OLLI Member Recipes
The Kitchen Shelf – November 2019

For this special food-themed issue of The Bookshelf, we asked OLLI members to submit their go-to holiday recipe. Here are the results – happy cooking!

**Bourbon Balls**
*Connie Hosier*

A family tradition to encourage Santa’s helpers to get into the spirit on Christmas Eve. And they magically disappear, too!

¾ cup Bourbon
2 cups Nilla Wafers – crumbled by placing in baggie and smashing
2 - separate ¼ cups cocoa powder
2 - separate ¼ cups confectioners sugar
¼ cup light corn syrup
(Finely chopped nuts, optional)

1. In a large mixing bowl, combine bourbon, Nilla Wafer crumbs, ¼ cup cocoa powder, ¼ cup confectioners sugar, and all the corn syrup to make the dough.

2. Using a heaping tablespoon size portion, shape dough in ¾-inch size balls.

3. In a separate bowl, combine the remaining cocoa power and confectioners’ sugar to roll and coat each ball. Place each onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover and chill for 2-3 hours. Makes approximately 30 bourbon balls.

**Polenta with Gorgonzola**
*Melissa Merli*

Everyone who tastes this raves about it. The best compliment I received was from my former brother-in-law, an international businessman/foodies who has eaten all over the world, particularly in Italy. He loved it. It is quite rich but so tasty and satisfying yet simple. I should add that this is not a family recipe. I found it in The New York Times probably three or more decades ago. Before the Internet.

1. Make polenta following a recipe online. Look for "how to make perfect polenta." I do it the old-fashioned way, stirring with a big wooden spoon until the polenta peels back from the pot. Usually 45 minutes to an hour. You don't have to stir constantly but stir often.
2. When the polenta is done, layer half of your polenta into a lightly buttered casserole dish. Then layer Italian Gorgonzola cheese over that bottom layer of polenta. I always use Italian Gorgonzola and I tend to use a lot but not too much. I like cheese.

3. Then layer your remaining polenta over the Gorgonzola/polenta layer. Then top the casserole (for lack of a better word) with sage leaves that you have browned in butter, taking care not to burn the butter or leaves. You want to sort of crisp the sage but not too much. Pour the butter-sage over the top of the casserole and add crumbles of Gorgonzola cheese to the top.

4. Put in a hot oven, around 425 degrees, for 10 or 15 minutes, until the Gorgonzola melts and bubbles. I have taken this to my cousin's, where I pop it in the oven right before Christmas dinner. So you can make it ahead of time.

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**Cranberry-Pear Crumble**  
**Jeannette Beck**

I first made this five years ago on Thanksgiving as an alternative to pumpkin pie for my son. It’s since become a regular dessert everyone looks forward to having.  
Source: bonappetit.com

Servings: 6  
2 pounds Bosc or Bartlett pears, peeled, cut into 1-inch pieces  
1 teaspoon finely grated orange zest  
3/4 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom  
Pinch freshly ground black pepper  
1/2 cup dried cranberries divided  
3 tablespoons plus 1/3 cup (packed) light brown sugar  
2 tablespoons plus 1/4 cup all-purpose flour  
10 tablespoons unsalted butter cut into pieces, divided  
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided  
1/2 cup old-fashioned oats  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 cup sliced almonds  
Ice cream (for serving; optional)

1. Position rack in lowest level of toaster oven and preheat to 350 degrees. Toss pears, orange zest, ginger, cardamom, pepper, 1/4 cup cranberries, 3 tablespoons brown sugar, 2 tablespoons flour, 2 tablespoons butter, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a large bowl until pears are coated. Scrape into an 8”x8” glass baking dish.

2. Using an electric mixer on medium-low speed, beat oats, vanilla, and remaining 1/4 cup flour, 3/4 cup brown sugar, 8 tablespoons butter, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a medium bowl until mixture just comes together (it will resemble a crumbly cookie dough), about 2 minutes. Add almonds and remaining 1/4 cup cranberries and mix on low speed until just incorporated.
3. Evenly sprinkle crumb mixture over pear mixture. Cover loosely with foil and bake 40 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until filling is bubbling and topping is browned, 15-20 minutes more.

4. Serve crumble topped with scoops of ice cream, if you’d like.

Keenie’s Cranberry Bread
Jane Smith

This is my grandmother's (who I called Keenie) wonderful cranberry bread. I make it every Thanksgiving and Christmas. Wrapping in wax paper as directed makes it wonderfully moist.

