

ALWAYS BUY EGGS

With these babies in your fridge, you're only minutes away from a satisfying meal. Scramble an egg with leftovers or drop an egg on top of a salad or a plate of stir-fried vegetables, and deliciousness is guaranteed.

BUY FRESH BREAD

Try to buy fresh loaves of interesting bread from an independent bakery or the bakery in your grocery store. Although fresh loaves don't last as long as sliced bread, they're much more enjoyable, and you can use the old stuff to make panzanella (p. 49) or croutons or breadcrumbs (p. 146) to top other dishes. Later in the day, many independent bakeries offer deep discounts on bread they would otherwise have to throw out.

DON'T BUY DRINKS

All the body needs drink-wise is water. Except for milk, most packaged drinks are overpriced and deliver a lot of sugar without filling you up the way a piece of fruit or a bowl of yogurt does. If you want a special drink, make agua fresca (p. 149), a smoothie (p. 150), or tea.

TREAT YOUR FREEZER WITH RESPECT

A freezer can be a great friend for saving time by letting you prepare large batches of food at once. Cooking dried beans takes a while (p. 145), so make more than you need, then freeze the rest. Another great trick I learned from a reader is to dice a whole package of bacon, fry it, then freeze it in small parcels. This makes it easy to add a small amount of bacon to a dish without the temptation of using the whole package.

TURN CHICKEN SKIN INTO SCHMALTZ

Schmaltz is rendered chicken fat that you can use like butter. Buy chicken that still has its skin, then trim the skins and lay them in a pan on low heat. Add a cup or so of water and simmer until the fat releases from the skin and the water cooks off. Let the fat cool, then throw away the skins and pour the fat into a glass jar. Store in the fridge.

BUY A PEPPER GRINDER

Seriously, banish pre-ground pepper from your life; it loses all flavor when it sits around. Fresh pepper creates pops of intense flavor on the tongue and lights up bland dishes. One of the most popular dishes in Rome is just pasta with butter and pepper: give it a try!

FROZEN FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Fresh berries can be expensive, but the frozen ones often go on sale and are great for smoothies. Frozen veggies are quick to add to soups and rice dishes. Again, compare prices to see whether frozen is the best value.

[berries](#), [peas](#), [green beans](#), [corn](#)

BUY FOODS THAT CAN BE USED IN MULTIPLE MEALS

Versatile ingredients save meals. If you buy flour, you can make tortillas (p. 137), roti (p. 138), scones (p. 22), and pancakes (p. 18). If you buy yogurt (or make your own), you can have it with fruit (p. 32), make raita (p. 164) and tzatziki (p. 165), or use it in a drink (p. 150). Need I even mention the versatility of garlic or lemons? If you always keep them around, you can make anything else taste fantastic.

Omelette

FOR TWO



I make this omelette at least once a week. It's insanely delicious, whether laden with veggies or kept simple. I love it with dill, but it's good with almost any herb or scallions. Once you are a pro at making this, add any other cooked veggies you have around.

4 eggs
2 tbsp fresh dill, finely chopped
salt and pepper
butter for the pan
1 shallot or $\frac{1}{2}$ small red onion, finely diced
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated cheese

Crack the eggs in a bowl. Add the dill, salt, pepper, and beat with a fork.

Put a big saucepan on medium-high heat. Melt a small blob of butter in the pan. Once the butter is sizzling, add the onion and sauté for about two minutes, until it's translucent and smells great.

Add the egg to the hot pan and swirl it around to coat the surface evenly. If the center of the omelette cooks more quickly than the edge, use a spatula to pull any raw egg into the middle. Then stop touching it.

After about 30 seconds, toss the cheese on top along with any other raw or cooked vegetable you feel like adding. Once none of the egg remains translucent, fold the omelette in half with your spatula, then lift it out of the pan. You don't want any brown on your eggs.

If I'm serving two people, I usually cut one large omelette in half rather than making two omelettes. However, when you feel like being fancy, you can make a pair of two-egg omelettes simply by using half the ingredients for each. For extra fanciness, roll up the omelette instead of folding it—that's how the French do it, traditionally. The result will be quite thin and tender.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Granola Bars

MAKES TWELVE

Heat the oven to 350 °F.

Butter or oil an 8" x 11" baking pan. If you have a different size pan, that's fine—it'll just change how thick the bars are.

Pour the oats into a large bowl. You can use quick oats if they're all you have, but I prefer the bite and chew of rolled oats. For a different texture, you can also substitute a cup of oats with a cup of Rice Krispies, but the bars are great either way.

Add the peanut butter, half the jelly, the water, and the salt to a small pan. Stir over low heat until it's smooth.

Mix the peanut butter and jelly concoction into the oats until all the oats are coated and you have a sticky mass. Dump the mixture into the oiled pan and press it into an even layer. Spread the remaining jelly over the top.

Pop the pan into the oven for 25 minutes, until it's toasty and brown around the edges. Mmm. Crunchy.

Leave the bars in the pan until they cool completely, about an hour, then slice into 12 bars.

Tired of endless PB+J sandwiches? Give these bars a try instead! I designed them for my friend Alex, who is allergic to gluten and is the best long-distance runner I know. I wanted to create a simple but nutritious breakfast that he could grab on his way out for a run. They are a little more crumbly than a store-bought granola bar, however.

As a bonus, these are made entirely from ingredients that you can find in any corner store or food pantry. Any kind of jam or jelly will do; I used blueberry, but grape or strawberry or any other flavor would be tasty.

