

Add warmth to the holidays with Southwest crab or shrimp cakes

By Susie Iventosch



Southwest Crab and Shrimp Cakes

Photo Susie Iventosch

This is the time of year when I start to think about new crab recipes. For some reason, January and crab go together in my mind and crab cakes came up in conversation at a recent holiday luncheon.

Oddly enough, this conversation was prompted by the delivery of a lovely slice of tiramisu.

Lynn Ballou, who writes Lynn's Top Five, a column offering financial planning advice, told

me she'd love to travel the globe in search of the perfect tiramisu and crab cakes. In fact, when she and her colleague, Marilyn Plum, first met they attended many business luncheons together and very

quickly discovered that Marilyn always gravitated toward the crab cakes on the menu, while Lynn was tempted by the tiramisu.

"Our favorite place to have both was the wonderful restaurant in Walnut Creek — Speidini's, which is no longer there, but a favorite for both of us," Lynn recounted.

Now that Marilyn is semi-retired, she's traveling the globe and Lynn says that instead of sending pictures of herself and her husband in some famous, far-away destination, she sends photos of the most amazing crab cakes or tiramisu they've enjoyed along the journey.

I really love this idea and

would love to join in the adventure, but in the meantime, I traveled to my kitchen put together a recipe that works both for shrimp and crab cakes. I had never made shrimp cakes before, and they were awesome. We served them with blue cheese-yogurt dressing spiced up with hot sauce. Just add a salad, and you have a beautiful dinner ready to go.

If you have a favorite crab cake or tiramisu recipe, or have had an amazing one in a local restaurant or in your travels that you'd like to share, please email it to me so we can expand our quest!

Cooking Term of the Week

Timbale

Timbale is a drum-shaped mold that is slightly tapered toward the bottom. Usually the food that is made in this mold is a custard-based recipe that is turned out of the mold before serving. Both the dish itself and the recipe made in the dish are referred to as a timbale. A timbale can also be a high-sided pie crust that holds meat or fruit.

Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



Southwest Crab or Shrimp Cakes

(Makes 8 crab or shrimp cakes)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound, (roughly 3 cups) chopped cooked shrimp or crab meat
 - 1 Tbsp. grated red onion
 - 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
 - 1 Tbsp. fresh-squeezed lime juice
 - 2 Tbsp. finely chopped cilantro leaves
 - ½ jalapeño pepper, very finely diced (optional)
 - 1 egg
 - 1 tsp. hot sauce
 - 1 Tbsp. mayonnaise (need for crab cakes, but not necessary for shrimp cakes)
 - 1 cup panko, divided into 1/3 cup for inside cakes and 2/3 cup for exterior coating
 - ½ tsp. each salt and pepper
 - 2 Tbsp. olive oil for cooking
- Garnish: Lime wedges and cilantro leaves
Blue cheese dressing with hot sauce for dipping

DIRECTIONS

Remove tails from shrimp and place in the bowl of the food processor. With the metal blade pulse 8 to 10 times, until shrimp is chopped but not too pasty. (For crab, don't process meat.) Transfer meat to a medium-sized bowl.

Add 1/3 cup panko (reserve 2/3 cup for coating exterior of cakes) and all remaining ingredients except olive oil. Mix well and divide into eight equal portions. Form into patties and then coat on all sides in panko crumbs seasoned with salt and pepper.

At this point, you can cook the crab cakes and serve, or you can refrigerate them ahead of time to cook later in the day.

When ready to cook, heat oil on griddle over medium-high heat. Place cakes on griddle and cook for about 3-4 minutes per side, or until golden brown.

Garnish with lime wedge, cilantro leaves and a spoonful of spicy blue cheese dressing.

Pressures on high school students

By Sophia McManus

Junior year is infamous among students as the hardest year of high school. Juniors are expected to challenge themselves with the most rigorous courses and maintain a schedule of extracurriculars in the hopes of admittance to a good college. There is a mounting pressure to succeed, which stifles the passion for learning.

Many students have grown to believe that a high GPA is the only indicator of success. They are hesitant to challenge themselves, worried that a poor test score will be detrimental to their grades. It takes a large influence to deter students from this level of thinking.

For me, my physics teacher helped me rediscover how to view learning. She opened my eyes to see testing as a learning experience, rather than a way to demonstrate knowledge. She gave tests that forced students to apply material to new situations, favoring the experience over results. Despite the poor scores, she never made the tests easier. Instead, she encouraged test corrections where students had to explain the physical implications of their incorrect answer, and their correct answer. In her class, students were forced to think critically, and embrace their mistakes. My teacher even agreed to add money for an end-of-the-year party if students caught her mistakes. This normalized mistakes, ensuring students would value learning material more than messing up.

Despite the teacher's emphasis on learning rather than testing, she often had to combat the fear of failure instilled by parents. When the first physics test was returned most students immediately asked the teacher, "Can you email my parents and explain that everyone got this score?" The threat of punishments left students terrified of a bad test score. Rather than helping their

children succeed, strict parents prevented students from embracing the failure associated with learning.

Even with supportive teachers and parents, the stress of school pervades. Pressure from fellow peers, an often-overlooked factor, is suffocating for many students. Since classmates spend so much time inside classrooms, many students incorporate their academic success with social standing. Students tend to know where they stand compared to others even when there is no ranking system. They know who got the least amount of sleep, who was accepted to prestigious colleges, who aced the final exam.

The problem with this competitive mindset is the desire to be the best. Students find themselves wishing others to fail a test, to have a better comparative grade for colleges. Although thoughts like these are fleeting, there is still a divide in friendships caused by grades. The competitive atmosphere between peers undermines the sense of community and camaraderie that students desperately needed.

Furthermore, the self-awareness of the pressures within school leads students to prove their self worth as the one that "struggles the most." Many view lack of sleep as an indicator of success. The association of poor mental health with success leads students to extenuate their own mental health problems. This inevitably contributes to the perpetuated notion that unhappiness is necessary in high school.

In response to this competitive atmosphere, some students ridicule others that are seen to work too hard in classes, calling them "try hards" as an insult. With the ongoing academic competition, those unwilling to compete for a top spot choose to make fun of those that are.

The academic competition ultimately causes a sense of un-

happiness and division between students. To mitigate the sense of competition, students must support each other, and help each other to do their best. It should not be about who got an A, but how many people are able to get an A. The community around the school should

take pride in educating everyone, not providing a list of elite students.

Schools alone are not responsible for changing the pressure on students. It is up to the community to change the perspective around grades. The emphasis on grades deters from the importance of education, since it

discourages any mistakes. Of course grades matter, it would be ignorant to say otherwise, but receiving worse grades with challenging courses far exceeds the benefits of an "easy A." Motivation and a passion for learning are more important lessons than one bad test score.

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