

What's the Buzz at Reformation?

Feb. 6, 2022

Feb. 14	Mon.	Valentine's Day
Feb. 21	Mon.	Ronald McDonald House
Mar. 1	Tues.	TBD – Pancake supper at Reformation
Mar. 2	Weds.	Ash Wednesday service 7:30pm (at Reformation)

Oranges

A long time ago, people called oranges apples. *Sinaasappel*, the Dutch word for orange, actually means "China apple." The three golden apples that Hoppomenes threw down in his footrace against Atalanta might have been oranges.

Oranges grew in China about 20 million years ago. This is before there were people there. Eventually people carried oranges and their seeds to Europe, where oranges were so expensive only the rich could enjoy them. Orangeries, greenhouses for the cultivation of the warm-climate plants, were built for the kings, queens and other wealthy people. No wonder oranges were put into Christmas stockings as gifts.

Christopher Columbus is credited with bringing orange trees to the New World. Ponce de Leon, another explorer, brought them to Florida. Today, most oranges in the US are grown either in Florida (9 billion per year) or California (3.75 billion per year). The largest orange producer of orange juice in the world is Brazil, followed by the US.

The navel orange got its name because the one end looks like a belly button. That "navel" is actually a miniature orange. Americans drink about 4.7 gallons of orange juice per year. In one episode of *Downton Abbey*, a lady's maid wins the affection of Lady Crawley by bringing her a glass of orange juice with her breakfast tray, a nod to Lady Crawley's American upbringing .

A weird fact about orange and other citrus seeds is that a seed from one fruit can grow into a tree that bears almost any of the others. Therefore, commercial growers grow their fruit from scions, small branches of a tree that are grafted onto the rootstocks of other established trees. So, most Florida orange trees are grafted onto the roots of lemon trees.

Source: Robbins, Ken. *Food for Thought*. (New York: Roaring Book Press, 2009)

Feb. 6, 2022 (p. 2)

Johnny Marzetti

Time: 1 hour if you bake it, 35 minutes if not.

Serves: 6

1 lb. ground beef (lean or not)

1 large onion, chopped

1 clove garlic, minced (optional)

1/2 cup chopped green pepper (optional)

1/2 lb. mushrooms, sliced (optional)

2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato sauce OR about 14-16 oz. spaghetti sauce

salt and pepper to taste

12-16 oz. pasta (either macaroni type or egg noodles)

2 c. shredded cheddar cheese (some people like American instead)

In a large pot, about 6-8-qt. (I prefer this to a skillet because you'll be adding a lot to it), cook the ground beef, onion, garlic, and green pepper until meat is no longer pink and vegetables are almost as tender as you like them. Drain off fat.

Add mushrooms, tomato sauce and seasonings, then reduce heat to simmer 10-15 minutes, uncovered.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350F. Cook pasta in boiling water according to pkg. directions. Drain well in colander but do not rinse. Add the cooked pasta to the meat mixture. Stir in cheese. At this point, if you don't want to bake it, just stir the cheese until it melts.

But if you want to bake it, transfer mixture to a 9x13" baking dish and bake about 25-30 minutes til cheese melts and there is a bit of crust around the edges.

What's the Buzz at Reformation?

Feb. 13, 2022

Fitness Trackers

Fitness tracker bracelets are often worn by people who aim to get in better physical condition. But how accurate are they? A journalist named Eric Chemi did an informal study, wearing nine at the same time (he had tried wearing ten, but one wouldn't sync with his smartphone). Brands included were Fitbit (2 models), Garmin, Polar, Misfit, Jawbone, Withings, and Apple (2 watches). Note: Chemi says these results are not scientific, just his personal experience.

Step counting was the first experiment, and the results after one walk varied by 20%. Disappointing to think that if you walked 10,000 steps, the counter might only say you did 8,000. The Fitbit ChargeHR was the most accurate, while the cheaper Fitbit Flex either undercounted or overcounted, so there was variance even within brands.

Monitoring heart rate was the another area that Chemi tested. The two Apple watches were the most accurate, but along with most of the devices, they undercounted a heartbeat of 140 by at least 3 beats per minute.

If you want to know how far you walked, that number is also up for grabs. The Withings Pulse 02 matched what the treadmill said, if the treadmill was accurate. The longer Chemi walked, the more variance the fitness trackers showed. When he walked 0.5 miles, the tracker results showed anywhere from 0.3 to .51 miles. After 2 hours of walking, the trackers said he walked from .51 to 1.12 miles.

