

# AT HOME WITH NANCY WELCH

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TOMATO GRUYERE PIE

Now that fall is here and we are back into a routine, we can turn our thoughts to fall activities. Susannah Wesley, mother of eighteen children, including John, founder of the Methodist Church, and Charles, hymn writer, not only home-schooled all of her children, but also found time to be a writer. In *Seize the Opportunity*, she wrote, "May it be that whatever my hand finds to do, I will do with all my might. When I have an opportunity, therefore I will thankfully and vigorously make use of it." Here we are at the beginning of a new school year and a time for "opportunity." For those with school-age children, this is a time for rejoicing that they have the "opportunity" to go to school and therefore you are now back on schedule. For those who don't have school-age children, there is still a sense of order being restored all around us. Things seem to come together better when there is a "world order" larger than us and an "opportunity" to do things that have not been done during the summer.

With that in mind, may I take a cue from Mrs. Wesley and say, now that school has started, what are *you* going to learn this year? What "opportunity" are you going to seize? What is your "hand" going to find to do? That's right. What are you going to learn this year? In case you haven't heard, there is a concept called Lifelong Learning that beckons all of us to be better than what we are right now. I remember saying, upon completion of my doctorate, I didn't even want to drive through a school zone for fear someone would want to teach me something! Well that was five years ago and I have already changed my mind. In fact, I have gone through mediation training and loved every minute of it. Mediation is the "art" of getting people to come to terms and agree to settle their squabble in a peaceful manner rather than in court. That is what most of us do every

day whether at work, at home, in our community, or in our church. Most of the time we figure out how to get along with each other.

Let me suggest the following for your consideration as you think about something you can learn this year: a new recipe to try, a new hobby to learn, a new place to visit, a new friend to make, and a new way to be a better person. We might be able to combine some of these. Let's see. I offer here several new recipes you can use to introduce your new cooking hobby to new friends you met while visiting a new place and in some way and then you'll be a better person for sharing the gift of hospitality with them! Was that a stretch? I don't think so.

Since you are going to invite your new friends over for dinner, here is a little invitation etiquette. Formal dinner party invitations should be in the mail at least 3 weeks before the event. For casual gatherings a phone call is fine, but not an e-mail. The same is true for a formal drop in or a casual drop in.

So fall is here and nothing says lovin' like something from the oven and Pillsbury® says it best. Let's begin with what could be part of a fall weekend brunch.

## Tomato Gruyere Pie

Serves 6-8.

- 2 (9") refrigerated pie dough rounds, unfolded and rolled together to fill a 9"x13" casserole
- 4 medium size ripe tomatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 ½ cups grated Gruyere or Swiss cheese
- 1 ½ cups mayonnaise
- 8 large fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 3 tablespoons chopped green onions

*A dash of salt, pepper, and paprika*  
*Preheat oven to 400 degrees and bake piecrust for 5 minutes. Reduce oven to*

*350 degrees. Arrange the tomatoes in layers over the crust. In a bowl, mix cheese, mayonnaise, basil, onions, salt, and pepper. Spread over the tomato layer. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake for 30-40 minutes until hot and bubbly.*

To go with this fall brunch, try this creamed chicken on cornbread, or this can be an evening meal on a cool night.

## Creamed Chicken on Cornbread

Serves 6-8.

- 1 ½ pounds bone in chicken breasts, cooked
- ½ cup sliced green onions
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms
- 1 stick butter, divided
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 ½ cups milk or half and half
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 2 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- ½ cup green peas, frozen and thawed
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 to 8 pieces of cornbread or biscuits

*Remove chicken from bones and cut in small pieces. In skillet, sauté green onions, celery, and mushrooms in 4 tablespoons butter until tender. Remove from the pan and set aside. Melt the remaining butter and stir in flour until smooth. In a bowl combine the milk, broth, and egg yolks. Add to the flour and stir over low heat until thick and smooth. Stir in the sautéed vegetables, chicken, peas and hard-boiled eggs. Season with salt and pepper. Can be thinned with more milk or broth is needed. Serve hot over cornbread or biscuits.*

If seafood is more what you are craving in the fall, let me suggest this wonderful crab and shrimp casserole. It will make you think you are back at the beach for one last weekend! This will be great with the tomato pie, as well as the apple slaw.