3 cups rolled oats (or 2 cups oats and 1 cup Rice Krispies)

½ cup peanut butter

½ cup jelly or jam

¼ cup hot water

¼ tsp salt

butter or vegetable oil

ADDITIONS

nuts

coconut

dried fruit

honey

This thick lentil soup is a flavor-packed staple of the Indian table. There are a ton of ways to prepare dal, but the core—beyond the lentils themselves—is usually ginger, garlic, and chili, along with some dry spices.

2 cups lentils
1 tbsps butter
1 onion, finely chopped
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp black mustard seeds
1 tsp turmeric powder
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 green chili, finely chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch ginger root, grated
salt and pepper

You can use any type of lentil you like. If you're using larger lentils (like chana dal, french lentils, or split mung beans), soak them for 30 minutes to start. If you're using the small orange lentils, then don't bother soaking them; they cook very quickly.

Melt butter in a saucepan on medium heat. Add the onion and let it cook for 1 minute, then add the cumin and mustard seeds and stir them around with the onions until they sizzle. Toss in the turmeric powder, garlic, and chili and cook for 3 to 4 more minutes. Add the ginger root and stir fry quickly for about 30 seconds.

Add the lentils along with enough water to cover them, then place a lid on top. Let everything cook for 20 to 45 minutes, or until the lentils are tender. Taste the dal and add salt and pepper. You'll probably need a fair bit of salt to bring out all the flavors—a teaspoon or so.

If you have them available, top the dish with a splash of cream or some chopped fresh cilantro.

Dal

FOR FOUR

\$2.40 TOTAL
\$0.60 / SERVING





Broiled Grapefruit

FOR TWO

If your oven has a broiler, this is a fast and fun way to liven up a standard, healthy breakfast of grapefruit. This method produces a hot and sticky treat.

2 grapefruit
2 tbsp brown sugar
salt

Turn on the broiler in your oven.

Split a grapefruit in half and place it on a baking tray or in an oven-proof pan. Sprinkle the pink halves evenly with sugar and top with just a tiny bit of salt to bring out the flavor.

Place the grapefruit halves under the broiler until they turn bubbly and a little brown (or even black) around the edges. This usually takes about 3 minutes, but monitor it because every broiler is different. Don't get distracted! Overbroiling ruins a good meal fast.

If you have maple syrup on hand, use it instead of sugar for even more flavor.

This breakfast will make a grapefruit lover out of you!

Lightly Curried Butternut Squash Soup

FOR FOUR

Squash is almost the perfect vegetable for soup: it's flavorful and has a divinely smooth texture when cooked and puréed. Serve this soup to people who think they don't like squash or curry, and you'll change some minds. You can substitute any winter squash for the butternut; I just like butternut because it's faster to peel and chop than its many cousins.

1 butternut squash
or other winter squash
1 tbsp butter
1 medium onion, diced
1 green bell pepper, diced
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp cumin powder
1 tsp coriander powder
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp cayenne pepper
1 can coconut milk
3 cups water
salt and pepper

OPTIONAL
sour cream
scallions
fresh cilantro

To prepare the squash, peel off the tough skin with a potato peeler. Cut the squash in half lengthwise with a sharp chef's knife, then scoop out the seeds and gloop. (You can save the seeds for a tasty snack later, if you like: just clean the gloop off, then toast them.)

Next, slice off the stem and very bottom of the squash and throw them away. Take each half of the squash and place it face-down on a cutting board. Chop each into $\frac{1}{2}$ " slices, then turn each slice into cubes.

Put a large pot or Dutch oven on the stove on medium heat. Melt the butter and let the pot get hot. Add the onion, pepper, and garlic, then sauté for two minutes.

Add the cubed squash and spices and stir it all together. Put a lid on the pot and let it cook for another two minutes. Add the coconut milk and water and stir.

Bring the soup to a boil, then turn down the heat to low and let it cook for about 30 minutes, or until the squash is tender.

Once the squash is tender, taste the soup and add salt and pepper as needed. Soup usually needs a fair bit of salt, so be generous.

If you have an immersion blender, you can purée the soup in the pot. If you have a normal blender, wait until the soup has cooled before transferring it to the blender. Purée until smooth, then taste again and add any more salt and pepper it might need.

You can enjoy the soup as-is or serve it with another drizzle of coconut milk or a dollop of sour cream, plus some chopped scallions or cilantro.



Broiled Eggplant Salad

FOR TWO

Even if you aren't a big eggplant fan, you might enjoy this despite yourself. Broiled eggplant has a crunchy and meaty texture, and the tahini dressing makes the salad rich and creamy.

1 medium eggplant, sliced into circles

1 tbsps lemon juice

1 tbsps tahini

sprinkle of chili flakes (optional)

fresh dill, finely chopped (optional)

salt and pepper

Turn on your oven's broiler. Arrange the slices of eggplant on a baking sheet, then place them under the broiler for about 3 minutes. Watch them carefully. Once they begin to blacken, remove them from the oven and flip the slices over. Repeat the process on the other side. Once your eggplant is nicely charred, chop it into bite-sized pieces.

In a bowl, mix the tahini, lemon juice, and chili flakes (if using), plus plenty of salt and pepper. Add the eggplant and stir it around. Add more salt or lemon juice according to your taste, then top it with dill if available, and serve!

\$4.50 TOTAL
\$2.25 / SERVING



Smaller potatoes are best, but whatever you've got will be fine! If you're using very large potatoes, chop them into halves or quarters to speed up the cooking—or dice them into bite-sized pieces if you're really in a hurry. Otherwise, keep the potatoes whole.

Cover the potatoes with water in a large pot with a lid. Bring the water to a boil over medium-high heat, then turn the heat down to medium and set the lid askew so that steam can escape.

