

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

Swap Shop

To the rescue!

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BY SANDY THORN CLARK

When a reader writes "URGENT REQUEST" on her envelope, it has to receive special attention. B.J.R. of Homewood wasn't exaggerating: Her dilemma is a family gathering this weekend at her home -- and everyone is expected to bring a dish containing sauerkraut, her father's favorite food.

B.J.R. specifically requested a chocolate cake made with sauerkraut.

"I've heard of it but I'm not having any luck finding it," she wrote. "And do you have any other ideas for our party honoring my dad?"

With no time to ask readers for help, I sought help from the makers of my favorite sauerkraut, Frank's Quality Kraut. Chris Smith, vice president of the Fremont Co. in Fremont, Ohio, obliged with recipes for Chocolate Sauerkraut Cake and Classic Kraut Balls, sure to be hits at your party.

For the tasty appetizer, I recommend Frank's Quality Bavarian Style Kraut. It's sweet, mild and has caraway seeds.

And there's an easy Reuben Dip that is exceptional on chunks or slices of pumpernickel or rye bread. If you have a fondue pot, put the bread on the fondue forks for dipping. Combine 1/2 cup sauerkraut (chopped and drained); a 3-ounce package of cream cheese (softened); an 8-ounce container of sour cream; 1/2 cup of grated Swiss cheese, and 1/4 pound of sliced corned beef (finely diced) in a saucepan or fondue pot over low heat. Thin with 2 to 3 tablespoons of milk, if desired.

To "slim" the recipe, use light or fat-free cream cheese, sour cream and Swiss cheese, and thin with skim milk.



CHOCOLATE SAUERKRAUT CAKE

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1-1/2 cups sugar
1/2 cup butter
1 teaspoon pure vanilla
3 eggs
1 cup water
3/4 cup Frank's Kraut, drained
and chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Sift flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cocoa powder together. Cream together sugar, butter and vanilla. Beat eggs in one at a time. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture alternately with water. Add sauerkraut; mix thoroughly.

Pour into greased layer pans or pan. Bake 30 to 40 minutes, checking frequently until cake tests done. Place on wire rack; cool for 15 minutes and remove from pans. Allow to cool completely before frosting with your favorite chocolate frosting.

Nutrition facts per serving: 396 calories, 14 g fat, 8 g saturated fat, 109 mg cholesterol, 62 g carbohydrates, 6 g protein, 622 mg sodium, 2 g fiber

Frank's Sauerkraut

CLASSIC KRAUT BALLS

MAKES 25 TO 30 BALLS

3 tablespoons butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/2 medium clove garlic, crushed
1 cup cooked ham, finely chopped
1 cup cooked corned beef, finely chopped
6 tablespoons flour
3 eggs, divided
3 cups sauerkraut, drained, squeezed and finely chopped
1-1/8 teaspoon seasoned salt
1-1/8 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
1/2 cup beef stock or bouillon
2 tablespoons water
Fine cracker meal, sufficient to coat balls
Oil for deep frying

Melt butter; add onion and garlic; cook over low heat for 5 minutes. Stir in ham, corned beef and flour; cook until brown.

Combine egg, sauerkraut, seasoned salt, Worcestershire sauce, parsley and beef stock or bouillon. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until thickened.

Remove from heat and chill until thick cookie-dough consistency to make balls. Shape into walnut-size balls. Beat remaining eggs with water; coat balls with mixture. Immediately roll each in fine cracker meal (works best in a small bowl).

Heat oil to 375 degrees in pan or deep fryer; deep fry balls 2 to 3 minutes until brown. Drain on absorbent paper. Serve warm.

Hint: Sauerkraut balls may be frozen on a cookie sheet, and then placed in a bag. Simply thaw before deep-frying.

Nutrition facts per meatball: 69 calories, 4 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 43 mg cholesterol, 2 g carbohydrates, 4 g protein, 391 mg sodium, 0 g fiber

Frank's Sauerkraut

Requests

My friend and I are hooked on Asian-type salads with mandarin oranges and crunchies (fried wontons, almonds and/or sesame seeds). We particularly love the thick sweet-and-sour dressings. Any recipes?

A.B., Chicago

I'm looking for papaya recipes for a party with a tropical theme.

L.D., Arlington Heights

How about a marinade for grilled shrimp?

B.H., Chicago

Send recipes and requests to: Swap Shop, Chicago Sun-Times, 350 N. Orleans, 9th Floor, Chicago 60654, or by e-mail, swapshop @suntimes.com. All mail must include a daytime telephone number.

Sorry, requests can't be answered personally.