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— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Letter from the EDITOR

THE GREAT JAMES Beard once said, “Food is our common ground, a universal experience.”

I love that.

There was a time when just about anyone with an interest in food and cooking studied Beard’s wise words and recipes—culinary students, restaurant chefs, writers, and home cooks alike. The man known as the “dean of American cooking” championed simple fare over fancy dishes with French titles. A foundation* and prestigious awards** bear his name. And prior to the pandemic, renowned chefs hosted benefit dinners in his Greenwich Village home.

As much as I admire Beard the man for elevating American food, it is his gracious perspective on matters of humanity and his efforts to democratize the food system that I respect most.

In 1940, he used his influence to bring attention to one of America’s invisible cooks, an African American woman I have described as the 20th century’s least celebrated celebrity chef.

Lena Richard was a restaurateur, cookbook publisher, and food manufacturer who appeared on a television cooking show 20 years before food TV made Julia Child a household name. In 1939, she self-published the *Lena Richard Cook Book*—an artful collection of recipes for exquisite New Orleans cuisine, such as shrimp bisque, timbales, and ground artichoke mousse. A year later, Beard and



food editor Clementine Paddleford urged Houghton Mifflin to reissue the book, which the New York publisher did. The new edition appeared with a new title: *New Orleans Cookbook*. Sadly, the frontispiece, a cameo portrait of Richard, was removed.

When I shared this tragic tale of erasure with the James Beard Foundation, I was invited to host a reception and art exhibit featuring larger-than-life portraits of Richard and other African American cooks at the Beard House. I asked New York chef Scott Barton to select the menu from Richard’s cookbook and arranged for culinary students representing the underserved community in Austin, Texas, to be sous chefs for the evening.

Since then, my respect for the “hidden figures” of America’s kitchens has continued to grow. Consider the stunning portrait of William Chaney in this issue’s Cook’s Close-Up (inside back cover).

Chaney is the illuminating force behind some of the most famous barbecue restaurants in Kansas City, including Fiorella’s Jack Stack Barbecue. He got his start in the pit-building business

as a young bricklayer constructing fireplaces for private homeowners in the late 1950s. At the time of his 90th birthday in March, he was renowned for building more than 20 wood-burning masonry pits in the region. He was still working every day, keeping a watchful eye on production. And he appeared in “The Legacy Quilt Project,” the Museum of Food and Drink’s exhibition featuring African American culinary heroes.

I confess I fell hard for Chaney’s legacy. I thought his accomplishments, while hidden in plain sight, represented the rich and complex history of American food, the kind of stories I hope to share regularly in *Cook’s Country*. So in the spirit of James Beard, I telephoned Mr. Chaney. I conveyed my respect. Then I asked him how it felt to finally be honored after so many years in the background. He replied humbly:

“It was just a job, not anything special, just a way of making a living.”

TONI TIPTON-MARTIN

Editor in Chief

* The James Beard Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to “celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America’s food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone.”

** The foundation’s annual awards, dubbed the “Oscars of the food world,” shine a spotlight on restaurant and food media excellence. Full disclosure: I am a former member of the awards committee and a proud two-time James Beard Award recipient.



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by Matthew Fairman

Q: I HAVE STARTED GETTING KOHLRABI IN MY FARM SHARE, BUT I'VE NEVER EATEN IT. WHAT ARE SOME THINGS I CAN DO WITH IT?

—Greg Pruitt, Ames, Iowa

A: Kohlrabi—from the German kohl (“cabbage”) and Rübe (“turnip”)—is a cultivated variety of *Brassica oleracea* and a close relative of broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage, and kale (among others). Its defining physical trait is its swollen, almost spherical bulb.

The leaves, stems, and bulb (the most commonly eaten part) have a mild flavor like a sweeter broccoli or a more vegetal cauliflower, though kohlrabi is a bit less sulfurous than both. The bulb, which can be eaten either raw or cooked, has two distinct layers of fibrous skin that should be thoroughly peeled away before eating. The texture of the bulb is crisp like a radish, though larger, more mature kohlrabi can get a little woody and develop a bitter flavor. It's therefore advisable to look for small- to medium-size kohlrabi; something about the size of a navel orange is ideal.

When sliced thin, shredded, grated, or julienned, the peeled bulb makes a nice addition to salads and a delicious replacement for cabbage in slaws. When cut into larger pieces, it works great roasted, stir-fried, or in braises and soups, though long cooking can dull the delicate flavor. It can also be pureed into a creamy soup like cauliflower can be.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Kohlrabi, which can be either green or purple, is in the Brassica genus. Look for younger, small- to medium-size bulbs. The flesh of younger bulbs is crisp, delicate, and sweet (sometimes with a peppery note) and is best when sliced thin and eaten raw or cooked quickly.



YES, YOU CAN EAT THE LEAVES, TOO

Q: CAN I USE MY IMMERSION BLENDER IN RECIPES THAT CALL FOR A JAR BLENDER?

—Thomas Flynn, Sacramento, Calif.

A: An immersion blender (aka stick blender or hand blender) is a handy tool for pureeing soups right in the pot and will also work for a multitude of other blending jobs. We love how light and compact they are and how much easier they are to clean than jar blenders. The test kitchen's top-rated model is the Braun Multiquick 5 Hand Blender (about \$60), pictured at right.

Aside from pureeing soups, an immersion blender will work well for most *Cook's Country* recipes for sauces and marinades that call for a jar blender, such as for the sauce in Flank Steak in Adobo (February/March 2016) or for the marinade in Green Goddess Roast Chicken (August/September 2018). Our winning hand blender also made perfectly acceptable kale smoothies (though they were not as smooth as smoothies made in our winning jar blender).

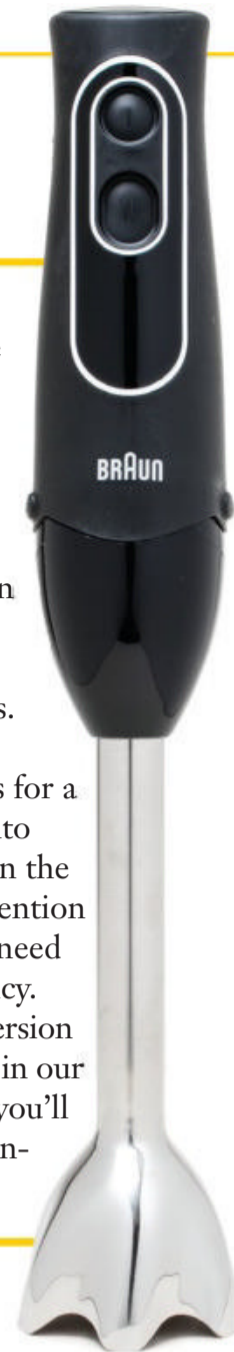
But what about recipes where the blender is used to incorporate air into the mix, something jar blenders excel

at? To find out, we made two such recipes: Orange Chocolate Mousse (February/March 2019) and Milk Chocolate No-Churn Ice Cream (August/September 2019). The resulting mousse and ice cream were a bit more dense but still acceptable.

Jar blenders do have one big advantage: power. Immersion blenders are typically less powerful than jar blenders and may not completely break down ingredients such as fibrous thyme sprigs or kale, almonds for almond butter, or ice for frozen drinks.

Additionally, keep in mind that if you use the immersion blender in one of our recipes that calls for a jar blender, you'll need to immerse the blender into a container large enough to hold a little more than the entire volume of ingredients. Also, pay special attention to the visual cues given in the recipe, as you may need to adjust the timing to reach the proper consistency.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Nine times out of 10, an immersion blender is a convenient substitute for a jar blender in our recipes. As with any change you make to a recipe, you'll need to exercise some discretion and pay extra attention to visual cues rather than times given.



Q: I MADE YOUR CHOCOLATE GANACHE-FILLED BROWNIES (FEBRUARY/MARCH 2021). THE BROWNIES WERE DELICIOUS, BUT THEY STUCK TO THE LINERS. DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?

—Matt Jenkins, Austin, Texas

A: Those brownies have been a big hit, but we did amend the recipe online (specifying parchment liners sprayed with baking spray) soon after publication to fix the sticking problem. Here's the story: While developing the recipe, we first tried baking the brownies (without liners) in a muffin tin sprayed with vegetable oil spray. Those batches stuck to the tin and were misshapen. The problems disappeared when we added parchment liners to the muffin-tin cups—the brownies released easily, and we considered sticking a nonissue. Our mistake was not specifying parchment liners in the first published version of the recipe. Soon after publication, a few online commenters let us know that with certain types of liners, the brownies stuck stubbornly. We quickly diagnosed the problem and fixed it online—our apologies to all who made the brownies and had sticking problems.

To learn from this mistake and avoid making it in the future, we conducted a series of tests to figure out which liners were least likely to stick. We tested the brownies with regular paper, foil, and parchment liners. We tried each type of liner on its own (ungreased), sprayed with vegetable oil spray, and sprayed with baking spray (which contains flour). Each sample of the paper and foil liners—ungreased and greased—had significant problems with sticking. The parchment liners worked well and were clearly the best choice. Plain, ungreased parchment liners released adequately, while parchment liners sprayed with vegetable oil spray released easily. Parchment liners sprayed with baking spray released easiest of all.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Parchment liners sprayed with baking spray with flour work best for our Chocolate Ganache-Filled Brownies, but parchment liners sprayed with vegetable oil spray also work very well. If you bake a lot, parchment muffin-tin liners are worth seeking out.



Q: DOES GINGER HAVE A GRAIN SIMILAR TO THE GRAIN IN SOME MEAT?

—Devin Spector, Melbourne, Fla.

A: Yes, ginger has a grain, and cutting ginger against the grain makes it easier to chew. Each finger of ginger has fibers running through it lengthwise. These fibers can be quite stringy and chewy, but breaking down these long fibers into shorter ones negates that chewiness. Therefore, it's best to cut the ginger crosswise, against the grain.

This is especially important for long, skinny matchsticks of ginger or for thinly sliced ginger. For matchsticks, if you begin by cutting the ginger crosswise (against the grain) into thin rounds before then slicing those rounds into matchsticks, you'll have pleasantly tender results. Alternatively, if you begin by slicing the ginger lengthwise (with the grain) into thin planks and then cut those planks lengthwise into matchsticks, you will end up with stringy ginger that's hard to chew.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Cut ginger crosswise, against the grain, to make sure that it isn't tough or stringy.

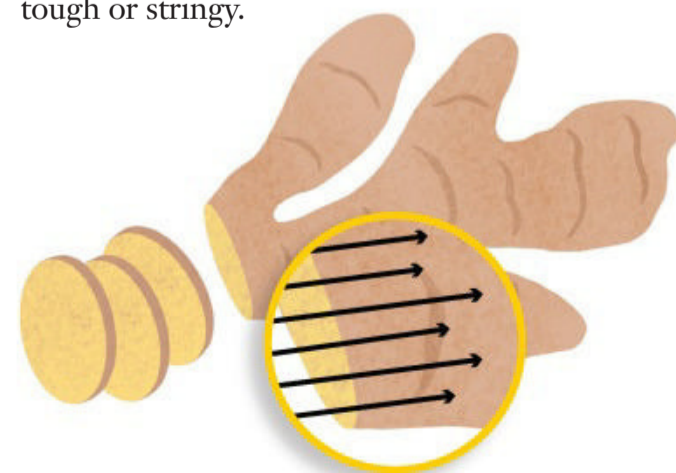


Illustration: Sophie Greenspan

KITCHEN SHORTCUTS

Compiled by Mark Huxsoll



Hold the Cream and Sugar

Dried mushrooms float, but they don't rehydrate evenly unless they are submerged in hot liquid. Elizabeth King of Longmont, Colo., conquers the floating shiitake or porcini mushrooms by using her French press. She puts the dried fungi in the press, pours boiling water over them, and depresses the plunger screen to hold the mushrooms down. When the mushrooms have hydrated, she pulls the plunger out and lets them float to the surface, where they're easy to remove with a fork or tongs (leaving the grit and sand at the bottom of the pot).

Makeshift Jar Opener

When Sean Hockert of Trenton, N.J., was recently trying to open a stubbornly stuck unopened jar of salsa, he was frustrated at not having a silicone jar opener. He improvised by using a silicone-coated pot holder; the sticky surface created enough traction to allow him to easily open the jar.



Tidier Chicken Trimming

Wanda Suzuki of Redmond, Wash., hates dirtying a cutting board just to trim chicken thighs. So instead, she removes the plastic wrap from the plastic tray the chicken comes in, picks up each piece, uses kitchen shears to trim off excess fat and skin, and puts the trimmed piece back in the tray. This way she has to wash only her shears—and not a cutting board, knife, and plate—after this prep task.



Tasting Bottled Cold-Brew Coffee

by Chase Brightwell

ONCE FOUND ONLY at trendy coffee shops, cold-brew coffee is now widely available in grocery stores and online. Some cold brews are sold as concentrates, while others are sold ready to drink, meaning that they don't require dilution. We purchased eight—four concentrates and four ready-to-drink products—and tried them plain and with milk. Two were brewed with chicory root, an ingredient commonly found in New Orleans-style coffee.

Overall, we preferred the convenience of the ready-to-drink options. The concentrates were weak when we mixed them with water to manufacturer recommendations, so we needed to use more coffee than suggested to get a flavorful cup. This process takes guesswork, which negates any cost savings.

In the end, which cold-brew coffee you prefer will depend on how you like to take your coffee. Some of the products in our lineup were unappealing or sour when tasted plain. Others were weak when sipped with milk. Our top-rated cold brews balanced robust flavor with smooth drinkability. Because coffee is so personal, we picked several winners. Our top two are both ready-to-drink products: one for people who drink their coffee black and one for people who like to add milk. We also named a top concentrate for those who want the flexibility to dilute to their personal preference. Lastly, we named a best New Orleans-style winner for those who appreciate the earthiness that chicory adds to coffee. Whatever your preferred coffee style, one of these brews is sure to deliver.

OUR RESULTS

TASTERS' NOTES

Best Plain

La Colombe Cold Brew Brazilian
Price: \$36.99 for twelve 9-oz cans (\$0.34 per oz)
Style: Ready to drink
Ingredients: Cold-pressed coffee (water, 100% arabica coffee)



"Smooth and not too acidic," with a "subtle nutty and chocolaty flavor," this ready-to-drink brew went over well with many tasters, especially when sampled without milk. Tasters praised its body, calling it "velvety."

Best with Milk

Starbucks Bottled Cold Brew
Price: \$17.26 for six 11-oz bottles (\$0.26 per oz)
Style: Ready to drink
Ingredients: Cold-brewed coffee (water, coffee)



This "nutty and bold" cold brew held up well to milk, with one taster noting "it doesn't feel overwhelmed by dairy richness." Other tasters enjoyed its "smooth and drinkable" body and noticed notes of vanilla, chocolate, and smoke.

Best Concentrate

Chameleon Organic Cold Brew Concentrate, Black
Price: \$12.89 for 32-oz bottle (\$0.27 per oz, diluted)
Style: Concentrate
Ingredients: Organic cold brew coffee (water, organic coffee)



A few tasters praised this cold brew, calling it "fruity and bright," and liked that they could "drink it straight up." Some tasters found it too acidic but noted that milk improved it, calling it a "full-flavored, bright cup of iced coffee that's mellowed slightly (in a good way)."

Best New Orleans-Style

Grady's Cold Brew New Orleans-Style Coffee Concentrate
Price: \$10.99 for 32-oz bottle (\$0.17 per oz, diluted)
Style: Concentrate
Ingredients: Water, coffee, chicory, spices



Tasters picked up on a bouquet of flavors in this chicory-infused brew, including lemon, cinnamon, chocolate, and orange. If you like the unique complexity of coffee with chicory root added, this is our top New Orleans-style cold brew.

Web subscribers can see the complete results chart at [CooksCountry.com/july21](https://www.cookscountry.com/july21).



Kansas City—Style

BARBECUE

RIBS

These lacquered, tender, sticky ribs check all the boxes. **by Bryan Roof**

KANSAS CITY BARBECUE is known for its enthusiastic use of sweet, complex barbecue sauce, which is considered an essential part of the experience. Pitmasters marry peppery sauce and rich, smoky meat with a deft touch. Burnt ends are bathed, brisket is slathered, and ribs are glazed. The effect is balanced flavor with peaks and valleys of spice and smoke—and sticky fingers to boot. I spent four days eating my way through the Kansas City barbecue scene, talking to pitmasters about the spirit of Kansas City barbecue. I came away from my trip inspired to make ribs similar to those I found at Harp Barbecue in Raytown, Missouri, 12 miles outside of downtown Kansas City—lacquered, tender to the bone, and assertively spiced.



ON the ROAD

Attitude and Smoke

Text by Bryan Roof; photos by Steve Klise



AS I PULL into the gravel parking lot of Crane Brewing in Raytown, Missouri, on a hot Saturday in August, I spy a 375-gallon offset smoker kicking off a faint trickle of smoke. I step inside the brewery and work my way past the bar area and across the production floor and eventually take my place in line with the small crowd gathered in the barrel room, flanked by giant, wooden vats of beer. I was ready for my first taste of Harp Barbecue. Owner Tyler Harp dons an apron and positions himself behind a cutting board, ready to slice ribs and brisket to order.

Tyler has been around Kansas City barbecue as far back as he can remember. “My favorite memories of being a child are playing baseball and being at barbecue contests with my dad, six to eight times a summer,” he tells me.

Tyler doesn’t compete like his father once did, but he credits the barbecue circuit with showing him how much work went into making great barbecue. “The competition scene is money and politics. I had neither. So I’d sit my ass in the driveway and cook,” he says with a laugh. “I wanted to carve out my own path. So I didn’t want to compete for that reason.”

