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Patrick does St. Patrick's - recipes

by Elaine Johnson

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If cooking for 25 or 50, remove pan from range so you can cook beef; let potatoes stand in water, covered, until near serving time, up to 4 hours. To reheat, return to boil, covered, over high heat (15 to 20 minutes).

Drain; mash, part at a time, in a heavy-duty mixer or by hand in a large bowl. As mashed, transfer to a very large bowl; cover.

Place cabbage and butter in pan used for potatoes. Cover; steam cabbage over medium-high heat until well wilted (8 to 15 minutes), stirring often. Meanwhile, stir milk and onions often in a 3- to 4-quart pan over medium heat until simmering, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir milk mixture into potatoes until smooth; stir in cabbage. Season with salt and pepper.

Per serving: 205 cal. (39 percent from fat); 4.1 g protein; 8.8 g fat (5.3 g sat.); 28 g carbo.; 109 mg sodium; 24 mg chol.

Irish Soda Bread

Ingredients	For 12	For 25	For 50
All-purpose flour	3 c.	6 c.	12 c.
Sugar	3 tbsp.	1/4 c.	1/2 c.
Baking soda	1 tsp.	2 1/4 tsp.	4 1/2 tsp.
Salt	3/4 tsp.	1 1/2 tsp.	1 tbsp.
Butter or margarine	9 tbsp.	1 1/8 c.	2 1/4 c.
Caraway seed	1 tbsp.	2 tbsp.	1/4 c.
Golden raisins	1/2 c.	1 c.	2 c.
Dried currants	1/3 c.	3/4 c.	1 1/2 c.
Buttermilk for dough	1 c.	2 c.	4 c.
Buttermilk for brushing	1 1/2 tbsp.	3 tbsp.	6 tbsp.

For 50 servings, make half a recipe at a time. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, soda, and salt. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or rub with fingers until fine crumbs form. Mix in caraway, raisins, and currants; add buttermilk for dough. Stir until evenly moistened.

Gather dough into a ball and knead about 16 turns on a lightly floured board. Pat into a smooth ball, then into a flat 1-inch-thick round. (For 25 servings, make 3 rounds; for 50, make 6 rounds total.) Evenly space round or rounds on 1 or 2 greased 12- by 15-inch baking sheets.

Slash an X about 1/4 inch deep completely across each round; brush with remaining buttermilk. Bake in a 375 |degrees~ oven until deep golden, 30 to 35 minutes; switch pan positions halfway through baking. Serve warm or cool. If making ahead, store airtight up to 1 day, or freeze. Cut into wedges. Makes 1, 3, or 6 loaves.

Per serving: 246 cal. (35 percent from fat); 4.5 g protein; 9.6 g fat (5.6 g sat.); 36 g carbo.; 355 mg sodium; 24 mg chol.

Elaine's Shortbread

Ingredients	For 12	For 25	For 50
Butter, softened	1 c. (1/2 lb.)	2 c. (1 lb.)	4 c. (2 lb.)
Sugar	1/2 c. 1 tbsp.	1 c. 1 1/2 tbsp.	2 c. 3 tbsp.
All-purpose flour	1 1/2 c.	3 c.	6 c.
White rice flour (or more all-purpose)	1/2 c.	1 c.	2 c.

Look for rice flour in health food stores. For 50 servings, make half a recipe at a time.

In a food processor or large mixing bowl, whirl or beat butter with the larger amount of sugar until smooth. Gradually add all-purpose and rice flours until well combined (if using a mixer, stir in last half of flour by hand). For 12 servings, spread in a 9- by 13-inch baking dish (for 25 servings, use a rimmed 10- by 15-inch baking pan; for 50 servings, use 2 rimmed 10- by 15-inch baking pans).

Bake shortbread in a 275 |degrees~ oven until pale golden, 55 to 65 minutes, switching pan positions halfway through baking. Place on racks and let cool for 10 minutes. Sprinkle lightly with remaining sugar, then cut into 24, 50, or 100 bars. Let cool completely. Serve, store airtight up to 3 days, or freeze. Per bar: 126 cal. (56 percent from fat); 1 g protein; 7.8 g fat (4.8 g sat.); 13 g carbo.; 78 mg sodium; 21 mg chol.

