

This Issue Takes the Cake

bon appétit

Baking projects, freezer-friendly recipes,

cozy stews, and so much more



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Confetti Cake
with Chocolate Frosting
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From the Editor

Here I share what's on my mind, including my own cooking dilemmas, which the test kitchen helps me tackle



Won't you feel good knowing this lasagna's waiting at home?
P. 67

Q: Spring break is looming, which presents a problem for me: After a day of travel from some warmer spot, my crew always wants homemade dinner, no matter how late we arrive or how exhausted I am. **How can I feed my family with what little energy I have left after hours of travel?**

Dawn I. Davis

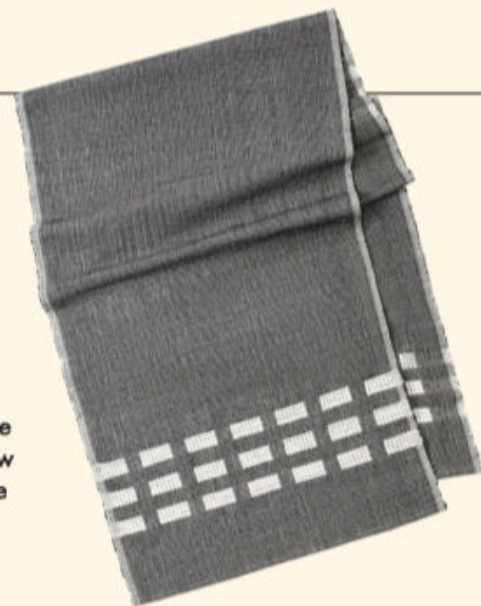
Food director Chris Morocco advises: While I seem to be a lost cause as a meal-prepper, lucky for you others on our team are great at planning ahead. Associate food editor Zaynab Issa knows a thing (or five) about stocking her freezer with food that needs only an oven or microwave wake up to taste just as fresh as the day it was made. I suggest you make and freeze her lasagna (page 67) before you go, then bake right from frozen on your return. (And since I'm imagining your fridge will be bare, she's even got breakfast handled, with microwavable egg-and-cheese sandwiches found on page 66.) For those like me who cannot seem to plan ahead, "panic pasta" is what saves me in this situation. I like to make a sauce out of flavor-packed ingredients that are always in my kitchen, like anchovies with dried chile and fistfuls of parm, or a few knobs of butter swirled with soy sauce and toasted sesame oil. The only constraint is that whatever you do for the sauce, it has to come together in the time it takes for the water to boil and the pasta to cook.

Chris Morocco

What I'm Loving

The newest napkins in my collection

Some people hoard plates, some hoard glasses. I hoard napkins. They make even the most casual table look special, easily change the vibe of a set table, and don't take up much space to store. Hana Getachew started **Bolé Road Textiles** to marry ancient Ethiopian weaving techniques with a modern aesthetic. I love the bright color palette she employs, as well as these elegant darker napkins.

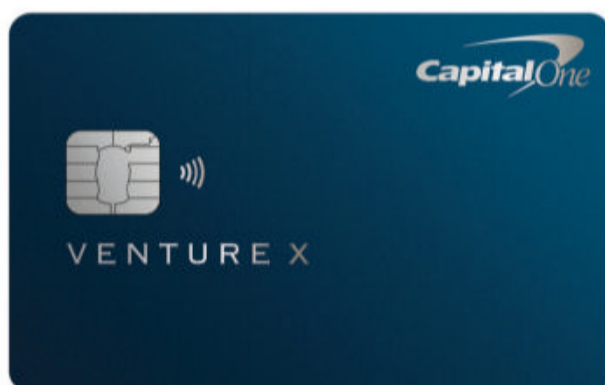




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TEST KITCHEN
TIPS, RECIPES, *and*
RECOMMENDATIONS

Table Talk

RESTAURANTS,
TRAVEL, *and* FOOD
FOR THOUGHT

A DEEP DIVE ON LENTILS



The best things really do come in the smallest of packages. A pantry full of lentils is a pantry full of potential—turn the page to unlock a rainbow of delicious, nourishing possibilities

Little Things

Comforting, versatile, and quick-cooking, lentils check off all the “what’s for dinner?” boxes

BY ANTARA SINHA • RECIPES BY SHILPA USKOKOVIC
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISA ZAPATA

LENTILS 101

Legume. Pulse. Bean. Lentil. Are these the same thing, different things, or what? Let’s break these terms down. Think of it as a family tree: Legumes are plants in the Fabaceae, or Leguminosae family. The dried, edible seeds of legumes are called pulses, a category which includes beans, peas, and lentils, which are distinguished from other pulses by their characteristic curved, flattened shape. Lentils are not a monolith; they come in an impressive array of colors, shapes, sizes, and textures and are an important part of many culinary traditions around the world. Historians estimate that humans began cultivating lentils as a food source as early as 8000 BC, and today the majority of the world’s lentils are grown in Canada (who knew?) and India. They’re a nutritious, delicious staple that’s stood the test of time, and we can’t get enough.

THEY’RE GOOD FOR YOU, RIGHT?

As a category, lentils often have a bit of a health halo around them, and for good reason. Packed with fiber, protein, and carbohydrates, they provide a whole lot of nutrition for not a lot of money. The United Nations has made pulse and legume research a part of its efforts to solve world hunger. If we’re getting technical, however, lentils do not qualify as a “complete protein” the way that meat does, meaning they’re missing certain amino acids that humans need. This isn’t really an issue unless you’re on a lentils-only diet: You’re likely still receiving those missing amino acids from other food like grains, nuts, and seeds.





START STOCKING THE GOOD STUFF

You can get lentils at most supermarkets, but we find that health food stores and South Asian and Middle Eastern groceries often boast the most expansive and freshest offerings. For single-source, especially tasty lentils, we turn to mail-order purveyors like Zürsun Idaho Heirloom Beans (zursunbeans.com)—they source lentils from small family farms and offer all sorts of unique heirloom types. And because they sell lentils from single-growing years, you're getting only the freshest, most flavorful crop. Your average bag of supermarket stuff may contain some older and some younger vintages, which can lead to uneven cooking.

SPEEDY DOES IT

Provided they're relatively fresh, lentils cook quickly, averaging around 20 to 40 minutes—think of them as the weeknight counterpart to a lazy Sunday pot of beans. If, however, you're looking to get them on the table even faster, you've got options. Though by no means necessary, soaking them for at least 4 hours or up to overnight can cut cooking time in half and will help thicker-skinned varieties cook more evenly. If mushy lentils are on the menu, adding a smidge of salt and a pinch of baking soda will soften the legumes and encourage them to fall apart even more rapidly. And a pressure cooker or Instant Pot will cut down cook time to as little as 10 minutes.

SNAP, CRACKLE, POP

To turn lentils into a versatile, speedy, and crispy topping, we like to use a technique common in South Asian cooking known as tempering. In a small pan over medium-low heat, sizzle a spoonful of lentils (smaller, quicker cooking varieties like red lentils or urad dal are what you want here) in hot neutral oil along with a few pinches of whole spices like black mustard seeds and cumin. You'll know the mixture is ready when it smells toasty, the spices and lentils have browned, and they start sizzling and "dancing" in the hot oil. This crunchy, nutty condiment can then be spooned over everything from pasta and rice to roasted veggies and stewy, meaty braises.

VARIETIES WE LOVE

There's a wide world of lentils out there, and each one is uniquely suited to particular applications. Here's what's on our pantry shelves:



Yellow

This is a sticky category. Yellow lentils can refer to everything from peeled, split mung beans (beans, not lentils) to split yellow pigeon peas (also beans, weirdly) to split chickpeas known as chana dal (also, not lentils). But because these are all commonly labeled as lentils, we'll get into it: Often sold "split," meaning the pulse has been processed into smaller pieces, this broad category of pulses breaks down readily, making them great for stews and soups.



French Green

Another one for the toothsome category, French or "du Puy" lentils stay intact even when tender. Beautiful and speckled green when dry, they take on a lovely olive-drab hue when cooked. Prepare them simply with some garlic and mirepoix, or use them in place of meat for a vegetarian ragù.



Red

These are exceptionally mild and tend to quickly fall apart when cooked due to their smaller, thinner size. Sometimes labeled as masoor dal, they're especially suited for making classic dal or soup and are a stellar blank canvas for spices and aromatics.



Black Beluga

Tiny, thick-skinned, inky black beluga lentils—which get their name from their caviar-like appearance—are especially suited for salads, braises, and grain bowls where their robust texture can shine. They have an earthy, almost black-bean-like taste and hold their shape better than most.



Brown

For creamy, fall-apart lentils that add heft to soups and stews, we reach for brown (sometimes labeled green) lentils. They're a quick ticket to hearty, rib-sticking earthiness and a comforting—and we mean this in the best possible way—mushiness.

DO THEY GO... BAD?

You might think that dried lentils have a near-infinite shelf life, but the reality of the situation is a bit more complicated. Though they'll be edible for years, all dried seeds—lentils included—enter a state of dormancy the longer they sit on your shelf. They dry out even further, get tougher inside, lose flavor, and their cooking time increases. For the best texture and flavor, store lentils in a cool, dark, dry spot in your kitchen and aim to use them up within six months of purchasing.

DELICIOUS MYTHS

Lentils have a lot of fiber—more than half of your daily recommended value in just one cooked cup according to the USDA. If you're not accustomed to a high-fiber diet, this can make them, er, difficult to digest. On top of that, they also contain oligosaccharides, which are carbohydrates that we lack the enzymes to break down. These carbohydrates feed the good-for-you bacteria in your intestines, causing—there's no way around this—gas. People across cultures swear that cooking lentils with certain ingredients will make them easier on your belly—turmeric, kombu, ginger, cumin, and asafetida are common. Though such claims are, sadly, unsubstantiated, these additions are, at the very least, very tasty. The only way to really combat lentil-induced gas is to, well, eat lentils more often.



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WHAT TO DO WITH THEM

Lentils can be a shape-shifter—soft and creamy or firm and toothsome, depending on the variety you're using and how you cook them. Below, two recipes that highlight the impressive range of textures they have to offer: A savory lentil braise with chewy, pearly grains that stay intact, and a luscious, velvety khichdi with a risotto-like texture thanks to quick-softening red lentils.



Soy-Braised Black Lentils

We love the way that thick-skinned, tiny-but-mighty black beluga lentils remain chewy and intact even when fully cooked. In this sweet-salty Korean-inspired braise, maintaining a low simmer is the key to keeping each little bead whole. Adding sugar and agave after the lentils are fully cooked ensures that the lentils don't become tough.

Bring **4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced**, **½ cup black beluga lentils, rinsed**, **3 Tbsp. soy sauce**, and 2 cups water to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally and adjusting heat as needed, until lentils are tender (liquid will be mostly absorbed), 18–22 minutes. Mix in **2 Tbsp. agave syrup** and **1 Tbsp. sugar**; cook, stirring often, until liquid is syrupy and reduced to about 2 Tbsp., 8–10 minutes.

Remove from heat; sprinkle **1 Tbsp. toasted sesame seeds** over. Serve with **cooked rice** and **seasoned toasted seaweed snacks**. *4 servings*



Simple Spinach Khichdi

This greens-packed khichdi, with its comforting, porridgy texture, gets its luscious quality from creamy, fall-apart red lentils. A longer cook time and a vigorous boil ensure they break down and almost disappear into a silky sauce.

Bring **1 cup basmati or other white long-grain rice, rinsed**, **1 cup red, yellow, or brown lentils, rinsed**, **1 Tbsp. vegetable oil**, **1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt**, and 4 cups water to a simmer in a large heavy pot over medium. Partially cover and cook until rice and lentils are very soft and water is absorbed, 20–25 minutes.

Meanwhile, blend **1 jalapeño or serrano chile**, **two 10-oz. packages frozen spinach, thawed**, **1 cup (packed) cilantro leaves**, and **½ cup (packed) mint leaves** in a blender until very smooth; set spinach purée aside.

Heat **3 Tbsp. ghee or unsalted butter** in large skillet over medium. Cook **2 tsp. cumin seeds**, stirring, until golden, about 2 minutes. Add **1 large onion, finely chopped**, **6 garlic cloves, finely chopped**, **one 1"-piece ginger, peeled, finely chopped**, and **2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt**; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened and translucent, 9–12 minutes.

Stir in **1 Tbsp. tomato paste** and cook until slightly darkened, about 3 minutes. Pour reserved spinach purée into pan; cook, stirring often, until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Stir in rice mixture, **1 tsp. garam masala**, and **1½ cups water**; bring to a simmer. Cook until flavors have melded and some of the water is absorbed, 6–8 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in **1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice**. Taste and season with salt. Add more water to get to a risotto-like consistency if needed. *6 servings*



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Earth Studies

Designer Noa Santos mines the beauty of natural stone

BY SAM COCHRAN • PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF NAINOA

▼ Balancing Act

For designer Noa Santos there's no improving upon the elegance of natural stone. But you do need to be strategic about the sensitive material. "At least one surface in a kitchen should be indestructible," he says. So if your island is stain-prone natural stone, make sure other counters are something engineered and "super wearable," like Corian. In this New York City kitchen, Santos combined an island of Rosa Levanto marble with a complementary wall of Caesarstone counters.



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Noa Santos of Nainoa

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"Your home should
serve you, not the other
way around."

► **Made to Measure**

When mapping out stone surfaces, it helps to understand the logistics. Slabs are typically sold no more than five feet wide by nine feet long, in thicknesses of three-quarter or one and one-quarter inches. But they can be installed side by side to create broad expanses, or mitered together—joined at an angle—to form chunky countertops or seemingly monolithic islands like this marble showstopper in NYC. But you don't need a ton of stone to make an impact. "A little goes a long way," Santos says. Stone is expensive, he notes; a marble-clad hood or backsplash on a focal wall can set the mood more affordably.



◀ **See It to Believe It**

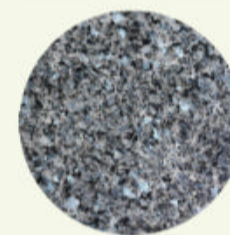
Deciding on kitchen surfaces can be daunting. "It's such a tactile experience," says the designer. With clients he always dedicates a virtual session to discussing material (see right for some of his thoughts), color, and veining, which ranges from quiet, like the travertine in this California kitchen, to super graphic. But no matter what, he advises, head to the stone yards yourself. "Oftentimes you're surprised when you see stone in person," Santos says. "Every time I think I have a favorite I come back with a new obsession."

ROCK AND ROLL

Santos gives a primer on kitchen geology



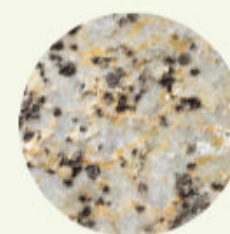
Travertine Distinguished by its pitted texture, this porous stone requires lots of care.



Granite "The patterns are a bit busier than I usually like, but it's such a durable surface," he says.



Marble Santos loves marble for its veining, which can vary from minimal to exuberant.