The first offset smoker Tyler bought was 150 gallons, big enough to fit about six briskets or 10 pork butts. It was attached to a rickety trailer that Tyler needed to repair halfway home. The first day he fired it up, he sold pork butts to his small following and made a little more than \$300 on a smoker he’d just bought for \$400. “That’s when I realized I could start making money on barbecue.”

Tyler cooked barbecue in his driveway for three years. “If I wasn’t traveling to cook or learn [about barbecue], I maybe took four weekends off in those three years,” he says. “Even if we were just selling one or two pork butts, a couple briskets, or a couple slabs of ribs, I knew that we would continue to evolve our skills. If you put in the work and you have a positive attitude, I think you can make anything happen.”

In 2016, *Texas Monthly* barbecue editor Daniel Vaughn wrote an article that Tyler thought cast an unfavorable view of Kansas City barbecue. This prompted Tyler and his dad to travel to Texas to taste their barbecue firsthand. At that point, says Tyler, “we were in the beginning stages of developing our style. I didn’t know what our style was going to be, but



I knew I wanted to travel and learn to create that style.” It was during that trip to Texas that Tyler says, “it all kinda came together. The way I cooked, the way I liked to cook, it just really aligned with the way [Texans] cooked—offset smokers, wood, a few simple ingredients.”

Although Tyler has great respect for Texas barbecue, he feels that Kansas City offers more variety and the rules of what’s considered right and wrong are less rigid. He considers his contribution to be “craft barbecue,” which to him means it’s cooked fresh every day using only wood and then cut to order. “I try to put something on [the menu] that basically you can’t get anywhere else here in the barbecue world. We’ve done pastrami, beef cheeks, oxtail, pork jowl.”

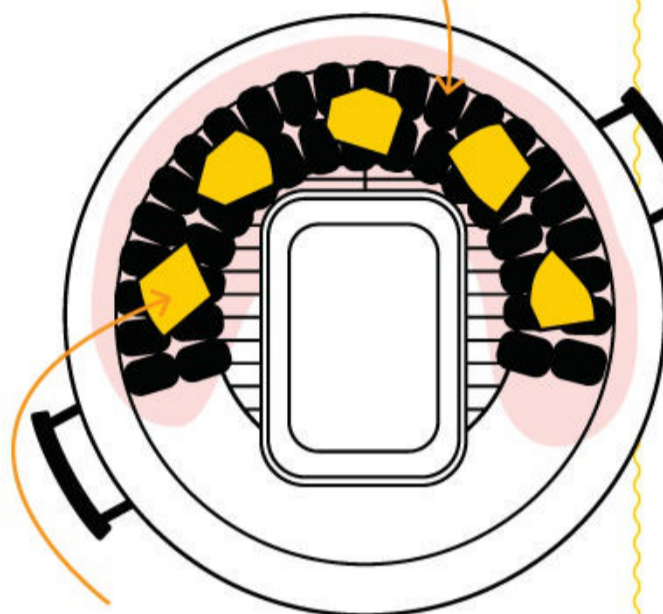
He tells me he eventually wants to have a top-tier barbecue place that everyone can be proud of, where everyone can say, “yeah, that’s Kansas City right there,” but feels he still has a long way to go. “Everything I’ve done in the last five years was for barbecue. I knew that one day all the money I invested into it would come back. My barbecue has never been about me. It’s always been about Kansas City.”

Counterclockwise from top right: Signs point to the food, but the nose leads the way; Tyler Harp slices brisket at his pop-up operation, Harp Barbecue; a platter of the day’s offerings; Harp Barbecue set up in the barrel room of Crane Brewing; Tyler Harp bustin’ a gut at something we said over beers.

A Slithering Arrangement

This configuration of charcoal, called a snake, will throw steady heat for hours without the need to refuel the grill. If you like to slow-smoke meats over charcoal, it's a game changer.

TWO BY TWO
Double-stack briquettes, two briquettes wide, around half of perimeter



WOOD CHUNKS
Provide smoke and additional heat

● KANSAS CITY-STYLE BARBECUE RIBS

Serves 6 to 8

Total Time: 5¼ hours

The corn syrup helps give the sauce a nice shine when applied to the ribs. You can omit it, if desired.

RIBS

- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons pepper
- 1 tablespoon granulated garlic
- 2 (2½- to 3-pound) racks St. Louis-style spareribs
- 5 (3-inch) wood chunks
- 1 (13 by 9-inch) disposable aluminum pan

SAUCE

- ¼ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ½ teaspoon granulated garlic
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin

1. FOR THE RIBS: Combine salt, pepper, and granulated garlic in bowl. Place ribs on rimmed baking sheet and pat dry with paper towels. Flip ribs meaty side down. Sprinkle bone side of ribs with about one-third of spice mixture. Flip ribs and sprinkle meaty side with remaining two-thirds of spice mixture.

2. Open bottom vent of charcoal grill completely. Arrange 40 charcoal briquettes, 2 briquettes wide, around half of perimeter of grill, overlapping slightly so briquettes are touching, to form C shape. Place second layer of 40 briquettes, also 2 briquettes wide, on top of first. (Completed arrangement should be 2 briquettes wide by 2 briquettes high.)

3. Starting 2 inches from 1 end of charcoal C, place wood chunks on top of charcoal 2 inches apart. Place disposable pan in center of grill, running lengthwise into arc of charcoal C.

4. Light chimney starter filled with 10 briquettes (pile briquettes on 1 side of chimney so they catch). When coals

are partially covered with ash, use tongs to place them at end of C where you started wood chunks.

5. Set cooking grate in place, then clean and oil grate. Place ribs side by side on grill, meaty side up, lengthwise over water pan. Cover grill, position lid vent over ribs, and open lid vent completely. Cook, without opening grill, for 2 hours.

6. FOR THE SAUCE: Meanwhile, whisk all ingredients together in small saucepan and cook over medium heat until sugar is dissolved. (Sauce does not need to come to boil.) Set aside off heat.

7. Open grill and rotate ribs 180 degrees. Brush meaty side of ribs with half of barbecue sauce. Cover grill, positioning lid vent over ribs. Continue to cook, without opening grill, for 2 hours longer.

8. Transfer ribs to clean rimmed baking sheet, meaty side up. Brush meaty side of ribs with remaining sauce. Cover sheet tightly with aluminum foil and let ribs rest for 30 minutes. Cut ribs between bones. Serve.

Juneteenth and KC Barbecue

by Adrian Miller



America's barbecue culture is a many-splendored thing that embraces various regional styles and traditions. For African Americans, the "Juneteenth" barbecue holds a special place in community life. This annual celebration was born on June 19, 1865, in Galveston, Texas. That day, Major General Gordon Granger, commanding officer for the district of Texas for the Union Army, read General Order No. 3, which stated: "The people of Texas are informed that, in accordance with a proclamation from the executive of the United States, all slaves are free . . ."

The announcement arrived two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation to liberate enslaved people living in the rebellious states of the Confederacy, and nearly six months after

the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution officially outlawed slavery in the entire country.

By 1866, Black communities throughout Texas commemorated the anniversary of their true freedom, a second Independence Day, with what they called "the 19th of June" or the "June 19th" celebration. By the 1910s, "Juneteenth" became the more popular nickname

for this occasion, which featured any combination of speeches (many by formerly enslaved people); church services; concerts; parades; athletic games (especially baseball); and a very impressive feast featuring "red foods" such as barbecue, strawberry soda, and watermelon. Juneteenth grew so popular that it became an official Texas state holiday in 1980, and it's now gaining momentum to become a national holiday.

Why? Because Texans are very good cheerleaders for their own traditions, especially when they move somewhere else. Juneteenth first spread from the Lone Star State to Oklahoma, and then to other parts of the country. That's how Juneteenth made its way to Kansas City, Missouri.

When he was a child, Horace Peterson

III moved there with his family from his native Tulsa, Oklahoma, sometime in the 1950s. He always remembered how Juneteenth brought Tulsa's Black community together, and he wanted to bring that same spirit to his adopted city. In 1980, he started Kansas City's annual Juneteenth celebration, and it endures to this day.

Kansas City is a true "melting pit" of different regional barbecue styles, harkening back to its past as a major agricultural and commercial center, especially for livestock-related industries. It's not a city limited to just one barbecue dish or one type of meat. Want some pork? Several restaurants offer spareribs, shoulder, sausages (often combined with beef), and even snoots (pig snouts). Chicken or lamb? They've got that, too. Craving some beef? Order some beef brisket (chopped or sliced) or "burnt ends," the city's signature barbecue dish.

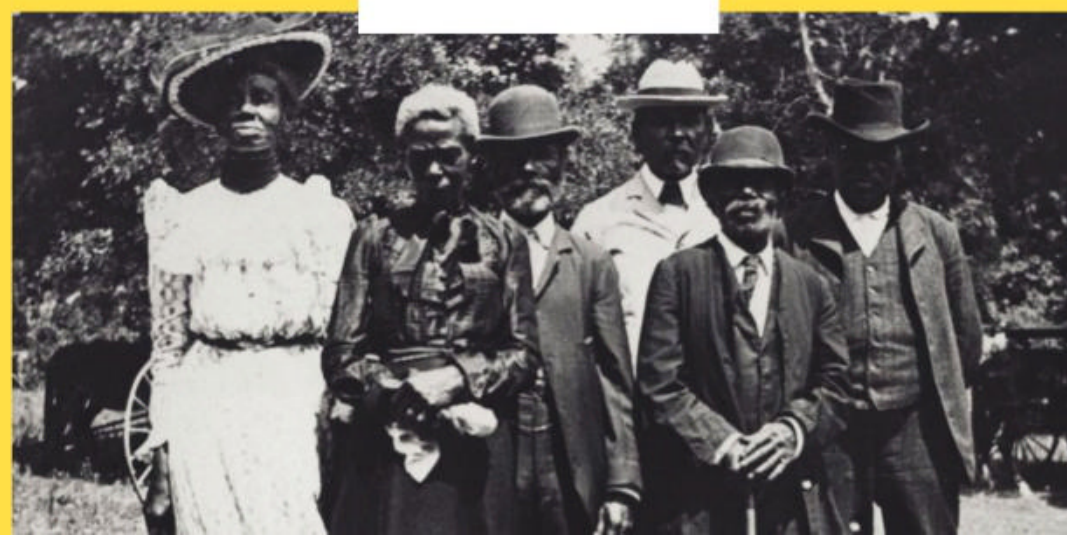
Burnt ends are the brainchild of

Arthur Bryant, one of the city's legendary African American barbecuers. Instead of throwing away the extra charred, crispy, fatty, and slightly meaty pieces left after cutting brisket, he gave them to his customers to snack on as they waited in line for their food. With all the barbecue goodness happening in Kansas City, it's hard to imagine a more perfect place outside of Texas to pair barbecue and Juneteenth.

Adrian Miller is a James Beard Award-winning author based in Denver, Colorado. His newest book is Black Smoke: African Americans and the United States of Barbecue (2021).

A platter of burnt ends passed through the service window at Arthur Bryant's Barbeque (above left).

Juneteenth celebration in 1900 in Austin, Texas (below).



BLT Salad

Summer dining calls for reimagining a favorite sandwich as a main-course salad.

by Amanda Luchtel

IS THERE A better, more satisfying sandwich than a homemade BLT? Slices of juicy, ripe tomatoes; smoky strips of bacon; crisp lettuce; and a hefty swipe of mayonnaise all stacked between slices of golden-brown bread—my mouth is watering just thinking about it. I wanted to redirect my intense love of this summertime classic by using all the components of a BLT for a perfectly balanced, light but satisfying main-course salad.

I started by cutting ripe tomatoes into chunks, tossing them with salt and pepper in a bowl, and setting them aside while I prepped the other ingredients. This resting period allowed the salt to season the tomatoes and pull out some of their liquid to concentrate the sweet, tart tomato flavor; if you don't presalt, the tomatoes give up their excess liquid in the salad, making it watery.

The bacon was easy; I chose a full eight slices, chopped them into bite-size pieces, and cooked them in a skillet until they were browned and crispy. Eyeing the bacon drippings glistening in the skillet, I decided to double down on the bacon flavor (rarely a bad idea) by cooking torn pieces of ciabatta in those drippings to make crunchy, supersavory croutons.

Finally, the dressing. Since mayonnaise is such an integral part of the BLT experience, I wanted to use it to lend creaminess to the dressing. I started by whisking vinegar (I chose the red-wine variety for its bold pucker) and mayonnaise together with a little minced garlic, but the dressing lacked depth and was too sweet (from the mayo). Cutting the mayonnaise with a little extra-virgin olive oil helped rein in the sweetness, and stirring in 2 teaspoons of spicy Dijon mustard gave the dressing added dimension and punch. Torn fresh basil leaves added a fragrant freshness, and now all that was left to do was to add the seasoned, concentrated tomatoes to the salad.



Our garlicky dressing brings it all together.

● BLT SALAD

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

A baguette or boule can be substituted for the ciabatta, if desired. This salad is best with in-season, ripe tomatoes and is perfect for lunch or a light supper.

- 12 ounces ripe tomatoes, cored and cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon pepper, divided**
- 8 slices bacon, cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces**
- 4 ounces ciabatta bread, torn into ½-inch pieces (3 cups)**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise**
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar**
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- 2 romaine lettuce hearts (12 ounces), cut into 1-inch pieces**
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves, torn**

1. Toss tomatoes, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper together in bowl; set aside.
2. Line large plate with paper towels. Cook bacon in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until well browned and crispy, about 12 minutes. Using

slotted spoon, transfer bacon to 1 side of paper towel-lined plate.

3. Return skillet with bacon fat to medium heat and add bread. Cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 3 to 6 minutes. Transfer croutons to empty side of paper towel-lined plate and let cool completely, about 5 minutes.

4. Whisk oil, mayonnaise, vinegar, mustard, garlic, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper in large bowl until combined. Add lettuce, basil, bacon, and croutons and toss to combine.

5. Using slotted spoon, transfer tomatoes to salad (leaving liquid behind) and toss gently to combine; discard tomato liquid. Serve immediately.

Bring It Home

The test kitchen's highest-ranked supermarket bacon is **Oscar Mayer Naturally Hardwood Smoked Bacon**. Our tasters described it as a "classic," "textbook" bacon that "hit all the right notes" in flavor and texture. If you feel like splurging, our favorite artisanal, mail-order bacon is **Vande Rose Applewood Smoked Artisan Dry Cured Bacon**.

KEY STEP 1



Salt tomato pieces so they expel excess moisture.

KEY STEP 2



Brown ciabatta pieces in rendered bacon fat to make flavorful croutons.

FOR MY MOST recent birthday celebration, I requested a cheeseburger instead of a cake. This is a true story. Sure, I could have had both, but I love burgers so much that I wanted my candles stuck into a sesame seed bun. I say this only so that you'll know just how serious I am about hamburgers and potentially feel the impact more when I tell you that these lamb burgers are really incredible.

The technique for making them is uncomplicated and smart, and it's a bulletproof method for getting juicy medium-rare (or medium) burgers with a gorgeous, seared-on spice crust every time. First, to ensure a consistent cook on each burger, you start with store-bought ground lamb and portion the patties precisely, using 8 ounces per burger and shaping them into rounds with a consistent thickness and diameter. Second, you use your thumb to make a dimple in the centers of the patties to prevent them from swelling into round meatballs on the grill. Finally—and this is the crucial step—you place the patties on a platter and freeze them for about 30 minutes, until they are firm but not frozen solid. Chilling the patties allows for extra time on the grill, meaning that the burgers have plenty of time to get a flavorful, seared-on crust without overcooking in the middle. The contrast of the flame-kissed char and the tender, juicy, just-rosy interior is unbeatable.

But these burgers aren't just great because they're cooked well. What makes them really exciting is the combination of the familiar with the unexpected. Generously coating ground lamb patties with a spice rub consisting of salt, pepper, earthy cumin, and a kiss of cinnamon adds an uncommonly delicious complexity and warmth that accentuates the subtle differences between the lamb and the usual ground beef. It's unmistakably a grilled burger, but it's also something new. They're excellent with a little ketchup and mayonnaise, but they're fully irresistible when topped with our Five-Spice Tomato Chutney (page 28), some crumbled feta, and thinly sliced red onion.

Since the first time I bit into one of these burgers, I've been dreaming about my next opportunity to show them off to guests at a backyard barbecue. If you're like me and you love a good burger, I hope you'll try these. I think you'll be delighted.



We like to top these burgers with tomato chutney, red onion, and feta . . . but you do you!

Grilled Lamb Burgers

For more robust and interesting burgers, change that “ham” to “lamb.”

by **Matthew Fairman**

● GRILLED LAMB BURGERS

Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour

These burgers develop great char and stay perfectly medium-rare (or medium) at the center because we freeze the patties slightly before putting them on the grill. After lighting, it takes about 20 minutes for the charcoal to be ready, so plan the freezing of the patties accordingly. The amount of spice mixture may seem excessive, but it helps form the crust, so be sure to use all of it. These burgers are great topped with our Five-Spice Tomato Chutney (page 28), feta cheese, and sliced red onion.

- 2 pounds ground lamb**
- 2 teaspoons table salt**
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 4 brioche hamburger buns, toasted and buttered**

1. Divide lamb into four 8-ounce portions and roll between your hands to form balls. Working on baking sheet, press each ball into 4½-inch-diameter patty, about ¾ inch thick. Using your thumb or fingers, make 1-inch-wide by ¼-inch-deep depression in center of each patty. (Patties can be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for up to 24 hours at this point.)

2. Transfer patties to platter and freeze until firm but not frozen solid, 30 to 45 minutes. Combine salt, cumin, pepper, and cinnamon in bowl; set aside.

3A. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL: Light large chimney starter three-quarters filled with charcoal briquettes (4½ quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over half of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

3B. FOR A GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high; cover; and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Turn all burners to medium.

