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BABKA LIKE
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SEEN IT!

BABKA

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DEEPLY DELICIOUS

VEGETARIAN CHILI

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PEAR CRISP ...

WITH A SECRET!

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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2022
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— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

Letter from the EDITOR

MY OVEN STAYS hot from the Tuesday before Thanksgiving Day until the third Monday of January, Martin Luther King Day. For me, holiday baking is a labor of love.

The marathon begins with the pillowy potato rolls that grace our family dinner table every Thanksgiving. Then, while putting away the turkey platter and decorating the house for Christmas, I make and freeze the doughs for everyone's favorite cookies, which I finish baking just before Christmas—a radical tradition that has evolved from the early years when my daughter, Jade, and I decorated sugar cookies in all sorts of shapes for Santa. There are chocolate crinkle cookies dusted with confectioners' sugar for my husband, Bruce. My oldest son, Brandon, likes chocolate chips, while salty-sweet peanut butter cookies topped with chocolate candy kisses suit my middle kid, Christian's, tastes. Copycat Caramel deLites stand in for the Girl Scout Cookies my youngest son, Austin, adores. Shortbread reminds my mom of her youth.

The baking turns into a family affair when everyone joins me in the kitchen to bake homemade caramel corn for our friends and extended family. We take turns stirring the buttery treat as it crisps in a low, slow oven; nibble stray kernels that pop out of the baking pan; and then spoon the caramel corn into festive cellophane bags, each one thoughtfully decorated with ribbon and a small ornament. By Christmas morning, we are all in a sugar stupor, but no one can resist my gooey sticky buns drenched in a Kahlúa-laced sweet syrup. To top it all off, we manage to make room for just one more small bite of the Southern pie I bake to celebrate the Martin Luther King holiday. (This is a new tradition, seasonal baking's "last call." But that is another story.)

This year, the five loaded cookies on page 23 will evolve my baking passion. They each start with an easy and simple cookie dough base that works



with a wide range of add-ins. The triple chocolate chunk version is a chocolate lover's joy. And it reminds me of a concept in my cookbook *Jubilee: Recipes from Two Centuries of African American Cooking* (2019) that augments a sugar cookie base with spice-forward flavors such as ginger-molasses, egg-nog, or pumpkin pie. Best of all, this alternative to personalized doughs allows me to fulfill everyone's sweet dreams without giving up the ingredient that matters most: love.

TONI TIPTON-MARTIN

Editor in Chief



ONE-HOUR COMFORT

Learn How to Make Everyone's Favorite Foods in No Time

This collection of mouthwatering recipes from around the world features delicious dishes including Colombian Arroz con Titoté, Shrimp and Grits, and Malted Milk Pancakes with Nutella Maple Syrup. You'll learn how to create these crowd-pleasing recipes in no time with a variety of time-saving hacks that will make hosting any game night or Sunday brunch a breeze. Order your copy at AmericasTestKitchen.com/comfort.



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DT=Dinner Tonight

QUICK BITES:

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

by Matthew Fairman, Mark Huxsoll, and Scott Kathan

IN PRAISE OF KITCHEN SHEARS

Many cooks use kitchen shears to cut out poultry backbones when spatchcocking—and that's it. But kitchen shears are incredibly useful in the kitchen, and they're underutilized by most home cooks. They can replace a chef's knife and a cutting board in numerous circumstances, saving you counter space and dirtying fewer dishes (this is especially useful for reducing the risk of cross contamination with raw meat), and they're the best choice for some jobs you might not be using them for. Here are a dozen tasks where your kitchen shears will prove their mettle. **—M.F.**

- 1 Trimming fat from cuts of meat such as chicken thighs or pork roasts
- 2 Cutting smaller hunks of raw boneless meats into bite-size pieces
- 3 Snipping bunches of chives and scallions into short lengths
- 4 Slicing basil with less bruising
- 5 Slicing homemade pizzas
- 6 Chopping whole peeled tomatoes in the can with less mess
- 7 Trimming the ends from handfuls of green or wax beans
- 8 Removing florets from heads of broccoli and cauliflower
- 9 Chopping up sticky dried fruit such as dates or figs
- 10 Neatly trimming excess pie dough before crimping
- 11 Snipping through the fat surrounding the loin muscle of pork chops to prevent buckling
- 12 Stemming and cutting up tough dried chiles



INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT: NUTRITIONAL YEAST

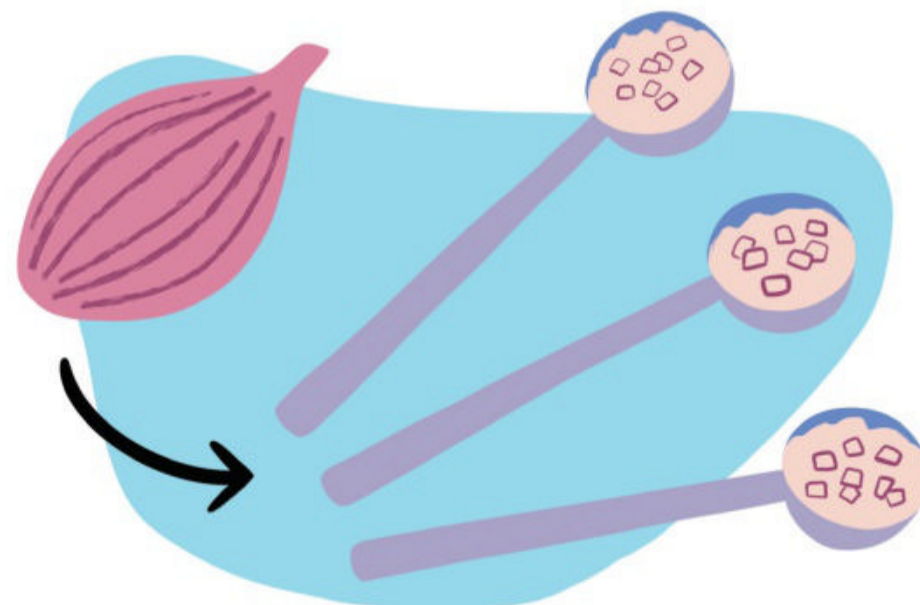
The powdery yellow flakes of nutritional yeast are made by heating yeast to kill it and disable its leavening power. That process transforms the yeast into an umami powerhouse (it contains a lot of glutamic acid) with a unique savory, salty, cheesy flavor that is fantastic in all kinds of foods. Vegans and vegetarians find “nooch” especially valuable because it provides the essential nutrient vitamin B₁₂, which is usually obtained from animal products. I enjoy it sprinkled on popcorn, pasta, or salads or in one of the test kitchen's clever vegan recipes—such as our Vegan Creamy Cashew Mac and Cheese—that employ it with great results. Oh, and one trick I use at home: Dissolve a tablespoon of nutritional yeast in a cup of boiling water to make a quick vegan broth for cooking. **—S.K.**



Q: CAN I SUBSTITUTE ONIONS FOR SHALLOTS IN YOUR RECIPES?

A: Shallots are sweeter and milder than onions but otherwise very similar in flavor. We typically call for shallots in recipes where we want a more delicate onion flavor, such as in salad dressings and stir-together sauces. If you substitute onions for shallots in raw applications like these, the result will have a more pronounced and sharper oniony bite. Depending on your preference, you'll likely find the flavor to be out of balance and overly pungent. However, if you're in a pinch with no shallots on hand, you can tame the bite of raw onion by soaking it in ice water for 10 minutes.

In most cooked applications where chopped or sliced shallots are sautéed or roasted, substituting the same volume of onion should work fine, as long as you cut the onions into the same size pieces as you would the shallots. If you're sautéing, you can mellow out the onion a bit by simply cooking it a little longer before proceeding with the next step. Even if the alliums are being cooked, however, we don't recommend making this swap in recipes where shallots play a starring role, such as our Roasted Carrots and Shallots (February/March 2018).



BOTTOM LINE: You can substitute onions for shallots in most cooked applications, but you should use caution when replacing shallots in raw applications. If there's no alternative, you can soak the onion in ice water to tame its bite. To help you make a one-for-one substitution of onion for shallot, note that one medium shallot weighs about 1 ounce (28 grams) and will yield about 3 tablespoons when minced. **—M.F.**

HIDDEN TREASURE

We love using canned or jarred anchovies. If you use a large proportion of them, the little fish lend a potent seafood flavor to whatever you're cooking; if you use a judicious amount and mince them, the anchovies dissolve and provide depth and savoriness without tasting like fish. But the anchovies themselves aren't the only valuable thing in the can/jar: The oil they are packed in also carries a wonderful flavor that can be great in vinaigrettes, sauces, and soups or stews. If you cook with anchovies, cook with their oil, too! **—M.H.**



THE BEST TURKEY FRYER

by Miye Bromberg



A GOOD TURKEY fryer makes perfectly browned turkey in less than half the time it would take you to roast the same bird. There are two types of fryers: outdoor and countertop. Outdoor cookers are pretty simple—just a large stockpot and a burner that you hook up to a propane tank. Most outdoor cookers also include a rack for holding the turkey, a hook for lowering the rack, and a thermometer for monitoring oil temperature.

Countertop fryers are powered by electricity and are essentially extra-large deep fryers. Both types usually come with a steamer basket so that you can also cook seafood or steam tamales.

Countertop cookers are easy to use and allow you to fry your turkey indoors, but the model we tested trapped moisture and couldn't maintain proper frying temperatures, so it splattered dangerously and made a soggy-skinned bird. We vastly preferred the outdoor cookers. Their pots were roomy, accommodating birds up to 18 pounds and plenty of oil for frying them. Their powerful propane burners heated the oil quickly and maintained proper frying temperatures, ensuring that the turkey cooked evenly, with crispy skin.

Our favorite set, the Bayou Classic Stainless Steel 32-Quart Turkey Fryer and Gas One High Pressure Burner, was easy to assemble and operate. The fryer also had a well-designed rack that held the turkey securely in the cooking pot as well as a large steamer basket that held plenty of crawfish.



Condensation built up under the lid of the countertop fryer, making for soggy birds and dangerous splatter.

Turkey fryers can be dangerous. For tips about how to fry your turkey safely, go to [CooksCountry.com/turkeysafety](https://www.cookscountry.com/turkeysafety).

Our Favorite

Bayou Classic Stainless Steel 32-Quart Turkey Fryer and Gas One High Pressure Burner
Model: 1118 (cooker), B-5300 (burner)
Price: \$176.80

OUTDOOR COOKER
 Versatile, plenty of power for maintaining cooking temperature

SIMPLE PROPANE BURNER
 Easy to set up and use

STAINLESS-STEEL POT
 Sturdy and durable



Web subscribers can see the complete results chart at [CooksCountry.com/jan22](https://www.cookscountry.com/jan22).

Q: WHAT CAN I DO WITH SWISS CHARD STEMS?

A: Swiss chard is one of my favorite vegetables (see page 7 for a great recipe), but I don't enjoy eating the strong-tasting stems. In lieu of tossing them in the compost, I've found the perfect solution: pickling them. Simmering the chard stems briefly in a pleasantly sour, subtly sweet brine flavored with bay leaves, garlic, thyme, and black peppercorns balances their bitterness. I happily eat these on salads, sandwiches, and cheese plates (or anywhere else a pickle is welcome). —**M.F.**



● QUICK PICKLED CHARD STEMS

Serves 8 to 10 (Makes about 1 cup) Total Time: 20 minutes, plus 5 hours cooling
 Depending on the size of your container, you may have extra pickling brine.

Stems from 12 ounces Swiss chard, ends trimmed and discarded, stems sliced on bias ¼ inch thick (about 1½ cups)

- ⅓ cup red wine vinegar
- ⅓ cup water
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons table salt
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorns
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes

1. Combine all ingredients in small saucepan and bring to boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until chard stems are just softened, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool completely, about 1 hour.
2. Transfer to airtight container and refrigerate for at least 4 hours before serving. (Pickled chard stems can be refrigerated for up to 1 month.)

SCALLOP SCHOOL

Sea scallops have a lovely sweet, mild flavor. Here are two tips for cooking them. —**M.H.**



1. Whole scallops come with small side muscles (they look like small tabs) that don't become tender with cooking; we recommend removing and discarding those muscles before cooking.



2. As with any protein that you want to get a good sear on, it's important to blot scallops dry before pan-searing them; if you don't, the extra moisture has to evaporate before any flavorful browning takes place, meaning the scallops could overcook by the time they get any color.

This succulent shoulder gets hit with a dose of the honey mixture for the last bit of cooking, again after resting, and then again before serving.

Honey-Glazed Pork Shoulder

Juicy, rich pork and honey make a sweet pair.

by Morgan Bolling

PORK AND SUGAR play well together (think maple bacon, brown sugar-glazed ham, and sticky ribs). As an unapologetic fan of all things swine (it's a bit of a joke among my coworkers), I wanted to enhance a holiday-worthy pork roast with fruity, floral honey.

I started with a roast from the pig's shoulder called a Boston butt (or pork butt), which I think of as the darling of the meat department. It's relatively inexpensive and has plenty of fat and connective tissue that—with low, slow cooking—melt out as the meat becomes tender and silky. It's the cut that most people, including us here in the test kitchen, use for pulled pork.

For the honey, I bought every type I found in local markets: clover, wildflower, orange blossom, buckwheat, and alfalfa. Tasted plain and brushed onto some simple roasted pork, they were all fine here save one: The flavor of the buckwheat honey was too strong and dominant. (I ultimately developed the recipe with clover honey, which is the most common in supermarkets.)

To merge the meat with the sweet, I coated three pork butts with honey at different points: before refrigerating overnight, before roasting, and halfway through cooking. I roasted them in a moderate 325-degree oven to 190 degrees, the sweet spot for ultra-moist but still sliceable pork butt (any higher and it shreds). But all the roasts emerged with burnt exteriors. Honey's high sugar content caused it—in this case—to caramelize way too quickly.

The roast with honey brushed on halfway through cooking was the closest to edible, so I forged on with that method. I tried lowering the oven temperature to 250 degrees, but the butt took a solid 8 hours to become tender, and the exterior was still straddling the line between deeply caramelized and burnt. I also tried covering the pork with aluminum foil as it roasted, but it stuck to the honey and made a mess.

And then it struck me: Why not add the honey even later? For my next test, I roasted a pork butt with only salt until it was almost done, which took about 5 hours. Then I brushed it with honey

for the final half-hour of cooking. Finally I had a juicy roast with a beautiful brown crust and a shiny honey glaze. Now, onto the last details.

An overnight rub of kosher salt and brown sugar (to double down on the honey's sweetness) seasoned the meat throughout. The rub had the added benefit of drying out the exterior of the roast, which created a clingy surface for the honey to adhere to. To provide

depth and complexity to the honey slather, I added red pepper flakes for heat, soy sauce for rich salinity, aromatic five-spice powder to counterbalance the richness of the succulent meat, and red wine vinegar for brightness. These flavors enhanced, rather than overshadowed, the honey's sweetness.

My tasters were fighting over the honey-lacquered, crispy edges of the pork. So for a final test, I doubled the

Bone Removal



1. Cut around bone Using boning knife, carefully separate bone from meat.



2. Remove bone Grasp bone (with clean dish towel if bone is hot) and pull.

amount of spiced honey, gave the roast a light brush with it after resting, and saved some to drizzle over the meat after slicing. This allowed all the pork, even the interior pieces, to be saturated with that bold, sweet honey flavor.

● HONEY-GLAZED PORK SHOULDER

Serves 8 to 10

Total Time: 5¾ hours, plus

13 hours salting and resting

Plan ahead: The roast must be seasoned at least 12 hours before cooking. We developed this recipe with clover honey.

- 3 tablespoons kosher salt
- 3 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
- 1 (6- to 7-pound) bone-in pork butt roast with fat cap
- ½ cup honey
- 1½ tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar
- ¾ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- ¼ teaspoon five-spice powder

1. Combine salt and sugar in bowl. Using sharp knife, cut 1-inch cross-hatch pattern about ¼ inch deep in fat cap of roast, being careful not to cut into meat. Place roast on 2 large sheets of plastic wrap and rub salt mixture over entire roast and into slits. Wrap roast tightly with plastic. Place on large plate and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.

2. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil and set wire rack in prepared sheet. Unwrap roast and place on rack. Cover sheet tightly with foil. Transfer to oven and cook for 2 hours. Remove foil and continue to cook until meat registers 180 degrees in several places, 2½ to 3½ hours longer.

3. Combine honey, soy sauce, vinegar, pepper flakes, and five-spice powder in bowl. Remove roast from oven. Brush top and sides of roast with ¼ cup honey mixture (set aside remainder). Return roast to oven and continue to cook until meat registers 190 degrees and fork slips easily in and out of meat, 30 to 45 minutes longer. Transfer roast to carving board and let rest for 1 hour.

4. Brush pork with 2 tablespoons reserved honey mixture. Using boning or paring knife, cut around inverted T-shaped bone until it can be pulled free and removed from roast (use clean dish towel to grasp bone if necessary). Using serrated knife, slice roast ½ inch thick. Drizzle with remaining honey mixture and serve.



Garlicky Brussels Sprouts with Chorizo

Spice up your relationship with this classic winter vegetable. **by Matthew Fairman**

IF YOU'RE A fan of bacon and brussels sprouts, you're going to find comfort in these well-browned, roasty sprouts paired with smoky chorizo. But you're also sure to be surprised and refreshed by the distinctly unique tastes in this recipe. Rich pork sausage seasoned with Spanish pimentón (smoked paprika); lots of fried garlic; creamy Manchego cheese; tart, ultracomplex sherry vinegar; and sweet honey blend harmoniously here, adding layer upon layer of flavor and intrigue to these vibrant buds. The brussels sprouts themselves—which are strong enough to stand up to other bold flavors—are not overwhelmed. With a simple, two-stage stovetop method, they emerge perfectly cooked: juicy and just tender, with flavorful caramelized edges.

