

Patrick's Cookbook

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2025 Edition - December

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Chapter I

- BASICS

Basic Chicken Thighs (Instant Pot)

Ingredients

Water	2 cups
Better Than Bouillon - Chicken	1 Tbsp.
Chicken thighs	3 lbs
Dried rosemary	2 tsp.
Bay leaf	1

Directions

Remove skin from **thighs** (if bone-in) — Trim excess fat — Prepare **stock** with **Better Than Bouillon**

1. Combine **water** and **Better Than Bouillon** in a measuring cup, stirring to dissolve completely.
2. Place **chicken thighs** in the Instant Pot. Add prepared **stock**, **dried rosemary**, and **bay leaf**.
3. Seal lid and set valve to sealing position. Cook on *high* pressure for *15 minutes*.
4. Allow natural release for *5 minutes*, then carefully quick release remaining pressure.
5. Remove **chicken** and set aside. Strain **cooking liquid** through fine-mesh strainer, discarding solids. Reserve **broth** for other recipes.
6. Use **chicken** as needed - whole, sliced, or shredded.

Equipment Required

- Instant Pot (6-quart or larger)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Fine-mesh strainer
- Large measuring cup or bowl (for stock preparation)
- Storage containers for chicken and broth
- Tongs or slotted spoon
- Cutting board and knife (for trimming)

- If using bone-in **thighs**, arrange with meatier portions toward bottom for even cooking
- *5 minute* natural release prevents vigorous boiling and keeps meat tender
- Strain **broth** while still hot for easier filtering
- For shredding, use two forks while **chicken** is still warm

Mise en Place

- Remove skin from bone-in **thighs** if necessary
- Trim excess fat from **thighs**
- Measure **water** and **Better Than Bouillon**
- Have storage containers ready for finished products

Ingredient Tips

- Both bone-in and boneless **thighs** work with this timing
- Bone-in **thighs** produce more flavorful **broth**
- Skin can be removed before or after cooking - before is easier
- **Better Than Bouillon** concentration is intentionally strong to account for chicken moisture release
- Quality **dried rosemary** makes a noticeable difference

Preparation Tips

- Ensure **Better Than Bouillon** is fully dissolved before adding to pot
- Don't overfill Instant Pot - 3 lbs is appropriate for 6-quart model

Make Ahead & Storage

- Cooked **chicken** keeps refrigerated for *3-4 days*
- Reserved **broth** keeps refrigerated for *4-5 days*
- Both **chicken** and **broth** freeze well for up to *3 months*
- Store **chicken** and **broth** separately for maximum flexibility
- Label containers with date and contents
- Cool to room temperature before refrigerating
- Skim fat from **broth** after refrigeration if desired

Serving Suggestions

- Use whole or sliced for grain bowls and salads
- Shred for tacos, enchiladas, casseroles, and sandwiches
- Dice for soups, fried rice, and pasta dishes
- Use reserved **broth** as soup base or for cooking grains
- **Broth** adds depth to sauces and gravies
- Reheat gently to prevent drying - add splash of reserved **broth** if needed

Basic Rice (Rice Maker)

Ingredients

Long grain white rice	3 cups
Hot water	3 cups
Better Than Bouillon - Chicken	1 Tbsp.
Bay leaf	1
Butter	1/2 Tbsp.

Directions

Wash **rice** thoroughly — Prepare **stock** with **Better Than Bouillon**

1. Wash **rice** thoroughly: Place **rice** in a fine-mesh strainer or bowl. Rinse under cold running water, gently agitating with your fingers, until the water runs clear (typically 3-4 rinses). Drain well.
2. Combine **hot water** and **Better Than Bouillon** in a measuring cup, stirring to dissolve completely.
3. Transfer washed **rice** to rice maker pot. Add prepared **stock** and **bay leaf**.
4. Cook according to rice maker instructions (long grain white rice setting).
5. Once cooking is complete, let rice rest for 5 minutes before opening.
6. Open rice maker, remove **bay leaf**, and gently fluff rice with a fork or rice paddle.
7. Add **butter** and gently fold into rice until evenly distributed. Serve immediately.

Equipment Required

- Rice maker
- Fine-mesh strainer or large bowl
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Large measuring cup or bowl (for stock preparation)
- Rice paddle or fork (for fluffing)

Mise en Place

- Measure **rice**
- Measure **hot water** and **Better Than Bouillon**
- Have **bay leaf** ready
- Have **butter** at room temperature for easier incorporation

Ingredient Tips

- Long-grain white rice works best for this method
- Thorough washing removes excess starch and prevents gummy texture
- **Better Than Bouillon** adds depth without overwhelming the rice
- Quality **butter** makes a noticeable difference in final flavor
- **Bay leaf** should be removed before serving

Preparation Tips

- Ensure **Better Than Bouillon** is fully dissolved before adding to rice maker

- Don't skip the washing step - it's essential for proper texture
- Let rice rest after cooking to allow steam to finish the process
- Fluff rice gently to avoid breaking grains
- Add **butter** while rice is still hot for best incorporation
- If rice seems too wet, let it sit with lid open for a few minutes
- If rice seems too dry, add a tablespoon of hot water and fluff again

Make Ahead & Storage

- Cooked **rice** keeps refrigerated for *3-4 days*
- Reheat gently with a splash of water or broth to restore moisture
- Freeze cooked **rice** for up to *2 months*
- Cool to room temperature before refrigerating
- Store in airtight container
- Label container with date

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as side dish with any protein
- Use as base for grain bowls and stir-fries
- Perfect accompaniment to saucy dishes
- Use leftover rice for fried rice (best with day-old rice)
- Add to soups and casseroles
- Reheat gently with additional broth for extra flavor

Chapter 2

APPETIZERS

Cheesy Sausage Balls •

Ingredients

Ground sausage	16 oz.	Garlic salt	1 tsp.
Cheddar cheese, shredded	16 oz.	Onion flakes	1 tsp.
Italian cheese blend	4 oz.	Parsley flakes	1 tsp.
Bisquick	3 cups		

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F — Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper

1. Using hands, mix all **ingredients** together thoroughly until well combined.
 2. Roll mixture into $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch balls and place 1 inch apart on baking sheet.
 3. Bake for 15 minutes, then turn and continue baking for $8-12$ minutes until cooked through.
 4. Let stand for 5 minutes before eating.
 5. Store refrigerated in a sealed container.
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Deviled Eggs •

Ingredients

Eggs	10	Salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Mayonnaise	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	Sugar	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Dijon mustard	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	Garlic powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
White wine vinegar	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.	Smoked paprika	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Dried dill weed	$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp.		

Directions

Bring **eggs** to room temperature — Prepare ice bath

1. Cook **eggs** in Instant Pot on high pressure for *5 minutes*. Natural release for *4 minutes*, then transfer to ice bath. Peel **eggs**.
2. Slice **eggs** lengthwise and remove yolks to a mixing bowl.
3. Combine **egg yolks, mayonnaise, dijon mustard, white wine vinegar, dried dill weed, salt, sugar, and garlic powder**. Mix until smooth.
4. Transfer filling to a gallon zip bag and snip a small corner off. Pipe filling into **egg whites**.
5. Garnish with **smoked paprika** and serve.

Spam Musubi •

Ingredients

Spam, low salt	1 (12 oz.) can	Nori sheets	4
Soy sauce, low salt	1/4 cup	Kewpie mayonnaise	1/2 cup
Mirin	1/3 cup	Sriracha sauce	1 1/2 Tbsp.
Brown sugar	2 Tbsp.	Toasted sesame oil	1 tsp.
Sake	2 Tbsp.	Neutral oil	2 Tbsp.
Sushi rice, cooked	3 cups	Toasted sesame seeds	1 Tbsp.

Directions

Using a musubi mold and spam slicer will be helpful — Cook rice — Slice Spam into 10-12 even pieces — Cut nori sheets into thirds

1. For the sriracha mayo:
 - (a) Combine and mix **Kewpie mayonnaise**, **Sriracha**, and **sesame oil** in *Small Bowl #1*
 - (b) Refrigerate until needed
2. Heat **oil** in a pan over medium heat. Working in batches if needed, fry **Spam** slices for *2-3 minutes* per side until browned and crispy.
3. In *Small Bowl #2*, whisk together **soy sauce**, **mirin**, **brown sugar**, and **sake**.
4. Add sauce mixture to pan with **Spam** and swirl to coat evenly. Simmer for *5 minutes* until liquid is nearly absorbed.
5. Using a musubi mold, layer ingredients as follows:
 - Place a strip of **nori** on work surface
 - Press **rice** (1/4 cup) into mold on center of **nori**
 - Add 1 piece of glazed **Spam**
 - Top with 1 tsp. sriracha mayo (*Small Bowl #1*) and sprinkle with **furikake** (or **toasted sesame seeds**)
6. Slide mold off musubi and fold **nori** ends up and over to seal, using a drop of water to secure.
7. Serve immediately or wrap individually in plastic wrap. Store in refrigerator for up to *5 days*.

Spinach and Artichoke Dip

Ingredients

Frozen chopped spinach	10 oz.	Parmesan, grated	2 oz.
Artichoke hearts	1 (14 oz.) can	Mozzarella, shredded	1/4 cup
Butter	2 Tbsp.	Salt	1/4 tsp.
Garlic cloves	2	Black pepper	1/4 tsp.
Cream cheese, softened	4 oz.	Red pepper flakes	pinch
Mayonnaise	1/2 cup		

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F — Thaw **spinach** and squeeze dry aggressively; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Drain and rough chop **artichoke hearts**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature — Shred **mozzarella**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* (topping)

1. Melt **butter** in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add squeezed **spinach**, breaking up clumps. Cook for *5-7 minutes*, stirring occasionally, until **spinach** begins to brown and any remaining moisture evaporates.
2. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook for *1 minute* until fragrant. Add chopped **artichoke hearts** (*Medium Bowl #2*) and cook for *2-3 minutes* more. Remove from heat and let cool slightly.
3. In *Large Bowl #1*, combine softened **cream cheese**, **mayonnaise**, **Parmesan**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **salt**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **black pepper**, and a pinch of **red pepper flakes** until smooth.
4. Fold in the cooled **spinach** and **artichoke** mixture until evenly distributed.
5. Transfer to a 1-quart baking dish and top with shredded **mozzarella** (*Small Bowl #2*).
6. Bake for *25-30 minutes* until bubbly and golden brown on top.
7. Let rest for *5-10 minutes* before serving.

Equipment Required

- 1-quart baking dish (ceramic or glass)
- Large skillet or sauté pan
- Large mixing bowl
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Rubber spatula or wooden spoon
- Kitchen towel or cheesecloth (for squeezing spinach)
- Colander (for draining artichokes)

Mise en Place

- Thaw **frozen spinach** overnight in refrigerator or use microwave defrost
- Remove **cream cheese** from refrigerator at least *1 hour* before starting
- Squeeze **spinach** as dry as possible - this is critical for texture
- Drain **artichoke hearts** thoroughly and chop before cooking
- Have all ingredients measured and ready before starting

Ingredient Tips

- Use artichoke hearts packed in water rather than marinated varieties
- Frozen chopped spinach works better than whole leaf for this recipe
- The key to success is aggressively squeezing the **spinach** - wrap in kitchen towel and twist hard
- Full-fat dairy products yield the best texture and flavor
- Freshly grated **Parmesan** provides better flavor than pre-grated

Preparation Tips

- Don't skip the browning step - caramelized **spinach** adds deep, nutty flavor
- Watch for golden bits forming on the **spinach** - that's where the flavor develops
- Let vegetables cool slightly before mixing with dairy to prevent separation
- Rough chop **artichokes** for better texture - avoid fine chopping
- If top browns too quickly during baking, cover loosely with foil

Make Ahead & Storage

- Can be assembled up to *24 hours* in advance and refrigerated
- If made ahead, bring to room temperature for *30 minutes* before baking
- This recipe reheats exceptionally well without separation
- Leftovers can be refrigerated for up to *4 days*
- Reheat in *325°F* oven until warm, about *15-20 minutes*, or microwave and stir

Serving Suggestions

- Serve with toasted baguette slices, pita chips, or crackers
- Fresh vegetables like bell peppers, carrots, and celery make excellent dippers
- For best texture, allow to cool slightly before serving
- Garnish with additional **Parmesan** or fresh cracked pepper if desired
- Pairs well with a crisp white wine, light beer, or sparkling water

Chapter 3

BREADS AND PASTRIES

Flapjacks with Fruit and Nuts

Ingredients

Rolled oats	3 cups	Light brown sugar, packed	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Nuts, chopped	1 cup	Mexican vanilla	1 tsp.
Dried fruit, chopped	1 cup	Ground cinnamon	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Unsalted butter	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	Ground cardamom	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Light corn syrup	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup	Ground nutmeg	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Unsulphured molasses	2 Tbsp.	Fine sea salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F — Grease and line a 9 inch \times 9 inch baking pan with parchment paper (leaving overhang for easy removal) — Toast **nuts** at 350°F for 8-10 minutes until fragrant, cool, rub in towel to remove skins if applicable, then finely chop; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Finely chop **dried fruit**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Place chopped **fruit** (*Small Bowl #2*) in *Small Bowl #3*, cover with warm water, soak 10 minutes, drain thoroughly, and pat dry with paper towels; return to *Small Bowl #2*

1. In *Large Bowl #1*, combine **oats**, chopped **nuts** (*Small Bowl #1*), $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **cinnamon**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **cardamom**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **nutmeg**, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **salt**. Mix well and set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan over medium-low heat, combine $\frac{3}{4}$ cup **butter**, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup **corn syrup**, 2 Tbsp. **molasses**, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **brown sugar**. Stir constantly until **butter** is melted and **sugar** is dissolved, about 3-4 minutes. Do not allow mixture to boil.
3. Remove from heat and stir in 1 tsp. **vanilla**.
4. Pour the **butter** mixture over the **oat** mixture (*Large Bowl #1*) and stir thoroughly until all **oats** are evenly coated and mixture is well combined.
5. Add the drained, chopped **fruit** (*Small Bowl #2*) and fold in gently but thoroughly to distribute evenly throughout.
6. Transfer mixture to prepared baking pan. Press down very firmly and evenly with the back of a spatula or measuring cup to compact the mixture — this is critical for achieving cohesive bars.
7. Bake for 30 minutes until golden brown throughout. The edges will be slightly darker and the center should be set but still give slightly when pressed.
8. Remove from oven and allow to cool in pan for 10 minutes. Using a sharp knife, cut into bars while still warm (12 or 16 bars depending on desired size).
9. Allow bars to cool completely in the pan, at least 2 hours, before removing. The bars will firm up significantly as they cool.

10. Once completely cool, use parchment overhang to lift from pan. Separate bars along pre-cut lines and store in an airtight container.

Fruit and Nut Pairings

- **Cherry + Hazelnut** — Classic pairing with deep, complementary flavors
- **Apricot + Almond** — Mediterranean combination, honeyed and nutty
- **Cranberry + Pecan** — Tart-sweet with buttery richness
- **Fig + Walnut** — Sophisticated, earthy sweetness
- **Blueberry + Macadamia** — Subtle berry with rich, creamy nuts
- **Raisin + Cashew** — Traditional, mild pairing

Equipment Required

- 9x9 inch baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Large mixing bowl (at least 4-quart capacity)
- Medium saucepan (2-3 quart)
- Small bowl (for soaking fruit)
- Rimmed baking sheet (for toasting nuts)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Rubber spatula or wooden spoon
- Measuring cup or flat-bottomed glass (for pressing)
- Kitchen towel (for removing nut skins)
- Paper towels (for drying fruit)

Mise en Place

- Toast and chop **nuts** first, as they need time to cool
- Soak **dried fruit** while preparing other ingredients
- Measure all spices and have them ready before starting
- Cut parchment paper to fit pan with overhang on two sides
- Have all ingredients at room temperature for easier mixing

Ingredient Tips

- Use certified gluten-free **oats** if needed; regular rolled oats work well otherwise
- For **nuts**: toast until fragrant to intensify flavor; hazelnuts and almonds benefit from skin removal
- For **dried fruit**: choose unsweetened or lightly sweetened varieties; tart cherries, unsulphured apricots, and less-sweetened cranberries provide best flavor balance
- Light **corn syrup** (Karo) combined with **molasses** approximates British golden syrup
- European-style **butter** with higher fat content yields richer flavor

Preparation Tips

- Chop **nuts** and **fruit** finely for even distribution and cohesive texture
- Don't skip soaking the **fruit** — this prevents hard, dry bits in final bars
- Press mixture very firmly into pan; inadequate pressing results in crumbly bars
- Watch carefully during final *5 minutes* of baking to prevent over-browning
- Cut while warm but allow complete cooling for clean cuts and proper texture
- If bars seem too soft after cooling, they may need *5 minutes* more baking time next batch

Make Ahead & Storage

- Flapjacks keep at room temperature in air-tight container for up to *1 week*
- Layer bars between parchment paper to prevent sticking
- Freeze for up to *3 months*; thaw at room temperature for *30 minutes*
- Texture firms slightly during storage; this is normal
- Do not refrigerate as this can make bars overly hard

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as breakfast bars, snacks, or with afternoon tea
 - Pair with coffee, tea, or cold milk
 - For dessert, serve warm with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream
 - Pack individually in parchment paper for portable snacks
 - Drizzle with melted chocolate for special occasions
-

Gluten-Free Lemon Bars •

Ingredients

BRM 1:1 Baking Flour	$1\frac{1}{4}$ cups	Egg yolk	1
Almond flour, finely ground	3 Tbsp.	Granulated sugar	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup
Cornstarch	3 Tbsp.	TrueLemon powder	1-2 tsp.
Powdered sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Kerrygold butter	16 Tbsp.	Powdered sugar	for dusting
Meyer lemons	3	Flaky salt	for sprinkling
Mexican vanilla	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.		
Eggs	3		

Shortbread Crust

Preheat oven to 350°F — Line 8 inch \times 8 inch pan with parchment paper, leaving overhang — Zest 1 lemon; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Bring 10 Tbsp. **butter** to room temperature

1. In *Medium Bowl #1*, whisk together $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups **gluten free flour**, 3 Tbsp. **almond flour**, 2 Tbsp. **cornstarch**, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **powdered sugar**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **salt**. Add 10 Tbsp. softened **butter**, **lemon zest** (*Small Bowl #1*), and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **vanilla extract**. Mix with a fork or your hands until mixture forms clumps and holds together when pressed.
2. Press dough evenly into prepared pan, creating a uniform $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick layer. Use the bottom of a measuring cup to compact and smooth the surface. Dock the crust all over with a fork.
3. Bake at 350°F for 20-25 minutes until edges are golden brown and center is set. Remove from oven and reduce temperature to 325°F .

Lemon Curd

Zest 2 lemons; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Juice 3 lemons to yield $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Cut 6 Tbsp. **butter** into tablespoon pieces; set aside in *Small Bowl #4*

1. While crust bakes, whisk together $\frac{2}{3}$ cup **granulated sugar** and 1 tsp. **cornstarch** in a medium saucepan. Add **eggs** and **egg yolk**, whisking until smooth.
2. Add **lemon juice** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup, *Small Bowl #3*), **lemon zest** (*Small Bowl #2*), 1-2 tsp. **TrueLemon powder**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **salt**. Whisk to combine.
3. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring constantly with a silicone spatula or wooden spoon, scraping the bottom and sides of the pan. Cook until mixture thickens noticeably and reaches 170°F , about 8-10 minutes. The curd should coat the back of a spoon and leave a clear trail when you draw your finger through it.
4. Remove from heat and immediately stir in 6 Tbsp. **butter** (*Small Bowl #4*), one piece at a time, until fully incorporated and smooth.
5. Strain the hot curd through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl or measuring cup to remove **zest** bits and any cooked egg pieces.
6. Pour strained curd onto the hot pre-baked crust, spreading gently to edges if needed.
7. Bake at 325°F for 15-18 minutes until filling is set but still jiggles slightly in the center when gently shaken.

Finishing

1. Cool completely in the pan on a wire rack for 1 hour, then refrigerate for at least 3 hours or overnight.
2. Use parchment overhang to lift bars from pan. Cut into 16 squares using a sharp knife, wiping blade clean between cuts.
3. Just before serving, dust moderately with **powdered sugar** and sprinkle lightly with **flaky sea salt**.

Equipment Required

- 8x8 inch baking pan
- Parchment paper
- Medium mixing bowl (for crust)
- Medium saucepan (2-quart capacity)
- Fine-mesh sieve or strainer
- Silicone spatula or wooden spoon
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Microplane or fine grater (for zest)
- Citrus juicer or reamer (for juicing lemons)
- Fork (for docking crust)
- Instant-read thermometer (optional but helpful)
- Sharp knife for cutting
- Wire cooling rack

Mise en Place

- Bring **butter** to room temperature for crust (*1 hour*)
- Zest **Meyer lemons** before juicing (zest 1 for crust, zest 2 for curd, then juice all 3 for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- Cut 6 Tbsp. **butter** into pieces for filling
- Line pan with parchment before starting
- Have all ingredients measured and ready
- Set up double layer of fine-mesh sieve over a bowl for straining

Ingredient Tips

- Bob's Red Mill 1:1 G.F. flour works best; other blends may need adjustment
- **Almond flour** should be finely ground (blanched almond flour, not almond meal)
- European-style **butter** (Kerrygold, Plugrá) has higher fat content and richer flavor
- Use fresh **Meyer lemons**; zest before juicing, and 3 lemons yield about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice

- **TrueLemon powder** significantly amplifies lemon brightness without added liquid
- Fresh **lemon zest** is essential for aromatic oils and complexity
- Use the finest grater for **zest** to avoid bitter white pith

Preparation Tips

- Press crust very firmly and evenly; uneven thickness causes uneven baking
- Dock crust thoroughly to prevent bubbling during baking
- Don't underbake the crust; edges should be golden for structural integrity
- Stir curd constantly to prevent curdling; use silicone spatula to scrape sides
- Watch for 170°F on thermometer or coat-the-spoon consistency
- Strain while curd is hot for easiest flow through sieve
- Pour curd onto hot crust immediately after straining
- The filling will continue to set as it cools; slight jiggle is correct
- Clean knife between cuts for neat edges
- Add **powdered sugar** and **salt** just before serving to prevent dissolving

Make Ahead & Storage

- Bars must cool completely and chill at least 3 hours before cutting
- Best made a day ahead; flavors meld and texture improves overnight
- Store covered in refrigerator for up to 5 days
- Can be frozen unfrosted for up to 2 months; thaw in refrigerator overnight
- Apply **powdered sugar** and **flaky salt** just before serving
- For meal prep, cut and store individually wrapped in refrigerator
- Bring to cool room temperature before serving for best texture ($15\text{-}20$ minutes)

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as elegant finger food dessert at room temperature
 - Pair with hot tea, coffee, or sparkling wine
 - Garnish individual servings with fresh mint or candied lemon peel
 - Serve alongside fresh berries or whipped cream for plated dessert
 - The **flaky salt** provides crucial sweet-savory contrast
 - Store any leftovers covered in refrigerator; remove *15 minutes* before serving
-

Holiday Spice Cake

Ingredients

All-purpose flour	$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups	Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Sugar	1 cup	Vegetable oil	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup
Light brown sugar	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	Applesauce	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup
Baking powder	1 tsp.	Eggs	2
Cocoa powder	1 Tbsp.	Mexican Vanilla	1 tsp.
Ground cinnamon	1 Tbsp.	Powdered sugar	for dusting
Ground ginger	2 tsp.		
Ground nutmeg	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.		
Ground allspice	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.		

Directions

Preheat oven to $350^{\circ}F$

1. In *Medium Bowl #1*, whisk together 1 cup **sugar**, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **brown sugar**, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups **flour**, 1 tsp. **baking powder**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **salt**, 1 Tbsp. **cocoa powder**, 1 Tbsp. **cinnamon**, 2 tsp. **ginger**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **nutmeg**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **allspice**.
2. In *Large Bowl #1*, beat $\frac{2}{3}$ cup **vegetable oil**, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup **applesauce**, **eggs**, and 1 tsp. **vanilla extract** until well combined.
3. Add dry ingredients (*Medium Bowl #1*) to wet ingredients (*Large Bowl #1*) and stir until just blended.
4. Pour batter into a buttered and floured 9 inch \times 5 inch loaf pan, smoothing the top with a spatula.
5. Bake until golden and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about *40-45 minutes*.
6. Cool in pan for *10 minutes*, then unmold onto a wire rack to cool completely.
7. Dust with **powdered sugar** before serving.

Injera Bread

Ingredients

Teff flour, whole grain	2 cups	Baking powder	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Water, filtered/bottled	3 cups	Vegetable oil	1 tsp.
Active dry yeast	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.		
Salt	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.		

Directions

Measure **teff flour** — Dissolve **yeast** in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm **water** ($105-110^{\circ}F$)

Day 1 (Morning)

1. In a large non-reactive bowl, dissolve **active dry yeast** in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm **water** ($105-110^{\circ}F$). Let stand 5 minutes until foamy. (*Water must be chlorine-free to allow fermentation*)
2. Add **teff flour** and $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups room temperature **water** to yeast mixture. Whisk vigorously until completely smooth with no lumps. The batter should be thin, similar to crepe batter, and coat a spoon in a thin layer.
3. Cover bowl loosely with clean kitchen towel or cheesecloth (do not seal—fermentation produces CO_2 that must escape). Place in warm location ($68-75^{\circ}F$) away from direct sunlight.

Days 2-3 (Fermentation)

4. Monitor fermentation progress *twice daily*. Healthy fermentation indicators:
 - Surface bubbling and active foaming
 - Pleasant sour aroma (lactic fermentation, similar to yogurt)
 - Thin layer of clear liquid (hooch) on surface—stir this back in
 - Batter will thin slightly as enzymatic activity breaks down starches
5. Check for contamination signs (see detailed notes on page 2). If contamination is suspected, discard and restart.
6. Batter is ready when it shows active bubbling, smells pleasantly sour, and has fermented for *48-72 hours*. In cooler environments, full fermentation may require *3 days*.