After about 25 minutes, try piercing the largest potato with a fork. If the fork pierces the potato easily, it's fully cooked. If not, boil for 5 more minutes. It's fine if they're a little overcooked, but undercooked potatoes are awful.

Drain the water. Once the potatoes are cool enough to handle safely (but still warm), roughly chop them into bite-sized pieces, if you haven't already.

In a large bowl, mix the olive oil, citrus juice or vinegar, mustard, salt, and pepper. Whisk it briskly until the liquid is blended. If you don't have a whisk, simply whip with a fork.

Throw the potatoes into the bowl and stir to coat them in the dressing. Add a generous amount of salt as you stir. Potatoes are very bland without salt! Then let them marinate for 10 minutes.

Chop a handful of scallions and sprinkle them over top. Toss the salad once more, then taste and adjust the salt, pepper, and vinegar as you see fit.

This keeps very well and travels nicely to a picnic or potluck. Have fun!

Ever-Popular Potato Salad

FOR FOUR

I developed this salad because I'm not a big fan of mayonnaise-based potato salads. This is really the simplest thing: just potatoes in a regular vinaigrette. You can add all kinds of extras to it to make it more festive, but people always rave about the salad as is. The secret is that potatoes actually have really nice flavor—all you have to do is season them properly. Let potatoes be potatoes, no need to hide 'em!

If you have leftover roasted potatoes or other root vegetables, the same idea works great. Just skip the cooking part and go straight to the dressing.

2 lb potatoes
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice, lime juice, or vinegar
2 tsp Dijon mustard
salt and pepper
scallions

ADDITIONS

fresh dill, chopped
fresh parsley, chopped
paprika
fresh chillies, finely chopped
pickles, finely chopped



Kale Salad

FOR TWO, OR FOUR AS A SIDE

This kale is treated like romaine lettuce in a Caesar salad. The bitterness of the greens is delicious alongside the rich, fatty dressing. You could also use Swiss chard. If you're worried about the raw egg yolk in the dressing, feel free to omit it.

1 large bunch kale
2 cups bread cubes
2 tbsps butter [more as needed]
salt and pepper
Romano or Parmesan,
freshly grated

DRESSING

1 egg yolk, raw, from a high-quality fresh egg
2 tbsps lemon juice
2 tbsps Dijon mustard
1 clove garlic, finely grated [optional]
1 anchovy, finely chopped [optional]
3 tbsps olive oil
salt and pepper



Start by making croutons (p. 146).

To make the dressing, drop the egg yolk into a large mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice, mustard, garlic, and anchovy. Whisk briskly until the dressing is light and frothy. Slowly add the olive oil, whisking the whole time. Once everything is incorporated, add the salt and pepper, then adjust to your taste. I like it very lemony.

Cut the kale leaves to remove the large stem from the center. (Lacinato kale, sometimes called Tuscan kale, has the easiest stems to remove.) Slice the leaves in half lengthwise, then cut into thin ribbons. Chopping the kale into small pieces disguises its tough texture.

Toss the kale in the bowl to coat it with dressing. Set aside for 10 minutes or leave in the fridge for a few hours. The kale will become tender as it marinates.

Before serving, toss in the croutons and top with Romano cheese.



Spicy Panzanella

FOR FOUR

A former classmate, George, likes salads with a little kick. (As you can maybe tell, I do too!) For inspiration, I turned to panzanella, a classic Italian bread-and-tomato salad. The Italians are true masters of making leftovers delicious. Here, old hard bread soaks up tomato juice and dressing for a super flavorful and filling salad. You can toss in any vegetable or fruit so long as it's juicy. Bell peppers or carrots won't work so well, but peaches, grapes, and zucchini all do. If you don't like spicy salads as much as George and I do, feel free to replace the jalapeño with garlic or shallot.

2 small field cucumbers
or 1 English cucumber, chopped
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
salt and pepper
4 slices day-old bread

DRESSING

1 jalapeño, finely chopped
2 tbsps tomato, chopped
1 lime, juiced
2 tbsps olive oil
salt and pepper

ADDITIONS

fresh herbs
peaches, nectarines, or plums
red onion, finely chopped
zucchini or summer squash
olives
grapes

If you're using field cucumbers—usually much less expensive than English cucumbers—peel them roughly to remove the tough skin.

Keep about 2 tablespoons of chopped tomatoes aside to use in the dressing, but throw the rest of the tomatoes and all the cucumbers into a large bowl. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper; the salt helps draw out the juices. Toss the vegetables quickly.

Place a small saucepan on medium heat with a few drops of olive oil. Sauté the jalapeño for about a minute, then add the remaining tomato and a tablespoon of water. Cook for another 2 minutes, until the tomato juices release. Sprinkle liberally with salt and pepper.

Once the water has evaporated, turn off the stovetop and dump the jalapeño-tomato mixture on your cutting board. Chop it very finely, then throw it back into the pan—with no heat—along with the lime juice and olive oil. Taste it and add more salt and pepper as needed. You've got dressing!

Chop or tear the bread into bite-sized pieces, then toast it in a skillet over medium heat, tossing occasionally until the bread chunks are toasty on all sides. Alternatively, just toast full slices of bread in a toaster and tear them up afterwards, or skip the toasting entirely if the bread is already super-hard.

Mix the bread and vegetables with the dressing. Taste and adjust salt and pepper once more.

Let it sit for a few minutes so that the bread can soak up the juices, then serve!

Beet and Chickpea Salad

FOR TWO

This dish is spicy, crunchy, and almost certainly the pinkest salad you'll ever eat! Don't be scared.