This recipe, which comes together quickly, starts with frying chopped chorizo and garlic in olive oil until the sausage's fat renders and the garlic begins to brown. The chorizo and garlic transform the oil, turning it a lovely deep, rust-colored red. This superflavorful chorizo-garlic

oil becomes the cooking medium for the sprouts. Tossing the brussels with the oil, along with some salt, pepper, and more smoked paprika to amplify the flavors in the sausage, ensures that they are exceptionally well seasoned. After cooking, covered, for a little more than 5 minutes, the brussels sprouts are bright green and just becoming tender. Uncovering and continuing to sauté the sprouts imparts gorgeous, delicious caramelization. A quick toss off the heat with the vinegar and honey animates the flavors of the rich, smoky sprouts with a vibrant, balancing sweet-and-sour element. A final flourish of nutty, creamy Manchego cheese takes them over the top.

Bold Spanish Flavors

Spanish-style chorizo (shown here) is a hard, salami-like pork sausage assertively flavored with garlic and smoked paprika. Manchego is a sheep's-milk cheese with a pleasantly pungent bite; it's sold in both fresher and more aged varieties, and either will work well here.

● SKILLET-ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH CHORIZO AND MANCHEGO CHEESE

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

Look for brussels sprouts that are similar in size, with small, tight heads that are no more than 1½ inches in diameter. If you have any very small brussels sprouts, cut them in half rather than quarter them. We call for a dry-cured Spanish-style chorizo for this recipe, not the fresh Mexican variety. Manchego is a Spanish sheep's-milk cheese. If you can't find Manchego, you can substitute Pecorino Romano or extra-sharp cheddar cheese.

- 5 ounces Spanish-style chorizo sausage, quartered lengthwise and sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced thin
- 2 pounds brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered through stem end
- 1½ teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1½ teaspoons table salt
- ¾ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2 ounces Manchego cheese, shredded (½ cup)

1. Combine chorizo, oil, and garlic in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook over medium heat until oil is bright red and garlic is just beginning to brown, about 6 minutes. Off heat, using slotted spoon, transfer chorizo and garlic to bowl; set aside.

2. Add brussels sprouts, paprika, salt, and pepper to oil in skillet and stir to combine. Cover and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until brussels sprouts are bright green and starting to brown, 5 to 7 minutes.

3. Uncover and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until brussels sprouts are well browned in spots and tender, 5 to 7 minutes longer. Off heat, stir in vinegar, honey, and chorizo mixture. Transfer to serving platter, sprinkle with Manchego, and serve.



No-Fear Duck Breast

Make any celebratory dinner extra-special with this easy recipe for an amazing entrée.

by Mark Huxsoll



DUCK IS A restaurant special-occasion dish that is also a great choice to cook at home. To love duck is to understand its uniqueness and its dichotomies: This game bird is hunted wild, but it's also commonly farm raised and can be purchased in supermarkets. Duck is often eaten rare

(like beef). Because it flies, its muscles are firmer and pinker, more similar to red meat. Most important, with a little know-how, you can have restaurant-quality duck at home. My goals are to get you to share my love of duck and to

Duck Tales

We developed this recipe with White Pekin duck breasts.

On March 14, 1873, nine White Pekin ducklings arrived on Long Island, New York, from China's Beijing imperial aviaries, establishing the beginning of duck farming in the U.S. and giving the White Pekin breed its other name: Long Island duck.

make you confident in cooking it.

I developed this recipe using boneless breasts from White Pekin ducks, which tend to have a more balanced meat-to-fat ratio than the breasts of Moulard, Muscovy, and Mallard breeds. Also, since White Pekin is the most popular breed raised in the United States, it's easier to find in grocery stores, and the breasts are typically more consistent in size.

Sourcing the duck might actually be the hardest part of this recipe.

Let's begin. Too much duck fat can be too much of a good thing, so trim away excess fat and any gristly bits, and then double-check for bone fragments. Score the skin in a crosshatch pattern to help the subcutaneous fat render and the skin crisp. Salt the breasts and refrigerate them, wrapped in plastic wrap, for at least 6 hours to firm them up, help them retain moisture, and season them deeply. Place the breasts skin side down in a cold skillet, and then turn the heat to medium; this "cold start" technique is an efficient way to render the fat, crisp the skin, and cook the meat gently. Once the fat is rendered and the skin is browned (after about 20 minutes of hands-off cooking), flip the breasts, lower the heat, and finish cooking them to your desired temperature on the stovetop—this part takes only a few minutes more.

The duck is perfectly cooked, so now what? A sauce! In keeping with the "ease" theme, it is a simple affair of port wine and dried figs (duck goes very well with fruit) that cooks in about 15 minutes.

It's true, you might have to seek out a source for your duck, but with a little preparation ahead of time and a hands-off cooking method, this recipe is the perfect introduction to cooking duck. Time to celebrate!

DUCK BREASTS WITH PORT WINE-FIG SAUCE

Serves 4 Total Time: 50 minutes, plus 6 hours salting

This recipe was developed with duck breasts weighing 7 to 8 ounces each. However, if you can find only larger duck breasts that weigh 10 to 12 ounces each, they will also work here. They tend to come with more excess fat; once it's trimmed away, the breasts will weigh closer to 8 or 9 ounces. You may need to cook these larger duck breasts about 1 minute longer on the second side to reach the desired temperature. We prefer duck cooked to medium-rare or medium.

DUCK

- 4 (7- to 8-ounce) boneless duck breasts
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1½ teaspoons pepper

SAUCE

- ½ cup ruby port
- ¼ cup dried Black Mission figs, halved through stem
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 tablespoons sugar

- 1. FOR THE DUCK:** Pat duck breasts dry with paper towels. Place breasts skin side down on cutting board. Using sharp knife, trim away excess fat around edges of breasts, then remove any visible silverskin attached to meat.
2. Flip breasts and cut ½-inch cross-hatch pattern in fat, being careful not to cut into meat. Sprinkle all over with salt and pepper. Place duck on large plate skin side up, cover tightly with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or up to 24 hours.
- 3. FOR THE SAUCE:** Meanwhile,

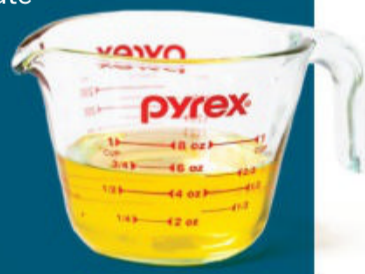
- combine all ingredients in small saucepan. Bring to boil over medium heat. Cook until reduced to about ½ cup, about 15 minutes; set aside off heat. Sauce will thicken to syrupy consistency as it cools. (Cooled sauce can be stored in airtight container for up to 3 days or refrigerated for up to 2 weeks.)
- 4.** Place breasts skin side down in cold 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook over medium heat until copious amount of fat has rendered and skin is well browned and crispy, 17 to 20 minutes.
 - 5.** Flip breasts skin side up and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook until centers of breasts register 125 to 130 degrees (for medium-rare), 1 to 2 minutes; 130 to 135 degrees (for medium), 3 to 4 minutes; 135 to 140 degrees (for medium-well), 4 to 5 minutes; or 145 to 150 degrees (for well-done), 7 to 8 minutes.
 - 6.** Transfer breasts to wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet. Tent with aluminum foil and let rest for 10 minutes.
 - 7.** Transfer duck to carving board and slice ¼ inch thick. Serve with sauce.



Liquid Gold

Rendered duck fat is one of the most flavorful fats you can cook with. To save duck fat after making this recipe, pour it through a fine-mesh strainer into a Mason jar (or similar container). Once the fat is cool, cover the jar and refrigerate the fat for up to one month or freeze it for up to six months.

Once you have duck fat at the ready, you can use it to make duck or chicken leg confit, croutons, or french fries; as the fat in gravy; to sauté vegetables; to roast potatoes; or to fry eggs.



Crosshatch with Caution



When crosshatching the skin, be sure not to cut all the way through it to the meat.

Swiss Chard Salad

The lightest, brightest way to eat this vegetable.

by Matthew Fairman

LOOKING ALMOST LIKE a tangle of emerald-green fettuccine when plated, this shredded Swiss chard salad is one of the most beautiful recipes you can make with a fresh, vibrantly colored bunch of leafy greens. Happily, chard (which is also commonly known as silver beet and perpetual spinach) is not just exceptionally nutritious, being rich in vitamins, minerals, and fiber—it also makes a delicious salad green when simply stemmed, sliced, and tossed in dressing. Unlike heartier kale, which needs some massaging or light cooking to tenderize, chard is tender enough to be eaten raw without any pretreatment. It's also lighter, fresher, and slightly less earthy-tasting than cooked chard.

The other ingredients in this salad make for perfect foils to the mild and

pleasantly bitter leafy green, creating a harmonious, balanced blend of flavors. A bright, sweet vinaigrette of fig preserves, whole-grain mustard, red wine vinegar, and minced shallot complements not only the chard but also some peppery, pungent blue cheese and salty, rich prosciutto. A handful of shredded fresh basil layers in complexity with its herbal notes of licorice, while toasted walnuts add luxurious nuttiness and crunch. If it isn't already, with this recipe in your hands, chard could become your new favorite salad green.

Stemming Swiss Chard



Lay leaves flat on cutting board and cut along sides of stems to remove any stems thicker than ¼ inch.

SHREDDED SWISS CHARD SALAD WITH PROSCIUTTO, BASIL, AND BLUE CHEESE

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 20 minutes
You can use any color Swiss chard in this recipe.

- 12 ounces Swiss chard
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fig preserves
- 1 small shallot, minced
- 2 teaspoons whole-grain mustard
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ cup shredded fresh basil
- 3 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, torn into bite-size pieces, divided
- ½ cup walnuts, toasted and chopped coarse, divided
- 2 ounces blue cheese, crumbled (½ cup), divided

1. Stem Swiss chard, cutting out any stems thicker than ¼ inch from middle of chard leaves. Halve leaves lengthwise, then stack them on cutting board and slice crosswise ¼ inch thick.
2. Whisk oil, vinegar, fig preserves, shallot, mustard, salt, and pepper together in large bowl. Add chard, basil, half of prosciutto, half of walnuts, and half of blue cheese and toss to combine. Transfer salad to platter or individual serving plates and top with remaining prosciutto, walnuts, and blue cheese. Serve.

Hasselback Potato Casserole

A crowd-pleasing, showstopping dish that turns the idea of a gratin on its side. **by Matthew Fairman**

HASSELBACK POTATOES, A dish purportedly created by Leif Elisson in 1953 at the Hasselbacken Restaurant Academy in Stockholm, are whole potatoes that are sliced thin almost all the way through to create a fanned effect. They look cool, but they take some care and precision to prepare. This revised, easier version features potato coins arranged on their sides in a baking pan. Standing the potato slices upright exposes more potato flesh to flavorings and creates gorgeous caramelized edges.

Chef and author J. Kenji López-Alt, an ATK alumnus, deserves credit for melding Hasselback potatoes with potato gratin. His recipe inspired this one as well as countless recipes for Hasselback potato casseroles from food bloggers and celebrity chefs alike.

The key to making our utterly delicious and failproof version is layering in our own complementary flavors and testing rigorously to find the best way to stack the potatoes (see “Slice Spuds; Then Stand Them Up”). Crisping bacon before caramelizing onions in the rendered bacon fat builds a sweet, savory, smoky flavor base. Ample garlic adds a pungent bite, and minced fresh rosemary (both baked in and sprinkled on top before serving) brings piney high notes that brighten the dish. Gruyère and Parmesan provide nuttiness and sharpness while structurally melding the slices into a cohesive whole as they melt.

Slice Spuds; Then Stand Them Up



1. Slice potatoes crosswise $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick using mandoline.



2. Working with 2-inch stacks of potatoes, lay stacks on their sides in pan.

In a typical casserole, the potato slices lie flat. Here, they're arranged on their sides for more browning and better distribution of the flavorful bacon, onion, Gruyère, and rosemary.

Choosing large russets makes for slices that will fit neatly when arranged in three rows in an 8-inch square metal baking pan, and slicing the potatoes uniformly thin on a mandoline results in an unfailingly tender interior; an extra-crispy top; and a refined, impressive presentation. They're stylish enough for a fancy dinner party but so delectable that you might not be able to resist making them every Sunday.

HASSELBACK POTATO CASSEROLE

Serves 8 Total Time: 3 hours

Look for oblong russets that are 4 to 6 inches long and about 3 inches in diameter at their widest. Large potatoes are easier to peel and to slice on a mandoline and fit well when stacked in an 8-inch square pan. If you can find only small russets, you may need more than

$4\frac{1}{4}$ pounds to yield enough slices to fill the pan. Do not pack the potatoes in too tightly or they may not cook through in the stated time; it's OK to have a few unused slices. Use the mandoline's finger guard and stop slicing when you've got about a 1-inch nub of potato left.

- 6 slices bacon, chopped fine**
- 2 cups finely chopped onion**
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups chicken broth, divided**
- 4 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary, divided**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter**
- $4\frac{1}{4}$ pounds large russet potatoes, unpeeled**
- 6 ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded ($1\frac{1}{2}$ cups), divided**
- 2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (1 cup), divided**
- 2 teaspoons table salt**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**

- 1.** Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Cook bacon in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until crispy, 5 to 8 minutes, stirring frequently.
- 2.** Stir in onion and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup broth. Cover and cook until most of liquid has evaporated, 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Uncover and continue to cook until onion is well browned, about 5 minutes longer. Add garlic and $2\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons rosemary and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Set aside off heat.
- 3.** Grease 8-inch square baking pan

- with butter. Peel potatoes. Using mandoline, slice potatoes crosswise $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Combine potatoes, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Gruyère, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan, salt, pepper, bacon-onion mixture, and remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup broth in large bowl and toss to thoroughly combine, breaking up any stacked potatoes and making sure potatoes are coated.
- 4.** Stack 2 inches of potatoes, then lay stack on its side in 1 corner of prepared pan. Continue stacking and laying down potatoes until pan is filled with 3 rows of potatoes. (Potato slices should fit snugly without having to be squeezed in. You may not need all of them; save any extra slices for another use.) Pour remaining broth mixture in bowl over potatoes. Brush any pieces of bacon or onion on top of potatoes down into valleys between rows.
- 5.** Cover pan tightly with aluminum foil and place on foil-lined rimmed baking sheet. Bake for $1\frac{1}{4}$ hours. Uncover and continue to bake until tops of potatoes are golden brown and paring knife inserted into potatoes meets very little resistance, about 30 minutes longer.
- 6.** Combine remaining $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Gruyère and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan in bowl. Remove potatoes from oven and sprinkle with cheese mixture. Continue to bake until potatoes are well browned, about 15 minutes longer.
- 7.** Remove potatoes from oven. Sprinkle with remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon rosemary. Let cool for 15 minutes and serve.



We pretoast the panko bread crumbs to maximize their crunch.

Mushroom and Leek Gratin

This creamy vegetable dish topped with crispy bread crumbs is worthy of a spot on the holiday table.

by Lawman Johnson

MUSHROOM AND LEEK GRATIN

Serves 6 to 8 Total Time: 1½ hours

Leeks come in a variety of sizes. If possible, purchase ones that have more white than green. If you can find only predominately green leeks, then buy closer to 5 pounds of leeks to ensure that you have enough to yield the 10 cups of sliced leeks needed for this recipe. You can substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth, if desired.

- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- ⅓ cup panko bread crumbs
- 1½ teaspoons table salt, divided
- 4–5 pounds leeks, white and light-green parts only, halved lengthwise, sliced 1 inch thick, and washed thoroughly (10 cups)
- 1 tablespoon water
- 10 ounces cremini mushrooms, trimmed and quartered (halved if small)
- 10 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and sliced thin
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme
- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¾ cup chicken broth
- 4½ ounces Parmesan cheese, grated (2¼ cups)

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 450 degrees. Melt

1 tablespoon butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add panko and ¼ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring frequently, until golden brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl; set aside. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels. 2. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in now-empty skillet over medium heat. Add leeks (skillet may be full), water, and ½ teaspoon salt. Cover and cook until leeks are tender, 7 to 9 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook until water has evaporated, about 2 minutes longer. Transfer leeks to 13 by 9-inch baking dish and spread in even layer; set aside. 3. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat. Add cremini mushrooms, shiitake mushrooms, pepper, and remaining ¾ teaspoon salt. Cover and cook until mushrooms have released their moisture, about 4 minutes. Uncover and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until

mushrooms are deep golden brown and tender, 6 to 8 minutes longer.

4. Stir in flour, garlic, and thyme and cook for 1 minute. Stir in cream and broth and bring to boil. Off heat, stir in Parmesan until smooth. Pour mushroom mixture over leeks in baking dish. 5. Transfer to oven and bake until bubbling around edges, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer dish to wire rack and let cool for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with toasted panko. Serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

At end of step 4, let casserole cool completely. Cover dish with aluminum foil and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. Store panko in airtight container at room temperature. To serve, bake, covered, for 30 to 35 minutes.

Leek Prep

Leeks grow in layers of concentric circles, which means that they can trap a lot of dirt. After slicing the white and light-green parts, wash the pieces well (a salad spinner works great).



THOSE WANTING TO limit the amount of meat in their diet deserve to celebrate the holidays with food that's as rich and lavish as any roast. This showstopping gratin is a fantastic option because it can serve as a vegetarian entrée or as a side dish to a meaty main course.

The word “gratin” in this dish's name refers to its baked or broiled topping, which often consists of cheese or bread crumbs mixed with butter. Gratins are both elegant and comforting and can be made with an endless variety of vegetables. For a streamlined and appealing holiday dish, I selected just two vegetables that I knew would shine in the rich, creamy dish: earthy mushrooms and subtly sweet leeks.

The first—and most important—step to making this dish is to precook the vegetables to rid them of excess moisture. If you skip this step, the vegetables will shed their liquid in the oven and you'll end up with a watered-down mess. Simply sauté the leeks in butter (plus a little water) in a covered pan to create steam and help them give up their liquid more readily. The butter adds a hint of nuttiness, and steaming locks in that gradient of green for a more impressive look in the finished dish. Remove the lid, let any excess moisture evaporate, and then transfer the leeks to a baking dish. As for the mushrooms, a combination of cremini and shiitake varieties offers an appealing mix of flavor and texture. Cook them covered to draw out their moisture and then uncovered to deepen their flavor and gradually caramelize their edges.

