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TAMARIND
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TURKEY

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OF OLD
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Ahh...

Thanksgiving

Issue 178

Chocolate Caramel

Having trouble keeping your resolutions? Well you won't need any willpower to keep this one. This tasty treat will be the best resolution you've ever had. **La Résolution**, a dark and spicy holiday ale inspired from a recipe that our brewmaster Jerry Vietz created just for his friends. And to make this resolution even easier to keep, we snuck the beer into a great chocolate caramel brownie recipe just for you. The toffee, spice and roasted malt notes from the beer will pair deliciously well with the chocolaty caramel, coffee and pecans in the brownie. So don't worry about your next resolution, just enjoy it!



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10% alc./vol.

750 mL / 1 pt 9.4 fl oz

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Brownies à La Résolution

PREPARATION : 20 MIN | COOKING TIME : 40 MIN | SERVINGS : 15

INGREDIENTS

8 ounces 70% dark chocolate (8 big pieces), chopped
¾ cup caramel / toffee bits
6 tbsp melted butter
1 cup unbleached flour
¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tsp instant coffee
1 generous pinch of salt

4 large eggs (room temp.)
1 cup white sugar
1 cup La Résolution beer by Unibroue, (shelf temp.)
¼ cup pecan nuts, coarsely chopped
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips
Fleur de sel

PREPARATION

- 1 - Preheat the oven to 375 F or 190 C.
 - 2 - Melt the chocolate, the caramel and the butter in a bain-marie. Mix well. Keep warm.
 - 3 - In the meantime, pour the flour, cocoa, coffee, and salt in a big bowl and mix well. Set aside.
 - 4 - Mix the eggs and sugar at high speed with an electric mixer for about 2-3 minutes, until you get a light and foamy texture.
 - 5 - Pour the chocolate mixture into the egg mixture and mix at medium speed until homogenous. Then, add the flour mixture, the beer and nuts and continue to mix until homogenous.
 - 6 - Cover a 9x13 edged baking pan with parchment paper. Pour in the mixture and sprinkle it with chocolate chips. Add Fleur de sel to your liking.
 - 7 - Oven bake for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Let it cool completely.
- Cut and enjoy!

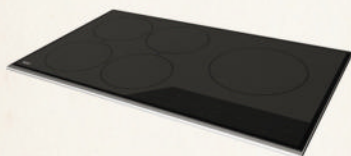
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PREDICT DELICIOUS







Tamarind pulp, fish sauce, and Scotch bonnet chiles come together for a spicy-sweet take on the traditional Thanksgiving bird (see page 41 for recipe).

NOVEMBER

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By Alexander Lobrano

Cover photograph by Ryan Liebe
Food styling by Mariana Velasquez
Prop styling by Allie Wist

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Have a special dish on your Thanksgiving table each year? Tag it with **#saveurtraditions** and tell us all about it.

Ready for a culinary travel adventure? Check out **SAVEUR Trips**, curated with Butterfield & Robinson, at saveur.com/trips.

After reading **Alexander Lobrano's story on Slovenia** (page 70), visit saveur.com/slovenia for travel tips and more.

With menus, recipe galleries, and technique videos, **our Thanksgiving Guide** (saveur.com/thanksgiving) has you covered.

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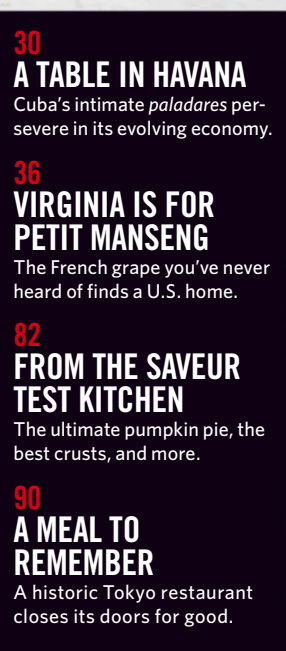
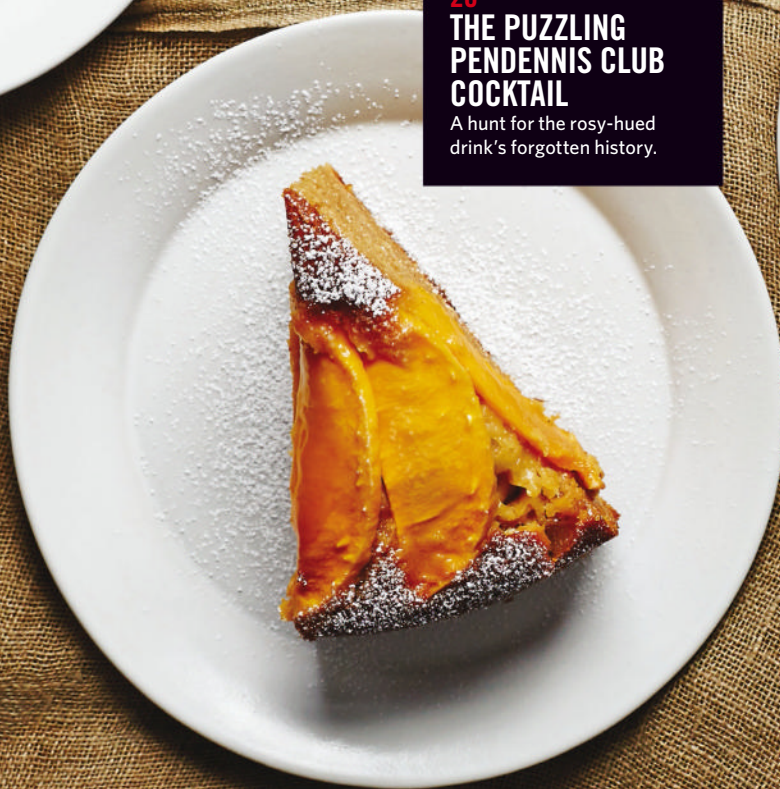
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Cinnamon and ginger meet roasted pumpkin and tropical mangoes in this moist and aromatic pumpkin cake (see page 45 for recipe).



NOVEMBER

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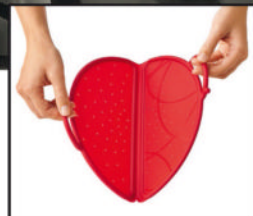


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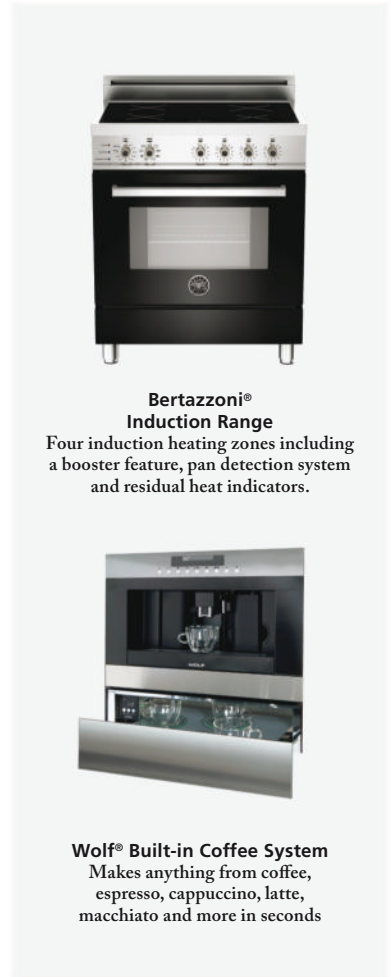
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 An illustration of a turkey standing in a bog filled with red cranberries. The turkey is holding a long wooden rake. In the background, there are trees with autumn foliage in shades of orange, yellow, and red, set against a light blue sky. The foreground is a dense field of red cranberries.

Relish the Cranberry

HERE'S TO THE (TINY, TART, RED) DETAILS THAT BRING
BALANCE TO THE THANKSGIVING TABLE

By Matthew Jennings Illustration by Tram Nguyen

It was my ritual to scope out the sideboard at my grandparents' Thanksgiving as soon as I walked into their Massachusetts home. The whole spread was set out: a bronzed, crackling turkey flanked by mashed potatoes, ambrosia salad, creamed onions, giblet gravy, and a couple types of stuffing—one chockful of littleneck clams and another with cornbread. My mom would make her famous green beans with slivered almonds. And there was always my grandmother's cranberry relish, fragrant with orange zest and Grand Marnier.

I'm a staunch New England cranberry relish guy. That's cranberry *relish*, not cranberry sauce. Not the gelatinized blob that is still in the shape of the can when you dump it out. Not even the home-made sauce that's too sweet to resemble actual cranberries and too slippery to stick on a turkey sandwich the day after Thanksgiving (arguably the more important eating day). Cranberry relish is tart and textured and bright, with just a touch of residual sweetness to tame the fruit's wild puckering sharpness.

Turkey may be the lead singer, the star of the meal, but that relish is the drummer at the back of the stage providing a staccato jolt to keep the show from going flat. It is the Thanksgiving table's unsung hero, delivering an essential fresh, crunchy counterpoint to all the rich and creamy dishes.

My kinship with cranberries almost seems like a Massachusetts folktale. Before Nantucket became a fancy beach destination, my grandmother had a place there, in Siasconset. During the fall and winter before I left for college, I worked there

in the cranberry bogs during the day and at a restaurant at night. I would put on a flannel shirt, rubber waders with suspenders, a knit cap, and work gloves. Wading out into the bog, I would use a rake to skim the glistening red berries bobbing on the cold water's surface. On a sunny day, it was gorgeous out there, breathing in the crisp fall air. That year, my grandmother didn't have to buy cranberries at the market—each worker got a wooden crate the size of a big television filled with those tart beauties.

The first year I hosted Thanksgiving with my wife and kids, my grandmother was no longer with us, so my mother made the cranberry relish. By then a professional chef, I watched her and, embarrassingly, judged her as she prepared the family heirloom dish. She was zesting an orange with a clumsy cheese grater, for godsakes. "Mom, why don't you use a Microplane?" I asked. "What's a Microplane?" she retorted. "Your grandmother used to cut them with a knife."

Despite my reservations about her technique, that bowl of zippy, rough-hewn cranberry relish was great, just as it always was—even one small spoonful provides that perfect acidic counterpunch to all the heavy dishes. Truth be told, even if I made it myself with a Microplane grater, it wouldn't be as good as my mother making her mother's cranberry relish on Thanksgiving. You know, it's the little things that make all the difference.

Massachusetts native Matthew Jennings is the owner, with his wife, Kate, of Townsman restaurant in Boston.

Cranberry-Orange Relish

Finely grate the zest of half an orange into a small saucepan, finely chop its flesh and peel, and add it to the pan along with 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries, 1 cup sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh lime juice, 2 Tbsp. Grand Marnier, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat and cook, stirring, until the cranberries burst and the sauce thickens, 8 minutes. Scrape into a bowl and let cool.

An aerial photograph of a rugged desert landscape. A dirt road winds through a field of large, rounded boulders and sparse, dry vegetation. In the distance, a vast valley opens up towards a range of jagged, rocky mountains under a cloudy sky. A small dark SUV is driving on the dirt road in the lower-left quadrant, kicking up a trail of dust.

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OPPABLE





On the North Fork of Long Island, spots like Cliff's Elbow Room and Southold Fish Market, which is helmed by Charlie Manwaring (bottom right), serve low-and-slow-simmered classic Manhattan chowders.



On the Chowder Trail

A SHELLFISH OBSESSIVE SCOURS LONG ISLAND IN SEARCH OF A QUINTESSENTIAL CLAM SOUP **By Hugh Merwin**

If he wants to talk to you about chowder, he'll get in touch," said the bartender who answered the phone at Cliff's Elbow Room. Then she hung up. Three unreturned messages later, I came to terms with the fact that Cliff didn't want to talk.

Cliff's cedar-shingled dive is something of a North Fork, Long Island, landmark known for its shell steaks, which are marinated and broiled to a degree of black char that lies beyond the redemptive power of any Instagram filter. I had eaten two bowls of Cliff's transcendent, Manhattan-style clam chowder—as in red with tomatoes, not cloudy with cream—the stuff that's long been denigrated by New Englanders as worked-up vegetable soup from the borough that bears its name. Cliff's version has been served in round, heavy bowls on plates lined with doilies practically forever, and I needed to know more about this paradox of mediocre-looking excellence: The broth was clam bouillon gray, practically overcast with ground bivalves, the opposite end of the Manhattan chowder spectrum from sauce red; its celery and onion were less sliced and diced and more hacked apart, like by one of those high-powered infomercial choppers gone haywire. Yet it tasted the way Manhattan clam chowder should taste, broadly sweet with glutamate-rich clams, as if its constituent parts had been on a slow simmer together forever until they reached a soupy alchemy. The only problem was no one wanted to tell me how that alchemy worked.

I already knew a little. I grew up on Long Island, cooking in waterfront clam bars with kitchens the size of tin cans and with stoves that really had no business holding two 30-gallon stockpots. I spent a decade lugging bushel bags, prying shells apart with a heavy-bladed knife, and rendering chopped chowder clams into thousands of gallons of red, white, and clearish varieties, all with brackish culinary backstories. I waited in line for egg sandwiches at delis with the dwindling ranks of the sunburnt, stoned clambers ready for their shifts on the bay. A store in the next town sold nets, tongs, and custom shellfish rakes. I was so enamored with the T-shirt hanging in its

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window depicting a happy littleneck with his fist raised high and the words CLAM POWER that I bought one in each color.

One summer long ago, a burly shellfish deliveryman who more grunted than spoke cornered me at the rundown clam shack by the boat basin where I had been appointed “chef.” He giddily declared our house Manhattan—transformed into a kind of benthic, clammy food miracle by our steam table, the flavors layering and growing deeper each simmering hour—the only authentic chowder he had ever eaten.

I’ve eaten chowder in everything from foam cups to bone china, and certain things have become apparent: A lot of tomato-pasty, appallingly bad Manhattans are served in old-school canteens and luxe steakhouses alike, particularly (and ironically) in its namesake borough. But on the outer reaches of Long Island, there are still far-flung keepers of the metaphorical cauldron. These people, often helming small, humble establishments within throwing distance of the water, swear by their well-weathered Dexter Russell shucking blades, their archaic celery shredders. The chowder at Cliff’s was a shining example, and I was certain I could find it elsewhere, hiding in plain sight between the Salads and Appetizers columns on menus throughout Long Island. So I got in my car and headed east.

My trail started at Peter’s Clam House in Island Park, on the South Shore, where the deep-fryer oil burns a little too hot and the chowder is as shiny red as the plastic tray it’s served on, and went as far as a Montauk pancake house called John’s, where short stacks arrive topped with banana-slice eyes. On a good day, John’s chowder could win awards—and it has—but the staff wasn’t too forthcoming about the recipe, other than to tell me the clams were local.

I encountered similar tight-lipped circumspection at Chowder Bar in Bay Shore, adjacent to the ferries that lumber over to Fire Island. Lynda Nenninger and Patricia Robinson have owned Chowder Bar since 1988, paving its minuscule lot with decades’ worth of crushed chalky white and iridescent purple shells. Their meaty Manhattan includes enormous swaths of clams delivered by diggers who still work the bay.

“We’ve been in business for so long, we get priority,” Robinson explained of her bivalve sourcing. They use half canned crushed tomatoes, half whole, and while there’s an order in which ingredients are added to the soup, that’s about as far as a “proprietary recipe” goes.

“That’s how people are,” said Charlie Manwaring, a fishmonger. “When you’ve got a good recipe, you don’t want the public to have it.”

Manwaring has been with Southold Fish Market for 28 years; he started filleting fluke at age 12 and finally bought the place in 2000. He’s the kind of guy who says he’s going “up island” and means nearby Riverhead.

The market sells a staggering number of new soups with recipes that are constantly being tweaked, from crab bisques to gumbos, but the parameters for its Manhattan clam chowder, made in 40-quart batches, haven’t budged in years. Beyond the standard vegetables and tinned tomatoes, the recipe includes rendered salt pork and rough-

chopped chowder clams from the Peconic Bay, which is just about visible if you stand on the hood of your car in the parking lot and look south.

Manwaring believes that good Manhattan clam chowders aren’t fussed over, that chef-like tinkering can lead to an astringency that muffles the clean, lean taste of good clams. “There are new, high-end places trying to make fancy stuff,” he said. “But it’s a down-to-earth soup.”

And yet: High-end doesn’t necessarily mean mediocre Manhattan. Toward the tail end of my journey, I found myself at Aquagrill in New York City’s Soho neighborhood. Chef-owner Jeremy Marshall has been the de facto torchbearer for Manhattan clam chowder in its home base for the last two decades. From the beginning, the chef stripped out shortcuts like soup bases and add-ons like carrots and bell peppers in favor of what is essentially a high-wire balancing act between clams and tomatoes. Marshall deconstructs behind the scenes, not for modernity’s sake but to ensure consistent cooking. His Rhode Island-dug clams spend a little time in the walk-in (“so they’re actually Manhattan residents before we make them into soup,” Marshall says). Next, they’re steamed in one pot, vegetables sweated out in another, potatoes boiled separately, and then everything is combined to order. An opposite approach to those from the old-guard clam shacks, for sure, but it bears the correct hallmarks of a killer chowder, its heartiness fine-tuned by the natural saltiness of the clams and little else.

After tasting a dozen chowders up and down the island, I sought insight from folklorist Nancy Solomon, who recorded the oral histories of the dwellers of Long Island’s bay houses, the freestanding structures, some a century old, built in the tidal marshlands of the South Shore. Kitchens in these homes often had a pot of chowder on low heat, she told me, with new components added as soon as the new hauls came in. A mix of old stock and new ingredients.

That’s the technique I tried to replicate when I got back home, picking and choosing from the recipes I’d come across. I omitted carrots, which appeared about half the time, and made a shockingly red tomato broth that mellowed when simmered with pork and vegetables. The next day I used it as a kind of base—sort of like using a flavor-bearing sourdough starter—to which I added bacon and fresh herbs. I never let it boil, and it was delicious.

The real alchemical force behind great Manhattan clam chowder, I found, happens when the last batch informs the next one, when the clams that have been on that slow simmer forever meet up with fresh topnecks and vegetables you’ve hauled in that day—even if that haul is from the supermarket and not the open waters. I’m a believer that all soup is better the next day rather than fresh off the stove, but this is particularly the case with the Manhattan, when the briny clams and long-simmered stock land together with fresh vegetables and smoky bacon in the same bowl. It’s a reminder of the way chowder parties and clam bars have for centuries operated at their best. Great chowders are less of a soup, I learned, and more of a continuum. ■

On Long Island, there are still far-flung keepers of the metaphorical chowder cauldron





The key to a richly flavored Manhattan clam chowder is to start with a long-simmered clam-rich base and add fresh flavors to the pot right before serving.

Manhattan-Style Clam Chowder

Serves 8 to 10

Active: 2 hr.; Total: 4 hr. plus overnight

Meaty topneck clams are full of briny juices and remain tender when simmered low and slow, so they are our top choice for this two-part chowder. Their salinity can be quite potent, so taste the chowder before seasoning.

- 2 ³/₄ lbs. large topneck or cherrystone clams (about 3 dozen), frozen overnight
- 4 oz. salt pork, cut into ¹/₄-inch cubes
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 medium white onions, finely chopped
- 2 cups bottled clam juice
- One 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed by hand
- 2 ¹/₄ lbs. russet potatoes, peeled and cut into ¹/₂-inch cubes
- 4 oz. slab or thick-cut bacon, cut into ¹/₄-inch lardons
- 6 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, smashed and peeled
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped thyme
- 1 tsp. finely chopped marjoram
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Oyster crackers, for serving

1 The day before you plan to serve the chowder, place the

clams in a large colander and rinse with warm water for 30 seconds. Working quickly while they're still frozen, shuck the clams, discarding their shells, and roughly chop the meat by hand.

2 Place the salt pork in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-low heat. Cook the pork, stirring, until its fat renders, about 12 minutes. Add the bay leaves and half the onions and cook, stirring, until softened, 10 to 12 minutes. Pour the clam juice and tomatoes into the pan along with the chopped clams and bring to simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the soup is reduced by one-third, about 1 hour. Stir in the potatoes and cook until tender, about 12 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let the soup cool to room temperature. Remove and discard the bay leaves and refrigerate the chowder a few hours or overnight, or alternatively, freeze up to one month.

