

Two Red Bowls

Two Red Bowls

A taste of everything

By Cynthia Gee

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About the Author

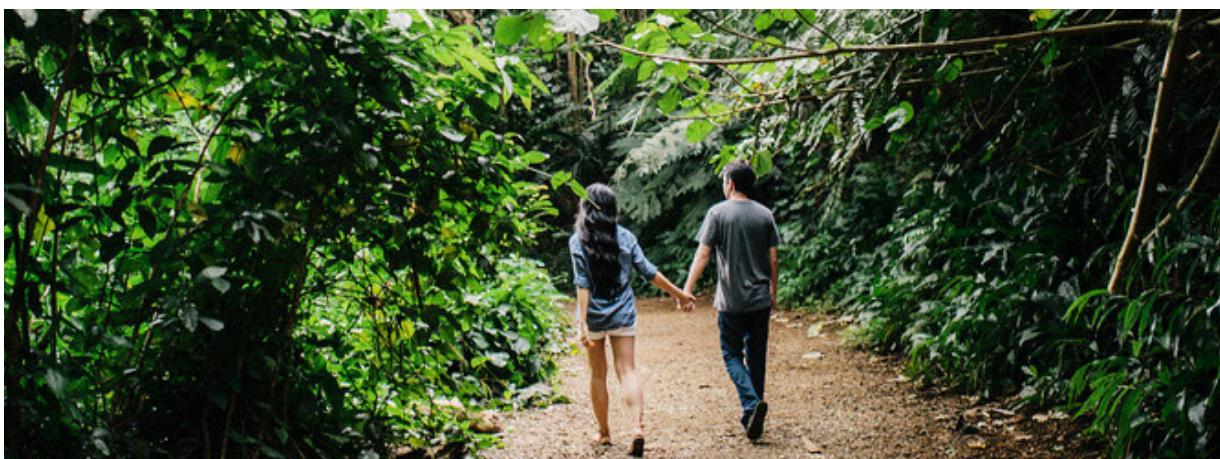


Hmm. I'm a woefully inexperienced junior lawyer, for one. You can usually find me in a firm in Manhattan, knocking over file folders, getting lost in the mailroom, and saying "Oh God, I'm sorry!" about twice a minute. When I'm not there, I'm in our teeny kitchen in a little apartment in Brooklyn, where I live with Bowl #2, the original owner of the two red bowls, my beloved boyfriend fiance husband!, and my good-humored taste-tester. He eats both my culinary successes and failures with dignity and aplomb.

As for what you'll find here, I love Asian food and anything that can be made mini, so please expect a lot of both. And everything in between.

What are the two red bowls?

Before this, I'd wanted to start a blog for awhile but could never think of a name. So instead of posting the recipes and the food I made, I just gradually accumulated more and more pictures of what I'd cooked, with nowhere to post them. Finally, I noticed that every other picture I'd taken was of food we'd eaten out of two little plastic red bowls of ours, side by side — and suddenly it came to me that, since they'd obviously been so good to us, I should just name a blog about them. And here it is!





SAVORY



TOMATO-BACON BISQUE

Yields: 3-4 servings

This tomato bisque and grilled cheese combo is one that I've actually been meaning to share since the tail end of last tomato season (oops) but it's one of my absolute favorites. The soup is inspired by a creamy, comforting one from my college days, one that I loved to turn to when sick or when looking for a late-night pick-me-up after a long night in the library. It's got an extra boost of umami from a few rashers of bacon, but a little less dairy to balance that out, and it's perfect when paired with a grilled cheese amped up with tart apple slices and two different kinds of smoky cheese.

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2-3 rashers (about 2 oz) bacon | 2-3 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese |
| 1 tbsp rendered bacon fat, from above | 2 tbsp light brown sugar (or more, to taste) |
| ½ cup diced onion | 2 tbsp whole milk (or heavy cream) |
| 1-2 cloves garlic, minced | 2 tbsp Greek yogurt |
| 28 oz (1 large can) crushed tomatoes (or 2 lb fresh tomatoes, if in season) | salt and pepper to taste |
| 1 tbsp tomato paste (optional) | ½ tsp finely chopped fresh thyme |
| 1½ cups chicken stock, plus more for thinning if needed | ½ tsp finely chopped fresh oregano |
| | cilantro or parsley (optional, for garnish) |

Directions

1. First, prepare your bacon. (If you're making the grilled cheese too, you might want to prepare all the bacon at once in this step.) You can either panfry it on the stove or bake it -- I like baking for ease of preparation. To bake, place the bacon strips on a rimmed baking sheet (foil-lined, if you prefer) or in a cast-iron skillet, then pop them in a cold oven (no need to preheat) and turn the oven to 400 degrees. Let bake for about 12-15 minutes, until fat is rendered and bacon is crisp. The crisper the better for the soup -- it purees smoother.
2. Drain and reserve the bacon fat from the bacon strips; set the strips aside. Heat one tablespoon of the bacon fat (or however much you'd like to sauté with) in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add the onions and minced garlic, and sauté until onions just begin to soften. Crumble two rashers of bacon into the pot and continue to cook for 20-30 seconds more.
3. Add the tomato paste, crushed tomatoes, chicken stock, grated Parmesan, and brown sugar, and stir to combine. Turn the heat to low and let simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Turn the heat off. Add the milk and Greek yogurt, then use an immersion blender or regular blender to puree the soup until uniform in texture. Season with salt, pepper, thyme, and oregano to taste, and adjust the soup with chicken stock if it's too thick for your liking. If the soup is tart, add a bit more brown sugar and another splash of milk or cream. Serve hot, or let cool and freeze for later.

Notes

- *This freezes well.*
- *If your dairy separates, just give it a stir when you reheat it -- and adding another splash of milk or cream when you do won't hurt anyone.*
- *If you're out of chicken stock, water will work in a pinch -- just add a bit more Parmesan and salt to compensate, if needed.*



CHEESY GARLIC PULL-APART BREAD

Yields: one 9x5 loaf

As it turns out, really gross names for food only make me more gleeful about eating them. I hadn't thought to share the recipe at first (despite the super-glamorous name) but it ended up so tasty that I made another version with scallion pesto. Both loaves use my very favorite enriched bread dough, a simplified and lightened-up milk bread that has slowly become my standby ever since I first used it in these black sesame rolls, and the rest is just easy, cheesy heaven — this garlic bread version uses lots of melted butter, garlic, mozzarella, and Parmesan, with parsley here and there to add some brightness.

Ingredients

for the tangzhong

6 tbsp water
2 tbsp bread flour
for the dough:
½ cup milk
1½ tsp yeast

2 ¾ cups (about 350 grams) bread flour
½ tsp salt
2 tbsp sugar
1 egg
2 tbsp butter, very soft

to bake

¼ cup (½ stick, 2 oz, or 4 tbsp) butter, very soft
2-3 tbsp minced parsley
1-2 tbsp minced garlic, or to taste
¼-½ tsp garlic powder, or to taste

¼ cup shredded or grated Parmesan
½ to 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese (optional)
scallions, finely sliced (optional)

Directions

make the tangzhong

1. In a small saucepan, whisk together 6 tbsp water and 2 tbsp bread flour until no lumps remain. Heat the mixture over medium-low heat, whisking constantly. It should thicken in less than a minute to a gel-like consistency. As soon as lines appear in the mixture when stirred, remove from heat and transfer to a small, clean bowl. Let cool to room temperature.
2. Next, heat the milk briefly to just above room temperature, about 110 degrees or luke-warm to the touch but not hot. I do this simply by microwaving it for 10-15 seconds. Sprinkle the yeast over the milk and set aside for 5-10 minutes for the yeast to activate. The milk should foam.
3. In the meantime, sift together the bread flour, salt, and sugar in a large bowl. Once the yeast has foamed, add the tangzhong and the egg, and whisk until well-combined.
4. Make a well in the flour mixture and pour in the wet ingredients. Stir with a wooden spoon until the mixture forms a loose, shaggy dough, then switch to using your hands. Knead for 4-5 minutes, or until the dough forms a semi-smooth ball. The dough should be quite sticky -- sprinkle flour over your hands and the dough as needed to keep kneading, but try to avoid overflouring. One tablespoon should be enough.
5. Add the butter to the dough, one tablespoon at a time, kneading after each addition. Add the second tablespoon of butter only after the first has been evenly incorporated. The kneading will be slippery and messy at this point, but just keep kneading (it's weirdly satisfying, actually) and it should eventually form a soft and pliable dough that's easy to work with. Knead for an additional 4-5 minutes, or until dough becomes smooth and elastic.
6. Place the dough in a large bowl with plenty of room and cover the bowl with plastic wrap or a damp towel. Let proof for 1-2 hours, or until well-doubled. Alternatively, let the dough proof overnight in the refrigerator for 8-10 hours, covered with plastic wrap. I prefer the latter -- it gives extra time for the gluten to develop, and yields a better flavor, in my opinion. Plus, dividing the labor over two days makes the process much more manageable.

the next day

7. Whisk together softened butter, chopped parsley, garlic, and garlic powder. On a well-floured surface, roll the dough out to a rough 10x14-inch rectangle (or larger, which will result in more pieces). Spread the butter evenly across the surface, then sprinkle with mozzarella, Parmesan, and cheddar. If you like, you can also add finely sliced scallions here, too. Slice the dough into strips, then stack the strips and cut into squares, like Kelly's tutorial here.



8. Place the pieces vertically into a 9x5 loaf pan lined with parchment paper. Tuck extra pieces on the sides as needed. When finished, there should be some extra room, either on the sides or at the top, for the dough to rise. Let the dough rise again, covered with a damp towel, for about 45 minutes to an hour. The dough should nearly double again.
9. About 30 minutes into the rise, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Once the dough has risen again, sprinkle extra cheese over top, then bake, uncovered, about 35-40 minutes, or until cheese is well-browned on top and bread sounds hollow when tapped. (If cheese browns too quickly, cover the loaf with foil to prevent burning.) Cool briefly, then remove from tin and serve warm, with extra parsley and scallions if desired.

Notes

- If your milk doesn't foam and your yeast is fresh, it might be because the milk isn't ultra-pasteurized -- discard and start over, but this time, heat the milk to just under boiling to scald it, then cool it down to lukewarm and proceed
- If not measuring the flour by weight, be sure to fluff it before scooping to get the most accurate measurement. I generally spoon the flour into a cup and then level.
- If letting the dough rise overnight, take care not to seal the bowl completely airtight, which can sometimes result in a build-up of gas and an alcohol-like smell. I generally wrap it lightly in plastic wrap and then again with a tea towel.

HURRICANE POPCORN

So simple but incredibly addictive, so much so that I had to give away half of it to the neighbors before I ate the entire tub myself. It starts with your standard popcorn and melted butter, but then it adds just a touch of soy sauce and sugar, a generous pour of salty furikake, and a heaping of crunchy, shiny-glazed rice crackers, called mochi crunch or kakimochi in Hawaii. It's pretty much the embodiment of everything I love about Hawaii.

Ingredients

10 cups freshly-popped popcorn (or about 6 tbsp unpopped kernels)	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp sugar
3 tbsp melted butter	$\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup nori furikake, or more to taste
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp soy sauce	2 cups Japanese rice crackers (preferably like these)

Directions

1. First, prepare your popcorn. You can pop it using a stovetop method, or using the microwave. Put about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time in a paper bag, folded and sealed, or a large, microwave-safe glass bowl with an airtight lid, and microwave it on high for about 2 minutes, or until popcorn pops only once every 2-3 seconds.
2. Place popcorn in a large bowl, at least 3-quart capacity. Whisk together melted butter, soy sauce, and sugar. Gradually drizzle the butter mixture evenly over the popcorn, tossing the popcorn as you go, to distribute the butter as evenly as possible.
3. Working quickly, sprinkle the furikake over the popcorn while the butter is still warm to help it adhere to the popcorn, and continue tossing to distribute evenly.
4. Last, mix in the rice crackers, and top with an additional sprinkling of furikake. Serve!





SAVORY BACON & CHEESE STUFFED FRENCH TOAST

Yield: serves 2

I've actually been meaning to share this French toast for almost a year now, which is a little crazy to me. It's pretty much all I want in a lazy weekend breakfast — eggs, bacon, cheese, carbs — all rolled into one, and it's perfect for breakfast in bed. The custard in the French toast keeps bed crumbs to a minimum, and wrapping all your usual breakfast suspects up into one plump challah jacket makes for neat but decadent eating.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3-4 rashers bacon | $\frac{1}{3}$ cup milk |
| 3-4 very thick-cut (about 1-inch or more is ideal) slices of day-old bread (I used this no-knead challah made with this filling) | 1 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese |
| about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup shredded mozzarella cheese (or cheese of your choice -- I substituted a handful of shredded smoked Gouda; Gruyere would also work wonderfully) | salt and pepper as desired |
| 1 egg | 1 tsp minced garlic |
| | 2-3 tsp reserved bacon grease (from above), for frying |
| | maple syrup for serving (optional, but I love it) |

Directions

1. Cook the bacon, either by baking or pan-frying, to the doneness of your liking. To bake, simply place the bacon on a rimmed baking sheet and place in a cold oven. Turn the oven to 400 degrees and let heat for 10-15 minutes, or until bacon is crisp and fat is rendered. (Keep an eye on it for the last 5 minutes to ensure it doesn't burn.) To panfry, lay the bacon in a single layer in a cold skillet. Turn the heat to medium and cook until crisp, flipping as necessary. Reserve bacon fat for frying the French toast. Let bacon cool briefly, then chop into small pieces and set aside.
2. Use a serrated knife to cut through bottom crust of each slice of bread, slicing almost to the edges, to make a "pocket" for the cheese and bacon.
3. In a small bowl, mix shredded cheese and cooled bacon until combined. Stuff each slice carefully with your desired amount of the bacon and cheese mixture.
4. In a shallow bowl large enough to hold the bread slices, whisk the egg, milk, Parmesan cheese, and a pinch of salt and pepper until well-combined. Soak each slice of bread in the egg mixture until both sides are well-coated.
5. In a cast-iron skillet, heat 2-3 tsp of the reserved bacon fat over medium heat with the minced garlic until the garlic crackles. Add the soaked bread slices and fry until golden-brown on both sides, about 2 minutes per side. Serve immediately with extra bacon, if desired, and plenty of maple syrup if you're so inclined.

Notes

- *Slightly stale or day-old bread will work best here. I especially love it with challah or brioche, though I think leftover slices of this milk bread would work well, too. Here, I used Artisan Bread in Five's no-knead challah, but made using the garlic, chives and smoked gouda filling here.*
- *The amount of bread you need will vary depending on the size of your slices -- I used a squat challah, so we made four slices, but you might just need two from a larger loaf.*



BOURSIN & CARAMELIZED ONION TARTLETS

The play between the creamy, slightly pungent Boursin and a tangle of darkly sweet onion, topped off with a sprig of fresh thyme and over a perfectly golden, crackly pastry, was exactly what I was hoping for. For a bit more liveliness to cut through the dairy, I think a drizzle of balsamic glaze (which I meant to do but totally forgot in my excitement to gobble these all down) would have been spectacular.

Ingredients

about 1 lb of your favorite croissant, puff pastry, or pie dough (I used a half-batch of this superlative recipe from Izzy at Top with Cinnamon)

5 oz (1 package) Garlic & Fine Herbs Boursin cheese (or creamy goat cheese)

2 cups sliced red onion

1 tbsp olive oil

salt and pepper to taste

1 tbsp balsamic vinegar (optional)

1 egg, beaten

for the balsamic glaze (optional):

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup balsamic vinegar

1 tbsp brown sugar

Directions

1. First, make your caramelized onions. Heat olive oil in a cast-iron skillet over low heat. Spread thinly sliced red onions in a single layer in the pan and let cook slowly, stirring only occasionally, for at least 30-40 minutes and up to an hour. When onions are brown and jammy, add the balsamic vinegar and cook a little longer. Remove from the pan and set aside.
2. Roll out the dough of your choice to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch in thickness. Use a biscuit or cookie cutter to cut rounds to your desired size. Using a smaller cookie cutter or a knife, score a circle inside the pastry without cutting all the way through, then prick holes in the center circle with a toothpick or fork.
3. Top each round with a teaspoon of Boursin and a few slices of caramelized onions. If you're using croissant dough, let the rounds sit and rise for about two hours. If you're using puff pastry, go ahead and preheat your oven to 425 degrees. Using a pastry brush, brush the edges of the rounds with beaten egg, then bake at 425 for about 15 minutes, or until golden.

Optional

Make a balsamic glaze by combining balsamic vinegar and brown sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. When mixture simmers, turn the heat down to medium-low or low and let bubble until reduced by half, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool briefly.

When the tarts are golden and puffed, top with small sprigs of fresh thyme and a drizzle of the glaze, and serve warm. Enjoy!

CHICKEN KATSU, MAC SALAD & RICE

Yield: serves 2-3 (with extra mac salad)

I found that a touch of oyster sauce in the katsu sauce lent that perfect sweet-sour balance and gave me a sauce that I was tempted to guzzle down plain. For the katsu, I tried a few different dredging methods and found that the L&L cornstarch slurry method, not a dry-wet-dry dredge, gave the tastiest consistency -- not too crunchy, but not too yielding. As for deep-frying, the shallowness of the oil makes this a tad more manageable than most.

