

# Make-Ahead Christmas Dinner



entertaining *with* beth

# Christmas Menu

Serves 8



Kir + Kir Royal



Cheese Puffs



Beef Bourguignon



Gratin Dauphinois



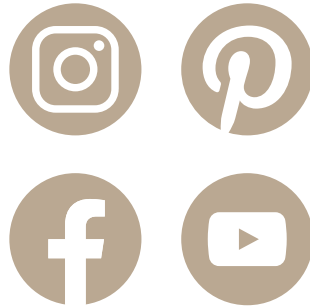
Chocolate  
Christmas Cake



Kirsch Cherries



# A Make-Ahead Christmas



Christmas is filled with so many joyful moments! But you can easily miss them if you are strapped to the kitchen preparing food in real-time while everyone else is gathering in the living room opening gifts and making memories! (I hate that!!)

But not this year! Follow my make-ahead Christmas dinner and you'll be the one making memories and opening gifts because all you'll have to do for this menu is reheat and serve!

— beth





# Kir

1 tsp Crème de Cassis

1 glass White Wine

# Kir Royal

1 tsp Crème de Cassis

1 glass of champagne or prosecco

## For Kir:

In a wine glass pour 1 tsp room temperature crème de cassis, fill the glass  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with a light white wine (Chablis, or Sauvignon Blanc)

## For Kir Royal:

In a champagne flute pour 1 tsp room temperature crème de cassis, fill glass  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with champagne or a sparkling wine like prosecco.





# Cheese Puffs

6 thick slices of soft French bread, cut into 36 1-inch cubes  
1/2 cup unsalted butter  
1/2 cup whipped cream cheese  
2 egg whites  
1 1/3 cup Sharp Cheddar Cheese, grated  
1/2 tsp Smoked Paprika  
1 Tbsp Fresh Chives, minced

Preheat the oven to 400F. Line two sheet pans with parchment paper and set it aside.

Slice bread into 1-inch cubes removing crust, until uniform in size. Set aside.

In a double boiler, add the butter, cream cheese, and cheddar cheese. Stir gently with a whisk until combined and a cheese sauce forms. Transfer sauce to a large bowl and allow to cool slightly and then set aside.

Meanwhile, whip the 2 eggs whites until stiff peaks form. Fold the egg whites, in thirds, into the cheese sauce, lightening the mixture gently with each fold.



# Cheese Puffs Continued

Dip the bread cubes, one by one, into the cheese mixture with 2 forks, rolling the cube around the sauce until the cube is coated. Transfer the cubes to the baking sheets lined with parchment. Complete the process until the trays are filled.

Sprinkle cubes with paprika and fresh chives. Bake for 13 minutes, switching trays at the 6-minute mark. Serve immediately.

MAKE AHEAD TIP: Trays can be refrigerated until ready to bake. Or freeze until solid, then place in Ziploc bag and bake at 400F for 13-15 mins. No need to thaw first.



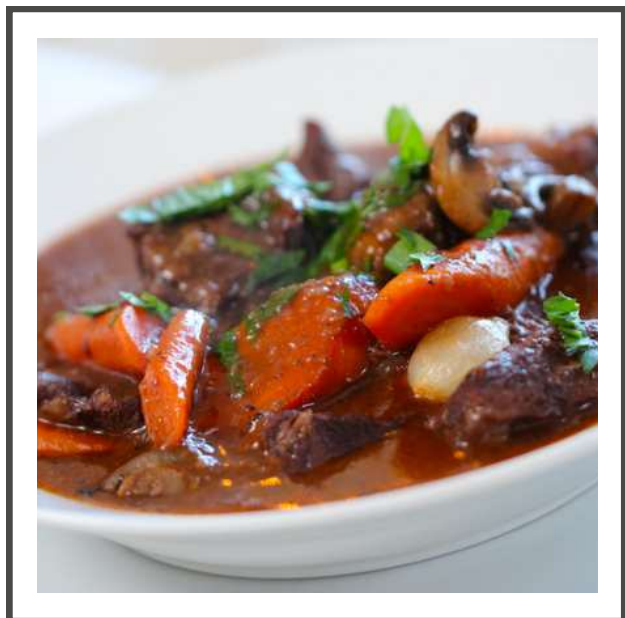
# Cheese Puffs Video



Join my Dad and I for a demo on how  
to make these delicious cheese puffs!  
My Aunt Mellarie's recipe.



