

There and Back Again...

VARIOUS RECIPES OF

Middle-EARTH

as interpreted by contributors at the now
infamous

Eat Your Way Through Middle-Earth
Party, held in Michigan December 18, 2004

The Schedule

PreParty

Monday to Friday

Maurita cooks. Patti cooks. Anne Cooks. Carol cooks. Gail & Grace shop.

Friday

Carol, Liz and Maurita ransack Eastern Market for last minute food. Liz and Carol pick up Trish at the airport. Maurita, Carol, Liz and Trish cook in Carol's kitchen 'til the wee hours. Patti bakes at home.

Party Day

7:30 am - cooks start to arrive at Carol's house.

9:00 am- rest of guests arrive

9:30 am - Second Breakfast

10:00 am - Fellowship of the Ring - disk 1

11:30 am - Elevenses in Rivendell

noon - Fellowship of the Ring - disk 2

1:30 pm - Lunch in Rohan

2:30 pm - The Two Towers - disk 1

4:00 pm - Tea in Lothlorien

4:30 pm - the Two Towers disk 2

6:00 pm - Dinner in Gondor

7:30 pm - additional guests arrive

8:00 pm - Return of the King - disk 1

10:15 pm - All the Peoples of Middle Earth "Filling in the Corners" Buffet

11:00 pm - Return of the King - disk 2

1:15 am - Afterglow in Valinor

The party broke up about 2:30 am and the cleanup, what we did that night, was finished by about 3:30 am.

Everyone went home tired, happy and vowing not to eat for at least three days!

Second Breakfast with the Hobbits

Sausage Hash

Well-cooked Apples

Mushroom Pie

Scrambled Eggs

Oven-roasted 'Taters

Workaday Bread & Cheddar Cheese

Sausage Hash

1 Tbsp olive oil
4 - 6 medium red potatoes (for about 4 cups cubed)
5 cloves garlic -- peeled & chopped
1 lb bulk breakfast sausage
1 tsp dried rosemary
1/2 tsp sugar
1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes

Heat oil over med heat in a deep 12-in skillet that has a lid. Meanwhile, scrub potatoes, and dice, skins left on, in 3/4" cubes, adding them to the pan as you cut. Raise heat to high, then cover and cook until the potatoes are slightly brown, stirring occasionally. While potatoes cook, peel & chop garlic.

Add sausage to skillet and stir constantly for 2 min to break up chunks. Cook til potatoes are golden and sausage is brown, 7-9 min or so. Add the garlic to the pan, and the rosemary. Stir well.

When the sausage is done, add the sugar, stir well, and stir in tomatoes with their juice. Cook til 1/2 juice evaporates, 2-3 minutes more.

(Maurita)

Well-cooked Apples

3 pounds Granny Smith apples peeled -- cored, & sliced
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
3 Tablespoons cornstarch
1 cup sugar
3 Tablespoons butter cut into small pieces

Put apples in the crockpot. Add the remaining ingredients and stir well, then dot w/ the butter. Cover & cook on low for 6 hours or until apples are cooked but not mushy. Stir occasionally.

(Maurita)

Mushroom Pie

Preheat oven: 375 F

About 1 lb assorted mushrooms. Use fresh, not dried. No more than half should be white buttons. A mix of wild and domestic varieties works well. Portobellos are especially nice.

1 T each of butter and oil (sunflower, safflower, or canola)
1 small onion, chopped
3-4 oz smoked pork, ham, or bacon, cut up small
1-2 tsp extra oil
1-2 tsp prepared mustard (honey or herb mustard, such as dill)
1/2 tsp dry mustard
2-3 T each of flour and water
2 T hard cider, English beer, or dry sherry
Chopped parsley and black pepper to taste.
You can also add chives, if you like.

Clean and cut up the mushrooms to a reasonably uniform size. If you like big pieces, slice the buttons, and cut the portabello or other larger types to match; otherwise, just cut them all up into little bits.

Melt the butter and oil together and add the mushrooms, onions, and meat. Cook gently until the onions are transparent and the mushrooms have released their juices.

Mix together the extra oil, mustards, flour, and water to make a paste. Add to the pan to thicken the juices. If your mushrooms didn't make a lot of liquid, you can add water as needed to make a sauce that is neither runny nor thick. Then, stir in the cider, beer, or wine. Sprinkle on the herbs and pepper, stir, and simmer until all is thickened and bubbling. Cool slightly.

Pour into a pastry lined pie tin (use your favourite unsweetened pastry for this). Cover with more pastry, slit the top, and crimp the edges the way you like. Bake about 1 hour, until browned and the juices bubble around the vent. Serve hot or cooled to room temperature.

(Patti)

Scrambled Eggs

eggses
butter

Oh, I don't really have to give a recipe, do I? Add herbs for a nice touch.

(Carol)

Oven-roasted 'Taters

1/4 c oil
1/2 c - 1 stick - butter, melted
1 envelope Lipton onion soup mix
1 tsp dried rosemary
3 lbs red potatoes, cut in 1" chunks with skins on

Heat oven to 450.

In a shallow bakingpan, mix the oil, melted butter, and seasonings. Add the potatoes and turn to coat all surfaces.

Bake, uncovered, 45-60 minutes, stirring occasionally. When the potatoes are golden brown and tender, they're done.