Quartzite "Aesthetically close to marble but durable like granite, it's ideal in terms of function and form."

► **Child's Play**

Young families, Santos cautions, call for certain considerations. Because right angles at eye level can be dangerous when there are kids running around, Santos opts for rounded countertops, as in this New York City kitchen. Santos also avoids using lightly colored, subtly striated stone on the base of an island, where restless bodies perched on stools might kick and leave scuff marks.



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (TRAVERTINE, GRANITE, MARBLE, QUARTZITE)

Breakfast for Dinner

QUICK AND EASY WEEKNIGHT MEALS

In my opinion, the allure of a 24-hour diner is not its extensive menu or vinyl booths, it's getting permission to eat breakfast any time of day. Maybe you're an egg lover who doesn't need much convincing to make yourself an omelet on a busy weeknight; maybe you're hesitant to break hash browns out of the confines of a morning meal. No matter your feelings about B-for-D, these four speedy, savory recipes will inspire you to make delicious food whenever you're craving it—because anything can be dinner if you put your mind to it. —*Kendra Vaculin*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISA ZAPATA





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CAJUN CHICKEN GRAVY AND BISCUITS

A simple folding method yields majorly flaky biscuits without any rest time. Use a Cajun spice blend without salt for the gravy; you'll season to taste as you go

RECIPE BY KENDRA VACULIN

4 SERVINGS

- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 2 cups plus 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 4½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 2¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- ½ cup (1 stick) plus 3 Tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 cup plus 1 Tbsp. sour cream
- 2 tsp. vegetable oil
- 1 lb. ground chicken
- 2 tsp. plus 1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 small red bell pepper, finely chopped
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- Freshly ground pepper
- 2½ cups whole milk
- 1 tsp. apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- Coarsely chopped parsley (for serving)

1. Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 425°. Pulse baking powder, baking soda, 2 cups flour, and 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt in a food processor. Add ½ cup butter; pulse until crumbly and largest pieces of butter are pea-size. Transfer to a bowl and fold in 1 cup sour cream.

2. Turn out dough onto a surface; pat into a rectangle. Fold in half, pat out again. Repeat 1 more time, then form into an 8x4" rectangle; cut into 4 pieces. Transfer to a parchment-lined baking sheet.

3. Mix remaining 1 Tbsp. sour cream and a drizzle of water in a small bowl (it should be the consistency of heavy cream);



brush tops of biscuits with sour cream mixture. Sprinkle with a little salt. Bake, rotating baking sheet once, until golden brown, 18–22 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add chicken, 2 tsp. Cajun seasoning, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt and cook, breaking up meat into small pieces with a wooden spoon, until browned and cooked through, about 5 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate.

5. Melt remaining 3 Tbsp. butter in same pan over medium-high heat. Add onion, bell pepper, celery, remaining 1 Tbsp. Cajun seasoning, and 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt and mix to combine; season with black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and lightly browned, 8–10 minutes.

6. Sprinkle in remaining 3 Tbsp. flour and cook, stirring to coat, until golden, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat

to medium-low. Stirring constantly, gradually pour in milk, stopping occasionally to combine and let thicken before adding more, about 4 minutes total. (Gravy should be slightly runnier than you'd expect; it will thicken when you add the chicken and as it cools.)

7. Stir vinegar, red pepper flakes, and reserved chicken into gravy; taste and season with salt and black pepper. Divide gravy among plates and top with parsley. Serve with biscuits.

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DAK JUK

This deeply comforting Korean chicken-and-rice porridge makes a quick and cozy meal any time of day. Gently poaching the chicken breast creates an aromatic broth that the rice cooks in

RECIPE BY HANA ASBRINK

4 SERVINGS

- 3 scallions
- 5 garlic cloves
- 1 1"-piece ginger, peeled, thinly sliced
- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts (about 4 small)
- 1 cup short- or medium-grain rice or glutinous rice
- 2 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil, divided, plus more
- 1 medium carrot, peeled, finely chopped
- 1 large shallot, finely chopped
- 3 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce, plus more
- Toasted sesame seeds (for serving)

1. Separate white and light green parts from 1 scallion and place in a medium pot; reserve dark green part for another use. Thinly slice all of remaining 2 scallions; set aside.

2. Add garlic, ginger, chicken (if using large breasts, cut in half first), and 5 cups water to pot with scallion. Bring to a vigorous boil; remove from heat. Cover; let sit 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, rinse rice in a medium bowl in several changes of water until water almost runs clear, 2–3 times. Drain and set aside.

4. Using tongs, transfer chicken and garlic in poaching liquid to a cutting board; let cool. Strain poaching liquid through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium bowl (you should have about 5 cups); discard solids.

5. Heat 1 Tbsp. oil in a medium heavy pot over medium. Add



rice and toss until each grain is toasted and coated with oil, about 1 minute. Add carrot and shallot, season with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until shallot is translucent, about 2 minutes. Stir in reserved poaching liquid, 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, and 2 cups water. Increase heat to medium-high and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to

medium-low, partially cover with a lid, and simmer, stirring occasionally to keep from sticking, until juk is creamy and porridge-like, 25–30 minutes. (If it becomes too thick, stir in more water ¼ cup at a time.)

6. Meanwhile, shred chicken, then mash garlic with the flat side of a chef's knife. Combine chicken, garlic, 1 Tbsp. soy sauce, 1 Tbsp. oil, and

remaining 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl; season with pepper.

7. Remove juk from heat; stir in half of chicken and most of reserved sliced scallions. Ladle into bowls. Top each with a bit of remaining chicken and scallions. Sprinkle with sesame seeds, season with pepper, and drizzle with soy sauce and oil.



bon appétit

COOK WITH US ON YOUTUBE



SHEET-PAN MERGUEZ HASH WITH FRIED EGGS

This hands-off hash trades active stovetop cooking for a stint in the oven. Layering spicy sausage over potatoes and onions means the vegetables roast in the meat's flavorful drippings

RECIPE BY ZAYNAB ISSA

4-6 SERVINGS

- 2 large russet potatoes, scrubbed, sliced ½" thick
- 1 large onion, cut into 1" pieces
- 5 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 2½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- 1 lb. merguez or other spicy sausage, casings removed
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. tahini
- ¾ cup coarsely chopped mixed tender herbs (such as dill, cilantro, and/or mint)
- 4 large eggs
- Flaky sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper

1. Preheat oven to 425°. Place potatoes and onion on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle 2 Tbsp. oil over and sprinkle with paprika, garlic powder, cumin, and 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt; toss to coat. Arrange in a single layer, then break sausage into 1½" clumps and dot all over vegetables.

2. Roast hash until potatoes are tender, 25–28 minutes. Set oven to broil or heat broiler and broil hash until sausage is browned, about 4 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, mix lemon juice, yogurt, tahini, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a small bowl to combine. Set tahini yogurt aside.



4. Remove hash from oven, scatter about three fourths of herbs over, and toss to evenly distribute.

5. Heat remaining 3 Tbsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Crack

eggs into skillet and season with kosher salt. Cook, rotating skillet occasionally to ensure even browning, until the whites are golden brown and crisp around the edges and set around the yolks (which should still be

runny), about 2 minutes. Remove eggs in pan from heat.

6. Spread reserved tahini yogurt over each plate and top with hash and eggs. Scatter remaining herbs over; season with sea salt and pepper.

THE LIST

by BON APPÉTIT



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Try it with Shilpa's carrot sheet cake on **P. 44**



PONZU SALMON AND AVOCADO TOAST

Avocado toast gets poke bowl vibes with fatty smoked salmon and crunchy cucumbers in a quick homemade ponzu sauce

RECIPE BY KENDRA VACULIN

4 SERVINGS

- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp. sriracha
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, plus more
- 3 Persian cucumbers, coarsely chopped
- 1 avocado, coarsely chopped
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped pickled ginger
- Kosher salt
- 4 oz. smoked salmon, torn into bite-size pieces
- 4 slices country-style bread, lightly toasted
- Toasted sesame seeds and seasoned toasted seaweed snacks (for serving)

1. Mix mayonnaise and sriracha in a small bowl until well combined; set spicy mayo aside.

2. Mix soy sauce, lime juice, and 1 Tbsp. lemon juice in another small bowl just to combine, then set ponzu sauce aside.

3. Place cucumbers, avocado, and pickled ginger in a medium bowl; season with salt. Squeeze a little lemon juice over and toss gently to combine.

4. Dip each piece of salmon in reserved ponzu sauce and add to bowl with cucumber mixture; toss gently just until distributed throughout.

5. Spread some reserved spicy mayonnaise over each piece of toast. Top with salmon mixture and drizzle a small amount of remaining ponzu over. Sprinkle sesame seeds over, then crumble seaweed snacks on top.



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DINNER



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LISTEN AND FOLLOW WHEREVER YOU GET YOUR PODCASTS

Rind and All

A preserved lemon lover on why you ought to be one too

BY ZAYNAB ISSA ■ PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISA ZAPATA



My obsession first started on a trip to Morocco in 2017: After asking my waiter what gave my tagine the kick I couldn't quite put my finger on, he revealed the gift of preserved lemons. I'm a fan of all things briny, salty, and sour, so it's no surprise these pickled wonders made my palate dance.

I don't need to give you a lesson on lemons; everyone knows these fruits are tart and tangy, ideal in recipes that benefit from acidic balance and an assertive brightness. The flavor is very recognizable, so nine times out of 10 you know when something's got lemon in it. Preserved lemons, however, are an entirely different story. They're shelf-stable* (you heard me) and an all-out pantry superstar. They're more savory than fresh lemons, so they work especially well when I want to add a mellow citrusy, slightly umami undertone to a dish, without in-your-face lemon flavor. (Or I go for the best of both worlds, using fresh and preserved together, when I want brightness *and* funk.)

Preserved lemons are made by storing fresh lemons in lots of salt until the flesh, pith, and rind soften. Because of their uniquely concentrated saline, slightly bitter, pickle-y profile, they quickly add depth and complexity to the most basic meals. Though preserved lemons are an essential ingredient in Moroccan cuisine, their merits extend far beyond tagines and braises. Boring vinaigrette? Add chopped preserved lemon. One-note lemon cake? Stir in crushed preserved lemon. Dull lentil



soup? You get the idea. Pop them whole into stews; add thin-sliced slivers into drinks; or mince them up for earthier pasta sauces. Before use, rinse to tame the saltiness and be sure to discard the seeds; because of the fermentation process, the rind and pith are fine to consume and will taste the same as the flesh.

The ultra-concentrated brine is also great, when applied sparingly. A few drops can bring pizzazz to seltzers or help deglaze a pan. So, anytime you want to add that special kick to a dish, just reach for your trusty jar.

**Homemade preserved lemons are shelf-stable. Follow store-bought storage suggestions accordingly.*



ZAYNAB'S FAVES

I love **Mina** preserved lemons, available at many markets. Or rustle up your own batch with our recipe: [bonappetit.com/preserved-lemon](https://www.bonappetit.com/recipe/preserved-lemon)



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SPARKLING PRESERVED LEMONADE

4 SERVINGS

Like sparkling lemonade but funkier. Tonic water provides bubbles, a touch of sweetness, and a hint of bitterness that nicely complement the salty-sour preserved lemon.

- 3 Tbsp. coarsely chopped preserved lemon
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- Chilled tonic water and thinly sliced preserved lemon (for serving)

Crush chopped preserved lemon to a paste with a mortar and pestle or the flat side of a chef's knife. Transfer to a small bowl and stir in lemon juice.

Divide mixture among 4 highball glasses. Fill with ice, then top off with tonic water. Garnish with preserved lemon slices.

CREAMY PRESERVED LEMON DRESSING

2-4 SERVINGS

Think of this as a citrusy take on blue cheese dressing. The preserved lemon steps in for the cheese, bringing its own salty complexity to a dressing that's an ideal match for crisp iceberg wedges, colorful crudité's, or spicy Buffalo wings.

- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped preserved lemon, plus 2 tsp. (or more) brine
- 2 Tbsp. thinly sliced chives
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- Freshly ground pepper

Whisk mayonnaise, sour cream, preserved lemon, chives, and Worcestershire sauce in a small bowl to combine; season generously

with pepper. Whisk in brine and 1 Tbsp. water. Taste dressing and add more brine if needed.

PASTA AL PRESERVED LIMONE

4-6 SERVINGS

Preserved lemon instantly transforms simple buttered noodles into a sophisticated dish. Adding a touch of the brine takes the deep lemon flavor even further.

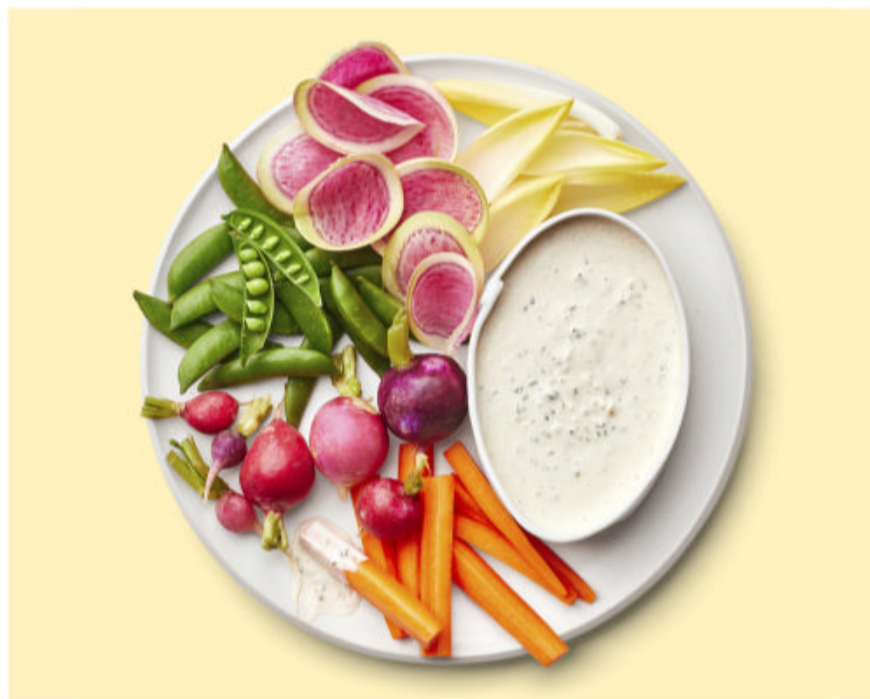
- 12 oz. spaghetti
- Kosher salt
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ¼ cup finely chopped preserved lemon, plus 2 Tbsp. brine
- Freshly ground pepper
- Finely grated Parmesan (for serving)

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until just shy of al dente, about 1 minute less than package directions.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add preserved lemon and season with pepper. Cook, stirring, until butter is sizzling around edges of lemon, about 1 minute. Stir in brine, reduce heat to low, and keep warm until pasta is ready.