3 When ready to serve, remove the soup base from the refrigerator or defrost. Place the bacon in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Cook the bacon, stirring, until its fat renders, about 6 minutes. Add the remaining half of the onions, along with the celery and garlic, and cook, stirring, until softened, 10 to 12 minutes. Pour the defrosted soup base into the pan along with the thyme and marjoram, bring to a simmer, and cook, stirring, until warmed through, about 30 minutes. Remove the chowder from the heat and season with pepper. Ladle into bowls and serve with oyster crackers.



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BAKE-OFF

A Tale of Two Biscuits

EVERY BISCUIT—WHETHER A HALLOWED SQUARE OF BUTTERY PERFECTION OR A DELICATE, NO-FUSS ROUND—HAS ITS PROPER PLACE, **RUTH REICHL** DISCOVERS

On the left: Four ingredients and a little mixing are all it takes to make fantastically simple everyday biscuits. On the other end of the spectrum (top right), a fussy-but-worth-it version that calls for tons of butter and patience. Recipes on page 24.



A few months ago my friend Nancy Silverton asked if I would test her biscuit recipe. “Sure,” I said, failing to hear the warning bells that should have started clanging when she asked the next question. “Do you have a yardstick?”

I did not.

“I’ll lend you mine,” she said. Still oblivious to the fate awaiting me, I gathered the ingredients that Nancy—the James Beard Award-winning founder of Los Angeles’ La Brea Bakery—considers biscuit essentials. The buttermilk and Maldon salt were no problem, and while a pound and a quarter of sweet butter seemed excessive, it wasn’t until I started baking that I began to understand what I’d gotten myself into when I said yes to a chef.

Have you ever grated five sticks of frozen butter? It takes forever. Your fingers get so cold you soon find yourself standing in the kitchen screaming in pain. And you are just getting started.

Before you’re done you will have to freeze your fingers again. You will have to tame an undisciplined mound of dough and attempt to take its measure with a ruler. You will have to roll it out and then struggle to turn and fold the recalcitrant mass, like you do with puff pastry.

More trials lie ahead. You will find yourself climbing on

chairs, vainly attempting to silence the smoke alarm that erupts when those five sticks of butter hit the hot oven, engulfing you in smoke. You will be apologizing to the neighbors who come to find out what is going on. And finally, after what seems like hours of agony, you will have exactly 12 biscuits to show for your trouble.

Don’t get me wrong: I revere a good biscuit. There’s no better way to add a spark of romance to an ordinary meal. “Would you like a biscuit?” sounds so much more appealing than “please pass the bread.” With a single word you’ve conjured up warm kitchens, loving cooks, and the scent of melting butter.

I fell in love the first time I met a biscuit, and like any self-respecting home cook, immediately began looking for the easiest way to produce a decent version. This sent me on an odyssey of experimentation.

I began with the fat. That was easy; it instantly became clear that for the time-pressed cook, cream is the only way to go. Simply stirring some cream into flour is a lot less cumbersome than cutting in cold shortening.

Next I grappled with the vexing issue of flour. Southerners insist that White Lily is essential, but we Northern cooks can only order it by mail. I soon found that “00” pasta flour, which

is far easier to find, works wonderfully well. Cake flour will do, too, and in a pinch I simply use all-purpose.

The recipe I ended up with is simplicity itself. Four ingredients. A couple minutes of mixing. A hot oven. In my house that's a recipe for happiness: Hot biscuits are never more than half an hour away.

For years I was perfectly content with my biscuits. Then Nancy came along. And her biscuits weren't just food—they were an experience. Flaky layers of dough crumbling into crisp shards that left the haunting taste of butter and salt in their wake.

"Are you aware," I asked her, "That each of these biscuits contains half a stick of butter?"

"Yup," she replied, with a shrug. "All I want to know is if you've ever eaten a better biscuit."

I had to admit that I had not.

But I have no helpers and no professional equipment, and if the only biscuits I ever made were Nancy's, we would suffer biscuit deprivation. Fortunately, I'm not a chef, and I feel no compulsion to knock people's socks off every time I cook.

Sure, there are recipes I won't cut corners on. Some people scramble eggs in a minute, but *The Alice B. Toklas Cook Book*

showed me a better way. Her scrambled eggs take half an hour of constant stirring over a very low flame, and the result is so soft, smooth, and custard-like that ordinary scrambled eggs went straight out of my life. If I don't have time to scramble slowly, I'll take my eggs fried, thank you very much, and sometimes fried eggs are all you want anyway. My little biscuits might not stop people in their tracks—but week in and week out they make my family very happy.

I think about this every year when Thanksgiving rolls around. Faced with this major meal, I want at least one unforgettable dish, a showstopper. But it would be foolish—and probably impossible—to make every dish a knockout. So I figure out which dish matters most to me, and relax about the rest.

Should biscuits be your passion, I highly suggest you try Nancy's. Mine, on the other hand, will leave you plenty of time to concentrate on stuffing, gravy, or pie, and keep the smoke alarm quiet. ■

Ruth Reichl's My Kitchen Year (Random House) was released in September.

Biscuit: With one word you've conjured up warm kitchens, loving cooks, the scent of melting butter

Ruth Reichl's Cream Biscuits

Makes 20 biscuits; 📖 Page 22
Active: 20 min.; Total: 1 hr. 45 min.

If you can't find "00" Italian pasta flour (available on amazon.com or in Italian specialty stores), substitute cake flour. Its low gluten content lets you mix it with the cream without developing the gluten.

- 2 cups (10 oz.) "00" pasta flour, plus more
- 1 Tbsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 1/4 cups heavy cream, chilled, plus more for brushing

1 In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder and salt. Pour the cream into the flour and stir until a dough forms. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work surface and briefly knead until smooth.

2 Using a rolling pin, flatten the dough until 5/8 inch thick. Using a 2 1/4-inch round cutter, cut out circles of dough, rerolling scraps as needed to get 20 biscuits. Arrange the biscuits 2 inches apart on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and freeze for 1 hour or up to 3 days.

3 Heat the oven to 425°. Brush the tops of the biscuits with more cream and bake,

rotating the baking sheet halfway through cooking, until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Transfer to a rack and let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Nancy Silverton's Butter Biscuits

Makes 12 biscuits; 📖 Page 23
Active: 35 min.; Total: 4 hr.

Though chef Nancy Silverton calls for grating the frozen butter for these giant buttery biscuits by hand, we found the grating blade of a food processor works just as well. The biscuit dough is treated like puff pastry—rolled and folded several times—to create flaky layers.

- 5 sticks unsalted butter, frozen, plus more, melted, for brushing
- 5 cups (1 lb. 7 oz.) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 2 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 2 cups buttermilk, chilled
- Flaky sea salt

1 Either working with a box grater over a large bowl or using the large grating blade of a food processor, quickly grate the frozen sticks of butter and then freeze the butter for at least 30 minutes. Meanwhile, in a

large bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder, salt, sugar, and baking soda, and freeze the dry ingredients for the same amount of time as the butter.

2 Scrape the frozen butter into the dry ingredients and toss briefly to combine. Pour in the buttermilk and stir just until it forms a solid dough. Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and, using your hands, mold the dough into a 10-by-7-inch rectangle. Fold the rectangle in thirds like a letter and then rotate 90 degrees. Using a rolling pin, flatten the dough again into a 10-by-7-inch rectangle. Repeat the folding, turning, and rolling process 3 more times, ending with the dough shaped into a 12-by-10-inch rectangle about 1/2 inch thick. Trim the edges so you have a sharp, clean rectangle and then cut this rectangle into 12 equal squares. Space the biscuits at least 3 inches apart on 2 parchment paper-lined baking sheets and freeze for at least 2 hours or up to 3 days.

3 Heat the oven to 425°. Brush each biscuit with some melted butter and then sprinkle with sea salt. Bake 1 sheet of biscuits for 10 minutes. Then reduce the oven temperature to 400°, rotate the baking sheet, and bake the biscuits until puffed and golden brown, about 15 minutes. Transfer the biscuits to a rack and repeat to bake the second sheet of biscuits. Let the biscuits cool for 5 minutes before serving.

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Toby Cecchini serves a version of the gin-based Pendennis Club Cocktail at his Brooklyn establishment, The Long Island Bar.

The Puzzling Pendennis Club Cocktail

INVESTIGATIVE BARTENDER **TOBY CECCHINI** ON AN EXQUISITE PINK GIN DRINK AND THE CLUB IN LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, THAT FORGOT HOW TO MAKE IT

A long while back I had two regulars in my bar who enjoyed tasking me with interpreting classic cocktails. One night, these fellows ordered their all-time favorite, the Pendennis Club Cocktail. I blushed over my inability to conjure it: I had heard of it but had never encountered one nor seen a recipe. They walked me through it—gin, apricot brandy, lime juice, and Peychaud's, the revered, anise-inflected New Orleans bitters. Taking a sip, I experienced one of those zoom-freeze moments. Intriguingly opaque, slightly frothy,

and salmon-hued, the Pendennis Club Cocktail has a mesmerizing balance of flavors: sweet, tart, and packed with spice and strength all at the same time. It has remained one of my favorite drinks for some two decades, during which time I have tinkered with its parts and attempted to trace its perplexing history.

The actual Pendennis Club is a dining and social institution in Louisville, Kentucky, some 130 years old and deeply garlanded with its city's history. It has long billed itself as the birthplace of the old-fashioned, a debate that has raged long and loud but one for which

Step 1

Add all ingredients to blender in the order listed in recipe.

Step 2

Blend on SOUP setting. When program is complete, soup will be hot and ready to serve.

Step 3

Pour directly into individual bowls and garnish as desired.

For the full recipe, visit
WolfGourmet.com/ThaiCarrotGingerSoup



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I'd prefer to stay on the sidelines. Instead, what I've wanted to know for many years is, who cooked up the actual Pendennis Club Cocktail, and why, in the middle of the bourbon belt, would this namesake house drink be composed with gin?

In a serendipitous visit to Louisville, it occurred to me that I could finally go to the Pendennis Club to order one in its birthplace and put these burning questions to rest. I've long imagined the club's eponymous cocktail as the tipple slung dozens of times nightly across a grandiose bar in some stately salon filled with tinkling glass and cigar smoke. Giddy with anticipation, I derived from an unflappable doorman at the Seelbach hotel that the famous club was right around the corner from where I was

staying. "So, I can just walk right around the block and go have a drink there?" I queried, incredulous at my luck. Taking in my weedy mien, long hair, and Northern accent, he raised one eyebrow and replied in a Robeson-esque baritone, "No sir, you cannot. And neither can I."

Even had I somehow gained entry to this private establishment in a lofty neo-Georgian building, there would have been no Pendennis Club Cocktail for me there. Curiously enough, the Pendennis Club itself doesn't seem to know exactly where, how, when, or who first concocted the drink. When I contacted them recently to inquire about it, I was not referred to any official representative of the club, but instead to an amiable member, William Hinkebein, whom they considered the most knowledgeable source on its history. He avowed that, sadly, the club had lost the particular running narrative of the drink's history over time. It wasn't even available at their bar until last year, when Jeff Watts-Roy, a member and the chairman of the club's food and beverage committee, developed a seasonal cocktail list after doing research on historical cocktails that the club had offered through the years. He used the recipe in Charles Baker's 1939 *Gentleman's Companion* as reference, but clearly the drink goes back well beyond that. There is a mention of it in the obscure 1915 supplement to William Boothby's *The World's Drinks and How to Mix Them*.

Hinkebein also brought my attention to a further historical question. The Juniper Club, a private hunting and fishing camp founded in 1897 in central Florida and still operated by members of the Pendennis Club, serves, naturally, a Juniper Club Cocktail, consisting of gin, Cointreau, lemon or lime juice, and Peychaud's bitters—technically a White Lady with a dollop of Peychaud's, but an awfully short evolutionary leap from the Pendennis. Which begat which?

One of my favorite aspects of this drink is how you can distinctly taste each of the four elements, but when you make it for first-timers, almost everyone smacks their lips and declares



Intriguingly opaque, slightly frothy, and salmon-hued, the Pendennis Club Cocktail has a mesmerizing balance of flavors

how they love the grapefruit. Somehow, the lime juice and apricot spirit together combine to make a startling facsimile of grapefruit. Mixed properly, it should be just over the line of tart, but with the lush apricot looming to provide a soft landing of sweet fruit, and the bitters then giving it a furtively spicy finish.

The Pendennis is really just another in the large family of sours, which includes the margarita, the sidecar, and the daiquiri. But what makes the Pendennis particularly stand apart from other sours is its sweetening element, which is, to follow the verbatim recipe from old, "apricot brandy."

What that obscurity means in this day and age is what has led me to fuss with this drink for so many years now. Apricot brandy may have

meant a lot of different things a hundred years ago. Likely it was distilled from apricots, aged in barrel, to which sugar was added to make it palatable. Such a creature doesn't currently exist, exactly. We have eau-de-vie, a clear, single-distilled fruit brandy, which is aromatically smashing but bone dry and, to some, quite harsh. Then we have apricot cordial, which in its best iterations is eau-de-vie with usually some colorant and sugar added in. The excellent Giffard line out of France makes my favorite of these.

The eau-de-vie makes an oddly dry, hair-raisingly tart drink, while the cordial often makes for a overtly saccharine version. Sometimes more is more; using them both, judiciously, creates a celestial formulation of this cocktail. You get the aromatic bolt of the eau-de-vie along with the body of the cordial.

While I still hope to someday snoop the club's attic for the solid historical skinny on this drink's birth, for now I happily content myself with the nightly fortuity of shaking and savoring a Pendennis in blissful ignorance. ■

The Improved Pendennis Club Cocktail

In a cocktail shaker, stir 1 tsp. sugar with ½ tsp. hot water until the sugar dissolves. Fill the shaker with ice and add 2 oz. Plymouth or Citadelle gin, 1 oz. fresh lime juice, ¾ oz. Giffard Abricot du Roussillon liqueur, ½ oz. Blume Marillen apricot eau-de-vie, and 3 dashes Peychaud's bitters. Cover and shake vigorously until chilled, about 15 seconds. Place 1 halved kumquat (optional) in a chilled coupe glass and strain the cocktail into the glass. Makes 1 cocktail.

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With political restrictions recently eased, tourists are flooding Havana's colorful streets, like this one by the capitol building in Centro Havana.

A Table in Havana

IN CUBA'S RAPIDLY CHANGING POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, IN-HOME RESTAURANTS KNOWN AS PALADARES ARE PROVING TO BE PARTICULARLY ROBUST INCUBATORS FOR INNOVATION

By Julia Cooke
Photographs by Tegra Nuess

The only salt sold in Cuba is the iodized kind, packaged in plastic bags and parked on low grocery shelves. So when Niuris Higuera travels outside the country, she returns with suitcases stuffed with flaky sea salt.

"Twenty kilos of sea salt, yes," Higuera says, ticking off a list. "Sesame seeds, separated into black and white, because you only get a sort of mixed sesame here. Curry spices—not in their individual plastic containers, but in larger bags to save weight. Hand towels for the bathrooms..."

We're in the main dining room of her popular Havana restaurant, Atelier—a long, high-ceilinged, church-like space on the second floor of a Spanish colonial home, shot through with light and wind from the high open windows. The aesthetic is graceful grandma chic, all heavy, curved wood furniture, vintage tableware, 1950s radios, and modernist Murano glass ashtrays. Lunchtime guests, including a group of 30 tourists, clink glasses and laugh as white embroidered tablecloths puff in the breeze. While Higuera details her shopping list, an American diplomat and his wife, off to their

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On the roof of the *paladar* Atelier, run by Niuris Higuera (opposite page), the crowds come for icy-cold daiquiris and a constantly changing menu of Cuban classics and innovative Continental fare.



next posting in a few weeks, eat dishes seasoned with the spices she brought from Miami a few weeks ago.

In Cuba, in-home restaurants like Atelier, known as *paladares*, were legalized in the 1990s but limited by idiosyncratically enforced regulations: a maximum of 12 seats, no beef or lobster, only ingredients purchased at state stores, at least two “family helpers” as staff. Those restaurants that survived despite the restrictions possessed a speakeasy ambiance and exclusively served Cuban food. In 2011, nationwide economic reforms loosened regulations, and in short order, *paladares*—some selling comparatively exotic Indian or Spanish food—outstripped state-run restaurants in both number and popularity.

The American Embassy in Havana has recently reopened, the streets are teeming with tourists, and the country is at an obvious inflection point. For Higuera and her fellow culinary entrepreneurs, things are changing too: A government-run restaurant-appliance store opened last year, the first of its kind, and while only one type of let-



Running a restaurant in Cuba presents unique challenges: Recipes refer to ideal ingredients; grocery lists reflect wishful thinking

tuce used to grace local green markets (*agromercados*), these days leafy greens proliferate, the result of newly organized farming co-ops. But there is still no wholesale market, and products disappear from government-run supermarket shelves with no advance notice. Running a restaurant presents unique challenges: Recipes refer to ideal ingredients; grocery lists still reflect wishful thinking.

“But at the same time, not having a stable marketplace in Cuba provides the opportunity to create,” Higuera says. “You’re always thinking, ‘How am I going to substitute products to make new things?’”

Higuera’s Atelier is just that: a workshop, where everything is always a work in progress. Higuera has, as she puts it, “the gift of persistence.” She and chef Michael Calvo adjust their menu and tweak spices depending on what her husband, the purchaser-in-chief, finds on his morning round of the green markets and groceries. Calvo, a Cuban- and French-trained chef, employs cheap rum—which is never scarce—to tenderize octopus and combines mint, rose-

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The tourists are coming! But where will they eat? In-home restaurants like Atelier are working to source fresh, local ingredients and keep their dining rooms packed.

TOP PALADARES WORTH VISITING IN HAVANA

Atelier

Niuris Higuera and her brother Herdys opened this restaurant in a mansion five years ago and serve a constantly changing Cuban-Continental menu to a packed house every night. Eat outside on the roof if you can. *Calle 5, #511, between Paseo and Calle 2, Vedado*

Corte del Principe

When you arrive, ask owner Sergio which of that day's homemade pastas he recommends (his are the best in all of Havana) and then add some beef carpaccio or simply cooked fresh local fish to round out your meal. *Calle 9na at the corner of 74, Playa*

El Cocinero

The people-watching can't be beat on this late-night rooftop tapas bar reached via three flights of spiral stairs. The menu includes everything from tuna tataki to grilled pork ribs. *Calle 26 between 11 and 13, Vedado*

Ivan Chef Justo

Enjoy Spanish-Cuban fare—like paella and crisp suckling pig—at this lively, eclectically decorated

spot in the old city. *Agua-cate #9 at the corner of Chacón, Old Havana*

La Guarida

Located in the majestic, decaying building where legendary Cuban director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Strawberry & Chocolate* was filmed, La Guarida serves elegant Cuban food as stellar as the ambiance. Head upstairs to the new rooftop bar for a daiquiri and sweeping views of the city and ocean. *Concordia #418, Havana Centro; laguarida.com*

Le Chansonier

Héctor Higuera, Niuris' brother, helms this chic townhouse restaurant known for its Italian-Cuban cuisine, like octopus in squid ink and tamarind-sauced chicken. *Calle J #257, Vedado; lechansonnierhabana.com*

304 O'Reilly

Inventive small plates—like a light crab soup with miso broth or malanga with paprika and soy sauce—and creative gin cocktails ensure that tables are hard to snag at this tiny spot. Try anyway. *O'Reilly #304, Old Havana*

mary, and basil, hardly traditional to the Cuban palate, in his lamb stew.

What's perhaps most Cuban about Atelier's food is this deft adaptability and the aplomb with which Higuera and Calvo mix traditional with new and imported ingredients and flavors. The menu they've devised together isn't guided only by the whim of market shelves; it's also dictated by the season. A plump plume of that rum-tenderized octopus is drizzled with a balsamic reduction and served on julienned green apples, or placed atop a salad of chopped mango and pepper. In a lamb stew that structurally resembles the classic cumin-laced beef *ropa vieja*, the

meat is braised until tender in red wine and tomatoes, and then served with rice and soupy black beans.

But there are a handful of truly classic Cuban dishes on the menu too, like crispy malanga fritters made from a starchy tropical root similar to taro, with moist, parsley-flecked interiors and crisp golden crusts. They're best accompanied by the fluffiest icy-tart daiquiri in town.

Atelier consistently runs at capacity, and Higuera plans to open a sandwich café downstairs later this autumn. Though foreign tourists provide the stable base for the *paladar's* bottom line, Higuera wants to run the sort of casual eatery that's accessible to the

locals who are benefiting from the new entrepreneurial economy, too. She has big dreams for the future—entrepreneurship workshops, cooking classes, empowerment meet-ups—but countries don't change overnight. Despite the recent influx of foreign aid and nonprofit initiatives looking to help entrepreneurs, Higuera has worked long enough in Cuba to know her plans won't be easy to execute.