(Maurita)

Workaday Bread (Beer Bread)

Makes 1 loaf

6 oz good English beer (I used Bass)
1 c boiling water
1/8 c honey
1 1/2 tsp dry yeast (1/2 packet)
1/8 c rolled oats (not quick or instant)
1/8 c rye flakes (Bulk Foods or health food stores should have these)
1/4 c dark rye flour
3/4 c whole wheat flour
1 tsp salt
1 1/2 T melted butter or oil (sunflower or walnut)
1 1/2 c (or more) unbleached flour
Additional 1 c (or more) flour for kneading

Pour boiling water over honey in large bowl. Stir in oats and rye flakes. Add beer. When lukewarm, sprinkle yeast over. Let rest to proof, about 10 minutes. Stir in the rye and wheat flour. Add the butter and salt, stirring in. Add the unbleached flour 1/2 c at a time, mixing in each addition. The dough will be sticky, but should not be soft and liquid, like a batter. Cover and let rest in the bowl about 15 minutes. Flour your work board well, and turn out the dough, sprinkling more flour on top. Knead until it is smooth and elastic, working in flour as you go. It may still be a bit sticky. Wash and grease the mixing bowl, and put the dough in, turning in the bowl to grease the top. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about 2 hours, until it almost doubles in size. Grease your bread pan. Punch down the dough and shape it into a loaf. Cover it in the pan, and let rise to double again, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 375 F near the end of the second rising. You can slash the top of the loaf, if you like, but this isn't really necessary. Bake 40 - 50 minutes. Bread is done when it sounds hollow if you thump the bottom of the loaf. It won't hurt it to take it out of the pan to check; you can just slip it back in, and return it to the oven if you need to. Cool on a rack out of the pan.

(Patti)

Elevenes in Rivendell

SHORTBREAD

DATE BREAD

HONEY BUTTER

CHICKEN & MUSHROOM STRIPS

GINGERBREAD SCONES

HAM AND BOURSIN SPIRALS

HARD-COOKED EGGS

JAM TARTS

FRUITY DRINK

SHORTBREAD

1 lb. sweet (unsalted) butter
1 cup powdered sugar or 2/3 cup Splenda
4 cups sifted flour

Mix flour and sugar/Splenda. Cut in butter, use a knife, not your hands or shortbread will be oily. Pat dough into two 3/4" thick circles. Prick all over with a fork. Bake at 375° for 5 minutes, then at 300° F for 45 to 60 min. until golden, but not brown. Cut while still warm.

(Anne)

OATE NUT BREAD

2 cups flour
1/3 cup sugar or 3 tbsp Splenda
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
2 tbsp melted butter
1 egg
1 cup milk
3/4 cup broken walnuts
1 1/2 cup chopped dates

Mix Flour, sugar/Splenda, baking powder, and salt in a bowl, set aside. Beat egg until light, beat in the milk, and then beat in the melted butter. Beat the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients until well mixed. Fold in dates and walnuts. Place into a greased bread pan. Bake at 350° F for 40 min.

(Anne)

HONEY BUTTER

1 stick (1/4 lb) sweet cream unsalted butter
3/4 cup honey

Mix well.

(Maurita)

Chicken & Mushroom Strips

2	halves	chicken breasts -- cooked, coarsely chopped
8	oz	mushrooms
3	Tbsp	butter, unsalted
2	Tbsp	parsley -- chopped
1	Tbsp	thyme, fresh -- chopped
1	pkg	puff pastry, frozen -- 17-oz pkg, thawed

Preheat oven to 450° F.

Place mushrooms in the bowl of a food processor; chop until minced. Place 1 tablespoon butter in a medium saute pan; add the mushroom pieces and cook over medium heat, stirring, about 3 minutes. Place chicken in food processor and chop until minced.

In medium bowl, stir 2 tablespoons butter, chicken, parsley, thyme and mushrooms.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out both pieces of puff pastry. Using a pizza wheel, cut each piece in half. Spread half of the chicken mixture on one piece of puff pastry, and the remainder on the other piece. Top each with another piece of puff pastry. Using a rolling pin, lightly roll over the pastry.

Using the pizza wheel, cut the pastry into strips, each about 1 inch by 3 inches. Lay strips on a baking sheet. Bake 5 to 6 minutes, until puffed and golden brown. Serve immediately.

Makes 24 appetizers.

(Maurita)

Gingerbread Scones

2	cups	flour
3	tbsp.	Dark brown sugar or 2 tbsp Splenda w/ a dash of maple flavoring
2	tbsp	baking powder
1	tsp	ground ginger
1/2	tsp	ground cinnamon
1/4	tsp	ground nutmeg
1/8	tsp	ground cloves
1/2	tsp	baking soda
1/2	tsp	salt
1/4	cup	cold unsalted butter
1/3	cup	molasses (dark)
1/4	cup	milk
1	egg	separated

Mix flour, brown sugar/Splenda, baking powder, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove, baking soda, and salt. Cut in butter. In another bowl, mix molasses, milk, and egg yolk until smooth. Stir into flour mixture until just moistened. Turn onto a floured surface, knead gently 6-8 times. Pat into an 8" circle and cut into 12 wedges. Place wedges 1" apart on baking sheet, and brush on egg white that has been beaten until frothy. Bake at 400°F for 12-15 min. or until golden brown.

(Maurita)

Ham and Boursin Spirals

slices of ham
Boursin cheese

Spread Boursin on the ham. Roll it up and cut in small bite-sized spirals.

