

Berberé-Spiced  
Bloody Marys

Stuffed  
French Toast

Seafood  
Fra Diavolo

Mimosa  
Fried Chicken



# Cook's Country

**TASTE THE  
SUNSHINE**

Our Orange  
Upside-Down  
Cake radiates  
happiness.

**Creole  
Yakamein**

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**Peanut Butter-  
Stuffed Chocolate  
Cookies**

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Pork Ribs**

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# Letter from the EDITOR



**A** FEW MONTHS BACK, I joined a panel at the 43rd annual International Association of Culinary Professionals conference, convened to talk about the ways that magazine editors find the stories our publications tell. I had a lot to say, but I narrowed my remarks to just one thing: a personal statement I once wrote to help me clarify my purpose.

At the time of its writing, I was the CEO of our household (also known as a stay-at-home mom), anticipating my youngest son's high school graduation and my return to the workplace. I jotted a list of the skills I thought I was good at and recorded my family values in a journal. Then I distilled these thoughts into a simple principle that has guided my career ever since: A good reporter brings healing.

Two projects emerged from that awakening. The first was my award-winning book *The Femima Code: Two Centuries of African American Cookbooks* (2015), which recognizes and honors unknown cooks and their kitchen traditions. The other, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, relies upon real role models to uplift and shepherd women as they pursue their

culinary dreams—women such as Linda Green, who is profiled on page 19. Green, also known as “the yakamein lady,” turned a family tradition with personal meaning into a thriving business and a New Orleans cult favorite.

When we share our version of Green's delicious recipe in *Cook's Country*, it fulfills my mission and brings me personal joy. But more than that, it encourages people everywhere to preserve the unique and special dishes in their own communities—not just when the country is celebrating Black History Month each February or Women's History Month in March, but all year round.

I consider stories such as Green's to be loving tributes that honor the people and dishes that have been bringing people together for generations. And so at the conference I encouraged the audience to activate their own spirits of hospitality by becoming correspondents for *Cook's Country*.

The ask was simple. Send us the name of a hometown culinary hero and include a brief note about what makes them and their food special. Tell us whether you are sharing a restaurant dish from your childhood, one with cultural significance, or an old favorite that brings comfort in a storm. And most of all, think of your submission like an extension of your own kitchen table or dining room, a place to invite guests and to chat a bit about your family heritage or simply talk about the art of growing, preparing, and sharing food.

Today I'm extending the invitation to you, too, with hopes that you will tell us about the memorable people, places, and food where you live. Write to us at [cookscountryeditors@americastestkitchen.com](mailto:cookscountryeditors@americastestkitchen.com). We can't wait to hear from you!

## TONI TIPTON-MARTIN

*Editor in Chief*



### KEEP THE COLD-WEATHER WOES AT BAY

#### The Complete Autumn and Winter Cookbook

The colder months are the perfect time for gathering with friends and family. And what better way is there to spend those chillier nights than cooking new recipes or using new ingredients? Whether you live alone or are part of a large family, making nutritious and filling meals at home brings a sense of comfort and tradition. Go to [AmericasTestKitchen.com/winter](http://AmericasTestKitchen.com/winter) to order your copy today.



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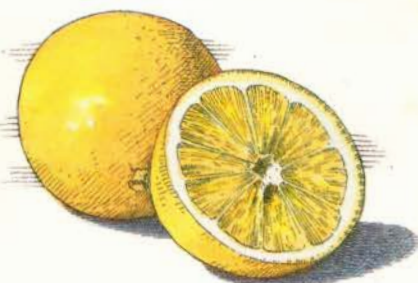
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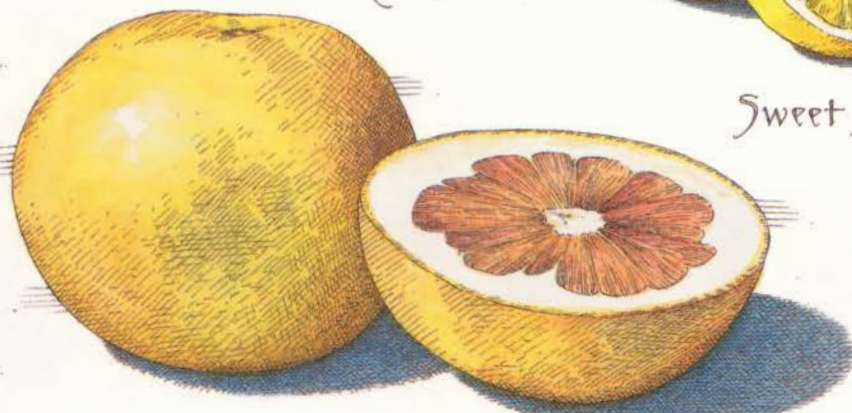
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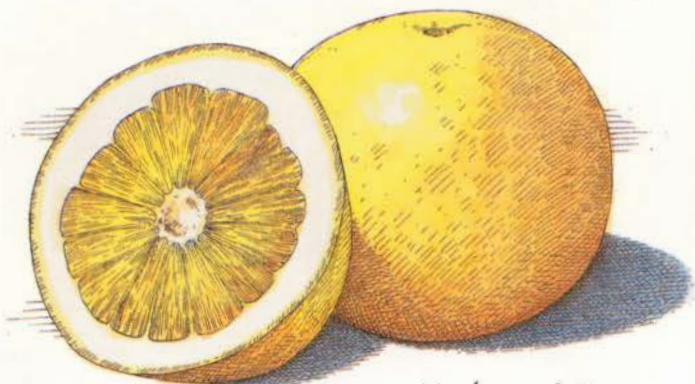
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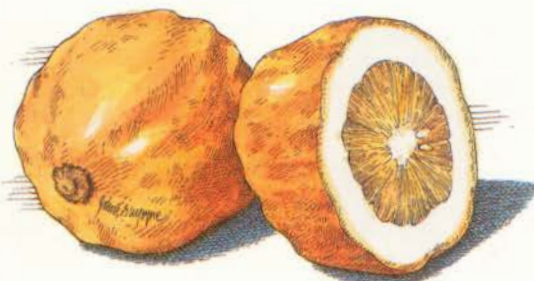
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Buddha's Hand



Melogold



Citron

# EXOTIC CITRUS

# QUICK BITES:

TEST KITCHEN TIPS, RECS, AND OTHER TIDBITS TO CHEW ON

by the Cook's Country team



## FROM LEFTOVERS TO NOVELTY ICE CREAM

Do you ever have a few leftover cookies or one random piece of pie that you just don't want to eat anymore? Mix them into our **Vanilla** or **Milk Chocolate No-Churn Ice Cream** (August/September 2019). Crumble or cut brownies, cookies, or that lonely slice of pie into bite-size pieces until you have about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup. After pouring your ice cream mixture of choice into an  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch loaf pan, gently stir in the pieces; press plastic wrap flush against the surface of the ice cream mixture; and freeze it until it's firm, at least 6 hours. Then dig in! —**AMANDA LUCHEL**

Find our recipes for **Vanilla No-Churn Ice Cream** and **Milk Chocolate No-Churn Ice Cream** at [CooksCountry.com/icecream](https://www.cookscountry.com/icecream).



## KEEP A CLEAN BOARD

I prefer large, sturdy wooden cutting boards for most of my knife work. But because these boards can't go in the dishwasher, I use a flexible plastic cutting mat any time I need to prepare raw protein. Because I only ever use the mat for protein and it's dishwasher-safe, preventing cross-contamination is a breeze. The mat is lightweight and takes up hardly any space, so I can easily pull it out when I need it and then move it out of the way quickly to get on with my other prepping tasks without having to worry about cleaning a messy, unsafe cutting board on the fly.

—**MATTHEW FAIRMAN**

## DON'T TOSS THOSE SHRIMP SHELLS

In many of our recipes, we call for peeling shell-on shrimp, but given that those recipes often call for more than a pound of shrimp, that leaves a lot of shells behind. The shells are full of flavor, and you can turn them into a versatile shrimp stock, which can be used right away for making risotto, gumbo, rice, grits—check out our recipe for **Shrimp and Grits** (June/July 2015) to see this in action—and more. The stock can also be stored in the refrigerator for up to a week or frozen for a couple months.

—**LAWMAN JOHNSON**

Find our recipe for **Shrimp and Grits** at [CooksCountry.com/shrimbandgrits](https://www.cookscountry.com/shrimbandgrits).



## ● QUICK SHRIMP STOCK

Makes about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups

Total Time: 25 minutes

Use this recipe as a guide. The quantity of water can be adjusted to accommodate fewer or more shrimp shells. The water should cover the majority of the shells in the skillet.

- 1 **tablespoon vegetable oil**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  **cups shrimp shells**
- 1 **tablespoon tomato paste**
- 2 **cups water**

Heat oil in 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shrimp shells and cook until spotty brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and cook for 30 seconds. Add water and bring to boil. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 5 minutes. Strain stock, pressing on solids to extract as much liquid as possible; discard shells. Stock can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 1 week or frozen for up to 2 months.

## AMERICAN CITRUS IN PERIL

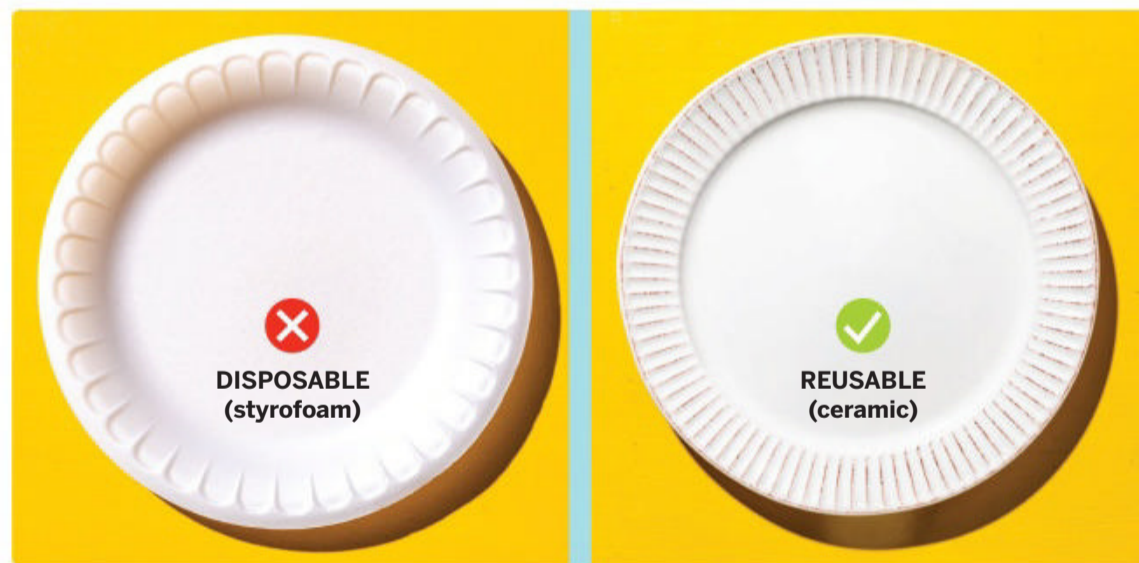
Citrus greening, or huanglongbing (HLB), is a bacterial disease threatening the American citrus industry. The disease, which is spread by insects, causes trees to produce unusable fruit that's misshapen, bitter, and discolored before eventually killing the tree itself. HLB first appeared in Florida in 2005, where it devastated the citrus crop over the next decade and a half, resulting in a 75 percent decrease in yield. It has since spread to California as well. The impact of lower yields could be increased prices on citrus fruits and juices.



There is no known cure for HLB. As of now, the best course of action is to carefully monitor groves for symptoms of HLB and remove infected trees immediately to slow the spread. But researchers are working to develop disease-resistant citrus varieties. Some antibiotics have shown promise as a viable treatment, though health officials warn about the threat of antibiotic resistance. Recently, geneticists at the University of California, Riverside discovered a disease-tolerant peptide in a variety of Australian lime that can be injected into infected plants and help them fight off the disease. This peptide injection is encouraging, but the treatment is still being tested and developed for widespread use. **—JESSICA RUDOLPH**

### REUSABLE PARTY PLATES

When my fiancée and I were planning to have a few friends over for a dinner party, we realized we had only enough plates for four people. To accommodate everyone, we would need to use disposable plates or purchase more plates. We decided that buying plates at a local secondhand shop was the best move for three reasons: We were supporting a local business, we were reducing waste, and we were saving money—the secondhand plates were less expensive than new plates, and we could reuse them. Next up, planning another dinner party. **—MARK HUXSOLL**



### SAVE THOSE BUBBLES

Getting the cork back into a bottle of sparkling wine to reseal it is nearly impossible. So to save left-over sparkling wine, I transfer it to 1-cup Mason jars and screw on the lids tightly. Because the jars are airtight, the bubbles keep longer. As a bonus, I can drink right out of the Mason jar the next night.

**—MORGAN BOLLING**



Photography (top left): Puttapong Jitrakvad/Shutterstock

## ATK REVIEWS

## GET YOUR SCRUB ON

by Chase Brightwell



WHEN TACKLING STUBBORN messes in the kitchen—whether it's cooked-on egg, crusty bits of frizzled cheese, or baked-on tomato sauce—we often bypass a sponge entirely and reach for a scrub brush. Scrub brushes offer a few advantages to sponges: Their bristles are better at cutting through tough messes and are less likely to cling to food, their handles help provide good leverage, and they tend to keep our hands out of the mess. But not all scrub brushes are built the same, so we decided to test nine models, made from both natural and synthetic materials, with varying handle lengths and head sizes. They ranged in price from about \$5.50 to about \$24.00. We put the brushes through the wringer, powering through bowls sticky with biscuit dough as well as messes in skillets and in metal baking pans. We washed each brush upwards of 10 times and sent copies home with testers for some real-world use. In the end, one brush emerged victorious. Here's how the O-Cedar Rinse Fresh Pot & Pan Brush scrubbed out the competition.

### OUR FAVORITE



**O-Cedar Rinse Fresh Pot & Pan Brush**  
**Model:** 041785997840  
**Price:** \$7.99  
**Materials:** Plastic, silicone  
**Handle Length:** 8 in  
**Dishwasher-Safe:** Yes  
**Performance:** ★★★  
**Ease of Use:** ★★½  
**Cleanup:** ★★★  
**Durability:** ★★★

### FOUR STEPS TO THE BEST SCRUB BRUSH

- Stiff, synthetic bristles cut through messes and held up better than softer, natural bristles.
- Bristles that were spaced farther apart and flared outward were easier to clean, covered more surface area, and got into corners.
- Brushes with more-horizontal handles put our hands closer to the action and gave us better leverage.
- An extra set of ultrastiff bristles was more effective on stubborn spots than scrapers made of solid plastic.

Web subscribers can see the complete results chart at [CooksCountry.com/mar22](https://www.cookscountry.com/mar22).



# Mimosa Fried Chicken

Boneless chicken thighs are great for frying because they're flavorful and have a lot of surface area to hold the crunchy coating.

A North Carolina brunch institution inspired us to infuse crunchy fried chicken with the orange and wine flavors of mimosas. **by Matthew Fairman**

**A**T THE FOREVER jam-packed brunch joint Biscuit Head in Asheville, North Carolina, the highlights include fluffy biscuits (as big as a cat's head), towering breakfast sandwiches, and a unique delight called mimosa fried chicken. A nod to the popular brunch libation of sparkling wine and orange juice, Biscuit Head's creation is a crunchy, juicy boneless chicken thigh with bright orange notes layered throughout both the meat and the breading; a touch of heat; and just a hint of aromatic, complex white wine. The sparkling wine flavor doesn't hit you over the head, and if you weren't looking for it, you might not know it was there, but it adds unmistakable depth and intrigue. We liked this dish so much

that we were inspired to develop our own version and bring mimosa fried chicken to your kitchens.

At Biscuit Head, they marinate the chicken in orange juice, sparkling wine, salt, and spices. For our marinade, we used a one-to-one blend of orange juice and wine plus plenty of orange zest to ensure that the orange flavor came through after breading and frying. Garlic and pepper flakes added depth, and a generous amount of salt seasoned the chicken throughout and kept it juicy.

To achieve the most appealingly crunchy and craggy fried coating, we relied on a few tried-and-true test kitchen techniques. First, using nearly as much cornstarch as all-purpose flour in the breading ensured that the

chicken fried up crispy instead of soggy. Second, working a small amount of water into the seasoned flour-cornstarch mix created little hunks of breading that adhered to the chicken and were rendered crunchy by the hot oil. A bit of baking powder ensured that these craggy bits were light and crispy rather than hard and pebbly, and granulated garlic and a little cayenne added extra pizzazz to the breading.

