

tard seeds, chile, and cloves (essentially all the other seasonings besides salt and freshly ground black pepper) and use a teaspoon or more of chaat masala (to make your own, see page 68).

How to Cook and Eat Dals

The word *dal* describes both beans and the dishes made from them. Though—as with pasta in Italy—specific beans are assigned to specific preparations, I approach eating beans in the Indian style rather than as a rigid kitchen doctrine. Exchanging one bean for another may not be strictly authentic, but it will result in delicious dishes, even if all you ever use are supermarket brown lentils.

The keys are the seasonings and the texture. I like slightly thicker but slightly soupy dishes you pour over something else—usually rice—and “dry” dal, where the beans remain intact. Serve dals with cooked basmati or jasmine rice (see page 456) or hot or at room temperature with crudités (see page 90), Chapati (page 848), or pita (page 872) for dipping. Soupy dals also make an effective and creamy sauce for simply cooked fish, chicken, meat, or vegetables. Add more water, stock, cream, or coconut milk and they become soup.

1 or 2 meaty smoked ham hocks, a chunk of bacon or salt pork, a meaty ham bone, or a piece of smoked turkey like a neck or wing

8 ounces sweet or hot Italian sausage

1 large onion, chopped

1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped

1 tablespoon minced garlic

4 or 5 sprigs fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme

2 bay leaves

1/4 teaspoon ground allspice

1 1/2 cups chopped tomato (canned is fine; include the juices)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Chopped fresh parsley or cilantro leaves for garnish

Tabasco or other hot sauce (optional)

1 Put the beans in a large pot with water to cover and bring to a boil over high heat, skimming the foam if necessary. Add the ham hock(s) and turn the heat down so the beans simmer. Cover loosely and stir very occasionally, adding water if necessary.

2 Meanwhile, put the sausage in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook, turning occasionally and pricking the sausage a few times to release its fat. When the sausage is nicely browned, after about 10 minutes, remove it; don’t worry about whether it is done. Cut it into small chunks.

3 Cook the onion, bell pepper, and garlic in the sausage fat, stirring frequently, until the pepper is softened, about 10 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon. Return the sausage to the skillet and cook, turning occasionally, until the chunks are browned all over, about 5 minutes. Return the vegetables to the pan, along with the thyme, bay leaves, allspice, and tomato. Turn the heat down to medium-low and cook, stirring, until the tomato breaks up, 10 to 15 minutes.

4 When the meat in the beans is very soft, remove it. When it is cool enough to handle, chop all the meat and return it to the pot, along with the sausage and vegetable mixture. Cook, until the beans are very tender; this could

Red Beans with Meat

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

TIME: About 2 hours, largely unattended



A pot of beans flavored with meat—sometimes just what you want.

Other beans you can use: any white or pink beans.

1 pound dried kidney, pinto, or other red beans, washed, picked over, and soaked if you like (see page 411)

take anywhere from 30 minutes to almost 2 hours, depending on whether you soaked them. Remove and discard the bay leaves. Taste and add salt and pepper if necessary. Garnish with parsley and serve, passing Tabasco at the table.

Vegetarian Red Beans. Obviously, omit the meat. Start the beans as directed. Double the amounts of onion and pepper and add 2 chopped celery stalks. Cook the garlic and vegetables over medium heat in 2 tablespoons olive or other oil until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the thyme, bay leaves, and allspice or use 1 tablespoon chili powder (to make your own, see page 66), or to taste. Then add 2 cups chopped tomato and cook as directed. Pour this mixture into the beans and adjust the seasoning as necessary. Garnish and serve, passing Tabasco at the table.

Black-Eyed Peas, Southern Style

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

TIME: At least 2 hours, largely unattended



Traditionally served on New Year's Day, along with a pile of collard greens. You might add some chopped collards to the pot, right from the start, and cook them until very soft—"to death," as some of my southern friends say.

Black-eyed peas are often sold frozen, and they're good, but the dried ones don't take long to cook.

1 pound dried black-eyed peas, washed, picked over, and soaked if you like

3 or 4 meaty smoked ham hocks or a meaty ham bone

2 large onions, chopped

About 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Red or white wine vinegar, to taste

Tabasco sauce (optional)

➊ Put the peas in a large pot with water to cover and bring to a boil over high heat, skimming the foam if necessary. Add the ham hocks, onions, and pepper. Turn the heat down so the beans simmer. Cover loosely and stir very occasionally, adding water if necessary.