(Grace)

Hard-Cooked Eggs

eggs, hard boiled (use grouse, quail, or pullet eggs for best presentation)
bowl of coarse salt crystals
bowl of chopped herbs to dip

Jam Tarts

tart shells, small
jam

Prick the bottoms of the tarts, add a bit of jam or jelly to each.

Bake at 350° until the pastry is golden brown.

(Maurita)

Fruity Drink

3/4	lb	seedless green grapes
1	medium	orange
40	oz	unsweetened white grape juice
1/2	c	lime juice
32	oz	club soda
32	oz	apple-cherry juice

Instructions

Arrange first 3 ingredients in a single layer in a shallow pan; cover & freeze at least 3 hours.
Combine juices and club soda in a large punch bowl; stir well. Add frozen fruit. Serve immediately.

(Maurita)

Lunch in Rohan

Pork and Pumpkin (or Squash) Soup

Horse and Rider Muffins

Sourdough Bread

Oatmeal Bread

Sliced Meats and Cheeses

Mustards and Pickles

Roasted and Spiced Herb Nuts

Hermits

Pork and Pumpkin (or Squash) Soup

1/2 pound ground pork
1/2 tsp salt
2 large onions minced
2 Tbsp butter
6 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1/2 tsp minced fresh ginger or 1/4 tsp ground ginger
1/4 tsp cinnamon
1/8 tsp nutmeg
pinch saffron (we used a *generous* pinch)
1 - 2 Tbsp brown sugar (optional to taste)
2 Tbsp minced parsley
1 large butternut squash, skinned, seeded and cubed

Brown the pork with the salt in a heavy skillet. Drain off the fat. Discard fat. In a large stock pot, sauté the onions in the butter until transparent. Add the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer covered about 10 - 20 minutes, or until squash is soft but firm. Salt to taste.

Variations - instead of squash use:

1 small pie pumpkin
2 medium zucchini 2 large cucumbers, peeled and seeded

(Carol)

Horse and Rider Muffins

1 cup flour
1 cup wheat germ
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1 T baking powder
1 egg
2/3 cup applesauce
2/3 cup milk
1/4 cup corn oil
1 cup apples, chopped

Preheat oven to 400° F and generously grease muffin tins.

Mix dry ingredients in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the remaining ingredients, including the chopped apples. Add liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix until moistened thoroughly. Scoop into muffin tins and bake 15 - 20 minutes. Let cool in a dog-proof location. (Dixie really enjoyed the first batch!)

(Jenny)

Sourdough Breads

This type of bread takes a lot longer to make than the others, since it needs 3 risings, rather than 2, and if you have no starter you will need a minimum of 3 days to produce one. But once you make your starter, you never have to worry about yeast for your next batch.

Sourdough Starter (The modern way)

1 envelope dry yeast (1 T)
2 c unbleached flour
1 1/2 c warm (not hot) water
1 T honey

Mix all and let stand, loosely covered, in a warm place a day or 2. It will get bubbly and smell fermented and a bit sour. Stir it down and refrigerate, loosely covered. You need to leave room for the fermentation process, or your container might break. I mix mine in a 1/2 gallon mason jar, and just set the lid on top without screwing it on. It tastes best if allowed to age a few days.

IMPORTANT NOTE: NEVER use metal utensils or bowls. Sourdough is acidic and can be corrosive.

If you want to expand your starter, add equal amounts of flour and water, allow to ferment, and refrigerate as described above.

To replenish your starter, if you use 1/2 - 1 c of starter in a recipe, replace with 1 c of flour and a scant cup of water.

Basic Sourdough Bread

Makes 1 or 2 loaves

The day before baking:

1/2 c starter
1/2 c + 2 T unbleached flour
1/2 c warm water

Mix in large bowl and let stand in a warm (not hot) place 10 - 24 hours. Cover loosely. Don't let it get too cold, or the yeast in the mix will not remain active. And don't worry if it forms a slight crust on the top; you can stir this back in when you're ready to bake.

Baking day:

3/4 c warm water
1 T each honey and oil (walnut or sunflower)
1 tsp salt

Mix together to melt honey, and cool to lukewarm.

3 1/4 c unbleached flour + 2T milled flaxseed

Stir the warm mixture into your starter. Beat in the flour, a cup at a time. Turn onto a floured board; cover with a damp cloth. Rest 15 - 20 minutes. Knead, adding a little flour if needed, until smooth and elastic; this will take some time. Wash and grease the bowl, and let dough rise, covered with a damp cloth, to double, about 2-3 hours. Punch down, and set aside, covered, to rise again (2 hrs). When doubled a second time, punch down, divide, and form 1 or 2

loaves (based on the size of your pans). Put in greased pans and cover with a damp cloth. Let rise a 3rd time, 1 or 2 hrs, to double. Bake in a preheated oven at 375 F for about 45 minutes.

Fruited Sourdough

Make the basic bread as described above through the first 2 risings. When you are ready to form the loaves, knead in your fruit. Chopped candied cherries, raisins, currants, dried, cherries or cranberries, and walnuts or almonds all taste good in this bread. The easiest way is to press the dough out in a rectangle about 3/4 - 1 inch thick and spread the fruit (about 3/4 - 1 c) in a layer on top and then roll the dough up with the fruit inside. Divide if you're making 2 loaves, and shape by hand to fit your pans. Let rise and bake as described above.

