

# Things I Cook

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

These are recipes that I use when I want to cook. I decided to start documenting them.



## Chapter 2

# Entrées

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This chapter will mainly document entrées that I make.

## American Cottage Pie

Time: 2 hours (45 minutes prep, 1 hour and 15 minutes cooking) Serves: 8

### Ingredients

- 1 pound of fresh or frozen green beans
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds ground beef
- about 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons salt for meat, to taste
- Pepper to taste
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons corn starch
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cold water
- 2 pounds mashed potatoes (see [Mashed Potatoes](#) recipe)
- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups cheese, grated

### Hardware

- 2 quart pot to boil vegetables in
- Dutch Oven
- 9x13 casserole dish



**Instructions**

1. If you have not made the mashed potatoes, do that first.
2. Boil or steam 1 pound of green beans to the point where they are just a bit underdone.
3. Remove green beans from heat, drain water.
4. Brown the meat in a dutch oven, adding salt and pepper to taste.
5. Remove the meat and all but two tablespoons of grease from the dutch oven.
6. Add in 2 cups of heavy whipping cream and stir to combine with grease.
7. Leave cream on medium-low heat for about 5 minutes, stirring.
8. Add 8 ounces of sliced mushrooms to cream.
9. Allow mushrooms to become somewhat heated through, about 5 minutes.
10. Dissolve 2 tablespoons of cornstarch in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cold water.
11. Stir cornstarch water into hot cream mixture.
12. Continue stirring until cream has thickened, about 10-15 minutes.
13. When the cream is almost to the desired thickness, add in ground beef and green beans. Stir to combine.
14. Remove cream and meat from heat.
15. Place the cream and meat mixture into the bottom of a 9x13 casserole dish.
16. Place the mashed potatoes in a flat layer on top of the meat.
17. Sprinkle the grated cheese to cover the potatoes.
18. Throw the entire dish in the oven, set to 350F.
19. When the cheese is melted and the rest of the dish is warm, remove and serve.

**Notes**

- Recipe is based on Cyndy Watt's recipe, however growing up we used canned cream of mushroom and green beans. Obviously we did NOT use instant mashed potatoes, as we were not barbarians.
- The core difference between a cottage pie and a shepherd's pie is the use of ground beef instead of ground lamb. This recipe works fine as a shepherd's pie with lamb instead. Be careful not to overcook the

lamb, as it dries out fairly easily.

- I call this American cottage pie as it is covered in cheese, while a ?? is a meat and gravy

layer under mashed potatoes that are crisped slightly, no cheese. This is basically how my mom made it growing up in Texas.

## **Boiled Shrimp**

Time: 20 minutes (5 minutes prep, 15 minutes cooking) Serves: 2-4

### **Ingredients**

- 1-4 pounds whole, large (ideally Gulf) shrimp
- 1 cup Crab Boil Spice Mixture (see [Crab Boil Spice Mixture](#))
- 1-2 cups cocktail sauce (see [Cocktail Sauce](#))

### **Hardware**

- 2 large pots
- Strainer

**Instructions**

1. Place 1 quart of water per pound of shrimp you are making into a large pot.
2. Dump spice mixture into water, and let water come to a hard boil.
3. When the water has good color from the spice, strain the water into another large pot, to remove the seeds and chunky mixture.
4. Let spiced water come to a

hard boil once again.

5. Add shrimp, and let cook for about 4 minutes.
6. Strain shrimp out of water.
7. Enjoy with cocktail sauce.

**Notes**

- While this worked well, Zatarain's is equally as good and much easier to use. I will likely just follow the Zatarain's boil instructions and use their mix.

## Cajun Tourtière

Time: 2 hours (30 minutes prep, 45 minutes cooking, 45 minutes baking)

Serves: 6-8

### Ingredients

- 2 Pounds ground pork
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped onion
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped celery
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped green bell pepper
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped parsley
- 1 Teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  Teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{2}$  Teaspoon cayenne pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$  Teaspoon crushed marjoram leaf
- $\frac{1}{8}$  Teaspoon ground cloves
- $\frac{1}{8}$  Teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 Tablespoons flour
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 1 cup hot water
- 2 pie crusts (see [Pie Crust](#) recipe)
- 1 egg