To give our chicken unmistakable mimosa character, we layer in ground coriander throughout the process—stirring it into the marinade, whisking it into the breading, and dusting it onto the fried chicken. The bright coriander bolsters the orange flavor, making for fried chicken with irresistible citrusy notes. Fabulous eaten with a fork and knife, it also makes for an unforgettable brunch monument when sandwiched between our Butter and Lard Biscuits (page 24). So do like they do in Asheville and see for yourself why the dining room's always packed at Biscuit Head.

## ● MIMOSA FRIED CHICKEN

Serves 4 to 6

Total Time: 1¼ hours,

plus 1½ hours marinating and refrigerating

Use a Dutch oven that holds 6 quarts or more here. If you like, you can use our Butter and Lard Biscuits (page 24) to create sandwiches. Other dry white wines can be substituted for the sparkling wine, if desired.

### MARINADE AND CHICKEN

- ½ cup dry sparkling white wine, such as prosecco or cava
- 2 tablespoons grated orange zest plus ½ cup juice (2 oranges)
- 5 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- 1 tablespoon table salt
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed
- 2 quarts peanut or vegetable oil for frying

### COATING

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups cornstarch
- 4 teaspoons ground coriander, divided
- 2 teaspoons granulated garlic
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons table salt
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 tablespoons water

**1. FOR THE MARINADE AND CHICKEN:** Combine wine, orange zest and juice, garlic, salt, coriander, and pepper flakes in large bowl. Add chicken to marinade and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

### Flavor Pals

Do oranges and coriander taste alike? No, they don't, but there are similarities that make them work especially well together in things such as salads; marinades; beer; and, yes, fried chicken. Coriander is the seed of the plant that gives us cilantro; the ground seeds have a distinctly floral, fruity, spiced flavor that pairs perfectly with orange's bright, perfumy sweetness.



**2. FOR THE COATING:** Whisk flour, cornstarch, 1 tablespoon coriander, granulated garlic, baking powder, salt, pepper, and cayenne together in second large bowl. Add water and, using your fingers, rub flour mixture and water together until craggy bits form throughout.

**3.** Working with 1 piece of chicken at a time, remove from marinade, allowing excess to drip off, then drop into flour mixture, turning to thoroughly coat and pressing to adhere. Transfer to rimmed baking sheet. Refrigerate, uncovered, for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.

**4.** Set wire rack in second rimmed baking sheet and line half of rack with triple layer of paper towels. Add oil to large Dutch oven and heat over medium-high heat to 350 degrees. Add half of chicken to oil and fry until golden brown and registering at least 175 degrees, about 7 minutes. Adjust burner, if necessary, to maintain oil temperature between 325 and 350 degrees.

**5.** Transfer chicken to paper towel-lined side of rack and let drain on each side for 30 seconds, then move to unlined side of rack. Return oil to 350 degrees and repeat with remaining chicken. Transfer chicken to platter and sprinkle with remaining 1 teaspoon coriander. Serve.



## ON the ROAD

# A Head for Biscuits

Text by Bryan Roof;  
photos by Steve Klise

JASON ROY GREETs me in the parking lot of his restaurant, Biscuit Head, in Asheville, North Carolina, with a smile as casual as his outfit: shorts, flip-flops, and a mechanic's shirt bearing the Biscuit Head emblem. We chat briefly by the turquoise picnic tables before heading inside, where food runners weave through a crowded dining room delivering towering plates of mimosa fried chicken biscuits to wide-eyed customers.

The decor is strongly cat themed, and the assembly line in the open kitchen trades steadily in gravies; country ham; eggs; and, of course, biscuits—about 500 on a busy weekend day.

Jason says he always knew he wanted to cook professionally, and he began his cooking career with a culinary apprenticeship at the age of 16. In the mid-2000s, he and his wife, Carolyn, were living in Boulder, Colorado, when they planned to open a bed-and-breakfast in Belize. When those plans lost steam, they turned their sights to the burgeoning culinary scene of Asheville, where Jason found quick work as an executive chef.

They noticed a handful of breakfast places in Asheville doing really great business, but each had a wait upwards of 2 hours on the weekends. “We thought, ‘how can we change that?’” They considered fast-casual counter service, which Jason says was a unique concept at the time. “It’s just a smarter business model, I think. On a busy weekend day, our average [order time] is 45 seconds per person. In 7 hours we’ll do 900 people.” One

benefit of counter service is a more consistent pace for the cooks, with fewer rushes.

From the outset, Jason locked on to the concept of brunch because of the creativity it allowed. The mimosa fried chicken, for example, was a “cheffy” idea that wasn’t a clean fit for a breakfast menu. But at brunch, it’s been their biggest seller since day one.

Biscuits provided a hook, but the innovative jam bar—featuring an array of homemade jams, compound butters, and hot sauces—proved an effective differentiator and a powerful word-of-mouth tool. “The jam bar is what really brings people back,” Jason says. “It’s something that no one else is doing.”

A devoted clientele and smart, scalable systems inspired Jason and Carolyn to open three more Biscuit Head restaurants in the region, but Jason is quick to credit his staff with the business’s success. “We have really good people who started with us from day one. We created Biscuit Head, but Asheville made it all come together.”



Counterclockwise from top right: Jason Roy in front of the word “cathead” painted in pink letters on the restaurant’s wall; the bar featuring a variety of house-made jams, compound butters, and hot sauces for topping biscuits; wall decor; the outdoor sign; the top-selling menu item—a mimosa fried chicken biscuit with sriracha slaw, sweet potato butter, and a poached egg.



### St. Louis-Style Spareribs

Cut from near the fatty belly of the pig, regular spareribs include the rib bones, the meat between them, and the brisket bone near the pig's chest. They can weigh more than 4 pounds per rack. We prefer the slightly smaller St. Louis-style ribs (each rack weighing 2½ to 3 pounds), which fit better side by side on a baking sheet for roasting (or on a backyard grill) because the bones and meat from the brisket section have been removed. They cook more quickly and evenly, too.



# Easy, Herby Indoor Ribs

*If there's an easier rib recipe that delivers more flavor than these supersavory, deeply seasoned beauties, we've yet to see it.* **by Amanda Luchtel**

ITALIAN COOKS ARE masters at creating deeply flavorful food from simple, often humble, ingredients—and that includes ribs. This easy, straightforward recipe for oven-roasted ribs uses seasonings common to Italian pork recipes: garlic, rosemary, fennel seeds, and red pepper flakes. In the spirit of the best Italian cooking practices, these ingredients are artfully employed to enhance, and not cover up, the natural pork flavor of the ribs—it's a lighter (and, dare I say, more elegant) approach than smoky, saucy barbecued ribs. And it's easier and faster, too.

Begin by making a superflavorful, superconcentrated paste by buzzing fresh rosemary leaves in the food processor with olive oil, garlic, fennel seeds, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper: This fragrant mixture is your powerhouse marinade. Slather the paste onto two racks of St. Louis-style ribs and refrigerate the ribs for at least an hour so that the flavors can sink in. Then roast the ribs in the oven, meat side down and covered with foil, with some white wine; the wine brings brightness and creates steam to help the ribs cook efficiently. After 45 minutes, uncover the ribs, flip

them, and let them roast for another 1¾ hours. During this last stretch of cooking, the ribs become tender and the caramelized garlic-herb paste forms an incredibly tasty crust. Plus, your kitchen smells fantastic!

These ribs do take a little bit of time, but it's mostly hands-off and the tasty reward is well worth it. They are also highly versatile—with white wine and steamed vegetables, they're elegant enough for company, yet they're easy enough to make for a night on the couch with a movie or your favorite television show.

## WINE-BRAISED SPARERIBS WITH GARLIC AND ROSEMARY

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 2¾ hours, plus 1 hour 20 minutes marinating and resting One ¾-ounce package of rosemary is enough to yield ½ cup of leaves.

- ½ cup fresh rosemary leaves, chopped coarse
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 10 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- 1 tablespoon table salt
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 2 (2½- to 3-pound) racks St. Louis-style spareribs, trimmed
- 1 cup dry white wine

1. Combine rosemary, oil, garlic, salt, fennel seeds, pepper flakes, and pepper in food processor. Pulse mixture until finely chopped, 15 to 20 pulses, scraping down sides of bowl as necessary.

2. Rub ribs evenly with paste and place meat side down in rimmed baking sheet. Cover sheet with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

3. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Add wine to sheet with ribs. Cover sheet tightly with aluminum foil. Roast for 45 minutes. Remove foil and flip ribs meat side up. Continue to roast, uncovered, until meat is tender and well browned, about 1¾ hours longer.

4. Let ribs rest for 20 minutes. Transfer ribs to cutting board and slice racks between ribs. Serve.

### Three Steps to Amazing Indoor Ribs



1. Pulse rosemary, olive oil, garlic, and seasonings in food processor to make paste.



2. Rub paste over ribs, arrange ribs meat side down in baking sheet, and refrigerate.



3. Add white wine to baking sheet, cover sheet with foil, and roast (flipping once).

# Lentilles du Puy with Spinach

This deeply satisfying lentil dish is both humble and extravagant. *by Mark Huxsoll*



These lentils are great under a piece of fish, topped with a soft-cooked egg, or served with your favorite main course.

**T**HE FRENCH GOVERNMENT goes through painstaking measures to protect certain French foods. For instance, their appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) seal certifies strict geographical identities to maintain the quality and authenticity of wines; cheeses; butter; and, yes, lentils. It's a way of preserving culinary heritage at the sourcing level. For centuries, the Le Puy community in the Auvergne region of France has been cultivating its namesake lentils with the utmost care to ensure that the legumes are of consistently high quality. Lentilles du Puy enjoy AOC status in France as well as Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) certification from the European Union.

The lentils from Le Puy have a deep-green color and are often referred to as the “caviar of lentils.” Though their price tag is lower than that of actual caviar, they are typically more expensive than other lentils. Lentilles du Puy have a rich, earthy flavor, and when cooked properly, they have a silky texture but still hold their shape. Thanks to the internet (and some big-box and department stores as well as large supermarkets), they are widely available.

This recipe is simple enough to allow the lentils to shine. To make it, gently cook mirepoix (a mixture of two parts chopped onion to one part each of chopped carrots and celery) in extra-virgin olive oil with a touch of salt until it's just softened. Add the lentils and some chicken broth (or vegetable broth if you prefer); bring the mixture to a simmer; and gently cook it, covered, for about 30 minutes, until the lentils are soft and creamy inside and still hold their shape and almost all the broth is absorbed or has evaporated. Next, stir in some mineral-y spinach and a few spoonfuls of fiery Dijon mustard. Let the mixture sit for 5 minutes, and then top it with a dollop of rich, tangy, creamy crème fraîche. Dig in!

## ● LENTILLES DU PUY WITH SPINACH AND CRÈME FRAÎCHE

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 1 hour

You can substitute other French green lentils for the lentilles du Puy, but do not substitute other types of green lentils or black, brown, or red lentils—the cooking times of the other lentil varieties can vary greatly. By the end of step 2, the lentils should have absorbed most, but not all, of the chicken broth. If the bottom of the saucepan looks dry and the lentils are still somewhat firm, add hot water,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup at a time, and continue to cook until the lentils are tender. For a vegetarian version, substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth. If you can't find crème fraîche, sour cream works well.

- 1 **tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  **cup finely chopped onion**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  **cup finely chopped carrot**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  **cup finely chopped celery**
- $\frac{1}{2}$  **teaspoon table salt**
- 2 **cups chicken broth**
- 1 **cup dried lentilles du Puy, picked over and rinsed**
- Hot water**
- 2 **ounces (2 cups) baby spinach**
- 2 **tablespoons Dijon mustard**
- $\frac{1}{4}$  **cup crème fraîche**

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat until shimmering. Add onion, carrot, celery, and salt; cook until vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Add broth and lentils and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and cook, stirring occasionally, until lentils are tender but still hold their shape, about 30 minutes. (Add hot water,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup at a time, if saucepan becomes dry before lentils are cooked through.)
3. Gently fold in spinach and mustard. Let sit off heat for 5 minutes. Transfer to serving bowl and dollop with crème fraîche. Serve.

### Key Ingredients

Lentilles du Puy are French lentils that have rich, earthy, complex flavor and a firm yet tender texture. Because they hold their shape, they work well in dishes where they are the main ingredient.



Crème fraîche, which is made by adding bacteria (or cultures) to heavy cream, has a lush, fluid consistency; a subtle tang; and a nutty flavor. It can be used to boost creaminess in dishes or add richness as a topping.



# Seafood Fra Diavolo

*Our one-pot method brings this spicy restaurant favorite home.* **by Matthew Fairman**



Red pepper flakes and jarred hot cherry peppers bring welcome heat to this seafood-laden pasta dish.

**F**RA DIAVOLO—A TOMATO sauce infused with red pepper flakes and most commonly studded with lobster, shrimp, or other mixed shellfish and tossed with pasta—is a much-loved Italian American restaurant classic. Having tasted and cooked many versions, I set clear goals for my recipe: Every element had to be packed with seafood flavor; the recipe had to be fail-proof and easy to pull off at home; and it had to result in a delicious, gorgeous seafood pasta worthy of any occasion, from a romantic Valentine’s Day dinner to a celebratory holiday feast.

For ease of preparation, I skipped the lobster and chose a delightful, quick-cooking mix of succulent shrimp, sweet scallops, and briny mussels. And one particular dish’s method for cooking pasta stood out as an opportunity to capitalize on all the flavor in the fresh seafood: pasta risottata. Put simply, pasta risottata is pasta cooked in the style of risotto, where you use just enough liquid to cook the pasta through (no draining) and achieve a silky sauce. This method also allows you to thoroughly infuse the pasta with flavorful cooking liquids other than water. For my fra diavolo recipe, I opted for the heavenly liquid from the steamed mussels; bright white wine; and a bottle of briny, clean-tasting clam juice—effectively layering in more light, bright seafood flavor. Cooking the pasta with all the other ingredients in one pot also meant fewer dirty dishes.

To prepare this recipe, which comes together in less than 30 minutes once you have your ingredients prepped, begin by blooming a mix of garlic, anchovies, red pepper flakes, tomato paste, and oregano in a generous amount of olive oil, laying down a spicy, ultraflavorful base for the sauce. Then add your wine and mussels, steaming the mussels just until they open up. Transfer the mussels to a covered bowl to keep them warm, making sure to leave all their flavorful juices in the pot.

Next, introduce a bottle of clam juice and a can of whole tomatoes, roughly crush the tomatoes with a potato masher, bring it all to a boil, and add your pasta. Once the pasta is nearly done, toss in shrimp and scallops (halved for quicker cooking) and let them gently cook through while the pasta finishes. Finally, return the mussels to the pot and finish with a spicy, vibrant flourish of chopped cherry peppers and fresh parsley. The results are impeccably delicious—light and fresh-tasting while simultaneously rich and indulgent.

## Seafood Prep



**Scallops** Cut in half horizontally.



**Mussels** Firmly pull beards to remove.



**Shrimp** Peel, then remove veins and tails.

## ● SEAFOOD FRA DIAVOLO

*Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 55 minutes*

We prefer shrimp not treated with salt or additives such as sodium tripolyphosphate (STPP). Most frozen E-Z peel shrimp have been treated (the ingredient list should tell you). We recommend buying “dry” scallops, which don’t have chemical additives and taste better than “wet.” Dry scallops will look ivory or pinkish; wet scallops are bright white. If you can’t find fresh “dry” scallops, you can substitute thawed frozen scallops. If you’re spice averse, use a lesser amount of pepper flakes and cherry peppers. Different brands of linguine will cook at different rates and absorb different amounts of liquid; you may not need to add any hot water in step 5, but having some on hand provides insurance against the pasta being too dry.