(Maurita)

Oatmeal Bread

Makes 2 loaves

1 1/2 c boiling water
1/2 c rolled oats and 1/2 c steel-cut oats
1/2 c honey
1/4 c butter
1 t salt

1 T (1 packet) dry yeast
1/2 c lukewarm water
1 tsp honey
1 c oat flour (Bulk Foods store usually carries this;
if not available you can use all whole wheat)
1 c whole wheat flour
3 1/2 - 4 1/2 c unbleached flour

Pour boiling water into large bowl. Add oats, stir in honey, butter, and salt until butter melts. Cool to room temperature.

Add honey to warm water in measuring cup. Dissolve yeast into mixture. Proof about 10 minutes, then stir into oats. Add oat and wheat flour, & 3 - 3 1/2 c of unbleached flour. Mix well. Turn onto floured board and knead, adding enough flour to keep it from sticking. Let it rest while you clean and grease the bowl. Knead some more, until smooth and elastic and no longer sticky to the touch. Let it rise in the bowl, covered, to double (1 1/2 - 2 hrs). Punch it down and divide in 2. Shape into loaves and let rise in greased pans, covered, 45 - 60 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 375 F about 15 minutes before the end of the second rising. Bake for 35 - 40 minutes.

(Patti)

Sliced Meats and Cheeses

Slice and arrange on a thick plank of wood:

black forest ham
Lebanon bologna
sliced chicken or turkey

farmstead Gouda
Leerdammer
Macallen Scottish Cheddar
dill Havarti

Mustards and Pickles

We served assorted mustards and pickles with the meats and cheeses.

Roasted and Spiced Herb Nuts

1 1/2 c almonds
1 1/2 c walnuts
1 c hazelnuts
1 c pecan halves
1/2 c maple syrup
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper -- or use 1 tsp Marash pepper
--- if using fresh herbs
1 1/2 tsp oregano leaves -- minced
1 1/2 tsp thyme leaves -- minced
1 1/2 tsp rosemary leaves -- minced
1 1/2 tsp savory leaves -- minced
1 1/2 tsp marjoram leaves
--- if using dried herbs -- use 1/2 tsp of each of the herbs listed above
3 Tbsp walnut oil -- or use olive oil
1 tsp salt, kosher

Heat oven to 300° F.

Mix nuts with herbs, syrup and oil. Spread in a 10"x15" sheet pan, and sprinkle with the salt. Bake uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the liquid evaporates, and nuts are golden under the skin (break some open to test), about 45 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool; taste and then add a little more salt if desired

NOTE ON HERBS: In lieu of fresh herbs, use dried ones (1/2 teaspoon of each).

STORAGE: Store cool nuts airtight up to 3 days at room temperature or 1 month in the freezer.

Makes: 5 cups

(Maurita)

Hermits

Sift together the dry ingredients!

2 c + 1 T flour
2 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt
2 tsp ground cinnamon
2 tsp ground ginger
1 3/4 tsp ground cloves
1/2 c + 1 T uns butter
1 c packed brn sugar
1 lg egg
1/4 c molasses
3/4 c raisins

Heat oven to 375°. DON'T grease cookie sheet. (Use parchment if you want easy cleanup.)

Cream butter and sugar until light & fluffy. Add egg, mix well, then molasses, mix. Add sifted dry ingredients and raisins, mix slowly until dough comes together.

Divide dough in half. Shape each into a log about 1 1/2" in diameter and about 12" long. Put on single cookie sheet w/3" between. Sprinkle with granulated sugar in a strip down the center of each roll. Bake 17-18 min til puffy but still soft in ctr. Cool, cut into bars, store in airtight tin.

(Maurita)

Afternoon Tea in Lothlorien

Cream Scones

Strawberry Preserves

Almond Butter Cookies

Autumn Jewel Salad Rolls

Chicken Nori Salad Wraps

Maple Tarts

Cream Scones

2 c flour
1 Tbsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 c sugar
OPTIONAL: 1/2 c chopped dried fruit
1 1/4 c heavy cream

Instructions

Preheat oven to 425° F. Combine dry ingredients (if you use them add the dried fruit). Stir in the cream with a fork, mix until the dough holds together in a rough mass.

Knead 9-10 times on a lightly floured board. Pat into a circle about 10" round. (OPTIONAL: glaze with a mix of 3T melter butter and 2 T sugar)

Cut into 12 wedges, put each on ungreased baking sheet, 1" or so between pieces. Bake about 15 minutes until golden brown.

(Maurita)

STRAWBERRY PRESERVES

8 cups strawberries -- sliced crosswise, packed (this is about 2 quarts)
6 c sugar
2 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp unsalted butter

Sort, hull, and rinse berries. Slice them crosswise in an enameled preserving kettle. Layer them with the sugar, stir gently, and let stand, covered, several hours or overnight.

In the morning: add the lemon juice and butter (to prevent foaming), bring to a boil, stirring occasionally, and boil it gently until it passes a standard jelly/jam test.

Remove from heat. Ladle into clean jars leaving 1/4 inch head space. Seal and process for 15 minutes in a boiling water bath. Cool jars, label, and store in a dark cool place.