To create a creamy sauce to bring the whole dish together, stir in a tablespoon of all-purpose flour for thickening along with garlic to boost the leeks' flavor and thyme to contribute herbal notes that complement the mushrooms. Then add heavy cream and chicken broth (or vegetable broth for a vegetarian version) for a savory backbone. Stir in a generous amount of grated Parmesan off the heat, and then pour the mushroom mixture over the leeks. A quick 5 minutes in a 450-degree oven until bubbling is all it takes to warm the dish through and further thicken the sauce. To finish, instead of baking untoasted bread crumbs on top, where they'll just end up getting soggy, sprinkle buttery pre-toasted bread crumbs over the gratin after it has cooled for 10 minutes and then bring it to the table.

Whether it's as a main dish or side, I hope this lush Mushroom and Leek Gratin will grace your holiday table.



Homemade Marshmallows

Fluffy, festive gifts for friends and family. **by Jessica Rudolph**

MY GO-TO HOLIDAY tradition (and my most exhausting) is a monthlong baking extravaganza that involves churning out batches of cookies to decorate, package, and send to friends. However, due to a new family addition (she's 1½, has cheeks for days, and is very distracting), I no longer have the time and focus it takes to painstakingly decorate cookies. Enter: marshmallows.

Trust me—they're easier to make than you think! Armed with a mixer and a thermometer, you'll find them failproof and not as sticky or messy as you'd suspect. All you need to do is cook a sugar syrup to the soft-ball stage (240 degrees), stir in gelatin, and whip a couple egg whites in your mixer before streaming in the hot syrup. Then you can sit back and watch the mixer magic: As the mixture whips and cools, it will become a thick, fluffy cloud.

The marshmallows keep for weeks, and they are durable (no packing peanuts necessary!) and darn adorable. Also? They're really good. Even if you're not prone to snacking on marshmallows from the package, these will change your mind: The egg whites make them lighter and fluffier than store-bought varieties, and a hefty pour

of vanilla gives them homemade flavor.

To take your gifts to the next level, try one of our festive flavor variations. Pick one that calls to you, or make them all and send samplers to your loved ones, like I'll be doing. (To my friends and family: Sorry for the spoiler.)

● FLUFFY VANILLA MARSHMALLOWS

Makes 48 marshmallows

Total Time: 1 hour, plus 4 hours setting

Three ¼-ounce envelopes of gelatin will yield the 2½ tablespoons needed for this recipe. You'll need a candy thermometer or another thermometer, such as an instant-read probe model, that registers high temperatures for this recipe. For a cleaner look, you can trim (and snack on) the edges of the marshmallows before cutting them into squares.

- 1 cup water, divided
- 2½ tablespoons unflavored gelatin
- 2 large egg whites
- 2 cups (14 ounces) granulated sugar
- ½ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ teaspoon table salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup (2⅔ ounces) confectioners' sugar
- 1/3 cup (1⅓ ounces) cornstarch

1. Make foil sling for 13 by 9-inch baking pan by folding 2 long sheets of aluminum foil; first sheet should be 13 inches wide and second sheet should be 9 inches wide. Lay sheets of foil in pan perpendicular to each other, with extra foil hanging over edges of pan. Push foil into corners and up sides of pan, smoothing foil flush to pan. Spray pan with vegetable oil spray.
2. Whisk ½ cup water and gelatin together in bowl and let sit until very firm, about 5 minutes. Add egg whites to bowl of stand mixer fitted with whisk attachment.
3. Combine granulated sugar, corn syrup, salt, and remaining ½ cup water in large saucepan. Bring to boil over medium-high heat and cook, gently swirling saucepan occasionally, until sugar has dissolved completely and mixture registers 240 degrees, 6 to 8 minutes. Off heat, immediately whisk in gelatin mixture until gelatin is dissolved.
4. Working quickly, whip whites on high speed until soft peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes. With mixer running, carefully pour hot syrup into whites, avoiding whisk and bowl as much as possible. Whip until mixture is very thick and stiff and bowl is only slightly

- warm to touch, about 10 minutes. Reduce speed to low and add vanilla. Slowly increase speed to high and mix until incorporated, about 30 seconds, scraping down bowl as needed.
5. Transfer mixture to prepared pan and spread into even layer using greased rubber spatula. Let sit at room temperature until firm, at least 4 hours.
6. Lightly coat chef's knife with oil spray. Whisk confectioners' sugar and cornstarch together in bowl. Lightly dust top of marshmallows with 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar mixture. Transfer remaining confectioners' sugar mixture to 1-gallon zipper-lock bag. Place cutting board over pan of marshmallows and carefully invert pan and board. Remove pan and peel off foil.
7. Cut marshmallows crosswise into 8 strips, then cut each strip into 6 squares (marshmallows will be approximate 1½-inch squares). Separate marshmallows and add half to confectioners' sugar mixture in bag. Seal bag and shake to coat marshmallows.
8. Using your hands, remove marshmallows from bag and transfer to colander. Shake colander to remove excess confectioners' sugar mixture. Repeat with remaining marshmallows. Marshmallows can be stored in zipper-lock bag or airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

● FLUFFY EGGNOG MARSHMALLOWS

Substitute 2 tablespoons dark rum, ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg, and pinch ground cinnamon for vanilla.

● FLUFFY LEMON-STRAWBERRY MARSHMALLOWS

Grind ½ ounce freeze-dried strawberries to powder in spice grinder. Add ground strawberries with vanilla. Stir in 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest with rubber spatula before transferring marshmallow mixture to prepared pan.

● FLUFFY MOCHA MARSHMALLOWS

Add ¼ cup natural unsweetened cocoa powder and 2 tablespoons instant espresso powder with vanilla. Add 2 tablespoons natural unsweetened cocoa powder to confectioners' sugar mixture.

● FLUFFY PEPPERMINT SWIRL MARSHMALLOWS

Add ⅛ teaspoon peppermint extract with vanilla. After spreading marshmallow mixture in pan, evenly drop 12 drops red food coloring over marshmallow mixture. Using clean, dry paring knife, swirl food coloring into marshmallow mixture.

How to Make 'mallows



1. Cook sugar, water, corn syrup, and salt to 240 degrees, or soft-ball stage.



2. With mixer running, pour syrup into egg whites, avoiding sides of bowl and whisk.



3. Transfer marshmallow mixture to greased foil-lined pan and smooth top.



4. Cut marshmallows into 1 1/2-inch squares using greased knife.

DRINKING CHOCOLATE HAS a long, delicious history: Civilizations in Central and South America enjoyed the beverage centuries ago. Spiking those chocolate drinks with alcohol is a time-tested celebratory move, too, as Europeans have likely been spiking their hot chocolate for hundreds of years—there are traditions of hot chocolate enhanced with rum, brandy, and other spirits all over the continent. So while we're not reinventing the wheel here, we are perfecting it by following two guiding principles: Keep it simple, and make enough to share.

For the base, whole milk is just rich enough without being too heavy. Dutch-processed cocoa powder brings a backbone of chocolaty complexity while melted bittersweet chips ensure chocolate-forward flavor. Milk powder brings creaminess while confectioners' sugar adds sweetness and a fuller mouthfeel. And vanilla contributes roundness and its signature perfume. Finally, bourbon takes this beverage into adult territory. And here's a tip: This hot chocolate is even better topped with our homemade marshmallows!

● SPIKED HOT CHOCOLATE

Serves 4 (Makes about 4 cups)

Total Time: 15 minutes

We like bourbon in this drink, but golden or dark rum, amaretto, coffee liqueur, brandy, or cognac can be substituted, if desired.

- 1/4 cup (3/4 ounce) nonfat dry milk powder
- 1/4 cup (3/4 ounce) Dutch-processed cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons confectioners' sugar
- 3 cups whole milk
- 1 cup (6 ounces) bittersweet or semisweet chocolate chips
- 4 ounces bourbon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Marshmallows or whipped cream (optional)

1. Whisk milk powder, cocoa, and sugar together in medium saucepan. Slowly whisk in milk until incorporated and no lumps remain. Bring to simmer over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Off heat, immediately whisk in chocolate chips until melted and smooth.

2. Stir in bourbon and vanilla. Divide among 4 mugs. Top with marshmallows, if using. Serve.

Spiked Hot Chocolate

Because why should kids have all the fun?

by Lawman Johnson

Bourbon is a great pairing with chocolate, but rum, amaretto, brandy, coffee liqueur, and cognac taste delicious here, too!





These hearty steak and cheese sandwiches are packed with steak tips, salami, vegetables, and gooey American cheese.

Jitto's-Style Steak Bombs

Finally, a loaded steak and cheese you can re-create at home. *by Mark Huxsoll*

WHILE THE HISTORICAL American epicenter of beef on bread may be the venerable Louis' Lunch in New Haven, Connecticut (where, they claim, the first hamburgers in the country were served), many people associate steak and cheese sandwiches with the fine city of Philadelphia. The Philly version of this sandwich is, in a word, glorious (I spent a lot of time cooking and eating there). But New Englanders have their own take, the steak bomb, that features shaved steak; gooey melted cheese; a messy tangle of onions, peppers, and mushrooms; and salami.

Jitto's Super Steak in Portsmouth, New Hampshire (see "A Delicious Legacy"), however, marches to the beat of a different drummer—they offer steak bombs with shaved steak (Philly-style), yes, but also with chunks of steak tips. To re-create their popular steak tip version, I started by cutting steak tips into small, bite-size pieces. To season the steak, I used a classic all-purpose seasoning that we spied in the kitchen at Jitto's: Lawry's Seasoned Salt. The rolls needed to be toasted,

and we preferred a light, pretoasting spread of mayonnaise to butter; the mayo provided extra flavor and helped the rolls develop a nice crusty texture in the oven.

To make the filling, start by lightly browning the onion, and then add the bell pepper and mushrooms and cook until they are softened. Transfer the vegetables to a bowl, and sear the seasoned pieces of steak tips in the same skillet, adding in the salami so that some of its fat renders and further flavors the steak. Finally, stir together the meats and vegetables, pile the filling into the toasted rolls, layer on some melty American cheese, and bake the sandwiches until the cheese is hot and gooey. It's the bomb.

Not-So-Secret Seasoning

Lawry's Seasoned Salt entered the scene in 1938 as a tableside seasoning for the prime rib served at the original Lawry's The Prime Rib restaurant in Beverly Hills, California. Diners would often steal the salt, so eventually the Lawry family manufactured the salt and made it available for purchase at the restaurant and then in supermarkets. We use it to enhance flavor in recipes such as these steak bombs.



Don't Shave That Steak



Cut the steak tips into small pieces for the filling.

JITTO'S-STYLE STEAK BOMBS

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

Sirloin steak tips are often sold as flap meat. Lawry's Seasoned Salt is usually stocked with other spice blends in the grocery store. We developed this recipe with a red bell pepper, but any color pepper can be used. Keep the sub rolls hinged when splitting them; otherwise, these extra-full sandwiches have a tendency to fall apart when fully assembled.

- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil, divided
- 1 onion, halved and sliced ¼ inch thick
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ¼-inch-wide strips
- 4 ounces white mushrooms, trimmed, halved, and sliced ¼ inch thick
- 2 teaspoons Lawry's Seasoned Salt, divided
- 4 (8-inch) sub rolls, split but hinged
- 6 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 pound sirloin steak tips, trimmed and cut into ¾-inch chunks
- 1½ ounces thinly sliced deli salami, quartered
- 8 thin slices deli American cheese (4 ounces)

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add onion and cook, stirring frequently, until beginning to brown, about 4 minutes.
2. Add bell pepper, mushrooms, and 1 teaspoon seasoned salt and cook until vegetables are tender, about 6 minutes. Transfer to bowl; set aside skillet.
3. Arrange rolls on rimmed baking sheet. Spread mayonnaise evenly on cut sides of each roll (1½ tablespoons each). Bake rolls until crusty and warmed through, about 5 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, heat remaining 1 teaspoon oil in now-empty skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add steak tips and sprinkle with remaining 1 teaspoon seasoned salt. Scatter salami over top and cook, without stirring, until steak tips are browned on bottom, about 5 minutes.
5. Off heat, stir onion mixture into steak tips. Divide steak mixture evenly among rolls. Layer 2 slices American cheese over steak mixture on each roll. Bake until cheese is melted, about 1 minute. Serve immediately.



A Delicious Legacy

Text by Bryan Roof; photos by Steve Klise

ON the ROAD



JITTO'S SUPER STEAK in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, looks more like a sprawling home than it does a proper restaurant. This feeling carries through to the inside, too, which has low ceilings and exposed wooden beams and an echo of familiar conversation between the bartender and the band of regulars seated around her. The neon glow of beer lights on the walls guides you through the dining room to a line of customers placing orders at a long take-out counter. And a glimpse into the open kitchen offers up the smells and sounds of a bustling restaurant, where the clang of metal spatulas on the flat-top griddle seems to keep time with the songs on the radio.

Jerry and Linda Nadeau opened Jitto's Super Steak in 1979. Kathy Nadeau and her late husband, Danny, took over the business from her in-laws in the mid-1980s. Kathy tells me that the name Jitto stems from the French pronunciation of "Jerry."

Over the years, Jitto's has become famous for its version of New England's beloved steak bomb, which Kathy explains "is a steak sandwich with

all the fixins: mushrooms, peppers, onions, extra cheese, and salami." At Jitto's they also add a considerable smear of mayonnaise and recommend American cheese over provolone. But what really sets this steak bomb apart is the steak: hearty cubes of steak tips cooked to medium and hit with an assertive sprinkle of Lawry's Seasoned Salt.

The recipe for the steak bomb hasn't changed since 1979, and to this day it remains Jitto's biggest seller. "That's why our shirts say 'Bomb Squad.'" Kathy jokes. To keep up with demand, Jitto's goes through 350 to 450 pounds of steak each week, which Kathy cuts by hand every day.

After Danny passed away in 2015, Kathy made the choice to keep the restaurant going. To her and Danny, it was more than a business—it was where they first met, got married, and raised a family. As Kathy hands me a sandwich for the road, she leans in close and says, "I don't want to get teary, but my husband was the best. That's why I keep doing it."

Clockwise from top left: Owner Kathy Nadeau tops off a steak bomb; Jitto's regulars gather at the bar; there's no missing this grand entryway; cook John Gray lays down some cheese on the flattop.



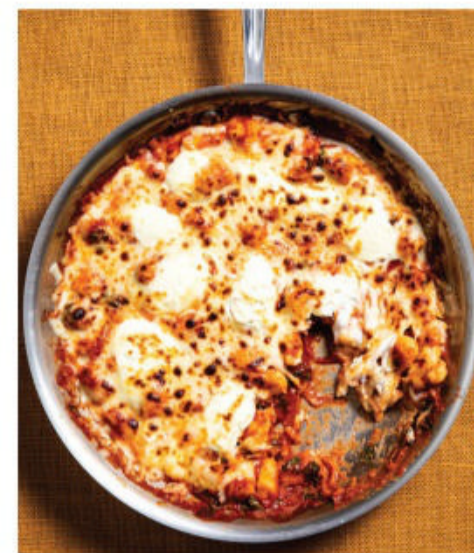
Instant Mashed Potato Gnocchi

These tender, plump dumplings are easy to make and delightful to eat.

by Mark Huxsoll



TOMATO-BASIL SAUCE



MAKE IT AL FORNO-STYLE Add Cheese and Broil

Use broiler-safe skillet. Dollop ½ cup whole-milk ricotta over tomato-basil-sauced gnocchi, sprinkle 1½ cups shredded whole-milk mozzarella over top, and broil on rack set 8 inches away from broiler element for 3 minutes. Let sit for 5 minutes, sprinkle with grated Parmesan, and serve.

WE'RE ALL FAMILIAR with spaghetti, fettuccine, and elbow macaroni, but let's talk about an Italian dumpling that's often overlooked in our home kitchens: potato gnocchi. Properly made gnocchi are versatile and, at their peak, offer a wonderfully light yet dense texture that pairs perfectly with all sorts of sauces and accompaniments. And these delicious dumplings can be easy to make, with a little help from our secret weapon: instant mashed potato flakes. Sure, you could simply buy frozen gnocchi, but with this simple convenience product, high-quality homemade gnocchi are right at your fingertips.

Traditional gnocchi made from scratch are a labor of love. The basic recipe includes cooking whole unpeeled

starchy potatoes until they are tender, which can take a while. The hot potatoes must then be peeled before they cool to keep them from becoming gummy. Next, the potatoes are mashed or riced and cooled slightly so that they do not cook the egg that gets mixed in along with some flour to create the dough. The dough is then kneaded into a ball on the counter using a generous but often unmeasured amount of flour; such inconsistency can lead to a dough that's too dense, chewy, or soft to work with (the dough can be temperamental with a high margin of error if the texture is not correct). Finally, the dough is rolled into logs, cut into pieces, and shaped—the shaping can take myriad forms (see “Shape it Your Way”)—before being boiled, sauced, and served.

The work is worth it, but there's also an easier way. Enter the instant mashed potato flakes; exit all that additional work. All you need to do is combine a measured amount of flakes, some all-purpose flour, a bit of salt, a little more than a cup of water, and a whole egg and stir until the mixture forms a ball. After a 3-minute rest for the potato flakes and flour to fully hydrate and the dough to relax, knead the dough and give it another quick rest. Then divide the dough into six even pieces, dust your counter lightly with flour, and roll each piece into a ¾-inch-thick log before cutting it into ¾-inch pieces. Shape the gnocchi, add them to salted boiling water, and cook them for about 1½ minutes. Then combine them with

the sauce or accompaniment of your choosing. Presto! A batch of beautiful hand-rolled gnocchi.

