

**Walt's Comfort Food
Recipes From
Mel's Diner**

**Featured in the
Lady Justice
Mystery Comedy Novel
Series**

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Walt's Comfort Food Recipes From Mel's Diner
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This book is a work of fiction.

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The recipes from page #42 to the end of the book are borrowed from the cookbook *Second Hand Recipes* by my daughter-in-law, Tresa Thornhill.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Walt Williams and I'm a seventy-year-old cop

In my five years on the Kansas City Police Force, I have been kidnapped, beaten, thrown off of a roof and off of a moving train. I have nearly been blown up more times than I care to remember.

Sure, it's stressful, but it's the life of a cop and the life I have chosen.

Some folks, when overwhelmed by stress, turn to booze or drugs --- not me. When I'm wound tighter than a drum and I'm not sure I can look one more bad guy in the eye, I turn to the one thing that I know will always pull me through --- comfort food!

There's just something about a big platter of biscuits and gravy that can turn a dismal day into something more bearable.

Oh, yes, I know that stuff cooked in butter is not good for me. My wife, Maggie, has convinced me of that, so my normal diet consists of the healthy stuff.

But after one of those days when my life seems to be hanging by a thread, I throw caution to the wind and go to the place that serves the best comfort food in Kansas City --- Mel's Diner!

My intention is not to convert you into a comfort food junkie --- you're free to choose your own vices, but one day, if you're feeling as low as a snake's belly in a wagon rut, you might try one of my comfort food recipes from Mel's Diner.

It won't make the IRS auditor go away, but for a few precious minutes, you just won't care!

COMFORT FOOD

One day your dog dies, your wife runs off with your best friend, your custom pick-up with the chrome wheels gets hit by a train, your dad gets five years in Leavenworth ---- Hold on! --- This sounds like a really bad country song.

For most of us, life isn't that bad, but who hasn't had a dead battery, or the bottom fall out of the trash sack, or toilet paper stuck to the bottom of their shoe?

It's just life. Right?

So what happens when the fickle finger of fate pokes us in the eye?

We need to be comforted.

If you're one of the lucky ones, maybe you have a spouse or best friend who will give you a hug or a pat on the back and tell you everything will be OK.

For the rest of us, we turn to the very thing that has been ingrained in us from birth.

Think about it.

When a baby cries, mom sticks a

bottle of warm milk in its mouth and everything is great until it comes out the other end.

When a kid has to go to the doctor, he gets a lollipop to take the fear away.

A kid grumbles because he doesn't want to go to Aunt Franny's house, but is bribed by a stop at Micky D's.

Let's face it. We get through the rough spots in life by putting something yummy in our mouths.

It's called "comfort food."

All of us do it, except maybe the most die-hard health fanatics.

It's not the best thing for your body, but it's better than turning to demon rum or a nervous breakdown.

Just like the alcoholic who has a bottle stashed away for emergencies, we each have our personal source for comfort food.

If you are a good cook, you can whip up your own treats.

Maybe you go to Grandma's house.
I go to Mel's Diner.

Actually, the sign over his door should read, “Mel’s Comfort Food”.

Everything Mel serves tastes really yummy.

Why?

Because none of it is healthy.

Everything is full of calories, cholesterol, MSG, sugar, butter and grease.

So, if you’re looking for new healthy recipes, this is not the cookbook for you.

But if your kid just threw a baseball through the neighbor’s window and you need a little something to make you feel better, something from Mel’s Diner will do the trick.



The Secret Ingredient

All great cooks have a secret ingredient.

It's something they use over and over again that sets their dishes apart from everyone else's.

For the comfort food aficionado, that secret ingredient is ----

BUTTER!

Butter makes everything better!

Butter turns an ordinary dish into real comfort food.

We're not talking about oleo or the whipped stuff or 'I can't believe it's not butter'.

We're talking about *real* butter.

When I was a kid, I spent every possible moment at my grandparent's farm.

Grandpa milked cows by hand and we would take the fresh milk into the smokehouse and put it in the separator.

The big machine would spin and separate the cream from the skim milk.

After supper, while I was busy shooting locusts off the big maple trees with my BB gun, Grandma would sit on the porch swing and churn butter by hand.

Once in awhile, I would take my turn with the churn, but usually the process required more patience than I possessed as a six year old.

After the butter solidified, Grandma would spoon it into a special bowl and press the excess milk out with a big wooden paddle.

Grandma used that butter in just about everything she cooked.

Maybe that's why my memories of that special time are so pleasant.

Grandma cooked comfort food.

Oh, yes, I've read all the articles about butter being bad for your heart, full of cholesterol and fat.

My Grandpa ate her cooking for over fifty years and lived into his nineties.

Go figure.

Fortunately, we don't have to milk cows and churn our butter. It's right there

in the dairy case.

I can only give you this advice.

If you're down in the dumps, cook something in butter.

You'll feel better.

I guarantee it.

More Secret Ingredients

For years, nutritionists have been pushing the basic food groups, meat, dairy, grain and fruits and vegetables.

Of course, all of those things are wonderful if prepared correctly, but in my humble opinion, there should be one more category in the basic food group ---

GRAVY!

Gravy is a staple item for the comfort food enthusiast.

This smooth, creamy elixir is the most versatile of all comfort foods.

It can be eaten at any meal, breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Another plus is that it can be made from the ‘squeezins’ of just about anything.

Typically, gravy is made from meat ‘squeezins’, white, creamy bacon or sausage gravy for breakfast, rich brown roast beef gravy over open-faced hot beef sandwiches for lunch, and lip-smackin’ chicken gravy for supper.

No holiday-mashed potato would be

the same without turkey or ham gravy.

If you happen to be a redneck, you can make gravy from most any critter you find lying along the road.

As I mentioned, my grandma was the cook at the farm, but one weekend, it was just Grandpa and me. Being an adventuresome pair, we fried apples in butter (of course), and made fried apple gravy. I am not including that recipe in this cookbook for obvious reasons.