(Maurita)

Almond Butter Cookies

1 c (2 sticks) unsalted butter -- at room temperature

1 c sugar

1 tsp vanilla

1 Tbsp almond extract

Measure and mix dry ingredients:

3 c flour

1/2 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

Cream the butter: beat with a mixer for about 2 minutes, or until it turns a pale yellow color. Scrape it down from the sides of the bowl, add the sugar, and beat again about 2 minutes, until it is soft and almost white. Scrape the bowl again. Add eggs and both extracts. Beat at medium speed about 30 seconds, until it has the consistency of mashed potatoes. Stop and scrape again.

Add the flour and mix on low speed about 30 seconds. Scrape bowl again. Mix a little more, until the dough sticks together and there are no streaks of unblended flour.

Shape in a number of ways:

Cookie scoops, roll tops in sugar, then use glass bottom (10-13 min)

Roll into log, refrigerate, then slice 1/4" thick with wet knife (8-10 min)

Refrigerate, roll out 1/4" thick and cut into shapes (8-10 min)

Bake in preheated 375° F oven until the edges just begin to brown.

(Maurita)

Autumn Jewel Salad Rolls

Dressing:

6 tablespoons walnut oil

3 tablespoons pomegranate molasses

2 tablespoons sherry vinegar

Salad

2 cups arugula

1 cup radicchio

2 cups mixed greens

2 Fuyu persimmons -- sliced

1 red Bartlett pear -- halved, cored, sliced very thin

2 cups halved red grapes

1 cup pomegranate seeds

2/3 cup toasted whole almonds

1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

Combine dressing ingredients in a small jar and shake to emulsify. Arrange salad ingredients beautifully and drizzle with dressing.

Serve wrapped in rice-paper wrappers like fresh spring rolls - use nori in a pinch (we did).

(Maurita)

Chicken Nori Salad Wraps

2 chicken breast halves -- cooked
1/2 lb rice noodles, dried, thin
1 large cucumber, peeled
12 sheets nori, toasted
1/3 c pickled ginger -- thinly sliced (that would be the *gari* used as garnish for sushi)
12 large leaves of red leaf lettuce
1 Tbsp sesame seeds -- toasted
1 Tbsp sesame seeds, black
3/4 c soy sauce
2 Tbsp wasabi -- prepared paste

Bring 2 quarts of water to a boil, add rice noodles and stir to separate. Return to a boil, cover and remove from heat. Let stand about 3 minutes until noodles are tender; drain, immerse in cold water and drain again.

Slice chicken crosswise into 1/2 inch strips. Cut cucumber lengthwise into 1/4 inch slices, then cut lengthwise into sticks.

Lay 1 nori sheet on flat surface; arrange 3 slices chicken, end to end, in horizontal line; top with ginger slices. Arrange 1 cucumber stick at edge of lettuce piece and roll tightly. Place lettuce roll on ginger and distribute 1/2 cup of rice noodles evenly over lettuce. Fold nori over filling and roll tightly, moistening edge to press and seal. Repeat process and arrange nori rolls, seam side down, on platter. Cut crosswise and sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Mix together soy sauce and wasabi; serve as dip. Makes 8 servings.

(Maurita)

Maple Tarts

20 3" tart shells, unbaked
2 lg eggs
1 c brown sugar, dark -- packed
1/4 tsp salt
2 tsp white vinegar
1/2 c maple syrup (best results with grade B or Dark Amber syrup)
6 Tbsp unsalted butter -- melted

Preheat the oven to 450°.

In a bowl, beat the eggs only until yolks and whites are well-blended. Add sugar, salt, and vinegar, mixing well. Add melted butter and maple syrup.

Fill the tart shells and bake for 7 minutes, then reduce the oven temperature to 350 and bake 5 to 8 minutes longer, or until tarts are bubbling.

(Maurita)

Dinner in Gondor

Lettuce & Asparagus Salad

Saffron Rice

Grilled Pork Tenderloin, Apricot Glaze

Baked Pork Tenderloin Emergency Style

Roasted Game Hens

Green Beans, Parmesan Shavings

Citrus Punch

At this point in the proceedings, the plumbing in the kitchen suffered a massive failure, and our presentations suffered from an inability to wash the dishes.

We apologize for the less spiffy serving pieces.

Lettuce & Asparagus Salad

3 c Bibb lettuce leaves washed, dried
3/4 lb asparagus, washed
1/2 sm cucumber peeled & chopped
1/4 sm red bell pepper minced

DRESSING

1/4 c fresh lemon juice scant is best
1/2 shallot chopped fine
1/2 tsp fines herbes blend
1 pinch salt
1/2 c extra virgin olive oil

Wash & spin-dry the lettuce leaves and set aside. Cut asparagus into even lengths, angling the ends as in penne pasta. Blanch them in boiling water until they are crisp-tender. Immediately drain and plunge into ice water. Drain and wrap in a towel. Set aside while making the dressing.

NOTE: MAY BE MADE AHEAD TO THIS POINT

Make dressing: whisk salt, lemon juice, minced shallot and fines herbes until well mixed. Add olive oil and shake well or blend in the teeny processor. Taste and adjust seasonings.

To assemble: 1st mix the cooled asparagus with 1/2 the dressing. Place torn Bibb lettuce on plates, top with dressed green beans, then chopped cucumber, then red pepper. Serve dressing on the side.