These “instant” gnocchi are every bit as good as traditional gnocchi, and their versatility means that you can pick from an almost infinite number of sauces and accompaniments. For starters, you could toss them with a simple tomato-basil sauce, smother them with a creamy fontina sauce, or dress them with a browned butter-caper sauce. The list goes on. As a bonus, the gnocchi also keep wonderfully in the freezer, extending their shelf life and making a future dinner even quicker if you make one batch to eat now and one to freeze. With this recipe and technique in hand, you'll be making gnocchi regularly at home.

Shape It Your Way Here are some popular methods for shaping gnocchi. Note that the shape you choose won't affect the cooking time.



SQUARES

Just cut the rope with your bench scraper, and you're done.



SPHERES

Roll the cut gnocchi between your fingers to form little balls.



INDENTED

Give each gnocchi a poke, about ¼ inch deep, in its center to create a divot.



RIDGED

Roll the cut gnocchi downward on the tines of a fork to create grooves.



FONTINA CHEESE SAUCE



BROWNEB BUTTER-CAPER SAUCE

INSTANT MASHED POTATO GNOCCHI

Serves 4 (Makes 1½ pounds) Total Time: 1½ hours

We used Idahoan Original Mashed Potatoes when developing this recipe. Do not use flavored instant mashed potato flakes. It is important to knead the dough to the texture of Play-Doh in step 2, or it will be too tender and difficult to roll into ropes. In step 3, be sure to very lightly dust the counter with flour before rolling the dough into ropes to keep them from sticking. In step 5, make whichever sauce you prefer. See “Shape It Your Way” for other shaping ideas.

- 2 cups (4 ounces) plain instant mashed potato flakes
- 1 cup (5 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons table salt, plus salt for cooking gnocchi
- 1½ cups water
- 1 large egg
- Grated Parmesan cheese

MAKE THE GNOCCHI

1. Whisk potato flakes, flour, and salt together in large bowl. Whisk water and egg together in separate bowl. Add water mixture to potato flake mixture and stir with wooden spoon until fully combined and mixture forms dough ball. Let sit for 3 minutes for potato flakes and flour to hydrate.
2. Turn out dough onto lightly floured counter and knead until dough has texture of Play-Doh and springs back halfway when poked with your finger, about 3 minutes. Lightly dust dough with flour and let rest on counter for 5 minutes.
3. Divide dough into 6 equal pieces. On very lightly floured counter, roll 1 piece into ¾-inch-thick rope. Lightly dust rope with flour. Using floured bench scraper, cut rope crosswise into ¾-inch pieces; transfer gnocchi to

lightly floured rimmed baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough pieces.

4. Press gnocchi, cut side down, on tines of fork, then roll downward to create grooves. If dough sticks, dust your thumb and fork with flour. Return gnocchi to sheet.

MAKE A SAUCE

5. Prepare 1 recipe sauce according to directions that follow.

TOMATO-BASIL SAUCE

Makes enough for 1½ pounds gnocchi

A good-quality jarred marinara, such as Rao’s, can be substituted for the canned tomato sauce.

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves, torn into ½-inch pieces

Combine oil and garlic in 12-inch skillet. Cook over medium heat

until garlic is fragrant and just beginning to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Carefully stir in tomato sauce, sugar, pepper, and oregano. Bring to simmer, then remove from heat. Stir in basil. Cover to keep warm.

FONTINA CHEESE SAUCE

Makes enough for 1½ pounds gnocchi

Fontal cheese, which is in the fontina family, can be substituted for the fontina.

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1¼ cups whole milk
- 4 ounces fontina cheese, shredded (1 cup)
- ½ teaspoon table salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Melt butter in 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Whisk in flour and cook for 1 minute. Slowly whisk in milk. Bring to simmer, then remove from heat. Whisk in fontina, salt, and pepper. Cover to keep warm.

BROWNEB BUTTER-CAPER SAUCE

Makes enough for 1½ pounds gnocchi

If using salt-packed capers, rinse them before mincing.

- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons minced shallot
- 2 tablespoons capers, minced
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Melt butter in 12-inch skillet over medium heat. Cook, swirling skillet often, until butter is color of milk chocolate and has toasty aroma, 3 to 5 minutes. Add shallot and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Off heat, stir in capers and lemon juice. Cover to keep warm.

COOK AND SAUCE

6. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon salt to boiling water. Add half of gnocchi, then stir gently to keep from sticking. Simmer until just cooked through and gnocchi float to top, about 1½ minutes. Using spider skimmer or slotted spoon, transfer gnocchi to skillet with sauce. Return water to boil and repeat with remaining gnocchi.
7. Place skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring gently, until hot throughout and gnocchi are well coated with sauce, about 2 minutes. Season with salt to taste. Sprinkle with Parmesan and serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

At end of step 4, gnocchi can be frozen on sheet. Once frozen, transfer to airtight container or zipper-lock bag and keep frozen for up to 1 month. Cook from frozen and increase cooking time to 3 minutes.

Want to make your own
herbes de Provence?
Visit [CooksCountry.com/hdp](https://www.cookscountry.com/hdp)
for our recipe.

Baked Chicken Drumsticks

This dish delivers a comforting dinner—rich, savory, and complex—with minimal effort.

by **Matthew Fairman**

IF YOU'VE GOT a weeknight coming up when you know you won't have much energy to cook, this recipe (paired with a simple salad and some crusty bread) could punch your ticket to a deeply flavorful, satisfying dinner. Toss the chicken in the pantry-friendly, ultraflavorful marinade the night before, and then simply pop it into the oven and bake it for about an hour. When the chicken is done, less than 5 minutes of work on the stove transforms the pan drippings into a luxurious sauce.

Drumsticks are not only an affordable option here but also full of flavor and very forgiving, since their dark meat is next to impossible to overcook. Plus, the salt in the marinade acts as a brine, seasoning the chicken inside and out and further ensuring that it emerges tender and juicy. And about that marinade: It might just become your go-to for all kinds of roasted meats. Sun-dried

tomatoes add concentrated, vibrant, savory pops of flavor. In league with the anchovies (don't worry—with this amount, you won't notice even a hint of fishiness), the umami (or savory flavor) already present in the chicken and tomatoes becomes exponentially more meaty and satisfying. The bite from the ample garlic and the myriad herbal notes of the herbes de Provence—an all-in-one powerhouse blend of rosemary, marjoram, thyme, lavender, and fennel—go exceptionally well with the rich roasted chicken. A glug of white wine adds balancing acidity.

Once roasted, the chicken and tomatoes are succulent and juicy. All that remains is to transfer the drumsticks to a platter and whisk a slurry of cornstarch and water into the drippings in the pan, emulsifying them into a glossy, full-bodied sauce that everyone at the table will eagerly sop up with bread.

● BAKED CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS WITH HERBES DE PROVENCE AND SUN-DRIED TOMATOES

Serves 4

Total Time: 1½ hours, plus 1 hour marinating

Depending on their size, you'll need anywhere from eight to 12 drumsticks to yield the 3 pounds called for here. We like to serve these saucy drumsticks with crusty bread, mashed potatoes, or rice.

CHICKEN

- 3 pounds chicken drumsticks**
- ⅓ cup sliced oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes**
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- ¼ cup dry white wine**
- 5 garlic cloves, minced**
- 4 teaspoons herbes de Provence**
- 2½ teaspoons kosher salt**
- 3 anchovy fillets, rinsed and minced**
- 1 teaspoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic**

SAUCE

- ¼ cup water**
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**

1. FOR THE CHICKEN: Toss all ingredients together in large bowl.

Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

2. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Place drumsticks in single layer in 12-inch oven-safe skillet. Pour any remaining marinade in bowl over chicken. Bake until chicken registers at least 185 degrees, about 55 minutes.

3. FOR THE SAUCE: Transfer chicken to shallow platter, leaving pan juices behind. Whisk water and cornstarch together in small bowl; whisk cornstarch slurry into pan juices. Bring pan-juice mixture to simmer over medium heat, scraping up any browned bits. Simmer until thickened, about 2 minutes.

4. Off heat, whisk in butter until incorporated, about 1 minute. Whisk in parsley. Spoon sauce over chicken and serve.

Sweet and Spicy Fried Fish Tacos



DINNER TONIGHT

Quick Mediterranean Beef Stew



DINNER TONIGHT

Rib-Eye Steaks with Bacon-Bourbon Compote and Mashed Potatoes



DINNER TONIGHT

Linguine with Sun-Dried Tomato and Eggplant Sauce



DINNER TONIGHT



Quick Mediterranean Beef Stew

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

Sirloin steak tips are often sold as flap meat. Garnish the stew with chopped kalamata olives and serve it with crusty bread.

- 1½ pounds sirloin steak tips, trimmed and cut into ¾-inch cubes**
- 1 teaspoon table salt**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 onion, chopped coarse**
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped coarse**
- ¼ cup tomato paste**
- 1 teaspoon herbes de Provence**
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour**
- ½ cup red wine**
- 2 cups beef broth**
- 2 (2-inch) strips orange zest**

1. Pat beef dry with paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Heat oil in Dutch oven over high heat until just smoking. Add beef and cook, stirring occasionally, until no longer pink, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer to plate.
2. Add onion, carrots, tomato paste, and herbes de Provence to now-empty pot and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften and tomato paste darkens, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in flour and cook for 1 minute. Stir in wine, scraping up any browned bits. Stir in broth; orange zest; and beef, along with any accumulated juices, and bring to boil.
3. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, until beef and vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Discard orange zest. Serve.



Sweet and Spicy Fried Fish Tacos

Serves 4 Total Time: 35 minutes

When purchasing frozen fish sticks, look for a product made from cut whole fillets instead of minced fish; we like Gorton's Premium Haddock Fish Sticks and Gorton's Premium Cod Fish Sticks.

- ½ cup vegetable oil for frying**
- 14 ounces frozen fish sticks**
- ⅓ cup mayonnaise**
- 2 tablespoons sweet chili sauce**
- 1 tablespoon sriracha**
- ¼ teaspoon table salt**
- 8 (6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed**
- 2 teaspoons lime juice**
- 2 cups shredded iceberg lettuce**
- 4 radishes, trimmed, halved lengthwise, and sliced thin**
- 3 scallions, sliced thin**

1. Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add fish sticks and cook until deep golden brown and crisp, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate.
2. Combine mayonnaise, chili sauce, sriracha, and salt in large bowl. Transfer 2 tablespoons mayonnaise mixture to medium bowl and set aside. Add fish sticks to remaining mayonnaise mixture and toss gently to coat. Divide fish evenly among tortillas.
3. Whisk lime juice into reserved 2 tablespoons mayonnaise mixture. Add lettuce and toss to coat. Divide lettuce mixture, radishes, and scallions evenly among tacos. Serve.



Linguine with Sun-Dried Tomato and Eggplant Sauce

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

This pasta is inspired by Francis Lam's recipe for Pasta with Let-My-Eggplant-Go-Free! Puree. One 8-ounce jar of oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes will yield the ¾ cup called for here.

- 1 pound linguine**
- 1¼ teaspoons table salt, plus salt for cooking pasta**
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for serving**
- 1½ pounds eggplant, peeled and shredded**
- 6 garlic cloves, sliced thin**
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- ¾ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped**
- ¾ cup chopped fresh basil**

1. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook, stirring often, until al dente. Reserve ½ cup cooking water, then drain pasta and return it to pot.
2. Meanwhile, heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add eggplant, garlic, thyme sprigs, pepper, pepper flakes, and salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until eggplant is uniformly wilted, about 8 minutes. Add tomatoes and 1½ cups water and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and cook until eggplant begins to break down, about 12 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Discard thyme sprigs. Add eggplant mixture, basil, and reserved cooking water to pasta and toss to combine. Serve, passing extra oil separately.



Rib-Eye Steaks with Bacon-Bourbon Compote and Mashed Potatoes

Serves 4 Total Time: 45 minutes

You can substitute strip steaks for the rib eyes. Serve with sliced scallions.

- 2 pounds red potatoes, unpeeled, quartered and sliced crosswise ¼ inch thick**
- 1¼ cups whole milk**
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided**
- 2¼ teaspoons table salt, divided**
- 1½ teaspoons pepper, divided**
- 2 (1-pound) boneless rib-eye steaks, 1 to 1½ inches thick, trimmed**
- 6 slices bacon, chopped**
- 3 shallots, sliced thin**
- 2 tablespoons packed brown sugar**
- ¼ cup bourbon**
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce**

1. Bring potatoes, milk, 4 tablespoons butter, 1¼ teaspoons salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper to boil in large saucepan over medium-high heat. Cover; reduce heat to medium-low; and cook until potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Off heat, using potato masher, coarsely mash potato mixture. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, pat steaks dry with paper towels and sprinkle with remaining 1 teaspoon salt and remaining 1 teaspoon pepper. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add steaks and cook, flipping every 2 minutes, until well browned and meat registers 125 degrees (for medium-rare), 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to cutting board and tent with foil. Wipe skillet clean with paper towels.
3. Cook bacon in skillet over medium-high heat until crispy, about 4 minutes. Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat (leaving bacon in skillet). Add shallots and sugar and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Carefully add bourbon and Worcestershire and simmer until reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Whisk in remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Serve.

Chicken Thighs with Rosemary Applesauce and Latkes



DINNER TONIGHT

Caramelized Black Pepper Chicken



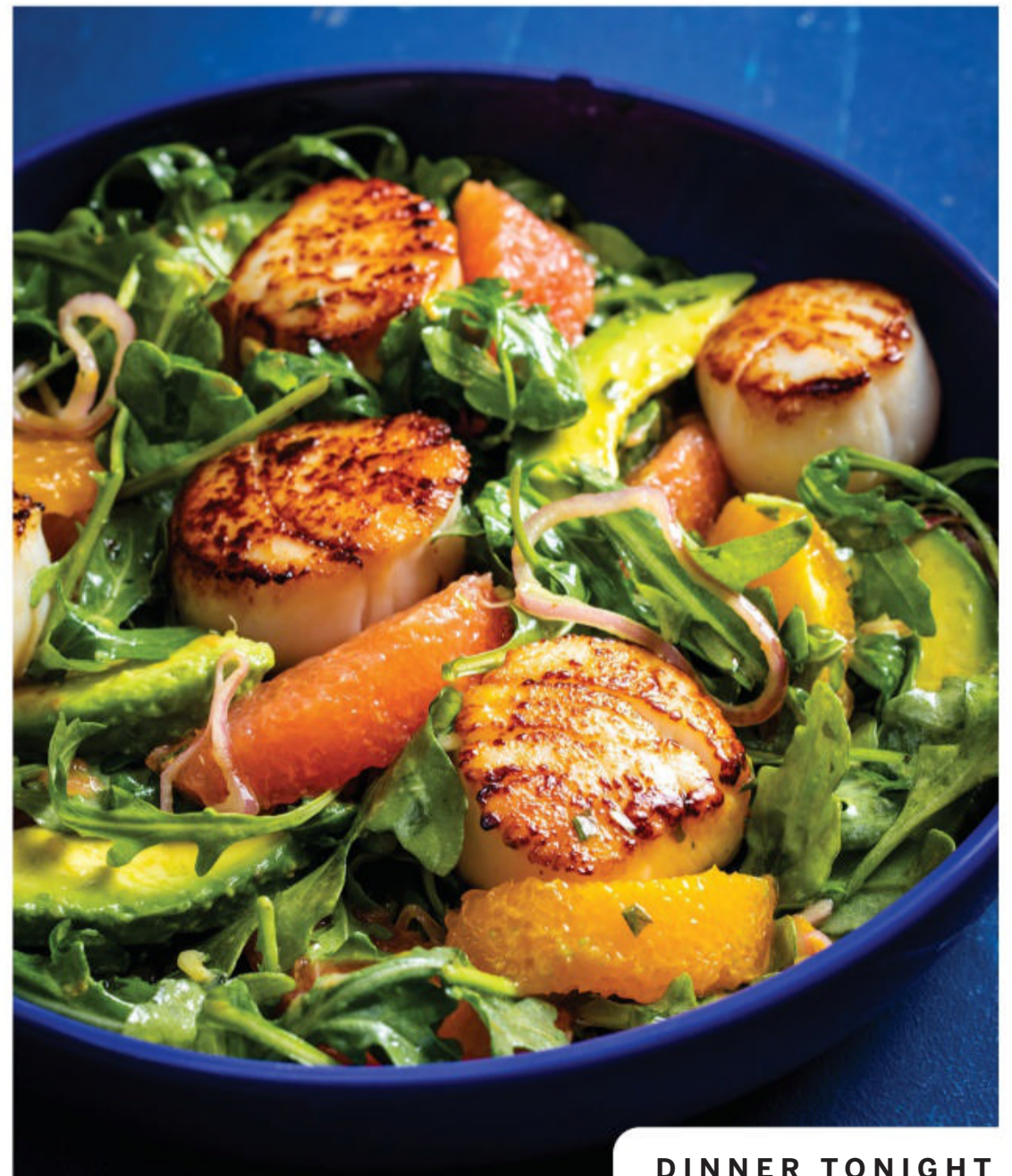
DINNER TONIGHT

Sausage-Stuffed Acorn Squash



DINNER TONIGHT

Seared Scallops with Citrus and Avocado Salad



DINNER TONIGHT



Caramelized Black Pepper Chicken

Serves 4 Total Time: 30 minutes

This recipe is inspired by Charles Phan's recipe from his cookbook *The Slanted Door: Modern Vietnamese Food* (2014). The saltiness of fish sauce can vary; we recommend Red Boat 40°N Fish Sauce. This dish is intensely seasoned, so serve it with plenty of steamed white rice, preferably jasmine.

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 shallots, halved and sliced thin
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1/3 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons fish sauce
- 2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Asian chili-garlic sauce
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground pepper
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed and cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro leaves and stems

1. Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add shallots and ginger and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in sugar, fish sauce, vinegar, chili-garlic sauce, and pepper and bring to simmer, stirring to dissolve sugar. Cook until very thick and syrupy, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in chicken and cook, stirring occasionally, until cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes (sauce will thin out as chicken exudes moisture). Sprinkle with cilantro and serve.