4. Clean and oil cooking grate. Sprinkle patties on both sides with spice mixture (use all of it), using spatula to flip patties so they don't become misshapen.

5. Grill patties indentation side down (uncovered and directly over coals for charcoal; covered for gas), without moving them, until browned and they release easily from grill, about 5 minutes.

6. Flip burgers and grill (covered for gas) until browned on second side and meat registers 125 degrees (for medium-rare), about 5 minutes, or 135 degrees (for medium), about 7 minutes. Transfer burgers to wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes.

7. Transfer burgers to buns. Serve.

Roasted Fingerling Potato Salad

Leave the mayo in the fridge for this potent, fresh take on potato salad.

by Mark Huxsoll

Four Keys to Perfect Burgers



1. Weigh meat into equal portions (for even cooking), then shape.



2. Press dimple into 1 side of patties so they stay nice and flat.



3. Briefly freeze patties to help ensure perfect medium-rare doneness.



4. Coat liberally with spice mixture on both sides before grilling.

WHILE SOME VARIETIES of potatoes are starchy and some are waxy, fingerlings (so named for their fingerlike shape) are right in the middle, making them quite versatile. Other attributes of these diminutive spuds: They hold their shape well when cooked, don't have to be peeled, are a great size that doesn't require too much prep, and have an excellent flavor—earthy and mildly nutty. When halved lengthwise and roasted until tender and browned on the cut side, they make a perfect canvas for a bold dressing.

My inspiration for the flavors in this recipe was the south of France. Before roasting, I tossed the halved potatoes with olive oil and seasoned them with dried herbes de Provence (see our recipe below). The anchor of the dressing was oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, which gave the dish sweet-tart complexity and a rich undercurrent of savoriness. Kalamata olives (while not French) helped carry the Mediterranean theme while providing a pleasantly distinct salinity. Fresh parsley and lemon kept things bright, while shallot and garlic added sharpness and depth. This flavorful potato salad is great served warm, cold, or at room temperature.

HERBES DE PROVENCE

Makes about 2½ tablespoons

Total Time: 5 minutes

Most supermarkets sell this herb blend, but if you prefer to make your own, here's our formula.

- 2 teaspoons dried marjoram
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon dried sage
- ¼ teaspoon dried lavender (optional)
- ⅛ teaspoon ground fennel

Combine all ingredients in bowl.



FINGERLING POTATO SALAD WITH SUN-DRIED TOMATO DRESSING

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 1¼ hours

Try to find fingerling potatoes that are consistently 2 to 3 inches long and 1 inch in diameter. It is important to toss the potatoes with the dressing while they're still hot.

- 2 pounds fingerling potatoes, unpeeled, halved lengthwise
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1½ teaspoons table salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon herbes de Provence
- ⅓ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, minced
- ¼ cup pitted kalamata olives, chopped fine
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped shallot
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest plus 1 tablespoon juice
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Toss potatoes, 2 tablespoons oil, salt, pepper, and herbes de Provence in large bowl until potatoes are well coated. Arrange potatoes cut side down in single layer on rimmed baking sheet. Roast until potatoes are tender and cut sides are golden brown, about 20 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, wipe bowl clean with paper towels. Add tomatoes, olives, parsley, shallot, lemon zest and juice, garlic, pepper flakes, and remaining 2 tablespoons oil to now-empty bowl.
3. Transfer hot potatoes to tomato mixture and toss to combine. Let sit for 30 minutes, tossing occasionally. Transfer to platter and serve. (Salad can sit at room temperature for 2 hours before serving.)



It's important to get good browning on the potatoes and to dress them while they're hot.

Crab and Corn Pasta

Any weeknight can be a special occasion with this buttery, luxurious seafood pasta.

by Matthew Fairman

Crunchy bread crumbs flavored with Old Bay seasoning for the win!

WHEN MY WIFE and I were living in Boston, our favorite special-occasion dinner spot was Neptune Oyster, a cozy North End institution that serves the absolute freshest seafood. On a birthday or an anniversary, we'd go there and feast on shellfish towers, lobster rolls, and pristine preparations of the finest seasonal catch. But every time I'd leave more and more certain that the most delicious thing they served was their simple crab salad: just fresh Atlantic blue crabmeat, a touch of lemon aioli, and fresh herbs. Eating it made me determined to eat more crab at home.

This crab and corn pasta was born of that determination. It was late July, and I had some fresh, sweet summer corn on hand. My plan was to cut the crisp, juicy corn kernels from the ears and pair them with fresh crab and a tangle of buttery, lemony linguine. I started by procuring a pint of fresh crabmeat from my fishmonger, and then I basically jogged home to get cooking.

I got out a large skillet and browned panko bread crumbs in butter with Old Bay seasoning, a classic pairing with crab. These crumbs would make for a crispy topping to add textural appeal to the silky pasta. Then I melted a good knob of butter in the same skillet; softened some shallots and garlic in it; stirred in a heap of crab and corn plus more Old Bay; and cooked it all together until it just began to sizzle, taking care not to overcook my prized crabmeat. At this point the fresh corn was still crisp and juicy and the crab was so sweet, with the loveliest mild taste of the sea. I squeezed on lemon juice to balance the richness. Perfect.

When the linguine was just al dente, I drained it and tossed the pasta together with my buttery crab and corn mixture and then sprinkled on the bread crumbs along with a fistful of fresh parsley. I've made this dish a dozen times since then, tinkering with and perfecting the recipe, and I'm always surprised that something that takes so little time to prepare can be so unbelievably satisfying.

CRAB AND CORN PASTA

Serves 6 Total Time: 45 minutes

We recommend fresh crabmeat for this dish. However, if you can't find fresh, refrigerated pasteurized crab is the next best option. Three cups of thawed frozen corn can be substituted for the fresh corn; you do not need to adjust the cooking time if using frozen corn.

- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup panko bread crumbs
- $4\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons Old Bay seasoning, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon table salt, divided, plus salt for cooking pasta
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup thinly sliced shallots
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced thin
- 4 ears corn, kernels cut from cobs (3 cups)
- 1 pound lump crabmeat, picked over for shells
- 3 tablespoons lemon juice, plus lemon wedges for serving
- 12 ounces linguine
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add panko, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon Old Bay, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, 2 to 5 minutes; transfer to bowl and set aside. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

2. Melt remaining 6 tablespoons butter in now-empty skillet over medium heat. Add shallots and garlic and cook until shallots are softened, about 3 minutes. Add corn, crab, and remaining 4 teaspoons Old Bay and cook until warmed through and beginning to sizzle, 3 to 5 minutes. Off heat, stir in lemon juice. Cover to keep warm while making pasta.

3. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooking water, then drain pasta and return it to pot.

4. Add crab mixture and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup reserved cooking water to pasta and toss to combine. Adjust consistency with additional cooking water as needed. Transfer pasta to individual bowls. Sprinkle with panko mixture and parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

CRAB PRIMER

WHAT TO BUY

Fresh Crabmeat: Fresh crabmeat from just-cooked crabs (available near the coast when crabs are in season) is the best-tasting option. Nothing beats the luxuriously sweet flavor of freshly picked crabmeat, but if you live inland, fresh crabmeat can be difficult to find.

Refrigerated Pasteurized Crabmeat: Unlike fresh crabmeat, the refrigerated pasteurized kind is readily available in most supermarkets and has a much longer shelf life. Usually packed in cans or plastic containers and available in the refrigerator near the fish counter, pasteurized lump crab features sweet, tender chunks of meat with a delicate salinity.

WHAT TO AVOID

Shelf-Stable Canned Crabmeat: Most shelf-stable canned crabmeat has been pressure-heated at a high temperature (220 to 250 degrees), and the trade-off (for most products) is drier, chewier meat. Shelf-stable canned crabmeat also often contains additives that can negatively affect texture and flavor.

Imitation Crabmeat: Imitation crabmeat, made of pollock that has been dyed orange, is candy sweet and does not have a taste or texture anything like crab.

HOW TO COOK WITH CRABMEAT

Whether you're buying fresh or pasteurized crabmeat, it comes cooked and ready to eat, but it may contain excess liquid and some small shell fragments. Before using, drain and pick out any small fragments of shell. For use in hot dishes, the delicate texture of the crabmeat can best be preserved when it is just heated through.

Pea Fritters

Party appetizer?
Light lunch? Snack?
These crisp, crunchy
fritters have
you covered.

by Amanda Luchtel



We like these light, crunchy fritters swiped through a creamy sauce.

GREEN PEA FRITTERS are a surprising, protein-rich alternative to popular zucchini or corn fritters, and they're a delightful option for summertime gatherings.

To create these simple and unique fritters, I relied on a freezer staple: frozen peas. I flavored the fritters with ingredients that played off the peas' sweetness: pungent Pecorino Romano cheese, fragrant cilantro, zesty scallions, and red pepper flakes.

The food processor made preparation easy. I processed the cheese until it was finely ground, and to keep some textural contrast, I made the batter in two stages. For the first, I blitzed the cheese and peas (along with an egg to bind and some seasonings) to a coarse puree. I then added more peas, plus chopped cilantro and scallions (and some flour, again, to bind) for a lighter pulsing that kept pieces of the peas and herbs intact.

To finish, I shallow-fried the fritters to a deep golden brown. These crunchy fritters can be enjoyed in myriad ways—atop a salad, piled into pita, or passed among your party guests.

● CRISPY PEA FRITTERS

Serves 4 to 6 (Makes about 18 fritters) Total Time: 40 minutes

To move quickly through adding the batter to the hot oil, measure out the first 2-tablespoon portion of batter to get a visual on how much batter should be in each fritter, and then use a dinner spoon to portion out the rest by eye. You can make a quick dipping sauce for these fritters by combining some yogurt with a little lemon juice and salt. Alternatively, try dipping them in our Onion Raita (page 32). Sprinkle the warm fritters with flake sea salt, if desired.

- 2½ ounces Pecorino Romano cheese, cut into rough 1-inch chunks**
- 1 pound frozen peas, thawed, divided**
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten**
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped**
- 1½ teaspoons red pepper flakes**
- 1 teaspoon table salt**
- ¾ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- 4 scallions, sliced thin**
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour**
- ½ cup peanut or vegetable oil for frying**

1. Process Pecorino in food processor until finely ground, about 30 seconds. Add 1½ cups peas, egg, garlic, pepper flakes, salt, and pepper to food processor. Process to coarse puree, about 10 seconds, scraping down sides of bowl as needed.

2. Add cilantro, scallions, flour, and remaining peas. Pulse until just combined, about 4 pulses, scraping down sides of bowl as needed.

3. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and line half of rack with triple layer of paper towels. Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Carefully place nine 2-tablespoon portions of batter into skillet, then press each portion into approximate 2-inch disk (about ½ inch thick) with back of dinner spoon.

4. Fry until deep golden brown on both sides, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Transfer fritters to paper towel-lined side of prepared rack, let drain for 15 seconds on each side, then move to unlined side of rack. Repeat with remaining batter. Serve warm.

Making the Fritters



1. Pulverize cheese, then add 1½ cups peas, egg, and seasonings and puree.



2. Add cilantro, scallions, flour, and remaining peas; pulse until just combined.



3. Place 2-tablespoon portions of batter in hot oil and press into 2-inch disks.



4. Fry until deep golden brown on both sides, let drain, and serve warm.



Heat, complexity, and smoky flavor: Canned chipotle chile brings a lot to the party.

Grilled Chipotle Shrimp

We wanted tender, juicy, flavorful shrimp.

by Eva Katz

GRILLED CHIPOTLE SHRIMP

Serves 4

Total Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

For this recipe, we like using jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per pound), but extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound) work as well, although you will need more skewers and the cooking time will be about 1½ minutes per side. We prefer untreated shrimp—those not treated with salt or additives such as sodium tripolyphosphate. Most frozen E-Z peel shrimp have been treated (the ingredient list should tell you). If you're using treated shrimp, reduce the salt in the mayonnaise mixture to ¼ teaspoon.

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tablespoons chopped canned chipotle chile in adobo sauce, plus 1 tablespoon adobo sauce
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- 2 pounds jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per pound), peeled and deveined
- 8 (10-inch) wooden skewers, soaked in water for at least 30 minutes

1. Whisk mayonnaise, cilantro, chipotle and adobo sauce, garlic, lime juice, cumin, paprika, sugar, and salt together in large bowl. Add shrimp and toss to coat with mayonnaise mixture.

2. Thread shrimp onto sets of 2 skewers, all facing same direction and nestled snugly together; you should have 8 to 10 shrimp on each set of skewers.

3A. FOR A CHARCOAL GRILL: Open bottom vent completely. Light large chimney starter mounded with charcoal briquettes (7 quarts). When top coals are partially covered with ash, pour evenly over grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and open lid vent completely. Heat grill until hot, about 5 minutes.

3B. FOR A GAS GRILL: Turn all burners to high; cover; and heat grill until hot, about 15 minutes. Leave all burners on high.

4. Clean and oil cooking grate. Place kebabs on grill and cook until lightly charred and cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to platter. Serve shrimp with lime wedges.

QUICK-COOKING SHRIMP MAKE an easy weeknight dinner. In the summer, that means cooking them on the grill. In the time it takes to heat the grill, you can peel, season, and skewer your shrimp, and after a few minutes on the fire, dinner is served. But grilling shrimp comes with one big inherent challenge: getting nice char on the shrimp while keeping them tender and moist. The line between perfectly juicy shrimp and dry, rubbery shrimp is very thin.

But I had a few tricks up my sleeve. I knew from the get-go that I needed a scorching-hot fire to develop the deep browning and char that give grilled foods their smoke-kissed flavor. To prevent overcooking, I stayed away from

small shrimp—using bigger specimens meant I could keep them on the grill for a few seconds longer. I also configured the shrimp on the skewers so that they were spooning each other; this essentially made one large mass of shrimp that gave me a little more insurance against drying out. And lancing each shrimp with two skewers kept them from spinning around during flipping.

So far, so good . . . but the real magic started to happen when I began playing with the flavors in the recipe. For a marinade base, I found that oil worked well to carry flavors, prevent sticking to the cooking grates, and improve browning, but it also dripped off the shrimp. Mayonnaise, which contains a lot of oil, worked better. It did a great job of

enhancing the browning and preventing sticking, all while staying where I wanted it—on the shrimp.

For a big pop of flavor, I leaned into one of my all-time favorite flavor superheroes, canned chipotle chiles (and the adobo sauce they're packed in). These little fire plugs provide incredible depth and complexity—and heat. Chop them up, whisk them into the mayo, and stir in some cilantro for brightness and lime juice for a burst of unifying acidity.

These shrimp are great served as a main course, maybe even piled into warm tortillas if that's your style. Alternatively, remove them from the skewers, load up a platter, and stick them with toothpicks to serve as an appetizer for a summer gathering.

Secret Ingredient: Mayo

In our grilling recipes, we like to use oil-based marinades because the oil physically carries other flavors well and aids in browning. But for this recipe, we found that the oil dripped off the shrimp and into the fire. We had better results using mayonnaise, which is essentially oil emulsified with egg yolks. By stirring our marinade ingredients into the mayo, those flavors stayed where we wanted them—on the shrimp. Mayo's base seasoning (sugar, salt, and acid) also worked to our advantage here, as it provided the shrimp with a smidge more flavor.



Hand-torn pieces of prosciutto add texture and big pops of flavor.

Charred Pepper and White Bean Salad

Want sweet red peppers to taste even better? Give them some heat.

by Morgan Bolling

A BEAUTIFUL THING happens when you char peppers: They become at once sweeter and intriguingly bitter, and they soften to the point of being almost velvety. You can marinate the charred peppers and serve them over crostini, blend them into a creamy dip, or layer them on sandwiches. Here, they are the basis of a boldly flavored salad.

There are plenty of different ways to char peppers, including under the broiler or directly over the flames of a grill or gas stovetop burner. But the process can be messy. To simplify things, I cut three red bell peppers into

strips and tossed them into a little olive oil in a hot skillet. I stirred only once every 2 minutes to allow the peppers to develop dark, blistered spots and deep flavor. Then I transferred these peppers—still hot from the pan—straight into a bowl with olive oil, lemon juice, and salt so that they could soak up the dressing while they cooled.

Now, to build a salad around the peppers. I found that a can of drained cannellini beans was just the thing to add heft, and they greedily soaked up the well-seasoned vinaigrette. Adding one of my favorite spices, smoked paprika, brought another dimension of flavor. It is made by smoking, drying, and grinding mild red peppers, so its flavor was naturally a good match here. A little cayenne—yet another dried red pepper—brought a welcome tingle. The salad was almost there.

Shaved Pecorino Romano cheese and hand-torn shreds of prosciutto

added richness, salinity, and depth. Toasted almonds provided a nice contrasting crunch. And to finish, some chopped parsley added freshness. This salad is great as a light lunch on its own, as a snack with predinner drinks, or as a robust side dish.

Charring Role

Charring strips of red bell pepper transforms the flesh into a silky, tender, flavorful delight. Resist the urge to stir constantly; it's important that the pepper strips stay put for a couple minutes at a time so that they can pick up flavorful browning.

● CHARRED RED PEPPER AND WHITE BEAN SALAD

Serves 4 to 6

Total Time: 30 minutes,

plus 30 minutes marinating

Look for medium red bell peppers, each weighing 7 to 8 ounces. Shave the Pecorino with a vegetable peeler.