Using tongs, transfer pasta to skillet (a little water coming along is okay) and add ½ cup pasta cooking liquid. Increase heat to medium and cook, tossing vigorously and adding more pasta cooking liquid by the ¼-cupful as needed, until sauce is silky and pasta is coated and glossy, about 2 minutes.

Divide pasta among bowls and top with Parmesan; season with pepper.



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Market Volatility

This is *not* a story about how the French food stalls saved me

BY JULIA LANGBEIN ■ ILLUSTRATION BY MARÍA MEDEM ■ PHOTOGRAPH BY ISA ZAPATA



If you come to France and visit its famous food markets—stall after stall spilling over with fruit and flowers and roasting chickens and the candy smell of cooking crepes—you’ll sigh and say, this is heaven. But if you are a local, you know that it’s very much earth: It’s people, and if you want the good stuff, you’ll have to deal with them.

Sure, you could survive on the supermarket, never making eye contact as you scan the shrink-wrap, but you wouldn’t get that pink rockfish with the crystal eyes, or the meaty boletus mushrooms that only appear for a few weeks, or the Corsican sheep’s-milk tomme without a name. Plus, you wouldn’t get charmed or educated, berated or swindled, so what’s the point?

We moved from Ireland to a village outside Paris for my husband’s job just as COVID restrictions were lifting in the summer of 2021. It was also four months after my brother—born two years before me, a precondition of my existence, a voice I’d never not heard—died of a rare cancer at the age of 41.

Readjusting to human contact after COVID was already weird, but the trauma of losing my brother had scary, unpredictable effects on my behavior—I could suddenly burst into tears or rage in front of strangers. It was as if I’d reentered the world and all the chairs had only three legs and the letter C had been removed from the alphabet, and, worse, people went on as if this was okay.

At the market I cannot get vegetables from my vegetable lady without crying. She’s so mean to me but also loves me? She must be over 80, the knuckles on her hands as large as the brussels sprouts she forces me to buy.

“Take a kilo, they’re superb right now.”

“I can’t fit them in my bag.”

She looks at me like I’m an idiot, with liquid blue irises that don’t end crisply but fade into the whites of her eyes as if eroded by 50 years of precisely this stare: “You didn’t bring your trolley?”

“No, I...I biked, I...”

“What can I do for you if you don’t come prepared?”

I take spinach instead, leaf spinach, veiny and buckling.

She tells me that with this batch, in this season, I can eat the stems. She repeats herself: “Do not throw out the stems.”

“I heard, I heard.” We are exchanging leaves and coins; this is not a war, and yet she is somehow my general and I am her grunt.

“You cook this with a little crème fraîche and those babies of yours will love it.”

Goddammit, she got me. I’m crying. She knows I have babies.

Does she love me? I wonder. She turns to the next customer as if I never existed.

There is another vegetable lady, younger, prettier, who tells me I’m adorable, but she once showed me beautiful green beans, then sent me home with rotten ones. Now when she calls me with silken voice (“*ça va, ma belle?*”) I look at her like I’m an evil witch shooting curses at her through my narrow eyes, which is a cool way to shop for beans.

This isn’t a story about how the market saved me or gave me a hopeful vision of humanity at its best. On the contrary, the market offers no coherent picture of the good life, of easy pleasures and satisfying trades. Your dead chicken will look you in the eye and that hot, empty smell you smell? It’s blood, and it’s on the soles of your shoes. In the course of your morning you’ll see blandishments and bull, loyalty and lies. Roaming through the rational, well-lit supermarket, managing loops of anxiety, I feel like the crazy one. But somehow, sidling up to Angry Ham Guy with my battered wheelycart (I came prepared this time!) holding crumpled cash and rehearsing what I’ll say under my breath because I’m kind of scared of him, I’m part of a meaningful social ritual. *Guess what?* the market whispers: *Everyone’s insane and you’ll be fine.*

Would you like apples from the man who sells only apples? You can’t have any because he’s always away having a sandwich. That is life: That is life. Sometimes people would rather have a sandwich than an income and you just have to go without. “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” was one of my brother’s favorite songs, and I’d love

to sit in a car and annoy him by singing it really loud right now, but I have to go without. Grief trains you in the conditional tense: *He would laugh at this joke; he would love this place.* Now I'm well suited to unattainable apples: *Those apples would be amazing,* I think. I'm almost convinced I've had them.

My favorite stall is the triperie because the couple that runs it like to make innuendo-filled jokes, winking as they hand over kidneys that look like a perfect pair of balls. Also, their tripe in broth is the best I've ever had, so full of collagen that it's solid at room temperature, sliced like glycerin soap from a big block. Warmed up, it's a viscous stew that makes our home smell like a herd of cows just did hot yoga in every room, so my husband makes me eat it in the garden like a filthy pet. Fine by me! I'm not here for personal dignity. I'm here for a five-euro lunch so nourishing that I can feel it filling all the potholes in my joints.

The triperie couple never berate me or swindle me, maybe because no one eats as much tripe as I do, or maybe because I come to them like a simpleton, always asking about their pallid lobes and velvety mounds. "What is that?" I ask, pointing to what looks like a rugby ball made of purple stone.

"Ox heart."

The husband slices it thin and gives me precise instructions to grill it quickly and serve it with pickles and parsley, which I do. It tastes like bavette steak, and when my children ask what it is, I lie to them because they don't yet know that hearts get eaten. They don't know how imperfect I am, or what I went through to come home with this treasure.

They'll learn about people later, but for now they eat their spinach, stems and all. ♦



JULIA LANGBEIN

is a writer and art historian. Her debut novel, *American Mermaid*, hits bookstores March 21.

SPINACH WITH GARLIC AND CRÈME FRAÎCHE

4 SERVINGS

It takes mere minutes to create silky, creamy spinach heaven. Unlike some versions that cook out to a dense, green gunge, this one is wonderfully light. Crème fraîche adds tanginess, but heavy cream and a squeeze of lemon would also be great.

- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 medium bunches mature spinach, trimmed, or two 5-oz. bags spinach
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- ½ cup crème fraîche

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium. Cook garlic, stirring occasionally, until golden around edges and very

fragrant, about 3 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high and add spinach by the handful, stirring and letting it wilt slightly after each addition. Season with salt and pepper. Cook spinach, stirring often, until mostly wilted, about 1 minute. Remove from heat.

Add crème fraîche; stir until spinach is saucy and coated. Taste and season with more salt and pepper if needed.



Text by Shilpa Uskokovic
and Nina Moskowitz

Let them



SHILPA USKOKOVIC'S CAKES FOR EVERY OCCASION

eat love kyle

●
Photographs by
Joe Lingeman



PB&J DOME CAKE
P. 45

FOOD STYLING BY SHILPA USKOKOVIC ● PROP STYLING BY MARINA BEVILACQUA





TAHINI HOT FUDGE SKILLET CAKE

6 SERVINGS

If cake had a personality, this one would be the people pleaser. Gluten-free? “Pick me!” it would say. Dairy-free? “Choose me!” No mixer? “I’m your pal.” Intensely chocolaty with a brownie-like chew, it has a little something for everyone. (Semisweet chocolate contains no dairy by default but check your package to be sure.) Thanks to its slick viscosity, tahini magically emulsifies with water and chocolate for a smooth, satiny sauce that rivals any ice cream shop version. For the fudgiest texture, be careful not to overmix the batter.

CAKE

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for skillet
- 1 cup (100 g) blanched almond flour or almond meal
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup (packed; 200 g) light brown sugar
- ½ cup (40 g) Dutch-process cocoa powder
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 large eggs
- 1 cup (170 g) semisweet chocolate chips (about 50% cacao; preferably Guittard)

SAUCE AND ASSEMBLY

- ¼ cup (packed; 50 g) light brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp. Dutch-process cocoa powder
- ½ cup (85 g) semisweet chocolate chips (about 50% cacao; preferably Guittard)

- ⅓ cup (75 g) well-stirred tahini
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- Vanilla ice cream (dairy-free if desired; for serving)
- Flaky sea salt

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Lightly grease bottom and sides of a 9"-diameter ovenproof skillet, preferably cast iron, with oil. Whisk almond flour, cornstarch, and baking powder in a medium bowl until well combined.

Vigorously whisk brown sugar, cocoa powder, vanilla, kosher salt, ½ cup oil, and ¼ cup room-temperature water in a large bowl until combined and smooth. Add eggs and whisk to combine. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in dry ingredients and chocolate chips until just incorporated, scraping down sides and bottom of bowl to ensure no dry pockets of flour remain. Scrape batter into prepared skillet; smooth surface.

Bake cake until puffy and set with no visible wet spots on top (cake is fudgy, so a tester isn’t of much use; err on the side of underbaking), 20–30 minutes. Let cool slightly.

SAUCE AND ASSEMBLY While the cake is baking, bring brown sugar, cocoa powder, and ¾ cup water to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high, whisking constantly. Remove from heat, add chocolate chips, and whisk until melted and smooth. Whisk in tahini, kosher salt, and vanilla until smooth (mixture will thicken once tahini is added). Let cool 10–15 minutes.

To serve, scoop ice cream onto warm cake and drizzle with a few spoonfuls of fudge sauce. Sprinkle with a small pinch of sea salt. Serve with remaining fudge sauce alongside.

A CAKE FOR YOUR NEXT DINNER PARTY

Tahini Hot Fudge Skillet Cake

•••

Dinner party planning can sometimes feel like a brain teaser, as you piece together a menu that satisfies everyone’s tastes and dietary restrictions.

Your search for the perfect recipe can stop here. This gluten- and dairy-free brownie-like cake, finished with a warming hot fudge spiked with nutty tahini, is so rich and decadent, you and your guests won’t miss a thing. Pair it with a dairy-free ice cream of your choice.

CONFETTI CAKE WITH CHOCOLATE FROSTING

12 SERVINGS

When it comes to sprinkles, choose wisely. Tiny multicolored nonpareils immediately dissolve into a streaky mess of color. Instead, look for ice-cream-parlor-style rainbow sprinkles or flat, round confetti quins (available online and at baking or craft supply stores) for distinct dashes of color. To achieve the silkiest frosting, first bring the sour cream to room temperature. Fridge-cold sour cream will harden the melted chocolate on contact, resulting in tiny shards that are impossible to fish out. Even if you think you're too grown-up for milk chocolate, use it anyway for a well-balanced frosting.

CAKE

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) unsalted butter, room temperature, cut into 1" pieces, plus more for pans
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 Tbsp. whole milk
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (281 g) bleached cake flour
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (300 g) granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (115 g) sour cream
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. almond extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup rainbow sprinkles or confetti quins

FROSTING AND ASSEMBLY

- 12 oz. milk chocolate, chopped (preferably Guittard)
- 12 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped (about 50% cacao; preferably Guittard)
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sour cream, room temperature
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- Rainbow sprinkles or confetti quins (for decorating)

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Lightly grease sides of two 8"-diameter cake pans with butter (do not grease bottoms). Line pans with parchment paper rounds. Whisk eggs and milk in a small bowl to blend; set aside.

Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda in the bowl of stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on low speed until well combined, about 1 minute. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

butter, increase speed to medium-low, and beat until mixture resembles breadcrumbs, about 1 minute. Add sour cream, vanilla, and almond extract; beat until batter is pale and fluffy, about 1 minute.

Add reserved egg mixture to batter in 4 or 5 additions, beating to blend between additions and scraping down sides of bowl with a rubber spatula as needed; batter should be smooth and creamy. Fold in sprinkles until evenly dispersed. Scrape batter into prepared pans, dividing equally (about 590 g per pan); smooth surface with an offset spatula.

Bake cakes until golden and tops spring back when lightly pressed (an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should register 205°, 25–30 minutes. (Cakes may start to shrink slightly from edges of pan.) Transfer pans to a wire rack and let cakes cool 10–15 minutes. Run an offset spatula around sides of cakes to loosen, then invert onto rack; peel away parchment. Let cakes cool completely, at least 1 hour.

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

FROSTING AND ASSEMBLY Heat milk chocolate and semisweet chocolate in a large heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water (do not let bowl touch water), stirring with a rubber spatula, until just melted and smooth, about 5 minutes. Remove bowl from heat. Vigorously whisk in sour cream, salt, and vanilla until mixture is smooth and resembles pudding (it may look stiff at first, but keep stirring). Use immediately. (If frosting feels very loose—might happen if the chocolate was very hot—let sit at room temperature 20–30 minutes to firm up slightly before assembling cake.)

Place 1 cake layer, right side up, on a cake stand or large plate (use a cake turntable if you've got one; it makes frosting easier). Scoop a heaping cupful of frosting on top and spread evenly with offset spatula. Place second cake layer, upside down, on top. Spread top and sides of cake evenly with remaining frosting. Using a spoon or offset spatula, create decorative swirls and divots in frosting if desired. Top with sprinkles (the limit does not exist). Let cake sit at room temperature at least 30 minutes to allow frosting to firm up slightly before serving.

DO AHEAD: Cake can be assembled 12 hours ahead. Cover with a cake dome or an inverted bowl and store at cool room temperature.

A CAKE FOR EVERY BIRTHDAY

Confetti Cake With Chocolate Frosting

...

If there's only one cake you ever learn to make, let it be this. Yellow cake swaddled in chocolate frosting is perhaps the defining signifier of birthdays and for good reason: It strikes just the right balance of chocolate and vanilla and is soft and colorful on the inside, rich and festive on the outside. This version is cloud-soft thanks to reverse creaming and cake flour (see below), and the shockingly simple frosting tastes like deluxe chocolate custard.

The Backward Technique You Should Know About

...

First introduced to home cooks by the Betty Crocker brand and immortalized in baking genius Rose Levy Beranbaum's seminal book, *The Cake Bible*, reverse creaming is a clever method of mixing the dry ingredients with fat (similar to pie dough or biscuits) before adding the liquid ingredients to make a batter. In doing so, the fat becomes something of a raincoat, wrapping around each flour particle. This raincoat of fat prevents the flour from absorbing too much liquid and forming strong gluten bonds (because liquid + flour = gluten). Then the batter is mixed with a liquid like milk or sour cream to build structure (you need some gluten to actually hold the cake together). The result is a plush, delicate cake that comes together in half the time as the conventional mixing method.





A CAKE FOR THE GREAT BRITISH BAKING SHOW FAN

Victoria Sponge Cake

...

If you too have fantasized of baking in a tent while being politely egged on by cheeky judges, welcome to the *Baking Show* fan club. Indulge your yearnings over a slice of this British classic, a jam-filled, cream-slathered marvel. Our recipe hinges on some international diplomacy, borrowing very American elements such as a hot milk sponge (see right) for lofty layers and a smidge of instant vanilla pudding powder for a cream filling that stays resolutely billowy over a few days.

VICTORIA SPONGE CAKE

8-12 SERVINGS

Instant vanilla pudding mix will forever change the way you make whipped cream—the modified cornstarch it contains does a spectacular job of absorbing excess moisture, making the whipped cream somehow creamier and yet more stable, able to hold its shape for days in the fridge. Your cake won't last long enough to see this for yourself, but it's still nice to know.