Chicken Thighs with Rosemary Applesauce and Latkes

Serves 4 Total Time: 50 minutes

Shred the potatoes and onion separately on the large holes of a box grater or with the shredding disk of a food processor. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve with sour cream, if desired.

- 8 (5- to 7-ounce) bone-in chicken thighs, trimmed
- 1 3/4 teaspoons table salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup shredded onion, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
- 2 cups chunky applesauce
- 1 pound russet potatoes, peeled, shredded, and squeezed dry
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 cup vegetable oil for frying

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position; heat oven to 425 degrees. Sprinkle chicken with 1 teaspoon salt and pepper. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Cook chicken, skin side down, until lightly browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to plate.
2. Remove all but 1 tablespoon fat from skillet. Add 1/4 cup onion, rosemary, and 1/4 teaspoon salt and cook over medium-high heat until softened, about 2 minutes. Stir in applesauce and bring to simmer. Pour applesauce into 13 by 9-inch baking pan. Nestle chicken into applesauce, skin side up. Roast until chicken registers at least 175 degrees, 15 to 17 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, combine potatoes, flour, egg, remaining 1/4 cup onion, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt in bowl. Heat 1 cup oil in clean, dry nonstick skillet over medium-high heat to 325 degrees. Place four 1/4-cup portions of potato mixture in skillet and flatten into 4-inch disks with fork. Cook until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer latkes to paper towel-lined plate. Repeat with remaining potato mixture. Season latkes with salt to taste. Serve chicken with latkes and applesauce.



Seared Scallops with Citrus and Avocado Salad

Serves 4 Total Time: 30 minutes

We recommend buying "dry" scallops, which don't have chemical additives and taste better than "wet." Dry scallops will look ivory or pinkish; wet scallops are bright white.

- 2 oranges, divided
- 1 grapefruit
- 1 1/2 pounds large sea scallops, tendons removed
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided
- 1 shallot, sliced thin
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon
- 4 ounces (4 cups) baby arugula
- 2 avocados, halved, pitted, and sliced 1/4 inch thick

1. Grate 1/2 teaspoon zest from 1 orange; set aside. Cut away peel and pith from oranges and grapefruit. Holding fruit over bowl, use paring knife to slice between membranes to release segments; set aside.
2. Pat scallops dry with paper towels. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over high heat until just smoking, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle scallops all over with 3/4 teaspoon salt. Add half of scallops, flat side down, in single layer around circumference of skillet; cook until browned, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer scallops to plate and tent with foil. Repeat with 1 tablespoon oil and remaining scallops.
3. Whisk shallot, vinegar, mustard, tarragon, orange zest, remaining 1/4 cup oil, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt together in large bowl. Add arugula and toss to coat. Add avocados, oranges, and grapefruit and toss gently to combine. Serve scallops over individual portions of salad.



Sausage-Stuffed Acorn Squash

Serves 4 Total Time: 40 minutes

The squash can be made ahead if you prefer: Before brushing with butter, wrap the stuffed squash in plastic wrap and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. To serve, bake in a 350-degree oven until heated through, about 30 minutes, and then brush with butter and broil as directed.

- 2 acorn squashes (about 1 1/2 pounds each), halved pole to pole and seeded
- 3/4 teaspoon table salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 8 ounces sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 Granny Smith apple, cored and chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, divided
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1/3 cup dried cranberries
- 4 ounces sourdough bread, torn into 3/4-inch pieces (2 cups)

1. Sprinkle cut sides of squash with salt and pepper. Microwave in large bowl, covered, until tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, combine sausage, apple, onion, 2 tablespoons melted butter, and sage in 12-inch nonstick skillet. Cook over medium-high heat, breaking up sausage with spoon, until sausage begins to brown and apple and onion are softened, about 10 minutes. Stir in broth and cranberries and bring to simmer. Off heat, stir in bread.
3. Adjust oven rack 8 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Transfer squash, cut side up, to rimmed baking sheet. Mound sausage mixture into squash, packing lightly with back of spoon. Brush filling and squash edges with remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter. Broil until lightly browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Serve.

GETTING TO KNOW

YOUR OVEN

Knowledge is power . . . and knowledge about how your oven works can make you a better cook.

by Scott Kathan

POT HOLDERS

Our highest-rated pot holders are the flexible, agile, durable, and very protective **OXO Good Grips Silicone Pot Holders (\$14 each)**.



OVEN BASICS

» Heating patterns

The heating element for most standard ovens is located on the bottom. The heat from that element is carried to the food, in part, by moving air currents in a process called convection. The heat rises up around the food, reflects off the top of the oven, and circulates around the oven chamber. A convection setting, which could more accurately be called forced convection, uses a fan to accelerate the moving of the air and heat. Food generally dries, crisps, and browns more rapidly when cooked with the convection setting.

» Rack placement

Because the heat comes from the bottom, foods placed on lower oven racks will receive more direct heat on the bottom. Foods placed on higher oven racks will receive heat reflected off the oven ceiling onto the top of the food. So if you want to brown the bottom of something, place it on a lower rack; if you want to brown the top, place it on a higher rack. Foods placed on racks in the middle will have a balance of both.

» Switch and rotate

Even new or freshly calibrated ovens have hot and cool spots. Thus, you should rotate most foods you cook in your oven, and if you are placing food on more than one oven rack, you should switch the positions of the food halfway through baking/roasting to ensure even cooking and browning.

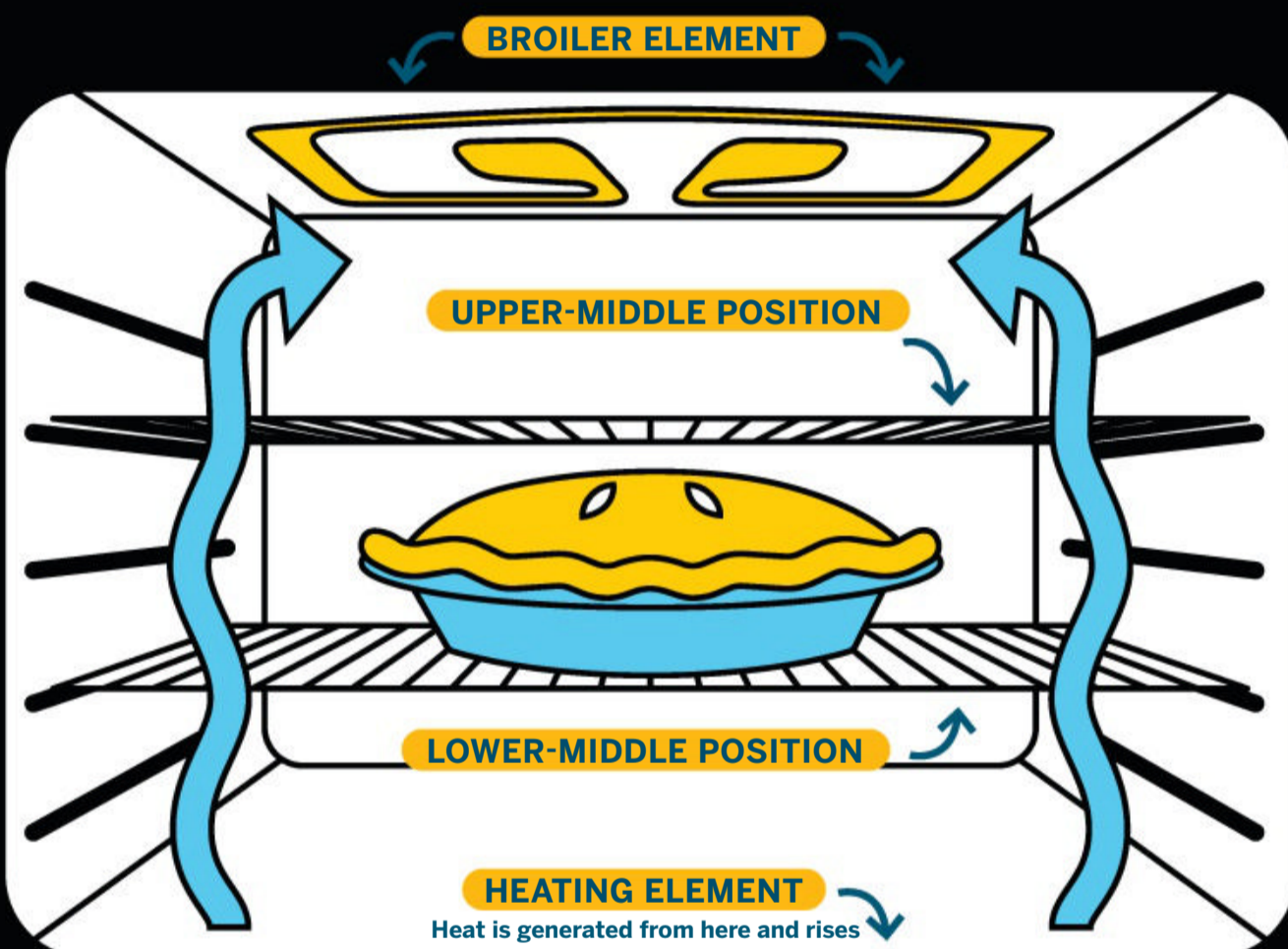


Illustration: Sophie Greenspan

QUESTION:

What is the self-cleaning function?

ANSWER:

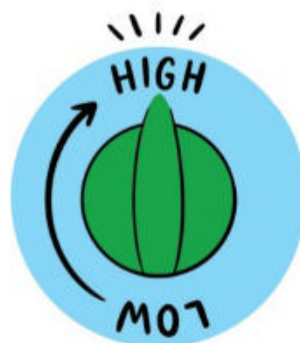
Most ovens have a self-cleaning function. When you activate it, the oven door locks and the heating element heats to its highest temperature, which is often up to 1,000 degrees. The supercharged heat incinerates caked-on matter, making it easy to remove with a damp cloth when the cycle is done and the oven has cooled.

TIP: Unless your oven's instructions specify otherwise, remove the oven racks before activating self-cleaning—they can warp in the intense heat.

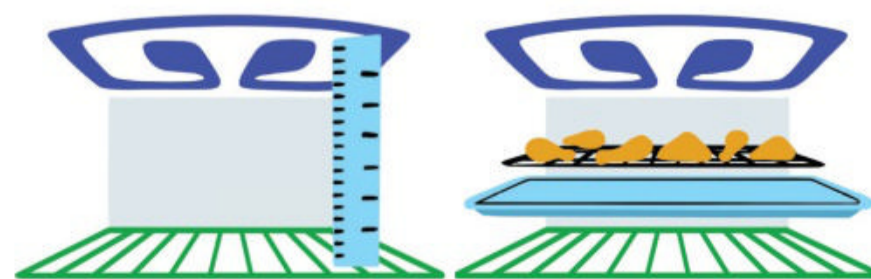
BROILING 101

In baking or roasting, indirect hot air circulating through the oven is what does the cooking. But in broiling, the cooking is accomplished through high, direct heat. And because the broiler's heat is generally more intense than that of the oven, it cooks foods faster, particularly on the exterior. Broiling is more akin to grilling than it is to oven roasting.

THREE TIPS FOR BROILING SUCCESS



1. When in doubt, go for "high." In our recipes, we don't specify broiler settings, but since the point of broiling is usually to expose food to intense heat, turn it up!



2. Measure the distance between the heating element and the oven rack; our broiling recipes specify this measurement rather than a rack position such as "middle" or "top."

3. When broiling on a rimmed baking sheet, set a wire rack inside it to elevate your food and prevent the bottom from steaming.

Four-Chile Chili

The complex beauty of the best chilis, such as this one, comes from the dried chiles—not the meat.

by Amanda Luchtel

ON A HOT August day in 2015, Mama T (real name: Trisha Gonçalves), a vegan chef, activist, educator, and reggae singer of Kumeyaay Indian heritage, entered her chili into the Chile Pepper Festival chili cook-off in Honolulu. Unbeknownst to the 600 attendees, the chili was vegan. As the votes were being tallied, she revealed her secret to the astonished crowd, who burst into laughter when it was announced that she won first place.

Imagine entering a bowl of plant-based chili that checks all the boxes that the cook-off judges are trained to look for in a traditional chili. An award-winning chili must have an appealing color and look, along with a captivating aroma—and that's all before the judges take a bite. Then, the chili itself must be the perfect consistency (not too thick, nor too thin), the meat (or is it . . . ?) must be perfectly cooked and present in the right proportions, and the chile flavor should be distinct and complex without short-circuiting anyone's mouth from the heat.

Inspired by Mama T, I created what I consider to be a competition-worthy vegetarian chili. To make it, start with the flavorful base: Sauté an onion and a fresh poblano pepper in plenty of olive oil until they're lightly browned. (The oil's fat is important to unlocking the flavors of the chiles and seasonings, whose flavor compounds are fat-soluble.) Then add tomato paste and plenty of minced garlic, along with dried oregano and a heap of warm, earthy ground cumin. Let it all sizzle until the tomato paste begins to darken and the sugars caramelize, deepening the flavor. Many recipes

call for store-bought chili powder, but using whole dried ancho and guajillo chiles—which you toast and reconstitute in water to soften and then blitz in a blender with tomatoes and canned chipotle chile—creates a significantly more complex chili.

A key to flavorful vegetarian chili is to use ingredients that contribute umami, or savory flavor, to account for the lack of meat. Soy sauce, dried porcini mushrooms, and tomato paste all work to that end here. And on top of the umami, the soy sauce and tomato paste combine to provide a concentrated salty-sweet tang while the reconstituted mushrooms add depth and a slightly smoky element, too.

Since this dish contains no meat, the heft and protein comes from the combination of beans and barley (Mama T's version used eggplant puree and meat alternatives). While I understand that chili purists (looking at you, Texas) may be furrowing their brows, the medley of canned beans—I use black, pinto, and kidney—creates an appealing mosaic of colors, flavors, and textures. All it requires is a few twists of the wrist to open the cans (and for the record, beans are a common ingredient in certain categories of competition chilis). Barley has a mild taste and contributes a pleasant chewy bite.

Like many chilis, this one is delicious (perhaps even more so) the next day. It makes a tasty topper to a hot dog or a Frito pie and is also great stirred into queso. The familiar flavors in this recipe—layers of smokiness, deep savoriness, chiles, tomatoes—make it an easy transition to a delicious, filling, plant-based main course.

This robust and flavorful vegetarian chili can compete with the best meaty chilis out there.

Chili Cook-Offs: The Granddaddy of Competition Cooking

Chili cook-offs are an American tradition that have spread across the globe. In addition to being social events, these cook-offs typically raise funds for local charities. Mike McCloud, president/CEO at World Food Championships, describes folks who attend chili cook-offs as “food sports athletes” that are “bigger than life, so colorful and so friendly.”

His independent marketing firm, MMA Creative, is the agency of record for the International Chili Society (ICS) and the World Food Championships. (They've also worked with the Kansas City Barbeque Society and the American Pie Council.) The passion and dedication

of competition chili cooks are remarkable; these chiliheads spend months every year honing their skills for a chance at the annual ICS World Championship Chili Cook-Off, which awards prize money annually. Apart from individual awards, the ICS has raised more than \$100,000,000 in donations for charities including Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Forgotten Soldiers, the Shriners, and Habitat for Humanity over the course of 55 seasons.

McCloud speaks proudly about “the granddaddy” of cooking competitions and accredits the birth of chili cook-offs to race car legend Carroll Shelby. Shelby and cofounder C.V. Wood started the ICS after having a friendly cook-off with their friends. “Individuals like Carroll Shelby brought some form and function to the table so that we could have an appropriate competition.”





● VEGETARIAN CHILI

Serves 6 Total Time: 1¾ hours

One ounce of ancho chiles is approximately two or three chiles; ½ ounce of guajillo chiles is about three or four chiles. Use more or fewer chipotle chiles depending on your desired level of spiciness. We like using a mix of pinto, black, and red kidney beans here, but you can use all of one type or any combination of the three. Do not substitute hulled, hull-less, quick-cooking, or presteamed barley in this recipe (read the ingredient list on the package to determine this). Serve the chili with any of the traditional garnishes: lime wedges, sour cream, diced avocado, chopped red onion, and shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese.

- 1 ounce dried ancho chiles, stemmed, seeded, and torn into 1-inch pieces
- ½ ounce dried guajillo chiles, stemmed, seeded, and torn into 1-inch pieces
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
- 1–3 canned chipotle chiles in adobo sauce
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2¼ teaspoons table salt, divided
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 poblano chile, stemmed, seeded, and chopped
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1 (15-ounce) can pinto beans, rinsed
- 1 (15-ounce) can black beans, rinsed
- 1 (15-ounce) can red kidney beans, rinsed
- ¾ cup pearl barley
- ½ ounce dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed and chopped fine
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

1. Place anchos and guajillos in Dutch oven and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until fragrant and darkened slightly but not smoking, 3 to 5 minutes. Immediately transfer anchos and guajillos to bowl and cover with hot water. Let sit until chiles are soft and pliable, about 5 minutes.
2. Drain anchos and guajillos and combine with tomatoes and their juice, 1 cup water, chipotle(s), soy sauce, and 1½ teaspoons salt in blender. Process until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes; set aside.
3. Heat oil in now-empty Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add onion, poblano, and remaining ¾ teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onion

begins to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, garlic, cumin, and oregano and cook until tomato paste darkens, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Stir in pinto, black, and kidney beans; barley; mushrooms; chile puree; and 2½ cups water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until barley is tender, 35 to 45 minutes. Let sit off heat for 10 minutes (chili will continue to thicken as it sits). Season with salt to taste. Stir in cilantro and serve.

Chiles 101

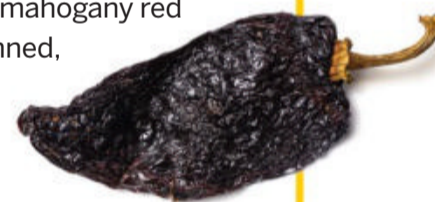
POBLANO

Poblano chiles vary in color from very dark green (most common in American markets) to dark red or brown when ripe. Spicier than bell peppers but not as spicy as jalapeño or serrano chiles, they add subtle heat and grassy pepper notes to recipes.