Cooking Day

7. Thin batter with remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **water** if needed—it should pour easily in a thin stream and coat a spoon lightly. Gently stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **salt** and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **baking powder** just before cooking (do not overmix).
8. Heat a 10-12 inch non-stick skillet over medium heat until a drop of **water** dances on the surface. Very lightly oil the pan with **vegetable oil** for the first **injera** only.
9. Pour approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **batter** into the pan in a rapid spiral motion from outside edge to center, tilting pan to ensure even coverage. The entire pour should take *3-4 seconds*—speed is critical for uniform thickness.
10. Immediately cover with a tight-fitting lid. Cook for *60-90 seconds* without lifting lid. Surface should be completely dry with numerous small holes (aynet) covering the entire surface. Bottom should be lightly set but not browned.
11. Remove **injera** without flipping (it cooks on one side only) and place on clean kitchen towel to cool. Do not stack while hot.
12. Repeat with remaining **batter**, adjusting heat as needed. No additional oil should be necessary after the first **injera**.
13. Once cooled to room temperature, stack **injera** between layers of parchment paper or clean towels. Use immediately or store.

Equipment Required

- Large non-reactive bowl (glass, ceramic, or stainless steel—minimum 3-quart capacity)
- Clean kitchen towel or cheesecloth for covering
- Wire whisk
- 10-12 inch non-stick skillet with tight-fitting lid (essential for steam)
- Ladle or measuring cup (½ cup capacity)
- Clean kitchen towels for cooling and storage
- Instant-read thermometer (for water temperature)
- Parchment paper for stacking

Mise en Place

- Prepare chlorine-free **water** at least *24 hours* in advance if using tap water (let stand uncovered to allow chlorine to evaporate)
- Ensure fermentation location maintains *68-75°F*—cooler temperatures slow fermentation significantly
- Use room temperature ingredients for initial mixing
- Have **salt** and **baking powder** measured and ready to add on cooking day
- Test skillet with water drop before beginning to cook

Ingredient Tips

- **Teff flour:** Use 100% whole grain teff for authentic flavor and texture. Brown teff produces more robust flavor; white teff creates milder, lighter-colored **injera**. Store **teff flour** in refrigerator or freezer to prevent rancidity.
- Chlorine in tap water inhibits fermentation—use filtered water or let tap water stand uncovered for *24 hours*
- **Yeast** acts as fermentation starter to ensure reliable results; traditional methods rely solely on wild yeasts but are less predictable

- **Baking powder** added on cooking day provides additional lift and insurance for hole formation

Fermentation Monitoring

- **Healthy fermentation:** Pleasant sour smell (lactic acid, yogurt-like), active bubbling, thin clear liquid on top, batter thins over time
- **CONTAMINATION SIGNS—DISCARD IF OBSERVED:**
 - Pink, orange, or red discoloration (bacterial contamination)
 - Fuzzy growth on surface (mold—white, green, black, or gray)
 - Putrid, rotten, or ammonia-like smell (spoilage bacteria)
 - Slimy or ropy texture when stirred (certain bacteria produce polysaccharides)
 - Complete separation with clear **water** on top and thick paste on bottom (failed fermentation)
- Stir batter *once daily* to redistribute microorganisms and prevent surface drying
- Temperature critical: below *65°F* fermentation is very slow; above *80°F* increases contamination risk
- If fermentation seems sluggish after *48 hours*, move to warmer location or extend fermentation time

Preparation Tips

- Batter consistency is critical—too thick produces dense **injera** without holes; too thin creates fragile bread that tears
- Pour rapidly in continuous spiral motion—hesitation creates uneven thickness and poor hole distribution
- **Lid must fit tightly**—steam trapped under lid creates the characteristic holes. Without steam, surface remains flat
- First **injera** is often imperfect as pan temperature stabilizes—consider it a test piece

- Do not flip or cook second side—**injera** has distinct top (holey) and bottom (smooth) surfaces
- If holes fail to form: batter may need more fermentation time, **baking powder** may be old, or lid may not seal properly
- Adjust heat between batches—pan should be hot enough for immediate bubbling but not so hot that bottom burns before top sets
- Stack only when completely cool to prevent steaming and sogginess

Make Ahead & Storage

- **Batter** can be refrigerated after fermentation for up to *24 hours*—bring to room temperature before cooking
- Cooked **injera** stores at room temperature for *2-3 days* wrapped in clean towel, then placed in plastic bag
- Refrigerate for up to *1 week*—layer with parchment paper and store in airtight container
- Freeze for up to *3 months*—layer with parchment, wrap tightly, and thaw at room temperature

- Best served at room temperature or slightly warm
- **Injera** becomes more pliable and easier to tear after *24 hours* as starches retrograde

Serving Suggestions

- Traditionally used as both plate and utensil—tear pieces with right hand to scoop stews and sauces
- Pairs excellently with Ethiopian wot (spiced stews), Moroccan tagines, or any rich, sauce-based dish
- The sour notes complement fatty meats (lamb, beef) and cut through richness of cream-based sauces
- Spongy texture absorbs sauces while maintaining structural integrity for scooping
- Serve at room temperature—cold **injera** is less pliable
- For traditional presentation, line large platter with **injera**, arrange stews on top, and serve additional **injera** rolled on the side
- Leftover **injera** can be torn and mixed with scrambled eggs for Ethiopian firfir breakfast dish

Leta's Fruit Crunch •

Ingredients

Frozen mixed berries	4 cups	Salt	1 tsp.
Brown sugar	1/4 cup	Cinnamon	1 tsp.
All-purpose flour (130g)	1 cup	Eggs	2 large
Sugar	1 cup	Butter	4 Tbsp.

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Lightly beat **eggs**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Melt **butter**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Grease 8 inch \times 8 inch glass baking dish

1. Mix **frozen berries** with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **brown sugar** and spread in a baking dish.
2. In *Medium Bowl #1*, combine 1 cup **flour**, 1 cup **sugar**, 1 tsp. **salt**, and 1 tsp. **cinnamon**.
3. Using a whisk, gradually add beaten **egg** (*Small Bowl #1*) to the flour mixture, a small amount at a time with a spoon.
***IMPORTANT:** Use a chopping motion with the whisk (not stirring) to incorporate each addition of egg until the mixture reaches a clumpy wet sand consistency. Be patient and methodical, and do not use all of the egg.*
4. Sprinkle the crumble mixture evenly over the **fruit**.
5. Pour melted **butter** (*Small Bowl #2*) over the top.
6. Bake for 60-75 minutes until golden brown and bubbly.

Equipment Required

- 8 inch×8 inch glass baking dish
- Large mixing bowl
- Small bowl for beaten egg
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Small saucepan or microwave-safe bowl for melting butter
- Rubber spatula

Mise en Place

- Keep **fruit** frozen until ready to use
- Beat **eggs** before starting
- Measure all ingredients before beginning
- Have whisk ready for proper mixing technique

Ingredient Tips

- Use frozen mixed berries straight from freezer
- If **fruit** has excess ice crystals, do not thaw, simply break up any large clumps
- Large **eggs** should be at room temperature for better incorporation
- Standard salted or unsalted butter works well

Preparation Tips

- The chopping motion with the whisk is crucial - do not stir
- Add **egg** very gradually, small amounts at a time
- The mixture should resemble wet sand before topping the fruit
- Spread topping evenly but do not pack it down
- Pour **butter** evenly over the entire surface

Make Ahead & Storage

- Best served warm from the oven
- Can be assembled and refrigerated for up to *24 hours* before baking
- Leftovers keep well covered at room temperature for *2 days* or refrigerated for *7 days*
- Reheat individual portions in microwave for *30 seconds*

Serving Suggestions

- Serve warm with vanilla ice cream
- Allow to cool for *10 minutes* before serving

Peanut Butter Cookies •

Ingredients

Peanut butter (creamy)	1 ¹ / ₄ cups	Baking soda	1 tsp.
Eggs, large	2	Mexican vanilla	1 tsp.
Sugar	1 cup	Salt	1 tsp.
Granulated sugar (for rolling)	1/4 cup		

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F — Bring **peanut butter** and **eggs** to room temperature — Line baking sheets with parchment paper — Place **rolling sugar** in shallow dish

1. In a large bowl, combine room temperature **peanut butter**, **eggs**, **sugar**, **baking soda**, **Mexican vanilla**, and **salt** until well mixed and smooth.
2. Cover bowl and chill dough for *15 minutes* to make it easier to handle.
3. Using a $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch cookie scoop or rounded tablespoon, portion dough into balls.
4. Roll each ball in **granulated sugar** until completely coated.
5. Place sugared balls on prepared baking sheets, spacing 2 inches apart.
6. Press each cookie with a fork twice, creating a crisscross pattern on top. If fork sticks to dough, dip it in the **rolling sugar** between cookies.
7. Bake for *12-13 minutes* until edges are lightly golden but centers still appear soft. If baking two sheets at once, rotate their positions halfway through baking.
8. Let cookies cool on baking sheet for *5 minutes* before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

Equipment Required

- Large mixing bowl
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch cookie scoop or tablespoon measure
- Baking sheets
- Parchment paper
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Fork for creating pattern
- Shallow dish for rolling sugar
- Wire cooling rack
- Rubber spatula

Mise en Place

- Remove **peanut butter** and **eggs** from refrigerator *1 hour* before starting
- Line baking sheets with parchment
- Measure all ingredients before beginning
- Set up sugar rolling station

Ingredient Tips

- Use commercial creamy peanut butter (like JIF or Skippy) rather than natural style
- Room temperature **peanut butter** creates a smoother dough
- For extra crunch, use coarse sugar for rolling

- Mexican vanilla adds depth, but pure vanilla extract can substitute

Preparation Tips

- Don't skip the *15 minute* chill time - it makes the dough easier to handle
- Keep cookie size consistent for even baking
- Press fork just deep enough to create pattern without flattening cookies too much
- Cookies will appear slightly underbaked when done but will set as they cool

Make Ahead & Storage

- Dough can be chilled up to *24 hours*
- Baked cookies keep in airtight container for *5 days*
- Freeze baked cookies up to *3 months*
- Freeze portioned dough balls up to *3 months* - roll in sugar after thawing

Serving Suggestions

- Best served at room temperature
- Excellent with cold milk or hot coffee
- Crumble over vanilla ice cream
- Pack in lunch boxes or cookie tins
- Use as base for ice cream sandwiches

Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients

Frozen Pie Crusts	2	Milk	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Cream Cheese	8 oz.	Butter, melted	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Canned Pumpkin	2 cups	Vanilla extract	1 tsp.
Sugar	1 cup	Cinnamon, ground	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.	Ginger, ground	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Eggs (1 whole plus 2 yolks)	3 eggs	Whipped Cream	1 cup
Heavy cream	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup		

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F — Thaw pie crusts about *15 minutes* at room temperature — Lightly beat eggs; set aside in *Small Bowl #1*

Pie Crusts

1. Fit a piece of aluminum foil to cover the inside of the shell completely. Fill the shell to the edges with dried beans.
2. Bake the pie crusts at 350°F for *10 minutes*, then remove the beans and foil and bake for another *5-10 minutes* until dried and beginning to color. Keep warm.

Filling

1. In *Large Bowl #1*, beat the **cream cheese** with a hand mixer.
2. Add the **pumpkin**, then beat until combined.
3. Add 1 cup **sugar** and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **salt**, then beat until combined.
4. Add the **eggs** (*Small Bowl #1*), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **milk**, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **cream**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted **butter**, then beat until combined.
5. Add 1 tsp. **vanilla**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **cinnamon**, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **ginger**, then beat until combined.
6. Pour the filling into the pie crusts and loosely wrap the edges with aluminum foil to prevent burning.
7. Bake for *40 minutes* at 350°F
8. Remove foil from edges and bake for *10 minutes*, or until the center is set.
9. Cool on a wire rack until room temperature. Slice and serve topped with **whipped cream**.

Chapter 4

BREAKFAST

Breakfast Burritos

Ingredients

Breakfast sausage	16-24 oz.	Salt	1 tsp.
Bell pepper	1	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.
Onion	1	Ground mustard	1/4 tsp.
Green chiles	1 (6 oz.) can	MSG	1/4 tsp.
Eggs	12	Cooking oil (or spray)	1 tsp.
Milk	1 1/2 cups	Frozen tater tots	30 oz.
Sour cream	3/4 cup	Tortillas, burrito size	12-16
		Shredded cheese	3-4 cups

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F — Dice **bell pepper** and **onion**; combine in *Small Bowl #1* (aromatics) — Drain **green chiles**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Shred **cheese**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1*

1. Cook the **breakfast sausage**, **bell pepper** and **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*), and **green chiles** (*Small Bowl #2*) over medium heat, crumbling the sausage until cooked through, about *10-12 minutes*. Drain grease and transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.
2. Whisk together the **eggs**, **milk**, **sour cream**, 1 tsp. **salt**, 1/2 tsp. **black pepper**, 1/4 tsp. **ground mustard**, and 1/4 tsp. **MSG** in *Large Bowl #3* until smooth.
3. Lightly grease a 9 inch \times 13 inch baking pan with **oil** or cooking spray. Place the **tater tots** in the bottom of the pan.
4. Sprinkle the cooked **sausage** mixture (*Large Bowl #2*) over the **tater tots** in the prepared pan. Pour the **egg** mixture (*Large Bowl #3*) evenly over the top.
5. Bake at 350°F for *30 minutes* covered, then *30-45 minutes* uncovered until set.
6. If freezing, let the casserole cool to room temperature. Scoop about 1/2 cup of the casserole onto each **tortilla**, sprinkle with **cheese** (*Large Bowl #1*), fold the sides, and roll up into a burrito.
7. To freeze, wrap burritos in parchment paper or plastic wrap, and place in a freezer bag. Reheat in the microwave or oven as desired.

Breakfast Burritos (Easy Mode)

These Easy Breakfast Burritos are perfect for busy mornings, combining classic breakfast flavors in a convenient handheld meal. They can be prepped quickly and are freezable for grab-and-go breakfasts, requiring just two minutes in the microwave to reheat.

Ingredients

Vegetable oil	3 Tbsp.	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.
Hash brown potatoes	4 cups	Salt	1/2 tsp.
Breakfast sausage	1 lb.	Cheddar and/or Jack cheese	2 cups
Eggs	8	Flour tortillas	12
Chopped green chiles	1 can		

Directions

Preheat large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat — Shred **cheese**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Beat **eggs** with **green chiles**, 1/2 tsp. **salt**, and 1/2 tsp. **black pepper**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1*

1. Heat 2 Tbsp. **oil** in a nonstick skillet. Add **hash browns**, press down lightly, and cook without moving for *7 minutes*. Drizzle with remaining 1 Tbsp. **oil**, turn, and cook until browned and hot. Transfer to *Large Bowl #2* and set aside.
2. Cook **sausage** in the skillet until browned, breaking into crumbles, about *8-10 minutes*. Stir in **egg** mixture (*Medium Bowl #1*) and cook until scrambled, about *5-7 minutes*. Transfer to *Large Bowl #3* and set aside.
3. To assemble burritos, spoon a line of **hash browns** (*Large Bowl #2*) down the center of each **tortilla**. Top with **cheese** (*Large Bowl #1*) and **egg** mixture (*Large Bowl #3*).
4. Roll up each **tortilla** tightly to secure the filling. Serve immediately, or follow freezing instructions.
5. To freeze, wrap each burrito in foil and store in a freezer bag for up to *1 month*. To reheat, wrap in a damp paper towel and microwave until heated through.

Cheesy Bacon Hash Brown Casserole

Ingredients

Frozen hash browns, thawed	30 oz.	Sliced mushrooms	8 oz. can
Cream of chicken soup	10.5 oz. can	Sun-dried tomatoes	1/2 cup
Sour cream	1 3/4 cups	Garlic powder	1 tsp.
Butter, melted	1/2 cup	Onion powder	1 tsp.
Onion, diced	3/4 cup	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.
Sharp cheddar cheese	2 cups	Cayenne pepper (optional)	1/4 tsp.
Gruyère cheese	1 cup	Potato chips, crushed	2 cups
Bacon, cooked and crumbled	1 lb.		

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F —Grease a 9 inch \times 13 inch baking dish — Thaw and pat dry **hash browns**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Shred **cheddar** and **Gruyère cheese**; combine in *Large Bowl #2* — Cook and crumble **bacon**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Drain and chop **mushrooms**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Crush **potato chips**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2*

1. Rehydrate **sun-dried tomatoes** in hot water for *10 minutes*, then drain and chop; set aside in *Small Bowl #3*.
2. In *Large Bowl #3*, mix **hash browns** (*Large Bowl #1*), **cream of chicken soup**, **sour cream**, melted **butter**, diced **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*), $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups **cheddar** and **Gruyère cheese** (*Large Bowl #2*), $\frac{3}{4}$ of the crumbled **bacon** (*Medium Bowl #1*), chopped **mushrooms** (*Small Bowl #2*), chopped **sun-dried tomatoes** (*Small Bowl #3*), 1 tsp. **garlic powder**, 1 tsp. **onion powder**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **black pepper**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **cayenne pepper** (if using).
3. Spread the mixture evenly in the prepared baking dish.
4. Top with remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **cheddar** and **Gruyère cheese** (*Large Bowl #2*) and crushed **potato chips** (*Medium Bowl #2*).
5. Bake for $50\text{-}55$ minutes until golden brown and bubbly.
6. Remove from oven and sprinkle remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ of **bacon** (*Medium Bowl #1*) on top.
7. Let cool for $5\text{-}10$ minutes before serving.

Chapter 5

ENTREES

Beef Pot Roast

Beef Pot Roast is a classic comfort food, perfect for a hearty family meal. This recipe combines tender beef with flavorful vegetables and a rich broth, slow-cooked to perfection.

Ingredients

Beef chuck roast	3-4 lbs	Red wine	1/2 cup
Onion, large	1	Worcestershire sauce	2 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	6	Tomato paste	3 Tbsp.
Carrots	4	Dried thyme	1 Tbsp.
Potatoes, Yukon Gold	4	Dried rosemary	1 Tbsp.
Celery stalks	2	Bay leaves	2
Mushrooms	1/2 lb.	Onion powder	1 tsp
Beef broth	1 cup	Garlic powder	1 tsp
		Salt	2 tsp
		Black Pepper, ground	1 tsp

Directions

Season the **beef roast** generously with 2 tsp. **salt**, 1 tsp. **pepper**, 1 tsp. **onion powder**, and 1 tsp. **garlic powder** — Slice the **onions**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Mince the **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Peel and cut the **carrots** into chunks; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Cut the **potatoes** into chunks; set aside in *Medium Bowl #3* — Chop the **celery**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Slice the **mushrooms**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3*

1. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and sear the **beef** on all sides until browned. Transfer to *Large Bowl #1*; set aside.
2. Place the sliced **onions** (*Medium Bowl #1*), minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), **carrots** (*Medium Bowl #2*), **potatoes** (*Medium Bowl #3*), **celery** (*Small Bowl #2*), and **mushrooms** (*Small Bowl #3*) in the crock pot.
3. In *Medium Bowl #4*, whisk together 1 cup **beef broth**, 1/2 cup **red wine**, 2 Tbsp. **Worcestershire sauce**, 3 Tbsp. **tomato paste**, 1 Tbsp. **dried thyme**, 1 Tbsp. **dried rosemary**, then add **bay leaves**.
4. Pour the mixture (*Medium Bowl #4*) over the vegetables in the crock pot.
5. Place the seared **beef roast** (*Large Bowl #1*) on top of the vegetables.
6. Cover the crock pot and cook on *low heat* for 8-10 hours or on *high heat* for 4-6 hours, until the beef is tender and easily shreds with a fork.
7. Once cooked, remove the **beef** from the crock pot and let it rest for a few minutes before slicing or shredding.
8. Serve the beef pot roast with the vegetables and drizzle with broth.

Boeuf Bourguignon

Ingredients

Chuck roast	4 lbs.	Tomato paste	2 Tbsp.
Thick-cut bacon	8 oz.	Unsalted butter	6 Tbsp.
Cremini mushrooms	16 oz.	All-purpose flour	1/3 cup
Pearl onions, frozen	16 oz.	Fresh thyme	8 sprigs
Yellow onions	2 large	Fresh parsley	1 bunch
Carrots	4 large	Bay leaves	2
Celery stalks	3	Black peppercorns	1 Tbsp.
Shallots	2 medium	MSG	1/4 tsp.
Garlic cloves	8	Kosher salt	2 Tbsp.
Burgundy wine	750 ml	Black pepper, ground	1 Tbsp.
Cognac	1/4 cup		
Beef Better Than Bouillon	2 Tbsp.		
Water	2 cups		

Directions

Salt **beef** 24 hours ahead — Bring **beef** to room temperature 2 hours before cooking — Preheat oven to 300°F — Cut **beef** into 2½ inch pieces — Dice **bacon** into ½ inch lardons; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Prepare mirepoix: dice **onions**, **carrots**, **celery**; combine in *Large Bowl #1* — Mince **shallots**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Crush **garlic** cloves lightly; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Quarter **mushrooms** if large; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Make bouquet garni with **thyme**, **parsley** stems, **bay leaves**, **peppercorns** — Dissolve **Better Than Bouillon** in *hot water*; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2*

1. Start with cold Dutch oven. Add **bacon** (*Small Bowl #1*), turn to medium-low heat, render until crisp (12-15 minutes). Remove with slotted spoon and transfer to *Medium Bowl #3*; set aside.
2. Increase heat to medium-high. Working in batches, brown **beef** until deeply caramelized (4-5 minutes per side). Transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.
3. Lower heat to medium. Add half the **wine**, scrape fond. Strain liquid into separate pot, reserve in *Medium Bowl #4*.
4. Return Dutch oven to medium heat. Add 2 Tbsp. **butter**, **onions**, **carrots**, **celery** (*Large Bowl #1*), **shallots** (*Small Bowl #2*), and ¼ tsp. **MSG**. Cook until onions are translucent (8-10 minutes).
5. Add **garlic** (*Small Bowl #3*), cook 1 minute. Add 2 Tbsp. **tomato paste**, cook until darkened (2-3 minutes).
6. Add ¼ cup **cognac**, reduce until nearly dry. Add 1/3 cup **flour**, cook (2 minutes).

7. Return **beef** (*Large Bowl #2*), **bacon** (*Medium Bowl #3*), reserved wine liquid (*Medium Bowl #4*), remaining **wine**, and **bouillon mixture** (*Medium Bowl #2*). Add bouquet garni. Bring to simmer.
8. Cover, transfer to oven. Braise until meat reaches 195°F , about $2\frac{1}{2}-3$ hours. Check liquid level hourly.
9. Meanwhile, blanch **pearl onions** in boiling water (*1 minute*). Shock in ice bath, peel; set aside in *Small Bowl #4*.
10. In large skillet, sauté **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #1*) in 2 Tbsp. **butter** until golden (*8-10 minutes*). Set aside in *Medium Bowl #5*.
11. Brown **pearl onions** (*Small Bowl #4*) in same skillet with remaining 2 Tbsp. **butter** until caramelized (*5-6 minutes*). Set aside in *Small Bowl #4*.
12. When meat is tender, remove from oven. Transfer **beef** pieces to *Large Bowl #2*. Strain sauce into clean pot, pressing solids.
13. Reduce sauce until slightly thickened. Meanwhile, make beurre manié: knead 2 Tbsp. each softened **butter** and **flour** in *Small Bowl #5*.
14. Whisk beurre manié (*Small Bowl #5*) into simmering sauce in small pieces until desired consistency. Return **beef** (*Large Bowl #2*), add **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #5*) and **pearl onions** (*Small Bowl #4*).
15. Simmer gently *5 minutes*. Adjust seasoning with **salt** and **pepper**. Rest *20 minutes*.
16. Garnish with chopped **parsley**. Serve with crusty bread or buttered egg noodles.

Equipment Required

- 7-8 quart enameled cast iron Dutch oven
- 12-inch heavy-bottom skillet
- Fine-mesh strainer
- 2-quart saucepan (for reducing wine)
- Digital instant-read thermometer
- Kitchen twine and cheesecloth (for bouquet garni)
- Large mixing bowls (3-4)
- Heavy cutting board
- Sharp chef's knife
- Kitchen spider or slotted spoon
- Wooden spoons and whisks
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Large plate lined with paper towels

Mise en Place

- Season **beef** 24 hours ahead, store uncovered in refrigerator
- Remove **beef** 2 hours before cooking
- Open **wine** to breathe 1 hour before cooking
- Prepare bouquet garni in cheesecloth, tie securely
- Cut all vegetables before beginning
- Have additional hot **stock** ready
- Soften butter for beurre manié ahead of time

Ingredient Tips

- Choose well-marbled **chuck roast**, preferably center-cut
- Use young red Burgundy (Pinot Noir) or Côtes du Rhône
- Select slab **bacon** for even lardons
- **Better Than Bouillon** must be "Roasted Beef Base"
- European-style **butter** (82% butterfat) preferred
- Fresh **herbs** only - dried will muddy the sauce
- Choose small **cremini mushrooms** for even cooking

Preparation Tips

- Cut **beef** against grain in equal sizes for even cooking
- Pat **beef** thoroughly dry before browning
- Cold start for **bacon** ensures proper rendering

- Never crowd pan when browning - pieces should not touch
- Dark fond is crucial - but watch carefully to prevent burning
- Skim surface fat during braising every 30 minutes
- Test several pieces of **meat** for doneness
- Sauce should coat the back of a spoon when finished

Make Ahead & Storage

- Improves if made 1-2 days ahead
- Cool completely before refrigerating
- Remove solidified fat cap before reheating
- Reheat gently at 300°F for 30-45 minutes
- Add hot stock if needed during reheating
- Can freeze up to 3 months in airtight container
- Thaw completely in refrigerator before reheating

Troubleshooting

- If sauce is too thin: make additional beurre manié
- If sauce breaks: whisk in cold **butter** piece by piece
- If meat is tough: continue cooking, check every 15 minutes
- If fond is too dark: deglaze immediately with **wine**
- If sauce is too acidic: add a pinch of sugar
- If seasoning is flat: add **MSG** in small increments

Serving Suggestions

- Rest 20-30 minutes before serving
- Traditional: egg noodles or pommes mousseline
- Crusty baguette for sauce
- Serve same **wine** used in cooking
- Garnish with fresh **parsley** and extra **pearl onions**
- Simple green salad with vinaigrette to balance

Chicken Broccoli Rice Casserole •

Ingredients

Chicken, cooked	1½ lb.	Sweet corn, canned	8 oz.
Rice, long-grain white	2 cups	Bay leaf	1
Neutral oil	2 tsp.	Rosemary, dried	1 tsp.
Chicken broth	4 cups	Sweet paprika	1 tsp.
Broccoli	1 head	MSG	¼ tsp.
Cream cheese	8 oz.	Garlic powder	½ tsp.
Onion, medium	1	Onion powder	½ tsp.
Garlic cloves	6-8	Nutmeg powder	pinch
Butter	6½ Tbsp.	Salt	1 tsp.
Flour	3 Tbsp.	Black pepper	½ tsp.
Milk	2 cups	Red pepper, crushed	¼ tsp.
Mushroom slices, canned	8 oz.	Crispy fried onions	¼ cup

Directions

Soften **cream cheese** at room temp and cube; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Preheat oven to 375°F — Dice **chicken**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Chop **broccoli**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Drain **corn** and **mushrooms**; combine in *Medium Bowl #3* — Grease a 9 inch×13 inch baking dish with $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. **butter**

1. Cook **rice** al-dente using 2 cups **chicken broth** and a **bay leaf**. Stop your rice cooker 5 minutes early.
2. While rice cooks, bring a pot of salted water to boil. Blanch **broccoli** for *2 minutes*, then immediately strain in a metal colander rinsing with cold water. Drain well and transfer to a large bowl.
3. In a large skillet, melt 4 Tbsp. **butter** on medium heat. Add 2 tsp. **oil** and **corn** (*Medium Bowl #3*) and increase heat to medium-high to brown and caramelize the corn, about *5 minutes*. Add diced **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook until translucent, *5-10 minutes*. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) and **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #3*), cooking for another *5 minutes*. Remove from heat and transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.
4. In a large saucepan, melt 2 Tbsp. **butter**. Add 1 tsp. **rosemary**, 1 tsp. **paprika**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **MSG**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **garlic powder**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **onion powder**, pinch **nutmeg**, 1 tsp. **salt**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **black pepper**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **red pepper**. Heat on medium, stirring constantly for *30 seconds*. Sprinkle 3 Tbsp. **flour** over the butter/spice mixture using a whisk to combine. Cook, stirring constantly for *2 minutes*.
5. Gradually whisk in 2 cups of **chicken broth**, then 2 cups **milk**. Heat and whisk constantly until bubbling and thickened. Add cubes of **cream cheese** (*Medium Bowl #1*) and

cut/whisk until melted and smooth. Remove from heat and transfer to *Large Bowl #3*; set aside.