- 12 ounces extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed**
- 12 ounces large sea scallops, tendons removed, cut in half horizontally**
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus extra for drizzling**
- 7 garlic cloves, minced, divided**
- ¾ teaspoon table salt, divided**
- 3 anchovy fillets, rinsed**
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano**
- 1–1½ teaspoons red pepper flakes, plus extra for sprinkling**
- 1 pound mussels, scrubbed and debearded**
- 1 cup dry white wine**
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes**
- 1 (8-ounce) bottle clam juice**
- 12 ounces linguine**
- Hot water**
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- 1–2 tablespoons chopped jarred hot cherry peppers, plus 1 tablespoon brine**

- 1.** Toss shrimp and scallops with 2 tablespoons oil, 1 tablespoon garlic, and ½ teaspoon salt in bowl. Refrigerate until ready to use.
- 2.** Combine anchovies, remaining ¼ cup oil, and remaining garlic in large Dutch oven and cook over medium heat until garlic is just beginning to brown, 3 to 5 minutes, breaking up anchovies with wooden spoon.
- 3.** Add tomato paste, oregano, and pepper flakes and cook, stirring constantly, until tomato paste begins to darken, about 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high. Add mussels and wine and bring to boil. Cover and cook, shaking pot occasionally, until mussels have opened, 3 to 4 minutes (discard any unopened mussels). Using tongs, transfer mussels to bowl and cover to keep warm.
- 4.** Add tomatoes and their juice, clam juice, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt to pot. Using potato masher, mash tomatoes in pot until coarsely pureed.
- 5.** Bring tomato mixture to boil over medium-high heat. Add pasta (it needn’t be fully submerged) and cook, stirring often, until strands are flexible but still slightly firm in center, 6 to 10 minutes. (If sauce begins to dry up before pasta is done, add hot water, ½ cup at a time, and continue cooking pasta. Begin checking pasta 2 minutes shy of package instructions; it should be nearly cooked to your liking before adding seafood.)
- 6.** Stir in shrimp and scallops and cook, stirring frequently, until pasta is al dente and seafood is opaque, about 3 minutes.
- 7.** Off heat, add parsley, cherry peppers and brine, and mussels (along with any accumulated juices) and toss to combine. (Pasta sauce will continue to thicken. Adjust consistency with additional hot water as needed.) Season with salt to taste. Serve, sprinkled with extra pepper flakes and drizzled with extra oil.

### What’s in a Name?

Fra diavolo is an angry sauce named after an angry guy. Its name translates as “brother devil” and is a reference to Michele Pezza, an infamous hothead and ferocious Italian bandit who carried that nickname. Pezza was pardoned and hired to lead Italian guerrilla forces fighting against the invading French in Naples at the turn of the 19th century.



### Flavor Shortcut

Bottled clam juice is made by briefly steaming fresh clams in water. The resulting broth is then filtered before it is bottled. This convenience product lets us skip the shucking but keep the flavor. We use it as an all-purpose seafood stock for its bright, mineral-y notes.



# Bagna Cauda Potatoes

*Bathed in a mixture of garlic, oil, and anchovies, these potatoes will draw a crowd.*

by Mark Huxsoll

**I**N THE LANDLOCKED Piedmont area of Italy, which is nestled up against the Italian Alps and known for its mountain cheeses, white truffles, and wine, anchovies show up in dishes more than you might think. These small and powerful cured fish became a staple food in Piedmont in part as a result of traders hoping to avoid the salt tax. The story goes that they would travel to the coast of Liguria and return to Piedmont hiding their salt under anchovies, which weren't taxed. Bagna cauda was born out of this relationship between mountain and ocean.

Bagna cauda, which translates as “hot bath,” is a simple, rustic, full-flavored dip of anchovies, garlic, and olive oil and occasionally butter or cream. Its ingredients meld into a creamy dipping sauce that is served in special clay dishes to keep it warm, much like fondue. Bagna cauda is traditionally a communal dish shared among family and friends—and even entire towns—with everyone dipping vegetables and bread into it to celebrate the harvest. Here, instead of bringing the vegetables to the bagna cauda, this recipe brings the bagna cauda to the vegetables by using the mixture to dress warm, tender slices of potatoes.

Though not the usual vegetable choice, potatoes pair perfectly with bagna cauda because they allow its flavors to shine. Start with sliced red potatoes, which, when cooked gently just until tender in salted water, have a wonderfully mild flavor and an almost creamy texture.

Drain the cooked potatoes and set them aside, and heat a hefty amount of minced garlic and anchovies in olive oil until fragrant and mellowed. Toss the oil mixture and potatoes together in a bowl, along with a tablespoon of lemon juice for balance. Transfer the dressed potatoes to a serving platter, and sprinkle minced fresh chives over top. Return to tradition by enjoying the



Don't let the simplicity of this dish fool you—it's packed with bold flavor.

bagna cauda-coated potatoes with your friends and family and a slightly chilled light-bodied red wine from Piedmont (such as a Barbera or Barbaresco).

## ● BAGNA CAUDA POTATOES

Serves 4 to 6

Total Time: 55 minutes

For the best results, use a high-quality extra-virgin olive oil. One 2-ounce can of anchovies usually contains about 11 anchovies. This may seem like a lot of anchovies, but their flavor mellows as they cook.

- 2 pounds red potatoes, unpeeled, sliced ½ inch thick**
- Table salt for cooking potatoes**
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 (2-ounce) can anchovies, drained and minced**
- 3 tablespoons minced garlic (about 9 cloves)**
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh chives**

**1.** Place potatoes and 1 tablespoon salt in large saucepan, add water to cover by 1 inch, and bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and cook until potatoes are fork-tender, about 10 minutes. Drain potatoes and transfer to large bowl; set aside.

**2.** Add oil, anchovies, and garlic to now-empty saucepan and cook over

medium heat until garlic is fragrant, about 4 minutes, stirring occasionally.

**3.** Immediately add oil mixture, lemon juice, and pepper to bowl with potatoes. Toss to combine. Let sit for 5 minutes. Transfer potatoes to serving platter. Spoon any remaining oil mixture in bowl over top. Sprinkle with chives and serve.

### For a Dish with So Few Ingredients, Opt for the Best

Bagna cauda is built on anchovies and olive oil, which means that those ingredients need to shine. When we tasted extra-virgin olive oils, two oils with crowd-pleasing flavor profiles stole the show: **Bertolli Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Original, Rich Taste** and **California Olive Ranch Global Blend Medium Extra Virgin Olive Oil** (not shown). These oils are bright and medium-fruity, with a lightly peppery aftertaste, and we recommend them here. As for anchovies, which add deeply savory notes, we prefer **King Oscar Anchovies Flat Filets in Olive Oil**. These anchovies are firm, meaty, and intense, but they're not too salty or pungent.



# Trout Amandine

This mild freshwater fish gets a classic culinary treatment for an easy, elegant weeknight dinner.

by Mark Huxsoll

**N**OT ALL SEAFOOD comes from the sea. There are rivers, lakes, and streams teeming with delicacies; trout is a long-standing favorite. Within the United States there are several major species of edible freshwater trout (both wild and farmed) commonly sold in markets from coast to coast: rainbow, brook, cutthroat, and brown. Trout and salmon are part of the same family (and some trout species live in salt water for at least a part of their lives), but unlike salmon, freshwater trout have delicate, flaky white flesh. Since freshwater trout is harvested and sold while relatively small, it cooks quickly. It tastes clean and fresh and is best seasoned and cooked simply, so it's perfect for speedy weeknight dinners.

The fillets can be long and quite thin, which can make flipping them seem intimidating—the threat of breakage looms. But fret not, as this recipe for trout amandine shows you how to avoid that pitfall (and honestly, it's not the end of the world if the fish does break). Here, you lightly dredge the skin-on fillets in flour before cooking, as flour browns more quickly than the uncoated fish does (so you can get good browning without overcooking the trout). The flour also creates a barrier between the hot fat in the skillet and the fish itself, which helps protect the fillets from overcooking on the outside. And as long as you let the fillets properly brown in a nonstick skillet and then flip them gently with a fish spatula (this is the time to break it out), the fillets should hold together just fine. You'll end up with beautifully golden-brown pieces of fish that are perfectly flaky, tender, and moist in a matter of minutes.

At this point the fillets are good with just a squeeze of lemon, but they graduate to greatness when you blanket them in a simple browned butter–almond sauce (“amandine” means “garnished with almonds”). The butter and toasted almonds give the tender, mild white fish a richness that accentuates its sweetness. Lemon zest and juice add balance, brightness, and just enough acidity to make every bite sing. Fresh parsley, sprinkled on just before serving, provides a pop of color. Though the skin browns with help

## Key Equipment

In a nonstick skillet, it's best to use a nonstick-safe spatula. Our favorite, the **Matfer Bourgeat Exoglass Pelton Spatula** (\$14), is shaped like a fish spatula, which is a bonus here.



from the flour, due to the short cooking time, it doesn't become as crispy as other fish skin. Serving the fish flesh side up makes the skin less of the focal point. It's a beautiful dish to look at and to eat.

With a certain level of care and technique, freshwater trout can become a main course that evokes the finest bistros—or makes a quick Tuesday night supper feel more special.

## ● TROUT AMANDINE

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

Use raw sliced almonds here—toasted ones can burn. We developed this recipe using farm-raised rainbow trout fillets. If you can't tell the color of the butter in the nonstick skillet in step 5, quickly spoon some onto a white plate to check.

- 4 (4- to 6-ounce) skin-on trout fillets**
- 1¼ teaspoons table salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided**
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 8 pieces**
- ½ cup sliced almonds**
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest plus 4 teaspoons juice**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**

- 1.** Pat trout fillets dry with paper towels. Sprinkle all over with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper.
- 2.** Place flour in shallow dish. Working with 1 fillet at a time, dredge both sides in flour, pressing gently to adhere. Shake off excess and transfer to large plate.
- 3.** Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until just smoking. Carefully place 2 fillets skin side down in skillet and cook until browned and crispy, 2 to 4 minutes.



Using fish spatula, flip fillets flesh side down and cook until flesh is opaque and begins to turn golden, about 1 minute.

**4.** Transfer cooked fillets to large serving platter flesh side up. Repeat cooking and transferring with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and remaining 2 fillets.

**5.** Add butter to now-empty skillet. Cook, stirring frequently, until butter is golden brown with toasted aroma, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in almonds and cook, swirling skillet occasionally, until almonds are deep golden brown, about 2 minutes.

**6.** Immediately remove skillet from heat and quickly but carefully stir in lemon zest and juice and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt, scraping up any browned bits. Pour sauce over fillets, sprinkle with parsley, and serve.

## Buy This, Not That



**FRESHWATER TROUT**  
(BUY THIS)

Relatively small, with white flesh



**SALTWATER TROUT**  
(DON'T BUY THIS)

Larger, with salmon-colored flesh

# Pork with Cabrales Sauce

Calling all blue cheese lovers. *by Morgan Bolling*

**L**OMO DE CERDO con salsa Cabrales is a tapas dish featuring pork tenderloin swimming in a rich and tangy sauce made with piquant Spanish Cabrales (see “Cabrales Breaks the Mold”). After tasting the dish at Dali Restaurant & Tapas Bar in Somerville, Massachusetts, I couldn’t get the intense blue cheese sauce out of my head.

To learn how to make it, I reached out to Teresa Barrenechea, author of *The Cuisines of Spain: Exploring Regional Home Cooking* (2005), who explained that “it is important to melt the cheese first in the juices after searing the meat in the pan and then [add] the cream and [bring] it to a boil while whisking the mixture.” The idea of cooking the cheese in a hot skillet after searing pork was surprising to me, as I’m more familiar with making a cheese sauce by bringing cream to a boil and then whisking in the cheese off the heat.

To understand the difference between these methods, I ordered some Cabrales and tried them both. I was blown away by how much the technique mattered: The version in which I added cheese to simmering cream off the heat was nice. But the other, in which I melted the cheese directly in the pork juices before adding

the cream, was much more complex. The cheese darkened slightly in color, giving the sauce a roasted, extra-intense flavor.

Cabrales can be hard to find in the United States, so I also tested this technique with other blue cheeses. All were delicious with the bronzed yet juicy pork tenderloin, but if you love blue cheese, excitingly strong Cabrales is worth seeking out. As Barrenechea stated, “It is a jewel cheese, made in an artisanal way, strong-flavored and delicate at the same time.”

## ● LOMO DE CERDO CON SALSA CABRALES (PORK TENDERLOIN WITH CABRALES SAUCE)

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 40 minutes

Cabrales (also called queso de Cabrales or Cabraliego) is a pungent, creamy Spanish blue cheese. Look for it in the cheese section of your grocery store or at a specialty cheese shop. If you can’t find it, you can substitute Valdeón, Roquefort, Gorgonzola piccante, Danish blue, or Stilton.

- 2 (1-pound) pork tenderloins, trimmed
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1½ tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 ounces Cabrales blue cheese, crumbled (½ cup)
- 1 cup heavy cream

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Pat pork dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with salt and pepper.
2. Heat oil in 12-inch oven-safe non-stick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add pork and cook until well browned on all sides, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer skillet to oven and continue to cook until meat registers 135 degrees, 6 to 9 minutes longer.
3. Transfer pork to cutting board and let rest for 10 minutes. Add Cabrales to now-empty skillet and heat over medium-low heat (skillet handle will be hot). Cook until fully melted and bubbling, about 2 minutes. Carefully whisk in cream; bring to simmer; and cook until mixture coats back of spoon, about 2 minutes.
4. Slice pork ½ inch thick and transfer to serving platter. Drizzle with half of Cabrales sauce. Serve, passing remaining sauce separately.

## Making Cabrales Sauce



1. Heat Cabrales in pork drippings until cheese is melted and bubbling.



2. Add heavy cream, bring to simmer, and cook until mixture coats back of spoon.



Mild pork tenderloin is the perfect vehicle for pungent Cabrales sauce.

## Cabrales Breaks the Mold

Blue cheese is typically made by adding rennet (a group of enzymes) to milk, which causes the milk to coagulate and form curds. Blue mold culture is usually added to the milk or the curds. Once the curds are drained and shaped into wheels, large needles are inserted into the wheels to create holes that allow oxygen to enter the cheese and activate the dormant mold spores.

Cabrales is made differently. No mold spores are added to the milk before making the cheese, and producers do not puncture the cheese while it’s aging. Rather, the cheese is loosely pressed into wheels and then aged in caves in the Cabrales region of Spain; these caves harbor unique molds that have been thriving for centuries. The molds naturally penetrate the cheese, giving it deeply hued blue-green veins throughout; an intense smell; and a pungent, delectable flavor.

Jeanne Carpenter, an American Cheese Society Certified Cheese

Professional and owner of Firefly Coffeehouse & Artisan Cheese in Oregon, Wisconsin, explained, “Cabrales is regarded as the strongest-flavored blue cheese made in the world. It is extremely earthy, robust, acidic, and most definitely not sweet. It is not for the faint of heart . . . and nothing like it is made in the United States.”

Carpenter explained that in the same way Champagne has a protected designation of origin, or PDO (it must come from a specific region of France), so does Cabrales. The caves, milk, and farms used for producing Cabrales must come from the Cabrales region in Asturias, Spain. And the only way to get a room in one of these caves is by inheritance or if a producer stops using their space—a rare occurrence.



# Carrot and Beet Salad

*Shredded raw beets and carrots give this salad sweetness, freshness, and crunch.*

by **Amanda Luchtel**

**U**SING A FOOD processor to make a shredded vegetable salad is incredibly satisfying, since the machine does most of the work for you. It's even more satisfying when that salad is a superflavorful standout created from midwinter root-cellar produce, namely carrots and beets. Here's how to get there.

Start by whisking together a vibrant vinaigrette. Orange zest and juice, minced shallot and garlic, and white wine vinegar make for a bright dressing that won't mute the natural sweetness of the carrots and beets. To season

the vinaigrette, add salt; pepper; and ground coriander, another citrusy element. A touch of maple syrup balances the acidity and elevates the sweetness of the root vegetables without overpowering them. Next, shred earthy carrots and sweet red beets in the food processor, toss the shreds with the vinaigrette, and let the salad sit for 30 minutes.

To take this salad to the next level, add handfuls of cooling mint and fresh, fragrant cilantro for an herby boost. Then top with chopped salted pistachios for a nutty crunch and creamy goat cheese for tangy richness.

## ● SHREDDED ROOT VEGETABLE SALAD WITH ORANGE VINAIGRETTE

Serves 6 to 8

Total Time: 25 minutes,

plus 30 minutes marinating

We prefer to use the shredding disk of a food processor to shred the carrots and beets, but you can also use the large holes of a box grater.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1½ teaspoons table salt
- 1 teaspoon grated orange zest plus 2 tablespoons juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 8 ounces beets, trimmed and peeled
- 1 pound carrots, peeled
- 4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled (1 cup), divided
- ½ cup salted shelled pistachios, chopped, divided
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves, chopped coarse

1. Whisk oil, shallot, vinegar, maple syrup, salt, orange zest and juice, garlic, coriander, and pepper together in large bowl.
2. Fit food processor with shredding disk. Cut beets, as needed, to fit through processor feed tube, then shred beets and carrots. Add to vinaigrette and toss until well combined. Let sit for 30 minutes to

allow flavors to meld. (Mixture can be refrigerated for up to 3 days.)

3. Add ½ cup goat cheese, ¼ cup pistachios, cilantro, and mint and toss to combine. Season salad with salt and pepper to taste. Transfer salad to platter and sprinkle with remaining ½ cup goat cheese and remaining ¼ cup pistachios. Serve.