Then again, keeping her kitchen stocked with basics like salt and spices has never been simple. For now, she'll rely on what's taken her this far: grit.

"I insist on things working out," she says, "and they usually do." ■

A woman in a flowing red gown stands in a desert landscape at sunset, looking back over her shoulder. A large, glowing chandelier hangs in the sky above her. The scene is filled with cacti and mountains under a warm, orange sky.

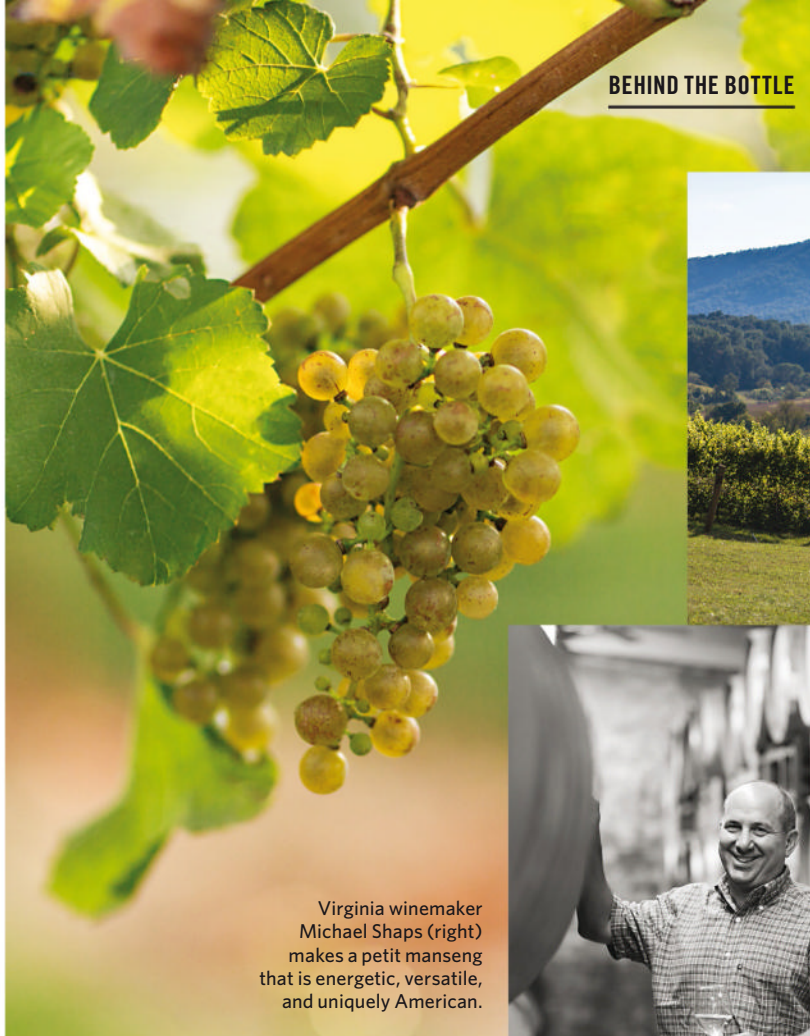
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Virginia winemaker Michael Shaps (right) makes a petit manseng that is energetic, versatile, and uniquely American.



Virginia Is for **Petit Manseng**

HOW A CREATIVE WINEMAKER USED AN OBSCURE FRENCH GRAPE TO MAKE A PERFECT-FOR-VIRGINIA AMERICAN WINE

By Bruce Schoenfeld Photographs by Andrea Hubbell

Nobody ever strolled into a winery looking to taste petit manseng. Merlot, chardonnay, even riesling, sure. Those varieties emerged as mainstays of Virginia's tourism-oriented wine industry in the 1970s, to be sold in tasting rooms alongside marginal concoctions like plum and blueberry wines. But an obscure grape from the French region of Jurançon, unknown even to most Frenchmen? You couldn't sell it. So why plant it?

Yet there comes a time in the maturation of every major viticultural region when its best producers segue from the grapes that everyone knows to those that thrive in the local conditions. For Michael Shaps, that meant petit manseng. Its tiny berries have high natural acidity, the attribute that can make wine thirst-quenching. They also have unusually thick skins, so they're more likely to stay disease-free in humid weather. What would never have worked in Napa or Oregon was perfect for America's Piedmont.

When Shaps, who had no ties to Virginia, returned to the U.S. from Burgundy, he declined various offers to serve as a cellar hand at West Coast properties in Oregon and Washington state because he wanted autonomy. After landing at Virginia's Jefferson Vineyards, he started the Michael Shaps brand in 2000. He dabbled in merlot and cabernet, but knew that for his adopted state to stake its claim as a great winemaking region, it needed to produce wine that tasted like nothing else.

When Shaps had his first glass of local petit manseng in 2006, its crispness intrigued him. "I knew that I had to try to make it," he says. If he could get the grapes ripe enough, he figured, all that acidity would work in his favor. Beginning in 2012, he started sourcing them from the Honah Lee Vineyard near Charlottesville. He made sure they stayed on the vines long enough to gain flavor and roundness, but not so long as to lose that signature tang.

The result is a uniquely American wine. The 2013 vintage,

his second, is tasty but still broad and imprecise, like a crayon drawing. With the 2014, from a cooler season, it has come of age. Crackling with energy, with a flavor profile that hints at apricots and mangos with a squeeze of lime, it's versatile enough to work perfectly with as complex a blend of tastes as Thanksgiving dinner. "Our best yet," Shaps says.

He makes about 500 12-bottle cases of petit manseng annually and sells it as fast as he can get it in the bottle. When the Washington, D.C.-based chef and restaurateur José Andrés, a strong supporter of Virginia wines, tasted it, he tossed his credit card on the counter and

Crackling with energy, petit manseng is versatile enough to work perfectly with Thanksgiving dinner

asked to buy everything that remained. That consisted of a three-case stash of the 2012 that Shaps had earmarked for his own cellar. "I said, 'You don't understand, that's for me. That's all I have,'" Shaps recalls. Shaps wouldn't budge until Andrés told him he wanted it not for his restaurants, but to drink at home with his wife. "When I heard that," he says, "I sold him a case."

At his small facility near the city of Charlottesville, Shaps makes a wide range of wines. His petit verdot and cabernet franc, especially, show the potential of bordeaux varieties in the region. They're among the many bottlings, notably Barboursville Vineyards' Octagon blend and Jim Law's Linden Hardscrabble Chardonnay, that make Virginia worthy of consideration. But those are variations on a theme, wines so good that you'd almost identify them as French. This one is different. It could be nothing else. ■



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NEW THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS / No. 1

A BROOKLYN HOLIDAY WITH
THE FLAVORS OF

DIFFERENCES



EXPAT RESTAURATEUR **PIERRE THIAM**
ADAPTS WEST AFRICAN FLAVORS FOR
HIS FESTIVE AMERICAN FEAST

Photographs by Ryan Liebe



Eat as much as you possibly can. Gorge. Help yourself to another plate of turkey. Pack in that extra slice of pie. Sounds like Thanksgiving, right? That way, you'll weigh so much, the Angel of Death won't be able to lift you away at the end of the night!

Wait, *what?* Can you imagine telling that to a kid? Well, we do, on *Tamxarit*, the Muslim New Year: Of all the holidays in my native Senegal, it's the one that reminds me the most of Thanksgiving. As a kid, I remember thanking God that my mom's food was delicious, otherwise I'd have had to force it down anyway.

Every Senegalese holiday has its signature dish, and special moments are linked to special food starting at birth. When you get your name, people celebrate at the ceremony by eating a *lakh*, a dish of millet that is perfumed with orange water and vanilla. At *Tamxarit*, we eat an elaborate millet couscous with bean and lamb stew. At my Thanksgiving now, I use American dishes as jumping-off points to pack in African flavor, creating new signature dishes for my family's table.

For example, instead of a plain butternut squash soup, I add Scotch bonnet peppers for heat to make a riff on a popular West African chile chowder called *pepe* (or pepper) soup. There are as many *pepe* soup recipes as there are regions in West Africa, but wherever you go, the soup is believed to prevent hangovers. You'll see people selling steaming bowls on the streets in West Africa at nighttime near nightclubs and bars. It's nice to have a little bowl at Thanksgiving, just in case. I make a raw collard green salad topped with roasted sweet potato, and a light stuffing made of fonio, an ancient grain that used to be considered fit only for royalty. We have a saying in Senegal, "Fonio never embarrasses the cook." That's how easy it is to make.

And the centerpiece is a tamarind-glazed turkey, similar to the ones my mother, who inspired much of my cooking, used to cook for us around Christmas. *Dakar*, the name of the city where I grew up, is the Wolof word for tamarind, so it feels appropriate to serve such a bird for our Senegalese Thanksgiving. While my mother is no longer with us, I like to think that having the bird on our table is a little mark of her presence.

Right before people come over—there's usually 25 in all, family and friends from Africa, Europe, the States, many of whom don't have family here in New York—I pop the pumpkin-mango cake in the oven, so that they are greeted with that scent of cinnamon and ginger, everything warm and fresh.

We have this belief in Senegal that you have to share food with whoever visits, because then your bowl will always be full. By sharing our food, we say, you bring a blessing.

I live in Brooklyn. If you find yourself near, stop by. We'll eat until we burst—even though there's no angel lurking, waiting to snatch us away at the end of the night.

Portrait by Walter Smith

Chef Pierre Thiam moved from Dakar to New York in the late 1980s to cook, and serves dishes like black-eyed pea hummus with chile paste (far left) and spicy butternut squash-pepper soup (left) on Thanksgiving. Recipes start on page 41.





A deeply burnished tamarind turkey with gravy (above), spicy collard greens with peanut butter and chile (top right), and a light pilaf (bottom right) made of fonio, a West African grain, are just a few of Thiam's Senegalese-inspired Thanksgiving staples. Recipes start on page 41.



Tamarind-Glazed Roast Turkey

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 40

Active: 1 hr.; Total: 3 hr. 45 min.

Sweet and sour tamarind pulp is a prized ingredient in Senegal, where it's formed into candies, mixed into a cooling drink, or slathered over grilled fish. Chef Pierre Thiam transforms the iconic Thanksgiving bird with his own glaze made with tamarind, Scotch bonnet chiles, and fish sauce, which lends the turkey skin a pleasantly sticky texture and the meat an umami-rich flavor. Be sure to use fresh, or "wet," tamarind pulp, which is packed in blocks with the seeds mixed throughout, and not tamarind concentrate or syrup; they are too sweet.

- 6 oz. "wet" tamarind pulp, roughly chopped (amazon.com)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup honey
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Vietnamese or Thai fish sauce
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 Scotch bonnet or habanero chile, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- One 12-lb. whole turkey, rinsed and dried thoroughly
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 2 Tbsp. cornstarch

1 In a small bowl, cover the tamarind pulp with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup boiling water and let stand for 10 minutes to soften. Using your fingers, break the tamarind apart and then let stand for another 5 minutes. Pour the tamarind through a fine sieve set over a medium bowl and, using a rubber spatula or spoon, press the tamarind through the sieve, discarding the solids. Add the honey, fish sauce, garlic, and chile to the tamarind liquid and stir into a smooth glaze; you should have $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups.

2 Heat the oven to 450°. Place the turkey on a rack set in a large roasting pan and season the cavity and outside liberally with salt and pepper. Pour the stock into the pan and roast the turkey until golden brown, about 1 hour. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°, cover the turkey with foil, and roast until almost cooked through, 1 hour more. Uncover the turkey and roast, basting with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the tamarind glaze every 10 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thigh of the turkey reads 160°, 30 minutes more.

3 Transfer the turkey on its rack to a cutting board, tent with foil, and let rest for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, pour the pan juices into a small saucepan. In a small bowl, stir the cornstarch with 2 tablespoons cold water, and then stir the cornstarch slurry into the pan juices. Place the pan over medium-high heat, bring to a boil, and cook, stirring, until thickened into a gravy, about 5 minutes. Pour the gravy through a fine sieve into a bowl and serve alongside the turkey.



Though West Africans often cook their collard greens, I love the chewiness and heartiness of them almost raw in salads



When he's in Africa, Thiam likes to use fresh goat cheese, featured here in a collard green salad (see page 43 for recipe), from the nomadic Fulani herders who graze their goats in the countryside. In lieu of that, any rich, creamy goat cheese will do the trick.

Black-Eyed Pea Hummus with West African Chile Paste

Serves 6 to 8; Page 38

Active: 1 hr. 20 min.; Total: 2 hr.

Pierre Thiam's nod to hummus uses black-eyed peas, native to West Africa and brought over to America with the slave trade. In Senegal, you'll often find them ground and fried into fritters called *accara* and served with spicy chile sauce. Here, they are puréed smooth and brightened with lots of lemon juice and served with a tiny dollop of intensely aromatic *shito*, a Ghanian chile paste, made sweet and spicy from caramelized onions, dried seafood, and smoky chile flakes. The paste will last for months in the refrigerator, but you can use crushed red chile flakes or any spicy chile sauce as a substitute, if you like.

For the chile paste:

- 1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp. red palm oil or vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup crushed red chile flakes
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 Tbsp. dried crawfish (amazon.com)
- 2 Tbsp. fermented fish powder (amazon.com)
- 2 Tbsp. smoked dried shrimp (amazon.com)
- 1 Tbsp. chipotle chile powder or smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- 1/2 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped

For the hummus:

- 2 red bell peppers
- 2 cups dried black-eyed peas, soaked overnight, drained
- 1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. red palm oil or vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. minced ginger
- 1 tsp. cayenne
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Flatbread or crudité, for serving

1 Make the chile paste: In a small food processor, combine 2 tablespoons palm oil with the chile flakes, tomato paste, crawfish, fish powder, shrimp, chile powder, onion powder, garlic, ginger, and onion and purée until smooth. In a small saucepan, heat the remaining 1/4 cup palm oil over medium-low. Scrape the chile purée into the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until it turns dark brown and caramelized, about 30 minutes. Transfer the paste to a jar and refrigerate until ready to use, preferably at least 8 hours.

2 Make the hummus: Heat the broiler. Place the bell peppers on a baking sheet and broil, turning as needed, until charred all over, about 15 minutes. Transfer the peppers to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let stand for 15 minutes to steam. Uncover the peppers and remove and discard their skins, stems, and seeds. Finely chop the pepper flesh and transfer to bowl.

3 In a 4-qt. saucepan, cover the peas with 3 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer and cook, stirring, until the peas are very tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Remove the peas from the heat and let cool for 10 minutes. Drain the peas and reserve 1 1/2 cups of the cooking liquid. Pour the reserved cooking liquid into a food processor along with the lemon juice, palm oil, ginger, cayenne, and garlic and purée for 20 seconds to blend flavors. Add the cooked peas, season liberally with salt and pepper, and purée until very smooth. Scrape the purée into a serving bowl and top with the roasted peppers. Serve with flatbreads or crudité and the chile paste on the side.

Butternut Squash Pepe Soup

Serves 6 to 8; Page 38

Total: 45 min.

Chef Pierre Thiam's take on this classic autumn soup uses Scotch bonnet chiles for spice and nutmeg for warmth. In Senegal, a similar soup is said to prevent hangovers, so you'll find hawkers selling it outside the bars late at night. Use your favorite type of pumpkin or other fall squashes to substitute for the butternut in this recipe, if you like.

- 2 Tbsp. red palm oil or vegetable oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 medium yellow onion, roughly chopped
- 2 vine-ripe tomatoes, cored, peeled, seeded, and roughly chopped
- 1 Scotch bonnet or habanero chile, stemmed, seeded, and minced
- 4 cups chicken stock
- One 2 1/2-lb. butternut squash, peeled, halved, seeded, and cut into 1-inch chunks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Freshly grated nutmeg

1 In a large saucepan, heat the palm oil over medium-high. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened, about 8 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and chile and cook until the tomatoes break down slightly, 5 minutes. Pour in the stock and add the squash. Bring the soup to a boil, reduce the

heat to maintain a simmer, and cook until the squash is tender, about 15 minutes.

2 Working in batches, transfer the soup to a blender and purée until smooth. Return the soup to the saucepan and season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Ladle the soup into bowls and drizzle with more palm oil before serving.

Shredded Collard Green Salad with Roasted Sweet Potatoes and Cashews

Serves 6 to 8; Page 42

Total: 1 hr.

The flavor of raw collard greens combines perfectly with tender roasted sweet potatoes and tangy, rich goat cheese in this hearty starter. West Africans cook virtually every dish they make with red palm oil, which is made from crushing the fruit of the palm, unlike palm kernel oil, which is derived from the fruit's seeds. Organic, fair-trade brands are available at Whole Foods and from West African specialty grocers.

- 2 lbs. sweet potatoes, peeled and cut crosswise into 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp. red palm oil or vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. cumin seeds
- 1 Tbsp. thyme leaves
- 2 garlic cloves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp. minced ginger
- 1 lb. collard greens, stems removed, leaves thinly shredded (6 cups)
- 2 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup roasted, unsalted cashews, roughly chopped

1 Heat the oven to 400°. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the sweet potato slices with 2 tablespoons of the palm oil, the cumin, thyme, and garlic. Season with salt and pepper and roast the sweet potatoes, flipping once halfway through cooking, until golden brown, about 40 minutes. Transfer the potatoes to a rack and let cool.

2 Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine the lime juice and ginger and let stand for 10 minutes to soften. Whisk in the remaining 1/4 cup palm oil until emulsified and then season the vinaigrette with salt and pepper.



Chunks of buttery mango folded into the batter of this mango-pumpkin spice cake (see page 45 for recipe) flavor each bite, while a fan of slices on top is a simple way to make the presentation elegant and festive.

**For me, the scent of mango and pumpkin
baking instantly transforms
the night into a celebration**

3 To serve, place the collard greens in a large bowl and toss with 1 tablespoon of the dressing, massaging it into the greens for about 5 minutes. Transfer the greens to a serving platter, top with the sweet potatoes, and sprinkle with the goat cheese and cashews. Serve with the remaining dressing on the side.

“Creamed” Collard Greens with Peanut Butter and Chile

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 41
Total: 45 min.

Greens laced with freshly ground peanut butter and fermented seafood for a funky umami kick is a common one-pot dish in West Africa. Chef Pierre Thiam grinds his own peanut butter from roasted peanuts to make a creamless creamy sauce, but if you don't make your own, use natural peanut butter, as peanut butters made with added sugar and stabilizers will change the flavor of the dish. Almond, cashew, and other nut butters also add an interesting, albeit untraditional, flavor to greens prepared in this manner.

- Kosher salt**
- 2 lbs. collard or turnip green leaves, roughly chopped (12 cups)**
- 1 cup dried shrimp (amazon.com)**
- 4 Scotch bonnet or habanero chiles, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped**
- 1½ medium yellow onions (1 roughly chopped, ½ sliced into ¼-inch-thick rings)**
- 1 vine-ripe tomato, cored, seeded, and roughly chopped**
- 4 Tbsp. red palm oil or vegetable oil**
- 2 Tbsp. tomato paste**
- ½ cup natural peanut butter**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

1 Bring 2 cups water to a boil in a large saucepan and season with salt. Add the collard greens, cover, and cook until the leaves are tender and wilted, about 5 minutes. Drain the leaves in a colander set over a bowl and reserve 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Place the leaves and reserved liquid in a blender, purée until smooth, and scrape the paste into a bowl.

2 Clean the blender and return it to its base. In the blender, combine the dried shrimp with three-quarters of the chiles, half the chopped onion, and the fresh tomato and purée until smooth. In a large saucepan, heat 2 tablespoons palm oil over medium-high. Add the remaining half of the chopped onion and the tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, until the onions are soft and lightly

caramelized, 6 to 8 minutes. Scrape the shrimp and tomato paste into the pan, reduce the heat to medium, and cook, stirring, until lightly caramelized, about 5 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat, stir in the puréed collard greens and peanut butter, and mash until evenly combined. Season the greens with salt and pepper and scrape into a serving dish.

3 In a 10-inch skillet, heat the remaining 2 tablespoons palm oil over high, add the onion rings, and cook, stirring, until soft and slightly caramelized, about 5 minutes. Arrange the onion rings over the collards and garnish with the remaining chile.

