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How to Be a Better Baker

Rise to the
challenge!

bon appétit

Sticky-Sweet
Date Buns

P. 63



Yes, you need
an oven
thermometer

P. 50



Ice 'em while
they're hot



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way to
measure flour

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YOU GET TO EAT IT.

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Cinnamon-Date Sticky Buns (for recipe, see p.63). Photograph by Laura Murray. Food styling by Susan Spungen.

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April

●
AFTERNOON TEA
HAS NEVER BEEN
THIS COOL.

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Basil Hayden®



*Because I don't believe a *houseplant* really warms a house.



BRING SOMETHING MORE TO THE TABLE

bon appétit

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Editor's Letter



They're Here for You

► **WHEN I ASKED SARAH JAMPEL** why she was testing her salty buckwheat chocolate chunk cookies for what seemed to me like the 97th time, she started going on about the absence of gluten in buckwheat flour. She jotted down notes in her tiny, meticulous handwriting while explaining that the half cup of buckwheat flour called for in the recipe balances the one cup of all-purpose flour and how it was imperative that we get the ratio just right.

Sarah is the editor of Basically, our learning-to-cook online vertical (eatbasically.com). And this month Basically takes center stage in the magazine with its Guide to Better Baking (page 48). Much of the success of the 16-page package can be traced back to Sarah's obsessive nature, but that would be ignoring the fastidious habits of her Basically teammates, Sohla El-Waylly and Molly Baz. One kitchen island over from Sarah, Sohla spent a

recent afternoon baking her cardamom carrot cake for, literally, the 11th time. She was striving to achieve a mirror-like glaze on her cake, as opposed to the candy corn-orange candle wax that her previous testing yielded.

It is this patient, compulsive attention to detail that I don't possess—at least not as a home cook. I like to think that, you know, I don't need recipes, that I can cook by feel. Of course, when you're running a site like Basically, cooking by feel isn't an option. If the recipes don't work, the site doesn't work.

And if, for some odd reason, a recipe isn't working, Sarah will do all she can to right a possible wrong. Like spending six hours a few Sundays ago fielding questions on our Basically Baking Forum (basicallybaking.bonappetit.com). Baking acolytes from all over the world peppered Sarah with queries:

@Krispy

1 ❤

Hi Sarah,
I'm in Australia and butter is sold as 500gm blocks here. Are you able to advise how many grams a stick of butter is please? My other question is about buckwheat. Is wholemeal flour the equivalent in Aus? Kind Regards,
Krispy

@Sarah_Jampel Staff

1 ❤

Hi Krispy!
1 stick of butter in the U.S. weighs 113 grams! Buckwheat flour isn't the same as whole wheat flour because it's gluten-free and grain-free, made from dried and ground buckwheat groats. BUT if you can't find buckwheat flour, I think that rye flour or spelt flour would be the best substitutes. Does that help?!

Okay, now imagine that same exchange roughly 62 more times—all in one day. Do that and you'll get a sense of what Basically is all about. A site that not only pops with snappy headlines, a conversational recipe tone, and crisp, gorgeous imagery, but also has recipes that work each and every time. You know, after they've been tested again and again and again. And again.

ADAM RAPOPORT
editor in chief
@rapoport on instagram

it could
only
happen
here



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SPRING'S BEST
NEW COOKBOOKS

p. 24

Home

Recipes, Essential Goods, and Test Kitchen Know-How



WE'RE ALL OVER
THIS ASPARAGUS

p. 28



Steel dustpan and
broom set, \$17;
worldmarket.com

Good Clean Fun

We asked
BA's resident neat
freaks for the
better-for-the-
earth products and
tools they depend
on to keep their
kitchens sparkling

DUST BUSTER

"As a designer
I need everything
in my life to
be aesthetically
pleasing—all
the way down
to this cheery
steel dustpan."

Christa Guerra
Art Director



ILLUSTRATIONS BY LIANA JEGERS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LAURA MURRAY

APRIL 2020 - 11



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— The Buy



BRUSH UP

"My ever-growing collection of chic reusable water bottles demands a cute bottle brush like this silicone one by Holikme (from \$7; amazon.com) that's safe for both metal and glass bottles."

Christina Chaey
Associate Editor



ALL-PURPOSE WITH PURPOSE

"Blueland's minimalist Forever bottle (\$12; blueland.com) means I'll never have to buy another cleaning product in a single-use plastic bottle. Fill it with water, plop in a \$2 dissolvable tablet of super-powered surface cleaner, and go."

Emily Schultz
Social Media Manager



THE UN-PAPER TOWEL

"I haven't used paper towels in almost two years. Instead, I keep a stack of dish towels or reusable sponge cloths (\$6; tenandco.ca) within sight and hide my one backup roll of compostable paper towels in a drawer."

Gaby Melian
Test Kitchen Manager

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Family Meal

The easiest steamed fish, spicy meatballs, and more spring recipes to cook this month

A layer of cabbage and mushrooms acts as a barrier between the fish and the pot (no steamer basket required).

You can make this in a large saucepan, Dutch oven, or donabe, a Japanese clay pot.

➔ **A FEW YEARS AGO** I made the game-changing decision to start buying fish not according to the recipes I'd bookmarked but based on what looked best at the market. These days I almost never know whether I'll end up with salmon or black bass or halibut on any given night, but I always know how I'm going to cook it: by steaming, a back-pocket technique that works with any fish. No method does a better job of letting the delicate flavor of the fish itself really shine. The recipe on page 18 features a flavorful soy-ginger broth that creates a little steam-room environment in the pot, resulting in a rich and flaky, never-dry fish. Call it my version of spa food. —CHRISTINA CHAEY

Room&Board

roomandboard.com



Piri-Piri Meatballs

This vibrant and spicy blender sauce livens up everything from quick meatballs to chicken and shrimp. Our riff uses more widely available Fresno chiles to add heat

RECIPE BY MOLLY BAZ

4 SERVINGS

- 1 red Fresno chile, seeds removed
- 3 garlic cloves, 1 whole, 2 finely grated
- ½ cup roasted red peppers from a jar, drained
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 4 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for drizzling

- 2¾ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided
- 1½ tsp. smoked paprika, divided
- ⅔ cup panko (Japanese breadcrumbs)
- 1 large egg
- ¾ tsp. ground cumin
- 1 lb. ground beef (20% fat)
- ¾ cup whole-milk Greek yogurt

► **1.** Purée chile, whole garlic clove, red peppers, vinegar, 3 Tbsp. oil, 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt, and 1 tsp. paprika in a blender until very smooth. Transfer piri-piri sauce to a small bowl.

2. Place a rack in upper third of oven; preheat to 450°. Using a fork, mix panko, 2 Tbsp. piri-piri sauce, and 1 Tbsp. water in a medium bowl. Add egg and mash with fork until homogenous, about 1 minute. Let sit until panko is softened, about 3 minutes.

3. Add finely grated garlic, cumin, 1 Tbsp. oil, 1¼ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, and remaining ½ tsp. paprika to panko mixture and mix well. Add about one-third of beef and gently work into panko mixture with your hands until well incorporated and it no longer feels wet. Add remaining beef and gently mix until evenly dispersed. Form into twelve 2"-diameter balls and space out evenly on a foil-lined rimmed baking sheet.

4. Bake meatballs 5 minutes, then turn on broiler (you can leave the meatballs in the oven while the broiler heats up). Broil until golden brown on top and just barely cooked through, about 5 minutes.

5. Spread yogurt onto plates and arrange meatballs on top. Drizzle with remaining piri-piri sauce and more oil.

DO AHEAD: Sauce can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill.



Each of the recipes in this section:

- Takes under 1 hour
-
- Has 10 ingredients or fewer (not including salt, pepper, and one cooking fat)
-
- Requires no special gadgets or appliances

Whether you swoosh, dollop, or swipe, yogurt is a must.

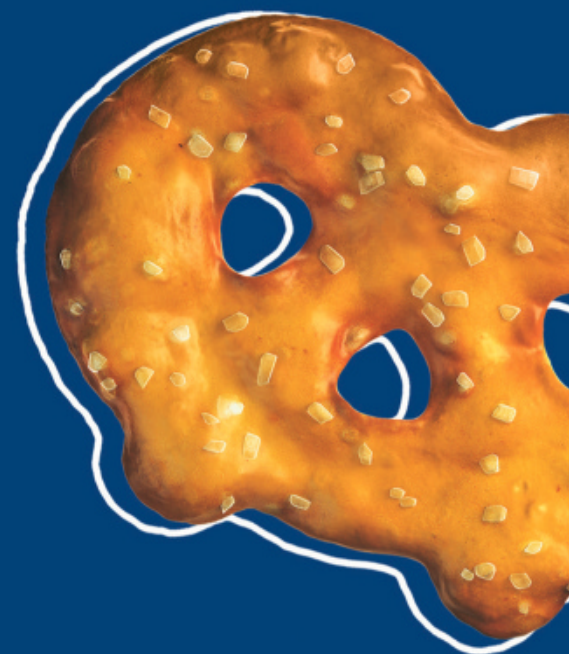
IT'S LIKE A
DELICIOUS
PRETZEL
BUT 2D

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DIP OR
NO DIP

THEY'RE
FLAT
OUT
DELICIOUS



FIND US IN THE DELI



Soy and Ginger Steamed Fish

This method is endlessly adaptable: Swap the black bass for salmon; use spinach instead of cabbage. Don't like mushrooms? Skip 'em!

RECIPE BY CHRISTINA CHAEY

4 SERVINGS

- 2 6–8-oz. skinless black bass fillets
- Kosher salt
- 1 4x3" piece dried kombu (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. sake or dry white wine
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. mirin
- ½ medium head of Napa cabbage, stems thinly sliced, leaves torn
- 4 oz. mixed mushrooms (such as shiitake, oyster, beech, and/or maitake), torn into pieces
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled, cut into thin matchsticks
- Cooked rice (for serving)
- 1 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced on a diagonal



► **1.** Slice each fillet into 3 pieces; season all over with salt. Set aside.

2. Combine kombu (if using), sake, soy sauce, mirin, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water in a medium donabe or Dutch oven or large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Layer cabbage stems, then leaves in pot. Scatter mushrooms and ginger over and place reserved fish on top. Cover pot and cook until fish is opaque and just cooked through, 8–10 minutes.

3. Spoon some rice into bowls and top with vegetables and fish, dividing evenly; ladle broth over. Drizzle with sesame oil and top with scallions.

Dried kombu is worth seeking out—it adds complexity to the simple broth.



MAKING THE
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FOR OVER
100 YEARS



ON THE SIDE OF REAL FOOD

Spring Chicken Dinner Salad

Poaching skinless, boneless chicken breasts in well-salted water yields impossibly juicy and flavorful meat that won't dry out

RECIPE BY KAT BOYTSOVA

4 SERVINGS

- 2 large skinless, boneless chicken breasts (about 1 ¼ lb. total)
- 3 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 3 ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 1 lemon, halved
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper

- 8 oz. green beans, trimmed
- 1 large head of Bibb lettuce
- 1 small bunch chives, sliced into 2"-long pieces
- 1 cup basil leaves
- 1 bunch radishes, trimmed, halved, cut into wedges if large
- 1 cup torn peperoncini
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced

► **1.** Place chicken in a large saucepan and pour in 4 cups cold water to cover; add 3 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 3 ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Bring to a gentle boil over medium heat, then immediately turn over chicken with tongs. Cover pot, remove from heat, and let chicken sit until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers 150°, 5–10 minutes (depending on thickness of breast). Transfer chicken to a cutting board and let rest 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, squeeze lemon halves into a medium bowl. Whisk in mustard, then gradually stream in oil, whisking constantly until dressing is thick and emulsified. Season with salt and pepper.

3. Using a rolling pin, whack green beans on a cutting board until skins split and insides are softened but not pulverized.

4. Transfer beans to a medium bowl and drizzle in 2 Tbsp. dressing. Massage beans with your hands to break down further and coat; season with salt.

5. Separate lettuce leaves; toss in another medium bowl with chives and basil. Arrange on a platter.

6. Toss radishes, peperoncini, and 1 Tbsp. dressing in the same bowl; season with salt. Slice chicken ¼"–½" thick; season with pepper. Arrange chicken, radish salad, green beans, and avocado on platter with lettuce as desired. Drizzle with more dressing; serve remaining dressing alongside.

Need an even quicker dinner? Pick up a rotisserie chicken.



Miso Polenta With Spring Vegetables

We skipped the milk, butter, and cheese in this polenta; a spoonful of savory miso adds tons of depth while still keeping the texture light

RECIPE BY CHRIS MOROCCO

4 SERVINGS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup polenta (not quick-cooking)
- 2 Tbsp. white miso
- Kosher salt
- 1 bunch spring onions or scallions
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ 14-oz. block firm tofu, drained, patted dry, torn into bite-size pieces

- 4 oz. shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, caps sliced if large
- 3 garlic cloves
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shelled fresh peas (from about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. pods) or frozen peas, thawed
- 8 oz. sugar snap peas, strings removed
- 2 Tbsp. black bean garlic sauce
- Toasted sesame seeds (for serving)

► **1.** Bring 3 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add polenta and miso and whisk vigorously to incorporate. Bring to a simmer and cook, whisking often in the beginning and less often as mixture thickens, until polenta is tender, 30–35 minutes. Season with salt. Keep warm over low heat until ready to serve.

2. Meanwhile, cut dark green tops from spring onions and thinly slice; set aside for serving. Cut white and pale green parts into 3" pieces, halving lengthwise if thick; set aside. Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Cook tofu, tossing occasionally, until browned and crisp around the edges, about 5 minutes. Season lightly with salt and transfer to a plate.

3. Heat remaining 1 Tbsp. oil in same skillet and cook mushrooms, tossing occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and reserved white and pale green parts of spring onions and cook, tossing often, until softened, about 3 minutes. Add both peas; cook, tossing occasionally, until bright green and beginning to soften, about 3 minutes. Add black bean sauce and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring once or twice, until vegetables are crisp-tender and liquid is reduced by half, about 3 minutes.

4. Transfer polenta to a platter. Top with tofu and vegetables. Spoon sauce over and top with sesame seeds and reserved spring onion tops.

Asparagus or favas would be welcome to crash this party too.



Which New Cookbook Is Calling Your Name?

Take this quiz to find out which of the season's best titles is your kitchen soul mate

by ALEX BEGGS

START

How much do you love beans?

They're fine

MUCH. VERY. A LOT.



THE BEAN BIBLE YOU NEED

Joe Yonan's fun-loving, very comprehensive **Cool Beans** (February; \$20) will leave you smarter and unexpectedly psyched to bake a white bean Bundt cake. Bonus: All the recipes are vegetarian!

ARE YOU EVEN GONNA COOK FROM THIS BOOK?

Uh...well

Duh

WHAT'S IN YOUR FRIDGE?

So many condiments

A juicy pét-nat



PAIRS WELL WITH ORANGE WINE

If cool is contagious, we want to catch it from **La Buvette** (July; \$25), the famously chic Parisian wine bar that serves simple but snazzy bar snacks. Sardines and seaweed butter, anyone?

TAHINI MAKES EVERYTHING BETTER

Agree

Disagree

PICK A PO'BOY

Oyster mushroom

Fried shrimp



CAJUN CALLING

Chef Melissa M. Martin of **Mosquito Supper Club** (April; \$35) takes us to the now-vanishing bayou where she grew up in Louisiana. Come for the crawfish, stay for the evocative essays on Cajun culture.

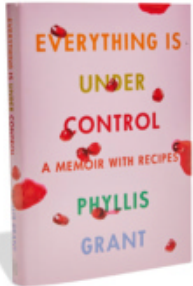
MUCH ADO ABOUT VEGGIES

Bryant Terry's **Vegetable Kingdom** (February; \$20) serves flavor-blasted Afro-Asian-Southern-Caribbean vegan fare (Jerk tofu! Lacto-fermented beets!) and playlists in a bumpin' party of a cookbook.



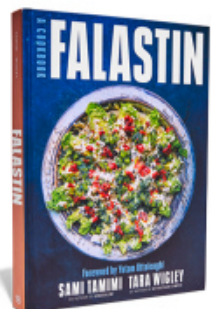
PANKO-CRUSTED CAULIFLOWER IS FOR EVERYONE.

What if I'm not vegan?



FOR BOOK CLUB

In **Everything Is Under Control** (April; \$25), dancer turned chef Phyllis Grant shares a fast-paced, heart-smacking memoir about cooking and motherhood—with recipes.



A POSTCARD FROM PALESTINE

Ottolenghi BFF Sami Tamimi and Tara Wigley's **Falastin** (April; \$35) takes us on an engrossing journey to Palestine with lush photographs, impressive reporting, and colorful dinner-friendly recipes. Plus tahini buns.