(Maurita)

Saffron Rice

3 c long-grain white rice
4 c water
1 tsp saffron threads, crumbled
1 onion, chopped
1/2 chopped green bell pepper
1/2 c chopped red bell pepper
1 bunch green onion -- chopped
1/2 c frozen peas
1/2 c tiny diced tomatoes [opt]

Mix together rice, water, saffron, onion, peppers in the rice cooker - cover and turn to cook. When cooked, toss in the green onion and peas, and tomatoes if using. Mix gently.

(Maurita)

Grilled Pork Tenderloin, Apricot Glaze

2 tsp garlic pepper
3 lbs pork tenderloin
1/4 c teriyaki sauce
1/4 c chili-flavored oil
1/2 c apricot jam

Preheat oven to 375°

Rub garlic pepper evenly onto both sides of the meat. Mix together the teriyaki sauce and chili oil, brush tenderloin with it.

Put tenderloin on a hot grill, sear it by browning the meat quickly. [you can also sear in a skillet] After meat has seared, transfer it to a shallow baking dish. Brush again with teriyaki-oil mixture.

Liberally spread apricot jam over the pork, and bake at 250° 10 min, until juices run clear.

(Maurita)

Roasted Game Hens

12 game hens
3 lemons
1 bunch rosemary

Roast hens till done with lemons and rosemary. Yum!

(Maurita)

Green Beans, Parmesan Shavings

Cook green beans according to your favorite method. While they are very hot, toss with a bit of unsalted butter and a bit of dill or marjoram. Sprinkle large shavings of Parmesan cheese on top.
Serve it forth.

(Maurita)

Citrus Punch

2 12-oz cans frozen limeade, thawed
1 12-oz can frozen lemonade, thawed
1 oz orange extract
6 c cold water
2 Tbsp powdered sugar
1 2-3 L bottle ginger ale or 7-Up, chilled

Combine 1st 5 ingredients. When ready to serve, stir in the ginger ale (or 7-Up) and serve immediately. (Maurita)

Filling in the Corners

Other People of Middle-Earth

Entish Orc-Butter

Roasted Bits of Manflesh (Orcs)

Dead Marshes en Gelée (Morgul vale)

Roasted Roots with Herbed Mustard Sour Cream (Ouarves)

Balroġ Tongues (Who else?)

Little Corn Cakes with Honey (Beornings)

Lembas (an approximation)

Entish Orc-Butter (Ents, of course)

1/2 c dry black beans & water to cover OR 1 15 oz can black beans
fresh garlic, finely minced, or dried minced garlic
1 small eggplant
olive oil
seasoned salt, cayenne pepper, coarse ground blackpepper
fermented black bean paste (most grocery stores should have this in their Oriental food sections)
balsamic vinegar
chopped , pitted Kalamata olives
roasted red peppers
parsley, chives, basil, rosemary, preferably fresh, roughly chopped
coarse black pepper

If using dried beans, you will need an extra day to soak and cook; they tend to take a very long time, and need to be checked often in the cooking so they don't go dry. Cover with water, soak overnight, then drain. Cover with fresh water and bring to a boil. You can add dried garlic now if you want. When they boil, reduce the heat to simmer. Cover and cook until soft, adding water as needed. Drain when fully cooked.

Slice the eggplant into rounds, 1/4 inch or thinner, leaving the skin on. Oil a baking sheet, and arrange the slices in a single layer. Sprinkle with seasoned salt, cayenne, and black pepper to taste, and a little more oil. How much depends on the amount of eggplant you have, but you just want to lightly cover the tops, to help them brown without drying out. Roast under the broiler until tender, turning once when the tops begin to brown. Watch them closely; this won't take very long. Shred the slices when cool enough to handle (or cut into uneven bits, if you prefer).

Reserve a handful of the cooked (or canned) black beans, and puree the rest with olive oil, bean paste, and vinegar, adding 1 T of each at a time, until smooth. 1 Tbsp may be enough, if your beans have much moisture of their own. Squash the reserved beans slightly with a fork, so they are still mostly intact, and stir into your puree. Dice as many olives as you like, fairly small. And remember they will add salt, so don't use too many. Cut the roasted pepper into thin, rough strips (1/2 to 1 whole pepper is plenty, depending on the size). Stir the olives and peppers into the mix, along with coarsely chopped parsley, chives, rosemary, basil, and black pepper to taste.

Keeps about 1 week in the fridge. Good on hearty breads or crackers (goes well topped with stilton cheese and thin slices of red onion), and can be tossed with hot cooked pasta as a quick sauce, too.

(Patti)

Roasted Bits of Manflesh (ORCS)

figure out a way to support hot dogs in a casserole dish - make a "frog" out of wire if need be. If you use chicken wire, be sure it's *not* galvanized! Food-safe materials only, please: we don't actually want to poison anyone.

stick hot dogs vertically in that
note - 1/2 cheese-stuffed, 1/2 regular hot dogs make the best mix

cover the support frame with canned baked beans

Bake at 350° until the beans are hot and the hot dogs are roasted (and spurting)

Serve at once for best effect.

(Claire)

Dead Marshes en Gelée (Morgul vale delicacy)

1 pkg. lemon Jello
1 1/2 c. hot water
1/4 c. mild vinegar (cider vinegar works well)
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. carrots, grated
1 c. cabbage, shredded
1 c. celery, finely chopped
1 pimento, chopped
4 tbsp. green pepper
many olives, stuffed with pimento, whole
food coloring if desired for that sludgy green appearance

Melt Jello in hot water, add salt, vinegar and lemon juice. Cool and when mixture begins to stiffen, add remaining ingredients. Turn into molds that have been rinsed in cold water and chill until firm. We advise placing the olives in pairs so they look like eyes.