➋ When the meat in the beans is very soft—at least an hour and a half later—remove it. When it is cool enough to handle, chop all the meat and return it to the pot, along with some salt if necessary.

➌ Continue to cook until the beans are very tender, 10 to 20 minutes longer. Drain if necessary and season with salt, pepper, vinegar, and Tabasco or other hot sauce if you like. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Rice and Beans

Rice and beans are among the most important culinary marriages. The combination is cheap, provides good protein, and doesn't take a lot of work. And you don't even really need a recipe: Take any well-seasoned bean dish, even leftovers, and serve it with any well-prepared rice.

Nevertheless, it's worth knowing some of the wonderful traditional preparations that are slightly more elaborate. These are my favorites.

Black Beans and White Rice, Spanish Style

Moros y Cristianos

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About 2 hours, largely unattended



One of the best rice-and-bean dishes. The technique of semipuréeing the half-cooked beans and adding the rice allows the bean flavor to really penetrate the rice. Throw it in the oven and an hour later you have a one-pot meal with an appealingly crisp crust.

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 red or yellow bell pepper, cored, seeded, and chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried black beans, washed, picked over, and soaked if you have time
1½ cups long-grain rice
1 cup chopped tomato (canned is fine; include the juices)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh parsley or fresh cilantro leaves

① Put the oil in a large ovenproof pot over medium heat. When hot, add the onion, bell pepper, and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Add the beans and cover with water. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat down to low so that the mixture bubbles gently. Cover loosely and cook, stirring occasionally and adding water if necessary, until the beans are about half-done—softening but still tough in the middle—about 40 minutes (an hour or more if you didn't soak the beans at all). Heat the oven to 350°F.

② Use an immersion blender or a potato masher to semipurée the beans in the pot (leave at least half unpuréed).

③ Stir in the rice, tomato, and a good amount of salt and pepper. (If you don't want a crust to develop, cover the pot.) Bake in the oven until the rice and beans are tender, about an hour, adding a little water if needed. Taste and season with salt and pepper. Sprinkle with parsley and serve or store, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days (reheat and stir in a little water and olive oil just before serving).

Baked Rice and White Beans, Tuscan Style. Omit the onion and tomato; the bell pepper is optional: Substitute white beans (like cannellini, navy, or Great Northern) for the black and add 2 to 3 tablespoons chopped fresh sage leaves (or just under 1 tablespoon dried) in Step 1. Proceed with the recipe and drizzle with good extra virgin olive oil just before serving.

Baked Rice and Red Kidney Beans, Jamaican Style. With coconut milk, irresistible: Replace the bell pepper with a fresh hot chile, the black beans with red kidney beans, and a 14-ounce can unsweetened coconut milk for the tomato. In Step 3, add about 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves or $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 teaspoon dried thyme, to taste.

Hoppin' John

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 1½ to 2 hours, largely unattended

The southern staples of bacon, black-eyed peas, and rice combine to make undoubtedly our best indigenous rice and bean dish. Even northerners will like it.

1 cup black-eyed or other dried peas, washed, picked over, and soaked
4 ounces slab bacon or 1 smoked ham hock
1 large onion, chopped
One 4-inch sprig fresh rosemary, 2 sprigs fresh thyme, or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried rosemary or thyme
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1½ cups long-grain rice

① Put the peas in a medium pot with the bacon or ham hock, onion, herb, and water to cover by at least 2 inches. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.

② Turn the heat down to medium and cook, skimming any foam that arises, until the peas are tender, 1 to 1½ hours. Remove the meat and reduce the liquid to about 3 cups; as the liquid is reducing, cut the meat into chunks, removing extremely fatty pieces if you like. Return the lean meat to the pot.

③ Taste the cooking liquid and add salt and pepper if needed. Remove the rosemary or thyme sprigs if you used fresh herbs. Stir in the rice and cook, covered, until the rice is done and the liquid is absorbed, 15 to 20 minutes. At this point, you may let the dish sit for 15 to 20 minutes before serving.

Red Beans and Rice

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About 30 minutes with cooked beans

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You can make this with or without meat, but the coconut milk really makes a difference.