... Anything but basic



Traveling Shoes and the Secret to Better Brews

Every little thing contributing writer **Priya Krishna** loves right now



Take Them in Stride

I've been raving about this pair of **Sabah shoes** (\$195; shop.sabah.am) made by Turkish leather artisans ever since my sister introduced me to them. I've worn them to trek through Delhi and Berlin and to shoot videos in the test kitchen—they're that versatile.



Pen Pals

I love sending handwritten notes, and these illustrated **Pyarful greeting cards** (from \$5; pyarful.com) are cute and cheeky! The puns are geared to South Asian culture ("Paneer or Far, You're Always in My Heart"), but they're universally lovable.



The Bold Lip

I wear a lot of lipstick, and **MAC's Frost Lipstick in Fresh Moroccan** (\$19; maccosmetics.com) is hands down my favorite. It's a deep pop of red with a subtle shimmer that stays on *alllll* day and looks particularly awesome on darker skin tones.



Watch me cook through my go-to recipes at [youtube.com/bonappetit](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbonappetit)



The Ideal Hot Pot

Chef Reem Assil introduced me to this **HIC Turkish coffee warmer** (\$20; walmart.com), which, ironically, I don't use for coffee. It's sturdy and perfectly sized for tempering spices in oil or boiling several eggs. It also has a convenient spout for pouring.



Sour Power

Without **MTR Spiced Chutney Powder** (\$15 for pack of two; amazon.com), my pantry would be incomplete. Mix it with melted ghee for a spicy-tangy condiment to pour on everything from roasted sweet potatoes and rice to dosas and idlis.



Chai Time

My mother has never made her chai with any brand but **Tetley Classic black tea** (\$4 for 100 tea bags; instacart.com), and now neither do I. It's smooth, fruity, and just intense enough, and it pairs well with aromatic chai spices like cardamom.

**YOU CAN'T EAT THAT.
BUT YOUR HAIR CAN.**





Some Don't Like It Hot

But with this Sichuan-inspired stir-fry, **Deb Perelman** makes it work

► **MY HUSBAND AND I** have a joke about how much he likes my cooking. “This is delicious!” he’ll say as he shakes a bottle of Sriracha all over the soup/tacos/omelet/spaghetti I’ve made. I’ve learned not to take it personally, and in fact I’ve joined him, finding that my own spice tolerance has slowly crept up from virtually nonexistent to “Who finished the chili crisp again?!”

Then there are the other two people in our family: the Picky Contingent. The older one, never wanting to miss out on the fun, asks for a microscopic dot of hot sauce on his plate at dinner and then immediately washes it down with half a glass of water. Still, this is progress. The four-year-old, also known as the one who recently requested “pasta with nothing on it and nothing near it,” would prefer not even a speck of black pepper in her food. This, of course, poses a challenge to the way I like my food: seasoned to the point where you might actually taste it, no matter how radical this sounds.

What’s a cook who refuses to make multiple versions of the same meal to do? The first time I make something, like this asparagus stir-fry that’s loosely inspired by my love for Sichuan dry-fried green beans, I go easy on the heat. Mostly I’m just trying to get everyone to the table. Then, once I’ve (hopefully) convinced everyone that they like this dish—blistered yet snappy asparagus and crispy pork in a robust sauce, how could they not?—I might sneak in an extra spoonful of chili crisp next time, hoping the slight shift won’t be too detectable. We may never get to a place where my husband doesn’t need to “adjust” his plate with hot sauce, but it’s nice to be heading in the right direction.



Pork and Asparagus Stir-Fry

4 SERVINGS We jump on asparagus the second we see it at the market this time of year, but green beans, snap peas, or any other crisp green spring vegetable would also be great here.

- 3 tsp. peanut or vegetable oil, divided
- 2 lb. asparagus, trimmed, cut on a diagonal into 1"–2" pieces
- Kosher salt
- 8 oz. ground pork
- 6 scallions, white and pale green parts only, finely chopped
- 5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. Shaoxing wine (Chinese rice wine) or medium-dry sherry
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- Cooked rice and store-bought chili crisp (for serving)



Heat 1 tsp. peanut oil in a large skillet over high. Once pan is hot (oil will be lightly smoking), add half of asparagus and a couple pinches of salt and cook, tossing only once or twice so the pieces have a chance to blister, until crisp-tender and lightly browned, about 4 minutes. Transfer asparagus to a plate. Add 1 tsp. peanut oil to skillet (no need to wipe it out) and repeat process with remaining asparagus.

Reduce heat to medium-high; add remaining 1 tsp. peanut oil to skillet, then add pork, spreading out into an even layer. Season with a couple pinches of salt and cook, undisturbed, until meat begins to brown underneath, about 2 minutes. Break up meat with a wooden spoon and add scallions, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring, until pork is crisp and mixture is very fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add wine and soy sauce and return asparagus to skillet. Cook, turning to coat with pork mixture, until heated through, about 1 minute.

Transfer stir-fry to a platter or large shallow bowl and drizzle with sesame oil. Serve with rice and chili crisp.

bon appétit

FOODCAST

EP. 180 **Peak Tomato**

EP. 159 **On Salt**

EP. 174 **It's All In the Vibe**

EP. 151 **Liquid Gold**

EP. 172 **The Ice Cream Man**

EP. 107 **Put an Egg on It**

EP. 130 **Acid Trip**

EP. 173 **Pizza, Pizza!**

EP. 161 **Rice 2.0**

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DAZZLE ALL YOUR SENSES

Enjoy plates full of flavor and meals full of memories at Kentucky's restaurants and state parks, where talented chefs and mixologists present longstanding flavors in exciting new ways. Settle in for a traditional supper featuring recipes passed down through generations, or score a table at a trendy new bistro serving up contemporary takes on the classics.

Now that you've sipped and sampled a taste of Kentucky, soak up the Bluegrass State's legendary bourbon culture with a tour and tasting at some of its most iconic distilleries. Stroll landscaped grounds, watch master distillers at work, hear fascinating stories, breathe in the "angel's share" and experience for yourself what makes Kentucky's signature spirit so special.

Afterward, check out the state's diverse music offerings at venues large and small – some in very unexpected places. Sure, this is the birthplace of bluegrass and a hotbed for country music, but a surprising symphony of other genres awaits. After exploring the state's bluegrass music attractions in Western Kentucky and the Country Music Highway in Eastern Kentucky, map a musical trail throughout the state to discover your new favorite sound.

Grab your family and friends to come gather around our table, toast good times and catch the next show. When it comes to experiencing Kentucky's top-notch food, bourbon and music, you won't just cherish the sights and sounds around you – but also the people by your side.



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19_227643





A THOROUGHLY
LAO RESTAURANT

p. 40

Away

Go here. Eat this. Drink that. Right this minute.

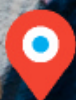


THE COOKIE THAT
HAS IT ALL

p. 42

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WHEN IN PHILLY

Springtime in South Philly means eating tacos, drinking Jarritos, and getting some sun at Tamalex.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
LIANA JEGERS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JILLIAN GUYETTE

APRIL 2020 - 33

South Philly

...where it's never been more diverse and delicious

by ALEX DELANY

► **LOCALS SAY THAT** South Philly is one of America's great dining neighborhoods. They're right. Over the past 30 years, the historically Italian, Black, and Irish area has become one of the city's most diverse neighborhoods. The Italian Market is home to some of the country's best tacos and tamales. Irish pubs are flanked by Indonesian and Thai neighbors slinging spicy soul-cleansing staples. Lebanese, Vietnamese, Black, Thai, Mexican, Italian, and Indonesian locals not only helm these spots but frequent them too—proving that they're truly neighborhood restaurants. And after hitting up these joints, you'll understand what South Philadelphians mean.



↑ The gang is all here at Tamalex: pambazo, pupusas, and tacos al pastor.

ESSENTIALS



The Hot Spots

- Tamalex
- Stargazy
- Bitar's
- Kalaya
- River Twice
- Café Diem
- John's Roast Pork
- Sky Cafe

When to Visit

You can't beat spring in the city.

Where to Stay

Airbnb is the move, but just north of the neighborhood is the beautiful **Deacon hotel.**

What to Bring Back

Center City
Pretzel Co. soft pretzels

The Latin American Mainstay

Two blocks east of the Italian Market—now a hub for fantastic Mexican grocers, butchers, and restaurants like Hot 10 alum South Philly Barbacoa—is one of the neighborhood's top Mexican joints, **Tamalex**. The Mexican-Honduran spot lights up on weekend mornings when chefs Alejandro Mondragon and David Piña serve thousands of steaming hot tamales. Show up early—they will sell out—or come through later for pambazos, huge sandwiches built on fried bread dipped in guajillo sauce and filled with sausage and potatoes or a fried chicken cutlet. Don't skip the bean pupusas, a simple reminder that pinto beans are enough to inspire pure joy.

The Savory Pie Expert

When was the last time you heard someone preach the British pie shop gospel? Well, here I go. Chef Sam Jacobson grew up in England before moving to Philly, cooking his way across the city, and ultimately opening **Stargazy**. Jacobson's pastry case is stacked with deeply savory pies (and some sweet ones), like the classic beef and onion or the Cornish pasty (upon request) served with fluffy mashed potatoes and traditional parsley liquor. But the grail is the sausage roll: ground pork seasoned with sage, nutmeg, allspice, ginger, and garlic and wrapped in a buttery laminated pastry dough. Based on extensive research, I can guarantee you that one sausage roll will not be enough.

The Middle Eastern Anchor

Ever since Elias and Mariette Bitar opened **Bitar's** nearly 50 years ago, the Middle Eastern grocery has been a pillar of the South Philadelphia scene, supplying folks with quarts of tabbouleh, tubs of tahini, and bags of pita. A few years back, when their sons took over, the grocery shifted into a full-service restaurant, and it's become even more of a neighborhood staple. Grab a corner table and order dolmas (herby rice wrapped in tender grape leaves), rich baba ghanoush, za'atar-seasoned olives, and the "owner's favorite sandwich" (thinly sliced lamb gyro, crispy falafel, and harissa mayo stuffed into a pita). One of the Bitar brothers will remind you to get it should you forget.

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↑ Som tum for the soul at Kalaya



↑ John's Roast Pork, a landmark in itself

The Hottest Thai Spot

Life seems boring after eating at **Kalaya**. Colors are duller. Smells that aren't chile or fish sauce aren't even worth inhaling. That's because the food at chef Nok Suntaranon's homey southern Thai restaurant is absolutely exhilarating. Her dishes—passed down from her mother and grandmother—bring an unapologetic spice-powered breath of fresh air. I'm talking about laab ped (spicy ground duck salad with chiles, fried shallots, and lime leaves), goong aob woon sen (baked shrimp with glass noodles and long hots, an ingredient South Philly Italians know and love), and rainbow-hued salads brimming with bright crunchy vegetables. It's BYOB, so bring a six-pack of something light and cold. You'll need it.

The Farm-to-Table Stunner

I usually roll my eyes at the phrase *New American cuisine* (the ultimate cliché). But I don't at **River Twice**, where New American translates to not only serving beautiful produce-driven dishes but supporting one of our country's great farming communities. Just west of Philly

lies Lancaster County, which has the most fertile nonirrigated (read naturally water efficient) farmland in the nation. Chef Randy Rucker highlights all those pristine ingredients on the constantly changing menu: raw bay scallops topped with fermented beech mushrooms and umami-laden sunchoke miso, Pennsylvania lettuces tossed with tangy grape vinegar and horseradish, and an off-menu smash burger that just might be the city's best.

The Vietnamese Soup Star

The bun bo Hue—spicy beef soup with rice noodles, basil, bean sprouts, and lime wedges—at **Café Diem** is the stuff of legend in Little Saigon. This vibrant neighborhood within South Philly is filled with Vietnamese bakeries, banh mi shops, and pho counters, but this tiny family-run noodle shop is always packed for a reason: that bun bo Hue. The broth is loud with herbal lemongrass, assertive chiles, and funky shrimp paste. But there are quieter soups too, like pho ga (chicken-based pho) or hu tieu (thin rice noodles with shrimp and pork in a savory pork-and-dried-squid broth).



5 EXCELLENT NEIGHBORHOOD BARS

Fountain Porter

Regional beers, a killer record collection, and the finest \$5 cheeseburger around.

Le Caveau

A dark, moody spot pouring affordable French natural wine.

Ray's Happy Birthday Bar

A beer. And a shot. And a cigarette in the bar. Happy birthday!

Royal Izakaya

The Japanese whisky and sake lists are outdone only by karaage chicken wings.

McCusker's Tavern

Cold beer close to the stadiums—this is not the place to trash-talk the Birds.

The Sandwich Artist

Ask a tourist what Philadelphia's best sandwich is and they'll say cheesesteak. Ask an Italian from South Philly and they'll say Italian roast pork. Ask me and I'll clarify—**John's Roast Pork**. Its namesake has been made the same way for the past 90 years: by rubbing hardy herbs, salt, garlic, and pepper all over pork shoulder and then roasting, refrigerating, skinning, slicing, and throwing it into fatty pork jus. The meat comes piled on a sesame hoagie roll (only Carangi's) with garlicky spinach, sharp provolone, and more jus.

The Indonesian Icon

If you're not eating at a strip mall off Washington Avenue, you'd better turn around and do it again. And while you're at it, make your destination **Sky Cafe**. Chef Lily Tjia brings traditional Indonesian dishes you'll want to order aggressively: luscious house-made pork sausage wrapped in crispy soy skin, lontong sayur (rice cakes with vegetable curry, spicy eggs, and beef rendang, coconut-milk-braised beef), and stinky beans (known as sator beans) that, yes, live up to their name.

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More Porridge, Please

When it’s supposed to be spring but the weather says otherwise, it must be porridge season.

Restaurants across the country are delivering on our comfort craving, from thick Cantonese-style congee with tender shredded chicken to stone-fruit-streaked bowls of soft grains that taste more like dessert. Not to get mushy, but we’ve fallen hard for, well, mush.

by JESSE SPARKS



FOLK
Detroit

Slow-cooked ginger-and-garlic rice grits congee with braised pork belly



THE ANCHORAGE
Greenville, SC

Carolina Gold rice congee with rock shrimp, XO sauce, and charred broccoli



PEPPERVINE
Charlotte, NC

Sichuan pork belly kimchi porridge with chopped scallions



PORRIDGE + PUFFS
Los Angeles

Soy-braised chicken-and-mushroom porridge with fried shallots and a soft-boiled egg



LUCINDA GRAIN BAR
Seattle

Steel-cut oats and red quinoa porridge with pepita brittle, plum purée, and oat ice cream



MADAME VO BBQ
New York City

Braised oxtail congee with honey butter, fish sauce, and scallions



BREWERY BHAVANA
Raleigh, NC

Chicken congee with cilantro, chili oil, and an egg hiding under a mound of fried garlic



CONGEE & ME
Boston

Rice congee with smoked tofu, everything-spice furikake, scallion oil, and a lazy egg



PETRA AND THE BEAST
Dallas

Rolled-oats porridge terrine with pork, shiitake mushrooms, and herby aspic jelly

PHOTOGRAPHS: EMILY BERGER (FOLK); WILLIAM CROOKS (THE ANCHORAGE); ASHLEY LESTER (PEPPERVINE); BRANDON HARMAN (PORRIDGE + PUFFS); CHARITY BURGRAAF (LUCINDA GRAIN BAR); LAURA MURRAY (MADAME VO BBQ); JOE ST. PIERRE (CONGEE & ME); KATHY TRAN (PETRA AND THE BEAST); FOR DETAILS, SEE SOURCEBOOK

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WE'RE GOING TO MEXICO
and you can come with us

cntraveler.com/wwttrips to read more and book

Laos by Way of D.C.

The moment you walk into Hanumanh, you're transported to Laos—and that's the point

by CHANNAPHA KHAMVONGSA

▶ **IT'S NOT MERELY** the sakoo yadsai, tapioca dumplings stuffed with preserved radish and peanut caramel, nor the salat hua pii, spicy banana blossom salad, that make **Hanumanh** in Washington, D.C., an unmistakably Lao restaurant. For chefs (and mother-son duo) Seng Luangrath and Bobby Pradachith, that comes through the physical space. "We thought a lot about the materials and the design," Pradachith says. "We wanted to really show how Lao people hang out." The wall murals depict the story of Hanuman, the famed Hindu monkey god celebrated in Laos for his strength and service as well as his appetite. (He's the restaurant's namesake; they added the *h* to differentiate from another spot—popular guy!) The restaurant's exterior is designed to mimic the grand entrances of Buddhist temples in Laos. And the go-to kitchen gadget in the restaurant is a meticulously researched kok and sak, or mortar and pestle. Luangrath and Pradachith are known for introducing Lao food to the D.C. area over the past decade with no-frills Padaek (formerly known as Bangkok Golden), hot-ticket dinner spot Thip Khao, and fast-casual Sen Khao. But with Hanumanh, it's all about the vibes.



