

CHRONICLES OF SAM Q



BY SAM Q

CELEBRATION TIME.... come on!!

THE above lyrics of "Kool & the Gang" always comes to mind whenever any festival looms to view. I hope this time I got the name of the group right, because last time when I quoted the song 'Let it be', I gave away all the credit to John Lennon, instead of the deserving Paul McCartney. And, I still would have been oblivious to this huge gaffe, if my good friend Joy, an avid reader of my diary did not point it out. Thank you sweetie, you are a life saver. I think I must have gone down notches in the pop song lovers world but as I said to Joy before.... I should not have name dropped and should have just stuck to saying.... Beatles. Anyway, diary, forgive me for straying from my point. This year, three major celebrations are coming in quick succession. Eid-ul-Azha, Christmas and New Years. We Bangalis do celebrate with full gusto all the above mentioned occasions. But this year we hardly have reasons to celebrate. I am sorry guys, to put a damper on everything, but really, SIDR has just taken out the joy from everything. I personally feel as if I am enveloped in noxious fumes whenever I think about the helpless people engulfed in their unimaginable misery.

Yesterday as I was going through the magazine, 'Forum', a monthly publication of the Daily Star newspaper, two articles really touched my heart. Both were so close to home that I photocopied them to pass them among friends in case they missed reading them. One article was by Kamal Hosain, titled 'Circle of Death', and one was by Manzoor Elahi Chowdhury, titled 'Sleepwalking Nation'. Kudos to both the writers in portraying such poignant and realistic journalism.

And from me to you diary, I am not going to give a whole spiel, because I know people are busy, but all I want to say is, let us do whatever we can, in our own way, so that it makes a difference in someone's life. To see people denuded of the very basic requirements of life, is so hard. Right after SIDR happened, I was running around like a headless chicken trying to figure out what I could do to help. It seemed like everybody was doing so much, but I wanted to, but did not know where to go or where to start. So then I suddenly thought why not help the people I know in my life? Like the school bua from The Aga Khan School, Shefali. Apparently her house is one of the millions of houses blown away. So I started digging and came up with a few deserving candidates. So people, gather up family and friends, make a list of people who you all know needs help, make a plan how to acquire, donate and distribute evenly and feel good to be a part of the re-building process.

Nothing can bolix up something so simple. Only a little bit of planning and organisational skills is required here and of course the most important of all, the willingness to help.

So happy holidays diary.
Celebrate the Sam Q way!



g u s t a t o r y g a a

Chocolate Oat Bars

Ingredients:

200g butter melted
2 cups sugar (preferably brown)
2 eggs lightly beaten
1 tsp vanilla essence
2 1/2 cups of flour
1 tsp baking powder
3 cups oats

Filling:

300g chocolate chopped
1 can of condensed milk
30g butter
1 cup chopped walnuts or almonds

Method:

Pre-heat oven; lightly grease two rectangular pans.

Combine butter, sugar, eggs and essence in large bowl. Add sifted flour, baking powder & oats. Mix well. Divide into 2 equal portions. Press each portion of mixture evenly over prepared pans. Refrigerate both pans while preparing filling.

For filling, combine chocolate, condensed milk and butter in a small pan. Stir over low heat until chocolate is melted.

Add nuts. Mix well.

Spread filling evenly over both the bases. Bake in moderate oven for about 30 minutes. Cool in pans. Cover and refrigerate for several hours before cutting into bars.

Rich Fruit Cake

Ingredients:

1 kg of raisins
125g of quartered glace cherries
1 cup of orange juice

2 tbsp marmalade
200g butter softened

1 cup brown sugar
1 tsp grated orange rind
1 tsp grated lemon rind
4 eggs
2 cups plain flour
2 tsp of mixed spice (nutmeg & mace)
1 cup blanched whole almonds
1/4 cup 7Up.

Method:

Pre-heat oven. Grease a 19 cm square cake pan & line them with two layers of baking paper in a large bowl.

Beat butter, sugar and rinds in a small bowl.

Add eggs one at a time until combined. Add butter mixture to fruit mixture. Mix in sifted flour & spice. Spread mixture evenly into pan.

Decorate top with almonds. Bake uncovered for about three hours or until cooked. Cool overnight.

Cappuccino cheesecake

Makes 12 servings.

Crust:
100g milk-coffee biscuits
75g dark chocolate, coarsely chopped
1/4 cup (70g) packed dark brown sugar
a pinch of ground nutmeg
40g hot, melted unsalted butter

Filling:

500g cream cheese (at room temperature)
1/2 cup sugar
1 tsp plain flour
1/4 cup strongly brewed cappuccino flavoured

coffee

1 tbsp cappuccino flavoured coffee
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 large eggs
Topping:
1/4 cup fresh cream (whipped cream optional)
1 tsp sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract

Method:

For the crust, finely grind biscuits, chopped chocolate, brown sugar and nutmeg in a food processor. Add hot butter and process until crumbs begin to stick together, for about 1 minute, scraping down the sides. Transfer to 19cm springform pan with 9cm-high sides.

Wrap plastic wrap around fingers and press crumb mixture firmly over bottom of pan.