### Hardware

- Dutch oven
- Pie dish

**Instructions**

1. Saute 2 pounds ground pork,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped onion,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped celery,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped green bell pepper, and 1 clove garlic until pork is browned and vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes in a dutch oven.
2. Stir in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup parsley, 1 teaspoon salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon black pepper,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cayenne pepper,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon marjoram,  $\frac{1}{8}$  Teaspoon ground cloves, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  Teaspoon ground cinnamon.
3. Cover and simmer on low heat for about 30 minutes.
4. Drain excess fat from the dutch oven.
5. Stir flour into the meat mixture.
6. Dissolve 2 beef bouillon cubes into 1 cup hot water.
7. Add beef bouillon into the meat mixture.
8. Bring to medium-high heat, and allow mixture to begin to boil.
9. Allow mixture to boil for 1 minute while stirring constantly.
10. Remove from heat and set aside to cool completely.
11. If you have already made pie crusts, place one in the bottom of a pie pan.
12. Mound cooled meat mixture into the pie pan, and cover with second crust.
13. Seal edges by fluting the crusts together. No need to cut slits into the crust.
14. Brush top crust with egg.
15. Bake at 400F for about 45 minutes, until the crust is golden-brown.

**Notes**

- Based on Mrs. Hazel Gourgues' recipe, from Hahnville (St. Charles Parish), as seen in Acadiana Profile's Cajun Cooking: From the Kitchens of South Louisiana, Part 1, 1990.
  - Main differences are less celery, addition of green bell peppers, removal of mace, addition of cayenne pepper, use of homemade crusts (that's a given).
- While the traiditonal Tourtière is a Quebecois Christmas staple, this version is closer to the Acadian Tourtière. The spices are still very aromatic, however they have a cajun flair.
- Also works well with wild game, duck, chicken, or seafood.

## Cigánypecsenye

Time: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours (10 minutes prep, 45 minutes making fries, 30+ minutes making bacon, 5 minute cooking pork chops) Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- 4 thin pork chops, bone in or out (about 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds)
- 6 cloves garlic, diced
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups oil (vegetable works)
- 4 teaspoons Hungarian spicy paprika
- 2 teaspoon marjoram
- 4 teaspoon ground mustard seed
- 2 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 teaspoon fresh cracked pepper
- 4 servings of French Fries (Recipe to be added someday)
- 4 slices of Szalonna (Hungarian style bacon), very thick cut, with rind
- Additional Hungarian spicy paprika to taste

### Hardware

- Skillet
- Medium mixing bowl

**Instructions**

1. Put the 6 gloves of garlic, 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups oil, 4 teaspoons of paprika, 2 teaspoons marjoram, 4 teaspoons ground mustard seed, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon of pepper into the mixing bowl.
2. Mix thoroughly.
3. Place the pork chops into the bowl, and make sure that there is oil and spices on all sides, and covering the pork chops.
4. Allow the pork chops to soak in the spice-oil while preparing bacon, occasionally spooning spices from the bottom back on top.
5. Take the 4 slices of thick cut szallonna, ensure that they have slits down the non-rind side, about every 1 inch.
6. Place the slices in the skillet at low heat.
7. Carefully raise the heat a small amount (between  $\frac{1}{2}$  and 1 notch) every three minute, while flipping the szallonna.
8. Once the bacon is somewhat crispy, remove and set aside.
9. Cook the pork chops (probably about 2 at a time) for about 2 minute at a side in the fat.
10. Place all pork chops in a dish in the oven, covered, at low heat.
11. Fry the french fries in the fat.
12. Plate the fries, then place a pork chop on each pile.
13. Sprinkle additional paprika to taste over the pork chop.
14. Place a szallonna slice on each pork chop.

**Notes**

- Based partly on a trip to Budapest, partly on this recipe: <http://www.nosalty.hu/recept/egyszeru-ciganypecsenye>, with the following differences:
  - Less oil is used.
  - More paprika is added after cooking.
  - Hard for me to say, as my Hungarian is basically nill.
- FOR NEXT TIME: Try instead of ground mustard seed, cooking the chops without paprika, then spreading mustard and paprika on after cooking. This may be more authentic...
- "Cigánypecsenye" translates to "Gypsy Steak"
- "Szallonna" is just Hungarian for "bacon", however when I



use that word in this recipe I am referring to a particular style of bacon I cannot hardly find in the states. It is still made from the pork belly, but is basically entirely just fat and rind, with none of the bits of meat strips typical in American bacon. I recommend googling "ciganypecsenye bacon" for examples. Regular American bacon can be used instead, made similar to the ?? recipe, but make it less crispy, so it cooks with the pork chop easier.