### The Root(s) of the Matter

Although you can buy them in markets year-round, both beets and carrots are cool-weather crops, traditionally harvested and at their best in the late fall and spring, when other produce can be scarce. Once harvested, both can be stored (free of their green tops) for several weeks in a cool, dark place. Beets grow relatively quickly, making them a crop that can be sold early in the fall or spring. Carrots take a little longer to develop and are harvested and sold shortly thereafter. They are also considered a storage crop, even though they don't last quite as long as others and require moister conditions than most storage crops. If stored under the right conditions and away from ethylene-producing fruits (such as apples), carrots will stay sweet and crisp. Some farmers even keep their carrots in the ground over the winter; this leaves room in their cold-storage refrigerators for other items and also produces extra-sweet carrots.



This salad is a fantastic side dish, a welcome addition to any potluck, or a refreshing component of a hearty grain bowl.

FENNEL AND  
OLIVE SALAD



BROCCOLI RABE,  
PICKLED PEPPERS,  
AND PROVOLONE



# Four Easy Sausage Sandwiches

The best sausage sandwiches start with perfectly cooked links. *by Lawman Johnson*

**I**F YOU'RE A meat eater, we probably don't have to sell you on the appeal of Italian pork sausages; they are deeply seasoned and flavorful, affordable, and extremely versatile. But it's easy to veer off course in the kitchen when doing something as seemingly simple as pan-frying sausages. The goal is to get a tasty brown exterior while keeping the link's interior moist and juicy. When these two things happen in concert, you're making sweet music.

Some recipes call for simply browning sausages in a pan until they reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees, but those links are often leathery, with overcooked exteriors edging toward black. Recipes that call for searing and then adding a little water to steam the sausages until they're done are better, but the extra water can wash away the savory browning. The secret, it turns out, is that you can gently steam and sear the sausages at the same time, without adding water.

Since sausages contain a lot of natural moisture, the trick is to harness that liquid as a steaming medium by starting the links in a cold skillet with a little olive oil and cooking them covered over medium heat (opening the lid to turn the sausages every couple minutes). This method results in nicely browned sausages that are tender and juicy within, and thanks to the covered cooking, it also reduces messy stovetop splatter.

Sausages cooked this way are great served plain or atop a plate of pasta or lentils, but the delectable sandwich recipes we've crafted here are truly extraordinary.

## Precooked Italian Sausage

We developed these recipes with raw Italian pork sausage (sweet and hot both worked well). If you choose to make these sandwiches with fully cooked chicken or turkey Italian sausages, which just need to be warmed and seared before using, prepare them according to their package directions before proceeding with step 4.

## SAUSAGE SANDWICHES WITH FENNEL AND OLIVE SALAD

Serves 6

Total Time: 30 minutes

Sausage size will vary by brand, and the size will affect the cooking time in step 2. This cooking method will work with any variety of fresh sausage that is similar in size to typical Italian sausages.

- 6 sweet or hot Italian sausages
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 fennel bulb, stalks discarded, bulb halved, cored, and sliced thin
- ½ red onion, sliced thin
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup olive salad, drained
- 6 hot dog buns
- 12 slices deli sharp provolone cheese (about 12 ounces)

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil.
2. Add sausages and oil to 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cover and cook over medium heat, flipping every 2 minutes, until sausages are well browned and register 160 degrees, 12 to 16 minutes, reducing heat to medium-low if sausages begin to get too dark.
3. Transfer sausages to plate, tent with foil, and let rest while preparing vegetables.
4. Heat fat left in skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add fennel, onion, salt, and pepper and cook until fennel and onion are tender and lightly browned, 6 to 9 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in olive salad. Off heat, place sausages over vegetables in skillet. Cover to keep warm.
5. Arrange buns on prepared sheet. Divide provolone evenly among buns. Bake until cheese is melted and buns are warm, about 3 minutes.
6. Place 1 sausage in each bun. Divide fennel mixture evenly among buns. Serve.

## For the Best Browning, Flip Often

To evenly brown the sausages, we turned to a method we've used to cook steaks evenly: flipping the meat every 2 minutes. Keeping the lid on between the flips traps steam that helps the links cook through evenly and efficiently; the lidded cooking also helps reduce stovetop splatter.



## SAUSAGE SANDWICHES WITH BROCCOLI RABE, PICKLED PEPPERS, AND PROVOLONE

Substitute 12 ounces broccoli rabe, trimmed and cut into ½-inch pieces, for fennel and red onion and ¼ cup chopped jarred hot cherry peppers for olive salad. Add pinch red pepper flakes with garlic.

## SAUSAGE SANDWICHES WITH GARLICKY MUSHROOMS AND PROVOLONE

Substitute 12 ounces cremini mushrooms, trimmed and sliced, for fennel and red onion. Add 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme with garlic. Omit olive salad. Add 1 cup grated Pecorino Romano with provolone in step 5. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley over sandwiches before serving.

## SAUSAGE SANDWICHES WITH MARINARA AND MOZZARELLA

Omit fennel and salt. Substitute 1 yellow onion for red onion and 1¼ cups jarred marinara sauce for olive salad. After cooking garlic, bring marinara sauce to simmer over medium heat and cook until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Substitute sliced deli mozzarella for provolone and add 1 cup grated Parmesan with mozzarella in step 5. Serve, sprinkled with extra Parmesan.

GARLICKY MUSHROOMS AND PROVOLONE

MARINARA AND MOZZARELLA

# Italian Dressing Chicken Breasts

While bottled Italian dressing is a common marinade for chicken breasts, it can be so much better if you make it from scratch. **by Amanda Luchtel**

**B**OTTLED ITALIAN DRESSING has been popular in the United States for decades, at least since the Wish-Bone brand (originally from the eponymous Kansas City, Missouri, steakhouse) became widely available in the early 1960s. It's tasty stuff: a bright vinaigrette bolstered with dried herbs, garlic, and red pepper flakes. Helping drive the dressing's growth into a supermarket staple were new recipes (often courtesy of dressing manufacturers) calling for the product to be used not only on salads but also as a quick marinade for things such as fajita meat, flank steak, and baked or grilled chicken.

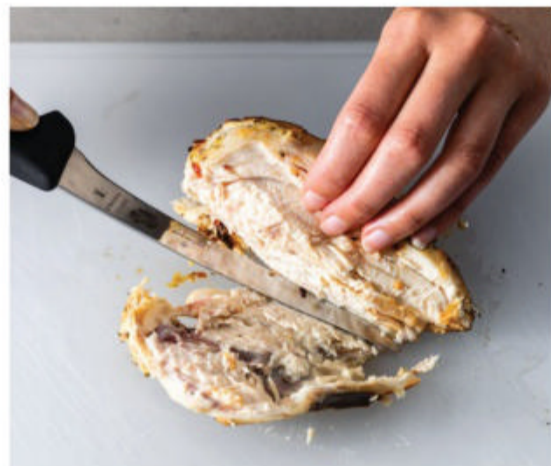
But a quick survey of shelf-stable supermarket Italian dressings showed us that many of them were, not surprisingly, highly processed. When cooking at home, you most likely won't be using ingredients such as xanthan gum, oleoresin, calcium disodium EDTA, potassium sorbate, maltodextrin, caramel flavor and color, dimethylpolysiloxane, propylene glycol, or BHA to make salad dressing. Thinking Italian dressing-marinated chicken deserved a more back-to-basics approach, we set out to update this easy weeknight dinner by using homemade dressing.

To make the dish, start with bone-in chicken breasts; they are less expensive than boneless breasts; plus, the skin and bone add flavor and help prevent overcooked, dry meat. Stir together a mixture of extra-virgin olive oil, grated Parmesan (which adds savory flavor and helps boost browning), minced fresh garlic, lemon zest, a little sugar for balance, salt and pepper, pepper flakes, and Italian seasoning. Marinate the chicken breasts in this mixture for

at least an hour (or up to one day) so that the flavors can permeate the meat.

To render out the fat in the chicken skin and achieve nice, flavorful browning, remove the breasts from the marinade (reserving the excess marinade) and place them skin side down in a cold nonstick skillet, turn the heat to medium, and cook them gently for about 15 minutes. When the chicken breasts are nice and brown, flip them; add the reserved marinade to the skillet; and pop it into a preheated 375-degree oven until the meat is cooked through, about 20 minutes more. Let the breasts rest for 10 minutes before slicing to allow the meat to relax (it contracts during cooking) so that it better holds on to its juices when cut. Just before serving, add a little fresh lemon juice and minced parsley to the flavorful goodness—browned chicken drippings and reduced marinade—in the skillet. Slice the meat; pour the pan sauce over it; and serve this deeply seasoned, incredibly delicious chicken. It tastes like the old version, only better.

## Carving Breasts off the Bone



Carve meat off bone and slice each breast crosswise 1/2 inch thick.

### Two Hits of Lemon

Lemon zest (a rasp-style grater, such as a Microplane grater, is our favorite tool for harvesting this) adds bright flavor and beautiful aroma to our marinade. We add fresh lemon juice to the dish, too, but not until just before serving, because with time its acid can denature (or "cook") the outside of the meat, causing an unappealing dry texture. These two sources of lemon flavor produce a delightfully bright complexity in the finished dish.



A lively homemade dressing puts a fresh spin on an old favorite.

## ITALIAN DRESSING CHICKEN BREASTS

Serves 4

Total Time: 1¼ hours, plus 1 hour marinating

Use a rasp-style grater to grate the Parmesan. You can use store-bought Italian seasoning or make your own (recipe follows).

- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest plus 1 tablespoon juice
- 1½ teaspoons table salt, divided
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 4 (10- to 12-ounce) bone-in chicken breasts, trimmed
- 1½ tablespoons minced fresh parsley

1. Combine Parmesan, oil, garlic, lemon zest, 1½ teaspoons salt, sugar, Italian seasoning, pepper flakes, and pepper in large bowl. Transfer chicken to bowl with marinade and turn to thoroughly coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.
2. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Place chicken, skin side down, in

12-inch ovensafe nonstick skillet; reserve any marinade left in bowl. Set skillet over medium heat and cook until skin is well browned, 12 to 15 minutes. Flip chicken, add any reserved marinade to skillet, and transfer skillet to oven. Roast until chicken registers 160 degrees, 20 to 25 minutes.

3. Let chicken rest in skillet for 10 minutes. Transfer chicken to cutting board. Stir parsley, lemon juice, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt into pan juices, scraping up any browned bits. Carve meat off bone and slice each breast crosswise ½ inch thick; transfer to platter. Spoon sauce over chicken and serve.

## HOMEMADE ITALIAN SEASONING

Makes about ½ cup Total Time: 5 minutes

To achieve a finer consistency, crush the dried rosemary by hand into smaller pieces or pulse it in a spice grinder (three or four pulses).

- 2½ tablespoons dried oregano
- 2½ tablespoons dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon dried rosemary
- 1 tablespoon dried sage

Combine all ingredients in bowl. (Seasoning can be stored in airtight container for up to 3 months.)

**Sausages with Potatoes, Fennel, and Arugula Salad**



DINNER TONIGHT

**Shrimp Tostadas with Coconut and Pineapple Slaw**



DINNER TONIGHT

**Spinach-Artichoke Macaroni and Cheese**



DINNER TONIGHT

**Chicken Breasts with Brussels Sprouts, Chickpeas, and Bacon**



DINNER TONIGHT



## Shrimp Tostadas with Coconut and Pineapple Slaw

*Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes*

We like to garnish these tostadas with fresh cilantro leaves and serve them with hot sauce.

- ½ cup canned coconut milk**
- 1 teaspoon grated lime zest plus 1 tablespoon juice**
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided**
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper**
- 2½ cups (7 ounces) shredded coleslaw mix**
- 1 cup ¼-inch pineapple pieces**
- 1 jalapeño chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced**
- 2 ripe avocados, halved and pitted**
- 1 cup vegetable oil for frying**
- 8 (6-inch) corn tortillas**
- 1 pound large shrimp (26 to 30 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed**

1. Combine coconut milk, lime zest, ¾ teaspoon salt, and cayenne in bowl. Reserve ¼ cup coconut milk mixture. Stir lime juice into remaining coconut milk mixture. Add coleslaw mix, pineapple, and jalapeño and toss to combine. Season with salt to taste; set aside. Mash avocados and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt with fork in separate bowl; set aside.
2. Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium heat to 350 degrees. Using fork, poke each tortilla 3 or 4 times. Fry 1 tortilla until crisp and lightly browned, 1 to 2 minutes, flipping tortilla halfway through frying. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate and let drain, then season with salt to taste. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
3. Pat shrimp dry with paper towels. Combine shrimp and reserved coconut milk mixture in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until shrimp are pink and cooked through, about 5 minutes; transfer to plate. Spread avocado evenly on tostada shells. Divide slaw and shrimp evenly among tostadas. Serve.



## Sausages with Potatoes, Fennel, and Arugula Salad

*Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour*

Serve the sausages with whole-grain mustard and sprinkle the salad with crumbled blue cheese, if desired.

- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, unpeeled, cut into 1½-inch pieces**
- 2 fennel bulbs, stalks discarded, bulbs halved, cored, and cut into 1-inch wedges**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
- ¾ teaspoon table salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper, divided**
- 1½ pounds sweet Italian sausage**
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary**
- 4 ounces (4 cups) baby arugula**
- ¼ cup chopped blanched hazelnuts, toasted**
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar**

1. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Toss potatoes, fennel, 2 tablespoons oil, salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together on rimmed baking sheet. Roast until vegetables begin to brown, about 13 minutes.
2. Remove sheet from oven and push vegetables to 1 half of sheet. Place sausages on now-empty side of sheet; return sheet to oven; and roast until sausages register 160 degrees, about 15 minutes. Sprinkle vegetables with rosemary.
3. Toss arugula, hazelnuts, vinegar, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper together in bowl; season with salt to taste. Serve sausages and roasted vegetables with salad.



## Chicken Breasts with Brussels Sprouts, Chickpeas, and Bacon

*Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes*

If you have a food processor with a slicing disk, you can use it to slice the brussels sprouts. Use the large holes of a box grater to shred the Parmesan.

- 4 (6-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed**
- ¾ teaspoon table salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon pepper, divided**
- 4 slices bacon, chopped**
- 1 pound brussels sprouts, trimmed and sliced thin**
- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- ¼ cup chicken broth**
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice**
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese**

1. Pat chicken dry with paper towels and sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Cook bacon in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until beginning to crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to bowl.
2. Add chicken to bacon fat left in skillet and cook over medium-high heat until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer chicken to plate.
3. Stir brussels sprouts, chickpeas, pepper flakes, cooked bacon, remaining ¼ teaspoon salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper into fat left in skillet. Nestle chicken into skillet along with any accumulated juices. Pour in broth and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and cook until chicken registers 160 degrees, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer chicken to carving board. Stir lemon juice into brussels sprout mixture. Slice chicken ½ inch thick and return to skillet. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Serve.



## Spinach-Artichoke Macaroni and Cheese

*Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes*

Use a 4-ounce block of American cheese from the deli counter rather than presliced cheese. Use the large holes of a box grater to shred the Parmesan.

- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 garlic cloves, minced**
- 5 ounces (5 cups) baby spinach, chopped coarse**
- 1½ cups water**
- 1 cup whole milk**
- 8 ounces (2 cups) elbow macaroni**
- ¼ teaspoon table salt**
- 1 cup marinated artichoke hearts, chopped**
- 4 ounces American cheese, shredded (1 cup)**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- 4 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (1 cup)**
- 1½ ounces Parmesan cheese, shredded (½ cup)**

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add spinach and cook until wilted, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer spinach to bowl and set aside.
2. Bring water and milk to boil in now-empty saucepan over high heat. Stir in macaroni and salt and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring frequently, until macaroni is slightly past al dente, 6 to 8 minutes. Add artichokes, American cheese, and pepper and cook, stirring constantly, until cheese is completely melted, about 1 minute. Off heat, stir in cheddar and Parmesan until evenly distributed but not melted. Cover saucepan and let stand for 5 minutes.
3. Add spinach to macaroni and stir until sauce is smooth (sauce may look loose but will thicken as it cools). Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

**Pan-Seared Salmon with Kale and Quinoa Pilaf and Garlicky Yogurt**



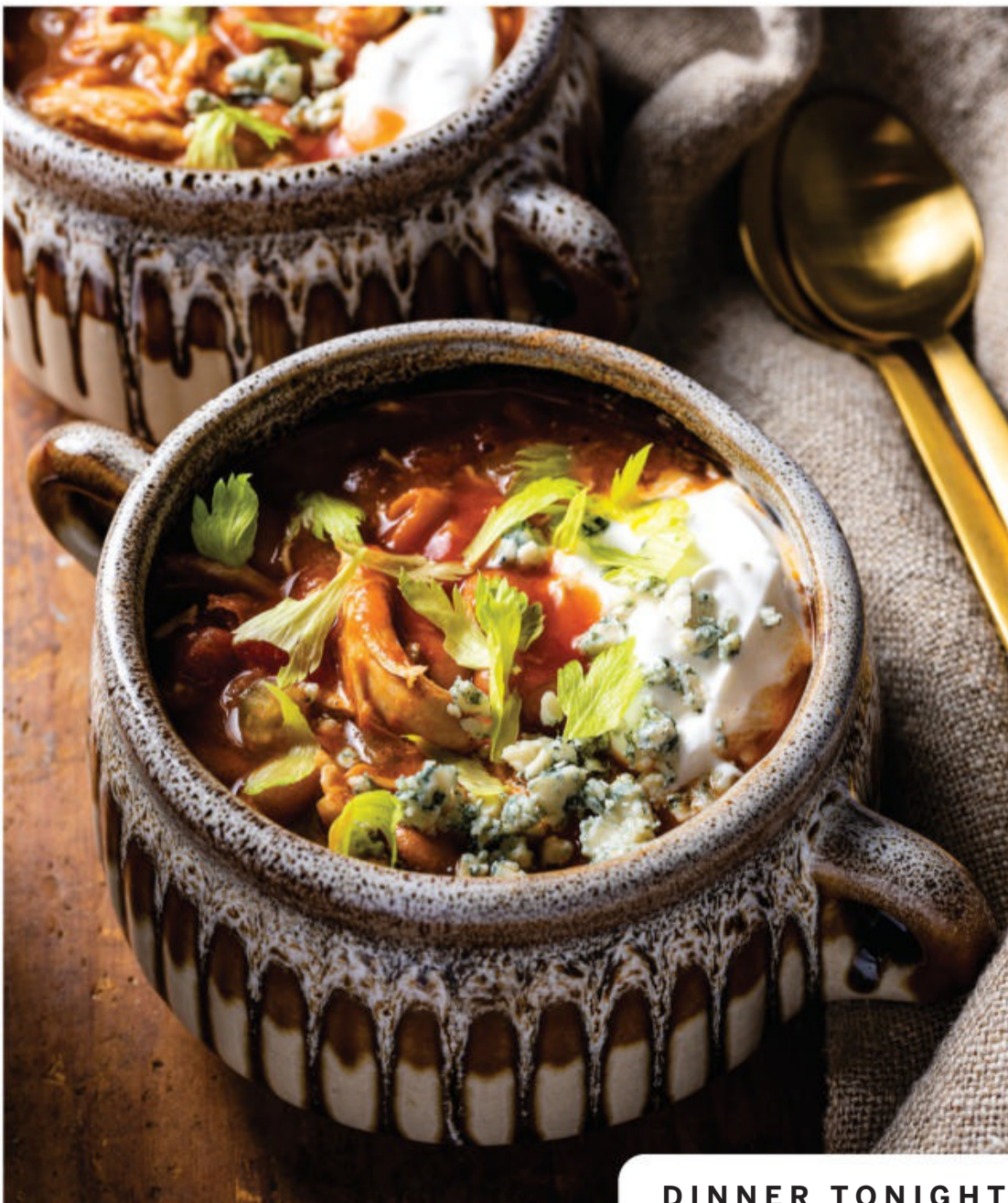
DINNER TONIGHT

**Vidalia Onion Pie**



DINNER TONIGHT

**Buffalo Chicken Chili**



DINNER TONIGHT

**Sesame-Glazed Meatballs and Broccoli**



DINNER TONIGHT



## Vidalia Onion Pie

Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour

We like to serve this pie with a mixed green salad dressed in a tangy vinaigrette. You will need about one sleeve of Ritz Crackers.

- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup half-and-half
- ½ teaspoon hot sauce
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 35 Ritz Crackers
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon table salt, divided
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, divided
- 4 cups thinly sliced Vidalia onions (about 2 onions)
- 6 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (1½ cups)
- ¼ cup minced fresh chives

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Whisk eggs, half-and-half, hot sauce, and pepper together in large bowl; set aside. Pulse crackers, flour, and ¼ teaspoon salt in food processor until coarsely ground, 8 to 10 pulses. Add 6 tablespoons melted butter and pulse until crumbs are evenly moistened, about 5 pulses. Transfer cracker mixture to 9-inch pie plate. Press crumbs into even layer on bottom and about 1¼ inches up sides of plate. Bake until crust is fragrant and beginning to brown, about 8 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, combine onions, remaining ¼ teaspoon salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cover and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until onions are softened, about 8 minutes.
3. Stir onions into egg mixture. Stir in cheddar and chives. Transfer onion mixture to crust. Bake until set and center of pie registers 165 degrees, 14 to 17 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes. Serve.



## Pan-Seared Salmon with Kale and Quinoa Pilaf and Garlicky Yogurt

Serves 4 Total Time: 50 minutes

If you use prewashed white quinoa, you can skip the rinsing.

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest plus 2 teaspoons juice
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided
- 1¼ cups white quinoa, rinsed
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 6 ounces curly kale, stemmed and chopped coarse
- ¼ cup golden raisins
- ¼ cup sliced almonds, toasted
- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) skin-on salmon fillets, 1 to 1½ inches thick

1. Combine oil and garlic in bowl. Microwave until garlic is golden brown, about 1½ minutes. Reserve 2 tablespoons garlic oil. Whisk yogurt, lemon zest, and ¼ teaspoon salt into remaining garlic oil in bowl; set aside.
2. Heat reserved garlic oil in large saucepan over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add quinoa and ¼ teaspoon salt and cook until quinoa is fragrant, about 3 minutes. Stir in broth and bring to boil. Layer kale on top of quinoa in saucepan, cover, and reduce heat to low. Simmer until quinoa and kale are tender, 15 to 18 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat and let sit, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff quinoa with fork, folding in kale. Stir in raisins, almonds, and lemon juice. Season with salt to taste.
3. Meanwhile, sprinkle salmon with remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Arrange salmon skin side down in 12-inch nonstick skillet and cook over medium-high heat until fat is rendered and skin becomes crispy, about 7 minutes. Flip salmon and continue to cook until center is still translucent when checked with tip of paring knife and registers 125 degrees, about 7 minutes longer. Serve salmon with pilaf and yogurt sauce.



## Sesame-Glazed Meatballs and Broccoli

Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour

Serve with white rice.

- 1½ pounds 90 percent lean ground beef
- 1 cup panko bread crumbs
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 4 scallions, white parts minced, green parts sliced thin on bias
- 2 tablespoons chili-garlic sauce
- 2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil, divided
- 1½ teaspoons table salt, divided
- 1 pound broccoli florets, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce, plus extra for serving
- 1½ tablespoons sesame seeds, toasted

1. Adjust oven rack 8 inches from broiler element and heat oven to 400 degrees. Spray rimmed baking sheet with vegetable oil spray. Mix beef, panko, eggs, scallion whites, chili-garlic sauce, 1 tablespoon sesame oil, and 1¼ teaspoons salt in bowl until well combined. Form mixture into sixteen 2-inch meatballs and arrange on half of prepared sheet.
2. Toss broccoli, vegetable oil, remaining 1 tablespoon sesame oil, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt together in bowl. Arrange broccoli on other half of sheet. Roast until meatballs register 160 degrees and broccoli is crisp-tender, about 20 minutes.
3. Remove sheet from oven and heat broiler. Combine hoisin and sesame seeds in bowl. Brush hoisin mixture over meatballs. Broil until glaze is bubbling and tops of broccoli are browned, about 3 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through broiling. Sprinkle with scallion greens and serve with extra hoisin.



## Buffalo Chicken Chili

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

If available, use celery ribs with leaves and use the whole leaves as a garnish.

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 celery ribs, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans pinto beans, rinsed
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 2 cups chicken broth
- ⅓ cup Frank's RedHot Original Cayenne Pepper Sauce, plus extra for serving
- 1 (2½-pound) rotisserie chicken, skin and bones discarded, meat shredded into bite-size pieces (3 cups)
- Sour cream
- Crumbled blue cheese

1. Melt butter in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add celery and cook until beginning to soften, about 3 minutes. Stir in chili powder and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
2. Stir in beans, tomatoes and their juice, broth, and hot sauce and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and simmer until flavors have melded, about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Using back of wooden spoon, mash some beans against side of saucepan until chili is slightly thickened. Stir in chicken and cook until warmed through, about 2 minutes. Season with salt to taste. Serve with sour cream, blue cheese, and extra hot sauce.

## GETTING TO KNOW

# DRIED CHILES

Dried chiles add depth, richness, and a soulful spark to cuisines worldwide. Here we home in on five common varieties that are used primarily in Mexican- and other Latin-influenced dishes.

by Scott Kathan

## THE TEST KITCHEN'S GO-TO CHILES

### ANCHO

These wrinkly, dark-red chiles (which are dried poblanos) have rich, raisiny sweetness and very little heat.

### ARBOL

Slender arbol chiles have smooth, dark-red skins. Their flavor is bright, with a little smokiness; they are always hot, and sometimes searingly so.

### GUAJILLO

Guajillos are dried mirasol chiles. These large chiles are a little sweet, with a distinct fruity tanginess and a mild-to-medium heat.

### CHIPOTLE

These smoked, dried jalapeños, which have very wrinkled skins (and are sometimes red), have a deep, chocolaty smokiness with hints of tobacco. They are usually moderately hot, but you'll occasionally encounter a real burner.

### NEW MEXICAN

Smooth and brick red, New Mexican chiles taste slightly acidic and earthy, with a mild-to-moderate heat. They are often bundled into ristras—hanging bunches of dried red chiles—which are commonly seen in the American Southwest and in parts of Latin America.



## SHOPPING

Like spices, dried chiles lose their flavor over time, so it's best to use them within six months of purchase. Buy them from sources that have a high turnover to ensure freshness and optimum flavor. The chiles should not be totally dry and brittle; look for chiles that you can bend a little without breaking them.

## THE EVOLUTIONARY APPEAL OF RED

Why do many chile peppers (and other produce) ripen to a red color? It's a function of genetic evolution; birds can easily spot and consume bright-colored fruits—birds are immune to chiles' fiery burn—and then fly away, depositing seeds (and thus eventually new plants) far and wide, giving that variety of chile a strong chance to keep growing and thriving in different environments.

## RED PEPPER FLAKES

In the United States, red pepper flakes are most often a coarse mix of ground cayenne peppers and milder varieties, including the seeds. In their raw state (such as when sprinkled over pizza), they provide a straightforward heat; if you cook with them, try blooming the flakes in hot fat to coax out a bit more nuanced flavor.

## A LONG HISTORY

Chiles are believed to have originated in the Andes. By roughly 4000 BCE, they were being cultivated by native people throughout South, Central, and North America; Europeans then brought them to their continent and Asia. Drying chiles was a practical way of preserving them; the intensified flavor was a happy side effect.

### Basic Dried Chile Prep for Sauces or Salsa



1. Stem and seed chiles.



2. Cut/tear chiles into pieces.



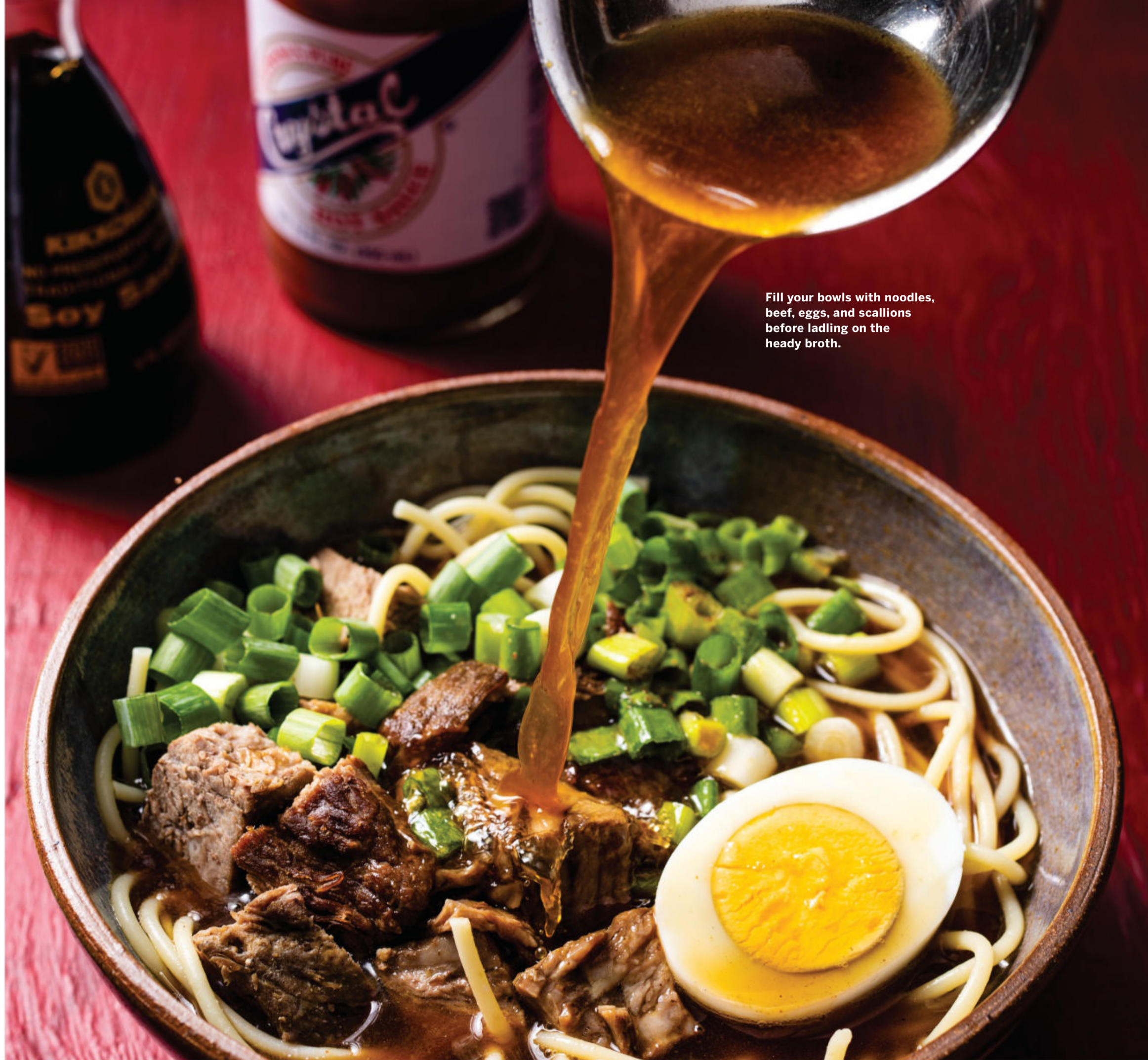
3. Dry-toast until fragrant.



4. Rehydrate with hot water.



5. Puree with other ingredients.



Fill your bowls with noodles, beef, eggs, and scallions before ladling on the heady broth.

# Creole Yakamein

*The origins and rise to fame of New Orleans's "old sober."*

by Matthew Fairman

I'M SITTING IN my car, tearing open packets of soy sauce and hot sauce with my teeth. I splash both sauces across my bowl of dark broth, noodles, chopped beef, boiled egg, and scallions. One bite and I get it. This is New Orleans, and this is yakamein (also

known as "old sober"), a powerfully seasoned, spicy noodle soup that's purported to cure even the nastiest of hangovers.

Thanks mostly to the tireless efforts of chef Linda Green, known around the city as the "Yakamein Lady," this irresistible Creole amalgamation is becoming

increasingly easy to find. In the years since Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, she's cooked yakamein into a popular resurgence, ladling out her soup to the likes of the late Anthony Bourdain; winning an episode of Food Network's *Chopped*; and garnering profiles in

publications such as the *New York Times* and *Rolling Stone*.

Since that first day in my car, I've had the pleasure of slurping down several cups of Green's noodles, along with a half dozen or so other excellent versions from places around the city. As I began work on my own recipe for the dish, I couldn't help but ask myself where this fusion of Creole, Asian, and soul food cuisines came from.

After calling around and doing some initial research, I contacted Winston Ho, a University of New Orleans graduate student researching Chinese

American history in New Orleans and an expert on the history of this dish.

Ho has documented what he describes as the "Chinese-American origin theory" of yakamein, explaining to me that he has "menus and photographs from almost fifty restaurants that served yakamein around the country over the past 120 years." His earliest example is a New York City

... [a] **spicy noodle soup that's purported to cure even the nastiest of hangovers.**

Chinese restaurant menu from 1904 that offers "yet quo mein (noodle soup with pork)." Ho theorizes that yakamein "is an improvised noodle soup, which the Cantonese created in the late

1800s from whatever ingredients they could find in North America—spaghetti noodles instead of Chinese noodles for example.” So Cantonese restaurants in cities across America (including San Francisco, New Orleans, New York, and Baltimore) were the first to serve yakamein. And some of these places still have Americanized noodle dishes descended from the original Cantonese noodles—such as “yock” or “yock in a box” in southeastern Virginia, among others. The name, spelled many different ways, loosely translates as “an order of noodles.”