# Beef Bourguignon



3lbs (1350 g) Chuck Beef (stew meat) cut into 1" chunks  
½ cup (60 g) flour  
1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil  
6 strips of applewood smoked bacon, sliced into bite sized pieces  
1 cup (150 g) chopped yellow onion  
2 cups (300 g) carrots, cut on the bias into 1" chunks  
3 cups (700 ml) red wine (Cotes du Rhone or Pinot Noir)  
3 cups (700 ml) Swanson® Beef Stock  
¼ cup (60 ml) tomato paste  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
2 tsp (10 ml) dried thyme  
1 bay leaf  
1 tsp (5 ml) salt  
freshly cracked pepper to taste  
2 tbsp (30 g) butter  
8 oz (230 g) white button mushrooms cut in half  
1 cup (150g) frozen pearl onions  
1 tbsp (5.5 g) flour+ 2 tbsp (15 ml) water  
¼ cup (60 ml) fresh parsley, roughly chopped



# Beef Bourguignon Continued

Season the beef with salt and pepper to taste. Then dredge the beef through the flour coating lightly. Set aside.

In a large, oven-safe Dutch oven, heat 1 tbsp (15 ml) of olive oil. Sautee bacon until crispy. Drain out of the pan with a slotted spoon and allow to drain on a plate lined with a paper towel.

Cook the diced onion and carrots in the bacon fat until the onions are slightly caramelized and carrots begin to become slightly tender. Remove the vegetables with a slotted spoon transfer to a bowl and set aside.

Add a drizzle more olive oil to your pan if needed, set the flame on medium high, and sear your beef in the hot oil, in a single layer, in batches being careful not to crowd the beef. You are looking for the beef to become golden brown on each side. You may need to do this in 3-4 batches to sear all your beef. Place seared meat on a plate and set aside.

DO NOT RINSE OUT PAN. All those drippings=flavor! Instead, keeping your flame on medium-high, deglaze this pan with the 3 cups of wine. Loosen the bits at the bottom of your pan with a wooden spoon. Then add the 3 cups of Swanson® Beef Stock.



# Beef Bourguignon Continued

Then add the tomato paste, the garlic, the thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Stir with a whisk to combine.

Add the sautéed carrots and onions, the beef and the cooked bacon. Place your stew in a preheated oven at 325F (162C) for 2 hours.

Once your stew has been in the oven for 1 hour and 30 minutes. You are ready for the next stage.

In a small sautee pan, melt 1 tbsp (15 g) of the butter, add mushrooms and season with salt and pepper, sautee the mushrooms until browned and tender. Add the mushrooms, along with any pan drippings to the stew. Along with 1 cup (150 g) of frozen pearl onions.

Meanwhile prepare your “slurry” (basically a combo of 1 tbsp (7.5 g) flour and 2 tbsp water (30 ml) water that will thicken our stew). Mix with a fork until smooth.

At the 2 hour mark, remove your stew from the oven. Remove the cover. Place the pot on a high flame, add the slurry and bring to a boil, simmer for 1 minute or until the sauce has thicken up a bit. Then add the bacon. Add 1 tbsp of butter to create a smooth and velvety finish. Ladle into bowls and top with the fresh parsley.



# Beef Bourguignon Continued

## MAKE AHEAD TIPS:

- Allow the stew to cool completely.
- Transfer to a container, and refrigerate. Reheat stew on medium-low, covered until heated through. (it will look thicker in texture, but will thin as it heats)
- Ladle into bowls, and garnish with freshly chopped parsley. Serve with a crusty French baguette. Enjoy!



# Beef Bourguignon Video



A delicious, hearty stew that is elegant enough for Christmas dinner too.

Serve with my gratin dauphinois which is a fantastic side dish with the beef and its velvety sauce.



# Gratin Dauphinois



4 large russet potatoes  
1 ½ cup (350ml) heavy cream  
1 ½ cup (350ml) milk  
2 teaspoon (10ml) salt  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
freshly cracked pepper to taste  
1 ¾ cup (420ml) grated  
Gruyere cheese

Preheat 325F (162C).