CAKE

- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- 1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 cup (125 g) bleached all-purpose flour
- ½ cup whole milk
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into 1" pieces

FILLING AND ASSEMBLY

- ⅓ cup raspberry or strawberry jam
- 2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¾ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1 Tbsp. instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- Powdered sugar (for dusting)

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Line two 8"-diameter cake pans with parchment paper rounds (do not grease). Beat eggs, granulated sugar, vanilla, and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment on medium speed until pale, fluffy, and nearly tripled in volume, 10–15 minutes (mixture will form an unbroken ribbon when whisk is lifted from bowl). Reduce speed to low, add baking powder, and beat, scraping down sides of bowl halfway through, until well combined, about 1 minute. Add flour and beat until incorporated, about 1 minute (batter will be very thick); scrape down sides and bottom of bowl.

Meanwhile, heat milk and butter in a small saucepan over medium, stirring occasionally with a heatproof rubber spatula, until butter is melted and milk is steaming (but nowhere near boiling), about 4 minutes. Pour milk mixture over batter, scraping saucepan to get every bit. Beat on low speed until combined and batter is smooth, about 2 minutes. Scrape down sides and bottom of bowl and fold gently once or twice to ensure batter is well combined (it will be runny).

Divide batter between prepared pans (about 325 g per pan). Bake cakes until golden brown and tops spring back when lightly pressed, 20–25 minutes. Transfer pans to a wire rack and let cakes cool 10 minutes. Run an offset spatula around sides of cakes to loosen, then invert onto rack; peel away parchment. Let cool completely, about 1 hour.

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

FILLING AND ASSEMBLY Stir together jam, lemon juice, and ¼ tsp. Diamond Crystal or Morton kosher salt in a small bowl.

Whip cream, granulated sugar, pudding mix, vanilla, and remaining ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt in the clean bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment on medium speed until medium-firm peaks form (it's okay if there are tiny lumps of pudding mix; they'll be imperceptible), about 4 minutes. Scrape down sides and bottom of bowl and fold gently to ensure mixture is uniform.

Place 1 cake layer, right side up, on a cake stand or large plate. Spread jam mixture over top, leaving a ¼" border around the edges. Dollop whipped cream over and spread evenly all the way to the edges with an offset spatula. Place second cake layer, upside down, on top and press gently to adhere. Dust lightly with powdered sugar.

To serve, slice cake into wedges with a serrated knife, wiping clean between cuts.

DO AHEAD: Cake (without powdered sugar) can be assembled 1 day ahead. Cover loosely and chill. Bring to room temperature before serving.

What Is a Hot Milk Sponge Cake?

...

Hot milk cake occupies the coveted intersection in the Venn diagram of pound cake (tender, buttery) and sponge cake (light, airy). Here's how it works: When whole eggs and sugar are whipped to a froth without being heated first, they form a voluminous but somewhat fragile foam (like a bubble bath). Adding scalding hot milk (with a temperature around 180°) begins to ever so gently cook the eggs, strengthening their proteins so the foam remains stable without collapsing.

CARROT SHEET CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE WHIP

12-16 SERVINGS

Think of this cake as a lesson in making good choices—choose to use slim, tender carrots instead of those massive, gnarly things that are often woody and bitter. Pick sticky, sugar-plumped dried pineapple over the sun-dried fruit leather version if possible and you will be well rewarded. If you simply cannot find dried pineapple, opt for golden raisins in an equal quantity.

CAKE

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1½ cups (120 g) pecans
- 2 cups (250 g) bleached all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 10.5 oz. small carrots (about 3), scrubbed, trimmed, cut into 1" pieces
- 3 large eggs, room temperature
- 2 cups (packed; 400 g) light brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 1 cup (140 g) finely chopped dried pineapple rings
- ¼ cup (45 g) finely chopped crystallized ginger

FROSTING AND ASSEMBLY

- 8 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 cups chilled heavy cream
- ⅓ cup (67 g) granulated sugar
- Ground cinnamon (for dusting)

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Lightly coat sides of a 13x9" metal baking pan with nonstick spray. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper. Toast pecans on a small rimmed baking sheet until fragrant and deep brown, 12–18 minutes. Let cool; coarsely chop. Increase oven temperature to 375°.

Vigorously whisk flour and baking powder in a large bowl to combine.

Blend carrots, eggs, brown sugar, oil, cinnamon, salt, and vanilla in a blender until very smooth, about 2 minutes. Add carrot mixture to bowl with dry ingredients and whisk until just combined (some streaks of dry flour should still be visible). Using a rubber spatula, fold in pecans, pineapple, and ginger, scraping down sides and bottom of bowl as needed, until well combined. Scrape batter into prepared pan and jiggle to level surface.



A CAKE TO FEED A CROWD

Carrot Sheet Cake With Cream Cheese Whip

...

Making carrot cake is all fun and games until you break a sweat and shred a knuckle grating all those carrots. Taking a page from Brazilian bolo de cenoura, this sheet cake blends the vegetable right into the batter instead, resulting in a sunset orange treat, softly squidgy from the purée and remarkably easy to make. Chunks of chewy dried pineapple and candied ginger stand in for raisins while the cream cheese frosting is light and airy, a mousse-like delicacy. Baked in a 13x9" pan, this cake is begging to be toted to a spring picnic in the park.

Bake cake until golden brown and top springs back when lightly pressed (an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center should register 200°), 25–30 minutes. Transfer pan to a wire rack and let cake cool, about 1 hour. If you prefer to serve the cake unmolded, invert cake onto rack and peel away parchment, then invert cake, right side up, onto a platter.

FROSTING AND ASSEMBLY Using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat cream cheese, vanilla, and salt in a medium bowl until smooth, about 3 minutes. Add cream and granulated sugar; beat until frosting holds firm peaks, about 5 minutes. Scrape down sides and bottom of bowl; fold gently to ensure mixture is well combined.

Spread frosting over top of cake all the way to the edges with an offset spatula. Using a spoon or offset spatula, create decorative swooshes and swirls in frosting if desired. Dust lightly with cinnamon.

DO AHEAD: Cake can be assembled 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Bring to room temperature before serving.

BAKE THE COVER

PB&J DOME CAKE

12 SERVINGS

Dome cakes seem shrouded in mystery. Though they are often shown off in their finished glory, the secrets of their making are seldom revealed. Consider them declassified now. Yes, you'll need a fair bit of gear—two sets of cake pans, for starters (you'll be making four cake layers and trimming two of them)—but the thrill of the final result is more than worth it. Break up the project over a day or two to make it easier.

CAKE

- 8 large eggs, room temperature, separated
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar
- 2 cups (packed; 400 g) dark brown sugar, divided
- ⅔ cup vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- 2 cups (250 g) cake flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder

STRAWBERRY CREAM

- 1.6 oz. (46 g) freeze-dried strawberries
- 1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- 2 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 4 cups chilled heavy cream
- 2 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract

FILLING AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 ¼ cups chilled heavy cream
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- ⅓ cup (67 g) granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla bean paste or vanilla extract
- ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 8 Tbsp. strawberry jam
- 8 Tbsp. coarsely chopped honey-roasted peanuts
- Food-safe flowers and leaves and freeze-dried strawberries (for decorating)

CAKE Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 350°. Line two 8"-diameter and two 9"-diameter cake pans with parchment paper rounds (do not grease; chiffon cakes rise higher in an ungreased pan). Beat egg whites, salt, cream of tartar, and 1 cup (200 g) brown sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment on medium-low speed until egg whites are broken up, about 30 seconds. Increase speed to medium-high; beat until meringue is glossy and holds medium peaks, 8–10 minutes.

Whisk egg yolks and remaining 1 cup (200 g) brown sugar by hand (or with a hand mixer) in a large bowl until pale and well combined, about 2 minutes (mixture will seem stiff). Whisk in oil, vanilla, and ⅔ cup room-temperature water. Sift flour and baking powder over and whisk vigorously to combine.

Add one fourth of meringue to egg yolk mixture; mix to incorporate. Add remaining meringue in 3 additions, gently folding with a rubber spatula after each addition until only a few streaks remain.

Divide batter among prepared pans to come ¾" up the sides (300 g in each 8" pan; 350 g in each 9" pan) and gently smooth surface. Run a chopstick through batter a few times to break up any large air bubbles. Bake cakes 15 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 325° and continue baking until cakes are golden brown and tops spring back when gently pressed, 15–18 minutes more (smaller cakes may be done first). Invert pans onto 2 wire racks and let cakes cool in pans, about 1 hour. (Cooling cakes upside down reduces shrinkage.)

Turn pans over. Run an offset spatula around sides of cakes to loosen, then invert onto wire racks; peel away parchment.

STRAWBERRY CREAM Working in batches if needed, pulse freeze-dried strawberries, granulated sugar, salt, and lemon zest in a food processor until finely ground. Add cream cheese, cream, and vanilla and process, scraping down sides halfway through, until mixture is thick and mousse-like, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl; cover and chill. Rinse out and dry food processor.

DO AHEAD: Strawberry cream can be made 1 day ahead. Keep chilled.

FILLING AND ASSEMBLY Pulse cream, peanut butter, granulated sugar, vanilla, and salt in food processor, scraping down sides as needed, until mixture is thick and creamy, about 1 minute (it's okay if some sugar remains undissolved). Transfer to a small bowl.

Line a large bowl (10"–11"-diameter at top; 4"–5"-diameter at base) with plastic wrap, leaving a 6" overhang. Using a 4"–5"-diameter plate or bowl as a template (size should match base of large bowl), cut out a round from one 8" cake layer (scraps are baker's treat). Using a 6"-diameter plate or bowl as a template, cut out a round from one 9" cake layer. Transfer 2 ½ cups strawberry cream to a piping bag (no tip needed) or a plastic bag with ¼" cut diagonally from 1 corner.

Place smallest cake layer in large bowl (it should sit flush against base) and spread 2 Tbsp. jam evenly over top. Spoon about ¼ cup (65 g) peanut butter filling on top of jam and spread evenly with an offset spatula. Scatter 2 Tbsp. peanuts over filling. Pipe strawberry cream to fill in gap between cake and bowl. Stack 6" cake layer on top; spread with 3 Tbsp. jam, then with about ½ cup (130 g) peanut butter filling. Pipe strawberry cream around cake to fill gaps. Scatter 3 Tbsp. peanuts over filling. Stack 8" cake layer on top and spread with remaining 3 Tbsp. jam, then with about 1 cup (260 g) peanut butter filling. Pipe strawberry cream around cake to fill gaps. Scatter remaining 3 Tbsp. peanuts over filling. Stack 9" cake layer on top, pressing down firmly to adhere. Bring plastic overhang up and over to cover. Chill until cream is set, about 1 hour.

Peel back plastic from surface of cake. Place a cake stand or large plate upside down over bowl and invert; unmold cake and carefully remove plastic. Set aside ½ cup strawberry cream for decorating; spread remaining strawberry cream in an even layer over top and sides of cake with offset spatula, mounding cream on top slightly to create a more pronounced dome shape. (For the cleanest dome shape, use a 9x4" strip of acetate—a flexible plastic sheet—to smooth strawberry cream: Grip ends of acetate and pull gently up slope of dome and down the other side, rotating cake as you go.) Chill cake, uncovered, at least 1 hour and up to 8 hours.

Just before serving, transfer reserved strawberry cream to a piping bag fitted with a St. Honore or other petal tip or to a plastic bag with ¼" cut diagonally from 1 corner. Pipe squiggles over cake. Press flowers, leaves, and freeze-dried strawberries onto surface of cake as desired.

DO AHEAD: Cake (without decorations) can be assembled 1 day ahead. Cover loosely and keep chilled.

A CAKE FOR THE PROJECT BAKER

PB&J Dome Cake



The dome cake is the It girl of cakes; she's completely unique and impeccably styled, and she has likely showed up on your social feed. Always wondered how to make one? It's by no means a piece of cake, but if you like an artful project (this one involves stacking layers of varying-size cakes) and obsessing over details, follow along. It's glued together with a whipped peanut butter filling and finished with a strawberry cream; we promise it's worth the elbow grease.

Seriously, Use the Flour We Call For in the Recipe (Please)



Annoying but true: The recipes in this story perform best with bleached all-purpose and cake flours. Let us explain why.

CAKE FLOUR

With its low-protein content (5%–8%) and extra-fine particle size, cake flour bakes up into the most delicate, tall, and tight-crumbed cake. It can absorb more liquid and sugar than all-purpose flour, resulting in velvety cakes that keep well for longer. High-ratio cakes (with a high percentage of sugar to flour) like the confetti cake or fragile cakes like chiffon really benefit from exclusively using cake flour. The common substitute of all-purpose flour cut with cornstarch lacks the chemical structure to perform as well as real cake flour. Just buy the box. You're worth it.

BLEACHED FLOUR

Some flours tout the fact that they are unbleached as a point of pride. Though there are some advantages, bleached flour has some selling points too. Bleaching or chlorinating flour (no, it's not the same as the bottle under your sink) alters its starch granules and pH, so fat and sugar disperse more efficiently and evenly. The decreased pH prevents cakes from browning too much and too fast. And cakes made with bleached flour generally rise higher than those made with unbleached.





DON'T CALL IT

TEX-MEX

The culinary tradition of South and West Texas is more than a cute abbreviation. Chefs who call the region home honor its history and push the cuisine forward—with vibrant, homey dishes at their restaurants in Texas and beyond

BY KENDRA VACULIN ▲ FOOD PHOTOGRAPHS BY ISA ZAPATA

Rancho Lewis in Charleston, South Carolina, Arredondo trained her staff to remove *authentic* from their vocabularies. “We get asked, ‘Is this traditional?’ I say, ‘No, this is regional.’” San Antonio-born Dave and Krystiana Rizo, owners of NYC’s Yellow Rose, agree. “We don’t wake up in the morning and say, ‘I’m going to eat a Tex-Mex breakfast,’” Dave says. “It’s just what we eat.”

What unifies South and West Texas cuisine is not a name, then, but a spirit—a scrappy commitment to using what’s around, even if the result strays from the inspiration. It’s an ethos fostered by migration and finding yourself without familiar comforts, which Pete Cortez, a third-generation member of the family behind San Antonio institution Mi Tierra, imagines his grandparents experiencing. “You can’t help adapting to what’s available to you,” he says. “Chili con carne is different from what you would have made in Mexico. You’re using yellow cheese instead of white, flour tortillas versus corn—that’s adaptation.”

Texans who have opened restaurants outside the state bring that perspective with them; by embracing their new surroundings, they reimagine the food they grew up eating. When Briana Valdez moved from Austin to LA, she says, “I went searching for breakfast tacos, queso, margaritas like I remembered—it made me even more homesick that I couldn’t find them here.” At her restaurant, HomeState, products from local vendors inform the Texan menu. Dave Rizo applies a similar ethos at Yellow Rose. “People might be surprised to come to a Texas restaurant and be served a chicories salad, but New York has amazing produce,” he says. “There are a lot of opportunities here to expand what it means to be Texan Mexican American.”