Ingredients

for the mac salad

1 quart water	2 tbsp minced celery
1 cup (4 oz) dried elbow macaroni	½ tsp brown sugar
2 tsp salt	¼ tsp black pepper (or more or less, to taste)
¾ cup mayonnaise (or more or less, to taste)	⅛ tsp white pepper
2 tbsp finely grated onion* (see Notes)	2 tbsp milk (optional)
2 tbsp grated carrot	

for the katsu sauce

½ cup water	for the chicken katsu:
¼ cup ketchup	½ lb (about 2-3) boneless chicken thighs
¼ cup sugar	¼ cup water
2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce	1 egg
1 tbsp oyster sauce	⅓ cup cornstarch
¼ tsp Tabasco	⅛ tsp salt
¼ tsp salt	⅛ tsp white pepper
⅛ tsp chicken bouillon	⅛ tsp garlic powder
⅛ tsp white pepper	2 cups panko, or more as needed
⅛ tsp garlic pepper	

to serve

2 cups cooked rice

Directions

for the mac salad

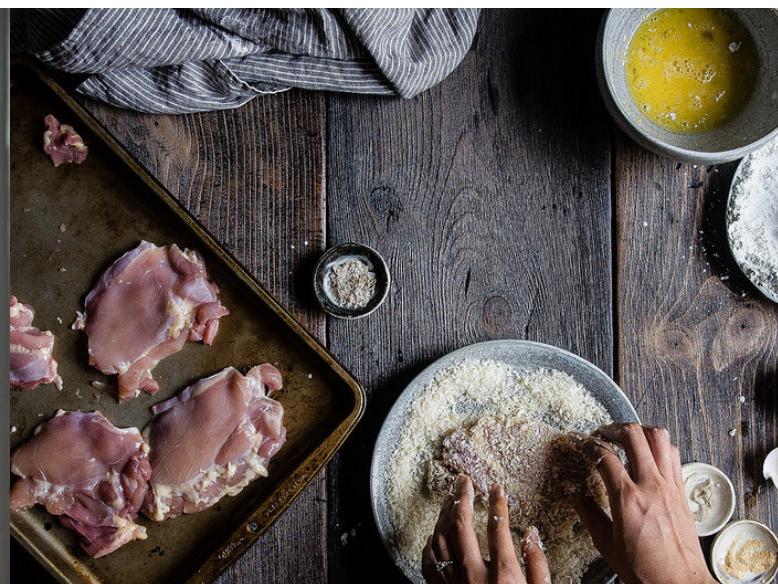
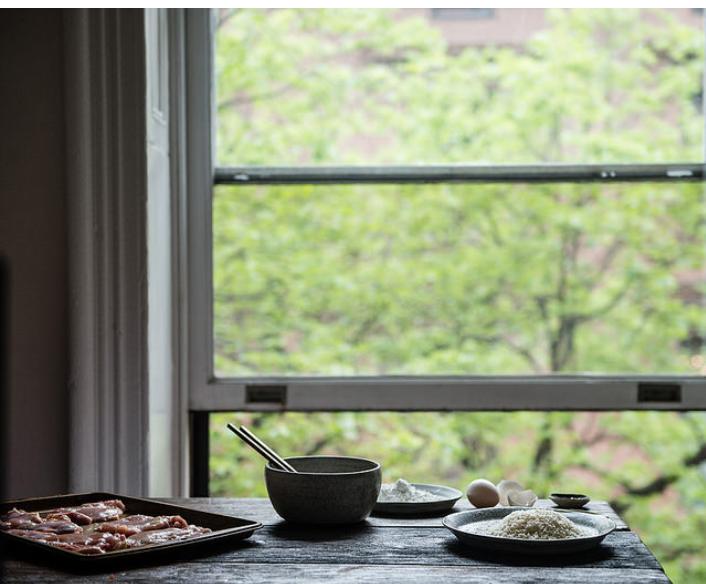
1. Bring water to a boil in a medium saucepot. Add the elbow pasta and salt. Boil for 12 minutes or until quite soft. Drain the water and let pasta cool thoroughly, about 30 minutes.
2. Whisk together all remaining ingredients. When pasta is fully at room temperature, add the remaining ingredients to the macaroni and fold until well-coated. Chill for at least one hour and up to several days in the refrigerator.
3. Just before serving, you can thin the macaroni with about 2 tbsp milk if you like. Adjust seasonings to taste and enjoy cold.

for the katsu sauce

4. Combine all the ingredients for the sauce in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat and let simmer for 4-5 minutes, or until mixture thickens and bubbles are slow, shiny and viscous, like caramel. Transfer to a small container and chill until ready to use.

for the chicken katsu

5. Open the chicken thighs and flatten. Cut off any excess fat or skin, then pound with a rolling pin or the bottom of a small bowl until the thighs are an even $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch in thickness. Whisk together water, egg, cornstarch, salt, white pepper, and garlic powder. Dip the chicken thighs into the cornstarch slurry, then thoroughly coat in panko.
6. To fry, heat about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch of oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan to 350 degrees. Fry the chicken thighs in the oil until golden brown and crispy, about 6-8 minutes per side.
7. Let the chicken thighs cool briefly, then slice and serve with two scoops rice and one scoop mac salad!



CHARRED CORN WITH MISO BUTTER, BACON & GARLIC SCAPES

Adapted from Momofuku, by David Chang. The first time I tested this recipe was back when scapes were curling energetically out of every other basket at the farmer's markets, but I was pumped to find a few left this past weekend, so I hope that means they're still around for you as well. In the off season, garlic (not regular) chives, green garlic, or chive bulbs would all work well, and in a pinch, you can use green onions.

Ingredients

2 tbsp white miso paste (or 1 tbsp red miso)	1 cup (about 6) sliced garlic scapes* (see above for substitutions)
2 tbsp softened unsalted butter	
4 cups corn kernels (about 4-5 ears)	4-6 slices (about 4-5 oz) bacon, depending on your preference

Directions

1. In a small bowl, whisk the miso paste into the butter until smooth and incorporated. It helps if the butter is softened and at room temperature, but will take a little bit of work before it's smooth. Set aside.
2. Turn your oven to broil and place your oven rack about 4" to 6" from your heating element, if needed.
3. Line a sheet pan with foil and lightly butter or oil it. Shuck the corn, remove the silks, and cut the kernels from the cob onto the pan. Add the scapes and spread the mixture in an even layer across the pan.
4. Broil the corn and scapes until there is visible charring in spots. This took me about 6-8 minutes in my oven, but can take as little as 3-5 minutes depending on the oven. If you see or hear a few kernels jump around in the pan, the corn is done. Remove from oven and set aside. (Alternatively, grill them!)
5. Next, dice the bacon. Fry in a cast-iron skillet over medium heat until crisp and the fat is rendered. Drain all but one tablespoon of the bacon fat. Turn the heat to its lowest setting, then add the corn and scapes to the pan and stir just until well-coated in bacon fat. Finally, add in the miso butter and cook until melted and evenly distributed. Enjoy on its own, as a side, or (our favorite) on tortillas with a fried egg and cheese.

Notes

- For a creamier and softer corn, you can add about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the broth of your choice, as per the original recipe, and cook until the broth no longer pools in the bottom of the pan.





MASHED POTATOES WITH SAGE BROWN BUTTER

Yield: 6-8 servings (about 4 cups mashed).

I've come to realize that making mashed potatoes from scratch does a thing or two or trillion for them. But a few months ago, I came across these glorious-looking roasted garlic smashed potatoes on The Baker Chick, and that was a real game-changer. First, this salt potato thing is genius. Boil the potatoes in well-salted water, pasta-style, and the result is a flavorful skin and a creamier potato. Smash it all up with butter and milk, leaving the skins because you're lazy because they're nutritious and have fiber and such. Then, add to that a couple of cloves of golden fried garlic. Finally, throw in one pan of sage leaves crisped up in brown butter? It turns out mashed potatoes can do the damn thing all on their own after all.

Ingredients

2 lbs Yukon potatoes
about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt for boiling
 $\frac{1}{2}$ stick (2 oz, or 4 tbsp) butter
4-5 sage leaves
2-3 cloves garlic, minced

oil for frying
2 oz cream cheese, creme fraiche, or sour cream (optional but delicious)
about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup whole milk or cream, or enough to reach desired consistency
black pepper to taste

Directions

1. Wash potatoes with a bristle brush or stiff sponge to clean them. Combine 6-8 cups of water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt, and potatoes in a large pot and bring to a boil. Simmer over medium-high heat for about 15-20 minutes, or until a fork inserted into the potato slides easily through the entire potato.
2. While the potatoes are cooking, melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the sage leaves and let cook until leaves are crisp and the butter has both turned a rich brown and given off a nutty aroma. Pour into a bowl, leaves and all, and set aside.
3. Add a bit more oil to the pan and heat over medium heat. Add the minced garlic and sauté until the garlic crisps and turns golden. Turn off the heat, remove the pan from heat and set aside.
4. When potatoes are ready, drain them, rinse the pot, and add potatoes back to the pot. Placing the pot over very low heat, mash the potatoes with a potato masher or, if you're like me and have problems acquiring new kitchen tools, a large fork. Mashing them over low heat will allow extra moisture to escape (says The Pioneer Woman). (Note: For fluffier, lighter potatoes, press the potatoes through a potato ricer or food mill.)
5. Add most of the brown butter to the potatoes, reserving the sage leaves and a bit of butter for topping (if desired). Add the cream cheese, and half the minced garlic (reserving the rest for topping) and stir gently until incorporated.
6. Pour in milk, a few tablespoons at a time, stirring gently until the potatoes reach your desired consistency. I like them a bit sturdier, so I don't add too much milk. Take care not to over mash, or the potatoes will turn gummy.
7. Season with black pepper to taste and salt, if needed. Top with remaining brown butter, sage leaves, and minced garlic. Serve!

Notes

- If you're using roasted garlic, you may want to omit the brown butter and sage and go with regular butter instead, as all three may be a bit overwhelming together.



ROASTED BRUSSELS SPROUTS, A MILLION WAYS

Personally, I've found I can eat Brussels sprouts in any form. Plain and raw when I'm supposed to be prepping them to cook, pan-fried with way too much oil (even if it made me feel like a herd of elephants decided to settle down in my stomach afterwards), roasted whole, and finally as chips. I've tried several seasonings — my three favorite are plain sea salt and olive oil, garlic and parmesan, and spicy garlic cayenne. I honestly don't know how I like them best, which is why I do the following

Ingredients

1 lb Brussels sprouts (or any amount you feel like, really — just adjust the seasonings if you use more or less sprouts)

about ½ to 1 tbsp olive oil
sea salt, to taste
black pepper, to taste

for garlic-parmesan flavor:

½ tsp garlic powder

2-3 tsp parmesan

for spicy garlic cayenne:

¼ tsp cayenne

½ tsp garlic powder

Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.
2. Slice the stem off one sprout. Peel off as many outer leaves as you can. If there are still loose leaves but they won't come off, slice off a bit more of the bottom and peel again. Set the leaves aside in a large bowl; slice the heart in half and place in a separate bowl.
3. Repeat until the sprouts are all done. If the sprouts are a bit damp, pat them until thoroughly dry.
4. Drizzle olive oil over the leaves and toss until each leaf is thinly coated. Sprinkle salt and pepper over the leaves to your preference. I like mine well-salted. Repeat for the hearts.
5. Decide if you want to add additional flavor — I think my favorite is garlic parmesan, but all of these are fantastic, including just having them plain. Add the additional seasonings ($\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder and 2-3 tsp parmesan for garlic-parmesan, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cayenne and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder for spicy garlic cayenne) and toss again to coat.
6. For the leaves, spread them evenly across the baking sheet, leaving a bit of space between each leaf, and bake at 400 degrees for 8-10 minutes, or until the edges are brown. Keep an eye on them, because they can burn quickly. (But they still taste pretty good burnt! I speak from experience, since my oven has hot spots.)
7. For the hearts, do the same, but bake a bit longer — it will take about 15-20 minutes, at least, and 20-25 if you'd like them nice and brown.



SWISS CHARD & QUINOA CAKES, WITH GARLIC YOGURT

Yield: makes about 6-8 patties(serves 2-3)

These quinoa cakes are elegantly simple and so delicious – they're made with little more than a hefty dose of Parmesan, some swiftly sauteed Swiss chard, and a couple of eggs to hold it all together. I think these are delicious on their own, but they're also fantastic over salad with a little buttermilk ranch, and I can imagine they'd be perfect in a veggie burger (though they're gluten-free as is!) I've been freezing them in two's and three's to take to work, and they're as exciting, flavorful, and not-sad of a desk lunch I could ask for.

Ingredients

½ cup uncooked quinoa, preferably red or white (about 1½ cups cooked)
4 cups chopped Swiss chard, leaves and stems separated (alternatively, kale or collards with ribs removed)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp oil
2 large eggs (or 3, for cakes that hold their

shape more when cooked)
⅓ cup grated Parmesan
½ tsp ground cumin (or 2 tsp cumin seeds, toasted and ground)
½ tsp salt (or to taste)
⅛ tsp pepper (or to taste)
additional oil for frying

to serve

½ cup plain Greek yogurt

1 clove garlic, minced or pureed

Directions

to cook the quinoa

1. First, rinse the quinoa in a fine metal sieve to reduce bitterness. Bring $1\frac{1}{4}$ cup of water to a boil in a small saucepan or pot with a tight-fitting lid. Add the quinoa, then lower the heat to medium-low, cover, and gently simmer for about 12 minutes, or until all the water is absorbed. Fluff with a fork, remove from heat and let sit, covered, for 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, sauté the chard. Heat the garlic and oil in a large wok or saucepan over medium heat until the garlic begins to crackle. Add the chard leaves only, reserving the stems, and sauté until dark green and soft, seasoning as desired with salt and pepper. Remove the leaves and sauté the stems with a bit of water over medium heat until soft. Set aside and let cool.
3. Once all ingredients are cool, place the cooked quinoa, cooked chard, Parmesan, and cumin in a large bowl and mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper, then add eggs and mix again until well-combined. Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

to assemble

4. Form handfuls of the quinoa mixture into patties. Heat a few teaspoons of oil in a cast-iron, seasoned steel, or other nonstick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add a few patties, leaving room for flipping, and fry for about 2-3 minutes on each side or until golden brown. Reduce heat as necessary to keep from burning. Repeat until all the patties are done.
5. To make the garlic yogurt, stir pureed garlic into yogurt and serve, or briefly panfry minced garlic until crisp and mix in -- either works well. I fried a little extra garlic for topping, too.

Notes

- *I increased the number of eggs because I found that it helped the patties to keep their shape.*
- *If you're having trouble, try adding a tablespoon or two of cornstarch, or even another egg.*

WARM GRAIN BOWL WITH ROASTED CAULIFLOWER & SPICY CHICKEN

Yield: serves two

These bowls take that roasted cauliflower and add a good dose of Parmesan cheese for heartiness (a la these quinoa cakes), toothsome sautéed kale for bite, and some sundried tomatoes and buffalo chicken for piquancy. With quinoa and a handful of fresh greens to tie it all together, I thought it was a perfect weekend lunch, the kind of meal that's healthy like salad but warm and nourishing like winter food needs to be.

Ingredients

to roast the cauliflower

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2 cups cauliflower florets | a shake of red chili pepper |
| 1 tbsp olive oil or vegetable oil | salt and ground black pepper, to taste (I used about 1 tsp salt and a shake of pepper) |
| 1 tbsp minced garlic | |
| sprig of thyme (optional) | 1-2 tsp grated Parmesan |

to steam the chicken

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 chicken breast | 2-3 tsp olive oil or vegetable oil |
| 2 tsp vegetable oil | 1 tbsp minced garlic |
| parchment paper or foil, for steaming | 2 cups kale, ribs removed |
| salt and ground black pepper | 1 tsp grated Parmesan |
| 2 tbsp hot sauce (I used Frank's) | salt and ground black pepper, to taste |
| 1 tsp brown sugar | 2 tbsp water or chicken stock |
| to sauté the kale: | |

to assemble

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 to 1 ½ cups cooked quinoa (or lentils, wheatberries, farro, etc.) (see Notes for how to cook quinoa) | handful spring greens or arugula |
| 7-8 small sundried tomatoes (about ½ cup) | ¼ cup grated or shaved Parmesan, or more or less, to taste |

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Lightly oil two large roasting pans or baking sheets, or line with parchment paper. Toss the cauliflower florets with one tablespoon of vegetable oil, minced garlic, thyme, and chili pepper, then spread the florets out onto a single layer on the pans, leaving a little room for the chicken on one. Season with salt and pepper to your liking, then set aside.
2. Heat a bit more vegetable oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Season the chicken breast on both sides with salt and pepper, then turn the heat to medium and sear the chicken for a minute on each side, until golden brown. Place onto a large square of parchment paper or foil, drizzle with hot sauce and brown sugar, then fold the paper in half and crimp to seal. Place onto the baking sheet along with the cauliflower. Roast the cauliflower and bake the chicken at the same time. Remove the chicken after about 20-25 minutes, and remove the cauliflower whenever it's well-browned on the edges, about 25-30 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, sauté the kale. Slice the ribs off if you haven't already, then heat 1 tbsp oil in a wok or skillet with the garlic until garlic begins to crackle. Add the kale and sauté until kale is well-coated in oil and just beginning to soften. Add the water or chicken stock, parmesan, and salt and pepper to taste, and continue to sauté until wilted. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Finally, assemble the bowls! Slice the chicken, then simply divide all the ingredients evenly between two bowls, top with sundried tomatoes and a handful of greens, and finish with plenty of Parmesan and an extra drizzle of hot sauce. Enjoy immediately.

Notes

- For a more savory quinoa, replace half the water with chicken stock.