2 cups flour
1 egg
1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons melted margarine
½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons hot water
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ cup orange juice
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ cup walnuts
1 cup fresh cranberries, halved

1. Sift dry ingredients together.

2. Mix 1 egg, well beaten, 2 tablespoons melted margarine, and 2 tablespoons hot water. Add ½ cup orange juice.

3. Add to dry ingredients and mix well.

4. Fold in ½ cup walnuts and 1 cup halved fresh cranberries.

5. Put in glass bread loaf pan.

6. Bake in 325 degrees oven for 1 hour and 10 minutes. Test with toothpick.

7. Remove from oven and butter top crust.

8. Wrap immediately in wax paper and place in refrigerator or cold place for 3 hours.

German Red Cabbage (Rotkohl)
Frank Chadwick

½ pound red cabbage, very thinly sliced
1 large yellow onion, finely diced
1 large Granny Smith or other semi-tart apple, diced
¼ cup butter
2 tablespoons red currant jam or cherry preserves
2-3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
½ cup vegetable broth
1 bay leaf
3 whole cloves (I crush them)
3 juniper berries (*see below for substitute)
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon brown sugar
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons water

1. Melt butter in large pot oven over medium heat and cook onions until lightly caramelized, 7-10 min.

2. Add cabbage and cook 5 minutes.

3. Add apple, broth, bay leaf, cloves, juniper berries, red currant jam, red wine vinegar, sugar and salt.

4. Bring to boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Add more broth if needed.

5. Combine flour and water until dissolved and stir into cabbage. Simmer for another minute. Add more salt, sugar and vinegar to paste.

*Juniper Berry substitute: Juniper berries are getting harder and harder to find. So instead of juniper berries, wait until the last half hour of cooking and add three tablespoons of gin and the juice of one fresh lemon.

This is a colorful and surprisingly delicious holiday side dish, and any recipe that calls for gin is okay with me.

Bisquick Coffee Cake
Chris Main
This is a modest 1950s recipe that my mother-in-law always made for my husband's family on Christmas morning. He loves it so much, I decided to continue the tradition. Its simplicity allows you to share more time with your loved ones.

2 cups Bisquick baking mix
2 tablespoons sugar
1 egg
⅔ C. half and half (milk is ok but less rich)
1 ½ cups fresh blueberries, or as an alternative: 1 1/2 cups ½-inch diced apples (any kind is ok except Red Delicious) combined with ⅓ cup brown sugar and ½ teaspoon cinnamon

1. Combine all ingredients with mixer for 2 minutes on medium speed and pour into greased 8”x8” pan.

2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees while you make the streusel topping

Streusel Topping
⅓ cup Bisquick
⅓ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
2 tablespoons firm butter

1. Combine first 3 ingredients, then use pastry blender to cut in the butter.

2. When this is uniformly crumbly and well mixed, distribute over the top of the cake batter.


Golden Creamed Onions
Cecile Steinberg

When she came to our family 20 years ago, our New England daughter in-law announced that creamed onions are an essential component of Thanksgiving Dinner. This was new to us, but we incorporated them into our tradition and we have been enjoying their buttery creamy richness ever since.

Ingredients
3 pounds small white onions (about 50)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 teaspoon sugar
⅛ teaspoon salt
Water
2/3 cup heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste
2/3 cup fresh parsley leaves, finely chopped
1. Blanch onions in boiling water for 2 to 4 minutes; drain and peel when cool enough to be handled.

2. In a deep skillet, place all the peeled onions in one layer. Add the butter, sugar, salt, and enough water to cover the onions by ½ inch.

3. Bring the water to a boil. Boil the onions until the liquid is almost evaporated. Lower the heat to medium and cook the onions, swirling the skillet until the onions turn golden and start to brown.

4. Add the cream. Bring the liquid to a boil. Stir occasionally until sauce is thickened slightly.

5. Season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle parsley on top before serving.

Carrot Casserole
Sharon Williams

My mother made this recipe for Thanksgiving or Christmas gatherings. My sons rank it as their favorite and make it for their holiday celebrations.

6 cups slice carrots
1/3 cup butter
1 medium chopped onion
1 ¼ cup diced Velveeta cheese
Crushed potato chips

1. Cook carrots in boiling water until tender.

2. Add butter, onion and 1 cup cheese. Mix well.

3. Put into greased 1 ½ quart greased casserole. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Top with chips.

4. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes.

Pumpkin Spice Muffins
Suzanne Meier

Here's a tasty and easy recipe for Pumpkin Spice Muffins made with just 2 ingredients that I found online (don't remember the exact source).