There is one more ingredient that is basic to comfort food cooking

CHEESE!

While not quite as versatile as butter and gravy, there are many ordinary dishes that are magically transformed from mundane to absolutely delicious by adding cheese.

Ever get tired of the same old eggs for breakfast?

Scramble a big batch and cover them with melted cheddar cheese. Yummy!

Pasta is OK, but kind of boring, but it becomes a “WOW” when you add cheese.

So now, whether you’re cooking or getting your picture taken, just say “cheese”.

Breakfast At Mel's

Some of us are morning people. Others are not.

I happen to be a morning person. I'm up at the crack of dawn singing and whistling. It drives my wife crazy.

The flip side of that, of course, is that I have difficulty staying awake for the ten o'clock news.

Regardless of which category you fall into, breakfast is essential.

Experts tell us it's the most important meal of the day.

Sometimes I'm lucky enough to have breakfast at Mel's.

An essential part of cooking is having the right tools. Mel cooks almost everything on a big cast iron griddle about four feet long and three feet deep.

Most of us don't have this mega-grill in our kitchen, but a twelve-inch cast iron skillet or a griddle pan with a non-stick surface will do very nicely.

As I mentioned previously, Mel cooks almost everything in butter.

The secret to butter cooking is the temperature. Butter burns at 250 degrees, so you can't have the old burners going full blast.

So let's look at some breakfast favorites.

Eggs



If you're an egg purist, you may want yours whole, as in sunny-side up or hard. There's not much you can do to improve those except cook them in butter. Just melt a pat of butter and fry as usual. Boring!

I personally prefer mine scrambled. There's so much more you can do with an

15

egg after you beat it to death.

For instance, you can chop an onion into very small pieces; add a sausage link, also chopped into tiny pieces and sauté in butter until the onions caramelize. Pour the egg into this mixture and stir. Sprinkle shredded cheddar cheese on top and you've got a super scramble.

Then there's the scrambles covered with melted cheese.

This is more work, but it's worth it.

The secret here is melting the cheese.

Use whole "block" cheese (cheddar, for example)...do not use the pre-shredded "bagged" stuff, because it contains cellulose and/or cornstarch. These things will affect the way the cheese melts.

Grate about two cups of the block cheese using the medium setting.

Pour one cup of whole milk or cream into a pan and cook on low to medium heat until it boils, remove the pan from the stove and stir in the cheese. Put the pan back on low heat and whisk until

it's creamy.

Pour the melted cheese over the eggs and you've got scramble deluxe.

If you have any left over, it will store quite nicely in the fridge. Just re-heat in the microwave. It's also great for nachos.

Mel keeps his pot of melted cheese on the back corner of the grill and adds it to all kinds of yummy dishes.

Before we leave eggs, we should mention that the next best thing to cooking eggs in butter is cooking them in bacon grease.

Grease is butter's younger sister. It can be substituted for butter in many recipes.

For instance, after you fry the bacon, that bubbly grease that's left over is the perfect place to scramble eggs or cook up a big batch of hash brown potatoes.

Mel adds finely chopped onions to his hash browns to give them that extra 'zing'.

Biscuits and Gravy



This is a breakfast staple for comfort food addicts.

Let's start with the biscuits.

There are many great recipes for home-made biscuits, and if you just like to cook and have lots of time on your hands, go for it.

But let's face it; the biscuit is simply the medium that delivers the gravy. Any good canned biscuit will do.

If the gravy is good enough, you could put it on a hockey puck and it would still taste good!

Now for the gravy.

Gravy can be too thick or too thin, but the very worst thing that can happen to gravy is lumps.

The ingredients for gravy are the ‘squeezins’ from whatever meat you cooked, flour and milk.

The rule of thumb is one teaspoon of ‘squeezins’ to two tablespoons of All Purpose flour to one cup of milk. Simply double or triple for big appetites.

Now here’s the secret.

Most recipes will say to add the flour to the ‘squeezins’ in the bottom of the pan and stir into a paste. This is called a ‘rue’. Then you slowly add the milk to the rue.

The ‘secret’ is to warm the milk before you add it to the rue.

No lumps!

There are two more secrets that will insure lump-free gravy.

The first is low heat. If you try to cook it too fast, it will stick and burn. The second is to stir constantly, and by ‘stir’ I mean that you should take your spatula and

run it continually over the entire bottom surface of the pan.

Again, gravy should ‘simmer’, not boil until it reaches the perfect consistency.

Pop open your biscuit, smother in gravy, salt and pepper to taste, and you have a breakfast fit for a king.

Pancakes and Waffles



These tasty treats are hard to ruin and even the most sullen ‘morning hater’ will go away smiling after a huge stack of flapjacks.

Like biscuits, pancakes and waffles are the delivery vehicle for the butter and syrup, so any good mix, like good old Aunt Jemima, will do.

Most recipes call for the pancake mix, egg and milk. If your recipe doesn't call for something greasy, you need to get a new one.

The batter should include some kind of oil.

If you've fried bacon, the grease from that works great, just don't add it to your mixture while its super hot.

Melted butter or just plain cooking oil will work too.

Unlike gravy, some small lumps in the pancake batter are desirable. Batter with no lumps gives you dense pancakes, and who wants a stupid pancake?

The next important feature is the consistency of the batter. I hate pancakes that are too thick. If the mixture is too thin, you get a crepe.

Pancake batter should be the consistency of good gravy (see above).

The next hint is maybe a matter of taste. Some folks cook their cakes on a dry griddle and they come out all smooth and brown.

Not Mel. He fries them.

Drop a pat of butter or a teaspoon of cooking oil or even bacon grease on the skillet and then pour your batter.

They come out with pretty designs and the edges have just the right amount of tasty fried crust.

At this point, your creativity can take over.

You can smother them in butter and maple syrup, the old standby, or choose one of the many flavored syrups like strawberry or blueberry. And, of course, fresh fruit on a pancake is scrumptious.

Mel will serve them any way you want them.