2 to 3 beets, peeled and grated
1 cup chickpeas, cooked or canned
3 tbsp peanuts

DRESSING

1 tbsp lime juice
1 tsp chili sauce
1 tbsp olive oil
salt and pepper

Peel the raw beets, removing the stems if necessary, then shred the beets with a box grater. Place the beets in a bowl along with the chickpeas and nuts.

Mix up the dressing ingredients in another small bowl and stir to combine. Taste and adjust the salt and pepper to your liking.

Add the dressing to the other bowl and mix up all the ingredients. Let it sit for about 5 minutes so that the flavors can soak into the vegetables and the beet juices can mingle with the dressing.



\$3.50 TOTAL
\$1.75 / SERVING

SALAD

53

Jacket Sweet Potatoes

FOR FOUR

I like to serve these with all kinds of toppings, usually leftovers from other meals. Try filling them with roast chicken, beans and cheese, corn and tomatoes—whatever you have around.

4 large sweet potatoes
salt and pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sour cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch scallions, finely chopped

Heat the oven to 400 °F. Scrub the sweet potatoes and stab them with a fork a few times. Lay them on a baking sheet.

Bake for 60 to 75 minutes. Because sweet potatoes vary greatly in size, check them after an hour by stabbing with a long knife. If it goes through easily, they're ready. If not, bake longer.

Let cool for 15 minutes. Make a long cut along the top of each potato and open them gently, beating with a fork to fluff up the soft, orange middle.

Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Let each person add sour cream and scallions (or more salt and pepper) to their taste.

\$4.80 TOTAL
\$1.20 / SERVING



Spicy Green Beans

FOR TWO

Whenever I make these, I think, "why don't I have this every day?" Throw a fried egg on top, serve with rice, and you have a delicious meal.

1 tsp vegetable oil
½ lb green beans, ends trimmed, chopped into bite-size pieces
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp soy sauce
1 tsp sambal oelek (or 2 tsp chili flakes)

ADDITIONS

1 tsp ginger, grated
1 tsp lemon juice

Add the vegetable oil to a frying pan on medium heat. Once it's hot, add the green beans. Let them cook undisturbed for about 1 minute.

Mix the garlic, soy sauce, and sambal oelek in a bowl (and the ginger and lemon juice, if using).

The beans should have turned bright green. Add about ¼ cup of water to the pan. Cook another 2 minutes, until the water is mostly gone. Pour the sauce into the pan and toss gently to coat. Cook another 2 minutes, until everything is fragrant and most of the liquid is gone. Poke the beans with a fork: if it goes through easily, they're done. They should take about 5 minutes.

Taste and add more chili sauce or soy sauce if you want the beans hotter or saltier.



\$1.30 TOTAL
\$0.65 / SERVING

BITES

59

\$4 TOTAL
\$1 / SERVING

Mexican Street Corn

FOR FOUR

This recipe takes fresh, sweet summer corn—already amazing—and adds salt, tang, and spice to the experience. If you have an outdoor grill, prepare the corn that way, but for those without, a broiler is a great shortcut!

4 cobs corn

4 tbsps mayonnaise

½ cup cotija, queso blanco, feta, Romano or Parmesan, grated chili powder

1 lime, sliced into wedges

Turn your oven's broiler up to high.

Peel off the outer layers of the corn and clean off all the corn silk. Leave the green ends attached for a convenient handheld.

Place the cobs on a baking pan under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes, then rotate them and repeat until they're brown and toasty all the way around. The broiling shouldn't take more than 10 minutes total.

Working quickly, spread a tablespoon of mayonnaise over each cob, lightly coating every kernel. Next, sprinkle the cheese all over the corn. It should stick fairly easily to the mayonnaise, but you'll probably get a little messy coating them thoroughly.

Sprinkle chili powder over the corn, but not too heavy or it'll be gritty. Use any chili powder you like; ancho or cayenne are great.

Lastly, squeeze lime juice all over and serve hot!



\$3.50 TOTAL
\$1.75 / SERVING

Green Chili and Cheddar Quesadillas

FOR TWO

4 tortillas (p. 137)

½ cup sharp cheddar, grated

½ cup green chilies, canned or fresh, chopped

1 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped

These are a great snack or a quick meal, and you can add pretty much anything to them! To make 'em cheaper, use fresh tortillas (p. 137).

Spread $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of green chilies evenly over one tortilla. Sprinkle $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cheese over the chilies, then top with half the cilantro. Place another tortilla on top of each prepared tortilla to form a quesadilla. Repeat!

Place a large, non-stick pan on medium heat. Once it's hot, add a quesadilla and toast for about 1 minute. Flip it over and brown the second side, then do the same for the other quesadilla. Slice into triangles and enjoy with some fresh salsa (p. 163) and sour cream.



Brussels Sprout Hash and Eggs

FOR TWO

This is a great light lunch or side dish. The Brussels sprouts get salty and tangy from the olive and lemon, then crispy and caramelized on the bottom. Mix in the little bit of fat from the egg yolk, and wow is this delicious.

4 cups Brussels sprouts, finely chopped
salt and pepper
1 tbsp butter
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
6 olives, finely chopped
lemon juice
2 eggs

Chop off the ends of the sprouts. Slice them in half, then finely shred each half. Place the shreds in a bowl and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Melt the butter in a non-stick pan on medium-high heat. Swirl it around to coat the pan. Add the Brussels sprout shreds and garlic, then leave it to cook for about 1 minute. Mix it up and toss it around. Add the olives and mix again.

Crack the eggs into separate areas of the pan. Sprinkle them with salt and pepper. Pour in 2 tablespoons of water and cover with a lid. Let the eggs steam, undisturbed, for 2 minutes.

Once the whites of the eggs are cooked through, turn off the heat and sprinkle everything with lemon juice.