Serves 6.
(Carol & Maurita)

Roasted Roots with Herbed Mustard Sour Cream

Peel and cut carrots, parsnips, and turnips into bites. Toss in a shallow baking dish with a little oil (walnut oil is very nice), season to taste with salt and pepper (and 1/2 tsp sugar if you want it), and bake in a single layer at 375 F for 1/2 to 1 hour, depending on how small you cut your vegetables, and how much you've used. They will be tender and lightly browned when done. Serve with a spoon of sauce on the side:

Herbed Mustard Sour Cream

1 c sour cream
1-2 tsp powdered mustard
1 T mustard seeds, whole or lightly cracked if you prefer
chopped fresh dill and rosemary to taste
1-2 tsp of malt, cider, or wine vinegar to thin if needed

Blend all together. NOTE: powdered mustard can be deceptively hot if you aren't used to it, and cracked mustard seeds can release mustard oil, which can also add heat to your finished cream. If you prefer mild, use less, and leave the seeds whole. And of course, you can add other herbs to vary the taste.

(Patti)

Balrog Tongues

Cut a slit from just under the top to the bottom of a whole yellow chile pepper, and stuff in a whole small Louisiana red pepper. John used La Preferida brand for both peppers, because the relative sizes of the peppers worked so well.

(John)

Little Corn Cakes with Honey (Beornings)

1 1/2 cups flour
3/4 cup yellow cornmeal
2 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons granulated sugar
3 eggs
2/3 cup milk
1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter or margarine, melted
Equipment: a 9-hole muffin top or hamburger bun pan, or a 9x13 baking pan

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt and sugar. In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs and milk till thoroughly combined. Pour the milk/egg mixture and the melted butter or margarine over the dry ingredients, and stir just to combine; don't beat this mixture, or the cakes will be tough.

Using a spoon or muffin scoop, scoop a generous 1/4 cup (or scant 1/3 cup) of batter into nine 3 3/4-inch corncake cups (I have a special pan for these, a muffin-top pan works also.) The cups should be just about half full, maybe a bit less. Wet your fingers and spread the batter to cover the bottom of the cups, smoothing the top at the same time. If you're using a 9 x 13-inch pan, grease it lightly (or line it with parchment) and spread the batter into it, smoothing the top.

Bake the muffins in a preheated 350°F oven for about 18 minutes, or until the bottoms are golden brown but the tops aren't colored yet, or just barely beginning to color (since they'll be going into the toaster, you don't want them to brown too much in the oven). Remove the cakes from the oven, and allow them to cool for 15 to 20 minutes before removing them from the cups. If you've used a 9 x 13-inch pan, let the cake cool, then cut it into nine rectangles, each approximately 3 inches wide and 4 1/4 inches long. Split and eat warm, or cool to room temperature, split, and toast. Yield: 9 cakes. Do as the Beornings do, and serve these with honey.

(Maurita)

Lembas

The rare grain the Elves use to make this waybread is not available to most of us, so this recipe is as close as I have been able to come. I hope any of you who have been fortunate enough to taste the real thing will find this version a reasonable substitute. (Patti)

Preheat oven: 450° F

2 c all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
3 tsp baking powder
2 tsp sugar OR 2 generous tsp honey
1/3 c butter or shortening
3/4 c milk

Mix dry ingredients together. Cut in butter. If using honey instead of sugar, add it to the milk; warm milk. Do not boil. Pour over the flour/butter mixture and mix together. Knead lightly, just enough to be sure all is mixed well. Cut and pat into squares about 3-4 inches to a side. Score into quarters, diagonally, being careful not to cut all the way through. Bake on ungreased sheet, about 8-12 minutes, until light golden.

Afterglow in Valinor

Fruit Melange with Spiced Syrup

Napoleons with Berries & Cream

Caramel Sauce

Orange Mousse in Chocolate Cups

Ultimate Flourless Chocolate Cake

Fruit Melange with Spiced Syrup

16 oz. each of canned pitted sweet cherries, sliced apricots, and sliced pears
8oz. each of canned tangerine sections, sliced peaches, and pineapple chunks
5 sliced kiwis
20 or so quartered strawberries
1/2 tsp nutmeg
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground cloves
1/2 cup spiced pear mead
1 cup cherry mead
2 cups fresh seedless grapes

Use fruit canned in their own juice. Drain all liquid from the canned fruits and place them in a covered baking dish. Mix pear and cherry mead and add nutmeg, cinnamon, and clove. Pour over the fruit in the baking dish and heat at 350 oF for 20 min. Add in grapes. Serve hot.

(Maurita)

Napoleons with Berries and Cream

(frozen) puff pastry sheets
whipped cream
fresh berries
chocolate or caramel sauce

Sprinkle puff pastry liberally with coarse sugar, then cut into small rectangles. Bake puff pastry in a hot oven until browned and crisp. Store in airtight container. At serving time - assemble whipped cream, berries, and pastry layers. Squirt some dark chocolate or caramel sauce over or around.