Combine the milk and heavy cream in a large Pyrex pitcher. Add salt and pepper, stir and set aside. Grease a 14" (35cm) gratin pan and set it aside.

Mince garlic with a garlic press and place in a small bowl.

Grate Cheese and place in a small bowl.

Peel potatoes and slice 1/16 of an inch thick. Either with a Mandolin or with a knife.

Place one single layer of potatoes in the gratin pan, add ¼ cup of the cheese and sprinkle ⅛ teaspoon of the garlic, repeat this process, layering potatoes, cheese and garlic until all 4 potatoes have been used.



# Gratin Dauphinois cont'

Slowly pour the cream and milk mixture on top of the layered potatoes making sure it is well distributed in all the nooks and crannies.

Top potatoes with the remaining ½ cup of cheese. Bake uncovered for 1 hour 30 mins until a knife slides easily into potatoes and they are soft and tender. If the cheese starts to brown too quickly cover with foil for the remaining duration of cooking time.

## MAKE -AHEAD TIPS:

- You can bake the gratin the day before and then allow to cool completely before refrigerating.
- Cover with foil and then place it in the fridge.
- To reheat, bake covered for 30 mins in a 375 oven, remove foil, and bake for another 10-15 mins more.
- Alternatively, you can also freeze this casserole and then reheat it, covered at 375F for 40-50 mins. Then uncovered for 15 minutes.



# Gratin Dauphinois Video



A delicious side dish for any holiday gathering! Tender potatoes in a rich cream sauce topped with a crispy cheesy topping.



# Christmas Cake



2 oz (52g) Ghirardelli Bittersweet Chocolate (60-70% Cacao) broken into pieces  
1 cup (100g) unsweetened cacao powder  
1 cup (240ml) boiling water  
2 cups(400g) white sugar  
1 cup (240ml) vegetable oil  
3 eggs  
2 egg yolks  
1 Tbsp (15ml) Vanilla Extract  
1 1/4 cups (150g) all-purpose flour  
1 tsp salt (5ml)  
1 tsp (5ml) baking soda

## KIRSH CHERRIES:

4 Tbsp (60g) Unsalted Butter  
4 Cups (600g) Pitted Frozen Cherries  
2 Tbsp (30ml) Kirsch (Cherry Brandy) or 1 tsp Almond Extract  
Pinch of salt

## GARNISHES:

4-6 Sprigs of Fresh Rosemary  
1/3 cup (65g) white sugar  
1/2 (120ml) cup of water  
12 fresh cranberries  
1 Tbsp (7g) Powdered sugar  
High-quality vanilla ice cream



# Christmas Cake Cont'

Preheat oven to 350F. Spray a 9-cup capacity bundt pan with baking spray and use a pastry brush to distribute it well into all the crevices.

In a large heat-safe mixing bowl add the bittersweet chocolate, the cacao powder and the boiling water. Let it sit for 5 minutes. Then whisk to combine.

Whisk in the sugar until dissolved and the mixture is smooth. Slowly whisk in the vegetable oil until combined. Add the eggs one at a time, whisking in between each addition. Then add the egg yolks, one at a time, combining well after each addition. Then add the vanilla extract. Set aside.

In a medium-sized bowl whisk together the flour, baking soda, and salt.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients, in thirds, whisking in between each addition.

Pour the batter into the prepared bundt pan. Bake at 350F for 40-45 mins until a lower skewer comes out clean.

Allow to cool for at least 2-3 hours before attempting to flip the cake out of the mold. It's less fragile the cooler it is.



# Christmas Cake Cont'

## FOR CHERRIES:

Melt butter in a large skillet.

Once foamy add the frozen cherries and stir occasionally until the cherries release their juices and the mixture is syrupy.

Turn off the flame. Add the kirsch. Start with 1 tablespoon and taste it, for a "boozier" mixture add the full 2 Tablespoons.

Add a pinch of salt.

## MAKE AHEAD TIPS:

- Allow to cool, transfer to a container, cover, and reheat before serving.



# Christmas Cake Cont'

## MAKE AHEAD TIPS:

- Once completely cooled, keep the cake in a Bundt Pan, loosely covered with foil at room temperature before serving.
- Cake can be made 1 day ahead.