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Follow his plans for a hearty meal to serve 12, 25, or 50 revelers

GROWING UP WITH A name like Patrick Joseph Peter McEvoy in an Irish American neighborhood in New York, my husband got lots of attention on St. Patrick's Day. And being fond of attention, it was natural that he would host an annual St. Patrick's Day bash when he moved to California. After 10 years, the party has become a bit of a legend among our friends, but not just because it's a great time.

For one thing, everyone agrees that Patrick's corned beef and cabbage is the most delicious they've ever had (is it the not-so-secret Guinness that goes in the pot?). Then there's the scale of the party--50 people is a small crowd, 100 average--and our tiny house is always in chaos.

What's amazing is that Patrick pulls off this feast with no apparent plan and seemingly little effort. With our friend Joan and me helping, the preparation and cooking take only 6 hours. (Patrick cooks for 50; when there are larger crowds, he expands the meal with friends' potluck contributions.)

Soda bread and corned beef have always been Patrick's party-day staples. Over time my role has expanded beyond head potato peeler. Now I supply the shortbread and colcannon, a traditional Irish dish of mashed potatoes with butter-steamed cabbage.

Last year, a bold first-time partygoer ventured that the meal seemed heavily tilted toward potatoes. She was quickly set straight. Patrick, the self-proclaimed Spud King, says you can't have too much of a good thing on St. Patrick's Day.

I've adapted Patrick's recipes to serve 12, 25, or 50. For 12 guests, you can cook the colcannon and corned beef on the range at the same time. If you're preparing for 25 or 50, you'll need to cook the colcannon and corned beef in sequence as outlined in the following

section. (The large pots won't all fit on the range at once, and overcrowding could seriously damage the range.) Follow recipe instructions for reheating foods.

HOW HE DOES IT

Beneath Patrick's off-the-cuff demeanor is the mind of a party general. After years of St. Patrick's celebrations, he has many tips for pulling off this feast.

Overall

- * Buy enormous pots to use year after year. Patrick has two 35-quart pans (from a restaurant supply store) to cook corned beef for 50.
- * Let friends help. This is not a menu to cook alone. Ask someone to bring appetizers.

One week ahead

- * Send out invitations by electronic mail (or phone).
- * Buy "clutter" (disposable cutlery and paper supplies) at a discount store, and beer (Irish stout and lager).
- * Make or buy shortbread; freeze.
- * Borrow extra vegetable peelers, and coolers for beer.

On the day

2:00 Get organized. Thaw shortbread, if necessary. Ice beer. In obvious spots, set out large, lined trash cans.

2:30 Put on Irish music. Peel potatoes like mad and cook for colcannon. Prepare vegetables for corned beef.

4:00 Start coined beef. Make soda bread. Pour a round of Black and Tans (equal parts Irish stout and lager--lager first for less foam).

7:15 When corned beef is tender, add vegetables. Pour more Black and Tans.

7:45 Start dishing up vegetables and carving meat; keep warm. Meanwhile (if for 25 or 50), finish colcannon.

8:15 Clear a path to the table and carry in food to rounds of applause.

CORNED BEEF KNOW-HOW

Coming is a process that cures and flavors beef in a mixture containing salt, sugar, preservatives, and sometimes garlic and pickling spices. Coined beef is available without added spices (sometimes called mild), or with spices (sometimes called old-fashioned), which are either pressed into the meat or included in a separate packet. Patrick prefers

corned beef that's spiced, if it's available. You may also see oven-roast style, which has less salt--and would taste a little bland simmered for Patrick's recipe.

Both beef brisket and bottom round are corned. Brisket is fattier and more succulent and flavorful than round, and requires a little carving care to avoid crumbly slices. To carve brisket, cut across the grain at a 45 |degrees~ angle; if meat is crumbly, make thicker slices. Bottom round slices neatly but is drier.

