

Home-cooked memories



Children's Hospital Boston employees come from around the country and around the world. With such a range of cultures and traditions to draw upon, we each bring something unique to the table—literally. In October, dozens of Children's employees participated in the Season of Hope Recipe Challenge, and we've highlighted the winning recipes below. Winners will receive a chef's jacket embroidered with their name and other prizes at the Season of Hope celebration December 7. And if you're too busy to attempt these recipes at home, you can taste each of them in the Cafe at Children's during the week of December 4.

Lily Maltz

Research data coordinator, Cardiology

"Growing up, my mother was a horrible cook," Maltz says. No one thought Maltz would be any good at it either, so she never got the chance to prove them wrong—until she went to Sicily. This recipe is for one of the first real dishes Maltz learned to cook. "I was staying at a villa in Catania, Sicily, and it has inspired me to cook for my family and even throw my own dinner parties," she says.

Chicken rollitini

Ingredients

- 4 boneless chicken breasts
- 8 slices prosciutto
- 2 tablespoons capers
- ½ lb pitted olives (any kind)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic
- Juice of a lemon
- ¼ cup fresh basil, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper

Directions

Combine olives, capers, lemon juice and garlic in a food processor and slowly drizzle olive oil into mixture. Pulse until paste-like consistency.

Pound chicken breasts until about ¼ inch thick and spread the olive and caper tamponade over the surface of each.

Place two slices of prosciutto over the tamponade and roll up each chicken breast with the prosciutto and tamponade on the inside. Secure with a piece of kitchen string knotted four times. Season each with salt and pepper and sauté them in extra virgin olive oil until golden brown and cooked through. Garnish with fresh basil and serve with rice and roasted vegetables.



From left, Mary Ellen Pierce, Mali Okada, Vyju Gopalan of Food Services, Alicair Peltonen, Christine Curtis and Lily Maltz.

Spinach-stuffed acorn squash

Ingredients

- 3 large acorn squash
- 1½ cups cooked spinach, finely chopped (frozen is fine)
- 1 cup grated mozzarella cheese
- 6 tsp oil (canola or vegetable)
- Dash of nutmeg
- 2 cups dried herb stuffing (not made with chicken stock)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat oven to 375° F. Halve the squashes lengthwise (using a sharp knife), remove the stem and discard the seeds. Sprinkle cavities with salt and pepper and place a teaspoon of oil and a teaspoon of water in each cavity. Set in deep, oven-proof dish.

Surround with two inches of water, cover with foil and bake for 30 minutes or until squash is soft. Remove squash from pan, cool and spoon into a mixing bowl, making sure to leave some flesh on shell. Mix squash pulp, spinach, stuffing and ¾ cup cheese and add seasoning to mixture. Refill shells with mixture. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake 15 minutes.

Alicair Peltonen

Administrative assistant,
Hematology/Oncology

Because Peltonen's husband is a vegetarian, he'd always been relegated to side dishes during holiday meals. So during their first Thanksgiving as a couple at her parents' house, Peltonen made him a special vegetarian dish so he wouldn't be stuck eating just green beans and mashed potatoes. She found this recipe and tweaked it a bit. "Despite some setbacks involving the squash shell, it turned out great," she says.

Christine Curtis

Research coordinator, Sports Medicine

This recipe is a favorite of Curtis's Papu (Greek for "grandfather"). "He's a great cook and created this recipe," she says. Curtis's whole family, including her grandparents, parents, brother, aunts, uncles and cousins, would all eat this meal together, usually at her grandfather's house in Baltimore. "Even at 96, my grandfather still enjoys this dish," she says.

Shrimp Creole

Ingredients

- 1 diced large green pepper
- 1 diced medium onion
- 2 stalks diced celery
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 tbs fresh diced parsley
- 1 tbs oregano
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon of Old Bay seafood seasoning
- 3 tbs tomato paste
- 1 pound of cooked shrimp (can be cut into bite size)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

In large skillet, heat the olive oil and cook the first three ingredients for three to five minutes.

Slowly add the next five ingredients. Cook covered for 15 minutes. Then stir in tomato paste and cook slowly another 20 minutes. Finally, add cooked shrimp and remove bay leaves before serving. Can be served over plain rice or rice pilaf.