Potato Leek Pizza

MAKES FOUR PIZZAS

Obviously you should just make all kinds of pizza. Seriously, do it. Make it a Thursday-night tradition and an excuse to use up leftovers. This pizza, for one, is a fun variation that confounds expectations—proof that, indeed, anything is good on pizza!

- pizza dough (p. 139)
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 1 Russet potato or 3 small potatoes, sliced into thin circles
- 3 leeks, sliced into circles
- salt and pepper
- 1 lb fresh mozzarella, shredded

Turn the oven to 500 °F.

Put a large pan on medium heat and add 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Once the oil is hot, add the potato slices evenly to the pan, making sure each slice is touching the bottom. (If you slice them thin enough, they'll turn out almost like little chips.)

Let them cook until they start to crinkle around the edges and turn brown. Flip them over and brown the other side, then move them to a bowl. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, then toss with your hands (after they cool down!) to make sure they're evenly coated.

Heat up another tablespoon of oil in the same pan, then toss in the leek slices, stirring occasionally until they're soft, about 5 minutes. Toss them with the potato slices and add a bit more salt and pepper.

Clear a space on the counter and sprinkle with flour. Divide your dough into 4 equal pieces. One at a time, stretch the doughs into crusts. You can use a rolling pin or just slowly use your fingers and hands. I like to make mine really thin and big, but it's up to you how thick to make it.

Once the crust is the desired shape and thickness, dust the back of a cookie sheet with flour or cornmeal to keep the crust from sticking, then place it the dough on the sheet.

Now layer it with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the potato and leek mixture and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the shredded mozzarella. Bake for 5 to 8 minutes. If it's your first time, simply keep an eye on the oven to see when the pizza's done. The crust should be light brown and the cheese melted.

Repeat the process until you've baked all your pizzas. If your oven is big enough, you can of course do more than one pizza at a time.



Creamy Zucchini Fettuccine

FOR THREE

Zucchini and summer squash are so abundant in the summer months. This simple pasta is like a lighter, brighter fettuccine alfredo. It also comes together in no time—the veggies will be ready by the time your pasta is cooked. You'll love it, I promise.

1/2 lb fettuccine
4 tbsp butter
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 tsp chili flakes
2 small zucchini, finely diced
1 lemon, zested

1/4 cup cream
1/2 cup Romano or Parmesan, grated
salt and pepper
fresh basil, finely chopped (optional)

Bring a pot of water to boil over high heat. Salt the water liberally. This is how pasta gets salted, so don't be shy! Most won't end up in the pasta.

Cook the pasta according to the package directions. I prefer my pasta with some bite, so I drain the pasta just before it's finished so it doesn't get mushy when I add it to the vegetable pan to cook slightly more.

Meanwhile, melt a tablespoon of butter in a pan on medium heat. Add the garlic and chili flakes. Let them sizzle for 30 seconds to a minute, then add the zucchini. Stir the vegetables to coat them. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until some of the water has cooked off and the veggies are tender when stabbed with a fork. Young summer zucchini doesn't need much cooking. Add the lemon zest. Stir!

Drain the cooked fettuccine and add it to the zucchini pan along with the rest of the butter, the cream, and most of the Romano cheese. Toss the fettuccine around the pan to get everything mixed. Add salt to taste and lots of freshly ground pepper. Top with a bit more cheese and serve immediately.

Chana Masala

FOR TWO

This Indian chickpea dish is a staple in my home. If you don't have cooked chickpeas around, you can use canned, but it will cost about \$1 more.

½ tbsp ghee or ½ tbsp butter
plus a splash of olive oil
1 tsp cumin seeds
½ cup onion, diced
1 tsp garlic, finely chopped
1 tsp ginger root, grated
½ jalapeño, finely diced
3 tsp coriander powder
1 tsp turmeric
¼ tsp cayenne powder
½ tsp garam masala powder

1 tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp salt
1 cup canned tomatoes, puréed
2½ cups cooked chickpeas,
drained
½ cup water

GARNISH
fresh cilantro
yogurt

Measure out all the spices except the cumin seeds and put them in a small bowl.

Let the ghee (clarified butter) melt in a small saucepan over medium-low heat. (Ghee is the traditional Indian choice, but you can substitute butter and a splash of olive oil if you can't find ghee.) Once the ghee begins to sizzle, add the cumin seeds and stir for about 5 seconds. Add the onion and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the ginger and jalapeño and cook for 1 more minute. Add the spices and then the puréed tomatoes. Mix, then put a lid on the pan and let everything cook down for 5 to 10 minutes.

Once the tomato has reduced and the ghee starts to separate from the sauce, add the chickpeas and water. Mix, then bring it to a boil before reducing to a simmer. Cook for 10 minutes, then squish a few chickpeas with a spoon to thicken the sauce. Garnish with yogurt and cilantro. For a full meal, serve over rice or with roti.



Coconut Chocolate Cookies

MAKES FORTY

A just-chewy-enough, just-crispy-enough, just-gooey-enough cookie that's perfect for a special treat.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup shaved, unsweetened coconut, toasted
1½ cups chocolate chips
 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb unsalted butter (2 sticks)
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
1½ cups dark brown sugar
2 eggs
2 tsp vanilla

Heat the oven to 350 °F.

Spread the coconut into a thin, even layer on a cookie sheet. Place it in the oven for 5 to 8 minutes, until it's light brown, toasty, and aromatic.

Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over low heat. Once it's melted, leave it to cool in the pan for a few minutes.

In a medium-sized bowl, stir together the flour, salt, and baking soda.