6. In *Large Bowl #4*, combine and mix blanched **broccoli** (*Medium Bowl #2*), cooked **rice**, cooked **vegetables** (*Large Bowl #2*), diced **chicken** (*Large Bowl #1*), and **sauce** (*Large Bowl #3*).
 7. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish and bake at 375°F for *20 minutes*. Remove from oven to sprinkle liberally with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **crispy fried onions**, and bake another *10 minutes*. Rest *5-10 minutes* before serving.
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Classic Braised Chicken Drumsticks with Pan Sauce

Ingredients

Chicken drumsticks	12 (3-4 lbs.)	Canned mushroom slices	12 oz.
Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.	Dried thyme	2 tsp.
Butter	6 Tbsp.	Dried rosemary	1½ tsp.
Onions, large	2	Dried sage	1 tsp.
Carrots, large	3-4	Bay leaves	3
Celery stalks	3-4	Dijon mustard	2 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	10-12 (1 head)	MSG	½ tsp.
Tomato paste	2 Tbsp.	Lemon, zested	1
White wine (optional)	½ cup	All-purpose flour	3 Tbsp.
Chicken stock	5-6 cups	Kosher salt	2 tsp.
		Black pepper	1 tsp.

Directions

Preheat oven to 275°F — Peel **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Cut **onions** into 8 wedges each; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Cut **carrots** into 2 inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Cut **celery** into 2 inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #3* — Drain **mushrooms**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #4* — Zest **lemon**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Pat dry **drumsticks** — Season **drumsticks** generously with 2 tsp. **salt** and 1 tsp. **pepper**

1. Heat **vegetable oil** in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Working in batches, sear **drumsticks** until golden brown on all sides, about 3-4 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate and set aside.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add 4 Tbsp. **butter** to the Dutch oven. Once melted, add **onion** wedges (*Medium Bowl #1*), **carrot** pieces (*Medium Bowl #2*), and **celery** pieces (*Medium Bowl #3*). Sauté until vegetables begin to soften and develop color, about 8-10 minutes. Add **garlic cloves** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook for 2 minutes more.
3. Add 2 Tbsp. **tomato paste** and cook, stirring constantly, until it darkens and becomes fragrant, about 2-3 minutes.
4. If using **white wine**, add ½ cup now and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Cook until wine is nearly evaporated, about 3-4 minutes. If not using wine, proceed to next step.
5. Add **chicken stock**, **drained mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #4*), 2 tsp. **dried thyme**, 1½ tsp. **dried rosemary**, 1 tsp. **dried sage**, **bay leaves**, 2 Tbsp. **Dijon mustard**, and ½ tsp. **MSG**. Stir to combine and bring to a simmer.

6. Return **drumsticks** to the pot, nestling them into the liquid (liquid should come halfway up the drumsticks). Cover with lid and transfer to oven. Braise for *1½-2 hours*, until **chicken** is very tender and nearly falling off the bone.
7. Remove pot from oven. Using tongs, carefully transfer **drumsticks** to a plate. Stir **lemon zest** (*Small Bowl #2*) into the braising liquid and taste for seasoning, adjusting **salt** and **pepper** as needed.
8. To thicken sauce, knead together remaining 2 Tbsp. **butter** and 3 Tbsp. **flour** to form a smooth paste (beurre manié). Return pot to stovetop over medium heat. Whisk in beurre manié, a little at a time, until sauce reaches desired consistency. Simmer for *3-5 minutes* to cook out flour taste.
9. For crispy skin: Pat **drumsticks** dry and air fry at *400°F* for *5-7 minutes* until skin is crispy and caramelized. For freezing: skip this step and proceed directly to storage.
10. Return **drumsticks** to sauce, or transfer to containers for freezing. Serve hot over rice or with crusty bread.

Equipment Required

- Large Dutch oven (6-7 quart capacity)
- Large plate or rimmed baking sheet
- Tongs
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Microplane or zester
- Small bowl (for beurre manié)
- Ladle
- Air fryer (optional, for finishing)
- Freezer-safe containers (if freezing)

Mise en Place

- Remove **drumsticks** from refrigerator *30 minutes* before cooking for even searing
- Prep all vegetables before starting - large uniform pieces ensure even cooking
- Have **stock** measured and nearby for quick addition
- Separate 2 Tbsp. **butter** for beurre manié from the 4 Tbsp. used for sautéing
- Zest **lemon** before cooking; reserve zest in small bowl

Ingredient Tips

- Choose **drumsticks** of similar size for even cooking
- Whole **garlic cloves** become sweet and tender when braised - they're delicious eaten whole
- Quality **chicken stock** makes a significant difference; low-sodium preferred for seasoning control
- If omitting **wine**, add 1-2 Tbsp. additional **lemon juice** at the end for brightness

- Canned **mushrooms** work well here; if using fresh, add them later to prevent overcooking
- **MSG** amplifies savory notes; omit if preferred without other adjustments

Preparation Tips

- Don't crowd **drumsticks** when searing - work in batches for proper browning
- Fond development is crucial - those browned bits add deep flavor
- Blooming **tomato paste** until it darkens intensifies umami
- Large vegetable pieces stay intact during long braise and provide textural contrast
- Check liquid level during braising - add more **stock** if needed
- Beurre manié should be added gradually while whisking to prevent lumps
- For stovetop braising: use lowest heat setting, check frequently to maintain bare simmer
- Pat **drumsticks** very dry before air frying for maximum crispness

Make Ahead & Storage

- Can be made up to *2 days* ahead and refrigerated
- Flavors improve overnight as they meld
- To freeze: cool completely, portion into freezer-safe containers with sauce, freeze up to *3 months*
- Freeze flat in zip-top bags for space efficiency
- Thaw overnight in refrigerator before reheating
- Reheat gently on stovetop or in *325°F* oven until warmed through, about *25-30 minutes*
- If reheating from frozen, add *15-20 minutes* to heating time
- Air fry for crispy skin after reheating if desired
- Sauce may separate when frozen; whisk while reheating to re-emulsify

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over jasmine rice cooked in **chicken stock** with dried soup vegetables and **bay leaf**
 - Excellent with mashed potatoes, egg noodles, or crusty bread for sopping up sauce
 - Garnish with fresh parsley, thyme, or chives if available
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- Vegetables from the braise are delicious served alongside
 - Pairs well with simple green salad or roasted green beans
 - For a complete meal: add roasted root vegetables or sautéed greens
 - Leftovers make excellent chicken and rice soup - add extra **stock** and shred **chicken**
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Coq au Riesling

Ingredients

Chicken thighs, bone-in	$2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 lbs	Fresh parsley	2 sprigs
Thick-cut bacon	6 oz	Bay leaves	2
Riesling wine	2 cups	Better than Bouillon, chicken	$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Leeks	4 medium	Water	$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups
Cremini mushrooms	8 oz	Heavy cream	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Butter	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	Egg yolk	1
Garlic head	1 whole	All-purpose flour	1 Tbsp
Fresh thyme	2 sprigs	Salt and black pepper	to taste

Directions

Cut **garlic** head in half horizontally; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Clean **leeks** thoroughly and slice into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch rounds; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Quarter **mushrooms**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Dice **thick-cut bacon** into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch pieces; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Chop **parsley** for garnish; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Mix **Better than Bouillon** with hot water until dissolved; set aside in *Medium Bowl #3*

1. In *Large Bowl #1*, combine **chicken thighs**, halved **garlic head** (*Small Bowl #1*), 1 sprig **thyme**, 1 sprig **parsley**, 1 **bay leaf**, and 1 tsp. **salt**. Pour in 2 cups **Riesling**. Cover and refrigerate for up to 12 hours.
2. When ready to cook, remove **chicken** from marinade and pat dry. Reserve the **wine marinade** in *Medium Bowl #4*.
3. Melt $\frac{1}{4}$ of the **butter** (2 Tbsp.) in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Cook diced **bacon** (*Small Bowl #2*) until golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and transfer to *Medium Bowl #5*; set aside.
4. Add another $\frac{1}{4}$ of **butter** (2 Tbsp.), then cook **leeks** (*Medium Bowl #1*) with a pinch of **salt** until soft, about 5 minutes. Remove to *Medium Bowl #5* with bacon.
5. Add another $\frac{1}{4}$ of **butter** (2 Tbsp.) and cook **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #2*) until golden. Remove to *Medium Bowl #5* with bacon and leeks.
6. Melt remaining 2 Tbsp. **butter**. Season **chicken** with **salt** and **pepper**, then brown on all sides until deep golden, about 8-10 minutes. Transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.
7. Lower heat and stir 1 Tbsp. **flour** into pan drippings. Cook for 2 minutes, then add reserved **wine marinade** (*Medium Bowl #4*) and **bouillon mixture** (*Medium Bowl #3*), scraping bottom of pan.
8. Return **chicken** (*Large Bowl #2*) to pot. Simmer covered for 90 minutes, until meat is very tender. Transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.

9. Whisk $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **cream** and **egg yolk** in *Small Bowl #4*. Off heat, whisk into sauce. Return to low heat and cook until thickened.
 10. Add back **bacon**, **leeks**, **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #5*), and **chicken** (*Large Bowl #2*). Warm through gently. Garnish with chopped **parsley** (*Small Bowl #3*).
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Dutch Oven Braised Pork Ribs •

Ingredients

Pork rib rack	4 lbs.	Dried thyme	1 tsp.
Pork or chicken stock	3 cups	Dried oregano	1/2 tsp.
Apple cider	8-12oz	Kosher salt	2 tsp.
Soy sauce	1/4 cup	Black pepper	1 tsp.
Worcestershire sauce	2 Tbsp.	Garlic powder	1 tsp.
Brown sugar	2 Tbsp.	Onion powder	1 tsp.
Tomato paste	4 Tbsp.	Smoked paprika	1/2 tsp.
Onion, medium	1	Chipotle powder	1/4 tsp.
Garlic cloves	1 bulb	Hot paprika	1/4 tsp.
Bay leaves	2	MSG	1/2 tsp.
Black peppercorns	1 tsp.		

Directions

Preheat oven to 275°F — Pat dry **pork ribs** — Quarter **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Smash **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2*

1. Cut **pork rib rack** into quarters for easier handling.
2. In *Small Bowl #3*, combine 2 tsp. **kosher salt**, 1 tsp. **black pepper**, 1 tsp. **garlic powder**, 1 tsp. **onion powder**, 1/2 tsp. **smoked paprika**, 1/4 tsp. **hot paprika**, 1/4 tsp. **chipotle powder**, and 1/2 tsp. **MSG**. Rub mixture evenly over all surfaces of **rib quarters**.
3. Arrange seasoned **ribs** in Dutch oven (they can overlap slightly), tucking quartered **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*), smashed **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*), **bay leaves**, **peppercorns**, 1 tsp. **dried thyme**, and 1/2 tsp. **dried oregano** around and under **ribs**.
4. In *Medium Bowl #1*, whisk together **stock**, **apple cider**, 1/4 cup **soy sauce**, 2 Tbsp. **Worcestershire sauce**, 2 Tbsp. **brown sugar**, and 4 Tbsp. **tomato paste** until well combined. Pour over **ribs**.
5. Cover Dutch oven tightly with lid and place in oven. Braise for 4-4½ hours until **ribs** are fork-tender and meat pulls easily from bone.
6. Remove from oven. Carefully transfer **ribs** from braising liquid as needed for intended use (BBQ finishing or soup preparation). Reserve braising liquid with rendered fat for soup base.

Equipment Required

- Dutch oven (6-7 quart capacity minimum)
- Small bowl (for dry rub)
- Medium bowl (for braising liquid)
- Whisk
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Tongs or slotted spoon
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Large plate or platter (for finished ribs)

Mise en Place

- Pat **ribs** completely dry with paper towels before seasoning
- Have all liquid ingredients measured and ready to whisk together
- Prepare aromatics (quarter **onion**, smash **garlic**) before starting
- Ensure Dutch oven lid fits tightly to prevent moisture loss

Ingredient Tips

- Use homemade or low-sodium **stock** for better control of final seasoning
- **Apple cider** should be unfiltered for more flavor; apple juice works as substitute
- **MSG** is optional but adds significant umami depth without altering flavor profile
- **Tomato paste** should be whisked thoroughly into liquid to prevent clumping
- Baby back ribs can substitute for spare ribs; reduce cooking time by *30 minutes*

Preparation Tips

- Cut **rack** into quarters through bone for easier handling and better liquid exposure
- Apply dry rub generously but don't let it sit more than *15 minutes* before braising (salt will draw moisture)

- **Ribs** can overlap in Dutch oven but ensure liquid reaches all pieces
- Don't lift lid during first *2½ hours* of cooking to maintain consistent temperature
- Test doneness by inserting fork between bones - meat should offer minimal resistance
- For BBQ finishing: remove **ribs** gently to preserve meat integrity for air frying
- For soup: pull meat directly from bones while warm, return to braising liquid

Make Ahead & Storage

- Entire braise can be completed up to *2 days* ahead and refrigerated in Dutch oven
- Fat will solidify on surface when cold; leave intact to protect meat, or remove if desired before reheating
- Reheat covered at *300°F* for *30-40 minutes* until warmed through
- Braising liquid without **ribs** can be frozen for up to *3 months*
- If freezing liquid, cool completely and skim excess fat before freezing

Usage Notes

- This recipe yields **ribs** suitable for both BBQ finishing and soup preparation
- For BBQ: transfer **ribs** to plate, pat dry, brush with sauce, finish in air fryer at *400°F* for *3-5 minutes*
- For soup: leave **ribs** in liquid, pull meat from bones, proceed with bean soup recipe
- Braising liquid contains rendered fat and collagen - ideal soup base requiring no additional stock
- Taste braising liquid before seasoning soup; it's already well-salted from the braise
- **Bay leaves** and **peppercorns** can be strained out before using liquid for soup

French Braised Beef •

Ingredients

Beef chuck shoulder	4–5 lbs	Black peppercorns	1 tsp.
Burgundy wine	2 cups	French dip seasoning mix	2 Tbsp.
Beef stock	2 cups	Kosher salt	1½ tsp.
Onions, large	2	Black pepper	½ tsp.
Celery stalks	3	Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	4	Pearl onions, peeled	2 cups
Tomato paste	3 Tbsp.	Cremini mushrooms	2 cups
Fresh thyme	4–5 sprigs	Fresh parsley, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Dried bay leaves	2		

Searing and Aromatics

Pat dry **beef chuck** with paper towels — Rough chop **onions** and **celery** into large chunks; combine in *Large Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Prepare **bouquet garni**: bundle fresh **thyme**, **bay leaves**, and **peppercorns** in a disposable teabag — Preheat oven to 275°F

1. Season **beef chuck** generously on all sides with 1½ tsp. **kosher salt** and ½ tsp. **black pepper**.
2. In a Dutch oven, heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** over medium-high heat until shimmering. Working carefully to avoid splatter, sear the **beef** on all sides until deeply browned, approximately 3–4 minutes per side. The goal is a rich mahogany crust. Remove **beef** and set aside in *Large Bowl #2*.
3. In the same pot, reduce heat to medium. Add rough-chopped **onions** and **celery** (*Large Bowl #1*), stirring occasionally until they begin to soften and caramelize slightly, about 5–7 minutes. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
4. Add 3 Tbsp. **tomato paste** and stir constantly for 1–2 minutes, allowing it to caramelize slightly and deepen in color. This develops savory complexity.
5. Deglaze the pot with 2 cups **Burgundy wine**, scraping up all browned fond from the bottom with a wooden spoon. Simmer for 2–3 minutes to allow alcohol to burn off slightly.
6. Return seared **beef** (*Large Bowl #2*) to the pot. Add 2 cups **beef stock** and 2 Tbsp. **French dip seasoning mix**. The liquid should come approximately one-third up the sides of the meat. Add **bouquet garni**.

The Braise

1. Bring braising liquid to a bare simmer on the stovetop, approximately 2–3 minutes.
2. Cover with the lid and transfer to the preheated 275°F oven. Braise for 3 hours, then check the meat for tenderness with a fork. It should yield easily but still hold its shape.

3. After *3 hours*, add peeled **pearl onions** and **cremini mushrooms** directly to the braising liquid, nestling them among the aromatics and meat. Return to oven, covered, for an additional *1.5–2 hours* until **beef** is completely fork-tender and vegetables are yielding but not dissolved.
4. Remove from oven. Using tongs or a slotted spoon, carefully transfer the **beef** to a warm platter, cradling it gently to prevent breaking apart. Distribute **pearl onions** and **mushrooms** around the meat.

Sauce and Service

1. Place the Dutch oven on the stovetop over medium heat. Allow the braising liquid to come to a gentle simmer. Using a skimming ladle, carefully skim the surface fat and impurities, working methodically until the surface is relatively clear. This typically requires *3–5 minutes* of gentle skimming.
2. The sauce should have reduced naturally to approximately one-third of its original volume, yielding a silky, glossy consistency that coats the back of a spoon. If it appears too thin, continue simmering gently until it reaches desired body, approximately *2–3 minutes* more. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional **salt** and **pepper** as needed.
3. Remove and discard **bouquet garni**.
4. Pour sauce over **beef**, **pearl onions**, and **mushrooms**. Garnish generously with fresh **parsley**. Serve immediately with mashed potatoes and supplemental beef stock gravy on the side.

Equipment Required

- 5–6 quart enameled Dutch oven with self-basting lid
- Large skillet or sauté pan for searing (optional; can use Dutch oven)
- Wooden spoon for stirring and scraping fond
- Tongs or slotted spoon for handling meat
- Skimming ladle with perforations
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Paper towels for patting dry
- Disposable cotton teabags (or cheesecloth bundle)
- Warm platter for resting meat
- Instant-read thermometer (optional but helpful)

Mise en Place

- Ensure **beef chuck** is at room temperature before searing—remove from refrigerator *30–45 minutes* prior
- Peel **pearl onions** and clean **mushrooms** well in advance; store in separate containers
- Rough chop **onions** and **celery** into large, uniform chunks
- Mince **garlic** fresh just before use
- Measure all liquids and seasonings
- Assemble **bouquet garni** in teabag
- Measure **French dip seasoning mix**

Ingredient Tips

- Select a quality Burgundy wine—Pinot Noir or a rustic Côtes du Bourgogne works well. Avoid heavily oaked wines; the braise will concentrate and intensify the flavors
- Chuck shoulder with good marbling ensures richness and tenderness; ask your butcher for a single large roast rather than portioned pieces

- Beef stock should be homemade or high-quality store-bought; weak stock will result in thin, unsatisfying sauce
- French dip seasoning mix varies by brand; look for onion-forward blends without excessive salt
- Pearl onions vary in size; uniformity helps with even cooking
- Cremini mushrooms maintain better texture than button mushrooms; avoid portobello, which can become mushy
- Fresh thyme is essential for the bouquet garni; dried thyme becomes powdery and unpleasant

Preparation Tips

- Pat the **beef** thoroughly dry before searing; moisture prevents proper browning
- Develop a deep mahogany crust during searing—this Maillard reaction creates the foundation of flavor
- Do not skip the fond-scraping step; those browned bits contain concentrated savory compounds
- Allow **tomato paste** to caramelize briefly before deglazing; this concentrates and deepens its umami impact
- The braising liquid should come only one-third up the meat, not submerge it; this creates a humid oven environment without excessive stewing
- Do not stir the braise during cooking; resist the urge to check frequently. The self-basting lid does the work
- Add **pearl onions** and **mushrooms** late to preserve their distinct texture and flavor
- Skim fat methodically and gently; aggressive skimming can cloud the sauce
- Taste the sauce before service; the braising aromatics may have rendered differently than expected, requiring seasoning adjustment

Make Ahead & Storage

- The **beef** can be seared and the braise begun up to *4 hours* ahead; add **pearl onions** and **mushrooms** only when you plan to finish
- Prepare all vegetables and seasonings the morning of service
- Leftover braise keeps refrigerated for up to *4 days*; the flavors actually deepen overnight
- To reheat: gently warm in a *325°F* oven, covered, for *20–30 minutes* until heated through. Add a splash of beef stock if sauce has reduced too much during storage
- The braise does not freeze well due to the delicate texture of the meat and the nature of the sauce emulsion

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over creamy mashed potatoes, allowing them to absorb the silky sauce
 - Accompany with supplemental beef stock gravy on the side for guests who prefer additional sauce
 - A simple green salad with vinaigrette provides brightness and cuts through the richness
 - Crusty bread for soaking up every drop of sauce is essential
 - The same Burgundy wine used in the braise pairs beautifully for drinking; continue with it at table
 - Garnish generously with fresh **parsley** just before service for color and herbaceous freshness
 - Allow guests to rest the platter for *5 minutes* before serving, preserving the meat's internal juices
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Hatch Green Chile Chicken Enchiladas

Ingredients

Chicken breasts	2 lbs	Heavy cream	1 cup
Hatch green chiles	2 cups	Chicken broth	1 cup
Onion, diced	1 medium	All-purpose flour	1/4 cup
Garlic cloves, minced	3	Butter	1/4 cup
Cilantro, chopped	1/4 cup	Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.
Lime juice	2 Tbsp.	Ground cumin	2 tsp.
Corn tortillas	12 (6-inch)	Dried oregano	1 tsp.
Monterey Jack cheese	1 pound	Salt	1 tsp.
Sour cream	1 cup	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.

Roasted Hatch Green Chiles

Preheat air fryer to $400^{\circ}F$

1. Wash and dry the **Hatch green chiles**.
2. Place **chiles** in the air fryer basket in a single layer, leaving space between each chile.
3. Air fry at $400^{\circ}F$ for $5-7$ minutes, then flip and cook for another $5-7$ minutes until the skin is blistered and charred.
4. Remove from the air fryer and place in a bowl covered with plastic wrap to steam for $10-15$ minutes.
5. Once cooled, peel off the skin, remove seeds, and chop the **chiles**.

(Continue with enchilada recipe...)