- The Szallona is cut along an edge to allow it to curl while cooking, and get more crispy edges, please see pictures online for examples.
- Be very careful cooking the mostly-fat bacon, as it can burn very quickly.

- If you manage to use the mostly-fat style szallona, I don't recommend eating the rind, instead eat each little slice off the rind.
- Concerning paprika: Hungarian paprika is (I'm quite convinced now) the best paprika in the world. While you can find it online, it's no substitute for the real thing. If you do not know where to get good paprika, please befriend a Hungarian (all of whom I've met are extraordinarily nice people) and ask them.
- I recommend "spicy" paprika, which is not terribly spicy really, it just means don't use "sweet" paprika, which is also not terribly sweet, they just taste different.

## Quiche

Time: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours (20 minutes prep, 1+ hours baking) Serves: 8

### Ingredients

- 8 eggs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk
- $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. bacon
- 12 ounces frozen broccoli
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pie crust (see [Pie Crust](#) recipe)

### Hardware

- Mixer or mixing bowl and whisk
- Pie dish
- Butter knife
- Sharp knife and spatula to cut and serve

**Instructions**

1. Make the pie crust per the standard recipe. As the dough rests in the fridge, do the following steps.
2. Fry  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. bacon in pan using normal method.
3. Remove bacon from heat and grease.
4. Crumble bacon.
5. Place 1 cup fresh spinach in skillet with olive oil, low-medium heat.
6. Add salt to taste, cook spinach till it's soft.
7. Chop cooked spinach.
8. Place 8 eggs and whisk till they have some air in them.
9. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup milk to eggs, mix in.
10. Add all frozen broccoli, spinach, and bacon crumbs to egg mixture.
11. Finish pie crust and place in pie dish.
12. Place filling in pie crust.
13. Bake at 375 for 50-60 minutes, until eggs are set (shake pan to check setness).
14. When done, poke the pie pan with a butter knife to check final setness.
15. Let cool for 5 minutes, serve.

**Notes**

- Adding other vegetables can be done, such as grilled bell peppers or onion, however more veggies is more moisture, which can make it take longer to set, which browns the crust more. Be wary of adding too many veggies.
  - Might can offset this by thawing the broccoli more, need to test.

## Slow Cooker Pork Carnitas

Time: 6 hours (15 minutes prep, 5 hours inactive cooking, 45 minutes cooking) Serves: 6

### Ingredients

- 1 medium onion, chopped into chunks
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 tablespoon oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon cumin
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 3-4 pound boneless pork butt, cut into 3 inch chunks
- 6 cloves of garlic, cut in halves
- 2 jalapeños, stemmed, quartered, and deseeded
- 1 large orange, cut in half (not peeled)
- 1 cup of lard, split into thirds

### Hardware

- 6 quart slow cooker or similarly sized dutch oven
- Small bowl for mixing spices
- 2 forks (for shredding meat)
- Skillet

**Instructions**

1. Put the onion chunks and cinnamon sticks into the bottom of the slow cooker.
2. In a small bowl, combine 1 tablespoon oregano,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon cumin, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper.
3. Shake all pork chunks in spice mixture.
4. Place the meat and the remaining spices into the slow cooker, on top of the rough onion chunks.
5. Place the 6 garlic cloves and jalapeno chunks on top of the meat chunks.
6. Squeeze the oranges to get most of the juice into the slow cooker.
7. Place the orange halves on top of the whole kit and caboodle.
8. Cook covered on low for 6-7 hours, until tender (to the point where it could be shredded with forks.)
9. Remove pork from juice and vegetables.
10. Strain the vegetables from the juice, saving the juice for frying.
11. Shred the meat with two forks.
12. Place  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of lard into a skillet and heat to medium-high.
13. When the lard is hot, place about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the shredded meat spaced out in the skillet, along with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of the juice from the slow cooker.
14. Allow the meat to become crispy on one side.
15. Serve the first  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the meat while cooking the next batch. Continue this way until all meat is cooked.

**Notes**

- Traditionally served with tortillas, cilantro, and raw onion pieces as a small taco.
- Works well in any taco, nacho, quesadilla, or burrito.
- These are not a traditional carnitas recipe, as the pork is not braised in lard initially, however the flavors, spices, and final result are very close and very good.
- For a more traditional recipe, see Traditional Pork Carnitas. This recipe is designed to be very simple to cook.
- If you do not wish to serve the entirety of the carnitas at once, bag portions of it with the juice from the slow cooking process. Freeze bags of this, then to

cook, allow to thaw, then fry the meat and juice that was frozen with some lard.