Toast



Let's face it. Toast is boring.

At least it is if you fix it in a toaster.

You already have the grill or skillet
piping hot.

Just spread butter on each side of
the bread and plop it on the grill.

Boring toast is magically
transformed into a breakfast delicacy.

No matter how you feel about mornings, if you eat at Mel's, you'll go away full and happy, with enough grease to keep you lubricated for the whole day.

Lunch and Dinner at Mel's

If you're looking for foo-foo food, don't go to Mel's.

Like breakfast, Mel's lunch and dinner menu is all comfort food. Everything is either grilled in butter or deep fried.

If presentation is what you're looking for, better go to Chez-Pierre's. Mel doesn't stick a twig in your mashed potatoes or dribble funny colored stuff around the edge of the plate.

In fact, you probably won't even be able to see the edge of the plate because the generous helpings hang over the edge.

Mel has a sign over the cash register that says, "If you go away hungry, you didn't clean up your plate."

One of my favorite items on the menu is the hamburger steak.



Hamburger! Sounds really boring, right? You can get a burger at any fast food joint. But not like the one's you get a Mel's.

He starts with two big dollops of butter on the hot griddle.

On the first dollop, he puts a quarter pound of ground beef.

Here's the secret.

If you're cooking on the old bar-b-que grill, you don't want to press the burger and squeeze out all the juices. It will dry out.

Just the opposite is true on the cast iron griddle.

Mel presses the patty as thin as he can so that the hot butter can permeate the whole burger.

On the second dollop, he lays two-quarter inch slices of Vadalina onion and fries them until they're brown and caramely.

He serves the patty smothered with the caramelized onions and a huge slice of tomato on the side. It all comes with Texas toast, buttered and grilled of course.

Mel's Side Dishes

His baked potatoes are big as a football.



Again, the secret is the butter.

Mel washes the potato and pokes holes in it with an ice pick. Then he coats the outside of the potato in butter and wraps it in aluminum foil. He slow bakes the potatoes in the oven until the butter flavors the whole spud.

Mel always keeps a big pot of green beans simmering on the back of the griddle.



There are three secrets to great green beans.

The first is bacon. Remember, bacon grease is butter's younger sister. Cut the bacon into small pieces, fry, and stir the bacon and grease into the green beans.

The second is brown sugar. Add 2 tablespoons to give it that extra sweet taste.

The third is slow cooking. Green beans should melt in your mouth. I hate going to a restaurant where they serve crunchy green beans.

Some things just aren't natural, like crunchy green beans or cold soup. Yuck!

Seasonal Comfort Food

When the thermometer reaches forty degrees, Mel whips up his big pot of chili.

His stock chili is a great recipe, but his regular customers hound him until he makes his ‘smokin’ chili supreme’.

He fires up his big old smoker that he keeps behind the restaurant and hickory smokes huge pork butts until the meat crumbles to the touch.

He substitutes this hickory smoked pork for the ground beef and serves his smokin’ chili with huge slices of corn bread dripping in butter.



While he has the smoker going, he will usually throw in a meat loaf or two.

You haven't lived until you've eaten hickory smoked meat loaf.

Eating out should be fun.

You can cook any way you want when you're at home, but when you go to a restaurant you should reward yourself with something special.

Mel specializes in special.

Desserts

Again, if you want a flambé or a brulee or a torte, you'd better go somewhere else.

Mel serves pie.

Not just *any* pie. Homemade pie.

Anybody can say they serve 'homemade' pie, but if it comes from a bakery, it's just not the same.

Mel doesn't make the pies, his mom does, right in her own kitchen, apple crumb, cherry and peach.

All the butter crusts are flaky and the edges are pressed into those little wavy edges by her very own thumbs.

The cream pies are to die for, lemon, butterscotch, banana, and chocolate. The meringue is at least two inches thick, a golden brown with the little curly spikes sticking up.



Pick out your favorite and sit back with a mug of Mel's coffee.

The comfort food from Mel's Diner comes with a guarantee.

I guarantee you won't loose an ounce of weight. Your cholesterol won't be lower. Your arteries won't be less clogged.

I also guarantee that you'll go away with a sunnier outlook on life, totally satisfied and happy as a hog in a trough.

Walt's Favorite Recipes

Walt eats at Mel's whenever he can, but when he has to rely on his own cooking skills, which are somewhat limited, he has several favorites.

Walt's Recipes

Walt Williams' Signature Tuna Casserole

8 oz. Angel Hair Pasta (more or less)
2-6oz. cans solid white albacore tuna in water
Large bag of shredded cheddar cheese
Sun Chips
Salt and pepper to taste

Get a big pot of boiling, salted water going, add your angel hair pasta, cook 'till tender, don't overcook as those little skinny buggers get too mushy!

Drain, if you lose some in the sink, oh well.....

Drain your tuna, just open and squeeze the lid down on it and press, does a

really good job, and you don't have to wash the strainer again!

Place your cooked pasta in a sprayed, appx. 8x11 Pyrex dish, take a sharp knife and a fork and cut it up a little bit.

Flake the tuna evenly in the pasta, mess it around a bit. Salt and pepper to taste.

Add the big bag of wonderful cheddar cheese and load that sucker down good, the more gooey cheese the better.

Crush up a big bunch of Sun Chips and put a whole bunch on top of all that.

Bake 350 for about 20 minutes until stuff melts! Enjoy!!

Wine pairing: Peach Arbor Mist - goes good with anything!

Please note: This is a high calorie, high fat dish and every bite you eat will go straight to your butt!!

For a hilarious step-by-step demonstration of how to prepare this dish, go to <http://youtube.com> and type 'Walt's Tuna Casserole' in the 'search'.

Walt's Nectar of the Gods



This is actually a recipe for baked sweet potatoes, but the gooey stuff in the dish is what it's all about.

6 large sweet potatoes
2 sticks of butter
1 cup of white sugar
1 cup of brown sugar
1 bag of large marshmallows.