Hatch Green Chile Chicken Enchiladas

Preheat oven to 350°F — Grease a 9 inch \times 13 inch baking dish — Shred **Monterey Jack cheese**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Juice **lime**; set aside in *Small Bowl #4*

1. In a large skillet, heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** over medium-high heat. Season **chicken breasts** with **salt** and **pepper**, then cook until golden brown and cooked through, about *6-8 minutes* per side. Remove from heat, let cool, then shred the **chicken**; set aside in *Large Bowl #2*.
 2. In the same skillet, sauté **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*) until translucent, about *5 minutes*. Add **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) and cook for another *1 minute*. Add 1 cup of chopped **roasted Hatch green chiles**, 2 tsp. **cumin**, and 1 tsp. **oregano**. Cook for *2-3 minutes* until fragrant.
 3. Add shredded **chicken** (*Large Bowl #2*) to the skillet and mix well. Season with **salt** and **pepper** to taste. Transfer to *Large Bowl #2*; set aside.
 4. In a saucepan, melt $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **butter** over medium heat. Whisk in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **flour** and cook for *1-2 minutes*. Gradually whisk in 1 cup **chicken broth**, 1 cup **heavy cream**, and 1 cup **sour cream**. Bring to a simmer and cook until thickened, about *5 minutes*. Stir in remaining 1 cup of **roasted Hatch green chiles**, **lime juice** (*Small Bowl #4*), and **cilantro** (*Small Bowl #3*). Season with **salt** and **pepper** to taste. Transfer to *Medium Bowl #1*; set aside.
 5. Warm **corn tortillas** in the microwave or on a griddle until pliable. Dip each **tortilla** in the sauce (*Medium Bowl #1*), then fill with the **chicken** mixture (*Large Bowl #2*) and some **Monterey Jack cheese** (*Large Bowl #1*). Roll up and place seam-side down in the prepared baking dish.
 6. Pour the remaining sauce (*Medium Bowl #1*) over the **enchiladas** and sprinkle with remaining **Monterey Jack cheese** (*Large Bowl #1*).
 7. Bake for *25-30 minutes*, until the **cheese** is melted and bubbly.
 8. Garnish with additional **cilantro**, if desired. Serve hot with your favorite sides like **Mexican rice**, **refried beans**, or a fresh salad.
-

Jerk Chicken Rasta Pasta

Ingredients

Boneless chicken thighs	2 lbs.	Green bell pepper	1
Jerk seasoning	5 Tbsp.	Green onions	1 bunch
Better Than Bouillon chicken	1 Tbsp.	Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.
Water	1 cup	Heavy cream	1/2 cup
Onion, small	1	Parmesan cheese	1/2 cup
Garlic cloves	7	Cilantro	1/4 cup
Fresh thyme sprigs	2	Salt	to taste
Penne pasta	16 oz.	Black pepper	to taste
Red bell pepper	1		
Yellow bell pepper	1		

Directions

Preheat Instant Pot — Quarter **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Smash 4 **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Mince remaining 3 **garlic cloves**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Slice **bell peppers** into strips; combine in *Medium Bowl #1* — Slice **green onions**; set aside in *Small Bowl #4* — Grate **Parmesan cheese**; set aside in *Small Bowl #5* — Chop **cilantro** roughly; set aside in *Small Bowl #6*

1. Coat **chicken thighs** thoroughly with 3 Tbsp. **jerk seasoning**, rubbing it in well.
2. Add **water** and **Better Than Bouillon** to Instant Pot and stir to combine.
3. Place seasoned **chicken** in the broth and add quartered **onion**, 4 smashed **garlic cloves**, and **thyme** sprigs.
4. Seal the Instant Pot and cook on High Pressure for 15 minutes, followed by a 10-minute natural release.
5. Remove **chicken** to *Large Bowl #1* and shred using two forks. Reserve 1/4 cup of the cooking broth in *Small Bowl #7* and stir 2-3 Tbsp. back into the shredded **chicken** (*Large Bowl #1*) to keep it moist.
6. Cook **pasta** in salted water according to package directions until al dente. Drain and set aside in *Large Bowl #2*.
7. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** over medium-high heat. Add **bell peppers** (*Medium Bowl #1*) and half the **green onions** (*Small Bowl #4*), sautéing for 3-4 minutes until peppers begin to soften but remain crisp.
8. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #3*) and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant.
9. Sprinkle in remaining 2 Tbsp. **jerk seasoning** and stir to coat vegetables.

10. Pour in the reserved **chicken broth** ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup, *Small Bowl #7*) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **heavy cream**. Bring to a simmer.
11. Reduce heat to medium-low and let sauce simmer for *3-4 minutes* until it begins to thicken.
12. Stir in the **Parmesan cheese** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup, *Small Bowl #5*) until melted and sauce is smooth.
13. Add shredded **jerk chicken** (*Large Bowl #1*) and cooked **pasta** (*Large Bowl #2*), tossing to coat evenly with the sauce. Season with **salt** and **black pepper** to taste.
14. Serve immediately, garnished with remaining **green onions** (*Small Bowl #4*) and chopped **cilantro** (*Small Bowl #6*).

Equipment Required

- Instant Pot or pressure cooker
- Large pasta pot (6-8 quart)
- Colander
- Large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp chef's knife
- Cutting board
- Box grater or microplane for cheese
- Two forks for shredding chicken
- Medium bowl for shredded chicken
- Small bowl for reserved broth

Mise en Place

- Measure all seasonings and spices before beginning
- Allow heavy cream to come to room temperature
- Prepare all vegetables before starting to cook
- Grate cheese while chicken cooks in Instant Pot
- Have all ingredients within arm's reach before beginning sauce
- Keep pasta water heating while preparing the chicken

Ingredient Tips

- Boneless chicken thighs provide more flavor and moisture than breast meat
- Store-bought jerk seasoning works well, but use a high-quality brand for authentic flavor
- For homemade jerk seasoning, combine allspice, thyme, cayenne, garlic powder, onion powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, brown sugar, and salt
- Freshly grated Parmesan is crucial - pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents

- For extra heat, add 1-2 teaspoons of minced scotch bonnet or habanero pepper
- Bell peppers can be substituted with poblano for a slightly spicier version

Preparation Tips

- Allow a full natural release if time permits - it keeps the chicken more tender
- Reserve more cooking broth than called for in case the sauce needs thinning
- Don't overcook the pasta - it will continue to absorb liquid in the sauce
- For bell peppers, aim for softened but still slightly crisp for best texture
- If sauce becomes too thick, add a splash of reserved cooking broth
- If sauce is too thin, simmer a few extra minutes before adding pasta
- Keep pasta very al dente as it will continue cooking in the hot sauce

Make Ahead & Storage

- Chicken can be prepared up to 2 days ahead and refrigerated
- Complete dish keeps well refrigerated for up to 3 days
- When reheating, add a splash of chicken broth or cream to revive the sauce
- Reheat gently on stovetop over medium-low heat
- Microwave reheating works but may cause pasta to become slightly rubbery
- Freeze portions without pasta, then prepare fresh pasta when reheating
- Garnish with fresh cilantro only just before serving

Serving Suggestions

- Serve with fried plantains for an authentic Caribbean pairing
- A simple green salad with lime vinaigrette balances the rich pasta
- Garlic bread made with Caribbean-style butter is an excellent side
- For a complete meal, add a tropical fruit salad as a refreshing dessert
- Offer extra jerk seasoning at the table for those who prefer more heat
- Jamaican Red Stripe beer or a fruity rum punch complement the flavors
- For a colorful presentation, serve in a large white bowl to highlight the vibrant peppers

King Ranch Casserole •

Ingredients

Chicken, boneless	2 lbs	White pepper	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Water	2 cups	Ground nutmeg	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp.
Mexican spice mix	3 Tbsp.	MSG	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Caldo de tomate bouillon	1 Tbsp.	Lard	2 Tbsp. + 1 tsp.
Better Than Bouillon - Chicken ...	1 Tbsp.	Onion	1 large
Butter	4 Tbsp.	Bell pepper	1
Flour	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	Ro-Tel	10-14 oz. can
Heavy cream	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	Corn tortillas, medium	14
Chicken broth	1 cup	Sharp cheddar cheese	16 oz.
Fresh mushrooms	8 oz.		
Garlic cloves	4-6		
Onion powder	1 tsp.		

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Quarter **corn tortillas**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Grease a 9 inch \times 13 inch baking dish with 1 tsp. **lard** — Dice **onion**, **bell pepper**, and **mushrooms**; combine in *Large Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Shred **cheese**; set aside in *Large Bowl #2* — Butterfly cut chicken breasts or thighs — Heat 2 cups of **water**

1. Mix **hot water**, **bouillon**, **caldo de tomate**, and **Mexican spice mix**.
2. Add the **broth** and **chicken** to a pressure cooker (e.g. Instant Pot).
3. Cook on *high* pressure for *6 minutes*, then allow for natural release for *5 minutes*.
4. Remove the **chicken** and shred it in a large bowl. Reserve 1 cup of the **cooking broth**.
5. In a large saucepan, melt 4 Tbsp. **butter** over medium heat. Add **mushrooms** from *Large Bowl #1* and cook until they release their moisture, about *5 minutes*. Add **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook for *1 minute*.
6. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **flour** over the mushroom mixture and cook, stirring constantly, for *2 minutes*.
7. Gradually whisk in $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups **heavy cream** and 1 cup **chicken broth**. Add 1 tsp. **onion powder**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **white pepper**, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. **ground nutmeg**, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **MSG**. Simmer, stirring frequently, until thickened, about *5 minutes*. Transfer to *Medium Bowl #2*; set aside.
8. In a large skillet, melt 2 Tbsp. **lard** over medium heat. Sauté **onion** and **bell pepper** from *Large Bowl #1* for *5 minutes*.
9. Raise heat to *high* and lightly scorch the **onion** and **bell pepper** for *1-2 minutes*.

10. Reduce heat to *medium*. Add **cream sauce** (*Medium Bowl #2*), **Ro-Tel**, and reserved **cooking broth**. Stir to combine.
11. Bring to a simmer, reduce heat to *medium-low*, and stir occasionally for *5 minutes*.
12. Add the **shredded chicken** to the sauce and stir to coat evenly. Transfer to *Large Bowl #3*; set aside. Remove from heat.
13. Layer ingredients in the prepared baking dish:
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ of the **tortilla quarters** (*Medium Bowl #1*)
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ of the **chicken mixture** (*Large Bowl #3*)
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ of the **shredded cheese** (*Large Bowl #2*)Repeat layers, then top with remaining **tortillas** (*Medium Bowl #1*) and **cheese** (*Large Bowl #2*).
14. Bake uncovered for *30-35 minutes* until bubbly and cheese is melted.
15. Let stand for *10 minutes* before serving.

Equipment Required

- Pressure cooker or Instant Pot
- 9x13 inch baking dish
- Large skillet (12-inch preferred)
- Large saucepan for cream sauce
- Large mixing bowl for chicken
- Medium bowl for cheese
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Whisk
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Box grater for cheese
- Colander (optional, for draining Ro-Tel)

Mise en Place

- Bring **cream** to room temperature
- Cut and prep all vegetables before starting
- Have all measured ingredients ready before beginning the sauce
- Shred cheese while chicken cooks
- Quarter tortillas before starting assembly

Ingredient Tips

- Use cup4cup or King Arthur Measure for Measure gluten-free flour for best roux results
- Fresh cremini mushrooms provide better flavor than white button
- Extra-sharp cheddar adds more depth of flavor
- If **Mexican spice mix** unavailable, combine equal parts ground cumin, chili powder, and paprika
- Authentic **lard** makes a difference - avoid hydrogenated versions

Preparation Tips

- Cook roux until it smells nutty but watch carefully as gluten-free flour can burn quickly
- Don't skip scorching the vegetables - it adds essential flavor
- Press excess moisture from mushrooms while cooking for better sauce texture
- Keep sauce warm until assembly to maintain proper consistency
- Warm tortillas slightly before cutting to prevent cracking

Make Ahead & Storage

- Chicken can be cooked and shredded up to *2 days* ahead
- Complete sauce up to *24 hours* in advance
- Assembled casserole can be refrigerated up to *24 hours* before baking
- If made ahead, add *10 minutes* to baking time
- Leftovers keep for *3 days*; reheat covered at *350°F*

Serving Suggestions

- Serve with Mexican rice and refried beans
- Garnish with diced avocado and fresh cilantro
- Offer sour cream and hot sauce on the side
- Can be frozen in individual portions for *2 months*

Korean BBQ Drumsticks •

Ingredients

Gochujang	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	Black pepper	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Soy sauce	6 Tbsp.	Chicken drumsticks	12-14
Honey	4 Tbsp.	Sesame seeds	2 Tbsp.
Brown sugar	6 Tbsp.	Green onions, sliced	4
Garlic, minced	8 cloves		
Fresh ginger, grated	2 Tbsp.		
Sesame oil	2 Tbsp.		
Rice vinegar	2 Tbsp.		
Mirin	4 Tbsp.		

Directions

Mince garlic; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Grate ginger; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Slice green onions; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Pat dry **drumsticks**

1. In *Medium Bowl #1*, combine all sauce ingredients: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup gochujang, 6 Tbsp. soy sauce, 4 Tbsp. honey, 6 Tbsp. brown sugar, garlic (*Small Bowl #1*), ginger (*Small Bowl #2*), 2 Tbsp. sesame oil, 2 Tbsp. rice vinegar, 4 Tbsp. mirin, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. black pepper. Mix thoroughly and divide: $\frac{2}{3}$ for marinade (*Medium Bowl #2*), $\frac{1}{3}$ for basting (*Small Bowl #4*, store separately).
2. Place **drumsticks** in a large container, pour marinade portion (*Medium Bowl #2*) over chicken. Cover and refrigerate for 2-4 hours.
3. Transfer **drumsticks** to slow cooker, discarding used marinade. Cook on *LOW* for 6-8 hours or *HIGH* for 3-4 hours until internal temperature reaches 165°F .
4. Preheat air fryer to 400°F . Working in batches of 4-6, brush **drumsticks** with reserved sauce (*Small Bowl #4*) and air fry 3-5 minutes until crispy, brushing again halfway through. Keep finished batches warm at 200°F .
5. Garnish with 2 Tbsp. sesame seeds and green onions (*Small Bowl #3*). Serve immediately while crispy.

Tex-Mex Pulled Chicken •

Ingredients

Chicken thighs,	3-5 lbs	Caldo de tomate	2 Tbsp.
Yellow onion, large	1	Bay leaves	2
Garlic cloves	4-6	Limes	2
Mexican spice blend	5 Tbsp	Fresh cilantro, chopped	1/2 cup
Herdez salsa ranchera	7 oz. can	Kosher salt	2 tsp.
Chicken stock	2 1/2 cups		

Directions

Preheat oven to 275°F — Pat **chicken thighs** completely dry — Large dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Juice **limes** ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup); set aside in *Small Bowl #4*

1. Pat **chicken thighs** completely dry with paper towels. Season skin side lightly with **kosher salt**. Heat dutch oven over medium-high heat with no added fat. Place **thighs** skin-side down and do not move them. Sear for *8-10 minutes* until deeply golden-brown and skin releases easily from the pan. Flip briefly for *1-2 minutes*, then remove **chicken** to *Large Bowl #1*. Pour rendered fat into *Small Bowl #5*, reserving 2 Tbsp. in the pot along with all the fond.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add diced **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*) to the fond, stirring to coat in fat. Cook *5-7 minutes*, stirring occasionally, until edges start browning—not just translucent, we want some color and caramelization.
3. Add 4-5 Tbsp. **Mexican spice blend** to the **onions**. Cook *45-60 seconds*, stirring constantly, until a toasted fragrance develops. You will smell the distinct shift from raw spice to bloomed aromatic. Add **salsa** to stop the bloom. Scrape all the fond from the bottom of the pot.
4. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) to the tomato mixture and cook for *30 seconds*. Add $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups **chicken stock**, 2 Tbsp. **caldo de tomate**, and 2 **bay leaves**. Stir well and bring to a simmer. Taste the braising liquid—it should be intensely flavored and slightly too salty. If not sufficiently seasoned, add another $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. **caldo de tomate**.
5. Return **chicken thighs** (*Large Bowl #1*) to the pot skin-side up. Liquid should come halfway up the **chicken**; add more **stock** if needed. Bring to a bare simmer on the stovetop, then cover with a tight-fitting lid. Transfer to the preheated 275°F oven and braise for *2 1/2-3 hours*.
6. Check at *2 1/2 hours*: the meat should pull from the bone with zero resistance. If still slightly firm, continue braising for another *30 minutes*.
7. Remove **chicken** from the pot and let cool for *10 minutes* to make handling easier. Remove skin and bones, etc. Transfer to *Large Bowl #2*.

8. In *Large Bowl #3*, shred the **chicken** (*Large Bowl #2*) into bite-size pieces, maintaining some texture. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the **braising liquid**, 2 Tbsp. **reserved chicken fat** (*Small Bowl #5*), **lime juice** ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup, *Small Bowl #4*), and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **cilantro** (*Small Bowl #3*). Fold gently to combine. Add more **braising liquid** as needed until moist but not soupy.
9. Serve immediately in tacos, or hold warm. This **chicken** benefits from resting *15-30 minutes* to allow flavors to marry fully.

Equipment Required

- Dutch oven (5-7 quart capacity, oven-safe to 300°F)
- Tight-fitting lid for dutch oven
- Large plate for holding seared chicken
- Fine mesh strainer
- Medium saucepan (for reduction)
- Small bowl (for reserved fat)
- Cutting board and chef's knife
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Paper towels
- Tongs or fork (for handling chicken)
- Ladle or large spoon (for skimming fat)
- Two forks (for shredding chicken)
- Citrus juicer (optional but helpful)

Mise en Place

- Remove **chicken thighs** from refrigerator *30 minutes* before cooking to take chill off
- Pat **chicken** completely dry—moisture prevents proper searing
- Prepare all vegetables before starting: dice **onion**, mince **garlic**, chop **cilantro**
- Measure **spice blend** and set near stove for quick addition
- Have all liquids measured and ready—braising moves quickly after sear
- Open **salsa** can and have ready to add immediately after spices
- Juice **limes** after **chicken** goes in oven (keeps juice fresh)

Ingredient Tips

- Bone-in, skin-on thighs are essential—boneless will not achieve the same tenderness or gelatin-rich sauce
- Choose thighs of similar size for even cooking

- **Herdez salsa ranchera** is preferred for its roasted pepper depth; substitute with quality jarred salsa if needed
- If your **Mexican spice blend** is older than *6 months*, increase quantity by 1 Tbsp as potency fades
- Use fresh **garlic** only—powdered garlic is already in the spice blend
- **Chicken stock** quality matters; homemade or low-sodium store-bought preferred
- Reserve rendered **chicken fat**—it's gold for finishing and adds authentic richness
- Fresh **Mexican limes** (Key limes) are more authentic but regular Persian limes work well

Preparation Tips

- The sear is critical: don't rush it. Deeply golden skin = maximum fond = concentrated flavor
- Resist moving the **chicken** during searing—let it release naturally when ready
- The fond (brown bits) contains concentrated Maillard compounds; scrape thoroughly
- Brown the **onion** edges—this adds another layer of caramelization
- Bloom spices until fragrant shift occurs, usually *45-60 seconds*—under-blooming leaves raw taste, over-blooming creates bitterness
- Add **salsa** immediately after blooming to halt cooking and prevent burning
- Taste braising liquid before adding **chicken**—should be intensely flavored
- During braise, liquid should barely simmer; vigorous bubbling means oven is too hot
- Skim fat before reduction—too much fat makes sauce greasy rather than rich
- Reduce sauce properly—half volume concentrates flavor exponentially
- Add **lime juice** and **cilantro** only at the end to preserve brightness
- Shred **chicken** to bite-size pieces, not fine threads—texture matters

Make Ahead & Storage

- Can be made up to *3 days* ahead through step 10; refrigerate in sauce
- Flavor actually improves after *24 hours* as spices continue integrating
- If made ahead, add fresh **lime juice** and **cilantro** when reheating
- Reheat gently in covered pot over low heat, stirring occasionally
- Add splash of **stock** if sauce has tightened during refrigeration
- Can be frozen for up to *3 months*; thaw overnight in refrigerator
- After thawing, refresh with additional **lime juice** and **cilantro**
- Leftover rendered **chicken fat** can be refrigerated for *1 week* and used for sautéing vegetables or making rice

Serving Suggestions

- Serve in warm corn or flour tortillas with diced **onion**, **cilantro**, and **lime** wedges
- Excellent with pickled jalapeños, sliced radishes, or quick-pickled red onions
- Top with crumbled queso fresco, cotija, or shredded Monterey Jack
- Pair with Mexican rice, refried beans, or charred street corn
- Makes exceptional enchiladas—use as filling with verde or roja sauce

- Works beautifully in tortas, quesadillas, or burrito bowls
- For tostadas: crisp tortillas, spread refried beans, top with **chicken**, shredded lettuce, Mexican crema
- Leftover **chicken** makes outstanding chilaquiles for breakfast
- Consider crispy skin garnish: remove skin before braising, roast separately until crispy, crumble over tacos
- Traditional accompaniments: salsa verde, salsa roja, pickled carrots and jalapeños, lime wedges, fresh tortilla chips

Flavor Profile Notes

- This recipe achieves depth through layering: seared proteins, bloomed spices, reduced sauce, bright finish
- The **Mexican spice blend** with cinnamon and cloves provides northern Mexican/mole-adjacent complexity
- Gelatin from bones creates luxurious mouthfeel and helps sauce cling to meat
- Reserved **chicken fat** adds authentic richness without greasiness when used judiciously
- The acid-fat-salt-umami balance is critical: **lime** cuts richness, **salt** amplifies everything, bouillon/caldo provide savory depth
- Finishing with fresh **cilantro** and **lime** preserves brightness that would be lost during long braise

Chapter 6

SAUCES AND SEASONINGS

Berbere Spice Blend

Ingredients

Sweet paprika	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	Ground cardamom	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Cayenne pepper	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp.	Ground cinnamon	1 Tbsp.
Fenugreek seeds	3 Tbsp.	Ground ginger	2 tsp.
Coriander seeds	2 Tbsp.	Ground turmeric	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Cumin seeds	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp.	Ground cloves	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Black peppercorns	2 tsp.	Dried thyme	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Allspice berries	1 tsp.		

Directions

Yield: approximately 1 cup

1. Toast **fenugreek seeds** in a dry skillet over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, for *2-3 minutes* until fragrant and darkened one shade. Remove immediately when nutty, maple-like aroma develops. Transfer to a plate to cool.
2. Toast **coriander seeds** in the same skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently, for *3-4 minutes* until fragrant and slightly darker. Transfer to cool.
3. Toast **cumin seeds**, **black peppercorns**, and **allspice berries** together over medium heat, stirring constantly, for *2-3 minutes* until **cumin** becomes fragrant and darkens slightly. Transfer to cool.
4. Let all toasted spices cool for *5 minutes*. Grind each group separately in a spice grinder or mortar and pestle to a fine powder. **Fenugreek** is particularly hard—grind until no large pieces remain.
5. In a medium bowl, combine all ground toasted spices with **sweet paprika**, **cayenne pepper**, **ground cardamom**, **ground cinnamon**, **ground ginger**, **ground turmeric**, **ground cloves**, and **dried thyme**.
6. Whisk thoroughly for *2-3 minutes* to ensure even distribution of all spices. Optionally sift for ultra-fine texture.
7. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place. Peak flavor within *2-3 months*, still good for *6 months*. Flavor mellows and marries over the first week.

Usage Notes

For stews and braises, use *2-3 Tbsp.* per pound of meat. Bloom **berbere** in oil or butter over medium heat for *1-2 minutes* before adding liquids to fully develop aromatic compounds. The spices require fat and time to release their complete flavor complexity.

Italian Sausage & San Marzano Tomato Sauce •

Ingredients

Italian sausage	1 lb.	San Marzano tomatoes, whole . . . 24 oz. can
Yellow onion, large	1	Tomato paste 3 Tbsp.
Carrots, medium	2	Italian seasoning 2-3 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	8	Brown sugar $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Zucchini, medium	1	Chicken stock as needed
Mushrooms, sliced	8 oz. can	Lemon juice 3 Tbsp.
Red wine	8 oz.	
Prego chunky garden style sauce	24 oz. jar	

Directions

Dice **onion**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Dice **carrots** fine; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Quarter **zucchini** lengthwise and slice into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #3* — Drain **mushrooms**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #4* — Crush **San Marzano tomatoes** by hand; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Open **red wine** to breathe

1. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, brown **Italian sausage** over medium-high heat, breaking into bite-sized pieces. Cook until well-browned and cooked through, about *8-10 minutes*. Remove **sausage** with slotted spoon and set aside, leaving rendered fat in pot.
2. Reduce heat to medium and add diced **onion** (*Medium Bowl #1*) to the rendered fat. Cook until translucent and softened, about *5 minutes*.
3. Add diced **carrots** (*Medium Bowl #2*) and cook for additional *5 minutes*, stirring occasionally.
4. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), sliced **zucchini** (*Medium Bowl #3*), and drained **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #4*). Cook for *2-3 minutes* until **garlic** is fragrant.
5. Pour in 8 oz. **red wine** to deglaze, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pot. Cook until wine reduces by half, about *3-4 minutes*.
6. Stir in 3 Tbsp. **tomato paste** and cook for *1-2 minutes* until it darkens slightly and becomes fragrant.
7. Add 24 oz. **Prego sauce**, hand-crushed **San Marzano tomatoes** with their juices (*Large Bowl #1*), 2-3 Tbsp. **Italian seasoning**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **brown sugar**. Return browned **sausage** to pot and stir to combine.
8. Bring to a gentle simmer, then reduce heat to low. Simmer uncovered for *2 hours*, stirring occasionally and scraping bottom to prevent sticking. Sauce should reduce and concentrate significantly.

9. During final *30 minutes*, add **lemon juice**, and **chicken stock** as needed if sauce becomes too thick. Taste and adjust with additional **brown sugar** or **Italian seasoning** as needed.
10. Serve immediately over pasta or cool completely before storing.

Equipment Required

- Large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven (6-8 quart capacity)
- Sharp chef's knife and cutting board
- Large wooden spoon or spatula
- Slotted spoon for removing sausage
- Can opener
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Large bowl for crushed tomatoes
- Ladle for serving
- Timer for monitoring cook time

Mise en Place

- Complete all vegetable prep before starting
- Open and crush **San Marzano tomatoes** by hand in bowl
- Have **wine** open and measured
- Pre-measure **Italian seasoning** and **brown sugar**
- Keep **chicken stock** nearby for final adjustments
- Reserve **lemon juice** for finishing

Ingredient Tips

- Use high-quality bulk **Italian sausage** from butcher for best flavor
- San Marzano DOP tomatoes provide superior sweetness and acidity
- Crushing tomatoes by hand creates better texture than machine processing
- Use dry red wine you'd drink - **Merlot**, **Chianti**, or **Côtes du Rhône** work well
- **Italian seasoning** should be basil and thyme heavy with oregano and touch of rosemary
- Fresh **lemon juice** is essential for proper acid balance

Preparation Tips

- Don't skip browning the **sausage** - the fond creates essential flavor base
- Maintain gentle simmer throughout long cook to prevent scorching
- Stir occasionally and scrape bottom to prevent sticking
- Sauce should reduce by about one-third during *2 hour* cook
- Taste and adjust seasoning progressively, not just at end
- Final consistency should coat pasta without being too thick
- Add **lemon juice** off heat to preserve brightness

Make Ahead & Storage

- Sauce improves with overnight rest - flavors meld beautifully
- Refrigerate up to *5 days* or freeze up to *3 months*
- Reheat gently, adding **chicken stock** if needed to restore consistency
- Can double recipe easily for batch cooking
- Freeze in portion-sized containers for quick weeknight meals
- Add fresh **lemon juice** when reheating for brightness

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over **spaghetti**, **rigatoni**, or **penne** pasta
- Reserve pasta water to adjust sauce consistency if needed
- Garnish with fresh **basil**, **Parmesan**, and cracked pepper
- Pairs excellently with garlic bread and Caesar salad
- Makes enough sauce for *1½ pounds* of pasta
- Also excellent as base for lasagna or baked ziti
- Serve with robust red wine like **Chianti** or **Sangiovese**

Jamaican Jerk Seasoning

Ingredients

Ground allspice	3 Tbsp.	Black pepper, ground	2 tsp.
Dark brown sugar	2 Tbsp.	Cinnamon, ground	1 tsp.
Scotch bonnet powder	1½ Tbsp.	Nutmeg, ground	1 tsp.
Onion powder	2 Tbsp.	Cloves, ground	½ tsp.
Garlic powder	2 Tbsp.	Coriander, ground	1 tsp.
Thyme, dried	2 Tbsp.	TruLime powder	2 tsp.
Ginger, ground	1 Tbsp.	Kosher salt	1 Tbsp.
Green onion, dried	1 Tbsp.		

