Things I want to try:

* Beignets
* Sourdough bread
* Spanakopita
* Dulce de leche
* Asparagus flan
* Panna cotta
* Crab cake eggs benedict w/ Bearnaise
* Lightly steamed asparagus tossed in butter w/ cayenne & shaved parmesan
* Hungarian goulash
* [Lemon Yoghurt Cake](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/lemon-yogurt-cake-recipe/index.html)
* [Grilled steak, avocado, and spicy crema sandwiches](https://d.docs.live.net/868d7d8de63e4535/Shared/Cooking/Grilled%20steak,%20avocado,%20and%20spicy%20crema%20sandwiches)
* Smoked oyster w/ bacon cream sauce pasta
* Rolled Stromboli
* Strawberry cheesecake pancakes
* [Chocolate lava cake](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePP1zaHLC84)
* [Coffee coffee cake](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/03/coffee-hazelnut-cocoa-coffee-cake-recipehtml.html)
* [Banana souffle](http://abloggablelife.typepad.com/recipes/2011/02/dessert-of-the-gods-recipe-warm-banana-souffle.html)
* Lobster benedict
* [Watermelon sorbet](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/08/watermelon-cocoa-nib-sorbet-recipe.html)
* Lobster thermidor
* Clams casino
* Oysters Rockefeller
* Beef tenderloin sliders on pretzel rolls w/ duxelles and English mustard.
* Monte Cristo sandwich w/ asparagus and Hollandaise
* Spaghetti frittata
* Lobster ceviche on butter lettuce rolls
* Chorizo and bread crumb stuffed jalapeno poppers w/ ranch dip

Shopping list:

* Meat slicer?
* Sous vide machine?
* Gratin dishes
* Vitamix

Spices:

* Sumac, Szechuan pepper, curry leaves, achiote powder

Ideas

Spaghetti carbonara but instead of bacon use fresh herbs. Parsley, chives, basil, maybe chervil.

Kaiser roll 100g  
Dinner roll 47g

Gift and preserve ideas:

* Biscotti
* Limoncello
* Liqueurs
* Pickled beets
* Pickled golden beets
* Dill pickles
* Pickled garlic
* Pickled beans
* Pickled mushrooms
* Ice wine jelly
* Jalapeno jelly
* Blueberry jelly
* Crabapple jelly
* Tomatillo salsa
* Fruitcake
* Sugar cookies
* Peanut brittle
* Beer nuts
* Maple butter
* Creton
* Port wine jelly
* Sauvignon blanc jelly
* Tarragon vinegar
* Smoked salmon
* Coffee liqueur
* Pickled tangerines
* Pickled kumquats
* Smoked cheese
* Canned tuna
* Canned salmon
* Pickled pike
* Applesauce
* Herb-infused oils
* Chocolate truffles
* Kumquat marmalade
* Split pea soup
* Tomato sauce
* Marinara
* Bolognese / meat sauce
* Irish cream
* Terrine or pate
* Brownies
* Fudge

6-Aug-10

For lunch sauteed some chicken leg quarters in oil, 20 minutes per side. Then made a sauce with a vermouth reduction, lemon juice, salt, pepper, chicken bouillon. Tasted great but the chicken was under-cooked.

For dinner made Italian wedding soup. 1/2 cup of glace, water, chicken bouillon, splash of marsala. Meatballs made with ground stewing beef, fresh breadcrumbs, crushed garlic, parsley, parmesan, salt, pepper, 2 eggs. Roll into small balls and add to stock, chop a cup or two of kale greens and add, cook until done.

7-Aug-10

For breakfast made a hash. Sautéed shallots in oil, added grated potatoes, chopped ham, chopped sausage, some wine, cover and cook. When close to done add cajun spice mix, basil, salt, pepper. Tasted great but potatoes should have been rinsed, and needed peppers.

Baked two loaves of "french" bread. Turned out tasty and nice and light, but didn't rise high enough.

Bought a bunch of fresh tomatoes and made a sauce from scratch. Used the food mill to strain the tomatoes, worked *great.* Added vermouth, sautéed onions, garlic, olive oil, and a bunch of frsh herbs, and the left-over meatballs from the Italian wedding soup. Served it over spaghetti, yum!

8-Aug-10

Made a large batch of meat sauce to freeze. Took fresh tomatoes, made sauce, added a tonne of veggies, wine, herbs, fresh ground beef. Froze 6 servings. For dinner made crab legs, beef tenderloin, cauliflower with a mornay sauce, and scalloped potatoes in a pan. Yum!

12-Aug-10

Bought a large chicken and broke it down. Had BBQ chicken legs and wings on the grill with some sauce, cauliflower, and fusilli in leftover mornay sauce.

13-Aug-10

Made scrambled eggs on toast for breakfast. Kat came for dinner and made spinach-noodle lasagna with meat sauce. Mixed a lot of grated parm and baby parm into the mozzarella and mascarpone. Was very good. Also had steamed broccoli tossed in melted butter w/ salt and a splash of vermouth. Tasted great this way.

14-Aug-10

For breakfast made toast, bacon, and scrambled eggs w/ truffle oil and chives. Delish. I need to buy more truffle oil!

Made crepe batter from Joy of Cooking. Added a splash of Grand Marnier to it.

15-Aug-10

Made crepes for breakfast, they were slightly over-done. Got 6 crepes out of a single recipe, with one loss. Brandy and I had Hollandaise. Made it with whole sweet butter. Was pourable and turned out well, but slightly too much lemon. Made Carrie and Karlee sliced tomatoes with a little sugar and whipped cream.

Bought three small tubs of tomatoes at Herridge’s and have them on the back deck sunning. Will make a tomato concassé to freeze.

Made ribs. 200 degrees in oven at 3 hours, with cherry wood smoker over a large pan of water. Dry rub was paprika, chili powder, five spice, dry mustard, ground cumin, onion powder, garlic powder, dried basil, pepper, salt. Will be serving with BBQ sauce with added vinegar.

22-Aug-10

Camping. Sautéed some chopped eggplant and hot sausage in butter, added store-bought spaghetti sauce and some heavy cream. Wonderful. Brandy wants more the day after.

29-Aug-10

Randal and Natasha came for dinner, made tacos. Brandy made a nice guacamole, I made tortillas from scratch. Rolled them nice and thin this time so they came out great. Don’t oil the pan next time, made the first few come out of the pan with burnt oil on them. Used the cast iron pan. Served them with sliced fresh jalapeno – WOW was it hot – sour cream, grated cheese, grated lettuce, green onions. The meat was finely chopped steak sautéed with salt, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, chili powder, and some Cajun spice mix. Everything was great.

Made vanilla pudding for the trifle today. Couldn’t find a good recipe anywhere, ended up settling for one based on milk, some half-and-half, 2 egg yolks, 3 tblsp corn starch. Tastes fine but is somewhat translucent, gummy, and has the rigid elasticity of gelatin thickener as opposed to the rich smoothness of egg yolk. Think I will go hit epicurious for ideas.

30-Aug-10

Epicurious suggested I may have wanted Bavarian cream, but think it’s still made with corn starch. Maybe a thicker version of my crème brulee custard?

Mark and Nancy are coming for dinner. Making buttermilk biscuits. <http://www.canadianliving.com/food/buttermilk_biscuits.php> They turned out nice and fluffy but didn’t rise much. Also making rib roast koshered and covered in Dijon, and chive mashed potatoes. Nancy is bringing corn on the cob and a salad or something else. Brandy’s already made the trifle.

Potatoes turned out fairly good, roast beef was well-done. ☹ The vanilla pudding was delicious even if it didn’t look great. Found out that the difference between pudding and custard is that pudding is thickened with starch, custard is thickened with eggs.

1-Sep-10

Made a big pot of white stock, and a big pot of marinara. Let the tomato sauce cool and added the herbs after it was cold, in the hopes the herbs will cook while defrosting rather than overcooking.

2-Sep-10

Reduced the white stock to a glace that fit in 3 tiny Ziplocs.

6-Sep-10

Made eggplant surprise again. Sauteed eggplant, onions, chopped hot sausage in olive oil. Then added to a pot with home-made marinara, some leftover chopped tomatoes, chopped celery, and heavy cream. Made a barley salad. Boiled the barley in 2 parts veg stock, then rinsed with cold water when cooked. Squeezed in juice of half a lemon, added olive oil, chopped parsley, chopped cilantro. No too bad, maybe needed pepper. The salt somehow tasted out of place.

7-Sep-10

Brandy made a wonderful roast chicken dinner with horseradish mashed potatoes and a caprese salad to start. I contributed stuffing which came out as the best stuffing I’ve ever made. I melted a pile of butter in a large saucepan, added some chopped fresh sage, chopped fresh parsley, chopped sweet onion, and some pepper. Added a bit of dried thyme, then some water, some chicken boullion concentrate, and finally a pile of fresh (not dried) bread crumbs. Made the bread crumbs from leftover hotdog buns. It turned out great! Tender, fresh, delicate. Didn’t even bother baking it.

8-Sep-10

Brandy bought pork chops so I think I’ll pan fry them, then make a mushroom cream sauce. Add butter, shallots, oyster mushrooms, and garlic to the pans and soften, deglaze with some sherry, then add heavy cream. Salt and pepper to taste.

Maybe I’ll also buy some sweet peppers – red or cubanelle – and add the stuffing leftovers to them, then bake. Could be nice. Think I’ll also try making a caprese salad in a hollowed tomato.

Dinner was out of this world. For the caprese I diced the mozzarella and tossed in salt, pepper, olive oil, white wine vinegar, and chopped basil.

The cubanelles I chopped the top off, seeded and de-membraned, stuffed, and convectioned (with caps) for 15 mins at 350. Served with the caps for presentation. So delicious.

For the pork chops I pan fried them in ¾ butter, ¼ veg oil, then set aside in warmer. Added one chopped shallot, one chopped clove of garlic, and one package of sliced oyster mushrooms and sautéed. Then added about ½ cup of sherry and reduced, then about 1 ½ cups heavy cream and reduced again. Added 1 tbsp black truffle oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Spooned the sauce over the warm chops to serve. Ho lee crap.

Earlier in the day also made long grain rice boiled in water. Not starchy or sticky at all, but utterly devoid of taste and slightly “wet” tasting. Perhaps the water needs to be more heavily salted? Or salt only after cooking?

10-Sep-10

For dinner made pasta pesto salad. Macaroni and chopped cubanelles and grilled chicken and grape tomatoes. The pesto was basil, pecorino romano, toasted almonds, pepper, olive oil.

Started making a big pot of brown stock. Roasted the bones at 400 degrees for 60 minutes, then deglazed the roasting pan with red vermouth and water.

11-Sep-10

Made French toast for breakfast. Takes just under 1 egg per slice. 4 eggs, pinch of nutmeg, ¼ tsp of cinnamon, ½ a vanilla bean, splash of bourbon, 2 tsp of sugar, and some milk. Tasted okay, mine was a bit over-done and had an aftertaste.

Cream of asparagus soup for dinner. Sweated one large sweet onion, one chopped celeriac, and the base of a bunch of asparagus in butter, then added equal parts water and white wine, vegetable stock mix, chicken stock mix. Cooked until tender then blended, added chopped asparagus bits and cream, white pepper, salt. Next time I need to discard the asparagus bases, it was very stringy but tasted okay.

12-Sep-10

Making ribs for dinner. Dry rub is 5-spice, paprika, chili powder, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, ground cumin, some dried thyme, flaked basil. Didn’t spread it on too thick, last time was way too much. Baked in oven over tray of water for 2 hours at 250, then turned down to 200 and cooking another 2-2 ½ hours. Going to go with a BBQ sauce highly watered down w/ vinegar so it doesn’t spread on too thick.

Started making another stock pot of meat sauce. Tomatoes are sweating on lowest heat setting and I browned up a tonne of turkey meat. Need to go to store to buy herbs, then add onion, garlic, some hot sauce, some beef stock, carrots, red (shepherd) peppers, mushrooms, red or white wine.

15-Sep

Made sushi for dinner. The sushi mat absolutely needs to be enclosed in a bag. Was a bit messy and challenging but came out well and tasted great. Made 2 rolls of avocado, cucumber, and Pollock, and 1 roll of spicy salmon, avocado, and cucumber. Made the rice the night before and read that would make it hard, but it was fine. Used calrose. Eyeballed the rice vinegar mixture with 3 tblsp of rice vinegar, 1 tblsp of sugar for 1 cup of rice (before cooking). Made the spicy salmon by chopping then mixing with mayo and sriracha.

17-Sep-10

Read today that you’re supposed to cook pizza on the bottom rack of the oven in order to crisp up the crust, and ideally to preheat to over 500, although then you have to watch it like a hawk. Looked at Foodwishes and it actually says bottom of the oven, not bottom rack, and several people on epicurious corroborated.

18-Sep-10

Will be trying Foodwishes’ no-knead ciabatta bread recipe today. Also making the stuffed pork roast, with mashed potatoes and some veggie. Seriously considering apple mashed, not sure how that would turn out.

Stuffing will be bread crumbs, sausage, sage, stock, onions. Something sweet could be tasty too.

Ended up making the stuffed pork, was delicious. Fried mild Italian sausage in some butter and two chopped shallots. Added some red vermouth (port), chicken bouillon, water, chopped sage, chopped parsley, dried basil. Then added a few cups of freshly ground bread crumbs. Cut open the pork roast and rolled flat. Added a layer of stuffing, rolled back up, and breaded the outside with bread crumbs, dried sage, and salt. Roast at 325 to an internal temp of 170 degrees.

Had frozen corn off the cob as a side, and lemon rice. Made a pilaf by frying 1 cup basmati, chopped shallots, pepper in veg oil. Then to my 2 cups water included ¼ cup vermouth, several tbsp. lemon juice. Added to the pot some salt, chicken bouillon, and turmeric for colour.

Everything turned out great but I didn’t tie up the roast and it was falling apart, and the stuffing was a bit soggy. Probably should have cooled it and added some egg to bind.

19-Sep-10

Finished the ciabatta, what a drama. Recipe called for 4 cups of flour to 2 cups warm water. Did that and ended up with soup. Had to add almost 3 more cups of flour to get the right consistency. Let it rest for 18 hours and then made a loaf, all is well. Let the loaf sit covered 2 hours, came back and towel was stuck to the loaf and tore it apart when I removed it. Loaf was basically a pancake. Used a tonne of flour to make it less sticky, and vaguely in the shape of a loaf. Baked for the full 45 mins called for in the recipe. End result was flat and enormous, but utterly delicious, chewy, crispy on the outside, with bubbles throughout. Go figure.

Made foodwishes’ oven dried tomatoes, waiting for them to dry now. For a snack later will have baguette crisped in the oven, baked garlic, and baked brie.

20-Sep

Made sushi again today. Making the rice the day of it was very, very sticky. Maybe night before is a good idea? Tried two rolls with rice on the outside and sesame seeds and they were really really hard. I think the trick is to cut 4 sections off the nori, cover it end-to-end in rice, and make then roll. If there’s any over-lap it comes out way too big. The inside-out ones are also super difficult to cut without ruining the rice, I think I need a razor-sharp knife, and one with blood wells won’t hurt.

Made 2 California rolls, 1 inside-out with spicy salmon and panko inside (this was really good), and 1 inside-out with avocado, cucumber, and spicy salmon. Altogether it was very tasy.

23-Sep

Made roast beef with mashed potatoes and squash. Added bacon bits to the squash. Potatoes were ruined because I left them in the heating drawer for several hours after they were completed.

24-Sep

Made pizza w/ brown crust, marinara sauce, fresh grated mozzarella, oven dried tomatoes and spicy sausage. Was very good, tomatoes were delicious.

27-Sep-10

Made NY strip steaks for dinner. Made them right for a change. Seared on each side for ~ 3 mins on top shelf at 450 degress, on a rack. Then roast on 425 for about 4 mins per side. (For very very thick steaks.) Then DID NOT season them. Let them rest 10-15 mins, then added salt and pepper, then spooned over garlic butter. Cooked and seasoned flawlessly.

Read Julia’s recipe for Caesar salad. She says they don’t include anchovy or bacon bits. Dressing includes Worchestershire, and eggs are boiled for exactly 1 minute.

3-Oct-10

Made oven-dried tomatoes again last night. Just started the dough for no-knead ciabatta. This time it turned out slightly dry and I used more yeast than it called for. Will be ready to punch down at 4PM tomorrow.

Might try making pastry dough and perhaps an apple pie or two today. Undecided.

Made the pastry dough from Julia’s recipe, but used only all-purpose. Was very easy, let dough rest in fridge for 3 hours. After rolling it out I put it between sheets of waxed paper and let it rest in fridge 10 minutes. Only had about 1 tbsp of dough go to waste and the crusts were rolled parchment thin. This recipe doesn’t leave a lot of room for error!

For the apples I used the recipe from Food Network:

<http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/apple-pie-recipe/index.html>

But accidentally cooked the spices into the apples. The recipe appealed to me because it uses no flour or other thickener. You cook the apples in advance then strain them, reduce the juices, then prepare.

Oh, and I didn’t prepare nearly enough apples, so the pie is thin and flat. ☹

So the final verdict on the pie is this. I washed it down with egg wash so it had a wonderful golden colour. But that also took away from the flakiness of the pastry. Don’t think I’ll do that again. The apples were mushy as I suspected, but they didn’t collapse at all and weren’t runny, so it wasn’t altogether bad. Maybe instead of baking at 375 for 45 mins, bake at 425 for 20, so the filling doesn’t overcook.

4-Oct-10

Baked the ciabatta today. Sadly I cooked it too long and it came out too dark, but the consistency was better and it rose well. Live and learn.

5-Oct-10

Made pork tenderloin w/ mushroom cream sauce for dinner. Cream sauce wasn’t sufficiently reduced, runny, and flavourless. Tried pan frying the tenderloin in oil but got oil everywhere (including face and hands) and it was raw when I cut into it. Threw in oven at 325 for 15 mins and it came out like shoe leather. Made mashed potatoes w/ chives which were okay but under salted, and roast asparagus w/ salt, pepper, and balsamic.

Not a great cooking day. ☹

7-Oct

For breakfast made scrambled eggs w/ truffle oil and chives, with a thick slice of ciabatta toast. Yum!

Watched the foodwishes buttermilk biscuits video and learned that you tri-fold your dough three times, starting with a rectangle. After the biscuits are on the silpat, press down lightly in the center with your thumb so that they’ll rise straight up.

Made the buttermilk biscuits from foodwishes, they were okay, no complaints. Brandy thought they were a bit dense.

Made the roast chicken from foodwishes, but used sage and parsley as the fresh herbs inside the skin. Skin was slightly moist because of the herbs but the chicken was delicious and tender. The fan drippings were to die for but I was too lazy to degrease them and make gravy. We also had leftover chive mashed and eggplant in rose sauce, but this time I left out the spicy sausage.

11-Oct-10

Made fettuccini Alfredo for dinner tonight. Brandy made the sauce and I made the fettuccini from scratch. Came out smashing. Used the semolina egg noodle recipe from inside the pasta roller box. Learned a few things:

* The dough needs to be folded in half, then rolled through at setting 1 several times before you start to roll it thin.
* The first time through or two the dough might be a disaster. Don’t worry, just try to fold it in half, then run through again.
* Always feed it in fold-first, otherwise it buckles and makes a mess.
* Once the dough has the right consistency, start increasing the number by 1 and running it through once, until you hit the desired thinness. (Fettuccini is 5).
* Very lightly dust the sheets when done to prevent them from sticking.
* The reason the cutter didn’t work well last time is because the pasta was spinach pasta and it can’t cut the tiny pieces of spinach. Egg noodles cut just fine.
* When you cut the pasta, discard the rough edge, it looks like hell.

Altogether I’m exceptionally happy with dinner, yay!

12-Oct-10

Made veal parmesan, roasted Parisien potatoes, and broccoli with mornay sauce for dinner. Made the veal with fresh bread crumbs but slightly over-cooked it so it tasted slightly burnt. Making a batch of meatballs later tonight.

Meatballs turned out fairly good, not spectacular. They were:

* 2 lb ground veal
* 1 lb ground beef
* 2 cups grated parmesan
* 2 ½ cups fresh bread crumbs
* Heavy cream
* Dried basil
* Dried parsley
* Garlic powder
* Salt
* Pepper

Then simmered in marinara. Used a coffee scoop to measure them out evenly.

13-Oct-10

Chef John says meat must be cold when forming burgers. He also marinated winter tomatoes in rice vinegar to bring out the sweetness.

Made the leftover homemade pasta, with meatballs in marinara for dinner, fairly good. Then made a lemon meringue pie. Pie was certainly a learning experience. First crust was trash because it wasn’t weighted down enough and puffed up while cooking. Second one worked, but came out raw under the mound of beans. Need to either use something that conducts heat better, or remove the beans before finishing.

First batch of meringue was a write-off because I couldn’t believe it took over 20 minutes to make meringue. Second batch worked and the final pie looked pretty decent, even if the meringue didn’t have stiff peaks.

16-Oct-10

Made ribs for dinner, came out quite good. Cooked them for 4 hours at 200 and the last hour at 275. Dry rub was paprika, pepper, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, basil, mustard, five spice, and whole cumin. Should have used ground cumin, the seeds were a tad strong. Ribs came out extremely tender for a change.

Making buttermilk pancakes for breakfast tomorrow. Chef John says creamy horseradish is made with crème fraiche. I totally want to try his crème fraiche recipe.

17-Oct-10

Made buttermilk pancakes today from Epicurious / Gourmet. <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Buttermilk-Pancakes-109480>

Turned out quite good, although I had to thin the batter out with more buttermilk. Had stove top at 2-3 and it perhaps was even a tad too high. Some of them browned a bit too much but altogether they were very good.

Made oregano pesto yesterday from all the oregano we grew, hung some up to dry, as well as all the thyme. Today I need to do the parsley, sage, and mint.

20-Oct-10

Made chicken strips, beets w/ creamy horseradish sauce, and sour cream & herbs egg noodles for dinner. Served the chicken strips w/ honey mustard sauce, next time less honey. Probably needs to be about a 50/50 mix. Beets were steamed for 25 mins in pressure cooked then peeled and sliced. Large ones were cooked enough but barely. Sauce was crème fraiche and 1 ½ to 2 tbsp horseradish. Good, just enough tang to add an accent, but not one you could place. Noodles were tossed in fresh herbs and crème fraiche. Altogether decent meal for a rush.

Wanted to make foodwishes’ crème fraiche but my buttermilk was past its date. :\

24-Oct-10

Made foodwishes’ baked cheesecake. Only let it cool for an hour but it split during that time so I took it out and threw it in the fridge to cool. Maybe if you don’t touch it at all as it cools it might not crack? Served it with a raspberry coulis that was frozen raspberries with some sugar added and then mixed until smooth. Served the cheesecake slightly warm and it seemed a bit too soft and had a grainy texture. Perhaps graininess will go away after it’s chilled? Oh, and for the recipe I substituted 2/3 cup of heavy cream for the 2/3 cup of milk it called for. Also cooked it 10 minutes longer than the recipe called for because it was wet in the centre.

25-Oct-10

Made leek & potato soup for dinner. Sweated 2 chopped leeks and 2 chopped celery stalks in 5 tbsp butter. Added ¾ cup vermouth and reduced. Added 4 cups water, chicken bouillon, vegetable bouillon, 3-4 chopped potatoes, white pepper. Cooked until potatoes were soft, then blended. Added 2-3 cubed potatoes and cooked until almost tender. Added 1 julienned leek, cooked for a few mins, then added 1 cup heavy cream, and sugar and salt to taste. Garnished with prosciutto bacon bits and a dollop of sour cream.

This was delicious!

Started a jar of Chef John’s crème fraiche.

Tried another piece of the cheesecake after it spent 24hrs in the fridge. Perfect! Dense, dry, and almost all of the graininess was gone.

26-Oct-10

Had a really great dinner tonight. Veal cutlet breaded in ½ panko and ½ bread crumbs. Cooked on lower heat than usual and with more oil, which let it cook to a nice, crispy, golden brown. No burnt spots. Made a pan sauce of butter, shallots, reduced vermouth, pepper, lemon juice, salt, vegetable bouillon and some beurre manié to thicken. Together these tasted AWESOME!

Made mashed potatoes with chip dip, chives, cream, salt. Salted them slightly more than usual and they tasted great. Steamed the potatoes themselves in a regular pot, this seems to work well.

Steamed cauliflower for a vegetable.

REMEMBER: Slightly over-season your garnish sauces because you combine so little sauce with so much food.

30-Oct-10

For dinner made Beef Tenderloin on pancetta rounds w/ stilton and reduced sherry, steamed mixed vegetables, and home-made spaghetti in butter/cream sauce.

Pasta was made with the semolina recipe. Couldn’t get it to not disintegrate even after adding several additional tbsp. of water. Wet each patty and then mashed it very flat and that worked. Trimmed the noodles into rectangles so they cut fairly well. Cooked them, then tossed them in heavy cream, butter, and salt, and garnished w/ chopped chives. Very tasty.

Steamed veggies were cauliflower, sugar snap peas, and baby carrots tossed in melted butter w/ salt and cooking wine. Carrots were crunchy, cauliflower fine, peas overcooked. Next time I think stagger throwing them into the steamer so some don’t cook as long.

Tenderloins were okay but I didn’t have time to do anything but eyeball the doneness, never checked them once. Other than that they were fine.

2-Nov-10

Made irish stout beef pot pie for dinner tonight. Sauteed the beef in the bottom of the pressure cooker with some oil, then added onions. Added a pint bottle of smoked oatmeal stout, some water, salt, pepper, and brought to pressure. Cooked for 30 mins, then added molasses, beef bouillon, diced carrots, a whole wheat slurry, and got very thick. Added frozen peas, added to some bowls, topped with puff pastry (coated on both sides with a milk wash) and baked for 15 mins at 400. Quite good, think the stew needed celery.

Never twist the ring mold when cutting biscuits or puff pastry, it prevents the dough from puffing up.

4-Nov-10

Made lasagna for dinner. Brandy made a quick marinara since we were out, I made egg noodles, and Brandy took a turn making them too. I parboiled the noodles so they wouldn’t taste gummy and although the sauce was a bit undersalted everthing was very tasty.

When peeling turnips, always pare past the dark line in the rind to avoid bitterness.

6-Nov-10

Made the Food Network buttermilk pancakes recipe for breakfast only to realize we were out of eggs. Made them anyway and they turned out quite good. The batter was thinner and they didn’t rise as high, but otherwise they were just fine.

For dinner made prime rib roast. Kosher salted and rubbed w/ Dijon mustard. Meat thermometer wasn’t working and said the meat needed to cook for far longer than I knew it did so I moved it, whereupon it told me the meat was WAY overdone. Took it out and decided “fuck it” and let it rest a good 10-15 mins. As it happens it was flawlessly cooked by sheer luck. Perfectly bright pink throughout, well done on edges.

Made garlic mashed w/ red potatoes partial skins in and they were very good. Boiled the potatoes and by not disturbing them they could be cooked well without falling apart. Made baby carrots w/ sugar snap peas and although the carrots were slightly crunchy the peas were perfect and altogether veggies were good. Added the peas after the carrots.

Also made the Emeril Yorkshire pudding recipe from Food Network. <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/yorkshire-pudding-recipe/index.html> Made them slightly different than the recipe. Used about ½ cup of buttermilk, used melted shortening instead of pan drippings, and used a generous pat of ghee inside the muffin molds. Also, heated up both the pan and ghee to 375 before adding the batter. These were FLAWLESS. Oh my, they puffed up so perfectly. Wish I had a picture.

Altogether this was one of the best meals I’ve ever made. Yay.

11-Nov-10

Made the banana bread recipe from foodwishes. Came out fine but it doesn’t taste enough of bananas. I think it’s just the recipe. Also made the dinner rolls again. Kneaded over 200 times and they still came out totally “cakey”. Asking chef john for some advice.

Want to try the tortilla recipe from foodwishes, looked good.

12-Nov

For dinner made t-bones w/ pesto risotto and broccoli rabe. Brandy made the t-bones. I oiled them first and salted heavily, she then placed under broiled for 2 minutes per side. After letting them rest she brushed them with garlic butter. Very very good. The rabe was extremely bitter, even though I cooked in heavily salted water. Risotto was gummy, should not have boiled out all the creamy starch. Once I added the parmesan it just seized up and you could make it into balls. Oh well.

12-Nov

Brandy made angel food cake “pinkalicious” cupcakes, they look great. I’m making pitas from <http://southernfood.about.com/od/yeastbreads/r/bl40319j.htm>. Trying using the mixer and dough hook to knead, thinking of letting it knead for about ½ hour.

Also chopped up some pork chops and they’re marinating in olive oil, vermouth, salt, garlic, chopped shallots, and lemon juice. Will skewer and BBQ to make souvlaki.

So dinner was fabulous. Brandy cooked the souvlaki and it was head and shoulders above marinating in salad dressing.

The pita were perfect, but I cooked them in a cast-iron pan instead of baking them as directed. They separated perfectly into “pockets”.

Tzatziki was greek yoghurt, a blended cuke that I then strained and pressed the liquid out of, 3 cloves of cooked garlic, chopped dill, and salt.

Rice was a simple pilaf w/ vegetable bouillon and some lemon juice. Tasted great but it looked awful, the bouillon made it brown.

Altogether this meal was A+++. Would eat again.

Also making crème fraiche but used yoghurt instead of buttermilk to start. So far doesn’t seem any more successful, and I think it will have a tangy flavor.

14-Nov

Steve and Sue came for dinner. Bought an $80 prime rib roast and due to fucking cocksucking meat thermometer it came out well done throughout. Tasted like pot roast. FUCK!

Gravy was good, mixed vegetables were good, potatoes were very good.

For the Yorkshires I used leftover egg yollks (no whites) so they came out flat and grainy. What a humiliating disaster.

16-Nov-10

Alton Brown claims a convection oven will prevent biscuits from fully rising.

For dinner made breaded veal cutlet on a bun w/ fried peppers and onions. Used fresh bread crumbs and fried in an inch of clarified butter.

Making another batch of dinner rolls. Kneaded in food pro with dough hook for 30 mins. Also stretched and beat on counter for a couple minutes.

Dinner rolls turned out the same as always. Cake, not bread.

17-Nov-10

Made hamburgers for dinner. Mixed lean ground beef with chopped bacon and added some salt. They cooked super slow and I had to cover them to steam, and they ended up being over-cooked. Tasted okay though. Served them on the rolls from last night with pickles, fresh tomatoes, romaine, sliced onions, swiss cheese, and condiments. Overall not so bad.

5 mins per side wasn’t enough when frying but was too much when covered.

18-Nov-10

Made shepherd’s pie for dinner tonight. Fried the ground beef w/ chopped shallots, added salt, pepper, and fresh bread crumbs. Used peas as the veggies and leftover chive mashed potatoes. Made a gravy by combining beef stock, porter, some tomato sauce, and reducing, then adding to a roux. Was pretty good.

Making a brown stock now. Roasted the bones on top of a bed of mirepoix for 1 hour at 450 degrees, then added the contents of the pan to a pot of cold water, deglazed the pan w/ beer, and added thyme, bay leaves, 2 cloves garlic, more porter, chopped tomatoes.

20-Nov-10

Made fried chicken for dinner tonight. Marinated for 36 hours in buttermilk, pepper, salt, paprika, cayenne, basil, onion powder, garlic powder. Then tossed in mixture of 2 cups flour, salt, pepper, paprika, cayenne, sage, thyme, garlic powder.

Directions were to fry at 350 for 25 mins but I had to take it out at about 20 mins. The texture was perfect but the batter was dark to the point of being burnt. Either one of the adidtions to the flour burnt, or the oil was too hot. Next time I try I will use a simpler flour mixture, and lower oil temp.

Foodwishes leaves in the paprika, cayenne, pepper, and garlic and onion powder in the batter, only the sage and thyme are missing. Either this was the cause or – more likely – the oil was too hot.

22-Nov

Made chicken fried rice for dinner. Very tasty. Cooked a turkey breast in the oven at 400 until done, then let cool and chopped. Added oil, soy sauce, and a touch of fish sauce to wok and sautéed sugar snap peas and diced red and yellow peppers. Added rice, chicken, and served.

Made biscuits tonight but rolled them way too thin so they weren’t very good.

24-Nov-10

Made Country roll, potato celeriac puree, and steamed vegetables for dinner. Cooked the baby carrots and cauliflower at the same time, because they were small carrots and big flowerettes. Still should have started the carrots first. The puree was not bad, but certainly not a superstar.

27-Nov-10

Mark and Nancy came for dinner tonight. I made foodwishes biscuits and this time they turned out very good. Rolled them much thicker and ended up with 8. Rose nice and high, thick, great results.

Made fried chicken in the new deep fryer, worked great.

Marinade was buttermilk, paprika, smoked paprika, cayenne, black pepper, onion powder (lots), garlic powder, thyme, salt. Made 2 chickens. Flour was 3-4 cups flour, paprika, smoked paprika, cayenne, onion powder, white pepper. Marinated for about 3 ½ hours. Cooked for 25 mins at 335 degrees, came out super crispy, tasty, not overdone. Slightly too much chicken in the fryer so some stuck together a tiny bit, and one or two got slightly overdone by resting against the element.

Made mashed potatoes w/ truffle oil and chopped rosemary. Romemary went grey, next time need to add it before plating.

Also made steamed baby carrots and cauliflower. Cauliflower was slightly overcooked, but not bad.

Brandy made angel food cake for dessert.

28-Nov-10

Made a hash for breakfast. Steamed some diced potatoes, sautéed them in butter with diced onions and diced ham. Added some Cajun spice mix, smoked paprika, and salt. Threw in some chopped rosemary before plating and served with toast, Frank’s Red Hot, and doused in Hollandaise. Oh my god this was delicious!

29-Nov-10

Made linguini for dinner. Made the pasta in advance, to firm al dente. For the sauce sautéed garlic with chopped onions, added pepper, vermouth, cooking wine, tomato paste, several large shrimp & boiled down until a sec. Threw in a container of chopped Campari tomatoes, then some chopped oregano, then rough chopped rosemary. Tossed the pasta into the sauce, warmed it on the heat, and served with grated pecorino Romano.

30-Nov-10

Made the basic white recipe from my foodpro manual today. Same results, although it was only kneaded for about 5 minutes. Tasted fine, no gluten.

1-Dec-10

Julia says that a dough hook can cut the gluten strands and hand-kneading is required to re-join them. She also says it can over-heat the dough and this can cause the gluten to break down. She says to machine knead for 30 turns, and 50 hand-turns.

She says dough needs to be proofed at no higher than 75 degrees Fahrenheit, and that in French baking the dough should not be oiled when proofing.

My meat thermometer can measure from 32 degrees Fahrenheit, so it can easily maintain a 70 degree temp for proofing dough.

2-Dec

Made chicken burgers. Fresh buns, tomato, lettuce, and chicken schnitzel.

3-Dec-10

Made potato pancakes. Shredded the potato, soaked in water, then squeezed the water out. Added salt, pepper, cayenne, onion powder, paprika, chopped chives, 1 egg, flour, buttermilk. Placed in a pan with 1/4” of oil in it and fried.

Made potato soup. Fried onions and garlic in butter until lightly browned, added glace, a tonne of cooking wine, bouillon, and water. Added leftover mashed potatoes and bay leaves, turmeric, onion powder, thyme, and cooked. Blended with immersion blender and added milk and cream and salt/pepper to taste.

4-Dec-10

Made buttermilk pancakes for breakfast. Ran out of buttermilk, used ¼ cup milk. Worked fine.

Made beef wellington for dinner. Bought beef tenderloin steaks and sears them on all sides. Salted and covered them in Dijon mustard. Then wrapped in Serrano ham and let rest in fridge. Added them to lightly rolled puff pastry, sealed well in egg wash and baked for about 20 mins in a 400 degree oven. Let rest for 20 mins and they were pretty close to perfect, meat was maybe slightly overcooked.

Also tried to make sweet potato mashed. Steamed 1 part sweet potato with 2 parts russet, then blended to smooth with immersion blender, butter, and cream. What I got was glue. Plain old glue. Brandy thinks it was that the sweet potatoes should have been baked instead of steamed, I think it may have been the blender. I definitely want to try mashing potatoes using the food mill.

For snack made buzzard baits. Rolled chopped chicken breasts in seasoned flour, then battered them. Batter was basically the same as the seasoned flour but with some baking powder and beer added. Then deep-fried them.

Didn’t puff up too much so I think the baking powder was a waste, but they were crispy and soft so no complaints. Came out basically like chicken balls, but seasoned them with butter and hot sauce like wings. Mostly a success, just not what I expected.

5-Dec

Made some lamb stew. Added chocolate porter, brown glace, vermouth, chopped onions, and a lamb shoulder to pressure cooked and cooked for 45 mins. Removed from heat and removed lamb shoulder. Added parisien potatoes and baby carrots and let cook. Added pepper, salt to taste. Removed meat from fat & connective tissues on roast and added to pot.

Made a loaf of “multi-grain” bread. Used the basic white recipe from my mixer manual but substituted 2 cups of whole wheat flour. Also added a couple tblsp of flax seed to dough while mixing. Was much more careful about temp while proofing and altogether it came out light, soft, tasty, and far more glutinous than past loaves.

Could have added some fennel in there, and ought to buy some millet.

6-Dec-10

I totally want to try Chef John’s pierogi recipe! <http://video.about.com/easteuropeanfood/How-to-Make-Pierogi.htm>

Tried the pierogies. Over-cooked the onions which gave the filling too powerful a flavor. Next time watch them closer. Also make a half recipe of the filling. Dough was easy but watch wet fingers and that it’s not stuck to the work surface as that makes them really tricky suckers.

Used my largest round cutter but it was too small and it was hard to work them, and they didn’t hold enough filling. Next time err on the side of larger.

Finally, Chef John recommended browning the butter but I didn’t like this. Recommend using clarified butter instead.

Other than that they actually turned out okay, there were just a lot of things I’d improve next time around.

7-Dec-10

Inspired by Iron chef I’d like to try making a turkey breast sous-vide with some butter and herbs. Then crisp up the skin to make cracklins, serve with gravy and Julia’s mushroom duxelle stuffing.

Watched some Julia. Says to peel asparagus with a paring knife and eat the whole thing. Recommends peeling the stalk and stem of broccoli and to boil in salted water to preserve the greenness.

9-Dec-10

Learned that pork butt and pork shoulder are the same thing. And a picnic roast is the same cut but I think it’s treated differently.

11-Dec-10

Making a beautiful white stock. Shallots, onions (no skins), celery, carrots, vermouth, 1 bottle beer, peppercorns, bay leaves, lots of chicken bones, water, zest & juice of 1 lemon. Cooked for about 2 hours on low heat then strained through cheesecloth. Degreased. Took 5 egg whites and tempered them with the hot stock, then added to the pot and cooked on low for 8 minutes. Ran through cheesecloth again and am now reducing. Beautifully clear and a nice bright yellow, just the way chicken stock should be.

12-Dec

Made a pretty decent wonton soup with that stock. Pulsed chicken breast in food processor until very well blended, added a beaten egg, chopped chives, salt, pepper. Placed a ball on a spring roll wrapper, brushed on an egg wash, pinched closed and poached in the stock. Added a tonne of chopped scallions.

The only complaint is that the spring roll wrappers weren’t quite right for it and wonton wrappers would have been better. They tended to break down and fall apart in the soup, making it cloudy. Need something with a bit more toothiness.

Made mac & cheese for Tammy’s xmas party. Same old. Mornay over cooked macaroni, topped with panko and baked. It sat around for about 3 hours so the mac absorbedthe moisture out of the mornay and it ended up being pasty, not creamy. Yay.