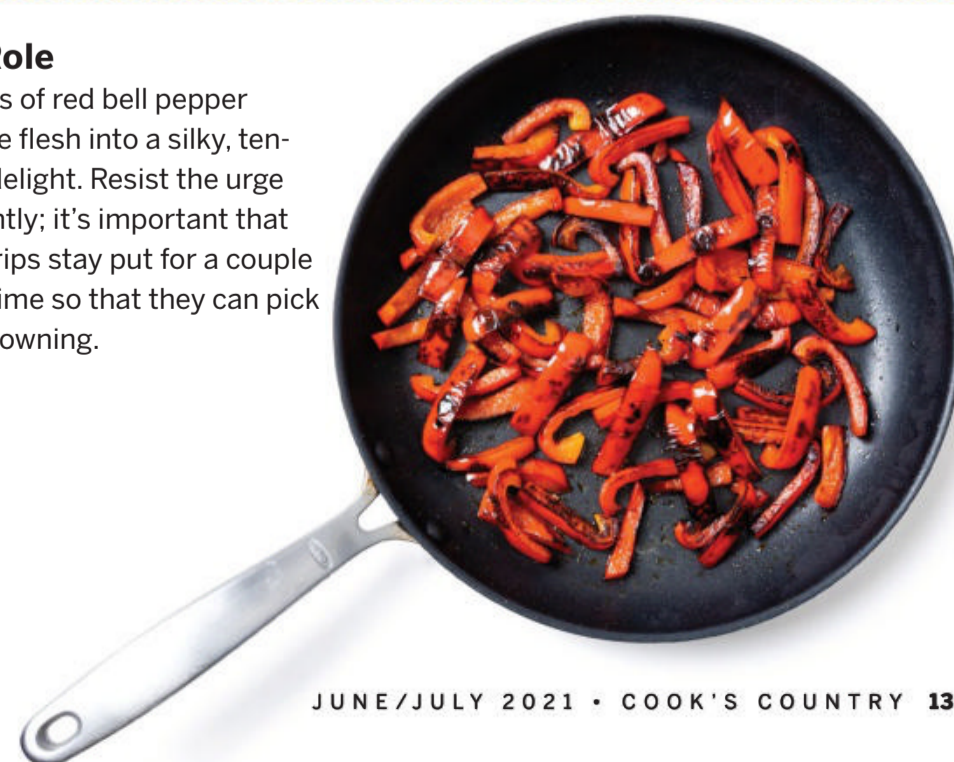
- 5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1½ tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, rinsed
- 3 red bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into rough 2- by ½-inch strips
- 1½ ounces prosciutto (3 slices), torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 ounce Pecorino Romano cheese, shaved
- ¼ cup whole almonds, toasted and chopped
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley

1. Whisk ¼ cup oil, lemon juice, ½ teaspoon salt, paprika, and cayenne together in large bowl. Add beans and toss to combine.

2. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add bell peppers and remaining ½ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring once every 2 minutes, until tender and deep spotty brown, about 8 minutes.

3. Transfer bell peppers to bowl with bean mixture and toss to combine. Let sit for at least 30 minutes to allow flavors to meld. (Bean mixture can be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

4. Just before serving, add prosciutto, Pecorino, almonds, and parsley to bean mixture and toss to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.





To create a big wallop of ranch flavor, we use fresh dill, chives, and cilantro in both the brine and the flour coating.

Ranch Fried Pork Chops

Combining the flavors of ranch dressing with crispy fried chops is a recipe for success.

by Morgan Bolling

● RANCH FRIED PORK CHOPS

Serves 4

Total Time: 1 hour 40 minutes, plus 30 minutes brining

We prefer blade-cut pork chops here, but you can use pork rib chops, if desired. If you're using rib chops, use kitchen shears to snip through the fat surrounding the loin muscle of each chop in two places, about 2 inches apart, before marinating to prevent the chops from buckling while frying.

PORK

- 2 cups buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh dill
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh chives
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro
- 1 tablespoon table salt
- 4 (5- to 8-ounce) bone-in blade-cut pork chops, ½ inch thick, trimmed
- 1 cup peanut or vegetable oil for frying

COATING

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup minced fresh dill
- ¼ cup minced fresh chives
- ¼ cup minced fresh cilantro
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1½ teaspoons pepper
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper

1. FOR THE PORK: Whisk buttermilk, dill, chives, cilantro, and salt in large bowl until salt is dissolved. Measure out 3 tablespoons buttermilk brine and set aside. Add pork to remaining brine and turn to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 24 hours.

2. FOR THE COATING: Combine all ingredients in large bowl. Add reserved 3 tablespoons brine and, using your fingers, rub flour mixture until craggy bits form throughout.

3. Working with 1 chop at a time, remove from brine, allowing excess to drip off, then coat with flour mixture, pressing to adhere. Transfer to rimmed baking sheet. Refrigerate pork, uncovered, for at least 30 minutes or up to 2 hours.

4. Set wire rack in second rimmed baking sheet. Heat oil in 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium-high heat to 375 degrees (to take temperature, tilt skillet so oil pools to 1 side). Carefully add 2 chops and cook until golden brown and registering 140 degrees, 2 to 4 minutes per side.

5. Transfer chops to prepared rack. Return oil to 375 degrees and repeat with remaining chops. Serve.

FOR ME, READING the word “ranch” in a recipe title creates instant intrigue. And if you put that magic word in front of “fried pork chops”? I’m all in. As a firm believer that most savory foods can be improved with the addition of ranch dressing, I was excited at the prospect of finding a new way—without using the actual dressing—to infuse crisp, meaty fried pork chops with the classic ranch flavors of tangy buttermilk, chives, cilantro, dill, garlic, and black pepper.

I started with four bone-in blade-cut pork chops, which are mostly dark meat and thus tend to stay juicy during high-heat cooking such as frying. I opted for thin (½-inch) chops to achieve a high ratio of crunchy coating to meat.

My favorite recipe for fried chicken calls for brining the raw chicken in a mixture of buttermilk and salt to season the meat, so I followed that path and soaked the raw chops in salted buttermilk for 30 minutes. Next I tossed the chops in flour heavily seasoned with garlic powder, pepper, chives, cilantro, and dill before shallow-frying them two at a time. The meat was tender and well seasoned, but the coating was a little thin and falling off the chops. Plus, it seemed like the intense heat from frying muted the fresh herb flavor.

To compensate, I added the herbs to the buttermilk brine, too, and increased the amount of minced fresh herbs in the flour mixture. I also augmented the flour mixture with cayenne

pepper and baking powder, the former for a pop of heat and the latter to help keep the crust light and crisp.

Next, I turned to a test kitchen technique and rubbed several tablespoons of buttermilk into the seasoned flour to create little nubs of moistened flour that resulted in a thicker, shaggier fried coating (see “A Craggy, Crunchy Coating”). And I let that shaggy coating rest on the meat for 30 minutes before frying so that it could set up and stick well to each chop throughout the frying process.

These crunchy, juicy, delicious pork chops are so full of bold herby flavor that they make me wonder what else I can ranch-ify. Ranch wings? Ranch pork roast? Maybe even ranch birthday cake . . . ?

A Craggy, Crunchy Coating

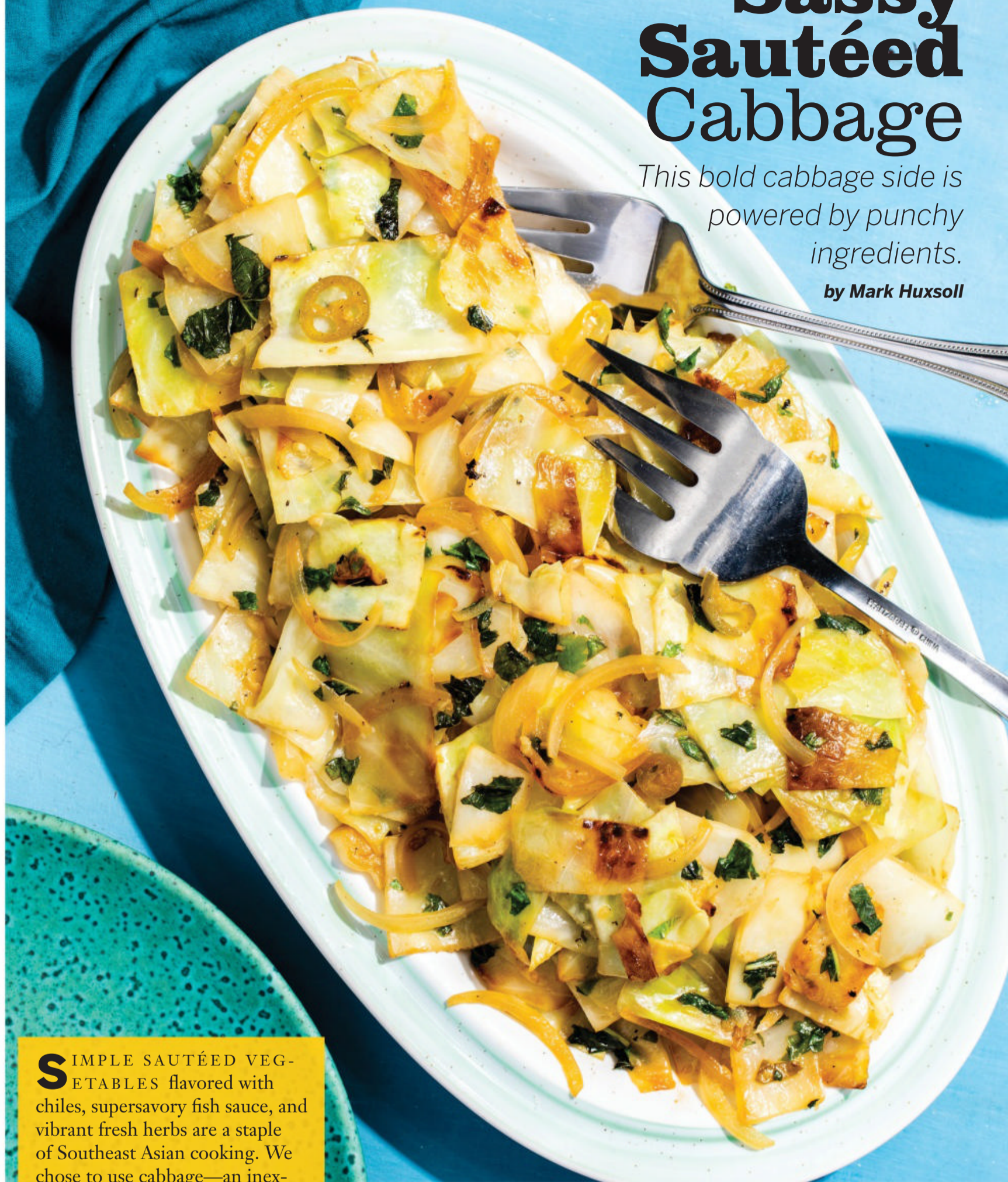


Use your fingers to rub the seasoned buttermilk (from the brine) into the flour coating.

Sassy Sautéed Cabbage

This bold cabbage side is powered by punchy ingredients.

by Mark Huxsoll



SIMPLE SAUTÉED VEGETABLES flavored with chiles, supersavory fish sauce, and vibrant fresh herbs are a staple of Southeast Asian cooking. We chose to use cabbage—an inexpensive and flavorful vegetable—for our version.

● SAUTÉED CABBAGE WITH GINGER AND HERBS

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 30 minutes
Vegetable oil can be substituted for the coconut oil, if desired. If you cannot find a serrano chile, you can substitute one jalapeño. If you're spice averse, consider halving the chile and removing the seeds. We recommend wearing rubber gloves when handling the chile. The skillet will be very full when you add the cabbage to it in step 1, but the pieces will shrink as they cook.

- 3 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1 head green cabbage (2 pounds), quartered, cored, and cut into 1½-inch pieces
- 1½ teaspoons table salt, divided
- 1 onion, sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 serrano chile, stemmed and sliced into thin rings
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- 1½ tablespoons fish sauce
- 2 teaspoons lime juice

1. Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add cabbage and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover (lid may not sit snugly at first; this is OK) and cook until cabbage is just tender, about 4 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking.
2. Uncover skillet and stir in onion, ginger, garlic, serrano, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Continue to cook, uncovered, until cabbage is charred in spots, 4 to 8 minutes longer, stirring once every 2 minutes.
3. Off heat, stir in cilantro, mint, fish sauce, and lime juice. Transfer to shallow platter and serve.

KEY STEPS



Cut head of cabbage into 1½-inch pieces

Quarter cabbage, peel off 5 or 6 large leaves, stack them, then make cuts in both directions to make square pieces. Repeat with remaining cabbage.



Steam cabbage

Heat oil in skillet. Add cabbage and 1 teaspoon salt; cover; and cook until cabbage has softened, about 4 minutes.



Sauté cabbage with aromatics and chile

Uncover skillet and stir in onion, ginger, garlic, serrano chile, and more salt. Cook another 4 to 8 minutes (stirring every 2 minutes), uncovered, until cabbage is charred in spots.



Finish with punchy flavors

Off heat, stir in cilantro, mint, fish sauce, and lime juice.

Socca

These crisp, nutty chickpea pancakes come together in minutes. **by Matthew Fairman**

IMAGINE YOU'VE SPENT the day sunning on a beach on the French Riviera, and now you're settling in at a sunny table in the market square. You're parched, famished, and giddy as the waiter drops off glasses of chilled local rosé and a platter of hot, crispy, flat pancakes straight out of the nearby wood-fired oven. They drizzle on a generous amount of olive oil and beckon you to dig in. You take a sip of wine (ahhh) and then bite into your socca. It's crispy, salty, rich, and smoky, with a center that's almost creamy. The slightly nutty flavor is familiar and comforting. One slice in, and you already know you're going to need more.

Don't feel bad—I haven't been there myself, either. But I feel like I get closer

each time I put a bottle of wine on ice and make yet another batch of these surprisingly easy, delightfully irresistible socca. Also known as farinata, torta di ceci, or cecina in Italy and a close relative of fainá in Uruguay and Argentina, socca are a kind of pancake or flatbread made from a simple batter of

Chickpea Flour

There's a lot to like about nutty-tasting, high-protein, and gluten-free chickpea flour. Try it in recipes for pakoras, or use it to help bind vegan baking recipes. Don't confuse regular chickpea flour (which we call for here) for black chickpea flour (aka urad dal), which behaves differently.

chickpea flour, water, olive oil, and seasonings. They're most commonly made by pouring a thin layer of the batter into a hot oiled pan and then baking them in a smoky, ripping-hot wood-fired oven until they're browned and crisp.

Aficionados say you can't replicate them at home (without the smokiness and high heat of the traditional oven), but having made many batches now myself, I'm sure happy I tried. I began trying to replicate the traditional method by pouring my batter into a cast-iron skillet that I'd heated under the broiler and then putting it all back in the oven. I immediately knew I'd need to rethink my approach. For the thin, crepe-like flatbreads I wanted, I needed to make several socca, and going in and out of the oven with a heavy, extremely hot pan was tedious and had me worried about burning myself.

So I turned to another method I'd seen in recipes for at-home socca, cooking the batter like a crepe in a nonstick skillet on the stovetop. This was much easier. After 5 minutes over medium-high heat, the underside of my socca had turned delightfully crispy and beautifully golden brown. Taking a cue from David Lebovitz (one of my favorite writers on French food), I added a bit of cumin to my batter to help replicate the earthy, smoky flavor I'd read so much about.

These socca were excellent with just a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil and a sprinkling of flake sea salt, but my wife, friends, and I loved them even more when I served them with a simple topping of sautéed onions with rosemary. Will you try them for yourself and see? They make a tantalizing lunch or incredible hors d'oeuvres. Of course, you might still want to find a way to the Côte d'Azur to have the socca there, but until then, let's enjoy summertime at home in style!

● SOCCA WITH SAUTÉED ONIONS AND ROSEMARY

Serves 4 to 6

(Makes four 10-inch pancakes)

Total Time: 1¼ hours

Chickpea flour is also sold as garbanzo flour; we don't recommend using besan or gram flour here. It's best to use a scale to weigh the flour for this recipe.

SOCCA

- 1½ cups water
- 1⅓ cups (6 ounces) chickpea flour
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus extra for drizzling
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground cumin
- Flake sea salt

SAUTÉED ONIONS

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 cups thinly sliced onions
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary

1. FOR THE SOCCA: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 200 degrees. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and place in oven. Whisk water, flour, 4 teaspoons oil, table salt, and cumin in bowl until no lumps remain. Let batter rest while preparing



This thin, crisp style of socca is inspired by the ones we tried at Coquine restaurant in Portland, Oregon.

onions, at least 10 minutes. (Batter will thicken as it sits.)

2. FOR THE SAUTÉED ONIONS: Heat oil in 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add onions and salt and cook until onions start to brown around edges but still have some texture, 7 to 10 minutes. Add rosemary and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Transfer onion mixture to bowl; set aside. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.

3. Heat 2 teaspoons oil in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Lift skillet off heat and pour ½ cup batter into far side of skillet; swirl gently in clockwise direction until batter evenly covers bottom of skillet.

4. Return skillet to heat and cook socca, without moving it, until well browned and crisp around bottom edge, 3 to 4 minutes (you can peek at underside of socca by loosening it from side of skillet with rubber spatula).

5. Flip socca with rubber spatula and cook until second side is just cooked,

about 1 minute. Transfer socca, browned side up, to prepared wire rack in oven. Repeat 3 more times, using 2 teaspoons oil and ½ cup batter per batch.

6. Transfer socca to cutting board and cut each into 8 wedges. Serve, topped with sautéed onions, drizzled with extra oil, and sprinkled with flake sea salt.

The Perfect Swirl



Swirling the batter makes for even socca.

Grilled Steak Tips, Broccoli, and Red Onion with Anchovy-Garlic Butter



DINNER TONIGHT

Herb-Crusted Salmon with Dilled Green Beans



DINNER TONIGHT

Smoked Trout, Watercress, and Fennel Salad



DINNER TONIGHT

Gochujang Chicken and Tortellini



DINNER TONIGHT



Herb-Crusted Salmon with Dilled Green Beans

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

To ensure uniform cooking, we prefer to buy a whole 1½- to 2-pound center-cut salmon fillet and cut it into four equal pieces ourselves.