Peel the sweet potatoes and cut them into 1 inch cubes and place in 8 x 11 inch Pyrex dish.

Cut the butter into half inch pats and place evenly over the sweet potatoes.

Sprinkle the brown and white sugar over the sweet potatoes and butter.

Place in 350 degree oven. Stir every fifteen minutes until the sugar and butter form a liquid.

Bake for an hour.

When you are ready to serve, cover the top with marshmallows and turn the oven to broil until the marshmallows brown.

Watch carefully. The marshmallows can turn to a burnt crisp in a hurry under the broiler.

The sweet potatoes are sinfully delicious, but the good stuff is the 'nectar of the gods' in the bottom of the dish.

Maggie's Favorite Recipes

Maggie's Dad's Cheesy Potatoes

This was Maggie's Dad's favorite casserole.

This recipe is huge. Cut in half if you need to.

6-10 large white potatoes, peeled and sliced real thin

1 # of bacon

2 T chopped onion, more or less

1# regular Velveeta, not the low fat stuff

2 sticks of real butter, cut in small slices

Salt and pepper to taste

Grease large Pyrex casserole dish.

Early on, fry the bacon and drain on a paper towel. Break the cooled bacon slices into smallish chunks. Better eat a few pieces to make sure its OK.

Cut the Velveeta into small to medium sized cubes --- try not to eat too

many ---

Arrange the sliced potatoes in the Pyrex dish, add and mix the bacon, onion, salt and pepper.

Mix in cheese cubes and stir.

Bake in pre-heated oven 350 degrees covered for about an hour. After the first 30 minutes, open up and stir to mix up all that melted butter and cheese so that it coats the potatoes thoroughly.

Continue to bake another 30 minutes until you see a little browning on the sides.

MMMM good!

After Easter, when you have left-over ham, dice that up instead of bacon ---

Maggie's Macaroni 'N Cheese

Maggie's grandma and mom made this quick and easy Mac 'N Cheese.

None of that mixing with flour to make a paste for the sauce, just quick and easy and mmmm good.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees

12 oz. bag of macaroni

1 to 1 ½ cups of milk

2, 10oz. Medium cheddar cheese in the hunk, not shredded. Her family likes medium over mild but not the sharp stuff. Use your favorite, it's all about the cheese anyway. Cut the cheese into 1" cubes.

Spray a 3 qt. casserole or smaller if you wish. This makes it thicker and will cook slower than if it is thinner.

Salt the boiling water and add the macaroni. Don't overcook (3-5 minutes), rinse with cold water to stop the cooking process and help take away some of that sticky stuff, and drain.

Dump the cooked macaroni into the casserole dish.

Spread and mix the cubed cheese into the macaroni. Lightly salt and pepper to taste.

Milk --- 1 to 1 ½ cups of milk. Why the choice? The more milk you add, the creamier it is. Whatever pan you use, the milk should come up to half the macaroni. Bake at 350 for 20 - 30 minutes, just until you see the cheese has melted down. Take out of the oven and stir real good and really coat all the noodles. Put back in the oven just a little while longer, maybe 10 minutes, until golden brown. That sets the cheese real good!



Appetizers

Bacon Wrapped Shrimp

2 lbs raw tail on shrimp (we like to use 16-21 count)

1 lb bacon- give or take depending on size of shrimp

Cajun seasoning

Toothpicks

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees.

Cut bacon in half.

Pick tails off shrimp and lay out flat on cookie sheet or cutting board.

Sprinkle both sides of shrimp with Cajun seasoning, depending on how spicy you like depends on how much you add.

Wrap each piece of shrimp with half strip of bacon and secure with toothpick.

Place in oven and cook 10-14 minutes (depending on size of shrimp and oven)

until shrimp is pink and fully cooked.

** This shrimp is also great cooked on the BBQ grill.

Chili Cheese Fries

2 lbs ground beef
1 med. onion, chopped
1 10 oz can Rotel
2 15 oz cans tomato sauce
2 15 oz cans chili beans
2 pkg chili seasoning
1 tbsp hot sauce
2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
Package Frozen French Fries

In a large saucepan over med-high heat brown hamburger and drain.

Add cooked hamburger back to pan and add onion, tomato sauce, Rotel, chili beans, chili seasoning and hot sauce.

Mix all ingredients together and let cook over medium-high heat for 25-30 minutes.

While chili is simmering, prepare french fries according to package directions.

To serve, place french fries on plate, spoon chili on top of fries then sprinkle cheese on top of chili.

Add sour cream or chopped onions as topping.

Corn Dip

2 cans Mexican style corn, drained
4 green onions, chopped
1 c. sour cream
1 c. mayo
1 pkg. 2 cups shredded cheese, Mexican style or 4-cheese
Jalapeno's to taste, chopped

Mix all ingredients together.

Let sit in refrigerator for 30 minutes. Serve with tortilla style chips.

Hillbilly Corn Dog

Serves 8

This is our version of a quick and easy corndog.
They taste great dipped in your favorite mustard.

8 corn tortillas- 6"

8 hot dogs

Mustard

Toothpicks

Oil for frying

In fry pan over med-hi heat, bring oil to 375 degrees.

While oil is heating, roll a hot dog in a corn tortilla and secure with toothpick.

Fry in oil till golden brown, 3-4 minutes.

Remove from oil and place on paper towel to drain any excess grease.

You can also use cheese hot dogs or spicy sausages.