At supermarkets, most corned beef comes sealed in plastic bags in pieces of 1 pound to several pounds. From your butcher, you may be able to special-order a piece that weighs 10 pounds or more (you will need to cut it to fit in the cooking pot).

Patrick's Corned Beef and Cabbage

Ingredients	For 12	For 25	For 50
Onions	1 3/4 lb.	3 1/2 lb.	7 lb.
Carrots	2 1/2 lb.	5 lb.	10 lb.
Corned beef brisket or round, spiced or unspiced	6 lb.	12 lb.	24 lb.
Malt vinegar	1 c.	2 c.	4 c.
Irish stout	6 oz.	12 oz.	24 oz.
Mustard seed	1 tbsp.	2 tbsp.	4 tbsp.
Coriander seed	1 tbsp.	2 tbsp.	4 tbsp.
Black peppercorns	1/2 tbsp.	1 tbsp.	2 tbsp.
Dill seed	1/2 tbsp.	1 tbsp.	2 tbsp.
Whole allspice	1/2 tbsp.	1 tbsp.	2 tbsp.
Dried bay leaves	2	4	8
Cabbage, rinsed	3 lb.	6 lb.	12 lb.
Small (2 in.) thin-skinned potatoes	2 1/2 lb.	5 lb.	10 lb.
Coarse-grain mustard	1/3 c.	2/3 c.	1 1/3 c.
Dijon mustard	1/3 c.	2/3 c.	1 1/3 c.

To serve 12, use a 14- to 20-quart pan; for 25, 2 pans (14 to 20 quarts each); for 50, 2 pans (about 35 quarts each).

Coarsely chop enough onions and carrots to make 1 cup each (for 12), 2 cups each (for 25), or 4 cups each (for 50). In one pan or two, as required (dividing equally between two pans), place chopped onions and carrots, corned beef with any liquid (if needed, cut meat to fit pan), vinegar, stout, mustard seed, coriander, peppercorns, dill, allspice, and bay leaves. Add

water to barely cover beef. Cover pan and bring to a boil over high heat (20 to 25 minutes). Simmer until meat is tender when pierced, 2 1/2 to 3 hours.

Meanwhile, cut remaining onions into wedges. Cut remaining carrots into 2-inch lengths; halve them lengthwise if large. Cut cabbages in half through cores, then into wedges to make 1 piece per person. Scrub potatoes.

Add onions, carrots, and potatoes to tender corned beef; place cabbage on top. Cover and return to simmering over high heat (8 to 20 minutes); reduce heat and simmer until cabbage is tender when pierced, 15 to 20 minutes. With a slotted spoon scoop out vegetables onto warm serving dishes. Using tongs and a slotted spoon, remove beef to a cutting board; cut off and discard fat, slice meat across the grain, and place on warm platters. If cooking for 25 or 50, cover vegetables and meat tightly with foil for up to 45 minutes while completing colcannon (keep foil-covered vegetables and meat warm in a 150 |degrees~ oven, or wrap with towels to insulate and keep warm on a counter). Serve vegetables and meat with coarse-grain and Dijon mustards. Per serving: 599 cal. (48 percent from fat); 35 g protein; 32 g fat (10 g sat.); 43 g carbo.; 2,143 mg sodium; 157 mg chol.

Colcannon

Ingredients	For 12	For 25	For 50
Russet potatoes	4 lb.	8 lb.	16 lb.
Cabbage, cut into fine shreds	1 lb.	2 lb.	4 lb.
Butter or margarine	1/2 c. (1/4 lb.)	1 c. (1/2 lb.)	2 c. (1 lb.)
Milk	1 1/4 c.	2 1/2 c.	5 c.
Sliced green onions	1 c.	2 c.	4 c.
Salt and pepper			

To serve 12, you'll need a 5- to 6-quart pan; for 25, an 8-quart pan; for 50, a 12-quart pan. Peel potatoes; rinse. Submerge in water until all are peeled. Drain; cut into 2-inch pieces. Place potatoes in pan; cover with water. Bring to a boil, covered, over high heat (10 to 40 minutes). Reduce heat; simmer until tender when pierced, about 15 minutes.

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