Ho is quick to point out that the original Cantonese soup would’ve been very different from what you can find now in soul food places across New Orleans (yakamein made with Creole spices and a soy sauce-heavy broth and finished with hot sauce). “Creole yakamein and Chinese yakamein are completely different from each other and don’t taste or look anything alike. Most Chinese now and in the past would consider Creole yakamein too salty.”

When asked about the Chinese influence in New Orleans food in a 2009 interview by chef and food writer Gisele Perez, the famed chef of Dooky

Chase’s Restaurant and “Queen of Creole Cuisine” Leah Chase echoed Ho’s theory, explaining that Chinese and African Americans commingled their food traditions while living side by side. Yakamein became a dish influenced by the many cultures of the great city of New Orleans.

And so yakamein spread and evolved, from Chinese restaurants in the once-bustling New Orleans Chinatown to their Black patrons and then to Black-owned Creole and soul food bars and restaurants. One such establishment, Bean Brothers Bar, is where Shirley Green, Linda Green’s mother and culinary inspiration, sold her yakamein. Shirley passed her closely guarded, wildly popular recipe to Linda. And Linda in turn has served it up for countless others at the jazz festival, in local museums, and at surprise events outside her home. Her efforts have immensely widened yakamein’s mysterious appeal.

Linda—who has shared her recipe with only her daughter—continues to guard the family secret. Since not everyone can just walk down the street and order a bowl of yakamein, I quilted together this recipe from my many samples of her version and the variations I tasted in restaurants all over New Orleans, so you can try your hand at making your own.

### The Yakamein Lady

Renowned New Orleans culinary personality Linda Green has yakamein in her blood; she learned to make the dish—a deliciously spicy noodle soup—from her mother, Shirley Green. If you are lucky enough to visit the Crescent City, seek out a bowl of Green’s yakamein.



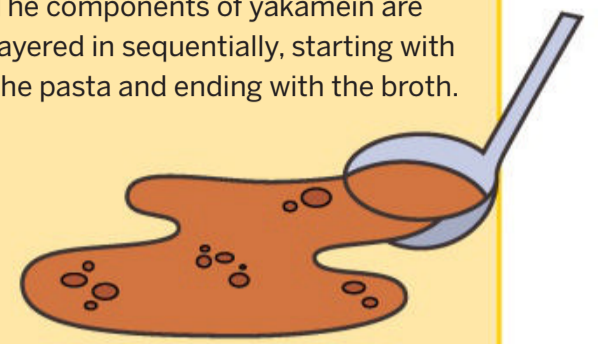
### Cutting Beef for Yakamein



Use chef’s knife to cut beef into approximate ¾-inch pieces.

### Building the Bowl

The components of yakamein are layered in sequentially, starting with the pasta and ending with the broth.



#### 5. BROTH



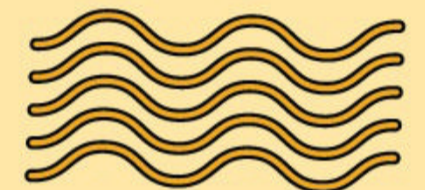
#### 4. SCALLIONS



#### 3. EGG



#### 2. BEEF



#### 1. PASTA



### Now Let’s Get Cooking

The crux of our recipe for yakamein is laying down a flavorful base for the foundation of the dish: the broth. Step one is to thoroughly brown a small beef chuck roast, rendering out some beef fat and creating a caramelized fond in the pot. Then, as with most any self-respecting recipe associated with the Crescent City, in goes the “trinity”: a mix of chopped onion, celery, and green bell pepper that sweetens, balances, and rounds out the intensely beefy broth. Garlic, Creole seasoning, onion powder, sugar, a touch of Ac’cent (monosodium glutamate), and a glug of soy sauce create a spicy, punchy flavor base, and adding beef broth and braising the chuck roast until it’s tender in this flavorful enhanced broth ratchets up the flavor even further. In the time it takes the beef to cool (so that it’s easy to handle and chop), you can boil your spaghetti (and eggs, if you haven’t planned ahead). All that’s left is to assemble your noodles, chopped beef, halved eggs, and scallions in bowls; ladle over the delicious broth; and garnish with a bit more soy sauce and some hot sauce.

### ● BEEF YAKAMEIN (NEW ORLEANS SPICY BEEF NOODLE SOUP)

Serves 6 Total Time: 3¼ hours

Smaller chuck-eye roasts (such as the one called for in this recipe) are sometimes sold prepackaged and labeled as chuck steak. If you can find only chuck roasts larger than 2 pounds, you can ask the butcher to cut a smaller roast for you or cut your own 2-pound roast and freeze the remaining meat for another use. Sriracha or Tabasco can be substituted for the Crystal Hot Sauce, if desired. We developed this recipe with Kikkoman Soy Sauce and Better Than Bouillon Roasted Beef Base. Monosodium glutamate, an umami-enhancing seasoning that gives this yakamein broth a savory boost, is sold under the brand name Ac’cent. Look for it in the spice aisle next to the seasoning salts.

- 1 (2-pound) boneless beef chuck-eye roast, trimmed
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons pepper
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon Tony Chachere’s Original Creole Seasoning
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon Ac’cent (optional)
- 8 cups beef broth
- ¼ cup soy sauce, plus extra for serving
- 12 ounces spaghetti
- 3 hard-cooked large eggs, halved
- 6 scallions, sliced ¼ inch thick
- Crystal Hot Sauce

1. Pat beef dry with paper towels and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add beef and cook until well browned on all sides, 8 to 12 minutes. Transfer beef to plate.
2. Add onion, bell pepper, and celery to fat left in pot and cook until softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add garlic; Creole seasoning; sugar; onion powder; and Ac’cent, if using, and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in broth and soy sauce, scraping up any browned bits. Return beef to pot and bring to boil over high heat. Cover; reduce heat to low; and simmer until beef is tender, 1½ to 2 hours.
3. Transfer beef to cutting board and let cool until easy to handle, at least 20 minutes. Use wide spoon to

- skim excess fat from broth. Set colander over large bowl. Strain broth through colander, pressing on solids to extract all liquid. Discard solids in colander. Return broth to pot; cover and keep warm over low heat.
4. Meanwhile, bring 3 quarts water to boil in large saucepan. Add pasta and cook until fully tender. Drain pasta and return it to saucepan. Cover and set aside.
  5. Using chef’s knife, chop beef into approximate ¾-inch pieces. Divide pasta evenly among 6 serving bowls. Divide beef, eggs, and scallions evenly among serving bowls on top of pasta. Ladle hot broth into serving bowls to cover pasta (about 1½ cups each). Serve, passing hot sauce and extra soy sauce separately.

# Orange Upside-Down Cake

*This easy, vibrant cake brings a burst of sunshine to your table.* **by Jessica Rudolph**

**T**O SOME READERS, the phrase “upside-down cake” likely elicits visions of golden pineapple rings and ruby cherries swathed in sticky caramel. Yes, the pineapple version is ubiquitous, but other renditions of this topsy-turvy cake actually predate it. In the mid-19th century, cooks baked skillet cakes in cast-iron skillets, often with a layer of seasonal fruit such as apples, berries, or stone fruit sitting beneath the batter. However, the popularity of these cakes skyrocketed in the 1920s with the rise in popularity of canned pineapple rings, helping give pineapple upside-down cake the iconic status it enjoys today.

These days, nearly every fruit (and even some vegetables) has been layered with sugar, baked under a buttery cake, and turned out for a showstopping presentation. Orange versions are particularly trendy, likely due to the beautiful stained-glass look mixed varieties can provide.

Adapting the classic recipe isn't as simple as swapping one sliced fruit for another, though: Modifications are necessary to accommodate the unique flavor and delicate texture of oranges. The traditional brown sugar or caramel topping overshadows the bright flavor of oranges, but cleaner-tasting white sugar allows it to shine through. Citrus fruits are also extra-juicy; some cornstarch in the topping helps gel that extra moisture so that the cake doesn't turn soggy. A standard stir-together butter cake (enriched with sour cream for moisture and tang) provides a plush, sturdy base for the fruit, and a little orange zest in the batter underlines the floral citrus flavor throughout the cake.

As tasty as the cake is, the wow factor lies in its stunning look. Using Cara Cara, navel, and blood oranges creates a mix of sunset hues; using only one variety still makes a beautiful, though understated, cake. Peeling the fruit by hand, as opposed to cutting away the peel with a knife, helps ensure picture-perfect round slices. And a finishing brush of orange marmalade adds sheen and bolsters the orange flavor. The end result? A cake that looks as cheerful as it tastes.

## ORANGE UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

Serves 8

Total Time: 1½ hours, plus 1 hour  
20 minutes cooling

For the most striking visual, we like to use a combination of navel oranges, blood oranges, and Cara Cara oranges. Look for oranges no larger than a tennis ball; you'll be able to use more slices and cover a greater area. Peel the oranges by hand instead of with a knife: Leaving the exterior membrane intact helps maintain a circular shape. We recommend using a serrated knife to slice this cake to get clean slices. Serve the cake with whipped cream, if desired.

- 1 pound small navel oranges, blood oranges, Cara Cara oranges, or a combination (2 to 3 oranges), divided**
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, divided**
- 1½ cups (10½ ounces) sugar, divided**
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch**
- ¼ teaspoon plus ½ teaspoon table salt, divided**
- 1 cup (5 ounces) all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon baking powder**
- ½ cup sour cream**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 2 tablespoons orange marmalade**

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9-inch round cake pan, line with parchment paper, then grease parchment. Grate 2 teaspoons zest from

1 orange; set aside. Using your hands, peel oranges. Using sharp chef's knife or serrated knife, trim ends and slice oranges crosswise ¼ inch thick, removing any seeds.

2. Pour 4 tablespoons melted butter over bottom of prepared pan and swirl to evenly coat. Whisk ½ cup sugar, cornstarch, and ⅛ teaspoon salt together in bowl, then sprinkle evenly over melted butter in pan. Arrange orange slices in single layer over sugar mixture, nestling slices snugly together and pressing them flat (you may have fruit left over).

3. Whisk flour, baking powder, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt together in large bowl. Whisk sour cream, eggs, vanilla, orange zest, and remaining 1 cup sugar in second large bowl until smooth, about 1 minute. Whisk remaining 6 tablespoons melted butter into sour cream mixture until combined. Add flour mixture and whisk until just combined.

4. Pour batter over oranges in pan and smooth top with rubber spatula. Bake until deep golden brown and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 50 to 55 minutes.

5. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 20 minutes. Run knife around edge of pan to loosen cake, then invert cake onto serving platter. Discard parchment. Let cake cool for at least 1 hour.

6. Microwave marmalade in bowl until fluid, about 20 seconds. Using pastry brush, brush marmalade over top of cake. Serve.

### The Many Shades of Oranges

While this cake looks beautiful with a single variety of orange, to give it the most stunning appearance, we like to use a mix of three types: blood oranges, Cara Cara oranges, and navel oranges. Blood oranges are a winter citrus standout with their crimson-colored flesh. Cara Cara oranges have a light pinkish-red flesh, similar to that of grapefruit. And navel oranges offer the traditional, well, orange color. The three together are reminiscent of a sunset or stained glass and make for a showstopper of a cake. If you can find only one variety, the cake will still have vibrant color and be sure to impress.





This bright, easy cake tastes as good as it looks.

### E-Z Peel

Peeling the oranges by hand was less work than using a knife, and the subsequent slices held their shapes better than those whose peels had been cut off.



### Key Steps



1. Coat lined pan with butter and sprinkle sugar mixture over butter.



2. Arrange orange slices in single layer over sugar mixture.



3. Pour cake batter over orange slices and bake.

# Peanut Butter–Stuffed Chocolate Cookies

*Chocolate cookies are good; chocolate cookies stuffed  
with peanut butter are even better.* by Matthew Fairman

Life is short . . .  
and these “hidden  
surprise” cookies  
will help you live it  
to the fullest.

STUFFING  
THESE  
COOKIES  
IS EASIER  
THAN YOU'D  
THINK



**C**HOCOLATE AND PEANUT butter were made for each other. So when you take a filling inspired by the creamy core of a peanut butter cup and bake it inside double-chocolate cookie dough, you get the absolutely mouthwatering combination of a fudgy, crackly, slightly chewy, intensely chocolaty cookie and a satisfying peanutty center. Making stuffed cookies sounds like a lot more work than unwrapping a peanut butter cup, but it's easier than you'd think, and the reward is worth it.

For the cookie dough, including both unsweetened cocoa powder and bittersweet chocolate, plus a good dose of salt, maximizes the dough's chocolaty complexity and balances out the cookies' sweetness. Dutch-processed cocoa powder, which tends to be high in fat and low in starch, not only helps keep the cookies moist and fudgy (rather than dry and crumbly) but also supplies deeper, earthier chocolate notes than natural cocoa powder (which is fruitier and more acidic). Melting a portion of the chopped chocolate for the dough and then folding in the remaining pieces creates luscious molten pockets in the finished cookies. Using both baking soda and baking powder ensures that the cookies will puff and spread just enough to crackle on top, and a combination of vegetable oil and butter creates the perfect amount of chew.

Once stirred together, the dough is easy to work with, not sticky or messy, so it molds effortlessly around the filling, a simple stir-together mixture of peanut butter, confectioners' sugar, and salt. Briefly freezing the filling while making the dough firms it up, ensuring that stuffing the cookies is fun instead of messy or frustrating. A final roll in granulated and confectioners' sugars coats the dark cookies in a bright-white crust, endowing them with the stunning visual contrast of crinkle cookies and adding a crunchy texture to their exteriors. Very gently flattening the coated dough balls just before baking ensures that each cookie spreads uniformly and consistently, making them pleasingly disk-shaped rather than inconsistently domed and round. Now when you've got chocolate and peanut butter on your mind, you can whip up a batch of these cookies and enjoy their complex notes of bittersweet chocolate and Dutch cocoa and their salty-sweet peanut butter filling.

## ● PEANUT BUTTER-STUFFED CHOCOLATE COOKIES

Makes 16 cookies

Total Time: 1½ hours,  
plus 30 minutes cooling

Once baked and cooled, these cookies are best stored in the refrigerator. We developed this recipe using Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Premium Baking Bars and Droste Cacao Dutch-processed cocoa powder.

### FILLING

- ½ cup creamy peanut butter
- ½ cup (2 ounces) confectioners' sugar
- ¼ teaspoon table salt

### DOUGH

- 1½ cups (7½ ounces) all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup (¾ ounce) Dutch-processed cocoa powder
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon table salt
- 10 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine, divided
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup (7 ounces) granulated sugar, plus ⅓ cup for rolling
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar for rolling

**1. FOR THE FILLING:** Combine peanut butter, sugar, and salt in bowl. Using fork or your hands, stir and mash mixture until thoroughly combined and no dry pockets of sugar remain. Divide filling into 16 equal portions (about 2 teaspoons each). Roll each portion into ball and place on large plate. Freeze until firm, about 30 minutes.

**2. FOR THE DOUGH:** Meanwhile, adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 300 degrees. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.

**3.** Whisk flour, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda, and salt together in medium bowl. Microwave 6 ounces chocolate, oil, and butter in second medium bowl at 50 percent power, stirring occasionally, until melted, about 3 minutes. Whisk vanilla into melted chocolate mixture until combined.

**4.** Whisk 1 cup granulated sugar and eggs in large bowl until thoroughly combined. Add melted chocolate mixture and whisk until uniform. Using rubber spatula, fold in flour mixture

## Here's How to Stuff and Shape 'em



**1.** Use your fingers to flatten 1 dough portion into disk with roughly 3-inch diameter.



**2.** Place 1 ball of chilled filling in center of disk.



**3.** Wrap edges of dough up and around filling, seal dough, shape into smooth ball, and roll in sugar.



**4.** Flatten dough balls into 2-inch-wide disks using bottom of drinking glass. Seal any cracks where filling shows through.

until combined. Fold in remaining 4 ounces chocolate.

**5.** Divide dough into 16 equal portions, about scant 3 tablespoons (1⅞ ounces) each; divide any remaining dough evenly among portions. Use your fingers to flatten 1 dough portion into disk with roughly 3-inch diameter. Place 1 ball of filling in center of disk. Wrap edges of dough up and around filling, seal dough, and shape into smooth ball. Repeat with remaining dough portions and filling.