The Kok and Sak

"It's like the jungle Vitamix," Pradachith says of this Lao kitchen workhorse. He had a short but specific list of requirements for the one used at Hanumanh: clay (the natural grit is better for pounding ingredients), cone-shaped (so everything can pool at the bottom), and medium in size (for easier handling).

The Stenciling

Luangrath discovered local artist Henley Bounkhong on, yes, Instagram. After finding out he was also Lao, she tapped him to design the restaurant's entrance. He based his stencil patterns on stunning temples in Luang Prabang, the heart of Lao Buddhism.

The Monkeys

To honor Hanuman and infuse his whimsical energy into every inch of the space, Luangrath and Pradachith have hidden monkey-centric designs all over the restaurant, from the vibrant decorative masks on the wall to the cocktail mugs.





◀ The Basket Lights

During Pradachith's last visit to Laos, he'd walk along the Mekong River at sunset and watch fishermen pull up their bamboo fish traps from the water. He loved how the light reflected through the pear-shaped traps and sought to re-create that magical moment by slipping bulbs into black wicker baskets.

◀ The Mural

For his playful fantastical style, Bounkhong combines Buddhist deities and mythical creatures with cartoons he grew up watching. Here he sketched by hand and relied on oil paints to create this larger-than-life piece showing Hanuman preparing and then digging into a feast.



▲ The Bar

Walk into any home in Laos and you'll find plenty of furniture and wood carvings made of mahogany, which is native to the country. The hardwood has exposed holes, which Pradachith commissioned local woodworker Colonial Hardwoods to fill in with blue epoxy for the restaurant's custom bar counter. It reminds him of rainy days in Laos and is the perfect backdrop for salat hua pii.



▲ The Plates

Pradachith has a thing for antiquing. He travels up and down the East Coast looking for one-of-a-kind plateware that—if not Lao in origin—is Lao in aesthetic. For example, the gold-leaf-rimmed plates remind him of the metallic bowls monks carry for almsgiving. And thanks to a recent Marie Kondo-level purge he did at home, you can now see his eclectic finds at Hanumanh.



▲ The Cocktails

While head bartender Al Thompson stocked the bar with the Lao essentials—crisp rice-based Beerlao and Lao-style whisky made with fermented sticky rice—he dipped into his own nostalgia for the drinking vessels, like this Stormtrooper cookie jar repurposed for a gin-powered punch.

Your Spring Checklist

Our slightly obsessive picks for this month's finest things to eat, drink, and buy



Digital Director
CAREY POLIS

on

The Perfect Cookie

Who would have thought that among all the buttery biscuits and croissants on offer at **Levee Baking Co.** in New Orleans, my favorite thing would be vegan? The salted chocolate olive oil cookie has the ideal crispy outside and chewy inside, due to an emulsion of olive oil, oat milk, and sugar. Plus, it's aggressively chocolaty, in a good way. Pastry chef Christina Balzebre sources 70 percent cacao Barataria Blend chocolate from Acalli, a local bean-to-bar company that uses no stabilizers or lecithin. "I'm just obsessed with the chocolate that we use," she says. Same.



Social Media Manager
EMILY SCHULTZ

I've been counting down the days until I could finally buy Kachka's pelmeni. Now I can, thanks to the little Eastern European grocery that Bonnie and Israel Morales opened above their Russian restaurant in Portland, Oregon. **Lavka** has everything Bonnie grew up with—beet-cured salmon, Georgian natural wines, pelmeni (duh)—and it's all going in my suitcase.



Assistant Editor
ALIZA AARBANEL

on

The Coolest Florals

➔ Dried pampas grass is camping up new NYC restaurants like Ernesto's—as well as my own apartment. Robin Rose Hilleary, owner of **Fleurotica** and mastermind behind these arrangements, shares her tips on replicating the look for your home.

1. GO WILD

Pampas grass is an invasive spiky-stemmed species often found along the beach. Run with this information (just be sure to take thick gloves and gardening shears), or check out a local flower market, crafts store, or Etsy.

2. LIVE IN COLOR

Hilleary prefers dyed grass for maximum impact. Soak in food coloring or natural dye, then hang upside down to dry for at least a few days for full feather effect. Fluff, then finish with hairspray to prevent shedding.

3. MIX IN LIVE PLANTS

Dried pampas will last for months, so Hilleary updates arrangements by adding in textural plants like stiff palms and waxy anthurium. Place them in a cup of water *inside* the vase to keep the pampas dry.

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Captured in Trentino, Italy.

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Will Write for Pasta

How holing up in a series of remote Airbnbs to work on my book and eat noodles by the pot reminded me why I write in the first place

by JIA TOLENTINO

ABOUT TWO AND A HALF YEARS AGO, I decided it would be a good idea to write a book on the side of my full-time job as a writer (or as I prefer to say, blogger) for the *New Yorker*.

In retrospect, I should have planned to take some time off work, but in defense of my own stupidity—a good subtitle for a book, come to think of it—I can only say that, like any other millennial who lacks the weighted blanket of family money, I understand the world I came of age in as a sort of Luigi’s Mansion of institutional collapse and economic precariousness. Even now I feel fairly certain that if I ever stop working

for more than 45 minutes I’ll lose my health insurance, bring a curse upon my loved ones, get into an exciting freak accident, and then die.

But after about a month of trying to activate my book muscles when I was—to use a rather old-fashioned phrase—“done with work for the day,” I realized that my attempts to demarcate one project from another were (at best) not working and (if I’m being real) terribly sad. Techniques such as “washing my face at 4 p.m.” and “changing from day sweatpants into night sweatpants” radiated desperation and unconvincing performance. It was like putting a checkout divider



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between a wedge of aged Gouda and a bottle of Clorox when the cashier at the grocery store definitely knows I'm going to ingest both of them later that night.

And so I concluded, as many have before me, that the solution involved getting out of the city. Such was the genesis of the only real writing ritual that I've ever developed: taking the Metro-North to Poughkeepsie on a Thursday afternoon, renting a car near the train station, picking up groceries, driving to the cheapest place I could find on Airbnb with a woodstove and a kitchen, and spending the next four days subsisting on a healthy variety of marijuana edibles and a strong third to half-pound of pasta per meal.

I'm not kidding when I say this routine made me feel like Gwyneth Paltrow. To me it was a secret pinnacle of spiritual, emotional, and physical wellness. It was a cross between a boot camp and a slacker's vacation. It was hiking in the sunlight and muttering "whoa" after 12 minutes of staring at embers and grinding black pepper out of a stranger's sky-blue ceramic pepper mill into a shimmering lake of olive oil inside an unfamiliar dented pan.

In my favorite of all these tiny backyard guesthouses, the lights were warm and low in the kitchen; the table was just big enough for two red placemats and a candle; there were old pennants hanging on the walls and owls hooting in the yard. I grated myself a soft snow pile of Pecorino, shook it over a swirled nest of spaghetti, and served myself a huge bowl of sharp, indulgent *cacio e pepe*. I slurped, splattering sauce on *Anna Karenina*, which was open to the part where Oblonsky was ordering roast beef and oysters, and remembered how I could avalanche myself with pleasure if I tried.

THESE WEEKENDS, which I took at the beginning of each month, were the full expression of all the compulsions within me that are unshareable by definition: to be lavishly alone; to eat in priestly silence; to stay up late reading; to think in the morning and write all night. Each trip was similar—the train, the car, the work, the pasta—but each thing was a little different every time.

Once in October, it was raining, and I got a splinter walking barefoot across the rough wood floor. I started a fire in the early afternoon, and made spaghetti carbonara my favorite way, slipping a molehill of garlic into the eggs. I chopped Parmesan with a knife because I couldn't find a grater, crisped bacon in quantities I would've had to explain had anyone else been present, and finished the whole pot in a day and a half.

A few months later, in January, it was bluebird skies and frosty. I was staying at an impersonal,

spooky rental property in the hills around Minnewaska State Park, reading chemical analyses of the MDMA molecule, and trying not to get freaked out by the lack of phone service. It was a relief to focus my attention on something right in front of me: celery and carrots, browning to caramel for a white wine Bolognese.

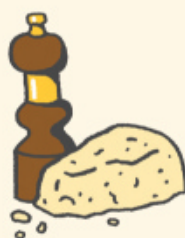
WITHOUT THESE TRIPS I'd never have finished my book, mainly because I would have lost my grip on the reason I wanted to write it in the first place. Underneath the structural conditions that I spend my professional life both objecting and yielding to, writing is fundamentally a matter of pleasure for me. More than that, it's a comfort. It is the self-perpetuating solace of discovering, over and over, that you don't need much—you hardly need any equipment, you can get it done in strange places—to be satisfied, or even, occasionally, thrilled.

Of course, the same goes for making and eating pasta. And on these weekends, the two became parallel acts for me. I grated parm with a highlighter in my mouth; I inhaled rigatoni the way I was working—until it was too much, but the good kind of too much, and it was time to go to bed.

There are many ways, too, in which making pasta is a far better pastime than writing. Every time I "get my materials together" for a piece, I seem to end up spending two hours on the Wikipedia page for Smilodons, which, as we all know, are the most famous prehistoric saber-toothed cats, reaching up to 880 pounds in their largest iteration. But I can get in and out of a Hannaford supermarket with everything I need for sausage-and-broccoli orecchiette in six minutes flat.

Every time I sit down to write something, I understand that the likely outcome is that it's going to be awful. Conversely, after you've made a pasta once, you'll probably get better at it. Unlike with writing, pasta will only ever be more precisely like what you wanted it to be. When you've spent all day wading through the swamp of your own inadequacies, there's no absolution like spaghetti dripping in pepper and cheese. And it was the spaghetti that reminded me, before the writing did, that the way we do things matters. If we cook the way we want to, we eat the way we want to. If something is absorbing to produce, it will be absorbing to consume. And even if you don't end up with anything you ever want to share with other people, you'll still have made something—and this is all you can hope for—for yourself. ■

Jia Tolentino is a staff writer at the New Yorker. Her first book, the essay collection Trick Mirror, is available now.



When you've spent all day wading through the swamp of your own inadequacies, there's no absolution like spaghetti dripping in pepper and cheese.



THE PERFECT DESTINATION WHEN YOU HAVE
AN APPETITE FOR MORE THAN JUST THE BEACH.
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TAKE YOUR TASTE BUDS ON A VACATION

Here's exactly where you should go in Naples, Marco Island, and the Everglades—and why.



THE SIGHT OF A FIERY SUN SETTING over a calm Gulf beach, the sound of gulls overheard as you stroll, the kiss of a breeze to remind you what perfect weather feels like—Naples awakens all the senses. This seaside haven has long been a magnet for sophisticated travelers and city transplants, so it's no wonder the strollable downtown, dotted with art galleries and boutiques, is also full of great restaurants. Follow your nose from one culinary adventure to another, whether it's creative takes on fresh seafood and local produce at **Sea Salt** or authentic handmade pasta and pizza at **Osteria Tulia**. Away from the buzz of downtown, you'll find eateries as distinct

as **Food & Thought**, a laid-back organic market and café, and **The Turtle Club**, an exquisite toes-in-the-sand experience at the Vanderbilt Beach Resort.

Beloved for its family-friendly beaches and waterfront fun, Marco Island is a popular year-round destination with more than a few gastronomic tricks up its sleeve. Head to the Marco Beach Ocean Resort where you can indulge—indoors or out—in sublime Italian food and wine, gorgeously presented at **Sale e Pepe**. **The Oyster Society** makes for an unforgettable date night, with a 1920s art deco vibe, live jazz, and unbeatable fresh shellfish. And the funky **Little Bar Restaurant**, in the fishing

village of Goodland, is the place to be for live entertainment and killer seafood from October through May—better known as stone crab season.

Fans of Florida's most famous crustaceans should also make a pilgrimage to **City Seafood**, further down the coast in yet another sweet fishing village, Everglades City. The restaurant's own boats bring in the crabs, grouper, and other delectable seafood straight from the Gulf. The rustic waterfront atmosphere is refreshingly and authentically Old Florida. And the taste? Pure paradise.

Whatever you're hungry for, we're confident you'll find it here. Come savor the possibilities at paradisecoast.com.



MEXICO CITY

SEPTEMBER 30 –
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STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON

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a basically guide to better baking

Butter, Sugar, Flour, Magic

Food trends come and go, but this combo is forever. Behold, our timeless advice—and very 2020 recipes—for making your baking as cool, successful, and photogenic as you are





SAW, DON'T SLICE

Use a serrated knife to cut these into neat squares: A chef's knife, no matter how sharp, will smooch the layers.

Tahini Billionaire Bars
p. 60

When Two Desserts Love Each Other...

Here's what happened after carrot cake met carrot halwa, the milky, long-cooking, spoonably-soft confection common in South Asia. Raisins, cinnamon, and cream cheese frosting made way for brown-butter pistachios, cardamom, and sticky carrot glaze and the rest of their romance was history.



There's more! At eatbasically.com/baking, you'll find ALL the recipes and advice.

ALL-PURPOSE ADVICE GET YOUR GEAR IN ORDER

Sure, you can strong-arm your way through a recipe without these. But will they make the process easier, faster, and less frustrating? Yes, yes, and yes.



Electronic scale
The tidiest and most accurate way to measure "the dries" (e.g., flour, sugar).



Oven thermometer
A polygraph for your oven, it's the best way to know if the dial tells the truth.



BOTTOMS UP

For a smooth, flat surface and dramatic drippage, turn out the cake and frost the bottom, whether that's with caramel, ganache, or, in this case, carrot glaze.



IN THE FOLD

In this cake, as in most, be gentle with the flour: Use a rubber spatula to fold it in, making broad strokes down the middle of the bowl and up around the sides, and stop as soon as the dry bits disappear. Being too aggressive leads to excess gluten development and tight, tough cake.



Cardamom-
Pistachio
Carrot Cake
p. 60



Rolling pin

Allows for more consistency and control than your empty wine bottle.



Bowl/bench scraper

A plastic one can manage sticky dough; a strong metal one excels at portioning.



Rubber spatula

Better than a wooden spoon at reaching corners and crevices (easier to clean too).



Pastry brush

Natural bristles make easy work of oiling a pan or brushing biscuits with butter.



THE WAITING IS THE HARDEST PART

Even if you can't resist eating a couple hot out of the oven, let the rest cool completely for the chewiest texture and most pronounced flavor.


Salty
Buckwheat
Chocolate
Chunk Cookies
p. 61



PRODUCT PLACEMENT

For eye-catching cookies, reserve a handful of chocolate chunks for cramming into the top of each ball before baking so that they stay on the surface.

Cookies Love Buckwheat

The quest for great chocolate chip cookies never ends, and buckwheat flour is our latest muse. It creates a cookie with all of the qualities you seek in the classic—**chewy-gooey centers, crisp edges, and nutty, buttery, toasty flavor**—but to an even greater degree. Track it down, then use the remainder for pancakes, waffles, and, yes, even more cookies.

**ALL-PURPOSE
ADVICE**
THE WAY YOU
MEASURE
FLOUR MATTERS



A scale will provide the most accurate measurement (buy one!), but when it's not an option, follow the spoon-and-level method: Use a fork to rake through your flour, spoon it gently into a cup, then level with the back of a knife. If you dip-and-scoop, you'll get heavier, more compact cups—and, consequently, denser cakes and drier cookies.

Sour Cream
and Onion
Biscuits
p. 61



Lean Into the Layers

Many biscuit recipes count on pockets of butter and an angel's touch for **pull-apart flakiness**. But we're not willing to leave it to chance. Our simple folding technique manually multiplies the number of layers for guaranteed no-risk success.



• Bring the short sides into the middle, hoisting one flap over the other.



• Pat back down to the original thickness—the dough will come together as you go.



• Repeat the fold-and-pat once more, then cut into squares (look, no scraps!).

Requires Little Skill but Lots of Olive Oil

If you want to be a person who makes your own bread, focaccia is the starting line. There's no kneading, shaping, or mysterious starter involved, yet it emerges from the oven bubbled, bronzed, and ready to tear apart. Next stop, sourdough?



**MESS-
PROTECTION PLAN**

To catch spills, rogue ingredients, and sprinkles of flour, cover your counter with a kitchen towel before you start measuring and mixing.



**ALL-PURPOSE
ADVICE
PARCHMENT
PAPER, OUR
SAVIOR**

Parchment ensures your creation releases with no begging/pleading, and trimming it to fit is easier than it seems:

FOR A
ROUND



Use a pen to trace the bottom of the pan onto parchment. Fold the circle in half three times to make a slender segment.



Cut the arc, then unfold the paper to reveal a perfect circle. Place pen side down in your greased pan.



FEAR NOT THE YEAST

If your yeast is dead, your bread won't rise. Make sure it isn't expired and keep a few extra packets on hand: If the first one doesn't foam when mixed with lukewarm water and honey, try again.



DIMPLES, DIVOTS, DELIGHT

Focaccia's characteristic hills and valleys come from handling the dough like you're rocking out on a keyboard.