16-Dec-10

Made vichyssoise today. Sauteed chopped leeks in clarified butter, then set aside. Sauteed more leeks and chopped onion, added vermouth and water, 3 chopped potatoes, chicken bouillon and cooked. Once tender, blended, added cream and honey, the sautéed leeks and salt to taste.

Wikipedia says scalded milk is used in bread to make a more tender loaf.

19-Dec-10

Kathy came over 2 nights ago. Made 2 pizzas. First was a white pizza with a pesto sauce made of olive oil, basil, parsley, garlic, romano. Topped it with grated pizza mozzarella, grilled chicken breast, artichoke hearts. Crust was white dough.

Second pizza had a sauce made with grape tomatoes, olive oil, parsley pesto, garlic. Topped it with a mixture of fresh and pizza mozzarella, kalamata olives, fresh basil, and Serrano ham. Crust was whole wheat.

Tonight I’m making strip loin steaks, and leeks and red cabbage wedges braised in the oven. Added a tonne of butter, some vermouth, pepper, and salt, and am baking at 325 for around 45 mins, will baste frequently. Will top the steaks with fried mushroom with a sauce made of marsala, pepper, salt, chopped shallots.

Everything turned out great, that mushroom pan sauce was to die for!

20-Dec-10

For dinner making roast chicken, fries, and broccoli w/ hollandaise. Made an herbed butter with 1 stick unsalted, salt, lots of chopped parsley, garlic. Broke down the garlic a new way. Placed it under plastic wrap and beat the shit out of it with meat hammer. Worked very well. Spread the butter under the skin of breasts, wings, legs. Salted and peppered the outside, added more butter to cavity, then roast. Put the cut fries in ¼ inch of oil on a preheated cookie sheet and plan to cook about 40 mins, tossing regularly. Then will toss in spice mix.

Fries tasted very good. Chicken was good but undersalted. Next time I think I’m going to kosher salt the chicken when I do an herb butter.

Also baked the remained of the pizza dough as a loaf of bread and it looked great and tasted pretty darned good.

21-Dec

For dinner made home-made linguini. Put half of the batch in the fridge for later, thinking maybe I’ll make a sugar snap, ham alfredo.

For a snack had corn chips, with a dip made of sour cream, Cajun spice, salt, and cayenne.

23-Dec-10

Made a sponge cake for Brandy’s trifle. Turned out pretty decent. Used the recipe from Joy of Cooking. Added a bit too much lemon zest, though.

24-Dec-10

Making foodwishes’ no-knead ciabatta. Used all white flour and made it drier than usual, let rise for 20 hours. Divided into 2 loafs and placed in regular bread pans.

Made the cranberry sauce for tomorrow. 1 ½ cups sugar, 1 cup water, 5 finely chopped kumquats, 2 cloves, and a few cups of cranberries. Boiled and placed in fridge.

The eggnog custard never set, after using 5 egg yolks, chilling overnight, adding 3 more, and reheating. Consistency of a thick crème anglaise. So we’re going to make ice cream instead of trifle.

Bread is baking now. Added an egg wash in the hopes of having a darker and crisper crust. Looks good but very low in the bread pans. Next time think I need to make the whole recipe in a single pan.

Note: finished bread was outstanding. Crust was still crisp and crunchy in the morning.

25-Dec-10

Randal and Natasha came for xmas dinner.

Cooked the turkey breasts at 165 degrees F for just over 2 hours. Added a tonne of thyme, and half a stick of butter to the ziplock. Came out very good, fairly tender and moist. Had a whole turkey breast left over.

Laid out the skin on the cutting board and added coarse salt and pepper, and let sit for an hour or so. Then fried in a no-stick pan with oil. They came out way too salty and I burned one of them so I threw the whole batch out. Live and learn.

Mixed veggies were steamed baby carrots, then added green beans and pattypan squash toward the end. Tossed in melted butter, salted, and peppered. Perfect.

Gravy was white glace, white wine reduction, pepper, salt, thickened with roux. Perfect.

Potatoes were parisiene potatoes steamed until tender, then tossed with butter and salt and a tonne of chopped parsley added just before serving. Perfect.

Served some of the bread from last night warmed in oven. Perfect.

Stuffing was chopped onions and celery sweated in butter until translucent, plus white glace, vermouth, pepper, finely chopped carrot, crushed hazelnuts. Added fresh bread crumbs at the end and freshly chopped sage. Put in ramekins and broiled for a couple minutes, I think this last step was superfluous. Anyways, perfect.

Flambeed some brown rum and added it to the eggnog crème anglaise, then made an ice cream out of it. Brandy then topped it with fresh berries, cubes of sponge cake, and whipped cream. Perfect.

Altogether everything turned out perfect, the best overall meal I’ve ever made.

Julia says when baking bread to ensure to throw some water into the oven when you add the loaves as the steam at the beginning facilitates browning and allows the bread to rise slightly higher.

27-Dec-10

Made foodwishes’ Pasta Aglio e Olio for dinner tonight. Was absolutely amazing. Made a half recipe of pasta for a change so there were no leftovers. Also cut back on the flour so it was a much moister dough than lately. Much easier to work with, although stuck very slightly to rollers. Rolled out to number 6, then tried to cut as spaghetti, didn’t work so I rerolled the ball of dough and switched to fettuccini. I think you may need to roll to a max of 5 when cutting spaghetti.

29-Dec-10

Making a ¾ portion of foodwishes’ ciabatta tonight. Had to get rid of fennel bulb and Jerusalem artichoke, so am making a soup. Sweated sliced fennel and a whole sliced Spanish onion in butter, added a whole bottle of white wine, 1 container of white glace, and the artichokes partially peeled.

The artichokes were delicious raw. Very crunchy and sweet, not a tonne of flavor but very pleasant. Should try in a stir-fry or on salad.

1-Jan-11

Made a pot of white stock last night, boiling it down now.

Making a ham for dinner, also some potato cakes w/ sour cream & green onions and probably broccoli for a veg.

Someone on foodwishes says the reason the dinner rolls are cakey is because of the milk. Milk makes cakey bread, water or oil make chewy.

For breakfast tomorrow I want to make crepes w/ bourbon crème anglaise.

Had to throw out the first creme anglaise. Let it just sit there on the heat and paid it almost no attention, and came back to find it was a pot of scrambled eggs. Retard, I know better. Second batch turned out fine, based it on Gloria’s master recipe for crème anglaise.

Cooked about ¾ cup of bourbon to a syrup, then added 1 1/3 cup of cold milk. In another bowl mixed 5 egg yolks, and slowly blended in 2/3 cup of sugar. Added the sugar and egg yolk mixture to the milk and cooked slowly. As Julia advised, took it off the heat after it had started steaming a lot, was clearly thickening, and all the surface bubbles suddenly collapsed. Added ¼ tsp of vanilla. Looks good!

Learned that when you make stock it also makes sense to make crème anglaise. Used 6 egg whites to clarify the stock, and used the 6 yolks to thicken my crème anglaise. Good match.

3-Jan-11

Made crepes for breakfast w/ bourbon crème anglaise and fresh berries. Made Julia’s crepes instead of Joy of Cooking’s. They were a lot more eggy and would say they’re no better or worse than the others.

For dinner am making pork wellington, sugar snap peas, and perhaps scalloped potatoes.

Made duxelles w/ salt, pepper, and marsala. Seared the pork tenderloin, let rest, rubbed w/ Dijon mustard, and rolled in cellophane w/ layered Serrano ham & duxelles. Resting in the fridge to firm up, the shape looks perfect.

A batch of bread is doing its second rising, trying an entire recipe in one bread tin this time since the last one was still a bit short.

The Wellington was very good but slightly overly salty where the Serrano overlapped. The bread turned out perfect, didn’t bother to egg wash it this time.

4-Jan-11

Sautéed onions, red peppers, and chopped ham in olive oil, added to 2 beaten eggs. Made a frittata in the same pan as I made the crepes and turned the frittata out onto the last crepe. Rolled it, cut it on the bias, and poured Hollandaise over it. Better than Cora’s.

5-Jan-11

Kitchen stuff I’d like:

lotus spoon set, French loaf pan, large spider, skimmer, mandolin, marinade injector, truffle/garlic slicer, ring mold set, cannoli rings, gravy separator, pasta cutter (pastry crimper?), citrus zester, individual gratin dishes, fish turner, pizza stone, pasta bowl set, tart pan set, 9” quiche pan (loose bottom?), piping bag & nozzles, untapered wooden rolling pin, cast iron wok, bamboo steamers, lion’s head soup bowls,

Brandy asked for split pea soup for dinner, one hour before dinner. No clue if this will work but here’s what I did. To pressure cooker added some vermouth, one large Ziploc of white glace, ¾ bag of yellow peas, 2 diced celery stalks, 1 diced onion, 2 cloves garlic, ¼ cup olive oil, several large skin-side slices of ham, black pepper, water to cover liberally. Will cook for 1 hour and puree, saving the ham and perhaps some peas if they’re not too mushy. (Or too hard!)

Took 1:15 to cook the soup, took it off the heat and mashed well with a potato masher. (Still came out nice and chunky.) Added salt to taste. This was really delicious!

7-Jan-11

Watching Bobby Flay make BBQ chicken. He says marinade in buttermilk, then wipe off excess. Cover in spice rub & grill low & slow, then finish with BBQ sauce.

16-Jan-11

Made a compound butter w/ chopped sage, thyme, shallots. Rolled up in cling wrap and froze.

For dinner made Chef John’s Brussels Sprouts recipe. <http://foodwishes.blogspot.com/2007/09/theyre-bigger-theyre-better-and-theyre.html> Quite good but next time I think it needs only a half a lemon, not a full one.

Kosher salted a chicken, then separated the skin, including from the neck all the way into the drumsticks. Sliced the compound butter and added it under the skin, stuffed bird w/ onions, and roasted.

Made garlic mashed potatoes w/ some of the compound butter & fresh chives. These were to die for.

Also, when prepping the chicken I took the liver, dredged it in flour, sautéed it, salted & peppered and ate. Wow, so yummy!

Read in Wikipedia that a gastrique is a sauce that begins with caramelized sugar. Fruit or wine is then added, followed by vinegar, and then it is either strained or not. It also says the sweetness of sugar declines as it caramelizes, and that a gastrique made from a nut brown caramel will come out savoury rather than sweet.

When cooking meat and you plan to make a pan sauce, don’t use a no-stick, as you don’t get a nice fond on the bottom.

17-Jan-2011

Made the osso bucco from Epicurious today. <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Osso-Buco-with-Tomatoes-Olives-and-Gremolata-107747> Forgot to make the gremolata, but otherwise it was very tasty and tender. Served it over the same garlic mashed w/ chives as Sunday night.

Also, tried the store-bought cornbread recipe, was horrific. Dry, flavourless, and stuck to the pan. What a waste.

Confited says you can know bread is done when it hits an internal temp of 190 degrees.

19-Jan-11

Made scrambled eggs for breakfast and added fresh thyme as well as chives. Tasted to die for but boy does the thyme ever taste strong.

20-Jan-11

Making the cornbread recipe from Foodwishes. <http://foodwishes.blogspot.com/2008/01/jalapeno-cornbread-now-with-75-less.html> But swapped clarified butter for regular, and left out the jalapeno.

Also making soft shell tacos for dinner. Bought a marinating steak, pounded it, chopped in fine cubes, and marinated for 3 hours in juice of ½ lemon, salt, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, olive oil, smoked paprika. Will fry up, as well as some fried peppers & onions, and serve w/ green onions, cheese, sour cream, guacamole.

Cornbread came out very good. Nice and sweet, fluffy, gritty, nice crust around outside of pan. Made guac w/ sweet onion, cilantro, salt, pepper, lemon juice, rough mashed avocado.

Added all the meat to the fry pan at once and it released all its liquid and boiled for 5 mins. ☹

21-Jan-11

For breakfast made burritos. Scrambled eggs w/ crème fraiche, chopped sausage, cheese, cooked chopped green pepper.

Ganache is a mixture of chocolate and cream. Do 2 parts chocolate to 1 part cream for a thick truffle filling, or 1:1 for a glaze.

For dinner butterflied some chicken breasts. Filled them w/ stuffing, rolled them, wrapped in smoked prosciutto, and baked at 325. Needed to cook them a little longer. Made fingerling potatoes cooked until barely done, then tossed in butter and chopped parsley. Next time add the parsley right before serving. Very lightly cooked some spinach, shocked it in cold water, dried it, chopped it, then tossed it in béchamel.

If I ever make the chicken dish again I need to do a few things differently. The portions were way too large so either buy smaller breasts or but them in half. Make sure to pound them out thinner, and be sure some stuffing sticks out both sides to crisp like a cannoli.

Tested the temp of my slow cooker element. With a large dutch oven filled with water, on low is reached 133 degrees. On high it reached 155.

22-Jan-11

Making chicken sausage for dinner. Ran dark meat, 1 clove garlic, chopped sage, chopped parsley, onion through the meat grinder, then seasoned with salt, pepper, cloves, one egg white, and fresh bread crumbs. Wrapped in cling wrap, then in Ziploc, and cooking sous vide. Then will sear.

Also making egg noodles and asparagus, sliced on the bias and sautéed in butter and garlic.

The asparagus was utterly to die for. Salted and peppered to taste, and sautéed very lightly. So much flavor!

Also made some crostini.

Made a double batch of crepes from foodwishes and froze them. Also started the sourdough recipe. Day 1.

23-Jan-11

For dinner made ribs, cooked covered in foil. Turned out pretty decent. Also made asparagus w/ ends peeled, with a parsley & white wine vinegar Hollandaise. Very yummy.

For a snack made warm spinach dip. Cooked a package of spinach in water, drained and squeezed out all the liquid. Chopped, and added to a pot w/ a package of cream cheese, some crème fraiche, pepper, cayenne, and some truffle oil. Served on crostini.

24-Jan

Watching Julia. Says to cut green beans on the bias if they are large (Frenching), and to dunk in an ice bath after cooking to set the green colour. Suggests finishing by sautéing in a little oil, adding small amount lemon juice and chopped parsley.

Says for turnip, cube and steam, then run through a food mill. Add to a saucepan and heat to evaporate extra liquid, add salt, butter, and cream before serving.

Julia suggested braising onions, then adding cream and boiling down until thick. I think I would brown the onions first before braising, and add a generous pat of butter after reducing. Would probably also be delicious with leeks.

Julia says to add some vinegar to red cabbage or beets to help them keep their colour.

She suggests grating beets and braising them.

She also suggests grating zucchini, squeezing out all the excess liquid, and sautéing for about a minute. Season to taste. Maybe sautee with shallots and some cubed pancetta?

Try slicing eggplant rounds, tossing some oil and Italian seasoning on top, then baking in the oven. Throw on some chopped fresh tomato, grates swiss cheese, and place under grill.

She suggests when making tomato sauce w/ winter tomatoes, augment them with some canned for flavor.

She says to toss ingredients in a sautee pan you simply pull the handle towards you.

26-Jan-11

Reading up on ranch dressing recipes the recipe looks to be roughly:

1/3 cup buttermilk  
1/3 cup sour cream  
1/3 cup mayo  
Chopped chives  
Chopped parsley  
1 tbsp white wine vinegar  
Salt & pepper

The top 3 ingredients vary greatly by recipe.

Day 3, looks normal.

26-Jan-11

Day 4, bubbles beginning to form and odour.

27-Jan-11

Day 5.

In general, mayonnaise is 1 egg yolk to ½ tsp lemon juice to ½ cup oil. Mustard is optional but is a good emulsifying agent.

Made lobster mushroom risotto for dinner. Poached a fresh lobster and chopped it. Sauteed some sliced oyster mushrooms in about 4 tbsp of butter, added one small diced shallot, then added some marsala. Marsala was way too dark brown, ruined the colour of the dish. Added 1 ½ cups Arborio and used water + chicken bouillon to keep it moist. After the risotto was cooked took it off the heat and added ¾ cup of ricotta, almost a whole package of slices basil, some truffle oil, and the chopped lobster. Next time don’t use ricotta, it was too grainy and the curd never melted. Other than the ricotta and the dark marsala it was great, flavor was perfect, but it wasn’t presentable.

28-Jan-11

Day 6

Mark & Nancy are coming for dinner tomorrow. For snack am going to make warm spinach dip and homemade pate, dinner will be eggplant pizzas w/ my pizza sauce, sous vide strip loin steaks, and cole slaw. Can’t decide if I should do a vinaigrette, or spicy SW creamy slaw.

Made the sponge for the bread.

Made liver pate. Sauteed the livers in butter, salted and peppered to taste. Removed from pan and added 2 diced shallots, more butter, sautéed. Added a 1 cup of sherry and reduced until almost dry. Added to livers, added salt and more pepper. Over-salted intentionally. Pureed the livers, and folded in 3 cups of whipped cream.

29-Jan-11

Sealed the steaks in bags w/ a sprig of rosemary and some olive oil, they are in cooking now. Slaw is cut – red cabbage, savoy cabbage, julienned carrots and radish.

According to Julia, the main difference between mayo and tartar sauce is that for tartar you add the oil to cooked egg yolks, not raw. Then you season with chopped pickles or capers, and optionally add pureed cooked egg whites.

The steak came out overdone and dry. The eggplant pizzas were fantastic and the slaw wasn’t bad.

Oh, and made the sourdough. Came out heavier and harder than a brick. Serious.

30-Jan-11

For dinner making sous vide roast beef, Yorkshire puddings, julienne sautéed zucchini w/ tomato sauce, scalloped potatoes w/ thyme.

The beef was rare, almost blue. Complete failure. Made scalloped potatoes in a pan, boiling down the cream until thick. Threw in several springs of thyme. These were delicious. Cut zucchini into noodles, tossed in a hot pan w/ butter and lemon juice, added salt & pepper. Topped with my rosemary tomato sauce. The sauce was horribly overcooked and yucky. The zucchini was okay. Also made Yorkshire pudding, they came out well.

1-Feb-11

Read that eggplant is supposed to be salted and patted dry prior to use to remove some salt.

For dinner I want to make veal a limone, the sautéed garlic asparagus, and maybe some egg noodles. Or rice.

Toss the veal in seasoned flour, sautee in butter, add chopped shallots and cook until translucent, add flour to the butter, add vermouth and lemon juice, reduce. Salt and pepper to taste, finish with some butter. Top with finely chopped parsley to finish.

I made the veal exactly as above, big change was I put the cooked veal back into the pan while the sauce reduced. Instead of the breading being a crisp coating it was very soft and soaked up all the sauce. This is the consistency most of the veal I’ve had in restaurants had and it was a very tasty treat. Dinner was outstanding! Almost forgot, I also marinated the veal in milk for about 3 hours first.

2-Feb-11

For breakfast made scrambled eggs, added bacon bits and chopped brie, rolled in a crepe and covered in Hollandaise. So-so. The crepe lost it’s nice texture from freezing, IMO.

For dinner took leftover Yorkshire puddings, warmed them and cut them in half. Covered top in Dijon mustard, covered bottom in pate, and added sliced roast beef in the middle.

Think I want to make Bobby Flay’s jerk chicken. <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/bobby-flay/grilled-jerk-chicken-with-mango-cilantro-salsa-recipe/index.html>

4-Feb-11

Made the jerk chicken tonight. Instead of grilling it I braised it – covered – for 30 minutes, then broiled for 15. It needed a lot more spice and salt, so I added some to the leftovers.

Made rice & beans. Added oil to pot, smoked paprika, pepper, salt, some grape tomatoes, and rice. Then added water and cooked, and added canned black beans as it rested. Very tasty.

Made popcorn cauliflower, it was really delicious. Made it with part of a cauliflower head so the proportions were slightly off. Too salty but otherwise very tasty.

5-Feb-11

Go to Model Bakery in Napa valley. Try English muffins.

Made choux pastry, some cream puffs and some eclairs. The eclairs barely rose at all but the puffs did okay. Still not round though.

Made Alton Brown’s ganache recipe <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/ganache-recipe/index.html> but it never set. ☹ CORRECTION: The ganache set up after about 2 hours. By morning I suspect it will be well set.

For dinner tomorrow I’m going to make fried chicken, roast kale, fried potato wedges, and jalapeno cheddar drop biscuits.

I made a buttermilk marinade with Frank’s, ancho chili powder, paprika, pepper, basil, onion powder, garlic powder. Broke down the chicken, poked lots of holes in it, and it and the potatoes are now marinating in it.

6-Feb-11

For biscuits making the cheddar ones from Epicurious. <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Cheddar-Buttermilk-Biscuits-230469> But leaving out scallions and parmesan, and including jalapeno.

So, final verdict. Chicken accidentally cooked slightly over 335 and it was way too brown. Tasted okay but I was pissed. Could some of the other ingredients also have contributed? Garlic powder? Onion Powder? Paprika?

Roast kale was like easting paper. Never making that again. Potato wedges were okay, nothing spectacular.

Biscuits were incredibly good. Make this again!

8-Feb

Made a sandwich with one of the biscuits. Added a slice of turkey cold cut, a slice of Serrano ham, some cheddar, and heated. So yummy!

9-Feb-11

Lunch was spectacular. Started with an aioli. One egg yolk, 2 tbsp lemon juice, ½ tsp Dijon mustard, one large crushed clove garlic. Drizzled in and whipped with about ¾ cup oil. Added salt and pepper. Never got firm at all, but it tasted good.

Sauteed some shrimps, chopped them, tossed with the aoli, added chopped chives, threw in a warm bun and topped with basil chiffonade. BOOM! POW! Delicious!

Making lasagna for dinner. Used the usual recipe but piled the semolina on the counter, hollowed it out, and added wet ingredients in centre. Made it easy to stop incorporating flour when it was done. Rolled them out 1 by 1 while composing 2 lasagna’s. Creamy filling is a mixture of mascarpone, ricotta, and salt. Cheese topping is fresh mozz w/ salt, pizza mozz, and baby parm.

According to CIA, when making infused oils heat the oil only to about 140 degrees. He doesn’t actually clarify it at all after straining.

11-Feb-11

Matt’s in the Market. Try the salmon chowder in Seattle. Catfish sandwich also good, and lamb burger.

12-Feb-11

Forgot that a few days ago I made mayo. 3 egg yolks, whisked 1-2 mins. 1 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tsp Dijon mustard, salt, white pepper. Whisked again, then started to incorporate oil until right consistency achieved. Added chopped chives, very yummy. Next day made my scrambled eggs but used mayo instead or crème fraiche, no added oil to eggs. This was to die for.

Today I made home made ranch dressing. ¾ cup of the mayo, ¾ cup sour cream, ½ cup buttermilk, chopped chives, parsley, basil. Some salt. Very tasty.

Bought some beef short ribs, need to find a recipe for them.

Tomorrow I’m going to make foodwishes pot a crème but with a white chocolate crust, and sherry short ribs. We went to cookgourmet for dinner. Was lots of fun although the food and learning left a little to be desired. Met Rachel-someone-or other who I had been to school with.

13-Feb-11

For dinner made foodwishes’ sherry short ribs. Braised the meat in dutch oven at 260 degree for 3 hours. Thought the gravy was a bit boring, next time I’ll go for something a bit more BBQ. Made parisienne potatoes tossed in oil and Italian seasoning mix, and shredded savoy cabbage sautéed w/ butter, garlic, lemon juice, pepper, salt.

Also made the pot a crème from foodwishes. The white chocolate glaze was a disaster so I’ll top w/ a dollop of whipped cream. Used a fair bit of lemon zest in it. Made the whipped cream by hand in a larger pot of ice. Came together relatively easily. The pot a crème were pretty good, but a bit too chocolatey and rich for either of us. Was much less set than it was supposed to be, despite chilling for 5 hours.

Le Bernardin is a 3-Michelin star seafood restaurant in New York. The chef there also owns Philadelphia's 10 Arts and Westend Bistro in Washington D.C.

16-Feb-11

For dinner tonight I’m going to make fresh spaghetti and Chef John’s spaghetti carbonara. Maybe add some sprinkled chopped parsley on it though.

Chubb gave me a great idea for a manicotti too! Make creamed spinach with béchamel and maybe some cream cheese. Roll this in noodles, cover with some marinara, and grated cheese and bake. This would be yum!

I also wonder what it would be like to wrap breakfast sausage in biscuit dough and bake.

They were out of pancetta at Metro so I used cubed prosciutto instead. Rolled the pasta too thick first time so it wouldn’t cut. Apparently spaghetti needs to be at least thickness 6 to cut. Didn’t use enough water in the sauce so it was too thick, but otherwise tasted okay.

Someone on Reddit suggested pureeing tomatoes with herbs and salt for pizza sauce. Uncooked.

17-Feb-11

For dinner making popcorn cauliflower, garlic mashed, and meatloaf. Combined ground turkey, ground beef, leftover rice pilaf, 2 eggs, fresh sage, fresh rosemary, sour cream, chopped prosciutto, salt, and pepper. Pressed into casserole and brushed with Dijon mustard.

Meatloaf was incredibly good, topped it with brown gravy. Made the mashed potatoes partially with buttermilk and they tasted great.

18-Feb-11

Bought a pork shoulder, rubbed it with allspice and ground cloves, put in a dutch oven and cooked at 300 for about 3 hours. Pulled the meat – this is a lot easier once it’s cooled and you use your fingers – and tossed it with salt, cider vinegar, and BBQ sauce.

Made BBQ pork summer rolls. Butter lettuce, shredded carrot, vermicelli noodles, and pork. Served with sweet chili sauce and spicy satay peanut sauce. Very yummy!

20-Feb

Bobbie came for dinner. I made manicotti with spinach in ricotta and fresh marinara. Didn’t pre-boil the noodles and they tasted awful. For a snack made onion rings soaked in buttermilk and double-dredged in spiced flour, served with home-made mayo and sriracha.

22-Feb-11

Commander’s Palace is the restaurant to eat at in New Orleans. And go for beignets at Café du Monde. Finally, Galatoire’s and Muriel’s are apparently good too.

For dinner we had BBQ pulled pork on warm buns, with a nice creamy slaw. Used the last of the savoy cabbage and shredded carrots, mixed w/ home-made mayo, buttermilk, cider vinegar, salt. Yummy.

23-Feb-11

For dinner tonight I made summer rolls with tempura avocado and tempura salmon gourgettes. But I heavily over-salted the flour dredge so it wasn’t a very good dinner. The avocado softened only slightly and dried slightly.

24-Feb-11

Best place for a muffuleta sandwich in New Orleans is at Central Market in French Quarter.

25-Feb-11

Randal & Natasha and Fred & Teresa came for dinner. Made spaghetti and meatballs and New York cheesecake topped w/ canned cherry pie filling. Found the best system for making pasta. Roll out the pasta sheets, not worrying too much about shape. Cut them into rectangles, and store stacked in layers of plastic wrap. Take the trimmings and add them to the next dough ball. When cutting spaghetti the dough needs to be fairly dry so cut lots of flour into it.

Everything was very tasty.

28-Feb-11

Made crostini. Cooked at 300F no convection. Barely toasted them, added a small amount of oil and salt. Much lighter and tastier than usual.

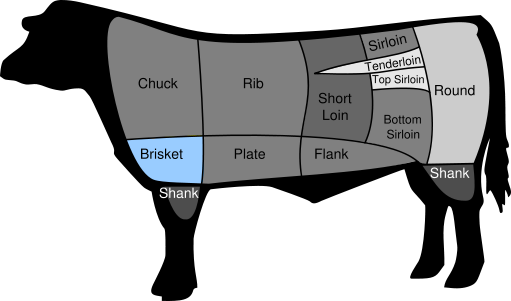
Also making a big batch of scrambled eggs w/ truffle oil, chopped green onions, and chopped parsley. Wrapping in crepes and putting in fridge for breakfasts.

Tuesday: Fajitas w/ home-made tortillas  
Wednesday: Steaks, Spaghetti squash sautéed w/ garlic, egg noodles, maybe home-made?  
Thursday: Pork souvlaki w/ home-made tzatziki & pita

1-Mar-11

Sodium Nitrite is used in corned beef and pastrami to keep the meat pink after cooking.

Flank steak is most frequently used in fajitas and Asian stir-fry.

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/BeefCutBrisket.svg)

Skirt steak is different than flank steak, but often interchanged. It’s the preferred cut of meat for authentic Bolognese sauce.

Using Alton Brown’s tortilla recipe this time. <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/flour-tortillas-recipe/index.html> Came together very easily, now the dough is resting.

Rolled the tortillas out super-thin then placed a mixing bowl over top and cut a circle. Cooked them in a cast-iron pan. They were very good but dried out quickly, oh well. The fajitas were nice but I used shredded extra-old cheddar and it was just way too strong.

2-Mar-11

One cup of raw rice yields 3 cups of cooked rice.

For a side today made sautéed spaghetti squash. Boiled the squash for 60 mins in salted water, then soaked in cold. Scooping out flesh, adding butter, garlic, lemon juice, Italian spice mix, salt, pepper, and sautéed for several mins.

Made home made egg noodles. Made half a batch of dough, rolled it out on the counter until very thin, then cut with a pizza roller. Tossed in a bag with AP flour. Then shook all the flour off and added to boiling water. Came out very good but the dough needs to be even thinner. PAPER thin. Also the AP flour made them a little big fuzzy on the outside. Next time try semolina instead.

3-Mar-11

Made buttermilk pancakes for breakfast, came out very well. I always have to use at least a half cup more buttermilk than the recipe calls for.

Made beef barley soup. Put water, 1 bottle beer, marsala, 1 container brown stock, and several grape tomatoes in a pot with the leftover steak and simmered it around an hour. Added barley, shredded the beef, then added fresh chopped carrots and celery. Cooked until almost tender.

Now making Julia’s master recipe for French bread. Turned out a little bit dense and nor very glutinous. Again. The one with the egg wash on it looked far better. I think next time I don’t cover the bread as it rises, but spray with water the whole time. Maybe it will prevent a skin from forming and inhibiting rising.

4-Mar-11

According to someone on epiforums, the flatiron steak is the 2nd-most tender of steaks behind tenderloin and it comes from the chuck.

Most tender beef cuts:

1. Tenderloin
2. Flat iron steak
3. Top Sirloin Center-Cut
4. Ribeye
5. Strip Steak Center-Cut
6. Beef Shoulder, Arm

Making souvlaki for dinner. Cut up a large pork tenderloin and placed in a Ziploc with juice of ½ lemon, olive oil, vermouth, chopped celery, onion, garlic. Salt, pepper, dried basil, greek spice mix.

Making the pitas from about.com, but this time only a half recipe. Sprayed the pan regularly w/ oil, and sprayed oil on all the pitas as they came out, for moisture. The pitas were flawless but I def. prefer a more fatty cut for the pork. Tzatziki was Balkan yoghurt, chopped cucumber, chopped oregano, salt, and 1 clove raw garlic. Tasty but next time the garlic needs to be cooked.

5-Mar-11

Making the pumpkin bread from <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/pumpkin-bread-recipe/index.html> but substituting spaghetti squash for pumpkin. Also added a couple tbsp more sugar.

Supposed to cook for 1:15 at 325F. Cooked it for 1:50 and then took it out. It split in half comng out of the pan because it still wasn’t fully cooked. Complete failure.

8-Mar-11

Roast the duck last night. Cut off the extra fat from the cavities, scored the skin, salted, and roast at 325F to a temp of 160F. Came off nice and pink although the skin didn’t crisp up. Removed the skin and returned it to the oven to render out. The meat was still a nice pink. Sliced it and salted lightly. Virtually no work and very tasty, I think I need to do this again. I think I would serve with a sherry / cream pan sauce.

Making thick cut veal chops for dinner tonight. They are soaking in buttermilk for the day.

I want to try coconut rice. Maybe tonight, undecided. Add ½ cup of coconut milk for each cup of rice, top up with water.

Watching Julia. She makes her potato leek soup with water as a base to avoid interfering with the flavours of the veggies. She also does one with a large batch of watercress cooked for 5 mins in it. For chicken stock she suggests not using skin. Fish stock cooks for only about 30 mins.

What an unmitigated disaster dinner was. First I made coconut milk rice and it burned to the bottom of the pan. I made another batch and added the coconut milk after it was cooked. So-so. I did a chiffonade of some basil but let it sit about 30 mins so by the time I added it to the rice it was dull grey/green.

I took the chops out of the buttermilk and dredged them in seasoned mash potato flakes, then tossed into a stainless pan. They stuck to the pan and burned so I had to scrape it all off the chops. Then threw them plus pan in a 325F oven to finish. Made a pan sauce of oil, shallots, sherry, cream, salt, pepper. Tasted so-so. The chops were nice and pink but they didn’t rest long enough and shed tonnes of liquid, diluting the pan sauce and turning it pink.

Finally made chopped beet greens w/ cream, garlic, salt, pepper, crisped Serrano ham. Not bad, but again the cream turned pink. Alos let them rest about 10 mins after cooking and the red parts went all grey.

Very unattractive meal.

9-Mar-11

Richard Bertinet has a cooking school in Bath, UK.

Bread ideas. You can add gluten powder to your dough mixture to make it more glutinous. J\_M recommends using Kitchenaid to knead, Richard Bertinet has a nice hand method. He sayd never flour your surface or the dough, and don’t pull the dough out of the pot after rising. Scrape it out so you don’t break the gluten.

According to eHow it’s okay to salt the water when boiling potatoes.

For dinner made corned beef brisket. Cooked it in the crock pot for about 4 hours at 180F. Sliced it and served. Made napa cabbage sautéed in wine, butter, a little bit of white wine vinegar, salt, pepper, and some crisped up duck meat.

Tried boiling potatoes in salted white stock but even though I watched them very carefully they ended up falling apart. Mashed them with some cream and more stock.

Sauteed some green leeks and used the leftover mash to make a vishysoisse. The leeks were slightly browned and this made for an incredibly tasty soup!

10-Mar-11

Roasting chicken and duck bones to make a brown stock. Don’t ever do this again. Duck carcass smells like death.

For dinner made fettuccini Alfredo with cubed ham and peas, very tasty.

11-Mar-11

Today I learned you can lard a roast with anchovies or cheese.

12-Mar-11

Jane and Liz coming for dinner. For appies we’re having pizza w/ tomato rosemary sauce, mozzarella, prosciutto, olives, basil.

Dinner will be burgers. Buns will be home-made egg bread onion & poppy seed buns, buns crisped in pan, guacamole, tomato, red onion, butter lettuce. Meat is chopped tenderloin and bacon. Side will be creamy slaw.

Made the keisers from this recipe: <http://www.grouprecipes.com/5795/onion-egg-bread-bread-machine.html>. They came out flawless. Left out the onions and poppy seeds from the recipe, and set the machine to dough. Took it out, formed into rolls, let rise for 45 mins in oven covered by a floured towel. Washed with egg wash, sprinkled with poppy seeds and fresh chopped onions, baked at 425F to an internal temp of 190F. They were flawless. Glutinous, golden, tasty. Next time split them into 7 pieces at least, not 5.

Burgers were chopped tenderloin, bacon, salt, pepper. Cooked to medium. Topped w/ cheddar slice, red onions, butter lettuce, and thick guacamole. They were utterly to die for.

Slaw was napa cabbage, carrots, chives, in creamy sace. Okay, but next time I make this it should be dressed then served.

Pizza was tasty too.

For breakfast I’m making a corned beef hash. Potatoes, cubanelles, onions, corned beef, basil. Would love to top with a poached egg and Hollandaise.

13-Mar-11

For breakfast made the corned beef hash but topped only with Hollandaise, no poached egg. I diced the corned beef but I should have minced it.

Just baked a loaf of no-knead ciabatta, came out perfect. Rose like a tower out of the pan and beautiful golden colour.

14-Mar-11

Made naan out of leftover pizza dough, cooked in a skillet and then brushed with garlic butter. Very tasty. Made tandoori chicken and then butter chicken. Yum!

17-Mar-11

For dinner making ribs. Marinating them for 1 hour in 1 cup cider vinegar, 1 cup water, 3 tbsp salt. Then will use a light dry rub and cook at 200F for several hours. Finally will brush one half with BBQ sauce and the other half rack w/ jerk sauce.

Rub is coriander, cumin, whole caraway, pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, basil. Ribs are cooking at 200 for 4 hours.

Also making collard greens w/ browned onions, crisped bacon, and simmered in wine as a veg.

Starch will be potato and turnip mash.

18-Mar-11

Made home made butter today. <http://www.injennieskitchen.com/2009/05/butter-101.html> It’s draining now. Would like to try adding a tbsp of yoghurt to see if it turns into cultured buttermilk.

For dinner making home-made pasta, alfredo sauce, and home-baked French bread for garlic bread with home-made butter.

The French bread came out amazing. Later on I cooked the corned beef on high for several hours and this time all the connective tissue broke down and it was nice and tender.

19-Mar-11

For breakfast made corned beef hash. Potatoes, onions, corned beef, basil, rosemary, salt, pepper, ancho chili powder. Put Hollandaise on top. A bit oversalted but tasty.

20-Mar-11

Made pot roast for dinner. Placed inside round in crock pot, added vermouth, chopped onions, chopped bacon, pepper, 2 cloves garlic, potatoes, chopped tomatoes, white glace. Cooked on High for 3 hours, added carrots, cooked another hour. Sliced beef, thickened sauce with slurry, added meat, carrots, potatoes, to serving platter and poured over thickened sauce. Served w/ egg noodles. Not too bad.

22-Mar-11

Making pizza for dinner. Made the dough recipe from the bread machine recipe book. After completed divided into 3 and froze 2 of them. The sauce will be plain old chopped raw tomatoes, spread on the dough then lightly cooked. Then add toppings: well-rinsed sauerkraut, emmental, thin-sliced sweet onions, and sautéed bratwurst.

The pizza was very good but needed a lot more sausage. I also remembered that the flatbread I had didn’t have any sauce.

Also clarified 3 lbs of butter. Slightly too much for the container, do 2 at a time from now on.

23-Mar-11

Making French bread, using the recipe from my bread machine.

Read on serious eats that you can fry fish bones. Deep fry bones until lightly browned and serve plain as a crunchy snack. Leave a tiny bit of meat on for flavour.

Made soup for dinner. Started with a nice veg. stock of water, mirepoix, prosciuttino, bay leaf, peppercorns, chopped turnip. Simmered for an hour and strained. Added sauerkraut, sautéed bratwurst dollars, and tiny pastas. Served with fresh baked bread and home made butter. Delicious!

Remediality mentioned on Reddit that when searing steaks in a pan you should heat the pan to 500 or 600F. Hence you should apply fat to the steak not the pan, or it would burn.

Tried Michael Smith’s dulce de leche with evaporated milk. Came out as evaporated milk. Next time maybe have it on a light boil the whole time?

24-Mar-11

Made sauerkraut pizza for dinner. Added some salt to the sauce, used Kielbassa as the sausage. Pre-baked the crust and sauce, added swiss cheese, sauerkraut, thin-sliced onions, and kielbasa slices. Brandy put it all together, she’s incredibly talented. I wouldn’t know how to cook without her!

25-Mar-11

Made a loaf of French bread tonight, finished with an egg wash and poppy seeds. Looks great.

26-Mar-11

Making roast chicken for dinner on the BBQ. Kosher salted it then rubbed with Italian spice mix. Brandy made a salad. Very tasty and very moist.

27-Mar-11

Made jerk chicken breast skewers for dinner using Mr.Goudas sauce. Tasted okay, nothing special.

28-Mar-11

Made enchiladas for dinner. Tried using the Maseca but it was unrollable. Asking on EpiForums for suggestions. Cork suggested kneading it longer. Confited suggested flattening them by passing between hands. Presumably that would require wetter dough.

Anyways, bought Old El Paso tortillas. They freshened up quite well by heating a no-stick pan, spritzing it with water and adding tortilla. Let sit a minute or so, flip and repeat.