- You can use vegetable oil

rather than lard, if you must.

- I tend to by a 7-8 pound roast, cut it in half, and make both this and a ??.

## Slow Cooker Pot Roast

Time: 9 hours (30 minutes prep, 8 hours inactive cooking, 30 minutes active)

Serves: 4-6

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds carrot sticks (or carrots, cut into small pieces)
- 4 pound chuck roast (the fattier the better)
- Salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste
- About 1 cup of flour (for covering the roast)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup oil for pan frying (bacon grease, vegetable oil... it's all good)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup chopped dill
- $\frac{1}{8}$  cup chopped oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter (whole stick)
- 6-8 peperoncinis plus some juice (maybe  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup), destemmed

### Hardware

- Skillet
- Slow cooker
- Cutting board
- Two forks (for shredding)

**Instructions**

1. Place 2 pounds of carrot sticks in slow cooker (this should include just a bit of water, if not, add some water, maybe  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup)
2. Salt, pepper, and garlic powder carrot sticks to taste.
3. Take your roast, add salt, pepper, garlic powder, and flour to every side.
4. Heat up  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup oil in a skillet
5. Sear all sides of the roast in the hot oil for 1-2 minutes each, just to brown the meat.
6. Place seared roast on top of carrots.
7. Place  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter (1 stick) on top of roast
8. Add salt, pepper, garlic powder,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup dill,  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup oregano on top of butter.
9. Chop stems off of pepperoncini.
10. Place pepperoncini around the butter stick, on top of the roast.
11. Add a splash of the pepperoncini juice onto the roast
12. Close slow cooker and cook on low for 7-8 hours. Flip at the halfway-way point (the butter will be melted, don't worry about the pepperoncini falling in the mix, it's all good.)
13. Remove meat from juice when tender, shred with forks.
14. Remove carrots and pepperoncini from juice.
15. Place all juice into a skillet at medium-high heat, cook down a little to remove some of the water from the roast.
16. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup flour and stir into the grease to create a light beef gravy.
17. Chop pepperoncini into bits.
18. Recombine carrots, pepperoncini, shredded roast, and gravy.

**Notes**

- Some people do not like pepperoncini. If so, use a splash of some other acid, such as distilled white vinegar.
- Searing the roast is not strictly necessary, however I do recommend it. Some people tell you to sear a roast to “lock in moisture”, that is nonsense. I sear it for 2 reasons. 1, I like the taste of browned meat, and it's easier to brown it in a skillet than cooking in it's own juice. 2, I like the flour on the outside to just start cooking with the hot oil, it's helps turn all the future-juice into a more gravy-like substance.



- While the addition of fat and pepperoncinis is similar to a “Mississippi Roast”, I refuse to

use packaged dressing mixes. I do like the additional fat, acid, and herb flavors though.



## Chapter 3

# Sides

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This chapter has to do with side dishes.

## Crab Boil Spice Mixture

Time: 5 minutes Serves: 1 pot of boiling seafood (crab, shrimp, or crawfish)

### Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons ground mustard seeds
- 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons ground coriander seeds
- 2 tablespoons whole allspice
- 2 tablespoons dill seeds
- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
- 8 bay leaves

### Hardware

- 1 cup bowl to store spices

**Instructions**

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl.
2. Store in an airtight container in the pantry for short term, or in the freezer for long-term.

**Notes**

- While this was very good, it tasted basically exactly like Zatarain's Crab Boil. Main differences are that right now, this

recipe costs about \$10 to make, whereas Zatarain's is on Amazon, and it costs \$10 for 6 pots worth.

- Zatarain's also already comes in boil bags, which is super nice.

- If you bought spices at bulk, it might be cheaper, but given the trouble of straining or getting tea cloth to boil in, I will likely just buy Zatarain's in the future.