For impressions that stick, dimple just before you bake.

Shockingly Easy No-Knead Focaccia p. 62



FOR A
9X9"



Tear a piece of parchment that's about the size of a baking sheet. Fold lengthwise, then slice into two 13x9" rectangles.



Place the two rectangles in the greased pan in opposite directions so you have a generous handle on every side.



Once your brownies/bars are baked and cooled, use the excess parchment as a sling to lift them out.



Camouflage
Chocolate
Fudge Brownies
p. 62

Brownies in Disguise

The only “problem” with ultra-fudgy brownies is the monotony: rich, rich, rich. To break up the intensity, hide them in a layer of tangy, cooling cream cheese. Not only does it make it easier to go back for seconds, it also gets you a '70s-chic pattern.



**ALL-PURPOSE
ADVICE
ROOM
TEMPERATURE
IS NOT
OPTIONAL**

When a recipe specifies room-temp dairy or eggs, take notice. Chilled butter won't properly cream; cold eggs can cause batter to curdle and collapse; and the list goes on. Luckily, these work-arounds help chilly ingredients catch up fast:

Butter

Microwave a whole stick, still wrapped, in 10-second increments, turning over between each zap, or cut into 1" cubes and place in a single layer on a plate near a preheating oven, monitoring closely so they don't melt.

Eggs

Place whole eggs in a medium bowl, then fill with warm tap water and let them hang out as you prep.

Cream/Milk

Microwave in 10-second increments or heat in a small saucepan over low.

The Get-Out-of-Bed-Fast Buns

When you accidentally agreed to host brunch, bake these. They're filled with date purée, finished with vanilla glaze, and the bulk of the labor is done in a food processor the night before.



● When you first place the swirls in the pan, space them evenly.



● As they proof, they snuggle up so that they grow taller rather than wider in the oven.



● Brush with glaze while they're warm so that it can soak into all the crannies.



SPRING TIME

To check to see if your buns are ready to bake, prod them with a finger: If the dough springs back quickly, give the buns more time; if it springs back slowly, they're ready to roar.



SPECKLED AND FRECKLED

Vanilla bean paste is responsible for the cute flecks, but extract offers the same flavor.

Cinnamon-
Date
Sticky Buns
p. 63



COLOR EQUALS FLAVOR

Your crust isn't properly baked until it's the color of a well-worn penny. If your timer dings but the dough is pale, keep going: Bake to the indicator ("deep golden brown"), not the time.



Triple-Threat
Onion Galette



EXTREME BIAS

Cutting the scallions on a sharp diagonal creates striking oblique disks. Nervous about your knife skills? Simply slice crosswise.

Pie for Dinner

Who says baking's gotta be sweet? Packed with crispy scallions, sautéed onions, sharp mustard, and parm, **this tart is as savory as it gets.** Add a fried egg and leftovers are breakfast.



● For a neat and tidy galette, make slashes from the edge of the filling to the edge of the dough every few inches.



● As you fold over the sections, they'll overlap, forming charming pleats.



● Pile on the scallions last, with some kissing the outer crust—they'll adhere as they bake.

Triple-Threat Onion Galette

MAKES ONE 12"-DIAMETER GALETTE

The key to this flaky galette crust is to move fast! Rolling and folding the dough before the butter has a chance to warm up creates distinct layers of butter and dough that will steam apart during baking, becoming light and flaky. For more alliums-as-the-star recipes, see "All In on Alliums" on p. 64.

DOUGH

- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 ½ cups (188 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 12 Tbsp. (1 ½ sticks) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½" pieces

ASSEMBLY

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
- 1 large onion, thinly sliced
- 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided
- 12 scallions, thinly sliced on a deep diagonal
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about 2 cups)
- Freshly ground black pepper

DOUGH Whisk sugar, salt, and 1 ½ cups flour in a medium bowl to combine. Add butter and toss to combine. Using your hands and working quickly, rub and smash butter into flat, irregular pieces (be careful not to overwork; you don't want to soften the butter too much).¹ Drizzle ⅓ cup cold water over and mix with a rubber spatula, smashing in butter, until dough mostly comes together—it will be dry and shaggy.

Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface. Working quickly and using a rolling pin and your hands, press dough together to form a mass.² Roll dough into a rough square about ½" thick. Fold in half into a rectangle, then once again to make a small square. Press down on the dough with rolling pin to make it hold together. Roll dough out once more to make a rough square about ½" thick. Repeat folding process, taking your time to make it neat as this will be your final

fold. Using rolling pin, gently flatten dough, rotating as needed, to make a 6"-diameter disk.

Dust surface with more flour and roll disk into a 14"-diameter circle or oval about ⅛" thick. Fold dough in half, then in half again to make a rough triangle (this will make it easier to move). Slide onto a parchment-lined baking sheet and unfold. Chill while you make the filling.

DO AHEAD: Dough can be made 3 days ahead. Wrap 6" disk tightly and chill until ready to roll out.

ASSEMBLY Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 375°. Heat 3 Tbsp. butter in a medium skillet over medium until foaming, about 1 minute. Reduce heat to medium-low; add onion, garlic, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton salt, and stir to combine. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is tender and just beginning to brown, 6–8 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, stirring occasionally and adding a splash of water if onion begins to stick, until golden brown in spots, about 5 minutes more. Transfer onion mixture to a plate; reserve skillet.

Melt remaining 1 Tbsp. butter in reserved skillet (no need to wipe out) over medium heat. Remove from heat and add scallions and remaining ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Toss scallions until coated in butter.

Remove dough from refrigerator and, using a small offset spatula or a spoon, spread mustard in a thin layer over dough, leaving a 1 ½"–2" border around the edges. Scatter onion mixture over mustard and sprinkle with Parmesan; season with pepper. Cutting from edge of dough to the start of the mustard and filling, make slits in border of galette at 2"–3" intervals.³ Fold flaps up and over filling, slightly overlapping. Scatter scallions over. Bake galette until crust is deep golden brown and scallions are lightly charred, 45–50 minutes. Using parchment paper, slide galette onto a cutting board and cut into wedges.

DO AHEAD: Onion can be cooked 3 days ahead; transfer to an airtight container, then cover and chill. Galette can be assembled 1 hour ahead; chill.

1—If the butter is getting too warm, throw the bowl into the fridge or freezer.

2—The dough will seem like a crumbly dry mess at first but will come together as you fold and roll. Have faith and don't give up.

3—Cutting the slits is optional but makes for a more beautiful presentation.

Tahini Billionaire Bars

MAKES 25–36 We took millionaire bars—shortbread plus caramel plus chocolate—and gave them an upgrade (hence, billions) with sesame seeds and tahini. The shortbread is tender, the filling is gooey, and the chocolate ties it all together.

SHORTBREAD

Nonstick cooking oil spray or vegetable oil (for pan)

- 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (83 g) powdered sugar
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup toasted sesame seeds
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. Diamond Crystal or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces
- 2 large egg yolks

BUTTERSCOTCH AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (packed; 250 g) light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into 8 equal pieces
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup tahini⁴
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 6 oz. bittersweet chocolate (65%–75% cacao), coarsely chopped
- Toasted sesame seeds (for serving)

SHORTBREAD Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Lightly coat a 9x9" or 8x8" baking pan, preferably metal, with nonstick spray. Line with parchment paper, leaving overhang on all sides. Whisk flour, powdered sugar, sesame seeds, and salt in a medium bowl. Add butter and toss to coat. Using your hands, work in butter until pieces are about pea-size. Using a rubber spatula, mix in yolks. (Dough should hold together when squeezed.)

Scrape dough into prepared pan and gently press into an even layer (lightly flour your hands if needed). Prick dough with a fork in several spots (this will help it stay flat as it bakes).

Bake shortbread until golden brown, 24–28 minutes (or up to 35 minutes if using a glass dish). Let cool slightly.

BUTTERSCOTCH AND ASSEMBLY While the shortbread is cooling, heat brown sugar and butter, whisking constantly, in a heavy medium saucepan over medium until butter is melted and sugar is dissolved, about 3 minutes. Whisk in cream and salt. Bring to a boil and cook, whisking constantly, until butterscotch is thick enough to coat a spoon (bubbling will become less frequent), about 5 minutes. Remove from heat, add tahini and vanilla and whisk until incorporated and smooth.

Pour butterscotch over shortbread and tilt pan to distribute evenly. Chill until set, 30–40 minutes.

Melt chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl in the microwave in 40-second increments, stirring between bursts. (Alternatively, place chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water; bowl should not touch water. Heat, stirring often, until melted and smooth.) Pour over butterscotch and spread evenly to edges of pan; sprinkle with sesame seeds. Chill until chocolate is firm, 1–2 hours.

Using parchment paper overhang, pull bars out of pan and set on a cutting board; remove parchment. Using a serrated knife, slice into 25–36 pieces (5–6 cuts in each direction). Bring to room temperature before serving.

DO AHEAD: Bars can be made 4 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Cardamom-Pistachio Carrot Cake

MAKES ONE 9"-DIAMETER CAKE Take your time when streaming the butter into the egg and sugar mixture—you want to create an emulsion, as when making a vinaigrette. If you go too quickly, you'll end up with a greasy batter.

CAKE

Vegetable oil (for pan)

- 3 medium carrots, peeled
- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1 cup (130 g) raw pistachios
- 3 large eggs, room temperature⁵
- 1 cup (packed; 200 g) dark brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (50 g) granulated sugar

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cardamom
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Diamond Crystal or $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (188 g) all-purpose flour

GLAZE AND ASSEMBLY

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup carrot juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (100 g) granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. unsalted butter

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Lightly coat bottom and sides of a 9"-diameter cake pan with oil. Line bottom of pan with a round of parchment paper and smooth to eliminate any air bubbles.

Grate carrots on the large holes of a box grater. Measure out 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (lightly packed; 250 g); reserve remaining carrots for another use (like raita!).

Set a fine-mesh sieve over a measuring glass and place next to stove. Heat butter in a medium saucepan over medium until foaming, about 2 minutes. Add pistachios and cook, stirring often, until butter browns and nuts smell toasty, about 5 minutes. (Butter will get very foamy and it will be hard to see what's going on, so once the foam is golden brown, remove pan from heat every 10 seconds to check how the nuts are browning.) Pour mixture through prepared sieve, scraping in all of the browned bits; set nuts and butter aside.

Crack eggs into a large bowl; add brown sugar, granulated sugar, baking powder, baking soda, cardamom, cinnamon, and salt. Using an electric mixer on high speed, beat 3 minutes (mixture should be thick, pale, and increased in volume). Decrease speed to medium-high and gradually stream in reserved brown butter (including browned bits); beat until combined. Coarsely chop reserved pistachios. Using a rubber spatula, fold in flour until almost completely combined, then add nuts and carrots and continue to fold until everything is incorporated. Scrape batter into prepared pan; smooth surface. Place

⁴—Tahini has a tendency to separate. Take a moment to give it a thorough stir with a butter knife or mini offset spatula before you measure.

⁵—Compared with cold eggs, room-temp eggs gain more volume when whipped.

⁶—When in doubt, it's better to slightly overbake this cake than to take it out too early. If underbaked, it will sink in the center.

⁷—Don't be tempted to stir: The layer of sugar insulates the cream from the heat.

pan on a clean smooth surface and give it a fast 360-degree spin (this pushes the batter up the sides of the pan and minimizes doming during baking).

Bake cake until deeply browned and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 50–55 minutes.⁶ Let cake cool in pan. Run a small offset spatula or butter knife around perimeter of cake to loosen. Place a plate upside down over cake and invert cake onto plate (leave flat side up). Remove parchment paper.

DO AHEAD: Cake can be baked 1 day ahead. Store tightly wrapped at room temperature.

GLAZE AND ASSEMBLY Place a small plate in the freezer. Cook carrot juice, cream, granulated sugar, and salt in a small saucepan over high heat (do not stir)⁷ until thick like lava, 8–10 minutes. Mixture will initially bubble and foam vigorously and look like it's going to boil over, but it won't! Don't be tempted to reduce the heat; the bubbling will subside and mixture will thicken. You want it to be thick enough to stick to the cake, but do not let it brown. Test glaze by putting a small dollop onto the cold plate: When you run your finger through the glaze, it should leave a defined trail.

Once the glaze is thick enough, remove pan from heat and stir in butter. Let cool until you can comfortably hold your finger in it (if it's too hot, it will run right off the cake), about 15 minutes.

Stir glaze well and pour over center of cake, nudging to the edges with offset spatula or butter knife. Pop any air bubbles with a toothpick. Let glaze cool at least 10 minutes before slicing cake.

Salty Buckwheat Chocolate Chunk Cookies

MAKES 16–18 *If you want to bake these cookies now and don't have buckwheat flour on hand, whole wheat flour is an acceptable substitute. Your cookies won't have the same depth of flavor, but they will still be delicious.*

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into 8 equal pieces
- 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour

- ½ cup (63 g) buckwheat flour⁸
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 ¼ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt; plus more (optional)
- ⅔ cup (packed; 133 g) light brown sugar
- ½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- 2 large egg yolks⁹
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 6 oz. bittersweet chocolate (65%–75% cacao) bars or wafers (disks, pistoles, fèves), coarsely chopped

Heat butter in a small saucepan over the lowest heat possible until melted (you don't want it to sputter or brown), about 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, whisk both flours, baking powder, baking soda, and 1 ¼ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl.

Scrape butter into a large bowl and add brown sugar and granulated sugar. Whisk vigorously until butter is absorbed into sugar, about 30 seconds. Add egg, then egg yolks, one at a time, whisking to combine after each addition; whisk in vanilla. Mixture should look much lighter in color and be almost creamy.

Add dry ingredients and use a rubber spatula or wooden spoon to stir until just incorporated and almost no dry streaks remain. Set aside a handful of chocolate, then add remaining chocolate to batter. Gently mix just to evenly distribute. Cover bowl with a kitchen towel (a silicone lid or plastic wrap also works) and chill 2 hours.

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 375°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. Using a tablespoon, scoop out 2-Tbsp. portions of dough (or, if you have one, this is a leveled-off #30 cookie scoop or a heaping #40) and place 5 on each baking sheet, spacing evenly.¹⁰ Roll into balls and gently press 2–3 pieces of reserved chocolate onto the top of each one. It's okay to jam the chocolate on there—some pieces can even be vertical. Cover and chill any remaining dough.

Bake cookies, rotating baking sheets top to bottom and front to back halfway through, until edges are golden brown and centers are puffed, 8–10 minutes.¹¹

Working one at a time, pull baking sheets out of the oven and tap lightly on the stove to deflate cookies. Sprinkle with Diamond Crystal kosher salt (if you're using Morton, skip it: the crystals are too large). Let cookies cool on baking sheets 5 minutes, then transfer to wire racks and let cool completely.

Let baking sheets cool, then turn parchment paper over. Repeat process with remaining dough, dividing evenly between baking sheets, to make 6–8 more cookies.

DO AHEAD: Cookies can be baked 3 days ahead. Let cool; store airtight at room temperature.

Sour Cream and Onion Biscuits

MAKES 8 *Sour cream isn't just a gimmick. Used in place of the more typical cream or buttermilk, it adds a rich, tangy flavor, and its acidity helps make the biscuits incredibly tender.*

- 2 ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 ¾ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 ¼ tsp. sugar
- 2 ½ cups (313 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for surface
- 10 Tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½" pieces, plus 2 Tbsp. melted
- 8 scallions, thinly sliced crosswise (not on a diagonal)
- 1 ¼ cups sour cream, plus more for serving
- Flaky sea salt

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 425°. Whisk salt, pepper, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, and 2 ½ cups flour in a large bowl to combine. Add chilled butter and toss to coat. Using your hands, work butter into dry ingredients until there are lots of flat pieces and pea-size bits. Add scallions and toss to evenly distribute.

⁸—Buckwheat flours can vary in hue and consistency, and that's okay. We tested with Bob's Red Mill, which is light-colored and finely ground.

⁹—The extra egg yolks provide the cookies with their velvety, almost fudgy, centers.

¹⁰—Avoid eyeballing the scoop size or squeezing in more than 5 per sheet: Otherwise, they may spread together (not tragic, but not gorgeous).

¹¹—Pull at 8 if you like cookies soft and want to guarantee they're pliable the next day.

Create a well in the center of mixture and add 1 ¼ cups sour cream into the center. Using a fork and working in circles, mix until large shaggy clumps form. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead once or twice until it comes together (flour your hands if needed). ¹² If there are any loose bits, add them to center of dough and knead once more to incorporate. Pat dough into an 8x4" rectangle about 1" thick.

Working from a short side, fold dough in thirds as you would a letter. It doesn't need to overlap perfectly. Pat dough into another 8x4" rectangle, then fold dough in thirds like a letter one more time. Pat dough back into an 8x4" rectangle and cut in half lengthwise. Cut each half crosswise into 4 squares for a total of 8 biscuits.