3 cups Red Beans with Meat or Vegetarian Red Beans (page 434 or 435)

1½ cups long-grain rice

3 cups coconut milk (to make your own, see page 389), warmed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Minced fresh parsley leaves for garnish

1 Put the beans in a saucepan that can hold at least double their bulk comfortably. Turn the heat to medium-low and warm gently. If there is a great deal of liquid in the beans, cook them, stirring frequently, until they are moist but not swimming in liquid.

2 Add the rice and the coconut milk to the beans. Cover and turn the heat to low. Cook for about 20 minutes, or until the rice is tender and the liquid is absorbed. If necessary, uncover and raise the heat to medium-high; cook, stirring, until the liquid is absorbed. Season with salt and pepper, garnish with parsley, and serve.

Curried Red Beans with Rice. Best with Vegetarian Red Beans (page 435) or even plain cooked red beans (see page 411). Before beginning, chop 1 small red onion and mince 1 tablespoon fresh ginger. Put 1 tablespoon of butter or neutral oil in a small skillet over medium heat. When hot, add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about a minute. Add 2 tablespoons curry powder (to make your own, see pages 66–67). Proceed with the recipe, adding the mixture in the skillet to the pot in Step 2 when you add the rice and coconut milk. Garnish with minced fresh cilantro if you like.

Lentils and Rice with Caramelized Onions

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 45 minutes

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This Middle Eastern staple is a vegetarian one-pot meal, easy, highly seasoned, and filling. Omit the caramelized onions if you're pressed for time, but they're really sensational.

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped, plus 1 large or 2 medium onions, halved and sliced

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1 teaspoon ground cumin

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 cups lentils, washed and picked over

About 6 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water, warmed

1 cup long- or short-grain rice

Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

1 Put 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large, deep saucepan over medium heat. When hot, add the chopped onion and cook until it begins to become tender, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, cumin, and some salt and pepper and cook for 3 minutes more. Add the lentils, stir, and add about 4 cups liquid.

2 Cook, stirring occasionally, until the lentils begin to soften, about 20 minutes. Add enough of the stock or water so that the lentils are covered by about an inch of liquid. Stir in the rice. Cover and turn the heat to low.

3 Meanwhile, put the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, cook the onion slices, stirring frequently, until they are dark brown but not burned, about 15 minutes. Scoop out the onions and let them drain on paper towels while you finish cooking the lentils and rice.

4 Check the rice and lentils after 20 minutes. When both are tender and the liquid is absorbed, the

dish is ready. If the lentils and rice are not tender, add more liquid, cover, and cook for a few more minutes. If the rice and lentils are soft and there is much liquid remaining, raise the heat a bit and cook, uncovered, stirring, until it evaporates. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary and serve, garnished with the caramelized onions and parsley.

Bean Fritters, Croquettes, and Cakes

All of these turn ordinary legumes into unique snacks, accompaniments, and main dishes, and it's amazing how crisp you can make mashed beans if you cook them right. They take seasonings and spices beautifully, and the transformation is so complete that you might not even recognize them as beans when you're done.

If you don't want to panfry, there's an alternative: Heat the oven to 400°F. Shape the croquettes as in the following recipes and put them on a lightly oiled, non-stick baking sheet. Roast until lightly browned and cooked through, turning once, for a total of about 20 minutes. They will be lighter in flavor, more delicate than the panfried variety, and quite good.

The Simplest Bean Burgers

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 20 minutes with cooked beans

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This is the easiest and most versatile vegetarian burger to make. Use chickpeas, and the patties are golden brown and lovely; with black beans, much darker; with red, somewhere in between. Lentils give you a slightly grainy texture.

Like almost all veggie burger mixtures, these will hold together a little better if you refrigerate them first (ideally

you'd refrigerate both before and after shaping, but that's only if you have the time).

2 cups well-cooked white, black, or red beans or chickpeas or lentils, or one 14-ounce can, drained

1 medium onion, quartered

1/2 cup rolled oats (preferably not instant)

1 tablespoon chili powder or spice mix of your choice (to make your own, see pages 65–69)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 egg

Bean-cooking liquid, stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159), or other liquid (wine, cream, milk, water, ketchup, etc.) if necessary

Extra virgin olive oil or neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, as needed

① Combine the beans, onion, oats, chili powder, some salt and pepper, and the egg in a food processor and pulse until chunky but not puréed, adding a little liquid if necessary (this is unlikely but not impossible) to produce a moist but not wet mixture. Let the mixture rest for a few minutes if time allows.

