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Customer Newsletter

FEBRUARY 2026 EDITION

From the Owner

This month is paradoxically both the shortest month, and the longest month – shortest in number of days, longest in seeming duration. To me, a confirmed winter-hater, who's been ready for spring since, oh, about September, we can't get through February fast enough. On the other hand, I am grateful for whatever time I have left on the planet, as I shuffle off into my twilight years in my fleeceline slippers, even if the weather stinks. This month also has a special place in my heart because my dear ol' dad was born on the 29th of February way back in 1928.



Chow Time with Dave

Effortless Pot Roast



This recipe's been around for a long time, experiencing the occasional resurgence. Super flavorful, and super easy. I make it in a Dutch oven, so that's what I'm describing, but the recipe is easily adaptable for a slow cooker or a pressure cooker.

You'll Need:

- ~4 lb chuck roast
- Avocado oil
- 1 large onion, halved then sliced
- ~3 jalapeños, seeded and sliced
- 1 c beef broth
- 6 – 8 pepperoncinis, along with ~¼ c of the juice

- ~2 T hot sauce
- 1 packet Ranch dressing mix
- 1 packet "au jus" gravy mix
- 1 stick of butter

Directions:

Coat the roast with a bit of the oil, then season generously with coarse Kosher salt and coarse ground black pepper. Sear the roast on all sides in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat, then kill the heat and remove the roast. Add the onion, pepperoncinis with juice, the jalapeños, the broth, and the hot sauce to the Dutch oven, and stir to combine. Set the roast back into the pot, then sprinkle the Ranch and gravy mix over it, and set the stick of butter on top. Put the lid on the Dutch oven, and cook the roast in a 350° oven for three hours or until it falls apart with very little effort. Some recipes call for removing the meat and resting it under foil, straining what remains through a sieve, and skimming off the fat to make a sauce. I just remove the roast to rest, and simmer the sauce while adding 1 T of cornstarch whisked with 1 T of water to thicken. I like having the pepperoncinis to serve with the meat. When you've done whatever you've done, shred the meat and mix it with the sauce. Serve with mashed potatoes. Use the leftovers for tacos, or whatever your imagination comes up with. This is really a delicious recipe – enjoy!

Virginia Spotlight

The Oyster Wars

Starting right at the mouth of our beloved Rappahannock river this month in 1882, the Oyster Wars dragged on for years. The harvesting of oysters in the Chesapeake Bay was big business in the postwar years, producing half of the world's production. This booming industry led to the collision of a number of opposing interests. Virginia and Maryland both claimed authority over the harvesting, and the development of dredging as a harvesting technique, which was hugely effective, but equally destructive, spawned legislation from both states regulating or banning its use. Attempts to enforce territorial, licensing, and anti-dredging laws led to occasionally bloody and often nearly comical skirmishes.

Blast From The Past

I've mentioned that my mom and her siblings were born in California to a couple who'd moved there from Japan. Random chance, along with the second World War, resulted in two of the sisters living in Japan for the rest of their lives. The siblings didn't reunite in person until the late '80s; this picture includes six of the Tabuchis. My mom is second from right, front row; my dad is second from right, standing.



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