

Recipes perfect for St. Patrick's Day

It's almost March and that means St. Patrick's Day! If you have a special recipe you like to make for the St. Patrick's Day, please share them with us. I will get started with this way to make the famous Shamrock Shake at your home. This recipe makes enough for 1 serving. I love these shakes!

Copycat Shamrock Shake

3 scoops Vanilla ice cream
1/4 cup heavy cream (whipping cream)
1/2 tsp mint extract
6 drops green food coloring

Mix ice cream, cream and mint extract in a blender. Add green food coloring.

This next recipe has nothing to do with St. Patrick's Day, and I did print it a few years ago, but I want to share it again. I love those big soft pretzels and I found this recipe to make my own at home. This could be a fun thing to make with your kids or grandkids. Let them shape the pretzels anyway they want! I also included a recipe for a cheese dip for the pretzels. They are also good served with mustard.

Soft Pretzels

1 pkg yeast
1 cup warm water
2 Tbsp butter, softened
1 Tbsp sugar
1/2 tsp salt
4 cups water
2 Tbsp baking soda
2 3/4 cups flour
coarse salt

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add butter, sugar, salt and 2 cups flour. Beat until smooth. Add flour a little at a time, using enough to make a soft dough. Cover and let rise for 20 minutes.

Punch down the dough. Divide into 12 pieces. On a lightly floured board, roll each piece

Let's Cook

By Linda Hoskins



Cheese Dip for Pretzels

8 oz. processed American cheese
3 oz. cream cheese, cubed
1 to 2 Tbsp milk

Combine the two cheeses, microwave on high for 2 to 3 minutes until melted, stirring occasionally. Stir in milk.

If you have a recipe to share, please send to letscook!@heraldpubs.com or mail to Mascoutah Herald, PO Box C, Mascoutah IL 62258. Thanks, and Happy Cooking!

Sun, plants and soil – and the energy produced

All of us are very familiar with these three things in Central Illinois. We live in one of the most productive farming areas in the world! But I have recently been viewing our local acreage from a whole different point of view.

This point of view starts with the amount of energy that is being transferred from the sun into the plants. Light energy is captured inside plants by cells containing chlorophyll. Chlorophyll can be thought of as plant blood. This plant blood is found within the part of a cell called a Chloroplast.

Why is talking about chlorophyll as plant blood important? Because I think it is

fascinating that our planet has built a complete system to transfer solar energy into energy we can use to create health daily. If we didn't have this ability, none of us would be here today.

The chlorophyll then transfers the sun's energy inside the chloroplast into energy for the plant when carbon dioxide (from the air) and water are combined to create oxygen and glucose. The oxygen is released into our atmosphere and the glucose is used by the plant to grow more leaves, stems and plant.

The other part of this system is the soil. The soil houses trillions and trillions of mi-

Real Life Wellness

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

crobes, bacteria, viruses, protozoa, parasites and all kinds of other germs. Topsoil also contains all the minerals and many vitamins necessary for the plant to adapt to its environment around it. The better the topsoil is, the healthier the plant can become and the

more nutritious it can be for somebody who eats it.

So, if we have a bright sunny day, beautiful green plants and rich diverse topsoil, we can transfer plenty of energy from the sun into our body to create health. But what if one or more of these three things

become weak or impaired? What will that do to our ability to create health?

Our health boils down to two factors, Diversity and Adaptability. If we have enough different types of genetic data available to our cells to fight off all the different invaders to our body, we are fully adaptable. But if we do not have enough diversity in the amount of genetic data, we have available to provide to our immune system to fight off invaders, we can get sick.

With this in mind, we can only control two of the three parts of this sun, plant and soil equation. The more diversity we can create in the plants and

in the soil, the more adaptable our ability to get and stay healthy. So, for us non-farmers, I will eat all kinds of different plants and animals to get as much different types of genetic data to give my immune system as much information as I can to fight disease.

It's up to our farmers to fight the fight of keeping our soil strong and healthy. The soil is the vital link of transfer from sun energy into the plant to be eaten by us to fuel our future health potential. If the soil dies, we will not be far behind it. So please keep up that fight!

A journey of purpose

Have you watched it yet? In my last writing, I mentioned a movie that touched me and left a big impression on me and made me think a lot about this trip that my husband and I are planning. The movie, in case you have forgotten, is The Last Tourist, and I watched it on Hulu. Tourism needs to be considered thoughtfully and taken seriously.

I like to dream about a relaxing lunch on a palm-covered patio, steps from the ocean, a tropical fruity drink in my hand, and the gentle sound of waves lulling me into a sleepy daze. That is not really how it would be though. Seagulls would eat my sandwich. There would be kids screaming and splashing in the water from a nearby hotel. I would get sunburned after 5 minutes of being outside. And there would be bugs. No Caribbean drum beats in the background or anything.

Holding It All Together

By Amy McCollom

The truth is this: Nothing is ever as good, or as bad, as you think it's going to be. We, humans, have huge and wonderful imaginations and we have watched A LOT of movies and videos in our lifetimes, and our brains put together some great scenarios of things to imagine. And when reality doesn't produce those results, we get disappointed.

Planning this trip has really made me dig deep into myself, to evaluate what I want versus what I only thought I wanted. It has helped me discover

who I am, honestly. And I am not the person that I thought I was. Thank goodness!

When we decide to travel, not only do we have to decide where, but we have to decide why. Why this place over that place? Why the mountains, or the beach, or the desert, or the jungle, or that city, or a secluded island? What is our purpose for the trip? Perhaps that is the first question we should ask ourselves.

Once we know why we are wanting to travel, then the elimination list begins to build.

Here is what I REALLY want to address today. The places I would NOT want to visit, and why. I would not want to visit places against my beliefs.

I DO NOT WANT TO VISIT HAUNTED PLACES. The only ghost I'm interested in knowing is the Holy Ghost, and all the other ones can stay far away from me. I am a Christian, filled with the Holy Spirit, and trying every day to live to the best of my ability so Jesus would be pleased with my life. I do not have any intention of knowingly going and playing patty cake with any un-holy spirit. The Bible is clear about abstaining from any kind of evil, and I do think that avoiding "known" haunted hotspots would be considered a good idea in that light. (* 1 Thessalonians 5:22 King James Version 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.)

I think we should all use

our heads, especially when traveling, so checking out the areas we plan to visit is an absolute must. That is why I was alarmed to find out that quite a lot of destinations are hotbeds for paranormal activity and ghost sightings. There are hotels in most cities with ghost stories. Gave me the heebie jeebies.

Even Branson, Missouri, where we have been thinking of visiting because it is only a day's drive and still has a beautiful nature-rich environment to explore, has its share of ghostly apparitions and scarings. I am not interested in the least about ghosts or hauntings, except only to avoid them like the plague (which by the way is still alive and well in certain locations, please do your research before traveling.) For this reason, my aversion to ghosts and such, I particularly avoid such places with high volumes of that type

of tourism. I don't play with no ghosts!

If it were up to me alone, I would be the opposite of a ghost and ghoulish hunter, and be a Holy Ghost hunter, tracking down large outpourings of the Holy Spirit, such as is happening at Asbury University in Kentucky right now. I would go there in a heartbeat and surrender in the glorious outpouring of God's Spirit and help pray for others who were there to lay their burdens down before the Lord. Perhaps that is my calling after all.

Waiting, waiting to feel the deep down assurance that I make the right choice in my journey plans. For now, I'm here to research, to help, to work, to love, and to keep doing what I'm doing for as long as God has me planted here. Take care, my friends. And travel carefully.

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