In another bowl, beat the brown sugar and melted butter together for about 2 minutes, until they're smooth. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat for about 5 minutes, until the mixture lightens in color. Mix the flour mixture with the brown sugar mixture, a third at a time, until it forms a dark brown, homogeneous mass. Add the chocolate chips and coconut and stir until just combined.

Place the dough in the fridge for 20 minutes.

Afterwards, scoop tablespoons of dough onto a lightly buttered cookie sheet, leaving large spaces between each cookie so they have space to spread out. I usually do about 6 cookies per sheet. Just before putting the cookies into the oven, sprinkle them with salt.

Let the cookies bake for 8 to 10 minutes. After you take them out of the oven, leave them on the sheet to set for 2 minutes, then move them to plates to cool further. Don't stack the cookies until they've cooled fully.

Continue the process until the dough is gone.

Store the finished cookies in an airtight container.

Avocado Milkshake

FOR TWO

John, the reader who introduced me to the silky magic of this milkshake, lives in California, where avocados are often less than a dollar. If you can find a similar deal, whip up a batch of these! If your avocado isn't quite ripe, a bit more lime juice will bring out the flavor.

- 
- 1 avocado
2 cups milk
1 tsp vanilla
1 tbsp lime juice
1 pinch salt
2 tbsp sugar

Toss all the ingredients in a blender and whizz them up! Let it go for a while because the avocados need to break down and blend with the milk. Once the liquid is Kermit the Frog green, it's ready. Taste it and add more sugar or lime juice as needed.

These shakes are even better if you use "coconut milk beverage," almond milk, or rice milk instead of regular milk. Each adds a little of its own flavor to the drink.

\$2.30 TOTAL
\$1.15 / SERVING

Set the oven to 400 °F.

Clean and chop your vegetables. Generally, I prefer to leave the skin on for the following reasons: skin tastes nice and gets crispy; there's a lot of nutrition in the skin; peeling is slow! Just be sure to wash the vegetables thoroughly.

It's up to you how you want to chop your vegetables. Many are nice roasted whole, like new potatoes or little sunchoke or turnips—they will be crispy and salty on the outside and bursting with fluffy, starchy goodness inside. The general rule is that the smaller you chop things, the faster they cook, so try to keep everything about the same size so nothing cooks faster than anything else.

Dump your vegetables into a roasting pan. Drizzle everything with olive oil or melted butter—about 2 tablespoons per medium-sized roasting pan. Season generously with salt and pepper and add any other extras from the list at right. Use your hands to coat the vegetables thoroughly with the oil and spices.

Pop the pan in the oven for 1 hour or longer, but check on the vegetables after 45 minutes. Test them by poking them with a knife. If it meets no resistance, they're finished; if not, let them cook longer. Don't worry: it's not much of a problem if you overcook them. Unlike vegetables overcooked through boiling or steaming, overcooked roasted vegetables may dry out a bit, but still retain their shape and flavor.

After you pull the vegetables out of the oven, push them around with a spatula to free them from the pan. Remove any garlic cloves and smash them into a fine paste (removing the skins at this point), then put the garlic back in the pan and mix together.

Squeeze the juice out of any lemons and discard the woody bits of any cooked herbs. Add a little more butter, a bit of favorite sauce, a little soft cheese or mayonnaise, and serve.

Turn the page for another great idea for roasted veggies.

METHOD

Roasted Vegetables

When the weather turns cool, I want only to eat warm, flavorful food. Roasting is easy, it warms up the kitchen, and it makes the house smell like the holidays. If you're uncertain how to prepare a new vegetable, you usually can't go wrong with roasting—most things end up sweeter, with nice crunchy bits. If you roast a bunch of vegetables at the beginning of the week, you can eat them throughout the week in various ways: with eggs at breakfast, folded into an omelette, as a side dish, in a taco or sandwich, on toast, or with any grain.

vegetables
olive oil or butter
salt and pepper

ROOTS
potatoes, sweet potatoes, beets, turnips, onions, parsnips, carrots, sunchoke, kohlrabi, fennel

NON-ROOTS
bell peppers, winter squash, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, asparagus, eggplant

EXTRAS
whole garlic cloves (unpeeled), lemon slices or lemon zest, anything you would pair with roast chicken, tough herbs like sage, oregano, thyme, bay leaves, any dry spice combination (p. 166)



I got really excited when my friend Iva asked for a recipe that featured the Chinese flavors she grew up with. After all, Chinese cooking depends on the same general principles as *Good and Cheap*: build bright flavors from a few key ingredients; use lots of veggies and just a little meat or fish. The ginger-garlic broth in this hot pot is spectacular! You can use whatever vegetables you have around, but mushrooms help create an earthy broth. The effect of such a small amount of toasted sesame oil is remarkable, too—an investment, but a transformative flavor.

If you have time, freeze the ginger root for an hour before you start. It's much easier to grate when frozen! Store the rest of the root in the freezer until the next time you need it.

Drop the grated ginger root and garlic into a pot over medium heat. A few seconds later, once you can start to smell the garlic, pour in the water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low.

Add the mushrooms, chili paste, soy sauce, and toasted sesame oil. Place a lid on the pot and let simmer for 20 minutes.

Separate the white and green parts of the scallions. You'll cook the white and save the green to sprinkle over the soup.

Cut the tofu into four slices, then turn each slice into eight squares. Or just chop it up however you like.

Add the tofu, carrots, and the white parts of the scallions to the broth. Cook about 10 minutes more, until the carrots are tender.

Add the noodles and keep boiling until they soften, usually just a few minutes, although it depends on the type of noodles.

Taste the broth. If it isn't salty enough, splash in more soy sauce. Adjust the sesame oil and chili paste to your taste as well.

Ladle the soup into bowls. For a little crunch, top with bean sprouts and the green bits of the scallions.