Fonio Pilaf with Dates, Carrots, and Peanuts

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 41
Total: 45 min.

Fonio, a delightfully nutty-tasting type of millet, is a ubiquitous staple in Senegal, and chef Pierre Thiam enjoys using it in his Thanksgiving menu because he finds it lighter than bread-rich stuffings. If you can't find fonio, substitute an equal amount of couscous or quinoa.

- ¼ cup red palm oil or vegetable oil, plus more for greasing**
- 5 oz. pitted Medjool dates, roughly chopped**
- ½ cup roughly chopped unsalted roasted peanuts**
- ½ tsp. cayenne**
- 2 medium carrots, cut into ¼-inch dice**
- 1 cup fonio (bonanza.com) or quinoa, rinsed and drained**
- 1½ cups chicken stock**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley**

1 Heat the oven to 325°. In a medium saucepan, heat the palm oil over medium. Add the dates, ¼ cup of the peanuts, the

cayenne, and the carrots and cook, stirring, until the carrots soften slightly, 8 to 10 minutes. Add the fonio and stir until well-coated with oil and then pour in the stock and bring to a boil. Cover the pan and cook, without stirring, until the fonio absorbs all the stock, about 3 minutes.

2 Scrape the fonio into an 8-inch square baking dish greased with palm oil and smooth the top. Cover the dish with foil and bake until tender and warmed through, about 20 minutes. Uncover, fluff the fonio with a fork, and season with salt and pepper. Scrape the fonio into a serving bowl and sprinkle with the remaining peanuts and the parsley before serving.

Mango and Pumpkin Spice Cake

Serves 8 to 10; 📖 Page 44
Active: 20 min.; Total: 2 hr. 20 min.

Fresh mango, mixed into the base and fanned on top of this warmly spiced pumpkin dessert—chef Pierre Thiam's version of his wife's classic pumpkin cake—adds a tropical brightness and dramatic presentation to his Thanksgiving table.

- 2¾ cups (12⅔ oz.) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting**
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon**
- 2 tsp. ground ginger**
- 1 tsp. baking soda**
- 1 tsp. kosher salt**
- 2 cups (14 oz.) sugar**
- 1 cup canned or homemade pumpkin purée (see “Roasting Pumpkin,” below)**
- 1 cup vegetable oil**
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract**
- 4 large eggs**
- 2 mangoes, peeled and pitted**
- Confectioners' sugar, for dusting**

1 Heat the oven to 325°. Grease and flour a 9-inch springform cake pan. In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the cinnamon, ginger, baking soda, and salt. In another bowl, whisk the sugar with the pumpkin, oil, vanilla, and eggs until smooth. Cut half of one mango into ½-inch cubes and stir into the batter. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and smooth the top.

2 Cut the remaining 1½ mangoes lengthwise into ¼-inch-thick slices and fan the slices over the top of the cake in a circle. Bake the cake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, about 2 hours. Transfer the cake to a rack and let cool completely. Unmold the cake, transfer to a serving platter, and dust with confectioners' sugar before serving.

ROASTING PUMPKIN

Try making your own pumpkin purée for Thanksgiving desserts—it's easier than you think. Halve a 2-lb. sugar pumpkin, scoop out the seeds, and drizzle the flesh with vegetable oil. Bake the pumpkin, cut side down, on a baking sheet at 400° until soft, 1 hour. Scoop out the flesh and purée.

NEW THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS / No. 2

THE HUNTER'S TABLE

JUSTIN DEVILLIER OF LA PETITE GROCERY IN NEW ORLEANS GATHERS INSPIRATION AND INGREDIENTS FROM THE LOUISIANA LANDSCAPE

Photographs by Christina Holmes

Hopping into a little boat with friends and heading out in the pitch black of an early morning to hunt in the duck blind as the sun rises—to me, that's the sign that Thanksgiving is coming.

Waterfowl hunting season in Louisiana opens the second week in November, and ever since I moved here 13 years ago, the holiday, hunting, and my duck and andouille gumbo—which takes pride of place on my Thanksgiving table—have been inextricably linked. I love hunting because it's methodical: To hit your target, you have to go through steps, making sure your stance and sight picture are both in line before you pull the trigger. And as a chef I believe each bite tastes better if you've had a hand in what you eat, from start to finish.

My little girls, Ruby and Beatrice, think so too. Last year I brought home ducks that were still feathered, still had heads and feet on. Ruby, who was three at the time, pulled up her stool so she could see over the butcher block, took one look at the birds and, without batting an eye, instructed me to cut off their heads. So I did. And then she helped me with everything—removing the feet, deboning the bodies, roasting the bones, and making a rich dark broth with them, step-by-step,

methodically. It took all day. That evening, Ruby drank six cups. That's like half her weight in duck broth. She's unflappable. I have no doubt she'll be a great shot when she gets older.

At my Thanksgiving table, where every dish is going to be enjoyed by friends and family—arguably my most important customers—I do my best to gather all of the ingredients personally. That means I go fishing on Lake Borgne, near my house, for redfish, which I grill “on the half shell,” a technique pulled from Louisiana fish camps that insulates the meat and keeps it super moist. And while I don't shoot my own venison, I still use fresh meat thanks to a restaurant regular, the priest at the church across the street. He hunts in his spare time and will drop off a shoulder, which I cook low and slow in wine until it's so tender you can eat it with a spoon. I guess it's our showstopping equivalent to the Norman Rockwell turkey.

But it's the duck gumbo that I associate most with the holiday. It starts with the camaraderie of camping out with a bunch of my friends the night before we hunt and ends with my kids digging into bowls filled with a rich roasted duck broth, thickened with roux and packed with andouille sausage and tender duck meat. And what can I be more thankful for than that?





Oyster Pie with Buttermilk Biscuits

Serves 12 to 16
Active: 1 hr. 10 min.; Total: 2 hr. 20 min.

Chef Justin Devillier's homage to a classic oyster stew is packed full of Swiss chard and shot through with smoky ham and absinthe, which perfumes each steaming bite. The buttermilk biscuits on top are just as delicious cooked separately and slathered with butter and honey.

For the biscuits:

- 3 cups (13 1/2 oz.) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 3 sticks chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk, chilled

For the oyster filling:

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 10 oz. smoked country ham, finely diced
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 2 fennel bulbs, finely chopped
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 cup (4 1/2 oz.) all-purpose flour
- 4 cups whole milk
- 2 bunches Swiss chard or spinach leaves, stems removed, roughly chopped
- 7 oz. shucked oysters (2 dozen)
- 1/2 cup finely chopped chives
- 1/4 cup absinthe or Pernod
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 Make the biscuits: In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the baking powder, salt, and baking soda until evenly combined. Add the butter and, using your fingers, rub the butter with the flour until pea-size crumbles form. Add the buttermilk and stir until a dough forms. Scrape the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knead until it forms a ball. Using a rolling pin, flatten the dough until 3/4 inch thick, and then fold in thirds like a letter. Repeat rolling and folding twice more, and then flatten the dough until 1/2 inch thick. Using a 2 1/2-inch round cutter, cut out biscuits, rerolling scraps as needed, to get 20 total. Place the biscuits on a baking sheet and freeze until ready to use, up to 1 week.

(continued on page 49)



Pickled Shrimp with Satsuma

Serves 8 to 10

Active: 25 min.; Total: 1 day

Bittersweet satsumas, a citrus native to Louisiana, brighten these pickled shrimp, which chef Justin Devillier spikes with Korean chile flakes. Substitute tangerines or any orange-related citrus and crushed red chile flakes, if necessary.

- 3 lbs. shell-on medium shrimp, preferably Gulf white
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup fresh lemon juice

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white wine vinegar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. celery seed
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Korean red chile flakes
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground allspice
- 4 bay leaves
- 3 satsumas or tangerines, peeled and cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ medium red onion, thinly sliced lengthwise
- Kosher salt

1 Bring a large saucepan of water to a boil and then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer. Add the shrimp, bring the water back to a boil, and cook until they turn bright orange and are done, about 2 minutes. Drain the shrimp and let cool to room temperature. Peel and discard the shells and legs from the shrimp, leaving their tails attached.

2 In a large bowl, mix the peeled shrimp with the remaining ingredients, except the salt, and toss until evenly combined. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 24 hours. Stir the shrimp and season with salt before serving.



Chef Justin Devillier (left) serves light appetizers of pickled shrimp and grilled oysters (opposite, see page 52 for recipe) to balance heartier mains, like duck and andouille gumbo (right) made with ducks he hunts himself.



(Continued from page 47)

2 Make the oyster filling: Heat the oven to 450°. In a large saucepan, heat the olive oil over medium-high. Add the ham and cook, stirring, until browned and crisp, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the celery, fennel, and onion. Season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until the vegetables soften, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Sprinkle the flour over the vegetables and cook, stirring constantly, until lightly toasted, about 2 minutes. Slowly pour the milk into the pan and stir until it comes to a boil. Add the Swiss chard, reduce the heat to medium, and cook, stirring, until the Swiss chard wilts down, about 8 minutes.

3 Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the oysters, chives, absinthe, and parsley. Season with salt and pepper and divide the oyster filling between two 1½-qt. oval baking dishes. Arrange the biscuits evenly over the filling in both dishes and place the dishes on a foil-lined baking sheet.

4 Bake the oyster pies until the fillings are bubbling in the center and the biscuits are golden brown, about 1 hour. Transfer the pies to a rack and let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Duck and Andouille Gumbo

Serves 8 to 10
Total: 4 hr. 20 min.

For his take on a Cajun gumbo, chef Justin Devillier uses rendered duck fat in the roux instead of butter, and quartered ducks in lieu of the classic chicken. In this recipe, we've called for only duck legs, which stay tender during a low-and-slow cooking process and won't run the risk of drying out.

- 8 duck legs, fat trimmed, thighs and drumsticks separated**
- 1 large yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped**
- 12 thyme sprigs**
- 1 sage sprig**
- 1 cup plus 2 Tbsp. (5 oz.) all-purpose flour**
- 2 Tbsp. hot sauce**
- 2 Tbsp. sweet paprika**
- 1 Tbsp. cayenne**
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 lb. andouille sausage, cut crosswise into ¼-inch-thick coins**
- 1 lb. okra, cut crosswise into ⅓-inch-thick coins**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- Cooked white rice, for serving**

1 In a 12-inch skillet, place the duck thighs skin-side-down in a single layer and then place the skillet over medium heat. Cook the thighs until golden brown on the bottom, about 40 minutes. Flip the thighs and cook until browned on the opposite side, 5 minutes more. Transfer the thighs to a plate and cook the drumsticks in the skillet, skin side down, until golden brown, 20 minutes. Flip the drumsticks and cook until browned on the other side, 5 minutes. Transfer all the duck pieces to a plate and pour the duck fat into a measuring cup. Set 1 cup fat aside to make the roux and save the remaining fat for another use or discard.

2 Return the skillet to medium heat, add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring to scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pan, until the onions are soft and beginning to caramelize, about 5 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and let cool. Meanwhile, tie the thyme and sage sprigs together with kitchen twine.

3 In a large saucepan, heat the 1 cup reserved duck fat over medium-low. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until the roux turns dark brown and smells toasty, about 50 minutes. Scrape the cooled onions into the roux along with the hot sauce, paprika, cayenne,



and Worcestershire and stir until evenly coated. Add the duck pieces and tied herbs to the pan along with the andouille, okra, and 10 cups water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the duck meat is falling off the bone, about 2 hours. To serve, season the gumbo with salt and pepper and serve in bowls with rice.

Braised Venison Shoulder with Mushroom Pierogi

Serves 6 to 8

Active: 1 hr. 45 min.; Total: 5 hr.

Venison is prominent on the holiday menus of many hunters because deer season coincides with late fall. Chef Justin Devilier braises venison shoulder in wine and serves it with mushroom pierogi, an homage to his mother, who has Polish roots.

For the venison:

- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- One 2-2 1/2-lb. boneless venison shoulder, tied into a roast
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 8 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 2 large yellow onions, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 cups red wine
- 4 cups veal or vegetable stock
- 2 medium carrots, finely chopped
- 12 flat-leaf parsley sprigs
- 1 bunch thyme sprigs
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

For the pierogi:

- 2 cups (9 oz.) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 3 large eggs
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 5 oz. shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, caps thinly sliced

- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 1 1/2 cups (10 oz.) MitiCrema cheese (forevercheese.com) or chèvre
- 1/2 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. whole milk
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- Thyme leaves, to garnish

1 Make the venison: Heat the oven to 350°. In a large enameled cast-iron pot, heat the oil over medium-high. Season the venison all over with salt and pepper and add to the pot and cook, turning as needed, until golden brown on all sides, about 18 minutes. Transfer the venison to a plate and add the celery, onions, and garlic to the pot. Cook, stirring, until the vegetables are soft and beginning to caramelize, 8 to 10 minutes. Pour the wine into the pot and cook, stirring, until reduced by half, about 6 minutes. Return the venison to the pot along with the stock and carrots and bring to a boil. Tie the



From left: Braised venison with mushroom pierogi, grilled redfish with charred scallion butter and creamy grits, and roasted turnip salad with thick bacon lardons are some of the hearty Louisiana-inspired dishes served at chef Justin Devillier's Thanksgiving. Recipes start on page 50.

parsley and thyme together with kitchen twine and add to the pot along with the mustard. Cover and bake until the venison is very tender, about 4 hours.

2 Meanwhile, make the pierogi dough: In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt and create a well in the center of the flour. Add 2 eggs and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup water to the well and stir, slowly adding flour, until the dough comes together. Transfer the dough to a work surface and knead briefly until smooth. Place the dough ball on a lightly floured baking sheet and cover with plastic wrap. Let the dough stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

3 In a 12-inch skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high. Add the mushrooms and shallots, season with salt, and cook, stirring, until all the mushrooms' moisture evaporates and they begin to brown, about 10 minutes. Remove the skillet from the

heat and let the mushrooms cool to room temperature. Scrape the mushrooms into a bowl, stir in the cheese and lemon juice, and season the filling with salt and pepper.

4 In a small bowl, whisk the remaining egg with the milk to make an egg wash. Transfer the pierogi dough to a lightly floured work surface and roll until $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Using a 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch round cutter, cut out circles of dough. Place 1 tablespoon of filling in the center of each circle, moisten the edge of the circle with the egg wash, fold the circle in half, and seal at the edges.

5 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and, working in batches, add the pierogi and cook until the dough is no longer raw, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the pierogi to a sheet of parchment paper and let dry for 5 minutes. In a 12-inch skillet, heat the butter over medium-high. Working in batches, add the pierogi and

cook, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, 2 to 3 minutes.

6 To serve, remove the venison from the pot and cut into bite-size pieces. Divide the venison among serving bowls and ladle the vegetables and cooking liquid on top. Place the pierogi alongside the venison in the bowls and sprinkle with thyme leaves.

Redfish on the Half Shell with Creamy Grits

Serves 8
Total: 1 hr. 45 min.

Chef Justin Devillier learned this popular Louisiana fish camp technique—cooking “on the half shell”—after moving to New Orleans from California. Grilling fish skin-side-down with its scales still attached protects the tender meat from ripping and

insulates it slightly from the heat, resulting in perfectly tender flesh.

- 2 bunches scallions (9 oz.), green and white parts separated
- 3 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- 2½ Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1½ Tbsp. colatura di alici (anchovy syrup; amazon.com)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 4 cups whole milk
- 4 cups water
- 1½ cups coarse-ground grits (not instant)
- 8 redfish or red snapper fillets, with skin and scales still attached (8 to 10 oz. each)

1 Light a grill and set it up for direct and indirect grilling. On a cutting board, thinly slice the scallion greens and place in a bowl. Place the scallion whites over direct heat on the grill and cook, turning, until charred and soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer the whites to the board and let cool completely. Finely chop the whites and add to the bowl with the greens along with 2 sticks butter, the lemon juice, colatura di alici, and garlic. Season with salt and pepper and mix the scallion butter until evenly combined.

2 In a large saucepan, combine the milk and water and bring to a boil. While whisking, slowly pour the grits into the milk and cook, stirring constantly, until the grits are tender, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Stir in the remaining stick of butter, season with salt, and remove the pan from the heat.

3 Season the redfish with salt and pepper and place over direct heat on the grill, skin side down, and cook for 3 minutes. Without flipping, move the fillets to indirect heat and brush each with 2 tablespoons of the scallion butter. Close the grill and cook the fillets until cooked through, about 10 minutes. To serve, scrape the grits into a serving bowl, remove the skin from each fillet, and serve the fish alongside the grits.

Roasted Turnips and Greens with Bacon Vinaigrette

Serves 8 to 10; 📖 Page 51
Total: 1 hr.

Pleasantly bitter turnips are roasted until sweet and then slicked with bacon fat and sherry vinegar in chef Justin Devillier's warm side dish, which also uses the root vegetable's hearty green leaves. If you can't find turnips with their greens still attached, use 1 pound of turnips and 8 ounces of collard greens.

- 3 oz. slab bacon, cut into ¼-inch lardons
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. sherry vinegar
- 2 tsp. minced shallot
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp. honey
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 bunches medium-size turnips with their greens (1¾ lbs.)
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp. finely chopped rosemary

1 Heat the oven to 425°. Place the bacon lardons in a small nonstick skillet and heat over medium-high. Cook, stirring, until the bacon renders its fat and is crisp, about 6 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to paper towels to drain and pour 2 tablespoons of the rendered fat into a small bowl; discard the remaining fat or save for another use. Stir the vegetable oil into the bacon fat along with the vinegar, shallot, mustard, and honey until emulsified. Season the vinaigrette with salt and pepper.

2 Trim the greens from the turnips, wash and dry them thoroughly, and chop into 1-inch pieces. Trim the turnips and quarter or halve them so they are roughly the same size. In a 12-inch skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high. Add the turnips, cut sides down, and cook until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Flip the turnips, transfer the skillet to the oven, and bake until the turnips are tender, 18 to 20 minutes.

3 Remove the skillet from the oven and stir in the greens to wilt slightly. Season the turnips and greens with salt and pepper and transfer to a serving platter. Sprinkle with the reserved bacon and rosemary and drizzle with the vinaigrette.

Grilled Oysters with Pecorino and Shaved Bottarga

Serves 8 to 10; 📖 Page 48
Total: 30 min.

Chef Justin Devillier likes to start Thanksgiving shucking oysters on his back porch with a bottle of champagne nearby. Some he eats raw; others go in his oyster pie (see page 47). The rest go on the grill, for this appetizer. Large Gulf oysters are ideal; their shells are the perfect vessels for poaching the meat.

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1½ tsp. minced garlic
- 1½ tsp. minced thyme leaves
- Kosher salt and freshly ground

- black pepper
- 2 dozen large oysters, such as bluepoint or Gulf
- Aged Pecorino Romano and mullet bottarga, for serving

1 Light a grill. In a large bowl, stir the butter with the lemon juice, garlic, and thyme and season with salt and pepper. Shuck the oysters, keeping their meat and juices in the concave shell, and dollop a teaspoon of the compound butter on each oyster.

2 Arrange the oyster halves on the grill, shell side down, and cook until their juices begin to bubble and the oyster meat just begins to curl at the edges, about 5 minutes. Remove the oysters from the grill and transfer to a serving platter. Using a Microplane, grate some pecorino over each oyster. With a truffle shaver or vegetable peeler, shave a sliver of bottarga over each oyster and serve immediately.

Cornbread Financiers

Serves 8 to 10; 📖 Page 53
Active: 20 min.; Total: 1 hr.

These are an elegant, restaurant-style nod to the hunks of cornbread typically found on Thanksgiving tables. Chef Justin Devillier's financiers are larger than their French counterparts, making them perfect for breaking apart and dunking in Sea Salt Ice Cream (see page 53 for recipe).

- 7 Tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- ½ cup plus 1 Tbsp. (4¼ oz.) sugar
- ¼ cup plus 3 Tbsp. (2¼ oz.) fine cornmeal
- 3 Tbsp. (¾ oz.) all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp. (¼ oz.) almond meal
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3 large egg whites, lightly beaten

1 Heat the oven to 425°. Lightly grease eight 6-oz. ramekins with butter. In a large bowl, whisk the sugar with the cornmeal, flour, almond meal, and salt. Slowly whisk the egg whites into the dry ingredients until just combined.

2 In a small skillet, heat the 7 tablespoons butter over medium and cook, stirring, until the butter begins to brown and smell nutty, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and pour the hot butter into the batter, whisking until smooth. Spoon 3 tablespoons of batter into each ramekin. Place the ramekins in the oven, reduce the oven temperature to 350°, and bake until the financiers are golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Transfer the ramekins to a rack, unmold, and let the financiers cool completely before serving.