Chopped up the roast chicken and jerk chicken leftovers,them + cheese made filling. Poured with Enchilada pepper sauce, crumbled monterrey Jack cheese, baked. Really delicious. Quite hot.

My crème fraiche came out perfect this time. 2 cups of (cold) heavy whipping cream, 4 tbsp cultured buttermilk, cover w/ cheesecloth and leave at warm room temp for 24 hours. Cover and refrigerate for another 24.

29-Mar-11

Brandy wants salad and chunky cream of cauliflower for dinner. Thinking maybe chunky cauliflower & cheese would be a nice change.

Read this on Wikipedia today: “Raw kidney beans, and to a lesser extent some other beans (such as broad/fava beans), contain the toxin phytohaemagglutinin, which is destroyed by boiling for at least ten minutes, but not by the lower temperatures of a slow cooker, so dry beans must be boiled prior to slow cooking to avoid poisoning.”

30-Mar-11

Started stroganoff for dinner. Sauteed sliced stewing beef in oil until browned, added to slow cooker w/ water, pepper, and brown glace. Sauteed onions in oil w/ 1 garlic clove, and after browned added 2 tbsp flour. Tossed some more and added to slow cooker. Waited an hour and sautéed mushrooms in oil, and deglazed with marsala, added to pan. Will slow cook on high for several hours, then drop down to warm when tender. Then add crème fraiche at end. Will make broad egg noodles to serve with.

Made hollandaise for breakfast, came out the best yet. 4 Egg yolks, couple tbsp water, made sabayon. Removed from heat regularly to prevent scrambling, but applied quite a bit of heat overall. Removed from heat, stirred in just over 1/3 cup clarified butter, few squirts of lemon juice, salt, white pepper. Perfectly smooth, pourable, great colour.

31-Mar-11

Going to make a loaf of French today.

For lunch bought some Panini buns. Add shaved ham, green peppers, mozz slices, and broil.

For dinner having brie, untoasted baguette, and roasted garlic.

Thought this was a concise description of why you brown meat before braising: “The reason for browning is clear. When you introduce meat to high heat, the proteins and carbohydrates interact, in a process called the Maillard reaction, to produce literally hundreds of new, distinct flavor compounds. When you then add liquid to the pot, these tasty compounds are diffused throughout the dish.”

For dinner tomorrow going to slice turnip, parsley root, sunchokes and steam. Then sautee in garlic butter. Herbs would be nice too but I’d have to go shopping. Need to make something with beef short ribs.

If you’re serving a dish over rice and the dish is very salty, you should serve over plain white rice.

2-Apr-11

Made braised beef shortribs. Seared te ribs then added to crock pot. 1 can stout, chopped shallots, bay leaf, garlic, pepper, salt, sugar. Cooked for about 6 hours. Very tasty.

3-Apr-11

Making calzone for dinner.

Apparently flax/linseed oil is the best for seasoning pans. Someone on Reddit today said the key is to season initially. On subsequent uses once done, heat the pan and burn off any residue. Then use a spatula to scrape off any large chunks. Cover with a thin film of oil and store. Never ever wash.

Making a half batch of bagels. <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/homemade-bagels-recipe/index.html> Kneaded by hand and let rise covered & oiled for 1 hour. Made 3oz balls, rolled them by hand, pinched the ends together, did some more shaping, and placed on lightly creased silpat. Let rise 20 mins. Tossed in boiling water for 1 min, placed face down in white & black sesame seeds & onion flakes, then baked for 40 mins at 400. The two ends came apart while boiling, but other than that they turned out quite nice.

Saw another recipe that recommended rolling into balls then poking your finder through the middle to make holes.

Made calzone for dinner. Rolled out pizza dough, added sauce, genoa spicy salami, mozzarella, kalamata olives. Sealed by rolling & twisting, then using a fork to seal. Washed with an egg bath, then baked for about 30 mins at 425. They were delicious but we were too full to finish them.

5-Apr-11

Read on Reddit today that failing to proof your yeast in advance can result in a dense loaf. ???

Made a version of pasta primavera for dinner tonight. Cooked egg noodles, added 4 tbsp butter, chopped tomato, thinly-sliced asparagus, fresh sweet peas. Heated slightly. Added salt, pepper, and a whack of home-made crème fraiche. To die for.

6-Apr-11

Read today that apparently paella is traditionally made w/ rabbit.

I WANT TO MAKE CROISSANTS.

Made my own version of a shooter’s sandwich. Made duxelles w/ salt, lots of pepper, and marsala. Hollowed out a crusty loaf, added the duxelles, then a layer of shaved BF ham. Then a layer of slices dill pickles, and a layer of slices Italian sausage. Put Dijon mustard on the top, and pressed for 6 hours. Bread was a bit soggy on the outside but it really was tasty.

9-Sep-11

Started another crème fraiche today.

Made another batch of butter.

Making a loaf of French. Used heaping 1 ½ tsp yeast this time, and let rise 1.5 hours. It looks to be rising VERY high. Baked at 400 instead of 425 for a change. Seems to have come out really well. Brushed it with some oil after it came out, not sure that was a brilliant idea. The oil actually looked quite nice once I rubbed it in with a paper towel. Before that it just looked dripping in oil.

Randal & Natasha coming for breakfast tomorrow. Making buttermilk pancakes and a hash with potatoes, either bacon or spicy Italian sausage, basil, cubanelle, onions, Cajun seasoning, grape tomatos, salt, pepper. Serving with sausage gravy.

Redeye gravy is just regular gravy with a cup of coffee added for liquid.

Some random dude on the internet said country gravy is best made the night before, which was all the ammunition I needed. Fried 4 patties of sausage in a pan, added 2 tbsp of flour, and enough milk to thicken it. Added lots of pepper and some salt. So yummy.

Pre-chopped most of the ingredients for the hash tomorrow. Onions, cubanelle, hot Italian sausage. Tomorrow will add potatoes, basil, tomatoes.

10-Apr-11

The bread turned out FLAWLESS. Chewy impenetrable crust, soft mushy inside. Indistinguishable from store-bought. Wow.

Decided to make French toast instead of pancakes so people can have French bread. 3 eggs, buttermilk, nutmeg, cinnamon. Soaking the bread now.

The French toast was very good, nice and creamy in the middle. The hash with gravy was beyond incredible. If anything it actually may have had TOOO much flavour. One bite just exploded in your mouth like a hydrogen bomb. But it was certainly tasty.

Sardonicsalmon says the best way to peel a boiled egg is to crack the shell immediately on removing it from the heat, being sure to break the membrane. Then add to ice water.

11-Apr-11

For dinner made chicken, asparagus, orzo. Marinaded the chicken in cider vinegar and salt for an hour, patted dry, sprinkled w/ Greek seasoning, and grilled. Asparagus was finely sliced on the bias with garlic, salt, pepper, and oil, then lightly sautéed. Orzo was mixed w/ chopped tomatoes, chives, crème fraiche, and salt. Everything was very tasty.

16-Apr-11

Week from hell, didn’t get to do any cooking at all. Today I made a very simple broth of mirepoix, bay leaf, peppercorns, and chopped chorizo. Put them all in a cast-iron pot, tossed with a small amount of oil, and roasted in the over at 425F for around 25 mins, stirring occasionally. Added 2 cups lager, then cold water. Simmered on low heat for about 45 mins, then strained out all the solids. Tasty, spicy. I would do it again for an appetizer, maybe add some chopped cilantro.

18-Apr-11

Making onion poppy Kaisers. Found a web page that says 3 ½ oz is ideal for a Kaiser.

According to Top Chef judges, lamb served rare will taste gamier.

The buns came out okay, a bit too dark on top. Next time cook at 400. I sliced some of them with curved slices, don’t think it worked well.

21-Apr-11

Learned to peel eggs like this <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PN2gYHJNT3Y&feature=player_embedded>

Worked like a charm for 5 eggs. You need to blow on the bum end, not the top end.

23-Apr

For dinner going to make Foodwishes’ chicken picatta but with tarragon instead of parsley. Also leek soufflé and baked beets.

The beets were huge and well undercooked. The soufflé was not bad at all but slightly undersalted and slightly underdone. The chicken was delicious although it sat for 5 mins so the tarragon turned grey.

25-Apr-11

Want to try Chef John’s lamb in root beer sauce recipe, and not tell Brandy anything. I think she’d enjoy it. <http://foodwishes.blogspot.com/2009/06/richard-dont-call-me-molecular.html>

For dinner I think I’m going to make simple BBQ chicken brushed w/ szechuan stir-fry sauce. Also going to make some simple samosas. Potato, onion, salt, cayenne, allspice, peas sautéed in pan, then folded in phylo pastry, brushed with butter, baked. Brandy will make salad.

For samosas cubed 2 potatoes and 1 small onion and added to a frying pan with some oil and some water. Added plenty of salt, ground allspice, few pinches cayenne, ground cumin, ground coriander, and whole fennel seeds. Covered and allowed to cook, then added peas. Rolled about 2 tbsp filling in 3-4 buttered phylo layers, baked at 350 for 15-20 mins until well browned.

26-Apr-11

For dinner tomorrow I want to make California spring rolls. Butter lettuce, julienne or shredded carrot, avocado, lump crab. Dip in either spicy peanut sauce, sweet & sour sauce, or spicy sriracha mayo.

According to French Cooking, pastry cream (p182) is the filling for eclairs, puff pastries, and tarts. It’s milk, vanilla, sugar thickened with egg yolks and corn starch.

Bavarian cream (p191) is a custard of milk, gelatin, egg yolks, vanilla, sugar, cooled to room temp and with whipped cream folded in.

There are 8 types of cheeses:

* Fresh cheese
* Soft cheese w/ downy rind
* Soft cheese w/ washed rind
* Veined cheeses
* Pressed cheeses
* Pressed and cooked cheeses
* Processed cheeses
* Goat milk cheeses

27-Apr-11

Going to make California spring rolls for dinner w/ spicy sriracha mayo. I made aioli instead of mayo and mixed it with the crab. Holy crap that is tasty. Also rinsed the crab meat with water so it’s a bit more palatable for “them.”

For a side dish some time I want to make a (steamed) potato and leek hash.

Mangos, pistachios, and cashews are all in the same family.

Chubbyalaskagriz posted the following cooking tips to Epiforums:

1.) It's best to start all root vegetables in a pot of COLD water- not hot.

2.) Though some here have debated this, I still feel it's best to follow the old wive's tale and not to add salt or tomato product to simmering dry beans until they are cooked to tender- I feel it makes them tough.

3.) Don't salt mirepiox, bell peppers, mushrooms or onions while sauteeing or they will never caramelize. Salt afterwards.

4.) Use paper-toweling to dry a roast or chicken well before placing in oven to roast.

5.) When sauteeing/pan-frying protein such as a crabcake, a cornmealed catfish fillet, or a floured chicken breast always place the up-side down into the pan first, and cook long enough on that side so that it only needs turned ONE time only. Don't keep turning and flipping it over and over.

6.) Always wash salad greens in cold water to crisp them up nicely. even the pre-washed greens in a bag.

7.) Whenever possible cook shrimp in the shells before peeling them for optimum color and flavor. Not always possible for some preparations- but do it whenever you can.

8.) When baking, think of sugar as a liquid- not a solid. As soon as it hits liquid or heat- it liquifies.

9.) A pinch of sugar in a rub, seasoning blend or even a seasoned flour coating will help your fried or sauteed food to brown more nicely.

10.) My Mom's method, whenever cooking w/ tomato product, whether it's tomato sauce/paste in marinara or tomato juice in chili- always temper w/ pinches of both salt AND sugar.

11.) For better-looking, prettier double-crust pie slices, place a plate over a whole pie and invert. Remove pie-tin. Use knife to slice wedges of pie on BOTTOM, then replace pie-tin or pie-plate, and re-invert back. Voila! Perfect portioned pie slices without pressing in and destroying your beautiful top-crust!

12.) Over-salt pasta water.

13.) When adding frozen peas to simmering soup do so at the last minute and turn burner OFF immediately after doing so.

14.) Rinse clams/mussels well under continously-running cold water before steaming. One sandy clam can ruin a whole pot of steamers!

15.) When mixing a cake or pancake batter in a mixer always add liquid to bowl first- not flour.

16.) If ever using half-and-half to make a cream soup, sauce or gravy NEVER use it in conjunction w/ milk or cream, it will almost always cause product to curdle. Use half-and-half all alone- all by itslef w/ no other dairy.

17.) If you're out of butter or margarine and crave a grilled cheese sammie, mayo works exactly the same way!

18.) These products are all wonderful additions to mashers: butter/margarine, sour cream, any milk/cream product, cream cheese, yogurt, chicken broth, canned cream soup- undiluted.

19.) When roasting a chicken or turkey or even cornish game hens don't let the wings hang loose- always lock the wings by crossing them. This gives the whole bird a better shape, plus it makes firm sturdy flat base-bottom and prevents the bird from toppling over to the right or left while roasting, or while carving.

30-Apr-11

Making beef ribs for dinner. Used a spice rub and then placed on rack over pan of water in oven at 200F, will cook for 6-8 hours. They came out tough and uncooked. I think my stove can’t do 200F.

1-May-11

Made cabbage rolls. Froze the cabbage head, then defrosted, removed the spine, and rolled a large portion of filling in each one. Poured plain tomato sauce on top and baked covered for 1 hour. Filling was ground beef, rice, salt, pepper, chopped onions, an egg. Pretty tasty.

2-May-11

Had leftover cabbage rolls. Made a hash of chopped leeks, cubed potatoes, aioli, garlic, wine, salt, pepper. Didn’t brown it. Tasted great but next time don’t use the aioli, the eggs cooked and left lumps.

3-May-11

For dinner tonight making veal picatta. Pounded the veal with rough edge of mallet, and now marinading in buttermilk and salt. Will dredge in flour and fry with some oil. Add some flour to pan, deglaze with vermouth, add capers, lemon juice, salt, pepper. Reduce. Re-add veal and then garnish with chopped rosemary.

Veggie will be roasted leeks w/ oil, some maple syrup.

Starch was stuffing.

Leeks weren’t bad but needed more maple syrup. Veal was almost great but too much salt, and for some reason the lightly cooked rosemary tasted like pine needles. Disgusting. Also the breading completely fell off, not sure what happened there.

4-May-11

Apparently waxy potatoes, like fingerlings, baby, or white, will hold up better when boiled than dry ones like russet.

Flour conversion: 1 cup = 128 grams or 4.5 ounces

Next time I make hamburger buns I want to use only onion, not poppy seeds. And slice them in a cross rather than a pinwheel. Also what if I use a tiny bit or turmeric for colour?

I want to take my best bread recipes and write them out with flour volume converted to weight. Hopefully that will make them a lot more consistent.

I would like to make lobster barley salad.

5-May-11

Made a delicious barley risotto for dinner. Seasoned 1 chicken breast and grilled with some asparagus. Chopped along with several morels. Added 1 cup risotto to sauce pan, added mushroom juice, wine, some chicken bouillon, and water. Cooked until tender, stirring continuously. Added 1 cup grated parmesan, some whipping cream, the chopped ingredients, pepper, and 1-2 tbsp truffle oil. Delish!

6-May

Made a roasted tomato sauce. About 16 Roma tomatoes, 3 cloves garlic, 3 small chopped carrots, 1 chopped onion, some olive oil. Roasted at 400F non-convection for about 2 hours. Blended, added some water, some fresh-chopped oregano. Yum!

7-May-11

For breakfast made lobster scrambled eggs. 3 eggs, some butter, scrambled. Added ½ cup of chopped lobster, some crème fraiche, salt, pepper, truffle oil, and some chopped tarragon.

Making enchiladas for dinner. Poached a chicken breast in water ,wine, salt, then pulled it. Added salt, pepper, ancho powder, chipotle powder, paprika, shredded cheese, chopped cilantro. Heated large tortillas in a pan with water and rolled enchiladas, covered in enchilada sauce and shredded cheese, and now baking covered at 325F.

For breakfast tomorrow want to make blueberry buttermilk pancakes.

Made a loaf of French bread. Weighed the flour, used the proper amount of yeast. Sprayed the loaf initially then let it rise 1 ¼ hrs, until it had well over doubled. Baked at 400 and took out at exactly 190F. Fluffiest, softest bread I’ve ever made. The crust could have been a bit tougher since it’s hard to cut, perhaps spray more while cooking. Regardless very tasty.

9-May-11

For dinner made beef tenderloin w/ béarnaise sauce, steamed mixed veggies, and gorgonzola mashed.

Steaks were brought to room temp, patted dry, seasoned w/ salt and pepper, then seared quickly in a hot pan, and put in warmer drawer to sit. Only mistake I made was I oiled the pan instead of the steaks.

Bearnaise was 3 tbsp vermouth, 3 tbsp white wine vinegar, pepper, 1 chopped shallot, reduced by about half. Then add 3 egg yolks, stir until starting to firm, and drizzle in ¼ cup clarified butter, salt, chopped tarragon. Tasted good on the steaks but by itself tasted too sweet.

I didn’t cook the potatoes long enough and the mashed were filled with raw chunks. Ran through food mill and it filtered them all out. Next time always make mashed with food mill.

Parboiled the veggies then shocked in ice water, then drained, tossed with salt, and put in warmer drawer. They were too undercooked. Next time heat them in steamer instead.

10-May-11

For dinner making pizza. Sauce will be grape tomatoes, rosemary, salt. Toppings will be Serrano ham, buffalo mozzarella, roast red peppers, oregano. I got the pizza stone super hot, rolled out the crust super thin, built the pizza, put on bottom rack at 500 for 8 mins. Crust was super crispy, just perfect.

11-May-11

According to Wikipedia, pesto can last in the fridge up to a week if you cover it in a layer of olive oil.

Made spaghetti a aglia e olio today for dinner. Absolutely delicious. Made the spaghetti from scratch and it turned out very well. Dusted the sheets with semolina several times while rolling it out to a thickeness of 6, then dredged it when done. The noodles could be stacked while they waited to be cut. Then tossed the spaghetti in semolina right after cutting and it didn’t stick while it waited to be tossed into the water.

16-May-11

I wouldn’t mind trying feta and spinach lamb meatloaf.

I want to make sushi rice bowls w/ teriyaki beef. Make some sushi rice, toss it with sugar and rice wine vinegar, toss in some black and white sesame seeds, Maybe even a few squirts of sriracha mayo, then top with thinly sliced med-rare teriyaki steak. Yum!

Made burritos for dinner, they were great.

Made salsa fresca with chopped tomatoes, sweet onion, garlic, cilantro, salt, pepper, Serrano chili, and a dash of cider vinegar. Would love to try it with chips but would pulse it in the foodpro first.

Made Spanish rice with sautéed onions, salt, pepper, ancho powder, chipotle powder, paprika. Next time add sautéed cubanelle and use less smoked chili powder.

The filling was leftover grilled turkey breast chopped, sautéed shortly in a pan, with salt, shredded cheese, sour cream, rice, Cholula.

17-May-11

Dinner tonight was teriyaki beef bowl.

Made a marinade of honey, soy sauce, rice vinegar, crushed ginger. Marinated a strip loin for 2 hours in it, then grilled the steak on the BBQ and reduced the marinate over the stove. Brushed down the steak with the sauce when done and let rest.

Made sticky rice 1 cup calrose to 2 cups boiling water. Cooked for 15 mins on low. Added rice wine vinegar mixed with 1 tbsp sugar, tossed with rice and added white and black sesame seeds.

Put rice in bowl, drizzled on some of the teriyaki reduction, sliced the steak thin and placed on top, squirted on some sriracha mayo, and topped with fresh chopped cilantro. It was really really good, Brandy thought there was too much teriyaki sauce on the rice. The steak had a great smoky charred flavour from the sugars. Maybe next time I would sprinkle on some panko for crunch.

18-May-11

Made stir-fry for dinner tonight. Took a top sirloin and marinated it in mostly teriyaki sauce, honey, ginger, garlic, rice wine vinegar, salt, pepper. Patted the steak down and cooked it in a searing pan.

Sauteed broccoli, long-cut green onions in some water and oil. Added about 1 tbsp of corn starch to the marinade, threw it in at the end with some sriracha for heat. Served it over rice noodles with thin-sliced steak mixed in.

Was delicious.

23-May-11

Made salsa fresca today and had it with chips. 2 thick slices sweet onion, 2 large garlic cloves, 1 large clump of cilantro, some pepper, 1 large seeded jalapeno, some salt, small amount cider vinegar, pulsed in foodpro. Added to bowl then pulsed 1 container of campari tomatoes in foodpro and combined, then strained outsome of the excess liquid and served. It was really delicious.

For dinner making clam chowder. 3 potatoes cubed, ½ a small head of cauliflower, 2 leeks cooking in stock. Once done will puree. Will sauté some of the leek greens in butter later and add, and steam some cubed potato, add to puree, add finely chopped parsley, cream, salt, sugar, and a full can of clams with all the juice.

Soup was to die for, one of my best ever. Big chunks of potato. Chunks of leek. Yummy clams. Super creamy. Couldn’t taste the cauliflower at all which was probably for the best.

Making a loaf of French bread. Mixed 100g whole wheat flour with 365g white. Let rise for 1 hour at fairly high temp, used egg wash and baked at 425F to 190F, spritzing with water several times. Brushed lightly with oil when it came out. Came out very light and fluffy, but only mildly crusty.

24-May-11

Made white pizza for dinner. Heated pizza stone to 500F then took it out, placed very very thinly rolled crust on it, then oregano pesto, rinsed sauerkraut, spicy Italian sausage, grated Jarlsberg, sweet onion. Very tasty, very crispy crust.

25-May-11

Learned that a baker’s couche is a heavy canvas cloth in which you proof bread. Its purpose is to hold the loaf’s shape and to absorb moisture for a crispier crust. This also makes be strongly believe that if I want a more crispy crust I need to stop spritzing while it proofs?

26-May-11

According to seriouseats the Maillard reaction is enhanced the higher the pH (more basic) of your ingredients. i.e. – Add baking soda to encourage browning.

They also mentioned that bases break down pectin, so add some vinegar to your water to cook potatoes without having them break down.

80/20 ground beef refers to 80% meat protein, 20% fat. This is the standard for burgers.

For dinner made parisienne potatoes tossed in Cajun spice mix and oil, and roasted at 400F for about 25 mins. Veggie was asparagus wrapped in prosciutto roasted at 400F for about 15 mins. Next time cut the prosciutto pieces in half, there was just too much of it. Main course was chicken breasts sautéed in oil in stainless pan. Once seared added shallots and garlic and white wine and bourbon, pepper, salt, and heavy cream. Reduced until thick, added chopped parsley and tarragon and served. Sauce was ridiculously decadent.

Tomorrow going to make lasagna with home-made ricotta, home-made pasta, and home-made sauce. Roma tomatoes are in oven now for sauce with several carrots, onions, garlic, olive oil and thyme. Roasting at 400 for a long time. Ricotta later tonight and will leave to drain overnight.

Deglazed the sauce pan with a tonne of vermouth and then scraped all the browned bits back into the sauce. Ran it through the food mill and ended up with the thickest, richest, tastiest sauce you could imagine. Tasted like a meat sauce but with no meat.

27-May-11

Made lasagna for dinner. The ricotta took 3.5x the recipe and I had no white vinegar so it tasted a bit like white wine vinegar. The sauce was also very very rich so the lasagna tasted very different than usual. Still very good but not the fresh and light taste my lasagna usually has.

28-May-11

To make ribs you use 3-2-1 method. 3 hours uncovered to cook and smoke. 2 hours wrapped in foil. 1 hour with foil unwrapped. Last 30 mins for sauce.

29-May-11

Making ribs for dinner. Put on a light dry rub and cooked/smoked at 300F in BBW for 3 hours. Covered in foil and cooked for 2 more, then uncovered for 1 more.

Making leek bread pudding from <http://smittenkitchen.com/2010/04/leek-bread-pudding/>. Used sage instead of thyme and parmesan instead of emmenthal. Also ran out of eggs so used 1 egg and a couple tbsp of flour.

Bread pudding was very tasty but don’t really see how it’s better than stuffing and lots of dairy.

The ribs were terrific. Completely falling off the bone tender, tasty. A little light on the smoke but delicious nonetheless.

30-May-11

I want to try the kumquat meringue pie at <http://www.kumquatgrowers.com/recipe029.html>

31-May-11

Made greek meatloaf for dinner. ½ ground lamb, ½ ground turkey. 1 egg, large chunk of chopped feta, 1 pkg chopped steamed spinach, several chopped grilled peppers, salt, pepper, 2 cloves garlic. Very tasy.

Veraci pizza in Seattle is supposed to be the best pizza anywhere. It’s a food truck.

2-Jun-11

Made Rachel Ray’s polenta with pancetta and peas recipe. <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachael-ray/polenta-with-peas-and-pancetta-recipe/index.html> Very tasty. Needed a tonne of extra milk to keep it from over-thickening, but I also used heaping cups full when adding the polenta.

4-Jun-11

Last night Kat came over. For dinner made burgers. Meat was beef short ribs ground with some pancetta. Made egg buns. Measured the flour by weight and the dough came out WAY too soft. Also let them over-rise so they fell. Toasted the buns on the inside, sprinkled on some truffle oil, then the burger, a thick slice of foie gras, brandy-glazed onions, and then a slaw of red cabbage, buttermilk, mayo. Very tasty but also super rich.

For lunch today had tomato sandwiches. Toasted bun, buttered, basil leaves, tomato slices, salt, pepper, bacon, lots of mayo. Yum!

7-Jun-11

Making paella tonight on the BBQ. Sauteed the rice in oil, added some turmeric (out of saffron), grilled some chicken, chorizo, shrimp w/ seasonings and oil. Will add rice and stock to casserole and place on BBQ, at ½ mark add red peppers, long-cut scallions, snap peas, meat. At very end will add bunch of fresh basil. Everything in the paella was overcooked but the seasoning was right so it was still very enjoyable.

Also making a batch of roasted tomato sauce on the BBQ. Canned tomatoes, grilled peppers, rosemary, thyme, onions, garlic. The sauce came out super sweet and rich and delicious. Not sure if it’s because I started with canned tomatoes which already had tonnes of sauce, or if not using olive oil made a difference.

21-Jun-11

Made the gnocchi from <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/potato-gnocchi-with-pesto-recipe/index.html>. They said don’t overwork the dough or it’ll be too firm but it was really, really soft. Next time I think I need to knead it. Let rest in fridge for 1 hour. Was still tasty, just too soft. Looked great.

22-Jun-11

Someone on breadit says you cook bread to 195F for rich breads, 205F for lean breads. TIL an animal has to be alive when it’s bled, so the heart pumps out all the blood. About fajitas:

*“Fajitas are the heart of modern Tex-Mex. They became popular when consumers started rejecting cheesy combination plates in the 1970s and 1980s in favor of more authentic Mexican cuisine. The name "fajitas," along with the recipe and the service style, came from the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, not Mexico. But at least it was authentic Tejano cooking. The name fajita means "little belt" and refers to the shape of the outside skirt — anything else isn't really a fajita.”*

Apprently inside inside skirt steak is tough and needs to be marinated, outside skirt steak is tender and can be grilled without marinating. Apparently 90% of outside skirt steak is exported to Japan.

Dinner tonight will be grilled chicken Caesar.

Cuts of steak I want to buy and freeze: hanger steak, skirt steak, brisket, flat-iron. Maybe some chuck roast. Skirt steak loves, and needs, intense heat. Don’t cook over medium or it will be chewy. Let rest 10 mins, then cut against the grain.

Papain and ficin are commercial meat tenderizers (enzymes) derived from papayas and figs, respectively. Papain is only activated above 122F and does not stop acting until the meat drops back below 122F. AVOID OVERCOOKING AND STORING IN WARMER! Marinade to get the tenderizer in there.

Traditionally marinated meat will have 2% uptake of marinade. This can be increased to 10% by marinating under vacuum and tumbling. Perhaps piercing meat and/or pounding can increase the 2%?

I want to read The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan.

Making rhubarb cobbler from <http://tastykitchen.com/recipes/desserts/rhubarb-cobbler-2/>. Bought 4 large rhubarb stalks and it didn’t quite come to 4 cups. Next time buy 5. The cobbler was to die for. Definitely needed the ice cream (home made blueberry) to balance the sweetness, but together it was awesome.

23-Jun-11

Dinner tonight is souvlaki w/ home-made pita. Grilled the pitas on the BBQ, Brandy loved them!

Read on reddit that the proper way to make meatballs is to use milk-soaked bread to bind them, not egg. Soak bread crumbs (preferably stale) in milk, squeeze out extra milk, incorporate.

24-Jun-11

Made flatbread for dinner. Pizza dough, brushed with garlic olive oil, then emmenthal, kielbasa, grilled turkey, and sauerkraut. Made on the pizza stone on the grill. Very tasty but it could have used a small flavour punch.

Made guacamole for a snack, it was utterly to die for. Finely chopped tomatoes, jalapeno, onions, cilantro, crushed garlic, salt, pepper, lemon juice, roughly mashed avocado. Incredible.

25-Jun-11

Made rotisserie chicken for dinner. Kosher salted it, rubbed with Cajun spice, cooked in BBQ. About ½ way through sprinkled some sugar on the skin. Was delicious. Made stuffing of butter, celery, onions, jalapeno, vermouth, water, carrots, sultana raisins, crushed filberts, salt, pepper. Forgot the sage. Lastly made fresh peas lightly steam with butter, cream, salt, minced mint. Everything was delicious.

26-Jun-11

Making rabbit stew for dinner. To crock pot added 1 whole rabbit broken into 4 pieces, 2 bay leaves, peppercorns, rough chopped potatoes, onion, carrots, vermouth, water, some chicken bouillon, some mustard. Will cook on low all day while we’re at the zoo.

Removed all the rabbit to cool, added a flour slurry, salt, chopped sage and parsley. Removed all the meat from the bones and re-incorporated it. Absolutely delicious. You can’t tell the meat from chicken but the stew itself is filled with flavour.

27-Jun-11

Tomorrow I’m going to make chicken asado tacos from <http://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/2011/06/pollo-asado/>.

Making rolls now for dinner with the stew. Made the dough, divided it into 16 equal 47g balls, oiled them, then placed in my 9x9 baking pan. Letting rise now, will cook at a low temperature so they don’t get too crusty.

Cooked at 400F until just done, then brushed with butter melted with honey. They were soft, spongy, delicious! Stew was also delicious. Used waxy potatoes so they came out perfectly shaped when done.

28-Jun

Made the chicken asado tacos for dinner. Used the vacuum sealer to do the marinade but forgot to add garlic. Grilled the chicken skin-on like the recipe said and it flared like crazy. Next time remove the skin like I wanted all along. Served with warmed tortillas, pico de gallo, cheese, sour cream, chopped jalapenos, Cholula. Fairly tasty even with the mistakes, but not “wow!”

29-Jun-11

For dinner I think I’ll make a large strip steak grilled and sliced thin, and a caprese salad with a balsamic reduction.

2-Jul-11

Baking a loaf of French bread. I want a thick heavy crust so I formed the loaf and covered it heavily with flour before letting it rise. After risen sprinkled on more flour, cut slits in the loaf, and will bake at 440F. Fingers crossed! Bread came out fantastic, best bread I’ve ever made. Super crispy on the outside, light and fluffy on the inside.

3-Jul-11

Made pesto pasta salad today. Pesto had parmesan, sage, parsley, basil, oregano, mint, olive oil, roasted almonds, cooked garlic. The salad had penne, black olives, sliced grape tomatoes, salt, pepper, artichoke hearts, grilled chicken.

4-Jul-11

Bought a butterflied pork tenderloin today, stuffed it with crushed pecans, watercress, and brie and tied up tight. Rubbed with oil, salted, and will grill. Making a salad of yellow tomatoes, lemon juice, salt, pepper, balsamic reduction drizzle, chopped arugula, basil, and mint, and topping with fresh goat cheese.

The tenderloin was very disappointing. I couldn’t get a thermometer read on the meat because of the cool filling and ended up horribly overcooking the meat, all the cheese leaked out, and the juices wicked off all the salt. The pecans were a nice touch though, as was the watercress.

The tomato salad was utterly delicious. Had to re-season it after it had rested for about 45 mins due to too much liquid shedding out, but the end product was great.

6-Jul-11

Made chicken asado tacos again last night. Scored a large turkey breast and marinated it in juice of 1 lime, 1 lemon, 1 orange. Salt, olive oil, 2 large cloves garlic crushed, 2 tbsp chopped mint. Grilled then sliced, served with pico de gallo, guacamole, grated cheese, chopped jalapenos. Very tasty but I doubt it would taste much different if I simply salted and peppered the turkey and grilled it outright.

7-Jul-11

Made the garlic scape recipe from Serious Eats. [http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/07/the-crisper-whisperer-garlic-scape-tart.html](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/07/the-crisper-whisperer-garlic-scape-tart.html?utm_source=Serious+Eats+Newsletters&utm_campaign=342c1a6888-Serious_Eats_Recipe_Newsletter_July_6_2011&utm_medium=email). It was tasy but the garlic shoots were way too tough and I think I baked it a bit too long. Next time make it with leeks. Also, the pastry fell down into the tart pan, next time try putting the second tart pan inside the first when cooking. Also made a creamy slaw of grated parsley root and grated carrots, w/ sour cream, mayo, and buttermilk. Not bad but I just hate raw carrot so badly.

12-Jul-11

Read on seriouseats that the key to grinding meats is to have the meat cold so the fat remains firm.

Kenji also says that instead of using the foodpro to incorporate the ice water, use a spatula in a bowl. It will turn out much flakier.

He also says that 205F to 210F is completed baking temp for bread.

Tonight I want to make seared peppered tuna with a cilantro lime pesto. Side will be cold beet salad w/ pickled onions, watercress and sour cream. Want to use something fairly acidic on the beets as opposed to sweet since I think the beets will be sweet enough. Bother looked great and were good, but the tuna probably didn’t need the lime and the salad probably didn’t need the sour cream. Maybe goat cheese next time.

Will also use the beet greens to make Italian wedding soup w/ ground chicken meatballs.

According to Kenji a proper Neopolitan pizza must have a charred crust top and bottom, chew center, puffy outside ring, be made with buffalo mozzarella, and the sauce be uncooked w/ canned tomatoes and salt. He also says Italian “00” flour is the best, should be high-protein, and that it’s a misconception that 00 flour is low-protein. He finally says the best way to make pizza is to pre-heat a cast-iron pan, place the dough inside, form your pizza, they throw under broiler.

Started a batch of Seriouseats’ no-knead bread, as well as a batch of crème fraiche. Foodwishes says home-made butter is even better made with crème fraiche.

13-Jul-11

For dinner made a bean salad. Yellow and green beans, chiffonade of mint, canned white kidney beans, shaved sweet onions, sugar, salt, pepper, white vinegar. Wanted to add roasted almond slivers but we were out. Very tasty. Also made a take on Italian wedding soup. Meatballs were ground chicken, fresh bread crumbs, parmesan, salt, pepper, 1 egg. The mixture was way too loose so instead of forming meatballs I dropped them in as dumplings to a mix of ½ chicken stock and ½ beef stock, some small pasta, and chopped beet greens. Salt to taste.

Everything was very good, but the string beans should have been lightly par cooked. Also, chilled the meat until firm before grinding, made a big difference.

14-Jul-11

For dinner tonight going to make a ricotta and beet green tart and peppers stuffed with the leftover meat from yesterday and topped with a panko au gratin. I added about 50% more veggies to the tart and an extra egg, came out well. Over-salted it a bit. Stuffed peppers were very tasty.

I want to try the avocado egg salad on thePioneerwoman. <http://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/2011/07/avocado-egg-salad/>

15-Jul-11

For dinner tonight I want to make Linguini primavera w/ crème fraiche. Cream, snap peas, red peppers, and perhaps fresh basil.

17-Jul-11

Baked the bread, came out really really good.

Making ribs. Started with dry rub of garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, pepper, salt, cumin, basil, parsley. 3-2-1. Cherry smoking. Also made a potato salad of Yukon golds, buttermilk, mayo, sour cream, Frank’s Red Hot, dill, green onions. The salad was awesome, the ribs were very good.

Made a roasted corn salsa. Corn, grilled red peppers, cilantro, lime juice, salt, pepper, jalapeno, garlic, onion.

18-Jul-11

Tips from SeriousEats on blooming gelatin: Best practices for blooming powdered gelatin include: using a cold liquid, sprinkling the gelatin over the liquid a little at a time in an even layer to ensure even hydration, and allowing the mixture to rest, away from heat, for a few minutes before using.

Randal & Natasha came over and I made a dessert of a grilled peach half over a bourbon & brown sugar simple syrup with a dollop of lightly sweetened whipped crème fraiche. Really light and delicious, I loved it. The whipped crème fraiche start to fall immediately after I whipped it, but fortunately it came right back with more whisking.

21-Jul-11

Terikaki salmon for dinner on top of rice with grilled yellow and green zucchini w/ eggplant.

23-Jul

Apparently carnitas are just confited pork shoulder. Chef John says Carolina-style BBQ sauce are vinegar-based, with lots of pepper, sometimes mustard, and no tomato base.

26-Jul-11

Someone on Reddit said you can add a small amount of vodka to ice cream to keep it soft in the freezer? Supposedly from an Alton Brown recipe.

Carnitas are supposed to be burnt/crispy on the edges.

27-Jul-11

Jacques says you should remove the wishbone whenever you roast chicken because it interferes with carving.

31-Jul-11

Making tacos for dinner. Will make the tortillas from scratch, with some pico de gallo and guacamole. Roasting the pork now. Let it brine overnight, then rubbed with star anise, cloves, pepper, ancho powder, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder. On the BBQ for 6 hours at 300F, with some hickory wood chips smoking.

I think scrambled eggs w/ fresh jalapeno and avocado would be delicious.

The pork turned out great. I think next time I’ll save some of the juices left over after tenting and mix them back in after the pork is pulled. It gets a tad dry. We had pulled pork on warm tortillas w/ pice de gallo and guac.

The masa tortillas failed again even with the tortilla press and parchment paper. They stuck to the parchment paper. Fuck that shit.

Advice from reddit is it’s better to start too dry and add tiny amounts of water until it works than to start too wet since this is likely why they’re sticking. Someone else also recommended oiling the press.

3-Aug

Made Neapolitan pizza for dinner. Preheated pizza stone and turned on broiler to 550F, then slid assembled pie on and cooked for 4-5 minutes. Sauce was raw, seeded, skinned, strained tomatoes. Then added fresh basil and fresh mozz. Basil was slightly burned, crust was cooked properly but very poor. Tight, dense crumb, tough, not enough outside crust.

Overall it was tasty but the crust needed a lot of work.

4-Aug-11

For dinner made SeriousEats’ [Southwest Quinoa Salad](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/08/quinoa-salad-corn-tomatoes-avocado-lime-recipe.html). Added some raw garlic and left out scallions. Also made Gordon Ramsay’s [Broccoli Soup](http://www.bigoven.com/recipe/161419/broccoli-soup-gordon-ramsay). Both were very tasty and very light. Delicious.

7-Aug-11

Camping. Randal and Natasha came over and for dinner I made roasted corn salad with cilantro, jalapeno, lime juice, onion, tomato. Also made sliced sausage, yellow zucchini, green zucchini, canned spaghetti sauce, and cream.

8-Aug-11

Camping. For dinner we had t-bone steaks grilled and leeks cooked in butter. The leeks were a bit tough but tasted amazing and te steak was great.

9-Aug-11

Camping. For dinner made a delicious salsa. Can of tomato sauce, cilantro, chipotle powder, chopped onion, chopped tomato, chopped hot yellow pepper. Yum!