Quick & Tasty Meatballs

2 lbs ground beef
2 eggs
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp garlic salt
½ c. ketchup
1 c. Italian seasoned breadcrumbs
1 med onion, chopped
1 tsp. parsley

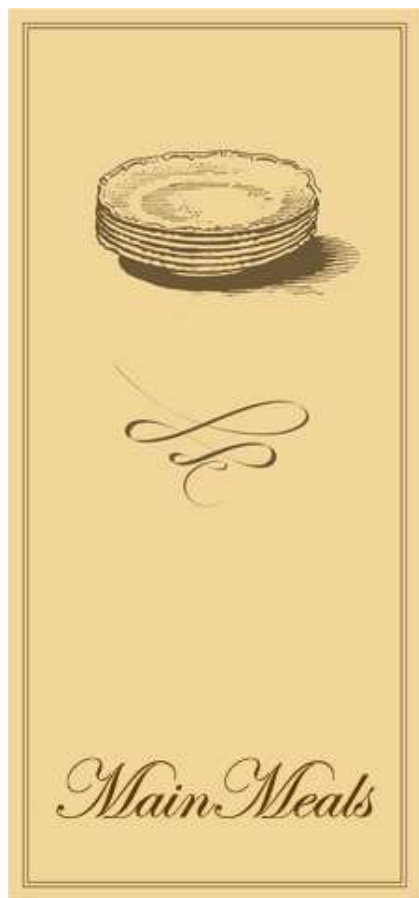
Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In large mixing bowl combine beef, eggs, Worcestershire sauce, garlic salt, ketchup, breadcrumbs, chopped onion and parsley, mix well.

Form meat mixture into meatballs and place on cookie sheet. Bake 20-30 minutes depending on size of meatballs.

These are great with spaghetti sauce on a hoagie for a sub sandwich.

These are also great with BBQ sauce.



Herbs and some of their uses

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Basil- | Used with meats, poultry and fish. Use in soups, stuffing's, dressings and sauces. |
| Caraway- | Seeds have a spicy smell. Used in breads, soups, cheese and sauerkraut. |
| Chives- | Chives have a mild onion flavor. Used in omelets and soups. Also used as a garnish. |
| Cinnamon- | Used in breads, pies, cakes and cookies. Used with some pork and chicken recipes. |
| Cloves- | Used to season pork, lamb and vegetables. Also used |

in some pies and cookies.

Cumin- Used in Mexican
dishes, cheese dishes,
soups, vegetable dips
and BBQ rubs.

Dill- Leaves may be used for
pickling, such as dill pickles.
The seeds may be used to
add flavor to a dish such as
fish.

Fennel- Has a sweet, hot flavor.
Leaves may be boiled with
fish. We use ground fennel
seeds in some of our “rubs”
for smoking.

Garlic-	Available many ways, cloves, powder, salt, minced. Used in meats, poultry, casseroles, soups and marinades.
Marjoram-	May be used fresh or dry for flavoring soups, stuffing's, meats and fish.
Nutmeg-	Commonly used in eggnogs, cookies cakes and pies.
Oregano-	Used with meats, fish, soups, casseroles and vegetables.
Paprika-	Bright red in color. May be used in cream or stock soups. Used as a garnish on potatoes, salads and deviled eggs.
Sage-	Used both fresh or dried. May be used in poultry stuffing's, when making sausages and great to add to most cheese and vegetable combinations.

Thyme-

Used with meatloaves,
meatballs, fish, casseroles,
breads and Sauces.

CHEESY CHICKEN NOODLE CASSEROLE

2 lbs boneless chicken breast
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp garlic salt
1 tsp Italian seasoning
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp flour
2 cups milk
2 10 oz cans cream of chicken soup
1 c. sour cream
2 cups shredded asiago cheese
1 cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs
1 Large package of dry egg noodles

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 casserole pan. Add olive oil to large skillet over med-high heat.

Cut chicken into 1" cubes and add to skillet.

Add garlic salt and Italian seasoning to chicken and continue cooking until chicken is done.

Boil noodles till tender and drain.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add flour and whisk together.

Add milk, sour cream and cream of chicken soup, stirring after each ingredient. Continue to cook, stirring frequently for 10 minutes until well blended and warm throughout. Add 1-½ cups of the shredded asiago cheese.

When cheese has melted add to chicken in the large skillet. Add cooked egg noodles and stir all together.

Put in greased casserole pan, sprinkle with Italian seasoned breadcrumbs and remaining ½ cup of cheese and place in oven.

Bake 15-20 minutes to melt cheese and warm throughout.

Chicken-N-Noodles

Serves 6-8

8 chicken thighs

6 chicken bouillon cubes

2 sticks butter

4-6 celery leaves (not the stalk, just leaves)

2 24 oz. packages Reames frozen egg
noodles

1 tsp garlic salt

1 tsp coarse ground black pepper

In large pot boil chicken with celery leaves 30-40 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Then remove chicken and set aside to cool slightly. Make sure pot is at least half full of water.

Over medium-high heat add butter, bouillon cubes, black pepper and garlic salt.

Cook 10-15 minutes, remove celery leaves. Add egg noodles and stir.

Continue cooking over med-high heat for

10-15 minutes.

When chicken has cooled enough to touch, pick chicken from bones and add to noodles in pot.

Reduce heat to low and simmer for about 30 minutes until noodles are done and tender.

Stir often to prevent sticking.

Chili El Simpson

- 1 cup butter, melted in skillet
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 3-4 lbs coarse ground beef
- 1 20 oz can tomatoes
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 jalapeno, chopped

In large pot over medium heat, sauté garlic, onion and pepper in $\frac{1}{2}$ c. of the butter until tender then remove and set aside.

Cook coarse ground beef in the other $\frac{1}{2}$ c. butter until done then add garlic, onion and pepper. Reduce heat to low, add tomatoes, salt, pepper, chili powder and jalapeno to pot and simmer for 10-15 minutes.

Add water to cover and stir, continue to simmer for 30 minutes

Hamburger & Bean Soup

Serves 4-6

- 1-½ lbs ground hamburger
- 2 tbsp beef base (beef bouillon)
- 1 tsp kitchen bouquet
- 1 10 oz can Rotel, drained
- 2 10 oz cans red beans, drained
- 2 10 oz cans pinto beans, drained
- 1 small onion, chopped

Brown hamburger in skillet and drain.

In large pot add hamburger, Rotel and beans.

Cover with water adding enough to make a good size pot of soup.

Add beef base, onion and kitchen bouquet.
Simmer over med heat 1 hour and serve.