Mary Ellen Pierce, RN Pre-Op Clinic

A few times a year, the Pre-Op Clinic has potluck and everyone always asks Pierce to make her famous French toast. She puts it together the night before, lets it sit in the refrigerator overnight, then gets up at 4:30 a.m. to put it in the oven while getting ready for work. Then she brings it to work while it's still piping hot in an insulated bag. She originally found the recipe in a cookbook and adapted it. Pierce has advice for those watching their waist lines: "I know someone who made it with egg beaters and skim milk and it came out fine."

French toast

Ingredients

- 1 loaf French bread sliced into ¾" slices (don't use the end pieces)
- 6 eggs
- 1½ cups milk
- 1½ cups half and half
- 1 tbs vanilla
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 cup slivered almonds
- ¼ cup soft butter
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 tbs maple syrup



Directions

Arrange the bread slices flat in a lasagna size pan that's been sprayed with cooking spray. Mix eggs, milk, half and half, vanilla and cinnamon until eggs are blended. Pour over bread. Mix topping ingredients. Put topping on each bread slice. Cover with slivered almonds and then cover with aluminum foil. Refrigerate overnight. Bake at 350° F for about 45 minutes or until puffy and golden brown. Serve immediately.

Mali Okada Research assistant, Emergency Medicine

Okada has fond childhood memories of baking Australian ANZAC cookies with her older sister. She's of Japanese and Taiwanese heritage but grew up in Australia. "While I may appear of Asian descent, my Aussie upbringing is reflected in my cooking, which includes these scrumptious and simple cookies," she says. ANZAC (Australia New Zealand Army Corps) cookies are thought to have originated during WWII when Australian and New Zealand soldiers would bring the cookies, baked by their loved ones, off to war. "I've never tested the durability of these cookies though—they disappear too quickly!" she says.

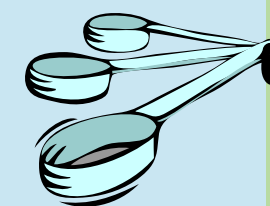
Australian ANZAC cookies

Ingredients

- 1 cup each of plain flour, rolled oats and dried coconut
- ½ cup of brown sugar (tightly packed)
- ½ cup of white sugar
- 4 oz butter
- 1 tablespoon treacle (golden syrup or honey)
- 2 tablespoons boiling water
- 1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda (add a little more water if mixture is too dry)

Directions

Grease baking tray and pre-heat oven to 355° F. Combine dry ingredients. Melt together butter and golden syrup. Combine water and soda and add to butter mixture. Mix wet butter mixture and dry ingredients. Drop teaspoons of mixture onto tray allowing room for spreading. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden. Allow to cool on a tray for a few minutes before transferring to cooling racks.



Javier Amador-Pena

Senior graphic designer,
Public Affairs and Marketing



Growing up on the coast of Colombia, Amador-Pena family has a longstanding tradition of preparing arroz con pollo (rice with chicken) for all sorts of special occasions, such as weddings, baptisms, first communions and Christmas Eve. Like his nine brothers and sisters, Amador-Pena still cooks this meal for his loved ones on holidays.

Arroz con pollo

Ingredients

- 2 chicken breasts
- 3 cups white rice
- 6 cups water
- 2 carrots (shredded with a potato peeler)
- 2 small cans tomato paste
- 2 onions
- 1 packet of frozen peas (defrosted)
- ½ cup of raisins
- ½ jar of stuffed olives, sliced
- 3 tbs capers
- 4 crushed cloves of garlic
- 2 chicken stock cubes
- 1 tbs Goya Adobo seasoning
- 3 tbs olive oil
- ¾ cup scallions
- ¾ cup cilantro
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Boil the chicken breasts in the water with the chicken stock cubes and Goya seasoning powder. Once it's well cooked, remove the chicken and cool, but keep the water. Shred the chicken. Add 3½ cups of the water to the rice and cook. As the rice starts to boil, put on a very low heat, stir and cover until it's almost done.

In a frying pan, heat the olive oil and add the garlic, then the onions. Lightly saute. Add the shredded chicken and one more cup of water. Add olives, capers, raisins, shredded carrots and peas. Add water as required to keep a sauce-like consistency—not too watery, not too sticky.

In a separate bowl, gradually add one part rice to one part chicken, mixing gently, until the mixture is blended. Add chopped scallions. Use a small dish to mold the mixture into rounded shapes and serve with a little ketchup and a sprig of cilantro on top, with saltine crackers on the side.