13-Aug-11

Back from camping. For dinner we had salsa. Tomato sauce w/ chopitle powder, ancho powder, pepper, salt, and pureed fresh tomatoes, sweet onion, cilantro, jalapeno. Very delicious, just the right hotness. Ever so slightly too smoky, maybe it was the ancho? Also, it could have used some lime juice.

Quartered and seeded 5 large strawberry basket of roma tomatoes. Nearly filled the 22qt stock pot. Cooked them overnight, covered, at 225F in oven.

14-Aug-11

Continuing the sauce. Straining the sauce and am boiling down the tomato water. Roasting many onions, garlic, and carrots at 400F. Roasted the meat in the oven on a rack over a tray. Let the beef brown, broke it up, deglazed pan and poured over juices. Roasted the tomatoes, peppers, and celery for several hours.

15-Aug-11

Making blueberry sorbet from [Ree’s recipe](http://thepioneerwoman.com/cooking/2011/08/cherry-sherbet/). The sorbet came out wonderful, it’s in the freezer to rest overnight. Very curious what the texture will be when fully frozen.

For dinner we has sliced yellow and green zucchini topped with meat sauce, mozzarella, parmesan, browned in broiler. Left the zuke raw.

16-Aug-11

When pressure canning you should let the canner return to 0 lbs pressure on it’s own, don’t release the steam. For meat sauce you should cook 60 minutes for pints and 70 minutes for quarts.

I need a pressure canner, cans, and a canning funnel.

The sorbet came out very good. Very slightly over-firm but still scoopable. And delicious!

For dinner we had BLTs on toasted multigrain with salt, pepper, and mayo. So yummy!

17-Aug-11

Making burgers on the grill for dinner and [sweet potato fries](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/sandra-lee/sweet-potato-fries-recipe2/index.html) from Food Network.

The sweet potato fries were good, cooked them at 375F convection for 25 mins. Got a bit too browned on edges and a bit too soft in centres but not too bad.

My burger was medium rare, beef-only, loosely-packed, salted and peppered, on a toasted sesame bun, onion, tomato, pickles, lettuce, mayo. Really, really delicious. Simple and perfectly cooked.

21-Aug-11

Picked up the Bradley today. Read that smoking is best done between 200F to 220F. Someone said that when doing 3-2-1 for pork ribs, he sprays the ribs with a 50/50 mixture of Jack Daniels and apple juice regularly during the first phase.

22-Aug-11

Reading about smoking cheese. Apparently the ideal temp is 70F to a max of 90F and you smoke for 2-4 hours. You let sit for 30 mins in the fridge, then vacuum pack and let rest in fridge for at least 30 days or more. Apparently it can keep in the fridge for over a year.

Smoking some cheese now. ☺ Pepper jack, gouda, Havarti, and white cheddar. Wish me luck!

23-Aug-11

Cheese came out quite good. Wiped it down, wrapped it, and left overnight in the fridge. Then vacuum packed it and leaving it a month. It turned out quite well but it was tough keep the temp cool. After n hour or so the temp creeped to 100F. Stopped it, let it cool, then restarted. All the cheese were fine except the Havarti which started to melt through the shelf. But it still looks edible.

Started the ribs. Gave them a dry rub of ancho powder, smoked paprika, paprika, garam masala, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, allspice, cloves, star anise, pepper, salt. Cooking 3-2-1.

Also started some chili. Smoked some beef short ribs with the same rub as the pork ribs. Added to a dutch oven with blended garlic, mushrooms, carrots, red pepper, onion, 1 can of tomatoes. Added ancho powder, chipotle powder, smoked paprika, paprika, garam masala, molasses, caramel colour, cumin seeds, fennel seeds, chili powder, ground cloves, ground allspice, ground cinnamon, pepper, salt, chopped celery. Will slow cook for several hours.

Chili is good but arguably too much flavour. I think I need to throw in some tomato sauce.

Ribs were delicious although Brandy didn’t like them. Super tender, flavourful. The temp really was a yoyo though, next time I’ve got to use the PID. Set it to high and walk away. Also, the cabinet takes a long time to reach heat, I think next time I should engage the cabinet about an hour in advance, and as always, the smoker 20 mins in advance.

24-Aug-11

Apparently jerky is cooked at a maximum of 170F to 180F. General process seems to be: marinate beef (top round?) overnight (sugar, salt, seasoning, sure cure), smoke for a couple hours, then cook only.

Jerky needs to be cut with the grain of the meat, not across.

Canning steps:

1. Add jars to pot and boil for minimum 10 mins, reduce to simmer.
2. Add lids and rings to simmering water, do not boil
3. Lift out one jar at a time and fill
4. Fill jar, run spatula around inside of jar to remove trapped air.
5. Remove lid from water and place on top.
6. Fit ring until you feel resistance.
7. Fill rest of jars
8. Process in water bath for a minimum of 15 mins.
9. Remove jars from water and let cool for 24 hours.
10. Check seals, tighten rings.

Re-did the batch of jelly. As it turned out the original jelly had set just fine, who knew? I made a new batch, added one packet of certo, and then the old jelly. The old jelly never really melted well despite bringing to a boil so it was slightly clumpy when packing. We’ll see if it worked. But this time I properly disinfected the jars and lids so as long as it sets it was probably a good idea.

So many things I want to can. Tomatillo salsa, corn salsa, ice wine jelly, jalapeno jelly, habanero jelly, port wine jelly, garlic, asparagus, perhaps pears. So many choices.

26-Aug-11

Made two batches of garlic dill pickles today. Used the recipe from SeriousEats but added some alum to the brine to keep them crispy. Have to wait at least a week before eating them but they look good. Also bought a pressure canner.

27-Aug-11

Randal and Natasha and Carrie came for dinner. Smoked a pork shoulder w/ a spice rub and basted with orange and lime juice. Internal temp never peaked above 160F after 6 hours of cooking, next time cook a lot longer. But chopped it up very finely, added the citrus juice, and served with corn tortillas, pico de gallo, chopped jalapeno, and guacamole and it tasted very good.

Made a salad of grilled corn, grilled red peppers, black beans, diced onion, chopped cilantro, lime juice. Very tasty.

28-Aug-11

For breakfast made scrambled eggs w/ goat cheese, truffle oil, and basil. Added a bit too much truffle oil but it was still tasty.

Canning chili, garlic, peppers, blueberry jelly today. Totally winged the jelly, don’t know if it will turn out. Cooked two quarts of blueberries in water, strained, added some water, 5 cups sugar, 2 packages pectin, and boiled to 220F. Fingers crossed.

The jelly seemed to come out good and set. The garlic turned a bit brown but looks okay. The chili is empty on top and probably will spoil easily. The pepper jar is almost half empty and needs to go in the fridge.

29-Aug-11

Low-acid foods canned in a pressure canner require 20-100 minutes of processing. Acid foods preparedin a hot water bath require 5 to 85 mins. At sea level, a canner operated at a gauge pressure of 10.5 lbs provides an internal temperature of 240°F.

Gelling of jellies and jams are a product of a correct ratio of sugar,pectin,and acid. Fully ripe fruits contain less pectin, so you should use ¼ unripe fruits if you’re not adding extra pectin.

When there is too much acid,the jelly will weep (lose liquid.) When there is insufficient acid it will not set. Commercial pectin usually has acid added to ensure setting.

Made fried green tomatoes for dinner. Took 1/2c flour, 1/2c corn meal, added salt, garlic powder, onion powder. Dredged sliced tomatoes in it, dipped in egg wash, dredged again, fried in clarified butter. Served with chipotle mayo. Bleh. Not much flavour, a batter delivery mechanism.

Also had a salad of quartered golden beets, toasted pine nuts, halved cherry tomatoes, spinach, cider vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar, olive oil. Topped with chevre. Not bad but I pressure cooked the beets for 20 mins and they were completely spongy on the outside.

30-Aug-11

Made potato leek soup. Boiled 4 potatoes in water, added 2 large leeks, cooked until tender. Blended, added salt, pepper, 1/2c whipping cream, a few dashes of truffle oil. Very simple, tasty, truffle oil probably unnecessary.

Made another batch of blueberry jelly:

* 2 Quarts blueberries
* 4 tbsp lemon juice
* 2 packages certo pectin
* 5 cups sugar
* 4 tsp Bernardin Fruit Fresh

Add blueberries to pot and fill with water until visible but fruit not floating. Add Fruit Fresh, mash with a potato masher and bring to simmer for 10 mins. Strain in cheesecloth, discard pulp, and put juice in a new pot. Add pectin, sugar, lemon juice. Cook at low boil to a temp of 220F, place in sterilized jars, process in water bath for 5 mins. Wish me luck!

I want to make a tomato tart. Pastry dough in a tart tin, very ripe small tomatoes, salt, fresh mozzarella. Cook at high heat until done, garnish with fresh basil.

31-Aug-11

The blueberry jam set perfectly.

Made up the tomatillo salsa tonight. Roasted a poblano under the broiler then removed the skin and seeds. Didn’t taste too hot. Halved about 16 tomatillos, sprayed with oil, and roasted them under the broiler. Added the poblano, tomatillos, 4 large garlic cloves, half a huge sweet onion, 2 jalapenos seeded but with the membrane intact, salt, pepper and lots of lime juice to a dutch oven and cooked them, then blended. Very tasty but it’s too tart. Either less salt or less acid next time. But still tasty.

5-Sep-11

Making a Chicago deep-dish tart tonight. Made a batch of pastry, will fill a rectangular tart pan, add mozzarella, olive oil, tomato sauce, parmesan cheese, and garnish with fresh basil. Made the sauce from scratch – seeded tomatoes, onion, some sugar, and a bouquet of thyme. Roasted until well browned, added a can of San Marzano tomatoes, blended, salted, and reduced until thick.

Also making halved leeks sautéed in butter and a small bowl each of potato leek soup.

Rough master recipe for sorbet:

2 cups fresh fruit  
1 cup simple syrup  
3 tbsp liqueur or lime juice

Puree and process in ice cream maker.

6-Sep-11

Making grilled sausages for dinner w/ potato salad. Salad is baby red potatoes halved and boiled in acidic water, tossed w/ buttermilk, mayo, sour cream, chopped pickle, green onion, celery, parsley, salt, pepper, Dijon mustard, Frank’s Red Hot. Brandy raved about the dressing.

7-Sep-11

Making beef ribs for dinner. Rub is mustard powder, cardamom, 5 spice, garlic powder, onion powder, pepper. Smoking with alderwood, 3-2-1. Undecided on sauce, maybe NC style. Also making corn on the cob.

Made the Carolina-style BBQ sauce. Cooked 1 large cubed peach in a small amount of oil, added 2 tbsp brown sugar, 1 cup cider vinegar, 1 ¼ tbsp black pepper, one sliced hot pepper, 2 tbsp yellow mustard. Cooked and then blended.

For breakfast made something delicious. Oiled a ramekin, lined it with prosciutto, then baked. Added 2 eggs and baked until almost firm. Added tomatillo salsa and ate with toast. Delicious. The only thing wrong was the prosciutto was very, very salty. Also, next time I should either coddle or poach the eggs.

Apparently if you cool your pressure canner too quickly the liquid inside the jars will come to a rapid boil and boil out of the jars. Cooling slowly will prevent this.

12-Sep-11

For dinner made cream of celery soup and pesto orzo. For the soup cooked several stalks of celery tossed in olive oil at 325 for about an hour. Added to blender, added cream and water and milk, blended. Ran through a strainer, salt and pepper to taste, thicken with a flour slurry.

For pesto took parmesan, toasted almonds, olive oil, basil, parsley, green onions, cooked garlic and blended in Foodpro. Salt and pepper to taste.

Everything was good but I didn’t have time to watch the soup closely enough and it developed lumps.

For breakfast made crepes with warm peach coulis. Crepes were Julia’s recipe with buttermilk substituted for milk. Coulis was fresh peaches cooked with 4 tbsp brown sugar and a splash of brandy then blended. Topped the crepes with hand-whipped cream. Very tasty.

13-Sep-11

Made pizza for dinner tonight. Dough was store-bought. Sauce was grape tomatoes seeded and lightly cooked w/ olive oil, salt, and oregano. Topped w/ fresh mozz, black olives, prosciutto. Forgot to add fresh basil after cooking. Preheated the grill to 500F with the pizza stone on it, prepared the pizza on parchment paper, and then slid it onto the stone. Pizza was very good but partially burnt on bottom. Next time heat the ambient temp to 600F and don’t let Brandy keep on lifting the lid.

14-Sep-11

Some interesting facts from Kenji:  
<http://www.seriouseats.com/2011/09/the-food-lab-answers-questions-about-food-science.html>

* Dough fermented for several days will convert more carbs to sugar and lower the pH, meaning it will brown better.
* To warm prepared tortillas dip a tortilla in a bowl of water and place it directly on the dry skillet. Let it sit long enough to char in spots, then flip to the other side. Stack the warmed tortillas on a plate wrapped in a clean dish towel.
* For crispy fried chicken skin dehydration is the key. Overnight rest uncovered in the fridge with a baking soda rub works wonders (check out the science and recipe [here](http://www.seriouseats.com/2010/02/the-best-baked-buffalo-chicken-wings-in-oven-not-fried-appetizers.html).) This can also be applied for whole chickens or roasts.
* Salt helps dissolve myosin in meat, causing ground meat to bind and remain juicier.
* Sprinkle bacon fat over your cornbread if you want it to be moist.
* Soy sauce has natural enzymes that break down proteins, so Chinese fried beef is marinated overnight in soy to make it tender.
* Tramontina cookware are almost as good as All-Clad for 1/3 the price.
* Gelato has less fat and more sugar than ice cream, meaning it’s generally softer.
* Salt in a marinade inhibits absorption of other flavours, so you need to overcompensate with them to compete with the salt.
* The reason whole wheat flour can never make as good a dough as white is that bran impedes formation of gluten.
* Green beans turn grey because as the cell walls burst they release acid into the structure. Best solution is to boil in lots of water and not overcook.
* In the US, eggs are all washed, which cleans them, but also gets rid of the waxy cuticle that makes them airtight. Our eggs are porous, so prone to new contamination. Unwashed eggs are hermetically sealed, so don't need to be refrigerated.
* Sodium nitrate is the pink salt used to cure certain types of charcuterie. It's what sets the oxygen in the myoglobin molecule to keep the meat nice and pink. It also affects flavor.
* In general you should not go below a 1:1 ratio of water to vinegar for refrigerator pickles, which is a 2.5% acid solution.

<http://www.seriouseats.com/2010/09/the-food-lab-how-to-make-peking-duck-at-home.html>

15-Sep-11

Made bruschetta for dinner tonight. Toasted some Parisien bread, topped with chopped seeded roma tomatoes, olive oil, salt, raw garlic, basil. Very yummy.

Also made capellini a aglio e oilio but it was awful.

16-Sep-11

Made bruschetta again, with the leftover cappellini tossed in a tomato herb sauce. Pasta was much better.

I want to make thai burgers. Med-rare beef, peanut butter mixed w/ sriracha, cilantro, and shredded cabbage and carrot.

23-Sep-11

For dinner tonight made breaded veal on a bun. Served it on plain buns w/ mayo, shredded iceberg, and tomato. It was to die for. This time I deep fried the veal and it made it come out super crispy and perfect.

Kat’s coming for dinner and I’m going to make steak tacos.

Cooked 2 New York strips to perfect in ribbed pan salted and peppered. Sliced thin and placed in a bowl with lime juice, orange juice, lemon juice. Dipped tortillas in water, heated in a skillet, then wrapped in a towel. Served tacos w/ smooth guac, pico de gallo, diced jalapenos, sour cream, cheese, tomatillo salsa. They were delicious.

Only thing to do different next time is don’t put a medium steak in citrus, it turns the pink part grey.

25-Sep-11

Made Alton Brown’s pumpkin bread. Very tasty. Sprayed the pan with Pam and dusted with flour, didn’t stick this time. Karlee helped make it, did almost everything.

26-Sep-11

Making corn on the cob for dinner tonight.

But I want to make spinach ricotta ravioli in brown butter topped w/ parmesan and basil.

I also made braised radish greens with bacon bits, butter, salt, pepper. Not bad, a bit peppery, but unfortunately I oversalted them.

I also read that you can roast radishes. NY Times said to roast them, toss them in a garlic, anchovy, butter sauce and serve on crostini. Or just as a side.

Kenji says salt is key to making sausage because it causes the meat to bind. Also letting it rest after salting means it will shed far less moisture when cooking. Your sausage meat also needs to be kneaded to link protein strands together.

He also says to put your meat grinder in the freezer for at least an hour before using.

27-Sep-11

Made ravioli and zucchini for dinner. Zucchini were green and yellow sliced, put in a casserole, topped with diced tofu, marinara, panko gratin, and baked.

Ravioli were home-made pasta, filled with home-made ricotta, spinach, salt, pepper, nutmeg. Boiled, then tossed in brown butter and topped with grated parmesan and chiffonade of basil. Not bad. A little heavy on the pasta but not bad.

28-Sep-11

This year for thanksgiving I might want to do a roulade stuffed with stuffing, wrapped in a mild bacon, pan seared, roasted, and topped with cranberry sauce.

I think indian curry w/ firm tofu instead of paneer would be delish.

In General Tso’s chicken, chicken cubes are marinated in egg white, cornstarch, Chinese cooking wine, soy sauce for 2 hours, then fried in a wok.

For dinner tonight going to make chicken pot pie w/ puff pastry tops, garlic and rosemary confit potatoes, green beans w/ butter and roast almonds.

The chicken stew was delicious. Cooked chicken thigs w/ bone in chicken stock, removed bones & meat & added carrots, onions. Cooked, added whipping cream w/ flour, thickened, added peas, carrots, chopped chicken, salt, pepper, Frank’s Red Hot. Put stew in French onion bowls, topped with a ring of puff pastry and baked. Stew got too hot and thinned, and I put the puff pastry on too early and they shrunk and fell into the soup, preventing them from rising. But it tasted great.

Frenched the green beans and they were great but slightly undercooked. Potatoes were okay but they didn’t brown so I decided to just deep fry and salt. Tasted okay but nothing special.

2-Oct

Made smoked prime rib for dinner, Randal & Helene came over. Kosher salted the prime rib, rubbed with Dijon mustard, then cooked at 200F for about 5.5 hrs, to an internal temp of 135F. Lef rest about 40 mins. Then finished on frill at 600F, sliced, served.

Made Yorkshire puddings they were very good, and Brussels sprouts. Cut them in half, scored stalk once, blanched in heavily salted water for 2 mins w/ some chopped parsley root. Threw in ice bath and left for the afternoon. When ready to serve browned some butter, threw in veggies, sautéed for one minute, threw in 400F oven for 20 mins. Also made gorgonzola mashed potatoes.

3-Oct-11

Try making duck breast bacon. Rub a duck breast (skin-on) w/ spiced meat cure, let rest in fridge uncovered for 24 hours. Smoke for 4 hours, let rest in fridge another 24 hours or so, vacuum pack.

6-Oct-11

When making a cheese fondue you usually rub the pot down first with a garlic clove. Add neuchattel wine to the pot, simmer, add some salt, lemon juice, and some brandy. Bring to a simmer. Add gruyere, smoked gouda, corn starch.

Always weigh grated cheese, not by volume since it’s too inexact. Too much heat makes cheese clump and starch helps prevent it. Lemon juice splits the long protein strands which keeps it from being stringy. Add cheese slowly, letting it get back to temp before adding more.

The proteins in milk are casein and lactoglobulin. They split during cheesemaking to make curds and whey.

10-Oct-11

According to Alton Brown the purpose of baking soda in cakes is to neutralize the acidity of the mixture so that the baking powder can work effectively to release carbon dioxide. Putting a pan of water in the oven can prevent the outside of the cake from drying out and cracking.

11-Oct-11

According to Kenji you should avoid using all EVOO when making mayo using a hand blender as the blender will break down the flavor compounds lending a bitter flavor. Instead start your mayo with a neutral oil then whisk in the EVOO for flavor.

Some pumpkin recipe ideas from SeriousEats:

* [Pumpkin and sage orzo](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2009/01/pumpkin-orzo-with-sage.html)
* [Pumpkin leek soup](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2009/10/dinner-tonight-pumpkin-and-leek-soup.html)
* Pumpkin turkey chili
  + Pumpkin puree, diced jalapenos, browned turkey, cinnamon, cumin, garlic, onion, cayenne, perhaps corn, smoked paprika, diced tomatoes, garnished w/ fresh cilantro.
* Pumpkin and potato hash
  + w/ diced bacon and sage
* I think I’d prefer the pumpkin and sage orzo as pumpkin and sage risotto. Use crème fraiche to add creaminess and cubed pancetta for flavour.

Carnaroli or Vialone Nano are the two best rices in North America for risotto. Traditionally you should use warm stock for risotto, not hot. According to Kenji toasting your rice in oil first makes for a nutty flavour but less creamy.

For dinner made butternut squash risotto. Fried 3 slices of cubed pancetta in a pan until the fat rendered, added 2 diced shallots, fresh pepper. Once shallots were translucent added roughly 10 chopped fresh sage leaves, 1 3/4c Arborio rice, and 1 tbsp olive oil. Sauteed for several minutes then added 3 tbsp white chicken glace, 1c vermouth, water. Continued adding water and stirring until rice was cooked, removed from heat and added 1 1/2c cooked butternut squash puree, 1/2c crème fraiche, salt to taste, and water to bring to a smooth, stew-like consistency.

Was really delicious, loved it.

12-Oct-11

Ravioli aren’t cut with a pastry roller along the edges, they’re crimped with the tines of a fork. Duh.

Lobster should be cooked to an internal temp of 135F, which is roughly 4 to 5 minutes for a 1 to 1 ½ lb lobster.

For dinner made an iceberg wedge. Dressing was Danish blue w/ crème fraiche, mayo, buttermilk. Topped with lightly crisped prosciutto sliced thin.

Served with beef tenderloin tournedos pan fried (in stainless pain) with oil and garlic, salted and peppered. Meat didn’t stick at all which was great, but I completely misjudged the meat and it came out completely raw. Tasted good many minutes of roasting later but can’t believe how badly I misjudged.

13-Oct-11

For dinner made chicken schnitzel sandwiches on toasted buns with lettuce, tomato, Frank’s Red Hot and leftover home-made blue cheese dressing. Very very tasty. Breaded the chicken as per Chef John’s [onion ring recipe](http://foodwishes.blogspot.com/2010/05/can-i-get-onion-rings-instead-of-fries.html). The batter adhered really well, was really crispy, very light golden brown. Deep-fried. I doubt the batter was much better than egg wash and panko, I think the key is the deep frying.

When I make my smoked beef brisket I want to also make BBQ baked beans and creamy cabbage raddichio slaw.

Julia says 80% of the compounds that give beans flatulence are water soluble. To get around it soak the beans, pour out all the water, add fresh, and cook as prescribed to avoid flatulence. Add 3 parts water to 1 part beans to a sauce pan, bring to a boil, and boil uncovered for 2 mins. Cover and set aside for 1 hour. Then cook as prescribed. At this point they can be cooked in a pressure cooker to 15 bars for 3 minutes, let them cool on their own, and add further flavouring as needed.

14-Oct-11

3-2-1 dough is pastry dough made with 3 parts flour to 2 parts fat to 1 part moisture.

16-Oct-11

Alton says to never bring mashing potatoes to a rolling boil or they’ll get waterlogged. Medium-starch potatoes like Yukon gold are great for gratins and scalloped potatoes.

17-Oct-11

Made pesto pasta for dinner and white asparagus salad.

Pesto was very nice. 1 c parsley leaves, 1c basil leaves, 4 tbsp sage leaves, 4 tbsp oregano leaves, 1/4c toasted pine nuts, olive oil, 1/2c parmesan, pepper, 2 cloves garlic. Let cook in residual heat of pasta.

For dessert made apple fritters. Made a thick buttermilk pancake batter, dipped small chunks of apple in it, then fried at 350F until golden brown. Then dusted w/ icing sugar.

18-Oct-11

Farmed salmon have pigments added to their diet to color their flesh—without it, they'd be totally white. Kenji says to kill the lobster first, steam it for about 1 minute, then roast at 350F to an internal temp of 135F. He also says to separate the tail from the body as the liver breaks down the flesh in the tail, making it mushy. You can also consider cooking them separately to account for the greater thickness of the tail vs. claws.

The rib steak, or rib eye, consists of 2 muscles:

1. Logissiumus – Smooth, fine-grained, firm
2. Spinalis – Tender fatty cap that rests around the longissiumus. The closer to the head of the steer the more you get. Often considered the tastiest cut of beef on a cow.

Because tenderloins contain less fat – and fat conducts heat more slowly than muscle – tenderloin will tend to cook much quicker than most cuts.

A porterhouse is a T-bone where the tenderloin is at least 1 1/2 “ wide.

Making pot roast. Dusted it in flour, browned in a saucepan. Braising liquid is vermouth, water. Added Dijon mustard, garlic, chopped onions, cubed kielbasa, rough chopped carrots. Removed the carrots when done, boiled down the gravy until thick.

Served over mashed potatoes w/ crème fraiche and chives. Cooked russet potatoes with some vinegar in the water and didn’t let them come to a rolling boil. Mashed with a masher. Turned out really good but with some lumps. Either it was because the vinegar formed a skin on the potatoes or because I was mashing them with the masher in a rounded bowl. Think the mixer would have done them fine.

Made a batch of crème fraiche the other day. Learned that to make it set up firmer and faster just use more buttermilk.

Started a batch of SeriousEats no-knead bread.

21-Oct-11

Making chicken souvlaki for dinner tomorrow night. Chopped up a large turkey breast and am marinating it with olive oil, salt, pepper, chili flakes, chopped oregano and sage. Tomorrow I’ll add the lemon juice.

22-Oct-11

1 cup of dried beans makes 3 cups of cooked.

Making a batch of Julia’s Boston baked beans, but with sautéed pancetta instead of salt pork.

23-Oct-11

Wow. Worked my ass of for dinner and while it was almost terrific, every single dish has one thing done wrong and the end result was that everything was a disaster.

The beef brisket tasted okay but was so horribly overcooked and dry that is flaked when you tried to cut it. Oh well, beginner’s mishap.

The beans were almost flawless but I oversalted them so they were gross. Next time don’t salt them at all until they’re done.

The coleslaw was tasty but I used radicchio and it was bitter as hell. No wonder I hate radicchio.

So frustrating to work so hard and a few big mistakes ruined the entire meal.

26-Oct-11

Want to try the SeriousEats [Apple Ginger Caramel Galette](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/10/ginger-caramel-apple-galette-recipe.html).

Author of above recipe recommends rolling out your pastry dough between layers of parchment paper. She also recommends coring apples by cutting them in half and using a metal 1tsp measure to cut out the centre.

27-Oct-11

Tried my canned tuna. On the plus side it tasted exactly like store-bought canned tuna. On the downside it was much more expensive than store-bought. It was also a bit over-salted. I want to try salmon now.

For dinner made calzone and bruschetta. Took pizza dough, divided it into 80g balls, rolled out flat. Filled with cheese, sauce, spicy sausage, brushed the edges with egg wash. Folded over, crimped with the tines of a fork, cut a hole, and brushed the entire thing with egg wash. Throw in a 450F (convection) oven on a pizza stone and cook until browned. Cool.

They were a tad ugly because the cheese leaked out through the holes but they were tasty.

For bruschetta, seed and chop some tomatoes, add crushed garlic, salt, pepper, olive oil, chiffonade of basil. Toast some ciabatta baguette under broiler brushed with olive oil. Top toast with topping and serve.

30-Oct-11

Made a batch of pizza dough with the stand mixer instead of bread machine. Used the bread machine recipe but bloomed the yeast in warm water first with the butter, used beer for the rest of the liquid, used bread flour, then mixed/kneaded for about 10 mins using the dough hook. Let rise for about 50 mins in the mixer bowl, oiled & covered, in the oven until doubled. Punched down, divided into 2 and then froze the dough. Looked very good but think I will have to make bread instead to see if it turned out glutinous enough.

31-Oct-11

I want to try making panzerotti filled with spiced ground meat, shallow friend in a cast-iron skillet and served with a cilantro yoghurt sauce.

I wanna make a soup of creamed corn, seared scallops, and basil.

Wanna make a linguini with a smoked salmon cream sauce, maybe with capers. Or a beurre blanc sauce with extra cream.

1-Nov-11

For dinner made a take on Beef Stroganoff. Salted some tenderloin tournedos, seared in a pan, with some thyme, removed them from heat. Added chopped shallots and garlic and cooked until softened, deglazed the pan with some morel water, added heavy cream, crème anglaise, chopped morels, reduced, re-added meat, served over egg noodles with some broccoli.

Also boiled broccoli in heavy salted water. The heads were very mushy, couldn’t tell if it was because of the salted water or because they had been overcooked.

2-Nov-11

Making jambalaya for dinner. Sautéed 2c of Arborio rice with chopped onions and chopped sausage until browned, added 4 cups (combined) of chicken glace, tomato sauce, and water. Added salt, pepper, chopped jalapeno, garlic, chopped sweet peppers, cubed chicken breast. Let cook until almost done, added cooked shrimp. Served. Very tasty but rice overdone.

Made my canned salmon. Used same recipe as the tuna. 15 mins at 10lb pressure. Cool slowly.

Read today that the red blood around chicken thighs aren’t because it’s under-cooked, it’s because the chickens are young and the bones not fully developed, which makes them porous. As they are cooking marrow leaks out from the bone, releasing blood. Even if the meat is adequately cooked.

Started a batch of no-knead ciabatta. Used the recipe from FoodWishes but will store in the fridge several days like the SeriousEats recipe. Will then cook in a dutch oven as per SeriousEats.

3-Nov-11

For dinner made a broccoli soup. Steamed ¾ a head of broccoli, with stems, took off heat when still green. Added the broccoli and cooking liquid to a blender with cream. Blended, salted & peppered to taste, plus about 1 tbsp sugar. Tasted delicious.

For a veggie I made roasted carrots. Peeled, cut in large pieces, and tossed in baking dish with salt and pepper and a touch of sugar. Roasted at 475 until well caramelized on the outside. Very tasty.

Main dish was chicken cordon blue. Butterflied chicken breasts, filled w/ proscitto & emmenthal, salted, then rolled in cling wrap to shape. Dredged in flour mixed w/ powdered sage, salt, pepper. Egg wash. Rolled in panko and deep fried until golden brown. They opened slightly but surprisingly the emmenthal didn’t leak out.

They were slightly undercooked, next time cook them to a deep golden brown. In the end they tasted exactly like chicken cordon blue ought to, but both Brandy and I thought they were very bland.

6-Nov-11

Cooked the no-knead bread. Turned out amazing. Used the Foodwishes recipe but prepared it as per SeriousEats. Perfect size, nice and fluffy, great crust and crumb.

7-Nov-11

Making [Emeril’s Fettucini Alfredo](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/fettucine-alfredo-recipe2/index.html) for dinner tonight. Turned out extremely tasty, I definitely prefer this recipe. Came out of suspension after about 10 mins though and got greasy.

8-Nov-11

For dinner made prosciutto-wrapped veal tenderloin, parmesan and truffle polenta, and heirloom tomato salad.

The polenta was 4:1 liquid to polenta. 3/4c polenta, 3c milk and water mix, 1/4c parmesan, ¼ tsp truffle oil, salt & pepper to taste, and fresh parsley to finish.

Served with an heirloom tomato salad. Heirloom tomatoes cut very thick, tossed in salt, pepper, white wine vinegar, olive oil, and finished with shaved parmesan.

The tenderloin was peppered, wrapped in prosciutto, pan seared, then finished in a 400F oven for about 15 mins.

Everything was delicious but the tenderloin was the biggest problem. The prosciutto was overcooked and peeled away, and Brandy was waiting so it didn’t have enough time to rest so it shed a lot of juices. But it was cooked to perfection and tasted great so I can’t complain too much.

Also picked up radishes at Longo’s which I want to roast, Brussels sprouts which I want to roast with pancetta, and golden beets. I want to use the beet greens to make green pasta. I also want to buy a big batch of golden beets and pickle them.

10-Nov-11

For dinner made roasted Brussels sprouts, mashed potatoes, and beef patties w/ onion gravy. Quartered the Brussels sprouts, sautéed them for a few mins with some pancetta until browned, added pepper, and threw pan in 400F oven until done. Everything was pretty good, Brandy liked the sprouts.

11-Nov-11

For dinner made turkey breast cooked sous vide in a pot of water. In the bag added turkey, 1 stick butter, sage, thyme. Cooked for about 4 hours bringing the water to about 174F. Sliced and served with some slightly thickened white glace.

Made individual scalloped potatoes in ramekins. Layered sliced potato, onion, salt, pepper, and heavy cream, baked at 400F.

Lastly made roasted radishes with whole cloves of garlic tossed in olive oil w/ kosher salt and pepper. Roasted at 450 until partly browned. Finished with a dash of lemon juice. Was really delicious, like mild turnips. At times salty, sour, sweet. Really enjoyed it.

12-Nov-11

Tomorrow I’ll make fried chicken and biscuits. The chicken is marinating in buttermilk, salt, pepper, smoked paprika, ground sage, lots of Frank’s Red Hot.

14-Nov

Kenji recommends parboiling home fries/roasted potatoes in a bit of acid to ensure the crispiest exterior.

For dinner made fried chicken. Started the chicken at about 220F and it rose to 330F and unfortunately slightly burnt. Made battered beet wedges and stopped them at 300F and they were perfect.

Also made an aioli w/ egg, olive oil, veg oil, mustard, salt, pepper, lemon juice, garlic. Was to die for. Brandy adored the beets, next time will just bake, not batter and fry.

Also made cheddar jalapeno biscuits. Used a 1/3c measure to scoop them out and place tall on parchment paper. Looked great cooked but dropped while cooking. Still tasted great, looked good, and were a uniform size for a change.

15-Nov-11

Kenji says salt dissolves as quickly in cold water as it does in hot, unlike sugar.

Cutting the spine off a chicken and flattening it is a great way to reduce cooking time, make your skin crispier, and save the spine for stock!

Making ravioli for dinner tonight. Made a spinach pasta w/ beet greens. Used only 168g of greens instead of the 265g called for but it seemed to turn out fine. Filling is ricotta, parmesan, salt, pepper, nutmeg, truffle oil. Forgot to add egg.

Some things that seemed to help this time:

* Pinch the edges from the outside-in so the filling gets pushed to the centre, not out.
* Go very light on the egg wash to seal, makes them more sticky.
* Prep the ravioli and place on parchment.
* Let sit 15 mins before cooking so they have time to seal.
* Simmer, don’t boil.

Will see if this helped.

Sauce is just blended san marzanos with oregano, rosemary, salt, some Frank’s Red Hot.

Verdict: the ravioli still stuck to the parchment and many of the seals broke open, but by pressing them lightly and adding to the water they all sealed. Altogether a fairly decent attempt but way too much work to justify itself.

Beef comes from steers which are castrated bulls.

A primal is a large commercial cut from which other cuts are taken. Strip, T-bone, porterhouse, and tenderloin all come from the shortloin primal. From rib primal we get ribeye steak and standing rib roast.

Closer to head or tail of steer is tougher meat.

Alton’s method for steak:

600F+ cast-iron pan on stove, season steak with salt, pepper, high-heat oil. Add to pan, 30s each side. Flip again and add to 500F oven. 2mins per side, put on rack to rest, tent for 3 mins.

16-Nov-11

Today I learned about chili verde. So much as I can tell it’s like salsa verde with a stock base and shredded pork shoulder. Roasted tomatillos, garlic, peppers, cilantro, onion, stock, shredded/pulled pork.

For dinner made cheesy pizza with spicy sausage. For the crust used no-knead bread dough. It was really soft and hard to work with but in the end is turned out okay. Didn’t char the crust right and the cornicione needed to be bigger because the cheese leaked out. But it was still very tasty.

17-Nov-11

Made a great lasagna for dinner. Rolled out the green pasta into sheets and used meat sauce. Two layers of mascarpone mixed w/ ricotta and salt. Lots of mozzarella on top, and broiled it for a few mins for a crispy top. Not my usual fresh recipe but for a meat lasagna it was delicious.

18-Nov-11

For a snack tonight made cinnamon roll. Took the remaining bread dough and rolled it flat, added brown sugar, cinnamon, crushed pecans, and lots of butter. Baked covered about 45 mins. There was too much better and some of the dough at the bottom was crisp, but for the most part it was good.

20-Nov-11

Making [Pickled Golden Beets](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/10/pickled-golden-beets-recipe.html). Recipe wa s 1c water : 1c cinvegar : 1tbsp pickling salt : 1lb veggie. Never put alum in your pickling solution. It can cause upset stomach, and 1oz can be fatal. (About half a container of it.)

For dinner made eggplant celeriac soup. Baked a large eggplant, skinned, chopped. Steamed a chopped whole celeriac. Passed them both through a food mill and combined with the steaming liquid. Added butter, cream, salt, pepper, and some fish sauce for umami. Served with garlic crostini. Very tasty.

21-Nov-11

Dinner tonight will be stewed beef shanks over noodles with chopped & sautéed long beans in butter w/ roasted almonds and garlic.

Seared the beef shanks in oil, added to slow cooker with 2 cups vermouth, bay leaves, pepper, marjoram. Cooked some chopped onions in the pan then deglazed with white wine vinegar, and a cup of water. Added to pot with 2 cloves garlic, chopped tomatoes, artichoke hearts, black olives. Slow cooked until tender, then added a slurry to thicken. At very end removed boned, broke up the meat, and removed fat and gristle. Salted to taste. Served it over egg noodles, it was utterly delicious, one of the best things I’ve made in a while.

I chopped the long beans short, sautéed in butter w/ pepper, toasted sesame seeds, garlic, dried marjoram. Salted. These were really delicious too, the sesame seeds were yummy and nutty.

Home-made pickling spice:

1 tbsp pepper corns

1 tbsp mustard seeds

1 tbsp cloves

1 tsp star anise (optional)

1 tsp crushed bay leaves

1 large garlic clove

I think sautéed and roasted fennel and radishes would taste great together.

Pectin in a sorbet reduces the freezing point, but also thickens the melted juice, which is why fruit preserves in a sorbet are good. They can also be substituted 1:1 for sugar. Just don’t let it boil or the pectin can break down.

Gelato has less air than American ice cream and is thus denser. It is also typically milk-based, where ice cream is cream based and French ice creams are custard-based.

Vanilla beans with white crystals or powder on the outside are actually better. The crystals are the vanillin.

The mixture for a cream-only ice cream needs to rest in the fridge for 6-12 hours.

22-Nov-11

Would like to make make-ahead mashed potatoes. In a casserole start with a layer of creamy mashed, cool in fridge. Add a layer of sweet potato mashed, cool in fridge. Finish with another layer of creamy mashed. Bake to a golden crust before serving.

Kenji’s technique for perfect prime rib: cook at 200F to 125F or 130F. (Approx 4 hours) Remove from oven and tent in foil for 30-90 minutes, while bringing oven to 550F. Finish for 8 mins at 550F.

Dinner tonight:

* Country fried pork chop
* Maple glazed roasted purple yams
* Sauteed radishes w/ shaved fennel hearts

Pork chop was marinated in buttermilk, Frank’s, salt, pepper all afternoon. Then dredged in salted flour, egg wash, panko, and deep pan fried. Delicious!

Sauteed the radishes in a pan, added fennel near the end, salt, pepper. They were sweet and succulent and delicious!

Yams were sautéed in oil until starting to brown, salted, then put in 400F oven. Added maple syrup, and cooked until tender. They were a bit dry but very flavourful. Brandy really loved them. Next time use more syrup.

26-Nov-11

For dinner tonight had beet green soup, hasselback potatoes, radish salad.

Soup was pureed steamed beet greens w/ salt. Tasty but horrific looking.