- 1 pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch lengths
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided, plus salt for cooking green beans
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ cup panko bread crumbs
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest plus 2 teaspoons juice, plus lemon wedges for serving
- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) skinless center-cut salmon fillets, 1 to 1½ inches thick
- 6 radishes, trimmed, halved, and sliced thin (1 cup)

1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large saucepan over high heat. Add green beans and 2 tablespoons salt; return to boil; and cook until green beans are bright green and tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Drain in colander and rinse under cold water until chilled. Drain well and pat dry with paper towels.
2. Meanwhile, combine mayonnaise, dill, mustard, and pepper in bowl; measure out and reserve 4 teaspoons mayonnaise mixture. Combine panko, thyme, and lemon zest in second bowl. Pat salmon dry with paper towels and sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon salt. Spread 1 teaspoon reserved mayonnaise mixture on top of each fillet. Sprinkle panko mixture evenly over top of each fillet, pressing to adhere. Arrange salmon on baking sheet. Roast until centers of fillets register 125 degrees, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Stir lemon juice and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt into remaining mayonnaise mixture; add radishes and green beans and toss to combine. Serve salmon with dilled green beans and lemon wedges.



Grilled Steak Tips, Broccoli, and Red Onion with Anchovy-Garlic Butter

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

You will need four 12-inch metal skewers for this recipe. Serve sprinkled with chopped fresh chives.

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 anchovy fillets, rinsed
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 pounds sirloin steak tips, trimmed and cut into 1-inch chunks
- 2 teaspoons table salt, divided
- 1 teaspoon pepper, divided
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 pound broccoli crowns, cut into 3-inch wedges
- 1 red onion, sliced into ½-inch-thick rounds

1. Cook butter, anchovies, garlic, and pepper flakes in small saucepan over medium heat, whisking to melt butter and break up anchovies, until garlic just begins to turn straw-colored, about 4 minutes. Off heat, whisk in lemon juice. Cover to keep warm and set aside.
2. Pat beef dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with 1 teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Thread beef onto four 12-inch metal skewers. Whisk 3 tablespoons oil, water, ¾ teaspoon salt, and remaining ½ teaspoon pepper together in large bowl. Add broccoli wedges to oil mixture and toss well to coat. Push toothpick horizontally through each onion round. Brush onion rounds with remaining 1 tablespoon oil and sprinkle with remaining ¼ teaspoon salt.
3. Grill beef, broccoli, and onion over hot fire until meat registers 125 degrees and vegetables are crisp-tender and browned, 10 to 12 minutes, flipping and repositioning as needed for even browning. Remove toothpicks from onions. Serve beef and vegetables with butter sauce.



Gochujang Chicken and Tortellini

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

We developed this recipe with Barilla Three Cheese Tortellini. Make sure to use gochujang paste, which comes in a tub, instead of the sauce, which comes in a bottle.

- 8 ounces dried cheese tortellini
- 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed and cut into ¾-inch pieces
- ¼ cup honey
- 3 tablespoons gochujang paste
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- 8 ounces fontina cheese, shredded (2 cups)
- 2 scallions, sliced thin on bias

1. Adjust oven rack 8 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large saucepan over high heat. Add pasta and cook until tender. Drain and return to saucepan.
2. Meanwhile, combine chicken, honey, gochujang, soy sauce, oil, garlic, and ginger in 12-inch broiler-safe skillet. Cover and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until chicken is cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes.
3. Off heat, stir in tortellini. Sprinkle with fontina. Broil until cheese is melted and just beginning to bubble, 2 to 5 minutes. Sprinkle with scallions and serve.



Smoked Trout, Watercress, and Fennel Salad

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

Use small red potatoes measuring 1 to 2 inches in diameter.

- 1 pound small red potatoes, unpeeled, quartered
- ¾ teaspoon table salt, divided, plus salt for cooking potatoes
- 1 cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 4 ounces (4 cups) watercress, torn into 1- to 2-inch pieces
- 1 fennel bulb, 2 tablespoons fronds chopped, stalks discarded, bulb halved, cored, and sliced thin
- 8 ounces smoked trout, skin and pin bones removed, flaked
- 4 hard-cooked large eggs, quartered

1. Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add potatoes and 2 tablespoons salt; return to boil and cook until tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain potatoes, then spread out on large plate and let cool slightly. Combine yogurt, horseradish, pepper, and ½ teaspoon salt in bowl; set aside.
2. Whisk oil, lemon juice, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt together in large bowl. Add watercress, sliced fennel, and potatoes and toss to coat.
3. Divide yogurt mixture evenly among individual plates and spread into even layer. Divide salad among plates and top with trout and eggs. Sprinkle with fennel fronds and serve.

**Grilled Dijon Chicken Salad
with Raspberries and Avocado**



DINNER TONIGHT

**Cast Iron Pork Chops
and Barbecue Beans**



DINNER TONIGHT

Cutty's-Inspired Eggplant Spuckie



DINNER TONIGHT

**Skirt Steak with Tomato, Corn,
and Brown Rice Salad**



DINNER TONIGHT

Cast Iron Pork Chops and Barbecue Beans

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

Our favorite supermarket barbecue sauce is Bull's-Eye Original BBQ Sauce. To prevent the pork chops from curling while they cook, cut two slits about 2 inches apart through the fat and connective tissue on the side of each chop. If you like, sprinkle on some chives before serving.

- 1 teaspoon table salt
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 4 (8- to 10-ounce) bone-in pork rib chops, ¾ to 1 inch thick, trimmed
- 6 slices bacon, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 (15-ounce) cans navy beans, rinsed
- ¼ cup barbecue sauce
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar

1. Combine salt, mustard, paprika, and cayenne in bowl. Pat chops dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with spice mixture. Cook bacon in 12-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat until crispy, 5 to 7 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to plate, leaving fat in skillet.
2. Add chops to fat left in skillet and cook until well browned on 1 side, about 5 minutes. Transfer to plate, browned side up. Add onion to now-empty skillet and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in beans, barbecue sauce, ketchup, water, vinegar, and bacon and bring to boil.
3. Arrange chops, browned side up, in skillet and add any accumulated juices from plate. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and simmer until chops register 140 degrees, 6 to 10 minutes. Serve.



Grilled Dijon Chicken Salad with Raspberries and Avocado

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

Sprinkle with julienned fresh basil before serving.

- 5 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar
- 1¾ teaspoons table salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 4 (6- to 8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 10 ounces (10 cups) mesclun
- 5 ounces (1 cup) raspberries, halved
- 1 avocado, halved, pitted, and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup chopped pecans, toasted

1. Combine mustard, sugar, salt, and pepper in large bowl. Transfer 3 tablespoons mustard mixture to second large bowl; set aside. Pat chicken dry with paper towels. Add chicken to remaining mustard mixture (in first bowl) and toss to coat.
2. Grill chicken over hot fire until well browned and registering 160 degrees, about 6 minutes per side. Transfer chicken to cutting board and tent with foil.
3. Whisk oil and vinegar into reserved mustard mixture. Add mesclun and toss to combine. Slice chicken ¾ inch thick. Top salad with raspberries, avocado, pecans, and chicken. Serve.



Skirt Steak with Tomato, Corn, and Brown Rice Salad

Serves 4 Total Time: 50 minutes

Feta or goat cheese can be substituted for the ricotta salata, if desired.

- 1 cup long-grain brown rice
- 1¼ teaspoons table salt, divided, plus salt for cooking rice
- 1 (1-pound) skirt steak, trimmed and cut crosswise into 4 equal pieces
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 ears corn, kernels cut from cob, or 1½ cups thawed frozen corn
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 shallot, minced
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 8 ounces cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3 ounces ricotta salata cheese, crumbled (¾ cup)

1. Bring 2 quarts water to boil in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add rice and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until rice is tender, about 25 minutes. Drain rice in fine-mesh strainer and rinse under cold water until chilled. Drain well and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, pat steaks dry with paper towels and sprinkle with pepper and ¾ teaspoon salt. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Cook steaks until well browned and meat registers 135 degrees (for medium), 2 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer steaks to carving board and tent with foil. Add corn to now-empty skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until just beginning to brown, about 3 minutes; transfer to bowl.
3. Whisk parsley, shallot, lemon juice, remaining 2 tablespoons oil, and remaining ½ teaspoon salt together in large bowl. Add tomatoes, rice, and corn and toss to combine. Sprinkle salad with ricotta salata. Slice steaks thin against grain and serve with salad.



Cutty's-Inspired Eggplant Spuckie

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

This sandwich, inspired by one at the Boston-area sandwich shop Cutty's, is a test kitchen favorite. It's OK to use the tender, thin stems at the base of the parsley leaves.

- 1½ pounds eggplant, sliced into ½-inch-thick rounds
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided
- ¾ cup pitted kalamata olives
- ½ cup fresh parsley leaves
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 4 ciabatta sandwich rolls, halved lengthwise
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced into ¼-inch-thick rounds

1. Adjust oven rack 6 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Line rimmed baking sheet with foil and spray with vegetable oil spray. Brush eggplant slices with 2 tablespoons oil, sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon salt, and arrange on prepared sheet. Broil eggplant until softened and beginning to brown, 10 to 14 minutes, flipping halfway through cooking. Transfer eggplant to plate and set aside.
2. Pulse olives, parsley, vinegar, garlic, pepper flakes, and remaining ¼ teaspoon salt in food processor until chopped, 6 to 8 pulses. Transfer to bowl and stir in carrots and 2 tablespoons oil.
3. Arrange rolls on now-empty sheet and brush cut sides with remaining ¼ cup oil. Broil rolls, cut sides up, until golden brown, 2 to 5 minutes. Spread carrot-olive mixture evenly on cut sides of each roll. Distribute mozzarella and eggplant evenly among roll bottoms, then cap with roll tops. Serve.



Charcoal Grilling

Gas grills may be convenient, but nothing beats the experience—the great smell, the live fire—of grilling over charcoal. Here's what you need to know about charcoal grilling to ensure that fire is your friend, not your foe.

BY SCOTT KATHAN

BRIQUETTES



HARDWOOD LUMP



The Fuel

There are two main categories of charcoal: machine-pressed briquettes and irregularly shaped hardwood lump charcoal. Which type should you use?

First off, avoid “match-light” briquettes; their chemical additives can impart unpleasant flavors to food. Use regular briquettes or lump and light them with a chimney starter (see page 18). We've found that, contrary to popular belief, briquettes actually burn just as hot as (or hotter than) lump. What's more, briquettes are generally cheaper and burn for longer (2-plus hours versus about 35 minutes for lump), and their heat is more consistent. That said, lump charcoal has fewer additives and binders and is thus considered more “natural.”



**Grill Vents =
Breath of Life**

Success in charcoal grilling depends on understanding how the grill vents work—and using them properly. Most kettle-style grills have bottom vents below the charcoal grate and top vents on the lid; air flows into the grill through the bottom, running over the charcoal to encourage combustion, and out via the top vent. We typically keep the bottom vents fully open to ensure a clean-burning fire. While the top vent can be closed to slow/dampen the fire, we typically keep it fully open, even for long-burning barbecue, to keep the heat and smoke moving through the grill.



Scrape and Oil

It's important to keep your grill clean. To prevent food from sticking to the cooking grate, preheat the grill, covered, and scrape it clean with a grill brush before cooking and again after cooking when the grill is still hot. And don't forget to oil the grate before cooking. To oil the grate, wad up a paper towel (or two), grab it with your tongs, dip it in vegetable oil, and move the oiled towel all over the grate. You can also use pieces of rags in place of the paper towels to get even better results. A preheated grill that has been scraped clean with a grill brush and then well oiled should be virtually nonstick.

SINGLE LEVEL



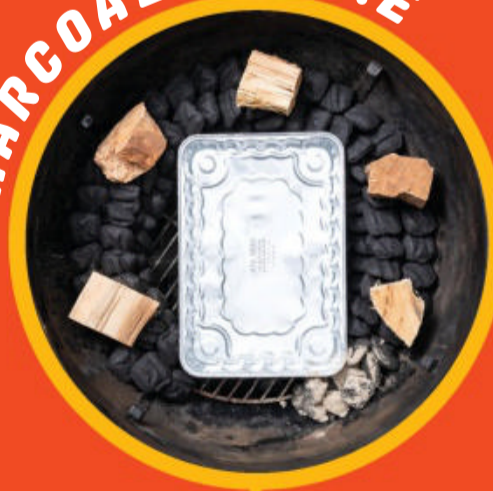
TWO LEVEL



HALF GRILL



CHARCOAL SNAKE



Hotter and cooler zones

Spread all the coals in an even single layer across the bottom grate; you can use long-handled grill tongs to help arrange them evenly.

USE FOR: Small, quick-cooking foods such as burgers, hot dogs, steaks, some fish, and vegetables

Evenly distribute two-thirds of the lit charcoal over half the grill, and then scatter the remaining third over the other half. This creates hotter and cooler cooking zones so that you can both cook slowly and sear the food.

USE FOR: Bone-in chicken pieces, sausages, and thick pork chops

Evenly distribute all the lit charcoal over half the grill. This setup also produces two cooking zones, but the hotter zone is really hot.

USE FOR: Whole chickens, bone-in chicken pieces, thick pork chops, and foods that are prone to flaring up (pull them to the cooler side)

Lay two layers of unlit charcoal, two briquettes wide, in a C shape around the grill's perimeter, and place wood chunks on top. Light just one end of the snake for a slow burn.

USE FOR: Slow-smoked items such as Kansas City–Style Barbecue Ribs (page 6) and brisket

Here's everything you need for a successful—and delicious—cookout.

by Emily Phares

UNTIL THE 1940s, people grilled primarily at picnics and campsites. Then, after World War II, the middle class moved to the burbs. Lest you think the 1950s were all about poodle skirts and Elvis (swoon), that's also when backyard grills became all the rage. And decades later, grilling remains as popular as ever. Here are some of our favorite ingredients and equipment to help ensure success.



The Best Grilling Equipment

GRILLS

MASTER THE FLAMES WITH OUR TOP-RATED GRILLS

Gas Grill Under \$500

We like gas grills for their ease of use—they're ideal for people who want a quick, low-fuss setup. This grill does a great job of maintaining consistent, steady heat and distributes smoke well, too. The angle of the lid when it's open means that any smoke that's generated stays out of our faces. Another smart design innovation: a large tray that provides plenty of room for collecting any grease that drips down, making cleanup easier. The sturdy, durable cart is built to last. Better still, Weber now offers a 10-year warranty on the ignition system.



ATK Recommends: Weber Spirit II E-310 Gas Grill (\$499.00)

Charcoal Grill

Food grilled over charcoal has the smoky taste we love, making it worth the extra time and effort of setting up this type of grill. So if flavor is paramount and you're not in a hurry, we recommend a charcoal grill. And while some charcoal grills can be intimidating to handle, our favorite model removes the guesswork, making it especially easy to use. It has a gas ignition system that lights coals with the push of a button, no chimney starter required. And it has a roomy cart that rolls well, a charcoal storage bin, and a lid holder.



ATK Recommends: Weber Performer Deluxe Charcoal Grill (\$399.00)

THE BEST GEAR FOR THE JOB

BEAT THE HEAT WITH THESE KEY TOOLS



Chimney Starter

If you have a charcoal grill without an ignition system, you'll likely need one of these. We use a chimney starter to light charcoal for grilling because lighter fluid, which is petroleum- or alcohol-based, can impart unpleasant flavors to grilled food. Our winner is easy to load, lift, and pour from, and it feels comfortable to use thanks to its two handles.

ATK Recommends: Weber Rapidfire Chimney Starter (\$14.99)

Grill Brush

Cleaning your grill—every time you grill—is a must. We tried a lot of different brushes and found that short metal bristles and a triangular head shape made for a winning combination. Our winning brush could both sweep the top of the grill and clean between bars, and because it doesn't have a scraper we can brush even the very ends of the grates.

ATK Recommends: Weber 12 Inch Grill Brush (\$7.99)

Grill Tongs

A well-designed pair of tongs can make grilling so much more pleasant, letting you turn, flip, and transfer food from a safe distance. Our favorite pair is light but durable, with precise pincers that stay aligned and can handle foods large and small. They're 16 inches long, offering ample protection from the grill's heat without sacrificing leverage.

ATK Recommends: OXO Good Grips 16" Locking Tongs (\$14.93)

Grill Spatula

Those burgers aren't going to flip themselves, meaning you'll need a spatula—one designed specifically for grilling—to protect your hands from the flames. Our highest-ranked grill spatula is narrow enough to navigate between burgers on the grill, easily handles everything from delicate fish to floppy pizza, and is sturdy with a comfortable handle.

ATK Recommends: Char-Broil Comfort-Grip Grill Spatula (\$14.94)

TIPS FROM OUR VERY OWN GRILL MASTER

We asked Deputy Food Editor Morgan Bolling how to make great grilled hamburgers. Here are her top tips.



1 Don't overwork the meat when forming patties, or your burgers may end up with a dense, sausage-like texture.

2 Salt only the exterior of your burger, not the interior, and do so just before grilling. Salt removes water from and dissolves some meat proteins, leaving the insoluble proteins bound

together. Because of this, adding salt to the interior of the patty gives the meat a springy bite that's better suited to sausages than burgers.

3 Create a small indentation in the center of each burger patty. This will help prevent the patties from puffing up.

READY TO GET GRILLING?

Cook's Country has a burger recipe for every palate. We have recipes for bacon burgers and steak burgers, portobello burgers and meatloaf burgers, and even grilled chile chorizo burgers and pork burgers. Go to [CooksCountry.com/grillingrecipes](https://www.cookscountry.com/grillingrecipes).