② With wet hands, shape into whatever size patties you want and again let rest for a few minutes if time allows. (At this point, you may cover the mixture or the patties tightly and refrigerate for a day or so, then bring everything back to room temperature before cooking.) Film the bottom of a large nonstick or well-seasoned cast-iron skillet with oil and turn the heat to medium. When hot, add the patties. Cook until nicely browned on one side, about 5 minutes; turn carefully and cook on the other side until firm and browned, about another 5 minutes.

③ Serve on plates with the same sorts of side dishes you'd use for simply prepared meats or on buns with the usual burger fixings. Or cool and refrigerate for up to a day or two or freeze for up to 3 months.

Bean-and-Cheese Burgers. You don't have to mess with melting cheese on top of the burger, and—for the most part—it acts as a binder: Add 1/2 to 1 cup

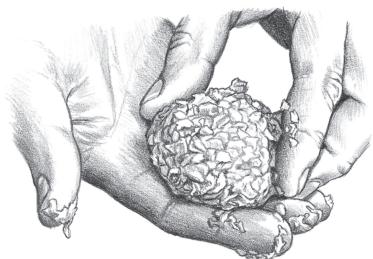
grated Parmesan, cheddar, Swiss, Jack, mozzarella, or other cheese to the mix (you can omit the egg if you like).

Bean-and-Spinach Burgers. You can leave it uncooked and just shred it if you prefer (figure about 2 cups), but this gives better results; it's great with a little garlic added: Squeeze dry and chop about 1 cup cooked spinach (you'll need about 8 ounces of raw spinach to start, or you can use frozen spinach); add it to the mix and proceed with the recipe.

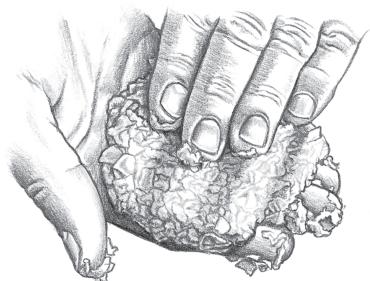
Bean-and-Veggie Burgers. Many options, but don't overdo it or the burger will fall apart: Add up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup carrots, bell peppers, shallots, leeks, celery, potato, sweet potato, winter squash, zucchini, or a

SHAPING VEGGIE BURGERS

1



2



(STEP 1) Gently form the mixture into a ball (it helps if your hands are wet), then (STEP 2) press—again, gently—into a patty.

combination. Cut into chunks as you do the onion and grind with the beans or shred or mince and add afterward.

Falafel

MAKES: 6 servings

TIME: 1 hour plus 24 hours to soak the beans

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Most bean fritters are made from cooked beans, but for falafel they're just soaked. Leaving the beans in plenty of water for a full day softens them enough to be minced. The spices and aromatics only add to the fabulous bean flavors, and it wouldn't be unheard of to double or even triple the amount of garlic. Serve the falafel in pita with lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, and other raw vegetables; with a green salad; or on their own, with Tahini Sauce (page 35) or any yogurt sauce (page 24); some Harissa (page 75) or other Chile Paste (pages 74–75) is great too.

Other beans you can use: dried lima beans; also see the variations.

$\frac{1}{4}$ cups dried chickpeas or 1 cup dried chickpeas
plus $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried split fava beans

2 cloves garlic, lightly crushed

1 small onion, quartered

1 teaspoon ground coriander

1 tablespoon ground cumin

Scant teaspoon cayenne, or to taste, or mild chili powder (to make your own, see page 66), to taste

1 cup chopped fresh parsley or cilantro leaves

1 teaspoon salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or to taste

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice, or more to taste

Neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, for deep-frying

1 Put the beans in a large bowl and cover with water by 3 or 4 inches—they will triple in volume as they soak. Soak for 24 hours, checking once or twice to see if you need to add more water to keep the beans submerged.

