

# BACON PALOOZA

## Spinach Salad with Egg and Bacon

- 8 oz. spinach
- 2 large hard cooked eggs
- 8 pieces thick-sliced bacon, chopped
- 3 T. red wine vinegar
- 1 t. sugar
- ½ t. Dijon mustard
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 large white mushrooms, sliced
- 3 oz. red onion (1 small), very thinly sliced

Remove the stems from the spinach and wash, drain and pat dry thoroughly. Place into a large mixing bowl and set aside. Peel the hard cooked eggs. Slice each egg into 8 pieces and set aside. Fry the bacon and remove to a paper towel to drain, reserving 3 T. of the rendered fat. Crumble the bacon and set aside. Transfer the fat to a small saucepan set over low heat and whisk in the red wine vinegar, sugar and Dijon mustard. Season with a small pinch each of kosher salt and black pepper. Add the mushrooms and the sliced onion to the spinach and toss. Add the dressing and bacon and toss to combine. Divide the spinach between 4 plates or bowls and evenly divide the egg among them. Season with pepper, as desired. Serve immediately.

## Bacon Chocolate Chip Cookies

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| ½ c. butter (softened, feel free to replace some with bacon grease) | 1 ¼ c. all purpose flour                     |
| ½ c. brown sugar (packed)   | ½ t. baking soda                             |
| ½ c. white sugar  | ¼ t. salt                                    |
| 1 egg   | 1 c. dark chocolate chunks                   |
| 1 t. vanilla extract  | 5 strips cooked bacon (I used candied bacon) |

Preheat oven to 350°F Cream the butter and sugar in a bowl. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract. Mix the flour, baking soda and salt in another bowl. Mix the dry ingredients into the wet. Mix in the chocolate and the bacon. Place the dough onto a cookie sheet one table spoon at a time. Bake for 8-10 minutes.

## Bacon and Cheddar Scones

- 4 slices bacon, chopped
- 3 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 T. baking powder
- 1 T. sugar
- 1 ½ t. salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 6 oz. sharp cheddar cheese, grated (about 1 ½ cups)
- ½ c. thinly sliced green onions
- ½ t. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 c. heavy cream, plus 2 T.



Preheat the oven to 400°F. In a medium skillet, cook the bacon, stirring, until crisp, about 5 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain well on paper towels. Into a large bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt. Cut in the butter, cheese, green onions, and pepper with a pastry blender or fork, and work just until it starts to form lumps and come together. Add the bacon. Add 1 cup of the cream and work just until it becomes a sticky dough, being careful not to overwork. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and pat until it comes together. Form into 2 large circles, about 7 inches in diameter and ¾ inch thick and cut each into 8 wedges with a sharp knife. Transfer to baking sheet with a spatula, leaving ½-inch space between each wedge. Paint the tops of the wedges lightly with the remaining 2 T. of cream and bake until golden brown, 22 to 23 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool slightly on the baking sheet. Serve warm.

## Perfect Skillet Bacon

To fry bacon to crisp perfection, start with a cold skillet. Carefully separate the bacon pieces from each other and place them side by side in a cold skillet.

Now place the skillet over medium heat. The bacon will begin to sizzle and turn translucent. Here's the main tip: don't move the bacon until it releases easily from the pan.

You can gently lift the edges as the bacon starts to brown on the first side, but don't lift it or force it until it releases. Then turn the bacon, using tongs, and cook on the second side until it releases easily again.

Keep turning the bacon frequently for even cooking. The bacon is done when it looks like bacon! The noise will subside dramatically, and when there are no more pink, white, or translucent areas on the bacon, it's ready. Remove it to a paper towel to drain, and then eat!

## BLT with Garlic Mayonnaise

- 1 small head garlic
- 1 t. olive oil
- 2 fresh sprigs thyme, rosemary, or oregano
- ½ c. Mayonnaise
- 12 strips bacon
- 4 slices white sandwich bread, sliced about ½ inch thick
- 1 small head green or red-leaf lettuce
- 1 to 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, thinly sliced
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat oven to 375°. Rub entire head of garlic with olive oil. Place on aluminum foil, add herbs, and wrap tightly. Cook until cloves are soft, 25 to 35 minutes. Set aside to cool. Squeeze roasted garlic out of each clove onto a cutting board. Transfer soft garlic to a medium bowl; mash with a fork until smooth. Stir in mayonnaise, and set aside.

Working in batches, fry bacon in a heavy skillet over medium heat until crisp. Transfer bacon to paper towels to drain. Toast bread under a broiler until lightly golden on both sides. Spread one side of each bread slice with garlic mayonnaise. Arrange lettuce over two slices. Top with tomatoes and bacon. Season with salt and pepper. Top with remaining bread slices, and serve.

## Perfect Oven Bacon

Once you make bacon in the oven you may never want to have it any other way. You will need:

- 1 lb package of bacon
- Oven
- Baking sheet
- Aluminum foil and paper towels
- Container for fat drippings

Don't preheat your oven. Line a baking sheet with foil that is lightly crinkled. This will make cleanup easier later. Arrange bacon slices on the foil and place the baking sheet on the center rack of a cold oven. Close oven door. Turn oven on to 400°F. Walk away.

Come back 17 to 20 minutes later. As soon as the bacon is golden brown, but not excessively crisp, it's done. The exact time will depend on the thickness of the bacon slices, and also on how quickly your oven reaches the target temperature.

Remove the pan from the oven. Transfer the bacon to another sheet pan lined with paper towels to absorb the fat. You can pour the liquid fat into a heat-resistant container to save for other uses.

Try this:

For a crispy shell ~ Dredge bacon in flour or corn meal before baking.

For a sweet spicy surprise ~ Sprinkle bacon with brown sugar or freshly ground black pepper before baking.

## Candied Bacon

- 1 lb. thick bacon
- ½ c. brown sugar or maple syrup

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with foil and set a cooling rack on it. Spread the bacon out over the cooling rack. Rub the brown sugar onto the bacon. Bake until the bacon reaches the desired crispiness, about 15-20 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes and then enjoy.

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