

I'm so happy to have been born into my generation! I was lucky enough to grow up in a era of preppy clothes, weekend dances, roller skates and unlocked doors.



All of the kids my age could safely stay out after dark. Until we were old enough to drive, we walked or rode our bikes everywhere AND we grew up with the greatest music ever written! I just got back from a fabulous weekend in my hometown with a bunch of my childhood friends from grade school and high school. Thanks to Facebook we've reconnected and have once again become as close as we were when we were all growing up together. Needless to say, I'm a huge Facebook fan! The social networking website has turned out to be a great way to catch up with old friends and keep up with current ones. I'm now back in touch with my BFF (Best Friend Forever) from the 8th grade and my very first friend who I've known since I was 3 years old. We've all been having so much fun! So, when I got an idea to publish some recipes from my Facebook friends I was thrilled with the response! This week's recipes are all from my friends. We're scattered all over the country but we still have three things in common ---- friendship, food and Facebook!

Buffalo Chicken Dip

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves

1 (8-ounce) bottle hot sauce (prefer Louisiana Hot Sauce)

2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened

1 (16-ounce) bottle ranch dressing

1/2 -3/4 cup chopped celery

1 (8-ounce) package grated Monterey Jack cheese (or cheddar cheese)

Boil chicken breasts until cooked through. Cool and shred. In a medium mixing bowl, combine shredded chicken with entire bottle of hot sauce. Spread chicken mixture in a lightly greased 9x13-inch baking dish, making an even layer. In a saucepan, combine cream cheese and ranch dressing over medium heat until smooth. Pour cream cheese mixture over the chicken. Sprinkle with chopped celery and then with the shredded cheese. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 30-40 minutes or until bubbly. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Serve warm with sturdy tortilla chips and celery sticks. Serves 8 to 10. (Carol Wheeler – Linden, Michigan)

Fried Mozzarella

1 pound block mozzarella cheese

2 eggs, beaten

1/4 cup water

1-1/2 cups Italian-seasoned bread crumbs

1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic

1/2 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon dried basil

2/3 cup flour

1/3 cup corn starch

Vegetable oil, for frying

Slice the block of cheese lengthwise into 1/2-inch sections. Cut each section in half. Beat the eggs with water and set aside. Mix the bread crumbs, garlic, oregano and basil and set aside. Blend the flour with cornstarch and set aside. Heat vegetable oil for deep frying to 350 degrees. Dip cheese in flour, then in egg wash and then coat with bread crumbs. Place carefully in hot oil and fry until golden brown. This should only take a matter of seconds, be sure to watch the cheese closely. Drain on paper towels and serve with your favorite pasta sauce. Serves 6 to 8.
(Gina Pittman – Wilson, North Carolina)

Strawberry Salad

Fresh baby spinach leaves, washed and dried

Bottled poppy seed dressing

Fresh strawberries, thinly sliced

Feta cheese, crumbled

Sliced almonds, toasted

Sliced bacon, cooked and crumbled

Use quantities to taste. In a large bowl, toss spinach with poppy seed dressing.

Place spinach on individual chilled salad plates. Top each salad with strawberries, feta cheese, toasted almonds and crumbled bacon. (Rhonda O'Neal Davis – Wilson, North Carolina)

Santa Fe Soup

2 pounds ground sirloin or ground turkey

1 small onion, chopped

2 (16-ounce) cans white kernel corn

1 (16-ounce) can dark red kidney beans

1 (16-ounce) can pinto beans

1 (16-ounce) can black beans

2 (16-ounce) cans diced tomatoes

1 (4-ounce) can green chilies

2 packages ranch dressing mix

2 packages taco seasoning mix

2 cups water

Brown meat in a large skillet until cooked through. Drain meat and add diced onion, ranch dressing mix and taco seasoning mix. Mix well to combine. Pour all canned vegetables into a crock pot. Add meat mixture and 2 cups of water. Cover and cook for at least 2 hours or until vegetables are tender. Serves 10 to 12. (Lisa Shingleton Palumbo – Palm Harbor, Florida)