**6.** Place confectioners' sugar and remaining ⅓ cup granulated sugar in 2 separate shallow dishes. Working in batches, roll dough balls first in granulated sugar, then in confectioners' sugar, to coat. Evenly space dough balls on prepared sheets, 8 dough balls per sheet.

**7.** Using bottom of drinking glass, flatten dough balls into 2-inch-wide disks. (Dough balls will crack at edges; this is OK. If filling shows through any large cracks, pinch dough together to seal cracks.) Bake until cookies are puffed, edges are just set, and cookies no longer look raw between cracks, about 22 minutes, switching and rotating sheets halfway through baking.

**8.** Let cookies cool completely on sheets, about 30 minutes. Serve.

## Double Chocolate Punch

We wanted these cookies to shout chocolate from the rooftops, so we packed them with both cocoa powder and bittersweet chocolate. We call for Dutch-processed cocoa powder instead of natural cocoa powder for the deep chocolate notes it contributes. Dutch-processed cocoa powder also tends to be high in fat, which makes for moister cookies. Our favorite Dutch-processed cocoa powder is **Droste Cacao**. Then we add bittersweet chocolate in two ways. Six ounces of the chopped chocolate gets melted and

mixed into the dough, while the remaining 4 ounces are folded in to ensure melty, chocolaty bits in every bite. **Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Premium Baking Bar** is our favorite bittersweet chocolate bar.



# Two-Fat Biscuits

*A combination of lard and butter produces flaky, tender, mouthwatering biscuits.*

*by Lawman Johnson*

These supersavory biscuits taste amazing and are easy to make.

## ● BUTTER AND LARD BISCUITS

*Serves 9 Total Time: 40 minutes,*

*plus 50 minutes freezing and chilling*

We developed this recipe using John Morrell Snow Cap Lard. If you have leftover buttermilk, it can be frozen in ice cube trays, transferred to zipper-lock bags, and frozen for up to a month. Upon thawing, the whey and the milk solids will separate; simply whisk the buttermilk back together before using it.

**6 ounces lard**

**12 tablespoons unsalted butter**

**4½ cups (22½ ounces) all-purpose flour**

**1½ tablespoons sugar**

**1½ tablespoons baking powder**

**¾ teaspoon baking soda**

**1½ teaspoons table salt**

**1¼ cups buttermilk**

1. Cut lard and butter into ½-inch pieces and freeze until firm, 20 to 30 minutes.
2. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Process flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in food processor until combined, about 3 seconds. Scatter frozen lard and butter over top and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs with visible pea-size pieces, about 14 pulses.
3. Transfer flour mixture to large bowl. Stir in buttermilk until very shaggy dough forms and some bits of dry flour remain. (Do not overmix.) Turn out dough onto lightly floured counter and knead briefly until dough comes together, 4 to 6 turns. Using your floured hands and bench scraper, shape dough into 8-inch square, about 1½ inches thick. (Dough may be sticky; reflower your hands as needed.)
4. Using sharp, floured chef's knife, trim ¼ inch of dough from each side of square and discard. Cut remaining dough into 9 squares (2 cuts by 2 cuts), flouring knife after each cut. Arrange biscuits at least 1 inch apart on prepared sheet. Cover sheet with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 24 hours. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees.
5. Bake until biscuits begin to rise, about 5 minutes. Rotate sheet and reduce oven temperature to 400 degrees. Bake until biscuits are golden brown, 12 to 14 minutes. Transfer sheet to wire rack and let biscuits cool for at least 5 minutes. Serve warm.

## HOW TO MAKE BUTTER AND LARD BISCUITS



### 1. Cut and chill fats

Cut lard and butter into ½-inch pieces. Place pieces on large plate or baking sheet and freeze until firm.

**Why?** The chilled pieces of lard and butter will be cut more uniformly in the food processor and melt more slowly in the oven.



### 2. Mix dry ingredients

Process flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in food processor until combined.

**Why?** Processing the dry ingredients separately ensures that they are thoroughly combined before the lard and butter are incorporated.



### 3. Add lard and butter

Scatter frozen lard and butter over flour mixture and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs with visible pea-size pieces.

**Why?** Pulsing the lard and butter into small pieces distributes them more evenly throughout the dough, which leads to better rising during baking.



### 4. Combine dry and wet

Transfer flour mixture to large bowl. Stir in buttermilk until very shaggy dough forms and some bits of dry flour remain, being careful not to overmix.

**Why?** Mixing causes gluten formation, which gives baked goods structure. But too much gluten development in biscuit dough leads to tough biscuits.



### 5. Knead and shape dough

Turn out dough onto lightly floured counter and knead briefly until dough comes together, 4 to 6 turns. Then press dough into 8-inch square, about 1½ inches thick.

**Why?** The lightly floured counter keeps the dough from sticking, while kneading briefly (to minimize gluten development) makes the dough more cohesive.



### 6. Trim and cut biscuits

Trim ¼ inch of dough from sides of square using sharp, floured chef's knife. Then cut dough into 9 squares, re-flouring knife.

**Why?** A sharp, floured knife produces clean edges when trimming and cutting the dough. And cutting the dough into squares ensures evenly sized biscuits.



### 7. Leave some room

Arrange biscuits at least 1 inch apart on parchment paper-lined baking sheet.

**Why?** Since they grow a bit in the oven, spacing the biscuits 1 inch apart keeps them from touching while they bake. And baking them on parchment paper prevents them from sticking to the sheet.



### 8. Chill biscuits

Cover biscuits with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 24 hours.

**Why?** Chilling the dough helps the biscuits hold their shape while baking. (Unchilled biscuits will bake up unevenly, with wider bases and thinner tops.)



### 9. Start baking at 450 degrees

Bake biscuits at 450 degrees until they begin to rise. Then rotate sheet, reduce oven temperature to 400 degrees, and bake until golden brown.

**Why?** Starting the biscuits at a higher heat leads to a better rise, and rotating the sheet leads to more even rising and browning.



### 10. Let cool

Transfer sheet to wire rack and let biscuits cool for at least 5 minutes. Serve warm.

**Why?** A warm biscuit is comforting and accepts condiments without crumbling, while a hot biscuit is more fragile.

### Why Two Fats?

While you can make biscuits with just butter or just lard, we call for both here for the richest, flakiest, most tender biscuits. Butter can contain almost 20 percent water, while lard—like shortening and coconut oil—is 100 percent fat. Because lard doesn't contain any water, it doesn't encourage gluten development. When the dough is worked, the lard coats the gluten strands to prevent them from bonding, in essence "shortening" the strands, thus creating more tender biscuits. Butter has a lower melting point than lard, which means that it melts faster when heated. During baking, this allows the butter to form more air pockets in the dough as its water converts to steam, resulting in flakier, more leavened biscuits. Butter is also helpful for browning due to the sugar and protein in its milk solids, which undergo Maillard browning when heated. Some lards, such as U.S. Dreams Lard (far right), can impart a porky flavor, a plus for many; John Morrell Snow Cap Lard (near right) is more neutral-tasting. **—MEGAN GINSBERG**

### OUR FAVORITE LARDS

We found that lards with higher melting points produced flakier biscuits. Here are our top picks.

#### Supermarket Lard: John Morrell Snow Cap Lard

(\$1.69 for 1 lb)

With a "soft," "flaky," "moist" texture that "melts in your mouth," biscuits made with this widely available supermarket lard were a hit.



#### Artisan Lard: U.S. Dreams Lard

(\$11.99 for 1 lb)

In our tests, this preservative-free, nonhydrogenated lard produced "beautifully crisp and tender" biscuits with "clean, rich flavor."



### OUR FAVORITE UNSALTED BUTTER

We prefer butter with a simple, straightforward flavor. Here is our go-to.

#### Challenge Unsalted Butter

(\$4.49 for 1 lb)

Tasters praised this California-made butter for its "clean," "strong dairy flavor."





The chicken juices and berbere meld into a flavorful jus for drizzling over the chicken.

**R**OAST CHICKEN IS so simple yet satisfying and makes for an impressive weeknight dinner. And when you employ an Instant Pot, our winning multicooker, roasting a chicken becomes even easier—and perhaps even more satisfying. It can produce tender, juicy chicken that practically falls off the bone (think supermarket rotisserie chicken) in less time than oven roasting and without much fuss. There's no need to truss the bird, rotate it, or even adjust the oven temperature partway through—it's relatively hands-off, like using a slow cooker but much quicker!

Chicken seasoned simply with salt and pepper is already a crowd-pleaser, but a spiced-up chicken always knocks dinner out of the park. While there are many spices to choose from, berbere, a hot yet sweet and complex Ethiopian and Eritrean spice blend, pairs well with chicken and is the blend of choice here (see "Berbere").

To add flavor before cooking the whole chicken under pressure, first combine berbere, vegetable oil, and kosher salt to form a wet sand-like paste. Rub the bird with the mixture to infuse it with the spices. The Instant

Pot's concentrated heat blooms the spices, bringing out their nuanced flavors, and its tight-fitting lid traps that flavor during cooking. As a bonus, the spices combine with the juices at the bottom of the Instant Pot to create a delicious jus. For more intense chicken-y flavor, before locking the lid, brown the breast side of the bird using the Instant Pot's handy sauté function.

Since this chicken is so tender (spoon-tender, even), the best way to carefully remove it from the Instant Pot is with a foil sling. While the poultry rests, skim the excess fat from the surface of the jus. Finally, carve the chicken, drizzle the pieces with some of the jus, and serve the chicken with the remaining jus. You'll be turning to this quick and easy chicken preparation again and again. To change things up, you can also try a variation, which calls for paprika, cumin, coriander, granulated garlic, pepper, and cayenne in place of the berbere. With these two flavor-packed recipes in your pocket and the Instant Pot in your corner, the only pressure when you're trying to get dinner on the table will be the pressure in the multicooker.

# Berbere-Rubbed Chicken

We use a few tricks—a time-saving appliance and a complex spice blend—to get a whole chicken on the table in just over an hour. **by Lawman Johnson**

## ● INSTANT POT

### BERBERE-RUBBED CHICKEN

Serves 4 Total Time: 1¼ hours

Once cooked, the chicken will be very tender; we call for an aluminum foil sling to make it easier to remove it from the Instant Pot. If your Instant Pot comes with a steamer rack with handles, you can use it instead of the foil sling. Berbere is a warmly aromatic and highly flavorful Ethiopian and Eritrean spice blend often found in grocery store spice sections. Its potency can vary from brand to brand, so if you're spice averse, feel free to use less than the amount called for.

**2 tablespoons berbere**

**2 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided**

**1½ tablespoons kosher salt**

**1 (4-pound) whole chicken, giblets discarded**

**1 cup water**

1. Combine berbere, 1 tablespoon oil, and salt in small bowl to make spice paste. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Rub spice paste over entire surface of chicken. Tuck wingtips behind back.
2. Using highest sauté or browning function, heat remaining 1 tablespoon

oil in Instant Pot for 5 minutes (or until just smoking). Place chicken, breast side down, in pot and cook until well browned, 4 to 6 minutes. Using tongs, remove chicken from pot.

**3.** Create aluminum foil sling by folding large sheet of foil into 19 by 6-inch rectangle. Place chicken, breast side up, crosswise in center of sling. Lift sides of sling and lower chicken into pot, allowing narrow edges of sling to rest along sides of insert. Add water to pot.

**4.** Lock lid into place and close pressure-release valve. Select high pressure-cook function and cook for 30 minutes.

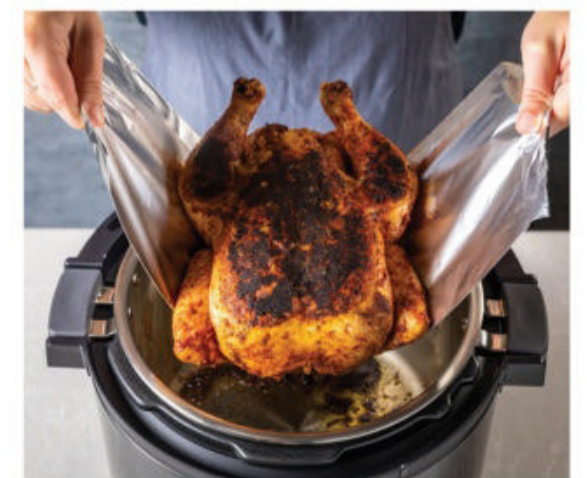
**5.** Turn off Instant Pot, then quick-release pressure. Carefully remove lid, allowing steam to escape away from you. Using sling, carefully transfer chicken to carving board, allowing excess liquid to drain back into pot. Let rest for 15 minutes.

**6.** Using wide spoon, skim fat from surface of jus in pot. Carve chicken and transfer to shallow platter. Drizzle ¼ cup jus over chicken. Serve, passing remaining jus separately.

## ● INSTANT POT SPICE-RUBBED CHICKEN

Substitute 1½ teaspoons paprika, 1½ teaspoons ground cumin, 1½ teaspoons ground coriander, 1 teaspoon granulated garlic, 1 teaspoon pepper, and ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper for berbere.

## How to Make a Foil Sling



Fold sheet of aluminum foil into 19 by 6-inch rectangle. Center chicken on foil sling, breast side up, and lower into Instant Pot.

## Berbere

Berbere, which Hawa Hassan describes as "the spice mix of Ethiopia and Eritrea" in her cookbook, *In Bibi's Kitchen* (2020), adds intriguing notes of chiles, fenugreek, coriander seeds, sweet paprika, and warm spices (such as cardamom, cinnamon, and ginger). Blends vary and might also include cloves, turmeric, garlic, or other seasonings. Hassan writes, "It's at once spicy and a tiny bit sweet and full of layers." Over the years berbere has traveled beyond its origin countries and has grown in popularity in all manner of dishes, but pairing chicken with berbere is nothing new: Doro wat (braised chicken with berbere) is a staple in Ethiopian cuisine.

—MEGAN GINSBERG



Sweet Marsala—an Italian fortified wine with notes of dried fruit, caramel, and molasses—flavors the honey-pistachio syrup.



# Orange-Ricotta Stuffed French Toast

*This decadent breakfast-in-bed treat is inspired by two desserts.* **by Amanda Luchtel**

**O**N VALENTINE'S DAY—or any time you're seeking a special breakfast for two—pour some steaming-hot coffee into a couple mugs and make this stuffed French toast for yourself and your loved one. Combining the flavors of creamy cannoli and pistachio baklava (that's been saturated in orange blossom water and honey) creates a stuffing that's sure to impress in this creative, elevated version of the classic breakfast dish.

Start by making a filling of creamy ricotta cheese scented with bright orange zest and sweetened with a bit of confectioners' sugar. Spread the filling between slices of hearty white sandwich bread, and then quickly soak the sandwiches in the classic mixture of egg and milk for a firm but custardy interior

once cooked. Melt a little butter in a skillet, add the sandwiches, and cook them until they're deep golden brown on both sides. Arrange them on plates, and move on to the topping.

Toast some chopped salted pistachios in the skillet with butter and salt before stirring in a harmonious blend of honey and cinnamon. Add a splash of sweet Marsala wine (or freshly squeezed orange juice) to fortify the floral honey flavors and create a syrup that will take this dish over the top. Use this warm and nutty syrup to coat every last golden-brown bite of this delectable confection. Then dust the French toast liberally with confectioners' sugar, and share it with your sweetheart. It's hard to think of a better way to start a special day.

## RICOTTA-STUFFED FRENCH TOAST FOR TWO

*Total Time: 35 minutes*

We developed this recipe with Arnold Country White Bread. You can substitute fresh orange juice for the sweet Marsala and/or chopped salted almonds for the pistachios, if preferred.

- 4 ounces (½ cup) whole-milk ricotta cheese**
- 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar, plus extra for dusting**
- ½ teaspoon grated orange zest**
- 4 slices hearty white sandwich bread, divided**
- ¾ cup whole milk**
- 1 large egg**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ¼ teaspoon table salt, divided**
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided**
- 3 tablespoons chopped salted pistachios**
- ¼ cup honey**
- 2 tablespoons sweet Marsala**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon**

**1.** Combine ricotta, sugar, and orange zest in bowl. Spread mixture evenly on 2 bread slices. Top with remaining bread slices, pressing down gently, to form 2 sandwiches.

**2.** Beat milk, egg, vanilla, and ⅛ teaspoon salt with fork in 8-inch square baking dish until combined. Soak sandwiches in milk mixture until saturated but not falling apart, about 20 seconds per side.

**3.** Melt 2 tablespoons butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Using firm slotted spatula, pick up each sandwich, allow excess milk mixture to drip off, and place in skillet. Cook until deep golden brown on both sides, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer French toast to individual plates. Wipe out skillet with paper towels.