Salty ice cream, sweet cornbread financiers, and a glass of whiskey—that's my perfect ending to a holiday meal

Sea Salt Ice Cream

*Makes 2 qts.
Active: 20 min.; Total: 10 hr.*

Chef Justin Devillier relies on the highest-quality local milk to make this simple yet standout ice cream, which gets a welcome savory note from a generous hit of sea salt.

- 1½ cups (11 oz.) sugar**
- 12 large egg yolks**
- 4 cups heavy cream**
- 2 cups whole milk**
- 1 Tbsp. flaky sea salt, plus more for serving**

1 In a medium saucepan, whisk 1 cup of the sugar with the egg yolks until smooth. Stir in the remaining ½ cup sugar, 2 cups cream, and the milk until smooth and place over medium-high heat. Cook the custard, stirring constantly, until it coats the back of a spoon, about 8 minutes. Scrape the custard into a bowl and stir in the remaining 2 cups cream and the salt. Let the custard cool to room temperature and refrigerate until chilled, at least 4 hours.

2 Pour the chilled custard into an ice cream machine and churn according to the manufacturer's instructions. Scrape the ice cream into a container and freeze until firm, at least 6 hours. Serve with more sea salt sprinkled on top.





NEW THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS / No. 3



BEST OF

Using China as inspiration for Thanksgiving dinner, chef Cara Stadler brines her turkey with Peking duck spices (middle), stir-fries local maitake mushrooms with chiles (top left), stuffs squash into pork dumplings (right), and tops a raw kale salad with black-sesame maple cashews (bottom left).
Recipes start on page 57.



**BACK FROM
BEIJING,
CARA
STADLER
OF BRUNSWICK,
MAINE'S TAO YUAN
SMOKES TURKEY
WITH PEKING
DUCK SPICES AS
PART OF A
CHINESE-NEW
ENGLAND-SPICED
CELEBRATION**

BOTH WORLDS

Photographs by Matt Taylor-Gross



At Tao Yuan in Brunswick, Maine, Cara Stadler cooks spirited Chinese food that reflects her classical French training and time working in Beijing and Berkeley, California.

The turkey is exceedingly moist and permeated with earthy Chinese spices and smoky flavors

My girlfriend still gives me flak about it. “Do you remember that time you didn’t make Thanksgiving *on Thanksgiving*?” she asks, peeved.

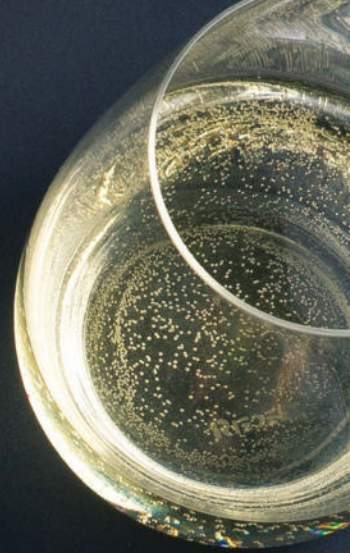
That was our first year living in Maine, and I had the half-cracked notion to do an all-Chinese Thanksgiving replete with Peking-style duck. After seven years of cooking professionally in various cities—Berkeley, California; Philly; Paris; Singapore; and, most recently, Beijing—I had just returned to the U.S. I missed the food from China, all those full, intense flavors, the slow burn of Sichuan peppercorns. So on Thanksgiving Day, I bought ingredients for a cauliflower, bacon, and scallion stir-fry; another with bok choy, whole chestnuts, and shitake mushrooms; wok-fried potatoes; and Peking-style duck.

“Why can’t you just make a turkey and mashed potatoes like every other family?” she asked, as she helped me take down the duck I had hung in my kitchen to dry before roasting. Two other chefs, who were too busy to go home, would be arriving soon.

The funny thing is: I grew up with the turkey-and-mashed-potatoes Thanksgivings. Food holidays were big in our house, and even though we were a culturally mixed family, the celebrations were strictly traditional. My mother is Chinese and my father is Jewish, so we had both Chinese New Year and Passover. Thanksgiving was all New England. Every year, we drove from our home in Massachusetts to my dad’s family’s house in the thick of the Maine woods. Packed with more than 20 relatives, it was very big and it was very loud. The adults would each make their own special dishes. My mother, who typically cooked homey Shanghai food, always brought a cranberry bread and relish. Afterward, we would all play charades.

The year of the Chinese duck Thanksgiving, my parents were living in Beijing, and it was the first time I cooked the holiday meal. Everything was delicious, but I got the sense that our small group of displaced chefs just wanted what they grew up eating. If the world’s greatest chef offered to cook for you on Thanksgiving, you’d probably still want turkey and Brussels sprouts.

So for this Thanksgiving, I’ve tweaked the menu to be a play between the holiday’s traditional dishes and Chinese flavors. In Maine, we get great foraged maitake mushrooms, which I use in my mother’s home-style Shanghainese dish with star anise, ginger, and soy. The local winter squash are also phenomenal, and I mix them into pork dumplings. I use Brussels sprouts, that staple Thanksgiving side, for a Sichuan-style stir-fry with bacon and chestnuts. And the raw kale salad with black-sesame maple cashews and a punchy Shanxi vinegar dressing is my girlfriend’s recipe. Instead of duck, I brine a turkey with the Peking spices—Sichuan peppercorns, star anise, black cardamom, and more. I don’t have one of the special Peking duck ovens that are crucial for that crackly skin, but I do have a simple smoker, which adds a depth of flavor to the meat. The turkey is exceedingly moist and permeated with earthy Chinese spices and smoky flavors. It may not be exactly what you’ve always had on Thanksgiving, but it’s so drop-dead delicious that you just might consider starting a new tradition.



Apple and Kale Salad with Black-Sesame Maple Cashews

Serves 6 to 8
Total: 35 min.

Crunchy cashews coated with maple syrup and sesame seeds, and a boldly piquant dressing of Shanxi vinegar, add texture and verve to the classic kale salad. This vinaigrette is sharper than most, so if you prefer less acidity, add up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup more vegetable oil.

- 1 cup cashews
- 1 Tbsp. black sesame seeds
- 2 Tbsp. maple syrup, preferably Grade B
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plus 2 Tbsp. Shanxi vinegar (efooddepot.com)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup apple cider
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 4 cups packed roughly chopped lacinato kale
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Cortland apple, peeled, cored, and cut into 16 wedges


1 In a small skillet, heat the cashews over medium-high, tossing, until lightly toasted, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate and return the skillet to the heat. Add the sesame seeds and toast until fragrant, about 45 seconds. Transfer the sesame seeds to another plate and return the skillet to the heat. Add the maple syrup and cook until reduced and thick, about 1 minute. Return the cashews to the skillet and stir to coat in the syrup. Spread the cashews onto a sheet of foil, sprinkle with the sesame seeds, and let cool completely.

2 In a small bowl, whisk the vinegar with the apple cider, sugar, and oil until the sugar dissolves. Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vinaigrette into a large bowl, add the kale, and season with salt and pepper. Massage the kale with the vinaigrette and let stand until slightly wilted, at least 15 minutes. Toss the kale with the vinaigrette again and transfer to a serving platter. Toss the apple wedges in the dressing left in the bowl and arrange over the kale. Break the cashews up into small pieces and sprinkle over the salad just before serving.



Cara Stadler riffs on a kale salad (top) by adding black-sesame maple cashews, and on a Sichuan stir-fry (above, see page 60 for recipe) with slab bacon, ginger, and chestnuts by using Brussels sprouts.

Slow-Smoked and Spice-Brined Turkey

Serves 6 to 8;  Page 54

Active: 25 min.; Total: 17 hr.

Inspired by the flavors of Peking duck, Stadler infuses a turkey with a spiced brine of Sichuan peppercorns, fennel seeds, and fresh ginger and then lightly smokes it with oak wood chips. The delicate smokiness balances the spices, and the low cooking temperature keeps the bird exceptionally moist. If you don't have wood chips, omit the smoking part of the recipe; the turkey will still taste delicious without it.

- 3 cups shaoxing cooking wine
- 2 cups honey
- 2 cups kosher salt, plus more
- 1 Tbsp. whole coriander seeds
- 1 Tbsp. red Sichuan peppercorns
- 2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 2 tsp. whole anise seeds
- 2 tsp. whole fennel seeds
- 5 whole star anise
- 3 whole black cardamom, crushed
- 2 cinnamon sticks, crushed
- One 1-inch piece ginger, thinly sliced
- 2 gallons cold water
- One 12-lb. whole turkey, rinsed
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp. "stovetop smoker" oak wood chips, such as Camerons (amazon.com)
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil

1 In an extra-large stockpot, combine the cooking wine with the honey, 2 cups salt, the coriander, both peppercorns,

anise seeds, fennel seeds, star anise, cardamom, cinnamon, and ginger and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring, until the honey and salt dissolve, remove from the heat, and stir in the water. Gently submerge the turkey into the brine, cover, and refrigerate 12 to 24 hours.

2 Heat the oven to 250°. Remove the turkey from the brine and transfer to a rack set in a roasting pan. Pat the turkey dry with paper towels and then season with salt and ground pepper. On a work surface, layer two 6-inch squares of foil over each other, pile the wood chips in the center, and fold up the sides to enclose the chips, leaving a 1/2-inch-wide opening at the top. Place the foil packet over a stove burner and heat over high until the chips begin to smoke, 1 to 2 minutes.

3 Using tongs, transfer the packet to the oven along with the turkey and bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thigh reads 140°, about 3 1/2 hours. Increase the oven temperature to 425°, brush the turkey with the oil, and bake until golden brown and the temperature at the thigh reads 160°, about 45 minutes.

TURN YOUR OVEN INTO A SMOKER

Don't have a big smoker in your backyard? No problem: You can use a foil packet of "stovetop" wood chips in your oven instead. Stovetop wood chips are cut into much smaller bits than regular ones, so they start burning quickly when heated over the stove before you put them into the oven.

Remove the turkey from the oven and discard the foil packet. Let the turkey stand for 20 minutes before carving.

Roasted Squash and Pork Dumplings

Serves 8 to 10

Total: 1 hr. 30 min.

At her dumpling shop, Bao Bao, in Portland, Maine, Cara Stadler turns out creative versions, like this delicate seasonal dumpling with squash mixed into a filling of spiced pork, ginger, and scallion. You can make the filling, assemble the dumplings, and store them in the refrigerator up to three days before cooking them.

For the spice mix:

- 2 Tbsp. small dried shrimp (amazon.com)
- 3/4 tsp. whole coriander seeds
- 3/4 tsp. red Sichuan peppercorns
- 1/2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 1/4 tsp. whole cloves
- 4 dried chiles de árbol, stemmed
- 2 1/2 whole star anise
- 2 black cardamom pods, crushed
- 1 1/2 bay leaves
- 1 cinnamon stick, broken

For the dumplings:

- 2 lbs. sunshine or kabocha squash (about 1/2 large squash), peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (1 1/2 lbs. flesh)
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 12 oz. ground pork
- 3 Tbsp. minced ginger
- 3 Tbsp. shaoxing cooking wine
- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce

Roasted squash and pork dumplings get toasty flavors from a spice mix that includes Sichuan peppercorns, star anise, and cardamom.





we love when
YOU FINISH
what
WE START



In Naples, you don't bring a gift when you're invited to dinner. No flowers, no wine, no delicacies. There's only one thing you can do to please your host. You can finish your plate.

COOK WITH NAPLES
PASTAGAROFALO.IT



- 2 Tbsp. double soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. toasted sesame oil, plus more for drizzling
- 3 scallions, finely chopped, plus more, thinly sliced, to garnish
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten
- 4 dozen wonton wrappers
- Black vinegar, for serving

1 Make the spice mix: In a large skillet, combine the dried shrimp with the coriander, both peppercorns, cloves, chiles, star anise, cardamom pods and seeds, bay leaves, and cinnamon. Place the skillet over medium heat and cook, stirring, until the spices are toasted and fragrant, 2 minutes. Working in batches, transfer the spices to a spice grinder and process into a fine powder. Transfer the spice mix to an airtight container and store in the refrigerator until ready to use.

2 Make the dumplings: Heat the oven to 350°. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the squash with the vegetable oil and 1 tablespoon of the ten-spice mix and bake, tossing halfway through cooking, until lightly caramelized and soft, about 35 minutes. Transfer the squash to a large bowl and mash until smooth. Stir in 1 tablespoon ten-spice mix along with the ground pork, ginger, wine, both soy sauces, sesame oil, finely chopped scallions, and the egg white until evenly combined. Place 2 teaspoons of the filling in the center of a wonton wrapper and, using your fingers, moisten the edges of the wrapper with water. Fold the wrapper along the diagonal and press to seal the edges. Transfer the dumpling to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and repeat with the remaining filling and wonton wrappers.

3 In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook the dumplings in batches until they float to the surface and are cooked through, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, lift the dumplings from the water and set over a towel to drain briefly. Transfer the dumplings to a serving platter, drizzle with more sesame oil and thinly sliced scallions, and serve with black vinegar.

Wok-Fried Brussels Sprouts and Bacon with Crispy Chestnuts

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 57
Total: 25 min.

Cara Stadler puts a Thanksgiving spin on one of her favorite Sichuan stir-fries by replacing the traditional cauliflower with Brussels sprouts. They are wok-fried with bacon, ginger, and garlic until crisp-tender, and garnished with thinly sliced chestnuts.

- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 lb. Brussels sprouts, ends trimmed, halved lengthwise
- 4 oz. slab bacon, cut into 1/2-inch lardons
- 2 tsp. minced garlic
- 2 tsp. minced ginger
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1/4 cup chicken or vegetable stock
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 8 scallions, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 3 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup vacuum-packed cooked chestnuts, cut into 1/4-inch slices
- Flaky sea salt

1 In a large wok or high-sided skillet, heat the oil over high until it begins to smoke. Add the Brussels sprouts and bacon and cook, tossing occasionally, until browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the garlic, ginger, and sugar and cook, tossing, for 2 minutes. Pour in the stock and soy sauce and cook, tossing, until almost evaporated, about 2 minutes. Stir in the scallions and cook, tossing, until bright green and crisp-tender, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish and return the wok to high heat.

2 Add the butter to the wok, and when it melts, add the chestnut slices and cook, tossing, until crisp, 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, lift the chestnuts from the butter and scatter over the Brussels sprouts and bacon. Sprinkle the chestnuts with sea salt before serving.

Sautéed Maitake Mushrooms with Red Chiles and Cilantro

Serves 6 to 8
Total: 25 min.

Adapting her mother's Shanghai-style mushroom stir-fry—fragrant with star anise, chiles de árbol, and cilantro—Cara Stadler uses meaty maitake mushrooms, which are abundant in Maine in the fall. Keep the mushrooms in large chunks so they can brown to a crisp on the outside while remaining tender inside. If you can't find maitake mushrooms, use oyster, hen of the woods, or whole chanterelle mushrooms as a substitute.

- 1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 10 dried chiles de árbol

- 8 whole star anise
- 2 lbs. maitake mushrooms, torn in half by hand into large 3-4-inch pieces
- 2 Tbsp. minced ginger
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable stock
- 1 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. packed light brown sugar
- 1/2 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves
- 3 scallions, thinly sliced crosswise on the bias

1 In a large wok or high-sided skillet, heat the oil until it begins to smoke. Stir in half the chiles and star anise and toss in the oil until fragrant, about 20 seconds. Add half the mushrooms in a single layer, toss in the oil, and cook, undisturbed, until caramelized and crisp on the bottom, about 4 minutes. Toss again and cook, undisturbed, until caramelized and crisp, about 2 minutes more.

2 Using a slotted spoon, remove the mushrooms, chiles, and star anise from the wok and transfer to a plate. Return the wok to the heat and repeat with the remaining chiles, star anise, and mushrooms.

3 Return all the chiles, star anise, and mushrooms to the wok along with the ginger and garlic and cook, tossing, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Pour in the soy sauce, stock, and sugar and cook, tossing, until the sugar dissolves and the garlic and ginger are tender, about 1 minute. Transfer the mushrooms, spices, and chiles to a large serving platter and sprinkle with the cilantro and scallions before serving.



The local pumpkins are phenomenal; I mix them into pork dumplings

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WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO
TURTLE SOUP?



JACK HITT EXPLORES THE
DISAPPEARANCE OF AN AMERICAN DELICACY AND
JOINS A HUNTING PARTY TO TAKE PART
IN A CENTURIES-OLD CULINARY TRADITION

Illustration by The Heads of State
Photographs by Matt Taylor-Gross



The best turtle hunting anywhere, I'd been told, was down this one road—"can't miss it"—in that far southwest outback of Virginia where the state resembles a wood planer peeling Kentucky off from Tennessee. One of the few champions of the almost extinct practice is Ricky Crouch, a logger whose South Carolina twang is music to my ears (I'm from there, too). But his directions, translated through crummy cell reception, ended up on paper as: "Past a gas station, out of business, a road goes off there, left, right, the one-lane bridge, and careful there's a rise where the road goes to gravel and it looks like you're going to drive off the earth." And finally, before he hung up: "Don't worry, just get there and I'll find you."

Somehow I did find that terrifying rise, then down Dean Hollow Road, past the Dean Cemetery, where I met Buster Dean, who's been hosting a turtle hunt at his farm for decades now. Crouch and assorted relatives and friends all gather here in this isolated little valley every July Fourth because they love the taste of snapping turtle and the intrigue of the hunt. They practice a style of turtle hunting that easily dates to before the Civil War and back to the very mists of the nation's founding.

I wanted to find out what had happened to turtle soup, which was among the most sought-after and popular dishes in all of American history. Accounts in the 18th and 19th centuries of massive parties known as "turtle frolics" suggest they were more popular than hog barbecues and oyster roasts, with descriptions of servants bearing three-foot-long upturned turtle shells filled with hot turtle stew for large crowds. No early cookbook lacked a recipe for turtle, terrapin, or snapper stew—made from sea turtle, snapping turtle, box turtle, or diamondback terrapin, all of which, in Southern slang, became "cooter" in the pot. But some 50 years ago, turtle soup disappeared and, to most palates, now seems almost improbable verging on unacceptable. What happened?

That was my question, and through a convoluted set of connections, I had been introduced to Ricky, who had told me right off that "ain't nothing like catching a big cooter and ain't nothing like eating one" and then invited me to join his July Fourth crew. So I packed my rubber boots.

"Look how nice Buster done scraped out the cow dung," Ricky's father, Bud, said to me the night before the hunt, as folks started hauling in their gear to Buster's open-air cow-

shed, where they'd sleep. A five-foot-high pile of meadow muffins—days old, so no smell—marked the entrance. It was threatening to rain, so the assembled crew—a mixed-race group ranging from Ricky's five-year-old grandson Landon to 78-year-old Bud—all gathered inside to get supper going, blow up those new air mattresses a foot thick, and tell some stories.

A retired cooter hunter, Frank Marshall, parked permanently in a portable easy chair, was there for the company and the moonshine. He asked me if I knew how to clean a turtle. I didn't. "Well," he said, "you grab him by the tail, and you take some tissue and wipe his butt. Now, he's clean." Laughter shook the shed wall, and all around, bullets of chaw blasted into the dust. According to legend, Ricky said, turtle is made up of a miscellany of meat, seven kinds—chicken, beef, lamb, goat, fish, pork, and shrimp. Bud piped up with the genesis story for my benefit: "They say that the Lord made the world in seven days, and he had a whole bunch of scraps left over. With those, he fashioned the cooter."

For centuries, the flavor was legendary, and, really, nothing said American democracy like turtle. The poor man could often find a few slow-moving specimens hanging out at the backyard well, even as the privileged man sought out its refined flavor. Two days after voting for independence in Philadelphia, on July 4, 1776, John Adams celebrated with a bowl of turtle soup; when the war was over, George Washington met with his officers at Fraunces Tavern in lower Manhattan for a farewell frolic; and Lincoln celebrated his second inaugural with terrapin stew. Before Aaron Burr murdered Alexander Hamilton, both were members of the elite Hoboken Turtle Club.