Transfer biscuits to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Brush tops gently with melted butter; sprinkle with sea salt. Bake biscuits until golden brown, 18–22 minutes. Serve warm with sour cream (or more butter!) for slathering. ¹³

Shockingly Easy No-Knead Focaccia

10–12 SERVINGS *Letting the dough do its first rise in the fridge overnight means improved flavor and ease of handling, but if you don't feel like waiting that long, leave it out at room temperature until doubled in size—three to four hours.*

- 1 ¼-oz. envelope active dry yeast (about 2 ¼ tsp.)
- 2 tsp. honey
- 5 cups (625 g) all-purpose flour
- 5 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 Tbsp. Morton kosher salt
- 6 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for hands
- Flaky sea salt
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for pan
- 2–4 garlic cloves

Whisk yeast, honey, and 2½ cups lukewarm water in a medium bowl and let sit 5 minutes. Add flour and salt; mix with a rubber spatula until a shaggy dough forms and no dry streaks remain.

Pour 4 Tbsp. oil into the biggest bowl that will fit in your refrigerator. Transfer dough to bowl and turn to coat in oil. Cover with a silicone lid or plastic wrap and chill until dough is doubled in size (it should look very bubbly and alive), at least 8 hours and up to 1 day.

Generously butter a 13x9" baking pan (for thicker focaccia that's perfect for sandwiches) or an 18x13" rimmed baking sheet. Pour 1 Tbsp. oil into center of pan. ¹⁴ Keeping the dough in the bowl, gather up edges of dough farthest from you and lift up and over into center of bowl. Give the bowl a quarter turn and repeat process. Do this 2 more times; you want to deflate dough while you form it into a rough ball. (Using a fork in each hand makes this process even easier and less messy!)

Transfer dough to prepared pan. Pour any oil left in bowl over the dough and coat it in oil. Let rise, uncovered, in a dry, warm spot until doubled in size, at least 1 ½ hours and up to 4 hours. To see if it's ready, poke the dough with your finger. The dough should spring back slowly, leaving a small visible indentation. If it springs back quickly, the dough isn't ready. (If at this point the dough is ready to bake but you aren't, you can chill it up to 1 hour.)

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 450°. Lightly oil your hands. If using a rimmed baking sheet, gently stretch out dough to fill (you may not need to do this if using a baking pan). Dimple focaccia all over with your fingers, as if you're aggressively playing the piano, creating very deep depressions in the dough. ¹⁵ Drizzle with remaining 1 Tbsp. oil and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake focaccia until puffed and golden brown all over, 20–30 minutes.

Melt 4 Tbsp. butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat and grate in garlic (use 2 cloves if you're garlic-shy or up to 4 if you love it). Return to medium heat and cook, stirring often, until garlic is just lightly toasted, about 45 seconds. Brush garlic butter all over focaccia. If you don't want to serve the focaccia immediately, hold off on brushing so it remains crisp.

Camouflage Chocolate Fudge Brownies

MAKES 16 *The secret to the fudgiest, most chocolaty brownies is cocoa powder—not melted chocolate. We borrowed chocolate expert Alice Medrich's technique, then added a cream cheese topping for tangy balance. Don't stress about your camo design; the brownies will look even better when sliced.*

Nonstick cooking oil spray or room-temperature unsalted butter (for pan)

8 oz. cream cheese (not low-fat), cut into 1" pieces

3 large eggs, chilled

1 ⅓ cups (266 g) sugar, divided

1 tsp. vanilla extract, divided

¾ tsp. kosher salt, divided

1 ½ tsp. plus ¾ cup plus 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder, preferably Dutch-process ¹⁶

10 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into pieces

1 tsp. instant espresso powder (optional)

½ cup (63 g) all-purpose flour

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Lightly coat a 9x9" pan, preferably metal, with nonstick spray. Line with parchment paper, leaving overhang on all sides. Lightly coat parchment with nonstick spray. Place cream cheese in a medium heatproof bowl set over a medium saucepan of barely simmering water (do not let bowl touch water). Heat cream cheese, stirring occasionally, until very soft, about 5 minutes. Remove bowl from heat (leave water simmering). Using a heatproof rubber spatula or wooden spoon, smash and mix cream cheese until smooth. Add 1 egg, ⅓ cup (66 g) sugar, ½ tsp. vanilla, and ¼ tsp. salt and whisk until very smooth. Transfer about half of cream cheese mixture to a small bowl and whisk in 1 ½ tsp. cocoa powder.

Place butter in another medium heatproof bowl. Add espresso powder (if using) and remaining 1 cup (200 g) sugar, ¾ cup plus 2 Tbsp. cocoa powder, and ½ tsp. salt. Place bowl over saucepan of still simmering water and

¹²—If your bowl is wide enough, you can knead the dough once or twice inside it for ease before transferring to the work surface.

¹³—These are at their peak when they're warm out of the oven. Plan accordingly.

¹⁴—Buttering may seem like overkill (there's all that oil, right?), but it helps the focaccia unlatch rather than stick to the pan's bottom and sides.

¹⁵—Press your fingers all the way to the bottom of the pan when you dimple.

cook, stirring occasionally once the butter starts to melt, until mixture is homogeneous and too hot to leave your finger in, 7–9 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes.

Add remaining 2 eggs and remaining ½ tsp. vanilla to butter mixture one at a time, whisking vigorously after each addition until smooth and glossy. Add flour and mix with spatula or spoon until no longer visible, then vigorously mix another 30 strokes. Scoop out ½ cup brownie batter and set aside. Scrape remaining batter into prepared pan and spread into an even layer. ¹⁷

Working quickly, alternate dollops of cocoa–cream cheese mixture and cream cheese mixture over batter. Dollop reserved batter on top (it will be quite thick). Don't worry if your design looks random and spotted.

Bake brownies until center is set and no longer looks wet, 22–25 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let cool. Using parchment paper overhang, lift brownies out of pan and transfer to a cutting board. Remove parchment paper and cut into sixteen 2¼" squares, wiping knife clean between slices.

BAKE THE COVER

Cinnamon-Date Sticky Buns

MAKES 9 *These fluffy buttermilk rolls are filled with a cinnamon-scented date purée to capture all that sticky bun glory without being overly sweet.*

DOUGH

- ¾ cup buttermilk or plain whole-milk yogurt
- 7 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup (packed; 50 g) dark brown sugar
- 1 ¼-oz. envelope active dry yeast (about 2¼ tsp.)
- 3 cups (375 g) all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. kosher salt

FILLING AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 cup (packed; 180 g) Medjool dates, halved, pitted
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon

- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- ¼ cup (packed; 50 g) dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup (83 g) powdered sugar
- 3 Tbsp. buttermilk or plain whole-milk yogurt
- 1 tsp. vanilla paste or extract

DOUGH Combine buttermilk and 6 Tbsp. oil in a small microwave-safe bowl (it won't get smooth and that's okay) and heat in the microwave in three 10-second bursts until just about body temperature (it shouldn't feel hot or cold to the touch); an instant-read thermometer will register about 98°. (Alternatively, you can heat in a small saucepan over medium-low, stirring constantly, about 1 minute.)

Whisk egg, brown sugar, and yeast in a liquid measuring cup to combine, then whisk into buttermilk mixture.

Pulse flour, baking soda, and salt in a food processor to combine. With the motor running, stream in buttermilk mixture. Process until about 80% of the dough comes together into a ball (mixture will look very wet at first, then begin to pull away from the sides of processor), about 2 minutes.

Using a bowl scraper or rubber spatula, scrape dough onto an unfloured surface. (It should still be pretty wet and sticky.) Knead, pushing it away from you, then pulling it back toward you, until a smooth ball forms, about 3 minutes. ¹⁸ The dough will grow silkier, tighter, and easier to work with as you knead.

Roll out dough into a rough 8" square. Fold dough over onto itself to make an 8x4" rectangle, then flatten it slightly and fold over once more to make a 4" square. Roll dough back out to an 8" square and repeat folding process (you should be back at a 4" square). Pour remaining 1 Tbsp. oil into a medium bowl and add dough (still folded); turn to coat. Cover bowl tightly and chill dough until doubled in volume, at least 8 hours and up to 1 day.

FILLING AND ASSEMBLY Place dates in a small bowl and pour in 1½ cups hot water to cover. Let soak until softened, about 10 minutes.

Drain dates and transfer to a food processor; discard soaking liquid. Add cinnamon, salt, and 2 Tbsp. oil. Purée, scraping down sides as needed, until smooth, about 4 minutes. (You should have about ½ cup purée.)

Grease a 10" cast-iron skillet with remaining 1 Tbsp. oil. Transfer dough to a clean, unfloured surface and roll out to an 8" square. Fold in half into an 8x4" rectangle, then fold rectangle over itself to form a 4" square (same folding process as you did before). If dough feels tough and uncooperative, let it sit about 5 minutes to relax and try again. Roll out dough to a 12" square about ¼" thick. Dollop date purée all over. Using a small offset spatula, spread evenly over dough, leaving a ½" border without purée along edge farthest from you. Sprinkle brown sugar over purée.

Starting at edge closest to you, roll up dough into a tight log. Using a sharp serrated knife and long sawing motions, trim about ½" of dough from both ends and discard. Slice log crosswise into 3 sections, wiping knife clean between slices. Slice each section crosswise into 3 buns (you should have 9 buns total that are each about 1" thick). Transfer buns to prepared pan as you go.

Cover pan tightly with foil (or a domed lid if you have one) and place in a warm, dry spot. Let buns rise until they're doubled in volume and spring back when poked, leaving only a small indentation, 1–1½ hours, depending on how warm and humid your kitchen is. ¹⁹

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Bake buns, still covered, until puffed, pale, and mostly set, about 20 minutes. Remove foil and continue to bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes if you prefer a soft and squishy bun and up to 25 minutes for a more toasted bun. Let cool slightly.

Meanwhile, whisk powdered sugar, buttermilk, and vanilla in a medium bowl to combine.

Brush glaze over warm buns and serve in skillet.

DO AHEAD: Purée can be made 3 days ahead. Place in an airtight container; cover and chill. Bring to room temperature before using.

¹⁶—Both Dutch-process and natural cocoa powder will work here, but the former will provide a deeper color and a smoother, richer flavor.

¹⁷—To keep the reserved brownie batter loose, put it in a warm place, like near the oven.

¹⁸—Resist the urge to add flour to your hands or the work surface. If the dough is too sticky to handle, you can lightly oil your hands.

¹⁹—If your kitchen is cold, let the buns rise in a turned-off oven with its light on.



ALL FOR ALLIUMS

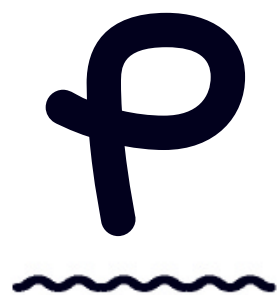
Garlic, onions, and leeks make (almost) everything better, but too often they're stuck in a supporting role. We say it's time they grabbed the spotlight

text by JESSE SPARKS • recipes by ANDY BARAGHANI • photographs by ALEX LAU



SCALLION PANCAKES
WITH CHILI-GINGER
DIPPING SAUCE
P. 66





PERHAPS YOU'VE NOTICED THE CRAZE: Swarms of chefs going AWOL to forage for ramps. Farmers market goers elbowing each other to get to the piles of bulbs and greens. What's all the fuss? Alliums bring complexity and backbone to pretty much everything they touch. And when they're in season, the bounty of produce arriving at your local farmers market will be significantly better than the stuff you're used to seeing at the grocery store. This spring we're getting up close and personal with these fragrant vegetables. Charring leeks until they're smoky-sweet. Slow-roasting green garlic until jammy and tender. These recipes make the case: Alliums are worth the hype.

Scallion Pancakes With Chili-Ginger Dipping Sauce

4 SERVINGS These pancakes get their light texture from a batter made with club soda. Pressing hard on them when frying makes them crisp.

SAUCE

- 1 ½" piece ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tsp. chili oil
- 1 tsp. sugar

PANCAKES AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 tsp. sugar
- 1 cup chilled club soda
- 2 tsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 10 scallions, thinly sliced on a diagonal (about 2 cups)
- 4 Tbsp. vegetable oil

SAUCE Whisk ginger, soy sauce, vinegar, chili oil, and sugar in a small bowl until sugar is dissolved. Set sauce aside.

PANCAKES AND ASSEMBLY Whisk flour, cornstarch, salt, and sugar in a large bowl. Whisk club soda, soy sauce, and sesame oil in a medium bowl to combine, then pour into dry ingredients and whisk until smooth (be careful not to overmix; it's okay if there are a few small lumps). Fold in scallions.

Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium-high. Pour ¼ cup batter into skillet. Cook, moving pan around on the burner for even cooking, until bottom of pancake is set and golden, about 2 minutes. Flip and cook, pressing down on pancake to create direct contact with pan, until other side is golden, about 1 minute. Continue cooking, turning often to keep scallions from burning, until golden brown and

crisp and cooked through, about 5 minutes longer. Transfer pancake to a wire rack. Repeat process with remaining batter and remaining 3 Tbsp. oil 3 more times to make a total of 4 pancakes.

Cut each pancake into wedges if desired and serve with reserved sauce on the side for dipping.

Charred Leeks With Honey and Vinegar

4 SERVINGS Don't be afraid to take the leeks to the point where they almost look burnt. A well-charred exterior means the interiors will be creamy, soft, silky, and delightfully sweet.

- 4 medium leeks (about 2½ lb.), white and pale green parts only, tough outer layers removed (root ends left intact)
- 2 Tbsp. sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. honey
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

Prepare a grill for high heat. Rinse off any sand and dirt from leeks and pat dry. Arrange directly on grate (no need to oil) and grill, turning every few minutes with tongs, until outsides are completely blackened (leeks should start to soften and may begin to release some juices), 12–16 minutes.

Transfer leeks to a cutting board and let rest 10 minutes (the interiors will continue to steam and get even softer as they cool).

While the leeks are resting, whisk vinegar and honey in a small bowl until honey dissolves. Set dressing aside.

Cut leeks on a diagonal into 1½"–2" pieces. Transfer to a medium bowl and toss with 2 Tbsp. oil; season with salt.

Transfer leeks to a platter and spoon reserved dressing over. Drizzle with more oil and season with pepper.



WHAT EVEN IS AN ALLIUM?

Onions and garlic: sure. But there are more. Here's who gets the lucky moniker allium—and what to do with them.

LEEKS

Ah, the gentle giants of the allium clan. Look for long white bulbs and stalks with green leaves. Roast or braise them with your next chicken.

GREEN GARLIC

Think of green garlic—which often has purple-tinged stalks and flat leaves—as garlic's milder sibling. It steals the show in dressings.

SCALLIONS

They shine year-round. Grill them, toss into fried rice, nestle into frittatas, or whip up a sauce by sizzling sliced scallions and minced ginger in oil and finishing with soy sauce.

RAMPS

Foraging fanatics freak when these wild leeks pop up. Whir the greens into a pesto or sauté the bulbs and greens in butter with breadcrumbs.

SPRING ONIONS

Slice these sweet and mild onions into rounds, then scatter them over a sad salad to make it, well, happy. Look for firm white bulbs with sturdy greens that stand upright.

GARLIC

You already know about the goodness of garlic (you do watch *It's Alive*, after all). Grab a head and give it a sniff. Good garlic smells earthy. A garlicky aroma is a sign of bruising.



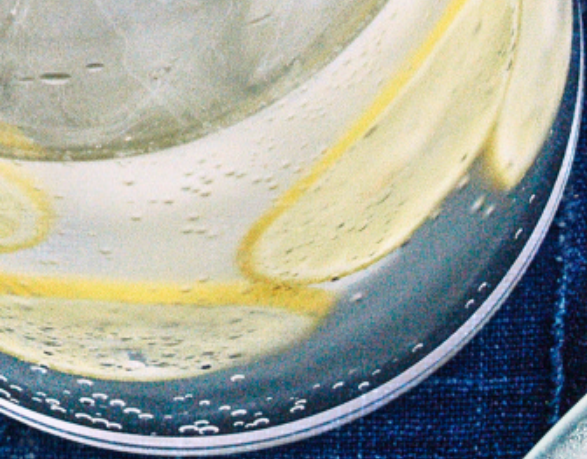
CHARRED LEEKS
WITH HONEY AND
VINEGAR

TRUST THE CHAR

Want to take your leeks to the next level? Start by cranking up the heat.



Leeks thrive when charred until dark and crisp. A stint over high heat turns their insides tender and sweet, getting rid of any harsh bitterness—just toss them into a dry cast-iron skillet or onto a grill whole. Once they're off the heat, let them rest. Like that last bit of sleep after your alarm goes off, those minutes make a difference; they give the leeks time to fully steam inside and get creamy-tender. And don't stop there: Try the same technique with scallions, ramps, or spring onions. The world is your onion!