See our recipe for Grilled Lamb Burgers on page 8.

Our Top-Rated Grilling Ingredients

THE MAIN EVENT MEAT AND MEAT-FREE OPTIONS FOR YOUR COOKOUT

Ground Beef

For burgers, we use 85 percent lean ground beef most often. It's plenty rich and has less fat than 80 percent lean ground beef, meaning there's less risk of flare-ups.



All-Beef Hot Dogs

When shopping, look for larger hot dogs with more fat; with 15 grams of fat, our winning hot dogs are juicy and bouncy. Hot dogs that include corn products (including corn syrup) as primary ingredients can be too sweet; we prefer varieties with no or "2 percent or less" corn products listed.

ATK Recommends: Nathan's Famous Skinless Beef Franks (\$6.99 for 8 hot dogs)



Firm Tofu

Tofu is a protein with truly ancient roots—it dates back 2,000 years to China's Han dynasty. And with more people now embracing plant-based eating, tofu is a great idea for the grill. We prefer firm tofu for grilling; it absorbs marinades well and holds together on the grill.

ATK Recommends: Nasoya Organic Firm Tofu (\$2.99 for 14-ounce package)



Meat-Free Burger

Our favorite meat-free burger tastes just like a normal burger, thanks in part to the use of heme, an iron-containing molecule, which contributes mineral-y flavor and a bold red color. Coarse-textured, with bits of solid coconut oil evenly distributed throughout, it resembles beef flecked with fat.

ATK Recommends: Impossible Foods Impossible Burger (\$10.39 for 12 ounces)

FLUFFY BREAD BUNS THAT ARE WORTHY OF YOUR MAIN



Hamburger Buns

While traditional hamburger buns use water to hydrate the dough, the manufacturer of our winning buns replaces water with potato flakes, milk, and butter—essentially, mashed potatoes. The potato starch gives the rolls a tender, fluffy texture, and the sweetness contrasts nicely with savory burgers.

ATK Recommends: Martin's Sandwich Potato Rolls (\$3.69 for 8 buns)

Hot Dog Buns

Hot dog buns can be top sliced or side sliced; we much prefer the former because the bread is evenly distributed on each side of the hot dog, holding it and any condiments securely. Our top-ranked hot dog buns have a yeasty flavor and are crusty and sturdy enough to handle even the heftiest of hot dogs.

ATK Recommends: Pepperidge Farm Hot Dog Buns (\$1.99 for 8 buns)

MELTY CHEESE A LITTLE CHEESE PROVIDES RICHNESS



American Cheese

We love adding American cheese to burgers, but some manufacturers cut costs by using less actual cheese in their products and more cheap thickeners such as milk, whey, or milk protein concentrate. Our winner is a "process cheese," a technical term that means it doesn't include tons of thickeners, as evidenced by its short ingredient list. It's nutty, tangy, and tender.

ATK Recommends: Boar's Head American Cheese (\$5.49 for 8 ounces)

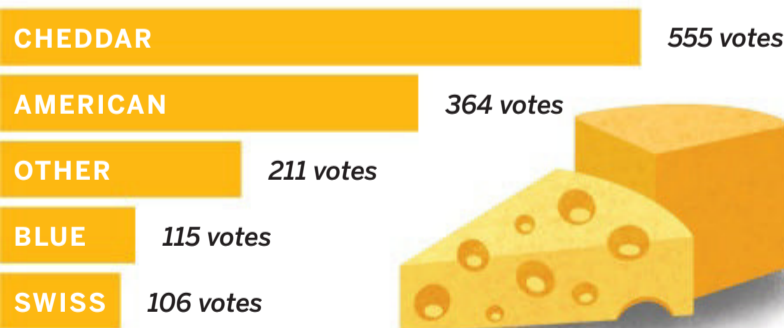
Extra-Sharp Cheddar

Manufacturers sometimes make their white and orange cheddars differently, with regional preferences, terroir, and local bacteria all playing roles. Our favorite white cheddar is tangy and melts beautifully, while our favorite orange cheddar is mild and milky and has a creamy texture when melted.

ATK Recommends: Cracker Barrel Extra Sharp White Cheddar Cheese (\$3.99 for 8 ounces), Cracker Barrel Extra Sharp Cheddar Cheese (\$3.99 for 8 ounces)

CHOOSE A CHEESE

We asked readers about their favorite cheese for topping burgers. Cheddar was the resounding favorite, but American was also popular. We also got some other delicious-sounding suggestions. Some of our favorites? One reader uses Camembert with thin slices of dates or figs, while another loves creamy mozzarella. And yet another said they opt for blue cheese and skip all the other condiments entirely.



FUN TOPPINGS SUPERCHARGE YOUR MAINS WITH THESE ADDITIONS



Sauerkraut

We prefer sauerkraut packaged in shelf-stable jars or cans; refrigerated plastic bags let in air over time, degrading the sauerkraut's flavor. Look for versions made with just cabbage, salt, and water; preservatives can add off-flavors. Our winner is tangy and slightly chewy.

ATK Recommends: Eden Organic Sauerkraut (\$4.45 for 32 ounces)

Dill Pickle Spears

When shopping, look for refrigerated pickle spears; because they have a shorter shelf life, they don't sit in their liquid and become oversaturated, instead staying pleasantly crunchy. Our favorite spears are also slightly spicy and very garlicky, with a great snap.

ATK Recommends: Boar's Head Kosher Dill Pickle Spears (\$3.99 for 26 ounces)

BOLD CONDIMENTS ADD THE RIGHT SAUCES AND SPREADS

Ketchup

We've tasted ketchups with grainy textures and others with atypical ingredients such as honey and green bell pepper, but we prefer the classic style. Our winner is smooth and has a familiar sweet-tart flavor.

ATK Recommends: Heinz Organic Tomato Ketchup (\$3.69 for 14 ounces)



Yellow Mustard

Yellow mustard gets its characteristic bright hue from the addition of turmeric. Our favorite is mildly sweet, smooth, and zingy.

ATK Recommends: Heinz Yellow Mustard (\$1.99 for 14 ounces)



Mayonnaise

Mayonnaise is America's top-selling condiment, and for good reason. We love it on sandwiches, burgers, salads, and more. Tasters called our top product a "close second" to homemade.

ATK Recommends: Blue Plate Real Mayonnaise (\$4.79 for 32 ounces) or Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise (\$4.79 for 30 ounces)



Bottled Barbecue Sauce

Most supermarket barbecue sauces are modeled after Kansas City-style blends—thick, sweet, tangy, and tomato-based. Our favorite has a sweet, slightly smoky, tomatoey flavor.

ATK Recommends: Bull's-Eye Original BBQ Sauce (\$2.59 for 18 ounces)



Kombdi, Jira Ghalun (Cumin-Scented Chicken)



The beauty
of this delicious,
fragrant dish
is in its
simplicity.

Grinding Cumin Seeds

The flavor compounds in cumin are volatile, and they start to evaporate and lose potency when they're exposed to air. (Coffee beans and ground coffee are a good parallel.) That's why it's best to buy whole cumin seeds and grind them fresh for this recipe. The 3 tablespoons of whole seeds translates to 7 teaspoons of ground cumin.

A simple, soulful recipe that's fast enough for a weeknight.

by **Kaumudi Marathé**

AS A CHILD, I had no interest in cooking. My head was always in a book, I dreamed of being a writer, and I later trained to be a journalist. But food was circling in the air above me. After all, I had grown up with great cooks who were always throwing parties and discussing food.

My parents came from India, from a generation that made everything from scratch. Mom was the speediest, most inventive cook I knew. If she lacked equipment or ingredients, she

found innovative solutions. Her food was experimental but delicious. Her mother, Aji, by contrast, was precise and deliberate. Aji's recipes tasted the same every time: familiar and comforting. When I was working as a reporter in Bombay, Aji generously taught me to cook many of my favorite recipes; cooking alongside her and documenting those recipes sparked my career as a food writer.

Kombdi, Jira Ghalun (Cumin-Scented Chicken) is a recipe from my second cookbook, *The Essential Marathi Cookbook* (2009), which features food from Maharashtra, the state on India's west coast where I was born. I researched and wrote the book because the region's cuisines had not previously been widely represented in English-language cookbooks. In fact,

until the late 2000s, regional Indian food was not much talked about in the United States, and I wanted to change the status quo. Saag paneer, chicken tikka, naan, and samosas were delicious and well-known dishes in India and abroad, but they did not represent a huge swath of the country.

My idea was to showcase Maharashtra's rich culinary heritage, some of which I knew about from personal experience. I also wanted to document it for my daughter and others like her who were growing up far from family and roots, with no opportunity to learn from an older generation. And finally, I wanted this book to highlight the vast variety of people in the state, not just my family, whom my previous cookbook had featured.

So I gathered recipes from a long

list of contributors—cooks who represented different Hindu classes (priests, warriors, merchants, etc.) and different religions, since each community cooks its own version of Marathi food, influenced by religious dietary laws (I regret that I could not include Marathi Jewish cooking nor tribal food, but those are on my list for the next book). I interviewed my contributors to learn more about

Indian Red Chile Powder

Indian red chile (sometimes spelled “chili” or “chilli”) powder is a spicy, bright-red powder typically made with guntur or bedgi (byadgi) chiles. To make this recipe accessible to the most readers, we offer a substitution of paprika and cayenne for the Indian red chile powder. If you have access to Indian red chile powder, however, by all means use it here; replace the paprika and cayenne with 2 tablespoons of the chile powder. When shopping, look for a product with a bright-red color, a sign of freshness. Do not use Kashmiri chile powder here; it is used primarily for color, not heat.



the recipes they shared, and I also researched Maharashtra’s cultural and culinary history.

Kombdi, jira ghalun is a simple, aromatic recipe shared by my friend Anuradha Samant. Anuradha is a native of Kolhapur, 145 miles south of Pune, where I was born. She belongs to a community (known in Maharashtra as Maratha) known for elaborately created, deeply flavored meat dishes. This recipe is an exception in that it is not elaborate and it can easily be made on a weeknight. But it proves the rule that braising meats produces deeply nuanced flavors. The chicken is first marinated in yogurt, garlic, and ginger. Then it’s braised in a tomato-onion sauce until it’s tender and cooked through.

Unlike north Indian recipes, which

often rely on warm spices such as cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves to add aromatic flavor, this version of the dish calls for only cumin. But the chicken is not braised with the ground spice. The cumin is added just before serving so that its smokiness adds fresh top notes to both the chicken and the sauce.

Cook drumsticks for a quick, fragrant, oh-so-satisfying dinner, served with rice or Indian bread. If you use chicken breasts and cut them into bite-size pieces, this recipe makes a great cocktail snack. Our Onion Raita (page 32) makes an easy, cooling accompaniment.

Recipe was adapted from *The Essential Marathi Cookbook* (2009) by Kaumudi Marathé. The author is a senior editor for the America’s Test Kitchen cookbooks team.

● KOMBDI, JIRA GHALUN (CUMIN-SCENTED CHICKEN)

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 1¼ hours, plus 1 hour marinating

You can substitute 2 tablespoons of Indian red chile powder for the paprika and cayenne, if desired. We strongly recommend toasting and grinding your own whole cumin seeds for this recipe, but you can substitute 7 teaspoons of ground cumin, if desired. If using ground cumin, toast it in an 8-inch skillet over medium heat until fragrant, about 1½ minutes. This recipe can also be made with 2¾ pounds of boneless, skinless chicken breasts instead of the drumsticks. If using breasts, cook until the meat registers 160 degrees in step 6, 18 to 25 minutes. If you enjoy spicy food, use the full 1½ teaspoons of cayenne. **For a milder version, reduce the amount of cayenne to ½ teaspoon.** Serve with rice or Indian bread and extra yogurt or our Onion Raita (page 32).

- 3⅓ cups water, divided**
- ¼ cup plain whole-milk yogurt, plus extra for serving**
- 8 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled**
- 1 (2-inch) piece ginger, peeled and chopped coarse**
- 1½ tablespoons paprika**
- 1 tablespoon table salt, divided**
- 1½ teaspoons cayenne pepper**
- 2 tomatoes, cored and chopped coarse**
- 2¾ pounds chicken drumsticks (about 8 large drumsticks)**
- 3 tablespoons cumin seeds**
- ¼ cup vegetable oil**
- 1 large onion, chopped fine**
- ½ cup fresh cilantro leaves**

1. Process ⅓ cup water, yogurt, garlic, ginger, paprika, 2 teaspoons salt, and cayenne in blender until smooth, about 2 minutes, scraping down sides of blender jar as needed. Transfer yogurt marinade to bowl.

2. Process tomatoes in now-empty blender until coarsely pureed, about 5 seconds. Transfer to second bowl.

3. Add chicken to bowl with yogurt marinade and toss to coat, rubbing marinade into chicken. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours (if marinating longer than 1 hour, cover and refrigerate tomatoes as well).

4. Heat cumin seeds in 8-inch skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Transfer to spice grinder or mortar and pestle and grind to powder; set aside.

5. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add onion and remaining 1 teaspoon salt and cook until onion is softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Add tomatoes; increase heat to high; and cook until mixture darkens slightly and begins to stick to bottom of pot, 5 to 7 minutes.

6. Add chicken, along with any marinade left in bowl, and remaining 3 cups water and bring to boil. Cover; reduce heat to medium-low; and simmer, stirring occasionally, until chicken registers at least 175 degrees, 25 to 30 minutes.

7. Using tongs, transfer chicken to large plate. Increase heat to high and cook, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until sauce is thickened and reduced to about 2¾ cups, 12 to 15 minutes. Stir cumin into sauce. Add chicken back to pot and stir to coat with sauce. Serve, sprinkled with cilantro and passing extra yogurt separately.

Key Steps

This fragrant stew warms your soul regardless of the temperature outside. Here are four keys to this delicious dish.



1. Process yogurt and seasonings in blender. Transfer mixture to bowl and add chicken.



2. Add 2 chopped tomatoes to unwashed blender jar and process until coarsely pureed.



3. Toast cumin seeds in skillet until fragrant, then grind.



4. Add ground cumin to reduced sauce after chicken is cooked.



Key Lime Pie

Puckeringly tart key lime pie is classic for a reason. But just how important is the “key” part?

by Lindsay Autry with Morgan Bolling

HOWEVER AND WHEREVER key lime pie was born, the pie has become a point of pride in Florida, where it’s the official state pie. But even within the Sunshine State, the dessert inspires heated opinions. In the 1960s, state representative Bernie Papy Jr. called to impose a \$100 fine on anyone calling the dessert “key lime pie” without using real key limes. And while no one has pushed this legislation, many believe that green food coloring ruins the pie. A graham cracker crust and a whipped cream topping are common elements, but plenty of Floridians adamantly defend a traditional pastry crust and/or a meringue top.

So going into this recipe, we knew that we wouldn’t be able to satisfy everyone. But we set off to create a pie with a soft yet set filling that straddled the fine line between sweet and tart.

We started with what many think of as the go-to recipe for key lime pie filling: the one on the back of the bottle of Nellie & Joe’s Famous Key West Lime Juice. This recipe calls for mixing sweetened condensed milk, egg yolks, and lime juice and then baking the mixture. After some trial and error, we decided to nearly double the ingredient amounts and add some heavy cream to make an impressively tall slice of pie that’s extra-luscious.

Next, we wondered whether the tiny, yellow-hued key limes were truly better than regular supermarket limes (aka Persian limes), which are generally easier to find. We baked three pies to find out: one using bottled key lime juice, another using freshly squeezed key lime juice, and a final with fresh Persian lime juice.

The bottled-juice version had a bitter aftertaste and lacked brightness. But both pies made with fresh juice were deliciously tangy. Sure, there were some differences; the key lime version was floral and nuanced. But the key lime custard was also a little astringent, and juicing those 18 tiny limes—

as opposed to six Persian limes—was not an easy task.

For some embellishment to our already nontraditional pie, we bolstered a sturdy graham cracker crust with pulverized pretzels. The pretzels added a buttery saltiness that balanced the sweet-tart filling. Topping the pie with a light, fluffy meringue was a good way to use up some of the egg whites left over from making the filling. Plus, the pillowy meringue added a contrasting texture and a stunning look.

One thing not worth debating: This delicious, creamy, not-necessarily-key lime pie is just the thing to bring a little sunshine to your table.

Adding crushed pretzels to the graham cracker crust gives the pie salty-sweet appeal.

Key Ingredient?

It's worth noting that, nowadays, most commercial key limes are grown not in Florida but rather in Mexico and Central America, after a 1926 hurricane wiped out the Sunshine State's crop. Agricultural reports from Florida in the early 1900s noted that key limes grown in favorable conditions were often 2 inches long, meaning that they were closer in size to regular Persian limes than the tiny key limes we know today. The key limes of today have a sharp acidity and complex, floral flavor. While they may have once made the pie, key limes (at least those purchased at the grocery store) hardly feel worth spending the extra time and money on today.

● REALLY GOOD KEY LIME PIE

Serves 8 Total Time: 1 hour 50 minutes, plus 5 hours cooling and chilling

Note that two of the egg whites from the filling are used to make the meringue topping—don't discard them when separating the eggs. Be sure to zest the limes to get the 2 teaspoons of zest needed for the garnish before juicing them. We do not recommend using a disposable aluminum pie plate here; those plates are shallow and the volume of the filling is too much for them. We like the meringue on this pie, but you can top it with our Failproof Whipped Cream (page 26) instead, if preferred. You'll need to buy two 14-ounce cans of sweetened condensed milk to yield the 1½ cups for this recipe. We call for regular, fresh lime juice in this recipe, but if you'd prefer to use key lime juice you'll need to squeeze about 18 key limes to get ¾ cup of juice.