## Collard Greens

Time: 3 hours (30 minutes prep, 2 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours cooking) Serves: 6

### Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$  pound of bacon, about 4 thick cut slices
- $\frac{1}{2}$  sweet onion, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pound tasso ham (see ??tassoHam)), diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 quart chicken broth
- 1 pound collard greens, stems trimmed out
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon black pepper

### Hardware

- Skillet
- 4 Quart stock pot

**Instructions**

1. Cook bacon in skillet, at medium heat until somewhat crispy.
2. Set bacon aside, move bacon fat to stock pot.
3. Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  chopped onion at medium heat and saute for 5-10 minutes, until slightly cooked.
4. Add diced  $\frac{1}{2}$  pound tasso ham and 4 minced cloves garlic. Cook for 2 minutes.
5. Add 1 quart broth, 1 pound of collard greens, 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  table-spoon sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon black pepper.
6. Stir all ingredients together and lower heat to low.
7. Cook at low heat for about 2 hours, until leaves are tender.

**Notes**

- the tasso ham tends to make this pretty spicy, use regular smoked ham instead if you don't want the spice, or want a more traditional flavor.

## Dirty Rice

Time: 2 hours (45 minutes prep, 1 hour 15 minutes cooking) Serves: 8

### Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{4}$  pound chicken gizzards, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 ribs of celery, chopped
- 2 green bell peppers, deseeded and chopped
- 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  pound of chicken livers, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$  pound ground beef
- 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
- 1 beef bouillon cube, dissolved in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup hot water
- 1 tablespoon worcestershire sauce
- Salt, red pepper, and black pepper to taste
- 3 cups steamed white rice (standard steamed white rice recipe)

### Hardware

- Dutch oven



**Instructions**

1. Simmer  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound chicken gizzards in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water for 20 minutes.
2. Remove gizzards and water from dutch oven.
3. Saute chopped onion, celery, and bell peppers in oil until soft, at least 10 minutes.
4. Add liver, gizzards, ground beef, and parsley.
5. Brown meat thoroughly at medium heat.
6. Add beef bouillon liquid and spices. Cover and simmer at low heat for 30 minutes.
7. Remove from heat, add to rice, mix well.

**Notes**

- Based on Mrs. Landen Alexander's recipe, from Brusly (West Baton Rouge Parish), as seen in Acadiana Profile's Cajun Cooking: From the Kitchens of South Louisiana, Part 1, 1990.
  - Main difference is the addition of simmering the gizzards first, in order to soften them up. Additionally, I changed the odd ratio of Holy Trinity from the original recipe.
- Haven't actually tried the gizzard simmering yet, need to cook this again.

## Mashed Potatos

Time: 45 minutes (15 minutes prep, 30 minutes cooking) Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- 3 pounds potatos, peeled and chopped into  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch pieces
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons black pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter, cut into  $\frac{1}{2}$  table-spoon sized pieces
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sour cream

### Hardware

- Large Pot (at least 4 quarts)
- Fork

**Instructions**

1. Start about 3 quarts of water boiling in a large pot.
2. Place potato chunks into water and allow to boil until soft, about 15 minutes.
3. Drain water from potatoes, then return potatoes to pot.
4. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter into potatoes.
5. Add 2 teaspoons salt and 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons black pepper (more or less to taste).
6. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sour cream to potatoes.
7. Mash potatoes with a fork, stirring and mixing in all ingredients at the same time.

**Notes**

- Recipe is based on Cyndy Watt's, who taught me a lot of things about cooking growing up.
- If you refuse to use a fork, a stand mixer, hand mixer, or that silly wavy wire thingy for mashing all work just fine.
- You can leave different amounts of chunks in the final potatoes, per your preference, however for dishes such as [American Cottage Pie](#) I prefer very smooth potatoes.
- These are especially delicious with [Country Gravy](#) or ?? if you'd rather.

## Stovetop Mac and Cheese

Time: 1 hour (15 minutes prep, 45 minutes cooking) Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- 1 pound elbow macaroni (or shells... love me some shells)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon table salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cups milk
- 2 cups cheese, shredded (chedder, colby... as long as it melts)
- 4 slices bacon (optional)
- 16 ounces broccoli (optional)

### Hardware

- Large pan
- Medium sauce pan
- Skillet (optional, for bacon)