Variations:

- Add shredded Colby/jack cheese to soup bowl when serving
- Add sour cream to soup bowl when serving

You can also add chopped green peppers when adding chopped onion.

Savory Beef and Vegetable Soup

Serves 6-8

1 lb ground beef
1 c. chopped onions
2 15 oz cans stewed tomatoes
4 c hot water
2 beef bouillon cubes
1 tsp kitchen bouquet
1 tbsp salt
1/2 tbsp black pepper
1 c chopped celery
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 8 oz pkg uncooked noodles
1 16 oz pkg frozen mixed vegetables
1/2 tsp basil

Brown ground beef and onions in a large pan.

Drain excess grease from meat and onions and return to pan.

Add tomatoes, water, bouillon cubes,
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kitchen bouquet, salt, pepper, celery and Worcestershire sauce. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes.

Add noodles, mixed vegetables and basil.

Simmer 20-30 minutes

Cheesy Twice Baked Potatoes

6 large baking potatoes
3 c. shredded cheddar cheese
2 sticks butter
2 c. sour cream
1 tsp garlic salt
1 tsp Cajun seasoning
1 lb bacon, cooked slightly crispy

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

Cook bacon until slightly crispy, chop bacon and set aside.

Bake potatoes, let cool slightly and slice in half lengthwise.

Reduce oven temp. to 350 degrees.

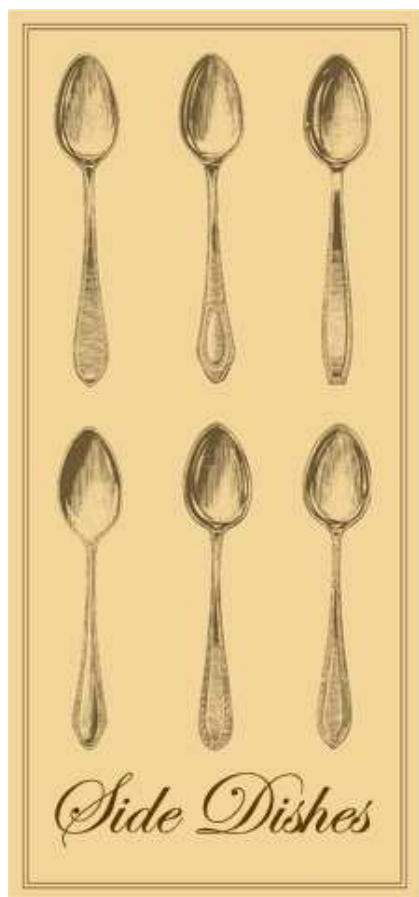
Using a spoon scoop out middle of potatoes leaving ¼ edge on inside of potato. Put all potato scooping's in large bowl.

Add butter, sour cream, garlic, Cajun seasoning, chopped bacon and 2 cups of the cheese. Mix well, you can use an electric mixer if you want your filling to be more like mashed

potatoes.

Spoon filling into potato shells and place on cookie sheet.

Sprinkle the remaining 1 c. of cheese on top of potatoes and bake 20-30 minutes until cheese is melted and filling is hot.



Creamy White Cheese & Mac

16 oz bag of elbow macaroni
¼ c. butter
¼ c. flour
1 c. half & half
1 c. milk
½ c. sour cream
1 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp parsley
2 c. shredded asiago cheese
2 c. Italian seasoned breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 casserole dish.

In large pan boil macaroni until done and drain.

In large saucepan over medium heat melt butter.

Add flour and stir well.

Add half & half, milk and sour cream.

Mix well and cook 10 minutes stirring often to prevent sticking.

Add garlic, parsley and cheese.

Reduce heat to low and cook another 5-8

minutes or until cheese has melted.

Stir often to prevent sticking. Add macaroni to cheese mixture and stir well.

Pour mixture into casserole dish and sprinkle breadcrumbs on top.

Bake 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Fried Potatoes

5 lbs potatoes

½ c. grease (these are best if you use left over bacon drippings)

1 med onion, chopped

1 tsp garlic salt

1 tbsp Cajun seasoning

salt and pepper to taste

Wash and pat dry potatoes.

Heat grease in large skillet (you may use canola oil if you don't have bacon drippings).

Add chopped onions and let them begin to cook.

Slice potatoes using food processor or grater, leaving skins on.

As the potatoes are sliced add them to the heated oil.

Sprinkle with garlic salt, Cajun seasoning, salt and pepper.

Continue to flip potatoes to make sure they are evenly cooked.

Continue to cook until all potatoes are done to desired tenderness.



Desserts

Helpful Hints

Salt in the water when boiling eggs will make them peel easier

When making rolled cookies, roll them out on powdered sugar instead of flour and they won't get tough

To keep cookies soft while storing, place a piece of bread in container with them

Bake stuffed peppers in a loaf pan and they will not fall over while baking

Adding a quartered white potato and boiling for 10 minutes may fix too much salt in soup

If you run out of powdered sugar, you can put granulated sugar in blender and blend till fine.

For more chocolaty cakes and brownies,

mix cocoa powder with flour when dusting greased pans

Thaw fish in milk for a fresher taste

To prevent salt from clogging in the shaker add a few grains of rice inside

Brown sugar will stay fresh longer if the box is wrapped in a plastic bag and stored in the freezer

Try storing sugar in a clean, dry milk jug. The sugar will not harden as it does in the bag.

Chocolate Crackles

1 c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
1 c. brown sugar
1/3 c. veg. oil
2 eggs
1 c. flour
1 tsp vanilla
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 c. powdered sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In medium saucepan, melt chocolate and combine with brown sugar and oil. Add eggs, one at a time, beat well. Add vanilla and stir.

In large mixing bowl combine flour, baking powder and salt. Add chocolate mixture and stir.

Chill dough in refrigerator 20-30 minutes. Drop by spoonful into powdered sugar, roll

to coat.

Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes.

The cookies will “crackle” while baking.