But culinary evolution is not reserved for Texas expats; as appetites and demographics within the state change, so do local restaurants. At Houston institution Ninfa’s, chef Alex Padilla began his tenure by reworking the menu in response to contemporary tastes. “I can’t eat lard every day, so I use olive oil instead,” he says. Chef Miguel Vidal opened Austin food trailer Valentina’s Tex Mex BBQ

as evidence that two beloved food traditions could grow together. “You can get your classic brisket plate with white bread and barbecue sauce, but most people opt to have tortillas,” he says. It isn’t a hybrid; it’s just South and West Texas—a place where change and ingenuity show up on the plate.

MEX

Covering 1,254 miles of riverbank switchbacks, desert and hill country, from the Rio Grande Valley to Paso del Norte—the Texas-Mexico border is as expansive and complex as the culture born along it. But in every town you’ll find variations of the same culinary tradition, united not by specific ingredients but a dedication to making do with what you have. “This is where a hyper-regional cuisine formed,” says Patty Arredondo, a front-of-house professional originally from the South Texas border. “And that became ‘Tex-Mex’—finger quotes for sure.”

Texas-born Mexican chefs are quick to tell you that their cooking reflects their own experiences, not some imaginary monolith called “Tex-Mex.” How could it? “The food in McAllen is different from the food just 45 minutes away in Brownsville,” Arredondo says. When she helped open the Texas-border-style restaurant

Food styling by Micah Morton Prop styling by Tim Ferro

▲
Dave Rizo of Yellow Rose prefers a queso that's slightly runnier than the standard. A queso with too much body, he says, "will start thickening almost immediately since it's purely cheese." This recipe reflects his desire for a dip that's "pourable even when completely cooled"—with a subtle beer flavor.

LONE STAR
BEER QUESO
FUNDIDO
P. 56



▲
Briana Valdez's punchy green salsa has helped make HomeState's migas an LA favorite. Blending cilantro with water before adding roasted tomatillos, chiles, and onion to the mix creates an herbaceous salsa you'll want to use on more than just migas.

MIGAS WITH
GREEN SALSA



MIGAS WITH GREEN SALSA

4 SERVINGS

Frying your own corn tortilla strips creates a uniquely flavorful base, but if you're in a rush, you can use store-bought tortilla chips instead.

- 1 small yellow onion, very coarsely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 serrano chile, halved
- 8 oz. tomatillos (about 4 medium), husks removed, rinsed
- 6 Tbsp. vegetable oil, plus more
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 1 small bunch cilantro, coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 8 large eggs
- 4 corn tortillas, halved, cut into ½"-thick strips
- 3 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- 3 oz. sharp cheddar, coarsely grated
- Freshly ground pepper
- Flour tortillas, sliced avocado, pickled sliced jalapeños, and lime wedges (for serving)

Preheat oven to 400°. Place yellow onion, garlic, chile, and tomatillos in a medium bowl. Drizzle with oil, season with salt, and toss to coat. Arrange tomatillos on a rimmed baking sheet; roast 10 minutes. Add onion, garlic, and chile; roast until charred in spots, 20–25 minutes. Let cool slightly.

Blend cilantro and ½ cup water in a blender until smooth. Add roasted vegetables, lime juice, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Blend until mostly smooth. Set salsa aside.

Beat eggs in a medium bowl with a fork to combine; season with salt.

Heat remaining 6 Tbsp. oil in a large nonstick pan over medium-high. Drop in a corn tortilla strip; if oil sizzles it is ready (heat a little longer if needed). Working in 2 batches, cook strips, stirring often to avoid clumps and adjusting heat as needed, until golden, 2–3 minutes per batch. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels; season with salt.

Pour off all but 1 Tbsp. oil from pan. Add butter and heat over medium until melted. Add white onion; season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally with a heatproof rubber spatula, until slightly softened and translucent, about 5 minutes.

Pour eggs into pan and cook, stirring gently and adjusting heat to medium-low if you prefer a softer scramble, just until eggs start to come together, about 45 seconds. Add fried tortillas and quickly stir into eggs. Immediately add cheese and cook, stirring occasionally, until cheese is melted, about 1 minute. Transfer to a plate and season with pepper.

Serve migas with flour tortillas, avocado, pickled jalapeños, lime wedges, and reserved salsa alongside.

CARNE GUISADA

4–6 SERVINGS

This slow-cooked stew is worth the long braise time; you'll be rewarded for your patience with tender, shreddy short ribs in a deeply flavorful sauce.

- 2 medium onions, divided
- 8 garlic cloves, divided
- 3–4 lb. boneless beef short ribs, cut into 4" pieces
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 Tbsp. plus 2¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- 1 lb. red potatoes, peeled, cut into 1" pieces
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 lb. tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 6 oz. tomatillos (about 3 medium), coarsely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, ribs and seeds removed, coarsely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, ribs and seeds removed, coarsely chopped

- 1 small jalapeño, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1½ tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- Freshly ground pepper
- Cilantro sprigs (for serving)

Cut 1 onion in half and smash 4 garlic cloves. Place short ribs in a large heavy pot. Add bay leaf, smashed garlic, an onion half, and 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt; pour in water just to cover meat. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, occasionally skimming foam from surface, until meat is nearly fork-tender, about 3 hours. Transfer meat to a large bowl. Strain braising liquid through a fine-mesh sieve into a medium bowl; discard solids. Set liquid aside.

Meanwhile, cook potatoes in a medium pot of salted boiling water until just fork-tender, 8–10 minutes. Drain; set aside.

When short ribs are almost done braising, coarsely chop remaining 1½ onions and finely chop remaining 4 garlic cloves. Heat oil in another large heavy pot. Cook onions, garlic, tomatoes, tomatillos, both bell peppers, jalapeño, and 2 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 Tbsp. plus ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened, 18–22 minutes. Add tomato paste, cumin, and coriander; season generously with black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are coated and mixture is pasty, about 4 minutes.

Add short ribs, potatoes, and 3 cups reserved braising liquid to pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until meat falls apart easily, 65–75 minutes. Let cool slightly; ladle into bowls and top with cilantro.

CARNE GUISADA



▲ One pot of tender carne guisada can be the starting point for many meals, and that's what makes the dish so popular, according to Ninfa's chef, Alex Padilla. "Make tacos, tortas, or for breakfast, make a carne guisada hash with a fried egg on top."

TEX-MEX CAESAR SALAD





TEX-MEX CAESAR SALAD

4 SERVINGS

Chile-powder-and-Cotija-crust croutons, crumbled queso fresco, and creamy avocado add crunch, a little heat, and richness to the traditional Caesar template.

- 1 Tbsp. chopped oregano
- 1 Tbsp. thyme leaves
- 4 garlic cloves, finely grated, divided
- 3 Tbsp. plus $\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. plus $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. red chile powder
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 3 cups torn bite-size pieces sourdough bread
- 4 Tbsp. finely grated Cotija cheese, divided, plus more for serving
- 4 oil-packed anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- Zest and juice of 1 lime
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 Tbsp. chopped cilantro, plus more for serving
- 2 large romaine hearts, coarsely chopped
- 1 avocado, coarsely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled queso fresco

Preheat oven to 375°. Whisk oregano, thyme, 1 grated garlic clove, 3 Tbsp. oil, and 1 Tbsp. red chile powder in a small bowl; season with pepper. Place bread on a rimmed baking sheet; drizzle oil mixture over. Season with salt, then scatter 2 Tbsp. Cotija cheese on top and toss to coat. Spread out in a single layer and bake until bread is golden and crisp, 12–17 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook anchovies, remaining garlic, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. red chile powder in a small skillet over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until anchovies begin to fall apart and dissolve into oil, about 2 minutes. Let cool.

Whisk lime zest and juice, mayonnaise, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and 2 Tbsp. cilantro in a medium bowl; season with salt and pepper. Whisk in anchovy mixture, then gently stir 2 Tbsp. Cotija cheese into dressing.

Toss croutons, romaine hearts, avocado, and more Cotija cheese in a large bowl. Drizzle dressing over and toss to coat. Top with queso fresco and more cilantro.

▲
Bar Amá's take on the classic Caesar salad is emblematic of chef Josef Centeno's view on the cuisine as a whole. "I always say the only thing authentic about Tex-Mex is it isn't authentic," he says. "It evolves and adapts."



1. NINFA'S, HOUSTON

“There are tons of restaurants in Houston, and at every one you’ll talk to someone who worked at Ninfa’s,” says chef Alex Padilla. Founded by local legend Mama Ninfa, the 50-year-old establishment continues to inspire new generations with its commitment to making everything from scratch. “Even for the margaritas,” says Padilla, “we squeeze lime juice every hour and a half.”

2. RANCHO LEWIS, CHARLESTON, SC

Helmed by El Paso native John Lewis and South Texas-born Patty Arredondo, Rancho Lewis boasts a menu of Mexican border classics and mesquite-grilled dishes, tapping into Lewis’s pitmaster experience. “[John’s story and mine] are so similar, despite our color, because we’re both border kids,” Arredondo says. Rancho Lewis focuses on the food of Paso del Norte, where West Texas, Chihuahua, Mexico, and New Mexico meet. Says Arredondo, “It’s a very beautiful history on a plate.”

3. MI TIERRA, SAN ANTONIO

Pedro Cortez opened Mi Tierra in 1941; since then it’s become the cornerstone of a robust restaurant group, with a bakery, butchery, and produce commissary run out of the original location’s basement. “The building has taken on a life of its own,” says Pedro’s grandson Pete of what makes the beloved spot synonymous with San Antonio. “People know the restaurant because of the year-round Christmas lights and the hanging piñatas.”

4. VALENTINA'S TEX MEX BBQ, AUSTIN

After years working in kitchens, chef Miguel Vidal looked to his family for inspiration when planning to open his own spot. “I went home to San Antonio to visit, and my dad made a brisket, a rack of ribs, and some chicken, and my mom made enchiladas, fresh tortillas, and salsa,” Vidal says. “I was like, ‘Oh, this is it right here.’” His popular Austin food trailer is known for dishes that lean heavily on smoke and fire, pairing Texas barbecue classics like brisket and beef ribs with guacamole and Mexican rice.



PHOTOGRAPHS: TERRY VINE (NINFA'S); PETER FRANK EDWARDS (RANCHO LEWIS); NIKKREATIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO (MI TIERRA); BRYAN SCHUTTMAT (VALENTINA'S); VICTOR LLORENTE (YELLOW ROSE); DYLAN & JENI (BAR AMÁ)

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5. YELLOW ROSE, NEW YORK CITY

In Manhattan's East Village, Dave and Krystiana Rizo pay homage to their San Antonio roots with a playful menu that changes daily—including a weekend brunch of tacos and doughnuts. “When I was little I would have a bean-and-cheese and a powdered sugar doughnut for breakfast,” Krystiana says. “Now I love having the food I grew up with on Saturdays and Sundays.”

▲

6. HOMESTATE, LOS ANGELES

Briana Valdez moved all over Texas while growing up, but didn't dedicate her life to making the food of her childhood until she moved to California and felt a migas-shaped hole in her heart. “After a decade of wishing someone would open the restaurant of my dreams in the beautiful city of LA, I decided to give it a go myself,” she says. Now her menu tells her story proudly through more than just food: “I named all the breakfast tacos after rivers in Texas,” she says. “Texans come in and say, ‘Okay, this is home.’”

▲

7. BAR AMÁ, LOS ANGELES

San Antonio-born chef and author Josef Centeno marries his culinary heritage with the bounty of LA through his restaurant and cookbook, both named for his grandmother Amá. “I showcase a version of Tejano cooking that I grew up with—simple cooking that wasn't authentically Mexican but not the melted-cheese-topped stuff people usually talk about when describing Tex-Mex,” he says.

BEEF FAJITAS

4-6 SERVINGS

This recipe is designed to give you optimal restaurant-style fajita sizzle. The trick? Heat your cast-iron skillet on the stove until very hot, then pile in the grilled onions and peppers and sliced steak and drizzle seasoned butter over, making sure to get it on the exposed edges of the skillet. You'll get an audible and visible smoke show!

STEAK

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ⅓ cup red chile powder (preferably sun-dried Hatch)
- 4 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 6 large garlic cloves
- Zest of 3 limes
- ⅓ cup fresh lime juice
- 3 Tbsp. fresh orange juice
- 1⅓ cups soy sauce
- ⅔ cup Worcestershire sauce
- 2 Tbsp. light or dark brown sugar
- ½ tsp. celery salt
- 2½ lb. trimmed skirt steak

VEGETABLES AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. red chile powder (preferably sun-dried Hatch)
- 1 tsp. granulated sugar
- 4½ tsp. vegetable oil, plus more for grill
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- Zest of 2 limes
- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 2 large onions, sliced into ½"-thick rings
- 2 large red bell peppers, ribs and seeds removed, sliced into ½"-thick rings
- Flour tortillas, salsa, guacamole, sour cream, shredded iceberg lettuce, and lime wedges (for serving)

STEAK Heat oil in a small saucepan until warm. Remove from heat and stir in chile powder, black pepper, and cumin. Let sit 30 minutes to infuse.

Pour oil mixture into blender; add garlic, lime zest, lime juice, orange juice, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, celery salt, and 2 cups water and blend until smooth.

Cut steak crosswise into 4" pieces, then prick all over on both sides with a paring knife (this helps the marinade permeate all the way into meat more easily). Place steak into a large airtight container or resealable plastic bag and scrape in marinade. Cover or close and chill 4-6 hours. (Don't go longer or the acid in the marinade will begin to cook the meat, resulting in a mealy texture when finished.)

DO AHEAD: Marinade can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and chill.

VEGETABLES AND ASSEMBLY Mix salt, chile powder, and granulated sugar in a large heatproof bowl to combine.

Remove steak from marinade and pat dry with paper towels; discard marinade. Place steak on a baking sheet; sprinkle all over with almost all of salt mixture. Chill at least 15 minutes and up to 45 minutes (making sure the steak is cold when it hits the grill helps prevent overcooking).

Prepare a grill for high heat; oil grate. Melt butter in small saucepan over medium heat. Remove from heat and stir in lime zest and garlic.

Add onions, bell peppers, and remaining 4½ tsp. oil to remaining salt mixture in bowl and toss to coat. Transfer onions and bell peppers to grate and grill, turning halfway through, until lightly charred, 2-4 minutes. Return to bowl and drizzle about 2 Tbsp. lime-garlic butter over; toss to coat. Cover and keep warm until ready to use.

Grill steak, turning every minute or so, until evenly charred on both sides and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part registers about 128°, about 5 minutes total. Transfer steak to a clean baking sheet and brush both sides with some lime-garlic butter. Tent with foil and let rest about 5 minutes.

Heat a dry large cast-iron skillet over high until very hot. Slice steak against the grain ½" thick. Transfer vegetables to skillet and top with steak. Drizzle remaining lime-garlic butter around edges (it will sizzle and steam). Serve with tortillas, salsa, guacamole, sour cream, lettuce, and lime wedges for building fajitas.