**Instructions**

1. If you want to add bacon, cook it per the ?? recipe.
2. Combine about 4 quarts of water, 1 tablespoon olive oil, and 1 teaspoon salt.
3. Bring water to a good boil over High heat.
4. While cooking bacon, cook the 1 pound of macaroni to just before al dente (usually about 5-6 minutes) in the boiling water.
5. As the macaroni is cooking, melt the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup butter at medium-low heat.
6. Sprinkle in all of the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour, and stir to combine.
7. Keep cooking the flour and butter for 4-5 minutes to create a light roux. Do not stop stirring the roux for the entire 5 minutes.
8. Stir  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt and  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon black pepper into the roux.
9. Stir in the about  $\frac{1}{5}$  of the milk.
10. Ensure the milk is well mixed with the roux, and that no clumps remain.
11. Continue to add in and fully combine milk  $\frac{1}{5}$  at a time until it is all combined.
12. Add in cheese, about  $\frac{1}{5}$  at a time, ensuring it is fully melted before adding in the next  $\frac{1}{5}$  of cheese.
13. Drain the macaroni of water.
14. Add cheese sauce to the macaroni.
15. (optional steps): Steam the broccoli and stir in with the cheese.
16. (optional step) Chop the bacon into small pieces and stir in with the cheese.

**Notes**

- Based on the Genius Kitchen recipe: <http://www.geniuskitchen.com/recipe/easy-stove-top-macaroni-cheese-60350>
  - Main differences are more detail in making the roux.
  - Addition of bacon and broccoli.
- I usually either use cheddar or colby jack, both are delicious.
- For noodles I actually prefer shells to traditional elbows. I find the cheese gets stuck inside the shells, and you get little cheesy pockets.
- I don't always add bacon or broccoli, but sometimes it's nice.
- You can add 1 pound of browned ground beef with broccoli to get something akin to an entree, if you prefer.



## Chapter 4

# Sauces and Stuffings

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This chapter has to do with sauces and stuffings.

## Alfredo Sauce

Time: 20 minutes (5 minute prep, 15 minutes cooking) Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- 1 pound Peeled shrimp or chicken breast
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Garlic powder
- Butter or olive oil to saute
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter
- 2 cup heavy whipping cream (higher fat content is better)
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed or minced
- 3 cups fresh-grated parmigiano reggiano
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fresh chopped oregano, parsley, or marjoram

### Hardware

- Skillet



**Instructions**

1. Add salt, pepper, and garlic powder to 1 pound shrimp or chicken
2. Saute shrimp in butter. Use olive oil for chicken.
3. Set aside protein.
4. In a skillet or saucepan, melt  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter at medium-low heat.
5. Add 2 cups heavy cream, and simmer for 5 minutes while stirring.
6. Add 3 cloves minced garlic to sauce, stir briefly.
7. Add 3 cups grated cheese, stir cheese into sauce until the mixture is smooth.
8. Mix in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup oregano (or other green).
9. Serve over protein source, usually on pasta (fettucini)

**Notes**

- I tend to use really good heavy cream and actual parmigiano reggiano, as opposed to the faux American Parmasean Cheese. The taste of the sauce really benefits from good ingredients.

## Cocktail Sauce

Time: 2 minutes Serves: 2 people

### Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ketchup
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon horseradish

### Hardware

- Storage container

**Instructions**

1. Add ketchup to a bowl
2. Add horseradish
3. Stir to combine

**Notes**

- I got my original version of this recipe from Damon Small.
- Taste and vary the horseradish. Sometimes I also add hot sauce to make it spicier. Adjust to tastes.

## Country Gravy

Time: 20 minutes cooking Serves: 4

### Ingredients

- Some sort of meat, usually ground sausage.
- 3 tablespoons meat drippings (ou'll get this from the meat)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup all purpose flour
- 2 cups milk
- salt and pepper to taste

### Hardware

- Skillet
- Spoon or whisk

**Instructions**

1. Cook a meat of some sort in a skillet.
2. Set aside the meat.
3. Throw out all but 3 tablespoons of the drippings.
4. Add in the  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of flour, and cook it like a roux. You want the flour cooked into the fat just a little, but not as dark as a cajun roux.
5. Once the flour and fats are cooked together, slowly add in the milk, about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup at a time. Make sure the milk is fully incorporated, hot, and begins to thicken before adding in another  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup. This usually takes 3-5 minutes each.
6. Once all of the milk is incorporated and has thickened a little,

remove from heat.

7. Continue to stir while gravy cools. It will thicken a little more while cooling down.

**Notes**

- Amounts of flour and fats are rough counts, based on cooking with my mom growing up. She never really measured, just eye balled it. You get a feel for the right amounts after enough gravies.
- You can easily stir sausage back into the final gravy to get a sausage gravy.
- This can be made with most any meat drippings. I made it with brisket drippings once and it tasted like liquid brisket. Highly recommend trying it.