If you have leftovers, you'll find you like this soup even more the next day. Overnight, the flavors will infuse into the tofu, as well as combining with each other. You might want to store the noodles separately, though, because otherwise they'll get soggy.

Tofu Hot Pot

FOR FOUR

1 tbsps ginger root, finely grated
4 cloves garlic, finely grated
8 cups water
½ lb mushrooms, chopped
1 tsp chili paste
2 tbsps soy sauce
2 tbsps toasted sesame oil
4 scallions, chopped
16 oz firm tofu
4 medium carrots, chopped
8 oz dried spaghetti, soba, or any Asian noodles
bean sprouts (optional)

ADDITIONS

chicken, pork, or beef
peanuts, chopped
cabbage, chopped
kimchi
chili peppers
fresh cilantro
daikon radish, sliced



Spicy, Crunchy, Creamy Polenta

FOR TWO

Polenta plus vegetable plus egg equals satisfying and delicious. You can also add a can of corn to the polenta for deep, rich, corny flavor. Or go a little different by adding frozen peas, scallions, olives, or (my favorite) green chilies to the polenta. Or skip the Romano and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of grated cheddar to the polenta.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup polenta or cornmeal
2 cups water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
1 tbsps olive oil
4 cups fresh spinach or 1 cup frozen spinach, roughly chopped
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 anchovy, finely chopped (optional)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp chili flakes (or fresh chili)
2 eggs
Romano or Parmesan, freshly grated
salt and pepper

Bring the water and salt to a boil in a medium-sized pot, then turn the heat down to low and slowly pour in the polenta while stirring briskly with a wooden spoon. Stirring while pouring is crucial to keep the polenta creamy and smooth—no lumps! Once the cornmeal becomes smooth and thick, place a lid on the pot with the spoon still in it so that steam can escape.

Let the polenta cook while you prepare the rest of the meal, checking in occasionally to give it a stir. The total cooking time should be about 25 to 30 minutes, but if you're in a rush, you can eat it after 15.

Meanwhile, chop the spinach, garlic, and anchovy if you're using it. Set them aside. Add a bit of olive oil or butter to a pan on medium heat. Let the pan heat up until it sizzles when you flick it with water. Add the garlic, anchovy, and chili flakes. Let them cook until you can smell them, about 1 minute. Add the spinach and toss it around with a spoon or tongs, or just swirl the pan to coat the spinach with the garlic mixture. Let everything cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until the spinach is wilted. Remove the pan from the heat and move its contents to a bowl to wait for the polenta and eggs.

When the polenta is about 2 minutes from done, start with the eggs. Wipe the pan quickly with a cloth, then put it back on medium heat. Splash a bit more olive oil in the pan and wait for it to get hot. Crack the two eggs into the pan and cover with a lid. This will steam them, making sunny-side-up eggs with fully cooked whites.

Scoop the polenta into a pair of bowls. Add some Romano and lots of salt and pepper. Layer about half the vegetables over the polenta.

Once the whites of the eggs are cooked, remove them from the pan with a spatula and lay them over the polenta and vegetables. Top with the rest of the vegetables and further sprinklings of cheese.



Agua Fresca

SERVES FOUR TO SIX

Refreshing and hydrating, these beautiful drinks are great at a party, and they can help you use up any fruit that you won't be able to eat before it goes off. This is certainly not the master recipe, just a good starting point.

2 cups fruit, chopped

4 cups water

ADDITIONS

1 tsp vanilla

squeeze of lemon
or lime juice

sugar

mint leaves

other herb leaves

VARIATIONS

blueberry and lemon

cucumber and lemon

mango and lime

melon

orange

papaya

peach and vanilla

pineapple

strawberry and mint

For a very lightly flavored agua fresca, just mix the water and fruit together. Done! Obviously, if you want more fruit flavor, then use less water; if you want less flavor, then use more water.

I usually run my agua fresca through the blender, however. If you want the drink to be clear, strain the pulpy leftovers of the fruit after blending. If you're using blueberries or oranges or other fruit with a skin, you'll almost certainly want to strain it.

For some fruits, you can also choose to leave the pulp: it's particularly great when making a melon agua fresca since it mostly disappears.

Serve over ice. Try some of the variations I've suggested or whatever fruits you like!





\$3.50 TOTAL
\$3.50 / CUP

Spice Oil

MAKES ONE CUP

Use this spice oil on salads, in cold noodle dishes, or on roasted or sautéed vegetables. If you have trouble finding the spices, you can get all of them at most Asian grocery stores.

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 cup olive or vegetable oil
- 2 tbsps chili flakes or dried red chilies
- 1 tsp Sichuan or regular peppercorns
- 1 star anise
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp cumin seeds
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

Use the side of a knife to crush the garlic clove until it cracks open. Add all of the ingredients to a small pot.

Warm the mixture over low heat for about 10 minutes, until it starts to bubble gently and you can hear a bit of a sizzle, then turn off the heat. You want to heat it just enough to let the spices infuse into the oil, without getting so hot that the spices start to cook or fry.

Remove the pot from the stovetop and put it in the fridge with a lid. Let the spices infuse for 4 to 8 hours.

Taste the oil. If it isn't strongly spicy, let it infuse for a few more hours. Once it's ready, strain through a sieve to remove the spices.

Store in a jar in the fridge for up to a week.

