

The kids ate my dessert! What do I do now?

Today's recipe is one born out of necessity. One day, not long ago, I was having company for dinner and had every intention of making strawberry rhubarb crumble for dessert. But, when I got to the fridge to get the strawberries out, I discovered that my kids had already eaten them all! Then, I went outside to harvest the rhubarb, only to discover that there wasn't as much left on the plant as I had thought.

Now what? Well, I scoured the fridge and discovered a few kind of tired apples. Then I went to the basement freezer and discovered that there was a small bag of frozen sour cherries left. So, the recipe originally was a combo of rhubarb, apples and cherries— dubbed "Chapplebarb crisp" by my girlfriend. It was yummy, but we have given you the recipe for rhubarb and cherries only, since apples are not really that great at this time of the year. If you do want to sub in some apple at a later point, just keep the total quantity of fruit in the recipe the same. You actually can do any kind of fruit combo you like using cherries, rhubarb, apples, blueberries, peaches, strawberries, raspberries— whatever you like.

I must tell you about our recent Father's Day picnic adventure. Some of you will remember reading about last year's picnic. I host it every year for my husband, my dad, my mom and two of our great family friends. Usually, what happens is I send the bunch of them on a puzzle or game or scav-

Lori Gysel
&
Gerry
Kentner



enger hunt type activity that eventually leads them to the destination I have chosen for the picnic. Then they arrive and we have a terribly civilized meal with china, linen, glassware, etc— all against a backdrop of a gently gurgling river and green grass and quiet.

Well, this year was our 13th annual. I should have known that the number alone would guarantee that this one would turn out a little different! First of all, I was so busy at work this year, there was no time for advance preparation. I woke up on the day of the picnic with nothing done— I had to start from scratch.

So, at 7:30 a.m. I was digging through recipe files, trying to figure out what to make. At 8:30 a.m., my sister phoned, saying that she and her youngest son were on their way here from Windsor for a surprise visit (which is very cool— we don't get to see them often enough), but that meant that there would be one more adult for dinner and since my parents would want to spend as much time as possible with their out-of-

town grandson, that would mean that he and my two kids would be coming along. So, it became a dinner for 10 instead of six.

The weather station was threatening thunderstorms. So, I cooked with one eye on the weather forecast all day. At 4 p.m., when I would usually be well organized and calm, I was scrambling—thank goodness for the kids— they loaded all the stuff into the truck: table, chairs, china, glassware, linen, drinks, food....Finally we were off.

I had to call home twice while en route to ask my hubby to bring something when he came. I've never forgotten anything before. We arrived at the park that I had planned to go to and I just about had to arm wrestle with another family for the last available picnic spot. I would never choose somewhere this crowded— but it wasn't crowded when I'd scouted it out a few weeks ago.

Fortunately, another spot became available and both families had room.

Then, as my guests tried to deduce the location from the game that I had left them, they almost came to blows due to a lack of communication about what was going on. They arrived grumpy rather than full of laughter.

As the evening progressed, everyone relaxed and enjoyed themselves. The weather turned out to be beautiful— it thunderstormed in Georgetown, but down by Lake Ontario it was great.

Let's hope next year, number 14 will be a little smoother!

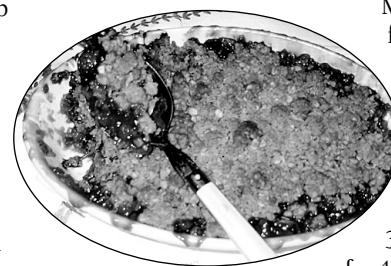
Man, time flies. My youngest is 12 today! Happy Birthday Michael! Have fun and keep cooking!

Lori and Gerry can be reached at whatscookin@independentfreepress.com

Rhubarb and Cherry Crumble

Ingredients

- 3 cups chopped rhubarb
- 2 cups sour cherries
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1 tsp cinnamon



Method

Mix rhubarb, cherries, sugar, flour and lemon juice. Pour into casserole dish sprayed with non-stick baking spray. Combine remaining ingredients and blend until crumbly. Pat onto fruit and bake in preheated 350 F degrees oven, uncovered for 45 minutes. Serves 6-8.

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