For the filling, preheat oven to 175°C. Using an electric mixer, blend cream cheese and sugar in large bowl. Beat in flour. In a small bowl, stir brewed coffee, ground coffee and vanilla until combined; beat into cream cheese mixture. Beat in eggs one at a time, occasionally scraping down sides of bowl. Pour filling over crust. Place cheesecake on rimmed baking sheet. Bake on the middle shelf of oven until the top is brown, puffed and cracked at edges, about 45 minutes. Transfer cheesecake to rack. Cool for 15 minutes while preparing topping (top of cheesecake will fall slightly). Maintain temperature.

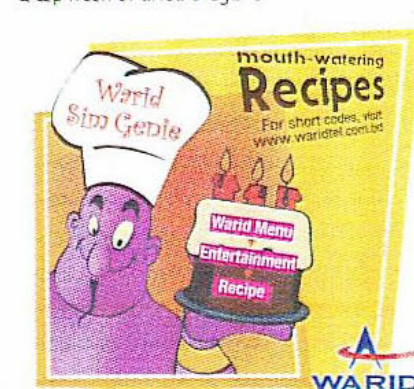
For topping, whisk cream, sugar and vanilla in medium bowl. Pour topping over hot cheesecake, spreading to cover com-

pletely. Bake until topping is set, about 10 minutes. Refrigerate hot cheesecake on rack until cool, about 3 hours. Loosen cheesecake from pan sides with a knife; serve on platter.

Mutton Souvlaki

Ingredients:

1 1/5 cups natural yoghurt
1 tsp sugar
2 tsp lemon juice
2 cloves garlic crushed
2 tsp fresh or dried oregano



2 tsp ground cumin
500g diced mutton
1 (130g) cucumber seeded & chopped
1/4 cup chopped mint
1 tsp olive oil
4 large pitta bread
75g coriander chopped
2 medium tomatoes chopped
1 medium onion sliced thinly

Method:

Combine yoghurt, juice, garlic, oregano & cumin in a bowl; remove half and reserve. Toss lamb in remaining yoghurt mixture. Thread lamb into four wooden skewers. Stir cucumber and mint into reserved yoghurt mixture. Drizzle mutton with oil. Grill, barbecue, bake until cooked.

Warm pitta. Divide coriander, tomato & onion among pitta. Top with mutton skewers and yoghurt mixture. Roll pitta tightly to enclose, hold firmly, pull out skewers and discard.

Iced Christmas cupcakes

Makes 12. Preparation time 1 hour.
Cooking 45 mins (plus cooling time)

Ingredients:
500 g dried mixed fruit
125g butter, chopped
1/2 cup (125ml) water
1 cup (200g) firmly packed dark brown sugar
1/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda
12 paper cases
2 eggs, beaten lightly
1/2 cup (75g) plain flour
1/2 cup (75g) flour
1 tsp baking powder

Method:

Combine the fruit, butter, water sugar and soda in a large saucepan; stir over a medium heat until the butter is melted and the sugar dissolved. Bring to boil; remove from heat and stir in the essence. Transfer to large heatproof bowl; cool to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 150°C/130°C fan-forced. Line 12 paper cases.

Stir eggs into the fruit mixture, then the

sifted flours; divide mixture evenly among prepared pans. Bake, uncovered, for about 40 minutes. Cover hot cakes with a clean tea towel while still in the pan; cool in pan.

To decorate:

Make butter icing. (4 ounce unsalted butter and 9 ounce sifted icing sugar). Spread on top with spatula. Top with chocolates or sprinklers. You can also add food colour to the icing to make the cupcakes bright and festive.

Butterscotch sauce

Ingredients:

150g golden syrup or honey
50g butter
75g soft brown sugar
50g granulated sugar
150ml cream
a few drops vanilla extract

Method:

Place the golden syrup, butter and sugars in a small saucepan. Heat gently, allowing the mixture to slowly melt and dissolve while stirring occasionally. This should take 5 to 7 minutes. Continue to cook for another 5 minutes, then gradually stir in the cream and vanilla extract until combined. Pour over ice cream or baked apples for a quick desert.

Layered Potato and chicken pie

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Ingredients:

6 (690g) medium potatoes boiled, peeled and thickly sliced.
3 chicken breast fillets
1 cup water
2 tbsp white vinegar
2 bay leaves

1 strip of lemon rind

60g butter
3 tbsp plain flour
3/4 cup milk
2 tbsp mayonnaise
2 tsp prepared mild mustard
1/4 cup lemon juice

Topping:

2/3 cup fresh whole meal breadcrumbs
1/3 cup grated cheddar cheese
Preheat oven to moderate 180 C. Brush a deep oven-proof dish lightly with melted butter.

Place chicken in a medium pan 'with water, vinegar, bay leaves and lemon rind. Bring to boil and simmer, cover for 10 minutes. Remove the chicken and set aside. Continue to boil stock, uncovered, until it has reduced to 1 cup. Discard bay leaves. Cut each breast into 6 slices.

Heat the butter in medium pan; add flour. Stir over low heat for 2 minutes or until flour mixture is lightly golden. Add the reserved stock and milk gradually to pan, stirring until mixture is smooth. Stir constantly over medium heat for 5 minutes or until mixture boils and thickens; boil a further 1 minute. Remove from heat. Leave the mixture to cool for about 5 minutes. Stir in the mayonnaise, mustard and lemon juice.

Place half the potatoes over base of dish, top with chicken and finish with remaining potatoes. Pour sauce mixture evenly over top. Sprinkle on combined Topping ingredients. Bake for 20 minutes or until heated through. Serve at once with a salad of your choice.

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