Easy Brownie Sundae Casserole

Serves 6-8

- 1 box brownie mix
- 1- ½ Gallon vanilla ice cream
- 1 jar or bottle of caramel ice cream topping

Preheat oven and bake brownies as directed on box in a 9x13 pan.

Cool brownies completely.

Let ice cream soften slightly and spread evenly over cooled brownies.

Pour caramel sauce over entire pan.

Place brownies in freezer until ready to serve. Cut into desired portion size and serve.

Variations:

Use different flavors of ice cream such as

cookies & cream, chocolate or cookie dough.

Use different types of toppings such as chocolate or strawberry and add chopped nuts if desired.

Chocolate Cake

2 c. flour

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c. sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

1 tbsp baking soda

$\frac{1}{2}$ c. cocoa

1 c. buttermilk

1 c. strong coffee, hot

$\frac{2}{3}$ c. oil 1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Mix flour, sugar, salt, baking soda and cocoa in large bowl.

Add buttermilk, hot coffee and egg, blend well.

Pour batter into greased 9x13 pan and bake 30-35 minutes until knife inserted comes out clean.

Sugar Cookies

4 ½ cups flour

½ tsp salt

1 tbsp baking soda

1 ½ c sugar

1 c shortening

1 ½ tsp vanilla

3 eggs

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In large bowl sift together flour, salt and baking soda.

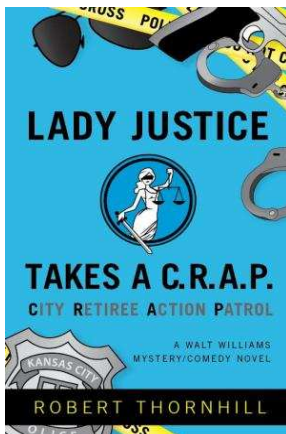
In smaller bowl cream together sugar, shortening, vanilla and eggs.

Mix sugar mixture to flour mixture and stir well.

Make dough into a roll shape and chill. Cut into desired shapes. Place on cookie sheet and bake 8-10 minutes.

Lady Justice Takes a C.R.A.P. City Retiree Action Patrol

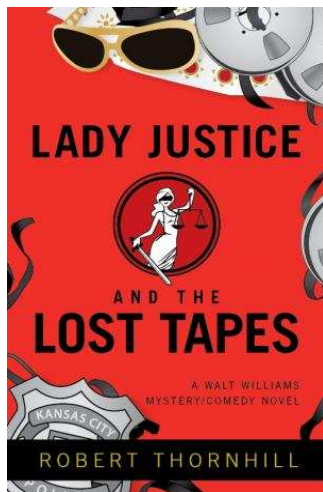
A mystery/comedy novel



This is where Walt's incredible story begins, as he joins the Kansas City Police Department at the ripe old age of 65 and starts the City Retiree Action Patrol.

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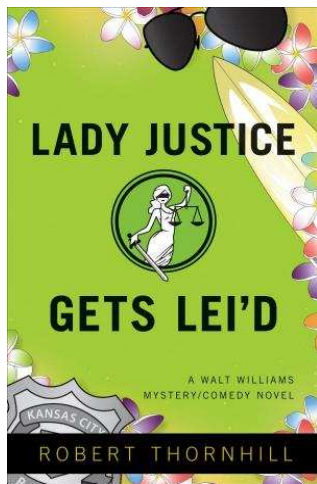
Lady Justice and the Lost Tapes



Walt's career takes a crazy turn as he has to go undercover as a tranny and then an Elvis impersonator to bring the bad guys to justice.

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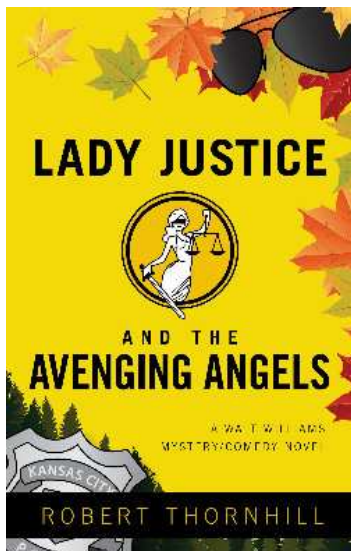
Lady Justice Gets Lei'd



Walt and Maggie are off to Hawaii for their honeymoon, but ancient artifacts, a Hawaiian legend and a tiny lizard lead them from their posh hotel into the rainforest and into the cauldron of an extinct volcano.

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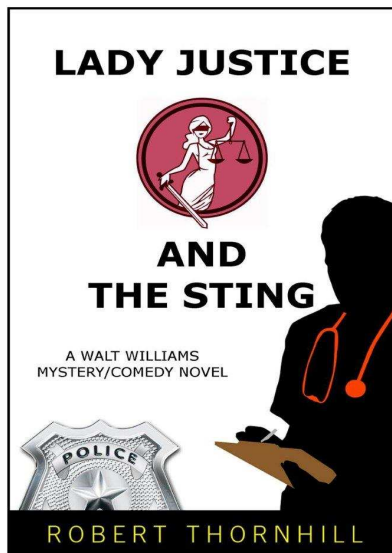
Lady Justice and the Avenging Angels



Lady Justice is unwittingly pulled into a religious war as the Avenging Angels, a group of religious fanatics, rain their fire and brimstone on Kansas City.

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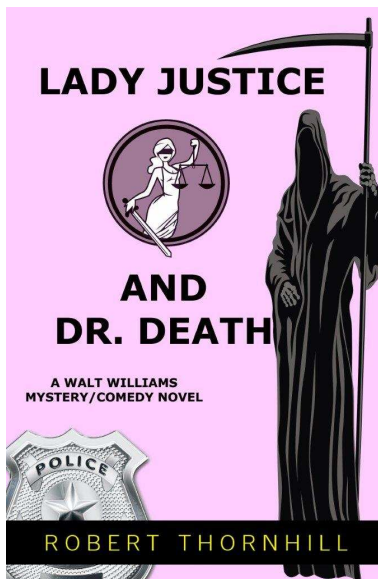
Lady Justice and the Sting



A holistic physician is murdered and Walt becomes entangled in the high-powered world of corporate giants and corrupt politicians.