(Maurita)

Caramel Sauce

1/2 c granulated sugar
2 Tbsp cold water
1/2 c heavy cream, warmed
1 Tbsp unsalted butter

Combine sugar and water in a 2-c glass measuring cup. Cover tightly with microwave-safe plastic wrap. Zap at full power for 4-5 min, until the syrup just begins to turn gold. Watch it closely!

Remove cup and uncover it carefully. Slowly pour in the warmed cream (be careful of spatters, these burns will be bad) Stir all the time, and also stir in the butter. Cook this mixture, uncovered, at full power about 1 minute, until dark gold.

If you cooked it a bit too long in step 1, and the syrup is already dark, you may not need to cook much more in step 2, but watch out, it will spatter furiously when you add the cream.

Makes 1 cup, good for 4 moderate folks for ice cream, or 2 piggy people. Also great with apple pie, cobbler, baked peaches or pears, and on a spoon all by itself.

(Maurita)

Orange Mousse in Chocolate Cups

2 tsp powdered gelatin
1 tsp grated lemon rind
rind of 1/2 orange
2 eggs, separated
3 level Tbsp sugar
juice of 1/2 orange
1 Tbsp lemon juice
3/8 c heavy cream

Put gelatin with 5 Tbsp cold water in a small bowl, dissolve over a pan of hot water (or in a microwave). Let cool.

Prep chocolate cups: put a 1-in wide piece of double foil around the top edge to make a collar, make a little fold to secure.

Put citrus rinds, egg yolks, and sugar, together with orange and lemon juice, in a bowl over hot water and beat until mixture is thick and creamy. Remove from heat and beat until cool. Beat in the gelatin and tint pale orange with food coloring.

Whip egg whites and cream - separately - until they just hold their shape, and fold them into the gelatin mixture.

Pour into containers and chill until set. When it's time to serve, run a hot knife between the collar and the souffle.

Garnish with shreds of candied orange peel

garnish: candied orange peel

4 cups (1/4-inch wide) orange peel strips (about 15 oranges)
1/2 tsp Salt
2 c sugar
1 c water
more sugar for rolling the peel in

Place orange peel in water to cover in a Dutch oven; add salt. Bring to a boil, and boil 20 minutes. Drain. Repeat boiling procedure twice without salt, and set orange peel aside. Combine 2 cups sugar and 1 cup water in a small saucepan; bring to a boil and cook, stirring often, until syrup spins a thread, about 7 minutes (234 degrees). Add orange peel; simmer 30 minutes, stirring often. Drain orange peel well.

Discard syrup. Roll peel, a few pieces at a time, in sugar. Arrange in a single layer on wire racks; let dry 4 to 5 hours. Store in an airtight container.

Yield: about 1 pound.

(Maurita)

Ultimate Flourless Chocolate Cake

8 large eggs -- should be very cold
1 pound bittersweet or semisweet chocolate -- coarsely chopped
1/2 pound (2 sticks) unsalted butter -- cut into 1/2 -inch chunks
1/4 cup Framboise liqueur (optional)
Confectioners' sugar or cocoa powder for decoration

Adjust oven rack to lower middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Line bottom of 8-inch springform pan with parchment and grease pan sides. Cover pan underneath and along sides with sheet of heavy-duty foil and place in a large roasting pan. Bring kettle of water to boil.

Beat eggs with hand-held mixer at high speed until volume doubles to approximately 1 quart, about 5 minutes. Alternately, beat in bowl of electric mixer fitted with wire whip attachment at medium speed (speed 6 on a KitchenAid) to achieve same result, about 5 minutes. Do *not* try doing this without a mixer unless you have really really well developed arm muscles. You want light fluffy eggs that have doubled in volume; this takes a *lot* of beating.

Meanwhile, melt chocolate and butter (adding liqueur, if using) in large heat-proof bowl set over pan of almost simmering water, until smooth and very warm (about 115 degrees on an instant-read thermometer), stirring once or twice. (To use the microwave, melt chocolate and butter together at 50% power until smooth and warm, 4 to 6 minutes, stirring once or twice.) Fold 1/3 of egg foam into chocolate mixture using large rubber spatula until only a few streaks of egg are visible; fold in half of remaining foam, then last of remaining foam, until mixture is totally homogenous. Work carefully so that you preserve the air beaten into the eggs!

Scrape batter into prepared springform pan and smooth surface with rubber spatula. Set roasting pan on oven rack and pour enough boiling water into the roasting pan so that it comes to halfway up side of springform pan. Bake until cake has risen slightly, and the edges are just beginning to set, a thin glazed crust has formed on surface, and an instant read thermometer inserted halfway through center of cake registers 140 degrees, 22 to 25 minutes. Even though the cake may not look done, pull it from the oven when an instant-read thermometer registers 140 degrees. (Make sure not to let the tip of the thermometer hit the bottom of the pan.) It will continue to firm up as it cools. If you use a 9-inch springform pan instead of the preferred 8-inch, reduce the baking time to 18 to 20 minutes.

Remove cake pan from water bath and remove foil overwrap. Set on wire rack; cool to room temperature. Cover and refrigerate overnight to mellow (may be hold for up to 4 days).

About 30 minutes before serving, remove springform pan sides, invert cake on sheet of waxed paper, peel off parchment pan liner, and turn cake right side up on serving platter. Sieve a light sprinkling of confectioners' sugar or unsweetened cocoa powder over cake to decorate, if desired.

(Maurita)