If you're going to use a fitness tracker, it can be great for motivation, and if you fall short, hey, just blame the tracker for not being accurate!

Source:

Chemi, Eric. "Here's What Happened When I Wore 10 Fitness Trackers at Once". CNBC 5-26-16.

Easy Coconut Cream Pie

Time: 10 min, plus 4 hours chilling time

Serves: 8

2 (3.4 oz.) pkgs. vanilla instant pudding

2 c. cold milk

2 c. thawed whipped topping, divided

1 c. shredded coconut, divided (sweetened or not)

1 prepared graham cracker pie crust

In a bowl, beat pudding mixes and milk with a whisk or fork about 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup whipped topping and 3/4 cup coconut. Pour mixture into pie crust.

Refrigerate until firm, about 4 hours. Meanwhile, toast remaining coconut.

Top chilled pie with remaining whipped topping and sprinkle with toasted coconut.

What's the Buzz at Reformation?

Feb. 20, 2022

Pete Seeger: singer, songwriter, and political activist

Pete Seeger wrote some of the most popular songs of the 20th century, including "If I Had a Hammer," "We Shall Overcome," and "Turn!, Turn!, Turn!". The lyrics to the latter were mostly a paraphrase of Ecclesiastes 3:1, King James Version. You wouldn't expect a song quoting the Bible to reach #1 on the American Top Hits List, but it did. To this day, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" is the #1 hit with the oldest words, traditionally attributed to King Solomon.

Seeger's songs and life are often about political issues. "If I Had a Hammer" has the message of possibility of social change. He got on the wrong side of the House Un-American Activities Committee and was subpoenaed in 1955. Rather than **invoking the Fifth Amendment as so many others did, Seeger told the committee** that being forced to discuss his political views and associations would be a violation of his First Amendment right to free speech. He was convicted of contempt and sentenced to a ten year prison term, but the case was thrown out the next year.

The folk music boom in the 1960s and 1970s tied in well with Seeger's political activism. He promoted cleaning up the environment, fair labor practices, peace, and civil rights. Over the years, he has given away a lot of money to worthy causes.

Sources:

Hatch, Robert and William. *The Hero Project*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006).

Wikipedia.org. "Seeger, Pete" and "Turn Turn Turn."

The Holy Bible, King James Version.

Chicken Parmesan with Ratatouille (rat-a-TWEE) Sauce

Time: 40 min. Serves 4 (recipe can be doubled or halved, if halving reduce only the amount of chicken - - leave the amount of ratatouille the same)

Ratatouille

- 1/4 c. lemon juice**
- 3 T. olive, canola, or vegetable oil, plus more for brushing on grill**
- 2 T. balsamic vinegar**
- 1 tsp. dried basil**
- 1 tsp. sugar**
- 1 tsp. salt, optional**
- pinch black pepper**
- 2 large tomatoes, each sliced into 4 rounds**
- 1 eggplant, sliced into lengthwise slabs 1/2" thick**
- 1 red and 1 yellow pepper, quartered; core, seeds & stems removed**
- 1 zucchini, ends cut off, sliced in half lengthwise**
- 1 red onion, peeled, ends cut off, sliced into 4 thick rounds**
- 2 scallions, root end cut off, but otherwise leave it as is**

Chicken Parmesan (affectionately named "chicken parm")

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts or thighs**
- up to 1/2 tsp. salt, optional (I substitute 1/2-1 tsp. dried tarragon)**
- 1 T. butter, preferably unsalted**
- 1/2 c. grated Parmesan or Parmigiano Reggano cheese**

Preheat grill to medium-high. In a large bowl, using a fork or whisk, stir lemon juice with oil, vinegar, basil, sugar, salt and pepper. Set dressing aside.

Brush vegetables with oil, then put them on grill (it might need to be done in two batches). Grill until tender and lightly charred, turning often, 6-8 minutes; tomatoes and scallion will probably be done first. Move cooked veggies to a cutting board as soon as they are done.

Chop tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, & red onion. Thickly slice zucchini about the size of french fries (3/8"-1/2" thick). Chop scallions. Toss veggies in dressing.