LONE STAR BEER QUESO FUNDIDO

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

Sodium citrate—available online and in some specialty stores—is the key to super smooth and homogenous queso. To make a version without it, replace the sharp white cheddar in this recipe with a cheese product that already includes sodium citrate in its ingredient list, like Velveeta; proceed with the rest of the recipe as written.

- 1 12-oz. bottle Lone Star beer or any lager or Pilsner
- 2 Tbsp. sodium citrate
- 8 oz. sharp white cheddar, coarsely grated
- 8 oz. mild, medium, or sharp yellow cheddar, coarsely grated
- ¼ tsp. sugar
- ½ cup coarsely chopped sliced pickled jalapeños, plus slices for serving
- ¼ cup crumbled cooked fresh chorizo



- 2 Tbsp. coarsely grated Oaxaca cheese or Monterey Jack
- Store-bought toasted breadcrumbs or panko, cilantro leaves with tender stems, and tortilla chips (for serving)

Bring beer just to a simmer in a medium heavy pot over medium-high heat. Whisking constantly, add sodium citrate



BEEF FAJITAS

(mixture will froth up and fill pot), then whisk in both white and yellow cheddar. Reduce heat to medium and cook, whisking often, until cheese is completely melted and mixture is velvety and just slightly thickened (you want it to be thin and runny), 6–9 minutes. Remove pot from heat and mix in sugar and ½ cup chopped pickled jalapeños; season queso with pepper.

Heat broiler. Scrape queso into a small ovenproof dish and top evenly with chorizo and Oaxaca cheese. Broil until Oaxaca cheese is melted and golden brown, 2–3 minutes. Remove from broiler and top with breadcrumbs, cilantro, and sliced pickled jalapeños to your liking.

Serve queso with tortilla chips alongside for dipping.

▲
“Cattlemen were given less-than-ideal and hard-to-cook cuts of beef and survived by making them edible,” says Rancho Lewis’s Patty Arredondo. By marinating skirt steak to tenderize and imbue it with flavor, then grilling it with peppers and onions, Tejanos created a dish that was not only resourceful but delicious.

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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■
Recipes by Zaynab Issa
Photographs by Isa Zapata

FREEZER



Imagine waking up on a Tuesday morning, rushed to make your 10 a.m. meeting, and finding the ooziest, meltiest egg 'n' cheese sandwich on hold just for you. Or coming home on a Thursday night from the *longest day ever* and having a creamy, steamy bowl of soup ready with just the push of a button. That's the power of freezer-friendly meals.

To come up with recipes for this story, I spent a long time considering all the situations in which I wished to have a dish ready but had to spend 30-plus minutes making it instead. What kinds of meals are best made ahead? How about lasagna—lying in wait for when a friend has an emergency and needs dinner *now*. Or muffins—when an early morning road trip beckons and I long for a low-maintenance portable breakfast. Or savory heat-and-serve pastries—for when the doorbell rings unexpectedly and uncles and cousins need something to snack on with their chai.

The key to a freezer-friendly dish is that it must be just as good after its cryogenic slumber as it is when it's fresh. Whether you're simply giving it the old microwave nuke-and-go or adding post-freeze elements to jazz it up (like frizzled shallots or Calabrian chile mayo) after a bake, the key here is convenience. Just don't forget to say a little thank you to past-you before you dig in. —Zaynab Issa

When it comes to cooking, looking out for Future You is probably the best thing Present You can do. These five reheat-ready recipes are here to assist



FRIENDLY

Food styling by
PEARL JONES

Prop styling by
STEPHANIE DE LUCA



**BROWN-BUTTER
BANANA NUT
MUFFINS**





BROWN-BUTTER BANANA NUT MUFFINS

MAKES 12

Ideal for breakfast or a mid-afternoon pick-me-up, these muffins pack in the nutty factor thanks to toasted nuts, brown butter, and enough whole grain flour to keep them interesting without weighing them down. Chocolate chips add complexity and work oh-so-well with the bananas. Best of all, the batter comes together in one bowl, meaning minimal cleanup.

- ½ cup chopped raw walnuts or pecans
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- 3 large very ripe bananas
- 2 large eggs
- ¾ cup (150 g) sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1½ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (63 g) whole wheat flour
- ½ cup semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 375°. Line cups of a standard 12-cup muffin pan with liners. Toast walnuts in a

dry medium skillet over medium heat, tossing often, until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Transfer to a plate and let cool. Wipe out skillet with paper towels if needed.

Add butter to same skillet and cook over medium until fragrant and milk solids turn a deep golden brown, about 4 minutes. Scrape butter into a large bowl and let cool 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, mash bananas on a cutting board or a large plate with a fork until mostly smooth.

Transfer bananas to bowl with butter and add eggs, sugar, and vanilla and whisk vigorously to incorporate. Add baking powder, baking soda, and salt and mix to combine. Add all-purpose and whole wheat flours and mix until mostly incorporated. Add walnuts and chocolate chips and mix just until evenly distributed and batter is completely combined.

Divide batter evenly among muffin cups (about 6 Tbsp. per cup; they should be almost completely full). Bake muffins until golden brown and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 18–24 minutes. Let muffins cool in pan slightly before serving.

DO AHEAD: Muffins can be baked 3 months ahead. Freeze in resealable plastic bags. Thaw at room temperature overnight or in the microwave in 30-second bursts before serving.

12 Things You Might Not Be Freezing But Should

By Alex Beggs

When you google “can I freeze ___?” you might be discouraged by the results. But while some foods don’t defrost with the exact same texture they had going into the freezer (learn from my grainy queso mistakes), you can always use them in soups, sauces, and comforting bowls of mush. Here are some lesser-frozen foods that freeze just fine indeed.

Leftover canned pumpkin

Citrus zest

Cooked rice or grains

Cornbread

All-purpose curry base (see bonappetit.com for recipe)

Fresh chiles (to cook)

The dregs of a can of tomato paste

Whole peeled ginger

Caramelized onions

Cooked sofrito

Ginger-scallion sauce

Chiles in adobo

ROASTED CARROT SOUP
WITH CRISPY SHALLOTS
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■ Seal the Deal ■

If you're serious about freezing, consider investing in a **Zwilling Fresh & Save vacuum sealer** (\$100, zwilling.com). It's sleek, like a pepper grinder designed by Apple, with a circular mouth that sucks all the oxygen out of your food storage bag, making everything more compact so you can cram more stuff in the freezer. My freezer is loaded with airtight sheets of paratha, vegetable stems for stock, and cookie dough balls. It looks like astronaut food and stacks so easily that I've lost track of how much I've got in there. But a little mystery never hurt anybody. —A.B.





SPINACH AND
RICOTTA LASAGNA
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CORONATION CHICKEN PASTRIES

MAKES 18

The chicken salad filling for these pastries takes its inspiration from the one served at Queen Elizabeth II's coronation luncheon. We kept the signature curry powder but made our own creamy dressing and added dried cranberries for a hint of sweetness. While most often used to make sandwiches, baking this filling up in flaky pastry makes it nothing short of irresistible and perfect for impromptu entertaining, or just dinner.

- 3 scallions, thinly sliced
- 3 cups shredded rotisserie chicken
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup chopped dried cranberries
- 2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. curry powder
- 1 17.3-oz. package frozen puff pastry, thawed
- All-purpose flour (for surface)
- 1 large egg, beaten to blend
- Flaky sea salt

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 375°. Place scallions, chicken, mayonnaise, dried cranberries, and mustard in a medium bowl. Heat oil and curry powder in a small skillet over medium, stirring often, until foaming and fragrant, 30–60 seconds. Pour oil into bowl with chicken and mix well.

Working with 1 sheet at a time, unfold puff pastry on a lightly floured surface and roll out to a 12x12" square. Cut into nine 4x4" squares with a knife.

Place a heaping 1 Tbsp. filling in 1 corner of bottom half of a square. Press down on filling to spread out, making sure to leave a 1/4" border around edges. Fold dough in half on a diagonal up and over filling to make a triangle; pinch edges together to seal. Crimp edges with a fork, then cut 3 slits across the top. Repeat with remaining pastry and filling.

Transfer pastries to 2 parchment-lined baking sheets, spacing about 1" apart. Brush tops with egg and sprinkle with sea salt. Bake, rotating baking sheets top to bottom and front to back halfway through, until golden brown and puffed, 30–35 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.

DO AHEAD: Pastries (without egg and sea salt) can be assembled 3 months ahead. Freeze on baking sheets until pastry is solid, about 45 minutes, then transfer to resealable plastic bags or stack in airtight containers between sheets of parchment paper. Brush with egg and sprinkle with sea salt before baking 35–40 minutes.





**CORONATION
CHICKEN PASTRIES**

MAKE-AHEAD EGG AND CHEESE SANDWICHES

8-12 SERVINGS

The quiche-like frittata freezes supremely well due to the addition of heavy cream, which adds enough richness to keep the eggs supple even after a deep freeze.

- Unsalted butter, room temperature (for pan and muffins)
- 2 medium red onions, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided
- 12 large eggs
- 1 jalapeño, finely chopped
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Freshly ground pepper
- 8-12 English muffins, split
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp. Calabrian chile paste or 1-2 Tbsp. sriracha
- 8-12 slices American cheese or cheddar

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 350°. Butter a 13x9" baking dish. Line with parchment paper, leaving overhang on long sides; butter parchment. Place onions on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with oil, sprinkle ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt over, and toss to coat. Arrange in a single layer.

Whisk eggs, jalapeño, cream, remaining 1 ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt in a small bowl to combine; season with pepper. Transfer to prepared baking dish.

Place pan with egg mixture on upper rack and baking sheet with onions on lower rack in oven and bake until egg mixture is puffed around the edges and mostly set in the center (it should only jiggle slightly when tapped), 20-25 minutes. Remove egg mixture from oven and let cool. Transfer onions to upper rack and continue to bake until softened and lightly browned around the edges, 10-15 minutes more. Let cool.

While the onions are cooling, heat broiler. Butter cut sides of English muffins; broil until toasted and golden, about 3 minutes. Let cool. Decrease (or increase) oven temperature to 375°.

Mix mayonnaise and chile paste in a small bowl; set aside.

Run an offset spatula around edges of pan to release egg sheet, then remove from pan. Cut egg evenly into 8-12 pieces, depending on the size of your English muffins. To build sandwiches, stack an egg piece, 1 slice American cheese, and 1-2 Tbsp. onions on bottom half of each English muffin; close up. Wrap individually in parchment paper.

If not making ahead, place sandwiches on a clean baking sheet; bake until heated through and cheese is melted, 9-12 minutes. (You can also microwave 30-45 seconds or leave unwrapped and heat in a cast-iron skillet over medium, about 2 minutes per side.) Unwrap and spread 1 Tbsp. chile mayo over cut side of top half of each English muffin just before serving.

MAKE-AHEAD EGG AND CHEESE SANDWICHES



■ Embrace Lazy Freezing ■

The recipes in this story include clear instructions for every step, but not *everything* you freeze has to be done with precision. Sometimes it's just the easiest way to avoid food waste. Before a vacation, I toss clothespin-clamped bags of spinach, leftover coconut milk, and plastic containers of berries right into the freezer. I didn't lay the berries on a tray first, or blanch the spinach like I was supposed to. Everything will be okay. When I'm back, it's all frozen into clumps that I can break and blend into smoothies. Even if I'm not sure something will freeze (polenta?), I'll try it anyway, because what do I have to lose? Nothing but my precious freezer space. —A.B.

DO AHEAD: Sandwiches (without chile mayo) can be made 3 months ahead. Freeze in parchment paper. Bake in a 375° oven, 10–15 minutes, microwave on high in 30-second bursts, 30–60 seconds, or unwrap and heat in a cast-iron skillet over medium, about 3 minutes per side, to warm. Make chile mayo and spread over sandwiches just before serving.

ROASTED CARROT SOUP WITH CRISPY SHALLOTS

4–6 SERVINGS

This no-pot soup is cooked on a baking sheet in the oven, then gets puréed to serve. It is the ultimate hands-off approach, concentrating the flavors of earthy-sweet carrot with fragrant ginger. If you intend to freeze the soup immediately, let the roasted vegetables cool completely before blending with the chicken broth.

- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 2" pieces
- 4 large shallots, 3 cut into 2" pieces, 1 thinly sliced
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled, halved
- 1½ lb. carrots, peeled, cut into 2" pieces
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- ½ tsp. ground cumin
- Kosher salt
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- Flaky sea salt
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Freshly ground pepper

Preheat oven to 425°. Place bell pepper, chopped shallots, ginger, and carrots on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle ¼ cup olive oil over, sprinkle with cumin, and season with kosher salt. Toss to coat and roast until tender and charred in spots, 35–45 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat vegetable oil in a medium skillet over medium. Cook thinly sliced shallot, stirring often, until deep

golden brown, 5–7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to paper towels to drain; season with sea salt. Let cool until crisp; discard oil.

Transfer roasted vegetables to a blender. Add broth and cream and season with black pepper. Blend on low until puréed, then increase speed to medium-high and blend until smooth. If soup is too thick, thin with up to 1 cup water. Taste soup and season with more kosher salt if needed.

Ladle soup into bowls. Drizzle with olive oil, season with black pepper, and top with crispy shallot.

DO AHEAD: Soup (without toppings) can be made 3 months ahead. Let cool, then transfer to airtight containers and freeze. Let thaw in refrigerator overnight; bring to a simmer with 1 cup water in a medium pot over medium, stirring often; cook until heated through, 8–10 minutes. Or, microwave with 1 cup water in a large microwave-safe bowl in 1-minute increments. (Use water as needed if heating smaller amounts of soup at a time.) Shallot can be fried 3 months ahead. Freeze in a resealable plastic bag. Let thaw at room temperature before using.

SPINACH AND RICOTTA LASAGNA

8–12 SERVINGS

This vegetarian pasta bake features a rich ricotta layer fortified with cream cheese and heavy cream to ensure a lush, cheesy sauce that won't dry out the straight-from-the-box lasagna noodles. That's right! You don't need to precook the noodles; there's plenty of liquid in the recipe to hydrate them as they bake.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for pan
- 5 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided

- 1 16-oz. package frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained
- 1 16-oz. container whole-milk ricotta
- 4 oz. cream cheese, room temperature
- 3 oz. Parmesan, finely grated, plus more for serving
- 1½ cups heavy cream
- Freshly ground pepper
- 15 dried lasagna noodles (from a 16-oz. box; not no-boil)

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease a large 13x9" baking dish with oil. Heat ¼ cup oil in a medium saucepan over medium. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until beginning to brown around edges and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and red pepper flakes and crush tomatoes with a wooden spoon to form a mostly smooth sauce. (If your tomatoes are on the firmer side, use kitchen shears or a potato masher to break up.) Season with 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt and cook until mixture is thickened and flavors have come together, 15–17 minutes. Transfer to a 4-cup heatproof measuring glass and, stirring constantly, pour in water to make 3 cups sauce.

