

## **Banana Boat Adventures ~ by Sharon Lee Riguzzi**

Spending last week in the Caribbean with all of our kids and their spouses left us with wonderful Kodak moments. Watching everyone getting along and enjoying one another's company warmed my heart.

Since I am not fond of the water, it took days of my kids' begging me to be adventurous, to be daring, to live, before I finally broke down and dived in (well, maybe it was more baby-stepped in). Seven of us saddled the banana boat – my pregnant daughter was able to be the photographer. As our “no problem, Mon” speedboat driver crisscrossed and turned, they were chortling; I was screaming. While they were switching seats with one another, I was keeping my eyes shut, clutching on tight as we bounced over the waves. Eventually everyone fell off except me – Esther Williams (if you don't know who that is, you're probably too young to read this). That is, technically I didn't fall off. It was more a case of hanging on by one leg and a death grip (forget Esther Williams, think Lucy Ricardo).

As the family returned to the boat, they faced the task of pushing me back on the banana. One was pushing, one was pulling, I was still screaming. One tried to instruct, and another tried another tactic. All the people onshore probably thought this was some sort of boat show. Finally I was back on top of the banana for the revved-up ride back to shore.

Once back on solid sand, one of my kids asked, “Why were you so scared?” I replied, “I felt like I was drowning. I hated not being in control.”

Another daughter blurted, “Mom, didn't you realize you were wearing a life jacket, which would keep you floating? And besides, don't you know we were there to help you, and we never would have let anything happen to you?”

When did the roles reverse? I missed that memo.

Do you ever feel like you're drowning? Do you ever feel like you're losing control? So often in life, with the pressures of work, family, responsibilities, I sometimes feel like I am going under. And yet my daughters' questions made me realize what had been my main problem in the salty sea. Yes, I was afraid, but my carrying on had blocked my senses from recognizing that help was close at hand. All I had to do was reach out and calmly ask for it. My screaming prevented me from hearing offers of how we could accomplish our feat (and getting me on the banana boat was exactly that).

I'll make a pact with each and every one of you. The next time any of us feels like we are drowning, we will take the following steps:

\* Breathe.

\* Look around to see who is available to help. (If no one is in sight, make a few calls. This might take a while, especially if our MO has been “I can do it myself!”)

- \* Ask for help.
- \* Let them help.
- \* Forget about not wanting to bother anybody else. If they asked you for help wouldn't you pitch in?

I rest my case.

After the fright of the banana boat experience left me, I realized I was proud that I actually had done something out of my comfort zone. It energized me so much that I suggested we all go on the water trampoline.

Who knew it would take more out of me than the banana (and I'm just talking about climbing the ladder). But that's another Shot.

### Chocolate Banana Chiffon Pie

Makes 12 servings

**PointsPlus™** value per serving: 5

#### Ingredients

- 9 whole graham crackers (or 1 cup store-bought graham cracker crumbs)
- 2 Tbsp confectioners' sugar
- 1 Tbsp fat-free milk
- 2 large egg whites\* at room temperature
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp water
- 2 ripe bananas
- 4 oz semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 oz unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice

#### Instructions

1. To make the graham cracker crumbs, combine graham crackers, sugar and milk in a food processor and pulse until crumbly and well combined. Alternatively, break up the crackers, seal them in a plastic bag, and crush to the texture of cornmeal with a rolling pin or the bottom of a heavy saucepan. Transfer the crushed crackers to a bowl and stir in sugar and milk.
2. Press the graham cracker crumb mixture into a 9-inch pie plate, evenly forming the crust across the bottom and up the side. Set aside.
3. Beat the egg whites in a large bowl with an electric mixer at high speed until soft peaks form. Set aside.
4. Stir the sugar and water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until the sugar dissolves and the mixture comes to a simmer. Clip a candy thermometer to the inside of the pan and continue cooking until the temperature registers 238°F.
5. Remove the thermometer and beat the egg whites a few seconds at high speed. With the mixer running, drizzle in the hot sugar syrup in a small, steady stream. Once all the sugar syrup has been added, continue beating at high speed 3 minutes. Set aside.
6. Meanwhile, place the chocolate in a medium bowl and microwave on high 30 seconds. Stir well, then continue microwaving in 30-second increments, stirring after each, until about two-thirds of the chocolate has melted. Remove the bowl from the microwave and continue stirring until all the chocolate has melted. Alternatively, place the chocolate in the top half of a double boiler set over about 1 inch of slowly simmering water, or place it in a medium bowl that will fit snugly over a medium saucepan with about 1 inch of slowly simmering water. Stir constantly until half the chocolate has melted, then remove the bowl from the heat (be careful of any escaping steam) and continue stirring until all the chocolate has melted.
7. Mash the bananas in a large bowl with a potato masher or a fork until creamy. Stir in the melted chocolate and the lemon juice. Fold this mixture into the beaten egg whites with a rubber spatula until uniform. Pour into the pie crust and smooth evenly across the crust.
8. Place in the freezer and chill 1 hour, then cover with plastic wrap and continue freezing at least 7 hours or up to 3 days. Set out at room temperature for 10 minutes before cutting and serving.

\* Use pasteurized egg whites to prevent food borne illness.