THAI SPICY BASIL CHICKEN FRIED RICE

Tiled: serves 2

I used outside recipes as a starting off point, with a few small additions (mainly egg and soy sauce). I might try brown sugar next time to see what it adds — but overall, it was pretty great! It ended up not an exact dupe, but it seems close enough to save us some delivery costs in the future.

Ingredients

2 tbsp oyster sauce	1-2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized strips
2 tbsp fish sauce	$\frac{1}{2}$ onion, diced
2 tbsp soy sauce	2 eggs, beaten
1 tbsp brown sugar	2 cups sweet Thai basil
2-3 tbsp vegetable oil for frying	1 red pepper, seeded and thinly sliced (optional)
3 cups cooked jasmine rice, chilled	1 cucumber, sliced (optional, for garnish)
3-4 cloves garlic, crushed or minced	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cilantro sprigs (optional, for garnish)
$\frac{1}{2}$ jalapeno pepper, sliced (for less heat, deseeded)	

Directions

Whisk together oyster sauce, fish sauce, soy sauce, and sugar in a bowl.

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large wok or pan over high heat; scramble the eggs, breaking into small pieces as it cooks. It's better to brown it more than you would for American scrambled eggs — I also add a little bit of the sauce to the egg mixture before scrambling, to add some extra flavor. Set aside.

Add more oil to the wok over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the garlic and chili pepper, stirring quickly. Right after that (before the garlic burns), add the sliced chicken, bell pepper, and onion. If you marinated the chicken beforehand, do not add any sauce at this point; if you didn't, add half the sauce mixture. Cook until chicken is no longer pink.

Raise heat to high and stir in chilled rice; stir quickly until sauce is blended with the rice. Add remaining sauce and continue to stirfry. Remove from heat and stir in basil leaves until wilted. Garnish with cucumber, cilantro, and crushed red chili pepper to taste, and serve.



FRANKIES SPUNTINO CAESAR SALAD WITH SALMON

Yield: serves two

This paragon of blender-dressing genius is scaled down from Food52 Genius Recipes and Frankies Spuntino. If you can bear fifteen minutes with the oven, the homemade croutons are a breeze, and a quick sear of some salmon adds staying power. If you're icked out by too much fish-on-fish, I think some grilled shrimp would be amazing here too.

Ingredients

for the croutons

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 cup diced day-old bread | 2-3 tbsp grated Parmesan (or to taste) |
| 2-3 tbsp olive oil (or as needed to coat) | 1 tsp garlic powder |
| salt and pepper, to taste | |

for the dressing

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 2 tbsp (12g) grated Pecorino Romano or
Parmesan, plus more for serving | 1 anchovy fillet |
| ¼ cup (55g) mayonnaise | ⅛ tsp Worcestershire sauce |
| 2 tbsp (30ml) water, plus more as needed | ⅛ tsp Tabasco sauce |
| ¾ tsp red wine vinegar | ⅛ tsp white pepper |
| ½ tsp minced garlic | salt and pepper, to taste |

for the salmon

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| two 4-oz salmon fillets | 1 tsp lemon juice |
| salt and pepper, to taste | to serve: |
| 1 tbsp olive oil | 1 romaine heart with outer leaves removed |
| 2 tsp minced garlic | |

Directions

to make the croutons

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toss diced bread in olive oil until evenly coated, then spread on a parchment- or foil-lined baking sheet. Season generously with salt, pepper, Parmesan, and garlic powder, then bake for 10-15 minutes, stirring once, until sides are golden. Set aside and let cool.

to make the salmon

Pat fillets dry on both sides, paying special attention to the skin-side if you're leaving it on. (I do because I love me some crispy salmon skin.) Season generously on both sides with salt and pepper. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic and salmon, skin-side down (if applicable). Cook about 4-5 minutes, until skin is crispy, then flip and cook the other side for another 4-5 minutes, until fish flakes easily. Try not to flip more than once. Sprinkle with lemon juice and set aside to let cool briefly.

Next, trim the root ends from the romaine, separate the leaves, and wash and dry them. Put the lettuce in the fridge to chill while you prepare the dressing.

to make the dressing

In a blender or food processor, combine all ingredients for the dressing except the salt and black pepper, and puree until smooth. If you don't have a blender or food processor, simply mince the garlic and anchovy as finely as you can, then whisk them with the remaining ingredients.

Taste and adjust with salt to taste -- the ingredients have a fair amount of salt, so you likely will not need any. Loosen the dressing with more water if needed. Set aside.

Toss the chilled lettuce with the dressing in a large bowl. Serve immediately with croutons, salmon, more grated cheese, and a turn of black pepper.





GRILLED PEACH & BURRATA SALAD

Yield: serves two

The fantastic folks at Lucini Italia were kind enough to send me a few of their products to try, two of which I gladly used here. The peaches were grilled in this lemon olive oil, and the glaze I made from this mind blowing fruit-infused balsamic. I thought the quality of both was exceptional — clean, nuanced, and deeply flavored. Definitely check them out if you feel so inclined.

Ingredients

for the caramelized onions

- 1 small red onion, sliced thin
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp balsamic vinegar (optional)

- for the balsamic glaze:
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp brown sugar

for the peaches

- 2 peaches or nectarines, white or yellow, sliced in half and pits removed

- 1 tbsp olive oil

for the rest

- 3 cups arugula (or more or less, to your preference)

- 1 ball burrata cheese

Directions

to make the caramelized onions

Heat olive oil in a cast-iron skillet over low heat. Spread thinly sliced red onions in a single layer in the pan and let cook slowly, stirring only occasionally, for at least 20-30 minutes. The longer you cook and the lower the heat, the better the onions will taste, but I often cook them for less time if I'm in a hurry and it's fine. When onions are brown and jammy, add the balsamic vinegar and cook a little longer. Remove from the pan and set aside.

to make the glaze

Combine balsamic vinegar and brown sugar in a small saucepan over medium heat. When mixture simmers, turn the heat down to medium-low or low and let bubble until reduced by half, about 10 minutes. Let cool and set aside.

to grill the peaches

Heat a skillet or grill pan over medium heat. Brush the cut halves lightly with olive oil, then place cut-side down and let sizzle until browned or charred to your liking. For me, this took only a few minutes. Set aside.

to assemble

It doesn't really matter how you do it, but I layered the arugula first, then the peaches and caramelized onions. Then I sliced the burrata into pieces and distributed it over the salad, and finished with balsamic glaze. Serve immediately.





SPICY GARLIC EGGPLANT & GROUND PORK NOODLES

Yield: serves 4

This eggplant dish is my tribute to homey, comforting food. This version isn't Japanese, but Chinese — it's prepared the way my mother taught me, pungent from a dose of Chinese black vinegar, a little spicy from a dollop of chili garlic sauce, couched in the Asian trinity of scallions, ginger, and (you guessed it) garlic, and rounded out with a touch of sugar, soy sauce, and savory ground pork.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| ½ lb ground pork | 2-3 tsp chili garlic sauce, to taste |
| 3-4 green onions, chopped (divided) | 2 tbsp Chinese or balsamic vinegar (or garlic-infused vinegar, instructions below) |
| 3-4 tbsp soy sauce (divided) | 1 tbsp of sugar, to taste |
| 1tsp sesame oil | ½ to 1 tsp salt, to taste |
| 1 tsp Shaoxing rice wine (or sake) | ½ tsp black pepper |
| 1lb eggplant (2 medium Chinese eggplants or 1 American eggplant) | ½ tsp white pepper |
| oil for frying | ½ cup water |
| 7-8 garlic cloves, finely minced | about 8-12 oz No Yolks extra broad noodles |
| 1tsp finely minced ginger | |

Directions

do ahead

If you'd like to use garlic-infused vinegar, just combine $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vinegar with 4-5 crushed garlic cloves in a small 4-ounce jar, seal, and let sit. Two weeks is optimal, though you can certainly use it earlier if you like. You'll only use a few tablespoons in this dish, but the vinegar preserves the garlic and will keep for up to two months, so you'll have plenty of time to use it (and you can make way more, if you like!)

for the pork

1. Combine ground pork, about 2 tbsp of the chopped green onions, 1 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tsp sesame oil, and 1 tsp Shaoxing rice wine in a small bowl and mix until well-combined. Let marinate for 15-30 minutes. Meanwhile, slice eggplant into bite-sized pieces and set aside.
2. Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large wok over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, add the garlic, ginger and remaining green onion. Stirfry for 10 seconds, then add the ground pork and chili garlic sauce.
3. When pork is fully cooked, add the eggplant and stir for a minute to mix everything together. Add the soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, salt, and both ground peppers, and stirfry for a few minutes more. Add the water. Once it boils, turn down the heat to medium-low, then cover and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the eggplant is fork-tender.
4. Meanwhile, prepare the noodles according to package instructions. When done, divide evenly between four bowls. When eggplant is ready, divide evenly over noodles and serve immediately.





SPINACH, CARAMELIZED ONION & ROASTED GARLIC WHITE PIZZA

The entire pizza is a little bit of an exercise in slow, patient food. The no-knead dough sits for a full day, chilling out and acquiring words like “artisanal” and “complex” as it goes; the garlic is gradually roasted into something that is aromatic and pungent yet subtly sweet and, when mashed, tastes like grown-up mashed potatoes with sass and panache; the onions are sautéed low and slow until they’re jammy and sugary, with a splash of balsamic vinaigrette for extra depth.

Ingredients

for the dough

- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp sea or kosher salt
- 1/8 tsp active dry yeast* (see Notes)

- 3/4 cup plus 1 tbsp water
- 1 tbsp honey (optional)

for the garlic paste

- 2 bulbs garlic
- 1-2 tsp olive oil, plus more for drizzling during roasting

- 2-3 tsp milk or cream
- pinch crushed red chili pepper

for the toppings

- 1/2 red onion, sliced thin
- 2 cups spinach
- oil for sautéing
- salt and pepper, to taste

- 1-2 cups shredded mozzarella
- for baking:
 - about 1 tbsp cornmeal
 - 1-2 tsp olive oil

Directions

for the dough

1. In a small bowl, combine water and honey, if using, and stir to dissolve. Sprinkle the yeast over the water and let proof for a few minutes. In a large bowl, sift together flour and salt, then add the yeast mixture and stir until it forms sticky dough.
2. Cover bowl with plastic and keep at room temperature for approximately 18 hours, or until the dough has more than doubled. (Note: If you're like me and you tend to forget to do this the night before, just double the yeast and the dough will rise in 6-8 hours instead, but with a flavor that is still comparable, in my opinion.)

for the garlic paste

3. About an hour before the dough is ready, start by roasting the garlic. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Slice off the top of the garlic bulb so that each clove is exposed. Drizzle a bit of olive oil over top, rubbing each clove to make sure the oil is well-distributed, then wrap in foil and bake for 30 minutes. The garlic should be soft when pressed when it's done.
4. Take the roasted garlic and pop out the cloves by squeezing, or with a fork. Combine with one teaspoon olive oil, two teaspoons of milk, and a sprinkle of crushed red pepper (optional), and mash with a potato masher or whiz in a food processor until it becomes a paste.

for the toppings

5. While the garlic is baking (or after, if you're bad at multitasking like I am), caramelize the onions. I do this by heating a few teaspoons of oil over medium-low heat in a large cast-iron skillet or saucepan, and spreading the onions in a single layer evenly across the pan. Stir until onions are evenly coated with oil, then let the onions sizzle gently in the pan for at least 30 minutes and up to 45-50, stirring no more than once every 5-10 minutes. Once onions are very soft, jammy, and smell deeply sweet, they're done. In the last five minutes, season with salt and pepper to taste; I also like to drizzle a little bit of balsamic vinegar in the last five minutes to loosen the fond and to add a bit of extra flavor, but you can feel free to use water, chicken stock, or a bit of wine for the same effect. When done, set aside.
6. Heat a bit of oil in a saucepan and sauté the spinach until just wilted, seasoning with salt and pepper as desired, drain any liquid, and set aside.

to bake

7. When the dough is ready, prepare your baking surface by sprinkling it liberally with cornmeal. I used a cast-iron skillet and found it to work wonderfully, though you can also use a baking sheet or, of course, a pizza stone. Preheat your oven to its hottest setting, about 500-550 degrees F. You can preheat the skillet or pizza stone if you like, but I didn't and found my pizza to be just fine.
8. Scrape the dough out of your bowl onto a well-floured surface. It should be quite sticky and soft. Flour the top of the dough, then divide the dough in half and form them into ball shapes by tucking the edges underneath itself. If you're baking these one at a time, cover one ball of dough with a damp towel while you prepare the other.
9. Gently press, shape, and stretch the dough into a flat circle or rectangle however you like (I'm no pizza shaping expert!) Again, I used a 10-inch cast-iron skillet for this, so I shaped the dough into two 10-inch rounds.
10. Brush a small amount of olive oil over the dough, then spread the garlic paste in an even layer across it. Sprinkle desired amount of cheese over that (I like a mixture of mozzarella and provolone if I'm feeling spendy), then your caramelized onions and spinach. I've also added turkey bacon (or you could use regular bacon).
11. Bake at 500 for 10-12 minutes, or until the pizza reaches your desired brownness. Slice and stuff face.

Notes

- *If you're looking for a shorter rise time, double the yeast to $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp and all you need will be 6-8 hours before the dough is ready to bake.*





BACON & MASHED POTATO PIZZA

BAR's bacon & mashed potato white pizza is unapologetic – it's carbs-on-carbs-(on-fat)-on-carbs decadence. Once baked, mashed potatoes turn magical – they become the airiest, lightest puffy clouds of carb, perfect with melty patches of mozzarella and crisp, salty bacon. Underneath all that cheesy starchy indulgence, there's still the nuance of grassy olive oil, roasted garlic, sweet and mellow, pungent Parmesan and fragrant oregano, all simple but lovely things that add just a little bit of liveliness to it all.

Ingredients

for Jim Lahey's no-knead pizza dough

2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
1 tsp kosher salt
½ tsp active dry yeast* (see Notes)

¾ cup plus 1 tbsp water
1 tbsp honey (optional)

for the toppings

6 rashers bacon
2 heads garlic
2 tsp olive oil
½ lb Yukon gold potatoes (1 large or 2-3 small to medium potatoes)

salt and pepper, to taste
2 tbsp heavy cream, creme fraiche, or sour cream
1 tbsp melted butter, or reserved bacon fat

for baking

about 1 tbsp cornmeal or flour (however much is needed to prepare baking surface)
1-2 tsp olive oil for brushing the dough

before topping
2-4 tbsp grated parmesan
1-2 cups shredded mozzarella
½ tsp dried oregano or 2 tsp fresh

Directions

for the dough

1. Combine water and honey (if using) in a small bowl and stir to dissolve. Sprinkle the yeast into the water and stir again. In a large bowl, sift together flour and salt, then add the yeast mixture and stir until it forms a sticky dough. (Lahey's recipe and most incarnations of it simply call for sifting the yeast into the flour, but I just like to make sure it's ready to go.)
2. Cover bowl with plastic and keep at room temperature for approximately 18 hours, or until the dough has more than doubled and surface is covered in tiny bubbles. (See notes below on shortening rise times -- especially if you're like me and have a tendency to forget to do this the night before.)
3. When ready, scrape the dough onto a well-floured surface. It should be quite sticky and soft, with long strands of wet dough. Generously flour the dough and pat it into a loose rectangle, then divide in half and form each piece into two balls by tucking the four corners into the center of the dough. Turn them seam-side down and let them rise for a final hour, covered with a damp cloth.
4. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

for the toppings

5. If you like to cook your bacon in the oven, like I do, place the bacon in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet and place it in the cold oven now, as it preheats. In about 10-15 minutes, or by the time the oven is preheated, the bacon should be cooked. If you prefer cooking on the stovetop, prepare the bacon in a skillet in your preferred method while the oven is preheating. Either way, when the bacon is at your preferred crispness, remove from heat, drain and reserve the bacon fat, and set both aside.
6. Once the oven is hot, slice off the top of your garlic bulbs so that each clove is exposed. Drizzle a bit of olive oil over top, rubbing each clove to make sure the oil is well-distributed. Wrap the bulbs in foil and bake for 30 minutes. When it's done, the garlic should be soft when pressed. Remove from oven and set aside to cool.
7. Next, or while the garlic is roasting, prepare the mashed potatoes. Skin the potatoes and slice into quarters. Place in a medium pot with enough cold water to fully cover the potatoes and a generous helping of salt (at least 1 tbsp), then bring to a boil and cook for about 10-15 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender enough that a fork slides through without resistance.
8. Drain the water, reserving just a bit to thin the potatoes if needed. For lighter, fluffier mashed potatoes, press the potatoes through a potato ricer or food mill into a medium bowl. If you don't have a potato ricer, put the pot back on low heat.