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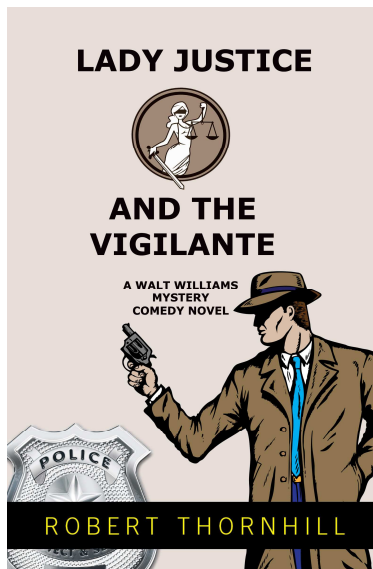
Lady Justice and Dr. Death



A new Dr. Death is helping terminally ill patients end their lives. Walt must decide if it's justice or murder! This mystery provides a light-hearted look at this explosive topic and death in general.

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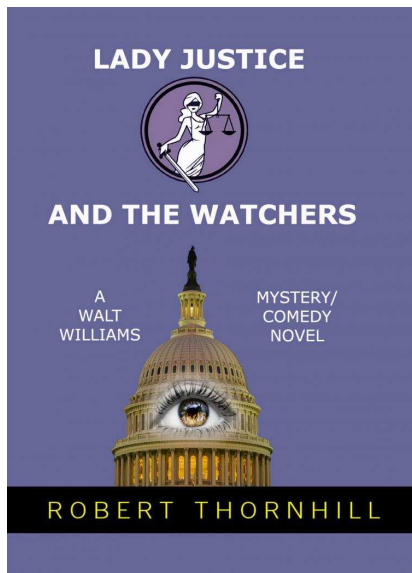
Lady Justice and the Vigilante



A vigilante is stalking the streets of Kansas City administering his own brand of justice when the justice system fails. As the body count mounts, public opinion is split. Is it justice or murder?

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Lady Justice and the Watchers

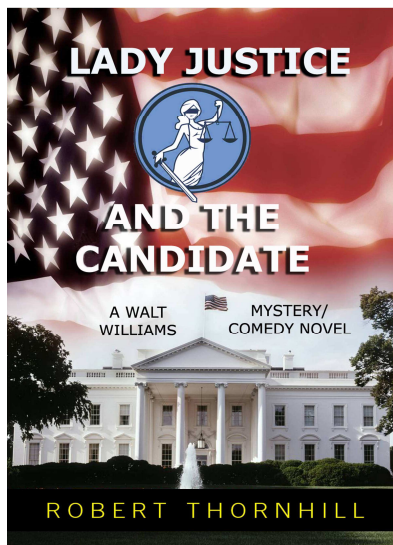


“Big Brother is watching you!”

Those were the words of George Orwell in his novel, 1984. Fortunately, the prediction of this dystopian society never came to pass --- or did it?

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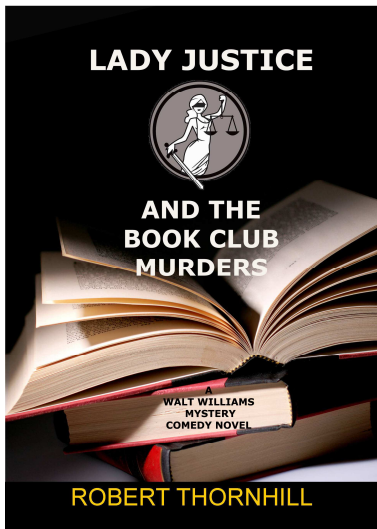
Lady Justice and the Candidate



Will American politics always be dominated by the two major political parties or are voters longing for an Independent candidate to challenge the establishment. Join Walt on the campaign trail for an adventure full of surprises, mystery, intrigue and laughs.

http://booksbybob.com/lady-justice-and-the-candidate_367.html

Lady Justice and the Book Club Murders



Members of the Midtown Book Club are found murdered! It is just the beginning of a series of deaths that lead Walt and Ox into the twisted world of a serial killer.

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Lady Justice and the Cruise Ship Murders



Ox and Judy's honeymoon cruise is interrupted by the murder of two fellow passengers. The murders appear to be linked to a century-old legend involving a cache of gold. Another nail-biting mystery that will have you on the edge of your seat one minute and laughing the next.

http://booksbybob.com/lady-justice-and-the-cruise-ship-murders_373.html

RAINBOW ROAD

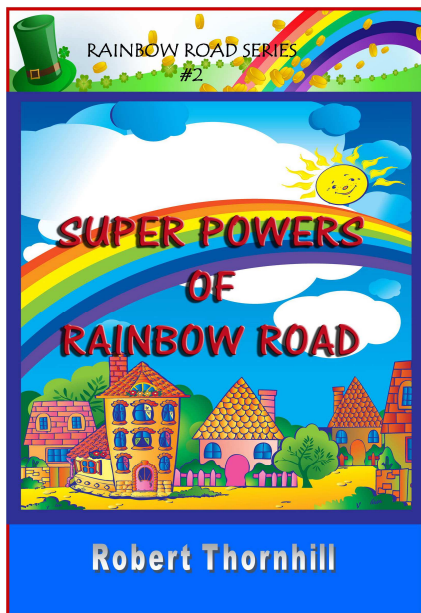
Children's Chapter Books

SUPER SECRETS OF RAINBOW ROAD



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***SUPER POWERS
Of
RAINBOW ROAD***



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HAWAIIAN RAINBOWS



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PATRIOTIC RAINBOWS



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***SPORTS HEROES
OF
RAINBOW ROAD***



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*Ghosts and Goblins
OF
Rainbow Road*



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***CHRISTMAS CROOKS
OF
RAINBOW ROAD***



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