SHRIMP RAMP-Y
P. 70



RAMEN NOODLES
WITH SPRING ONIONS
AND GARLIC CRISP
P. 70



Green-Garlic-Rubbed Buttery Roast Chicken

4 SERVINGS Roasting a whole chicken quickly at high heat is optimal for the crispiest skin but risks overcooking the meat. This method of going low and slow is much gentler on the meat, keeping it juicy yet shreddable underneath skin that crackles.

- 1 3½–4-lb. whole chicken, patted dry
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 8 green garlic stalks, dark green tops removed, divided
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Season chicken all over inside and out with salt and pepper (make sure to get in and around every nook and cranny; about 4 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 2½ tsp. Morton kosher salt). Place on a wire rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet and let sit at room temperature while you make the garlic butter, or chill, uncovered, up to 1 day. If chilling, let sit at room temperature 1 hour before roasting.

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Coarsely chop 4 green garlic stalks; transfer to a food processor. Pulse until very finely chopped. Add zest and butter and pulse until almost smooth. Cut remaining 4 green garlic stalks in half lengthwise; set aside.

Pat chicken dry again with paper towels (this will help the butter adhere and get the skin nicely browned). Smear garlic butter all over chicken. Gently lift the skin on the breast away from the flesh and rub some butter inside.

Toss reserved green garlic and oil in a large cast-iron skillet or 13x9" baking dish to coat; season with salt. Tie chicken legs together with kitchen twine and tuck wings underneath back. Place chicken, breast side up, on top of garlic in skillet.

Roast chicken, rotating pan halfway through for even browning, until skin is golden and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of breast

registers 155° (don't worry; temperature will climb to 165° as the chicken rests), 80–90 minutes. Let chicken rest at least 20 minutes and up to 45 minutes.

Transfer chicken to a cutting board and carve as desired. Serve with roasted green garlic alongside.

Shrimp Ramp-y

4 SERVINGS The combination of garlic and ramps may seem like overkill, but we promise it's not. The garlic will mellow as it cooks while the ramps stay pungent.

- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 bunch ramps (about 6 oz.), bulbs and greens separated, bulbs halved lengthwise, greens torn into 2"–3" pieces
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ½ tsp. mild red pepper flakes (such as Maras, Urfa, or Aleppo-style), plus more for serving
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1¼ lb. large shrimp, peeled, deveined, preferably tails left on
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- Kosher salt
- ½ lemon

Combine 3 Tbsp. oil and ramp bulbs in a large skillet. Set over medium heat and cook, tossing occasionally, until bulbs are softened but have not taken on any color, 6–8 minutes. Add garlic and ½ tsp. mild red pepper flakes and cook, tossing occasionally, until garlic is softened, about 3 minutes. Add wine and increase heat to medium-high. Let cook, stirring occasionally, until wine is reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Add ramp greens, shrimp, and butter to pan. Season with salt and cook, tossing occasionally, until ramp greens are wilted, shrimp turn pink, and butter is melted, about 3 minutes. Remove skillet from heat. Finely grate zest from lemon half over shrimp, then squeeze in juice.

Transfer shrimp to a platter. Sprinkle with more mild red pepper flakes and drizzle with plenty of oil.

Ramen Noodles With Spring Onions and Garlic Crisp

4 SERVINGS A slight twist on scallion noodles: the same savory, lip-smacking flavor but now with a lot of texture from the crunchy, spicy garlic topping.

- 1 bunch spring onions or scallions, very thinly sliced, divided
- 1 3" piece ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ½ cup vegetable or sunflower oil
- ½ serrano or other green chile, thinly sliced (with seeds)
- ¼ cup finely chopped tender herbs (such as cilantro, mint, and/or basil)
- 2 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. toasted sesame seeds
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 2 5-oz. packages fresh wavy ramen noodles
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into pieces

Place half of spring onions in a large heatproof bowl and set a fine-mesh sieve on top; set aside. Combine remaining spring onions with ginger, garlic, and oil in a small saucepan. Set over medium-high and cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is golden and scallions are beginning to crisp and turn golden brown, 8–10 minutes.

Pour mixture through reserved sieve onto spring onions. Turn out garlic crisp in sieve onto paper towels to drain. Stir spring onions in bowl until just softened, about 1 minute. Stir in chile, herbs, soy sauce, vinegar, sesame seeds, pepper, salt, and sugar. Let dressing sit 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook noodles according to package directions. Drain and rinse under warm water to get rid of any excess starch.

Transfer noodles to bowl with dressing and add butter and half of garlic crisp; toss to coat noodles. Divide among bowls; top with remaining garlic crisp.

SHOW THEIR SOFTER SIDES

The key to coaxing flavor out of these guys and mellowing their harshness? Fat.



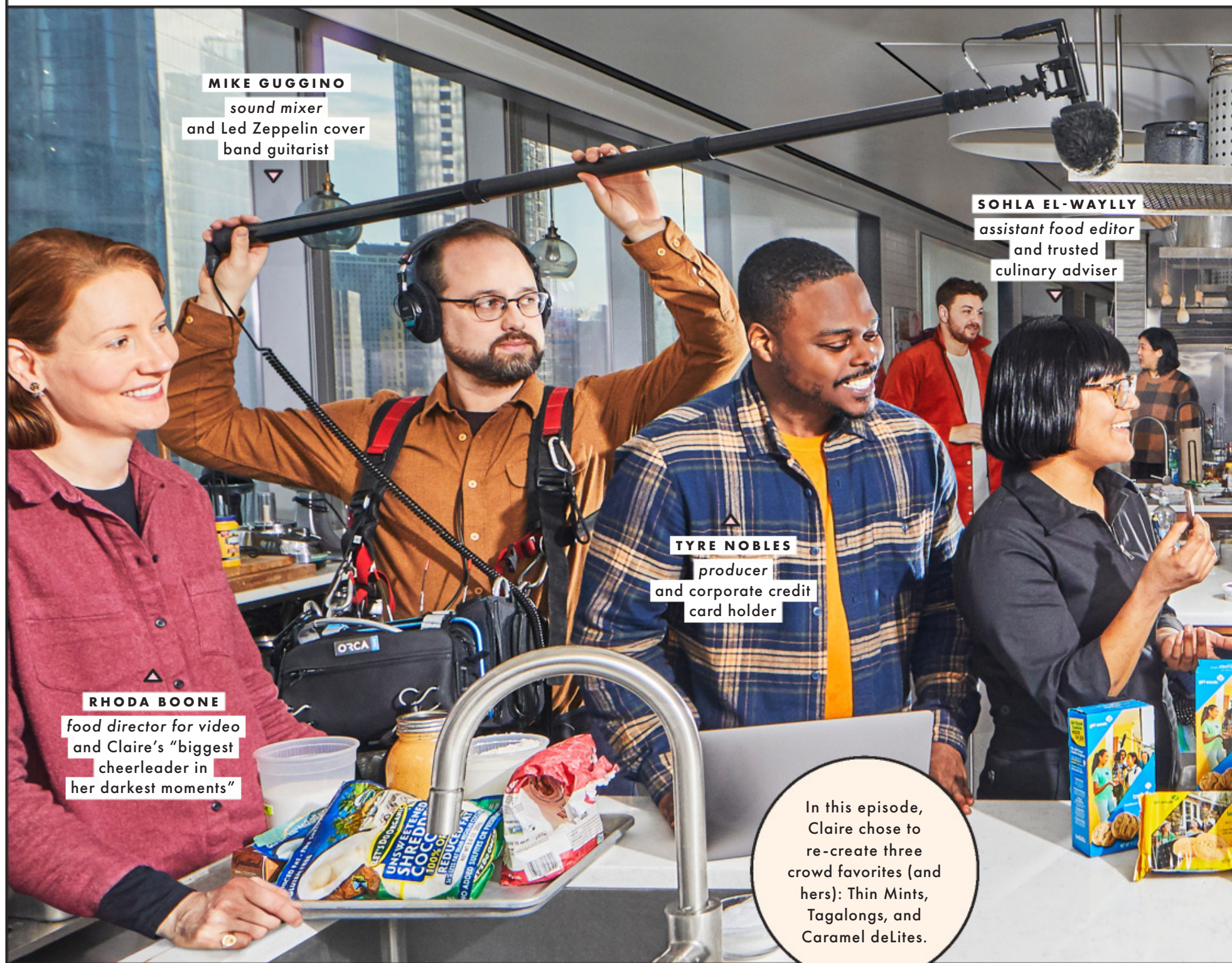
Kind of like Batman and Robin, Oprah and Gayle, Whoopi Goldberg and Lauryn Hill in *Sister Act 2* (have we made our point?), alliums and fat are simply better together. Butter and olive oil round out garlic and onions' edges, while also distributing their flavor throughout the entire dish. That's why we turn green garlic into a verdant butter to rub on roast chicken (see recipe above), why we simmer ginger, garlic, and spring onions in oil with serrano chile for a warming sauce to drizzle over noodles, and why we roast spring onions in an olive oil bath for an easy side.



GREEN-GARLIC-RUBBED
BUTTERY ROAST
CHICKEN



How the Video Gets M



MIKE GUGGINO
sound mixer
and Led Zeppelin cover
band guitarist

SOHLA EL-WAYLLY
assistant food editor
and trusted
culinary adviser

TYRE NOBLES
producer
and corporate credit
card holder

RHODA BOONE
food director for video
and Claire's "biggest
cheerleader in
her darkest moments"

In this episode,
Claire chose to
re-create three
crowd favorites (and
hers): Thin Mints,
Tagalongs, and
Caramel delites.

A FEW THINGS CLAIRE WOULD LIKE TO CLEAR UP

"We're not sponsored
by companies that make
snack foods. We do
eat the leftovers (there's an
office Slack channel
about it). And I'm not here
against my will."



Where to Find the Citric Acid

There's a cabinet in the test kitchen that
holds the **Gourmet Makes** pantry, which contains
necessities such as: tomato powder (Doritos,
Combos, Hot Pockets), four types of coconut oil
(Almond Joy, Sno Balls), citric acid (for the
sour coating on Warheads), and two types
of cocoa powder (black cocoa for Thin Mints
and regular for Tagalongs).

212

MILLION

THE TOTAL NUMBER
OF VIEWS OF
GOURMET MAKES
SO FAR—AND
THE POPULATION
OF BRAZIL.

Three years ago, BA's Claire Saffitz started re-creating snack foods on YouTube. And you guys, uh, got into it. We went behind the scenes of her breakout series, **GOURMET MAKES**, and learned a few things that surprised even us

EPISODE 39
 "Girl Scout Cookies"
 AIR DATE
 March 17, 2020
 DIFFICULTY LEVEL
 Too Easy for Claire



Editors are always at work in the background. Filming continues even when things get loud, like the whir of a blender or the clang of a stockpot.

KEVIN DYNIA
 director of cinematography
 and pro wrestling superfan

CLAIRE SAFFITZ
 host
 and patron saint of perseverance

DAN SIEGEL
 director
 and No. 1 Claire wrangler


 Watch this episode at bonappetit.com/gourmetmakes

The Gourmet Makes Museum

Some of Claire's makeshift tools are on display by the video team's offices: the **Mentos-drying "torture device"** made of toothpicks in a foam board, **molds for Oreos**, and now, a hand-painted **Girl Scout sash** with a patch, "Cookie Diva," that she made for this episode.



4 Things You Don't See Onscreen



CLAIRE'S COFFEE
 It's hidden behind the stack of cookie boxes. One time she wedged it into a jelly bean container.



THE DOWNTIME
 While the dough is chilling, the crew plans what kitchen tool they'd use in a zombie apocalypse.



CULINARY ASSISTANTS
 They're standing on the sidelines, ready to grab some cornstarch at a moment's notice.



BURRITOS!
 This crew takes their lunch break seriously. People gotta eat something other than cookies.



text by MOLLY BAZ
photographs by ALEX LAU

He may be America's most uncompromising Italian food fanatic, but **EVAN FUNKE** sure knows how to coax the flavor out of a few spring vegetables and a box of spaghetti



If there's one fact that best defines Evan Funke, it's this: His literal job is to make pasta, but he refuses to eat the stuff in America.

His fear, he says, is that American pasta might sully his sensory recall of the revelatory pasta-eating experiences he's had in Italy. And for the chef-owner of L.A.'s handmade-pasta temple, **FELIX TRATTORIA**, that's simply not acceptable.

Funke is a man obsessed, on a self-assigned lifelong mission to save obscure pasta shapes from the brink of extinction. It all began 13 years ago with an apprenticeship in Bologna, where he worked alongside pasta maestra Alessandra Spisni. Since then he has returned to Italy twice a year to find small-town sfoglino, or pasta makers, each of whom has perfected one particular passed-down-through-the-generations shape. He documents their anthropology, masters their technique, and brings each shape back to L.A. with him, from floppy diamonds of testaroli to ruffled squares of quadrefiore. In fact, no pasta shall grace the menu at Felix if it hasn't been physically taught to Funke by the hands of a native Italian.

Which is to say, I was a bit intimidated when I flew out to L.A. to meet Funke—especially since I had gone to ask him for five regular old store-bought dried pasta recipes that one

could easily make at home. Walking past the glass-walled pasta laboratory and catching a glimpse of a plaque that read "F*#% Your Pasta Machine," I was worried that when he heard my request he might throw a vat of perfectly salted pasta water straight at my face.

But no! Turns out Funke is nearly as enthusiastic about cooking dried pasta (as long as it's very good dried pasta—made in Italy, of course) as he is the fresh stuff. And though his meticulousness may be slightly maniacal, he's also pretty down-to-earth. Over the two days we spent together, he enlightened me, surprised me, humbled me, and proved to me that with a little finesse, a lot of respect, and adherence to the five simple rules you'll find on the following pages, even dried pasta has the potential to transcend.



3 Dried Pasta Brands That Funke Can Dig

The sauces in these recipes are designed to highlight excellent pasta. So your first ingredient should be, well, excellent pasta.

RUSTICHELLA D'ABRUZZO

When you're on the hunt for those obscure, lesser-known shapes, look no further than this nearly century-old brand, which started in Penne, Italy, in 1924. (\$10 for 17.5 oz.; casarustichellain.com)

MOLINI DEL PONTE

Funke spent some time in Castelvetrano, Italy, with the guy who makes this stuff, using an ancient grain called tumminia. Twisty busiate is Funke's preferred shape; he likes to pair it with pesto. (\$15 for 17.6 oz.; gustiamo.com)

GAROFALO

Born back in 1789 in Gragnano, Italy, where natural spring water flows and the climatic conditions are apparently ideal for drying pasta (legit!), this brand has mastered the art of texture at an accessible price point. (\$5 for 16 oz.; eataly.com)

SEIZE THE SEASON

Your pasta is only as delicious as the ingredients with which you pair it. Create sauces from local vegetables that have lived happy lives. In late summer, fat juicy Sun Gold tomatoes with a bit of garlic and olive oil are all you need for a perfect spaghetti sauce. In the dead of winter, toss hardy greens through cheesy baked ziti. And come spring? Blanch shelled fresh English peas in pasta water to bring out their peak-season sweetness.



TAGLIATELLE
WITH PROSCIUTTO
AND PEAS
P. 79

DRESS IT, DON'T DROWN IT

The glory of pasta, Funke taught me, should be the pasta, not the sauce. Turns out I've been oversaucing all my life! But from here on out I'll be wearing a bracelet that reminds me: D.I.D.D.I. Sauce should celebrate the craftsmanship of pasta rather than try to steal the spotlight. The citrusy olive oil sauce that naps on these noodles does just that, bringing out the spaghetti's limber, delicate nature. "Coco Chanel that s**t," Funke says. "She was all about restraint."



▽
SPAGHETTI
AL LIMONE WITH
ASPARAGUS

Spaghetti al Limone With Asparagus

4 SERVINGS Do your best to thinly slice the asparagus on a deep diagonal so that it bends and twirls around your fork just as easily as the spaghetti does.

- 1 lb. spaghetti
- Kosher salt
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large bunch asparagus, trimmed, thinly sliced on a deep diagonal
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 4 3"-long strips lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 8 large basil leaves
- 2 lemons, halved
- 2 oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about 1 cup), plus more for serving

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain pasta, reserving $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups pasta cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high until shimmering. Add asparagus, season with salt, and cook, stirring often, until just beginning to take on color, about 1 minute. Add garlic, lemon zest, and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Remove from heat and let sit until pasta is done.

Add pasta and basil to pot with asparagus mixture and return to medium-high heat. Squeeze juice from both lemons into pot and add 2 oz. Parmesan and 1 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid. Cook, tossing vigorously and adding more pasta cooking liquid if needed, until sauce is creamy and emulsified and pasta is coated, about 1 minute. Taste and season with more salt if needed. Remove and discard garlic.

Divide pasta among bowls, placing a lemon strip in each, and top with more Parmesan.