9. then Use a potato masher or a fork to gently mash the potato in the pot, letting steam escape as you mash. Take care not to work the potatoes too much, or they will turn gummy.
10. Add the melted butter or reserved bacon fat, and stir lightly to incorporate. Add the cream and stir again until blended; thin with an additional tablespoon or two of potato water if needed. For topping the pizza, I prefer the mashed potatoes a little drier than I normally prepare them, so that they don't make the pizza soggy. Taste the mashed potatoes and season with salt and pepper as needed.
11. When the dough has risen for another hour and your toppings are ready, prepare your baking surface by sprinkling it liberally with cornmeal. I used a cast-iron skillet and found it to work wonderfully, though you can also use a baking sheet or, of course, a pizza stone. Preheat the oven to 500 degrees F. If you prefer, place the skillet or pizza stone in the oven to preheat it. (I generally don't and find my pizza to be just fine.)

to assemble

12. Press, shape, or stretch the dough into a flat circle or rectangle however you like (I'm no pizza shaping expert!) I find that placing my fists underneath the dough and letting it fall gently over them stretches the dough out nicely. For this amount of dough, a 10" circle will yield a thicker, fluffier crust. If you can get it to 13" or 14", the pizza will be a nice thin crust, which I preferred for these toppings.
13. Take the roasted garlic and press out the cooked cloves. Brush a small amount of olive oil over the dough, then spread the garlic evenly across the dough in small pieces. Sprinkle desired amount of Parmesan and dried or fresh oregano across, then the mozzarella and bacon. Finally, drop tablespoon-sized dollops of the mashed potatoes across the pizza.
14. Bake at 500 for 12-15 minutes, or until the pizza reaches your desired brownness. Slice and stuff face.





SWEET



FIG, ROSE & ALMOND GRANOLA PARFAITS

Yield: one 8-oz jar rose preserves, 3 cups granola

The rose petal granola with almonds instead of walnuts (for no reason other than I like them) and without currants. The black pepper originally gave me pause, but don't be like me and don't be tempted to omit it -- it's the kind of extra touch that makes me marvel at the skill of other bloggers out there, and it brings out the floral notes in the granola in the most surprising, and amazing, way.

Ingredients

for the rose petal preserves

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ oz (about ½ cup, packed) dried culinary rose petals, or 1½ oz (1½ cups, packed) fresh, clean petals
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp rosewater (optional, for a stronger rose flavor)
- ½ tsp fruit pectin (optional)
- 2 cups (7 oz) rolled oats

- ¾ cups (3 oz) sliced or slivered almonds
- ¼ tsp kosher salt
- small pinch ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp dried rose petals, divided
- ¼ cup (½ stick or 2 oz) unsalted butter
- ¼ cup honey
- ¼ tsp rose water
- ⅛ tsp ground cardamom (optional)
- 1 egg white (optional)

to assemble

- Greek yogurt, regular yogurt of your choice, or fromage blanc
- fresh figs

Directions

rose petal preserves

First, pick over the rose petals to remove any leaves and separate the petals to ensure they release the most flavor. If using fresh petals, wash thoroughly.

Combine the sugar, water, and rose petals in a large saucepan over medium heat and stir until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a boil, then cook for 10 minutes.

Add lemon juice and rosewater, if using, and continue to cook for 3-5 more minutes, or until syrup begins to thicken slightly and bubbles form a pink foam on top. (For a syrupy preserve, remove from heat and jar. For a jammier, thicker consistency, add the pectin and continue to cook for 3-4 more minutes.)

Take care not to overcook -- even with the pectin, the consistency will still be somewhat liquid when hot, and will set much more upon cooling. I preferred mine a bit looser since it mixes into the yogurt nicely that way and gives a little room for error in cooking. Either way, pour into sterilized glass containers, seal and let cool completely or chill

to make the granola

Preheat the oven to 300 F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Combine the oats, almonds, salt, pepper, and half of the rose petals in a large mixing bowl.

Heat the butter in a small saucepan over low heat until melted, then stir in the honey until combined. Remove from heat and whisk in the rosewater.

Pour the honey mixture over the oat mixture and stir until oats are well-coated, at least 30 seconds. For a clumpier granola, stir in the egg white. Spread the mixture evenly across the baking sheet.

Bake, stirring once or twice, for about 35 to 40 minutes, or until the granola is toasty and deeply golden. You may want to rotate the pan once to ensure even baking.

Remove from the oven and press down on the granola with a spatula to form more clumps. Let cool completely, sprinkle with the remaining dried rose petals, then store in an airtight container at room temperature.

For the parfaits:

assemble

Greek yogurt, granola, rose petal preserves, and sliced fresh figs in the amount of your choice. Enjoy!

Notes:

- If using dried petals, the resulting preserves will be a bit chewier than with fresh petals.



BACON BUTTERMILK (GREEK YOGURT) PANCAKES

Yield: serves 2 (6 to 8 pancakes)

I've grown up eating savory-sweet food all my life. I thought it was just a quirk of my mother's to add sugar to everything until I looked up Shanghaiese cuisine on Wikipedia a few years ago and found that, evidently, it's a Shanghai thing. But the advent of adding savory to sweet only came upon me recently — mainly in the addition of bacon. I've never looked back since trying it — it's fluffy, pillow-soft but substantial, and it gives your local diner's version a run for its money.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 cup flour | ½ cup Greek yogurt |
| 1 tbsp sugar | ½ cup milk (alternatively, use 1 cup buttermilk and omit the Greek yogurt) |
| 1 tsp baking powder | 1 tsp vanilla extract |
| ½ tsp baking soda | 2 tbsp butter, melted and cooled, plus more for the pan |
| ½ tsp salt | 2 oz bacon (about 3 rashers), roughly chopped |
| 1 large egg (optionally, you can separate the egg for a fluffier pancake, see Notes below) | |

Directions

1. Place bacon in a cold skillet and turn to medium heat. Panfry until crispy and fat is rendered.
2. Drain fat and reserve for pancakes (Did I mention we're going to be cooking these pancakes in bacon fat? Oh yes. Mhmmm.) Set bacon aside to cool.
3. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl and whisk until well-combined.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk egg, yogurt, milk, vanilla extract, and melted butter until well-blended.
5. Add the dry mixture to the wet and mix gently until mostly incorporated. As always, a few lumps are okay and good. Let batter rest for a few minutes.
6. In the meantime, chop the bacon into bite-sized pieces. Heat a skillet over medium-low heat and grease lightly with the bacon grease. When skillet is hot enough that a water droplet will dance when dropped onto the surface, pour about 3 tablespoons of batter onto the skillet. I used a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup scoop (which I filled partially). It has the added benefit of keeping the counter fairly drip-free.
7. Sprinkle the chopped bacon evenly across the pancake. When bubbles form in the batter and leave a brief hole when they pop, flip the pancake and let brown on the other side for about 2-3 more minutes, or until golden-brown, then remove to a plate. I keep the pancakes that are done in the oven on its lowest heat setting, on an oven-safe plate.
8. Repeat until all the batter is gone, and serve with the fixings.

Notes:

- *The batter will be quite thick. If you want it to be pourable, add one or two more tablespoons of milk -- otherwise, simply press the batter with your measuring cup right after pouring into the pan to form a circle shape.*



BROWN BUTTER-OAT PANCAKES

Yield: serves 2 (makes about 6 medium pancakes)

Cloaked in buttery brown sugar caramel, gently spiced, and cradled by carbs, it was Sunday morning perfection — I don't know if I'd ever given thought to caramelized banana goodness in breakfast before then, but I'm now convinced it belongs in any and all breakfasts imaginable. I mean, the extra sauce from the caramelized bananas is its own pancake syrup — it was meant to be.

Ingredients

for the pancakes

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|---|--------------------|
| 2 tbsp (1 oz) butter, plus more for the pan
(or oil) | ½ tsp baking soda |
| ½ cup old-fashioned oats | ½ tsp salt |
| ½ cup flour | 1 large egg |
| 1 tbsp sugar | ½ cup Greek yogurt |
| 1 tsp baking powder | ½ cup milk |

for the bourbon whip

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ½ cup heavy whipping cream, very cold | 1 tsp confectioners' sugar |
| 2 tsp bourbon | |

for the caramelized bananas

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 firm banana, sliced | ¼ tsp cinnamon |
| 1 tbsp butter | roughly chopped roasted hazelnuts |
| 1 tbsp brown sugar | |

Directions

bourbon whip

Use an electric mixer or stand mixer to beat the cream to soft peaks. (Make sure your cream is as cold as possible, which aids in whipping.)

Lower the speed to medium and trickle in the bourbon, then the powdered sugar.

Increase speed back to medium-high and whip just until firm peaks, taking care not to overbeat. The whipped cream should set more once it rests. Chill in the refrigerator while you make the pancakes.

pancakes

Toast the oats in a skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the oats smell fragrant and nutty and begin to turn darker.

Pour the oats into a blender or food processor and blend on high speed until finely ground, about one minute. (This can be done ahead of time.) Wipe out the skillet and add the butter.

Cook over low heat, swirling constantly, until the butter turns a deep brown and smells nutty, about 2 minutes. Pour into a bowl and set aside. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, oat flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

To the bowl with the brown butter, add the egg, yogurt, and milk, and whisk together until well-combined.

Add the dry mixture to the wet and mix gently until mostly incorporated. As always, a few lumps are okay and good. (If you beat the egg white, add it here and mix just until wisps of egg white are still visible.)

Heat a skillet over medium-low heat and grease lightly with more butter or oil. When skillet is hot enough that a water droplet will dance when dropped onto the surface, pour about 3-4 tablespoons of batter onto the skillet.

When bubbles form in the batter and leave a brief hole when they pop, flip the pancake and let cook on the other side for one or two more minutes, or until golden-brown. Remove to a plate, then repeat until batter is gone.

bananas

Wipe out the skillet to get rid of any pancake bits. Melt one more tablespoon of butter in the skillet over medium heat.

Add the brown sugar and cinnamon and stir just until the sugar dissolves. Add the bananas and hazelnuts and stir to coat, then let cook until caramel is thick and bubbly.

Serve immediately over pancakes, spooning plenty of the extra sauce over top. Garnish with extra hazelnuts and bourbon whip, and enjoy!



NUTELLA ESPRESSO PANCAKES

Yields: serves 2 (about 6 medium pancakes)

I have a problem. It's now been a week and a day of my visit home to my parents. In that time, I've baked three dozen mini matcha shortbread cookies, a dozen almond rosemary shortbread cookies, some topsy-turvy cinnamon rolls, pumpkin cupcakes, and green tea cupcakes. It's gotten to the point where, every time I come into the kitchen, my mother cries, "Not again!" and leaves the room muttering about her waistline. For most of these things, I have a valid defense. We're giving them to friends! But ... I also made these pancakes. And they have no defense whatsoever. They have Nutella, espresso, and chocolate chips, and Nutella on top, and more chocolate chips on top, and also some powdered sugar because, because. There is nothing healthy about them.

Ingredients

1 cup flour	1 large egg
1 tbsp sugar	1 cup milk (you can use buttermilk if you like, or ½ cup yogurt and ½ cup milk)
1 tsp baking powder	2 tbsp butter, melted and cooled, plus more for the pan
½ tsp baking soda	¼ tsp vanilla extract (optional)
½ tsp salt	1 tbsp Nutella, plus more for drizzle
1-2 tbsp espresso, or 1 tbsp instant espresso powder (coffee will work too)	¼ cup chocolate chips for sprinkling on top

Directions

In a medium bowl, sift together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. If using instant espresso powder, sift it into the dry ingredients as well.

In a separate large bowl, beat the egg. Add milk (or buttermilk, or yogurt+milk, whatever you're using), melted butter, vanilla, and Nutella. If using liquid espresso or coffee, add that here as well, and mix until well-blended.

Note: I used a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Greek yogurt and a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk as a buttermilk substitute, but I felt that the other flavors in these pancakes were so strong that the buttermilk might not be necessary.

Fold the dry ingredients into the wet until just incorporated. A few lumps are good. Let batter set for a few minutes.

Heat a griddle or pan over medium heat. Coat griddle surface with oil or butter. When the griddle is hot enough that water droplets dance when dropped onto it, pour two to three tablespoons of batter onto the griddle. I used a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup scoop, which works well and also keeps the counter fairly drip-free.

Sprinkle a few chocolate chips evenly over the uncooked surface of the pancake. When bubbles form in the batter and leave a brief hole when they pop, flip the pancake and let brown on the other side for about 2-3 more minutes, then remove to a plate. I keep the pancakes that are done in the oven at 200 degrees, on an oven-safe plate.

Repeat until batter is gone, then serve with your choice of topping. (I used more Nutella. Like there was ever a real choice.)

Notes

- *These pancakes do have the tendency to be a bit bitter from the coffee.*
- *If you like your coffee black I suspect you won't mind a bit; if you don't, just a bit of Nutella on top will balance out the bitterness, or you can simply omit the espresso altogether and just have chocolatey chocolate pancakes.*



MEYER LEMON RICOTTA PANCAKES, WITH CHAMOMILE WHIPPED CREAM.

serves 2 (yields about 6 medium pancakes)

Lemon ricotta pancakes are as fluffy as their buttermilk counterparts, but the ricotta lends them a creamier, denser texture and flavor, while an extra egg adds a hint of custard to the mix. The “Meyer”-ness of the lemons is at its height when zested, and the extra zest on top is lively, yet sweet. But what truly stole my heart was the chamomile whip — the light floral notes from the tea add an irresistible buoyancy to heavy cream, even without any extra sugar. The perfect start to a long weekend.

Ingredients

for the chamomile whipped cream

½ cup heavy cream

1 bag chamomile tea or 1 tbsp loose

chamomile

1 tsp confectioners' sugar (optional)

for the pancakes

1 cup all-purpose flour (plus a few more tablespoons if ricotta is particularly liquid)

2 tbsp sugar

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

⅛ tsp salt

1 cup ricotta cheese, homemade or

storebought

½ cup milk

2 large eggs, separated

2 tbsp Meyer lemon (or any citrus) juice

1 tbsp Meyer lemon (or any citrus) zest, plus more for topping

butter for the pan

confectioners' sugar for topping

Directions

make ahead

The night before or several hours before, combine the cream and chamomile in a small saucepan over low heat. Just before it simmers, remove from heat and let cool for 15-30 minutes at room temperature.

Remove the teabag or strain the chamomile out through a fine mesh strainer, squeezing the chamomile to extract the most flavor.

Chill the cream in the refrigerator completely. Note that it should be completely cold for the cream to whip -- I did this the night before. Also, if you're making your ricotta at home, do this ahead of time as well.

Right before you're ready to make the pancakes, use an electric mixer or plenty of arm strength to whip the cream to firm peaks, or your desired consistency.

Place in the fridge while you make the pancakes. Optional: Add a teaspoon of confectioners' sugar to the cream after it reaches soft peaks for a hint of sweetness. I just saved it for the topping, but it's up to you.

pancakes

Whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl. In a large bowl, whisk together the ricotta, milk, egg yolks, lemon juice, and lemon zest.

Fold the dry ingredients gently in the wet until just incorporated and small lumps remain. If batter is too liquid, sprinkle a few more tablespoons of flour over the mixture and mix very gently again to incorporate. In a small bowl or cup, whip the egg white with an electric beater (or, again, with plenty of arm strength) until it reaches medium peaks.

Fold the egg white very gently into the pancake batter until only partially incorporated, leaving wisps of egg white visible. Heat a pat of butter in a cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat.

When a drop of water sizzles in the pan, you're ready to cook. Using a $\frac{1}{3}$ -cup measuring cup, drop batter onto the skillet. When bubbles pop on the pancake and leave a momentary hole, flip the pancake to cook the other side. Let cook for 1-2 more minutes, then remove and set aside. Repeat until batter is all gone. Serve with plenty of chamomile whipped cream, lemon zest, and confectioners' sugar.

Notes:

- *Don't omit the confectioners' sugar . I thought a touch of sugar was key to bringing together the floral notes in the whipped cream and the creaminess of the pancakes.*



CORNMEAL PANCAKES WITH BLACKBERRY-GOAT CHEESE SYRUP

Yield: 6-8 pancakes, just enough for two

Fluffy, decadent, soft, and lazy pancakes (after which you're also fluffy, soft, and lazy). This iteration of my go-to brunch meal that has to be one of my absolute favorites thus far. First, the addition of cornmeal gives the pancakes a little extra heartiness. Second, I took a leaf out of Neil and DeDe's Clinton St Baking Company pancake Bible and whipped the egg whites to medium peaks before adding them to the batter. Um, so fluffy. I could not believe the air these things got.

Ingredients

for the blackberry-goat cheese syrup

- 1 cup blackberries
- 3-4 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp Vermont Creamery creamy goat

cheese (you can also use $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp fresh goat cheese or 1 tsp goat cheese crumbles)

for the pancakes

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornmeal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 large egg, separated

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup Greek yogurt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk (any kind; alternatively, you can use 1 cup buttermilk and omit the Greek yogurt)
1 tsp vanilla (optional)
2 tbsp butter, melted, plus more for the pan

Directions

for the blackberry syrup

Combine blackberries and sugar in a small pot over medium heat. Simmer, stirring continuously and mashing the larger berries, for at least 5 minutes, or until sugar has melted, berries have released their juice, and the mixture forms a thick syrup.

When syrup has thickened to where lines remain in the pot when stirred, stir in the goat cheese until dissolved. Remove from heat and set aside. (Note: You can strain the pulp out if you want a smooth syrup -- I ended up using both the pulp and syrup on my pancakes.)

for the pancakes

Whisk together the cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl.

In a separate bowl, whisk together the Greek yogurt, milk, egg yolk, melted butter, and vanilla. Note that you should take care that your other ingredients aren't cold when you mix in the butter, or else it will re-solidify. It can be cool, just not refrigerator-cold. (If you forget and have it solidify -- as has happened to me -- just pop it in the microwave for a few seconds and it should be fine.)

Add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix gently until just incorporated and small lumps remain. In a small bowl or cup, whip the egg white with an electric beater or a very strong arm until it reaches medium peaks.

Fold the egg white very gently into the pancake batter -- it does not have to be fully incorporated. Heat a pat of butter in a cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat.

When a drop of water sizzles in the pan, you're ready to cook. Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measuring cup, drop batter onto the skillet (you may need to spread it a bit with your cup to form a circle).