1 can of pumpkin puree (Not pumpkin pie mix)
1 box of spice cake mix
1. Mix ingredients together, and spoon batter into greased muffin pan.

2. Bake at 325 degrees for 18-20 minutes.

This is a great recipe for the Fall Season – you can make a Pumpkin-Carrot Muffin by using a carrot cake mix instead of the spice cake.

Sweet Potato Pie
Casey Sutherland

The recipe is my slightly healthier version from *The New Orleans Cookbook* (1980). It’s a collaborative effort: Linda makes the crust and I make the filling. It gets requested frequently when we are invited to holiday gatherings. Enjoy!

- adapted from Yam Pie recipe in “The New Orleans Cookbook” (1980)

2 medium-sized sweet potatoes (2 cups baked and mashed)
2/3 cups brown sugar
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon allspice
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup fat-free evaporated skim milk (original recipe calls for half-and-half)
½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell (store-bought or homemade, recipe not included)

1. Wash the yams and dry them thoroughly. Prick with a fork on all sides and bake in a preheated oven at 450 degrees for an hour. Allow to cool, then peel and trim out any dark spots. Place in a large bowl and use a potato masher to mash until all large chunks are gone.

2. Add all the other ingredients (except pie shell) into the bowl with the sweet potatoes, and blend with a mixer until smooth.

3. Pour filling into the pie shell and bake in a preheated 450-degree oven for 15 minutes.

4. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees and bake for 30 to 35 minutes more, until a knife inserted in the center of the pie filling comes out clean.

5. Serve warm or chilled. Freshly whipped cream makes a nice topping.

Cranberry Sauce with Orange Juice
Priscilla Fortier

A big favorite in our family!
from Dash Recipes

1. Warm 12 ounces of fresh or thawed frozen cranberries in a saucepan over medium-high heat.

2. Stir in ¾ cup of sugar and ¾ c orange juice and cook until sugar is melted and berries begin to burst (4-6 minutes).

3. Stir again, add zest of 1 orange, and continue cooking for 2-3 minutes.

4. Remove from heat, cover pan, and allow to cool. Refrigerate until cold (about 2 hours).

**Chris Catanzarite**

**Haluski (Cabbage and Noodles)**

I’ve eaten this every Christmas Eve of my life. It is delicious, filling, inexpensive – the perfect Eastern European peasant food! It’s ubiquitous in Pittsburgh, but harder to come by in Champaign-Urbana. Fortunately, it’s very easy to make!

1 16-ounce package medium-wide egg noodles, prepared according to directions on the bag
2 small heads of cabbage, cored and cut into 1-inch pieces
1 large yellow onion, chopped
1 stick butter
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Melt butter in a large skillet with high sides over medium heat; add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent, about 5 minutes.

2. Add cabbage and cook, stirring occasionally, until it is soft and begins to caramelize. This can take a while – up to 30 minutes. Be patient and keep stirring!

3. Meanwhile, cook egg noodles according to package directions. Drain.

4. When the cabbage-onion mixture is cooked, mix with the noodles. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot or warm.

**Eileen Kohen**

**Pumpkin Bundt Cake**

A great Thanksgiving dessert

3 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup oil
4 eggs
2 cups pumpkin (1 16-ounce can)
2 cups sugar
chopped nuts
6-8 ounces mini chocolate chips

1. Sift flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon.

2. Beat eggs; then add sugar and oil.

3. Add dry ingredients and mix together.

4. Stir in chocolate chips and nuts.

5. Pour into greased and floured bundt pan.

6. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Judith Liebman
A Little Kick to Holiday Dinner

No recipe needed. Just add a canned chipotle (or more) to your cranberry sauce recipe or to mashed sweet potatoes.

Kath Brinkmann
Linzer Torte Cookie (Swiss recipe)
A family recipe from my husband’s Swiss ancestry.

1 ½ cups flour
½ cup sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon powdered clove
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 egg white
½ egg yolk (save other half to mix with a little milk for glaze)
1 ¼ sticks margarine
1 ¼ cups ground almonds
½ teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Raspberry jam
1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

2. Put all dry ingredients together. Add egg white, half of egg yolk, vanilla, almond extract, and cut-up cold margarine. Quickly knead all together. If dough sticks, put in refrigerator for a little while.

3. Roll out \( \frac{3}{4} \) of the dough in a baking sheet. Cover with a layer of raspberry jam.

4. Roll out remaining dough and cut into thin strips to place in lattice over the jam.

5. Bake for 30 minutes – take out of oven and brush a mixture of the remaining half yolk and milk over the top, and return to oven for another 15 minutes.