

COOKING WITH DONNA:

## Vidalia Onions

I was so glad to see the Vidalia onions in the store. I love cooking with them so much. I guess this is one post that will be "Georgia style". I think you can get them most places in the US. These are some we use each year and look forward to so much. I hope you enjoy them too.

The Vidalia, nicknamed the Sweetie, gets its flavor from the sandy, low sulfur soil and temperate climate found in southeast Georgia's designated "Vidalia Onion Country." Served raw, the Vidalia is very sweet, crisp and juicy with just a hint of heat.

### Sweet & Sour Vidalia Onions and Cucumbers

3 cups peeled, seeded and thinly sliced cucumbers

1-1/2 cups thinly sliced Vidalia onions

1/2 cup grated carrot

1/2 cup white vinegar

1/4 cup sugar

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill or 1 tablespoon dried dillweed

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

In a medium bowl toss together cucumbers, Vidalia onions and carrot; set aside. In a liquid measuring cup combine vinegar, sugar, dill, 2 tablespoons water, salt and black pepper. Pour over cucumber mixture, toss to coat.

Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

YIELD: 6 portions, 6 cups

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### Vidalia Onion & Ham Bruschetta

4 ounces sliced lowfat ham cut into 1-inch pieces (3/4 cup)

1 cup chopped Vidalia onion

1 cup chopped plum tomatoes

2 tablespoons reduced-calorie mayonnaise

1 tablespoon prepared Dijon-style mustard

8 large slices (3/4 inch thick) Italian bread, toasted

Preheat oven to 400 F. In a medium bowl combine ham, Vidalia onion, tomatoes, mayonnaise and mustard. Arrange bread in a large baking sheet; top with ham mixture. Bake until heated through, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve immediately at room temperature.

YIELD: 4 portions

Note: Onion and ham mixture can also be served cold as a sandwich filling in hollowed-out hard rolls or pita breads.

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### **Grilled Vidalia Onion with Orange-Honey Vinaigrette**

2 large (about 1-1/2 pounds) Vidalia onions cut in 8 (1/2 inch thick) slices

1/4 cup orange juice

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 teaspoons red wine vinegar

1-1/2 teaspoons honey or brown sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

a pinch of ground black pepper

Preheat outdoor grill or broiler. Place Vidalia Onion slices on a grill or broiler pan. Grill until slightly softened and golden brown, about 3 minutes; turn and cook until tender, about 3 minutes longer. To prepare dressing, combine in a small bowl orange juice, oil, vinegar, honey, salt and black pepper; spoon over grilled onions. Serve, if desired, on a bed of spinach leaves topped with chopped tomatoes and drizzled with dressing.

YIELD: 4 portions

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### **Summer Squash Vidalia Onion Quiche**

2 cups yellow squash, chopped

1/2 cup vidalia onion, chopped

1 1/2 cups half and half

3 eggs

1 cup grated yellow cheddar

1/2 tsp each dill, onion powder, garlic powder

Saute squash and onion in 1 tablespoon butter until tender, place in prepared quiche shell, 9 x 10 inch shell works best. Grate cheddar and top squash mixture with cheese. Beat eggs, fold in half and half, add spices, pour gently into pie shell.

Place in 350 degrees oven for 35 to 45 minutes.

Serves 6-8.

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### **Cheesy Vidalia Onion Bread**

1/2 cup chopped Vidalia onion  
1 tablespoon shortening  
1 slightly beaten egg  
1/2 cup milk  
1 1/4 cups Bisquick baking mix  
1 cup grated sharp cheddar cheese  
1 tablespoon poppy seeds (optional)  
2 tablespoons melted butter

Saute the chopped onion in shortening until golden, but do not brown. Mix the milk and egg, then blend in the Bisquick. Add half the cheese and the onions. Spread the dough in a greased 8 x 1 1/2 inch round cake pan. Sprinkle the top with the remaining cheese and poppy seeds, if desired. Pour the melted butter over all. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Serve hot with butter.

6 to 8 servings

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### **Baked Vidalia Onion Dip**

2 1/2 cups coarsely chopped Vidalia Onions.  
2 cups Helmans mayonnaise  
2 cups shredded Mozzarella cheese  
salt and pepper to taste

Combine ingredients and place into a shallow baking casserole dish. Place in the oven on 350 degrees for 25 to thirty minutes or until top is beginning to become golden brown. Serve piping hot with Ritz or Club crackers.

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## Vidalia Onion Tart

Ingredients (6 servings)

Filling

2 lb Vidalia sweet onions

2 Egg yolks

6 tb Heavy cream

1/2 c Water

1/4 lb Bacon; cut in strips

1 ts Flour

1 ts Salt

1/4 c Peanut oil

Pie pastry; see below

2 c All-purpose flour

1/2 c Unsalted butter

2 Egg yolks

1 ts Salt

6 tb Cold water

Instructions

**FILLING:** Slice onions thinly and layer in large saucepan. Add 1 teaspoon of salt to them and set aside to draw out the water for at least 30 minutes. Add 1/4 cup of oil and 1/2 cup of water. Steam onions until transparent and water is cooked out. Meanwhile, place sliced bacon in a small amount of water in a shallow pan and blanch to remove excess fat. Bacon should be limp. Pour off liquid and coarsely chop. When water is cooked out of onions, add 1 teaspoon of flour and stir to dissolve.

Remove from heat and add 2 egg yolks and cream with the onions. Stir constantly.

**PIE PASTRY:** Sift flour onto a pastry board, cloth or dough bowl and make a large well in the center. Pound butter to soften slightly or have at room temperature. Place butter, egg yolks, salt and smaller amount of water in the well and work together with the fingertips of one hand until partly mixed. Gradually work in flour, pulling dough into large crumbs using the fingertips of both hands. If the crumbs are dry, sprinkle over a tablespoon of more water. Press dough firmly together - it should be soft, but not sticky. Work on a lightly floured board, pushing dough away with the heel of the hand and gathering it up with a dough scraper until smooth and pliable. Press dough into a ball. Wrap in foil or plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes. It can be stored tightly wrapped in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

**DIRECTIONS:** Roll pastry to about 1/2 inch thickness in a rectangular shape.

Place pastry on an oiled baking sheet. Crimp edges of pastry if desired.

Beat an egg yolk with a pinch of salt and brush over the entire pastry. This is called "egg glazing" and helps the filling adhere to the pastry. Pierce pastry with a fork in several places to prevent bubbles from forming while baking. Spread onion mixture over the pastry and sprinkle the chopped bacon on top. Bake at 300 degrees F. for 10 to 15 minutes or until nicely browned. Cut into 1 inch squares for hors d'oeuvres. May be made a day ahead and reheated. Wait to cut until after heating if made ahead. May be baked in individual tartlet pans or a pie plate