Salad was mandolined radishes, jalapeno, carrots with olive oil, white vinegar, salt, pepper, sugar.

Potatoes had mandolined onions between each slice, salt, pepper, olive oil. Baked at 350 tented w/ some water for about an hour, then untented, covered with shredded cheese. Served with crème fraiche, pancetta bits, chopped chives. They were really delicious but Brandy’s wasn’t quite cooked.

27-Nov-11

Man these [potato cakes](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/11/potato-cake-recipe-leftover-thanksgiving-mashed-potatoes.html) made with mashed potatoes look great! I bet they’d be great seasoned spicy with a poached egg on top. Basically mashed potatoes, cheese, scallions mixed then breaded with panko.

Gordon Ramsay says to make a perfect poached egg get your water to temp and swirl vigorously with a whisk. From a ramekin, lower the egg into the water and cook, then drop in ice bath to cool. Be sure to drop the egg from the ramekin in the same direction the water s moving. He doesn’t seem to add it in the centre, but rather in the middle of the pot.

Made another batch of pickled beets, red this time. 2 cups white vinegar to 2 cups water to 2 tbsp picking salt in 1 pint jars. Pickling spice was mustard seeds, bay leaves, peppercorns, fresh garlic, 1 star anise. Filled jars and canned for 10 mins at 5 pounds pressure.

One jar was only ½ filled and it didn’t seal, so put it in the fridge to age.

28-Nov-11

Dinner tonight was chicken breast in cream sauce, pesto mashed potatoes, and sautéed leeks.

Chicken was pan seared then placed in 375F oven to finish. Removed from pan, added chopped onions, capers, fresh thyme, cooked until onions browned. Added heavy cream, pepper, salt, reduced. Added chicken back to pan and served.

Potatoes were boiled at low heat for 35 mins in their jackets. Removed skins once cooked, ran through food mill, added parsley pesto, crushed toasted pine nuts, grated parmesan, salt, crème fraiche, milk.

Sauteed chopped leeks in oil w/ salt, pepper, dash of sugar. After browned finished in oven.

Everything was very good.

29-Nov-11

Brandy’s jaw was hurting so I made her some carrot soup for dinner. Sauteed onions and carrots in butter until lightly browned. Added vermouth and water, salt, nutmeg, pinch of curry powder, pinch of cumin, cream, blended. Very tasty.

Also made basmati rice pilaf with cloves, cardamom, peppercorns, and golden raisins. Added toasted pumpkin seeds at the end. Very tasty.

Made sautéed long beans w/ salt, pepper, garlic.

I had beef liver dredged in spiced flour and pan fried to medium. Slightly under-salted but not tasty.

I find it funny that I feel I’m so good at cooking and yet I just recently learned how to use a stainless pan, just learned how to sautee and finish in the oven, and just learned to sautee well. So incredibly much to learn.

January 2 – 8 – Eggs  
No-knead bread toast, topped w/ potato pancake, poached egg, and herb Hollandaise.  
Souffle  
Poached egg on chicken liver and potato hash w/ herbed Hollandaise.  
Green eggs and ham – Round potato pancake, round of crisped pancetta, egg poached in green water, Hollandaise.

January 9 – 15 – Chinese  
Egg-drop soup w/ udon noodles, beef, cilantro.  
Home-made egg rolls on stir-fried veggies.  
Home-made fortune cookies.  
Crispy duck breast on sticky rice w/ sesame seeds & scallions.

January 16 – 22 – Soups  
Simple broccoli soup w/ crème fraiche & cilantro  
Carrot & onion soup w/ crème fraiche & parsley, herbed crostini.

January 23 – 29 – Pan Frying  
Pan fried chicken w/ cream sauce and sautéed fennel and radishes w/ pan-fried potato leek hash.

1-Dec-11

Making cretons. Added a pound of ground beef to a sauce pan, added water, vermouth, chopped onions, salt, pepper, allspice, cloves. Mixed until smooth and then heated on med, stirring frequently, until liquid is evaporated away.

For dinner making home-made chicken strips, steamed sweetlet peas, and mashed potatoes. Time to return to simple meals from time to time, I can’t remember the last time we had steamed peas and plain mashed potatoes.

Everything was really good. Started the chicken fingers in the depe fryer at 305F but had to bump up to high to get them to brown. Potatoes were just butter, milk, salt. They were delicious, maybe I need to simplify a bit.

3-Dec-11

Fred & Theresa came for dinner tonight. Smoked 2 racks of ribs with a simple brown sugar spice rub. The smoker maintained an even 200F temp at full heat. One was brushed with a hickory BBQ sauce plus cider vinegar, the other with regular BBQ sauce mixed with sriracha, cider vinegar, and pepper flakes. The spicy one was absolutely delicious.

I also made dinner rolls. Regular bread recipe, then divided into 47g balls and placed 4x4 in a 9x9” pan, and brushed them with oil. Baked, then brushed with butter mixed w/ honey.

Made a cole slaw with savoy cabbage, carrots, home-made aioli, buttermilk, sour cream.

Also made individual scalloped potatoes in ramekins.

For dessert Brandy made individual apple pies and I made vanilla ice cream which turned out delicious.

Probably my best-executed meal yet but here are the critiques. The ribs were, again, too much falling off the bones. Perhaps for pork ribs I should do 3-1-1. Rolls were slightly too dense and could have risen a bit more. And they were tough on the bottom not sure how to fix that. Cole slaw was tossed 2 hours in advance and shed a lot of liquid. Perhaps next time toss it an hour ahead, or simply toss, let shed, drain, and re-toss with new dressing.

5-Dec-11

Made a loaf of hearthgrain bread. Regular white loaf with 415g white flour, 50g whole wheat. Added sunflower seeds, bulgur wheat, and flax seeds. Came out really good but I over-floured the inside before rolling the loaf so it looked wonky.

Made a batch of cretons. Ground half a pork shoulder, skin-on. Browned in pan with some onions, added water, garlic, salt, pepper, maple syrup, ground cloves, ground allspice. Not bad but it’s a bit too fatty (I added lard, woops) and the maple syrup actually deadened the flavour.

Made pulled pork. Took a bone-in pork shoulder and made a rub, then seared in a pan w/ some oil. The sugar burnt and I had to stop before searing the entire roast. Placed in slow cooker skin side up, added lemon juice, lime juice, orange juice and simmered for about 8 hours. Took half & mixed with fish sauce, hoisin sauce, and spicy Szechuan stir fry sauce for spring rolls tomorrow.

The other half I mixed with juices from the slow cooker for pulled pork sandwiches.

Dinner this week: Tuesday – spring rolls, maybe a salad. Wednesday – Pulled pork sandwiches. Thursday – Smoked chicken thighs, popcorn cauliflower, potato pancakes. Friday – shepherd’s pie.

6-Dec-11

Dinner was a salad and spring rolls. Sauteed napa cabbage w/ ginger, garlic, julienned carrots, oil until tender. Mixed with pulled pork. Rolled up in spring roll wrappers, sealed them with a cornstarch slurry, then fried until golden.

The filling wasn’t ideal but they crisped up great and looked wonderful. Brandy ate about 6 of them.

The spring rolls were a resounding success. 2 ideas to try: veggie spring rolls w/ glass noodles, cabbage, carrots, and shrimp powder. Or (non-asian) spicy beef.

7-Dec-11

Finished the fruitcake. Used candied cherries and candied citrus instead of dried fruits, cranberries, and candied ginger. It came out great.

For breakfast made thick-cut toast w/ cretons and topped with a poached egg. Delicious. Used the swirl method for the egg and it came out flawless.

8-Dec-11

For dinner made shepherd’s pie w/ sautéed leeks instead of corn. Left the onions out of the meat and made buttermilk mashed potatoes. It was delicious.

Started a second fruitcake for us. Used candied cherries, dried apricots, dried cherries, and dried blueberries as my fruit.

10-Dec-11

Finished the second fruitcake.

Bought some massive t-bone steaks for dinner. Kosher salted them, rubbed with oil, some more salt, and pepper. Seared in pan then placed on a rack over cookie sheet in the oven at 375F convec. Took them out at after about 7 mins, tented, let rest on counter for 5 mins then rested in oven for next 5. They were over-salted but cooked to perfection.

Sides were buttermilk biscuits (mediocre) and popcorn cauliflower made w/ oil, salt, pepper, whole garlic, and some turmeric. Really tasty.

12-Dec-11

Dinner tonight was stuffed kubocha squash w/ olio e aglio capellini. Squash was stuffed with spicy Italian sausage, rice, bread crumbs, chopped onions, spices, egg and baked in a kubocha bowl. Pasta was 5 razor-thin cloves of garlic cooked slowly in olive oil, salt, pepper, chopped sage, pasta water, parmesan. Very tasty but needed more water to create a sauce. Stuffing was good, but squash was quite moist. Brandy liked it that way.

15-Dec-11

For dinner made orange beef. Sauce was juice of 2 oranges, salt, Chinese 5 spice, lots of fresh chopped ginger, pinch of cayenne, corn starch. Sauteed broccoli in wok w/ some oil and water, added baby bok choy, sweet red/orange peppers, green onions, sliced beef. Added udon noodles, sauce, served. Very good.

19-Dec-11

Tried some baked jalapeno poppers. Mixed cream cheese, shredded marble, panko, chopped green onions, smoked paprika together and stuffed it into halved jalapenos. Baked for ~15 mins at 375F. Tasted okay but filling never got melty and panko was soggy. I think next time use just cream cheese and cheddar, and a panko gratin. Or just bread / panko the whole thing.

20-Dec-11

A bit about food safety:

* Salmonella, Campylobacter, E. coli and Listeria bacteria in food cause food infection. In other words the bacteria themselves cause infection.
* Staphylococcus and Clostridium botulinum bacteria produce a toxin (or poison) as a by-product of growth and multiplication in food and cause food intoxication.
* Clostridium perfringens can multiply in foods to sufficient numbers to cause food poisoning.
* Salmonella bacteria grow at temperatures between 41 and 113 degrees F. They are readily destroyed by cooking to 160 F and do not grow at refrigerator or freezer temperatures. They do survive refrigeration and freezing, however, and will begin to grow again once warmed to room temperature.
* Campylobacter jejuni grows best in a reduced oxygen environment, is easily killed by heat (120 F), is inhibited by acid, salt and drying, and will not multiply at temperatures below 85 F.
* Listeria monocytogenes is frequently carried by humans and animals. The organism can grow in the pH range of 4.1 to 9.6. It is salt tolerant and relatively resistant to drying, but easily destroyed by heat. (It grows between 34 F and 113 F).
* When Staphylococcus bacteria get into warm food and multiply, they produce a toxin or poison that causes illness. The toxin is not detectable by taste or smell. While the bacteria itself can be killed by temperatures of 120 F, its toxin is heat resistant; therefore, it is important to keep the staph organism from growing. Keep food clean to prevent its contamination, keep it either hot (above 140 F) or cold (below 40 F) during serving time, and as quickly as possible refrigerate or freeze leftovers and foods to be served later.
* Clostridium perfringens belong to the same genus as the botulinum organism. However, the disease produced by C. perfringens is not as severe as botulism and few deaths have occurred. Spores of some strains are so heat resistant that they survive boiling for four or more hours. Furthermore, cooking drives off oxygen, kills competitive organisms and heat-shocks the spores, all of which promote germination. Once the spores have germinated, a warm, moist, protein-rich environment with little or no oxygen is necessary for growth. If such conditions exist (i.e., holding meats at warm room temperature for several hours or cooling large pots of gravy or meat too slowly in the refrigerator).
* Preventive strategies for E. coli infections include thorough washing and other measures to reduce the presence of the microorganism on raw food, thorough cooking of raw animal products, and avoiding recontamination of cooked meat with raw meat. To be safe, cook ground meats to 160 F.

For dinner made linguini in vodka cream sauce. Took a plain tomato and herb sauce, added vodka and chopped crisp pancetta, cooked down for a while, added heavy cream. Very tasty.

Bought a 12-lb whole boneless rind-on pork belly for porcetta at Barton’s meat. Place is great. They have smoked duck breast, regular duck breast, killer tomahawk steaks, rack of lamb, great aged strip loins, beef ribs, and just about everything imaginable.

22-Dec-11

Dinner tonight was fried rice. Made a rice pilaf first and salted lightly. Added oil to wok, heated, then finely chopped broccoli and chopped orange peppers. Cooked lightly, added peas and chopped chicken, then rice, chopped green onions, egg drops, and soy sauce. Tossed until heated. It was good and Brandy loved it even though she hates fried rice.

Made the porchetta. Forgot to salt and baking soda it, so remember to do that before cooking.

23-Dec-11

For dinner made scrambled eggs w/ avocado and smoked salmon. Not bad but nothing great. They were a bit oversalted and the smoked salmon was overpowering.

24-Dec-11

For lunch had 2 poached eggs smothered in salsa roja. The eggs were poached perfectly and it was delicious.

25-Dec-11

Watching Good Eats episode about biscuits. Low protein flours are better for biscuits. To make biscuits combine 3 parts AP to 1 part Cake flour. When placing biscuits on pan they should be just touching. This encourages them to rise upward, not outward. Do a gentle thumb-print in the center.

His grandma recommends just using the recipe on a package of White Lily self-rising flour.

For dinner made porchetta, mushroom risotto (w/ morels and lobster mushrooms), sautéed leeks, steamed corn, and leftover mashed potatoes from the shepherd’s pie. The porchetta was very very good, but the skin was rubbery on the bottom and sides. Think this was from it resting in plastic wrap in the fridge. Next time I think I will deep fry it.

28-Dec-11

Made rotisserie chicken for dinner tonight. Trussed a chicken properly for the first time ever. Kosher salted it, trussed it, separated the skin from the breasts, rubbed on Cajun spice mix, and cooked at about 450F in BBQ until cooked. Used indirect heat & rear burner. When done raised temp to max and cooked at 600F for 5 mins. Tasted out of this world but skin wasn’t quite crispy.

30-Dec-11

Made the brownies recipe from The Joy of Cooking but swapped the walnuts for a cup of broken chocolate chunks, half milk chocolate and half 72% cocoa. Cooked them in a 9x13 and they came out outstanding. Chewy on the inside, crisp on the outside, and super chocolatey.

4-Jan-12

Made a [brioche from SeriousEats](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/08/brioche-bread-recipe.html). Froze half the dough, prepared the rest as a loaf. After rising it was a beautiful, puffy round loaf. After cooking it fell to be even with top of pan and egg-washed surface was extremely dark brown. Tried it though and it tasted good and was nice and light so I’m not sure if it worked exactly as expected or not.

My Week 1 dish will be eggs 4 ways. Savoury brioche French toast topped with poached eggs and Hollandaise. French toast batter will be egg, milk, white pepper, cooked in thyme butter. Garnish the dish with finely chopped chives.

5-Jan-12

Made Week 1 dish. Poached egg w/ Hollandaise on savoury brioche French toast. French toast batter was thyme, eggs, milk, buttermilk, white pepper. Added Frank’s Red Hot to the Hollandise which tasted fine but gave it a slightly brown tinge. Altogether it tasted and looked great.

8-Jan-12

Made Chinese sticky rice w/ seared duck breast for Week 2. Butchered the duck and added legs & wings to a Ziploc w/ salt, pepper, garlic powder and let sit overnight for confit.

Chopped up a smoke pork hock and used the bone to make a stock with some peppercorns and bay leaves. Sauteed the pork with some sliced shiitake mushrooms.

Soaked sweet rice in water for an hour, then added pork stock and fish sauce and cooked it with the sautéed pork and muchrooms. Finished with fresh cilantro, scallions, and chopped red pepper.

Seasoned the duck breasts, scored the skin, and placed them skin-side down in a stainless pan. When well browned turned them over for about 1.5 mins, then removed from pan and let rest. Sliced the breast on a bias and served over the sticky rice.

Was fairly good, but the pork skin can get chewy and hard when sautéed. Also added soy sauce, sugar, and salt to the pork stock and served it as a broth. Liam said it was the best soup he’d ever had.

9-Jan-12

Confited the duck legs today, really tasty. Going to make spaghetti cabonara for dinner but using duck confit instead of bacon. Made my usual pasta recipe but made it entirely in the stand mixer. Added extra oil and lots of extra water because it didn’t want to come together, then kneaded it in the machine for 5 mins. The result was a very elastic, dull, dry dough that looks perfect. Divided it and am resting it for a little over an hour.

Kneading the pasta dough made all the difference in the world. It wasn’t grainy at all, didn’t stick, and had nice smooth edges. Doing it that way from now on.

The carbonara was very good. Used tonnes of water and the sauce came out creamy and thick. Added duck confit, thyme, pepper, chopped chives. Delish!

10-Jan-12

For dinner making cheese quesadillas topped w/ grilled avocado, salsa fresca, grilled chicken, sour cream.

The quesadillas only had cheese, fresh jalapeno, and green onions inside. Then I piled on grilled shrimp, grilled avocado, salsa fresca, and sour cream. Really delicious although next time I think the avocado would be fine raw.

12-Jan-12

Separated two egg yolks and whipped them into meringue. Heaped 2 meringues on top of a silpat, made a hole in the centre, and added the egg yolk back into each. Topped w/ chopped chives and baked at 350F for just over 5 mins. Salted. They really turned out great!

For dinner making [potato gnocchi](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/tyler-florence/perfect-potato-gnocchi-recipe/index.html). They tasted very good but again were very, very tender. I think I’m going to give up on firm gnocchi and assume they’re supposed to just melt in your mouth, with no tooth feel.

14-Jan-12

Going to start the brisket tonight:

1. Rub with thin layer of Dijon
2. Dry rub of kosher salt, pepper, garlic powder.
3. Smoke for many hours
4. When internal temp hits 150F tent it in foil.
5. When internal temp hits 190F remove, let cool slightly, and place in cooler for a few hours
6. Right before serving place on grill at high heat for up to 20 mins per side.
7. Use drippings for sauce

If I start at 9PM it can have 12 hours to reach 150F.

15-Jan-12

Brisket hit 190F at around 9:30AM. Tented it and put in the warmer for about 2 hours then ate. It was almost perfect. Juicy and tender, with all the connective tissue broken down. Unfortunately the crust was much too salty. Next time I think I’ll just kosher salt it and then use a no-salt dry rub.

Made [pretzel rolls](http://sweetpeaskitchen.com/2010/10/20/pretzel-rolls/). Followed the recipe except used bread flour instead of AP and kneaded for about 8 mins in the machine. Came out fantastic. Soft, chewy, dark brown, a little sweet, salty.

16-Jan-12

Made pho for dinner. Came out really good and was a big hit. Heated beef broth w/ some fish sauce and soy in a pot, with very thinly sliced ginger and leftover beef brisket. Let slow cook about 30 mins, then added wide rice noodles. When they were done I added very thinly sliced celery, julienne of carrot, sliced green onion, shredded basil leaves, fresh cilantro, thinly sliced jalapeno. Served.

17-Jan-12

Made fajitas for dinner. The tortillas were from Robert Rodriguez’ recipe and were rolled super thin and cooked lightly in a cast iron skillet. Tender, steamy, delicious, to die for. Then grilled green peppers, onions, and sliced turkey breast in the skillet, finished with salt pepper and lime juice. Rolled in a tortilla, and topped with grated cheese, sour cream, and fresh sliced japalenos. What a great meal!

19-Jan-12

Made wonton soup for dinner. Broth was just white chicken glace with salt and sugar. Filling was ground pork, garlic, ginger, 5 spice, green onions, and egg. Delicious!

20-Jan-12

Made the [potato bread](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/potato-bread-recipe2/index.html) recipe from seriouseats. Came out nice and tender but had to stop the rise early because it was totally spilling out of the pan. Also the dough was wet and I had to add a tonne of extra flour. Next time I totally need to divide the dough in 2 and make 2 loaves, or do a half recipe.

For week 5 going to make a flaming B-52 with home-made liqueurs. Started the [orange liqueur](http://www.grouprecipes.com/64444/orange-liqueur.html) tonight. Used the zest of 4 seville oranges instead of the zest of 3 navels. Resting it in the fridge for 2 days. Next comes coffee liqueur, then home made irish cream.

21-Jan-12

Randal and Natasha coming for dinner tonight. Making boiled cotechino, lentil & quinoa salad (w/ basil and tomatoes) and turnip hash w/ rosemary and pancetta. And some warmed potato bread.

The cotechino was terrible, all gooey and gummy.

The salad was very good. Cooked lentils and quinoa, tossed with white wine vinegar, raspberry vinegar, salt, pepper, olive oil, halved grape tomatoes, diced fresh mozz, chopped kalamata olives, chiffonade of basil. Lentils were slightly overdone but it was good.

Veggies were really good too. Diced turnips and fennel bulb and sautéed on high with salt, pepper, chopped thyme, chopped rosemary until browned. Turnips slightly overcooked but still very good.

Made another batch of potato bread and divided it in half. Turned out very good.

22-Jan-12

For dinner made beef ribs in the oven. The rub was just salt, black pepper, garlic powder. The sauce was honey, Dijon, and lots of black pepper. They weren’t that good.

Took baby red potatoes, halves them, and sautéed them in oil then added to oven with rosemary, pepper, salt, crushed garlic. Pretty good.

Veggie was chopped leeks and diced celeriac sautéed until browned with salt and pepper.

Finished my orange liqueur but added some food coloring to make it orange.

23-Jan-12

Seriouseats says ripening in fruits is caused by ethylene. To ripen an avocado faster put it in a paper bag as it concentrates ethylene. To ripen it even faster add a banana as they produce ethylene. Best way to store them is in water to prevent any browning, or you can cover in oil.

Made Emeril’s [banana bread](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/banana-bread-recipe2/index.html) recipe today. Not a huge fan. Came out dry and cakey instead of moist.

Tomorrow for dinner going to do summer rolls. Grilled shrimp, jalapenos, cilantro, lightly braised cabbage, shredded carrots, maybe some bean sprouts, sweet thai chili sauce.

24-Jan-12

Want to try sautéed leek tarts on puff pastry with thyme and goat cheese.

It occurred to me I can probably make spring rolls with the rice paper rounds, and not need to egg wash them. But would they turn out way too crispy?

Made the irish cream tonight. Very tasty but cloyingly sweet. I think it needs to be cut w/ more cream.

25-Jan-12

For dinner tonight had leek tarts, pesto polenta, and broccoli soup.

Pre-baked puff pastry shells until almost browned, added leeks sautéed in oil w/ thyme, salt, pepper, topped with a dollop of garlic and chive chevre, then baked. Delicious.

For the polenta cooked 4:1 2 cups water plus 1/2c polenta until fully cooked. Accidentally added all the polenta at once, should have added it slowly. Then added pesto w/ toasted pine nuts. Very tasty but adding it all at once made it lumpy. I wonder if I can make cakes next time.

27-Jan-12

Started my chile. Gave the brisket a rub of salt, pepper, brown sugar, garlic powder and have it on a hickory smoke for 4 hours.

Seeded and chopped 3 New Mex reds, 2 Ancho chilis, 2 Pasilla, and one Cascabel. Dry roasted them in crock pot and set aside, then added oil, 1 chopped large onion, 6 cloves garlic and cooked until brown. Added 1 tbsp cocoa powder and one container beef stock, and the chopped peppers. Roasted, ground, and added 3 star anise, 5 allspice berries, 2 tbsp coriander, 2 tbsp cumin. Ground 1 tbsp coffee beans and added. Added 1 bunch fresh thyme and 2 bay leaves. Added   
¼ cup cider vinegar, ¼ cup bourbon, 2 ½ cups tomato sauce.

After fully cooked will remove from heat and blend until smooth.

Once beef is done will add it to the crock pot with the chili liquid, adding 2 large finely chopped japalenos, 1 chopped green bell pepper, 1 chopped red bell pepper and cook for 8 more hours. Then break apart the meat and season to taste.

Before adding the brisket to the slow cooker I sliced it across the grain so there wouldn’t be any long strands left once the meat renders out.

29-Jan-12

Finished my coffee liqueur today.

According to Kenji, a dough with oil in it is called enriched, a dough without oil in it is called lean. He also says that the amount of bubbles in a bread are dictated by the amount of water in the dough. More water = more steam = more holes.

30-Jan-12

Made steak tacos / burritos for dinner. Steak was just seasoned with montreal steak spice and grilled. Tortillas was Robert Rodriguez’s recipe but I increased it by 50% and made 10. Next time for soft tacos original recipe and 8 would probably be fine. Tortillas had a lot of excess flour, yet were sticking. Not sure how to fix that. Toppings were leftover salsa, avocado, sour cream, cheddar.

31-Jan-12

For breakfast made breakfast burrito. Made 2 creamy scrambled eggs and added them to a heated tortilla. Sauteed bell peppers, leftover steak in a pan and added chive chevre at the end. Added chopped green onions and tree pepper salsa, and ate. Delicious.

1-Feb-12

Found out today that ricotta is properly made with whey. You can get about 6 ounces from a gallon of milk that’s been used to make mozzarella. It precipitates out mostly albumin, whereas mozzarella is mostly casein.

I want to do a batch of smoking. Smoked salmon, smoked gouda, smoked almonds.

For dinner Friday I think I’m going to make falafel w/ white bean yoghurt sauce, tabouleh salad, and garlic brushed fresh pita.

3-Feb-12

Kat came for dinner. I made [tabouleh salad](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/tabouleh-salad-recipe/index.html), pita, and [falafels with white bean sauce](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/melissa-darabian/falafel-recipe/index.html). The pita were a disaster, the tabouleh salad was very good, and the falafels were a bit pasty and flavourless but Brandy forgot to season them so it was hard to judge.

5-Feb-12

For dinner made [pizza Bianca](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/01/no-knead-pizza-bianca.html) and Italian meatballs in marinara sauce. The pizza was basically the same as fresh bread, like no-knead but more delicate. Very tasty, perhaps could have used a dash more salt. The meatballs and sauce were fine.

Fired up the smoker with some applewood. Made a batch of smoked salmon, smoked gouda, and [smoked almonds](http://www.smoker-cooking.com/smoked-almond-recipe.html). The almonds are very good but next time I might use brown sugar and make them sweeter. Lastly I have some mild Italian sausage that I cold smoked with everything else and am now cooking.

8-Feb-12

For dinner made seared scallops, saffron risotto, and panko breaded eggplant.

Rinsed, dried, and seasoned the scallops, then seared in a non-stick pan on med heat with some oil. Very hard to get them to brown, next time turn them way up. Could it have been the no-stick? They were slightly overdone but still very tasty. Karlee loved them.

The risotto I fried first, added water and removed from heat until later, adding pepper and saffron and a small amount of chicken bouillon. Later I added more water, heated & stirred, added grated parmesan and chopped parsley. A little gummy, a little underdone, but not too bad.

The eggplant I macerated in seasoned buttermilk, dredged in flour, egg wash, and panko crumbs, then shallow fried. Served with aioli with some added lemon juice, pepper, and a pinch of sriracha. The eggplant was awesome. Crunchy on the outside, creamy on the inside.

9-Feb-12

Made bacon cheeseburgers for dinner. Bought medium ground beef, made into large balls, pressed flat, rubbed outside with veg oil, and salted and peppered. Cooked on the grill and let rest. Placed on toasted small Kaiser buns, with melted cheddar cheese, bacon cooked on the grill, tomato slices, pickles, sliced sweet onion, and mayo. The patties were a bit overcooked but altogether the flavour was amazing.

15-Feb-12

For dinner made a take on [General Tso’s Chicken](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/general-tsos-chicken-recipe/index.html). I swapped vermouth for Chinese cooking wine, peanuts for cashews, left out the peppers and used sriracha as a condiment, and served over rice noodles instead of rice. Very tasty, would make it again.

20-Feb-12

For dinner making:

* Roast chicken. Kosher salted, rubbed w/ chopped sage, thyme, rosemary, olive oil, including under skin. Maple smoked and finished at 550F in oven.
* Roast carrots and potatoes, caramelized, with garlic, rosemary, and a touch of maple syrup.
* Stuffing w/ pumpkin seeds, celery, onion, dried cranberries, butter, duxelles.
* Maybe broccoli

For breakfast made Karlee buttermilk pancakes w/ little bit of rehydrated strawberries. She really like them. Brandy and I had toasted sesame bagels, w/ mayo, sliced tomatoes, and bacon. Yum!

The chicken cooked in only about 2 hours and had to rest so it wasn’t as moist as I like. However the skin crisped up nicely at 500F in the oven. The smoking wasn’t really to my liking, regular rotisserie chicken is just so delicious it doesn’t need the smoke flavour. But I’ll definitely use the trick of finishing off the chicken at 500F next time.

21-Feb-12

For slow cooking challenge I want to do pulled pork sandwiches on [steamed buns](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/03/chinese-roast-chicken-buns-with-scallions-spicy-hoisin-sauce.html). The pork will be tossed with hoisin sauce and topped with jalapenos, cilantro, sliced cucumber, and scallions.

26-Feb-12

Made my pulled pork last night. Used a rub of tonnes of pepper, garlic powder, and some kosher salt. Cooked it on high in the crock pot all night. Delicious. Great fond on the bottom of the pot that I mixed with the pork.

The recipe for the buns was bullshit. Unbloomed yeast in my dough, self-rising cake dough and three rises? Next time I’ll just use bread dough. The sandwiches were good though. Steamed buns, spread on some hoisin sauce, then pulled pork, cucumbers, scallions, shredded carrots, cilantro, jalapenos. Very tasty.

27-Feb-12

We made pulled pork tacos for dinner. Brandy made a large batch of R.Rodriguez’ tortillas and divided it into 9. I cooked them in a non-stick pan which I think worked better because there was no flour buildup. I rolled them relatively thick and they were great. Nice and soft with no dried out bits. We topped them with grated cheddar, pulled pork, pico de gallo, diced jalapeno, and sour cream. Extremely delicious.

28-Feb-12

Tonight was coffee night. Took a pork tenderloin and rubbed it with fine ground espresso and kosher salt I had fine ground in a mortar. Grilled it on the BBQ, let rest for 15 mins, then slices and served.

Pan sauce was chopped shallots cooked in olive oil with large sprig of thyme. Deglazed the pan with beef glace, added heavy cream, salt, pepper, and reduced by 1/3. Passed through a fine strainer.

Veggie was roasted cauliflower tossed in salt, pepper, olive oil

29-Feb-12

I don’t use a recipe for this and can’t guarantee it’s authentic, but it \*does\* make for a ridiculously tasty dinner. This is what I did this time:

\* Brown 2 lbs chopped chuck steak in a stainless saucepan with 3-4 tbsp olive oil, being careful to add in small batches and cook until very browned. (You could also fry up some cubed bacon here if you like, I chose not to)

\* Remove when cooked and place in crock pot.

\* Add some more oil to the empty pan, add 4-5 chopped shallots and cook until translucent, add to crock pot.

\* Add 1/4c of flour to the crock pot and stir the contents until the flour is evenly distributed

\* Deglaze the pan with about 1 ½ cups of burgundy wine, scraping the bottom with a spatula to dissolve all the brown bits. Add this liquid to the pan

\* Add the remainder of the bottle of wine to the crock pot. (Use a 1.5litre bottle, or two regular-sized bottled)

\* Add a generous helping of cracked black pepper

\* Add 1/2c of beef glace or a container of beef stock

\* Add two large, roughly chopped carrots

\* Add three large, roughly-chopped celery ribs

\* Wrap 1 bunch thyme, 2-3 stalks of rosemary, and one bunch sage in cheesecloth and tie closed (bouquet garni) and add to pot

\* Cook for 6-8 hours

\* Remove the bouquet garni and discard

\* Remove the beef to a separate container and shred it by hand

\* Add remaining contents of crock pot (sauce, carrots, and celery) to blender and blend until smooth

\* Recombine sauce and meat in a pot.

\* Add 2 large diced carrots

\* Add 5 peeled, diced turnips

\* Simmer for about 10 mins

\* Add 2 large diced celery ribs

\* Simmer for about 10 mins

\* A few dashes of balsamic vinegar & a few dashes of hot sauce for seasoning (optional)

\* Salt and pepper to taste.

\* Serve over mashed potatoes

In my personal opinion, your veggies should still be slightly crunchy and fresh-tasting when you serve the stew. The contrast of the slow-cooked beef, slow-cooked veggies, rich sauce, and fresh, crunchy diced veggies is what puts this stew over the top for me.

3-Mar-12

Made Julia’s chocolate mousse recipe. Added about ½ tbsp of fine ground coffee to the recipe. Came out really delicious. A bit more spongy than I expected but tasty nonetheless.

4-Mar-12

Making beef jerky from the recipe in my dehydrator manual. Sliced 2lbs of sirloin thin and marinating in soy sauce, worchestershire sauce, brown sugar, garlic, salt, and a few splashes of liquid smoke.

For dinner I’m making Chinese broccoli, pearl couscous, and chicken skewers marinated in yoghurt, olive oil, salt, pureed mint, pureed chives, pepper, and some thai chili powder.

The beef jerky recipe said to dry for 10 hours at 155F but I didn’t want well-done beef. I left it at 155F for a couple hours, then turned it down to 130F for a couple hours, then turned it down to the lowest setting for the rest.

5-Mar-12

Beef jerky came out really good.

6-Mar-12

For dinner made deep-fried porchetta. Was okay but very overcooked. For a veggie I made cream of kai-lan soup, and for a starch I made egg noodles with poppy seeds.

9-Mar-12

For dinner made celeriac and fennel soup. Sauteed some fennel and onions in a pan until translucent, then added a large container of veal stock. Added a whole chopped celeriac root, about a cup of sherry, and cooked until tender. Blended the soup until smooth and added a slurry made wit flour and whipping cream which lumped up like crazy. Never do this again. Added sugar and salt to taste and shaved fennel to finish. Not too bad.

10-Mar-12

For breakfast made scrambled eggs w/ green onions, lots of jalapeno, cilantro, salt, black pepper, crushed in the mortar. Used heavy cream to smooth out. Tasted fantastic.

Making sweet potato chips now. Oiled a silpat, salted it, added layer of potatoes, more oil, salt. One sheet is pepper and one sheet is ancho powder. Baking at 350F.

The sweet potato chips were good but oversalted.

Started a new batch of beef jerky. Followed the recipe exactly but added a bunch of sriracha to the marinade. Started the drying on no heat.

11-Mar-12

The beef jerky came out fantastic, but not very spicy at all.

Made another batch of sweet potato fries. Cooked at 200F until crisp and they were sprinkled with salt and cayenne pepper. Very good.

13-Mar-12

For dinner going to make steak sandwiches w/ tomato, lettuce, mayo.

For week 11 I’m going to make scotch eggs and… waffles? For some reason waffles is the only thing that is hitting me.

Maybe spicy chorizo scotch eggs w/ sliced avocado salad topped with pico de gallo.

Kenji describes anchovies and marmite as “umami bombs.”

14-Mar-12

Made Banh Mi for dinner. Teriyaki glazed strip steak grilled, served in sliced baguette w/ sriracha, onions, sliced cuke, sliced jalapeno, cilantro. Very good but unfortunately I greatly overcooked the steak and it was terrible.

14-Mar-12

Made lemongrass soup for dinner. One package of chicken broth, one can of coconut milk, 4 crushed stalks of lemongrass, lobster mushrooms, soy sauce, sachet of shrimp shells, sliced chicken, shelled shrimp, chopped sweet red pepper, lemon juice. Finished it with thinly sliced onion, chiffonade of basil, cilantro, and served with sriracha. Very tasty but not enough of the lemongrass infused and had to use lemon juice, and there was too much coconut milk and it turned the soup white.

Also served store-bought veggie spring rolls.

Made a banana bread from Joy of Cooking and also started a white stock. But it’s going to turn out brown because there are beef bones in it and the extracted blood will discolour it.

15-Mar-12

Making beef enchiladas for dinner. Confited a very large strip loin, shredded it, continuing to confit. Made a pepper sauce of water, cider vinegar, 1 ancho, 1 pasilla, 2 cascabels, 2 new mexicos, 3 serranos, some beef bouillon, 2 cloves garlic, some powdered cumin, and a can of tomato paste (next time use sweet red pepper.) Slow cooking it and will then blend it. After the beef is cooked will drain it, season it, roll it in tortillas, and top them with chili sauce and cheese, bake, top with sour cream and green onions.

Placed the tortillas in a hot non-stick, sprayed them with water, and cooked them until there were grilled parts. Cut off the sides with a knife (so there wouldn’t be extra bread) filled them with a small amount of meat, rolled them, then covered it all in chili sauce, cheese, and baked at 350.

Topped with sour cream and green onions. Very tasty.

The stock turned out very good. Cooked it overnight in the slow cooker at Low heat, then ladled the clear liquid through a fine strainer w/o disturbing it. Placed it in fridge to set and skimmed off the fat, then boiled to concentrate.

The white stock turned cloudy when I brought it to a boil so I let it cool again, added 2 egg whites and a whole, finely-chopped chicken breast, whisked it very well, and brought it to a boil before turning it off. Strained it again through a fine filter and now it’s clear as glass and tastes fantastic.

17-Mar-12

Tried making soft-boiled eggs as per seriouseats. No success at all, they can’t be peeled. Will try again tomorrow with a more traditional method.

Made pancakes for breakfast. Cooked them at a lower heat. Took forever but they came out a nice golden brown.

18-Mar-12

Made my Week 11 dish. Spicy chorizo scotch eggs w/ an avocado salad. Removed casings from chorizo, chopped it, then pulsed it in foodpro until fine textured. Tossed with egg, and pressed over a hard-cooked egg. Rolled in flour, then egg wash, then panko, then fried at around 325F. Avocado salad was sliced avocado, pico de gallo, sliced jalapenos, and a lime wedge.

The sausage had very little fat so very hard to work with. I think breakfast sausage would be better. Ruined at least a half dozen eggs trying to soft boil them. The eggs I finally used were baked for 25 mins at 325 and almost completely opaque yolks. Next time try 20 mins at 325.

For dinner made burger patties w/ hamburger and the leftover chopped chorizo. Grilled, topped with smoked pepperjack, hickory BBQ sauce, onions, tomatoes, pickles. Very tasty.

19-Mar-12

Made Alton Brown’s 40-clove garlic chicken tonight. Made it in a Dutch oven on the grill at bout 500F. Fairly tasty but nothing incredible and the white meat was a bit dry. Would make it again but nothing spectacular. Served it with peas and mashed potatoes. Passed them through a food mill, added butter, salt, and milk. Very very tasty.

20-Mar-12

Made fettuccini alfredo and caprese salad for dinner, posted it to 52weeksofcooking.

22-Mar-12

Making stuffed grilled poblanos and cheddar jalapeno biscuits for dinner tonight. For the stuffing made cooked 1/2c of rice. Added some oil to a pan and fried some chopped onions, added 1 finely grated chorizo sausage, 1 tbsp parsley, pepper, rice, and cooked. Removed from heat and added 3 tbsp chiffonade basil. Will wait until cool and add mixture of jack cheese and machego, then top it with more grated cheese and cook on the grill.

The stuffed peppers were awesome, as were the cheddar jalapeno biscuits.

23-Mar-12

Made mascarpone ice cream. 1/2c cream + 1/2c milk, scald, add 1/3c + 1 tbsp sugar, whisk until dissolved. Slowly whisk in 1c mascarpone in small portions. Remove from heat and whisk until smooth. Let cool and churn.

Made a blackberry coulis. Made a caramel crisp. Took photos. The ice cream was very tasty.

24-Mar-12

Made ribs, mashed potatoes, and peas for dinner. The dry rub was salt, lots of pepper, lots of garlic powder. One of them also had thai chili powder. The spicy ones I sauced with honey and Dijon. Very very spicy, very tasty, but a bit too salty.