When bubbles pop on the pancake and leave a momentary hole, flip the pancake to cook the other side. Let cook for 1-2 more minutes, then remove and set aside. Repeat until batter is all gone. Serve with blackberry syrup and butter!



APPLE CIDER CRÈME FRAÎCHE CARAMELS

Yields one 8x8 in pan

The apple cider reduces down to a spicy, aromatic syrup that itself begins to caramelize, then the addition of a good bit of sugar, crème fraîche and butter turns it into a pliable candy that tastes like chewy, melty apple pie. If regular caramels are like sitting in front of the fireplace on a winter evening, swaddled in blankets, these apple cider ones are the joy of kicking up fall leaves in the fading dusk of a fall day, with just a hint of chill but a flush in your cheek.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 4 cups (945 ml) apple cider | 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar |
| ½ tsp ground cinnamon (or more, to taste) | ½ cup (110 grams) packed light brown sugar |
| 2 tsp flaky salt, plus more for sprinkling | ⅓ cup (80 ml) Vermont Creamery crème fraîche |
| 8 tablespoons (115 grams or 1 stick)
unsalted butter, cut into chunks | neutral oil for the knife |

Directions

1. Boil the apple cider in a large pot over high heat until it reduces to a dark, thick syrup, between $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup in volume. It should take about 35 to 40 minutes, and by the end, bubbles will begin to turn shiny, viscous, and pop more slowly.
2. While the apple cider is reducing, line the bottom and sides of an 8-inch straight-sided square metal baking pan with 2 long sheets of crisscrossed parchment. Set aside.
3. Stir the cinnamon and flaky salt together in a small dish, and have the butter, sugars, and crème fraîche measured out and ready to go.
4. When the apple cider has reduced, remove it from the heat and stir in the butter, sugars, and crème fraîche, just until dissolved.
5. Return the pot to medium-high heat with a candy thermometer attached to the side, and let it boil until the thermometer reads 252 degrees, only about 5 minutes. Keep a close eye on it. If you don't have a thermometer, prepare a bowl of very cold water while the caramel is boiling.
6. Cook the caramel until a spoonful dropped into the water becomes firm, chewy, and able to be plied into a ball. You may want to cook the caramel at a lower heat for a little longer, to give yourself time to test the caramel before taking it off the heat.
7. When the caramel is at the right temperature or consistency, immediately remove it from heat, add the cinnamon-salt mixture, and give the caramel several stirs to distribute it evenly.
8. Pour the caramel into the prepared pan. Let it sit at room temperature or in the fridge until cool and firm. At room temperature, it will take about two hours; in the fridge, one should do it.
9. Once caramel is firm, use the parchment paper to transfer the block to a cutting board. Use a well-oiled knife or a pizza wheel, oiling it after each cut, to cut the caramel into 1-by-1-inch squares.
10. It will slice better when cold. Optionally, sprinkle each square with a bit of flaky salt. Wrap each one in a roughly 3x4-inch piece of waxed or parchment paper, twisting the sides to close.

Notes

- If you don't have crème fraîche, just sub in equal parts heavy cream.



PUMPKIN CUPCAKES, HALF-BATCH

Yields 6 regular-sized cupcakes. (frosting will yield just enough for six cupcakes)

The cake is wonderfully moist, but not dense; the crumb is light, but still substantial. And it's just the right balance of spice and pumpkin, in my opinion. Oh, and I can't forget about this maple cream cheese frosting, which is just incredible — it's based on the Smitten Kitchen recipe, with just a bit more confectioners' sugar for extra structure.

Ingredients

for the batter

- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp white sugar
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp Greek yogurt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup canned pumpkin (not pumpkin pie filling)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract (optional)

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup all-purpose flour, slightly heaped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground ginger*
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground cloves*
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground nutmeg*
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt

maple cream heese frosting

- 2 oz ($\frac{1}{4}$ package) Neufchatel cheese or regular cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp butter, room temperature

- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup confectioners' sugar (you may need to adjust depending on resulting thickness of the frosting)
- 1 tsp maple syrup

*Alternatively, simply add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp pumpkin pie spice

Directions

for cupcakes

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and line a 6-cup muffin tin with cupcake liners.

In a large bowl, vigorously whisk the egg and sugar together until creamy. Add vegetable oil, Greek yogurt, pumpkin, and vanilla extract, and whisk again until smooth.

In a separate bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, spices, and salt. Add the flour mixture to the pumpkin mixture and mix until incorporated, taking care not to overmix.

Fill liners to $\frac{2}{3}$ full or less for these. I filled mine about 3 tablespoons of batter each, using a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup measuring cup. You will have a little bit of extra batter left.

Bake for 18 minutes, or when a toothpick inserted comes out clean, and tops spring back when touched.

for frosting

If mixing by hand, whisk together cream cheese and butter first until very smooth.

If you're mixing by hand, it will greatly help if the cream cheese and butter are quite soft beforehand.

Add in the sugar next and whisk vigorously until smooth. Last, add the maple syrup or molasses and whisk again until incorporated. You may need to add a bit more confectioners' sugar after you add the syrup. 1(a).

If you're lucky enough to have an electric mixer or stand mixer, just throw everything into a bowl and beat on high speed until fluffy. Ta-da!



BANANA CUPCAKES WITH NUTELLA SWIRL

Yields 12 cupcakes

No frosting necessary (though the brown butter frosting does sound pretty out-of-control). The cake was pillow-y, moist, and banana-y, but not so dense and cloying as a typical banana bread; I was actually surprised by how soft and chewy the texture was. They were so good that even Bowl #2, enemy of sweets, ate at least half the pan. As good as they were, though, at the time I felt it was a little lackluster just to post a couple of squares of banana cake with no frosting, so I figured I'd make them as cupcakes or as a regular loaf later on, and shelved the idea.

Ingredients

for the cupcakes

½ cup granulated sugar

1 egg

2 tbsp butter, softened*

1 tbsp oil*

½ cup Greek yogurt

1 large or 2 small to medium very ripe bananas (should yield a little less than 1 cup mashed)

1 tsp vanilla extract

1 cup all-purpose unbleached flour

1 tsp baking soda

¼ tsp salt

for swirl

2 tbsp Nutella spread (I think this would be tasty with peanut butter, too!)

1 tsp oil

*If using butter only, use 4 tablespoons of butter; if using oil only, use 3 tablespoons of oil.

Directions

Preheat oven to 350F and line a 12-cup muffin tin with liners. (Note that these have a tendency to cling a bit to the liners, so I don't know whether you want to lightly grease it, or use foil liners.)

Cream together butter, sugar, and egg until fluffy. Add oil, Greek yogurt, mashed banana, and vanilla extract, and whisk again until blended. [If using oil, cream together only the egg and sugar for a minute or so, until airy. Then add oil, Greek yogurt, mashed banana, and vanilla extract, and whisk again until blended. If using butter, cream the butter, egg, and sugar, then the Greek yogurt, mashed banana, and vanilla.]

In a separate bowl, sift flour, baking soda, and salt together. Add dry ingredients to wet and stir gently until incorporated. The batter will be quite thick.

Divide batter evenly between liners. You should have just enough — scraping down the bowl should result in the liners filled about $\frac{2}{3}$ full. (Which is good, because otherwise I'd be licking up so much raw batter.)

For the Nutella swirl, warm about two tablespoons of Nutella with a few drops of oil in the microwave for about 10 seconds. Stir until fluid, then drop small dots of Nutella over each cupcake, three or so each. Very gently run the very tip of a butter knife or a toothpick through each dot in a circle to form swirls. You can also use peanut butter, or omit the swirl entirely.

Bake at 350F for 12-15 minutes, or until tops are golden and spring back when touched, and a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Mine were done at 12 minutes exactly.

Notes

- *The butter version was a bit denser than it should have been because the butter and yogurt were not as warm as I thought they were before I began to cream them together, and thus the mixture had a few lumps and wasn't as aerated and well-blended as I would have liked. Lesson learned — don't get impatient, and be sure to follow the room-temperature rule! Eggs, butter, milk, and yogurt at room temperature when you begin!*





STRAWBERRIES & CREAM MINIATURE CHIFFON CAKE

Yields two mini cakes (serves two)

I had visions of miniature strawberries & cream cakes once before, and each of those seven times the cakes had squished whipped cream everywhere. Using a stabilized whipped cream with a smidge of gelatin, which doesn't affect the flavor at all but adds a strength and structure to the whip to help the layers stay layered, and froze the cakes too and here we are — airy, light, eggy vanilla chiffon, crimson macerated strawberries, with gently sweetened whipped cream to tie all together, dusted with confectioners' sugar

Ingredients

for the cake

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|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2 eggs, carefully separated | 2 tbsp vegetable oil |
| ¼ tsp cream of tartar | ¼ cup milk |
| 7 tbsp sugar, divided | ½ tsp vanilla extract |
| ½ cup plus 1 tbsp (68 g) cake flour | ¼ tsp almond extract (optional) |
| ¼ tsp baking powder | two clean, empty tin cans (one 28-oz and one 14-oz) or one 6-inch round cake tin |
| ⅛ tsp salt | |

for the strawberries

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| ½ pound strawberries, hulled and sliced | 2 tsp cold water |
| 1 tbsp sugar | ½ cup heavy whipping cream, very cold |
| for the stabilized whipped cream | 1-2 tbsp powdered sugar |
| ½ tsp powdered gelatin (I used Knox) | ½ tsp vanilla extract |

Directions

for the cake

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Line the bottom of the tin cans or the cake tin with parchment paper rounds.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the cake flour, 6 tbsp sugar, baking powder and salt. In a separate small bowl, whisk together the yolks, oil, milk, vanilla, and almond extract until pale yellow. Set aside.

Combine egg whites and cream of tartar in a small bowl. Using an electric beater, beat the egg whites on medium-high speed until they reach soft peaks.

With the beater still running, gradually add the one remaining tablespoon of sugar and continue to whip the whites until firm and glossy.

Give the yolk mixture another few whisks to emulsify it, then add it to the cake flour mixture and whisk until just smooth, 20-30 seconds.

Very gently fold the egg whites into the mixture in batches, adding the next batch before the first has been fully incorporated to avoid overmixing. With the last addition, fold until just incorporated.

Pour the batter into the two tin cans, filling each about halfway.

Bake at 325 degrees for 35 minutes, then increase the temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 5-10 more minutes, for a total of 40-45 minutes.

When done, the cake should be dark golden brown on top and should bounce back when pressed. (Note: The smaller tin can might finish baking a few minutes earlier than the large one -- simply remove quickly from the oven and let the larger can finish baking.)

Invert the tins and let the cakes cool upside down for about 30 minutes to an hour.

Remove the cake by running a knife around the tin, angling the knife towards the tin to try and get the full crust on the cake.

for the strawberries

Meanwhile, combine the strawberries and sugar in a bowl and let sit in the refrigerator to macerate for at least 30 minutes. Strawberries will release syrup and turn a brighter red.

When cake is fully cool, torte them into layers and set aside while you prepare the whipped cream.

for the whipped cream

In a small bowl, combine gelatin and cold water and let stand until thick, about 5 minutes.

Microwave in 5-second increments or heat over a water bath until gelatin dissolves. This will only take about 10 seconds total in the microwave.

Remove from heat and let it cool briefly, 2-3 minutes, until just warm but not set.

Pour one tablespoon of room temperature cream into the gelatin mixture, whisking continuously, to temper the gelatin and avoid lumps.

Using an electric mixer on medium speed, beat the cream to soft peaks. Reduce the speed to low, add the powdered sugar and continue to beat until incorporated.

Keeping the mixer on low, add the gelatin in a slow stream to the whipping cream, beating continuously. Return the mixer to high speed and beat until stiff peaks form.

Note that this whipped cream will need to be used within 20 or so minutes of beating -- because it's stabilized, it tends to become more difficult to spread after that.

Frost cake as desired and enjoy immediately, as naked cakes have a tendency to dry out a bit quicker. (I did find that these froze pretty well, frosting and all)

Notes

- Be sure to separate the eggs carefully; even a small amount of yolk in the whites will prevent them from beating up properly.
- Using parchment to line the tin cans will cause the bottom to sink slightly when you invert the cakes to cool.





MINI MATCHA CAKE WITH COCONUT GLAZE

Yields two mini cakes (serves two)

That is, not Funfetti, or Ghirardelli Brownie Mix, or break-and-bake — but actually measuring out leaveners and flour and dry ingredients and wet ingredients and taking care not to overmix. (I'm not counting the time in the 9th grade that I tried to make sugar cookies without measuring cups or spoons, and thought it would be a good idea to substitute baking soda for baking powder 1:1.)

Ingredients

for the cake

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|----------------------------------|---|
| 2 tbsp plus 2 tsp yogurt | ¼ tsp baking powder |
| 3 tbsp soy, almond, or rice milk | pinch (⅛ tsp) baking soda |
| 1 tbsp plus 2 tsp canola oil | ¼ cup granulated sugar |
| a few drops vanilla extract | pinch salt |
| a few drops almond extract | 1 ¼ tsp matcha tea powder (divided into ¼ |
| ½ cup all-purpose flour | tsp, ½ tsp, and ½ tsp) |

for the glaze

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| ½ cup powdered sugar | ⅛ tsp almond extract |
| 2 tbsp coconut milk | |

for the topping

- sliced or slivered almonds (optional)

Directions

for the cake

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line three porcelain ramekins with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together yogurt, milk, vanilla extract, and oil until combined.
3. In a separate bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, sugar, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp of the matcha powder. (Note: To omit the ombre effect, simply add all the matcha powder here into the dry ingredients, mix together the dry and wet ingredients, and divide the batter evenly between the three ramekins, skipping this next step.)
4. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix until incorporated. Pour about a third of the batter into one ramekin (it should be about halfway-filled if you're using 4-ounce ramekins).
5. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp more of the powder to the remaining batter and mix gently again. To avoid over-mixing, I used a spatula to fold the powder in. It takes a little longer, but it's gentler on the batter.
6. When incorporated, pour another third into the second ramekin.
7. Finally, add the remainder of the matcha powder, fold it gently in again, and fill the final ramekin. Bake at 350 for about 20-22 minutes, or until domes have set and bounce back when touched, and a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

for the glaze

8. While the cake is cooling, make the glaze.
9. Whisk together the coconut milk and powdered sugar until smooth, then add the extract and mix again.
10. If the glaze is too thick to pour, add more coconut milk a teaspoon at a time.
11. If too thin, add powdered sugar a tablespoon at a time, until the glaze reaches the consistency that you want.
12. When the cakes are fully cool, level the tops (you may want to leave the top layer intact) and stack, drizzling glaze between each layer and on top. Top with a few almond slices, if desired.



MINI HUMMINGBIRD CAKE WITH COCONUT BUTTERCREAM

Yields two mini cakes (serves two)

Like most cakes I make, this will make just one tiny (about 3-inch) three-layer cake, or four cupcakes. The cake is vegan, but the frosting is not -- for a totally vegan cake, try a whipped coconut cream for frosting instead. But whatever you do, top with plenty of toasted coconut! (For more mini cakes I've made, hop on over here.)

Ingredients

for the cake

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1½ tbsp oil | ¼ tsp cinnamon |
| 2 tbsp sugar | pinch salt |
| ¼ tsp vanilla extract | 2 tbsp mashed banana |
| ½ cup (about 42 grams) flour | ¼ cup crushed pineapple |
| ⅛ tsp baking soda | |

for the buttercream

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ½ stick butter | ½ tsp coconut extract |
| 1 cup confectioners' sugar | 1-2 tsp coconut water or coconut milk, for thinning |

for topping

- ¼ cup shredded coconut, sweetened or unsweetened

Directions

for the cake

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Line three 4-ounce porcelain ramekins with parchment paper.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together the oil, sugar, and vanilla extract.
3. In a small bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt.
4. Fold the dry ingredients into the wet, then gently fold in the mashed banana and crushed pineapple. (You might want to puree the pineapple if you don't want chunks of it in your cake.)
5. Divide the batter between the three ramekins and bake for about 15 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean and the cake bounces back when touched.
6. Let cool briefly, then run a knife around the edges and remove cakes from the ramekins. Let cool completely while you make the frosting and the toasted coconut.

to make the buttercream

7. Use an electric beater to whip the butter until light and fluffy. Add the confectioners' sugar in batches, whipping after each addition, until incorporated.
8. Add the coconut extract and beat again, then add coconut water or coconut milk a few drops at a time until the frosting reaches your desired consistency. (If you don't have either of those, you can boil equal parts shredded coconut and water to make a little bit of DIY coconut-flavored water.)
9. To toast the coconut, simply heat a cast-iron skillet over medium-low heat and add the coconut -- no oil needed. Stir the shreds until lightly brown and fragrant, taking care not to burn. Remove and let cool. Frost as desired, and serve! .

Notes

- For such small scale recipes, the weight of the flour can matter tremendously.
- Try to use a fairly light hand when scooping the $\frac{1}{3}$ cup if you don't have a scale -- for best results, spoon the flour into the measuring cup and level with a knife.



WHITE NECTARINE & LYCHEE COBBLER

Yields one 8x4 loaf pan

A cobbler can mean all sorts of things, from biscuit toppings to pie crusts to crumbles, but for this one I wanted the truest Southern version I could find -- so it was a no-brainer to look to my girl Erika from Southern Souffle. Hers is what I imagine the quintessential cobbler to be, and though I took some liberties with it to adjust to what I had in the pantry, it was perfect -- almost like sponge cake with a slightly crisp, gently caramelized crust, baked right into the fruit so that you don't know where one ends and the other begins. Thank you for never once steering me wrong, friend!