2 Drain the beans well and transfer them to a food processor with all the remaining ingredients except the oil; pulse until minced but not puréed, scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary; add water tablespoon by tablespoon if necessary to allow the machine to do its work, but keep the mixture as dry as possible. Taste and adjust the seasoning, adding more salt, pepper, cayenne, or a little more lemon juice as needed.

3 Put at least 2 inches (more is better) of oil in a large, deep saucepan; the narrower the saucepan, the less oil you need, but the more oil you use, the more patties you can cook at the same time. Turn the heat to medium-high, and heat the oil to about 350°F (a pinch of the batter will sizzle immediately).

4 Scoop out heaping tablespoons of the mixture and shape them into balls or small patties. Fry in batches, without crowding, until nicely browned, turning as necessary; total cooking time will be less than 5 minutes. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Nutty Falafel. Lots of good texture from the chopped nuts: Replace $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the beans with walnuts, almonds, peanuts, or hazelnuts (don't soak the nuts). Omit the garlic, cumin, and cayenne and use the parsley instead of the cilantro or a tablespoon or so thyme leaves. Proceed with the recipe.

Black-Eyed Pea Fritters. Street food in West Africa and totally addictive: Replace the chickpeas or favas with black-eyed peas, the onion with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped scallion, the coriander with hot red pepper flakes, and the cumin with minced fresh ginger.

Mashed Beans

These are an excellent substitute for mashed potatoes. (In fact, you can vary and season them the same way; see the box on page 340.) Throughout the Mediterranean, mashed fava and chickpeas are classic (for Hummus and similar dips, see pages 93–96). In Italy, large creamy white beans are a favorite. But really, any bean is fair game, provided it's cooked until tender.

Mashed beans are easier and faster than purées (they're also not as smooth), since all you need is a potato masher or ricer or just a sturdy fork. Start with about 3 cups of cooked beans and a cup of their cooking liquid—or milk, cream, stock, wine, or water. Put the beans in a medium pot with about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of liquid, a pat of butter or a tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil, and a sprinkle of salt and freshly ground black pepper, and turn the heat to medium. As the beans heat, roughly mash and stir them. If they begin to stick to the pan, add more liquid to loosen them up to the consistency you like; see the following list for seasoning ideas.

10 Additions to Any Mashed Beans

Just stir any of these in and heat through, then taste, adjust the seasoning, and serve. You can use most in combination: For example, add lemon zest, shallots, and lemon juice to the beans, then garnish with a drizzle of olive oil and chopped fresh parsley.

1. Chopped fresh herbs, like parsley, basil, cilantro, chives, tarragon, chervil, dill, or mint
2. Grated lemon zest
3. Sautéed or Roasted Garlic (page 303)
4. Chopped fresh tomatoes
5. Feta, Parmesan, or blue cheese (crumbled or grated)
6. Roasted or boiled potatoes
7. Chopped steamed or roasted broccoli or cauliflower
8. Cooked and crumbled bacon or sausage
9. Cooked and chopped greens, like dandelion, escarole, collards, kale, spinach, or mustard or broccoli raab
10. Chopped shallots, scallions, or sweet onion

Bean Griddlecakes

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 30 minutes

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Use virtually any cooked beans here. All you really need is a sprinkle of cheese, a dollop of sour cream or any pesto, a drizzle of vinaigrette, or a small bowl of salsa for dipping. As you can see from the list here, there are plenty of possibilities.

2 cups cooked or canned beans, drained
1 cup half-and-half or whole milk, plus more if needed
1 egg
2 tablespoons melted butter, extra virgin olive oil, or neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, plus more for cooking the griddlecakes
1 cup all-purpose flour
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Put a skillet over medium-high heat or heat an electric griddle to 375°F. Put the beans in a large bowl and mash them roughly with a fork. Use the fork to stir in the half-and-half, the egg, and the 2 tablespoons melted butter or oil. Stir until the mixture is thoroughly combined.

2 Add the flour and sprinkle with salt and pepper (keeping in mind how well seasoned the beans were to begin with). Stir with the fork just enough to fold in the flour, adding more half-and-half if necessary to produce the consistency of thick pancake batter.

3 Start cooking when a drop of water dances on the surface of the skillet or griddle. Working in batches, use a little more butter or oil to grease the cooking surface. Spoon on the batter to form 3- or 4-inch pancakes. Cook until bubbles form on the surface, then turn and cook the other side until golden, about 4 minutes per side. Keep finished griddlecakes in a warm oven if you like while you finish the others. Serve hot or at room temperature.