26-Mar-12

For dinner made garlic and potato soup and fried veggies. The soup had about 14 cloves of garlic in about 4 cups of soup and it was sompletely and utterly flavourless. Yuck. The veggies were macerated in spiced buttermilk, then dreged in spiced flour, egg wash, and panko, then fried and served with ranch dressing. Made zucchini, green onions, okra, and jalapeno. Very tasty.

27-Mar-12

For dinner made burritos. Took the leftover stuffing from the anchos (sautéed onions, finely chopped chorizo, rice, tomato juice, shredded cheese) and served it with tortilla, cilantro, green onions, sour cream, sliced jalapenos, hot sauce, black beans. Very delicious, I miss rice and beans in my Mexican food.

Watching the Good Eats episode about rice. He says the shorter the grain the stickier the rice. Short grain is called “sweet” or “glutinous” even though it has no sugar or gluten. Medium grain rices start out fluffly but get sticky as they cool down. Long grain is fluffiest but when cooled the starches crystallize, which makes them very hard until re-warmed.

Brown rice needs 3x as much water and 3x as much time to cook as white.

Alton says you use 1.5:1 water to rice for small quantities, and less as the quantities grow. He makes his pilaf, adds the liquid, brings it to a boil, then finishes it, covered, in the oven at 350F for 15 mins. He then insists on resting it, covered, for 15-20 mins before opening, and turning out on a plate, not stirring.

28-Mar-12

For dinner made mac and cheese with sharp white cheddar, peas, pancetta, green onions, chopped jalapenos and a potato chip crust. Very tasty.

1-Apr-12

For dinner made chicken Kiev, boiled potatoes, radish salad. Ground sage and thyme in mortar with kosher salt, added butter and let set in freezer. Butterflied 2 chicken breasts, pounded flat, seasoned, then rolled with the butter in the middle. Rolled tight in plastic wrap and refreigerated 2 hours. Then dredged in seasoned flour, egg wash, panko. Shallow fried for about 4 mins per side.

Radish salad was sliced radishes, green onions, diced dill pickle, fresh dill, mayo, buttermilk.

Potatoes were simmered in heavily salted water with vinegar. They were tasty but they still fell apart a little bit.

3-Apr-12

For dinner grilled some delicious rib steaks and brushed them down with garlic sage butter. Served with mashed potatoes and grilled asparagus.

9-Apr

Made a loaf of French bread today. Didn’t let it rise quite enough, and cooked it at 500F with a fully preheated oven and it nearly burned. Next time keep it to 475 if I intend to preheat the oven.

10-Apr-12

Made pizza for dinner. Best crust I’ve ever made. Used my white bread recipe, divided it in 3 and froze 2 batches. Preheated oven and pizza stone to 475, put a layer of parchment on pizza peel, rolled out dough fairly thin but not paper-thin and placed on parchment. Brushed with olive oil, sprinkled with kosher salt, fresh ground pepper, and fresh rosemary. Added emmenthal slices, sauerkraut, lots of thinly sliced sweet onion, and thin-sliced kielbassa. Threw in oven then turned oven to broil, removed when top crust began to darken. Removed parchment after a couple minutes.

Crust was cooked all the way to centre, evenly cooked, puffed up well, and was a nice brown on the bottom. Pizza was a bit bitter, I don’t think the rosemary had a chance to cook and maybe next time do gouda instead of emmenthal. Next time the pizza stone could probably be even hotter to get a tiny bit of charring on bottom but altogether very good result.

14-Apr-12

For breakfast placed tortillas in a mesh bowl and cooked them on convection at 325 until browned. Added grated cheese and let melt, then a sunny-side-up egg and salsa. Very very tasty.

15-Apr-12

Made a loaf of hearthgrain bread w/ sunflower seeds, bulgur, flax, and oats.

For lunch made cream of broccoli soup. Chopped up a head of broccoli and saved some of the flowerets chopped very fine. Cut the skin off the stalks and used them too. Steamed in salted water and blended. Added crème fraiche, sour cream, pepper, salt, and a bit of milk. Re-added the chopped flowerets and cooked them lightly, then served. Very tasty.

For dinner made a turkey shepherd’s pie. Made a gravy by sautéing chopped carrots, celery leaves, chopped onions, some Italian seasoning and cooked until well browned. Added chicken stock then thickened with a slurry, strained it. Very tasty gravy and very tasty shepherd’s pie.

16-Apr-12

Fresh mozzarella should never be refrigerated.

Chinese steamed buns are called bao.

Made my asparagus and arugula pizza. Very very light and tasty. Made a pesto w/ toasted pine nuts, parmesan, salt, pepper, anchovy, salt, pepper, garlic, and arugula. Spread it on the dough, then added dollops of chevre, prosciutto, and cooked on preheated pizza stone at 475F w/ broiler on. Then added mandolined raw asparagus and arugula leaves. One of my best pizzas yet although the crust was overcooked.

17-Apr-12

For dinner made tempura asparagus and buffalo chicken nuggets. Used [Alton Brown’s recipe](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/tempura-recipe/index.html) for tempura and it worked very well. Served with pesto, teriyaki sauce, aioli, and honey mustard as dips.

For the chicken nuggets sliced some chicken breasts into nuggets and marinated in seasoned buttermilk. Dredged in seasoned flour and then fried. Finished by tossing in Frank’s wing sauce.

18-Apr-12

For dinner made “Asian inspired asparagus and seafood soup.” In a pot combined ¾ container of chicken stock, 3 crushed garlic cloves, generous quantity of sliced ginger, 2c chopped asparagus heads and stems, 2 tbsp fish sauce. Cooked for about 30 mins, then strained out the solids. Brought back to heat, added 1c mandolined fennel bulb, 2 packages udon noodles, removed from heat. Served with garnishes: chopped green onion, fresh cilantro, poached jumbo shrimp, pan-fried scallops, sliced hot long red pepper, raw chopped asparagus.

Very delicious although a small amount of red pepper made the entire soup extremely spicy. Also my scallops were perfectly cooked but stuck to the stainless pan, even though it was properly preheated and plenty of oil. Reddit said I needed to dry them off better, be careful of them shedding water after being seasoned, and wiggle them a bit as I place them in the pan.

21-Apr-12

Made Panini rolls for meatball subs tomorrow. Used regular recipe then divided into 5 balls of 153 g each. Let rise in French bread pan, then sliced with a razor. Cooked at 400F for 15 mins so they’d have a very tender crust. Turned out very good.

22-Apr-12

Made the meatballs for my subs. In one bowl mixed bread crumbs, milk, shredded onion, crushed garlic, paprika, salt, pepper, parmesan, parsley flakes, and fennel seeds. Added it to 1 lb ground pork and 1 lb ground veal. Formed into 1/4c meatballs and baked them for about 25 mins at 425F.

25-Apr-12

For dinner last night made breaded pork cutlet sandwiches. Cut slices of pork tenderloin 1 ½” thick then pounded flat. Seasoned flour, eggs wash, panko, shallow fried. Served on toasted French rolls topped w/ sautéed red, green, cubanelle, and banana peppers and sautéed onions. Very tasty.

26-Apr-12

For dinner tonight seasoned the leftover pork tenderloin and pan fried it. Made a pan sauce w/ chopped onions, cracked pepper, Dijon mustard, heavy cream, maple syrup, salt. Very tasty. Also made a simple version of Spanish rice. Sauteed the rice in oil then blended the leftover onions and peppers from dinner last night and added to saucepan, then cooked. Very tasty.

28-Apr-12

Made my week 17 dish – something from childhood. Spread peanut butter on white bread and added some banana sliced. Topped with another piece of white bread then cut into rounds. Dipped in buttermilk pancake batter then shallow fried until golden. Plated with powdered sugar, chocolate sauce, crushed hazelnuts, sliced bananas, and raspberries.

Holy fucking good.

Making banana bread from Joy of Cooking for when Randal and Natasha come over.

30-Apr-12

Pork shoulder is roughly 70% meat and 30% fat, which is also considered the ideal mix for sausage.

Stuffers Mo Curing Salt 5kg is essentially pink salt. Pink salt contains only nitrite and is commonly known as Insta-Cure #1.

Stuffers Mo Bacon Dry Rub Cure 1kg includes nitrite. Used primarily for dry-cured sausages. When nitrate is added to pink salt it’s commonly called Insta-Cure #2.

The general ratio for a dry cure is 2 parts salt to 1 part sugar, plus 10 percent of their combined weight of pink salt.

2 : 1 + 10%

Blanching bacon for one minute can reduce the saltiness if it is too salty, and also helps it crisp up.

5-May-12

For snack made a salsa with yellow tomatoes, 1 whole poblano chili, garlic, onions, lots of cilantro, salt, pepper. Not very hot but very tasty. Next morning used the rest in our scrambled eggs. Tasty.

6-May-12

Week 19 ideas: Vegetable consommé (w/ prosciutto), broccoli soup, pasta pomodoro, French bread, caprese salad w/ home-made mozzarella, roast chicken dinner.

7-May-12

Week 19. For dinner made a broth using celery, onion, carrot, prosciutto ends and water. Added udon noodles and garnished w/ green onion. 5 ingredients.

Also made French bread loaf. 4 ingredients.

8-May-12

For dinner made capellini in pomodoro sauce. Roasted some tomatoes and blended, then added to a can of San Marzano tomatoes w/ some olive oil. Added one bunch of basil leaves, torn into pieces. Tossed w/ capellini and garnished with shaved parmesan. 5 ingredients.

Also made my tuna salad for comp with donnyt. Made an aioli from scratch w/ 1 egg yolk, ½ clove garlic, Dijon mustard, salt, lemon juice, oil. Seared the tuna then diced, tossed in aioli w/ chopped chives, chopped parsley and served on top of a leaf of lettuce. Garnished with carrot julienne and sliced grape tomatoes. Very very delicious.

10-May-12

For dinner made flank steak w/ [chimichurri sauce](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/05/ted-allens-grilled-steak-with-roasted-jalepeno.html), Spanish rice, and grilled eggplant.

For the rice chopped some onions and poblano and sautéed in oil. Added rice, and sautéed until browned. Added chopped tomatoes, chicken stock, salt, pepper and cooked. Very delicious.

The steak was grilled to rare, then cut on the bias. I cut it a touch too thick so it was a little tough, and a little undercooked. Still a decent meal though.

Personal observations about French bread:

* Overproofing will result in a sunken or dense loaf
* Let the loaf rise almost completely to get a fluffy crumb
* Cook on very high heat for a long time for crusty bread
* Cook on low to just 190F for s soft crust
* If using oil during proofing use only a little
* Egg wash promotes a tougher crust
* Rubbing with flour before baking promoted a tougher crust
* Spray the top of the rolled dough with water before rolling to prevent separation
* Get the shape very right when forming your loaf or it will get much worse after rising
* A dry crust before baking promotes a tougher crust after baking

13-May-12

Made baby back ribs tonight. 5 hours at 225F and they were overdone. Didn’t tent. Cooked w/ a tray underneath of coffee porter and later made the porter into a BBQ sauce.

Dry rub was salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, crushed bay leaves, mustard powder, garam masala. Rub was so freaking delicious that I ate them with no BBQ sauce at all.

14-May-12

Strip steak comes from the same muscle as ribeye, it’s just further back on the cow.

15-May-12

/r/bbq says to pull pork ribs at 175F-180F to have them still be firm. Baby back ribs are equivalent to back ribs in Canada. Spare ribs (USA) are the same as side ribs in Canada. St. Louis style ribs are side ribs w/ the rib tips (cartilage) removed.

In general the consensus for back ribs sounds like 2-1-1.

For dinner made Spanish rice, fava beans sautéed w/ garlic, butter, and sage, and Cornish hens.

The rice was overcooked, the fava beans were overcooked, and the hens were okay.

16-May-12

Kosher dills have no vinegar. Kosher salt is uniodized.

Xanthan gum can be used in small quantities to thicken things. When you stir or blend the mixture it thins out but thickens again as it rests. It stabilizes emulsions although it’s not an emulsifier. Often used in salad dressings to bind the emulsion. In a salad dressing use 1/8tsp xanthan to 1/2 c vinegar. Combine the two then add oil. No cooking is required to thicken, and xanthan gum is resistant to heat. It can be used to make gluten-free breads. Add a pinch of xanthan gum only to sauces to prevent them from separating.

Baking soda is added to some caramels after removing them from the heat to make it foam so that it’s lighter when it sets. Used in caramel corn and peanut brittle.

18-May-12

Made [Salmorejo](http://www.reddit.com/r/food/comments/toj6y/salmorejo/) for dinner. Except I didn’t have sherry vinegar so I used ½ white wine vinegar and ½ raspberry vinegar. Also I soaked the bread in milk instead of water. Turned out crazy delicious.

19-May-12

For breakfast made a crazy delicious guacamole. Bunch of cilantro, bit of onion, 1 glove garlic, pepper, salt, juice of ½ lime, 2 avocados, blended in foodpro then added diced tomato. Really, really good.

20-May-12

Made a batch of [rhubarb crumble](http://southernfood.about.com/od/rhubarbrecipes/r/bl40311m.htm) for dinner, it was off the hook. Left out the cinnamon though. Also made a batch of [rhubarb jam](http://allrecipes.com/recipe/rhubarb-jam/detail.aspx). Tasted good but too “orangey.”

Horchata inspired me to try a rice smoothie. Cooked rice, milk, (yoghurt?), vanilla, cardamom, honey.

Made pan fried potatoes for breakfast. Parboiled them in water w/ vinegar, then added to pan w/ butter, onion, red pepper, cubanelle, pepper, salt, lots of Cajun spice mix. Then finished w/ fresh basil. Really tasty, if anything I may not have added vinegar to the water so they’d fall apart more.

21-May-12

Made cheesy bread for dinner, very tasty. Took a pizza dough and let it rise on the counter. Topped w/ chopped garlic and tonnes of pizza mozzarella, then threw on a 500F pizza stone under a 550F broiler. Cooked until cheese started to brown. Then cut with a pizza slicer and served w/ a bowl of spaghetti sauce for dipping.

At 7 pounds I don't think you had a whole brisket. A whole one runs from 9 pounds to 15 pounds and is made up of two muscles, the flat and the point. There is a good chance you had a big flat. <http://i.imgur.com/tt08i.jpg>

However if you did have a whole one, the first cut is at the natural seam between the point and flat. The point is the fatty end and the flat sort of overlaps the point. Often I use the back of a knife (because the meat is so tender) to separate the two muscles. <http://i.imgur.com/7NG7H.jpg>

Next look for the grain direction on the flat, and make your slices against it. Often I will mark the grain when the meat is raw so I know which direction to slice. <http://i.imgur.com/m6H7w.jpg>

Unless the fat cap is heavy, I leave it on and let folks trim it themselves. If I'm making sandwiches, I will trim most of it off. <http://i.imgur.com/pcOu3.jpg>

The point meat is different.... it's really tender and is best sliced into cubes for serving. Remove large areas of fat. If you want, you can take the point and smoke it longer, add seasoning and sauce, then reduce it. These are called burnt ends and are wonderful. <http://i.imgur.com/CScDT.jpg>

22-May-12

# All-Purpose Brine

225g Kosher salt  
4 kg / litres water

Or

56g Kosher salt  
1 kg / litre water

# Sugared Brine

225g Kosher salt  
4 kg / litres water  
125g Sugar

Or

56g Kosher salt  
1 kg / litre water  
31g Sugar

Brining Times

Boneless chicken breasts 2 hours  
Pork chops 2 hours  
1kg chicken 4 to 6 hours  
1.5 to 2kg chicken 8 to 12 hours  
2kg pork loin 12 hours  
4 to 7kg turkey 24 hours  
7kg+ turkey 24 to 36 hours  
Thin fish fillet 1 hour  
Thick fillet or steak 6 to 8 hours

23-May-12

For dinner made Mario Batali’s [Fennel Pork Chops](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/05/mario-batalis-pork-chops-with-fennel-seed-and.html) and mashed carrots and parsley root. For the pork chops all I changes was I braised some shaved fennel in the sauce while it was reducing. Very delicious. For the carrots I cut both roots into silver dollars and steamed for 15 mins. Added to foodpro w/ 1 tbsp salted butter, salt, pepper, and pulsed until roughly chopped. Very tasty.

28-May-12

Made a potato and leek tart for dinner tonight, with steamed asparagus and Hollandaise.

1 bunch leeks  
1c ricotta  
1 tbsp fresh thyme  
2 eggs, beaten  
½ tsp salt  
2 potatoes  
½ tsp cracked black pepper

Remove the tops and bottom of the leeks and dice them. Sautee them in about 3 tbsp oil until tender. Measure out 1 cup of cooked leeks.

In a bowl combine the cup of leeks, ricotta, thyme, eggs, salt, and pepper and stir. Add filling to a pre-cooked tart crust, shred the two potatoes and in a bowl combine them with about 3 tbsp olive oil and salt to taste. Spread the potatoes on top of the tart and bake for 30 mins at 400F.

29-May-12

For breakfast made an omelette filled w/ sautéed leeks and ricotta. Very tasty. Made a batch of marinara sauce and canned it. 5 large cans of stewed tomatoes fit into 4 pint jars. Added pureed garlic, parsley, onion, oregano, and fresh thyme. Canned at 10lbs pressure for 20 mins. Next time for large cans let the pressure cooker cool untouched for 8-12 hours before opening. Even hours later the contents began to boil the second I removed the lid from the canner.

30-May-12

For breakfast made a delicious masterpiece. Thinly sliced asparagus and sautéed it at high heat for 60 seconds w/ oil, pepper, salt. Removed to a bowl. Made a 2-egg omelette in same pan, seasoning it lightly. As it just finished cooking I removed from heat, added asparagus, folded the omelette, and served. Super tasty, super simple, very healthy. This would also be great w/ mushrooms or mushrooms + asparagus.

Made Alton’ Brown’s [Southern Biscuits recipe](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/southern-biscuits-recipe/index.html) today. Best biscuits I ever made. Rose high, nice & fluffy. Placed them touching on the baking sheet, pressed down with my thumb, and made sure to flour them well on both sides every time I turned the dough. Only baked them for 13 mins, they were done.

For dinner made tacos. Marinated some chopped chicken breast in oil, lime juice, garlic, onion, red pepper, cubanelle, cilantro, salt, pepper. Then sautéed it and served with corn tortillas, lettuce, chopped green onion, sour cream, cheese, sliced jalapenos. Very very tasty. The corn tortillas were dipped in water then cooked on the griddle. They didn’t brown or blacken as they started to dry out but it still made them more tender and pliable. Very good dinner.

31-May-12

Made souvlaki for dinner, was very very tasty. Marinated pork in oil, lemon juice, chopped fresh oregano, garlic, chopped red pepper, salt, pepper. Yum!

1-Jun-12

For dinner made fettuccini Alfredo w/ fresh pasta and garlic dinner rolls. The rolls were to die for. Made regular white bread recipe, divided into 16 equal 47g dough balls, rolled them under and pinched, oiled, and placed almost touching in 9x9 pan. Let rise very high then baked at 375F until golden brown. Poured over a tonne of garlic butter and served. Holy fuck were they good. Super soft, mushy, and pull-apart delicious.

3-Jun-12

For dinner made ribs, fennel & grapefruit salad, and cornbread.

The ribs were a super-meaty cut, tonnes and tonnes of meat on them. Rubbed them with pepper, salt, onion powder, garlic powder, basil, crushed bay leaf. Next time leave out the bay leaf you dummy. Then cooked them for 2 hours uncovered, 1 hour tented. Then sauced and broiled. They were almost perfect, only slightly undercooked on the inside ribs. I think next time 2-1.25 would be perfect.

The salad was shaved fennel, grapefruit supremes, rice vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper, finely chopped arugula, sliced cantaloupe. Not too bad but the grapefruit was quite bitter.

Used [this](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2010/07/mary-macs-tea-room-southern-cornbread-recipe.html?ref=search) recipe from SeriousEats for the cornbread. Used too high a percentage of cornmeal, so it came out grainy and crumbly. But I cooked it in a cast-iron skillet, and used white corn mean instead of yellow. Not terrible but not great.

4-Jun-12

For dinner made peameal bacon sandwiches and potato salad.

Sandwiches were toasted baps, buttered, with seared peameal bacon, lettuce, red onion, avocado.

Salad was chopped red pepper, celery, green onion, pickles, with potatoes, yellow mustard, Frank’s Red Hot, pepper. Very tasty.

According to Kenji, a sausage that shrinks and wrinkles as it cools is caused by overcooking. They should be cooked to an internal temp of 145-150F. He recommends slow-cooking them in sauerkraut, or peppers, of another condiment to around 140F, then finishing on a hot grill.

7-Jun-12

Randal came for dinner. I made chicken piccata, cornbread stuffing, and sautéed veggies. Dredged the chicken in seasoned flour, pan fried, then finished in oven. Added shallots to pan, deglazed with vermouth, added chicken stock, capers, lemon juice, pepper, and let reduce by 50%. Removed from heat and mounted with cold butter, adding chopped fresh tarragon.

For the stuffing I sautéed celery and fennel in butter until partially soft, added salt, pepper, dried thyme and sage. Added chopped red pepper and ancho. Added chicken stock and brought to boil. Finished by adding cubed cornbread, green onion, hazelnuts and tossing.

Veggies were fresh shucked peas and finely sliced asparagus w/ a clove of garlic flash fried, then finished with some chopped arugula and salt.

Everything was very good but the veggies were particularly yummy.

12-Jun-12

Making ginger beef on fried rice for dinner tonight. Bought some sirloinand gave it a quick pound with the meat mallet, sliced thin against the grain, and marinated in juice of 1 orange, soya sauce, about 6 tbsp corn starch, and grated ginger for 2 hours.

Made the rice 2 hours in advance. Pilaf with no seasonins, slightly undercooked it (on purpose) and only used 1.25c water to 3/4c rice and it came out much less sticky. It should finish cooking fine when frying. Will fry with some soy sauce and toss in some chopped green onions and peas.

Finally sautee the beef in a wok with onions and green peppers and serve with crushed peanuts and pepper flakes. I ended up cooking the beef fairly light and frying it flat on the bottom of the pan in oil, then removing and doing another batch. Worked quite well, was super tender and tasted wonderful.

13-Jun-12

For dinner making pasta salad. Penne, celery, cubanelle, red pepper, pickles, chopped egg, green onions, mayo, tuna in one and ham in the other. It was delicious.

14-Jun-12

For dinner made pulled pork tacos. Scored a pork should then rubbed with garlic powder, onion powder, brown sugar, cumin, mustard powder, black pepper, salt, cayenne and let rest overnight. Started cooking at 7AM in oven at 225F and cooked, untented, until 195F. Then shredded, salted, and squeezed in some lime juice.

Rolled out some pizza dough and cooked to make thick flour tortillas. Served with sour cream, tomatoes onions, jalapenos, lettuce.

Very very tasty.

17-Jun-12

Made ramen for dinner. Started with chicken stock poached 3 eggs in it, then put them in a cold water bath. Strained out the bits of egg and added fish sauce, soy sauce, plenty of sherry vinegar, chorizo, lots of ginger, lots of chopped BBQ pork and brought to a boil for about 20 mins. Removed the chorizo and ginger and discarded. Added ramen noodles and whole green onions, tops removed. When cooked removed from heat and added julienne red peppers, chopped cilantro and chopped green onion tops. Placed poached eggs in bowl and added noodles and some broth. Very very tasty.

SeriousEats says to brine a chicken breast before grilling for 30 mins. They also say to pound the breast so it’s got an even thickness and cooks evenly.

18-Jun-12

Made beef ribs for dinner w/ steamed corn on the cob. The ribs were done 2-2-1, with the first 4 hours in the smoker at 225F and the last hour over very low heat on the BBQ. Fairly good.

25-Jun-12

Made a batch of mild chili. 1 can enchilada sauce, 2 cans tomato sauce, salt, pepper, diced onion, diced poblano, diced celery, chili powder, paprika, bay leaf, oregano, seared brisket, molasses. Very tasty.

I also made [corn flake peanut butter bars](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/06/chocolate-peanut-butter-cornflake-bars-recipe.html). Not bad.

27-Jun-12

Carrie, Arnie, Randal, Natasha coming for dinner tonight. Making chicken kebabs, Caesar salad, honey dinner rolls. For the kababs took 5 chicken breasts, cut into large chunks, and am marinating all day in 1 container Greek yoghurt, 3 crushed cloves garlic, lots of salt, black pepper, a bit of sugar, and some hot chili powder. Will serve with red onions and perhaps raita.

The buns were incredible as always, and the chicken was to die for.

When brining meat it must be fully submerged and weighted down. After brining you need to refrigerate, uncovered, on a rack so a pellicle (dry, tacky surface) can develop. This helps smoke adhere.

30-Jun-12

Made tomato soup for dinner. 10 fresh tomatoes, a can of San Marzano, a half bottle of ice wine, white pepper, salt. Cooked well then ran through the food mill. Added a bit of flour slurry to emulsify it, basil pesto, cream, raspberry vinegar, some Frank’s red hot, salt and sugar to taste.

Also made a cream cheese arugula dip. Melted cream cheese in a pot, added pepper, cream, chopped arugula, and grated Edam cheese. Next time leave out the extra cheese and add some cayenne.

3-Jul-12

For dinner made potato & leek pizza w/ rosemary and prosciutto. Preheated pizza stone to 550F. Sliced some potatoes on the mandolin and soaked in heavily salted cold water. Sauteed leeks w/ salt and pepper. Dried off potatoes and sprayed w/ oil. Rolled out dough, topped with a layer of leeks, then chopped rosemary, prosciutto bacon bits, potatoes, and finished with cracked pepper. Turned oven to broil and placed pizza in oven to cook. This was really really delicious.

5-Jul-12

Making puled-pork lettuce wraps for BBQ week. Scored my pork shoulder last night and rubbed with dried ginger, Chinese 5-spice, cloves, pepper, garlic powder, paprika, salt, pepper, and spicy chili powder. Cooking at 225F now.

* Pulled pork
* Sliced jalapenos
* Rice noodles
* Julienne carrots
* Lettuce leaves
* Cilantro
* Peanuts?

6-Jul-12

For dinner made a pulled pork pizza. Cheddar cheese, Serrano peppers, pulled pork, onions, cilantro. Very tasty.

Was the best crust I’ve ever made. Rolled it relatively thick, fully preheated the pizza stone to 550F, fully warmed up the broiler. Crusty on the outside, tender on the inside, with lots of bubbles. Wow!

8-Jul-12

# Cookie Dough Cheesecake Bars

Yield: 12 bars Ingredients:

## For the Crust

1 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs  
5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

## For the Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, room temperature  
1/3 cup packed light brown sugar  
3 tablespoons granulated sugar  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
3/4 cup flour  
1 cup chocolate chips

## For the Cheesecake Filling

10 oz cream cheese, room temperature  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 large egg, room temperature  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

## Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 325 F. Line an 8 inch square baking pan with parchment paper or foil allowing a little overhang and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Mix the melted butter and graham cracker crumbs until thoroughly combined. Press the mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven for 6 minutes. Remove pan to a cooling rack. Do not turn your oven off.
3. While the crust is cooling, prepare the chocolate chip cookie dough. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a large bowl with an electric mixer, beat butter, brown sugar, granulated sugar, salt and vanilla until smooth and thoroughly combined, about 1 minute. Mix in the flour on low speed, and mix until just incorporated. Mix in the chocolate chips. Set aside.
4. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment or in a large bowl with an electric mixer cream together the cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Mix in the egg and vanilla on low speed just until incorporated. Pour the cheesecake batter into the prepared crust.
5. Using your hand to form clumps, flatten the clumps of dough in your palms to flatten them out a bit. Distribute the cookie dough onto the top of the cheesecake batter. Be sure to use all of the dough. You will cover most of the cheesecake batter.
6. Bake for about 30 minutes, until the top feels dry and firm (the cookie dough) and the entire pan looks set if given a gentle shake. Move bars to a cooling rack and allow to cool completely.
7. Lift the bars out by the overhang; slice into desired size and store in the refrigerator. Serve cold or at room temperature

9-Jul-12

Made an orange ginger stir fry for dinner tonight. Shredded red cabbage, peanuts, red and green peppers, green onions, and tofu. Sauce was orange juice, soy sauce, rice vinegar, corn starch, julienne orange peel, julienne ginger. Served over rice stick.

It was an unmitigated disaster. The cabbage turned everything purple and there wasn’t nearly enough sauce. Which was a shame because the sauce was actually very tasty and a great sweet and sour sauce.

22-Jul-12

Fred and Teresa came for dinner. Made pasta primavera. Cooked down heavy cream w/ butter, salt, pepper, garlic until thickened. Added yellow zucchini, peas, chopped asparagus, halved grape tomatoes, chopped green onions, julienned carrots, cooked extremely lightly and tossed with fresh linguini. Was a big hit.

24-Jul-12

Sean and Sandy came for dinner. Made bruschetta as an appetizer, lasagna for dinner, and peach sherbet for dessert. Was a huge hit.

30-Jul-12

Finally back after a long hiatus due to wisdom tooth. Not much fun cooking when you can’t enjoy it. Made [Cuban Picadillo](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/07/cuban-picadillo-recipe.html) for dinner. Not spectacular but certainly tasty soul food, would make again.

31-Jul-12

Broiling theme tonight. Made rib-eye steak, mashed, broiled tomatoes, and demi-glace. Trimmed the steak, saved the caps for later and kept fat and tough bits for the demi-glace. Seasoned the steak well and let rest about an hour. Put it directly under a 550F broiler for about 4 mins per side, then let rest.

Potatoes were Yukon gold cooked in the jackets in acidified water until completely tender. Removed skins and ran through food mill. Added heavy cream, milk, and salt. Tomatoes were seared in a pan then placed under broiled about 4 mins.

For the demi-glace seared the trimmings in some oil, added chopped shallots and flour and cooked until browned. Deglazed with a touch of sherry vinegar and beef stock. Added tomato sauce and pepper and cooked down until well reduced.

Everything was very tasty. Great gravy, great steak perfectly seasoned, and great potatoes. Put all three in your mouth together and oh my! Only mistake was the steak was done before it browned well. What if I put it under the broiled cold next time? No idea.

4-Aug-12

According to Kenji, if you whisk a few drops of milk wash into your seasoned flour before dredging you get more nooks and crannies in your crust.

6-Aug-12

For dinner made Kenji’s Chic-Fil-A sandwich and fries for dinner. Brined the chicken for 4 hours and it came out so salty it was painful. Yuck. The fries were gross too, I need to figure out fries.

According to Kenji you \*must\* refrigerate fresh corn immediately.

For corn week I think I’ll do Kenji’s corn chowder recipe, and fried polenta cakes with grilled corn, pineapple, and jalapeno salsa.

7-Aug-12

Made my polenta in prep for tomorrow using [this recipe](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/07/grilled-polenta-with-marinara-parmesan-and-basil-recipe.html?ref=search) only up until the polenta cakes are set. Also the recipe said to simmer for 30 to 45 mins, but in fact it set up in the first 2-3 minutes.

8-Aug-12

Did corn challenge tonight. Made just over a ½ portion of Kenji’s corn chowder recipe. The only deviation I made from the recipe was I mashed the chowder before adding the cream to break up the potato chunks. Was delicious.

The polenta cakes were to die for. Nice and crispy and tasted like fried parmesan around the edges. Need to try these served like mozz sticks, with marinara for dipping.

The salad was grilled corn, grilled pineapple, chopped jalapeno, diced tomato, salt, pepper, lime juice, and chopped cilantro. Very tasty but the weakest part of the meal.

11-Aug-12

Made meat sauce today. 3 large boxes tomatoes, chicken stock, beef boullion, bay leaves, red pepper, Franks’s red hot, carrots, browned onions, garlic, oregano, rosemary, spicy Italian sausage, ground beef, celery.

18-Aug-12

Formy challenge tonight I made parm and stilton mac & cheese w/ a walnut gratin, mint pea puree, and an antipasto skewer.

Made a mornay sauce with parm, salt, pepper, nutmeg. Tossed it with the macaroni and some crumbled stilton, put in a ramekin, topped with a gratin of 1 part chopped walnuts to 1 part fresh bread crumbs, some oil, and salt. Broiled until crispy.

The puree was peas, mint, a dollop of crème fraiche, salt, pureed then put through a fine mesh strainer.

The skewer was artichoke hearts, thick-cut prosciutto, and cantaloupe melon balls.

20-Aug-12

For dinner making roast chicken, twice-baked potatoes, and cole slaw.

Brining the chicken now for about 3.5 hours. Then will separate skin, truss, and roast on BBQ with offset heat and back burner.

Pierced the potatoes, rubbed with oil and generous amt of salt and cooked, then let cool a bit. Will cut, scoop, mix w/ milk, salt, pepper, prosciutto bacon bits, cheddar, green onions, and serve with sour cream.

The slaw is finely shredded green cabbage, vinegar, salt, sugar, pepper, celery seed, mayo. Turned out a lot like KFC.

Everything was very good. Slaw indistinguishable from KFC, potatoes great, wings were a bit over-salted but otherwise good.

26-Aug-12

For dinner making ribs, slaw, corn, honey glazed jalapeno cornbread.

The ribs were rubbed with salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Cooking for 2 hours uncovered, 1 hour tented at 225F. Will then mop w/ honey garlic sauce and finish on the grill.

Bread was FoodWishes’ recipe with yoghurt & milk substituted for buttermilk because they were out. Cooked it for 20 mins at 350 then finished at 400F convection to get nice browning and a crust. Then brushed it down with honey mixed with butter.

Slaw was KFC knock-off with a little more mayo and vinegar than usual.

Everything was fantastic. Outside of ribs was candied and chewy, bread was out of this world, and slaw was awesome. Corn was slightly undercooked but still very good.

27-Aug-12

For dinner made seafood paella. The rice was cooked in 30mins so next time add the seafood after 20. I used basmati rice and it came out nice and dry and fluffy. I also added lemon wedges and the acidity was delicious.

2-Sep-12

Made a batch of peach jam today. 3 1/2c of peaches made exactly 7 half-pint jars of jam. Definitely crush the fruit by hand, it was really easy, as was peeling them. Much easier to peel when they’re very ripe though.

For dinner made a saffron rice pilaf, tandoori chicken, and Indian flavoured popcorn cauliflower.

3-Sep-12

Made butter chicken and naan for dinner. Accidentally curdled the yoghurt while cooking so it was very disappointing.

Made a true naan recipe and cooked them on the pizza stone preheated to 500F, with the broiler turned on. Turned out pretty good.

4-Sep-12

For apple challenge this week I want to do a pulled pork, aged cheddar, and granny smith Panini sandwich.

6-Sep-12

Made the [peach turnovers](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/08/easy-peach-turnovers-recipe.html) recipe from SeriousEats. Next time halve the salt. These were super-easy, came out delicious, and were almost guilt-free. I need to try these with other fruit too, I bet blueberry and raspberry would be to die for.

2 cups fruit, 4 tsp sugar, 2 tsp tapioca, ¼ tsp salt, ¼ tsp lemon juice, egg wash, puff pastry, and sugar to sprinkle. Bake at 375F for 15 mins.

For apple week I’m going to make apple juice marinated pulled pork shoulder grilled sandwich with aged cheddar and apple slices, and a creamy apple slaw.

9-Sep-12

Made a hash for breakfast, it was delicious. Cubed potatoes sautéed in butter, diced onion, cubanelle, red pepper, jalapeno, chopped pulled pork, Spanish rice, Cajun spice mix, salt, and chopped cilantro. So yummy.

Helene and Liam are coming for dinner. Roast beef, popovers, gravy, creamy horseradish, roasted turned turnips and carrots, buttermilk mashed potatoes. Raspberry turnovers for dessert.

Dinner was very delicious but I took the roast out at 136F and tented it and after resting it was well done. Thankfully it was a great quality roast and was still super tender and juicy, but next time I’ll have to take it out much sooner. Probably 129F.

I made turned carrots and parsnips and parboiled them, then finished them in the bottom of the roasting pan. Tasted great and looked great but it was way too much work with way too much waste. Glad I tried it but never doing it that way again.

I also learned that you can’t put potatoes through the food millwith the skins on because it wil just grind them and pass them through. Always remove the skins before putting them through the food mill.

I wonder if it would be infinitely easier to turn vegetables \*after\* they’ve been par-boiled.

12-Sep-12

For Japanese week I want to do yakitori 3 ways: liver, breast, and hearts with a mirin, sake, soy, and sugar glaze, sprinkled in sesame seeds.

15-Sep-12

For this week’s challenge I made yakitori 3 ways. Chicken thighs, hearts, and livers cooked on the grill and glazed with brown sugar, soy sauce, and rice wine vinegar. The glaze was a bit thin, next time remember to only add enough liquid to the sugar to make it mildly wet, it shouldn’t be pooling in the bottom.

17-Sep-12

Made liver pate today. Liver, chicken hearts, butter, salt, tonnes of pepper, sherry, shallots. Mixed it into whipped cream and let it set. It turned out more like mousse than pate but it tasted great and for some reason it doesn’t discolour in air.

3 days later still no discoloration at all, wha happen?

20-Sep-12

For dinner made pumpkin gnocchi. Pulp of one small pumpkin, 2 baked potatoes, blended until smooth and salted to taste. Add and knead until dough ball forms. Roll and cut and toss in flour. Add to boiling salted water and cook until floating. Add to a pan of browned butter w/ tonnes of fresh chopped sage, toss for a couple minutes, add fresh cracked pepper and salt to taste.. Plate w/ chopped parsley and grated parmesan. Very good results.

Next time I think I would leave out the potato entirely for the pumpkin gnocchi.

21-Sep-12

Tomorrow I will try to make Thai coconut rice. I’m soaking the rice in coconut milk and tomorrow I’ll steam it over a layer of cheesecloth.

22-Sep-12

The rice turned out okay but there was zero flavor of coconut. It came out sticky but not at all gummy, took a while to cook. Next time give it perhaps 30 mins to cook, minimum.

Also made yakitori. Chicken breast, thighs, leek, garlic, tofu, green peppers. Everything was very good except the garlic which needed to be on its own skewer so it could cook much longer.

23-Sep-12

Started my limoncello today.

29-Sep-12

Made Michael Symon’s baklava recipe today. Was off the hook good. Used pistachios instead of walnuts, doubled the cinnamon, and used the minimum (6 oz) of honey, about 2 ½c of sugar, and didn’t use all the syrup. It was out of this world.

2-Oct-12

For squash week I’m going to do orzo with [Butternut Squash and Sage Cream Sauce](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/02/butternut-squash-and-sage-cream-sauce-recipe.html).

4-Oct-12

The pasta turned out quite tasty, although it was really just pasta tossed in squash soup. Could have used twice as much sage, easily.

7-Oct-12

Made pierogi for dinner tonight. Used store-bought wrappers. Filling was 2 medium mashed potatoes, caramelized onions, grated cheese, salt, pepper, and a splash of milk. Used too much butter in the pan so they were a bit greasy, and the best ones were the ones I didn’t flip and let brown until they were crispy. Served them with sour cream, prosciutto bacon bits, and chives. Really freaking delicious.

14-Oct-12

For casserole week I’m going to make cannelloni filled w/ butternut squash, ricotto, and fresh sage, baked in a romano mornay sauce and browned on top.

15-Oct-12

Made sushi rolls for dinner tonight. Were pretty easy when you take it slow and don’t get flustered. Filled them with fake crab, cucumber, red pepper, daikon, green onion, tofu, and smoked oysters. Want to do this more often.

19-Oct-12

For dinner tonight made shrimp rolls. Chopped up some cooked shrimp and tossed them in garlic butter, lemon juice, pepper, Cajun spice, chives, parsley. Served on a grilled top-cut hotdog bun. Pretty tasty but next time buy uncooked shrimp.

20-Oct-12

For dinner making osso bucco.