Ingredients

3 cups sliced white nectarines or white peaches (about 3 nectarines)
1 cup peeled, pitted and halved lychees, longans or rambutans (see Notes)
½ vanilla bean, scraped (optional)
1 tbsp brown sugar
2 tsp cornstarch

1 cup (125g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
¾ cup granulated sugar
½ tsp salt
6 tbsp milk
½ cup Greek yogurt
½ tsp vanilla extract

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350. In a medium bowl, toss the nectarines, lychee, vanilla innards, brown sugar, and cornstarch until evenly coated.
2. Divide evenly between four 8-ounce ramekins or miniature cocottes (I used these by Staub). Alternatively, use one 8x4 loaf pan. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, sugar, and salt.
3. Use the bowl from your filling to whisk together the milk, Greek yogurt, and vanilla extract, then fold the milk mixture into the flour mixture until just incorporated. The batter will be quite liquid, like cake batter. Pour the cobbler batter over the filling, letting some of the fruit poke through in spots. Fill the ramekins just shy of the top -- the batter will rise in the oven. Bake at 350 for about 25-30 minutes, or until bubbly and golden brown. Allow to cool for about 10 minutes before serving. Enjoy warm with ice cream.

Notes

- *Lychees, longans and rambutans all differ slightly in taste (I enjoyed this comparison, although I think longans might actually be my personal favorite!) but if you can get any one of them, they will do wonderfully here.*
- *If not, canned lychees can usually be found in most Asian supermarkets regardless of season -- and white peaches or nectarines will be just lovely on their own, too.*
- *Substitutions: you can use 1 cup of self-rising flour in place of the 1 cup all-purpose and 1 tsp baking powder, and if you have buttermilk on hand, feel free to substitute a scant cup in place of the milk and Greek yogurt.*



HONEY-GOAT CHEESE ICE CREAM WITH POACHED PEAR SWIRL

inspired by and based on this ice cream by Carey at Reclaiming Provincial.

Guys! I made ice cream! It. Was. Amazing. Seriously. The goat cheese, paired with the honey, adds a refreshing depth to the full-fat creaminess of an ice cream base that might otherwise verge on heaviness. At the same time, the pear swirl, with its anise, cinnamon, and clove goodness, balances out that bold tanginess with some warm fall flavor, and what's more, it gives the ice cream a little bit of texture without the seized-up iciness that typically comes with frozen fruit.

Ingredients

2 cups heavy cream

1 cup milk (I substituted almond milk with wonderful results)

4 egg yolks

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup honey

3-4 oz fresh or creamy goat cheese (my favorite is Vermont Creamery)

1 poached pear (recipe below)

1 cup poached pear syrup

Directions

1. Slice the pear into quarters, then place the pear and poaching syrup into a small pot and bring to a boil. Let simmer on low heat, uncovered, for 15-20 minutes, or until pear is very soft and syrup has thickened. (If you're poaching it on the same day, simply let it simmer for 15-20 minutes longer than the recipe calls for.)
2. Pour the syrup and pear into a blender or food processor and puree. If you want a smoother syrup, strain the mixture through a fine mesh strainer to remove pulp and use only the resulting syrup. I originally thought I would use just the syrup but loved it with the pear included for a little extra texture. With the pear, this should yield a generous $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of puree.
3. Add the cream, milk, honey, and goat cheese to the same pot and heat over medium heat, stirring until mixture barely begins to bubble on the edges and all ingredients are dissolved. Immediately remove from heat. Let sit, covered, for 20 minutes.
4. Whisk egg yolks together. Temper by whisking the warm cream mixture into the egg, a spoonful at a time, until you've added about half the cream.
5. Pour the warmed egg mixture back into the original saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture coats the back of a spoon. For me, this took about 15 minutes (which can feel a bit long, but it's worth it!) Refrigerate mixture until chilled — ideally overnight.
6. Process in your ice cream maker as per the manufacturer's instructions. When ice cream is finished churning, add a layer to the bottom of a large tin. Add a drizzle of the pear syrup, then lightly swirl in with a chopstick or knife. (Don't worry too much about swirling -- you could just drizzle it and add another layer and the swirl effect will come through just fine.)
7. Add another layer of ice cream and repeat. Continue until all the ice cream is in the tin.

Notes

- I used fresh, not the crumbles, and don't know how it would taste if you opted for the drier type.



BANGKOK PEANUT ICE CREAM

This is a riff on a Jeni's flavor I've been meaning to try for a long time. Her Bangkok Peanut ice cream has fascinated me ever since a friend came back from a Jeni's in Nashville raving about it, and I thought it'd be the perfect place to start with dairy-free ice cream, given that it already contains coconut milk, and all her ice creams are egg-free to begin with. In addition to the cornstarch and corn syrup combination Jeni already uses to fortify her ice cream, I added a tablespoon of bourbon to keep the ice away, as per Ashley's tip to add alcohol, and replaced the cream cheese in her formula with a little extra peanut butter.

Ingredients

3 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (28 oz, or two 14-oz cans) full fat coconut milk
1 tbsp plus 2 tsp cornstarch
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fine sea salt
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar
2 tbsp light corn syrup
2 tbsp honey (or, to make it vegan, agave nectar, maple syrup, or more corn syrup)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup natural peanut butter (if using regular, decrease sugar to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup unsweetened shredded coconut, toasted
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp cayenne pepper (more if you like it hot)
1 tbsp vodka, whiskey or bourbon (optional)
for topping (optional):
chopped peanuts
cilantro
crushed red pepper
extra toasted coconut

Directions

1. In a small bowl, whisk together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the coconut liquid with the cornstarch. Set aside.
2. In a cast-iron pan, toast the coconut shreds over medium-low heat for several minutes or until shreds begin to turn light brown, taking care not to burn. Remove from pan and set aside.
3. Prepare a large ice bath. (Optionally, you can skip the ice bath and simply chill the ice cream mixture for longer; see Step 7 below.) Combine the rest of the coconut milk, salt, sugar, corn syrup, and honey in a saucepan over medium high heat and bring to a rolling boil. Cook, stirring continuously, for about 4 minutes.
4. Remove from the heat and add the cornstarch mixture. Return to medium high heat and continue to simmer for about one minute, until slightly thickened. Remove from heat.
5. Place the peanut butter in a small bowl and slowly whisk a small portion of the hot milk mixture into the peanut butter, until smooth. Add the peanut butter mixture back into the rest of the hot milk mixture, whisking continuously, until incorporated.
6. Finally, add the cayenne pepper and toasted shredded coconut. Pour the ice cream mixture into a gallon Ziploc or a large jar.
7. Add the vodka (or whatever alcohol you're using, if using) then stir, seal and place into ice bath until chilled. Alternatively, skip the ice bath and chill the mixture for several hours or overnight. When ready, churn according to your ice cream maker's instructions.
8. Pack the ice cream into a freezer safe tin, then store in freezer until firm, at least three hours. Serve! I topped it with extra toasted coconut, peanuts, fresh cilantro, and extra red pepper.

Notes

- I topped it with fresh cilantro when serving, which adds a considerable bite -- if you hate cilantro, or if you find it flavorful enough on its own, of course feel free to omit it.



OLIVE OIL ICE CREAM SUNDAES

This olive oil ice cream is inspired by the most magical gelato I had at a friend's birthday dinner at Otto almost two years ago. We got a variety to share, and you could track the progress of the olive oil one by the general commotion and euphoric sounds that went up as it made its way around the table. It's hard to describe what olive oil does to ice cream — even though it has savory associations, it becomes the creamiest, most nuanced flavor you could imagine when frozen up in dairy. It has a rich warmth to it, but just enough of a grassy bite to add a balanced vibrancy.

Ingredients

for the olive oil ice cream

2 cups milk, divided (2% or 1% works well here; see Notes)
4 tsp cornstarch
1 cup heavy cream
½ cup sugar
2 tbsp light corn syrup

¼ tsp salt
6 tbsp of your favorite olive oil, preferably fruitier or grassier with less of a peppery finish (the grassy California Olive Ranch "Rich & Robust" worked particularly well here)
3 tbsp (1½ oz.) cream cheese

for serving

your favorite brownie recipe (I've included a few of mine in the Notes!)

flaky sea salt
extra olive oil for drizzling

Directions

1. Stir together the cornstarch and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the milk in a small bowl, and set aside.
2. In a medium, preferably high-sided pot, whisk together the remaining milk, cream, sugar, syrup, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
3. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 4 minutes, stirring continuously. If the mixture becomes too frothy and threatens to boil over, partially or totally remove from heat for a few seconds until it calms. I found that scooting the pot halfway off the burner and continuing to cook worked well.
4. After 4 minutes, take the cornstarch slurry, give it another quick whisk, then add it to the milk mixture. Bring the mixture back to a boil and cook for about 2 minutes more, stirring continuously again, until thickened. Remove from heat.
5. Place cream cheese in a bowl and pour in a small amount of the hot milk mixture. Whisk vigorously until smooth, or use an immersion blender to get out the lumps.
6. Whisk in the remaining milk mixture, then drizzle in the olive oil, whisking continuously, until well-combined. The olive oil will float on top at first, but it should incorporate smoothly after a good 15-30 seconds of whisking.
7. Pour the mixture into a glass container or a Ziploc bag and place in an ice bath or in the refrigerator until very cold. Once cold, pour mixture into an ice cream maker and process according to manufacturer's instructions.
8. Transfer to a 9x5" loaf pan, then chill in freezer until solid, about 4 hours or overnight. Then serve over your favorite brownies, with some flaky salt and an extra drizzle of olive oil, and enjoy!

Notes

- Since this ice cream depends solely on the olive oil for its flavor, this would be a good time to break out the good stuff, preferably with a strong flavor that tends towards fruity or grassy over peppery.
- Since you're adding quite a bit of fat to the recipe through the olive oil, I found that it was fine to scale down the fat content of the milk and the cream cheese and didn't notice any compromise in taste. I stopped at six tablespoons of olive oil because I didn't want to risk a greasy mouth-feel, but I expect you could up it a few more tablespoons for a stronger olive oil taste!



ASIAN

INSPIRED



BIBIMBAP

Bibimbap is one of my favorites, and the prep is extremely simple (although it may take some time if you're making everything at once and not using leftover veggies). The recipe I have from Bowl #2's mom is just one variation — other versions can have any number of vegetables, including fernbrake, pickled julienned radish, mushrooms ... and basically anything else you like, even any leftovers you have around. From the limited Korean that I've learned from his mom, bibim means mixed, and bap means rice, so literally the dish just means "mixed rice."

Ingredients

2 cups spinach	salt
1 cup bean sprouts	minced garlic
1 cup carrots, julienned	crushed red pepper flakes, or Korean red
1 cup zucchini, julienned	pepper powder (gochugaru) if you have it
½ lb ground meat (generally beef or pork, but you can use chicken or turkey,)	directions
2 tbsp shredded nori	for bibimbap sauce:
2 eggs	¼ cup red pepper paste (gochujang)
3 cups cooked rice	½ tbsp soy sauce
roasted sesame seeds	½ tbsp sugar or honey
sesame oil	1 tbsp sesame oil
soy sauce	1 tsp minced garlic (optional)
black pepper	½ tbsp roasted sesame seeds

Directions

1. Mix ground meat with $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp soy sauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp sesame oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp minced garlic, salt and pepper to taste, a few teaspoons of sugar, and a healthy dash of sesame seeds (probably at least $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp). Put in refrigerator to chill while you prepare everything else. (If using bulgogi meat, use this recipe and give it a little longer to marinate, about an hour and up to overnight.)
2. Combine the ingredients for the bibimbap sauce, above (gochujang, sugar, soy sauce, sesame seeds, and sesame oil) and set aside. You can also do this just before serving.
3. Prep all vegetables. Slice carrots and zucchini into julienne or matchsticks, and wash spinach and beansprouts. If you're diligent, you can do like my mother likes to do and break off the ends of the sprouts. I find that about the most tedious kitchen prep task ever (and one I was entrusted with regularly, growing up) so I refuse on principle.
4. Blanch the spinach and bean sprouts, but sauté the carrots and zucchini. So I like to start by putting a large pot of water on to boil, but while it's heating up, prepare the carrots and zucchini. Carrots: I heat about a tablespoon of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat and sauté carrots briefly (1-2 minutes is all you really need), or until aromatic. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.
5. Zucchini: repeat the same steps. Heat oil in pan, sautée until soft, and then season with salt and pepper. Set aside.
6. Spinach: By then, the water should be boiling. Fill another bowl with very cold water and place next to stove. Blanch spinach by submerging it in the boiling water for about 30 seconds or until spinach is very deep green, then remove and place it in the cold water bath. Start to remove the spinach with a slotted spoon pretty much as soon as it's all submerged. Strain excess moisture from spinach, then add salt and pepper to taste, a few teaspoons of sesame oil, some sesame seeds, and a few teaspoons of minced garlic. Set aside.
7. Soybean sprouts: Using the same pot (the water will be greenish, but don't worry, the sprouts won't be), blanch soybean sprouts, but for a bit longer (about a minute). Again, place in a cold water bath, rinse, and strain. Add salt, pepper, sesame oil, sesame seeds, and crushed red chili pepper flakes or gochugaru. Set aside.
8. Finally, heat a bit more oil in your skillet and sauté the marinated ground meat until browned.
9. Prepare two bowls of rice and top with equal parts carrots, zucchini, spinach, bean sprouts, and ground meat. I shake sesame seeds liberally over all of it, just for fun. Fry two eggs sunny-side up and place one over each. Finally, serve with bibimbap sauce. Just mix together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup gochujang, $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp soy sauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp sugar or honey, 1 tbsp sesame oil, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp roasted sesame seeds. If it's too sticky, add a bit more soy sauce and sesame oil to loosen it up and make it more mixable



BIBIM GUKSU

Bibim means mixed and guksu means noodles, so the dish literally translates to mixed noodles (just like bibimbap translates to mixed rice). This means that this pretty much works with any veggies and sauce mixed with noodles.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|---|
| 8 oz mak guksu (Korean wheat noodles) | taste) |
| 2 cups diced kimchi | $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp toasted sesame seeds |
| 1 tbsp gochujang | 1 small cucumber, sliced into matchsticks |
| 1 tbsp sesame oil | or thin slices |
| 1 tbsp honey, sugar, or agave nectar (to | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried nori shreds |

Directions

Finely chop kimchi. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp gochujang, 1 tbsp sesame oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 tbsp sweetener, and about $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp sesame seeds. Mix vigorously. It's easiest just to mash it all together with your hands. Definitely play around with the amount of seasoning. When you're satisfied, set aside.

Prepare mak guksu according to the package directions (generally, just bringing a pot of water to boil, then adding the noodles and removing when done). These will cook very, very quickly – only 3-4 minutes!

Drain noodles and rinse with cold water. Drain again.

Add kimchi to noodles and, again, mix vigorously with your hands until fully incorporated. Separate portions into bowls and top with cucumber and nori shreds.

PORK BULGOGI (ADAPTED FROM MAANGCHI)

The first time I had pork bulgogi, I thought it was the most ridiculously delicious dish I'd ever tasted, and I thought that that one god-like restaurant must have been the only place in existence that could create such a magnificent mouth-party. Logical. (And thus began a lifelong love affair with Korean food.)

Ingredients

$\frac{1}{2}$ onion, sliced	4 cloves garlic, minced
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup gochujang	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ginger, minced
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar	pinch of black pepper
2 tbsp rice cooking wine	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup pureed pear or apple
1 tbsp soy sauce	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup pureed onion (optional)
1 tbsp sesame oil	1 tsp Korean red chili powder (gochugaru)
1 tbsp sesame seeds	2 tbsp fish sauce (optional)
2-3 green onions, chopped	2 lbs pork butt, neck, or shoulder, thinly sliced

Directions

Combine all the marinade ingredients in a large bowl. Add pork and massage thoroughly, making sure each piece is well-coated. Chill in fridge.

When ready to cook, heat a skillet over medium-high heat with a bit of oil. Place meat in a single layer in the pan, taking care not to overcrowd, and let fry until meat is browned and begins to form a few caramelized bits. Serve over rice or in ssam.



BUDAE JJIGAE (KOREAN "ARMY STEW")

Yield: serves 3-4

If you happen to have a hot pot or fondue pot, this would be amazing right at the table -- otherwise, be sure to enjoy immediately, and keep the soup simmering while you eat for refills. You can add more water (or dashi stock, if you have extra on hand) as the broth boils down, and more ramen as you eat it.