CRUST

- 6 ounces graham crackers, broken into 1-inch pieces (about 11 crackers)
- 2 ounces mini pretzel twists (about 35 twists)
- ¼ cup packed (1¾ ounces) light brown sugar
- ¼ teaspoon table salt
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

FILLING

- 1½ cups sweetened condensed milk
- ¾ cup lime juice (6 limes)
- 6 tablespoons heavy cream
- 4 large egg yolks
- ⅛ teaspoon table salt

MERINGUE

- 2 large egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon table salt
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ cup (3½ ounces) granulated sugar
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons grated lime zest

1. FOR THE CRUST: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Process cracker pieces, pretzels, sugar, and salt in food processor until finely ground, about 30 seconds. Add melted butter and pulse until combined, about 8 pulses.

2. Transfer cracker mixture to 9-inch pie plate. Using bottom of dry measuring cup, press crumbs firmly into bottom and up sides of plate. Place plate on baking sheet and bake until crust is fragrant and set, about 17 minutes. Transfer sheet to wire rack.

3. FOR THE FILLING: Whisk all ingredients in bowl until fully combined. With pie plate still on sheet, carefully pour filling into crust (crust needn't be cool). Transfer sheet to oven and bake pie until edge of filling is set but center still jiggles slightly when shaken, about 30 minutes.

4. Place pie on wire rack and let cool completely, about 1 hour. Refrigerate until fully chilled, at least 4 hours, or cover with greased plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 24 hours.

5. FOR THE MERINGUE: Combine egg whites, salt, and cream of tartar in bowl of stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment. Whip on medium-high speed until soft peaks form, 2 to 4 minutes.

6. Combine sugar and water in small saucepan. Bring to rolling boil over medium-high heat and cook until syrup registers 240 degrees, 1 to 3 minutes.

7. Working quickly, turn mixer to medium speed. With mixer running, slowly and carefully pour hot syrup into egg white mixture (avoid pouring syrup onto whisk, if possible). Add vanilla. Increase speed to medium-high and whip until shiny, stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes.

8. Spread meringue over pie filling, leaving 1-inch border around pie. Working gently, use spatula or spoon to create swirls and cowlicks over surface of meringue. Sprinkle meringue with lime zest. Slice pie into wedges with wet knife, wiping knife clean between slices. Serve.

BACKSTORY

The Origins of an Iconic Pie

The origin of key lime pie is a subject of intense debate. One story goes that in the late 1800s, fishermen in southern Florida would put together makeshift meals on their skiffs by soaking stale Cuban bread with easy-to-store canned condensed milk and wild turtle or bird eggs. They squeezed juice from local key limes so that the acidity would both “cook” the eggs and add flavor. Observing these men, a local cook known as “Aunt Sally” was inspired to turn their creation into a tangy pie.

Another theory says key lime pie was born in the 1930s as an adaptation of a recipe called “Magic Lemon Cream Pie” created by the Borden condensed milk company. This icebox pie recipe calls for combining egg yolks, sweetened condensed milk, and lemon juice into a no-cook custard that ultimately gets topped with meringue. It looks strikingly similar to most modern key lime pie recipes but uses a different citrus.

The zest on top not only looks pretty but also adds another layer of bold citrus flavor.





The intensely flavored custard highlights the peaches' natural sweetness.

Peach Gratin

Sometimes even perfect peaches deserve a little dressing up. **by Mark Huxsoll**

PEACH PIE, PEACH cobbler, peach jam—all are delicious treats that celebrate perfectly ripe peaches at their seasonal peak. But this adaptation of “peaches and cream” takes inspiration from an Italian classic, fruit with zabaglione (which is also called “sabayon” in French cuisine). The elegant dessert is perfect served after a light meal on warm summer nights.

Zabaglione is a dairy-free custard made with egg yolks, sugar, and sweet wine; I cooked my version in a double boiler to achieve a silky consistency. The classic cooking method involves setting a bowl over a pot of simmering water—without the bowl touching the water—and constantly whisking the mixture until it thickens. Constant, gentle whisking traps air, keeping the sauce light, but it also slowly brings the mixture up to the desired temperature—anywhere from 165 to 170 degrees. Aiming for the target temperature and watching for visual cues takes the guesswork out of knowing when the zabaglione is done and minimizes the danger of curdling the eggs.

To make a complete dessert, I tossed the best peaches I could find with sugar, sweet Marsala wine, vanilla, and a touch of salt. The sugar drew out the natural sweetness of the fruit, while the Marsala added a nutty quality and the vanilla imparted richness. Macerating the peaches instead of cooking them maintained their shape; plus, the process yielded an incredible sweet peach nectar that I used to flavor the egg yolk base.

For a refined finishing touch, I arranged the peaches in a baking dish and then spooned the zabaglione on top before broiling, which created a toasted sugar crown that reminded me of a perfectly browned marshmallow. Fresh peaches never had it so good.

● PEACH ZABAGLIONE GRATIN

Serves 4 to 6

Total Time: 1 hour 20 minutes

For the best results, use in-season, ripe peaches here. A ripe peach will be fragrant and yield slightly when pressed with your thumb. We like to use freestone peaches, if they're available, because they're easier to prepare. Don't use cooking Marsala in this recipe—use a drinking-quality Marsala instead. Other sweet wines such as moscato and port can be substituted for the Marsala, if desired. Note that depending on the type of bowl you use, the timing of the zabaglione will vary by several minutes. The finished zabaglione should have the texture of soft whipped cream.

- 1½ pounds ripe peaches, halved, pitted, and cut into ¾-inch wedges**
- ½ cup (3½ ounces) sugar**
- ¼ cup sweet Marsala**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ¼ teaspoon table salt**
- 4 large egg yolks**

- 1.** Gently toss peaches, sugar, Marsala, vanilla, and salt together in bowl. Let sit for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set colander in medium bowl. Transfer peach mixture to colander and let drain for 2 minutes; reserve accumulated peach liquid.
- 2.** Remove colander from bowl and whisk egg yolks into accumulated peach liquid. Set bowl with egg yolk mixture over large saucepan with 1 inch of barely simmering water (water should not touch bottom of bowl).
- 3.** Cook, whisking constantly, until zabaglione is thickened to point where ribbons sit on top of mixture when drizzled from whisk and mixture registers 165 to 170 degrees, 10 to 15 minutes for metal bowl or about 20 minutes for glass bowl.
- 4.** Arrange peaches in single layer in shallow 1½-quart gratin dish. Spoon zabaglione over peaches to cover completely.
- 5A. FOR A BROILER:** Adjust oven rack 6 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Broil until top is well browned, 30 to 60 seconds.
- 5B. FOR A BLOWTORCH:** Ignite torch and continuously sweep flame above zabaglione until well browned, about 2 minutes.
- 6.** Serve immediately.

Sweet Wine Options

We call for sweet Marsala (Sicily's famous fortified wine) here, but you can also use moscato or port with good results. If you do use Marsala, make sure to use a sweet (not dry) one that's good for drinking—not a product labeled “Marsala cooking wine.”



It's in the (Za)bag(lione)



1. Macerate peach wedges in sugar, Marsala, vanilla, and salt, then drain.



2. Gently cook custard using double boiler.



3. Brown top under oven broiler or with blowtorch.

A SLICE OF TRULY excellent pound cake—tender, rich, and sweet—can transform an ordinary moment into one that borders on sublime. For generations, cooks have dressed up pound cake batter with sour cream, cream cheese, chocolate, and brown sugar or served warm slices slathered with salted butter or topped with fresh berries. But my favorite pound cake addition is a tart, fruity raspberry filling swirled throughout.

When I was a kid, my grandmother used to pick pounds of the perfect, ripe blackberries and raspberries growing behind her house, toss them with a touch of sugar, and freeze them for my brother and me to enjoy whenever we visited. I can still remember eagerly scraping at the thawing berries with a spoon.

I wanted to create a treat that would capture that joy. For the cake batter, I started with a test kitchen vanilla pound cake recipe that I've adored for years. The genius of this version is baking the cake in a relatively low, 300-degree oven, ensuring a just-browned, still-tender crust and a slice that's moist and evenly baked throughout. Adding a generous spoonful of vibrant lemon zest helped balance and round out the rich batter. (Remember: Pound cake originally got its name because the recipe involved baking 1 pound each of its essential ingredients: flour, butter, sugar, and eggs.)

For a fresh fruit element that would spread juicy textural contrast and a lovely ruby color throughout the pleasantly dense cake, I swirled in a raspberry filling that was so uncomplicated I knew my grandma would approve. Cooking the berries briefly with sugar and just enough cornstarch to thicken the sauce ensured that the surrounding cake wouldn't become soggy.

The result is this decadent loaf with a buttery, tender crumb thoroughly marbled with gorgeous sweet-tart raspberry ribbons.

Two-Stage Swirl



Use a butter knife to swirl the raspberry filling into the batter in two stages.

● RASPBERRY POUND CAKE

Serves 8

Total Time: 2¾ hours,
plus 3¼ hours cooling

We prefer to use frozen raspberries for this recipe because they are more consistently sweet than fresh. If you have access to very good fresh berries, use them instead. The ideal temperature for the eggs and butter is 60 degrees. The test kitchen's preferred loaf pan measures 8½ by 4½ inches; if you use a 9 by 5-inch loaf pan, start checking for doneness 5 minutes earlier than advised in the recipe.

RASPBERRY FILLING

- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon water
- 8 ounces (about 1⅔ cups) frozen raspberries
- ¼ cup (1¾ ounces) sugar
- ¼ teaspoon table salt

POUND CAKE

- 5 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1¾ cups (8¾ ounces) all-purpose flour
- ¾ teaspoon table salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ⅓ cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 14 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened but still cool
- 1¼ cups (8¾ ounces) sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest

1. FOR THE RASPBERRY FILLING:

Stir cornstarch and water together in bowl; set aside. Cook raspberries, sugar, and salt in small saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened and mixture measures 1 scant cup, 8 to 10 minutes.

2. Stir cornstarch mixture to recombine, then stir into raspberry sauce. Cook until thickened, about 1 minute. Transfer filling to bowl and refrigerate, uncovered, until no longer warm, about 1 hour. (Filling can be covered and refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

3. FOR THE POUND CAKE: Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Grease and flour 8½ by 4½-inch loaf pan. Whisk eggs and vanilla together in 2-cup liquid measuring cup. Whisk flour, salt, and baking powder together in bowl. Whisk sour cream and milk together in second bowl.

4. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat butter, sugar, and lemon zest on medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, 5 to 7 minutes, scraping down bowl as needed.

5. Reduce speed to medium and gradually add egg mixture in slow, steady stream. Scrape down bowl and continue



Raspberry Pound Cake

The sweet, buttery pleasure of a classic, with a joyful swirl of vibrant, jammy fruit. **by Matthew Fairman**

to mix on medium speed until uniform, about 1 minute longer (batter may look slightly curdled).

6. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture in 3 additions, alternating with sour cream mixture in 2 additions, scraping down bowl as needed. Give batter final stir by hand.

7. Transfer half of batter (about 2 cups) to prepared pan. Stir raspberry filling to loosen. Spoon half of raspberry filling over length of batter in pan, leaving ½ inch border. Using butter knife, thoroughly swirl filling throughout batter, taking care to not leave any big deposits of filling in center or along sides of pan.

8. Transfer remaining batter to pan

and repeat spooning and swirling with remaining raspberry filling. Tap pan on counter twice to release air bubbles.

9. Bake until toothpick inserted 1 inch to side of split in center of cake comes out clean (very top center of cake may seem underdone; this is OK), 1½ hours to 1 hour 40 minutes, rotating pan halfway through baking.

10. Run thin knife around edges of pan. Let cake cool in pan on wire rack for 15 minutes. Remove cake from pan and let cool completely on rack, about 2 hours. Slice and serve. (Cooled cake can be wrapped tightly in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 1 month.)

Failproof Sweetened Whipped Cream

Whipping cream isn't hard—if you use the tricks we show you here.

by Morgan Bolling

● FAILPROOF WHIPPED CREAM


Serves 6 to 8 (Makes about 2 cups)

Total Time: 5 minutes

If your kitchen is particularly warm, it's helpful to chill the mixer bowl and whisk attachment in the freezer for 20 minutes before whipping the cream. This recipe can be doubled or tripled, if desired.

- 1 cup heavy cream, chilled**
- ¼ cup (1¾ ounces) sugar**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**

Using stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment, whip cream, sugar, and vanilla on medium-low speed until foamy, about 1 minute. Increase speed to medium-high and whip until just shy of either soft or stiff peaks (depending on desired final texture), 1 to 2 minutes. Remove bowl and whisk attachment from mixer and whip by hand to desired texture.



These are proper stiff peaks.

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT: CREAM



Cream is the fat-rich layer skimmed from the top of unhomogenized milk. Cream is categorized based on its milk-fat content; it needs to be at least 30 percent milk fat to hold enough air to whip properly.



HEAVY CREAM (also called heavy whipping cream)
36 percent or more milk fat
★ **BEST FOR WHIPPING**



WHIPPING CREAM (also called light whipping cream)
30 to 36 percent milk fat
★ **WILL WHIP—BUT NOT AS HIGH OR AS STABLY**



LIGHT CREAM
18 to 30 percent milk fat
★ **GOOD FOR COOKING**

HALF-AND-HALF
10.5 to 18 percent milk fat
★ **SAVE IT FOR YOUR COFFEE**

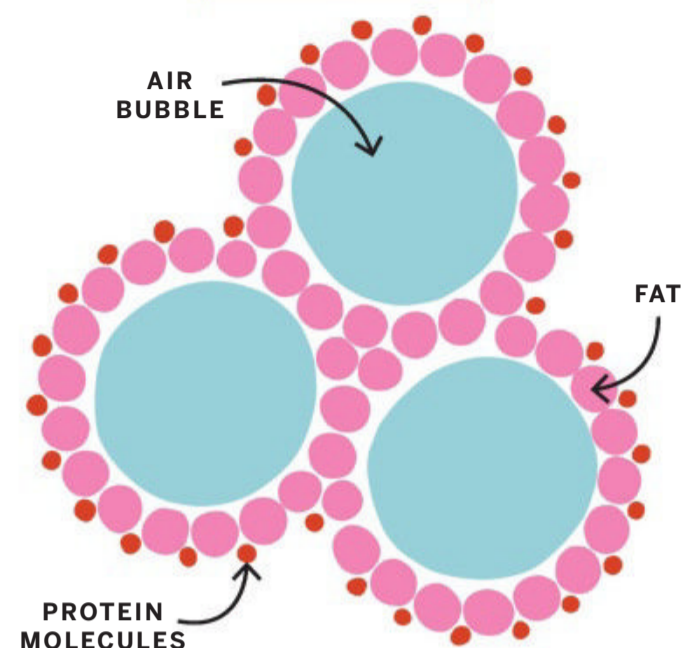
WHEN BUTTER IS A BAD THING: OVERWHIPPING

Overwhipped cream will separate and eventually turn into a mixture of butter and buttermilk. There's no going back when this happens, so you'll have to start again . . . but having extra butter and buttermilk isn't a total kitchen tragedy.

OVERWHIPPED CREAM STARTING TO SEPARATE



THE SCIENCE OF WHIPPED CREAM



When cream is whipped, the whisk introduces air bubbles. The bubbles are then surrounded by droplets of fat, which provide stability. Protein molecules adhere to the surface of the fat droplets, strengthening the protective coating around the air bubbles.



1. Shop wisely

Be sure to buy heavy cream (also called heavy whipping cream).

Why? Heavy cream (or heavy whipping cream) contains more fat than whipping cream (also called light whipping cream), making it richer, luxuriously thick, and able to hold its shape longer once whipped.



2. Chill gear

In especially warm kitchens, place mixer bowl and whisk attachment in freezer for 20 minutes or so before starting.

Why? Cold cream whips to a larger volume faster because the air bubbles in the cream are stabilized best by solid, cold globules of fat; the cold metal bowl and whisk help keep the cream cold.



3. Combine all ingredients

Add cream, sugar, and vanilla directly to chilled mixer bowl.

Why? Some recipes instruct you to hold off on adding the sugar or vanilla until the end. But that increases the likelihood of overwhipping in an attempt to evenly distribute those ingredients.



4. Start slowly

Turn mixer speed to medium-low to start mixing.

Why? If you start off at high speed, the cream will slosh right out of the bowl. By starting slow, you give the cream a chance to thicken and become less liquid-y.



5. Turn it up

Increase speed to medium-high and continue whipping.

Why? Once the cream has thickened in the bowl, you can increase the speed to medium-high, which will more efficiently incorporate air into the cream for fluffy results.



6. Finish by hand

Stop short of your desired texture (soft or stiff peaks), unplug mixer, detach whisk attachment, and use side-to-side motion to gently finish by hand.

Why? Finishing the whipped cream by hand is a safeguard against overwhipping and gives finer control over the final texture.



7. Whip to soft peaks

Whip by hand until cream forms soft, droopy peaks on whisk.

Why? This is the perfect texture for spreading over desserts or for soft, lobbly dollops.



8. Keep whipping to stiff peaks

Whip by hand until cream forms stiff peaks that don't droop.

Why? Stiff peaks are the pinnacle of whipped cream. Cream whipped to this stage holds its shape well and is the best texture for decorating desserts.



A World of Preservation

Cooking fruits and vegetables with sugar is a method of preserving (and amplifying) the flavor of peak-season produce. This savory tomato chutney is just one example of a preserve. Here's a sampling.

Chutney (derived from the Hindi word "chatni") is an umbrella term for a wide variety of sauces and condiments in Indian cuisines, both freshly prepared and preserved. In English, chutney refers more specifically to a sweet-and-sour

combination of fruit, aromatics, spices, and vinegar that's cooked down until syrupy and spoonable.