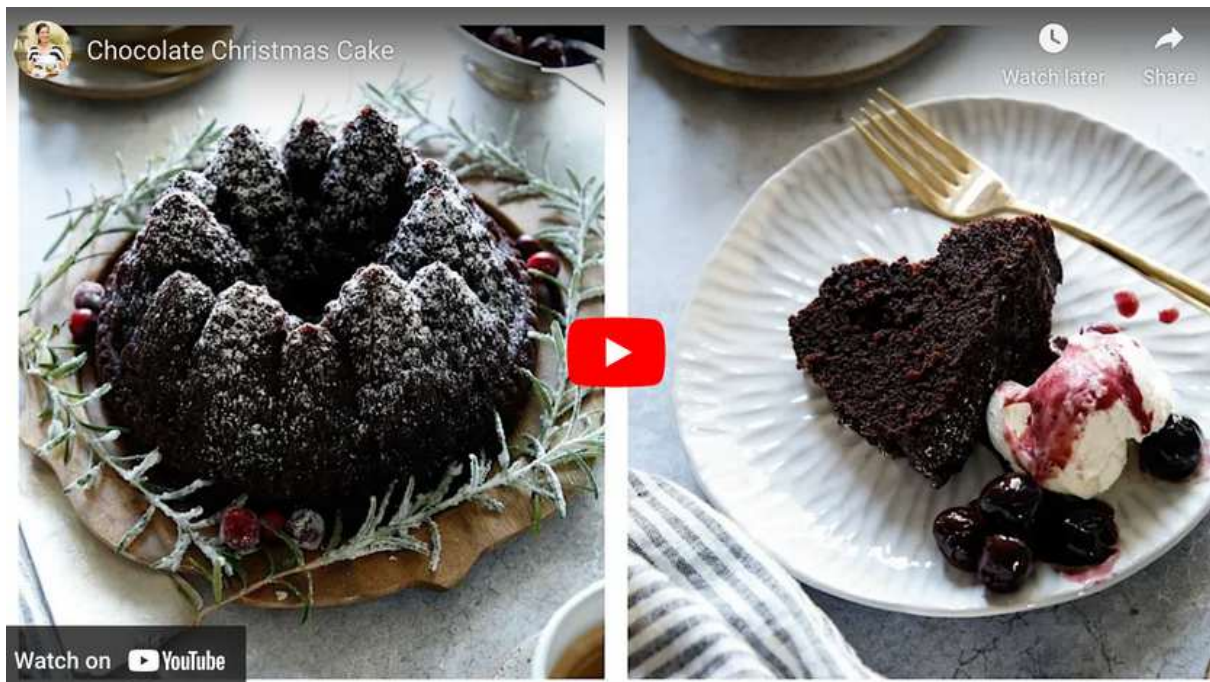
## TO SERVE:

Add the rosemary garnishes around the base of the cake, intermingled with 2-3 cranberries every few inches or so. Dust with powdered sugar. Cake can be assembled like this in the morning and left at room temperature until ready to serve in the afternoon or evening.

After serving, keep wrapped in foil in the refrigerator to preserve freshness and flavor.



# Christmas Cake Video



A rich and fudgy chocolate cake that is as easy as it is delicious! A pretty Bundt Pan will do all the work for you, creating something festive and beautiful without a lot of effort!



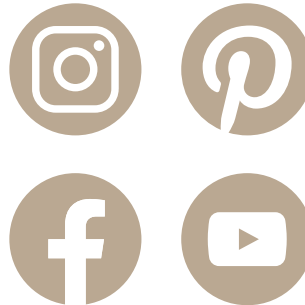


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CHRISTMAS DINNER IS FOR MAKING  
MEMORIES AND BEING TOGETHER!  
I HOPE THIS MENU WILL HELP YOU  
DO BOTH!

– *beth*

# Have Fun!



This is the most important ingredient at any party! FUN! So even if something does go wrong, no one will ever remember, or probably care! If they want flawless they'll go to a restaurant and even then, perfection is never guaranteed! The most important thing is to make time for your guests, savor their company, and be ready to be "present" and relax! This is what holidays are all about!

Happy Hosting!

- beth