ANCHO

Ancho chiles are almost-ripe poblanos that are dried. These chiles are dark, mahogany red and wrinkly skinned, and they have a deep, sweet, raisiny flavor with elements of coffee and chocolate.



GUAJILLO

Guajillos are dried mirasol chiles. They are a little sweet, with a mild to medium heat. These chiles have a fruity, tangy, smoky flavor profile with notes of berries and green tea.



CANNED CHIPOTLE IN ADOBO

Chipotles are ripe jalapeño peppers that are smoke-dried. While chipotles are available dried, they are also sold rehydrated and packed in cans with thick, tangy adobo sauce. Both the chiles and the liquid are loaded with spicy, smoky, complex flavors.





Incorporating small bits of cheddar into the dough ensures cheesy pockets throughout the scones.

Jalapeño-Cheddar Scones

Why limit scones to breakfast? When they include savory flavors, scones pair well with dinner, too!

by Amanda Luchtel

● JALAPEÑO-CHEDDAR SCONES

Makes 12 scones

Total Time: 30 minutes,
plus 30 minutes chilling

Work the dough as little as possible,
just until it comes together.

SCONES

- 3 cups (15 ounces) all-purpose flour
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces and chilled, divided
- ¼ cup (1¾ ounces) sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1¼ teaspoons table salt
- 6 ounces extra-sharp cheddar cheese, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ½ cup jarred sliced jalapeños, drained and chopped
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 large egg plus 1 large yolk

HONEY BUTTER

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1½ tablespoons honey

1. **FOR THE SCONES:** Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine flour, 6 tablespoons butter, sugar, baking powder, and salt in food processor and process until butter is fully incorporated, about 15 seconds. Add cheddar and remaining 6 tablespoons butter and pulse until cheddar and butter are reduced to pea-size pieces, 10 to 12 pulses. Transfer mixture to large bowl. Stir in jalapeños until coated with flour mixture.
2. Beat milk and egg and yolk together

in separate bowl. Make well in center of flour mixture and pour in milk mixture. Gently stir mixture with rubber spatula, scraping from edges of bowl and folding inward, until very shaggy dough forms and some bits of dry flour remain. Do not overmix.

3. Turn out dough onto well-floured counter and knead briefly until dough just comes together, about 3 turns. Using your floured hands and bench scraper, shape dough into 15 by 3-inch rectangle with long side parallel to edge of counter, dusting with extra flour if it begins to stick.

4. Using knife or bench scraper, cut dough crosswise into 6 equal rectangles. Cut each rectangle diagonally into 2 triangles (you should have 12 scones total). Transfer scones to prepared sheet, spacing about 1 inch apart. Cover sheet with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes or up to 24 hours. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees.

5. **FOR THE HONEY BUTTER:** Meanwhile, combine melted butter and honey in small bowl.

6. Uncover scones and bake until lightly golden on top, 15 to 17 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through baking. Remove scones from oven and brush tops with honey butter. Return scones to oven and continue to bake until golden brown on top, 3 to 5 minutes longer. Transfer scones to wire rack and let cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.

MANY BAKERS AND nonbakers alike think of scones as being sweet, but savory scones have become popular around the United States. Here in the test kitchen, the recipe we developed for Mixed Berry Scones (June/July 2019) makes a great starting point for scones where sweetness isn't the focus. Simply substituting spicy pickled jalapeños and a hefty amount of extra-sharp cheddar cheese for the berries plants these scones solidly in savory territory. The little bit of sugar in the dough stays, as it balances some of the saltiness from the cheese and helps with browning and ensuring a crisp exterior.

To make the scones, start by processing 3 cups of flour and a little baking powder and salt with just half the butter (6 tablespoons) in a food processor so that the butter breaks down and coats the flour. This prevents the flour from absorbing too much liquid later. Then add the remaining butter and some ½-inch pieces of extra-sharp cheddar cheese and pulse until pea-size pieces

form. Transfer the flour mixture to a bowl and toss in chopped jalapeños. Then beat 1 cup of milk, an egg, and a yolk together and gently stir the milk mixture into the flour mixture. Knead the dough just a few times to minimize the formation of gluten, which would make the scones tough. Liberally coat the counter with flour. With minimal handling, dust the dough with flour, shape it into a rectangle, and then cut it into triangles. Transfer the scones to a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet, chill them for at least 30 minutes, and then put them in a 425-degree oven. After they're partially baked, slather the scones with honey butter and continue baking them until they're golden brown.

The sweet-spicy mix of jalapeños, cheddar, and honey makes these scones great as a hearty snack or as an accompaniment to chilis or soups. They also make an outstanding breakfast sandwich with bacon, eggs, and extra cheese!

The History of Scones and Biscuits

Centuries ago, Scottish cooks made yeasted oatmeal or barley "cakes" that were cooked on griddles and cut into wedges; these cakes are the likely ancestors of what we call scones. Wheat flour was a later addition throughout the United Kingdom, as were, eventually, chemical leaveners that made the yeast unnecessary.

THE AMERICAN TABLE

As scones traveled to the United States, they were adapted to incorporate available ingredients wherever they were made. In the American South, scones evolved into biscuits made with lard, buttermilk, and soft wheat flour. The softer and fluffier versions of both scones and biscuits that we know today are a product of the leaveners as well as the introduction of butter. Although many would argue that the sugar-laden, fruit-filled version of America's scones popularized in coffee shops in the '90s and modern biscuit recipes that include sugar aren't authentic scones or biscuits, the technique is what sets them apart: To achieve tender dough that isn't tough, be sure to mix lightly and gently to minimize the formation of gluten.



Just a tablespoon of white miso brings incredible depth and complexity to the salty-sweet almond topping.

Pear Crisp . . . with a Twist

Literally easier than pie, and better-tasting, too.

by Matthew Fairman

FRUIT CRUMBLES BECAME popular in Britain when ingredients such as flour, butter, and sugar were being strictly rationed during the World Wars. I imagine they caught on and still persist for two reasons: They're absolutely scrumptious, and compared with other desserts such as pies or cakes, they're very easy to prepare. This simple, fuss-free recipe has roots in those first recipes but also boasts some upgrades that make it uniquely and surprisingly satisfying.

For starters, the warm filling of juicy pears and sweet-tart cherries is lavishly draped in a gooey caramel-like blanket

of cream, brown sugar, and butter. But that's not even the half of it. Top that off with a luxurious crust of rich, salty-sweet miso-almond crumble, and this pear crisp becomes something really irresistible.

Bosc pears that are just shy of ripe work best here because their firm, dense flesh retains its shape after baking. Dried cherries, lemon zest and juice, almond extract, and chopped sliced almonds round out, complement, and amplify the sweet floral flavor of the pears. Cooking the filling briefly on the stovetop to coax out and thicken the fruit juices before baking makes this

recipe failproof, ensuring that the filling will never turn out soupy.

As for the crumble, I'd understand if you'd never considered including miso in this classic dessert. But I strongly recommend trying it out. The Japanese paste, which is made from fermented soybeans, is a powerful, versatile ingredient with countless uses, from soups, stews, and marinades to, yes, even sweets. Adding a small amount of miso to the crumble topping in this pear crisp is akin to adding salt to caramel or sprinkling flaky sea salt on top of brownies. It doesn't intrude or announce itself but rather animates all the other ingredients in the dish and brings their flavors into focus on the palate. When you take the first bite, you won't taste miso, but it's the reason that the pears taste more like pears and the lemon, almonds, and cherries are all themselves distinct. You won't be able to resist taking another bite.

● PEAR CRISP WITH MISO AND ALMONDS

Serves 6 Total Time: 1¼ hours

Serve with vanilla ice cream. Be sure to use white (shiro) miso—which is relatively mellow and sweet—in this recipe. If you can't find it, you can substitute ½ teaspoon of table salt. Dried cranberries can be substituted for the cherries.

TOPPING

- ¾ cup (3¾ ounces) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup panko bread crumbs
- ⅓ cup sliced almonds, toasted and chopped coarse
- ¼ cup packed (1¾ ounces) light brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon white miso
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract

FILLING

- 2 pounds slightly underripe Bosc pears, peeled, quartered lengthwise, cored, and sliced crosswise ½ inch thick
- ¾ cup packed (5¼ ounces) light brown sugar
- ⅓ cup dried cherries
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- ¼ teaspoon table salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1. FOR THE TOPPING: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. Whisk flour, panko, almonds, sugar, lemon zest, and

cinnamon together in bowl. Whisk melted butter, miso, and almond extract in second bowl until miso is dissolved. Stir butter mixture into flour mixture until no dry spots of flour remain and mixture forms clumps. Refrigerate until ready to use (topping can be covered and refrigerated for up to 24 hours).

2. FOR THE FILLING: Toss pears, sugar, cherries, cream, cornstarch, lemon juice, and salt in large bowl until thoroughly combined. Melt butter in 10-inch oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat. Add pear mixture and cook, stirring frequently, until pears have released enough liquid to be mostly submerged and juices have thickened and turned glossy, 6 to 8 minutes. Off heat, stir to ensure cherries are evenly distributed throughout mixture.

3. Squeeze topping into large clumps with your hands. Crumble topping into pea-size pieces over filling. Bake until topping is browned and filling is bubbling around sides of skillet, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes. Serve.

TO MAKE AHEAD

At end of step 2, transfer filling to shallow 1½- to 2-quart baking dish, cover, and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. When ready to bake, microwave filling until heated through, about 5 minutes, stirring halfway through microwaving. Continue with step 3.

White Miso

White (shiro) miso is a salty, lightly sweet fermented soybean paste. We use it in the test kitchen to add complex, savory flavor to a wide variety of dishes.

Our favorite, Hikari Organic White Miso, is perfectly balanced and isn't overwhelmingly salty.



Bosc Pears

We've found that Bosc pears stay sweet and complex once cooked, while other varieties end up bland. Bosc pears develop sweetness earlier in the ripening process, so firm, slightly underripe ones, like the ones we call for here, already have plenty of flavor. They're also firmer, so they don't become mushy, as other varieties would.



LOADED TRIPLE
CHOCOLATE CHUNK
COOKIES

LOADED
S'MORES
COOKIES



LOADED WHITE
CHOCOLATE-MACADAMIA
COOKIES

LOADED
COOKIES-AND-CREAM
COOKIES

LOADED
PEANUT
BUTTER-
BACON
COOKIES

Five Loaded Cookies

Triple chocolate chunk is only the start . . . **by Mark Huxsoll**

COOKIES BRING BACK fond sensory memories from my childhood. I had a major sweet tooth (one cookie was never enough), but for me there was something deeper. I loved feeling the cookie dough in my hands and—if I'm being honest—sneaking a bite of it now and then. And the smell of freshly baked cookies filling a warm, cozy home ranks pretty high on my list of favorite aromas—candlemakers have even found a way to monetize it.

Fast-forward to today, and I still find joy in a spread of cookies, especially in the winter, when holidays and family gatherings bring people together. One cookie is still never enough, and since variety is the spice of life, I wanted a cookie recipe that reflected my inner desire for cookie-flavor freedom. The two constants: a great cookie base and a heavy hand with the add-ins.

I started with a base—a mixture of flour, melted butter, brown and white sugars, eggs, vanilla, baking soda, and salt—that would taste great both on its own and, for my first cookie, with three types of chocolate mixed in. From there the world was my proverbial oyster (though I doubt oysters would be good in a cookie). I found tasty ways to incorporate nuts, candy, bacon, and even Oreo cookies (yes, I put cookies inside cookies). The resulting cookies are big and hearty, with just the right amount of chew—and they're loaded with add-ins. They don't, however, come with warm memories. We've given you the baking template, but the memories are yours to create.

● LOADED TRIPLE CHOCOLATE CHUNK COOKIES

Makes 16 cookies Total Time: 1 hour
Underbaking the cookies ensures that they remain chewy once cool.

- 2¼ cups (11¼ ounces) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon table salt
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup packed (7 ounces) light brown sugar
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- ½ cup (3½ ounces) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 ounces white chocolate, chopped
- 4 ounces milk chocolate, chopped
- 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 425 degrees. Line 2 rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper. Combine flour, salt, and baking soda in bowl.
2. Using stand mixer fitted with paddle, beat brown sugar, melted butter, and granulated sugar on medium speed until well combined, about 1 minute, scraping down bowl as needed. Add eggs and vanilla and beat until fully incorporated, about 30 seconds.
3. Reduce speed to low and slowly add flour mixture. Mix until mostly incorporated but some streaks of flour remain, about 30 seconds. Add white chocolate, milk chocolate, and bittersweet chocolate and mix until evenly distributed throughout dough, about 30 seconds.
4. Divide dough into sixteen 2½-ounce portions, about ¼ cup each. Divide any

remaining dough evenly among dough portions. Roll dough portions between your wet hands to make dough balls.

5. Evenly space dough balls on prepared sheets, 8 balls per sheet. Using your hand, flatten dough balls to ¾-inch thickness.

6. Bake cookies, 1 sheet at a time, until centers of cookies are puffed and still very blond, 8 to 10 minutes. (Cookies will seem underdone but will continue to bake as they cool.) Let cookies cool on sheet for 5 minutes. Using spatula, transfer cookies to wire rack and let cool for 10 minutes. Serve warm.

● LOADED COOKIES-AND-CREAM COOKIES

Substitute 15 chopped Oreo cookies (1½ cups) for milk chocolate and bittersweet chocolate.

● LOADED PEANUT BUTTER-BACON COOKIES

Substitute 1½ cups Reese's Pieces and ¾ cup cooked chopped bacon for white chocolate, milk chocolate, and bittersweet chocolate.

● LOADED S'MORES COOKIES

Substitute ¾ cup mini marshmallows and ¾ cup lightly crushed graham crackers for white chocolate and milk chocolate.

● LOADED WHITE CHOCOLATE-MACADAMIA COOKIES

Increase white chocolate to 6 ounces. Substitute 1¼ cups chopped salted dry-roasted macadamia nuts for milk chocolate and bittersweet chocolate.

Load 'em Up

With the right cookie dough, the possibilities for add-ins are endless. Here are some of our favorite combinations.



White, milk, and bittersweet chocolates



Oreo cookies and white chocolate



Reese's Pieces and bacon



Mini marshmallows, graham crackers, and bittersweet chocolate



White chocolate and macadamia nuts

Chocolate Babka

This rich, tender, yeasted bread with swirls of chocolate is an impressive holiday treat.

by Mark Huxsoll



● CHOCOLATE BABKA

Serves 8 Total Time: 3 hours, plus 6 hours rising, chilling, and cooling

The test kitchen's preferred loaf pan, the USA Pan Loaf Pan, 1 lb Volume, measures 8½ by 4½ inches; if you use a 9 by 5-inch pan, start checking for doneness 15 minutes early. If the chocolate filling becomes too stiff to spread in step 6, use a rubber spatula to work it back to a softer texture. We developed this recipe using Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet Chocolate Premium Baking Bar. Do not over-flour the counter when rolling out the dough in step 5, or it may slide when rolling and shaping. It will feel like a lot of syrup when brushing the loaf in step 10, but use all of it. As hard as it is to do, let the babka cool for the full 3 hours before slicing it.

DOUGH

- 2¼ cups (12⅓ ounces) bread flour**
- 1½ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast**
- ½ cup whole milk**
- 2 large eggs**
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest (optional)**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ¼ cup (1¾ ounces) granulated sugar**
- ½ teaspoon table salt**
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 6 pieces and softened, plus 1 tablespoon for greasing pan**

FILLING

- 8 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped fine**
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- ½ cup (2 ounces) confectioners' sugar, sifted**
- ½ cup (1½ ounces) unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted**
- ½ teaspoon table salt**

SYRUP

- ½ cup (3½ ounces) granulated sugar**
- ¼ cup water**

- 1. FOR THE DOUGH:** Whisk flour and yeast together in bowl of stand mixer. Add milk; eggs; orange zest, if using; and vanilla. Fit mixer with dough hook and mix on medium-low speed until cohesive dough comes together and no dry flour remains, about 2 minutes. Turn off mixer, cover bowl with dish towel or plastic wrap, and let dough stand for 15 minutes.
- 2.** Add sugar and salt to dough and knead on medium speed until incorporated, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high and, with mixer running, add 6 tablespoons butter 1 piece at a time, allowing each piece to incorporate before adding next, about 3 minutes total, scraping down bowl and dough hook as needed. Continue to knead on medium-high speed until dough begins to pull away from sides of bowl, 7 to 10 minutes longer.
- 3.** Transfer dough to greased large bowl. Cover tightly with plastic and let rise at room temperature until slightly puffy, about 1 hour. Refrigerate until firm, at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.
- 4. FOR THE FILLING:** Just before removing dough from refrigerator,

place chocolate in medium bowl. Melt butter in small saucepan over medium heat. Immediately pour melted butter over chocolate and stir to combine. Microwave at 50 percent power, stirring often, until chocolate is fully melted and smooth, about 30 seconds. Stir in sugar, cocoa, and salt until combined; set aside.

5. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Grease 8½ by 4½-inch loaf pan with 1 tablespoon butter. Remove dough from refrigerator and turn out onto lightly floured counter. Using floured rolling pin, roll dough into 18 by 12-inch rectangle, with short side parallel to edge of counter.

6. Using offset spatula, spread chocolate mixture evenly over dough, leaving ½-inch border along top edge. Beginning with edge nearest you, tightly roll dough away from you into even 12-inch log, pushing in ends to create even thickness. Pinch seam to seal.

7. Using greased serrated knife and slicing in only 1 direction, gently cut log in half lengthwise and lay halves next to each other cut sides up. Forming tight twist, cross left log over right log. Continue twisting, 5 times total, keeping cut sides facing up as much as possible. Pinch ends together and carefully transfer to prepared loaf pan cut sides up. Tap loaf pan on counter to pack dough into pan.