Slow Cooker Chili

3 pounds ground beef, cooked and drained

2 (16-ounce) cans tomato sauce

1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped

1 tablespoon chili powder

1 packet chili seasoning

Freshly ground black pepper

Salt, to taste

Place all ingredients in a crock pot; stir to mix. Cover and simmer for 5 hours on low. Top chili with shredded Mexican-style cheese, sour cream and chopped chives. (Leigh Ferrell Gay – Wilson, North Carolina)

Herb-Roasted Lamb

6 large garlic cloves (unpeeled)

1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary leaves

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1 (3-1/2 pound) boneless leg of lamb, trimmed and tied

1 small bag Yukon gold potatoes

1 fennel bulb, chopped

1 large onion, chopped

6 whole carrots, peeled

2 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place the oven rack in the lower third of the oven so the lamb will sit in the middle of the oven. Peel 3 of the cloves of garlic and place them in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the steel blade. Add the rosemary, 1 tablespoon salt, 1 teaspoon pepper and butter. Process until the garlic and rosemary are finely minced. Thoroughly coat the top and sides of the lamb with the rosemary mixture. Allow to sit at room temperature for 30 to 60 minutes. Toss the remaining unpeeled garlic with the potatoes, fennel, onion and carrots in a bowl with the olive oil. Sprinkle with salt. Place the lamb on top of the potatoes and roast for 1-1/2 to 2 hours or until the internal temperature of the lamb is 135 degrees (rare) or 145 degrees (medium). Remove from oven and put the lamb on a platter; cover tightly with aluminum foil. Allow the lamb to rest for about 20 minutes. Slice and serve with the vegetables. Serves 6. (Brad Akerman – Indianapolis, Indiana)

Corn Pudding

1 (15-ounce) can corn, drained

1 (15-ounce) can creamed corn

1/2 cup sugar

2 tablespoons flour

4 eggs

2/3 cup butter, melted

1-1/2 cups milk

Pinch of salt

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl. Pour into a greased 9x13-inch pan. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Serves 6 to 8. (Janet Viverette Wheeler – Wilson, North Carolina)

Hilda's Sweet Potatoes

1/2 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup flour

1/2 stick butter, melted

1/2 cup chopped nuts

1 (29-ounce) can sweet potatoes, drained

1 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla

1 teaspoon nutmeg

2 eggs

1/2 stick butter, softened

1/2 cup milk

Combine brown sugar, flour, melted butter and nuts in a small bowl; set aside. Mix remaining ingredients in a large bowl with an electric mixer. Pour into a lightly greased baking dish. Sprinkle sweet potato mixture with brown sugar-nut topping. Bake, uncovered, in a 350 degree oven for 45 to 50 minutes or until heated through. Serves 4 to 6. (Elaine Bailey – Beaufort, South Carolina)

Italian New Potatoes

10-12 new potatoes, halved

1 package Italian dressing mix

1 stick butter, melted

Combine melted butter with dressing mix. Place potatoes in a lightly greased baking dish. Pour seasoned butter mixture over potatoes. Cover and bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 40-45 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Serves 4 to 6. (April Anning Whalen – Raleigh, North Carolina)

Toffee

2-1/2 sticks butter, melted

1 cup brown sugar, packed

Graham cracker cookies

Chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)

Line a baking pan with aluminum foil and spray lightly with baking spray. Lay graham crackers in a single layer in pan. Combine melted butter with brown sugar and pour evenly over graham crackers. Top with chopped nuts, if desired. Bake in a preheated 400 degree oven for 6 to 8 minutes or until graham crackers are dry and crispy. Cool and break into pieces. Store in an air-tight container. Serves 10 to 12. (Mary Harris Jones – Richmond, Virginia)

Quick and Easy Chocolate Chip Cookie Dessert

Chocolate chip cookies (prefer Keebler brand)

Milk

Frozen whipped topping (prefer Cool Whip)

Dip whole cookies in milk and place in a single layer in a glass dish. Top with a layer of whipped topping. Repeat layers, ending with whipped topping on top. Crumble some of the remaining cookies and sprinkle on top of dessert. Refrigerate until ready to serve. (Larry Dean Boykin – Fuquay Varina, North Carolina)

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