Put chicken on cutting board, cover with a piece of plastic wrap, and pound with a mallet or similar until 1/4" thick. Sprinkle both sides of chicken with salt or tarragon. Season with pepper. In big non-stick skillet over med-high heat, melt butter. Add chicken and cook 1-2 min, then flip. Remove from heat, reduce heat to low. Spoon 1/4 cup ratatouille over each piece of chicken, and spread out to edges. Sprinkle with cheese. Return pan to heat, cover, and cook about 3-4 minutes until done. Store extra ratatouille in fridge or freezer for another meal.

What's the Buzz at Reformation?

Feb. 27, 2022

Gardening Tricks from LittleBuddha.com and Me

Homemade peat-pot substitute - take empty cardboard tubes from toilet paper or paper towels (cut the latter down to size). Cut three flaps in one end and fold in. Place in a tray so the flaps don't collapse since you're not going to tape them. Put potting soil and seeds in and water until ready to plant out. When planting out, keep the bottoms closed with one hand, and sink tubes into the ground. Tubes will disintegrate.

Measuring tool - take any long-handled tool, lay it on the ground next to a yardstick or ruler. Starting at the top end of the tool handle, use a permanent marker to mark off inches up to 12 or 18 inches. Then you'll always have a measuring tool at your disposal without having to buy one or going back to the garage to retrieve it. [Or, if you take a moment to measure the size of your hand, your trowel, and your shoe, you can guesstimate it.]

Garden markers - if you have plastic markers you want to change, just sand off the permanent marker ink. You can cut several new markers from a clean plastic cottage cheese container. Or, write or paint on smooth stones and lay them on the ground. [I take the seed packet, tape the top shut, cut a little hole in the center of the bottom, and put it on top of a wooden garden stake.]

Cloches - If a frost threatens a small plant, just put a clay pot upside down over it, and remove it in the morning (or when no frost danger). [Or sheets or newspapers.]

Aphid control - wrap wide adhesive tape, such as packing tape, sticky side out, around one of your hands. Then gently stroke infested leaves, especially the undersides, to remove aphids.

Water reservoirs - take a disposable plastic water bottle with lid on. Cut the bottom off, and drill a few holes in the cap. Set the bottle upside down in the soil and fill with water. The water will drip down into the soil.

Saving Water - After cooking veggies or eggless pasta in plain water, let water cool off to for garden use. [Keep a clean gallon jug by bathtub, before showering let water

run out of the bath faucet into jug til water is right temperature for your shower.
Leftover water or rinse water (if no detergent or food) from pet water dishes.

Feb. 27, 2022 (p. 2)

Lemon Meringue Pie (adapted from Victoria magazine, April 1990)

Note: Read the recipe before starting. Make this pie the same day you plan to serve it, as meringue gets sticky or beads if refrigerated.

Time: 1 hour 15 min. (longer if pie shell is not prebaked and then frozen 1 hour)

Pie Crust:

1 pie shell, prebaked 15 minutes, then frozen 1 hour.

Lemon Filling:

1 c. sugar, divided

1/2 c. cornstarch

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 c. cold water

1 1/2 c. hot water

2 T. unsalted butter

3 egg yolks (save the whites for meringue)

1/3 c. lemon juice

1 tsp. grated lemon zest

1 tsp. vanilla extract

Meringue:

3 egg whites

1/3 cup sugar

Confectioner's sugar for garnish

Preheat oven to 325. In the top of double boiler, combine 1/2 cup sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Slowly whisk in cold water until smooth. Whisk in hot water.

Cook over boiling water, stirring constantly 5-8 minutes until thickened. Cover and continue cooking 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until very thick.

Reduce heat. Stir in butter until melted.

In a small bowl, slowly whisk in 1/2 cup sugar into egg yolks. Stir in 1/2 cup of the hot mixture. Stir egg yolk mixture into top of double boiler.

Cook uncovered over simmering water, stirring constantly, 10 min. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice, zest, and vanilla. Pour into pie shell.

In mixer bowl (preferably small), beat egg whites at high speed until soft peaks form. Gradually add 1/3 cup sugar, beat at high speed until stiff and shiny.

With a pastry tube (or baggie with a corner cut off and fitted with pastry tip), pipe meringue in a lattice design. Keep piping til all meringue is used. Bake 15-20 min. at 325F. Cool on rack 4 hours. Garnish just before serving.