Ingredients

for the dashi stock

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 6 cups water | removed (if you can't find dried anchovies, substitute 3 tbsp fish sauce) |
| 1-2 dried shiitake mushrooms | |
| 6 dried anchovies, head and innards | 1 sheet dried kelp (kombu) |

for sauce

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6 garlic cloves, minced | 1 tsp sesame oil |
| 1 tbsp Korean red pepper paste (gochujang) | 1 tbsp sugar |
| 1-2 tbsp Korean red pepper powder
(gochugaru) (adjust to taste) | 1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine (optional) |
| 1 tbsp soy sauce | generous pinch black pepper (optional) |

for the stew

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cup cabbage, chopped | 1 cup dduk (Korean rice cakes, optional) |
| ½ cup diced onion | 4-6 oz tofu, sliced (½ package, optional) |
| ½ cup chopped kimchi, well-fermented | ¼ cup baked beans (optional) |
| 2 scallions, chopped, plus more for garnish | ¼ cup mushrooms, sliced (optional) |
| 2 hot dogs or 2 oz Polish kielbasa, sliced | 1-2 packets ramen |
| 4 oz Spam (⅓ can, or more if you prefer) | slices of white American cheese or |
| ½ lb ground beef | mozzarella, for topping |

Directions

1. If using dduk, place it in a bowl with plenty of cold water and let soak while you prepare everything else.
2. Prepare the stock. Combine 6 cups water, mushrooms, anchovies, and dried kelp in a large 5-6 quart pot, or a hot pot if you have one. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and let simmer for 5 minutes, then remove kelp. If using anchovies, let simmer for another 5 minutes, then remove anchovies.
3. Meanwhile, mix together the sauce ingredients (garlic, gochujang, gochugaru, soy sauce, sugar, rice wine, and pepper) in a small bowl.
4. Place the cabbage, onion, kimchi, scallions, and sliced meat into the simmering broth, then place the ground beef in the center. If using, also add the dduk, sliced tofu, beans, and mushrooms. Pour the sauce over top. Reduce heat to medium and let simmer for 10 minutes, or until ground beef is cooked. Stir the ground beef to break it up into smaller pieces. You can leave the other ingredients in a ring around the beef for presentation, or just mix it all up.
5. Add the ramen to the center of the broth and cook for 2-3 minutes more, until noodles are soft. Top with American cheese or mozzarella if desired, and enjoy immediately!





CHAMCHI KIMBAP

Kimbap differs from sushi in a couple of ways. Instead of vinegar and sugar, the rice is generally seasoned with sesame oil and a bit of salt. The filling also consists of more distinctively Korean ingredients – perilla leaves, bulgogi, blanched spinach.

Most iterations of tuna kimbap are a tad more complex than this one, with the aforementioned plus egg omelette, pickled vegetables, crab stick, and more. But, true to Bowl #2's hassle-free tastes, he swore his favorite had only two things inside the rice and seaweed – canned tuna and a healthy dollop of mayo mixed in

Ingredients

3 cups of cooked short-grain rice (1 ½ cups uncooked rice)
1 tsp sesame oil
¼ tsp salt (or to taste)
10 ounces canned tuna (two 5-ounce cans), drained

⅓ cup mayonnaise
salt and pepper to taste
4-6 sheets of dried nori
2 tbsp water for sealing the sushi rolls
kimchi for serving

Directions

1. Place rice in a shallow bowl. Drizzle sesame oil and sprinkle the salt over it and mix to evenly distribute. If the rice is freshly made, cover with a damp towel and let it cool to room temperature.
2. Next, drain the canned tuna. Combine tuna and mayo in a small bowl, mixing until the mayo is well-incorporated. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Prepare your seaweed, rice, and tuna filling in one place, along with your two tablespoons of water in a small dipping bowl. Place a piece of nori on the sushi mat (if using -- see Notes below if you don't have one).
4. Next, place about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of rice over the lower two-thirds of the nori. Wet your fingers with water. Using your fingertips, gently flatten the rice to form a rectangle, leaving a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch border at the bottom and 2-3 inches at the top.
5. Place about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the tuna filling in a stripe across the center of the rice. (Optional: You can spread some additional mayo in a thin stripe under or above the tuna, as well.) Wet one finger in the water and use it to dampen the edge of the nori sheet furthest away from you, to help seal the roll.
6. Either using the mat for assistance or just the nori sheet, lift the edge of the sheet closest to you up over the filling, squeezing gently as you go. Continue rolling and squeezing (make sure to squeeze evenly across the entire roll -- it doesn't have to be forceful, just evenly done) until you reach the end of the roll. Press the dampened edge into the roll to seal.
7. I generally like to let the roll sit for a few minutes before cutting because I find it makes the seaweed a little more pliable. Either way, wet a sharp knife (I like to use a serrated one) and cut into pieces of your desired size. Serve with kimchi!

Notes

- *If you don't have a sushi mat, don't worry. This type of "seaweed outside" roll doesn't really need one -- and in fact, the first time I made this I actually didn't use a mat, and I kind of thought it was easier in some ways.*
- *Be gentle and patient with it, roll slowly, and make sure to apply even pressure across the entire roll as you go. You don't have to squeeze forcefully, just gently and evenly, and it should turn out grand.*

JAPCHAE

Yield: serves 6-8

Japchae isn't difficult, but it is fairly time-consuming. And the recipe does make a lot, but it doesn't keep particularly well — the dangmyeon noodles taste their chewy best right after cooking, and though panfrying to reheat instead of microwaving will help preserve the texture, well, that means you have to whip out a frypan to reheat it. At the same time, I wouldn't recommend scaling it down because then the time and effort might not be worth it.

Ingredients

for the bulgogi and marinade

- | | |
|--|--|
| 12-16 oz beef bulgogi meat | 2 tbsp soy sauce |
| 1 pear, crushed or blended (Asian pears are
best, but any will work well) | 2 tbsp brown sugar or other sweetener (I
sometimes use 1 tbsp of honey) |
| 4 cloves of minced garlic | a pinch of ground black pepper |
| 1 tsp minced ginger | 1 tbsp sesame oil |
| 1 green onion, chopped finely | |

*again, if making the marinade for beef bulgogi on its own, see below

for the rest

- | | |
|--|---|
| 3-4 cups spinach | whether it's the right noodle, check the
ingredients (it will be just one, sweet
potato starch) and the directions, which
will likely mention japchae(/jabchai/
jabchae/jobchae, haha). |
| 1½ cup carrots, julienned | 4-5 tbsp soy sauce (to taste) |
| 1 cup onion, sliced | 2 tbsp sesame oil (to taste) |
| 1 cup zucchini, julienned | 4-5 tbsp brown sugar, honey, or other
sweetener (to taste) |
| ½ cup shiitake mushrooms, sliced | toasted sesame seeds |
| ½ cup celery, diced (optional) | |
| salt and pepper, to taste | |
| 1 packet (12 oz) dangmyeon or sweet
potato starch noodles. If you're not sure | |

Directions

1. Marinate the beef bulgogi. First, you'll need to marinate the bulgogi, ideally at least an hour before everything else and up to a day (or weeks to months if you freeze it). Combine the marinade ingredients in a large bowl (pear, garlic, ginger, green onion, soy sauce, sesame oil, sugar, and pepper). Place the meat in the bowl and massage thoroughly, pulling each slice apart to ensure that everything is well-coated. Replace in the fridge or freezer if you're making it for later. Again, if you're making it to have on its own, add sliced onions, carrots, and mushrooms. (You could probably do this even if you were using it for japchae, though I haven't tried it.) Also, for japchae you might consider slicing the bulgogi into smaller pieces so that it mixes better with the noodles.
2. Prepare the spinach. Blanch the spinach by submerging in boiling water until a deep green (very briefly), then remove and place in a ice-water bath. Save the pot of water for the dangmyeon noodles. Season the spinach lightly with salt, pepper, sesame oil, and garlic. Set aside.
3. Prepare each of the other vegetables (carrots, onion, zucchini, mushrooms, and celery if using). For each, heat about a tablespoon or less of oil over high heat, then add the vegetables, season, and stir constantly until evenly cooked. If you're short on time, you should be fine stirfrying them all together, but sautéing each separately will ensure that you get each to the right done-ness. Set each aside. (Optional: For more flavor, you can add sugar, soy sauce, and sesame oil to each of the ingredients.)
4. Prepare the beef bulgogi. Heat about a tablespoon of oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Place the bulgogi slices in a single layer in the skillet and let sizzle until browned, cooked through, and bits are caramelized. I like to wait until the marinade is mostly cooked into the meat and is beginning to create sticky burnt bits in the pan. I think a tiny bit of burnt-ness here and there is okay in bulgogi, because it's tasty :) I'm sure all Asian mothers of a certain age would severely object here. When done, set aside.



(Note that you may have to panfry in batches so as not to overcrowd the pan.)

5. Prepare the dangmyeon noodles. Now comes the trickiest part (which wasn't that tricky after all!) Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Submerge dangmyeon noodles completely when the water boils — they should melt into the water fairly fast. Let cook for only about 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. When the noodles taste almost done but still a bit too chewy, remove and rinse immediately in cold water. Drain. Add a teaspoon or two of sesame oil to coat the noodles and prevent from sticking.
6. Mix it all together. For the final step, there's a few things you can do here. If you don't have a large wok, you can heat 1 tbsp of regular oil in a skillet, then panfry the dangmyeon noodles with 3-4 tbsp soy sauce, 2-3 tbsp of brown sugar, 1 tbsp of sesame oil, and sesame seeds. (These measurements are all to taste — you may need more or less depending on what you prefer. Just taste the noodles as you add seasoning bit by bit, to avoid over-seasoning.) Then you can simple combine it with the vegetables and beef in a large bowl and serve. If you do have a wok, then heat a bit of oil in the wok, then just add literally everything back into the wok and stirfry while adding the soy sauce, brown sugar, sesame oil, and sesame seeds. Let cook until the sauce is absorbed into the noodles, and serve with a healthy shake of sesame seeds on top.

Note

- To reheat, panfry until hot, which better preserves the springy texture of the noodles than microwaving.





KABOCHA, CRÈME FRAÎCHE & SAGE PAPPARDELL

Yield: serves 3-4.

This season I've been trying my hand at different squashes than pumpkin, as much as I love my old standby. This recipe uses kabocha, an Asian variety of winter squash that's almost unfairly sweet -- I loved it. But you should feel free to use whatever puree you have on hand, from a good old can of Libby's to butternut, acorn squash, or delicata

Ingredients

for the pappardelle

2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour (or "oo" flour, if you prefer or if you can get it)

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt, plus more for boiling the water
10 egg yolks
extra flour, for dusting

for the sauce

2 tbsp butter
7-8 sage leaves (a small handful)
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cup kabocha puree (see Notes below)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup creme fraîche
pinch nutmeg

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp cinnamon
about $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ cup reserved pasta water, for thinning
salt and pepper to taste
2-3 tbsp chopped walnuts or almonds, for garnish

Directions

1. Combine the flour and salt in a large bowl. Make a well in the center, and add the egg yolks. Stir with a wooden spoon until it comes together into a dough. On a lightly floured surface, knead the dough until smooth and elastic, about 5-10 minutes. Wrap in plastic wrap or place in a Ziploc bag and let rest for 45 minutes to an hour.
2. Cut dough into several pieces. If rolling the pasta by hand, place one portion of the dough on a well-floured surface and roll it out into as large a rectangle as you can manage, then fold the sheet in half or into thirds and roll it out again, and repeat as many times as you're able. This can be tough by hand (though probably tougher for me than it should have been!) so just do it as many times as you can comfortably manage, rolling the pasta sheet as thin as you can each time. If using a pasta machine, see this post for instructions on how to prepare this recipe.
3. To cut the noodles, generously dust the sheet with flour, then roll the sheet up into a log, cinnamon-roll style, and slice using a serrated knife to your desired width. Tajarín is technically a very thin-cut noodle, but I went with wider pappardelle here. Once sliced, unroll the individual noodles and toss generously in flour to make sure it doesn't stick together. Set aside.
4. Melt the butter over medium-low heat in a large saucepan or wok. Add the sage leaves and cook, stirring, until butter browns and sage leaves are crispy (about 2 minutes). Remove the sage leaves and set aside. Add the kabocha, creme fraiche, nutmeg and cinnamon and stir until smooth. Taste and season with salt and pepper to taste. Turn the heat to its lowest setting to keep the sauce warm while the pasta cooks.
5. Bring a large pot of well-salted water to boil, then add the fresh pappardelle. If hand-made, it should take no longer than 1-2 minutes for the pasta to cook. Generally, the pasta is done when the noodles float to the surface.
6. Use a pasta claw or tong to remove the pasta and add it directly to the sauce, letting some of the starchy water come with it. Toss the pasta until well-coated in sauce. If you've turned the heat off, you may want to turn it back to low for this step. Add another ladle or two of the pasta water as needed to loosen the sauce. Garnish with the reserved sage leaves and a handful of chopped walnuts or almonds, if desired. Serve immediately.

Notes

- *To make your own kabocha puree, use a sturdy knife to slice the kabocha in half. Lightly oil the cut sides, then place on a baking sheet and bake at 450 for about 40-50 minutes, or until kabocha is tender. Scoop out the seeds and use a food mill or food processor to puree.*



KOREAN SOY-BRAISED BEEF (JANGJORIM)

It took me a long time to learn this, but consistently (sometimes frustratingly) low heat and a long, long simmering time is key to tender braised beef. Something magical happens after the second hour, I swear. If you're in a rush, this is fine for serving after one hour, but it's incomparably good at two or three and only gets better with time. It also keeps wonderfully in the fridge for at least three to four days (plus the flavor will improve overnight) and will freeze for up to 3 months.

Ingredients

2 lbs flank steak, sliced against the grain into cubes
1 large onion, sliced
3 to 4 Korean green chili peppers, whole for less spicy and sliced for more (see Notes for substitutions)
1 jalapeno, sliced (optional, for extra heat)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup soy sauce

3 to 4 tbsp brown sugar
1½ tbsp coarsely ground black pepper
about 4-6 cups water (or enough to cover the beef)
optional:
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup whole garlic cloves, peeled and smashed (see Notes)
3 to 4 eggs (see Notes)

Directions

1. Place the cubed beef in a 4 or 5-quart Dutch oven or stockpot with the onion, Korean peppers, jalapeno, soy sauce, brown sugar, black pepper, and enough water to fully submerge the meat. Turn the heat to low and cover. Simmer on low heat only for at least two hours, but ideally three or more, or until meat falls apart easily when a fork is inserted. That's it!

Notes

- Many recipes call for parboiling the beef to remove impurities and adding the braising broth later -- I didn't see a huge difference in taste or quality by doing it all at once, so I omitted that step for simplicity's sake.
- Don't worry if the stew seems like it's taking forever to heat up or boil. The less it simmers, the better. If you want to shave a few minutes off the cooking time, you can start by heating it over medium heat for a few minutes, just until the liquid is almost hot but not boiling, then reduce to low heat.
- Korean gochu peppers are generally milder and sweeter than jalapenos. If you can't find them, Anaheim peppers would be a similar substitute; Italian long hot green peppers also work well. Alternatively, you could just use less jalapenos, one sliced and one or two whole. In addition, since it's hard to tell sometimes how spicy peppers will be, I generally start conservatively and add a few more slices of jalapeno or a few more peppers about halfway through cooking if it's too mild.
- On that note, I find that these stews tend to vary in how much seasoning they need each time I make them, so in any case, it might be a good idea to taste the braising liquid (not the beef) about an hour in, or when the meat is fully cooked but still tough. If bland, add more soy sauce and pepper; if too spicy, add a bit of sugar and remove peppers; if too salty, remove some broth and add water.
- Some versions of jangjorim add garlic or kombu for more flavor; you can do that if you like! Finally, you can also add a few eggs near the end, which soak up the stew flavor really nicely. To cook the eggs, add them (unshelled) to the pot about 15-20 minutes before the stew is done. Let simmer for 10 minutes, then remove and tap the shells with a knife or spoon to create cracks (like this post) and return to the broth until ready to serve.



KIMCHI GRILLED CHEESE

Yield: serves 2.

From my perspective, kimchi and cheese are just meant to be together, like a particularly awesome, sassy PB&J. To quote the articles by Serious Eats, it would never occur to me that it might "blow up with pure evil," and it's not even that it "doesn't sound appealing" to me but turns out to be. It just sounds super duper appealing! But I guess I'm just weird like that.

Ingredients

- 4 slices of your favorite bread (I used wheat)
- 2 tbsp butter, softened (or enough to thinly butter one side of each slice)
- 4 slices American cheese (or your favorite meltable cheese -- I think pepperjack,

cheddar, Colby, provolone, etc. would all work well. Also, of course you can add more cheese! I support the right to limitless cheese.)

$\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup kimchi, drained, patted dry, and chopped

Directions

1. Butter one side of each slice of bread, taking care to spread the butter to the very edges. (The very first time I tried to make a grilled cheese, sometime way back in high school, I didn't do this and left a very clean black outline of a piece of toast in our frying pan. I'm not sure my mom ever got it off.) Note: You can also melt the butter directly into the skillet and then fry the bread in it, which is handy especially if you're like me and tend to forget to soften the butter beforehand.
2. Heat a skillet over medium-low heat, then place two slices of bread butter-side down. (If you'd like to go the melted-butter route, add about 1 tbsp of the butter, swirl it until melted, then add the bread.) Next, add one slice of cheese to each slice of bread. Layer kimchi over the cheese, then add a second slice to each.
3. Let the bread fry on the skillet until golden-brown and the cheese begins to melt on top. Depending on your skillet, you may want to lower the heat to low to prevent burning (is there anything as sad as a burned grilled cheese?) Add the uncooked slices of bread, buttered-side up, to complete the sandwiches, then gently flip the sandwiches to their uncooked sides. (If they're not buttered, add the uncooked slices, remove from the pan, add the remaining 1 tbsp of butter to the pan to melt, then add the sandwiches back to the pan, uncooked side down.)
4. Continue to let cook in the pan for a minute or so longer, until the uncooked sides are golden-brown. I like to press down gently on the sandwich to get the cheese to really squish together. Remove and let cool, then slice and serve!

Notes

- *Some people recommend panfrying the kimchi on its own to get it warmed up and add some crispy bits, as well as avoiding sogginess -- I love this if I have a little extra time. If you're feeling really decadent you can pan-fry in butter and then your mind will be really blown.*

POTSTICKERS, THREE WAYS

This recipe makes about twenty-four to thirty-two dumplings, depending on the size. I used a 3.5-inch biscuit cutter for the dumpling rounds and ended up with twenty-four dumplings. Note that each of the filling recipes will make enough to accompany one batch of dough, so feel free to double or triple the dough recipe as needed. If you run out of dough, don't worry. Just pop the filling in the fridge while you whip up another batch.