Directions

Gather all spices and powders — Have measuring spoons ready — Prepare airtight container for storage

1. Measure all ingredients accurately and add to a large mixing bowl: **ground allspice, brown sugar, scotch bonnet powder, onion powder, garlic powder, dried thyme, ground ginger, dried green onion, ground black pepper, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, ground cloves, ground coriander, TruLime powder, and kosher salt.**
 2. Whisk thoroughly until all ingredients are well incorporated and the mixture appears uniform in color with no visible clumps.
 3. Transfer to an airtight container or glass jar with a tight-fitting lid.
 4. Allow flavors to marry for at least *24 hours* before using for best results.
 5. Store in a cool, dark place for up to *6 months*.
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Mexican Spice Blend •

This Mexican Spice Blend is inspired by Tex-Mex and northern Mexican cuisine. It combines smoky, spicy, and earthy notes to create a versatile seasoning mix. Makes 1 cup.

Ingredients

Black pepper, ground	1 tsp.
Cayenne pepper	1/4 tsp.
Chili powder	4 tsp.
Chipotle powder	1 tsp.
Cinnamon, ground	1 tsp.
Cloves, ground	1/2 tsp.
Coriander, ground	2 Tbsp
Cumin, ground	4 Tbsp
Garlic powder	2 tsp
Mexican oregano	2 tsp
Onion powder	2 tsp
Paprika, smoked	2 Tbsp

Thai Peanut Sauce (Easy)

Ingredients

Garlic cloves	2	Turbinado sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Lime	1	Tamarind paste	2 Tbsp.
Creamy peanut butter	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	Water	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Thai red curry paste	2-4 Tbsp.	Salt	to taste
Coconut milk	13.5 oz. can		

Directions

Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Juice **lime**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2*

1. In a medium saucepan, whisk together **coconut milk**, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup **peanut butter**, 2-4 Tbsp. **curry paste**, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **turbinado sugar**, 2 Tbsp. **tamarind paste**, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **water**, minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), and **lime juice** (*Small Bowl #2*).
2. Heat over medium-low heat, whisking constantly until smooth and well combined, about *5 minutes*.
3. Taste and adjust seasoning with **salt**, additional **curry paste** for heat, or **turbinado sugar** for sweetness.
4. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to *1 week*. Reheat gently before serving, adding water if needed to thin.

Makes approximately *2½ cups*

Note: Adjust **curry paste** amount based on desired spice level.

Serve as a dipping sauce for spring rolls, satay, or toss with noodles and vegetables.

Thai Peanut Sauce (Nam Jim Thua)

Ingredients

Coconut cream	1 cup	Garlic cloves, minced	3
Thai red curry paste	2 Tbsp.	Fresh lime juice	2 Tbsp.
Natural peanut butter	1 cup	Roasted peanuts, crushed	1/4 cup
Palm sugar (or brown sugar)	1/3 cup	Salt	1/2 tsp.
Fish sauce	2 Tbsp.	Water	1/4-1/2 cup
Tamarind paste	1 Tbsp.		
Fresh ginger, minced	1 Tbsp.		

Directions

Mince **ginger** and **garlic**; combine in *Small Bowl #1* — Crush **roasted peanuts**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Juice **lime**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Chop **palm sugar** if using block form; set aside in *Small Bowl #4*

1. In a heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat, cook **coconut cream** until it begins to separate and the oil rises to the surface, about *3-4 minutes*.
2. Add **Thai red curry paste** to the separated coconut cream and fry until fragrant and the oil turns slightly red, about *2 minutes*.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add **peanut butter** and stir constantly until well combined and smooth, about *2 minutes*.
4. Add **palm sugar**, **fish sauce**, and **tamarind paste**. Stir until sugar dissolves completely, about *2 minutes*.
5. Add minced **ginger** and **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*). Cook for *1 minute* until fragrant.
6. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **water** and simmer for *3-4 minutes*, stirring occasionally. Add more **water** if needed to reach desired consistency (up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup total).
7. Remove from heat and stir in **lime juice** (2 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #3*), **crushed peanuts** ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup, *Small Bowl #2*), and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **salt**. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed.
8. Let cool for *10 minutes* before serving. Sauce will thicken as it cools.

Equipment Required

- Heavy-bottomed saucepan (2-quart)
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Microplane or fine grater (for ginger)
- Garlic press (optional)
- Mortar and pestle (or food processor for peanuts)
- Fine-mesh strainer (optional)
- Glass storage container with lid
- Citrus juicer
- Sharp knife and cutting board

Mise en Place

- Have all ingredients measured and ready before starting
- Bring **peanut butter** to room temperature
- Mince aromatics just before cooking
- Crush **peanuts** ahead of time
- If using block **palm sugar**, chop finely

Ingredient Tips

- Use natural, unsweetened **peanut butter** for best results
- Coconut cream, not milk, provides proper thickness
- Mae Ploy or Maesri **curry paste** recommended
- Palm sugar preferred, but brown sugar works well
- Fresh **lime juice** only - never bottled
- Use Thai fish sauce (Nam Pla) for authentic flavor

Preparation Tips

- Watch coconut cream carefully - it should separate but not burn
- Stir constantly when adding **peanut butter** to prevent sticking
- Sauce will thicken significantly as it cools
- For extra smooth sauce, strain through fine-mesh strainer
- Add **water** gradually to control consistency
- Reserve some **crushed peanuts** for garnish

Make Ahead & Storage

- Keeps refrigerated for up to *1 week*
- Bring to room temperature before serving
- Reheat gently over low heat, stirring frequently
- Add warm water to thin if needed after refrigeration
- Freeze for up to *3 months*

Serving Suggestions

- Perfect for chicken satay or grilled meats
- Serve with fresh spring rolls
- Use as a dip for raw vegetables
- Thin with coconut milk for salad dressing
- Drizzle over grilled chicken or shrimp
- Garnish with extra **crushed peanuts** and cilantro

Tzatziki (Cucumber-Yogurt Salad)

Ingredients

English cucumber	1	Fresh dill, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Full-fat goat milk yogurt	3 cups	Fresh mint, chopped	2 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	5	Kosher salt	1½ tsp.
Red wine vinegar	1½-2 Tbsp.	Red pepper flakes	¼ tsp.
Extra virgin olive oil	3-4 Tbsp.		

Full-fat Greek yogurt (cow's milk) may substitute for goat milk yogurt

Directions

Grate **cucumber** on large holes of box grater; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Very finely mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Chop **dill** and **mint**; combine in *Small Bowl #2*

1. Grate **cucumber** on the large holes of a box grater. Transfer to a fine-mesh strainer set over a bowl. Toss with 1 tsp. **kosher salt** and let drain for 30-40 minutes, stirring 2-3 times to encourage drainage.
2. After draining, gather **cucumber** (*Medium Bowl #1*) in a clean kitchen towel (or multiple layers of cheesecloth) and squeeze aggressively to extract maximum liquid. Wring and twist until you cannot extract any more. You should remove ¾-1 cup liquid. The **cucumber** should feel almost dry when finished. Return to *Medium Bowl #1*; set aside.
3. Grate or very finely mince **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*). For more even distribution and less harsh bite, grate on a microplane. For stronger garlic punch with some texture, mince very fine with a knife. Optionally, crush **garlic** with a pinch of **salt** and **pepper** to create a paste.
4. In *Medium Bowl #2*, add 3 cups **goat milk yogurt** and prepared **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*). Begin adding **olive oil** gradually, 1 tablespoon at a time, while stirring vigorously. Alternate with small additions of **red wine vinegar** (1½-2 Tbsp.). This slow incorporation prevents the oil from pooling on top and creates a smooth, emulsified texture. Add ½ tsp. **kosher salt** and mix thoroughly.
5. Add thoroughly drained **cucumber** (*Medium Bowl #1*), chopped **dill** and **mint** (2 Tbsp. each, *Small Bowl #2*) to **yogurt** mixture (*Medium Bowl #2*). Fold together until evenly combined. The mixture should be very thick.
6. Taste and adjust aggressively. The tzatziki should be punchy with **garlic**, tangy with **vinegar**, and well-salted. Remember that flavors will meld and mellow slightly during rest time. Add more **salt**, **vinegar**, or **garlic** as needed.
7. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2-3 hours, preferably overnight. This allows the **garlic** to permeate, herbs to hydrate, and flavors to marry. The mixture will thicken slightly as it chills.

8. About *30 minutes* before serving, remove from refrigerator and let sit at cool room temperature—this improves flavor expression and makes the texture more scoopable.
9. Before serving, stir well and taste again. Adjust final seasoning if needed. Transfer to serving bowl, create a shallow well in the center with the back of a spoon, and drizzle with **olive oil**. Sprinkle with **red pepper flakes** and garnish with fresh **dill** leaves.

Equipment Required

- Box grater with large holes
- Fine-mesh strainer
- Medium bowl (for straining)
- Clean kitchen towel or multiple layers of cheesecloth
- Medium mixing bowl
- Whisk or sturdy spoon
- Microplane or garlic press (optional)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Serving bowl
- Rubber spatula

Mise en Place

- Begin **cucumber** draining *30-40 minutes* before assembly
- Allow *2-3 hours* minimum for resting before serving (overnight is ideal)
- Remove from refrigerator *30 minutes* before service
- All ingredients should be ready before beginning—once assembly starts, it moves quickly
- Prepare serving **cucumbers** during rest time

Ingredient Tips

- English (hothouse) **cucumbers** have fewer seeds and less water than standard cucumbers
- **Goat milk yogurt** provides authentic tangy flavor; traditional Greek tzatziki uses sheep or goat milk
- Full-fat yogurt is essential—low-fat versions are too thin and tangy
- If using cow's milk **Greek yogurt**, choose Fage Total 5% or similar thick, strained yogurt
- **Red wine vinegar** is traditional in Greece; lemon juice is an American adaptation

- Fresh **garlic** is critical; pre-minced or powdered won't provide the same punch
- Use young, fresh **dill** and **mint**—older herbs can be bitter
- **Dill** is the primary herb; **mint** is secondary or optional
- High-quality, fruity **extra virgin olive oil** makes a significant difference
- **Aleppo pepper** provides mild heat and fruity notes; substitute with mild red pepper flakes if unavailable
- For serving **cucumbers**, Persian varieties provide best crunch and minimal seeds

Preparation Tips

- Aggressive **cucumber** squeezing is the single most critical step—insufficient draining yields watery tzatziki
- Salt the grated **cucumber** generously to draw out moisture through osmosis
- Grating **garlic** on microplane creates smoother distribution; mincing creates pockets of stronger flavor
- Crushing **garlic** with **salt** into a paste mellows the bite slightly
- Slow incorporation of **olive oil** is essential—add gradually while stirring to prevent separation
- Alternate **oil** and **vinegar** additions for proper emulsification
- The mixture should taste quite assertive when first made—flavors mellow significantly during rest
- Overnight resting allows **garlic** to fully infuse and creates more unified flavor
- Bringing to cool room temperature before serving is essential—cold dulls flavor perception

Make Ahead & Storage

- Optimal make-ahead time is overnight in refrigerator
- Can be made up to *2 days* ahead; **garlic** intensifies over time
- Traditional Greek cooks make tzatziki in the morning to serve at lunch or dinner
- Store covered in refrigerator
- If making more than *1 day* ahead, reserve some **olive oil** and fresh **dill** for refreshing before serving
- Drain any accumulated liquid before serving if made well ahead
- **Garlic** acts as a preservative—tzatziki keeps up to *1-2 weeks* refrigerated
- Does not freeze well—**yogurt** separates and texture degrades
- Flavor becomes more garlicky over time; some prefer this aged flavor

Serving Suggestions

- Serve alongside rich, spiced stews and grilled meats for cooling contrast
- Essential accompaniment to souvlaki, gyros, and all grilled meats
- Excellent with warm flatbread, pita, or crusty bread
- Traditional pairing with fried foods like fried potatoes, zucchini fritters, or eggplant
- Persian or English **cucumber** spears make ideal dippers
- Can be used as a sauce for grilled vegetables or fish
- Garnish serving bowl with additional fresh **dill**, **olive oil**, and **Aleppo pepper**
- Pairs well with other mezze-style dishes
- Drizzle with **olive oil** and top with an olive for traditional presentation

Chapter 7

SIDES

Baked Beans, Better •

Ingredients

Butter	1 Tbsp.	Worcestershire sauce	2 tsp.
Garlic, minced	1 Tbsp.	Smoked paprika	1/2 tsp.
Bush's baked beans	1 (28 oz.) can	Black pepper	1/4 tsp.
Brown sugar	1 Tbsp.	MSG	pinch
Yellow mustard	2 tsp.		

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1*

1. In a small pan or skillet, melt 1 Tbsp. **butter**. Add **garlic** (1 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #1*) and sauté for *30-60 seconds* until fragrant. Remove from heat and transfer to *Small Bowl #2*; set aside.
 2. In a baking dish, combine **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*), **baked beans**, 1 Tbsp. **brown sugar**, 2 tsp. **yellow mustard**, 2 tsp. **Worcestershire sauce**, 1/2 tsp. **smoked paprika**, and 1/4 tsp. **black pepper**. Stir thoroughly.
 3. Bake at 375°F uncovered for *30-35 minutes* until edges are bubbling and top is slightly caramelized. The sauce should be thickened, not soupy.
 4. Let stand for *5 minutes* before serving.
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Berbere-Spiced Rice with Vegetables

Ingredients

Long grain white rice	3 cups
Hot water	3 cups
Better Than Bouillon - Chicken	1 Tbsp.
Bay leaf	1
Berbere spice mix	2 tsp.
Dehydrated soup vegetables	2 Tbsp.
Butter	1/2 Tbsp.

Directions

Wash **rice** thoroughly — Prepare **stock** with **Better Than Bouillon**

1. Wash **rice** thoroughly: Place **rice** in a fine-mesh strainer or bowl. Rinse under cold running water, gently agitating with your fingers, until the water runs clear (typically 3-4 rinses). Drain well.
2. Combine **hot water** and **Better Than Bouillon** in a measuring cup, stirring to dissolve completely.
3. Transfer washed **rice** to rice maker pot. Add prepared **stock**, **bay leaf**, **Berbere spice mix**, and **dehydrated soup vegetables**.
4. Cook according to rice maker instructions (long grain white rice setting).
5. Once cooking is complete, let rice rest for 5 minutes before opening.
6. Open rice maker, remove **bay leaf**, and gently fluff rice with a fork or rice paddle.
7. Add **butter** and gently fold into rice until evenly distributed. Serve immediately.

Equipment Required

- Rice maker
- Fine-mesh strainer or large bowl
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Large measuring cup or bowl (for stock preparation)
- Rice paddle or fork (for fluffing)

Mise en Place

- Measure **rice**
- Measure **hot water** and **Better Than Bouillon**
- Have **bay leaf** ready
- Measure **Berbere spice mix**
- Measure **dehydrated soup vegetables**
- Have **butter** at room temperature for easier incorporation

Ingredient Tips

- Long-grain white rice works best for this method
- Thorough washing removes excess starch and prevents gummy texture
- **Better Than Bouillon** adds depth without overwhelming the rice
- Quality **butter** makes a noticeable difference in final flavor
- **Bay leaf** should be removed before serving
- **Berbere spice mix** provides warm, aromatic Ethiopian-inspired flavors
- **Dehydrated soup vegetables** rehydrate during cooking and add texture

Preparation Tips

- Ensure **Better Than Bouillon** is fully dissolved before adding to rice maker
- Don't skip the washing step - it's essential for proper texture

- Let rice rest after cooking to allow steam to finish the process
- Fluff rice gently to avoid breaking grains
- Add **butter** while rice is still hot for best incorporation
- The **Berbere spice mix** will infuse the rice during cooking
- **Dehydrated soup vegetables** will soften and rehydrate during the cooking process
- If rice seems too wet, let it sit with lid open for a few minutes
- If rice seems too dry, add a tablespoon of hot water and fluff again

Make Ahead & Storage

- Cooked **rice** keeps refrigerated for *3-4 days*
- Reheat gently with a splash of water or broth to restore moisture
- Freeze cooked **rice** for up to *2 months*
- Cool to room temperature before refrigerating
- Store in airtight container
- Label container with date

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as side dish with grilled meats or roasted vegetables
- Excellent accompaniment to Ethiopian-inspired dishes
- Pairs well with braised meats and stews
- Use as base for grain bowls with additional vegetables
- Perfect with saucy dishes that benefit from spiced rice
- Use leftover rice for fried rice (best with day-old rice)
- Add to soups and casseroles
- Reheat gently with additional broth for extra flavor

Brussels Sprouts with Balsamic Brown Butter •

Ingredients

Brussels sprouts	1½ lbs.	Unsalted butter	6 Tbsp.
High-heat oil	2 Tbsp.	Fresh rosemary sprigs	2-3
Kosher salt	¾ tsp.	Balsamic glaze	3 Tbsp.
Black pepper	½ tsp.	Flaky finishing salt	to taste

Directions

Preheat air fryer to 400°F — Trim and halve **brussels sprouts**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1*— Have **balsamic glaze** ready for finishing

1. In *Large Bowl #2*, toss halved **brussels sprouts** (*Large Bowl #1*) with 2 Tbsp. **high-heat oil**, ¾ tsp. **kosher salt**, and ½ tsp. **black pepper** until evenly coated.
2. Arrange **brussels sprouts** in a single layer in the air fryer basket, cut side down when possible. Work in batches if necessary to avoid overcrowding.
3. Air fry at 400°F for *12-14 minutes*, shaking the basket halfway through, until outer leaves are charred and crispy and cut surfaces are deeply caramelized with dark brown to black edges.
4. While **brussels sprouts** are cooking, melt **butter** in a small saucepan (preferably light-colored to monitor browning) over medium heat.
5. Continue cooking, swirling occasionally, for *3-5 minutes* after the **butter** foams. Watch carefully as milk solids turn golden brown and develop a nutty aroma. Remove from heat immediately when the solids reach a deep amber color.
6. Add **rosemary sprigs** to the brown **butter** off heat. Let steep for *2-3 minutes* while the **sprouts** finish cooking.
7. Remove **rosemary sprigs** and whisk in **balsamic glaze** until loosely emulsified. The mixture will remain somewhat separated—this is expected.
8. Transfer hot **brussels sprouts** directly from air fryer to a large serving bowl.
9. Immediately drizzle balsamic brown **butter** over the **sprouts** and toss gently to coat evenly. The residual heat will help distribute the sauce.
10. Taste and adjust seasoning. Finish with **flaky salt** to taste. Serve immediately while **sprouts** are still crispy and the **butter** is warm.

Equipment Required

- Air fryer (basket style preferred)
- Large mixing bowl
- Small saucepan (light-colored interior for monitoring butter)
- Whisk
- Large serving bowl
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board

Mise en Place

- Trim and halve all **brussels sprouts** before starting
- Measure **balsamic glaze** and have ready
- Have **butter** at room temperature for easier melting
- Strip **rosemary** sprigs if using leaves from a larger bunch
- Start brown **butter** when **sprouts** have *5-6 minutes* remaining for optimal temperature synchronization

Ingredient Tips

- Use high-heat oil with smoke point above *400°F*: avocado oil (*520°F*) or refined coconut oil (*450°F*) are ideal
- Avoid extra virgin olive oil as it will smoke
- Choose **balsamic glaze** with minimal ingredients—ideally just grape must and wine vinegar
- Avoid products with added thickeners or caramel coloring
- European-style **butter** provides richer flavor due to higher butterfat content
- Smaller **sprouts** (*1-1½ inch*) can be halved; larger ones should be quartered for even cooking

Preparation Tips

- Loose outer leaves will char more aggressively—this is desirable for texture and bitter complexity

- Don't be afraid of significantly blackened edges—this char is where the flavor complexity develops
- The charred leaves provide bitter, smoky notes that balance the sweet-tart **balsamic** and rich **butter**
- The transition from perfect brown **butter** to burnt happens in seconds—remove from heat when you smell nuttiness and see amber color
- Residual heat will continue cooking the **butter** briefly after removal from heat
- The **balsamic** and **butter** mixture will remain somewhat separated—don't over-whisk trying to force an emulsion
- Toss **sprouts** gently to avoid knocking off the crispy charred leaves

Make Ahead & Storage

- **Brussels sprouts** can be trimmed and halved up to *24 hours* in advance
- Store prepared **sprouts** in an airtight container in the refrigerator
- The brown **butter** sauce must be made fresh and served immediately
- This dish does not reheat well—the crispy texture is lost
- Best enjoyed immediately after preparation

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as a side dish for roasted meats, particularly pork or beef
- Pairs well with rich, fatty main courses that benefit from acidic contrast
- The char's bitterness, **balsamic's** acidity, and brown **butter's** richness create a three-point flavor system
- The char provides textural contrast—crispy, almost chip-like leaves against tender interiors
- Consider garnishing with additional fresh **rosemary** leaves if desired
- For larger batches, cook **sprouts** in multiple air fryer batches and keep finished **sprouts** warm in a *200°F* oven while preparing subsequent batches

Dad's Brussels Sprouts •

Ingredients

Brussels sprouts	1-2 lb.	Dried rosemary	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Safflower oil	2 Tbsp.	Black pepper	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Lawry's garlic salt	1 tsp.	Parmesan cheese, grated	2 tsp.
Butter	4 Tbsp.	Lemon powder	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Garlic powder	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.	(or Lemon juice	1 Tbsp.)

Directions

Trim and quarter **Brussels sprouts**

1. Clean **Brussels sprouts** by trimming the stem ends and removing any discolored outer leaves. Cut larger sprouts into quarters and smaller ones in half.
2. In *Large Bowl #2*, toss the prepared **Brussels sprouts** (*Large Bowl #1*) with 2 Tbsp. **oil** and 1 tsp. **garlic salt** until evenly coated.
3. Spread the **Brussels sprouts** in the air fryer basket.
4. Air fry at 400°F for 15 minutes, shaking the basket halfway through cooking time, until the sprouts are crispy and slightly blackened.
5. While the sprouts are cooking, prepare the butter sauce: In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, melt 4 Tbsp. **butter**. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **garlic powder**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **dried rosemary**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **black pepper**. Cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
6. Remove butter sauce from heat and whisk in $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **lemon powder** (or 1 Tbsp. **lemon juice**).
7. Transfer the cooked **Brussels sprouts** to a serving bowl, pour the butter sauce over them, and toss to coat evenly.
8. Sprinkle with 2 tsp. grated **Parmesan cheese** and serve immediately.

Equipment Required

- Air fryer (3-6 quart capacity)
- Large mixing bowl (for tossing sprouts)
- Small saucepan (for butter sauce)
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Whisk
- Serving bowl
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Trim and quarter **Brussels sprouts** before preheating the air fryer
- Measure all spices and have them ready by the stovetop
- Have butter at room temperature for faster melting
- If using **lemon juice**, squeeze fresh just before adding to the sauce

Ingredient Tips

- Choose firm, bright green **Brussels sprouts** with tightly packed leaves
- Smaller sprouts tend to be sweeter and cook more evenly
- Use a high smoke-point neutral oil like avocado, canola, or grapeseed
- European-style butter (higher fat content) creates a richer sauce
- Freshly grated **Parmesan** provides better flavor than pre-grated
- Fresh rosemary (1 tsp. finely chopped) can be substituted for dried
- If you don't have **TruLemon**, fresh lemon zest can be used in addition to juice

Preparation Tips

- Size consistency matters - cut larger sprouts into quarters and smaller ones in half for even cooking
- Don't overcrowd the air fryer basket - cook in batches if needed for maximum crispiness
- For extra caramelization, place sprouts cut-side down in the basket
- If sprouts aren't crispy enough after the initial cooking time, air fry for an additional *2-3 minutes*
- Keep the butter sauce warm until ready to toss with the sprouts
- Add the **Parmesan** just before serving for the best texture

Make Ahead & Storage

- **Brussels sprouts** can be trimmed and quartered up to *24 hours* in advance and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator
- Butter sauce can be prepared *1 hour* ahead and kept warm on the lowest heat setting
- Leftover sprouts can be refrigerated for up to *3 days* and reheated in the air fryer at *350°F* for *3-4 minutes*
- Not recommended for freezing as texture will deteriorate

Serving Suggestions

- Serve as a side dish with roasted chicken, steak, or pork chops
- Add crispy bacon bits or toasted pine nuts as a deluxe garnish
- For a vegetarian main course, serve over creamy polenta or risotto
- Pairs well with rich, full-bodied red wines like Cabernet Sauvignon
- For a holiday meal, add dried cranberries for a pop of color and sweetness

Fried Rice •

Ingredients

Canola oil	3 Tbsp.	Soy sauce	3 Tbsp.
Sesame oil	2 Tbsp.	Fish sauce	2 tsp.
Cooked parboiled rice, cold	6 cups	Hoisin sauce (optional)	1 tsp.
Onion, finely diced	1/3 cup	Sesame seeds	1 Tbsp.
Carrot, finely grated	1/3 cup	Scallions, diced	1/3 cup
Garlic, minced	3 cloves		
Ginger, finely grated	1 tsp.		
Eggs	2		
Frozen peas	3/4 cup		

Directions

1-2 days ahead: Prepare Uncle Ben's parboiled rice, rinse and cook according to rice maker instructions — Finely dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Grate **carrot** and **ginger**; combine in *Small Bowl #2* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Dice **scallions**; set aside in *Small Bowl #4* — Scramble **eggs**; set aside in *Small Bowl #5*

1. In *Small Bowl #6*, combine 3 Tbsp. **soy sauce**, 2 tsp. **fish sauce**, 1 tsp. **hoisin sauce** (optional), and 1 Tbsp. **sesame seeds**
2. Heat large high-walled frying pan or wok on *High*.
3. Add 3 Tbsp. **canola oil** and heat for *30 seconds*.
4. Add 6 cups **rice** to pan and stir thoroughly. Pan should be hot enough that rice makes popping sounds.
5. Stir **rice** every *30 seconds* for about *5 minutes* until moisture is reduced and rice begins to change color.
6. Create an empty circle in center of pan and add **onion** (1/3 cup, *Small Bowl #1*), **carrot** and **ginger** (*Small Bowl #2*), and **garlic** (*Small Bowl #3*).
7. Add 1 Tbsp. **sesame oil** to vegetables in pan.
8. Cook and stir vegetables carefully for *1 minute*, avoiding combining with rice.
9. Stir contents of pan thoroughly.
10. Create an empty circle in center of pan and add scrambled **eggs** (*Small Bowl #5*).
11. Add remaining 1 Tbsp. **sesame oil** to eggs.
12. Cook, stir, and chop eggs carefully for about *1 minute* until set, avoiding combining with rice.