\$2.50 TOTAL
\$1.25 / CUP



Raita

MAKES TWO CUPS

- 1 cup cucumber, chopped
- ½ cup tomato, chopped
- ¼ cup red onion, chopped
- 1 cup yogurt
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp cayenne powder
- 2 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
- salt and pepper

ADDITIONS

- 1 tbsp ginger, grated
- 2 tbsp mint
- ¼ cup chickpeas
- cooked spinach

Raita is a traditional Indian sauce served with all kinds of things. It's simple and surprisingly tasty. Spoon it onto chana masala (p. 93), the potato and kale rolls (p. 84), or anything spicy to cool things down.

This recipe is extremely loose. Basically, just stir some of your favorite chopped vegetables into yogurt and add salt and pepper. Use this as a stepping stone to develop your own.

After you stir all the ingredients together, store the raita in a covered container in the fridge until you're ready to use it.

Smoothies

FOR TWO

I have four types of smoothies here, but of course there are many more. Give these a try when you have overripe fruit that you wouldn't eat otherwise. Add a teaspoon of vanilla to any of these and they will seem incredibly professional. The frozen melon drinks, in particular, are the most refreshing treat on a hot summer day.

DRINKABLE YOGURT: If you like the grocery store's yogurt drinks, try making these at home for less! You don't even need to blend them—just add the juice and yogurt to a jar, then shake.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain yogurt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit juice

MELON SMOOTHIE (TWO PICTURED): When you buy a melon, dice and freeze whatever you don't eat. Pull it out and blend it with a bit of water or juice to thin it out. It's like a better slushy!

1 cup frozen melon
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water or juice
1 tsp vanilla

BERRY SMOOTHIE: Blend until smooth, then adjust with more berries or milk to your taste.

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup yogurt
1 cup frozen berries
milk or juice to thin as needed

MANGO LASSI (NOT PICTURED): Blend the mango and yogurt together. If it's too thick to drink with a straw, add some milk to thin it out. A ripe and juicy mango combined with thin yogurt is often all you need. Be warned: if you make this for children, they will request it over and over.

1 mango, diced
1 cup yogurt
milk to thin as needed





Roast Chicken

FOR SIX

A whole chicken is usually less expensive than buying single pieces like breasts or thighs—plus you can make stock later from the bones and any meat too difficult to get off. The leftovers can be used in sandwiches, tacos, over a salad, or tossed with sauce and mixed into pasta. This is a base recipe: add spices to the butter or sprinkle over the surface of the chicken to change up the flavor in any way you like.

1 whole chicken
1 tbsp butter
2 cloves garlic
1 lemon
salt and pepper

Heat the oven to 400 °F.

Remove the giblets and neck from the chicken. Keep them for stock later. Rub the entire bird with butter, then sprinkle it with salt and pepper.

Smash the garlic cloves with the side of your knife and slice the lemon in half. Stuff the garlic and lemon into the chicken's body cavity.

Place the chicken in a roasting pan or an oven-proof skillet. Let it cook for 1 hour. If you have a meat thermometer, check to make sure the chicken is at 165 °F, the temperature when chicken is completely safe to eat. But 1 hour should be long enough to fully cook it.

Let the chicken rest for at least 10 minutes before you carve it to make sure you don't lose any of the tasty juices.

After you've carved away all the meat, make chicken stock from the carcass. Simmer it for several hours in a pot full of water along with scrap vegetables like the ends of onions and carrots, plus a generous helping of salt.

Filipino Chicken Adobo

FOR EIGHT

INGREDIENTS
¾ cup rice vinegar or white vinegar
¼ cup soy sauce
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ tsp black pepper
2 bay leaves
8 chicken thighs, fat trimmed
2 tbsps vegetable oil
¾ cup water
2 medium potatoes, chopped
4 medium carrots, sliced
2 cups white rice
salt
2 tsp cornstarch

ADDITIONS

4 jalapeños
ginger root, grated

VARIATIONS

1½ lb pork shoulder or butt, cubed,
instead of chicken
1 can coconut milk instead of water
chicken schmaltz instead of vegetable oil

This ultra-adaptable recipe comes to us care of Tony Pangilinan, who grew up on food stamps after his family immigrated from the Philippines "with nothing but four suitcases and a lot of dreams." After several decades of struggling to achieve those dreams, Tony can now help support family members who remain in poverty in the Philippines. Despite their hard circumstances, he notes that his relatives "still feel blessed."

Filipino adobo—very different from Spanish adobo—is basically anything cooked in vinegar, soy sauce, and garlic. Although this version is chicken, you can use any meat or vegetables you like. It's a brilliant dish that turns basic staples into deliciousness. Because it's vinegar-based, it also keeps well in the fridge!

In a large, non-aluminum pan, stir together the vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, pepper, and bay leaves. Add the chicken, coating each piece thoroughly. Cover and let marinate for at least 30 minutes, but overnight is great.

Pull the chicken out of the marinade and pat each piece dry.

Pour the oil into a large pot on medium heat. Once the oil is hot, add enough chicken to fill the bottom of the pot. Let it cook for a few minutes, until one side of the chicken is browned, then flip it over. When the first batch of chicken is done, remove it from the pot and repeat with the remainder.

After all the chicken is browned, put it back in the pot along with the marinade, water, potatoes, and carrots. Turn the heat up until the liquid comes to a boil, then reduce to low heat and simmer for 45 minutes, or until the meat near the bone is no longer pink and the carrots and potatoes are cooked through.

About 20 minutes before the adobo is ready, pour the rice into a medium pot with 4 cups of water. Add two pinches of salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat with the lid off. Turn the heat down and cover with a lid that is slightly askew to let the steam escape. Cook about 20 minutes, until the water is all gone.

Remove the bay leaves from the adobo. In a small bowl, mix the cornstarch with a tablespoon of water, then stir it into the sauce. Let the sauce boil and thicken until the chicken and vegetables are well glazed. Serve over the rice.

