

FROM OUR TABLE TO YOURS

Cookstrong: recipes that fueled a champion

Mother of Lance Armstrong shares her favorite dishes

BY PATRICIA TERRY VANSANT
CONTRIBUTING FOOD COLUMNIST

She is a retired corporate executive and now a dynamic motivational speaker. She is a devoted grandmother, mother of a record-setting cyclist, wife, and a leader in her church. What's more, she is an outstanding cook.

Linda Armstrong Kelly believes that food makes the champion. She has a famous son to prove it. Seven-time winning Tour de France cyclist Lance benefited from her devotion to preparing three nutritious, homemade meals a day, including a hot meal for breakfast.

Also, the table was a place for sharing and conversation. Lance was a most loved son, and he knew it. The dining table was the setting to talk about "dreaming big and making a difference." Lance did it. He has lived his dream all around the world.

Linda's grandmother influenced her in her cooking. She remembers, with great affection, that her grandmother also made each grandchild feel special. "Granny would make each grandchild's favorite cake. My favorite was orange cake."

Thus, she learned the art of southern hospitality early and that continues to this day. She usually takes food to her hosts and friends wherever she is.

Linda tells the story of traveling with Lance in California and being invited to meet one of his friends. He didn't tell her who the friend was. She decided to take guacamole dip and a bag of chips. She made the dip and found a container in which to serve it.

"Imagine my surprise when I drove up to Oprah Winfrey's house and there I was sitting with chips on my lap," said Kelly. Oprah loved the guacamole dip so much that she put it on her Web site.

Linda shares her recipes with us for Lance's Favorite Banana Bread and Lance's Favorite Cookie: Yummy Oatmeal Raisin Cookies. While on tour, he often receives care packages from his mother with his favorite endurance foods. Living near Dallas, Linda calls herself a "southern - a southwestern - cook." Her recipes speak flavor, flavor, and flavor!

Butternut Squash Soup

I have never been a soup lover but this takes the cake! If you can get past the pain of cutting up the butternut squash, you and your family will be asking for more of this great soup. Caution—use a good knife and take your time cuttin' up the squash.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups leeks, diced small
- 1 1/2 cups onions, diced small
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1/2 pound Idaho potatoes
- 2 pounds butternut squash
- 1/2 quart heavy cream
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/8 cup butter
- 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/8 teaspoon cumin
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon white pepper

Garnish:

- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 pound pancetta or bacon
- 1 ounce sage

Directions:

Peel and seed the butternut squash. I like to cut a slice off the bottom to create a flat surface. Then carefully peel the squash with a paring knife. Cut in half and slice into one-inch cubes. In a stockpot, cook leeks, onion and butter until translucent. Add bay leaf, potato, butternut squash, lime juice and chicken stock (along with seasonings). Use just enough chicken stock and cream to cover potatoes. You may not use all the cream and stock. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook until potatoes are tender. Remove bay leaf; puree a little at a time in a blender. Pour back into stockpot to keep warm until served. Adjust seasonings with salt, pepper and cumin.

Garnish:

Dice and fry pancetta until crisp. Pat on paper towel. Garnish each cup of soup with a dollop of sour cream, pancetta and chopped sage.

Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

Over the years of making this delicious cookie, I discovered a few cooking tips. I soften the raisins before adding to the flour mixture. To do this, you put the raisins in a microwaveable bowl and cover with water. Microwave about 1 minute and let stand in heated water for a few minutes. Drain raisins and add to flour mixture. I also bake all of my cookies on a Silpat. You can find this in your local Williams & Sonoma. When using a Silpat, there is no need to grease your cook-

Food for thought

Linda Armstrong Kelly will speak at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in Bradford Hall on the KSU campus, talking about her life of triumph over adversity, her famous son and his victory over cancer, and her love of cooking. Sponsored by the Frankfort Arts Foundation, FAF season tickets will be honored and event tickets will be available at the door beginning at 6:30. For information, call 330-2773.