Mostarda is a sweet-savory Italian condiment featuring candied fruits preserved in a mustardy syrup; mustard powder, seeds, and oil can all be used.

Conserve is a thick, chunky cooked condiment that usually contains nuts and dried fruits such as raisins or apricots. Conserve is often served with cheese,

Tomato Chutney

Meet your new favorite condiment: this bright, spicy, and complex chutney.

by Mark Huxsoll

IS THERE A more versatile piece of produce than a ripe tomato? This remarkable, surprising chutney is proof that there is not. The process for making this chutney is simple: cook down chopped tomatoes (I chose the fleshy plum variety so that there wouldn't be as much liquid to drive off) with vinegar, brown sugar, and flavorful ingredients. Tomatoes contain a lot of pectin, so the chutney doesn't require any thickeners aside from the sugar and some time on the stove. A jalapeño chile brings vegetal heat; five-spice powder provides a backbone of warm spice and complexity; fresh ginger and garlic bring spark and tingle; and, finally, fish sauce amplifies the tomatoes' umami and adds incredible depth.

This lively, spicy, sweet-and-savory chutney is delightful on buttered toast, in a grilled cheese or turkey sandwich, on burgers, or as an accompaniment to cheese and charcuterie boards. But that's just the start; once you have a jar of this chutney around, you'll find countless other uses for it.

roasted meat, and desserts.

Jam and jelly are made with whole pieces and/or the juice of fruits and vegetables, cooked down with sugar and often set with pectin.

Relish is another catchall term for any sweet or savory condiment made of chopped fruits or vegetables, usually pickled but sometimes raw or cooked. Sweet pickle relish is most ubiquitous in the United States.

● FIVE-SPICE TOMATO CHUTNEY

Serves 8

Total Time: 35 minutes, plus 1 hour cooling

If you're spice averse, consider removing the seeds from the jalapeño before mincing it. We recommend wearing gloves when working with chiles.

- 1 pound plum tomatoes, cored and cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons packed dark brown sugar
- 6 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 large jalapeño chile, stemmed and minced
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
- ¾ teaspoon five-spice powder

1. Combine all ingredients in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Bring to boil over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring often, until mixture is syrupy and slightly darkened in color, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Off heat, mash tomato mixture with potato masher to even consistency. Return to simmer over medium heat and cook until rubber spatula leaves distinct trail when dragged across bottom of skillet, 1 to 3 minutes. (Note: Chutney will continue to thicken as it cools, so don't over-reduce.)
3. Transfer chutney to jar and let cool completely before serving, about 1 hour. (Cooled chutney can be refrigerated for up to 1 month.)

Life Is Better with Chutney in It: Here's How to Get There



1. Core plum tomatoes and cut into ½-inch pieces.



2. Add all ingredients to skillet and cook until mixture thickens and darkens slightly, 10 to 15 minutes; remove from heat.



3. Use potato masher to mash mixture to uniform consistency.



4. Return to simmer and cook until chutney thickens (spatula dragged across bottom of skillet leaves distinct trail).

Steak Frites with Creamy Horseradish Sauce

We found the best method for cooking this bistro dish at home—no sous chef or deep fryer required. **by Amanda Luchtel**

STEAK FRITES IS a classic bistro dish of rosy-red steak and crisp, salty fries. The dish, while simple in nature, takes the right techniques and careful timing to pull off at home. We wanted a version pared down for two people that was streamlined and fast enough for a weeknight. This is the recipe your local French bistro doesn't want you to have!

● STEAK FRITES WITH HORSERADISH AIOLI FOR TWO

Total Time: 45 minutes

This recipe will also work with a boneless rib-eye steak of a similar thickness. We recommend reading the entire recipe before starting. It's important to cook the fries and steak simultaneously so that both components will be ready to eat at the same time.

HORSERADISH AIOLI

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme
- ½ teaspoon pepper

STEAK AND FRITES

- 1¼ pounds large Yukon Gold potatoes, unpeeled
- 2 cups peanut or vegetable oil for frying
- 1 (12- to 16-ounce) boneless strip steak, 1½ inches thick, trimmed
- 1¾ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon peanut or vegetable oil

- 1. FOR THE HORSERADISH AIOLI:** Combine all ingredients in bowl; set aside.
- 2. FOR THE STEAK AND FRITES:** Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and line half of rack with triple layer of paper towels.
- 3.** Square off potatoes by cutting ⅛-inch-thick slice from each of their 4 long sides (save slices for another

use). Cut potatoes lengthwise into ¼-inch-thick planks. Stack 3 or 4 planks and cut into ¼-inch-thick strips. Repeat with remaining planks; set aside.

4. Combine potatoes and 2 cups oil in large saucepan. Cook potatoes over high heat, without stirring them, until limp but exteriors are beginning to firm, 15 to 17 minutes. Using tongs, stir fries, gently scraping up any that stick to bottom, and continue to cook until golden brown and crispy, about 5 minutes longer.

5. Meanwhile, pat steak dry with paper towels and sprinkle all over with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 10-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add steak and cook, flipping every 2 minutes, until well browned and meat registers 115 degrees (for medium-rare), 12 to 16 minutes (steak will continue to cook as it rests). Transfer steak to unlined side of wire rack, tent with aluminum foil, and let rest for 10 minutes.

6. Transfer fries to paper towel-lined side of wire rack and sprinkle with remaining ¾ teaspoon salt. Transfer steak to carving board and slice ¼ inch thick. Serve steak with fries and horseradish aioli.



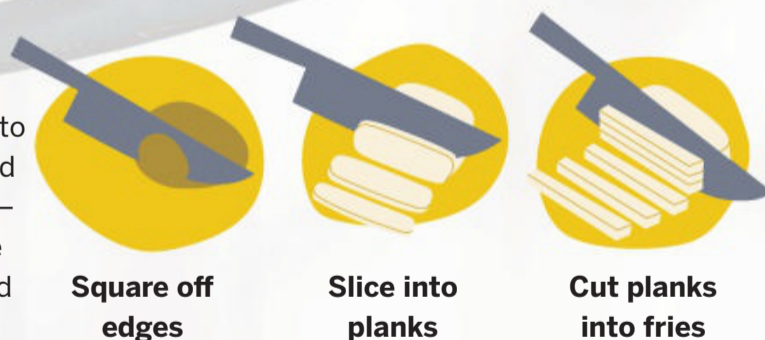
THE TIMING

Hot french fries are key to great steak frites. Instead of frying the potatoes first and then holding them in a warm oven, we found that we could start the fries in cold oil, cook the steak as they were bubbling, and then let the steak rest (tented with aluminum foil to keep it warm) as the fries finished cooking. By the time the fries are done and ready for the table, the steak will be fully rested and ready to slice and serve.



THE FRIES

Start with flavorful, sturdy Yukon Gold potatoes, cut them into ¼-inch-thick fries, and start them in cold oil—trust us, it works! The fries emerge crisp and not greasy.



THE STEAK

Buy a single big, thick strip steak; this relatively tender cut has lots of flavor and very little gristle. Then cook it in a hot pan, flipping the steak every 2 minutes (for the most even cooking and to minimize the overcooked gray bands on the top and bottom) until it has a nice browned crust and reaches the desired internal temperature. Note that a thick steak such as this will continue to cook as it rests off the heat.

THE SAUCE

Steak sauce and/or ketchup would be fine here, but an easy, stir-together horseradish aioli takes this recipe over the top (and yes, we dip bites of both steak and frites into it). Simply combine mayonnaise, prepared horseradish, minced garlic, Dijon mustard, fresh thyme, and lots of black pepper.



We love Pecorino here, but Parmesan works well, too.

Orzo: The Rice-Shaped Pasta

Orzo (also called risoni, among its many monikers) is a small pasta commonly used in soups and rice pilaf. Its name means “barley” in Italian, as the pasta resembles grains of barley or rice. Although this distinctive shape of pasta is believed to have originated in Italy, it is immensely popular in Greece, Turkey, the Middle East, and throughout the Mediterranean. We love orzo’s silky texture and its mild flavor, which makes it a great canvas for showcasing other ingredients.



Shrimp and Orzo Primavera

A light, fresh pasta dinner that doesn't skimp on flavor. *by Lawman Johnson*

AS THE DAYS get longer, shrimp and pasta starts to feel like the perfect supper combination, especially when that pasta is light, delicate orzo. This kind of meal is perfect for those warm days and cool nights when you need a simple, fast, and satisfying meal.

Start by gently sautéing peeled, deveined extra-large shrimp in a 12-inch nonstick skillet. When the shrimp are just beginning to turn pink (but are not yet cooked through), transfer them to a bowl so that they don't overcook as you get on with the rest. Instead of boiling and draining the orzo, cook it in a bit of water with seasonings—shallot, garlic, red pepper flakes—in the same skillet you used to cook the shrimp, no draining required.

For the vegetable component, slice a medium zucchini and toss it into the pan with the orzo. Will it overcook? Yes, thankfully! The slices will partially break down and help thicken the sauce. Once the pasta is almost done, stir in a generous amount of grated Pecorino Romano cheese for sharp flavor and creaminess, along with some sweet peas and a bit of lemon zest for bursts of bright spring color and flavor.

To finish, nestle the shrimp into the orzo mixture; bring it all to a simmer; cover the skillet; and cook for about 3 minutes, until the shrimp are just done. A bit of bright, perfumy basil and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil—plus extra Pecorino to pass at the table—round it all out. Tastes like spring.

● ONE-PAN ORZO WITH SHRIMP AND ZUCCHINI

Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour

You will need a 12-inch nonstick skillet with a tight-fitting lid for this recipe. Jumbo shrimp (16 to 20 per pound) will also work here, although you may need to increase the cooking time in step 4 by a minute or so. We prefer untreated shrimp—those not treated with salt or additives such as sodium tripolyphosphate. Most frozen E-Z peel shrimp have been treated (the ingredient list should tell you).

- 1 pound extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed**
- 1½ teaspoons table salt, divided**
- ¾ teaspoon pepper, divided**
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus extra for drizzling**
- 1 shallot, minced**
- 3 garlic cloves, minced**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- 2½ cups water**
- 1¼ cups orzo**
- 1 zucchini (8 ounces), quartered lengthwise and sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick**
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed**
- 1 ounce Pecorino Romano cheese, grated (½ cup), plus extra for serving**
- ½ teaspoon grated lemon zest**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil**

1. Pat shrimp dry with paper towels. Combine shrimp, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper in bowl. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shrimp and cook, stirring occasionally, until edges of shrimp are just beginning to turn pink

but shrimp are not cooked through, about 2 minutes. Transfer shrimp to clean bowl; set aside.

2. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shallot, garlic, and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute.

3. Stir in water, orzo, zucchini, remaining ¾ teaspoon salt, and remaining ½ teaspoon pepper. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; cover; and cook until orzo is al dente and nearly all liquid has been absorbed, 6 to 9 minutes.

4. Off heat, stir in peas, Pecorino, and lemon zest until well combined. Arrange shrimp in circular pattern on top of orzo mixture. Lightly push shrimp down to nestle into orzo. Return skillet to medium heat and cook, uncovered, until orzo begins to bubble, about 1 minute. Cover and continue to cook until shrimp are cooked through, about 3 minutes longer.

5. Sprinkle with basil and drizzle with extra oil. Serve, passing extra Pecorino separately.

THE FRUIT

Orange juice concentrate and strips of orange zest contribute potent, complex orange flavor. Plus, the juice adds sweetness and the zest provides bitterness.

THE MEAT

Boneless chicken thighs' flavorful dark meat stays moist through long cooking.

THE TOOL

A potato masher makes it easy to mash the cooked boneless, skinless thighs into shreds right in the slow cooker. It's efficient and—dare we say?—fun!

THE PAN

A nonstick skillet drives off excess liquid and concentrates the sauce before it's served.

The shredded chicken is deeply seasoned with orange and a hint of warm spices.



Citrus-Braised Chicken Tacos

The convenience of the slow cooker puts tacos on deck all week long—not just on Tuesdays.

by **Lawman Johnson**

SURE, YOU CAN sear a steak or chicken breast, slice it up, and use it for tacos. But I think the most satisfying taco fillings have a little more behind them: more seasoning, yes, but also more time to develop rich, nuanced flavors. My favorite taco fillings are the long-cooked guisados (Spanish for “stews”) that are popular in Mexico and throughout Latin America. I wanted a recipe in this style, so I chose dark-meat boneless chicken thighs for their rich taste and because they stay moist

through long braising. I knew I wanted citrus to be a driving element of the flavor profile, and after testing several types, I landed on orange juice concentrate: It's convenient and inexpensive and packs a lot of flavor without adding too much moisture. To the concentrate I added umami-rich tomato paste and Worcestershire sauce, plus garlic, cumin, oregano, and—for a kick of warm spice—allspice and cinnamon. A little vinegar stirred in at the end wakes up the flavors. Delicious.

● SLOW-COOKER CITRUS-BRAISED CHICKEN TACOS

Serves 6 Total Time: 4 hours 35 minutes

Orange juice concentrate is relatively soft even when it's frozen, so there's no need to defrost the whole container to get what you need. Remove the strips of zest from the orange with a vegetable peeler. Cider vinegar can be substituted for the distilled white vinegar, if desired. These tacos are best served with sliced radishes, avocado chunks, cotija cheese, fresh cilantro, hot sauce, and lime wedges. They're also great with pickled onions.

- ¼ cup thawed frozen orange juice concentrate**
- ¼ cup tomato paste**
- 1½ tablespoons Worcestershire sauce**
- 4 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin**
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano**
- 2 teaspoons table salt**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed**
- 1 onion, halved**
- 3 (3-inch) strips orange zest**
- 2 tablespoons distilled white vinegar**
- 18 (6-inch) corn tortillas, charred**

- 1.** Whisk orange juice concentrate, tomato paste, Worcestershire, garlic, cumin, oregano, salt, pepper, allspice, and cinnamon together in slow cooker.
- 2.** Add chicken and toss to coat with orange juice concentrate mixture. Nestle onion and orange zest into chicken mixture. Cover and cook until chicken is tender, 4 to 5 hours on low.
- 3.** Discard onion and orange zest. Using potato masher or tongs, mash chicken until finely shredded.
- 4.** Transfer contents of slow cooker to 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until liquid has mostly evaporated but chicken is still moist, about 10 minutes.
- 5.** Off heat, stir in vinegar. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve chicken on tortillas.

Want to make your own corn tortillas? Find our recipe at [CooksCountry.com/corntortillas](https://www.cookscountry.com/corntortillas).

Onion Raita



Try serving this creamy, cooling yogurt sauce with our **Kombdi, Jira Ghalun (Cumin-Scented Chicken)** (page 21).

ONION RAITA

Serves 4 to 6 (Makes about 1¼ cups)

Total Time: 8 minutes

This recipe is best with plain whole-milk yogurt. Do not use low-fat, nonfat, or Greek yogurt in this raita.

- 1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- ¾ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ⅓ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

Whisk yogurt, cumin, sugar, and salt in bowl until thoroughly combined. Stir in onion and cilantro. Season with salt to taste. Serve.

We're looking for recipes that you treasure—the ones that have been handed down in your family for a generation or more, that always come out for the holidays, and that have earned a place at your table and in your heart through many years of meals. Send us the recipes that spell home to you. Visit [CooksCountry.com/recipe_submission](https://www.cooks-country.com/recipe_submission) (or write to Heirloom Recipes, Cook's Country, 21 Drydock Avenue, Suite 210E, Boston, MA 02210) and tell us a little about the recipe. Include your name and address. If we print your recipe, you'll receive a free one-year subscription to Cook's Country.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

Hang on to those sweet summer vibes with our recipes for **Grilled Chicken Souvlaki**, **Fresh Corn Muffins**, and smoky **Baba Ghanoush**. Want more? We'll have recipes for **Kalbi**, **Bourbon Chicken**, **Tomato and Chickpea Salad**, **Okra and Shrimp Stew**, and a tutorial on making **Preserved Peaches**—with plenty of ideas on how to use them for a taste of summer all year long. Coming soon!



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FIND THE ROOSTER!

A tiny version of this rooster has been hidden in a photo in the pages of this issue. Write to us with its location, and we'll enter you in a random drawing. The first correct entry drawn will win a copy of The Complete Cook's Country TV Show Cookbook, and each of the next five will receive a free one-year subscription to our website. To enter, visit [CooksCountry.com/rooster](https://www.cooks-country.com) by June 30, 2021, or write to Rooster JJ21, Cook's Country, 21 Drydock Avenue, Suite 210E, Boston, MA 02210. Include your name and address. Mary Hodgson of Frankford, Delaware, found the rooster in the February/March 2021 issue on page 6.

WEB EXTRAS

Free for four months online at [CooksCountry.com/july21](https://www.cooks-country.com/july21)

Corn Tortillas



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DT=Dinner Tonight

COOK'S CLOSE-UP

WILLIAM CHANEY
Pit builder,
photographed
at the Tenderloin Grill,
Kansas City, Missouri



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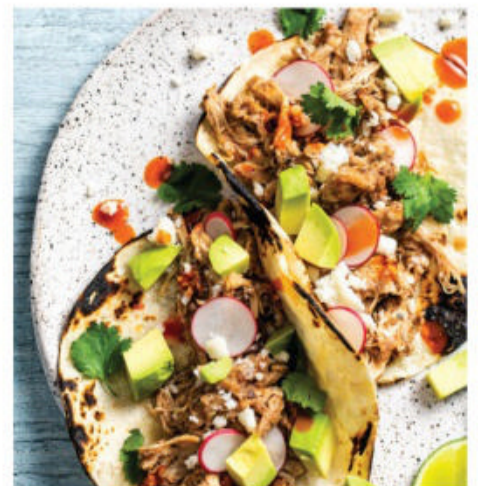
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