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# 3Bs Recipes (Bridge, Books and Bunco)

By Susie Iventosch

Exciting news ...it's Bunco night! Distressing news ... it's your turn to host. Yikes!

The perpetual problem possesses your thoughts: What, oh what to serve? It has to be delicious, it should be attractive, and it's best if prepared ahead—with minimal effort once the guests arrive. After all, you want to play too!

A couple of weeks ago, I received an email requesting some main dish ideas for just such gatherings.

"Many Lamorinda ladies are involved in Book, Bridge and Bunco groups," wrote Constance Clayburn of Moraga. "I would love to see some 'main dish' ideas and serving suggestions published in the Lamorinda Weekly, that are apropos to the season."

Clayburn said that these types of groups normally meet on a monthly basis, and the gatherings are anywhere from eight to 12 people. The hostess generally prepares the entire meal when it is her turn to host the event, but prefers dishes that can be prepared ahead of time,

so she, too, may join in the fun! "Everyone is thinking 'healthy' and 'low calorie', yet still tasty and attractive," Clayburn added. "It's the age-old 'what to serve' dilemma!"

Pouring over recipes, I came up with all sorts of rich, calorie-laden ideas, like lobster-Gruyere macaroni and cheese (heavenly), or homemade chicken pot pies, divine, but tough to make low-cal. Then I thought of a recipe a friend gave me long ago, that combines orzo pasta with Ortega chilies and cheese. Everyone I've ever served it to has absolutely loved it. And, it can be made in a low-cal version by using non-fat sour cream and reduced calorie cheese. Add a seasonal touch by serving an arugula-roasted pumpkin salad, garnished with pomegranate seeds, nuts and blue cheese. By adding roasted turkey or chicken, this salad can become a healthy and festive main course, too.

Then, there is always the amazing Chicken Marbella from the Silver Palate cookbook. This dish, made with olives, prunes, capers and brown sugar, is baked in a lovely marinade of wine, olive oil, herbs and wine vinegar, is really best served at room temperature, anyway!

For vegetarians, a stuffed eggplant with a walnut-wheat-germ-Parmesan crust is to die for—and a meal in itself. And, for crisp fall evenings, pumpkin bisque served in individual hallowed out pumpkins is an especially fun treat, too! You just need a short "time-out" for everyone to ladle their own pumpkin-ful. Actually, come to think of it, the arugula salad and pumpkin soup would team up for a delicious dinner pair, too.

I'll keep looking for more ideas, but here is a start! If anyone has a great recipe for the 3Bs they'd like to share, please email me and I will try to publish it!

## Baked Orzo-Ortega Chile Casserole

*Makes one 9x13 casserole*  
My friend Shawn made this dish for us before we ever had kids. Now, some 25 years later, it is still one of our family's favorite pasta dishes. My son used to think this dish was the absolute definition of the word "casserole." It wasn't until he was in his teens that he realized that "casserole" was a type of dish, not orzo pasta with chilies and cheese!

It can be made with brown or brown/wild rice, too, for those who prefer grains to pasta, but it is just a little more dense and slightly less puffy.

**Ingredients**  
1 ½ cups orzo (rice-shaped pasta) or rice  
1 ½ cups grated Monterey Jack cheese, or Pepper Jack (can use low-calorie version)  
½ cup diced, mild Ortega chilies  
1 red bell pepper, diced  
1 cup sour cream (can use non-fat or low-fat sour cream)  
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

**Directions**  
Preheat oven to 400°. In a large pot of boiling water, cook orzo to al dente. Drain and place in a large bowl. Mix cooked orzo with one 1 cup of the Jack cheese, red bell pepper, chilies and ½ cup of the sour cream. Stir well. Spread into greased 9x13 inch baking dish. (You can certainly do individual ramekins, if you prefer.) Spread remaining sour cream in a thin, even layer on top and sprinkle with remaining Jack and Parmesan cheeses. Bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until slightly puffed and cheese is browned. If there are any leftovers, which is unlikely, they make a terrific lunch to take to work or school, or it can be frozen for another busy day.