Bean Sprout Griddlecakes. Serve with soy sauce or one of the Asian sauces on pages 38–41: Instead of whole

cooked beans, use 3 cups washed and drained mung or soybean sprouts. Use 2 tablespoons dark sesame oil instead of the butter or other oil in the batter, then use a neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, to grease the pan. Add 1/2 cup sliced scallion to the batter if you like.

11 Tasty Additions to Bean Griddlecakes

1. 2 tablespoons minced mild fresh herbs like parsley, mint, basil, chives, chervil, or cilantro
2. 2 teaspoons minced potent fresh herbs like rosemary, thyme, tarragon, oregano, or epazote
3. 2 teaspoons minced fresh or crystallized ginger
4. 1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
5. Up to 1/4 cup chopped or sliced scallion or minced red onion
6. Minced fresh chile (like jalapeño or Thai), hot red pepper flakes, or cayenne to taste
7. 1 tablespoon any spice blend, like curry powder or chaat masala (to make your own, see pages 66–68)
8. Up to 1/4 cup chopped nuts, like almonds, walnuts, pecans, peanuts, or hazelnuts
9. Up to 1 cup corn kernels (frozen are fine; fresh are also fantastic added raw)
10. Crumbled cooked bacon or sausage
11. Minced anchovies

5 Sauces for Bean Griddlecakes

1. Fast Tomato Sauce (page 502)
2. Basil-Soy Dipping Sauce (page 38)
3. Simple Miso Dipping Sauce (page 39)
4. Harissa (page 75)
5. Fresh Tomato or Fruit Salsa (page 23), Fresh Tomatillo Salsa (page 33)

The Basics of Chickpea Flour

Chickpea flour, which is nothing more than ground dried chickpeas (and is also called *besan* or *gram flour*),

can be found in Indian, Middle Eastern, some Asian and health food markets, and often in Italian markets as well. It's used around the world—from Europe to the Middle East and throughout Asia—and it'll become a regular in your kitchen too once you've tried it. Like chickpeas, it has a nutty, robust flavor and is instantly likable.

The large chickpea pancake known as *socca* or *farnata* (page 116) is commonly eaten as an appetizer; both it and Chickpea Fries are wonderful as they are or dressed up with herbs, spices, or cheeses.

Chickpea Fries

Panelle or Panisse

MAKES: 4 to 6 appetizer servings

TIME: 45 minutes

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As good as, maybe better than, French fries: Even though they require two steps—making the chickpea porridge, then shaping and frying—they're not much more difficult and are far more reliable. You can produce them ahead of time and flavor them in at least a dozen different ways, serving them with just about any sauce you like.

Neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, for greasing and frying

1 cup chickpea flour, sifted

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Finely grated Parmesan cheese for garnish (optional)

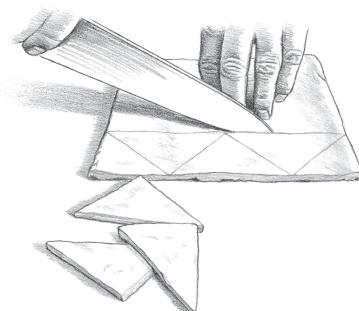
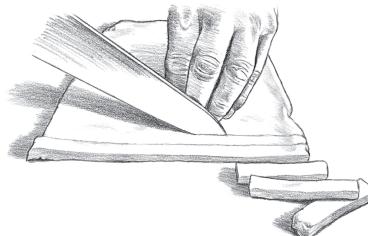
1 Grease a baking sheet or pizza pan with a rim and set aside. Bring 2 cups of water to a boil in a medium pot. Gradually add the chickpea flour, with a large pinch of salt and pepper, whisking constantly to prevent lumps from forming. Reduce to a gentle bubble, stir in the olive oil, and cook for just a minute.

2 Scoop the chickpea mixture onto the prepared pan and spread into an even layer. Let cool for a few minutes and then cover loosely with parchment or plastic. Refrigerate until chilled through, about 30 minutes (but up to a day, covered tightly, after it's completely cool).