Tagliatelle With Prosciutto and Peas

4 SERVINGS If they're in season, look for fresh peas. And if not, there is no shame in using frozen—it's one of the few frozen vegetables we can get behind.

- 1 lb. tagliatelle
- Kosher salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups shelled fresh peas (from about $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. pods) or frozen peas

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 6 oz. prosciutto, thinly sliced (about 12 slices)
- 16 sage leaves
- 2 oz. Parmesan, finely grated (about 1 cup), plus more for serving

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally and adding peas about 2 minutes before pasta is done, until al dente. Drain pasta and peas, reserving $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups pasta cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, heat butter in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium until frothy. Tear prosciutto slices into bite-size pieces and add to pot along with sage. Cook, stirring occasionally, until prosciutto is golden brown and beginning to crisp, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and let sit until pasta is done.

Add pasta, peas, 2 oz. Parmesan, and 1 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid to pot with prosciutto and return to medium heat. Cook, tossing vigorously and adding more pasta cooking liquid if needed, until saucy and pasta is coated, about 30 seconds. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

Divide pasta among bowls and top with more Parmesan.

Fusilli With Battuto di Erbe

4 SERVINGS This pasta recipe, which evokes the flavors of wild herbs that grow on the hillsides around Bologna, is a great way to use up any leftover herbs and greens in your fridge—use as many or as few as you'd like.

- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 garlic clove, smashed
- 1 oz. mixed hardy herb leaves (such as rosemary, sage, thyme, and/or marjoram; about 1 heaping cup)
- 1 tsp. fennel pollen (optional)
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- 7 oz. tender spring greens (such as arugula, dandelion, and/or broccoli rabe leaves; about 5 cups)
- 5 oz. mixed tender herb leaves (such as mint, basil, lovage, celery leaves, and/or parsley; about 6 cups)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 1 lb. fusilli (spiral-shaped pasta)
- Piave cheese (for serving)

Heat $\frac{3}{4}$ cup oil in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium until shimmering. Add garlic, hardy herbs, fennel pollen (if using), and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring often, until oil around garlic starts to sizzle slightly and garlic begins to turn golden brown, about 2 minutes (be careful when you add the garlic as the oil may spatter). Add spring greens and tender herbs and season with a couple pinches of salt. Cook, stirring often, until greens and herbs are wilted and bright green, about 2 minutes. Scrape herb mixture onto a rimmed baking sheet; spread out and let cool slightly. Reserve pot.

Transfer herb mixture to a blender or food processor and add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil; blend on high speed until you have a coarse purée. Taste pesto and season with more salt if needed.

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain pasta, reserving 1 cup pasta cooking liquid.

Scrape pesto back into reserved pot and add pasta and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pasta cooking liquid. Set over medium-low heat and cook, tossing vigorously and adding more pasta cooking liquid if needed, until warmed through and pasta is coated (do not let pesto come to a boil), about 1 minute. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

Divide pasta among bowls. Using a mandoline or vegetable peeler, shave cheese over pasta.

DO AHEAD: Pesto can be made 1 day ahead. Transfer to a bowl set in a larger bowl of ice water and let cool. Remove bowl with pesto from water; cover tightly and chill.

READ ON!

Want to learn more about handmade pasta? Grab Funke's cookbook, *American Sfogolino* (\$23; amazon.com).



IS IT WORTH IT? WORK IT!

The secret to Funke's supremely creamy (yet creamless!) sauces? Vigorously stirring the pasta with a wooden spoon as soon as it hits the sauce. This coaxes out the starch and helps the noodles bind with whatever fat you're using to create, as he says, a truly "groovy" dish.

The method transforms this simple guanciale fat and hot water emulsion into glossy perfection.



▽
BUCATINI
ALLA GRICCIA
WITH
FAVA BEANS
P. 82



▼
FUSILLI WITH
BATTUTO DI ERBE
P. 79

RESPECT YOUR ELDERS

Through trial and error, generations of sfoglini have established perfect shape and sauce pairings. So don't just go willy-nilly!

It's all about viscosity: Thicker sauces crave wide, flat noodles with plenty of surface area, while thinner sauces go best with nooks and crannies in which to catch and linger. Here fusilli is an ideal magnet for the fine texture of herby spring batutto.

Bucatini Alla Gricia With Fava Beans

4 SERVINGS Think of this as carbonara minus the eggs but still with massive amounts of flavor from guanciale, black pepper, and Pecorino.

- 1 Tbsp. black peppercorns
- 8 oz. guanciale (salt-cured pork jowl)
- 1 ¾ cups fresh fava beans (from about 1 ¾ lb. pods) or frozen fava beans
- Kosher salt
- 1 lb. bucatini
- 2 oz. Pecorino Romano, finely grated (about 1 cup), plus more for serving
- Freshly ground black pepper

Place peppercorns in a bag, close, and coarsely crush with a rolling pin or heavy skillet (alternatively, you can crush them directly on a cutting board set inside a large rimmed baking sheet). Slice guanciale into ¼"-thick slabs, then slice slabs crosswise into ¼"-thick matchsticks.

If using fresh fava beans, cook in a large pot of boiling salted water until just tender (the best way to gauge doneness is to check one; be sure to slip it from its skin before tasting!), about 3 minutes. Using a spider or slotted spoon, transfer to a bowl of ice water; let cool. Drain and peel away outer skin from each bean; discard skins. Reserve pot with boiling water for cooking pasta.

Place guanciale in a dry large Dutch oven or other heavy pot and set over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until golden brown and crisp, about 5 minutes. Add crushed peppercorns and stir once to combine. Add 1 cup hot tap water (using pasta cooking liquid here could make the dish too salty) and bring to a boil. Remove pot from heat and stir mixture aggressively to emulsify. Let sit until pasta is done.

Return reserved pot of water to a boil and cook pasta, stirring occasionally (if using frozen fava beans, add about 2 minutes before pasta is done), until al dente. Drain pasta and fava beans.

Add pasta, fava beans, and 2 oz. Pecorino to pot with guanciale and set over medium-low heat. Cook, stirring vigorously and adding more hot tap water if needed, until saucy and pasta is coated, about 2 minutes.

Divide pasta among bowls and top with more Pecorino and ground pepper.

Rigatoni With Fennel and Anchovies

4 SERVINGS Something truly magical happens when fennel, garlic, and anchovies get caramelized together in olive oil, then paired with citrus zest. Even the firmest anchovy haters will agree.

- 3 large fennel bulbs (about 2 ½ lb.)
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 6 oil-packed anchovy fillets
- 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ½ cup (packed) mint leaves, plus more torn for serving
- 1 orange or tangerine
- 1 lemon
- 1 lb. rigatoni
- 3 oz. Pecorino Romano, finely grated (about 1 ½ cups)

Remove tough outer layers and fronds from fennel bulbs and discard. Working one at a time, cut bulbs lengthwise (through root ends) into quarters, remove cores, and slice quarters lengthwise into ½"-thick wedges.

Heat oil in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over high until shimmering. Add fennel to pot, arranging in as even a layer as possible. Season with salt and cook, undisturbed, until golden brown underneath and starting to soften, 6–8 minutes. Using tongs, turn fennel over and cook until golden brown on the other side, 6–8 minutes.

Reduce heat to low and add anchovies, garlic, red pepper flakes, and ½ cup mint to pot. Cook, stirring often, until anchovies are disintegrated and garlic is golden, about 2 minutes. Remove pot from heat and finely grate zest of orange and lemon directly into hot oil; stir well to evenly distribute. Cover pot to keep sauce warm and let sit until pasta is done.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until al dente. Drain pasta, reserving 1 ½ cups pasta cooking liquid.

Uncover sauce, add pasta and 1 cup reserved pasta cooking liquid, and set over medium-low heat. Add Pecorino and cook, tossing vigorously and adding more pasta cooking liquid if needed, until sauce is emulsified and pasta is coated, about 2 minutes.

Divide pasta among bowls and top with torn mint.

Rescued From Obscurity

You probably won't find these rare Italian pasta shapes at your local grocery store. But if Funke has his way, they'll never be forgotten. (Funke even has a new docuseries, "Shape of Pasta," on his quest to re-create endangered varieties. Find it on the Quibi app starting April 6.)



ORECCHIETTE ALLA PUGLIESE

Though orecchiette (a.k.a. little ears) is now a widespread pasta shape, Funke believes that the highly coveted and precise version made in Bari Vecchia by a sfoglina named Nunzia Caputo is unparalleled. She is known for her machinelike precision and unrivaled speed, churning out perfectly consistent handmade orecchiette at a rate of 60–70 RPM.



TESTAROLI

Way back when (we're talking Etruscan times), this crepelike batter of wheat and water was cooked over hot rocks, rolled flat, and cut into diamond shapes in a town called Pontremoli—pasta's ground zero. Today only a few people in the world still practice the craft, including Funke.



STRAPPATELLE

This Umbrian specialty comes from small torn pieces of bread dough and looks a lot like gnocchi when cooked, though the texture is more like pizza dough. Funke learned to make it in 2010 from a woman he says was the last in Italy to produce the shape. She's since passed away, leaving Funke as keeper of her technique.



SALT IT LIKE SOUP—NOT THE SEA

For BA's biggest sodium fan (me), this rule was particularly difficult to stomach.

But Funke is adamant: When salting pasta water, think soup, not the sea. Because soup is delicious, and sea water is...not. Two tablespoons of kosher to three quarts of water should do it. Especially when your sauce is already salty. Helloooo, anchovies!

▽
RIGATONI WITH
FENNEL
AND ANCHOVIES

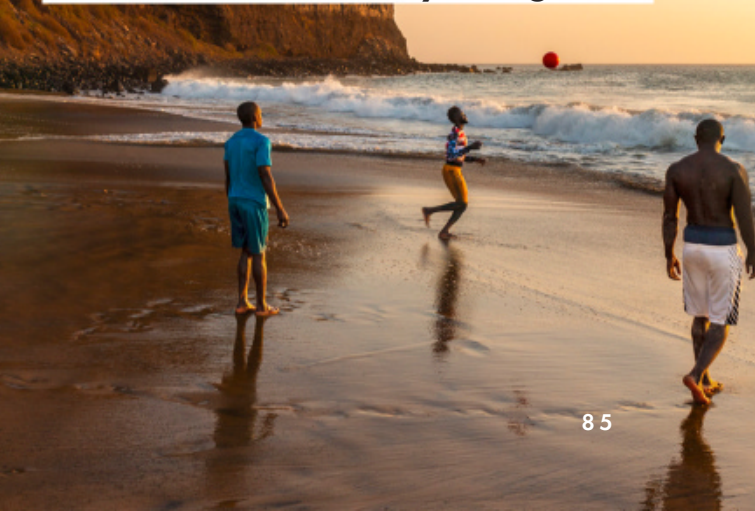
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

♦ A great day for surfing ♦ Vibes at **Chez Loutcha** ♦ The tea ceremony known as attaya ♦ Chez Loutcha's sausage-and-bean stew ♦ Doesn't it look fun at **La Pointe?** ♦ Don't miss **Plage des Mamelles** and its lighthouse ♦ Whole fish is better by the water ♦ Breaking up the seafood with a hot dog snack ♦ All of the uni ♦ It's called **Surfer Paradise** for a reason





Equal parts sleepy beach town, cosmopolitan metropolis, and creative enclave, Senegal's coastal food capital of **DAKAR** is as dynamic as it is delicious. Let born-and-bred chef **PIERRE THIAM** be your guide





THERE'S A TERM THAT DESCRIBES the culture of hospitality you'll find in Dakar: *teranga*. This sense of warmth and welcoming is ingrained into the city. It's why you can feast on heaping platters of *thieboudienne*, a West African staple of ruby-red tomato rice topped with hunks of fresh-caught fish, and still be offered more. You can find deeply satisfying meals in even the most unassuming places, like an art gallery by the airport or an apartment given a second life doling out golden plantains. You can meet restaurant owners so friendly and inviting that they join your table to pour tastes from their private reserves of *grog*, a pungent riff on Portuguese moonshine. You can sip crisp beers on rocky beaches while devouring platters of steamed clams and salted fish at sunset, then dance to jazz music till daybreak. Dakar's emphasis on hospitality weathered centuries of British and French colonization. In the years following, the city became a hub for Vietnamese and Lebanese communities who had been displaced by European rule, giving it a distinctly multicultural edge. Dakar, my hometown, is where I learned to cherish afternoon tea ceremonies, where I spent countless nights at restaurants that turned into dance parties, grabbing lamb skewers still hot from the grill at street vendors along the route home. Eventually I built a life in New York City running my restaurant, which captures the spirit of Senegalese cooking, named—what else?—*Teranga*. But I still try to return to Dakar every April, after the blistering heat subsides but before the torrential downpours arrive. There's no better time to come home. —AS TOLD TO JESSE SPARKS

Want to get a taste of West Africa without having to buy a plane ticket? Check out Thiam's NYC restaurant, *Teranga*, or one of his three cookbooks: *Senegal*, *The Fonio Cookbook*, and *Yolélé*.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Shellfish by the Beach

Along the rock-lined shore of Dakar's western coast sits a collection of shacks and food stalls known as **La Pointe**, slinging big portions of seafood just plucked from the water. Order from multiple stands: steamed clams, buttery uni, grilled grouper bundled in newspapers, plus big spoonfuls of cassava and couscous. Head to the communal tables, or take your food to the beach's large rocks for an even better view.

Ride the Wave

I may not be a big surfer, but Dakar's surfing culture is undeniable. And with the hype comes popular beachside shops like **Surfer Paradise** and hangouts like **Secret Spot** (pictured). While lots of people once considered surfing a sport for white people, I'm excited about how it's becoming more and more democratized.

Family Meal

Nothing captures the warmth of Dakar like sharing a platter of thieboudienne, tomatoey rice flecked with carrots, cassava, and pieces of fish. It's frequently served in homes, as pictured here, but it's also widely accessible at restaurants and hotels. I recommend *Le Thiof* (see page 89).



Skewers for the Squad

A stall located in the center of Sandaga, one of the city's most vibrant neighborhoods, **Bante Yi** is always a hub of activity with tourists, clubbers, and people working late. They're all filing into the same line for the stall's specialty: dibi, or grilled meats like offal and lamb rubbed in a fiery peanutty spice mixture called souya.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT,
TOP TO BOTTOM:

Keep It Fresh

When the food on a whirlwind tour of restaurants starts to feel a little too rich, you'll want to order a cup of fresh and floral hibiscus juice (pictured) or tart baobab juice. While you can find both throughout the city, I'm keen on **La Calebasse's** not-too-sweet approach to baobab.

Get the Cachupa

Don't be discouraged by the unrelenting crowds spilling out of the nondescript apartment building that houses **Chez Loutcha**. The cachupa, or peppery sausage-and-bean stew, at this Senegalese-meets-Cape Verdean restaurant is worth the wait.

Wine and Dine

When I come back to Dakar, **La Cave** is where I relax. It's a French wine bar with an extensive array of bottles plus charcuterie, cured fish, and sardines. Its deep European wine reserves are a nod to Dakar's colonial past, but its diverse clientele and unpretentious, laid-back vibes plant it firmly in the present.