WE'RE HUNTING NOT JUST TURTLE, but that wide variety

Across the pond, the Brits also revered turtle soup. *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy—By a Lady*, England's great 18th century cookbook, boasts instructions on how "to dress a turtle the West India way" (a recipe that comes right after a "cure for the bite of a mad dog," which involves boiling "scraped tin" filings in good ale). Serving turtle in three different dishes at a frolic was not only common, it was, according to 1769's *Experienced English House-Keeper*, standard operating procedure.

Today, the memory of this dish has withdrawn into the fossil record of place names—Turtle Bay in midtown Manhattan centuries ago was a literal description of the area, same as Cooterville, Louisiana, and Turtlepoint, Pennsylvania. According to Paul Freedman, a food historian at Yale, the great fashion for turtle soup peters out in the mid-20th century.

"I have looked at menus from the Philadelphia Club, a fancy old men's club, and in the 1950s they not only still served terrapin, but packaged it in some form so you could take it home," he told me, noting that because of "degradation of habitat, it became harder to get." One can still find it served, say, in New Orleans' Commander's Palace and at the Oyster House in Philadelphia. But probably the easiest way to taste fresh-cooked turtle these days is to pull on some rubber boots and meet up with Ricky.

Early the morning of the hunt, after a platter of sausage, grits, and cornbread, we headed to the western end of the area known as Big Stone Gap, which has a notable lack of poisonous snakes, an abundance of turtles, and a holler full of welcoming farmers whose chickens get eaten by big snapping turtles and whose cows get tormented. When we arrived, about eight of us decided to work the creek. The

rest, mostly kids, prowled the banks, shouting jokes and offering play-by-play cooter commentary.

We waded into a surging river up to our waists, pushing into a muscular flow strong enough to carry off a boy.

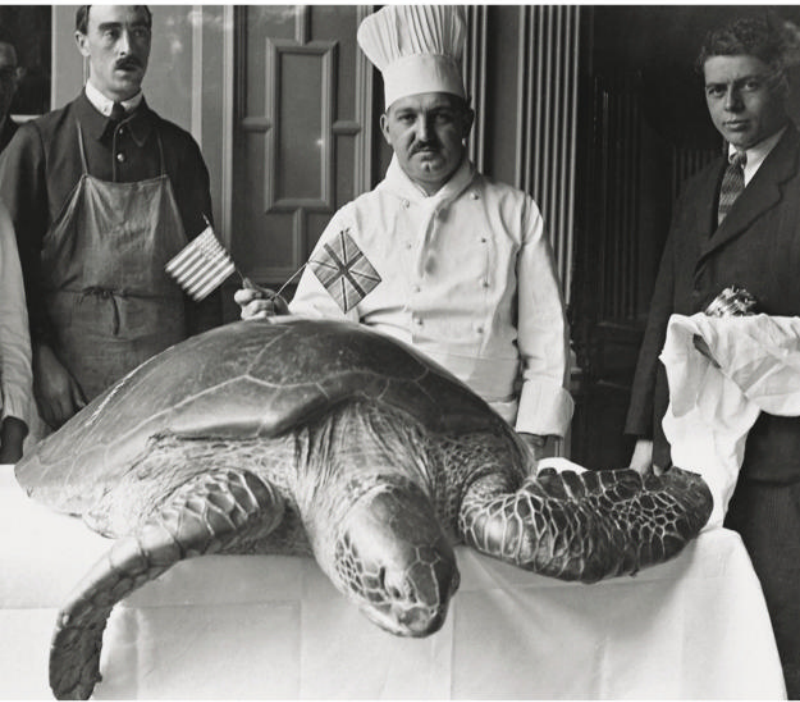
"You always walk upstream," Ricky explained. "This way you don't muddy up the water, so you can see." It was a slow trudge. Bud handed me a metal rod with a shepherd's crook at the end and showed me how to poke into the mud bank.

"Cooter like to hide out in muskrat dens," he said. The dens are essentially air pockets carved into the river bank with easy access to the creek. We were after big turtles with shells the size of dinner plates or steering wheels, heads the size of a man's fist, and a mouth big enough, Ricky told me, to guillotine a finger in one swift motion. I poked into the mud with the rod, trying to sense an easy give that suggested a den.

"You run the rod up through the den," Bud told me, "and you can tell the difference of the tink tink of a rock and not the thud thud of a turtle shell."

When you find one, Bud explained, put all five fingertips together to form your hand into a probing cone because "that way, the cooter can nick you but he can't really bite your finger." A snapping turtle's shell is smooth on the edge but a bit serrated at the back end, and with that knowledge you can locate the tail, which you grab—that is, if you haven't encountered the head already.

At one point, Ricky found a den and invited me to "give it a look-see." I glanced. "Put your hand in," he said, laughing. I slowly put my hand through some roots and dirt and could feel the creepy sensation of open air inside. "Get on in there," he said, sensing my greenhorn's hesitation, "you got to look around."



of flavors that now hides out far from the streamlined meat aisles

I pushed my forearm into the dark wetness, my brain suddenly showcasing a cartoon cavalcade of nightmare visions. My body instinctively delivered one of those full-length bedtime jerks. I was comforted only by the fact that here in the water, no one could see that I was breaking out in the yellow sweat of a coward. “Let’s find one with a cooter in it,” Ricky said helpfully.

We slow-motioned upstream with Ricky and Bud eagerly pushing their hands into the scariest-looking places imaginable—stump holes, thick briars, hanging tree roots. Fearless. I asked one of the boys for a gunnysack to carry so that I would at least appear to be doing something other than taking a very hard walk upstream because there was no way I was putting my arm in another den.

Ricky’s son-in-law CJ was beside me and instructed, “You look for the snakiest place you can find, and then, everything your body says not to do, that’s everything you gotta do.” He admitted that he’d been hunting for several years now but had never caught one. I took some solace in that.

Just then, Ronnie, a hunter, caught one swimming by. It bumped his leg and with lightning reflexes, he grabbed the tail, thick as a forearm, and held it up. It was big and his fierce head angled straight at me as I approached, a sharp beaky mouth opened in fury, hoping for a finger as he got lowered into a sack. That’s the other thing. Snapping turtles are powerful in the water and Ricky told the story, from a few hunts ago, when Bud caught one the size of a

manhole cover swimming away: “Bud was pulled by that one in a fast stream and his head slowly goes under and all we saw was bubbles.” In the end, Bud won that tug of war.

Ricky broke off talking as he’d spotted a nice thicket of loose roots, mud, and darkness, the kind of place that 100 million years of evolution had schooled the Golgi bodies in my every cell to walk widely around. Ricky trudged over, his arm now speckled with red dots of blood from poking past dozens of brambles and thorny bank growth. He plunged in, up to the elbow and then to the ball of his shoulder, the side of his face pressed into the muddy side of the creek bank, his feet taking the stabilizing stance of a linebacker. There were grunts and twists of his shoulder, and then he started to pull out his arm and suddenly, like some birth scene in Greek mythology, the river mud slurped open, and, before everyone’s eyes, Ricky was gripping the tail of a dangling turtle, another big one, the size of a hubcap. Cheers went up, praise was generous, and one of the boys with a gunnysack ran over for the honor of toting the prize.

AFTER TWO DAYS OF HUNTING, we all headed to Ricky’s house in Chester, South Carolina, to clean his share, ten good-sized ones.

Cleaning a turtle is not easy. First, there is the killing, and there is nothing to say here except you need a really sharp knife and a swift hand. I lopped the head off, drained the blood, and commenced with the hard part: Cutting out the bottom of the shell, the plastron, separating it from the carapace. Inside are the organs and an ample amount of yellow fat, which is not at all desirable. One of

By hunting and eating turtle, Ricky Crouch (far left and far right) keeps alive a tradition that goes back centuries and includes everything from “turtle frolics” to upscale banquets, like one on July 4, 1940 (middle), that showcased the reptile.

Ricky's friends, Bubba, who was helping out this afternoon, told me he accidentally got a mouthful of that fat in some badly prepared cooter and couldn't eat it for a decade.

The tough outer reptilian skin can be removed after a quick scalding, and then what's left are two large pieces of good meat, the back quarters including the tail and the front legs along with the neck. In the shell those two parts are nearly separate, barely connected by a double strip of loin nestled into its own bony cage in the center well.

The thing about an average turtle is that once cleaned, it will yield about three or four pounds of meat, so it's easy to see why it was once the workingman's meal. At any house with a well, there might be one or two turtles hanging out in the nearby puddles. I ran across accounts of people finding turtles here and there and tossing them into the water barrel at the well until there were enough to invite friends over for a frolic.

So, another explanation for their disappearance from the common menu, along with Freedman's argument about degradation of habitat, might well be indoor plumbing. Easy access to turtle was eliminated when we piped water directly into the house, allowing the once-visible turtle to withdraw into the creeks and swamps, back to the muskrat dens where Ricky and Bud still look for them every year.

Ricky generously let me bag about eight pounds of neck and legs on ice, along with some of the loin still locked into the shells. And with that in the backseat, I drove off to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to visit James Beard Award-winner Bill Smith, the legendary chef at Crook's Corner.

Once a year, Smith cooks cooter soup according to his own recipe, which is based on the kind of preparation that would have been familiar to presidents of yore.

"I love turtle soup, and every Mardi Gras season, I bring it onto the menu," Smith said. "This is a Southern restaurant and I feel like I need to do this—and it's a great break from typical winter fare."

While we boned the legs and the necks, we roasted the loin in the shell with some butter and herbs in a 400-degree oven for 30 minutes. Afterward, with some intense poultry-shear wrestling, I eventually popped that piece of meat from its bony cage. It was about the size of a small chicken cutlet, only slightly tough. The aroma was bright, clean, and meaty—somewhere between crab and beef—a smell that 100 million years of evolution were telling me, *yes*.

Smith's turtle soup is based on the classic New Orleans bowl, which means that once you've gotten the meat cooked and properly prepared with lots of tomatoes and the rest, you thicken up the sauce with a dark mixture called "peanut butter" roux, not because of the ingredients

but because of its color. A half-hour of simmering later, we scooped ourselves some dark red bowls.

If you mark waterborne foods along a continuum, with the sweet, rich taste of, say, fresh crab or salmon or lobster on one side, and on the other the strong marine flavor of mackerel, bluefish, or trout, turtle falls squarely in the savory phylum. Tasting our bowls, Bill and I circled around our terms until we landed on, "tastes like sturgeon."

Crook's Corner was cranking up for business the morning we started cooking. So sous chefs, managers, waiters, and bottle-washers were coming and going—stocks started, cornbread cooked, tables scrubbed down. One eagerly wanted a taste but another wanted nothing to do with it. A friend of Smith's who stopped by, a big meat eater, told us she'd pass.

"I just don't think I can do it," she said.

Indeed, turtle's disappearance may be partly due to the fact that its persona, over the years, has shifted away from easily accessible food toward something anthropomorphic, more like a lovable cartoon character—see: Yertle, Franklin, Cecil, and Touché, not to mention Donatello and that whole gang.

But there may be yet another explanation: There was a big shift in tastes somewhere after World War I, Freedman told me. It's hard not to note the sheer variety of what was available before then, not just of turtle, but of all manner of meats.

Menus from that time routinely offered everything from roasted snipe and plover to rabbit hash, mutton cutlets, and oxtail. The decline of the family farm and the rise of mechanized factory farming, a process described as the "Eden

Crash" in Christopher Leonard's *Meat Racket*, meant that by World War II, American taste for meat had bottlenecked into chicken, pork, and beef, all three of which could be grown, fed, quartered, and slaughtered according to the efficiency demands of Henry Ford's assembly-line theories. And I can testify that gutting and cleaning turtle is a big hassle and a poor candidate for any kind of industrial streamlining.

That's one reason Ricky is out there every July: He's hunting not just turtle, but also that wide variety of flavors that now hides out far from the streamlined meat aisles of the Piggly Wiggly. Take the sausage Ricky was cooking for breakfast that first morning. The boys were down at the creek fishing out little brim and tossing them in a barrel to be cooked later, and Ricky was telling me that I had to give the sausage a try. He'd cleaned timber for a guy who raised his own pigs in his own way, and bartered for the meat. The guy made his own homemade sausage, Ricky told me, and it tastes better than anything you've ever had. ■

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IN WHICH WE REVISIT A FORGOTTEN AMERICAN CLASSIC

TURTLE SOUP

SERVES 8 TO 10

Active: 1 hr.; Total: 2 hr. (not counting the turtle hunt)

The recipe for this classic preparation—spiked here with warm spices and dried anise-like herbs to contrast the mild gaminess of the turtle meat—comes from chef Bill Smith of Crook's Corner in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and is finished with old-school garnishes like hard-boiled eggs and a splash of sherry. If you can't find turtle meat, boneless veal shoulder makes a fine substitute. Freeze the turtle and beef for 20 minutes to make cutting easier.

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup (2 1/4 oz.) all-purpose flour
- 6 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 1 lb. beef chuck, cut into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 lb. turtle meat, cut into 1/4-inch cubes (exoticmeatmarkets.com)
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 cups chicken stock
- One 28-oz. can whole, peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed by hand
- 1 tsp. whole allspice
- 1 tsp. whole cloves
- 5 bay leaves
- 1 1/2 tsp. dried basil
- 1 1/2 tsp. dried marjoram
- 1 1/2 tsp. dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red chile flakes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

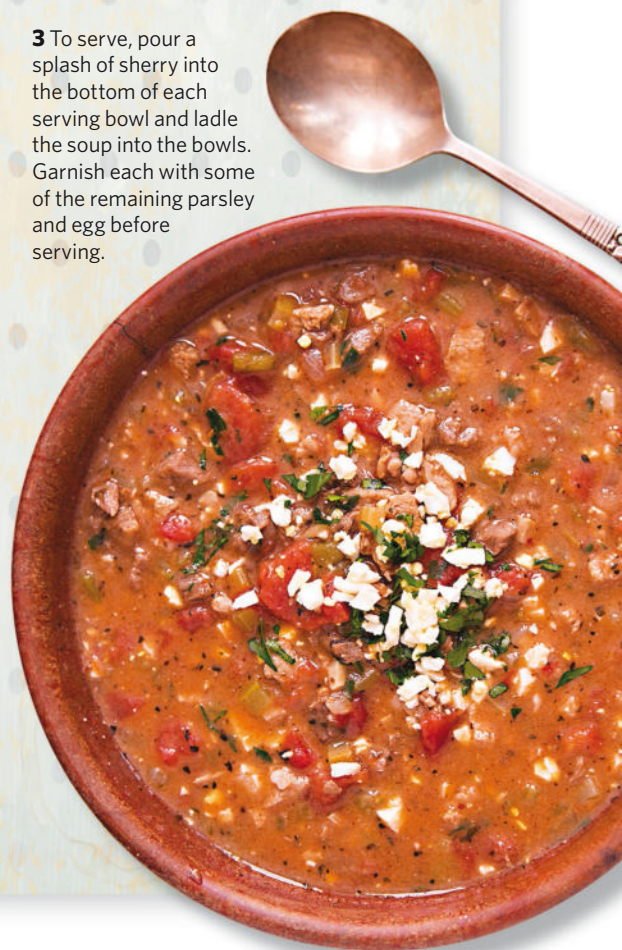
- 1/4 cup minced flat-leaf parsley
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, minced
- Sherry or madeira, for serving (optional)

1 In a 6-qt. saucepan, heat the butter over medium. Stir in the flour and cook the roux, whisking constantly, until it turns the color of peanut butter, about 12 minutes. Add the celery, bell pepper, and onion and cook, stirring, until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the beef and turtle and cook, stirring, until no longer pink, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Pour in the stock and tomatoes and bring to a boil.

2 Tie the allspice, cloves, and bay leaves in a piece of cheesecloth and add to the soup along with the basil, marjoram, thyme, and chile flakes. Reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer and cook, partially covered and stirring occasionally, until the meat is tender, about 1 hour. Remove the soup from the heat and stir in the lemon juice, 3 tablespoons of the parsley, and

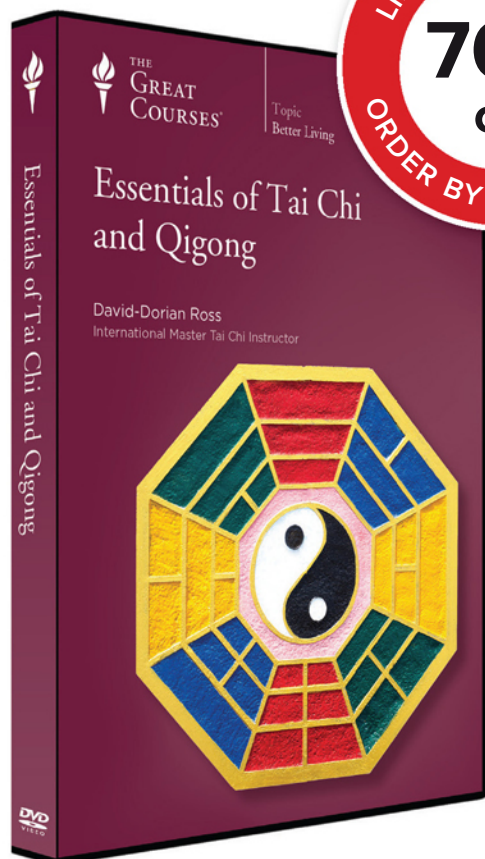
two-thirds of the egg. Season the soup with salt and pepper.

3 To serve, pour a splash of sherry into the bottom of each serving bowl and ladle the soup into the bowls. Garnish each with some of the remaining parsley and egg before serving.





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The Land of Roast Goose and Dumplings

ALEXANDER LOBRANO RETURNS TO THE SLEEPY VILLAGES OF
EASTERN SLOVENIA, WHERE FAMILY-RUN INNS SERVE THE BEST-PRESERVED
OLD-FASHIONED COOKING OF MITTELEUROPA

Photographs by Michelle Heimerman





There's a time-capsule appeal to eastern Slovenia: Family heirlooms decorate Gostilna Šiker's dining room in Pernica (above); the Drava River at sunset in Maribor, Slovenia's second largest city (left).

After the scandal we'd caused, Janez, the tall waiter with a taut black vest fitted over his keg-shaped belly, decided to take me into his confidence. Pensively stroking his red shoe brush of a moustache, he came to clear my dessert plate, and then leaned in and spoke behind the fence of his thick fingers.

"You must go east if you want our best food, Mr. Alexander. Go to the countryside east of Maribor, my hometown. Go to the Štajerska and Prekmurje regions. That's where the food in Slovenia is still good and honest and true."

The scandal was minor but telling: The night I'd arrived at the faded grand hotel on the shores of Lake Bled where my grand-

mother had once stayed as a young woman with a married lover, I'd blanched when Janez brought me a menu written to please the mostly middle-aged, mostly English clientele. I hadn't come to Slovenia to eat tomato aspic and trout amandine. So as one food lover taking pity on another, he'd served me off-the-menu *pršut*, Slovenia's excellent air-dried ham, and then a steaming bowl of *jota*, a tangy stew of red beans, bacon, potatoes, and sauerkraut, made by his wife, who was the cook in the staff canteen. The prissy maître d'hôtel had found my meal "inappropriate." By morning in the whispery dining room, I'd become known as "that American man who likes peasant food," a true



honorific in my book.

Now returning with my coffee, Janez handed me a folded yellow order slip on which he'd written the names of the two regions and the address for *Gostilna Tramšek*—*gostilna* means “inn” in Slovenian—in smudged lead script.

So I went east. I could only stay for a night, because I was on my way to meet friends in Croatia, but I drove four hours through fields of long trailing tendrils strung to taut wires like big green looms—hops, I later learned. I passed through vil-

lages of sturdy butter yellow cottages with white trim like piped pastry icing around their windows, and white churches with steeples sharp enough to prick anyone's conscience. Then, just beyond the sleepy little town of Ljutomer, I discovered my own Slavic Tuscany, where people still ate the way they did before the first World War.

What I ate was exactly what Janez had told me I would, foods his grandmother might have made. At *Gostilna Tramšek*, gentle, generous Jelena Tramšek cooked me a heartwarming feast of *prlekija tünka*, fine slices of succulent roasted pork preserved in lard and garnished with pickled vegetables and freshly grated horseradish; and *prekmurska gibanica*, an elaborate and surprisingly light cake with layers of apple, walnut, and poppy seed fillings. It was one of the best meals I've ever had, and seeing me off into the night after a last slug of her homemade pear liqueur, Jelena and her waiter Zvonko made me promise I'd come back.