Meanwhile, mix spinach, ricotta, cream cheese, and 3 oz. Parmesan in a large bowl to combine, then mix in cream. Season with black pepper and add remaining 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt.

Pour a scant ½ cup sauce into prepared baking dish and spread into a thin layer just to coat. Place 3 noodles in a single layer on top. Spread 1 cup spinach mixture over evenly. Pour ½ cup sauce on top and spread over evenly. Starting with noodles, repeat process to create 4 more layers. Sprinkle a thin layer of Parmesan on top and cover pan with foil.

If not making ahead, bake lasagna 45 minutes. Heat broiler. Uncover lasagna and broil until top is golden brown and bubbly, about 4 minutes.

DO AHEAD: Lasagna can be assembled 3 months ahead; cover tightly and freeze. Bake, covered, in a 375° oven 45 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 minutes more. Broil about 3 minutes.

COMFORT ZONE

Food styling by
THU BUSER

Prop styling by
GERRI WILLIAMS





Cold weather calls for warm stews. So **RACHEL GURJAR** delivers black pepper beef, spicy pork vindaloo, and more recipes that are as cozy as a roaring fire on a blustery day

Photographs by
ISA ZAPATA



BLACK PEPPER
BEEF STEW
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PIRI-PIRI CHICKEN
STEW WITH KALE
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STEWY MISO EGGPLANT
AND POTATOES
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PORK VINDALOO
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AVGOLEMONO SEAFOOD STEW

4-6 SERVINGS

Avgolemono is a traditional Greek soup or sauce made by thickening broth with beaten egg and lemon to create luscious texture. Both tangy and silky, it usually features rice and chicken, but the treatment works equally well with seafood, as in this variation. Any combination of small clams, cockles, mussels, squid, and/or shrimp will work and take just minutes to poach in the broth. Save the fennel fronds for scattering over the finished bowls just before serving.

- 3 large egg yolks
- 1 large egg
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium fennel bulb, fronds reserved, bulb quartered, cored, thinly sliced
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 lb. small clams (such as littleneck or Manila; about 12), scrubbed
- 1 lb. large shrimp, peeled, deveined
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 1 lb. flaky white fish fillets (such as cod, halibut, or snapper), cut into 4" pieces
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley and/or dill, plus parsley leaves and/or dill sprigs for serving
- Lemon wedges (for serving)

Blend egg yolks, egg, and lemon juice in a blender until smooth.

Heat oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium. Cook fennel bulb, onion, and garlic, stirring often, until fennel is softened and onion is translucent, 6–8 minutes. Add clams, shrimp, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shrimp is just starting to turn opaque, about 4 minutes. Stir in 1½ cups water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer.

Measure out ¾ cup broth in a heatproof measuring glass. With blender on low speed, slowly pour broth into egg mixture and blend to combine. Whisking constantly, slowly pour egg mixture into pot. Arrange fish in pot, overlapping if needed, and bring to a simmer. Reduce

heat to low and add cream and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until fish is opaque throughout and clams have opened, about 4 minutes; discard any clams that haven't opened. Remove from heat and stir in 2 Tbsp. parsley and/or dill. Taste and add more salt if needed.

Ladle stew into shallow bowls; top with fennel fronds and more parsley and/or dill. Serve with lemon wedges.

BLACK PEPPER BEEF STEW

4 SERVINGS

Though widely used, black pepper is rarely a star in its own right. Here it gets a moment in the limelight, shining in a wildly aromatic braise of tender yogurt-marinated chunks of beef fragrant with ginger and garlic. This recipe also harnesses the power of garam masala, with its flavors of cumin, bay leaf, cinnamon, and cloves, to yield a deeply spice-forward stew. Add snow peas and sugar snap peas toward the end to round it out.

- ⅓ cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled, finely chopped, divided
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped, divided
- 1 tsp. plus 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 2¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- 2 lb. boneless beef chuck roast, cut into 1" pieces
- ⅔ cup (or more) vegetable oil, divided
- 2 medium onions, quartered, thinly sliced
- 1 jalapeño, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. ground coriander
- 1 Tbsp. garam masala
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 4 oz. snow peas, trimmed
- 4 oz. sugar snap peas, trimmed
- Cilantro leaves and steamed rice (for serving)

Whisk yogurt, pepper, half of ginger, one third of garlic, and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl to combine. Add beef and toss to coat. Let sit at room temperature at least 20 minutes.

Heat ⅓ cup oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Working in 2 batches and adding

more oil between batches if needed, cook beef until browned on 2 sides, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

Reduce heat to medium and add remaining ⅓ cup oil to pot. Cook onions, jalapeño, and remaining ginger and garlic, stirring occasionally, until onions are translucent and beginning to brown around the edges, 6–8 minutes. Add coriander, garam masala, cumin seeds, and 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt; stir to combine. Cook, stirring occasionally, until onions are deep golden brown, 12–15 minutes.

Return beef to pot along with any juices that have accumulated on plate. Pour in 3 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover pot, and simmer, stirring occasionally and adding up to ½ cup more water if needed, until beef is tender and liquid is reduced by half, 1½–2 hours.

Uncover pot and stir in snow peas and sugar snap peas. Cook, stirring occasionally, until peas are bright green and tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Taste and add more salt if needed.

Divide stew among bowls; top with cilantro. Serve with rice alongside.

DO AHEAD: Beef can be marinated 1 day ahead; cover and chill. Stew (without peas) can be made 3 days ahead. Let cool; cover and chill.

PORK VINDALOO

4-6 SERVINGS

Pork vindaloo is a beloved classic in the Indian state of Goa, where Portuguese influences abound. Its roots lie in the garlic-and-vinegar-based Iberian stew carne de vinha d'alhos, to which it adds the robust earth-and-fire notes of dried chiles. Using two cuts of pork, shoulder and belly, lends extra richness to balance the tangy broth.

- 15 dried Kashmiri chiles or 12 guajillo chiles
- 8 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled
- 1 3" cinnamon stick, broken into pieces
- ½ cup distilled white vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. tamarind paste (optional)
- 1 tsp. black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds

- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- ½ tsp. whole cloves
- 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 1½ lb. skinless, boneless pork shoulder (Boston butt), cut into 1" pieces
- 8 oz. skin-on pork belly, cut into 1" pieces
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, quartered, thinly sliced
- Steamed rice (for serving)

Blend chiles, garlic, ginger, cinnamon stick, vinegar, sugar, tamarind paste (if using), peppercorns, cumin seeds, turmeric, cloves, and 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a blender (preferably high-speed), scraping down sides as needed, until marinade is the consistency of a fine paste.

Place pork shoulder and belly in a medium bowl and pour marinade over; toss to coat. Let sit at room temperature at least 30 minutes.

Heat oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Cook onion, stirring often, until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add pork shoulder and belly along with any marinade remaining in bowl; stir to combine. Pour in 2½ cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover pot, and simmer, stirring occasionally and adding up to ½ cup more water if needed, until pork is tender and liquid is slightly thickened, 1½–2 hours. Taste and add more salt if needed.

Divide rice among bowls and ladle stew over.

DO AHEAD: Pork shoulder and belly can be marinated 1 day ahead; cover and chill. Stew can be made 3 days ahead. Let cool; cover and chill.

STEWY MISO EGGPLANT AND POTATOES

2–4 SERVINGS

This recipe is proof that stews don't need to be simmered for hours. Miso and soy provide instant depth of flavor for eggplants and potatoes, which readily absorb the toasty, funky, salty-sweet broth. Quick-cooking Japanese or Chinese eggplants are ideal in this easy vegetarian stew, but Italian eggplants work great too; just simmer an extra 10–15 minutes, adding a splash more water if needed.

- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 4 scallions, white and pale green and dark green parts separated, thinly sliced on a diagonal
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup white miso
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. unseasoned rice vinegar
- 1 tsp. honey
- 2 large Yukon Gold potatoes (about 1 lb.), peeled, halved lengthwise, sliced crosswise ¼" thick
- 3 medium Japanese or Chinese eggplants (about 1 lb.), quartered lengthwise, cut crosswise into 3"-long pieces
- Kosher salt
- Crushed unsalted roasted peanuts (for serving)

Heat oil in a medium Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium. Cook white and pale green scallion parts, garlic, and ginger, stirring often, until fragrant and garlic is translucent, about 3 minutes. Add miso, soy sauce, and 1½ cups water and stir to combine, breaking up any lumps. Stir in vinegar and honey.

Add potatoes to pot and bring to a boil. Add eggplant, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally and adding up to ¼ cup more water if needed, until potatoes and eggplant are tender, 12–15 minutes. Remove from heat and add all but 1 Tbsp. dark green scallion parts. Taste and season with salt if needed.

Transfer stew to a large shallow dish or bowl and top with peanuts and remaining dark green scallion parts.

PIRI-PIRI CHICKEN STEW WITH KALE

2–4 SERVINGS

The flavor base for this stew takes inspiration from piri-piri sauce, a South African condiment packed with red chiles, garlic, onion, thyme, and oregano. Adding coconut milk (or heavy cream) tames the kick of the chiles while lending creaminess to the broth. Blistering the peppers and aromatics under the broiler before puréeing them to form the piri-piri is a wonderful shortcut that speeds up the transition from raw veg to rich, layered stew.

- 2 large red bell peppers, cut into 3" pieces
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 2 Fresno chiles, halved crosswise
- 3 red Thai chiles, halved crosswise
- 5 garlic cloves
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- 1 tsp. freshly ground pepper, divided
- 3 lb. skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into 3" pieces
- 1 bunch Tuscan kale, ribs and stems finely chopped, leaves coarsely chopped
- 1 13.5-oz. can unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 tsp. honey
- Sliced red chiles, toasted bread, and lemon wedges (for serving)

Heat broiler. Place bell peppers, onion, Fresno chiles, Thai chiles, and garlic on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle oil over and season with salt; toss to combine. Broil until peppers are softened and slightly charred, 10–13 minutes.

Transfer vegetables to a blender. Add lemon zest and juice, vinegar, paprika, thyme, oregano, and ½ tsp. black pepper and purée until piri-piri is smooth.

Sprinkle chicken with 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt and remaining ½ tsp. black pepper. Heat 3 Tbsp. oil in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Working in batches if needed, cook chicken until golden, about 5 minutes per side (it will not be cooked through). Transfer to a plate.

Add piri-piri to pot and cook, stirring often, until darkened in color and slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Add kale, then return chicken to pot along with any accumulated juices. Stir in coconut milk, honey, and ½ cup water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally and adding up to ½ cup more water if needed, until kale is tender, chicken is cooked through, and liquid is slightly thickened, 20–25 minutes.

Divide stew among bowls; top with red chiles. Serve with toast and lemon wedges.

DO AHEAD: Piri-piri can be made 2 days ahead; cover and chill. Stew can be made 3 days ahead. Let cool; cover and chill.

Rethinking the FWORD

By **Hana Asbrink** Photographs by **Isa Zapata**

The concept of **FUSION** food can be cringey, conjuring '90s-era trends where East-meets-West flavors collided on the plate (wasabi mashed potatoes, anyone?). But for those of us living across cultures, culinary overlap is a natural expression of identity—and tastes just right

Marinara-doused somyeon noodles. Meatballs seasoned with sesame oil and soy sauce. Pizza with kimchi on the side, always. If you're a child of immigrants, like I am, these kinds of cross-cultural combinations might sound familiar. When I was growing up in New York City, I had access to a thrilling bounty of foods: charred lamb gyros, perfectly spiced Jamaican patties, and succulent pernil. This exposure shaped my tastes—as did the traditional Korean cooking I enjoyed at home. My family blended Asian flavors into almost everything we ate; occasionally it felt like a concession (sometimes you just want a plain old sloppy joe like any other kid, you know?). But today that same impulse is practically a trend: I've spotted gochujang on chain restaurant menus and bulgogi taco kits at the supermarket. I didn't appreciate back then how lucky I was to be swimming in so many culinary traditions at once. Now I do.

For many of us, mixing cuisines is neither trend nor compromise; it's a normal part of cooking in our multicultural kitchens. So consider these recipes a love letter to my younger self, a melding of classic dishes and flavors from my childhood: Kalbi jjim is married with Jewish braised brisket, miso swirled into chocolate chip cookies. Not fusion, but not *not* fusion. It's all familiar food, rooted in comfort and nostalgia—neither here nor there but seemingly, and now comfortably, everywhere.

Food styling by
Judy Kim

Prop styling by
Nicole Louie



SOY-GARLIC
POPCORN CHICKEN
AND RICE CAKES
P. 84



SHRIMP SCAMPI UDON
WITH DOENJANG
BUTTER SAUCE

SHRIMP SCAMPI UDON WITH DOENJANG BUTTER SAUCE

4 SERVINGS

At Italian American restaurants, my family always ordered pastas heartened with garlicky seafood broth. This riff uses udon noodles, soy sauce, and a dab of assertive Korean doenjang in the butter sauce. If you can't find doenjang, double up on a light miso instead.

- 1 lb. large shrimp, peeled, deveined
- 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- 6–8 scallions
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
- 8 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. doenjang (Korean fermented soybean paste) or 2 Tbsp. light miso
- 2 8–9-oz. blocks frozen Sanuki udon noodles (such as Shirakiku brand)
- 1 lemon

Pat shrimp dry; sprinkle with 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt and season with black pepper. Thinly slice scallions (use 6–8 depending on their size and your preference); set some dark green parts aside for serving.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Arrange shrimp in a single layer; cook, undisturbed, until a golden brown crust forms underneath, 1–2 minutes. Turn over and cook until pink and opaque, about 30 seconds. Transfer to a plate.

Heat 2 Tbsp. butter in same skillet over medium until foaming, then

add scallions, garlic, red pepper flakes, and ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until scallions and garlic are softened, about 3 minutes. Add wine, scraping up any brown bits with a heatproof rubber spatula, and cook until almost completely evaporated. Add soy sauce and doenjang and cook, stirring constantly, until doenjang is dissolved. Remove from heat.

Add noodles to a large pot of boiling water and cook, undisturbed, 20 seconds. Using tongs, gently release from caked state. Cook until tender, about 45 seconds (no more than 1 minute). Drain, reserving 1 cup udon cooking liquid.

Transfer half of shrimp to a cutting board and cut into thirds. Return to plate with remaining shrimp.

Return skillet with scallion mixture to medium-low heat. Add ½ cup udon cooking liquid and remaining 2 Tbsp. butter; stir until a homogenized sauce forms. Return shrimp and any accumulated juices to pan and toss to combine. Add udon and toss again, adding more reserved cooking liquid if needed, until sauce is glossy and coats noodles; season with salt.

Divide shrimp scampi udon among plates, making sure to place a few whole shrimp on top. Finely grate some zest from lemon over. Top with reserved scallion greens; season with black pepper. Cut lemon into wedges and serve alongside for squeezing over.