A Sports Bar With Soul

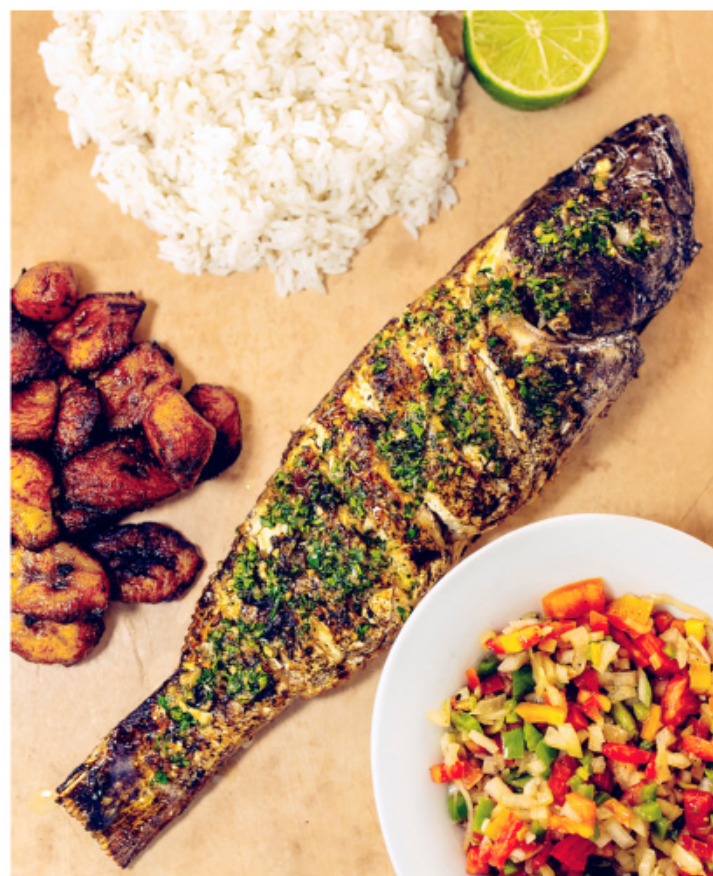
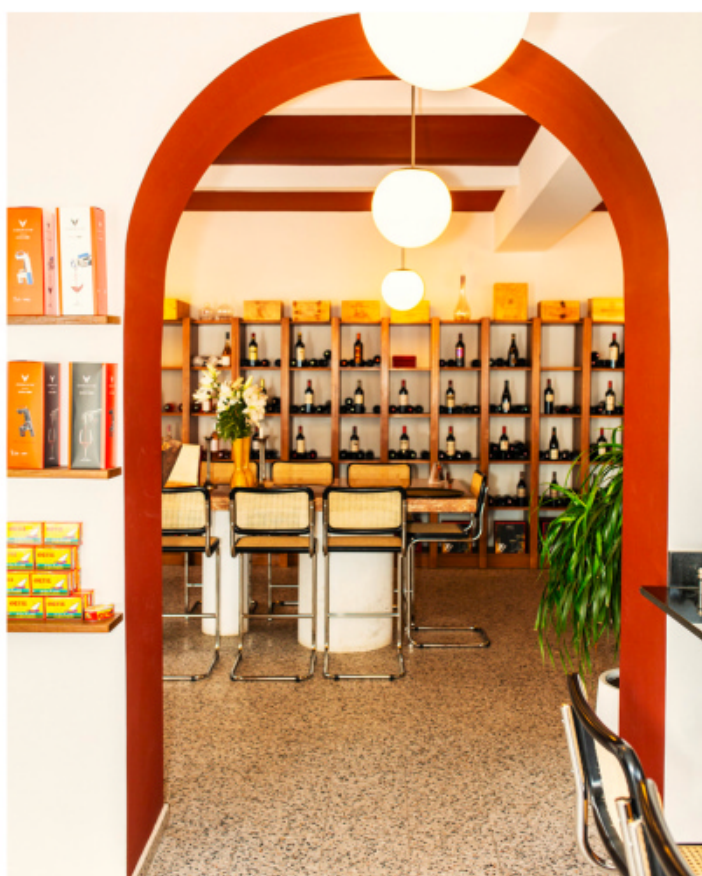
When she opened her bar in the summer of 1988 during the Seoul Olympics, Therese Mendy adopted that city's name for her business. Now its second iteration, **Seoul 2**, has become a neighborhood cornerstone known for playing international sports on mounted televisions, barbecuing hulking cuts of lamb and pork, and pouring regional beers (my go-tos are Gazelle, a pale lager brewed in Dakar, and Star, an amber lager brewed in Nigeria).

Banana Break

Stroll the shores at **Plage Pointe des Almadies** and you're sure to run into groups of fruit sellers offering whatever they have in stock. Grab a banana and spend a lazy day on the water.

The Big Catch

The white stucco walls and stark blue lighting of **Le Thiof** may channel a dinner in the Mediterranean, but the food will ground you here in Dakar. Order the thiof braisé—smoky grilled grouper with plantains and rice (pictured)—or the millet risotto capped with smoked fish.





good food. good health. good vibes.

healthyish

A BON APPÉTIT BRAND



STEP-BY-
STEPS

basically

Almost everything you need to know (and nothing you don't)



TIPS &
TRICKS

Bacon Bits

A motivational, inspirational
(and sure, instructional) guide to
breakfast's best supporting actor

by ALEX BEGGS



Bacon has nothing to do with Sir Francis (or Kevin).



Look for bacon that's almost equal parts white (fat) and pink (meat). That's the good stuff.

1

WAIT, WHAT IS BACON?

Bacon starts with fatty, wonderful pork belly, i.e., the meat from the underside of a pig. The belly gets cured (seasoned and left to rest for a week or two) with a dry rub of salt, sugar, and spices (the ol'-fashioned way) or a liquid injection (big producers). Then it's smoked for a few hours or days, sliced, and packaged. It keeps for around seven days in the fridge once it's been opened, more like five if it's from the butcher, or for months in the freezer.

2

If you want your mind blown, get thee to the butcher

Not only does butcher bacon usually have a deeper, more meaty-funky flavor, thanks to that dry rub, but it can also be sliced as hefty as you'd like. Quarter-inch-thick slabs you can grill and serve as an appetizer? Done! A single strip for a pot of soup? Fine. And if it's from a fancy-pants/nose-to-tail/sustainable butcher, the animal was likely treated better.



3

ALL THE TERMS, DECODED

Bacon packaging is crowded with a lot of marketing mumbo jumbo intended to make you think some is healthier than others. (It's not. It's bacon.) Let's take a closer look:

NATURALLY SMOKED

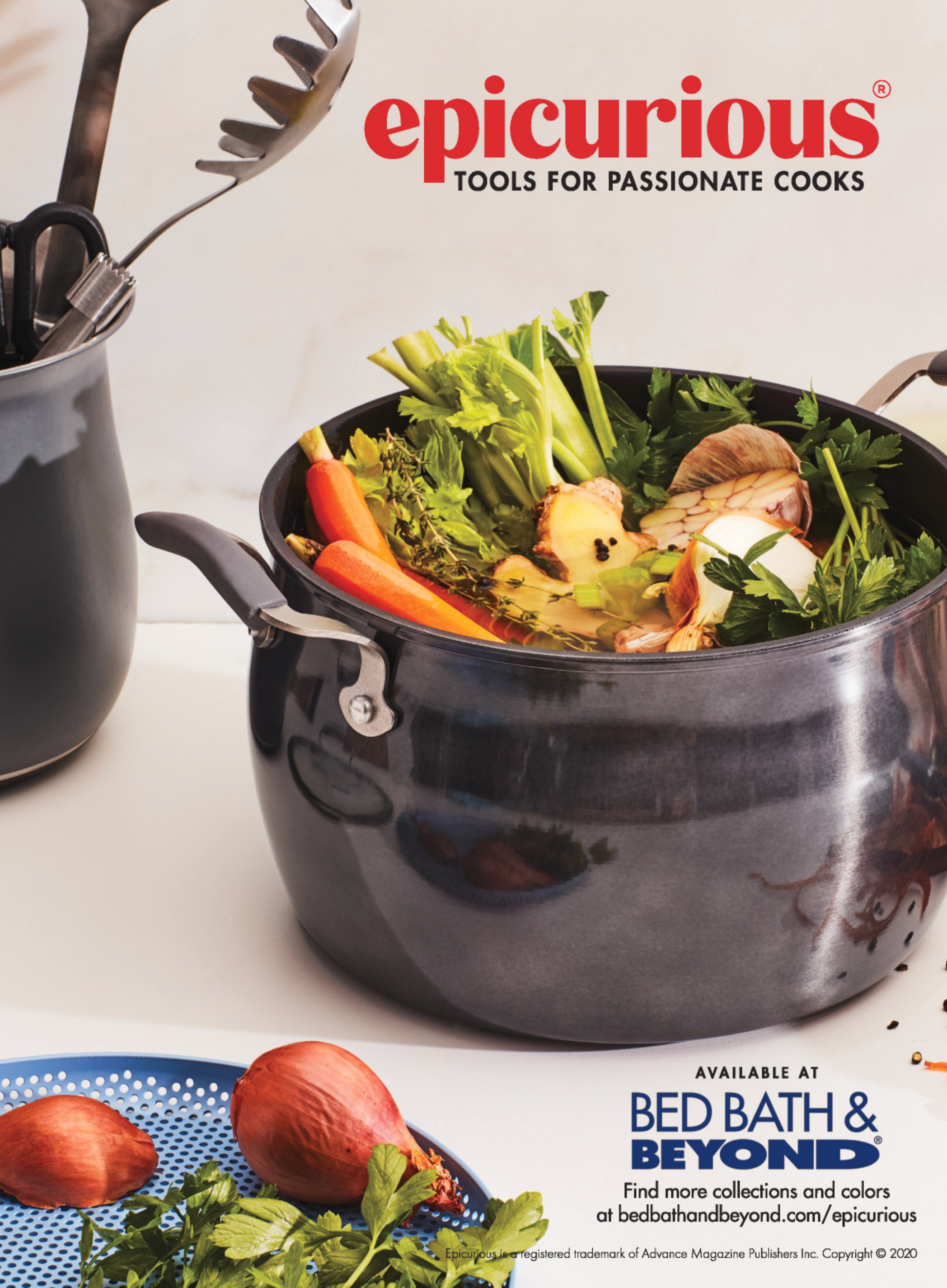
When packaging brags about applewood- or maplewood-smoked bacon, that's a good thing. Originally, the primary purpose of smoking was for preservation. Nowadays it's also a key factor in the bacon's flavor, as the wood lends a sweet-smoky aroma. Be on the lookout for ingredient lists that include "smoke flavoring" and pass them by: Flavor from actual wood always beats the fake stuff from a bottle.

UNCURED

Anything labeled straight-up "bacon" must legally contain sodium nitrite, which is added to preserve it, delay botulism, and create that fresh-looking pink color. Bacon with no added sodium nitrite must be sold as "uncured bacon." Confusingly, it's still cured, but with sea salt, celery powder, and a lactic acid starter culture. These ingredients work together to make...naturally occurring nitrites, which aren't superior.

THICK-CUT

Exactly what it sounds like. It's prime BLT material but never as steak house thick as what you can request at the butcher counter. Note: You'll need to cook this at a lower heat for slightly more time to ensure the bacon gets crispy rather than chewy. We like to bake it in the oven (see point 4), then brush it with maple syrup and throw it back in for five more minutes until glazed and caramelized. Serve with pancakes, hello!



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4

We endorse the oven method

The stove might be fine for a strip or three, but to make evenly cooked bacon for a crowd, turn on your oven. The slices get crispety-crisp and you won't have to dodge any spattering fat.

1

Preheat oven to 400°. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil. Distribute the bacon in a single layer.

2

Cook anywhere between 15–25 minutes, depending on the thickness of the bacon. Keep an eye on it and rotate the pan halfway through.

3

When you're at your desired state of crispiness, transfer bacon to paper towels and pour off fat to use later.



5

Save that fat

Leftover bacon fat is like a gourmet infused oil. Don't waste it when it's at your fingertips. Pour it into a jar and store in the fridge for, practically, ever. Use it to scramble eggs, fry bread, sauté onion, roast potatoes, sizzle chicken thighs, and burst cherry tomatoes.



Get the recipe at
bonappetit.com
/bacon-frisee-salad

6

BACON BELONGS IN VINAIGRETTE

Turn any salad into something you'd pay 17 euros for in a bistro. Slice **6 oz. thick-cut bacon** crosswise into $\frac{3}{4}$ "-thick pieces. Cook in a medium skillet over medium heat, stirring often, until just shy of crisp, about 5 minutes. Add **1 sliced shallot** and $\frac{1}{2}$ **tsp. freshly ground black pepper** and cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots are just softened, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ **cup red wine vinegar**, scraping the pan to collect all those browned bits. Stir in **1 Tbsp. honey**, then adjust acid and sweetness. Toss with frisée, chives, and croutons, then top with a poached egg. *Et voilà!*



OSCAR F. MAYER
Bacon Legend

7

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Bacon has been around for thousands of years. It was originally cured in salt as a way to preserve meat in a time before refrigerators. A British guy named John Harris found a way to crank up production with a wet-curing process still used today. Refrigeration came around and in 1924, Oscar Mayer became the first company to preslice and safely package it for retail sales. And now look where we are! Bacon paradise.

Now is the time to start listening.



Join the best writers in America
as they make sense of the world
and the people changing it.
Hosted by David Remnick.

THE NEW YORKER
RADIO HOUR
PODCAST

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Gotta get those dimples.
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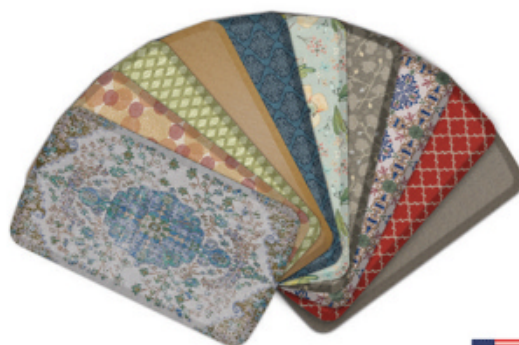
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Is It Ever Okay...to Kick Guests Out of Your House?

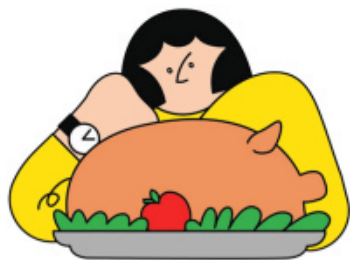
Solicited dinner party advice from **Alex Beggs**



How do you politely tell people to GTFO?

—TIRED TYRESE

Fall asleep on the couch like I do—works every time. Alternate technique: Smile and say, “Thank you guys sooo much for coming. I loved hearing that story about your coworker’s loud chewing. Unfortunately I have to wake up early tomorrow to [harmless lie],” then start clearing the table slowlyyy.



If people are running late, do I have to wait to serve dinner? At what point can the show go on without them?

—IMPATIENT IMOGENE

I’m assuming you padded in some cocktail hour cushion time before you planned to serve dinner, between 30 and 60 minutes. Anyone who’s 60-plus minutes late is unfashionably late. This isn’t the Vanity Fair Oscar Party with tiered entry times depending on how unfamous you are! Go ahead and serve the enchiladas.

It’s hard to host a thought-out dinner when you’re ballin’ on a budget. Can I request that my guests chip in cash?

—HUSTLING HUGO

Yes, but ONLY if you ask when you invite people over and not after the fact with a late-night Venmo request. Here’s your script: “I’m dying to cook an amazing elaborate dinner for you and [other names of mutual friends who’ll be there to set them at ease]. Are you free [date at least two weeks away]? The thing is, I have big dreams, but I’m on a budget, so I was wondering if you’d be willing to chip in \$10 to \$20 for groceries.” If they’re broke too, look up our \$50 dinner party series on bonappetit.com. Make the black-eyed-pea stew. It’s amazing.

What do I do if someone brings a guest who has a ton of dietary restrictions without giving me advance warning?

—UNPREPARED URSULA

Hey, there’s a lot you can do with a sweet potato! Plus they keep forever in a cool, dark place, which is where I want to go when a guest pulls this one on me. Otherwise all you have is honesty: “I’m sorry to hear you’re not eating nightshades right now, my good friend Tom Brady. But as it turns out, everything on tonight’s menu contains nightshades. Did you happen to bring anything?” Depending on your relationship and temperament, you can let them scrounge the pantry for a snack or you can let them suffer. Your house, your rules.



What’s the best move for hosting in a tiny apartment? Do I clear the room for one big folding table or eat picnic style? Does a couch count as appropriate seating?

—ITTY-BITTY ISABELLE

Depends on the mood you’re trying to set and how you feel about crumbs in the couch cushions. One long table means you’ll need to get out the serving platters and acquire chairs because things are getting formal. Scattered around the coffee table (totally fine! Vacuum the crumbs out later!) says we’re gonna blast the music and drink a little too much and tell stories about the friend who isn’t here. Your guests will be fine with whatever you’ve set up. They’re here to hang out with you. They love you! Awww!



Is it appropriate to start cleaning up while guests are still around?

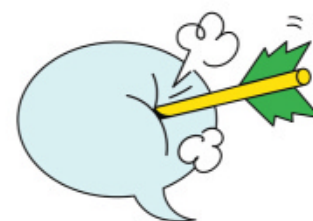
—ORDERLY ORVILLE

People make this a much bigger deal than it needs to be. Cleaning up is a part of cooking. No one’s going to think you’re being antisocial by doing dishes. In fact, if you lasso someone into drying, you get a buddy! Put on your pink rubber gloves and get it over with.

Can I just fold a paper towel in half and call it a napkin?

—QUILTED QUENTIN

No! Get cloth napkins, for the sake of the planet and the sanctity of dinnertime.



The conversation is DEAD. How do I bring it back to life without being awkward?

—DECEASED DEIRDRE

Conversation starters (the first five are free):

- “Have you ever seen a ghost?”
- “Is it me or have pants been in a weird phase lately?”
- “Does anyone know Chuck E. Cheese’s real name?”
- “Who here opens and eats food in the grocery store before you pay for it?”
- “Anybody been to the Panama Canal lately? Still cool?”
- “You guys...like...books?”
- “How do you sharpen a serrated knife?”
- “Alexa, play Jeopardy!”
- “Natural deodorant.”
- “Martha Stewart’s Instagram.”
- “Has anyone been canceled this week?”

GOURNAY CHEESE

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