Linda Armstrong Kelly is an accomplished cook, mother of cyclist Lance Armstrong and a motivational speaker.

ie sheet and cookies almost never burn.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1 cup shortening
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. Vanilla
- 3 cups quick oats
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 1/2 cup Sun Giant Raisins

Directions:

Cream together the sugars and shortening. Add eggs and vanilla; beat until smooth. In another bowl mix rest of ingredients (including raisins). Add a little at a time to the sugar mixture until all is blended. Roll into small balls and put on a greased cookie sheet. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes. Cool slightly before removing from pan. Makes 5 dozen.

Zippy Cheese Artichoke Oven Omelet

This recipe was featured in *Texas Living*. I love to serve this for family gatherings. We will be celebrating the christening of our new twins, Kate and Charlie, and I will definitely have this on the menu for our celebration!

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup picante sauce or salsa (hot or mild)
- 1 cup artichoke hearts, chopped
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 6 large eggs
- 1 carton (8 ozs.) sour cream
- Tomato wedges (optional)
- Parsley sprigs (optional)

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 de-

grees. Butter a 10-inch quiche dish. Spread picante sauce on the bottom. Distribute chopped artichokes evenly over picante sauce. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over artichokes. Sprinkle with Monterey Jack and cheddar cheeses. Blend eggs in a blender until smooth; add the sour cream to the eggs and blend until mixed. Pour the egg mixture over the cheeses and bake uncovered for 30 to 40 minutes, or until set. Cut into wedges and serve garnished with tomato wedges and parsley.

Lance's Favorite Banana Bread

Reprinted with permission from Linda Armstrong Kelly's book, *No Mountain High Enough: Raising Lance, Raising Me*.

It's forget-your-middle-name good. Here's what you need:

Ingredients:

- 1 stick butter (softened of course)
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup buttermilk (and don't even think about substituting something like 2 percent)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 cups flour
- 2 mashed bananas (try to catch them when they're just a little past their prime)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions:

Now don't just plop everything into a bowl. You're doing this for someone you love, so you want to do it right. Heat up the oven to 350 degrees. Cream the butter, sugar, eggs, bananas and vanilla into a lovely, ooey-gooey mess. Mix the buttermilk and soda together. Add that to the sweet, creamy banana mess.

Gradually add the flour and salt so you don't have that clumpy lumpy flour thing going on, and when you've got all that thoroughly stirred up, add the chopped nuts. Pour your batter into a greased and floured loaf pan and bake for one hour or until the center is cooked. Use a toothpick to test if the center is done. You may want to have your loved one standing by with a serrated knife and a cup of coffee, because it's best to sit right down and have some together while it's still warm.

In Lance's case, he has been known to "not share" this precious treat. What is so wonderful is that my grandson, Luke, loves it just as much as his Daddy!

Linda's Cornbread

You might think cornbread is cornbread but I beg to differ! Growing up in the south, cornbread is a staple with most all of our meals. Over the years, I have enjoyed "kicking" it up a notch. My bonus daughter, Maurereen, enjoys serving this to all of her guests at her dinner parties (she is, by the way, a great cook!).

Ingredients:

- 2 boxes Jiffy brand cornbread mix

Mix according to packet directions, but where it calls for milk, replace with EVAPORATED MILK. This is the trick!

Add to mixture:

- 2/3 cup creamed corn
- 1 small can green chilies
- 3/4 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 1/3 cup chopped onion (optional)
- 1/4 cup diced jalapeños (optional)

Directions:

Pour into a greased 8x8-inch baking dish. Cook according to Jiffy packet instructions. If center is still a little moist, cook an additional 10 minutes. Use a toothpick in center to check if cooked all the way through.

Awesome Enchiladas

Now get ready, plan for a great family or anything get-together. These enchiladas will make them remember what it is they were all together!

Ingredients:

- 1 cooked and diced chicken
- (I buy the roasted chicken in the deli section of the grocery store and just pull that chicken off to the bone!)
- 12 flour tortillas
- 1 can black beans
- 1 can green chilies
- 1 jar tomatillo salsa
- 1 can enchilada sauce
- 2 cups coquita cheese

(a very nice and smooth Mexican cheese available in

most grocery stores)

Directions:

To begin - get your family ready! This recipe only takes about 30 minutes to prepare. It will allow you plenty of time to enjoy your family and have them talking about you for a long, long time.