FURIKAKE-RANCH SNACK MIX

MAKES ABOUT 16 CUPS

Furikake Chex Mix, a popular fixture in Hawaii, meets another American favorite: ranch seasoning. Like all good snack mixes, this one is open to swaps and modifications: Can't find Bugles? Try oyster crackers! Prefer it spicy? Add a hot sauce to the syrup. This recipe feeds a crowd but can be halved easily.

- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ⅓ cup light corn syrup
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup vegetable oil



FURIKAKE-RANCH SNACK MIX

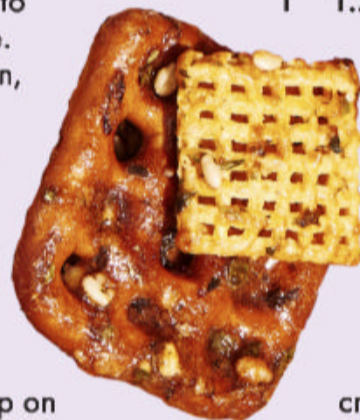
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 1-oz. packet ranch seasoning (such as Hidden Valley)
- 10 cups rice and/or corn cereal (such as Chex or Crispix)
- 3 cups Bugles corn chips or oyster crackers
- 2 cups mini windowpane pretzels (such as Snyder's of Hanover Butter Snaps)
- 2 cups Pepperidge Farm Goldfish Crackers
- 1 cup salted roasted peanuts
- 1 1.7-oz. bottle nori komi furikake (such as Ajishima)

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 250°. Heat butter, corn syrup, sugar, oil, soy sauce, and ranch seasoning in a small saucepan, stirring, until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat.

Mix cereal, Bugles, pretzels, crackers, and peanuts in a large bowl with your hands, working from bottom to top.

Wearing disposable gloves, carefully pour butter mixture into bowl, mixing from bottom to top to incorporate. Sprinkle half of furikake over and toss until evenly coated. Sprinkle remaining furikake over and toss again to coat. Divide mixture between 2 rimmed baking sheets and bake, carefully tossing every 15–20 minutes and rotating pans back to front and top to bottom halfway through, until dry, about 1 hour (a humid day may require 15–30 minutes more). Let snack mix cool before serving.

DO AHEAD: Mix can be made 2 weeks ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.



SOY-BRAISED BRISKET

4-6 SERVINGS

Kalbi jjim is a classic Korean braised short rib dish my family ate at countless celebrations. This recipe nods at that tradition while also paying homage to my favorite NYC delicatessen stalwart. Cut the brisket in half if it doesn't fit in one pot. And if it comes with a fat cap, trim only fat that extends beyond the lean meat. The fat will render slowly and help baste the brisket during cooking.

- 1 3-lb. piece untrimmed beef brisket
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or $1\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 1 head of garlic, cloves coarsely chopped
- 1 cup apple cider
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oyster sauce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 3 medium carrots, peeled, cut on a diagonal into 1" pieces
- 1 14.4-oz. bag frozen pearl onions
- 1 cup pitted dates (about 20)
- Chopped parsley (for serving)

Place a rack in lower third of oven; preheat to 300°. Pat brisket dry with paper towels. Sprinkle all over with garlic powder, pepper, and 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or $1\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt and rub into grain. Set aside.

Whisk garlic, cider, oyster sauce, soy sauce, and Worcestershire sauce in a small bowl to dissolve oyster sauce. Set garlic mixture aside.

Heat oil in a large ovenproof pot over medium. Pat brisket dry again. Cook, turning occasionally and reducing heat if needed, until browned, 3–4 minutes per broad side, 1–2 minutes per short sides (you may need to hold up with tongs). Transfer to a baking sheet or large plate.

Add wine to pot (be careful; it will sputter), scraping up browned bits with a heatproof rubber spatula. Cook until reduced by half. Mix in reserved garlic mixture; remove from heat. Carefully return brisket to pot and pour in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. If liquid does not reach halfway up brisket, then add up to another $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water to get it there. Cover pot tightly with a lid or foil and transfer to oven; braise brisket 2 hours.

Remove pot from oven. Add carrots, onions, and dates and stir into liquid. Re-cover and cook until meat is tender but still holds its shape, about 1 hour. Transfer brisket to a cutting board, tent with foil, and let rest 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, remove carrots, onions, and dates with a slotted spoon and place in a medium bowl; set aside. Line a sieve or colander set over a large bowl with cheesecloth or several layers of paper towels. Carefully pour jus in pot into bowl; discard cheesecloth and solids. Taste jus and season with salt and pepper.

Slice brisket against the grain and arrange on a platter; pour jus over as desired. Arrange reserved carrots, onions, and dates around. Serve with any remaining jus alongside.





SOY-BRAISED
BRISKET

GOCHUJANG
SLOPPY JOES



KIMCHI QUESADILLAS

2 SERVINGS

Meet my favorite after-school snack. As far as the kimchi goes, the older the better—it's the perfect time to use up that jar that's been hanging out in the fridge. Giving the kimchi a quick sauté reduces excess moisture and concentrates its flavor. Garlic salt lends these quesadillas extra-deep savoriness; it won't be quite the same, but you can sub in an equal-parts mix of salt and garlic powder if that's what you've got.

- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 cup chopped drained kimchi, plus 2 Tbsp. (or more) kimchi juice
- ½ tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. soy sauce
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 lime, quartered, divided
- Garlic salt
- 2 10"–12"-diameter flour tortillas
- 2 cups coarsely grated Oaxaca cheese or low-moisture mozzarella, divided
- Thinly sliced scallion greens (for serving)

Heat butter in a small skillet over medium. Cook kimchi and sugar, stirring occasionally, until it darkens and dries out a bit, about 5 minutes. Add soy sauce; cook, stirring, 1 minute. Remove from heat.

Place sour cream and kimchi juice in a small bowl and squeeze in juice from 1 lime wedge; mix well. Stir in a pinch of garlic salt; set seasoned sour cream aside.

Heat a dry large nonstick skillet over medium. Lay a tortilla in pan and top one side with ½ cup cheese, then half of kimchi mixture. Top with another ½ cup cheese and a pinch of garlic salt. Fold tortilla up and over filling to make a half-moon shape. Cook, turning halfway through, until tortilla is golden and cheese is melted, about 5 minutes total. Transfer to a plate and sprinkle with scallions. Repeat to make 1 more quesadilla.

Serve quesadillas with reserved seasoned sour cream and remaining lime wedges for squeezing over.

GOCHUJANG SLOPPY JOES

4 SERVINGS

When I was growing up, Manwich, the canned sloppy joe sauce, was a family favorite for making and enjoying quick skillet meals. My still-speedy take uses gochujang for a smoky, spicy undertone. Treat this recipe as a guide to home in on your ideal levels of heat and sweetness. Potato buns provide an ideal soft landing and cold pickle spears are a bright, crunchy counterpoint.



KIMCHI QUESADILLAS

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 lb. ground beef (ideally 20% fat)
- 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 medium green bell pepper, ribs and seeds removed, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 6–8 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 3 Tbsp. gochujang
- 2 Tbsp. ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. dark brown sugar
- 1 tsp. yellow mustard
- 1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
- 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 4 potato rolls
- Kosher dill spears and potato chips (for serving; optional)

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Add beef, spreading out in a single layer; sprinkle with 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal

or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt and season with pepper. Cook, undisturbed, until a light brown crust forms underneath, about 3 minutes. Continue to cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon, until almost completely brown all the way through, about 3 minutes more.

Push meat to one side of pan. Reduce heat to medium and add bell pepper, onion, garlic, and ½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt; season with pepper. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in gochujang, ketchup, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, and mustard, then add tomato sauce and ¼ cup water and stir again to combine. Bring to a simmer and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, stirring and scraping up any brown bits, until thick and saucy, 10–12 minutes. Remove beef mixture from heat and stir in vinegar; season with salt and pepper.

Spoon beef mixture onto rolls. Serve with pickles and potato chips if desired.

MISO WHITE CHOCOLATE-MACADAMIA COOKIES

MAKES 10-12

This extra-chewy and nutty chocolate chip cookie is really an ode to a favorite store-bought cookie: the Pepperidge Farm Sausalito (as a kid I devoured them while watching ABC's TGIF lineup). I've added brown butter and a dollop of miso to provide depth and balance. Don't forget to toast your macadamia nuts to bring out all of their buttery flavor.

- 1¼ cups (156 g) all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ¾ cup macadamia nuts
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
- ½ cup (100 g) dark brown sugar
- ¼ cup (50 g) granulated sugar
- 2 Tbsp. white miso
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup white chocolate chips
- Flaky sea salt

Whisk flour and baking soda in a small bowl to combine; set aside.

Toast nuts in a dry small skillet over medium-low heat, stirring often, until golden, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board; let cool. Very coarsely chop (you want to keep the pieces large).

Heat butter in same skillet, swirling and scraping bottom of pan often with a heatproof rubber spatula, until it foams, then browns, about 4 minutes. Scrape into a large heatproof bowl; let cool 1 minute.

Add brown and granulated sugars, miso, and kosher salt to brown butter and whisk, breaking up any clumps, until sugars are dissolved. Whisk in egg and vanilla. Working in 2 or 3 batches, sift reserved dry ingredients into bowl, folding after each addition until no dry spots remain. Add nuts and all of the chocolate chips and fold until just combined. Cover and chill dough at least 30 minutes and up to 1 day.

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat oven to 350°. Using a #20 cookie scoop (or about 3 Tbsp.), portion out dough, placing 5-6 cookies each on 2 parchment-lined rimmed baking sheets, spacing about 2" apart, and sprinkle with sea salt.

Bake cookies, rotating baking sheets front to back and top to bottom halfway through, until golden around edges, 14-16 minutes. Remove from oven and, using a spatula, lightly press down on cookies. Let cookies cool on baking sheets 5-10 minutes, then transfer to wire racks and let cool completely.



SOY-GARLIC POPCORN CHICKEN AND RICE CAKES

4 SERVINGS

My love of both KFC popcorn chicken and dakgangjeong, a traditional Korean fried chicken dish, informed this recipe, which features a sticky, sweet, and garlicky glaze.

- 1 cup cylindrical rice cakes (about 2½" long)
- 1¼ lb. skinless, boneless chicken thighs and/or breasts, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 1" piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
- 10 garlic cloves, 2 finely grated, 8 coarsely chopped

- 2 Tbsp. mirin, divided
- 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt, divided, plus more
- Freshly ground pepper
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup plus 1 tsp. potato starch or cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil, plus more for frying (about 1½ cups)
- Chopped salted roasted peanuts and chopped cilantro (for serving)

Place rice cakes in a medium bowl; pour in cool water to cover. Let soak 20 minutes. Drain and pat dry. Cut rice cakes in half; set aside.



**MISO WHITE
CHOCOLATE-
MACADAMIA
COOKIES**

Meanwhile, combine chicken, ginger, finely grated garlic, 1 Tbsp. mirin, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Diamond Crystal or $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl; season with pepper. Mix well; set aside.

Whisk coarsely chopped garlic, soy sauce, sugar, vinegar, remaining 1 Tbsp. mirin, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water in a small bowl until sugar is dissolved. Set dressing aside.

Place 1 cup potato starch and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a large bowl; season generously with pepper and whisk to combine. Remove reserved chicken from bowl, letting any marinade drip back into bowl; place in bowl with seasoned potato starch. Gently toss to coat, pressing down into mixture and turning to cover every surface; set aside.

Pour oil into a medium stainless-steel or cast-iron skillet to come $\frac{1}{2}$ " up sides and heat over medium-high until an instant-read thermometer inserted into oil registers 350° . Fry half of chicken in a single layer until golden brown and crisp underneath, 2–3 minutes. Turn over; fry until golden brown and crisp on the other side, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack set inside a parchment-lined baking sheet; season with salt. Using a slotted spoon, remove any dark bits from oil and return oil to 350° ; repeat with remaining chicken.

Stir remaining 1 tsp. potato starch and 2 Tbsp. water in a small bowl until starch is dissolved. Set slurry aside.

Heat remaining 1 Tbsp. oil in a large skillet over medium. Add reserved rice

cakes and cook, stirring, until golden brown in spots, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to rack with chicken. Reduce heat to medium-low and carefully pour in reserved dressing. Cook, stirring with a heatproof rubber spatula, until sugar is dissolved. Add reserved slurry (give it a quick stir if it has separated); cook, stirring constantly, until dissolved into sauce. Continue to cook sauce, stirring occasionally, until a line drawn through sauce with spatula holds, 30–60 seconds more. Reduce heat to low; add chicken and rice cakes and toss until every piece is coated with some sauce; remove from heat.

Arrange chicken and rice cakes on a large plate; top with peanuts and cilantro. Serve with toothpicks or skewers if desired.

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Padma Lakshmi Wants You to Plan Ahead

The *Top Chef* host, *Taste the Nation* creator, and veteran entertainer has a witty guest list (and some good advice)

BY DAWN DAVIS ■ ILLUSTRATIONS BY LAUREN TAMAKI



Padma Lakshmi is often on the go. She traveled

to London to film the 20th season of *Top Chef*, which features contestants drawn from the 29 international versions of the show. For the upcoming return of *Taste the Nation*, a docuseries that explores the food of indigenous and immigrant communities in the US, she sampled the Cambodian food

in Lowell, Massachusetts, and learned to flatfoot dance in Appalachia. Over lunch in New York City we talk about entertaining closer to home.

Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Director Joel Schumacher, a dear friend who died a few years ago. He had a million interesting stories, all just a little naughty. He's one of the most intellectual people I've met. The writer Michael Cunningham; he has a light in his eyes and

a wicked sense of humor. My daughter, who is funny and always steals the show. And my girlfriend and fairy godmother, Susan Sarandon. Also Muhammad Ali. I met him once, at the dry cleaner. I actually had my boxing wraps on because I was coming from a boxing gym. I was tongue-tied.

If you were to invite any *Top Chef* contestants, who would you pick?

Fatima Ali. After she was diagnosed with cancer,

I wanted her to meet some of her idols, like Susan Sarandon. So I had a dinner party for her. She was very funny. And Kevin Gillespie. He has the soul of a poet. We have so many hours of Kevin just talking about the beauty of a peach. It's as if he's channeling M.F.K. Fisher.

Where do you host?

At my home. I'm going to cook 70 percent of it ahead of time. The best advice I can give any cook: Do yourself a favor and plan your menu in a way that allows you to have fun and not be stressed.

What's on the menu?

Jerk chicken, coconut or lemon rice. And a vegetable curry with lots of ginger.

Is there a dress code?

I want people to come as they feel the most beautiful. For some that's jeans and a T-shirt. For others it's a sexy dress.

How do you set the table?

I have antique silver that I've been collecting. Instrumental music for ambience.

What advice would you give to someone looking to host a memorable dinner party?

It's nice to have an activity in the kitchen for your guests to break the ice. Like "Here, can you two make the salad?"

Any other tips?

It's the people that make a good dinner party. The silverware doesn't really matter; the plates can be paper. It's in the exchange.



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