# Chapter 5

## Breads

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This chapter has to do with breads.

## White Bread

Time: 3 hours (30 minutes prep, 1+ hours inactive rising, 25 minutes baking)

Serves: 3 loaves (about 12 people)

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 teaspoons salt
- About  $6 \frac{1}{2}$  cups bread flour (2 for starter, 3 for dough,  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  for kneading)
- 2 cups warm water (115F)
- 2 tablespoons yeast
- Extra oil for greasing bread pans

### Hardware

- Small bowl
- Large mixing bowl
- Silicon spatula
- Tea towel
- 3 bread pans



**Instructions**

1. Mix 2 tablespoons olive oil, 2 tablespoons honey, and 2 teaspoons salt in a small bowl.
2. Heat water to just above 115F (about 120F or so), then mix with 2 cups of bread flour in a large mixing bowl.
3. Add in olive oil/honey mixture, stir briefly.
4. Add in yeast, stir to combine.
5. Let this mixture sit until bubbly, about 10 minutes.
6. Add in 3 cups of flour and mix until it becomes slightly hard to stir.
7. Turn dough onto a floured surface, sprinkle some flour on top of the dough.
8. Knead the dough, adding in flour fairly often as you do.
9. Knead for about 8 minutes, until the texture is similar to that of an ear lobe.
10. Clean out large mixing bowl, return dough to bowl, cover with a moist tea towel.
11. Let dough sit at room temperature about 45 minutes, until doubled in size.
12. Punch down dough in bowl, then turn out into lightly floured surface.
13. Separate dough into 3 equal sized pieces.
14. Lightly oil each pan, then place a piece of dough into each one.
15. Cover the pans and let rise, about 20-30 minutes, until the pan is mostly full.
16. Place each pan in the oven and bake for about 25 minutes, until golden brown on top.

**Notes**

- Based on this recipe: <http://www.instructables.com/id/How-To-Make-Bread-without-a-bread-machine/>
  - Main difference is olive oil instead of vegetable oil and honey rather than sugar.
- The first time I made this I used cooking spray rather than oil on the pans, it worked fine.
- I only have one bread pan, so I put  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the dough into that, and the other  $\frac{2}{3}$  as a larger piece into a shallow pie pan, made for a large roundish loaf.



# Chapter 6

# Desserts

## Contents

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This chapter covers desserts.

## Buttermilk Pie

Time: 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours (30 minutes prep, 1 hours baking) Serves: 8

### Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter, softened (for creaming)
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 pie crust (see [Pie Crust](#) recipe)

### Hardware

- Pie pan
- Mixing bowl
- Whisk/Paddle
- Silicone spatula
- Small bowl

**Instructions**

1. Make a pie crust, following the standard recipe. Once you get to the 30 minutes resting in the fridge, begin making the custard filling for the buttermilk pie.
2. Preheat oven to 325F.
3. Beat 3 eggs until frothy.
4. Add 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups sugar, 3 tablespoons flour, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup softened butter.
5. Mix immediately upon adding butter until smooth.
6. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.
7. Combine 1 cup buttermilk, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon nutmeg in a small bowl.
8. Add buttermilk mixture to egg mixture and stir to combine.
9. Pour mixture into pie crust.
10. Bake for 45-70 minutes, until center is fairly firm.

**Notes**

- This is Cyndy Watt's recipe, just like she made it when I was growing up.
- You can make 2 pies with this same amount in more shallow pie-pans. This reduces the cook time.
- You may need to cover the edge of the pie crust during baking, especially if it takes more than 50 minutes or so to set. I use pieces of aluminum foil to cover the crust.
- I'm still experimenting with heat and time levels for the standard depth of pie. I was making 2 shallow pies for years due to my pie pans.

## Pie Crust

Time: 1 hour (30 minutes prep, 30 minutes inactive) Serves: 1 pie crust

### Ingredients

- 5 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons lard (or shortening, if you must)
- 6 ounces all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon table salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ice water
- Additional flour for rolling dough