Ingredients

dumpling dough

2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
½ tsp salt

¾ cup boiling water (in drier conditions, you may need 1-2 Tbsp more)

for a pork or vegetable filling

½ lb (8 oz) ground pork (ground chicken or turkey would also work well here)
1½ cup shredded napa cabbage, regular cabbage, or other leafy vegetable (I have used Brussels sprouts to great effect; kale and darker vegetables would work fantastically, too.)
½ tsp salt if using napa cabbage

½ Tbsp sugar (optional)
1 to 1½ Tbsp soy sauce
½ Tbsp sesame oil
½ Tbsp Shaoxing rice wine
½ Tbsp grated ginger
1 stalk green onion, minced
1-2 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbsp cornstarch

for a seafood filling

½ lb (8 oz) shrimp, peeled, deveined, and diced into small pieces
¼ cup garlic (Chinese) chives, regular chives, or green onions, chopped fine
1 to 1½ Tbsp soy sauce

½ Tbsp sesame oil
½ Tbsp Shaoxing rice wine
½ tsp grated ginger
1-2 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbsp cornstarch

for a tofu and vegetable filling

1½ cup shredded napa cabbage or other leafy vegetable
½ tsp salt if using napa cabbage
6 oz firm tofu (not silken)
2 oz mushrooms, diced (I used 2 large shiitake mushrooms)
1 to ½ Tbsp soy sauce

½ Tbsp sesame oil
½ tsp grated ginger
1 stalk green onion, minced
½ tsp finely minced garlic
1 Tbsp cornstarch

Directions

for the dough

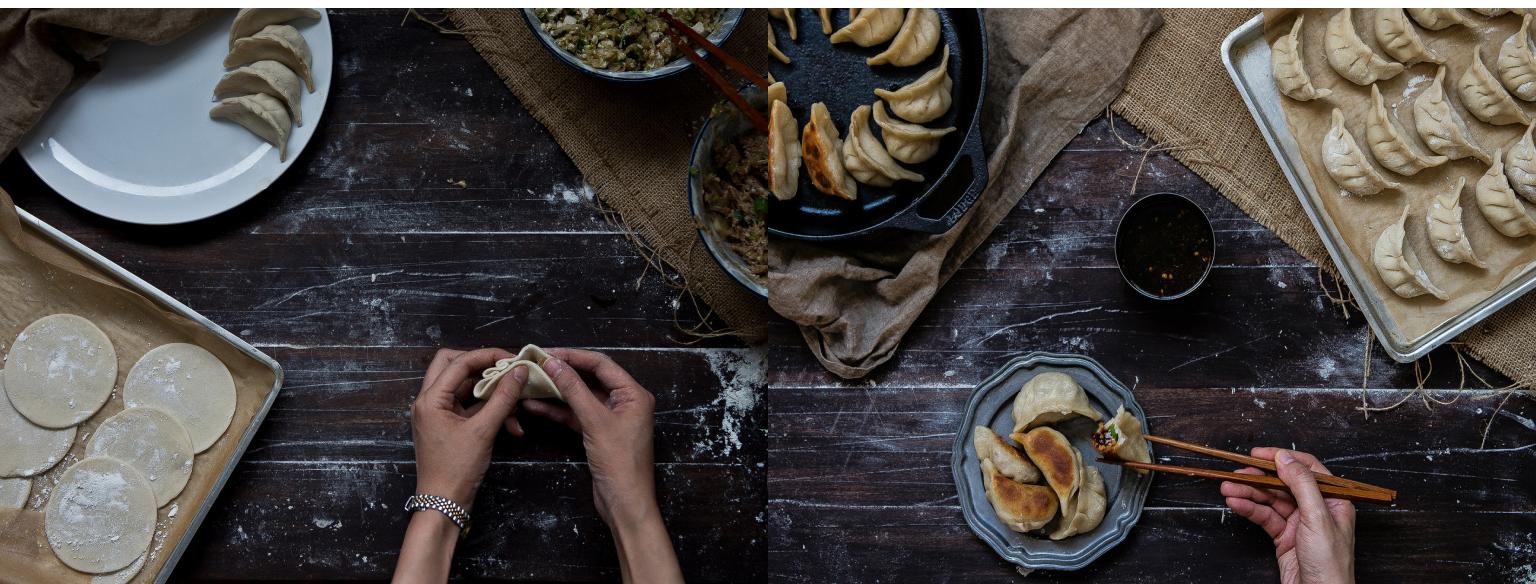
Whisk together the flour and salt in a large bowl. Bring the water to a boil, then remove from heat. To be safe, let the water calm for a few seconds, then pour it in a slow, trickling stream into the bowl of flour, stirring with a wooden spoon as you go.

When all the water has been added, the flour mixture should be somewhat pebbly with many little lumps, and it won't resemble a dough yet. Use your hands to bring the mixture together into one mass. If the dough refuses to hold together, trickle a tablespoon or two more of water over the dough and knead again.

When the dough comes together into one mass, turn it out onto a floured surface and knead for about 2 minutes, or until the ball is elastic and the surface is nearly smooth. Place the dough into a sealed container or plastic bag and let sit at room temperature for at least 15 minutes and up to 2 hours. In a closed container, the moisture will evenly distribute, allowing the dough to relax to a consistency that's easy to work with and roll out. While the dough is resting, make your desired filling.

When you're ready to fold the dumplings, remove the dough from its bag or container. At this point, you can do one of two things—either pinch off a tablespoon of dough and roll each ball out one at a time, filling and folding the dumplings one by one, or roll out the dough all at once in larger portions and use a cookie cutter to cut out rounds. If following the latter, divide the dough into four even pieces, then place all but one piece back into the sealed container to keep it soft while you work.

Roll the first piece out to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thick, then use a biscuit cutter to cut however many rounds you can out of the dough. After cutting, gather up the remaining dough scraps into a ball and replace it in the sealed container to allow it to soften back up. Rolling it too much at once will make the dough tough to work with, but you can certainly reuse those scraps.



Flour each round liberally (or risk every round sticking together and having to do it all over again), and lay them out on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Cover the rounds with a towel while you roll out the rest.

Repeat steps 6 and 7 with the remaining three pieces of dough, then repeat the same steps with the leftover scraps of dough as many times as needed. I got about 4 rounds from each fourth of the dough, then about 2 to 3 from each of the remaining scrap balls.

for each of the fillings

The steps are simple. If using napa cabbage, you'll need to sprinkle salt over the rinsed cabbage and let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the cabbage wilts and releases water. (Otherwise, the water is released while cooking and can result in soggy dumplings.) Squeeze and drain the cabbage well, then mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl.

If you're using a vegetable with less water content, skip this step and just mix all the ingredients together.

to assemble the dumplings

1 batch dumpling dough, cut into rounds	2-3 Tbsp water
1 batch desired filling	A large saucepan or wok with lid
1 Tbsp vegetable oil	

4-square-2

Lay out the rounds and the filling. Place about a tablespoon of dough into a round, then gently fold in half. Pleat one side of the fold, or simply seal however you like. Place the finished dumpling on a tray and cover with a towel while you fold the rest.

When you're ready to cook, heat oil in a large wok or saucepan over medium heat until a drop of water sizzles when it hits the pan. Place the dumplings in a single layer in the wok, leaving a little space between each. (If they touch, they'll stick together.) Let sizzle, taking care not to burn, until the bottoms are golden brown and crisp, about 2 to 5 minutes. I like to leave the heat a little lower and let the dumplings cook more slowly, since it doesn't matter if they take a bit longer to brown up, but it's disappointing if they burn!

Once browned to your liking, pour 2 to 3 tablespoons of water into the pan and quickly cover, turning the heat to low. Let steam for 5-10 minutes or until dumplings are cooked through and water has evaporated. Feel free to remove one, leaving the rest covered, and test for doneness.

Serve with your favorite dumpling dipping sauce. I usually use a base of 2-3 Tbsp black (Chinese) vinegar and 2 Tbsp chili-garlic paste, often with a touch of sugar, soy sauce, and sesame oil.





RED-COOKED PORK (HONG SHAO ROU) MINI POT PIES

Yield: four 5-inch pot pies

Red-cooked pork is one of my all-time favorite dishes — it's traditionally made with fat-laced pork belly, pan-fried in a bit of sugar until deliciously caramelized, then slowly braised in soy sauce and magical aromatics until fork-tender and coated in amber syrup.

Ingredients

for the pork

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 lbs boneless pork ribs, cubed
(regular pork ribs will also work; about
6 lb)
enough water to cover the pork
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
6-8 cloves of garlic, sliced into halves

4-5 scallions, sliced into inch-long pieces
5 whole star anise
6 tbsp soy sauce
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Shaoxing rice wine or sake
2-3 tsp cornstarch

for the scallion pie crust

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups (about 313 grams) flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
2 tsp sugar
1 scallion, very finely sliced and patted dry

1 cup (2 sticks) frozen butter
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ice water, plus more in case dough is
dry
2 tbsp ice cold Shaoxing rice wine or sake

for baking (optional)

1 egg
a splash of milk

flaky salt, for sprinkling

Directions

to make the piecrust

Remove the butter from the freezer and let it thaw briefly while you prepare the dry ingredients. Sift together flour, salt and sugar. Sprinkle the scallions over the mixture and mix briefly again to incorporate. Using the coarsest holes on a box grater, grate the frozen butter into the flour, then mix gently with your fingers to incorporate it into the flour until no clumps larger than peas remain. Sprinkle 3 tbsp of the ice water and all of the rice wine evenly over the mixture and stir with a wooden spoon to incorporate. When the mixture holds together when squeezed, it has enough moisture. If not, add more ice water, a tablespoon at a time, until it does. Knead gently a few times to gather it into a dough. Separate into two balls and pat each into a flat disk. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator to chill for at least an hour and up to a day ahead. For longer than a day in advance, freeze the dough.

to make the pork filling

1. Bring a large pot of water to boil and add the pork, making sure that there is enough water in the pot to cover it. Boil for about 5 minutes, skimming off any scum as it forms on top of the water. Drain the pork and rinse to remove any scum, then let cool. If the pork is in strips, slice into 1-inch pieces.
2. In a large wok, combine sugar and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the water over medium-high heat and stir until just dissolved. Continue to heat. The mixture will begin to bubble after a few minutes; swirl the mixture without stirring just until it begins to turn pale golden. Add the cubed pork back to the wok and sauté it with the caramelized sugar for about 4-5 minutes, or until pork is nicely browned.
3. Add the garlic, scallions, star anise, soy sauce, and rice wine to the wok, then add just enough water to barely cover the pork. Stir, then cover the wok and simmer over low heat for about 45 minutes to an hour, or until the pork is tender. The liquid shouldn't simmer down too much, but if the pot looks like it's starting to boil dry, add enough water to cover the pork again. (Note: If you want to divide the labor between two days, you can store the pork overnight at this point. Letting it hang out in the braising liquid for an extended period of time only improves the flavor. Also, when I did this, I diced the pork into smaller pieces before reducing in the next step.)
4. Once the pork is tender, remove the cover and turn the heat back to medium-high. Remove about 2 tbsp of the braising liquid and whisk the cornstarch into the liquid in a small bowl until incorporated. Set aside. Simmer until the sauce reduces to a thick and glossy consistency. For me, this takes about 10-15 minutes, depending on the amount of liquid. When the sauce has reduced significantly, add the cornstarch mixture back to the pork and stir to incorporate. When sauce is thick and viscous, turn off the heat and set the pork aside to cool. (Note: The cornstarch is included here to avoid a soggy

pie crust. If you're looking to serve the pork as its own dish, feel free to omit.)

to assemble

5. Remove the star anise and garlic from the pork filling. Dice some of the larger pork pieces into smaller pieces or shred using a fork. If you used ribs with the bone in, remove the bone. (Note: This is a good time to freeze the filling, if needed.) Preheat your oven to 400 degrees.
6. Remove the pie dough from the fridge and let thaw for a few minutes. Place a portion of dough between two lightly floured sheets of parchment paper and roll it out to about $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch thickness. Remove the top sheet of parchment and cut into generous circles for the base of your pies, aiming to size the circles so that there is generous overhang on the edges once placed into the molds. Using the parchment paper, transfer the pie circles to the molds (turning the paper upside down and peeling the circle off works well for me). Repeat this step as necessary until all your molds are lined. Chill the other pie dough and assembled pie crusts while you work with the portion you have.
7. Spoon in a generous helping of the pork mixture. For 5-inch pie pans, this was about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup. Roll out your remaining pie dough and top the pies with smaller pie circles (about the same diameter as the mold). Fold the overhang from the bottom crust over the pie "lid" and crimp to seal. Use a fork to prick holes in the top. Optionally, you can beat an egg with a splash of water or milk and brush the pie crusts with egg wash, and/or sprinkle the crusts with a bit of flaky sea salt.
8. Finally, bake at 400 degrees until golden brown on top, about 30-40 minutes. Let cool briefly and serve!

Notes

- *This does yield a fairly rich and heavy pie. For a more balanced dish, you can halve the amount of pie crust dough and make one-crust pies, with the crust on top only.*
- *For these pies, I used these 5-inch Norpro miniature pie pans.*
- *Finally, the cornstarch is included here to thicken the sauce and avoid a soggy crust. It's not crucial if you don't have it on hand, and if you plan to make the pork on its own, feel free to omit altogether.*



UDON NOODLES WITH SESAME DIPPING SAUCE (GOMADARE UDON)

Yield: serves 2

This is the simplest of cool, light summer lunches. I served it with a side of spinach blanched in the water used for the udon and some quickly pan-seared tofu -- if weather really won't permit standing at the stove any longer, though, cold tofu would be delicious too.

Ingredients

for the sesame dipping sauce

3 tbsp sesame paste or tahini	1 tsp sake
1 tbsp mirin	1 tsp minced garlic
2 tsp soy sauce or tamari	1/4 tsp grated ginger
2 tsp sugar	2-3 tbsp dashi or water, or as much as needed to thin

to serve

1 brick (8.8 oz) udon, cooked and chilled (or soba buckwheat noodles, for a gluten-free option)	1/4 cup finely sliced green onions shredded nori
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Directions

Mix all the sauce ingredients except for the water together in a small bowl. The resulting mixture should be a thick paste and may be a little grainy. Add the dashi stock or water a tablespoon at a time until the sauce thins to your desired consistency. I found that I preferred it a little thinner so that it coats the noodles more evenly. That's it! Adjust to taste if needed -- a tad more mirin and sugar can correct for bitterness if you find the sesame paste is a bit harsh, and a little more soy sauce will add saltiness, especially if you opt for water instead of dashi to thin. When you're done, serve with cold udon noodles, green onions, and nori, and enjoy!





SHANGHAIANESE LION'S HEAD MEATBALLS

Yield (serves 2)

Shanghainese lion's head meatballs are one of my dad's favorite foods, and the recipe was originally my great-grandmother's, on his side. She raised my father for most of his childhood, so many of his memories of childhood food come from her — savory sautéed Shanghainese can dou, or fava beans, large white steamed buns when they could get their hands on good flour, soup wontons, these lion's head meatballs.

Ingredients

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 lb ground pork | 1 tsp minced ginger |
| 2-3 tbsp sugar | 3 large eggs, beaten (2 if you want firmer meatballs) |
| 1-2 tsp salt | $\frac{1}{4}$ cup green bean starch (if unavailable, cornstarch will work just fine) |
| 1 tbsp shaoxing cooking wine, mirin, or sake | 1 pound baby bok choy, stems trimmed but otherwise intact |
| 2 tbsp soy sauce | |
| 1 tbsp sesame oil | |
| 1 green onion, chopped finely | |

Directions

1. Combine everything but the eggs, starch, and bok choy together in a large bowl and mash vigorously until well-blended. I just use my hands.
2. Add the starch and mix with a fork (I suggest withdrawing the hands-on approach at this point, because the starch makes it quite sticky).
3. Beat the eggs and add them, mixing again to incorporate. The mixture will seem extremely liquid at first -- just continue to mix and the egg will gradually absorb into the pork, leaving a thick porridge-like mixture. If you want rounder and firmer meatballs that you can shape with your hands, use two eggs instead of three
4. Pour about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil into a large wok, or enough to coat the bottom with about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of oil. Turn the heat to medium and give the oil a few minutes to warm up. Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup measuring cup or a large ice cream scoop, drop balls of the pork mixture into the wok in a single layer. Let sizzle in the pan for 2-3 minutes or until browned, then flip and cook the other side. Once the meatball is browned on both sides (it doesn't have to be cooked through), remove with a slotted spoon and set aside. You will likely have to fry in two batches, depending on the size of your pan.
5. Once all the meatballs have been fried, wash and clean the bok choy. Chop off the stems, and line the bottom of a large pot with the leaves. You can sprinkle the bok choy with a bit of salt if you like, though I found the leaves had enough flavor with the juice from the meatballs. Either way, place the meatballs on top of the bok choy and turn the heat to medium-low. Cover and let steam for 30-40 minutes, or until bok choy leaves have wilted and the stems are tender. If the pot begins to spatter too much, turn the heat down to low. When done, serve hot with rice!
6. Notes Use baby or Shanghainese bok choy if you can find it. Naturally, the supermarket was out the one day I went to make these, so I used regular bok choy, which was just fine.