**4.** Add pistachios, remaining ⅛ teaspoon salt, and remaining 2 tablespoons butter to now-empty skillet and cook over medium heat until pistachios are toasted, about 3 minutes. Stir in honey, Marsala, and cinnamon and bring to simmer. Spoon sauce evenly over French toast. Dust with extra sugar and serve immediately.

### Building a Blissful Breakfast



**1.** Combine ricotta, sugar, and orange zest in bowl.



**2.** Spread filling onto 2 bread slices and top with remaining bread slices.



**3.** Soak sandwiches in milk mixture just until saturated but not falling apart.



**4.** Transfer soaked sandwiches to hot buttered skillet using slotted spatula.

Find our recipe for Spicy Candied Bacon on page 32.

**Passata**

Passata is a smooth, relatively thin uncooked tomato puree with a fresher, cleaner flavor than the tomato juice sold in big cans. Its lightness of flavor and texture make it perfect for Bloody Mary mix and other recipes that don't require long cooking.



# Berberere-Spiced Bloody Mary Mix

An African spice blend adds fiery depth to the classic mix. **by Lawman Johnson**

**T**HE EVER-POPULAR BLOODY Mary can take all manner of seasonings and garnishes. For this recipe, we were after a version with extra depth and plenty of spice. For deep tomato flavor and a smooth consistency, opt for passata (see “Passata” for more information), a bottled uncooked tomato puree with a clean tomato flavor and an ideal texture—neither too thick nor too thin. Twenty-four ounces ensures enough mix for four cocktails. Add in some pickle juice for its briny notes, fresh lime juice for a little vibrant acidity, horseradish for pungent heat, and Worcestershire for umami (a rich, meaty, savory flavor). To build the heat and introduce complex sweet and spicy notes, look to an Ethiopian and Eritrean spice blend that’s growing in use outside of those cuisines: berbere. Like curry powder, each brand/version is a bit different, but berbere typically contains chiles, fenugreek, and coriander and often garlic and warm spices such as cardamom and cinnamon (see “Berbere” on page 26). You’ll use just 1 teaspoon of the intense blend to season the mix.

After whisking everything together, chill the mix for 2 hours (or up to one week) to give the flavors time to meld, and then break out your highball glasses. Reinforce the berbere flavor by rimming the glasses with more of the spice blend plus a little salt. Rubbing a lime wedge around the rim of each glass will ensure that the seasoned salt sticks. Fill the glasses with ice, add the mix and vodka, and you’re done—well, not quite. To have a little fun with this cocktail, make sure to add a garnish or two. Take your pick, from a simple lime wedge to candied bacon.

## ● BERBERE-SPICED BLOODY MARY MIX

Makes 32 ounces Total Time: 15 minutes, plus 2 hours chilling

Berberere is a warmly aromatic and highly flavorful Ethiopian and Eritrean spice blend. If you can’t find it, you can substitute Old Bay, jerk seasoning, or garam masala, but the flavor profile of your drinks won’t be the same. The type of horseradish you choose can greatly impact your cocktail; we suggest using a good-quality refrigerated prepared horseradish such as Woeber’s Pure Horseradish. Passata is an uncooked tomato puree usually found near the other tomato products in the grocery store.

- 1 (24-ounce) jar passata
- ½ cup cold water
- ½ cup dill pickle juice
- ¼ cup prepared horseradish
- 2½ tablespoons lime juice (2 limes)
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1½ teaspoons pepper
- 1 teaspoon berbere

Whisk all ingredients in pitcher until combined. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 2 hours. (Mix can be refrigerated for up to 1 week.)

## ● BERBERE-SPICED BLOODY MARYS

Makes 4 cocktails

Combine 1 tablespoon kosher salt and 1½ teaspoons berbere on small plate and spread into even layer. Moisten rims of 4 chilled highball glasses with lime wedge. Roll moistened rims in salt mixture to coat. Fill glasses with ice. Add 8 ounces Bloody Mary mix and 1½ ounces vodka to each glass and stir to combine. Garnish as desired and serve.

## GARNISHES

### SKEWER 1:

Cocktail shrimp and cherry tomatoes

For our recipe for Shrimp Cocktail, go to [CooksCountry.com/sc](https://www.cookscountry.com/sc).

### SKEWER 2:

Bocconcini and pepperoncini

### SKEWER 3:

Cubes of Genoa salami and white cheddar cheese

### SKEWER 4:

Jarred oil-packed artichoke hearts, pitted Cerignola olives, and pickled cocktail onions

## WANT TO TRY A MICHELADA?

Combine 6 ounces of Mexican beer and 4 ounces of our Berbere-Spiced Bloody Mary Mix in a chilled glass with a salted, spiced rim.

## Origins of the Bloody Mary

What do an unflattering nickname for Queen Mary I, a legendary ghost revealed in a mirror, and a popular brunch-time cocktail have in common? They all share an ominous name: Bloody Mary. It’s likely that the beverage got its name from the queen or the ghost, but its origins are, like those of many foodstuffs, disputed. Some say that Fernand “Pete” Petiot, a bartender at New York Bar (later The Harry’s Bar) in Paris in the 1920s, created a basic version of the drink by mixing vodka and tomato juice. In 1934, at the St. Regis hotel in New York, Petiot is said to have added citrus and spices, creating something more in line with the Bloody Mary we know today. Meanwhile, others attribute the cocktail to comedian George Jessel, who claimed in his autobiography, *The World I Lived In* (1975), to have developed the drink in 1927 in Palm Beach, Florida. Jessel’s story goes that he mixed vodka, tomato juice, and spices early one morning and shared it with a friend as a hangover cure.

# Does It Matter Which Brand of Garlic Powder You Buy?

We tasted nine garlic powders. Here's what to know about this versatile seasoning.

by Carolyn Grillo



**W**E LOVE GARLIC in all its forms, including garlic powder, which we view as its own ingredient rather than as an alternative to fresh garlic. In recipes where it's the only source of garlic, garlic powder adds sweet, warm flavor without the piquant tingle and punch of fresh garlic. In some recipes, we also like using garlic powder in conjunction with fresh garlic. (See “When We Use Garlic Powder” for more information about how best to use this powdered form of garlic.)

Garlic powder likely developed out of a centuries-old tradition of drying garlic for preservation. Native to central Asia, garlic is now grown all over the world. In commercial garlic powder production, garlic bulbs are separated into cloves and the cloves are peeled. Some manufacturers crush or slice the cloves before dehydrating them, while others leave them whole. The dehydrated garlic is then ground either to

a fine powder or into slightly larger pieces for granulated garlic. While garlic powder and granulated garlic are often used interchangeably in recipes, we focused on garlic powder for this tasting because more brands offer it. We purchased nine, including some mail-order products, and tried them in two recipes: Chive Sour Cream, which calls for garlic powder, and Really Good Garlic Bread, which calls for fresh garlic and garlic powder.

## Tasting Garlic Powder

Whenever we use garlic powder—whether it's in a barbecue sauce, the breading for fried chicken, or a spice rub—we often use only a small amount and combine it with other flavorful spices. Before holding our two tastings with a broader panel, we fine-tuned the measurements of garlic powder in the dip and garlic bread. In both, the flavor of the garlic powder was very subtle. To help

our tasters home in on each garlic powder's flavor, we increased the amounts in both recipes and cut back or eliminated other bold ingredients such as onion powder.

Even with these adjustments, many tasters had a hard time telling the samples apart. One product stood out slightly: Tasters liked that it was “on the sharper side.” While a few garlic powders were especially “sweet” or “floral,” our tasters mostly noticed slight variations in strength: Some were mellow, while others were a bit punchier. Tasters liked the mail-order products, but they were no more nuanced or powerful than the super-market samples in our lineup.

## All Brands Shone Brightly

The great news is that every garlic powder in our lineup delivered warm, nutty, spicy-sweet garlic flavor, and we recommend all of them. Our tasters did note a slight preference for the “punchy, spicy, and sweet” flavor of Morton & Bassett Garlic Powder. The garlic bread made with it was “really delicious” and had “lots of garlic flavor.” If you see Morton & Bassett Garlic Powder in the store, we suggest picking it up. However, we're confident that you'll be happy with every other product we tasted, too.

## When We Use Garlic Powder

Garlic powder is more than just a shortcut or an alternative to fresh garlic. Here's when we use it.



- When we want garlic flavor to distribute evenly in spice blends and dry rubs so that it sticks to and coats meat evenly
- When the intense heat and punch of fresh garlic could distract from other flavors in a dish (garlic powder provides more subtle garlic flavor)
- When garlic might not be consumed right away (in a make-ahead dip, for example), because chopped raw garlic continues to develop intensity as it sits, while garlic powder contributes the same intensity of flavor over time
- In conjunction with fresh garlic when we want extra depth and complexity, such as in garlic bread

## Wake Up That Garlic

When using garlic powder in a wet application, mixing it with water before adding it to the rest of the ingredients “wakes up” the garlic compounds and initiates the same reactions that occur when a fresh clove of garlic is crushed or cut, intensifying its flavor. We suggest using equal amounts of water and garlic powder.



Web subscribers can see the full tasting results and complete chart at [CooksCountry.com/mar22](https://www.cookscountry.com/mar22).

# Looking for a Lighter Dutch Oven

Our favorite Dutch ovens are great—but heavy. Could we find a good lightweight option? **by Chase Brightwell**

**T**HE BEST CAST-IRON Dutch ovens do it all, but they're too heavy for some cooks. We tested lighter-weight options to find an alternative that was versatile and dependable and could fully replace a cast-iron Dutch oven, performing all sorts of functions such as frying, braising, baking, searing, and making soups and stews.

## What to Look For

Certain factors set some lightweight pots apart from others. First, size. Our favorites were large enough for deep frying or preparing large batches of soups, stews, or braises. We think a capacity from 6 to 7 quarts is good for an all-purpose model.

Next, materials. The best pots were stainless-steel “tri-ply,” which means that they're made with three layers of metal: a highly conductive aluminum core sandwiched between layers of durable stainless steel. They're also fully clad, so these three layers run through every part of the pot, from the bottom to the rim. These pots heated up fast, retained heat well, and distributed heat evenly, making for a great sear. In addition, their light-metal interiors let us monitor browning easily.

Finally, we focused on design elements: Large, sturdy handles that stuck out allowed us to hold on to the pots securely when we maneuvered them into or out of the oven. We also liked pots with 9-inch-wide or larger cooking surfaces, which allowed us to brown meat in fewer batches and in less time. And we preferred pots with straight sides that provided a clear distinction between the walls and the cooking surface, thus maximizing cooking space.



## The Bottom Line

Unfortunately, none of the lightweight pots had the excellent heat retention of a cast-iron Dutch oven, which is essential for baking bread. But in the end, we found two stainless-steel pots that performed well: We recommend the All-Clad D3 Stainless Stockpot with Lid, 6 Quart for its even heat distribution; wide cooking surface; comparatively low sides; large, sturdy handles; and durability. We also liked our Best Buy, the Tramontina 6 Qt Tri-Ply Clad Stainless Steel Covered Sauce Pot, for similar reasons, though it does have a slightly smaller cooking surface.



## Lightweight versus Classic: Which Pot Is Best for You?

Our favorite lightweight and cast-iron Dutch ovens are both excellent performers, but which one you choose depends on a few factors.

	 <b>Winning Lightweight Dutch Oven:</b> All-Clad D3 Stainless Stockpot with Lid, 6 Quart	 <b>Winning Classic Dutch Oven:</b> Le Creuset 7 1/4 Quart Round Dutch Oven
<b>CAPACITY</b>	6 quarts	7.25 quarts
<b>MATERIALS</b>	Stainless steel with aluminum core	Enameled cast iron
<b>WEIGHT</b>	<b>5.1 pounds</b>	<b>13.7 pounds</b>
<b>WHAT DOES IT DO BEST?</b>	Searing, braising, making soups and stews	Deep frying, baking bread, searing, braising, making soups and stews

## Can you bake bread in a lightweight Dutch oven?

Dutch ovens made with cast iron retain heat very well and radiate it throughout their interiors, which allows for even browning. They also trap steam, aiding crust formation. We baked Almost No-Knead Bread in our lightweight winner, and we got an underbrowned, but still tasty, loaf. Nothing replaces cast iron for baking a crusty loaf of bread, so if you're looking for a Dutch oven for regular bread baking, we still think cast iron is the way to go.



## OUR TOP LIGHTWEIGHT PICKS



**Winner**

**All-Clad D3 Stainless Stockpot with Lid, 6 Quart**

**Model:** 8701004424  
**Price:** \$294.99  
 This reliable pot's fully clad construction ensured stellar heat retention and distribution, helping it sear meat efficiently and evenly. Its large, easy-to-grip handles and low, straight sides allowed us to maneuver and reach down into the pot with ease.



**Best Buy**

**Tramontina 6 Qt Tri-Ply Clad Stainless Steel Covered Sauce Pot**

**Model:** 80116/040DS  
**Price:** \$119.95  
 Our Best Buy lightweight Dutch oven's tri-ply design radiated and distributed heat evenly. We also liked its large, secure handles and tight-fitting lid. But its cooking surface is 2 inches smaller than that of our winner, so it took more batches (and more time) to sear food.

Web subscribers can see the complete results chart at [CooksCountry.com/mar22](https://www.cookscountry.com/mar22).



# Spicy Candied Bacon

by *Lawman Johnson*

## ● SPICY CANDIED BACON

Serves 4 to 6

Total Time: 50 minutes

Do not use dark brown sugar here. We call for center-cut bacon because we found the strips to be of more even thickness than regular bacon. Lining the sheet with aluminum foil eases cleanup. We suggest serving this bacon with our Berbere-Spiced Bloody Marys (page 29).

- 6 slices center-cut bacon**
- 2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- Pinch cayenne pepper**

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Cut bacon in half crosswise. Arrange bacon on prepared sheet.
- 2.** Combine sugar, pepper, pepper flakes, and cayenne in bowl. Sprinkle sugar mixture evenly over bacon (do not flip and sprinkle on second side). Use your fingers to spread sugar mixture evenly over each piece.
- 3.** Bake until bacon is dark brown and sugar is bubbling, 20 to 25 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Transfer bacon to wire rack and let cool for 5 minutes. Serve.

## COMING NEXT ISSUE

In our April/May issue, we're embracing spring with **Sautéed Radishes**, **Asparagus, Leek, and Goat Cheese Quiche**, and **Mixed Berry Rosé Sangria**. All are perfect for a light brunch, but if you're looking for something more substantial, check out our **Brunch Burgers**: beef-sausage patties topped with eggs, cheese, and bacon. This issue is also packed with desserts, including **Coconut Macarons with Chocolate Chips and Almonds** and **Strawberry Sorbet**.



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DT=Dinner Tonight



## FIND THE ROOSTER!

We've hidden a tiny version of the rooster above in a photo in the pages of this issue. Tell us where you think the rooster is hiding, and we'll enter you in a random drawing. The first correct entry drawn will win a copy of *The Complete Cook's Country TV Show Cookbook*, and each of the next five will receive a free one-year subscription to our website. To enter, go to [CooksCountry.com/rooster](http://CooksCountry.com/rooster) and fill out the submission form. All entries must be received by February 28, 2022. Sydney McGuire of Hayward, California, found the rooster in the October/November 2021 issue on page 20.

## WEB EXTRAS

Free for four months online at [CooksCountry.com](http://CooksCountry.com)

Milk Chocolate No-Churn Ice Cream  
Shrimp and Grits  
Shrimp Cocktail  
Vanilla No-Churn Ice Cream



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# COOK'S CLOSE-UP

PHOTO BY STEVE KLISE

*A simple portrait of an American cook.  
Are you ready for your close-up?*



## **GOCHA LOMIDZE**

Toné Cafe,  
Brooklyn, New York

Read our full  
On the Road article from  
Brighton Beach at  
[CooksCountry.com/  
otrbb](https://CooksCountry.com/otrbb).



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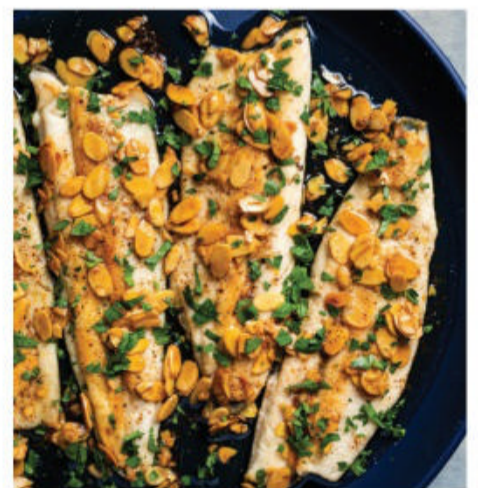
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DT Vidalia Onion Pie



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