13. Stir contents of pan thoroughly.
 14. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup **peas** and stir thoroughly.
 15. Add prepared sauce mixture (*Small Bowl #6*) and stir thoroughly.
 16. Cook for about *1 minute*, stirring frequently.
 17. Add **scallions** ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup, *Small Bowl #4*) and stir thoroughly.
 18. Remove from heat and serve hot.
-

Green Bean Casserole

Ingredients

Green beans, fresh	1½ lbs.	Cheddar cheese, shredded	1 cup
Butter	½ cup	Salt	1 tsp.
Mushrooms, fresh	½ lb.	Black pepper	1 tsp.
Onion, small	1	French-fried onions	2 cups
All-purpose flour	¼ cup		
Whole milk	1½ cups		
Sour cream	1 cup		

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F— Trim **green beans**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1*— Slice **mushrooms**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1*— Chop **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1*— Shred **cheddar cheese**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2*— Grease a 2½ quart baking dish

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add **green beans** (*Large Bowl #1*) and blanch for 5 minutes. Drain and immediately plunge into ice water. Drain again and return to *Large Bowl #1*.
2. In a large skillet, melt ½ cup **butter** over medium heat. Add **mushrooms** (*Medium Bowl #1*) and **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*); cook for 5 minutes, until tender.
3. Stir in ¼ cup **flour** and cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Gradually stir in 1½ cups **milk** and cook for 2-3 minutes, until mixture thickens.
5. Stir in 1 cup **sour cream, cheese** (1 cup, *Medium Bowl #2*), 1 tsp. **salt**, 1 tsp. **pepper**, and blanched **green beans** (*Large Bowl #1*).
6. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish. Bake for 25 minutes.
7. Sprinkle evenly with 2 cups **French-fried onions**. Bake for 15 minutes longer, until hot and bubbly.

Holiday Stuffing •

Ingredients

Bread, cubed	1 lb. (8-10 cups)	Dried rosemary	1 tsp.
Sage breakfast sausage	1 lb.	Dried thyme	2 tsp.
Butter	8 Tbsp.	Dried parsley	1 Tbsp.
Onions, medium	2	Ground nutmeg	1/8 tsp.
Celery stalks	4	Chicken broth	2-3 cups
Garlic cloves	3	Eggs	2 large
Dried sage	2 tsp.	Kosher salt	1 1/2 tsp.
		Black pepper	1 tsp.

Directions

Preheat oven to 250°F for bread, then 350°F for baking — Cut **bread** into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cubes; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Dice **onions** and **celery**; combine in *Medium Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Beat **eggs**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Grease a 9 inch \times 13 inch baking dish — Melt 4 Tbsp. **butter** for bread cubes in *Small Bowl #3*, remaining 4 Tbsp. for vegetables in *Small Bowl #4*

1. Toss **bread cubes** (*Large Bowl #1*) with melted **butter** (4 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #3*), then spread on a baking sheet and toast at 250°F for 45-60 minutes, stirring every 15 minutes, until golden and dry. Let cool and return to *Large Bowl #1*.
2. Brown **sausage** over medium heat until cooked through, breaking into small crumbles. Remove with slotted spoon and transfer to *Medium Bowl #2*; set aside.
3. In the same pan, melt remaining 4 Tbsp. **butter** (*Small Bowl #4*). Add **onions** and **celery** (*Medium Bowl #1*), cooking until softened, about 8-10 minutes. Add **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook for 1 minute more. Transfer to *Medium Bowl #3*; set aside.
4. In *Large Bowl #2*, combine toasted **bread** (*Large Bowl #1*), cooked **sausage** (*Medium Bowl #2*), sautéed vegetables (*Medium Bowl #3*), 2 tsp. **dried sage**, 1 tsp. **dried rosemary**, 2 tsp. **dried thyme**, 1 Tbsp. **dried parsley**, and 1/8 tsp. **ground nutmeg**.
5. Gradually add **chicken broth** (2-3 cups), stirring gently until bread is evenly moist but not soggy. Mix in beaten **eggs** (*Small Bowl #2*), 1 1/2 tsp. **kosher salt**, and 1 tsp. **black pepper**. Taste and adjust seasoning if needed - the mixture should taste slightly saltier than you'd expect, as the flavors will mellow during baking.
6. Transfer to prepared baking dish. Cover with foil and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes.
7. Uncover and bake for additional 15-20 minutes until top is golden brown and crispy.
8. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving.

Equipment Required

- 9x13 inch baking dish
- Large rimmed baking sheet for toasting bread
- Large skillet or sauté pan
- Large mixing bowl (at least 6-quart capacity)
- Medium bowl for beaten eggs
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Aluminum foil
- Slotted spoon
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Measure and prepare all ingredients before starting
- Bring refrigerated ingredients to room temperature
- Dice vegetables and measure herbs

Ingredient and Preparation Tips

- Choose hearty bread varieties for best texture
- Use high-quality bulk **sage sausage**, or Jimmy Dean

- Fresh herbs can be substituted at triple the quantity
- Cut bread into uniform $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes for even toasting
- Add **broth** gradually - absorption varies by bread type
- Test seasoning before adding **eggs**, then fold gently to maintain texture
- European-style butter provides richer flavor

Make Ahead & Storage

- Toast bread up to *3 days* ahead; store in air-tight container
- Assemble up to *24 hours* before baking
- Bring refrigerated stuffing to room temperature for *30 minutes*
- Add extra **broth** if needed after refrigeration
- Leftovers keep *3 days*; reheat covered at *350°F* for *20 minutes*

Serving Suggestions

- Serve alongside turkey or chicken
- Can be baked inside poultry or separately
- Garnish with fresh sage and extra gravy
- Transform leftovers into breakfast waffles
- Optional: top with toasted gluten-free breadcrumbs for extra crunch

Italian Sausage Stuffed Mushrooms

Ingredients

Mushrooms, medium	12 (about 1 lb.)	Parmesan, grated	4 oz.
Gluten-free bread	3-4 slices	Dried oregano	1 tsp.
Sweet Italian sausage	1 lb.	Dried thyme	1/2 tsp.
Shallot, medium	1	MSG	1/2 tsp.
Garlic cloves	4	Salt	3/4 tsp.
White wine OR chicken broth	1/4 cup	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.
Cream cheese, softened	4 oz.	Red pepper flakes	1/4 tsp. (optional)
		Fresh parsley, chopped	2 Tbsp.

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F— Remove **mushroom** stems and finely chop; set aside in *Small Bowl #1*— Clean **mushroom** caps with damp paper towel — Toast **bread** and process into coarse crumbs; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1*— Dice **shallot** and mince **garlic**; combine in *Small Bowl #2*(aromatics) — Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature; combine with 3 oz. grated **parmesan** in *Medium Bowl #2* (dairy) — Reserve 1 oz. **parmesan** for topping in *Small Bowl #3* — Combine 1 tsp. **oregano**, 1/2 tsp. **thyme**, 1/2 tsp. **MSG**, 3/4 tsp. **salt**, 1/2 tsp. **black pepper**, and 1/4 tsp. **red pepper flakes** in *Small Bowl #4* (seasoning) — Chop **parsley**; set aside in *Small Bowl #5*

1. Place **mushroom caps** gill-side up on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes to release moisture. Remove and set aside.
2. Toast **gluten-free bread** until golden and crispy. Process in food processor or crush by hand into coarse crumbs (about 1 1/2 cups). Transfer to *Medium Bowl #1*.
3. In a large skillet, brown **Italian sausage** over medium heat, breaking into small crumbles, until fully cooked, about 8-10 minutes. Remove sausage with slotted spoon and transfer to *Medium Bowl #3*; set aside. Reserve 2-3 Tbsp. of rendered fat in the skillet, discarding excess.
4. Add **shallot** and **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) to the skillet and sauté over medium heat until softened and fragrant, about 3-4 minutes.
5. Add chopped **mushroom stems** (*Small Bowl #1*). Cook, stirring occasionally, until mushroom liquid has evaporated, about 5-7 minutes.
6. Add **breadcrumbs** (*Medium Bowl #1*) to the skillet and toast, stirring constantly, for 1-2 minutes until golden and fragrant.
7. Add **white wine** or **chicken broth** and cook, stirring, until liquid is nearly evaporated, about 2-3 minutes.

8. Remove skillet from heat. Add cooked **sausage** (*Medium Bowl #3*), **cream cheese** and 3 oz. **parmesan** (*Medium Bowl #2*), and 1 tsp. **oregano**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **thyme**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **MSG**, $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. **salt**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **black pepper**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **red pepper flakes** (*Small Bowl #4*). Stir until cream cheese is melted and mixture is well combined. Taste and adjust seasoning—the filling should be well-seasoned.
9. Fill each **mushroom cap** generously with the sausage mixture, mounding slightly. Sprinkle reserved 1 oz. **parmesan** (*Small Bowl #3*) evenly over the tops.
10. Bake for 20-25 minutes until **mushrooms** are tender and tops are golden brown.
11. Garnish with fresh **parsley** (*Small Bowl #5*) and serve hot.

Equipment Required

- Rimmed baking sheet
- 12-inch skillet (oven-safe preferred)
- Food processor or rolling pin (for breadcrumbs)
- Slotted spoon
- Small prep bowls (5)
- Medium prep bowls (3)
- Sharp paring knife
- Damp paper towels
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Mixing spoon or spatula

Mise en Place

- Small Bowl #1 — chopped **mushroom stems**
- Small Bowl #2 — aromatics: diced **shallot**, minced **garlic**
- Small Bowl #3 — 1 oz. **parmesan** (topping)
- Small Bowl #4 — seasoning: 1 tsp. **oregano**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **thyme**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **MSG**, $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. **salt**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **black pepper**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **red pepper flakes**
- Small Bowl #5 — chopped **parsley** (garnish)
- Medium Bowl #1 — **breadcrumbs** (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- Medium Bowl #2 — dairy: softened **cream cheese**, 3 oz. grated **parmesan**
- Medium Bowl #3 — cooked **sausage** (set aside after browning, about 2 cups)
- Soften **cream cheese** at room temperature *30 minutes* before cooking

Ingredient Tips

- Choose **mushrooms** with intact caps, 2-2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter
- **Cremini** or **baby bella** mushrooms work well for deeper flavor
- Use quality **Italian sausage** with good fat content (not lean)
- Fresh **parmesan** (Parmigiano-Reggiano) preferred over pre-grated

- **White wine:** dry varieties like Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc work best
- Any gluten-free **bread** works; day-old bread yields better crumbs

Preparation Tips

- Pre-baking **mushroom** caps prevents watery filling
- Pat **mushroom** caps dry after pre-baking
- Don't overcrowd **sausage**—brown in batches if needed
- Rendered **sausage** fat adds flavor; don't discard all of it
- Toasting **breadcrumbs** in the fat adds richness
- Filling should be generously seasoned—it will mellow when baked
- Mound filling slightly; it will settle during baking

Make Ahead & Storage

- Prep **mushrooms** and make filling up to *24 hours* ahead
- Store filled **mushrooms** covered in refrigerator
- Add extra *5 minutes* baking time if starting from cold
- Leftovers keep *3-4 days* refrigerated
- Reheat at *350°F* for *10-15 minutes*
- Not recommended for freezing (texture suffers)

Serving Suggestions

- Serve immediately while cheese is bubbly
- Excellent as appetizer (serves 4-6) or side dish (serves 3-4)
- Pairs well with roasted meats or grilled steaks
- Drizzle with balsamic glaze for presentation
- Serve alongside arugula salad with lemon vinaigrette
- Can be served room temperature for parties

Lime and Cilantro Rice

Ingredients

Long-grain white rice	2 cups	Lime zest	1 lime
Chicken broth	3 cups	Cilantro, fresh	1/2 cup
Olive oil	2 Tbsp.	Butter	2 Tbsp.
Onion, small	1	Jalapeño (optional)	1 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	3		
Salt	1 tsp.		
Lime juice, fresh	1/4 cup		

Directions

Rinse **rice** until water runs clear — Finely dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Zest and juice **limes**; set zest in *Small Bowl #3* and juice in *Small Bowl #4* — Finely chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #5* — If using, finely dice **jalapeño**; set aside in *Small Bowl #6*

1. Heat 2 Tbsp. **olive oil** in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Sauté **onion** (*Small Bowl #1*) for 2-3 minutes until translucent.
2. Add **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) and optional **jalapeño** (*Small Bowl #6*) and cook for 30 seconds until fragrant.
3. Add rinsed **rice** to the pan and stir to coat with oil. Toast for about 2 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. Transfer rice mixture to rice cooker. Add 3 cups **chicken broth** to appropriate fill line. Stir gently to combine.
5. Close lid and cook on standard white rice setting until cycle is complete.
6. Once done, let rice sit for an additional 5-10 minutes with the lid closed.
7. Open lid and fluff rice with a fork. Add **lime juice** (1/4 cup, *Small Bowl #4*), **lime zest** (*Small Bowl #3*), chopped **cilantro** (1/2 cup, *Small Bowl #5*), and 2 Tbsp. **butter**. Fold gently until well combined and butter is melted.
8. Taste and adjust seasoning, if needed, with salt, lime juice, or cilantro to preference.

Ingredients**Mac and Cheese •**

Elbow macaroni	1 lb.	Salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Butter	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 stick)	Black pepper	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
All-purpose flour	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	Sodium citrate (optional)	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Whole milk, warmed	4 cups	Sharp cheddar	1 lb.
Heavy cream	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	Gruyere cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.
Smoked paprika	1 tsp.	Smoked gouda cheese	$\frac{1}{4}$ lb.
Hungarian hot paprika	1 tsp.	Cooked ham, diced	1 cup (6 oz.)
Garlic powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	Parmesan cheese	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Dry mustard powder	1 tsp.	Panko breadcrumbs	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
		Parsley	1 Tbsp

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°F — Lightly grease a 9 inch \times 13 inch baking dish — Shred **sharp cheddar**, **Gruyere**, and **smoked gouda cheeses**; combine in *Large Bowl #1* — Shred **Parmesan cheese**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Chop **ham**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Warm **milk** — Combine **sodium citrate** and 2 Tbsp. water in *Small Bowl #3*

1. **Cook the Macaroni:** Bring a large pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Add the **elbow macaroni** and cook according to package directions until al dente. Drain well and set aside. Do not rinse.
2. **Make the Roux:** In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, melt $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **butter** over medium heat. Whisk in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **flour**. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2-3 minutes until a pale golden roux forms.
3. **Build the Cheese Sauce Base:** Gradually whisk in 4 cups **warmed whole milk**, a little at a time, until smooth. Continue whisking until the sauce thickens about 5-7 minutes. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **heavy cream**, 1 tsp. **smoked paprika**, 1 tsp. **Hungarian hot paprika**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **garlic powder**, and 1 tsp. **dry mustard powder**. Season with $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **salt** and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **black pepper** to taste. Stir in **sodium citrate** (*Small Bowl #3*) thoroughly.
4. **Melt the Cheeses:** Reduce the heat to low. Add the shredded **sharp cheddar**, **Gruyere**, and **smoked gouda cheeses** (*Large Bowl #1*) to the sauce, a handful at a time, stirring constantly until melted and smooth.
5. **Combine Macaroni & Cheese:** Add the cooked macaroni to the cheese sauce and stir gently until fully coated. Fold in the diced **ham** (*Small Bowl #2*).
6. **Assemble & Top:** Transfer the mac and cheese mixture to the prepared baking dish, spreading it evenly. In *Small Bowl #4*, combine the **grated Parmesan cheese** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup, *Small Bowl #1*) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **panko breadcrumbs**. Sprinkle this mixture generously over the top.
7. **Bake:** Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the mac and cheese is bubbly around the edges and the topping is golden brown and crispy.
8. **Serve:** Let the mac and cheese stand for 5-10 minutes before serving. Garnish with fresh **parsley**.

Mexican Rice •

Ingredients

Long grain rice	2 cups	Mexican spice mix	1 Tbsp.
Lard	1 Tbsp.	Hot water	2 cups
Better Than Bouillon, chicken	1 Tbsp.	Ro-Tel tomatoes and chilis	10 oz. can
Caldo de tomate	1 Tbsp.		

Directions

Prepare rice cooker — Combine **hot water**, **Better Than Bouillon**, **caldo de tomate**, and **Mexican spice mix** in *Medium Bowl #1* to create broth

1. Brown 2 cups **rice** in a pan with 1 Tbsp. **lard** until lightly toasted. Transfer to *Medium Bowl #2*; set aside.
 2. Add browned **rice** (*Medium Bowl #2*), **Ro-Tel tomatoes**, and prepared **broth** (*Medium Bowl #1*) to rice cooker to appropriate fill line.
 3. Cook on standard rice setting. When done, fluff rice with fork before serving.
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Mexican Street Corn (Elote-Style) •

Ingredients

Sweet corn	2 (15 oz.) cans	Fresh cilantro, chopped	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.	Queso fresco, crumbled	3 Tbsp.
Mexican spice mix	1 Tbsp.		
Mayonnaise	2 Tbsp.		
Fresh lime	$\frac{1}{2}$		

Directions

Drain **corn**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Crumble **queso fresco**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Juice $\frac{1}{2}$ **lime**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3*

1. Heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** in a large skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering.
2. Add drained **corn** (*Medium Bowl #1*) in a single layer. Cook undisturbed for *3-4 minutes* until kernels develop golden-brown caramelization.
3. Stir **corn** and continue cooking *2-3 minutes*, allowing additional browning and caramelization.
4. Sprinkle 1 Tbsp. **Mexican spice mix** over **corn** and stir constantly for *30 seconds* until fragrant and evenly distributed.
5. Remove skillet from heat. Add **lime juice** (*Small Bowl #3*) over **corn**, then add 2 Tbsp. **mayonnaise**, stirring until kernels are evenly coated.
6. Fold in chopped **cilantro** ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup, *Small Bowl #1*) and crumbled **queso fresco** (3 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #2*), gently mixing until **cilantro** wilts and **cheese** begins to soften and melt into the mixture.
7. Transfer to serving bowl and serve immediately while warm.

Serves 4-6 as a side dish

Equipment Required

- Large skillet or sauté pan (12-inch recommended)
- Serving bowl (medium size)
- Measuring spoons and cups
- Sharp knife for chopping cilantro
- Cutting board
- Can opener
- Colander for draining corn
- Wooden spoon or spatula for stirring

Mise en Place

- Drain **corn** thoroughly in colander
- Chop **cilantro** into small pieces
- Crumble **queso fresco** by hand or with fork
- Cut **lime** in half and juice one half
- Measure all ingredients before heating pan

Ingredient Tips

- Fire-roasted **corn** varieties add extra smoky depth
- **Mexican spice mix** should contain chili powder, cumin, and paprika at minimum
- Fresh **lime** juice is essential - bottled juice lacks brightness
- **Queso fresco** can be substituted with cotija or mild feta
- Full-fat **mayonnaise** provides best texture and richness

Preparation Tips

- Don't move **corn** too early - caramelization requires direct contact
- **Spice mix** should sizzle when added - this blooms the aromatics
- Remove from heat before adding **lime** and **mayo** to prevent breaking
- Fold **cilantro** and **cheese** gently to maintain texture
- Serve immediately for best flavor and temperature contrast

Make Ahead & Storage

- Best served fresh and hot from the pan
- Can be reheated gently in skillet over low heat
- Leftovers keep 2 days refrigerated
- Add fresh **cilantro** and **lime** when reheating
- May need additional **mayonnaise** if mixture seems dry

Serving Suggestions

- Excellent alongside grilled meats or fish
- Perfect for taco nights and Mexican-themed meals
- Serve with additional **lime** wedges and hot sauce
- Can be served as appetizer with tortilla chips
- Pairs well with cold Mexican beer or agua fresca
- Garnish with extra **queso fresco** if desired

Perfect Bacon •

A cold-start technique for consistently crisp, flat bacon every time. Starting in an unheated oven allows the fat to render slowly and evenly while the meat cooks: no curling, no burning, no fuss.

Ingredients

Bacon as needed

Directions

Remove **bacon** from refrigerator *1 hour* before cooking and allow to come to room temperature — **DO NOT** preheat oven. A cool oven is the key to success.

1. Place wire cooling rack(s) on baking sheet(s) and arrange **bacon** strips in single layer, not touching.
 2. Place baking sheets with **bacon** on rack(s) in a cold oven.
 3. Set oven to *405° F* and start timer for *20 minutes*.
 4. Check **bacon** at *20 minutes*. It is done when golden brown and stiff. Bacon will crisp further as it cools. Depending on oven and cut, another *5–10 minutes* may be necessary.
 5. Transfer **bacon** to a paper towel-lined plate, (optionally) layering paper towels between strips to absorb excess grease.
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Quick Pickled Cucumbers (Oi Muchim)

A refreshing Korean cucumber side dish that perfectly balances crisp texture with spicy, garlicky, and sesame flavors. This quick pickle provides the perfect counterpoint to rich Korean dishes.

Ingredients

English cucumber	1 large	Toasted sesame oil	2 tsp.
<i>or Regular cucumbers</i>	2 medium	Sugar	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Kosher salt	$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	Toasted sesame seeds	1 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	4	Black pepper	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Green onions	2		
Gochugaru	$1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.		
Rice vinegar	1 Tbsp.		

Directions

If using regular cucumbers, peel and halve lengthwise — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Slice **green onions** thinly; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Prepare ice water bath

1. For regular cucumbers: Remove seeds with a spoon, then slice into $\frac{1}{8}$ inch half-moons. For English cucumber: Slice into $\frac{1}{8}$ inch rounds. Set aside in *Large Bowl #1*.
2. Place cucumber slices (*Large Bowl #1*) in a colander, sprinkle with $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **kosher salt**, and toss gently. Let drain for *30 minutes* (regular) or *20 minutes* (English).
3. Rinse cucumbers briefly under cold water. Plunge into ice water bath for *1 minute*. Drain well and pat thoroughly dry with paper towels. Return to *Large Bowl #1*.
4. In *Medium Bowl #1*, combine minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **gochugaru**, 1 Tbsp. **rice vinegar**, 2 tsp. **toasted sesame oil**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **sugar**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **black pepper**.
5. Add dried cucumber slices (*Large Bowl #1*) and sliced **green onions** (*Small Bowl #2*) to the bowl. Toss gently but thoroughly to coat.
6. Sprinkle with 1 Tbsp. **toasted sesame seeds**, toss once more, and let rest for *10 minutes* before serving.

Equipment Required

- Large colander
- Large mixing bowl
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Paper towels
- Measuring spoons
- Large bowl for ice bath
- Vegetable peeler (if using regular cucumbers)

Mise en Place

- Prepare ice water bath before starting
- Measure all seasonings before beginning
- Have paper towels ready for drying cucumbers
- Toast **sesame seeds** if needed

Ingredient Tips

- English cucumbers are ideal, but regular cucumbers work well when properly prepared
- Fresh **garlic** is essential - do not substitute pre-minced
- **Gochugaru** can be found at Asian markets - no good substitute exists
- Use unseasoned **rice vinegar** for better control of flavors
- Regular table salt can be used, but reduce quantity by half

Preparation Tips

- Slice cucumbers as uniformly as possible for even texture
- Don't skip the ice bath - it ensures maximum crispness
- Pat cucumbers very dry before adding seasonings
- Adjust **gochugaru** amount based on desired heat level
- Test seasoning before final rest period

Make Ahead & Storage

- Best served fresh, within *2 hours* of preparation
- Can be made up to *4 hours* ahead, but texture will soften
- Store leftovers in airtight container for up to *24 hours*
- Do not freeze
- Drain any accumulated liquid before serving leftover portions

Serving Suggestions

- Perfect accompaniment to Korean BBQ or grilled meats
- Serve cold or at room temperature
- Excellent as part of a banchan (Korean side dish) spread
- Can be used as a sandwich or burger topping
- Pairs well with rice dishes and noodles

Roasted Asparagus with Lemon-Garlic Butter Sauce

Ingredients

Asparagus, fresh	8 oz.	Garlic cloves	2
Olive oil	1½ Tbsp.	Dried parsley	1 tsp.
Lemon	1	Dried minced onion	½ tsp.
Lemon zest	1½ tsp.	Chicken broth	3 Tbsp.
Lemon juice	2 Tbsp.	Cornstarch	1 Tbsp.
Dried thyme	½ tsp.	Water	2 Tbsp.
Salt	½ tsp.		
Black pepper	¼ tsp.		
Butter	2½ Tbsp.		

Roasted Asparagus

Preheat oven to $400^{\circ}F$ — Trim woody ends from **asparagus**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Zest and juice **lemon** to yield 1½ tsp. zest and 2 Tbsp. juice; set zest in *Small Bowl #2* and juice in *Small Bowl #3* — Mix 1 Tbsp. **cornstarch** with 2 Tbsp. cold **water** to make slurry in *Small Bowl #4*

1. Place trimmed **asparagus** (*Medium Bowl #1*) on a baking sheet. Drizzle with 1½ Tbsp. **olive oil** and sprinkle with ½ tsp. **dried thyme**, **lemon zest** (1½ tsp., *Small Bowl #2*), ½ tsp. **salt**, and ¼ tsp. **black pepper**. Toss to coat evenly.
2. Arrange **asparagus** in a single layer and roast for *30-40 minutes* until tender-crisp and lightly browned.

