me a Pioneer Woman cookbook, I saw this recipe and had to try it. It's wrapped in bacon, truly food of the gods, right? So how could it be bad? This is one of our favorite meals, plus it can be made ahead to be baked later and leftovers reheat great.

I do like to use a meat thermometer, especially if it starts chilled.

Meatloaf

Disposable plastic gloves (think catering/foodservice, find in aisle with napkins and paper plates, etc.) are a game changer!

Can also be made in a 9 x 13 pan, adds a nice crust to the bottom.

Ingredients

For the Meatloaf:

1 c. whole milk

6 slices white bread

2 lbs. ground beef

1 c. (heaping) freshly grated parmesan cheese

1/4 tsp. seasoned salt

3/4 tsp. salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1/3 c. minced flat-leaf parsley

4 whole eggs, beaten

10 slices thin/regular bacon

For the Sauce:

1 1/2 c. ketchup

1/3 c. brown sugar

1 tsp. dry mustard

Tabasco, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Pour milk over the bread slices. Allow it to soak in for several minutes. Place the ground beef, milk-soaked bread, parmesan, seasoned salt, salt, black pepper, and parsley in a large mixing bowl. Pour in beaten eggs. With clean hands, mix the ingredients until well combined. Form the mixture into a loaf shape on a broiler pan, which will allow the fat to drain (line the bottom of the pan with foil to avoid a big mess!) Lay bacon slices over the top, tucking them underneath the meatloaf.

Make the sauce: add ketchup, brown sugar, mustard, and hot sauce in a mixing bowl. Stir together. Pour 1/3 of the mixture over the top of the bacon. Spread with a spoon or brush. Bake for 45 minutes, then pour another 1/3 of the sauce over the top. Bake for another 15 minutes. Slice and serve with remaining sauce.

Chocolate Chip Cream Cheese Brownies

These are Ben's absolute favorite!

1 batch of chocolate chip cookie dough (can use two rolls of store bought)

Filling:

Beat together

2 - 8 oz. packages Cream Cheese, softened

2 eggs

½ c. sugar

1 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a 9 x 13 cake pan. Pat 1/2 (or one roll) cookie dough in the bottom then spread cream cheese mixture on top. Drop by spoonful (crumble the remaining roll) remaining cookie dough across the top; bake 30 to 35 minutes.

Sausage Lasagna

Passed down by a long-time family friend, this is a winter favorite and is my “go-to” when I want to deliver a meal to a family. This can be baked freshly assembled or refrigerated/frozen to enjoy later.

Ingredients

Meat Sauce

2 lbs. sausage, browned and drained

1/2 tsp. garlic powder

2 qts. stewed tomatoes

2 small cans tomato paste

2 small cans water

2 T basil

1 ½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. oregano

Mix ingredients and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes.

Cheese filling

1 large carton small curd cottage cheese

½ c. parmesan cheese

2 T parsley

2 eggs, beaten

1 tsp. salt

½ tsp. pepper

Mix together all ingredients.

Additional ingredients

1 lb. mozzarella, grated

8 to 10 lasagna noodles (I use regular lasagna noodles, but do not cook them)

In a greased 9 x 13 pan, layer meat sauce, noodles, cheese mixture, mozzarella, and then repeat.

Bake at 375 degrees Fahrenheit for 45 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes before cutting.

Note: This can be made ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator or freezer. If so, bake at 350 degrees Fahrenheit for 1 hour and 10 minutes, let stand for 15 minutes before cutting. If frozen, thaw in refrigerator.

Deep Dish Double Decker Pizza

From *Seventeen* magazine (many, many, many years ago), this was one of my dad's favorites. The tomato sauce is my standard for spaghetti or anything that uses tomato sauce.

Ingredients

Pizza Dough

1 pkg. active dry yeast
1 c. warm water (105 to 115 degrees Fahrenheit)
3 ½ c. flour
½ tsp. sugar
1/3 c. dry onion flakes
2 T. olive oil

Dissolve dry yeast in warm water. Combine dry ingredients in bowl, making a well in center. Pour in liquids, stirring until well mixed. Turn out on a lightly floured board and knead for 5 minutes. Place in a greased bowl; cover with damp towel, and place in a warm draft free area until doubled in size (about 2 hours).

Tomato Sauce

1 c. onion, chopped
1 ½ T. olive oil
2 – 1 lb. cans of tomatoes, drained
1 – 8 oz. can tomato sauce
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. sugar
½ tsp. pepper
1 bay leaf
½ tsp. oregano
1 cinnamon stick (or 1/8 tsp. ground cinnamon)

In large saucepan sauté onion in olive oil until soft and transparent. Add remaining ingredients, simmer for 1 hour (vent lid); remove bay leaf and cinnamon stick.

Additional Ingredients

1 lb. sausage or hamburger, cooked and drained
1 lb. mozzarella, grated
½ c. parmesan, grated
Your favorite toppings

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Divide risen dough in half. Roll out half into a 16 x 17 inch circle. Line a 10-inch cast iron skillet or 14-inch deep dish pizza pan with 1 ½ inch sides. Layer bottom of pizza dough with browned meat and mozzarella. Roll out remaining dough and place over top of filling. Roll edges up together toward center for pie crust edging. Spread desired amount of tomato sauce over top of dough, sprinkle with parmesan, and top with desired toppings. Bake for 40 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before slicing. If surface should bubble during baking, puncture with a toothpick.

Baked Brisket

This was a winning recipe in a Missouri Cowbelle Cookoff Contest back in the 1970s. It was a family favorite growing up and still now with Ben and me.

Ingredients

5 to 6 lbs. fresh brisket
1 T. liquid smoke
1 tsp. celery salt
1 tsp. onion salt
1 tsp. garlic salt
2 tsp. salt (I use Lawry's Season Salt)
1 tsp. pepper
2 T. Worcestershire sauce

Line baking pan with heavy duty aluminum foil. Add all ingredients, rotate meat a couple times to cover in marinade, seal the foil tightly, and marinate in refrigerator overnight. Bake at 275 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 to 6 hours. If desired, barbecue can be added the last hour of baking time.

Chocolate Chip Coffee Cake

The recipe was shared by a family friend from home and now is favorite at home and the barn. I'd never used pancake mix before, but this treat makes me keep it on hand! Most times, I make this in a muffin tin with cupcake papers, so it's handy to grab and go.

Ingredients

2 ½ c. pancake mix (kind that only requires water)

1/3 c. sugar

½ c. mini chocolate chips

½ c. water (I use milk)

½ c. sour cream

½ tsp. vanilla

Mix together ingredients until well combined (batter will be thick). Spread in a greased 8 x 8 pan or fill muffin cups 2/3 full.

Topping:

¼ c. sugar

½ tsp. cinnamon

¼ c. pecans, chopped

Stir together; sprinkle on top of batter and gently swirl through batter with knife or toothpick.

Bake in a preheated 375 degrees Fahrenheit oven for 24 to 26 minutes (until a toothpick comes out clean).