Dredged veal shanks in seasoned flour and seared off in a pan with olive oil and butter. Removed meat and added mirepoix, sautéing until browned. Added a cup of vermouth, a small container of tomato sauce, pepper, salt, bay leaf, dried basil, a crushed garlic clove, some chopped parsley, and a large bunch of fresh thyme. Covered and let simmer for about 1 ½ hrs and then uncovered, removed the thyme, and simmered another hour, finished with a few dashes of Frank’s Red Hot. Serving over creamy mashed potatoes and topped with gremolata.

It was out of this world. Would definitely make again. The gremolata was good and refreshing but tended to overpower every other flavour, I’m undecided about it.

I noticed another recipe that used diced canned tomatoes instead of tomato sauce, and beef stock. I think beef stock or glace might be a great idea to fortify it.

21-Oct-12

Someone on Reddit said he thinks citric acid helps crisp up chicken skin. I guess it wouldn’t hurt to try basting a chicken with ponzu.

22-Oct-12

For dinner made penne in vodka cream sauce. Sauce was diced tomatoes lightly blended, added a fair amount of prosciutto bacon bits, about ¼ cup vodka, and simmered for about 15 mins. Added heavy cream and salt to taste. Prepared the penne to slightly under-done and drained, sauced it, using plenty of sauce. Covered and let rest around 15 mins for the sauce to absorb. Added finely chopped basil, and some extra sauce when plating. Delicious!

23-Oct-12

Kenji says in order to crisp up chicken wings and to allow batter to stick, dust them with corn starch, baking powder, and salt, and let them rest an hour. He uses baking powder instead of soda because it’s also a leavening agent, promoting crispiness.

He also says corn starch is a pure starch with no protein, so it doesn’t form gluten the way flour does. He also says it’s the proteins in flour that help it brown, hence the reason corn starch batters stay very light.

2-Oct-12

Starting to run out of ideas for cinnamon week. I think I may simply do a curry with chicken legs, cinnamon, hot peppers, raisins, and cashews. What about black olives for acidity?

6-Nov-12

For dinner making chicken braised in cinnamon mole, Spanish rice, and whipped cauliflower.

For the mole used [this recipe](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/10/mole-poblano-recipe-how-to-make-mole.html) but halved the chocolate, cranked the cinnamon, and left out the tomatillo. Blended until smooth and then braised chicken leg quarters in it. The chicken was tender and delicious, and the mole sauce tasted great, especially on the rice. It was very rich and I’m not sure it was worth the effort, but certainly nice for a change.

Cooked the cauliflower, added it to blender w/ milk, butter, cream cheese, sour cream and blended until smooth. Added chopped chives, salt to taste, and a pinch of xanthan gum. Very tasty.

11-Nov-12

For dinner made grilled spatchcocked chicken marinated in soya, lime, maple syrup. Grilled up very nice, no complaints. Also made oven fries tossed in oil, salt, and cajun spice and baked them at 375F convec until crispy. Very good, almost as good as deep fried. Finally made a parsnip puree in the blender and it came out gummy, didn’t eat it. But I added chicken stock and it turned into a very tasty soup!

12-Nov-12

Planning xmas baskets: Randal & Natasha, Kelly & Sabrina, Viv & Hugh, Olga, Sasha, Dmitri. 6 total. 1 liqueur, beef jerky or duck breast prosciutto, fruitcake, 1 preserve, smoked almonds.

Need to finish my Limoncello.

Started my chicken confit. Layered 5 chicken thigh quarters in slow cooker pot with lots of kosher salt, fresh cracked pepper, tonnes of sliced garlic and tonnes of fresh thyme. Then weighed it down with a large Ziploc filled with water.

Tomorrow I’ll rinse it off, pat dry, cook for about 2 hours, then let entire dish cool, then refrig, then the following day remove, filter the oil, and roast at very high heat until skin crispy.

I want to make this: <http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/11/swiss-chard-fennel-white-bean-gratin-recipe.html> this week. Kale, fennel, and white bean gratin.

13-Nov-12

For dinner made confit chicken, confit potatoes, and veggies.

Cooked the chicken a bit too long but it was certainly tender. Also didn’t salt it enough. Broiled it and the potatoes and both were crispy and tasty, they just needed more salt.

14-Nov-12

For dinner made curry fried noodles with the leftover chicken. Chicken, oil, rice stick, curry powder, salt, green onions, orange peppers, peas, fresh cilantro. Very very tasty.

Duh, you blind bake a pie crust with TIN FOIL in the bottom so your beans don’t stick! Dummy!

15-Dec-12

For dinner made grilled sandwiches and parsnip pumpkin soup.

The sandwiches were ¾ a loaf of French bread cut in half with some of the interior bread pulled out a-la-shooter’s sandwich. Then a basil aioli on both sides of the bread. Prosciutto, thinly-sliced kielbasa, brie. Butter one side, cook on the cast-iron grill weighted down, butter other side and flip. Then cut into thin strips cross-wise and serve. Holy fucking delicious!

The soup was my parsnip soup w/ more chicken bouillon, water, cream, and salt, some sugar, and plenty of garden-grown dried sage. The parsnip soup was, in turn, pureed parsnip, butter, cream, chicken stock, and bouillon.

The soup and the sandwich were freaking awesome!

A review of Guy Fieri’s restaurant mentioned Donkey Sauce and suggested it was roasted garlic aioli. Sounds great!

19-Nov-12

The difference between pastrami and corned beef is that pastrami is smoked and coated with crushed peppercorns and coriander.

21-Nov-12

Started brining my pastrami today. Used the recipe from Charcuterie but cut the quantities in half. Also replaced some of the honey with molasses.

For dinner butterflied some chicken breasts, added a stick of gruyere, wrapped in prosciutto, then pan fried and finished in 425F oven to an internal temp of 165F. Not fantastic but worth making again.

22-Nov-12

Made a loafof multigrain bread today. Also started my coffee liqueur.

For dinner making a pepper and sausage ragout. Steamed the sausaged to cook, then sautéed themin their own fat w/ paprika and smoked paprika. Deglazed pan w/ vermouth and chicken stock, then added sliced red, yellow, green peppers, sliced onions, several crushed cloves garlic,, salt, pepper, dry oregano, 2 chopped tomatoes, 2 bay leaves, and 1/4c chopped kalamata olives. Covered and let render down. At the very end added a slurry, some Frank’s Red Hot, MSG, and salt. Holy crap this is tasty!

Serving over rice. The rice came out perfect at 1.75 to 1.

24-Nov-12

Rubbed my pastrami today. Used [meathead’s recipe](http://www.amazingribs.com/recipes/beef/close_to_katzs_home_made_pastrami.html), but omitted the mustard powder and cooking oil, and instead brushed the pastrami w/ Dijon mustard and stuck the rub to that. Looks amazing, resting in fridge for 2 more days.

25-Nov-12

For dinner made gyros, sort-of. Toasted some coriander seeds, black peppercorns, cumin seeds, then ground in mortar. Added to foodpro with beef, lamb, ginger, garlic, salt, pepper, and blended. Let that rest for several hours in the fridge, then formed it around wood skewers, grilled, and served on home-made pita with tzatziki, red onions, and fries.

Really, really tasty!

26-Nov-12

For dinner making pasta chicken salad. Chopped chicken, penne, mayo, a dash of buttermilk ranch, pepper, diced cubanelle, diced celery, green onions. Also added some sliced olives, but forgot to add sliced radishes.

Saw two recipes in FoodNetwork magazine that really appealed to me. Herbed hazelnuts and sausage cassoulet. Maybe I could do an assortment of comfort foods for xmas? Cassoulet, herbed hazelnuts, popcorn cauliflower, pasta salad, Caesar, steamed haricots?

TacoJunkie gave me the idea of brie wrapped in puff pasty and baked.

27-Nov-12

For dinner made baked rigatoni in vodka cream sauce. Cooked the pasta to almost al dente, tossed it in the sauce, put in a casserole and baked at 375F for 20 mins. At the 15 min mark I heaped on shredded Romano and Parmesan, then let it finish, and let rest 5 mins. The pasta on top was nicely chewy, as was the cheese. Very good.

Next time maybe bake for 25 mins, add cheese at 20 min mark.

28-Nov-12

For dinner made eggplant parmiggiana over quinoa and lentils.

For the eggplant seared it in a pan on both sides in some oil. Added a layer of vodka cream sauce to a 9x9 casserole, added the seared eggplant, some more sauce, and then a whole grated mozzarella ball. Cooked at 375F for 20 mins, then switched to broiler 450, Cooked until crispy and brown on top.

For the quinoa/lentils added 3/4c quinoa and 1/4c green lentils to saucepan and added 2c chicken stock and some salt. Cooked for about 25 mins until all water incorporated. The quinoa was a bit overcooked but everything tasted out of this world and the lentils added a great texture.

30-Nov-12

For dinner made chimichangas. Burritos, then shallow fried them, placed in casserole and topped with some tomatillo sauce and jack cheese. Baked at 375F for just over 5 mins, topped with shredded lettuce and served with refried beans. Really yummy!

1-Dec-12

Warm spiced cranberry lemonade. 1L lemonade, 1c fresh cranberries, 1” segment ginger sliced thin, 5 cloves, zest of one orange. Bring to a boil then simmer 20 mins. Cool and refrigerate overnight. Strain, then warm on stove. Serve, optionally with a shot of limoncello.

I think I’m finally ready to face my pastrami failure. Problems: too smoky, too salty, too peppery, and too fall-apart.

Solution: Next time don’t use a mustard rub, too much spice stuck to it. Do a desalination step like meathead recommended, use powdered pepper and coriander, not rough cracked, steam instead of pressure cooking, and do a very light smoke with a mild wood.

3-Dec-12

Someone on Reddit said this is the perfect way to make couscous:

I allow a half cup of cous cous per person and this quantity should be cooked in exactly the same amount of freshly boiled water, a pinch of salt and 1/2 tbsp of olive oil. Measure your ingredients exactly! Then pour the water mixture over the grains of cous cous and quickly cover with plastic wrap. Then just allow the water to fully absorb (10-15 mins) and remove the plastic wrap when you serve the cous cous, just fluff lightly by scraping at the cous cous with a fork as you serve.

6-Dec-12

Made a killer egg scramble for breakfast. Sauteed some finely chopped onions in butter, added chopped leftover pastrami, 2 eggs, pepper. Cooked until done, then finished with salt and truffle oil. Wow was this ever tasty!

TIL the reason you add mustard to mac & cheese isn’t for flavour, it’s to help emulsify the fat. You can get a very creamy sauce with just cheese, milk, and mustard, no roux needed.

7-Dec-12

TIL mustard isn’t high in lecithin, it’s high in mucilage, also an emulsifier.

Several people said sodium citrate is a great emulsifier but Wikipedia doesn’t list it in it’s emulsifiers section.

When making hash browns, grate the potato, then wrap it in a tea towel and twist to squeeze out all the liquid.

9-Dec-12

Jacques’ method for a classic French omelette: 3-4 eggs w/ salt and fines herbes (tarragon, chives, parsley, chervil) in a pan w/ lots of butter, not hot enough to brown. Stir the egg vigorously, folding it in on itself to get a small curd. As it starts to firm up slightly tilt the pan so everything runs to one side. Flip down the thin side into the larger mass. Run a fork all around the edges of the omelette to free it from the pan. Keep tilting pan even further, give it a couple whacks until it’s almost falling out, and fold in the opposite lip. Over a plate keep tiliting and roll out (turning over) onto plate.

For dinner tonight made cream sauce primavera lasagna. Started with béchamel, added baby parm, some mustard powder, and on removing from heat added finely chopped broccoli, peppers, and peas.

Cooked some dried lasagna noodles, and layered in 9x9 casserole with sauce, chiffonade of basil, and topped with shredded pizza mozzarella. Baked for 25 mins at 375F then finished with broiler at 425 to brown the top. Was very tasty although the veggies were overcooked.

Also my sauce was lumpy. Not sure if the milk curdled, I used too little flour, or the wrong cheese. I suspect the latter and it did better with more mustard and a slurry. Either way it was unnoticeable after baking. Either the baking smoothed it out or it simply wasn’t apparent once mixed with veggies and spread thin in a lasagna.

10-Dec-12

Started my beef jerky.

Christmas dinner:

* Warm cider
* 2 brined roasted chickens
* Creamy mashed potatoes
* Peas
* Carrots w/ rutabaga
* Gravy
* Mushroom stuffing
* Panattone bread pudding

15-Dec-12

Smoked almonds:

* 5c almonds
* 1/2c (1 stick) butter
* 1 clove garlic, crushed
* 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
* ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
* 4 dashes liquid smoke
* 4 dashes caramel color
* 2 tbsp kosher salt
* 4 tsp sugar
* 1 tsp onion powder

Combine the butter, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, cayenne, liquid smoke, and caramel colour in a large non-stick skillet. Bring to a gentle boil for 1-2 minutes. Add the almonds and turn off heat, tossing well. Let rest 10 mins, tossing occasionally, then drain excess butter in a colander. Combine the salt, sugar, and onion powder in a pestle and grind very fine. Place the nuts back in the skillet and toss very well with salt mixture, to coast evenly. Distribute evenly on cookie tins and bake at 225F for 2 hours.

16-Dec

Making xmas dinner. Started Chef John’s [wild mushroom dressing](http://foodwishes.blogspot.ca/2012/11/sweet-corn-wild-mushroom-spoonbread.html). But added mushroom liquid, chopped onions, chopped celery, and dried cranberries to the pan with the mushrooms. Will cut down the corn by half.

The dressing wasn’t very good. Cooked way too long (45mins) so it was dry, and the nuts didn’t work. Would I try it again? Not sure. The panatone bread pudding wasn’t bad but a bit too eggy for my tastes.

19-Dec-12

Kenji says that foie gras, bacon, and just about any very fatty product store very well in the freezer. Cut foie gras with a hot knife so it – literally -- cuts like a hot knife through butter. He also scores one surface of his foie gras, mostly for looks. It cooks in 30 seconds to a minute per side.

Meathead says the juices that come out of steak are primarily myoglobin.

Made carrot cake yesterday and it was a disaster. Fell precipitously, and was crunchy and greasy on the bottom. I think the reason was I added my wet ingredients to the dry one at a time and then stirred, rather than combining them first, then adding them all at once. I also substituted toasted pepitas instead of walnuts, and added some chopped candied ginger, but I don’t think this is why it failed.

Kansas City BBQ uses a sauce that is very sweet and sticky and usually based on ketchup and multiple sweeteners. South Carolina BBQ uses a mustard-based sauce because of the German heritage. Texas BBQ uses a very thin mopping sauce based potentially on beer, peppers, cumin, beef drippings. They cook their meat often over direct heat so the mop rehydrates and cools. Memphis BBQ uses a dry rub only, applied before cooking and sometimes after as well. North Carolina (Lexington) sauce is thin and vinegary with some ketchup and sugar. East Carolina sauce is highly acidic and very thin, consisting only of vinegar, hot peppers, and perhaps some hot sauce and sugar. It’s used as a mop, penetrates deeply, and is the original US BBQ sauce.

22-Dec-12

Cronins coming over for dinner. Making chicken parmesan, steamed mixed veggies, Caesar salad, and dinner rolls.

Pounded out the chicken thin between 2 pieces of cling wrap, salted it, then placed it – cling wrap and all – in the fridge for a couple hours. Rolls are rising. For dessert I made [salty oats](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/12/salty-oats-oatmeal-cookies-recipe.html) cookies and [peach jam thumbprint cookies](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/12/raspberry-jam-thumbprint-cookies-recipe.html).

Breaded and shallow fried the chicken, then placed it in a single layer in 2 casseroles, poured over a medium amount of sauce, topped with shredded pizza mozzarella, then baked at 325F for about 20 mins.

The breading didn’t stay crispy but it tasted absolutely amazing and was fantastic.

The biggest challenge with the chicken was that I had such a big batch that the bread crumbs that fell off were scorched black well before I was finished frying all the cutlets. While it didn’t impart a burnt flavour, the scorched bread crumbs started to stick to the cutlets as I added them to the pan, I had to throw out one cutlet because of this. Discarded the oil and crumbs, washed the pan, and started with new oil. Next time either use 2 pans, make a smaller batch, or discard the oil like I did this time.

Either way this was a resounding success.

The rolls didn’t turnout great because I didn’t have my proper 9x9 pan. I used 2 pans instead and the rolls weren’t close enough together so they rose sideways instead of up. Generally okay but not nearly as good as usual.

Both sets of cookies were okay. Hard to tell if people liked them or not but in general they were passable.

24-Dec-12

I found it interesting to read that a wet mop on your BBQ isn’t just for flavour, it’s to reduce the temp on your meat as well.

27-Dec-12

I want to try slow-cooking steaks. Bake in 200F oven to 125F, rest, then sear on extremely high heat to brown. This would no doubt also be great in the smoker.

28-Dec-12

Made babyback ribs for lunch today. Rubbed with meathead’s [Memphis Dust](http://amazingribs.com/recipes/rubs_pastes_marinades_and_brines/meatheads_memphis_dust.html) and let rest in fridge overnight. Baked them at 225F for 2 hrs untented, then 1.25 hrs tented. Removed from oven and let rest while bringing the oven to 400F. Sauced and placed back in oven about 20 mins. Sauce was loosely based on meathead’s [Kansas City-Style BBQ sauce](http://amazingribs.com/recipes/BBQ_sauces/kansas_city_classic_BBQ_sauce.html). These were my best ribs yet and the first ones with perfect doneness. If they had been smoked they would have been flawless.

30-Dec-12

Meathead had an interesting idea for dressing. Mix it with some egg and bake it in muffin tins to make stuffing muffins.

Meathead (correctly) points out that it takes over an hour on the counter for a thick steak to come to room temperature, and many, many hours for a roast to do so. He recommends placing meat in a ziplock and submerging in room-temp water. Sounds good to me!

Started 2 batches of jerky today. Realized I’ve been cutting it all wrong. Cut it in very thin, broad strips along the grain and it’s turning out nice. The second batch has lots of sriracha and about 5 chopped birds’ eye chilis in it, we’ll see if it turns out spicy.

For dinner made chicken burgers. Cut a chicken breast thin and brined it for 2 hours. Huge mistake, was super salty. Baked it instead of frying. Huge mistake, overcooked to the point of being almost like jerky. Seasoned it with Cajun spice mix.

Also made lazy “twice baked potatoes.” Baked 3 potatoes, chopped them up skins and all and added buttermilk and milk, and mashed. Added salt, bacon bits, chopped chives, sharp cheddar. Added to small oven-safe dish and baked until top was golden. Not too bad.

31-Dec-12

Made filet mignon for dinner using the slow-cook / sear method. Salted well first. Cooked at 200F then turned down to 175F, they cooked in only about 20 mins. Took them out at exactly 128F and let rest, then rubbed with oil and seared in case iron pan. Let rest again, then finished with pepper and garlic butter. Pretty much perfect.

2-Jan

TIL potatoes are cooked to an internal temp of 210F.

Making another very small pastrami. Brined it for about 20 hours, now desalinating it overnight. Will finely grind the spices for the dry rub and not use oil to make it stick.

Finished desalinating the pastrami. Used meathead’s rub and am now leaving it for a day.

Smoked the pastrami for 1 hour, then slow cooked for around 3 hours until the internal temp was around 165F. Then steamed it for 1 hour.

Turned out very very good. Flavours were perfect. It was a bit dry but I think that’s because my tiny brisket had all the fat trimmed off.

I’m dying to try bacon now. ☺

8-Jan

For dinner made white chili. I liked it, Brandy and Karlee loved it.

In some butter sautee chopped onion, lots of garlic, and one sliced plantain. Add plenty of black pepper, cumin, coriander. Add a container of chicken stock and let reduce slightly. Add diced celery, jalapeno, and 2 diced chicken breaks and stir until cooked. Remove from heat and add frozen corn and white beans, several large dollops of sour cream, some half-and-half, several dashes of Frank’s Red Hot, and salt to taste.

Serve with tortilla chips.

9-Jan-13

For dinner made eggs poached in salsa with home fries.

Cut some small potatoes into wedges, tossed in oil, salt, pepper, and Cajun spice mix. Cooked at 425F convec for about 30 mins, tossing occasionally until very brown and crispy.

For the eggs added chjopped tomatoes, garlic, onions, salt, pepper to pan with some red sauce. Covered and brought to a simmer, added 5 eggs, salted and peppered them. Covered and let poach. Topped w/ shredded Monterrey jack and poached a bit longer. Removed from heat, topped with fresh cilantro and diced jalapeno, and served with toast and home fries. Super, super delicious.

11-Jan-13

Dinner tomorrow:

* Cheese & cracker plate
* Nachos w/ Dip
* Lasagna – 45m at 325F
* Mac & cheese – 10m at 400F
* [Cassoulet](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2011/12/cassoulet-pork-beans-sausage-stew-recipe.html) – 2.5h at 325F, 10m at 400F
* Caesar salad
* Garlic bread -- 15m at 325F
* Trifle
* [Tira Misu](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2012/08/easy-chocolate-tiramisu-recipe.html) – 2h

12-Jan-13

Dinner was very good.

The taco dip was warmed refried beans added to a 9x9, then cooled to solidify it. Then a layer of sour cream, and a layer of diced tomatoes, seeded jalapenos, cilantro, green onions, salt, pepper. Then a layer of Monterrey jack cheese. Randal ate a tonne of it. Could probably have used some garlic but very tasty.

The cassoulet was very very good but not exceptional.

The tira misu wasn’t very authentic but extremely tasty. Lots of bitterness from the cocoa powder and just the right amount of sweetness to balance it. Overall not to sweet at all and delicious IMO.

14-Jan-13

For dinner made beef korma. In pressure cooker sautéed in a little over a tablespoon of ghee: 1 onion, 3 cloves garlic, 1” chopped ginger until well browned. Added a cup of chicken stock, 2-3c water, about 1 1/2 cups pistachios, 1lb stewing beef, 3 tbsp sesame seeds, cumin, coriander, cloves, cinnamon. Pressure cooked for 20 mins then removed meat from sauce, blended well, added 1bout 1c more of cashews because sauce was too thin, and 3/4c sour cream because I had no yoghurt. Salt, sugar and cayenne to taste.

Was very good, but a few problems:

* Meat wasn’t quite tender enough. Next time pressure cook for 25 mins.
* Sauce was too thin. Next time use only 1c stock, no water.
* Sauce was lacking a bit in taste. Next time use only 1c stock, sear off the meat in advance, and perhaps use more aromatics.
* Sauce was grainy. Probably because I added more cashews at the end and they hadn’t softened.

With some home-made naan it was way tasty, but still had room for improvement.

17-Jan-13

For dinner making [Emeril’s Bolognese Sauce](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/spaghetti-bolognese-recipe/index.html) recipe with fresh spaghetti. Turned out pretty tasty after I added a tonne of beef bouillon to it to give it some flavour.

19-Jan-13

Went to St.Jacob’s and bought pita chips, hummus, Egyptian samosas, summer sausage, and andouille sausage. Then went to Barton’s meats and bought a beef brisket, whole pork belly, cross-cut beef shanks, duck breasts, short ribs, and sausage casings.

For dinner made Spanish rice with a little bit of the Andouille, was super tasty.

22-Jan

Started my bacon. Cutting off it skin is easy once you get the hang of it. Place the pork belly on your cutting surface, skin side up. Using a sharp boning knife start at one of the corners. Press down firmly on the skin with your palm while slicing into the meat from the corner, just below the skin. Keep the blade of the knife angled upward toward the skin side so as not to cut away the underlying fat. The skin is very tough so in general you can press down from above and up with your knife fairly hard, as long s the pressure is even and smooth.

As the corner of skin begins to work itself away begin to cut from the centre in strong motions toward you, then reverse the knife and cut in strong motions away from you, then free more skin from the centre to even out your cut. Repeat from all 4 corners until the skin is freed.

For dinner making Asian braised pork belly on fried rice. Making a sauce of 1/4c brown sugar, juice of 2 oranges, juice of 2 limes, 4 crushed garlic cloves, 1c soy sauce, 1 star anise. Will strain, then use some of the sauce + water to braise the pork belly, then glaze it after cooked. Then serve over fried rice, perhaps with some sauce as well depending on how it turns out.

Made the sauce, added the pork belly, then cooked uncovered in a 325F oven for about 2 hours, turning the pork bellies occasionally. Then finished under the broiler to crisp it up. Very delicious.

Next time I could crisp them up fat side down in a skillet, as they burned a tiny bit under the broiler and didn’t crisp up much.

26-Jan

For breakfast made a Dutch baby pancake. Puffed up like crazy, tasted great. Dusted with powdered sugar, topped with some lemon zest, and served with marmalade. Definitely something to make again.

For dinner making Emeril’s [Chicago-style deep dish pizza](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/emeril-lagasse/chicago-style-deep-dish-pizzas-recipe/index.html). Turned out very very good but also very very heavy. Couldn’t eat more than a slice.

31-Jan

Finished my bacon today. Smoked at 225F to an internal temp of 150F using alder and hickory smoke. Looks very good, going to try it for breakfast tomorrow. Saw an oven-baked version on Ruhlman.com, was thinking of maybe using this next time, along with some liquid smoke.

2-Feb-13

For dinner / snack making pork chili verde. Pressure cooking a pork shoulder w/ beer. In separate pot sautéed 1 large chopped onion, 5 crushed cloves of garlic, 2 tsp pepper, salt, 2 tsp cumin seed. Added 1 container chicken stock, 2 chopped bell peppers, 3 chopped cubanelle, 4 large chopped jalapeno with membrane.

Afterward will cool both down, shred the pork, blend the sauce, and serve w/ cheese, sour cream, and chips.

13-Feb-13

For dinner made chili verde toastadas. Crisped up corn tortillas in oven sprayed with some oil. Topped with Spanish rice, chili verde, monterrey jack cheese, red and green peppers, cilantro, and pickled onions.

15-Feb-13

Bought my carbon steel wok today. Seasoning it now, appears to be turning out really well.

18-Feb-13

Roast chicken idea: kosher salt it, then place it back in the fridge uncovered for 24 hours to let it dry. Then cook it. Hopefully crispy skin. Update: didn’t work.

21-Feb-13

For dinner made poutine. Tossed fries in oil and Cajun spice mix, thenadded shredded mozzarella, gravy, small amount of Frank’s RedHot, topped with crisped crushed capicollo and ranch dressing.

Watched a video today that said to leave chicken in fridge uncovered for 3 days before cooking. And then to finish cooking in a 550F oven on convection for 7 minutes.

23-Feb-13

I want to try making garlic parm pull-apart bread. <http://imgur.com/a/TwnKx>

Made a batch of [marshmallows](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/homemade-marshmallows-recipe/index.html) today. In KitchenAid took only 4 minutes on setting 8, probably should have taken them out even a bit sooner. Added some red food dye and topped with some pink sugar for some crunch. Came out exactly the same as store-bought marshmallows.

For dinner made pizza topped with béchamel, walnut, stilton, and sliced pear. Was very tasty, next time use more stilton and thicker pear slices.

24-Feb-13

For dinner made chicken & dumplings. In a large pot added 1 skinned chicken, 1 large onion finely sliced, 1 large carrot diced, ½ fennel bulb thinly sliced, 2 bay leaves, 2 cloves garlic crushed, several peppercorns, 1/2c vermouth, stems of 1 bunch parsley. Add water to almost cover, put on lid and simmer for 1 to 1 ½ hrs. Remove chicken from pot and allow to cool, strain stock and discard vegetables. Once cooled separate the chicken from bones and dispose of bones. Chop the chicken and set aside. Bring the broth to a low boil. Roll out some pizza dough and with pizza roller cut into 1” squares. Add them to the water 6-8 at a time and stir, repeating until all dumplings are in. Keep at low boil and cook for 5-10 mins until dumplings are cooked through. Remove from heat and add 1 leek julienned, few dashes Frank’s Red Hot, some Accent, 2 tbsp sugar, ¾ bunch parsley. Let rest 5 mins, serve.

I’d like to try [Chicken & Andouille Etouffee](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/tyler-florence/chicken-and-smoked-sausage-etouffee-recipe/index.html).

25-Feb-13

For dinner made home-made gnocchi w/ carbonara sauce and crispy garlic bread crumbs.

Fried up the bread crumbs in a pan with garlic, salt, and olive oil until crispy, set aside.

Chopped about 1c home-made bacon and crisped up in large no-stick pan w/ lots of pepper. Set aside.

Boiled in skins 3 large potatoes, skinned and passed through food mill. Added salt, 1 egg, kneaded in stand mixer adding AP flour until it could hold together. Then pulled off plum-sized balls, rolled, cut, and added to a small pot of boiling water, cooked until floating, then spooned out into a cold water bath. Repeated until all pasta done. Kept leftover pasta water. Next time use only ½ egg!

Beat 2 eggs w/ about 1 1/2c grated parmesan.

Placed pan of bacon back on heat, added some olive oil. Strained the gnocchi and added to pan, stirring until heated through. Added 2 ladles of pasta water, removed from heat, stirred in egg mixture and 1/4c finely chopped parsley. Served garnished w/ crispy bread crumbs.

This was **to die for**. Although bread crumbs had a slight burned flavour, next time crisp them at very low heat or in oven.

5-Mar-13

For dinner made spaghetti & meatballs.

Meatballs:

* Pulsed ¾ loaf French bread in foodpro, place in large bowl
* Add cayenne, salt, pepper, onion powder, ¾ package of parm/romano mix
* Pulse ¼ bunch whole parsley, including stems, add to bread mixture and stir in
* Add milk to bread mixture, allow to soak in until you have only a slightly moist mixture
* Add 2 packages each of ground, pork and veal. Break up and combine well with bread crumbs
* Preheat oven to 350F
* Form into heaping 1tbsp balls and brown on all sides in large saucepan with plenty of oil, remove when cooked to large pot
* When done start your sauce

Sauce:

* In a blender combine 1 ½ whole bunches oregano removed from stem
* ½ bunch rosemary
* 5 cloves garlic
* 3/4c olive oil
* Salt, sugar, MSG
* Leftover fat from cooking meatballs
* 1 large can san marzano tomatoes
* Pulse and add to stock pot w/ meatballs
* One at a time, pulse and add 3 more cans of tomatoes.
* Stir well, add pot (uncovered) to oven and cook for 1 ½ hrs

Serve with spaghetti.

9-Mar-13

Made roast chicken for dinner. Injected with brine, then let rest in fridge 3 days. Cook at 200F for 2 hours, then remove from oven, crank to 550F and cook for another 7 mins.

Don’t think I’ll be doing it that way again. Lots of smoke, chicken wasn’t all that browned, and the skin wasn’t salty. I think next time I’ll kosher salt, then rest in fridge 3 days, then just cook at a really high temp like 425 or something.

For breakfast tomorrow I want to make waffles benedict.

10-Mar-13

For brunch made waffles benedict. Pre-made the eggs and let them cool but they were cool when served. Next time warm them for a few mins in hot water. Waffles were also soft. Instead of stacking them keep them uncovered in hot oven.

11-Mar

Want to make fish sandwiches. Battered fried fish w/ lettuce and tartar sauce.

15-Mar-13

Made a grilled romaine Caesar tonight, was incredibly delicious. Dressing was Julia’s recipe. Cut a romaine heart in half and brushed it with olive oil, then grilled in a very hot grill pan to give it scorch marks. Plated, salted, and peppered. Topped with croutons, pancetta bacon bits, dressing, and shaved parm.

The croutons were fresh cubed Belgian bread tossed in garlic oil then roasted at 325F convec until just browned. Turned out crispy on the outside and still tender on the inside, then finished with pepper and salt.

17-Mar-13

Made sloppy joe’s for dinner. Yuck! Also made a batch of bagels using Emeril’s recipe. Made 3.1 oz dough balls, folded them in on themselves like a roll, then dipped in flour, poked a hole in the centre. Seemed to work quite well.

24-Mar-13

For dinner made chicken piccata, chef john’sclazed carrots, and scalloped potatoes.

Overcooked and under salted the potatoes. They were edible but not very good.

Brandy and Karlee hated the carrots, I thought they weren’t bad.

Chicken was very very good. Seared off 5 chicken thighs in a pan, getting them extremely browned on the skin side before flipping, cooking a few more mins, then moving to 400F oven to finish. Removed pan from oven, removed thighs, and added shallots and chopped capers and cooked until tender. Added juice of ½ lemon, and 1/4c vermouth to deglaze pan, reduced. Added cracked pepper. Added 1/2c chicken stock and reduced until thick, added salt to taste. Add chicken to pan and turn to coat with sauce. Awesome!

1-Apr-13

Use leek greens in stock.

10-Apr-13

For dinner made a very tasty pasta and cauliflower casserole. Start with popcorn cauliflower:

* Chop ¾ head of cauliflower and stems into ~ 1” cubes
* Toss with 1 ½ tbsp. olive oil, 1 tsp kosher salt, ½ tsp pepper, 2 crushed garlic cloves
* Roast at 400F convec, stirring occasionally until cooked and well browned

Combine with 1c cooked macaroni or pasta shells, 2 tbsp parsley, ½ cup grated cheese. Top w/ a gratin of olive oil and panko. Cook at 400F convec until gratin is browned. Really tasty!

Also started another roast chicken, trying for that skin nirvana! Spatchcocked it, then rubbed liberally with salt and dried sage, placed on paper towel on place and into fridge for 3 days. Will cook on very high heat to crisp up skin, and spatchcock should prevent it from cooking unevenly.

13-Apr-13

For dinner made spatchcocked roast chicken and potato “wedges”. The chicken was rubbed with salt and sage and dried for 3 days. Then cooked at 400F convestion until cooked. The skin wasn’t salty enough but it was very, very crispy.

The potatoes I sliced to about ¼” thick, tossed in seasoned flour, then was of eggs + buttermilk, then shallow fried for 10 mins. Turned out fantastic.

14-Apr-13

Started a batch of duck breast prosciutto from “Charcuterie.”

Also made [these](http://www.verybestbaking.com/recipes/18476/Original-NESTL%C3%89-TOLL-HOUSE-Chocolate-Chip-Cookies/detail.aspx) tollhouse cookies using hazelnuts. Really liked them.

15-Apr-13

For dinner made the [satay and peanut sauce recipe](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/04/thai-chicken-satay-recipe.html) from SeriousEats. Didn’t like them that much but it \*did\*inspire me to find a good recipe.

16-Apr-13

Accidentally left my duck breast curing for over 24 hours too long! I hope it’s not ruined. It’s ready this coming Monday.

Today I made an asiago and truffle oil mac and cheese, the only notable part being as a gratin I used one huge casserole-sized parmesan tuile.

17-Apr-13

For dinner made asparagus soup and grilled cheese. The soup was 1 ½ bunches asparagus (bottoms of thick ones peeled) with tops removed and set aside. Add 1 large clove garlic, ½ onion, small amount of water and cooked until completely tender. Remove from heat, add heavy cream, blend on high for 2 mins. Add back to pot, sugar, salt and pepper to taste, add chopped asparagus tops and cook on low until tender. This was great. Tonnes of asparagus flavour and each bite had a tonne of asparagus tops. Yum!

Made a “pesto” of canned artichoke hearts (drained), olive oil, salt, fresh garlic, pepper. Blended until very smooth. It was super garlicy but delicious.

Grilled cheese was on French bread, with artichoke pesto, basil, and mozzarella. Then dipped in more pesto while eating. Yummy as hell!

Reddit suggestion for clarifying stock: “if you want to get really clear stock you can freeze the stock and then put the frozen block of stock over a mesh strainer with cheesecloth and it will clarify like a consomme. This process is called gel clarification and utilizes the process of syneresis that allows the liquid to seep out of the gel while the solids stay stuck in the leftover gel.”

20-Apr-13

For dinner making green curry and coconut rice.

For curry took 1 can coconut milk, whisked in ½ jar green curry paste. Added ½ chopped onion, ½ chopped yellow pepper, 1 chopped jalapeno, some green hot sauce, 2 tbsp brown sugar, 2 tbsp fish sauce, 2 crushed stalks lemon grass, one large sliced chicken breast, bamboo shoots, and will finish with frozen peas and fresh basil.

Coconut rice is equal parts coconut milk and water, some salt, and rice.

The curry turned out freaking delicious. Next time I won’t slow cook it. The rice was also very successful, but I had to add some sugar to give it the taste I wanted.

I want to make toad in the hole in muffin tins, with a chunk of sausage in the middle.

21-Apr-13

Made oven spare ribs. 2:45, 1:45, grill. Tasted very good but terribly overcooked. The rub was Memphis rub, and the sauce was brown sugar, garlic, lots of white vinegar, ketchup, Dijon, Worcestershire, pepper, cooked down. I also removed the membrane for the first time and the ribs definitely pulled back from the bone. No doubt this is also why they fell apart while being pulled off the grill.

Made [Alton Brown’s oatmeal cookies](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/alton-brown/the-oatiest-oatmeal-cookies-ever-recipe/index.html). Used 1 tsp salt, and replaced the raisins with Skor chips. Used ice cream scoop to measure them. They turned out \*huge\*! But overall they tasted good. I also noticed the batch I cooked entirely on the bottom shelf burned before they were fully cooked, but the ones I rotated shelves were fine.

24-Apr-13

Kenji says the best way to make a grilled cheese is to toast the bread, butter and flip it over, then add the cheese, so *both sides of the bread are toasted.*

25-Apr

Made [mango sorbet](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/04/mango-sorbet-recipe.html). Served it over coconut rice pudding. The rice pudding was simply sweet rice cooked in a 1:1.25 ratio, then mixed with coconut milk and honey. Both were very good.

26-Apr-13

Made toad-in-the-hole. Took 2 parcooked sausages and cut them into 12 pieces. Made a batch of Yorkshire pudding batter, filled miffun tins to around ¾, dropped in a piece of sausage, and cooked for 40 minutes. Made onion gravy (sautéed chopped onions, reduced beef stock, salt, pepper, slurry) and served it over top. They puffed up like crazy, tasted delicious, but it really didn’t need the sausage.

This may be my new favourite way to make gravy. I could even strain out the onions at the end if I wanted the delicious taste in a smooth gravy.

28-Apr-13

Made a grilled cheese with bread toasted on both sides, really good. Also added guacamole, not a big fan.

Made guacamole with chips, it was super delicious. Mashed 2 avocadoes with a fork, added salt, pepper, lime juice. Chopped green onions, chopped jalapeno, chopped cilantro, diced cucumber, crushed garlic.

Also made [sour cream and poppy seed lemon loaf](http://www.canadianliving.com/food/baking_and_desserts/lemon_poppy_seed_sour_cream_cakes.php), was really good.

The other day I made sunny-side-up eggs by adding butter and basting the eggs in hot butter as they cooked. It really did work well, the tops were cooked before the bottom got crispy, and they didn’t end up with a white haze on top.

29-Apr-13

For dinner made like-5 Guys burgers and fries.

Grilled the insides of the burger buns, cooked the patties in a tonne of fat on high heat so they got nice and crispy brown. Served with American cheese, crispy prosciutto, mayo, lettuce, tomato, pickles. Not an exact replica but damned close.

For the fries was going to make Kenji’s triple-cooked. Ran out of time so instead just boiled them in 2Q water, 2 tbsp vinegar, 2 tbsp kosher salt, then oven roasted them at 400F convection until crispy. They were still really, really good. Crispy on the outside, creamy on the inside, and perfectly salted throughout – no salting required.

30-Apr-13

Tried Kenji’s 1-minute Hollandaise and it really was top-notch. Dead easy, perfect thickness, perfectly seasoned.

I want to try making hash browns with the vinegar parboiling method. 2 Quarts water, 2 tbsp vinegar, 2 tbsp kosher salt.