Lemon-Garlic Butter Sauce

1. While **asparagus** roasts, melt 2½ Tbsp. **butter** in a small saucepan over medium-low heat.
2. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), 1 tsp. **dried parsley**, and ½ tsp. **dried minced onion**.
3. Cook for *1-2 minutes* until garlic is fragrant.
4. Add 3 Tbsp. **chicken broth** and **lemon juice** (2 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #3*). Bring to a gentle simmer.
5. While whisking constantly, slowly pour the cornstarch slurry (*Small Bowl #4*) into the simmering sauce.
6. Continue whisking and simmer for *2-3 minutes* until sauce is thickened and no longer cloudy.

7. Season with additional **salt** to taste. Remove from heat.
 8. Pour warm sauce over roasted **asparagus** and serve immediately.
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Roasted Cauliflower

Ingredients

Cauliflower, whole head	1 large (2-3 lbs.)	Lemon juice	2 Tbsp.
Olive oil	1/4 cup	Salt	1 tsp.
Garlic cloves, minced	4	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.
Fresh thyme leaves	2 Tbsp.	Parmesan cheese, grated	1/2 cup
Fresh rosemary, chopped	1 Tbsp.	Pork rinds, crushed	1 cup
Garlic powder	1/2 tsp.	Gluten-free flour blend	2 Tbsp.
Onion powder	1/2 tsp.	Butter, melted	2 Tbsp.
Smoked paprika	1/4 tsp.		
Lemon zest	1 Tbsp.		

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F —Line a baking sheet with parchment paper—Bring a large pot of salted water to boil—Prepare an ice bath—Crush **pork rinds** in food processor or by hand; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1*—Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1*—Chop **thyme** and **rosemary**; combine in *Small Bowl #2*—Zest and juice **lemon**; set zest in *Small Bowl #3* and juice in *Small Bowl #4*

1. Remove the outer leaves from the **cauliflower** and trim the stem, keeping the head intact. Carefully cut out the core with a small knife, ensuring the head remains whole.
2. Blanch the **cauliflower** by carefully lowering the head into the boiling water, stem-side up. Boil for $3-4$ minutes, then transfer to the ice bath for 1 minute to stop the cooking process. Drain thoroughly and pat dry with paper towels.
3. In *Small Bowl #5*, mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **olive oil**, minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), **thyme** and **rosemary** (*Small Bowl #2*), $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **garlic powder**, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **onion powder**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **smoked paprika**, **lemon zest** (1 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #3*), 1 Tbsp. **lemon juice** (*Small Bowl #4*), 1 tsp. **salt**, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **pepper**.
4. Place the **cauliflower** stem-side down on the prepared baking sheet. Brush the entire surface generously with the herb oil mixture (*Small Bowl #5*), ensuring it gets between the florets.
5. Roast in the preheated oven for 40 minutes, brushing with more herb oil mixture (*Small Bowl #5*) halfway through cooking.
6. While roasting, prepare the crust mixture: In *Medium Bowl #2*, combine crushed **pork rinds** (1 cup, *Medium Bowl #1*), grated **Parmesan** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup), 2 Tbsp. **gluten-free flour**, remaining 1 Tbsp. **lemon juice** (*Small Bowl #4*), and 2 Tbsp. melted **butter**. Mix until it forms a coarse, slightly moist mixture.

7. After *40 minutes* of roasting, remove the **cauliflower** and carefully press the crust mixture onto the top and sides of the cauliflower. Return to the oven and roast for an additional *15-20 minutes* until the crust is golden brown and the cauliflower is tender when pierced with a knife.
8. Let rest for *5 minutes* before transferring to a serving platter. Slice into wedges and serve hot.

Equipment Required

- Large pot (6-8 quart) for blanching
- Large bowl for ice bath
- Rimmed baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Small mixing bowl for herb oil
- Medium mixing bowl for crust mixture
- Pastry brush or spoon for coating
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Food processor or zip-top bag and rolling pin (for crushing pork rinds)
- Microplane or zester
- Citrus juicer
- Kitchen towel or paper towels
- Serving platter

Mise en Place

- Prepare the **cauliflower** by removing leaves and trimming stem before preheating the oven
- Crush **pork rinds** and store in airtight container until needed
- Prepare herb oil mixture before blanching the cauliflower
- Set up ice bath before bringing water to boil
- Have all ingredients measured and ready before beginning cooking process

Ingredient Tips

- Choose a firm, compact **cauliflower** with tight florets and no brown spots
- For maximum flavor, use freshly grated **Parmesan** rather than pre-grated
- Plain, unflavored **pork rinds** work best as a neutral crispy base
- Verify your **gluten-free flour blend** contains xanthan gum; if not, add $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

- Use high-quality cold-pressed **olive oil** for best flavor
- Fresh herbs provide superior flavor, but dried can be substituted (1 tsp. dried thyme, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried rosemary)
- For extra richness, substitute some of the olive oil with duck fat or schmaltz
- Check that your **Parmesan** is truly gluten-free (some brands use anti-caking agents)

Preparation Tips

- The blanching step is crucial for ensuring the cauliflower cooks evenly
- Thoroughly dry the cauliflower after blanching to ensure proper browning
- Apply herb oil generously between florets for maximum flavor penetration
- If crust browns too quickly, cover loosely with foil
- Test for doneness by inserting a knife into the thickest part - it should enter easily
- For extra browning on the crust, broil for the final *1-2 minutes* (watch carefully)
- Adjust roasting time based on cauliflower size - larger heads may need an additional *10-15 minutes*
- Let the cauliflower rest before cutting to allow juices to redistribute

Make Ahead & Storage

- Herb oil can be prepared up to *24 hours* in advance and refrigerated
- **Pork rind** mixture can be prepared *4 hours* ahead and stored at room temperature
- The entire dish can be blanched and prepared up to the roasting step *4 hours* in advance
- Leftover cauliflower can be refrigerated for up to *3 days*
- Reheat leftovers in a 350°F oven for *10-15 minutes* until warmed through

Serving Suggestions

- Present whole on a serving platter and carve at the table for dramatic effect
 - Serve alongside **Dad's Brussels Sprouts** for a vegetable-forward meal
 - Pairs beautifully with roasted meats, particularly lamb or beef
 - Drizzle with extra herb oil just before serving for added freshness
 - Garnish with additional fresh herbs and lemon wedges
 - For a complete meal, serve with a gluten-free grain like quinoa or millet
 - Accompany with a crisp white wine such as Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc
-

Steamed Cabbage (Sweet and Sour) •

Ingredients

Round cabbage	1 head	Ginger powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Rice vinegar	$3\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp.	Sesame oil	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.
Sake	2 Tbsp.	Fresh lime juice	1 tsp.
Mirin	2 Tbsp.	White pepper	pinch
Light soy sauce	1 tsp.	Candied ginger, minced	2 pieces
Grapeseed oil	1 Tbsp.	Salt	if needed

Directions

Remove outer leaves from **cabbage** and cut into 1 inch strips; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Discard core — Mince **candied ginger** fine; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Set up steamer

1. Steam **cabbage** strips (*Large Bowl #1*) for *6-8 minutes* until tender but with slight bite. Return to *Large Bowl #1*; set aside.
2. While **cabbage** steams, heat 1 Tbsp. **grapeseed oil** in wok or skillet over medium heat. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **ginger powder** and bloom for *30 seconds* until fragrant.
3. Add 2 Tbsp. **sake**, $3\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. **rice vinegar**, and 2 Tbsp. **mirin**. Bring to simmer and reduce by about one-third to concentrate flavors and mellow acidity, about *3-4 minutes*.
4. Stir in 1 tsp. **light soy sauce**, pinch **white pepper**, and minced **candied ginger** (*Small Bowl #1*). Cook for another *1-2 minutes* to integrate the **candied ginger** flavors.
5. Remove from heat and stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **sesame oil** and 1 tsp. **fresh lime juice**.
6. Add steamed **cabbage** (*Large Bowl #1*) to the pan with the sauce. Toss gently for *1 minute* to coat evenly.
7. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Equipment Required

- Steamer setup (bamboo steamer, electric steamer, or large pot with steaming rack)
- Wok or large skillet for sauce
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Measuring spoons and cups
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Serving platter
- Small bowl for mincing candied ginger
- Fine-mesh strainer (optional, for lime juice)

Mise en Place

- Set up steamer and bring water to boil before starting
- Have all sauce ingredients measured and ready
- Mince **candied ginger** finely before cooking begins
- Cut **cabbage** just before steaming to prevent oxidation
- Juice **lime** fresh and strain if desired

Ingredient Tips

- Choose firm, heavy **cabbage** heads with tight, crisp leaves
- **Grapeseed oil** can be substituted with vegetable or canola oil
- Quality **sake** makes a difference - avoid cooking sake if possible
- **Candied ginger** should be soft and pliable, not dried out
- **White pepper** provides clean heat without competing with other flavors
- Use fresh **lime juice** only - bottled lacks the volatile oils needed for palate cleansing

Preparation Tips

- Cut **cabbage** strips uniformly for even cooking
- Watch steaming time carefully - smaller pieces cook faster than wedges
- Don't over-reduce the sauce - it should remain light and bright
- Bloom **ginger powder** carefully to avoid burning
- Add **sesame oil** and **lime juice** off heat to preserve delicate aromatics
- Taste sauce before final seasoning - **candied ginger** adds natural sweetness
- Toss gently to avoid breaking the tender **cabbage** strips

Make Ahead & Storage

- **Cabbage** can be cut up to *2 hours* ahead and stored covered
- Sauce can be made up to *1 day* ahead and gently rewarmed
- Add **lime juice** only when ready to serve for maximum brightness
- Best served fresh, but leftovers keep *2 days* refrigerated
- Reheat gently or serve at room temperature as a cold salad
- Do not freeze - texture will be compromised

Serving Suggestions

- Perfect as palate cleanser alongside spam musubi or other rich dishes
- Serve between every *2-3* pieces of musubi for optimal effect
- Excellent with grilled meats or fried foods
- Can be served warm or at room temperature
- Provide small chopsticks or forks for easy pickup
- Pairs well with steamed rice and other Asian-inspired sides

Chapter 8

SNACKS

Canned Cherries with Light Syrup

Ingredients

Cherries	10 lb.	Vinegar	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Bottled lemon juice	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	Canning jars/lids/bands (quart)	7
Sugar	5 cups		
Water	25 cups		

Instructions

- 1. Prepare the equipment:** Sterilize 7 quart jars and an equal number of lids and bands in boiling water. Check the pressure canner for proper operation, including the seal and vent.
- 2. Prepare the cherries:** Wash and pit 10 lb. cherries. Prepare a solution with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups bottled lemon juice and 10+ cups water. Soak the cherries for 10 minutes to help preserve their color and flavor.
- 3. Prepare the syrup:** Combine 5 cups sugar with 10 cups water in a large saucepan. Heat at medium-high until the sugar is completely dissolved, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking.
- 4. Pack the jars:** Evenly distribute the prepared cherries into the sterilized jars. Pour the hot syrup over the cherries, ensuring each jar is filled while leaving approximately 1 inch of headspace. Use a non-metallic spatula to gently stir inside the jars to remove any trapped air bubbles.
- 5. Place lids:** Wet a clean lint-free cloth with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinegar to clean and dry the jar rims. Apply lids and rings, then tighten lightly with fingertips. (Always use new lids!)
- 6. Process in canner:** Place the filled jars on the rack inside the pressure canner. Add water as per the canner's instructions, usually around 2-3 inches. Secure the lid and heat until steam flows freely from the vent. Continue to vent for 10 minutes, then close the vent and attach the pressure regulator weight. Process the jars at 10-15 pounds of pressure (adjusted for altitude) for 10 minutes.
- 7. Cool down and store:** Turn off the heat and let the pressure canner cool naturally until the pressure gauge reads zero. Carefully remove the jars using a jar lifter and place them on a towel or cooling rack, avoiding drafty areas. After 12-24 hours, check that each jar is sealed by pressing the center of the lid; it should not flex up or down. Label the jars with the canning date and store in a cool, dark place.

Kettle Corn

This recipe is for a 3 quart stir-type popcorn maker.

Ingredients

Popcorn	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	Mexican vanilla	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.
Coconut oil	2 Tbsp.	Butter	$\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp.
Turbinado sugar	3 Tbsp.	Salt	$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.

Directions

1. Add **coconut oil** and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **vanilla** to popcorn maker plate.
 2. Sprinkle in $\frac{1}{3}$ cup **popcorn** and 3 Tbsp. **turbinado sugar**.
 3. Thinly slice $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp. **butter** and place on dripping shelf.
 4. Turn on popcorn maker.
 5. Two or three times during popping, gently shake the popcorn maker side to side to dislodge stuck kernels. **TAKE CARE!**
 6. When the pops slow to every 3 seconds, quickly turn off power and transfer popcorn to a large bowl.
 7. Salt to taste with $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **salt**.
-

Rice Krispies Treats •

Ingredients

Salted butter (Kerrygold) 6 Tbsp
Small marshmallows 16 oz bag
Mexican vanilla extract 1 tsp
Rice Krispies cereal 6 cups

Directions

Use a large pot — Line a 9 inch×9 inch baking dish with parchment paper

1. In the pot, melt 6 Tbsp. **butter** over *medium-low* heat.
2. Add all but 1 cup of **marshmallows** to the melted **butter**.
3. Reduce heat to *low* and stir continuously until **marshmallows** are completely melted.
4. Remove from heat, add 1 tsp. **vanilla extract** and stir to combine.
5. Add 6 cups **Rice Krispies cereal** and remaining 1 cup **marshmallows**, stirring until well combined.
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish, spreading it evenly.
7. Allow to cool for 1 *hour* before cutting into squares.
8. Store at room temperature away from light and heat.

Note: These treats taste best after 2 days.

Sweet and Saltines •

Ingredients

Saltine crackers	2-3 sleeves	Lindt milk chocolate bars	8 oz
Kerrygold butter	2 sticks (1 cup)	Crushed nuts or pretzels	1/4 cup
Light brown sugar	1 cup	Cooking spray	as needed

Directions

Preheat oven to 425°F — Line a large cookie sheet with foil and **cooking spray** — Prepare a second large cookie sheet with crushed ice — Crush **nuts** and/or **pretzels**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Break apart **chocolate bars** into 1 inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Have a candy thermometer ready

1. Arrange **saltine crackers** in a single layer, salt side down, on the prepared sheet.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine 2 sticks (1 cup) **butter** and 1 cup **brown sugar**.
3. Heat the mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly until the **butter** is completely melted and the **sugar** is dissolved.
4. Once the mixture starts to bubble, stop stirring and let it cook undisturbed. Cook until it reaches 285°F (soft-crack stage) on a candy thermometer, about *3-5 minutes*. Watch for visual cues: the caramel should be a deep golden brown color and have a smooth, glossy appearance. You may see wisps of smoke starting to form.
5. Immediately remove from heat and pour evenly over the arranged **crackers**. Work quickly as the caramel will start to set.
6. Bake for *3-5 minutes* until the caramel is bubbly all over. Watch carefully.
7. Remove from oven and quickly arrange **chocolate** (*Medium Bowl #1*) over the top.
8. Wait about *1 minute*, then spread the melted **chocolate** evenly.
9. Sprinkle crushed **nuts** and/or **pretzels** ($1/4$ cup, *Small Bowl #1*) over the melted **chocolate**.
10. To cool quickly, place the hot cookie sheet with the crackers on top of the ice-filled sheet. For faster setting, place in the freezer if possible.
11. Once cold but not frozen, break into pieces.
12. Store in an airtight container.

Chapter 9

SOUUPS

Bean Soup with Braised Pork Ribs •

Ingredients

Bean mix, dried	1 lb.	San Marzano tomatoes	28 oz.
Braised pork ribs	2 lb.	Dry red wine	1/2 cup
Chicken stock	6-8 cups	Crystal hot sauce	1 Tbsp.
Bacon fat or Lard	3 Tbsp.	Bay leaves	2
Onions, medium	2	Fresh thyme sprigs	4-5
Carrots, medium	2	White pepper	1 tsp.
Celery stalks	4	Kosher salt	1-2 tsp.
Leeks, medium	2	Black pepper	to taste
Parsnip, medium	1	Dried parsley	2 Tbsp.
Garlic, minced	2 Tbsp.	Salt	1 tsp.
Tomato paste	3 Tbsp.		

Directions

Make the **Braised Pork Ribs** — Soak beans overnight in cold water — Pick 2 lbs. **pork** from **ribs** — Dice **onion, carrots, celery** to 1/2 inch; combine in *Medium Bowl #1* — Grate **parsnip**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Clean and slice **leeks** into 1/2 inch half rounds; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Hand-crush **San Marzano tomatoes** in *Medium Bowl #3*

1. The night before, rinse **beans** thoroughly and place in large bowl. Cover with cold water by 3 inches. Soak for 8-12 hours. Drain before using.
2. Make the **Braised Pork Ribs** according to recipe (*up to 2 days before*). Strain **braising liquid**, removing spent aromatics and herbs. Reserve **rib bones** with any remaining meat attached. Pick 2 lbs. of **meat** from **ribs**, keeping pieces rustic and chunky. Set aside **meat** and **bones** separately.
3. In large Dutch oven or heavy pot (*8+ quart*), heat 3 Tbsp. **fat or lard** over medium heat. Add diced **onion, carrots, celery** (*Medium Bowl #1*), **leeks** (*Medium Bowl #2*), and grated **parsnip** (*Small Bowl #1*). Sauté for 10-12 minutes until vegetables are softened and beginning to caramelize.
4. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) and cook for 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Add 3 Tbsp. **tomato paste** and cook, stirring constantly, for 2-3 minutes until paste darkens and becomes fragrant.
5. Deglaze with 1/2 cup **red wine**, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pot. Simmer until **wine** reduces by half, about 3-4 minutes.
6. Add soaked and drained **beans**, hand-crushed **tomatoes** with juices (*Medium Bowl #3*), **braising liquid**, 1 Tbsp. **hot sauce**, reserved **rib bones**, 2 **bay leaves**, 4-5 **thyme sprigs**, and 1 tsp. **white pepper**. Add 6 cups **chicken stock**.

7. Bring to boil, then reduce to gentle simmer. Cover and cook for *2-2½ hours*, stirring occasionally, until **beans** are completely tender. Add additional **stock** as needed to maintain thick soup consistency.
8. Remove **rib bones** (they should be clean or nearly so). Add picked **pork** and **dried parsley**. Simmer for *10 minutes* to heat through.
9. Taste and adjust seasoning with **kosher salt**, **black pepper**, and/or **hot sauce**.
10. Remove **bay leaves** and **thyme sprigs**. Let soup rest for *10-15 minutes* before serving—it will thicken as it sits.

Equipment Required

- Dutch oven or heavy pot (8+ quart capacity)
- Large bowl (for soaking beans)
- Fine mesh strainer or colander
- Medium bowl (for crushing tomatoes)
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Wooden spoon or sturdy spatula
- Ladle
- Storage containers (for leftovers)

Mise en Place

- Soak **beans** the night before—this is essential for even cooking and proper texture
- Strain **braising liquid** ahead of time, removing all aromatics and **peppercorns**
- Pick all **pork** from **bones** before starting; reserve **bones** separately
- Prepare all vegetables before heating pot—this ensures smooth workflow
- Have **stock** or water measured and ready; you'll add it gradually
- Hand-crush **tomatoes** in bowl before starting to cook

Ingredient Tips

- **Beans:** Overnight soaking is crucial for tender, evenly cooked beans; quick-soak methods don't work as well for this recipe
- **Braising liquid:** Already contains significant **salt**, soy sauce, and Worcestershire—taste before adding more **salt**
- **San Marzano tomatoes:** Use certified DOP if possible; hand-crushing gives better texture than pre-crushed varieties
- **Bacon fat:** Rendered bacon fat adds tremendous flavor; substitute with olive oil or butter if needed
- **Leeks:** Clean thoroughly—slice lengthwise and rinse between layers to remove sand

- **Stock:** Homemade or low-sodium **chicken stock** preferred; water works well given the rich **braising liquid**
- **Wine:** Use a dry red you'd drink; avoid "cooking wine" which contains added **salt**

Preparation Tips

- Take time with vegetable sauté—caramelization builds foundational sweetness and depth
- Bloom **tomato paste** until it darkens and smells sweet; this removes raw taste and concentrates flavor
- Don't rush the **wine** reduction—you want to cook off harsh alcohol while preserving acidity
- Keep **rib bones** in during bean cooking—they continue releasing gelatin for body
- Stir occasionally during long simmer to prevent sticking, but don't over-stir or **beans** will break down
- Add liquid gradually—different bean mixes and **braising liquid** concentrations affect absorption
- Test **beans** for doneness by tasting several; they should be completely tender with no chalky center
- Add **pork** near end to prevent it from becoming tough through extended simmering
- **White pepper** blooms throughout cooking for integrated heat; **black pepper** at end for fresh bite
- Let soup rest before serving—flavors meld and consistency thickens naturally

Make Ahead & Storage

- This soup improves significantly overnight as flavors marry; make *1-2 days* ahead if possible
- Store in refrigerator for up to *4 days*; soup will thicken considerably when cold
- To freeze: cool completely, portion into containers, freeze up to *3 months*

- Reheat gently on stovetop, adding water or **stock** to achieve desired consistency
- Taste and re-season after reheating—flavors can mellow

Serving Suggestions

- Serve with crusty artisan bread, cornbread, or buttermilk biscuits for sopping

- Serve on baked potatoes
- Top with grated Parmesan, Pecorino Romano, or aged cheddar
- Garnish with fresh parsley, thyme leaves, or chopped **green onions**
- Serve with simple green salad dressed with vinaigrette to cut richness

Berbere Lamb and Chickpea Stew •

Ingredients

Dried chickpeas	2 cups	Chicken broth or lamb stock	3 cups
Kosher salt	5 Tbsp.	Diced tomatoes	28 oz. (2 cans)
Lamb shoulder/shank*	3 lbs.	Dried apricots	1½ cups
Black pepper (for lamb)	1 tsp.	Fresh cilantro	1 cup
Vegetable oil	¼ cup	Fresh lemon juice	½ cup
Onions, large	2	Honey	3 Tbsp.
Garlic cloves	8-10	Pomegranate arils (optional)	½ cup
Berbere spice blend	5 Tbsp.	Tzatziki (optional)	for serving
Tomato paste	6 Tbsp.	Harissa (optional)	for table

Beef chuck shoulder may substitute for lamb (same method and timing)

Directions

Night Before: Combine 2 cups **chickpeas**, water, and 3 Tbsp. **salt** in a large bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight (8-12 hours).

Day of Preparation: Preheat oven to 300°F — Drain and rinse soaked 2 cups **chickpeas** — Pat dry **lamb** and cut into 1½" cubes — Season **lamb** with 1 Tbsp. **salt** and 1 tsp. **pepper** — Dice 2 large **onions** and mince 8-10 **garlic** cloves; combine in *Small Bowl #1* (aromatics) — Chop 1½ cups **apricots** into ¼" pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Chop 1 cup **cilantro** — Combine chopped **cilantro**, ½ cup **lemon juice**, and 3 Tbsp. **honey** in *Medium Bowl #2* (finishing)

1. Heat 6-quart enameled dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add 2 Tbsp. **oil**. Working in 3-4 batches to avoid crowding, brown **lamb cubes** on multiple sides until deeply caramelized, about 8-10 minutes per batch, adding more **oil** as needed (up to ¼ cup total). Transfer browned **lamb** to *Large Bowl #1* and set aside.
2. Reduce heat to medium. If pot is dry, add final portion of **oil** (remaining from ¼ cup). Add **onions** and **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*) and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden brown, about 8-10 minutes.
3. Add 3 Tbsp. **berbere** to the pot. Stir constantly for 45-60 seconds until spice is darkened and very fragrant. Add 6 Tbsp. **tomato paste** and stir constantly, scraping to prevent scorching, for 2-3 minutes until paste is brick-red and caramelized.
4. Add remaining 2 Tbsp. **berbere** and 1 Tbsp. **salt**; stir to combine. Immediately add 3 cups **chicken broth** and use a wooden spoon to scrape bottom of pot vigorously, releasing all browned bits. Add 28 oz. (2 cans) **diced tomatoes** with their juices. Bring to a simmer.
5. Return browned **lamb** and any accumulated juices (*Large Bowl #1*) to pot. Add drained **chickpeas** and **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #1*). Stir to combine. The liquid should come about ¾ of the way up the solids; add additional **broth** if needed.

6. Bring to a full simmer on stovetop. Cover with tight-fitting lid and transfer to preheated 300°F oven.
7. Braise for *4 hours*, checking at $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Lamb should be pull-apart tender and 2 cups chickpeas should be creamy. If liquid level seems low at the $3\frac{1}{2}$ hour check, add $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 cup hot broth. If stew seems too thin, crack lid slightly for final *30 minutes*.
8. Remove from oven. If sauce needs reducing, place uncovered pot on stovetop over medium heat and simmer for *5-10 minutes* until thickened to coat the back of a spoon. If desired, skim excess fat from surface.
9. Stir in remaining apricots (*Medium Bowl #1*) and cilantro, lemon juice, and honey (*Medium Bowl #2*). Taste and adjust seasoning with additional salt if needed. Let rest for *10-15 minutes* before serving.
10. Serve over couscous or cooked rice, topped with pomegranate arils and tzatziki, with harissa on the side.