Combine chicken, black beans, green chilies and 1 cup of cheese in a bowl. Grease a 9x10 baking pan. Take one tortilla at a time and dip in the enchilada sauce. I also pour some of the enchilada sauce into the baking pan - it just makes them so much better! If you use a pie plate, it makes the dipping really easy!

After you dip your tortilla in the sauce, spoon the combination chicken mixture into each tortilla, rolling up one at a time and placing them into the baking pan. After I have rolled up each tortilla, I pour the tomatillo salsa over the top of the enchiladas and sprinkle the remaining cheese over the top. Bake for 30 minutes covered. Serve with rice and chopped Mexican salad (stay tuned for these recipes!).

Tiramisu

Ed and I enjoyed this wonderful dessert at our cooking class in Tuscany. Toscana Mia hosted our Trek group. We enjoyed preparing homemade pasta and other Italian dishes with Chef Alvaro. He was the chef in a well-known Tuscan restaurant until he retired to enjoy his country.

Ingredients:

- 10.5 oz. Sponge ladyfingers
- 4 eggs
- 17.75 oz. mascarpone cheese
- 4 spoonfuls of sugar
- 1 small glass of brandy (or rum)
- 1 cup of coffee

Directions:



Beat the egg yolks with the sugar, and then add the mascarpone, mixing perfectly to form a cream. Flavor with 2 spoonfuls of brandy (or rum). Beat the egg whites stiffly and add them to the cream, folding. Pour the coffee into a wide, deep dish, add as much sugar as you like, dilute with a few spoonfuls of water and a spoonful of brandy (or rum).

Dip the sponge fingers one at a time in the coffee and place a layer of these in a dish. Spread half of the cream over them and level the surface. Continue making layers in this way, finishing with a layer of cream. Place this dessert in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. Just before serving, sprinkle the top with a thick layer of unsweetened cocoa.

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DEAR ABBY

Daughter despairs over tense relationship with her mother

DEAR ABBY: I am a 16-year-old girl and I fight with my mother almost daily. It makes me sad and upset all the time, and I don't know what to do. The last fight we had was over something so dumb I don't even know why I dragged it out for so long. I said things I didn't mean - things that were hurtful and cruel.

No child should ever treat a parent like I treat my mom. I take her love and kindness for granted, and never tell her how much I really do appreciate her. What I said to her in anger made her cry.

How can I tell or show my mom how sorry I am and how much I love her and admire her, and how can I stop myself from exploding and saying things to her that I don't mean?

UPSET

DEAR UPSET: The most

direct way to make amends would be to hug your mom and apologize for flying off the handle and saying things you didn't mean. Tell her you love her and will try hard to do better because you are ashamed of your behavior and know it wasn't justified.

It's important to understand that the average person can experience frustration that leads to anger multiple times a day. Anger is a normal emotion.

The challenge that everyone faces is how not to deny the feeling, but to express it in ways that are productive for ourselves and not hurtful to others. One way to accomplish this is recognizing what pushes our buttons. What provoked you? Were you under pressure? Or were you angry about something else so you "dumped" on an innocent party (in this case,

your mom) because she was handy?

In my booklet, "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It," I explain that one of the unhealthiest ways to deal with anger is to deny or repress it. However, because most of us have been trained from early childhood to suppress anger, many of us need to learn to express it appropriately.

The Anger booklet can be ordered by sending your name and mailing address, plus a check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to Dear Abby - Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

In it are suggestions for managing anger, including how to express anger in constructive ways, such as a few well-chosen words that will

make your point. It takes maturity to identify and verbalize negative emotions instead of "lashing out" and saying - or doing - something you'll regret.

Being able to calmly say, "When you do (blank), it makes me angry," before flying off the handle will earn you respect from others. If you resort to name-calling, the other person hears only the "static" and doesn't get your message. The first step in controlling anger is to recognize that the emotion is building, to understand that there are healthy and effective ways to express it, and to diffuse it before you lose control.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.