Photo Susie Iventosch

## Arugula salad with roasted pumpkin, toasted hazelnuts or pecans, pomegranate seeds, bleu cheese and Blood Orange Vinaigrette

**Salad Ingredients**  
4 cups rocket-leaf arugula  
1/3 cup pomegranate seeds  
¼ cup crumbled blue cheese  
1 cup cubed, roasted pumpkin\*  
1/3 cup toasted hazelnuts or pecan halves

**Blood Orange Vinaigrette**  
1/3+ cup extra virgin olive oil (add a little more or less, depending upon your tastes)  
2 tablespoons Blood Orange vinegar (Cuisine Perel makes this)  
2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
½ teaspoon onion powder  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
½ teaspoon white pepper  
½ teaspoon sea salt

**Directions**  
Place arugula, pumpkin, pomegranate seeds, blue cheese and pecans in a glass salad bowl. (This is a very pretty salad, so a glass bowl makes a nice presentation.) Toss with vinaigrette and serve at once!  
\*To cook pumpkin, heat oven to 375° and spray roasting pan with cooking spray or brush with olive oil. Cut baking pumpkin in half, scoop out seeds and drizzle inside of pumpkin halves with olive oil. Place, cut side down, in roasting pan and bake for approximately 15-20 minutes, or until a knife will easily pierce through skin and meat. Remove from oven. Cool and remove skin. Cut pumpkin into bite-sized pieces and toss with salt and pepper to season. Refrigerate until ready to use.



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## LAMORINDA's Restaurants

... updated July 7, 2010 ...

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Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-4422 Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-9687 Table 24, Theatre Sq, Ori, 254-0124	<b>Chinese</b> Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-0809 Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor, 376-1740	<b>China Moon Restaurant</b> , 380 Park St, Mor, 376-1828 <b>The Great Wall Rest.</b> , 3500 Golden Gate Way, 284-3500 <b>Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine</b> , 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori, 253-9852 <b>Lily's House</b> , 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf, 284-7569 <b>Mandarin Flower</b> , 581 Moraga Rd, Mor, 376-7839 <b>Panda Express</b> , 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-0288 <b>Szechwan Chinese Restaurant</b> , 79 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2020 <b>Uncle Yu's Szechuan</b> , 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf, 283-1688 <b>Yan's Restaurant</b> , 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 284-2228	<b>Coffee Shop</b> Millie's Kitchen, 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf, 283-2397 Squirrel's Coffee Shop, 998 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-7830 Village Inn Cafe, 204 Village Square, Ori, 254-6080	<b>Continental</b> Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-7108 Petar's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 284-7117 Roya's Garlic Garden, 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3007 Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf, 284-1330	<b>French</b> Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf, 385-0793 Fuz, 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-9930	<b>Hawaiian Grill</b> Lava Pit Hawaiian Grill, 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori, 253-1338 Lava Pit Fire Grill, 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 385-0658	<b>Indian</b> Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 962-9575	<b>Italian</b> Giardino, 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-3869 La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf, 284-5282 La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-9191 Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, 284-3081	<b>Michael's</b> , 1375 Moraga Way, Mor, 376-4300 <b>Pizza Antica</b> , 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0500 <b>Trattoria Lupetti</b> , 65 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-7662 <b>Postino</b> , 3565 Mt. 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Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-0404 Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori, 254-1200 Zamboni's Pizza, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori, 254-2800	<b>Sandwiches/Deli</b> Bianca's Deli, 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor, 376-4400 Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way, Ori, 254-7202 Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori, 253-0766 Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 299-0716 Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori, 254-1990 Subway, 396 Park St., Mor, 376-2959 Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 284-2627 Subway, Theatre Square, Ori, 258-0470	<b>Seafood</b> Yankee Pier, 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, 283-4100	<b>Steak</b> Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori, 254-2981	<b>Tea</b> Patisserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf, 283-2226 Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori, 254-2206	<b>Thai</b> Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, 283-8883 Baan Thai, 99 Orinda Way, Ori, 253-0989 Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor, 377-0420 Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori, 253-1975	<b>Vietnamese</b> Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor, 376-7600
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