Equipment Required

- 6-quart enameled dutch oven with tight-fitting lid
- Large mixing bowl (for soaking chickpeas)
- Small prep bowls (1)
- Medium prep bowls (2)
- Large prep bowl (1)
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Wooden spoon or heatproof spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Ladle
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Small Bowl #1 — aromatics: diced 2 large **onions**, minced 8-10 **garlic** cloves
- Medium Bowl #1 — chopped **apricots** ($1\frac{1}{2}$ cups total, used in two stages)
- Medium Bowl #2 — finishing: 1 cup chopped **cilantro**, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **lemon juice**, 3 Tbsp. **honey**
- Large Bowl #1 — browned **lamb** (set aside after browning, about 3 lbs., with accumulated juices)
- Soak 2 cups **chickpeas** the night before in salted water ($8-12$ hours)
- Drain and rinse **chickpeas** before beginning active cooking
- Pat dry and cut **lamb** into uniform $1\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes; season with **salt** and **pepper** before browning
- If using whole lamb shoulder, trim excess fat but leave some for flavor
- Prep all aromatics and measure all spices before beginning—once you start browning, the process moves quickly
- Have **broth** ready and warm for easier deglazing
- Allow *45-60 minutes* total for prep work on day of cooking

Ingredient Tips

- Lamb shoulder is ideal for braising due to marbling and connective tissue; leg meat is leaner and won't be as tender
- Quality **berbere** blends vary significantly in heat level and complexity; taste yours to gauge intensity before adding
- San Marzano or fire-roasted **diced tomatoes** add extra depth
- Turkish or California **apricots** are ideal; avoid overly sweet or sugared varieties
- Homemade **lamb stock** elevates the dish significantly

Preparation Tips

- Don't rush the browning—deep caramelization is the foundation of flavor
- Work in small batches; crowding the pot steams meat instead of browning it
- The **tomato paste** will threaten to scorch; keep stirring and scraping constantly during step 3
- Vigorous deglazing in step 4 is critical—every bit of fond adds flavor
- Starting the braise at a full simmer on the stovetop ensures immediate cooking when transferred to oven
- If your dutch oven lid doesn't seal tightly, cover pot with foil before adding lid to minimize evaporation
- Check liquid level at $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours; ovens and pots vary, so adjustment may be needed
- **Lamb** texture varies by cut quality; check tenderness and extend cooking if needed
- The stew will continue to thicken as it rests; it should be slightly looser than desired final consistency when removed from oven

Make Ahead & Storage

- This stew benefits from sitting; make up to 3 days ahead and refrigerate
- Add finishing ingredients (**cilantro**, **lemon juice**, **honey**) only when reheating

to serve

- If freezing, slightly undercook (reduce time by *30 minutes*) as reheating continues cooking
- Leftover stew thickens significantly; thin with **broth** or water when reheating

Caldo de Carnitas y Frijoles Negros •

Ingredients

Carnitas consommé	2 cups	Ground cumin	1 tsp.
Water	3 cups	Mexican oregano	1 tsp.
Shredded carnitas meat	1½ cups	Bay leaves	2
Black beans	2 (15 oz.) cans	Kosher salt	1 tsp.
Rotel diced tomatoes	1 (10 oz.) can	Black pepper	½ tsp.
Yellow onion, medium	1	Fresh cilantro	½ cup
Garlic cloves	4	Lime juice	3 Tbsp.
Celery stalks	2	Lime wedges	for serving
Carrots, medium	2		
Vegetable oil	2 Tbsp.		

Directions

Dice **onion**, **celery**, and **carrots** into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch pieces; combine in *Medium Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Drain and rinse **black beans**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Juice **limes**; set aside in *Small Bowl #3* — Warm **carnitas meat** if refrigerated; set aside in *Medium Bowl #3*

1. Heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat. Add diced **onion**, **celery**, and **carrots** (*Medium Bowl #1*). Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables begin to soften, about *8-10 minutes*.
2. Add minced **garlic** (*Small Bowl #1*), 1 tsp. **cumin**, and 1 tsp. **Mexican oregano**. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about *1 minute*.
3. Add **Rotel tomatoes** with their juice and cook for *3-4 minutes*, allowing some liquid to evaporate and flavors to concentrate.
4. Pour in 2 cups **carnitas consommé** and 3 cups **water**. Add 2 **bay leaves**, 1 tsp. **salt**, and ½ tsp. **black pepper**. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for *15 minutes*.
5. Add **black beans** (*Medium Bowl #2*) and **carnitas meat** (1½ cups, *Medium Bowl #3*). Simmer for additional *10-15 minutes* until vegetables are tender and flavors are well integrated.
6. Remove **bay leaves**. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional **salt** and **pepper** as needed.
7. Remove from heat and stir in **lime juice** (3 Tbsp., *Small Bowl #3*) and half of the chopped **cilantro** (½ cup, *Small Bowl #2*).
8. Serve hot, garnished with remaining **cilantro** and **lime wedges** on the side.

Equipment Required

- Large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot (6-quart capacity)
- Sharp chef's knife
- Large cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Can opener
- Colander for draining beans
- Ladle for serving
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Bring **carnitas consommé** to room temperature if refrigerated
- Warm **carnitas meat** slightly if cold from refrigeration
- Dice all vegetables to uniform $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pieces for even cooking
- Have all spices measured and ready before starting
- Open and drain **black bean** cans just before use

Ingredient Tips

- Use **Mexican oregano** rather than Mediterranean for authentic flavor profile
- **Rotel** provides perfect heat balance - avoid substituting with plain diced tomatoes
- Rinse **black beans** thoroughly to remove excess sodium and starch
- If **carnitas consommé** is very gelatinous, it will thin perfectly when heated
- Fresh **lime juice** is essential - bottled juice lacks the brightness needed

Preparation Tips

- Don't rush the vegetable sautéing - proper softening builds flavor foundation
- Bloom spices in oil for maximum potency before adding liquid
- Add **lime juice** and **cilantro** off heat to preserve bright flavors
- Taste soup before final seasoning - **consommé** saltiness varies
- If soup seems too thick, add water; if too thin, simmer uncovered longer

Make Ahead & Storage

- Soup improves in flavor after *24 hours* in refrigerator
- Store up to *4 days* refrigerated or *3 months* frozen
- Add **lime juice** and fresh **cilantro** only when reheating to serve
- May need additional water when reheating as beans absorb liquid
- Freeze in individual portions for easy weeknight meals

Serving Suggestions

- Garnish with diced white onion, crumbled **queso fresco**, or **Mexican crema**
- Serve with warm corn tortillas or crusty bread
- Add diced **avocado** just before serving for richness
- Accompany with pickled jalapeños for those wanting extra heat
- Makes excellent leftover lunch - flavors continue to develop
- Consider serving with Mexican rice as a more substantial meal

Hungarian Mushroom Soup •

Ingredients

Unsalted butter	8 Tbsp.	All-purpose flour	6 Tbsp.
Onions, medium	2	Sour cream	1 cup
Mushrooms	2 lbs.	Fresh parsley	1/2 cup
Chicken broth	6 cups	Lemon juice	4 tsp.
Soy sauce	2 Tbsp.	MSG	1/4 tsp.
Hungarian hot paprika	1 tsp.	Salt	1 tsp.
Hungarian sweet paprika	4 tsp.	Black pepper	1/2 tsp.
Dried dill weed	4 tsp.		
Milk	2 cups		

Directions

Chop **onions** (4 cups); set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Slice **mushrooms**; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Chop **parsley**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1*

1. Melt 8 Tbsp. **butter** in a large pot (5+ Qt.) over medium heat.
2. Add **onions** (4 cups, *Medium Bowl #1*) and cook, stirring until softened, about *5 minutes*.
3. Add **mushrooms** (2 lbs., *Large Bowl #1*) and sauté for *5 more minutes*.
4. Stir in 6 cups **chicken broth**, 2 Tbsp. **soy sauce**, 1 tsp. **hot paprika**, 4 tsp. **sweet paprika**, and 4 tsp. **dried dill weed**.
5. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for *15 minutes*.
6. In *Small Bowl #2*, whisk 2 cups **milk** and 6 Tbsp. **flour** together; stir into soup until blended.
7. Cover and simmer for *15 more minutes*, stirring occasionally.
8. Add 1 cup **sour cream**, **parsley** (1/2 cup, *Small Bowl #1*), 4 tsp. **lemon juice**, 1 tsp. **salt**, 1/4 tsp. **MSG**, and 1/2 tsp. **black pepper**.
9. Stir over low heat until warmed through, about *3 to 5 minutes*.
10. Serve immediately.

Italian Sausage Soup •

Ingredients

Sweet Italian sausage	1 lb	Tomato sauce, unsalted	12 oz. can
Hot Italian sausage	1 lb	Diced tomatoes w/basil & garlic	24 oz. can
Onion, large	1	Chicken broth	12-14 cups
Garlic bulbs, minced	2	Italian herb mix	1 tsp
Carrots, chopped	3	Basil	1 tsp
Celery stalks, chopped	3	Parsley	3 Tbsp
Russet potatoes, chopped	3	Bay leaves	3
Zucchini, chopped	1	Oregano	1/2 tsp.
Frozen vegetables (stir fry mix)	1 lb	Sugar	1 Tbsp
Mushrooms, sliced	12 oz. can	Onion salt	1 tsp
		MSG (<i>optional</i>)	1 tsp

Directions

Chop onion, carrots, celery, potatoes, and zucchini; combine in *Large Bowl #1* — Mince garlic; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Drain mushrooms; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1*

1. Brown 1 lb. sweet Italian sausage and 1 lb. hot Italian sausage into small chunks. Transfer to *Medium Bowl #2*; set aside.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large stock pot: browned sausage (*Medium Bowl #2*), onion, carrots, celery, potatoes, and zucchini (*Large Bowl #1*), garlic (*Small Bowl #1*), 1 lb. frozen vegetables, mushrooms (*Medium Bowl #1*), 12 oz. tomato sauce, 24 oz. diced tomatoes, 12-14 cups chicken broth, 1 tsp. Italian herb mix, 1 tsp. basil, 3 Tbsp. parsley, 3 bay leaves, 1/2 tsp. oregano, 1 Tbsp. sugar, 1 tsp. onion salt, and 1 tsp. MSG (optional).
3. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer covered for 30 minutes.
4. Stir occasionally and vigorously to thicken broth.
5. For canning: process at 15 pounds for 90 minutes.

Add 1-2 cups of water per quart when reheating.

Lamb and Chickpea Stew

Ingredients

Dried chickpeas	2 cups	Ground turmeric	2 tsp.
Kosher salt (for soaking)	3 Tbsp.	Ground cinnamon	1 tsp.
Lamb shoulder*	3 lbs.	Tomato paste	6 Tbsp.
Kosher salt (for lamb)	1 Tbsp.	Kosher salt (for stew)	1 Tbsp.
Black pepper (for lamb)	1 tsp.	Chicken broth or lamb stock	3 cups
Vegetable oil	1/4 cup	Diced tomatoes	28 oz. (2 cans)
Onions, large	2	Dried apricots	1 1/2 cups
Garlic cloves	8-10	Fresh cilantro	1 cup
Fresh ginger	2 Tbsp.	Fresh lemon juice	1/2 cup
Ground cumin	5 tsp.	Honey	3 Tbsp.
Ground coriander	5 tsp.	Harissa	for table
Sweet paprika	4 tsp.		
Smoked paprika	2 tsp.		

Beef chuck shoulder may substitute for lamb (same method and timing)

Directions

Night Before: Combine **chickpeas**, water, and 3 Tbsp. **salt** in a large bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight (8-12 hours). — Preheat oven to 300°F — Drain and rinse soaked **chickpeas** — Pat dry **lamb** and cut into 1 1/2" cubes; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Season **lamb** (*Large Bowl #1*) with 1 Tbsp. **salt** and 1 tsp. **pepper** — Dice **onions**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Grate **ginger**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Chop **apricots** into 1/4" pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Measure all **spices**; combine in *Small Bowl #3* — Chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #4*

1. Heat 6-quart enameled dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add 2 Tbsp. **oil**. Working in 3-4 batches to avoid crowding, brown **lamb cubes** on multiple sides until deeply caramelized, about 8-10 minutes per batch, adding more **oil** as needed. Transfer browned **lamb** to a large bowl and set aside.
2. Reduce heat to medium. If pot is dry, add final portion of **oil**. Add diced **onions** and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden brown, about 8-10 minutes. Add minced **garlic** and grated **ginger**; cook, stirring constantly, for 1-2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add **cumin**, **coriander**, **sweet paprika**, **smoked paprika**, **turmeric**, and **cinnamon** to the pot. Stir constantly for 45-60 seconds until spices are darkened and very fragrant. Add **tomato paste** and stir constantly, scraping to prevent scorching, for 2-3 minutes until paste is brick-red and caramelized.
4. Add 1 Tbsp. **salt**; stir to combine. Immediately add **chicken broth** and use a wooden spoon to scrape bottom of pot vigorously, releasing all browned bits. Add **diced tomatoes** with their juices. Bring to a simmer.

5. Return browned **lamb** and any accumulated juices to pot. Add drained **chickpeas** and 1 cup chopped **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #2*). Stir to combine. The liquid should come about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the solids; add additional **broth** if needed.
6. Bring to a full simmer on stovetop. Cover with tight-fitting lid and transfer to preheated 300°F oven.
7. Braise for $3\text{-}3\frac{1}{2}$ hours, checking at $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. **Lamb** should be pull-apart tender and **chickpeas** should be creamy. If liquid level seems low at the $2\frac{1}{2}$ hour check, add $\frac{1}{2}\text{-}1$ cup hot **broth**. If stew seems too liquidy, crack lid slightly for final $30\text{-}45$ minutes.
8. Remove from oven. If sauce needs reducing, place uncovered pot on stovetop over medium heat and simmer for $5\text{-}10$ minutes until thickened to coat the back of a spoon. If desired, skim excess fat from surface.
9. Stir in remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #2*), **fresh cilantro** (1 cup, *Small Bowl #4*), **lemon juice** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup), and 3 Tbsp. **honey**. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional **salt** if needed. Let rest for $10\text{-}15$ minutes before serving.
10. Serve over **couscous** or **cooked rice** with **harissa** on the side.

Equipment Required

- 6-quart enameled dutch oven with tight-fitting lid
- Large mixing bowl (for soaking chickpeas)
- Large bowl or plate (for browned lamb)
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Wooden spoon or heatproof spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Microplane or fine grater (for ginger)
- Ladle
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Soak **chickpeas** the night before in salted water
- Allow *45-60 minutes* total for prep work on day of cooking
- If using whole lamb shoulder, trim excess fat but leave some for flavor
- Cut **lamb** into uniform $1\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes for even cooking
- Prep all aromatics and measure all spices before beginning—once you start browning, the process moves quickly
- Have **broth** ready and warm for easier deglazing

Ingredient Tips

- Lamb shoulder is ideal for braising due to marbling and connective tissue; leg meat is leaner and won't be as tender
- Use whole spices and grind fresh for maximum flavor if possible
- San Marzano or fire-roasted **diced tomatoes** add extra depth
- Turkish or California **apricots** are ideal; avoid overly sweet or sugared varieties
- Fresh **ginger** is essential; powdered won't provide the same brightness
- If making homemade **lamb stock**, this elevates the dish significantly

Preparation Tips

- Don't rush the browning—deep caramelization is the foundation of flavor
- Work in small batches; crowding the pot steams meat instead of browning it
- The **tomato paste** will threaten to scorch; keep stirring and scraping constantly during step 3
- Vigorous deglazing in step 4 is critical—every bit of fond adds flavor
- Starting the braise at a full simmer on the stovetop ensures immediate cooking when transferred to oven
- If your dutch oven lid doesn't seal tightly, cover pot with foil before adding lid to minimize evaporation
- Check liquid level at *2½ hours*; ovens and pots vary, so adjustment may be needed
- **Lamb** texture varies by cut quality; check tenderness and extend cooking if needed
- The stew will continue to thicken as it rests; it should be slightly looser than desired final consistency when removed from oven

Make Ahead & Storage

- This stew benefits from sitting; make up to *3 days* ahead and refrigerate
- Fat will solidify on surface when chilled, making it easy to remove if desired
- Reheat gently on stovetop, adding **broth** if needed to restore consistency
- Add finishing ingredients (**cilantro**, **lemon juice**, **honey**) only when reheating to serve
- Freezes well for up to *3 months*; thaw overnight in refrigerator
- If freezing, slightly undercook (reduce time by *30 minutes*) as reheating continues cooking
- Leftover stew thickens significantly; thin with **broth** or water when reheating

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over basmati rice, couscous, or with crusty bread
 - Accompany with **harissa** for heat, plain yogurt for cooling contrast
 - Garnish with additional **fresh cilantro**, toasted sliced almonds, or sesame seeds
 - A simple cucumber-tomato salad provides refreshing contrast
 - Pairs beautifully with full-bodied red wines or Moroccan mint tea
 - Consider topping with a poached or fried egg for brunch service
 - Leftovers make excellent filling for savory hand pies or empanadas
-

Pork and Chickpea Stew with North African Spices

Ingredients

Dried chickpeas	2 cups	Ground cinnamon	1 tsp.
Kosher salt (for soaking)	3 Tbsp.	Fennel seeds	1 tsp.
Pork shoulder, 1½" cubes	3 lbs.	Tomato paste	6 Tbsp.
Kosher salt (for pork)	1 Tbsp.	Kosher salt (for stew)	1 Tbsp.
Black pepper (for pork)	1 tsp.	Chicken broth	3 cups
Vegetable oil	¼ cup	Diced tomatoes	28 oz. (2 cans)
Onions, large	2	Dried apricots	1½ cups
Garlic cloves	8-10	Fresh cilantro	1 cup
Fresh ginger	2 Tbsp.	Fresh lemon juice	½ cup
Ground cumin	5 tsp.	Honey	2 Tbsp.
Ground coriander	5 tsp.	Cooked rice	for serving
Sweet paprika	3 tsp.	Harissa	for table
Smoked paprika	1 Tbsp.		
Ground turmeric	2 tsp.		

Directions

Night Before: Combine **chickpeas**, water, and 3 Tbsp. **salt** in a large bowl. Cover and refrigerate overnight (8-12 hours). — Preheat oven to 300°F— Drain and rinse soaked **chickpeas** — Pat dry **pork** and cut into 1½" cubes; set aside in *Large Bowl #1* — Trim excess fat from **pork**, leaving some for flavor — Season **pork** (*Large Bowl #1*) with 1 Tbsp. **salt** and 1 tsp. **pepper** — Dice **onions**; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Grate **ginger**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Chop **apricots** into ¼" pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2* — Measure all **spices**; combine in *Small Bowl #3* — Chop **cilantro**; set aside in *Small Bowl #4*

1. Heat 6-quart enameled dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add 2 Tbsp. **oil**. Working in 3-4 batches to avoid crowding, brown **pork cubes** on multiple sides until deeply caramelized, about 8-10 minutes per batch, adding more **oil** as needed. Transfer browned **pork** to a large bowl and set aside.
2. Carefully pour off all but 2 Tbsp. of rendered fat from pot (reserve excess for another use). Add diced **onions** and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden brown, about 8-10 minutes. Add minced **garlic** and grated **ginger**; cook, stirring constantly, for 1-2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add **cumin**, **coriander**, **sweet paprika**, **smoked paprika**, **turmeric**, **cinnamon**, and **fennel seeds** to the pot. Stir constantly for 45-60 seconds until spices are darkened and very fragrant. Add **tomato paste** and stir constantly, scraping to prevent scorching, for 2-3 minutes until paste is brick-red and caramelized.

4. 1 Tbsp. **salt**; stir to combine. Immediately add **chicken broth** and use a wooden spoon to scrape bottom of pot vigorously, releasing all browned bits. Add **diced tomatoes** with their juices. Bring to a simmer.
5. Return browned **pork** and any accumulated juices to pot. Add drained **chickpeas** and 1 cup chopped **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #2*). Stir to combine. The liquid should come about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the solids; add additional **broth** if needed.
6. Bring to a full simmer on stovetop. Cover with tight-fitting lid and transfer to preheated 300°F oven.
7. Braise for $2\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 hours, checking at 2 hours. **Pork** should be pull-apart tender and **chickpeas** should be creamy. If liquid level seems low at the 2 hour check, add $\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 cup hot **broth**. If stew seems too liquidy, crack lid slightly for final 30 - 45 minutes.
8. Remove from oven. Skim excess fat from surface—**pork** renders more fat than lamb, and removing excess prevents greasiness. If sauce needs reducing, place uncovered pot on stovetop over medium heat and simmer for 5 - 10 minutes until thickened to coat the back of a spoon.
9. Stir in remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped **apricots** (*Medium Bowl #2*), **fresh cilantro** (1 cup, *Small Bowl #4*), **lemon juice** ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup), and 2 Tbsp. **honey**. Taste and adjust seasoning with additional **salt** if needed. Let rest for 10 - 15 minutes before serving.
10. Serve over **cooked rice** with **harissa** on the side.

Equipment Required

- 6-quart enameled dutch oven with tight-fitting lid
- Large mixing bowl (for soaking chickpeas)
- Large bowl or plate (for browned pork)
- Cutting board and sharp knife
- Wooden spoon or heatproof spatula
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Microplane or fine grater (for ginger)
- Ladle
- Fat separator or large spoon (for skimming)
- Timer

Mise en Place

- Soak **chickpeas** the night before in salted water
- Allow *45–60 minutes* total for prep work on day of cooking
- Trim excess fat from **pork shoulder** but leave some marbling—it adds flavor and moisture
- Cut **pork** into uniform $1\frac{1}{2}$ " cubes for even cooking
- Prep all aromatics and measure all spices before beginning—once you start browning, the process moves quickly
- Have **broth** ready and warm for easier deglazing
- Keep a heatproof container nearby for collecting rendered pork fat

Ingredient Tips

- Pork shoulder (also called pork butt or Boston butt) is ideal; avoid loin, which is too lean for braising
- Look for well-marbled **pork** with visible fat running through the meat
- Use whole **fennel seeds** rather than ground for better texture and flavor; they add aromatic sweetness that complements pork

- San Marzano or fire-roasted **diced tomatoes** add extra depth
- Turkish or California **apricots** are ideal; avoid overly sweet or sugared varieties
- Fresh **ginger** is essential; powdered won't provide the same brightness
- Reduced **honey** (compared to lamb version) accounts for pork's natural sweetness
- Increased **smoked paprika** balances pork's richness and adds depth

Preparation Tips

- Don't rush the browning—deep caramelization is the foundation of flavor
- Work in small batches; crowding the pot steams meat instead of browning it
- **Pork** renders significantly more fat than lamb; pour off excess after browning to prevent greasy stew
- The **tomato paste** will threaten to scorch; keep stirring and scraping constantly during step 3
- **Fennel seeds** add subtle licorice notes that pair beautifully with pork and apricots
- Vigorous deglazing in step 4 is critical—every bit of fond adds flavor
- Starting the braise at a full simmer on the stovetop ensures immediate cooking when transferred to oven
- If your dutch oven lid doesn't seal tightly, cover pot with foil before adding lid to minimize evaporation
- Check tenderness at *2 hours*; **pork** often reaches pull-apart texture faster than lamb
- Skimming fat in step 8 is more important with pork than lamb—be thorough
- The stew will continue to thicken as it rests; it should be slightly looser than desired final consistency when removed from oven

Make Ahead & Storage

- This stew improves with time; make up to 3 days ahead and refrigerate
- Pork fat will solidify into a thick layer when chilled, making it very easy to remove
- Remove solidified fat layer before reheating for best results
- Reheat gently on stovetop, adding **broth** if needed to restore consistency
- Add finishing ingredients (**cilantro**, **lemon juice**, **honey**) only when reheating to serve
- Freezes well for up to 3 months; thaw overnight in refrigerator
- If freezing, slightly undercook (reduce time by 30 minutes) as reheating continues cooking
- Leftover stew thickens significantly; thin with **broth** or water when reheating
- The rendered pork fat can be saved and used for sautéing vegetables or making cornbread

Serving Suggestions

- Serve over basmati rice, couscous, polenta, or with crusty bread
- Accompany with **harissa** for heat, plain yogurt or sour cream for cooling contrast
- Garnish with additional **fresh cilantro**, toasted sliced almonds, or toasted pine nuts

- A simple arugula salad with lemon vinaigrette provides refreshing contrast
- Pickled vegetables (turnips, carrots, or red onions) cut through the richness
- Pairs beautifully with medium-bodied red wines, amber ales, or spiced cider
- Consider topping with a poached or fried egg for brunch service
- Leftovers make excellent filling for tacos, empanadas, or savory hand pies
- Also delicious served over creamy polenta or mashed potatoes

Variation Notes

- This is a North African-*inspired* recipe adapted for pork; traditional North African cuisine does not use pork
- For a more traditional approach, substitute lamb or beef shoulder using the same technique
- For extra richness, add ½ cup golden raisins along with the **apricots**
- Orange zest (1 Tbsp.) added with finishing ingredients complements pork beautifully
- For a spicier version, add 1-2 tsp. cayenne pepper or Aleppo pepper with other spices
- Substitute bone-in pork shoulder for even more flavor; increase cooking time to 3-3½ hours

Tuscan Zuppa Soup •

Ingredients

Italian sausage	1 lb.	Cannellini beans	1 (15 oz.) can
Onion, medium	1	Heavy cream	1 cup
Garlic	4-6 cloves	Salt	1/2 tsp.
White wine (optional)	1/4 cup	Pepper	1/4 tsp.
Kale	1 bunch	Red pepper flakes	1/4 tsp.
Potatoes, large	3-4	MSG (optional)	1/4 tsp.
Chicken broth	8 cups		

Directions

Dice **onion**; set aside in *Small Bowl #1* — Mince **garlic**; set aside in *Small Bowl #2* — Dice **potatoes** into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #1* — Remove stems from **kale** and tear leaves into bite sized pieces; set aside in *Medium Bowl #2*

1. Brown 1 lb. **Italian sausage** over medium heat until fully cooked. Remove and transfer to *Medium Bowl #3*; set aside, retaining drippings in the pot.
2. Sauté **onions** (*Small Bowl #1*) in the same pot until translucent, then add **garlic** (*Small Bowl #2*) and cook for an additional *1 minute*.
3. Deglaze the pan with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **white wine** (optional).
4. Return **sausage** (*Medium Bowl #3*) to the pot along with 8 cups **chicken broth** and **potatoes** (*Medium Bowl #1*). Bring to a boil, then simmer until potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally, about *10-15 minutes*.
5. Stir in **kale** (*Medium Bowl #2*) and **cannellini beans** (do not drain). Simmer until kale is wilted, about *5 minutes*.
6. Stir in 1 cup **heavy cream**. Season with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **salt**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **pepper**, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **red pepper flakes**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **MSG** (optional) to taste.