For years afterward, I kept Janez's yellow order slip in my wallet as a reminder to return to this delicious place and get to know it better. Until I did, though, it would remain my secret. Or so I thought. Last winter, a friend from Vienna told me one of the best meals she'd had all year was in Maribor. And some food-loving friends in Berlin surprised me with chatter about their summer vacation near a Slovenian spa town. With a sinking feeling, I realized my confidential corner just might be on the cusp of becoming fashionable. I went anyway.

Since there's a risk in returning to a place you've loved before, I started my recent trip in Maribor, a city I didn't know. Hugging the banks of the Drava River, this pleasant, polite old town still has the public fittings of the prosperous Austro-Hungarian city it once was. In the cool of Maribor Cathedral, a tiny golden pretzel dangling from the beautiful brass chandelier (donated

by the bakers' guild in 1686) reminded me I was hungry. I headed for lunch at *Rožmarin*, a stylish and unexpectedly good restaurant and wine bar run by a retired Slovenian tennis star in the heart of the city.

What fascinated me about the menu was that it offered contemporary Slovenian comfort food that was still rooted in local traditions. There was pumpkin soup garnished with toasted pumpkin seeds and pumpkin seed oil; squid stuffed with mozzarella, chestnuts, and bacon with basil pesto (Slovenia has a brief Mediterranean coastline); and veal schnitzel, the prevalence of which still defines the culinary boundaries of the now-vanished Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Every city wants to own a superlative or two, and Maribor's claim to fame is the world's oldest grapevine. Sprawled along the whitewashed façade of the Old Vine House, a wine museum and tasting room, is a tree-like 400-year-old specimen that still bears fruit and is zealously tended by an official municipal vinedresser. Stepping inside the museum out of curiosity, I ended up doing a flight of the region's excellent and little-known wines with amiable enologist Jernej Lubej.

“We're a little conservative in our restaurants,” Lubej told me when I asked him about contemporary Slovenian cooking. “The industrial food sold in the supermarkets never became popular because most people still eat what's grown on our small farms and gardens. We prefer small careful changes in our cooking to big showy ones—this is the type of food David Vračko does at Mak. You must go.”

When I arrived at the gray stucco building where *Restavracija Mak* is located, after a long walk through the industrial outskirts of Maribor in a cloudburst, I wasn't especially keen on an avant-garde culinary experience. My foreboding deepened when I was ushered into the drab, dimly lit dining room, where I was the only guest. Then Vračko, a lanky-haired guy with a tremulous voice and the distracted gaze of a poet, poured me a flute of excellent Slovenian sparkling wine and returned with a primal assortment of hors d'oeuvres—grissini draped with dangling ivory bands of ham fat, a potent chicken liver and ricotta macaron, and a funky deep-fried sweetbread bonbon. I loved these farmyard tastes.

Vračko brought every dish to the table, explained it with a strange wry excitement, and then withdrew with a little bow. An edible miniature Mittel European still life of beets, white asparagus, and farmers' cheese dressed with rhubarb juice was movingly lyrical. This was followed by a tiny succulent rack of *Mangalitsa* pork ribs with paprika-rubbed crackling and cabbage stuffed with stewed peppers and eggplant that displayed the same sly sensuality. What Vračko had done was recompose the flavors of farmhouse foods in a way that was delicious and thoroughly modern.

Delighted by the unexpected pleasure of contemporary Slovenian cooking, the next day I (*continued on page 76*)

Chicken meatballs over creamed zucchini (top left) and crackling rolls (bottom left) at *Gostilna Tramšek*. Chef David Vračko (top right) makes modern Slovenian food at *Restavracija Mak*. Boutique hotel *Sončna Hiša* (middle left) and *Rožmarin* restaurant (center) represent a hipper Slovenia. Tanja Pintarič (bottom right) stirs a pot at *Gostilna Rajh*.



Beef Broth with Liver Dumplings and Saffron

Serves 6 to 8

Active: 1 hr. 15 min.; Total: 9 hr.

This dish is known in Slovenia as “Sunday soup,” a reference to the long simmering time it takes to extract flavor from beef bones for the broth. The liquid is then chilled and later used to poach tender calf’s liver dumplings.

For the broth:

- 2 lbs. beef bones, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- 2 medium carrots, finely diced
- 1 medium celery root, peeled and finely diced
- 1 medium turnip, peeled and finely diced
- 1 medium white onion, finely diced
- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced lengthwise
- 1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, plus whole leaves to garnish
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 vine-ripe tomato, cored and roughly chopped
- 1/8 tsp. crushed saffron threads
- Freshly ground black pepper

For the dumplings:

- 9 oz. white country bread, torn into small pieces
- 8 oz. cleaned calf’s liver
- 1 Tbsp. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 large eggs, separated
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Make the broth: In a large saucepan, combine the bones with three-quarters each of the celery, carrots, celery root, turnip, and onion. Add the 1 tablespoon salt, whole peppercorns, garlic, parsley bunch, bay leaf, tomato, and 10 cups cold water to the pan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer and cook, undisturbed, until the broth is richly flavored and reduced, about 3 hours.

2 Remove the broth from the heat and let cool to room temperature. Using a spoon, skim off and discard any scum on the surface of the broth. Pour the broth through a cheesecloth-lined strainer set over a large bowl and discard the bones and solids. Refrigerate the broth until chilled, at least 4 hours. Once chilled, remove the solidified fat on the surface of the broth and discard.

Photograph by Chris Court





Farmers' Cheese with Onion and Pumpkin Seed Oil

In a medium bowl, stir 2 cups farmers' cheese with 1 small white onion, finely chopped, and 1 tsp. sweet paprika. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, scrape the cheese into a serving bowl, and sprinkle with 1 Tbsp. finely chopped chives. Drizzle 2 Tbsp. pumpkin seed oil over the cheese and serve with buckwheat or pumpernickel toast and radishes. Serves 8.

Some of Slovenia's simple, lusty, traditional dishes include beef broth with liver dumplings, farmers' cheese with onion and pumpkin seed oil, and roast goose with egg noodles and red cabbage (see pages 77 and 78 for recipes).

The dishes were proudly local, incredibly fresh, and cooked with boundless affection and patience

(continued from page 72) headed into the country in search of the heartfelt old-fashioned cooking that had seduced me when I visited a decade ago. My first stop was Gostilna Šiker, a fifth-generation family-owned inn. I began my meal with what the waitress called “Sunday soup,” or beef bouillon with liver dumplings, since soup always tells the truth about country cooking. The deep ruddy flavor of the long-simmered bouillon would have been a rich reward by itself, but the liver dumplings were surprisingly light and offered a contrasting prism of beefy tastes. The highlight of my calvary officer’s lunch, however, was roast goose, red cabbage, and *mlinci*—broken noodles made from flatbread. The cabbage’s tart sweetness was the perfect foil for the roasted bird, and the *mlinci* absorbed the juices.

That night I fell asleep listening to the nightingales in the woods surrounding Sončna Hiša (House of the Sun), a bona fide urban boutique hotel in the village of Veržej. My room was called “Manhattan” and had clearly been named by someone who’d never been there. It was spacious, light, and very quiet. When I opened my windows in the morning, I smelled bread baking.

In France, they’ve got butter regions and olive oil ones. In Slovenia, we have olive oil regions and pumpkin seed ones,” explained Gorazd Kocbek, as dark oil poured from the spout of the century-old cast-iron press into a metal canister. It glowed emerald green in the low light and filled the room of his family’s pumpkin seed oil mill with a toasty scent. “Our seeds come from Cucurbita pepo pumpkins grown locally. We roast them and then stone-grind them to make the oil cake, which is pressed to produce Štajersko Prekmursko pumpkin seed oil.” After I visited the mill with Kocbek, he invited me to do an impromptu tasting, which began with some warm bread his mother had just taken out of the oven and a bowl of farmers’ cheese mixed with pumpkin seed oil, chopped onion, and paprika.

Down the road in Bakovci, Tanja Pintarič and her husband, Damir, hold up the Gostilna Rajh kitchen’s traditions, which have evolved over four generations.

“Our kitchen is like a hinge that moves in every direction,” Tanja told me at the end of lunch. “We get a taste for savory foods from the Italians, smoke from the Germans, sour things from the Slavs, and some heat from the Hungarians. This is why the flavors in our cooking are so balanced.”

Among the balanced flavors I’d tried: mixed-greens salad garnished with shredded smoked ham, big red kidney beans, and horseradish mousse, a dish that’s also popular in Austria. A pork rib roast under a shroud of crunchy golden crackling came along with a lush red-wine sauce that bowed in the direction of the Veneto and the Alto-Adige. And finally a cherry strudel worthy of a Salzburg café.

Most of life’s best pleasures aren’t planned. I certainly hadn’t scheduled a nap after lunch with the windows open during

a summer thunderstorm. Waking up was all the better with the smell of wet earth and wildflowers in Jeruzalem, a perched village settled by Crusaders who were seduced by the countryside’s beauty and never made it home.

After the rain, the vineyards surrounding the hotel were steaming. I left for my last supper, at Gostil-

na Tramšek, where I’d eaten that magnificent meal ten years earlier. As I headed to the restaurant, a stag lunged out of the woods in front of our car. Staring at the magnificent animal, I realized I had a lump in my throat; my trip was almost over.

“How nice to see you again!” said Zvonko, the wiry maître d’hôtel, sommelier, and waiter when I walked through the door. “Jelena and me, we knew you’d come back. So tonight, no menu. Okay? Because she’s cooked for you before.” Somehow they remembered me a decade after I’d come to this remote inn on the Croatian border for a single meal, albeit one during which I was the sole foreign diner and ordered nearly the entire menu.

It was a relief to see that nothing had visibly changed. There were still bronze and Bordeaux dahlias growing by the front steps and a vegetable garden across the street. Abashed by the fact that Zvonko remembered me, I praised his impressively improved English. I also told him he hadn’t changed at all, unlike me, a belt size or maybe three more ample. “Maybe a little bit more round you are, but still such nice smile,” he said as he poured me a glass of white wine.

I ate Jelena’s sunny yellow rolls, some garnished with crackling, some with salt, some with poppy seeds, and a salad of smoked tongue from a pig she’d raised and lentils she’d grown, and I was relieved, because memory had not created a gastronomic mirage. Her food really was superb, but not because it was show-offish. Nothing could be homier than *Krpice*, a type of torn fresh noodle, in a sauce of cabbage braised in butter, or a beef stewed with onions in white wine with millet porridge; they expressed everything there is to love about her cooking, since the dishes were proudly local, incredibly fresh, and cooked with boundless affection and patience.

“And now Jelena’s new dish,” said Zvonko. “Like you she is always thinking about food, and not just in the old way.” He brought me juicy browned chicken meatballs on a bed of creamed zucchini with fresh basil, one of the most innocent and delicious things I’ve ever eaten.

“Please don’t wait another ten years to come back, or we might be in the sky playing harps!” Zvonko said when he and Jelena walked me to my car. Yes, life in eastern Slovenia is slowly changing as the region becomes better known, but the best things keep going, and the food is not only, in Janez’s words, “good and honest and true”; it just gets better and better. ■

Slovenian home-style cooking can be found at small inns, such as Gostilna Tramšek, which serves dishes like pasta with spicy cabbage and bacon (top right; see page 78 for recipe), while newer spots, including Restavracija Mak, showcase modern Slavic food in dishes like bone marrow with trout caviar (middle left).





3 Make the dumplings: In a food processor, pulse the bread until it is finely ground into bread crumbs. Transfer the bread crumbs to a large bowl and add the livers to the food processor. Pulse the livers until finely chopped and then return bread crumbs to the food processor along with the parsley, butter, and egg yolks and pulse until evenly combined. In the large bowl, whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks. Scrape the liver mixture into the egg whites, season with salt and pepper, and fold until evenly combined. Using a tablespoon-size measuring spoon, portion and roll the liver mixture into small 1-inch balls and place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Refrigerate the dumpling balls until ready to serve, at least 1 hour.

4 To serve, pour the chilled broth in a large saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer and stir in the reserved one-quarter each of the celery, carrots, celery root, turnip, and onion, plus the saffron. Gently drop the dumplings into the simmering broth and cook until they float to the top and are just tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Season the broth with salt and pepper and ladle the broth, dumplings, and vegetables into serving bowls. Garnish with parsley leaves before serving.



Apple- and Chestnut-Stuffed Roast Goose with Egg Noodles

Serves 8 to 10; 📷 Page 74
Active: 1 hr.; Total: 5 hr.

A lightly griddled egg-and-flour dough is torn into small pieces and transformed into tender noodles by being soaked in salted water for a side dish called *mlinci*. It's typically served with roasted meats like this impressive goose, stuffed with apple and chestnuts and flavored with plum eau-de-vie. Geese render a lot of fat when cooked, so save any extra for roasting potatoes.

- 2 Tbsp. kosher salt, plus more
- 1 Tbsp. dried marjoram or oregano
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin
- One 12-13-lb. whole goose, rinsed and dried thoroughly
- 2 lbs. baking apples, such as Braeburn, cored and quartered
- 1½ cups (8 oz.) vacuum-packed cooked chestnuts
- 6 shallots, cut into quarters
- 2 cups chicken stock
- ¼ cup plum or cherry eau-de-vie
- 4 oz. slab or thick-cut bacon, cut into ¼-inch cubes
- 3½ cups (16 oz.) plus 2 Tbsp. all-purpose flour



- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- Freshly ground black pepper**
- Finely chopped chives and flat-leaf parsley, to garnish**
- 1/2 cup dry white wine**

1 In a small bowl, combine the 2 tablespoons salt with the marjoram and cumin. Place the goose on a work surface and season the inside with some of the spice mix. Rub the remaining spice mix all over the outside of the goose and stuff the goose's cavity with the apples, chestnuts, and shallots. Using kitchen twine or poultry needles, close the goose's cavity. Place the goose, breast side down, on a rack set in a large roasting pan. Pour the stock into the pan and place the goose in the oven. Bake for 2 hours, and then flip the goose and brush with the eau-de-vie. Continue cooking the goose, basting every 10 minutes with its rendered fat and pan juices, until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the middle of the goose's thigh reads 160°, about 30 minutes more. Transfer the goose to a cutting board, tent with a sheet of foil, and let rest for 30 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, make the egg noodles: Heat the bacon in a medium skillet over medium and cook, stirring, until its fat renders and the bacon is crisp, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to paper towels to drain and reserve 2 tablespoons of bacon fat; discard the remaining fat or save for another use.

3 In a large bowl, stir 3 1/2 cups of the flour with the eggs and 3/4 cup water until a stiff dough forms. Transfer the dough to a work surface and knead until smooth, about 6 minutes. Cut the dough into four pieces and, using a rolling pin, flatten each piece until 1/8 inch thick. Heat a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium, add 1 dough circle, and cook, flipping once, until just cooked through but not browned, 3 minutes. Transfer the dough circle to a cutting board and cook the remaining 3 dough circles. Using your fingers, shred the dough circles into 3/4-inch pieces over a large bowl. Pour boiling water over the noodles to cover and let stand until al dente, about 5 minutes. Drain the noodles, return them to the bowl, and toss with the reserved bacon fat until

evenly coated. Season the noodles with salt and pepper and transfer to a serving bowl. Sprinkle the noodles with the crisp bacon and garnish with chives and parsley.

4 While the goose rests, pour the pan juices into a fat separator and pour off the fat, reserving 2 tablespoons for the gravy; refrigerate or freeze any remaining fat for another use. In a small saucepan, heat the reserved goose fat over medium-high. Add the 2 tablespoons flour and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Pour in the reserved pan juices and the wine and cook, stirring, until thickened and slightly reduced, about 5 minutes. Season the gravy with salt and pepper and serve hot alongside the carved goose and egg noodles.

Spiced Red Cabbage with Apples and Cranberries

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 74
Active: 1 hr.; Total: 3 hr.

Red cabbage and apples are stewed with wine, sugar, and dried cranberries in this spiced side dish, best served with roasted meat like the apple- and chestnut-stuffed goose with egg noodles (see page 77 for recipe). Use tart apples, such as Granny Smith, if you want a more sour-sweet flavor from this cabbage dish.

- 2 large apples, such as Cortland or Rome, peeled, cored, and grated**
- 1 red cabbage (2 1/4 lbs.), cored and finely shredded**
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice**
- 1 tsp. ground cumin**
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves**
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper**
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter**
- 3 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar**
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced**
- 1/2 cup red wine**
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar**
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped dried cranberries**

1 In a large bowl, combine the apples and cabbage with the lemon juice, cumin, and

cloves and season with salt and pepper. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 hours.

2 In a large saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Stir in the sugar and cook until dissolved, about 2 minutes. Add the onion and cook, stirring, until softened and translucent, about 4 minutes. Stir in the marinated cabbage and apples along with 1/4 cup wine, the vinegar, and 1/2 cup water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, about 30 minutes.

3 Pour the remaining 1/4 cup wine into the pan along with the cranberries and cook, covered, until the cabbage is very tender, 10 minutes more. Season the cabbage with salt and pepper before serving.

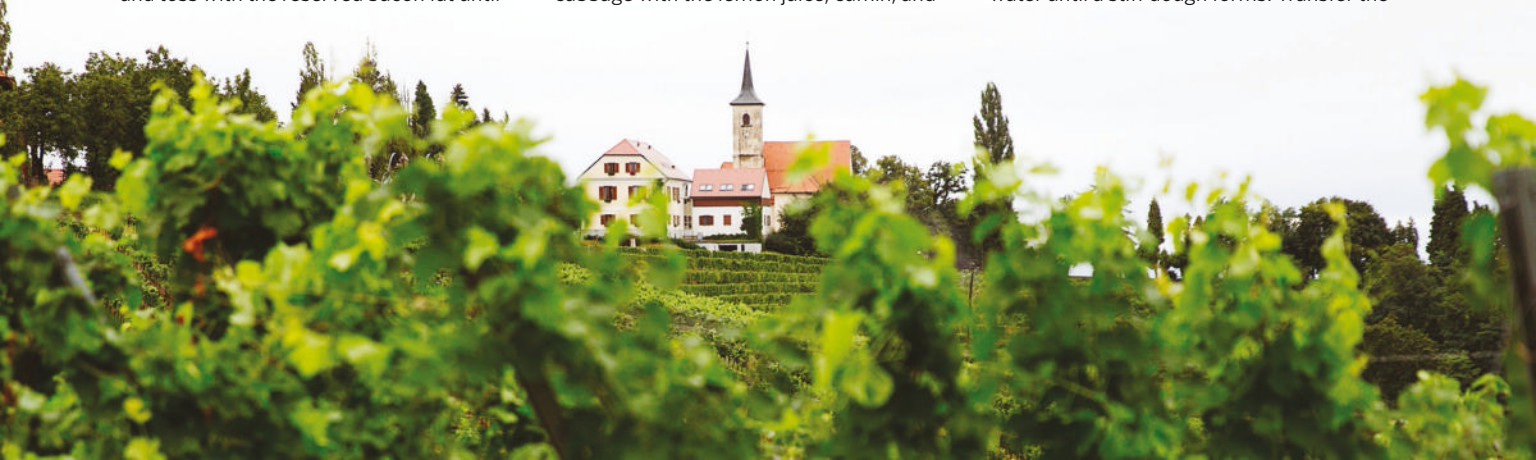
Homemade Pasta with Spicy Cabbage and Bacon (Krpice)

Serves 6 to 8; 📖 Page 77
Active: 50 min.; Total: 2 hr.

Cabbage is a staple vegetable in Slovenia; here it is wilted in bacon fat and spiced with cayenne before being tossed with homemade noodle dough for this traditional pasta dish.

- 1 1/2 cups (7 oz.) all-purpose flour, plus more**
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more**
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten**
- 3 Tbsp. unsalted butter**
- 1 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar**
- 2 oz. slab or thick-cut bacon, cut into 2-by-3-inch pieces**
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped**
- 3 1/2 cups (9 oz.) roughly chopped green cabbage**
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin**
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne**
- Freshly ground black pepper**

1 In a large bowl, stir the flour with the 1/2 teaspoon salt, the eggs, and 2 tablespoons water until a stiff dough forms. Transfer the



Prekmurska gibanica, a layered cake (see page 80 for recipe), is so famous in Slovenia that it has even appeared on the country's stamps.



What I ate was exactly what Janez had told me

I would, foods his grandmother might have made


dough to a work surface and knead until smooth, about 6 minutes. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

2 Unwrap the dough and place on a lightly floured work surface. Using a rolling pin, flatten the dough until $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. Cut the dough into 2-by-1-inch squares, transfer to a flour-dusted baking sheet, and refrigerate until ready to use.