8. Set wire rack in rimmed baking sheet and center loaf pan on wire rack. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and cover babka with aluminum foil. Return to oven and continue to bake until center registers 200 to 205 degrees, 50 minutes to 1 hour.

9. FOR THE SYRUP: Meanwhile, combine sugar and water in small saucepan and heat over medium heat until sugar dissolves. Set aside off heat.

10. Remove babka from oven. Leaving babka in loaf pan, brush syrup evenly over entire surface of hot babka (use all of it). Let cool in loaf pan on wire rack for 1 hour. Carefully remove babka from pan and let cool completely on wire rack, about 2 hours. Slice 1 inch thick and serve.



BABKA HAS COME A LONG WAY

According to culinary historian Gil Marks in the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Food* (2010), babka originated in Poland and Ukraine as a tall yeasted cake, and its name, from the Slavic “babcia” (related to the Yiddish “bubbe”), translates as “grandma’s cake.” This may be because the original

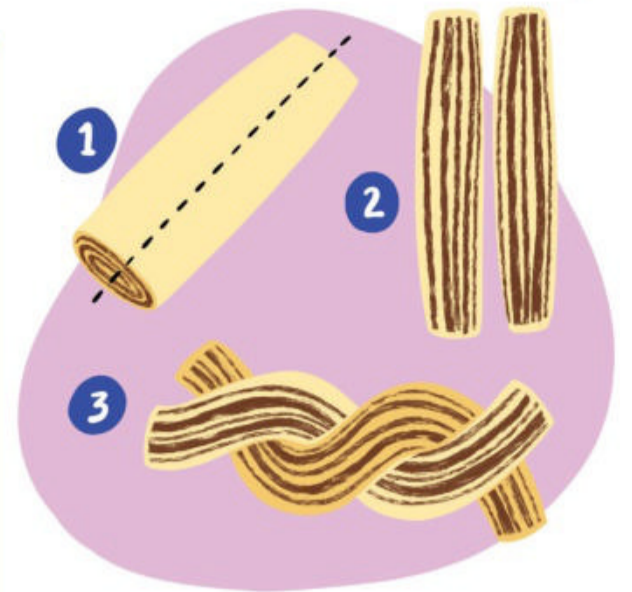
cakes had tall fluted sides that resembled a skirt (baking babka in a loaf pan evolved later) or because grandmas typically baked these treats, wrote Marks.

Marks explained that Jewish versions of babka evolved in Poland in the early 19th century from challah “when housewives prepared extra dough, spread it with a little jam or cinnamon . . . rolled it up, and baked it alongside

the bread.” These early babkas were made with oil to keep them dairy-free and were a bit firmer and drier than today’s butter-enriched loaves. In the late 1950s, Jewish babka began finding its way into Jewish bakeries and then into non-Jewish bakeries in New York City. Many Americans now associate the word “babka” with the Jewish version, explained Marks.

As it has gained popularity, babka has taken on all manner of embellishments such as chocolate, Nutella, and even savory fillings and streusel toppings. Food writer Jake Cohen, whose babka recipe offers Reuben and pumpkin spice fillings, noted in his cookbook, *Jew-ish: A Cookbook: Reinvented Recipes from a Modern Mensch* (2021), “Long gone are the days of *Seinfeld*, when your only choices were chocolate or cinnamon.”

—MEGAN GINSBERG



Do the Twist

For a babka that looks as good as it tastes, we focused on creating lots of rich, chocolatey swirls.

After spreading chocolate on the dough and rolling it into a log, cut the dough in half lengthwise to expose all the layers. Then twist the halves together five times, crossing the left half over the right and making sure to keep the cut sides facing up.

HOW TO MAKE BABKA



1. Mix dough and let stand

Mix flour; yeast; milk; eggs; orange zest, if using; and vanilla until dough comes together. Cover dough and let stand for 15 minutes.

Why? Mixing the dough without the salt and sugar and then letting it rest is a technique called autolyse, which leads to less kneading time and improved crumb structure.



2. Finish dough

Add granulated sugar and salt, then, with mixer running, add butter, 1 piece at a time, and knead until dough pulls away from sides of bowl.

Why? Adding the softened butter gradually ensures even distribution.



3. Let dough rise

Transfer dough to greased bowl, cover with plastic, and let rise for 1 hour. Then refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 24 hours.

Why? Chilling the dough makes it easier to work with and builds deeper flavor through cold fermentation, since it slows down the yeast activity.



4. Make filling

Pour melted butter over chocolate in bowl and microwave until chocolate is melted. Stir in confectioners’ sugar, cocoa, and salt.

Why? Microwaving the melted butter and chocolate together before introducing the other ingredients ensures that the chocolate is fully melted and smooth.



5. Roll dough and fill

Turn out dough onto counter and, using rolling pin, roll out to 18 by 12-inch rectangle with short side parallel to counter’s edge. Spread filling evenly over dough.

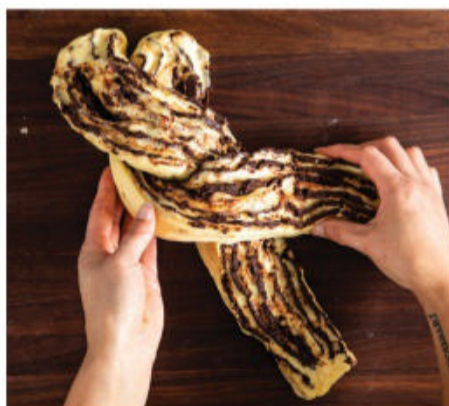
Why? Rolling the dough out evenly and spreading the filling across it ensures the perfect amount of chocolate in every bite.



6. Roll up, seal, and cut log

Roll dough away from you into tight log and pinch seam to seal. Transfer to cutting board and use greased serrated knife to cut log in half lengthwise. Lay halves next to each other cut sides up.

Why? Pinching the seam keeps the log from unraveling, and using a greased serrated knife minimizes sticking.



7. Twist dough

Cross left half over right half to form twist. Continue twisting 4 more times, ensuring that cut sides are facing up. Pinch ends and transfer to prepared pan cut sides up.

Why? Keeping the cut sides up while tightly twisting the dough makes a visually stunning finished babka.



8. Bake

Bake on wire rack set in rimmed baking sheet for 30 minutes. Cover with foil and continue to bake until center registers 200 to 205 degrees.

Why? Elevating the pan on a rack allows for air circulation and encourages more even baking. Covering the loaf with foil prevents overbrowning.



9. Glaze

Make sugar syrup and let cool slightly. Remove babka from oven and brush syrup over hot babka.

Why? Brushing the babka generously with syrup adds sweetness and shine. The syrup also helps lock in moisture.



10. Let cool and serve

Let babka cool in pan on wire rack for 1 hour, then remove from pan and let cool completely. Slice 1 inch thick and serve.

Why? Cooling the babka in the pan first keeps it from collapsing. Finishing cooling on a rack lets air circulate around it so that the crust doesn’t steam.

Palace Diner Lemon-Buttermilk Flapjacks

These ultrafluffy pancakes are a lemony twist on a diner classic. *by Afton Cyrus*

— AMERICA'S —
TEST KITCHEN

KIDS

Did you know that Cook's Country's parent company, America's Test Kitchen, has a brand devoted to young chefs? You can learn more by visiting AmericasTestKitchen.com/kids. In the meantime, we proudly present this recipe from our colleagues at ATK Kids (written in their style, with some extra kid-specific information). This recipe was adapted for kids ages 5 and up from the Palace Diner's original recipe. Make sure to gather your equipment and measure your ingredients before you start.

● PALACE DINER

LEMON-BUTTERMILK FLAPJACKS

Serves 4 Total Time: 50 minutes

To use a stovetop griddle, place it over two burners, brush it with oil, and heat it over low heat for 5 minutes. Increase the heat to medium and let it heat for 1 minute before cooking the flapjacks.

1 1/3 cups (6 2/3 ounces) all-purpose flour

1/4 cup (1 3/4 ounces) sugar

3/4 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon table salt

1 1/3 cups (10 2/3 ounces) buttermilk

1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest plus

4 teaspoons juice

3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

and cooled, plus extra butter for

servings

1/2 teaspoon vegetable oil

Maple syrup

1. In large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt.
2. In medium bowl, whisk buttermilk, egg and egg yolk, and lemon zest and juice until combined. Add melted butter

and whisk until well combined.

3. Add buttermilk mixture to flour mixture. Use rubber spatula to stir gently until just combined (batter should remain lumpy—do not overmix). Let batter sit for 10 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, add oil to large electric griddle or 12-inch nonstick skillet. Use paper towel to spread oil into thin, even coating over surface of griddle or skillet. Discard paper towel. Heat griddle to 350 degrees, or heat skillet over medium heat for 2 minutes.

5. When batter is ready, use 1/3-cup dry measuring cup to scoop 2/3 cup batter onto griddle. Use rubber spatula to scrape batter from cup and spread into 7-inch circle. Repeat 1 more time, leaving space between mounds of batter. If using skillet, cook only 1 flapjack at a time.

6. Cook until edges are set and first side is deep golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Use spatula to flip flapjacks and cook until second side is golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes.

7. Use spatula to transfer flapjacks to plates. Repeat portioning and cooking with remaining batter. Turn off heat. Serve with extra butter and maple syrup.



Lemon juice and zest in the batter bring tang and brightness to these delicious pancakes.

Equipment

1. 2 bowls (1 large, 1 medium)
2. Whisk
3. Rubber spatula
4. Large electric griddle or 12-inch nonstick skillet
5. Paper towel
6. 1/3-cup dry measuring cup
7. Ruler
8. Spatula
9. Serving plates



Flapjacks Reign at the Palace Diner

The Palace Diner first went into service in the town of Biddeford, Maine, in 1927 and has been serving breakfast and lunch ever since. This tiny restaurant (it has just 15 seats!) is an example of a “dining car” diner. Dining cars were small restaurants built to look like train cars. They became hugely popular in the 1920s and 1930s, but you can still find some of these train-like restaurants all over the United States today.

When co-owners Chad Conley and Greg Mitchell took over the Palace Diner in 2014, the diner became known for its breakfast menu, especially the flapjacks. “There are a few things that make the recipe unique,” Chef Conley told us. “One is the addition of lemon zest for flavor and aroma. Another is the addition of lemon juice, which adds to that flavor and aroma, but more importantly, the acidity reacts with the baking soda to create extra lift. That helps to make them superfluffy.”

Whether they're serving fluffy flapjacks, gooey tuna melts, or creamy milkshakes, diners are a piece of American culinary history. For Chef Conley, a diner is a “fundamentally American restaurant serving fundamentally American cuisine . . . heartwarming, cozy comfort food. And part of what's enjoyable about diner food is that everyone enters the door knowing that's what they're getting.”





Shrimp with Tomatoes, Fennel, and Chickpeas

Who says comfort food has to be heavy?

by **Lawman Johnson**

COMFORT FOOD BRINGS to mind rich, filling dishes such as casseroles and cheesy pastas. But there's no reason that a satisfying, soothing dinner can't lean toward the sprightlier, fresher side. Briny shrimp, sweet-tart tomatoes, fragrant fennel, and earthy chickpeas make for a lighter but still satisfying take.

Quick-cooking shrimp take center stage here. To help prevent overcooking them, salt the raw shrimp and let them sit for a few minutes; like a quick brine, this seasons the shrimp and helps them retain moisture when cooked. While the shrimp rest, start a staggered cooking process to ensure that all the ingredients are perfectly done.

Begin with the fennel, which provides a gentle sweet, licorice-y backbone; slice two bulbs $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, and start cooking them in a covered skillet so that they release their liquid

and begin to soften. When the fennel is lightly browned, stir in red pepper flakes for kick, paprika, and a generous amount of minced garlic.

Next, stir in a can of whole peeled tomatoes (that you've chopped coarse) and their juice; the bite-size pieces of tomato are small enough that you won't need a knife at the table, and using canned tomatoes ensures good quality all year round. (Why not use diced tomatoes? We prefer the fresher flavor and more tender texture of canned whole tomatoes.) Stir in a little chicken broth for savory depth, and then add a can of drained and rinsed chickpeas for heft; their nutty flavor is a nice counterpart to the sweet vegetables. Simmer this mixture for about 10 minutes so that the flavors concentrate as the excess moisture evaporates. Finally, drop the shrimp into the pan and cook, covered, for just 4 minutes (with a good stir halfway through for even cooking).

Stir in a few tablespoons of chopped fennel fronds and some parsley before serving for a pop of color and freshness, and you're done. Dinner is served!

● ONE-PAN SHRIMP WITH TOMATOES, FENNEL, AND CHICKPEAS

Serves 4 Total Time: 1 hour

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, do not season the shrimp with salt in step 1. If the fennel doesn't have fronds, increase the parsley amount to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped. Serve with crusty bread.

- 1 pound extra-large shrimp (21 to 25 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons table salt, divided
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 fennel bulbs, 2 tablespoons fronds chopped, stalks discarded, bulbs halved, cored, and sliced crosswise $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes, drained with juice reserved, chopped coarse
- 1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, rinsed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1. Sprinkle shrimp with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and pepper; set aside. Heat oil in 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add fennel bulbs and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and cook, covered, until lightly browned, 8 to 10 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking.
2. Stir in garlic, paprika, and pepper flakes and cook, uncovered, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes and their juice, chickpeas, broth, and remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and bring to simmer. Cook, uncovered, until reduced by half, 9 to 11 minutes.
3. Stir in shrimp and cook, covered, until shrimp are just cooked through, about 4 minutes, stirring halfway through cooking. Off heat, stir in parsley and fennel fronds. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

Fennel Breakdown



1. Remove stalks and fronds, trim thin slice from base of each bulb, and halve bulbs lengthwise.



2. Cut out and discard triangular core from each half.



3. Slice each half crosswise $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick.



A PRESSURE COOKER IS a tightly sealed pot that traps steam as the food inside it heats. The contained steam creates pressure, which causes the temperature inside the pot to grow hotter than it otherwise would on the stovetop. Put another way, water boils at 212 degrees, and it can't get any hotter than that unless it's under pressure. These hotter temperatures accelerate cooking. When you introduce additional functions—open-pot searing, slow cooking, rice cooking—to electric pressure cookers, they become multicookers. With a little know-how, the Instant Pot, our winning multicooker (see “Multitasker”), can get typically long-cooked recipes on the table faster and with fewer dishes.

Beef short ribs are ideal for the multicooker because they typically require searing followed by a long, slow braise of several hours. While these rich ribs are great braised in a classic red-wine sauce, cooking them in a bold, Southeast Asian-inspired coconut curry adds intrigue and interest. After a few weeks

of testing, we came up with a method for a fabulous dish that is ready after less than an hour of cooking (as opposed to 4 to 6 hours in the oven).

To start, trim the short ribs of any excess fat to reduce greasiness, and then pat them dry, salt them, and sear them right in the pressure cooker using the “sauté” function to begin rendering some of the fat and building flavor via caramelization. After removing the ribs from the pot, add garlic and ginger and let them sizzle and bloom. Stir in some flour to help thicken the braising liquid, and then add coconut milk, jarred red curry paste, sugar, and fish sauce and whisk until smooth—it couldn't be easier. Return the browned short ribs to the pot, latch on the lid, and let the machine do its thing; the meat will be tender in about 45 minutes. Then simply skim the fat off the top of the braising liquid before pouring it over the tender, succulent ribs.

Coconut-Red Curry Braised Short Ribs

Rich, meaty short ribs braised in a coconut curry in about an hour? We show you the way.

by Mark Huxsoll

● INSTANT POT COCONUT-RED CURRY BRAISED SHORT RIBS

Serves 4 to 6 Total Time: 1½ hours

We developed this recipe using Thai Kitchen brand red curry paste. Our favorite fish sauce is Red Boat 40°N Fish Sauce. Coconut milk can separate in its can during storage, so it's important to stir it before measuring to make sure that it is fully emulsified. Serve with rice.

- 2 pounds boneless beef short ribs, 1 to 1½ inches thick, trimmed
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups canned coconut milk
- 1 (4-ounce) jar red curry paste
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1½ tablespoons lime juice
- 4 scallions, sliced thin on bias

1. Pat ribs dry with paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Using highest sauté function, heat oil in Instant Pot for 3 to 5 minutes (or until just smoking). Add half of ribs. Cook until well browned all over, 8 to 10 minutes, then transfer ribs to plate. Repeat with remaining ribs.

2. Add ginger and garlic to now-empty

Instant Pot and cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Stir in flour and continue to cook 30 seconds longer. Whisk in coconut milk, curry paste, sugar, and fish sauce until smooth, scraping up any browned bits. Return ribs and accumulated juices to pot. Lock lid into place and close pressure-release valve. Select high pressure-cook function and cook for 45 minutes.

3. Turn off Instant Pot and let pressure release gradually for 15 minutes. Quick-release any remaining pressure. Carefully remove lid, allowing steam to escape away from you. Transfer ribs to shallow serving platter and tent with aluminum foil. Let sauce settle in pot for 5 minutes to allow fat to separate.

4. Using ladle or large spoon, skim fat off top of sauce. Stir lime juice into sauce, then pour over ribs. Sprinkle with scallions and serve.

Huge Flavor, Little Jar

Many Southeast Asian dishes are built around curry pastes of varying colors and styles. We developed this recipe with Thai Kitchen Red Curry Paste, which is common in American supermarkets. Depending on the brand, this powerhouse mixture typically contains red chiles, garlic, galangal (a cousin of ginger), lemongrass, and spices. Don't let the small jar fool you, as this paste packs an astonishing wallop of flavor.



Multitasker

Our top-rated multicooker, the **Instant Pot Pro 8Qt** (\$150), is safe and intuitive to use and sears and pressure-cooks with aplomb.



Easy Searing

It's easy to sear the ribs right in our winning multicooker. But you can also sear them in a skillet and add them to a multicooker.

Two chicken leg quarters stand in for the whole bird in this pared-down version of the classic.