### Hardware

- Medium mixing bowl
- Small bowl
- Rolling pin
- Quart-sized ziploc bag

**Instructions**

1. Chop butter into small pieces (maybe  $\frac{1}{6}$  tablespoon squares, about as big as 2-3 peas combined).
2. Place butter on small plate in the freezer while working on lard.
3. Cut lard into similar sized pieces, store on butter plate in the freezer.
4. Sift flour and salt into mixing bowl.
5. Run hands under cold water to drop temperature while working on the fats.
6. Drop butter parts into dry-mix (placing lard back into freezer immediately). Using fingers (or forks or pastry wire thingies, if you insist) start crushing butter into the dry mix.
7. Eventually you'll have the butter in tiny parts and flakes throughout the dry mix.
8. Add lard pieces to the mixture, and crush it into the flour mix in the same way as the butter.
9. Take small bowl of ice-cold water, use your hand to scoop a small amount, sprinkle it around the dry-mix.
10. Use your fingers to mix the dry-mix around and soak in the small amount of water. Continue doing this until the pie dough holds together, but is not super sticky.
11. Once the dough holds together, roll it all into a ball, then flatten the ball slightly with your palm.
12. Add a small amount of flour on both sides of the dough, then store in ziploc bag.
13. Place bag in fridge for 30 minutes to rest and cool down.
14. Remove dough from fridge, add small amount of flour on both sides.
15. Add flour to flat surface or tea towel for rolling out. Flour rolling pin.
16. Set dough down, and flatten it out. The crust should end up less than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick, and approximately round in shape. It needs to be big enough to cover the entire bottom and sides of a pie pan.
17. Move pie crust from flat surface to pie pan for baking the pie.

**Notes**

- Based on Alton Brown's recipe: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/pie-crust-recipe-1915025>

- Main differences are that I mix it all by hand (no need for a food processor) and I do not blind-bake the crust (though you could, should be fine.)
- Additionally I currently use a different ratio of butter to lard (this changes occasionally, as I try new ratios.)
- You can make larger recipes for cobblers, top crusts, even dumplings. For Chicken and Dumplings, roll the crust to about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick, then cut into rectangles and place in soup.
- The amount of ice water that gets added varies depending on moisture in the air and temperature.
- Working in a cooler kitchen is ideal, as you don't want the fats to melt before baking.
- You don't have to use butter and lard. The amount of butter or lard can also vary. This is my favorite ratio so far.
- Pie crust gets its flaky texture from the fat flakes within the crust melting away during the baking process. While most fats can do another fat's job, in the case of pie crust, you want fats that are solid when the crust is rolled out. Butter, lard, and shortening all work well. Any sort of oil would not really work. No olive oil for your health or whatever. If you want health food, don't eat pie.
- You can pre-bake the crust a bit in the oven, in order to keep it from getting too soggy. This may be required for some pie mixtures, but I usually don't use this recipe.



## Chapter 7

# Barbecue and Other Meats

Smoked and grilled meats deserved their own special chapter apart from Entrées, partly due to their very different preparations, and partly because these are the epitome of good food. "Barbecue is meat, prepared in a very special way." -Rhett & Link



## Chapter 8

# Fermented, Pickled, and Canned

This chapter deals with fermented things, from sourdough starter to kombucha.

## Yogurt

Time: 9 hours (1 hour prep, 8 hours inactive culturing) Serves: 3

### Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon active yogurt
- 32 Ounces milk
- pureed fruit (optional)

### Hardware

- Pan
- 32 ounce jar
- Thermometer
- Cheesecloth

**Instructions**

1. Heat 32 ounces of milk to 180F.
2. Stir milk in jar until it reaches about 150F.
3. Place jar of warm milk in ice bath, and continue stirring until it reaches about 120F.
4. Remove jar from ice bath. Try to keep milk between 110F and 115F.
5. Mix 1 Tablespoon active yogurt into warm milk.
6. Let milk sit at 110F to 115F for 6 to 8 hours.
7. Strain out resulting whey.
8. store yogurt in the fridge with a lid.
9. Sometimes I add pureed fruit with just my bowl of yogurt, leaving the base plain to start a new batch later.

**Notes**

- Keep 1 Tablespoon of your plain yogurt to start your next

batch in a week or so.

- To start off, you can use store-bought yogurt that has bacteria in it (check ingredients) or buy a Yogurt starter.
- I had a really hard time getting a place that was consistently warm enough for the cultures to multiply (above 110F) but cold enough they did not die (below 115F). I finally found that my slow cooker set to warm, with the lid slightly open, with a water bath in it and the milk in the jar in the water bath keeps the perfect temperature.
- Experiment with heat sources on water prior to making this, as once the bacteria is in the milk, you will not want to go above 115F.
- You can strain out more or less whey to change the consistency of the yogurt.
- Whey can have other uses, and is rich in protein.