3 In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the sugar and cook, stirring, until it dissolves, 2 minutes. Add the bacon and onion and cook, stirring, until the bacon renders its fat and the onion is lightly caramelized, about 12 minutes. Add the cabbage, cumin, and cayenne and cook, stirring, until the cabbage softens slightly, about 5 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, in a large saucepan of boiling salted water, add the pasta and cook, stirring, until al dente, about 5 minutes. Drain the pasta, reserving 2 tablespoons of the cooking water, and add to the cabbage along with the cooking water. Cook the pasta and cabbage, stirring, until combined, about 1 minute. Season the pasta with salt and pepper, transfer to a serving bowl, and serve while hot.

Layered Strudel Cake (Prekmurska Gibanica)

Serves 8 to 10;  Page 79

Active: 1 hr. 15 min.; Total: 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.

This multilayered pastry cake is stuffed with poppy seed, walnut, cottage cheese, and tart apple fillings. Though time-consuming to assemble, the dough and fillings are a cinch to make and work with, and, once assembled, the cake can be refrigerated for up to 2 days before baking.

For the strudel dough and baking:

- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (10 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.) all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 Tbsp. white wine
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sour cream
- Confectioners' sugar, to garnish

For the cheese filling:

- 2 Tbsp. raisins
- 2 Tbsp. dark rum
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cottage cheese, preferably small-curd

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.) sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten

For the poppy seed filling:

- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups ground poppy seeds (kalustyans.com)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole milk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.) sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground cinnamon

For the apple filling:

- 2 medium tart apples, such as Granny Smith, peeled, cored, and grated
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.) sugar
- 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. finely grated lemon zest
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. ground cinnamon

For the walnut filling:

- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups walnuts
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.) sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. ground cinnamon

1 Make the strudel dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine the flour with the wine, oil, sugar, salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. On low speed, mix until the dough comes together, and then increase the speed to medium and knead until smooth and elastic, 8 to 10 minutes. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

2 Make the cheese filling: In a small bowl, soak the raisins with the rum until soft, 30 minutes. Stir in the cheese, sugar, salt, and vanilla into the raisins. Pour 1 tablespoon of the beaten egg into the cheese filling and stir to combine; reserve the remaining beaten egg for Step 9.

3 Make the poppy seed filling: In a small saucepan, combine the ground poppy seeds with the milk, sugar, salt, and cinnamon and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until the poppy seeds form a smooth paste and just begin sticking to the bottom of the pan, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from the heat, scrape into a small bowl, and let cool completely.

4 Make the apple filling: In a small bowl, toss the apples with the sugar, lemon juice and zest, salt, and cinnamon. Let stand for at least 20 minutes before using.

5 Make the walnut filling: In a small skillet over medium heat, toast the walnuts until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Finely chop the

walnuts and place in a small bowl. Stir in the sugar, salt, and cinnamon until evenly combined.

6 Assemble the cake: Line the bottom of an 8-inch round springform pan with parchment paper and then brush the bottom and side with some of the melted butter. Unwrap the strudel dough and divide into 9 pieces (1 piece should weigh 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. and the remaining 8 should weigh 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz.). Using a rolling pin, flatten the larger, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. piece into a 12-inch circle. Line the baking pan with the dough circle, letting the excess hang over the edge of the pan.

7 Brush the dough with melted butter and then spread half of the poppy seed filling over the dough, smoothing the top. Flatten each of the eight 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -oz. pieces of dough into an 8-inch circle, and then place 1 circle over the poppy seed filling. Brush the circle with butter and then spread half of the apple filling over the top. Cover with a second dough circle, brush with butter, and spread half of the cheese filling over the top. Cover with a third dough circle, brush with butter, and sprinkle with half of the walnut filling. Repeat with 4 more dough circles and the remaining poppy seed, apple, cheese, and walnut fillings, brushing each dough circle with butter before adding the next filling.

8 Fold the overhanging dough back into the pan, over the walnut filling, and brush the dough with butter. Place the last dough circle over the walnut filling and press gently at the edge to adhere to the buttered dough. Brush the top of the pastry cake with the remaining butter and pierce the top with a paring knife in 6 evenly spaced places. Refrigerate the cake at least 4 hours, or overnight.

9 Bake the cake: Heat the oven to 350°. In a small bowl, stir the sour cream with 1 tablespoon of the reserved beaten egg until smooth; discard the remaining egg. Spread the sour cream evenly over the top of the pastry cake, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border, and cover with foil. Bake the pastry cake for 1 hour, and then remove the foil and bake until the edges are golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in the middle of the cake reads 180°, about 30 minutes more.

10 Transfer the cake to a rack and let cool completely. Unmold the cake from the pan, transfer to a serving platter, and discard the parchment paper. Dust the top of the cake with confectioners' sugar before serving.

Travel Guide: **EASTERN SLOVENIA**

GETTING THERE

There are no direct flights from North America to Slovenia, but the country's international airport in Ljubljana is served by Adria, Air France, and Lufthansa, among others. It's a one-and-a-half-hour drive from Ljubljana to Maribor.

WHERE TO STAY

Dvorec Jeruzalem

Perched on a hillside, this old manor house in the winemaking village of Jeruzalem offers great vistas of the surrounding countryside. *Jeruzalem 8, Ivanjkovci*

Hotel City

It may lack Old World charm, but until Maribor gets the boutique property it needs, this business hotel by the Drava River fits the bill, with a friendly staff and comfortable rooms with good views. *Ulica kneza Koclja 22, Maribor; cityhotel-mb.si*

Sončna Hiša

Improbably hip for its location in a tiny rural Slovenian village, this friendly boutique hotel with a spa makes a good base from which to explore the countryside. *Banovci 3, Veržej; soncna-hisa.si*

WHERE TO EAT

Gostilna Rajh

French chef Joël Robuchon left a note in the guestbook praising the cooking at this inn, which has recently gotten stylish new decor. *Soboška ulica 32, Bakovci; rajh.si*

Gostilna Šiker

The kitchen at this charming inn, run by the same family since 1870, is supplied by the vegetable garden out back. *Močna 7, Pernica; siker.si*

Gostilna Tramšek

Jelena Tramšek's superb Slovenian home cooking is served in an immaculate dining room. *Žerovinci 25 B, Ivanjkovci; gostilnatramsek.si*

Restavracija Mak

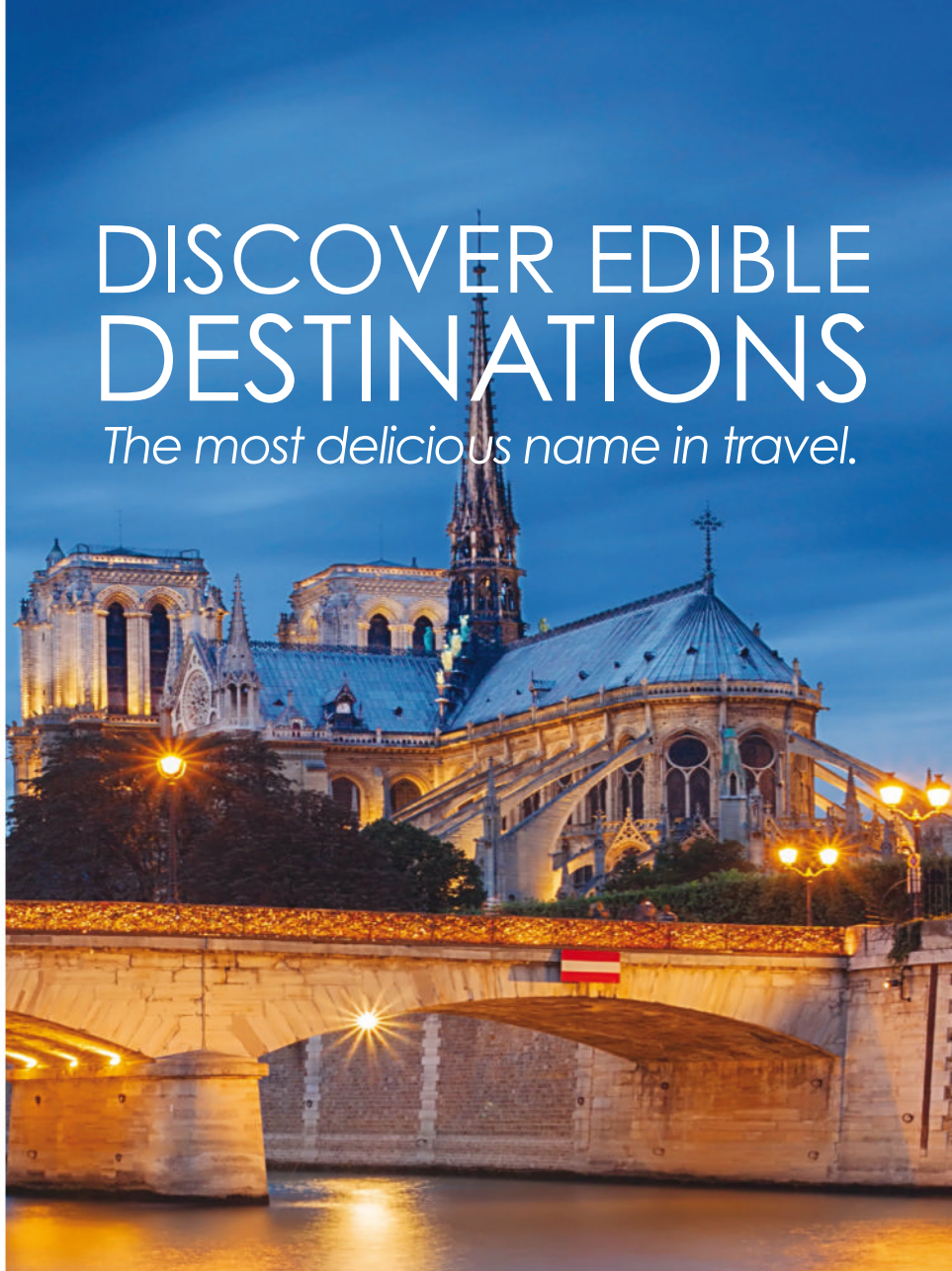
Chef David Vračko offers brilliant contemporary Slovenian cooking. *Osojnikova 20, Maribor; restavracija-mak.si*

Rožmarin

Given the studied hipness of this restaurant and wine bar, the food is surprisingly good. *Gospoška ulica 8, Maribor; rozmarin.si*

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FROM THE SAVEUR
**TEST
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• PIES EDITION •

Rosemary
Caramel
Apple Pie

We Didn't Forget the Pie!

Neither, we're guessing, did you. For there is no more correct, satisfying, nay *patriotic* way to end our beloved annual circus of overindulgence than with a table full of pies—preferably lots of them and all of them your favorites. Which raises the basic pie paradox, which is itself a subset of the central Thanksgiving conundrum: Even as we seek new recipes, what we're really hungry for is what's most familiar. We want exciting and different pies (and turkeys and gravies and, sometimes, visiting uncles and brothers-in-law), while we yearn secretly for the never-changing status quo. Solution: a few pie fixes that riff on the standards without straying too far from classic formulas. We consulted pie experts at Bang Bang Pie & Biscuits in Chicago and they came back with two winners: a fresh-roasted sugar pumpkin pie, its filling piled into a bittersweet, homemade graham cracker crust and topped with pepita-sage brittle, and an apple pie that's gently improved with fragrant rosemary-infused caramel and still as easy and all-American as you-know-what. Feel free to mix and match the crusts and substitute whatever filling makes you happiest. What more could you want? Another slice, please.

Pumpkin Pie
with Graham
Cracker Crust
and Pepita-
Sage Brittle



Rosemary Caramel Apple Pie

Serves 8 to 10

Active: 1 hr. 10 min. ; Total: 5 hr. 20 min.

In this sophisticated apple pie, a subtle, rosemary-infused caramel sauce does double duty: First, it's mixed in with tart apples for the filling, and then it's drizzled on top toward the end of baking to form a delectably gooey topping. The all-purpose, no-fail pastry crust uses lard for flakiness and butter for flavor. Make it your go-to crust for any pie, including our pumpkin pie (below), if you like.

For the pastry crust:

- 3 cups (13 1/2 oz.) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 3/4 cup (5 1/2 oz.) chilled lard or vegetable shortening, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 12 Tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 5 Tbsp. ice-cold vodka
- 5 Tbsp. ice-cold water

For the caramel and filling:

- 2 cups heavy cream
- 8 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 rosemary sprigs
- 1 2/3 cups (12 oz.) sugar
- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 2 1/2 lbs. tart apples, such as Gala, peeled, cored, and diced (about 6)
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- Flaky sea salt, to garnish
- Vanilla ice cream, for serving

1 Make the pastry crust: In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the sugar and salt. Using your fingers, rub the lard and butter into the flour until they form pea-size crumbs. Add the vodka and water and stir until the dough just comes together. Divide the dough in half and flatten each half into a disk. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour before using.

2 Meanwhile, make the caramel: In a small skillet, combine the cream with the butter and rosemary. Heat over high and cook for 3 minutes. Remove the cream from the heat and keep warm. In a small saucepan, combine the sugar and corn syrup and heat over high. Cook the sugar, without stirring, until golden, 7 to 8 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and pour the warm cream into the caramel, and stir until the caramel dissolves. Let the caramel stand at room temperature for 2 hours to infuse flavors, and then remove the rosemary.

3 Heat the oven to 375°. On a lightly floured work surface, roll 1 dough disk into a 12-inch circle. Fit the circle into a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate, trim the edge with a knife, leaving a 1-inch overhang, and brush the edge with some of the beaten egg. In a large bowl, combine 1 cup of the rosemary caramel with the apples, cornstarch, and salt and scrape the filling into the pie crust. Roll the remaining dough into a 12-inch circle and place over the apples. Trim the excess dough, and fold the overhang under to form a thick edge. Crimp the edge with your fingers to seal.

4 Brush the top of the pie with the remaining egg and, using a knife, make 4 slits in the top. Transfer the pie to the oven and bake until golden, about 1 hour. Pour 1/2 cup of the remaining rosemary caramel over the top of the pie, and continue baking until the caramel is lightly set, about 15 minutes more. Remove the pie from the oven and transfer to a rack. Sprinkle with sea salt and let cool to room temperature. Serve warm slices of pie with ice cream on top, if you like.

Pumpkin Pie with Graham Cracker Crust and Pepita-Sage Brittle

Serves 8 to 10

Active: 30 min. ; Total: 2 hr. 15 min.

Baking your own graham crackers for this crust, which forms a great base for other cream pies, is totally worth the effort—it pays off with a deeply concentrated molasses flavor—and the filling of fresh-roasted pumpkin and warm spices puts the canned stuff to shame. A sprinkle of bittersweet caramel brittle, packed with sage and pumpkin seeds, adds a welcome crunch that will kick up store-bought pumpkin pie, too. Substitute dried coconut flakes and chopped macadamia nuts to pair with a Key lime pie, or dried lavender and slivered almonds for a chocolate cream pie.

For the filling:

- 1 1/2 lbs. peeled and seeded sugar pumpkin or butternut squash, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- Kosher salt
- 3/4 cups (6 oz.) packed light brown sugar
- 2 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves
- 1 3/4 cups chilled heavy cream



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For more information contact: Anne Crawford, Coastline Travel anne@coastlinetravel.com



*All elements subject to availability



- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole milk
- 2 large eggs plus 1 large yolk

For the graham cracker crust:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.) graham flour
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt
- 6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (2 oz.) sugar
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. molasses (not blackstrap)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 $\frac{1}{4}$ oz.) all-purpose flour

For the pepita-sage brittle:

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups plus 2 Tbsp. (1 lb.) sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped sage
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- 1 tsp. flaky sea salt

1 Roast the pumpkin: Heat the oven to 350°. On a rimmed baking sheet, toss the pumpkin with the oil, season with salt, and bake, tossing halfway through, until lightly caramelized and soft, about 35 minutes. Scrape the pumpkin into a food processor and purée until

smooth. Reserve 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of the purée for the pie and save the remaining purée for another use.

2 Make the crust: Reduce the oven temperature to 325°. In a large bowl, whisk the graham flour with the cinnamon, baking soda, and salt. In another bowl, beat 3 tablespoons butter, the sugar, honey, and molasses with a hand mixer on medium speed until fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add the dry ingredients and beat on low speed until just combined. Press and spread the dough into a single $\frac{1}{4}$ inch-thick cracker on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and bake until browned and set, about 20 minutes. Transfer the baking sheet to a rack and let the cracker cool completely.

3 Crumble the cooled cracker into a food processor and pulse to form fine crumbs. Melt the remaining 3 tablespoons butter and pour into the food processor along with the all-purpose flour and pulse until evenly combined. Scrape the crumbs into a 9-inch pie pan and press the crumbs into the bottom and up the side. Bake the crust until lightly browned at the edges and set, about 20 minutes. Transfer the crust to a rack and let cool completely. Meanwhile, keep the oven heated to 325°.

4 Make the filling: In a large bowl, whisk the reserved pumpkin purée with the brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves until smooth. Pour in $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the cream, the milk, and eggs and yolks and whisk lightly until smooth. Scrape the filling into the cooled crust and bake, rotating once halfway through, until set but slightly loose in the center, about 1 hour. Transfer the pie to a rack and let cool completely.

5 Meanwhile, make the brittle: Line a baking sheet with foil and grease. In a medium saucepan, combine the sugar with the corn syrup and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water and bring to a boil over high heat. Cook, without stirring, until the syrup turns golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk the 4 tablespoons butter and the sage into the caramel. Immediately stir in the baking soda, pour the foaming caramel onto the prepared baking sheet, and sprinkle with the pumpkin seeds and salt. Let the brittle stand until cooled and hardened and then break into small pieces.

6 To serve, pour the remaining 1 cup cream into a large bowl and whisk until stiff peaks form. Spread the whipped cream over the pie and sprinkle with the pepita-sage brittle just before serving.

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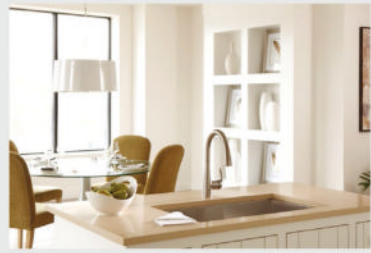
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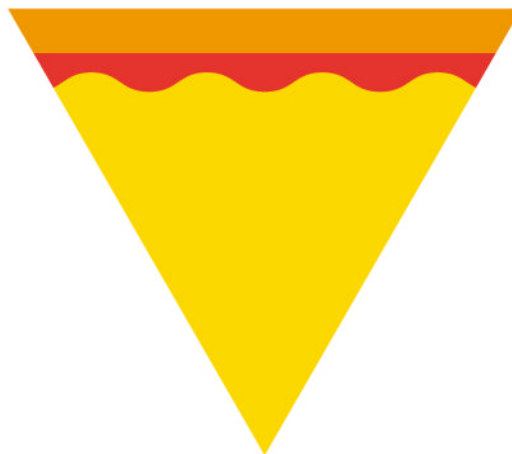
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Before the Wrecking Ball

The final lunch at Hotel Okura,
Tokyo, Japan, August 31, 2015

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREA FAZZARI

Even before I'd ever been to Tokyo, I looked up pictures of the famed Hotel Okura—a spectacular 1960s architectural anomaly in a city where things are torn down all the time for shiny steel-and-glass newness. Some 15 years ago, before I moved to the city, I made the pilgrimage to its vast double-level lobby to gawk at the gilded panels and cascading hexahedral chandeliers. Like other design lovers, my heart sank when I heard that it would be demolished this year as part of the city's preparations for the 2020 Olympics. I knew I had to witness its luxurious, period-piece spectacle one more time, so for the very last day it was open, I made lunch reservations in the hotel's restaurant, a space that offers the same stunning design and formal old-school service as the rest of the place. When the day arrived, I was greeted with a bow and a fantastically anachronistic menu. We kicked off the meal with a tableside Caesar salad. One waiter in a white dinner jacket rolled a cart over and set out the ingredients, and then another waiter in a black tuxedo prepared the salad with great flourish. He extended his arm up into the air, letting the parmesan shreds fall from a great height into the bowl. Dessert was equally dramatic: cherry jubilee, the fruit set ablaze with orange peels and brandy by another serious, tuxedoed waiter. It was strange luxuriating in that beautiful time-capsule of a dining room, knowing that tomorrow it would be no more, but after three hours of soaking in the graciously orchestrated service of a bygone era, it was time for us to go, too.



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