Coq au Vin for Two

Building flavor in the skillet in batches eliminates extra steps, pans, and time.

by Lawman Johnson

JULIA CHILD HELPED introduce coq au vin, chicken stewed in red wine, to the American food consciousness in the early 1960s. While its ingredients are humble, the dish can require multiple steps and hours in the kitchen. Child's version, for example, entails cutting and simmering bacon lardons; butchering and browning the chicken; peeling and braising onions and sautéing mushrooms; simmering the chicken in a mixture of wine, stock, and aromatics; skimming off fat; and finally, making a butter-flour paste to thicken the sauce. To serve two, we needed a downsized, simplified version that still maintained its nuanced flavor profile—all in a fraction of the time.

For this adapted French classic, you'll want to use chicken leg quarters, which stay juicier than white meat and eliminate the need for at-home butchering. To create complex flavor (otherwise compromised by a shortened cooking time), it's important to develop savory browning on the chicken before introducing the vegetables. Place the chicken skin side down in a cold 10-inch nonstick skillet, and then turn up the heat to slowly render the chicken's fat and brown it evenly. A bonus: This method also reduces splatter, making for an easier cleanup. Next, crisp the bacon (cut-up slices will work just fine in place of lardons) in the rendered chicken fat, and set it aside to add back at the end.

To cook the vegetables and build the sauce, discard all but 2 tablespoons of the fat, and use the remaining fat to sauté some mushrooms and shallots—a less fussy substitute for the traditional pearl onions. Add some rich tomato paste, garlic, and thyme for depth, along with a little flour to achieve the right sauce consistency. Then stir in some chicken broth and red wine for a potent and flavorful base, and return the leg quarters to the skillet—skin side up to preserve the crisped, browned skin—to simmer to a perfect doneness in just 20 minutes. As they simmer, they'll absorb all those flavors that you built

right in the skillet and contribute their own notes to the sauce.

After letting the chicken rest briefly, sprinkle fresh parsley and the reserved crispy bacon on top. With this streamlined recipe, you can have coq au vin for two on the table in just 1 hour, without sacrificing flavor.

COQ AU VIN FOR TWO

Total Time: 1 hour

Quarter the shallots lengthwise if they're bigger than golf balls; keep the root ends intact to hold them together.

- 2 (10-ounce) chicken leg quarters, trimmed**
- 1 teaspoon table salt, divided**
- ½ teaspoon pepper, divided**
- 2 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces**
- Extra-virgin olive oil**
- 8 ounces cremini mushrooms, trimmed and quartered**
- 2 shallots, halved through root end**
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 2 teaspoons all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme**
- 1 cup chicken broth**
- ¼ cup dry red wine**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley**

- 1.** Pat chicken dry with paper towels and sprinkle with ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Place chicken skin side down in 10-inch nonstick skillet. Cook chicken over medium-high heat, without moving it, until skin is well browned, 7 to 9 minutes. Transfer chicken to plate, skin side up.
- 2.** Add bacon to fat left in skillet and cook over medium heat until crispy, 5 to 7 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to small paper towel-lined plate; set aside.
- 3.** Pour off all but 2 tablespoons fat from skillet (add enough oil to equal 2 tablespoons if needed). Heat fat left in skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add mushrooms, shallots, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, and remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper and cook until vegetables are softened and browned, 7 to 9 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 4.** Stir in tomato paste, garlic, flour, and thyme and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Slowly stir in broth and wine and bring to simmer.
- 5.** Nestle chicken, skin side up, into sauce and pour in any accumulated juices from plate. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover; and simmer until chicken registers 200 degrees, about 20 minutes.
- 6.** Off heat, let chicken rest in skillet, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Season sauce with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with parsley and bacon. Serve.

Simple Steps, Complex Flavor



1. Sear chicken leg quarters skin side down until skin is well browned; remove.



2. Cook mushrooms and shallots until softened and browned.



3. Return chicken to skillet skin side up to finish cooking and absorb flavor.

A New Age of Cast-Iron Skillets

Artisan brands of American-made cast-iron cookware challenge the old guard. *by Lisa McManus*



WE LOVE COOKING in cast-iron skillets. Whether we're searing, frying, baking, braising, or roasting, these pans are incredibly sturdy and naturally nonstick. As you use them, their seasoning keeps improving because heated fat molecules link up to form a hard, elastic film that bonds to the iron, protecting it from rust and forming a surface that easily releases food—and is endlessly renewable. You can hand down these pans for generations.

In the 19th century, cast-iron skillets were common in the United States and made by many American manufacturers. Sadly, almost none of those companies survived the 20th century. Lodge Manufacturing, however, has produced cast-iron cookware in Tennessee since 1896, making it the

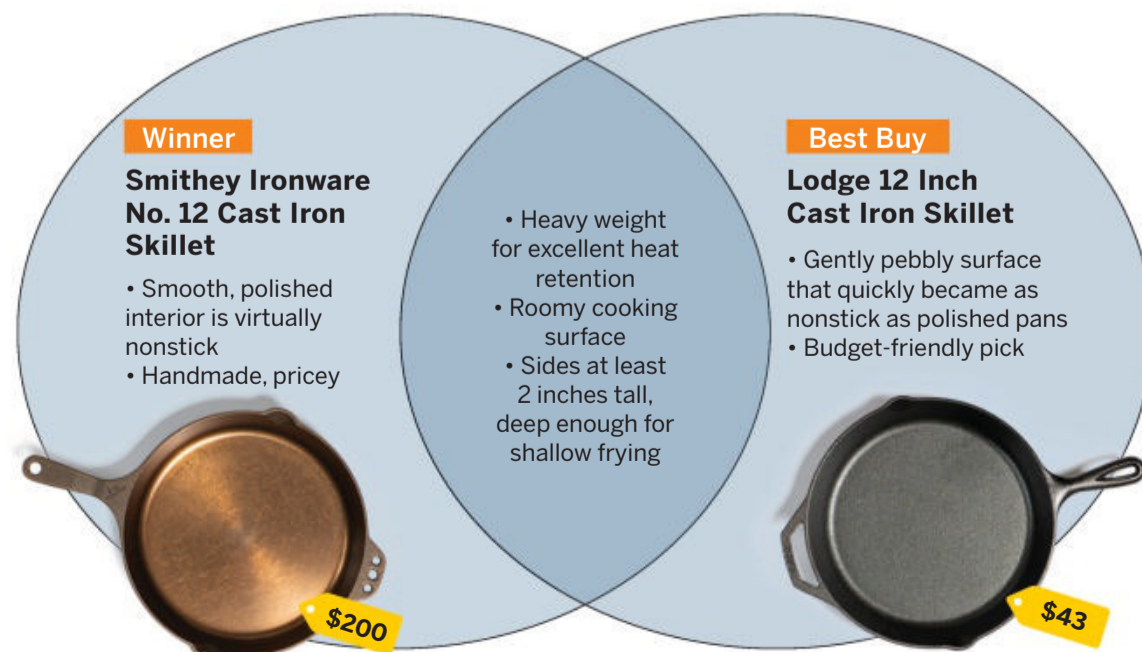
longest-operated American cast-iron cookware company. Today, most cast-iron skillets are imports from China, where cast-iron cookware was invented. But recently, artisan makers have sprung up in the United States, many with a goal of re-creating labor-intensive features that disappeared from most modern cast-iron cookware, including smooth, hand-polished interiors (most new pans have a rougher surface that shows the texture of the sand they were cast in) and pans cast to be thinner and more lightweight. We tested some of each type; our favorites shared certain traits (see “Comparing the Winners”).



Web subscribers can see the full testing results and complete chart at [CooksCountry.com/jan22](https://www.cookscountry.com/jan22).

COMPARING THE WINNERS

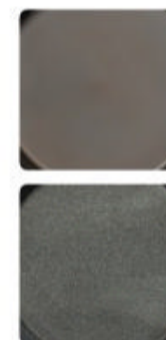
Our two highest-rated skillets shared key characteristics for success.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR

✓ A SMOOTH—OR GENTLY PEBBLY—SURFACE:

Artisan pans with glassy surfaces released food almost perfectly and stayed slick throughout testing, but a few others—in particular, our Best Buy from Lodge—had a lightly nubby texture that quickly gained seasoning. Its near-perfect release in our final egg test and easy cleaning matched the slick artisan skillets.



✓ LOTS OF SPACE:

Pans with at least 10 inches of flat cooking surface didn't get crowded when we seared steak and fried potatoes.

✓ SIDES AT LEAST 2 INCHES TALL:

Pans need at least 2-inch-tall sides to contain hot oil and food for tasks such as frying doughnuts.

✓ HEAVY WEIGHT:

Lighter pans were easy to lift, but they couldn't do what cast-iron pans should: retain and conduct plenty of heat for deep, even browning.

WHAT TO AVOID

✗ EXTRA-ROUGH SURFACES:

The super-rough textures of a few pans were frustrating to clean. When we wiped oil on their hot surfaces, they ripped up paper towels and left lint; this kept us from achieving a really thin layer of seasoning, so pans stayed slightly oily and tacky. The effectiveness of their seasoning actually decreased during testing, with more eggs sticking at the end of testing than in the beginning. It will take longer for rougher pans to become as nonstick as smoother models.

✗ LIGHTWEIGHT PANS:

Lighter, thinner pans browned food evenly only if we preheated them in the oven, and we don't want to have to do that every time. Heated only on the stovetop, lighter pans developed hot spots, and scrambled eggs quickly overcooked.

CAST IRON 101

Should I strip and reseason my new cast-iron skillet?

Do yourself a favor and just start cooking. Manufacturers sell pans lightly preseasoned, so you can skip lots of mess, smoke, and trouble and get to the good part of cast-iron skillets: cooking great food. Only strip a pan if it's extremely rusty or gunky—way past the point of being fixed with steel wool and elbow grease.

Can I use my cast-iron skillet on all types of stoves?

Yes. Cast-iron skillets work on gas, induction, and electric stoves. They'll also perform well on your grill or campfire. If you have a glass-topped stove, be gentle. Lift and place the pan gently, and don't drag it, to avoid scratching or cracking the glass.

How much and how often should I oil my pan?

To maintain cast iron's seasoning—the key to its nonstick quality—do this after every use: Lightly, evenly coat the clean, dry skillet with about ½ teaspoon of any oil. Wipe the oil off with a paper towel until you can see no trace. Heat the pan until it smokes moderately, a sign that the oil is breaking down and bonding to the pan to create a nonstick coating. If you see oil beading up as the pan is heating, wipe out the excess. Too much oil will gum up the pan.

How do I avoid maintenance?

Consider enameled cast iron. The glass-like coating protects the iron from rust—no seasoning required. Unlike regular cast iron, you can cook long-simmered acidic foods in it and use plenty of soap. However, enameled pans never become more nonstick, and you must protect the enamel: Be gentle with utensils.

The Best Oat Milk

Oat milk sales are skyrocketing. With so many products on the market, which one is the best?

by Carolyn Grillo



OAT MILK IS one of the fastest-growing nondairy milks in terms of both sales and popularity. It comes in different styles: original, extra-creamy, low-fat, unsweetened, and “barista” blends intended for whipping into foam for lattes or cappuccinos. We chose six nationally available brands, narrowing down the lineup to original styles that don’t list sugar as an ingredient (but that doesn’t mean they’re sugar-free—more on that later). We tasted the mix of refrigerated and shelf-stable products plain and then in coffee.

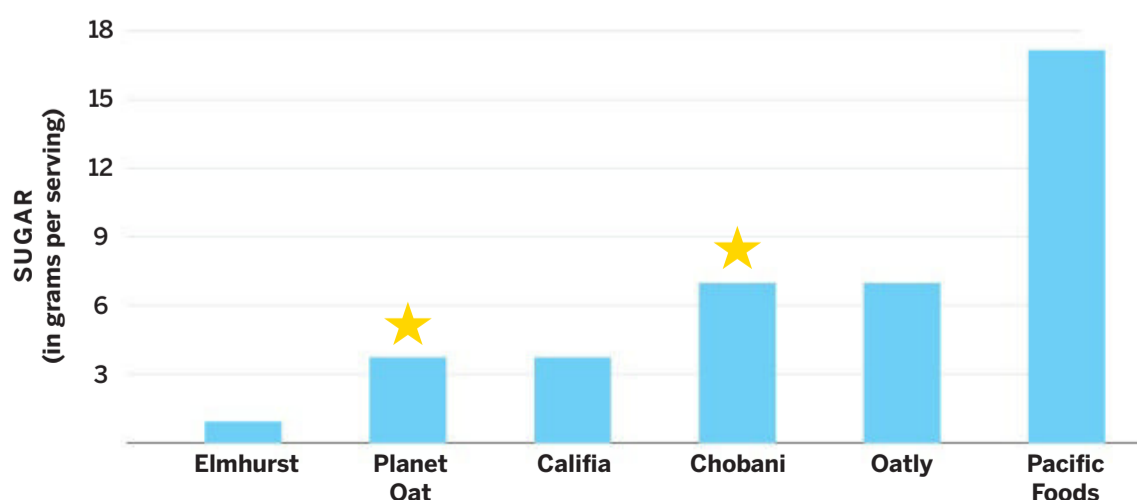
Some of the oat milks were thin (think skim milk), while others were

more viscous (think whole milk). We had a slight preference for the thicker oat milks; added stabilizers or thickeners such as oil, phosphates, and gellan gum gave them both body and richness and also ensured that the milks stayed smooth and fully incorporated once packaged.

Many tasters liked the slight nuttiness and mild sweetness of some oat milks, but some of the products we tasted were more oat forward than others. The amount of oat flavor present in each milk is most likely influenced by the type of oats used to make it and how the oats were processed.

No Added Sugar, but Levels Varied Wildly: Why?

None of the milks we tasted contained added sugar. But due to how the milks are processed, their sugar contents ranged from 1 gram to a whopping 17 grams per 1-cup serving. Our favorites (noted with a “★” below) had moderate sugar levels.



Can You Bake with Oat Milk?

We tried our mild-flavored winner and a boldly flavored recommended product in a biscuit recipe. Our winner gave us tender, subtly sweet biscuits; the biscuits made with the boldly flavored product were tender but tasted overwhelmingly like oats. When baking or cooking we suggest choosing a mild- or neutral-tasting oat milk that won’t interfere with or dominate the other ingredients.



Some of the milks were also sweeter than others. Even though none of the products listed sugar as an ingredient, their sugar contents ranged from 1 gram to a whopping 17 grams per 1-cup serving. Samples that contained 4 to 7 grams of sugar per cup were described as being “pleasantly sweet,” while the product with 17 grams had an “overpowering sweetness [that was] a deal breaker.” Enzymes, which are added to help break down some of the oats’ starch into sugar, are more active at certain temperatures, so the oat milks that contained more sugar per serving were likely cooked longer and/or remained in a more enzyme-active temperature range for longer.

We can fully recommend three of the oat milks we tasted, but Chobani Oat Plain came out on top. It had a “mellow oat flavor” and was silky, homogenized, and moderately thick. The addition of oil, gum, and emulsifiers made it “supersmooth.” With 7 grams of sugar per cup, it was just

sweet enough. If you’re looking for a great nondairy milk for drinking plain, adding to coffee or tea, or baking with, we think Chobani Oat Plain is an excellent choice.

OUR TOP PICK

Chobani Oat Plain
Price: \$4.49 for 52 fl oz
(\$0.09 per fl oz)

Tasters loved this mellow oat milk’s “very faint nuttiness” and “slight oat” flavor.



Web subscribers can see the complete results chart at [CooksCountry.com/jan22](https://www.cookscountry.com/jan22).



Marinated Manchego

MARINATED MANCHEGO

Serves 6 to 8 Total Time: 35 minutes, plus 24 hours marinating

Use a good-quality extra-virgin olive oil here. Remove the strips of orange zest with a vegetable peeler. Serve the cheese with crusty bread as an appetizer or use it in a salad. You can use the marinated oil in a salad dressing or serve it with bread for dipping.

- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra as needed**
- 8 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled**
- 6 (3-inch) strips orange zest**
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme**
- 3 bay leaves**
- ½ teaspoon table salt**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- 8 ounces Manchego cheese, cut into rough ¾-inch cubes**

1. Combine oil, garlic, orange zest, thyme sprigs, bay leaves, salt, and pepper flakes in small saucepan and cook over medium-low heat

until garlic begins to turn golden, about 10 minutes. Set aside and let cool completely.

2. Place Manchego in 16-ounce jar with tight-fitting lid. Using tongs or fork, transfer garlic, orange zest, thyme sprigs, and bay leaves to jar with Manchego. Pour oil mixture over Manchego to cover, pressing down cheese as needed to submerge it. If needed, add extra oil to cover cheese. Affix jar lid and refrigerate for at least 24 hours or up to 1 week. Let come to room temperature before serving.

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DT=Dinner Tonight



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 by December 31, 2021, or write to Rooster DJ22, Cook's Country, 21 Drydock Avenue, Suite 210E, Boston, MA 02210. Include your name and address. Pamela Slagle of Lone Jack, Missouri, found the rooster in the August/September 2021 issue on page 16.

WEB EXTRAS

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COOK'S CLOSE-UP



PATRICIO ARGUELLO

Mary & Tito's Cafe,
Albuquerque, New Mexico

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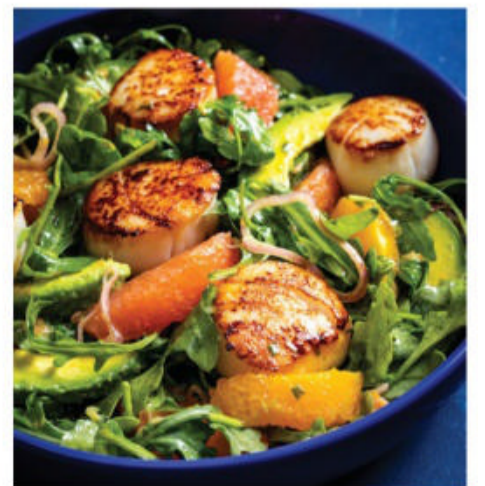
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