CREAMED CHICKEN ON  
CORNBREAD

## Crab & Shrimp Casserole

Serves 10-12.

- 6 oz. package wild and white rice mix (preferably Uncle Ben's®)
- 1 pound sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 stick butter, divided
- 6 tablespoons flour
- 3 ½ cups half and half
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 14 oz. can artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
- 2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and cooked
- 1 pound cooked lump crabmeat
- ½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- Paprika

*Cook rice mix according to directions for*

*firmer rice and set aside. In a small saucepan sauté the mushrooms in 2 tablespoons butter until tender. Set aside. In a medium saucepan heat the remaining 6 tablespoons butter. Add the flour and cook, stirring for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and stir in the half and half. Stir until smooth. Return to the heat and cook until lightly thickened. Season with Worcestershire, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. In a 3-quart casserole dish, layer the cooked rice, artichokes, mushrooms, shrimp, and crabmeat. Pour the sauce over the layers, making sure all ingredients are covered. Sprinkle with paprika and Parmesan cheese. Bake, uncovered for about 40 minutes or until bubbly and hot.*

The apple cole slaw will go nicely with either of these entrees. Also, the brunch apricots will complement either one.



CRAB AND SHRIMP CASSEROLE

## GREEN APPLE COLE SLAW

Green Apple  
Cole Slaw

Serves 8-10.

1 medium green cabbage  
shredded, about 1 ½ pounds  
1 medium sweet onion, finely  
chopped  
1 grated carrot, grated  
2 Granny Smith apples,  
chopped  
Dressing  
1 cup mayonnaise  
¼ cup white vinegar  
1/3 cup sugar

*Salt and pepper to taste  
Combine all of the slaw  
ingredients in serving bowl.  
Mix dressing ingredients  
together in bowl and pour over  
slaw. Cover and refrigerate  
several hours before serving.*

## Brunch Apricots

Serves 12.

4 (15oz) cans apricot halves  
1 (15oz) can pitted sour  
cherries  
1 ½ cups fresh or frozen  
blueberries  
35 Ritz® crackers, crushed  
2/3 cup packed light brown  
sugar  
1 stick melted butter

*Preheat oven to 325 degrees.  
In a 2-quart casserole dish,  
layer one half of the apricots,  
cherries, and blueberries.  
Sprinkle with half the crackers  
crumbs and brown sugar.  
Repeat layers. Pour the melted  
butter on top. Bake for 30-40  
minutes or until mixture is hot  
and bubbly.*



BRUNCH APRICOTS

For the pie, place the Heath bars in the freezer to harden. Mix the chocolate wafer crumbs and melted butter together and press on the bottom and up the sides of two 8-inch pie plates. Place in freezer to harden. Remove the bars from the freezer and crush into small pieces. Mix with the ice cream. Fill the pie plates with the ice cream mixture and return to the freezer and freeze overnight. For the sauce, melt the butter and chocolate chips in a medium saucepan. Add the powdered sugar and milk. Cook over medium heat until thickened, about 15 to 20 minutes, stirring often. Stir in the vanilla and refrigerate until ready to use. When ready to serve, heat the sauce and serve over the pie slices.

CHOCOLATE TOFFEE ICE CREAM PIE



This Chocolate pie is a delicious way to get rid of some Halloween candy!

## Chocolate Toffee Ice Cream Pie

Serves 10.

### Pie:

- 12 small Heath bars or 12 oz. package of miniature Heath bars
- 10 oz. box chocolate wafers, crushed (2 cups)
- 1 stick melted butter
- ½ gallon vanilla ice cream, softened

### Sauce:

- 1 stick butter
- 11.5 oz. package chocolate chips
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 12 oz. can evaporated milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla



This should put you back in the swing of things in the kitchen and ready for fall gatherings whether it is before or after the game or brunch the next day. You are ready with two menus. Just substitutes the chicken or the seafood and the rest will be perfect. Good luck with your new ventures this fall. I know they will be rewarding. Here's to Lifelong Learning!



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