3-May-13

Made red thai curry for dinner. 1 can of red curry paste, 1 jar red curry, ½ a large onion, 2 tbsp fish sauce, chopped chicken breast, bamboo shoots, chopped pineapple, 1” of finely chopped ginger. Will finish with lots of fresh chopped basil and serve on sticky rice.

5-May-13

Made lobster stock. Shells of 4 lobsters, cover with water and simmer overnight. Strain out pieces then add mirepoix, bay leaves, 1 garlic clove, cook for 40 mins. Strain through cheesecloth and reduce by about 2/3. Add 1-2 tbsp tomato paste. This was freaking delicious.

6-May-13

For dinner made home-made pasta. Half-portion required about double the water the recipe called for. Cut it as spaghetti. Sauce was primavera (green beans, grape tomatoes, peas, black olives) in arugula pesto.

Also made ice cream sandwiches w/ chocolate wafer cooking and vanilla ice cream.

7-May-13

Dinner tonight is salmorejo and avocado egg salad sandwiches.

The egg salad will be chopped eggs, chopped avocado, chives, mayo, pinch of white wine vinegar, chopped parsley and some sriracha served on toasted white.

The salmorejo is done, but I used bread crumbs and milk instead of stale bread and water. I ended up using way too much milk and it came out extremely pale.

Both turned out great, Brandy loved the avocado egg salad sandwich.

Kenji says the enzyme in pineapple that breaks down meat breaks down under heat and therefore is ineffective once cooking starts.

11-May-13

Made the best lasagna I’ve ever eaten today. Sauce was 1 can San Marzano tomatoes, 4 very ripe tomatoes, oregano, rosemary, parsley, vermouth, heavy cream, tomato paste, sugar, Worcestershire, salt, MSG blended and left uncooked. Made a strong mornay sauce w/ parmesan, emmental, and gruyere. Layered with sauce, 2 layers of béchamel, mozzarella, and topped with pizza mozzarella and more parm, emm, and gruyere. Baked for 45 mins at 350F until cheese on top was crispy. Super rich, creamy, and delicious.

I started a batch of Williams Sonoma [lemon-rosemary no-knead bread](http://www.williams-sonoma.com/recipe/rosemary-lemon-no-knead-bread.html). Will cook it tomorrow.

Also added a rub to some beef back ribs. Meathead says there are actually inferior and should primarily be for braising because they have very little meat on them. He says short ribs are much better.

23-May

Made pizza margherita for dinner, probably the most authentic pizza I’ve ever made. Put the pizza stone on the absolute bottom shelf of the oven and preheated to 550F on convection.

Rolled the crust thin and perfectly round.

Sauce was 3 very ripe tomatoes, 1 ½ tbsp. tomato paste, salt, sugar, MSG. Sauced the crust, added halved sliced bocconcini balls, and cooked for 5 mins. Added whole basil leaves and cooked for 1 more minute. Removed from oven and served with more sauce (with chopped basil inside) for dipping.

The only downside was the sauce could have been more salty. It was really quite, but apparently in order to compensate for the other ingredients it needs to be especially so.

24-May-13

Made pizza bianco and Caesar salad for dinner.

Pizza was 1 whole batch pizza dough pressed out into an oval with surface dimpled by massaging. Then drizzled with olive oil, sprinkled with kosher salt, then sprinkled with shredded parmesan and chopped rosemary. Served with more uncooked marinara sauce for dipping. Very good.

Caesar dressing was 1 egg, 1/3c olive oil, 1 small crushed clove garlic, salt, pepper, juice of ½ lemon, then blended. Served with lightly toasted croutons, crispy prosciutto bacon bits, parm. Even with lots of dressing it was still really light, refreshing, and delicious.

25-Mar-13

Made potato chips last night, nearly perfect. Added 1 tbsp kosher salt and 1 ½ tbsp. white vinegar to a quart of cold water. Added one potato sliced over the mandolin and brought to a simmer for 5 mins. Drained and rinsed thoroughly with cold water then patted dry on a rack. Shallow fried in a non-stick pan for ~10 to 15 mins, weighed down so they wouldn’t curl. Removed from the pan the moment they started to brown. Added salt to taste.

Turned out super crispy, not a single soggy patch in them, and with absolutely no caramelized taste.

Next time bump up the salt to 2 tbsp so they don’t need to be seasoned after cooking. Maybe increase the vinegar so they don’t brown? Hard to say.

Perfected chip recipe:

* 2 qt water
* 2.5 tbsp salt
* 3 tbsp white vinegar

Parboil potatoes for 5 mins, rinse thoroughly with cold water and pat dry. Deep fry at 295F until crispy, serve.

These fuckers were flawless, they didn’t even brown one iota.

27-Mar-13

I always notice that my pancake recipe comes out \*super\* thick and I have to essentially double the buttermilk. But I’ve noticed a lot of people make pancakes small and quite thick. Presumably this is how the thicket batter would turn out, thinner for thinner larger pancakes.

30-May-13

For dinner made grilled Romaine hearts w/ dill ranch dressing.

Dressing was 2 parts sour cream to 1 part buttermilk to 1 part mayo. Added chopped dill and chives and salt.

Cut the Romaine hearts in half and drizzled with oil and salted, placed on a smoking hot grill for about a minute to a minute-and-a-half. Topped with dressing, crumbled blue cheese, prosciutto bacon bits, halved grape tomatoes, sliced radishes. Really awesome.

Forgot to pepper the romaine hearts after grilling. ☹

Also for the record, plain grilled romaine hearts with olive oil and salt are TO DIE FOR, no dressing required.

31-May-13

Dinner was caprese grilled cheese and cold tomato soup. Grilled cheese needed a lot more salt and the tomatoes were a bit runny.

Holy shit, I need to make roasted garlic aioli!

2-Jun-13

The roasted garlic aiolo was okay. Nothing wrong with it but flavour was very mild and mostly tasted like mayo.

For dinner made wonton soup. The broth was amazing. 1 container of white glace, cooked with 1 large chopped onion and several peppercorns, and 3 chicken thighs. Never boiled. Strained out all ingredients and passed broth through cheesecloth. Discarded onions and pepper and washed and chopped chicken meat, discarding bones. Added salt, sugar, and MSG. Added chicken gyoza, chopped chicken, and chopped green onions. Delish!

3-Jun-13

Going to make a [blackberry crumble cake](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/06/blackberry-crumb-coffee-cake-recipe.html).

For dinner making chicken and chorizo perlou. Rice cooked in stock with meat, onions, celery.

The perlou was very tasty with some Frank’s on it but otherwise was quite boring. The crumble cake was very tasty, but it could have used some whipped cream, ice cream, or coulis to make it a little less dry. Nice flavour though and not too sweet.

4-Jun-13

To calculate the hydration of a bread, divide the weight of the water by the weight of the flour. For example, if a flour has 20oz of flour and 16oz of water, 16 / 20 = .8 = 80% hydration.

Made moussaka for dinner. Wasa bit too salty but still delicious, would make it again.

Peeled an eggplant and sliced it thin, tossed in olive oil and salt. Grilled and set aside.

Made a meat sauce of diced onion, 2 cloves crushed garlic sautéed in olive oil. Add 4 chopped, seeded tomatoes, 2 tbsp tomato paste, bunch thyme, handful chopped fresh oregano, ¼ tsp cinnamon, 1 lb beef. Break up beef and reduce until liquid is gone. Salt and pepper to taste.

Make a mornay sauce of milk cooked with onion, bay leaf, peppercorns. Thicken with roux and add parmesan, grated nutmeg, and salt and pepper to taste.

In bottom of a bread pan place 1 layer grilled eggplant, layer ground beef, layer eggplant, layer ground beef, finish with a layer of eggplant, then mornay sauce. Bake at 350F for 30 mins, then turn to broil to brown on top.

10-Jun-13

For dinner made Asian hot chicken wings. Marinated them for 2 hours in soy, lime juice, honey, rice wine vinegar, garlic, pepper, ginger. Removed and dried them, reserving the marinade. Added tonnes of sriracha, brought to the boil and reduced for about 10 mins. Grilled the wings until cooked and had some charring, then tossed in the sauce. Really delicious.

11-Jun-13

For dinner going to make bacon and tomato Panini sandwiches w/ roasted garlic aioli and a vinegar slaw.

12-Jun

Instacure #1 is pink salt. It contains salt and sodium nitrite (about 6.25%). It’s for brined and wet-cured products.

Instacure #2 is salt, sodium nitrate (about 1%) and sodium nitrite (about 1%). The sodium nitrate slowly breaks down into sodium nitrite, which is why this is used for dry-cured products, salumi, prosciutto etc.

14-Jun-13

A club steak is from the front of the short loin and has an L-shaped bone. It’s similar to a T-bone but has no tenderloin muscle. A T-bone is taken from the middle of the short loin and has some tenderloin attached. A porterhouse steak is taken from the end of the short loin and has the largest portion of tenderloin muscle.

15-Jun-13

Made a 45oz AAA dry-aged steak yesterday. Salted it and let it rest uncovered in the fridge for 24 hours. Let come to room temp for 5 hours before cooking. Cooked using the Alain Ducasse method. Blowtorched the bone and all the sides over the cast iron skillet so the fat would render into the skillet. Preheated the skillet for 25 mins on Med (3 ½), then added the steak. Placed pats of cutter underneath and flipped every 5 mins. Added garlic and sage to the pan and continued to baste with butter. In the last 5 mins added pepper. Removed from heat at 127 degrees and let rest for 20 mins, and salted to taste.

18-Jun

For dinner made broccoli and cream cheese popovers. Steamed some broccoli and pulsed it in a foodpro a few times. Combined it with one pkg softened cream cheese, some nutmeg, and cayenne. Large dollop on a square of puff pastry, egg wash, fold in triangle, egg wash again, 2 slashes for vents, bake at 400F convection until very puffy and browned.

Served with a “raita” of cilantro, jalapeno, chives, salt, pepper crushed in mortar and mixed with greek yoghurt. Both were delicious.

19-Jun-13

Some things I learned from my steak experiments:

* Taking a massive steak off at 128F will allow it to rise to 138F while resting
* 138F is still perfectly red throughout, no pink or purple
* If you flip your steak frequently you can sear it fairly slowly without getting a thick brown line along the surface
* Always kosher salt your meat, makes for a better crust and the saltiness is absorbed more deeply.
* Drying in fridge doesn’t seem to make much difference to the crust
* Steak heats up exponentially, takes a long time to make the first few degrees and very little time to make up the last 10.

Reverse-searing means cooking low and slow, then searing at the end at very high heat.

For dinner tonight made [Cajun chicken fritters](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/05/cajun-chicken-fritters-recipe.html), served on top of waffles with spicy country gravy. Everything was delicious, especially the fritters. Left out the cayenne and tabasco though, that would have been way too spicy.

23-Jun-13

Traditional Valencian ingredients in paella are snails, rabbit, duck, chicken, butter beans, rosemary, paprika, olive oil, saffron, a local variant of string beans, and garlic. Traditional rice is calasparra or bomba, which are short-grain rices. It’s cooked over an open fire.

It always has a layer of toasted rice on the bottom – called socarrat—which is considered essential to a traditional paella.

For dinner made a salad of quinoa, cheese tortellini, avocado, red onion, grilled shrimp, and vinaigrette. Was very good but next time I’d leave out the avocado. Also made antipasti skewers with marinated mozzarella, black olives, spicy salami, artichoke hearts, and lightly roasted heirloom cherry tomatoes. Again, tasty but I slightly overcooked the tomatoes and they were mushy.

24-Jun-13

For dinner made cheese ravioli in a pesto sauce served room temp. The pesto included plenty of well-toasted almonds, parm, pepper, garlic cooked in olive oil, basil, tarragon, and parsley. Super tasty but I’ve come to the conclusion pesto needs 2 bunches of basil.

I also made a raita salad. Mandolined English cucumber with halved grape tomatoes in a sauce of Greek yoghurt, cilantro, parsley, jalapeno, lemon juice, salt, garlic, and some sugar. Came out a bit spicy mostly from the garlic but Brandy ate the hell out of it.

25-Jun-13

For dinner making [white gazpacho](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/06/chilled-spanish-white-gazpacho-from-joanne-chang-flour-too.html). Initial impression is it’s not that great. Not bad but not worth making again.

1-Jul-13

For dinner made breaded cod on plain basmati. Brandy and Karlee loved it and want it again.

Seasoned flour was flour, salt, pepper, Cajun seasoning. Egg wash, then panko, then shallow fried. Topped with squeezed lemon.

2-Jul-13

For dinner made [spanakopita](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/rachael-ray/spanikopita-recipe/index.html). Was pretty good. Served with mashed carrots and rutabaga, and oven roasted potatoes. Started them out boiled in a water, salt, vinegar bath, then finished in oven with bacon fat, salt, pepper, rosemary, and garlic. And finally a squeeze of lemon.

3-Jul-13

For dinner made some delicious open-faced sandwiches. Halved a loaf of Parisian bread, spread on roasted garlic aioli, pepper, fresh basil, fresh prosciutto, and sliced bocconcini. Broiled until cheese was melted and topped with grated parmesan. Delicious!

10-Jul-13

For dinner made cheese and spinach ravioli with a beef short-rib ragout. Used cornmeal to thicken the sauce, it worked really really great. Wouldn’t work if you needed a smooth sauce but it was super easy – just throw in the cornmeal and stir. I really like this idea.

14-Jul-13

Made a batch of [dilly beans](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_06/dilled_beans.html). 4 pints. Substituted dill seeds (1/2 tsp) for dill tops.

15-Jul-13

For dinner made a puff-pastry tart w/ garlic scapes, prosciutto, and finished with camembert. Quite tasty.

Made a batch of [cherry jam](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/cherry_jam_powder.html). Tastes AWESOME.

16-Jul-13

For dinner made a pretty awesome baked mac & cheese. The sauce was a béchamel with mustard, worchestershire sauce, and then 3 types of cheese. Melt it and add Frank’s Red Hot and salt to taste. The pasta was penne. Toss the penne in the sauce and then divide into gratin dishes. Broil at 450F until browned and chewy on top.

I learned that for penne, 1 level cup of raw pasta per person is about perfect.

30-Jul-13

For dinner made panko-coated fried tilapia, then served it in lettuce wraps w/ sriracha mayo, squeeze of lime, shredded radish, and cilantro. Brandy and Karlee loved the fish.

31-Jul-13

Made some polenta cakes w/ leftover sweet corn. It turned out very soft but fried it in a pan with lots of oil and it got very crusty on both sides and was actually very tasty.

3-Aug-13

Tried making tortillas like crepes. Used Robert Rodriguez’s recipe but swapped oil for lard and added a tonne of water until the batter was very runny. Added two ladles of batter per tortilla and covered them immediately after cooking with plastic wrap so the dry parts would re-absorb moisture. No idea how they’ll turn out, will check on them tomorrow.

If they turn out okay some ideas for next time: use the stand mixer to develop more gluten. Let them sit 15 mins to let the baking powder bloom, and use a non-stick pan.

After cooking them and cooling them off I recooked them in a non-stick pan and tried them. Definitely more crepe than tortilla, but they were certainly very good, and paper-thin.

5-Aug-13

For dinner smoked some really good quality beef shortribs. Used meathead’s [Big Bad Beef rub](http://www.amazingribs.com/recipes/rubs_pastes_marinades_and_brines/big_bad_beef_rub.html). Smoked them with oak and cooked them to an internal temp of 195F (was supposed to be 180, oops!). Unfortunately the rub was definitely too salty. And they had a lot of fat that had to be cut off. While they tasted good I just don’t see how they’re worth it for the price.

6-Aug-13

Started a batch of [sauerkraut](http://www.thekitchn.com/how-to-make-easy-homemade-sauerkraut-in-a-mason-jar-cooking-lessons-from-the-kitchn-193124). In the end it turned out very tasty and I canned some of it.

30-Aug-13

Made a ratatouille. Put some grill marks on green zucchini, yellow zucchini, and eggplant. Then salted and peppered, layered them in a casserole, topped with finely sliced red pepper and topped with a tomato, garlic, onion, basil sauce. Baked at 325 for about 15 mins covered in foil, then another 15 mins uncovered, and served. A little wet, but very tasty. However I think I would have found it boring had the veggies not been grilled.

4-Sep-13

Made Navajo nachos for dinner. Rolled out pizza dough and deep fried until golden. Top with refried beans, spiced ground beef, cheese, and heat under broiler. Top with chopped tomatoes, chopped green onions, sliced jalapenos, cilantro, and sour cream. Very delicious. The bread was fluffy on the inside an crispy on the outside without being hard.

11-Sep-13

For dinner made german potato salad, green bean salad, and a strip loin steak w/ chimichurri sauce. The potato salad was baby red tomatoes, green onions, bacon, salt, pepper, sugar, whole seed Dijon mustard, white balsamic vinegar. Very mediocre.

The green bean salad was delicious. Blanched chopped green beans, sherry vinegar, olive oil, salt, pepper, pearl bocconcini, toasted almonds, capers. With some quinoa added it would make a great dinner salad.

Brandy couldn’t stop eating the chimichurri. It was garlic, olive oil, red wine vinegar, lime juice, salt, pepper, parsley and cilantro.

20-Sep

For dinner made a potroast with carrots and potatoes. Strained out the cooking liquid and thickened it into a gravy. Served over egg noodles. Really tasty.

21-Sep-13

For brunch made scrambled eggs and puff pastry rolls with prosciutto and swiss cheese.

29-Sep-13

For dinner making [pork braised in milk](http://memoriediangelina.blogspot.ca/2009/11/arrosto-di-maiale-al-latte.html) (maiale al latte) served on cheesy sage polenta w/ steamed green beans.

Preheated a dutch oven with some olive oil. Seasoned a boneless pork rib roast with salt and pepper then seared on all sides. Added one large clove of crushed garlic, about 1/4c chiffonade sage, large bouquet garni of thyme. Sauteed some more then filled with milk up to half-way point up roast. Simmered roast covered for 1.5 hours and removed.

Removed thyme and cooked remaining sauce at medium until completely reduced and remnants were well-browned. Added about 1c heavy cream and whisked well. Sliced the pork roast thin and topped with sauce. This was really delicious. Pork was delicious, super-tender on its own and sauce only made it better.

Also served with browned butter sage polenta. Heated 2 tbsp butter in a small saucepan on med-high and cooked until brown. Added 3 tbsp chopped saged and stirred, added 1c milk and 1/2c water and brought to a boil. Added 1/2c corn meal (slowly) and stirred until thickened. Stirred in 1/4c grated parmesan. Add milk as required to maintain creamy consistency. Salt and pepper to taste. Also very delicious, esp with sauce from the pork.

Also served with green beans. Add grean beans to heavily water on the boil and cook to al dente. Remove from water to a bowl of cold water. Let rest, and retain the cooking liquid off the heat. 2 mins before serving add the beans back to the water to reheat, then remove and serve. Came out nice and green and crispy.

13-Oct-13

For dinner making Caesar grilled skicken skewers, lemon herbed potatoes, and sautéed cauliflower w/ herbed breadcrumbs.

Chicken: Marinade in leftover home-made Caesar salad dressing for 5 hours. Skewer and grill.

Potatoes: Peel and quarter 3 very large potatoes. Boil in 2 qt water, 2 heaving tbsp. salt, juice of 1 whole lemon. In small saucepan melt ¾ stick butter, 1 tbsp lemon juice and gently reduce. Pour over cooked potatoes, add 3 tbsp finely chopped parsley, and toss.

Cauliflower: Remove the flowerettes only of 1 head cauliflower. Break apart into roughly popcorn-sized bits, discard the stems. Toss with olive oil, salt, pepper. Add ¼ c chopped onion. Sautee in non-stick pan on medium heat until full cooked and well-browned. Top with leftover garlic herb bread crumbs.

14-Oct-13

Randal came for thankgiving linner. Made turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, peas, and gravy.

Turkey was made as per Thomas Keller’s recipe minus the root veggies. Came out very good although dry.

Stuffing was stock w/ onions, carrot, celery, butter, and several egg whites mixed in. Tossed them in a bowl with some dried sage and placed in a buttered 13x9 pan. Bakes until crispy on top.

Potatoes were a rough take on Robuchon’s. 4 large potatoes boiled, then passed through a food mill. Add 2 whole sticks of butter, milk salt to taste. Very decadent and yummy.

For dessert I made [pumpkin spice ice cream](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/10/pumpkin-spice-ice-cream-recipe.html). Left out the bourbon and added in about 3/4c of crushed amaretti cookies. Tasted good considering, although the amaretti was probably unnecessary. Couldn’t even tell it was in there.

18-Oct

Made some lamb vindaloo:

1 lab leg roast trimmed & cubed

1 ½ tbsp. ghee

1 large onion diced

1 large clove garlic

6 cloves

2 sticks cinnamon

1 tsp cumin seed

½ tsp ground cardamom

3/4c cashews

1 qt water

1 tsp garam masala

2c greek yoghurt

In the bottom of a pressure cooker add the ghee and heat it until smoking. Add the lamb and sautee until browned.

Add the onion, garlic, cloves, cinnamon, cumin, and cardamom and sautee a further 2-3 minutes.

Add the water and cashews, cover, and pressure cook for 30 mins.

Remove from heat, equalize the pressure, and allow to partially cool. Add garam masala and stir. Remove the pieces of meat to a separate container. Remove and discard the cinnamon.

Add all the remaining contents to a blender along with the yoghurt and blend until smooth.

Recombine the ingredients in a pot and reheat if required. Salt to taste. Serve over saffron rice pilaf or with naan bread.

20-Oct-13

Making [almond brittle](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/trisha-yearwood/peanut-brittle-recipe/index.html). First batch was a disaster, my candy thermometer was broken. Second batch turned out perfect, Brandy really loved it.

Kenji say you can sterilize a raw egg by holding it a few hours at 130F, but it won’t cook or coagulate at all. Also that 165F is the best temp for a hard-boiled egg.

Alex Talbot and Aki Kamozawa cooking eggs for 13 minutes at 167°F for a soft-boiled egg that doesn’t hold its shape.

Kenji says for the perfect soft-boiled egg do 3 minutes in simmering water, then a minute in an ice bath, then 45 mins at 143F.

He also recommends salmon be done at 130F.

21-Oct-13

First experiment with circulator. Cooked two 3-minute eggs and cooled in water bath. Cooked one at 143F for 45 mins, cracked the other. White was partially congealed with several clear parts, yolk completely raw. Edible but definitely undercooked, completely unpeelable.

The sous vide egg was closer to being peelable, but ultimately not. The white was translucent throughout with no clear and – most oddly – the yolk had started to firm. Definitely edible but still not my idea of a soft-boiled egg.

According to a video on Youtube a 3-minute egg is cooked at a boil and not shocked in ice water. And has a white that is largely translucent and runny.

Heston Blumenthal’s method: Add egg to cold water. Place on highest heat and when the water boils remove from heat and let sit, covered for 6 mins. Remove from water and serve.

22-Oct-13

Made sugar snap peas s.v. 45 mins at 183F with a pat of butter and some salt. Came out a bit overcooked and \*very\* grey.

Now working on dulce de leche. A can of evaporated milk at 185F for 13 hours.

Learned that the difference between caramel and butterscotch is that caramel is made with white sugar, butterscotch is made with brown, and butterscotch includes more butter.

The difference between butterscotch and toffee is that butterscotch is heated to soft crack, and toffee to hard crack.

Tried a Heston Blumenthal 6-minute egg in small saucepan + bath and it came out with a firm white, was peelable, with a firm but still slightly runny yolk. Definitely the way to go for a peelable, firm egg, but definitely not for custardy egg eaten with a spoon.

Egg experiments:

3 minute egg on a simmer + ice bath = yolks perfectly runny, whites too clear. Don’t like.

3 minute egg + ice bath + 143F for 45 mins = custardy white, runny yolk, perfect for eating with a spoon

Heston Blumenthal 6-minute egg = firm white, firm but slightly runny yolk, perfect for a peelable soft boiled egg.

23-Oct-13

Made a Heston Blumenthal 5-minute egg and it was even better.

TIL how to flawlessly peel a medium-boiled egg!

Equipment: 1 spoon. It should be either very small, or with a shallow curve. If the curve of the spoon doesn’t match the curve of an egg it won’t work.

Invert the egg and tap on its bottom with the spoon until it is cracked and loose. (This part of the egg is air-filled, there is no white connected to this part.) Peel off this bottom piece being sure to pierce and remove the membrane. Now insert the spoon between the shell and the white, being sure to be beneath the membrane. Gently work it around the egg, keeping it as close to the shell as possible, going no further than half-way down the egg. Continue until you’ve gone all the way around the egg, again not going any further than half-way down. Gently peel away the portion of shell you’ve already freed from the egg. Repeat, this time going all the way down and completely freeing the egg from the shell. Result: a perfectly peeled egg!

The ducle de leche was a complete failure. After 13 hours I got brown milk.

Just put in 2 seasoned thick-cut pork chops at 140F for two hours. Came out pretty good, very juicy.

26-Oct-13

For dinner made meatloaf. 1 pks medium ground beef, 1 pkg onion soup mix, salt, pepper, 2 eggs, bread crumbs, Worcestershire sauce. Mixed, spread in a bread tin and topped with BBQ sauce. Baked at 325F convec until internal temp of 165F. Let rest 15 mins to set a bit. Served with broccoli boiled in heavily salted water and boiled potatoes in 1 qt. water, 1 heaping tbsp. salt, 1 tbsp vinegar.

Everything was very good but I think from now on I forgo ketchup or BBQ sauce with meatloaf and just go with brown gravy.

27-Oct-13

For breakfast had a toasted bagel topped with smoked salmon, scrambled eggs, crème fraiche, and chives. Really yummy.

Learned that a traditional chocolate roux uses a \*tonne\* of oil, and does, indeed keep in the fridge. In fact, when making etouffee or gumbo, they often add the onions, peppers, celery, and spice mix directly into the roux.

One video mentioned that if you don’t constantly stir the roux it can “break apart”? Also, you need to progressively turn down the heat as it gets darker to avoid burning it. Dark roux can be made in as little as 7 minutes but chocolate or black roux can take 30 to 45 mins.

General technique for a chocolate roux:

* Heat 1 part oil in cast iron pan or dutch oven until just shimmering
* Add 1 to 1.25 parts flour and stir well
* Stir frequently and continue cooking on med to med-high heat for up to 30 mins until very dark brown like chocolate syrup.
* Once completed, if making gumbo or etouffee add onions, peppers, and dry spice mix

28-Oct-13

Made an absolutely killer sandwich today. On white toast layered thin-sliced leftover sous-vide pork, thinly-sliced smoked cured beef (coldcut), marble cheese, lettuce, mayo sliced dill pickle. Holy crap this was tasty.

29-Oct-13

Made my first chocolate roux, appears to be a success. Recipe was:

1c bacon grease  
155g flour

Preheat the oil (my large grey saucepan) on 7, add the flour and begin to stir. Stir frequently. Once it begins to smoke begin to stir constantly. As it begins to darken slowly reduce heat to 5. One it reaches the colour of a Hershey’s chocolate bar turn off the heat, leave it on the burner, and continue stirring constantly until the smoking stops. Remove from burner and allow to cool.

It definitely starts to break if you don’t stir it constantly.

This was a ratio of 1:1.25. It was a bit runny and although it thickened at the end I’m sure I could do 1:1.35, which is 1c oil to 169g flour.

1-Nov-13

Made gumbo today:

* 2c chocolate roux
* 1c diced onion
* 1c diced celery
* 1c diced bell pepper
* 2c diced chorizo
* 2 bay leaves
* 2 cloves crushed garlic
* ½ tsp black pepper
* ½ tsp cayenne pepper
* 4c chicken stock
* 3 chicken thighs
* 1c chopped okra
* 10 jumbo shrimp

To the hot roux add the onion, celery, pepper, and sausage and cook, stirring frequently until vegetables begin to become translucent.

Add chicken stock, bay leaves, garlic, pepper, cayenne, and okra. Place the whole chicken thighs in the pot and simmer for 1 hour.

Remove the chicken thighs and let cool slightly. Add shrimp. Remove the meat from the bones, chop, and add to pot.

Cool overnight and skim off any excess fat, then heat and serve with white rice.

3-Nov-13

Made a loaf of [cheddar jalapeno bread](http://www.epicurious.com/articlesguides/bestof/toprecipes/bestbreadrecipes/recipes/food/views/Cheddar-Jalapeno-Bread-237667). Also added a few tablespoons of chopped red bell pepper for colour. Came out super tender and fluffy, infinitely better than the pic posted on Epicurious.

For dinner made a gorgonzola cream sauce. Reduced some heavy cream, added some parmesan, pepper, salt, crumbled gorgonzola. Whisked until smooth. Added a handful of chopped parsley then tossed with gnocchi and served topped with crispy herbed bread crumbs. Very tasty.

Started a 40-hour cook on a beef strip loin roast. Rubbed it with salt, pepper, and garlic powder and have it set to 134F.

4-Nov-13

Modernist cuisine claims the reason sous-vide meat is so juicy is that high heat causes the collagen mesh in the meat to contract, squeezing out moisture.

Took the beef out after only 24 hours because I forgot we were going out for my birthday. Strained out the juices from the bag, they were nice and dark but fairly red. Tasted great though. Cooked them whereupon all the blood coagulated. Strained that and it still was quite tasty. Modernist Cuisine has a recipe for rare meat jus so maybe I should have left it as-is.

Preheated the oven to 550F with a cast iron, then added oil and placed the roast in fat side down, cooked for 5 mins. Removed from oven, let rest 10 mins, then sliced.

Ho-lee-fuck. So tender, so tasty. Even the traditionally tough parts were totally edible. Brandy absolutely loved it, this was amazing.

Next time I think I’ll cook it at 132 though, wasn’t quite pink enough.

Modernist cuisine says meat has to “bloom” in order to take on its full pink colour. This is because myglobin needs to react with oxygen to achieve its bright red colour. So maybe I don’t cook to 132 after all!

5-Nov-13

Made a Joy of Cooking carrot cake for my birfday. Used a 9x9 pan for a change and it turned out perfect. Adapted a recipe for cream cheese icing that was out of this world:

* 1 package Philadelphia cream cheese
* ¼ cup (4 tbsp) melted butter
* 1 tsp lemon juice
* 1 tsp lemon zest
* 1 cup icing sugar

Bring the cream cheese to room temp and mix it until smooth. Add butter, lemon juice, zest and mix until smooth. Slowly add icing sugar, stirring constantly. This was super fucking tasty!

Also started an au jus for the Philly cheesesteak dips tomorrow. Preheated oven to 450F convection. In a roasting pan added 1 large onion roughly chopped, then 3 large carrots roughly chopped, and finally one package of beef marrow bones. Roast for 1 hour, tossing occasionally.

Place the meat and veggies in a saucepan, add 2 bay leaves, 6 peppercorns, 1/2c red wine, and one package of stewing beef, finely chopped. Cover with cold water and simmer overnight.

Chilled in fridge then skimmed off the fat. Ran it through a strainer twice, then through paper towel twice. Finished it with salt, MSG, sugar, and red wine vinegar. Used a bit too much vinegar though…

9-Nov-13

Made some doughnuts today. Fried pizza dough until golden brown then tossed in white sugar and cinnamon. Pretty tasty. Probably put them away warm though because all the sugar dissolved and they’re not nearly as good now.

11-Nov-13

Took out the pork shoulder after 72 hours at 155F. Strained the juices and added them back after pulling the pork. The fat was falling-apart and delicious. The flavor of everything was amazing, but it was definitely overcooked. Next time aim for 48 hours.

Served it on hamburger buns topped with creamy coleslaw and a side of baked mac and cheese made with jalapeno Havarti.

13-Nov-13

For dinner made poutine. Cooked the fries in brine, then baked at 400F convec. They never browned but tasted great plain. Made a brown gravy with the au jus from the pork shoulder, plus a box of beef stock. Reduced them both heavily. Made a brown roux with 2 heaping tablespoons of flour and added the cooled stock. Barely thickened it at all so I had to resort to a slurry. Layered hot fries with cheese curds in a bowl, poured on hot gravy and served.

Was so-so. There were three main flaws:

* The fries should not have been cooked in brine, it made everything too salty.
* The gravy was missing the smoky flavour of rendered beef drippings.
* The gravy tasted floury.

15-Nov-13

Someone on yahoo said sodium citrate is the product used to keep fruit from browning and is available at the grocery store. Fruit Fresh, or something like that.

16-Nov-13

Made a batch of smoked gouda and edam. 2h cold smoke on applewood. Also opened a 2+ year smoked cheddar that’s been sitting in the fridge. Sharp, dry, crumbly, and incredibly delicious.

Started a s-v batch of amazing beef short ribs. 72 hours at 144F. Rub was 2 tbsp salt, 2 tbsp garlic powder, 1 tbsp pepper, 2 tbsp brown sugar, and ¼ tsp cayenne.

Also threw ¾ of them in the oven at 350F since they couldn’t fit in the s-v. I left the really fatty ones out and cooked them in the oven, but in hindsight I bet the s-v would have turned that fat into butter.

20-Nov-13

Bisque is thickened with rice.

Making a lobster bisque. Took my lobster stock (approx. 6 cups) and heated on stove. Mandolined in:

* 1 medium onion
* 1 stalk celery
* 1 med carrot
* 2 large cloves garlic

Added:

* Small bunch parsley + stems, roughly chopped
* 2 lobster tails

Removed lobster tails when cooked, let cool, then broke down and chopped well. Reserved meat in flesh.

Cooked stock for a total of 40 mins uncovered then strained out all solids.

Add:

* 1/3c raw white rice
* 1/4c tomato paste
* 3 tbsp brandy
* 1 tsp paprika
* 1 tsp Old Bay

Cook another 15 mins, then blend until smooth. Add 1/2c heavy cream, reserved lobster meat, then serve, drizzle with cream, garnish with fresh chopped tarragon.

This was fucking DELICIOUS. A little seafood-y, salty, sweet, tomatoey, spicy, and the tarragon was a fantastic contrast. Brandy would have loved this.

Making a batch of cream biscuits from Foodwishes but added 1/3c each of chopped green onions and chopped black forest ham. They turned out okay, but didn’t rise much at all, and next time leave out the sugar when making savoury biscuits.

21-Nov-13

For dinner made flatbread. Preheated oven to 550F with a skillet, rolled out to into large rectangle. Drizzle with oil, then add mandolined sweet onions, home-made sauerkraut, kielbasa, home-smoked gouda. Cook until done then garnish with chopped red swiss chard.

23-Nov-13

Made a batch of biscuits with self-rising flour. 250g flour, ½ stick butter, 1/2c parmesan, 3/4c milk. Combine and cut very thick, folding in thirds every time with lots of flour between layers. Bake at 450F for 10 mins. Turned out really really awesome.

Used the leftover pizza dough to make pretzel rolls. Formed them and let them rise, then boiled for about 5 mins in 1.5 quarts of water with 3 tbsp baking soda. Took them out, scored them, then cooked them at 425F convection until browned.

24-Nov-13

Made Coquilles St. Jacques from foodwishes. Quite good but I needed to reduce the cream much more.

I want to make sous vie pork rillettes with a skin-on pork shoulder.

25-Nov-13

For dinner made Singapore noodles. Added to a wok, in this order:

* 1 can light coconut milk
* 1-2 tbsp curry powder
* 1 tbsp salt
* 1 clove garlic, minced
* 1 sliced chicken breast
* 1 package rice vermicelli
* 1 can shrimp
* ½ can bamboo shoots
* ½ can water chestnuts
* 1 c shredded savoy cabbage
* Water as needed to hydrate

Garnished with fresh scallions and sriracha to taste. Absolutely delicious.

26-Nov-13

For dinner made sticky rice:

In a medium saucepan add 1c rinsed sweet rice. Add 1 ¼ c water. Add 1 chopped chicken breast and 4 slices cooked bacon, chopped. Cover and bring to boil then reduce to a bare simmer. Cook for 20 mins.

Stir in: ½ can water chestnuts, ½ can bamboo shoots, ½ c frozen peas, 1 ½ tbsp. rice vinegar, 2 tbsp soy sauce, ½ tsp sriracha. Garnish with scallions and sriracha to taste.

Really tasty.

27-Nov-13

Made a batch of Flanagan chili. In a dutch oven added one king can of beer and 2 ancho chilis, 2 New Mexico chilis, and 2 cascabel’s. Added 3 cloves of garlic, one large minced onion, 1 package minced mushrooms, 2 tsp cumin powder, 1 tsp black pepper, 1 can tomatoes, 1/3c molasses.

Cooked until onions were translucent, removed and blended until smooth.

Cleaned the Dutch oven and added 1 ½ tbsp oil and heated until shimmering. Add one lb medium ground beef and stir well. Allow liquid to cook away and brown, stirring regularly.

Add a mirepoix of ½ large minced onion, 2 diced stalks celery, 2 diced large carrots. Stir regularly until celery and onion begin to become translucent.

Add chili back in, 2 bay leaves, 2 tbsp marmite, 1 ½ tbsp. beef bouillon, 2 tbsp cider vinegar, 1 can red kidney beans, salt to taste.

Simmer for 1 hour.

Read that baguettes are 390g of dough.

1-Dec-13

Started my brisket. 1/3 of it will be sous vide. I rubbed it with salt, pepper, garlic powder, and sugar and am cooking it for 48 hours.

The other 2 thirds will brine for 5 days and then be pastrami.

5-Dec-13

Made a really delicious faux-Asian broth today. 1 quart chicken stock, lemon juice, thinly sliced ginger, 1 large clove garlic sliced, small amount soy sauce, sugar, salt, MSG. Simmer 30 mins then discard solids.

Will serve it with leftover s.v. beef, noodles, sprouts, cilantro, green onions.

10-Dec-13

For dinner made a nice ham bisque. In a pot added 2 qts water, 1 smoked ham hock, 2 bay leaves, 3 cloves garlic, ½ onion (which had both been pureed in some of the water), 1 can tomato paste, 2 tbsp paprika and simmered until meat was very tender. Removed hock from soup and let cool, added 3/4c basmati rice, salt, sugar, several dashes Frank’s red hot, and cooked until rice was soft. Blended with an immersion blender until very smooth, added chopped ham back to soup along with 3/4c rice and cooked until tender and served.

21-Dec-13

It snowed last week like crazy and I didn’t feel like trudging out to the smoker. To finish it I cooked it in the oven at 300 to an internal temp of 195F. Let it rest a few days then steamed it to an internal temp of 204F. Sliced it and served it on rye with yellow mustard. Really quite good, almost a bit too fatty. Perhaps a bit too tender but altogether my best pastrami yet and far better than the store bought shit.

25-Dec

Made [The Best Chocolate Chip Cookies](http://www.seriouseats.com/recipes/2013/12/the-food-lab-best-chocolate-chip-cookie-recipe.html) from SeriousEats, and they were really quite great. The only thing I changed was I used salted butter instead of unsalted and left out the sprinkling of sea salt. 40g cookies were the perfect size, measured out when cold then rolled in the hand until perfectly round.

30-Dec-13

Made a turkey breast to use as sandwich cold cuts. Marinaded in Italian dressing overnight, then cooked s.v. for 2 hours at 150F.

Bag was hard to seal with all the liquid, next time don’t seal with the marinade.

Made the noodles by hand, rolled them out with the machine, then thick-cut them with a pizza roller. Then tossed with semolina in a huge bowl before straining out the extra semolina and cooking them. They came out perfect. The paprikash was also totally delicious.

4-Jan-14

Making cottage pie for dinner, new method. Fried some turkey and pork in dutch oven with salt, pepper, poultry spice, fresh thyme, savoury, crushed cloves, chopped onions, diced carrots. After cooked added gravy, frozen peas, frozen corn. It tastes amazing. Will place creamy mashed over that and serve as-is.