3 Put $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Meanwhile, cut the chickpea mixture into $3 \times \frac{1}{2}$ -inch fries (or into triangles or into rounds using a cookie cutter). Gently put batches of the fries into the hot oil, rotating them gently for even cooking and browning on all sides, about 3 to 4 minutes.

4 Drain the fries on paper towels and immediately sprinkle with salt, lots of pepper, and a good dusting of Parmesan if you like. Serve hot or at room temperature with lemon wedges.

CUTTING CHICKPEA FRIES



Spread the chickpea mixture on a rectangular sheet and let it firm up. Then you can cut it into fries (batons) or triangles before deep-frying.

Peanut and Chickpea Fries. The peanut flour adds a wonderfully nutty flavor—serve savory or sweet, sprinkled with confectioners' sugar: Replace half of the chickpea flour with peanut flour.

21 Main-Course Bean Dishes

With corn bread (or any bread) and salad, almost any bean dish can serve as a main course. But the following are especially satisfying:

1. Bean and Tomato Casserole (page 414)
2. Bean Casserole with Hominy and Tortillas (page 414)
3. Baked Beans (page 416)
4. Stir-Fried Tofu with Scallions (page 417)
5. Black Beans with Crisp Pork and Orange (page 419)
6. White Beans with Cabbage, Pasta, and Ham (page 421)
7. Bean and Potato Gratin or any of its variations (page 422)
8. Stewed Chickpeas with Chicken or any of its variations (page 423)
9. Edamame with Tofu or Edamame with Shrimp (page 425)
10. Edamame with Ground Pork (page 425)
11. Fresh Favas with Croutons or any of its variations (page 426)
12. White Beans and Sausage or White Beans and Shrimp (page 427)
13. Beans and Greens (page 427)
14. Chili non Carne or its variations (page 429)
15. Red Beans with Meat or its variations (page 434)
16. Black-Eyed Peas, Southern Style (page 435)
17. Red Beans and Rice (page 437)
18. Lentils and Rice with Caramelized Onions (page 437)
19. Falafel and its variations (page 439)
20. Bean Griddlecakes (page 441)
21. Braised Tofu with Spicy Ground Pork (page 448)

The Basics of Tofu

Tofu has gone mainstream; you see it in every supermarket and it's on restaurant menus all over the country. And it's about time: Tofu (or bean curd) is among the most valuable foods on the planet, a nutritional powerhouse, and almost as versatile as the egg.

Tofu is nothing but coagulated soy milk, made as you would fresh cheese. It comes in myriad forms and shapes and can be fried, stir-fried, baked, grilled, boiled, braised, broiled, whipped, blended, even served cold right out of the package, included in smoothies, or used in sauces.

Types of Tofu

Your local Asian market may stock tofu in many forms. In supermarkets, you'll at least find "brick"-formed regular and silken tofu.

"Regular" Tofu

Brick, Momen, or Chinese Tofu

The most familiar tofu, shaped like bricks and sold sealed in plastic tubs with water or in an open tub. The texture is dense and crumbly; its firmness—determined by water content—may be soft, medium, firm, or extra-firm. The firm and extra-firm varieties hold their shape and are suitable for just about any cooking technique: stir-frying, baking, braising, grilling, or frying. Soft and medium tofu hold their shape when cut but not necessarily when cooked, so they're best served raw or used as thickeners or blended to replace eggs or dairy.

Silken Tofu

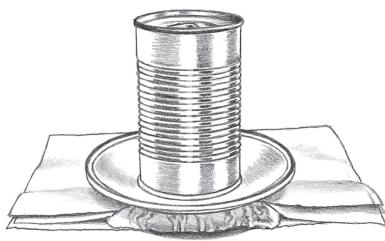
Kinugoshi or Japanese Tofu

Also brick shaped and usually sold in aseptic boxes, silken tofu can be as soft as custard, though it's sold in soft, firm, and extra-firm varieties. It's an excellent thickener or replacement for eggs or dairy, and firm and extra-firm versions can be diced and added to broths and soups, crumbled, deep-fried, or even gently stir-fried.

Pressed or Extra-Firm Tofu

Not to be confused with tofu you press yourself (below), this is subjected to high pressure to form a very firm tofu that has the density of Swiss cheese and comes plain or seasoned. It's labeled a number of ways but is always brown and dense and sold whole or cut into thin strips used like noodles. Whole, it's ideal for stir-frying, marinating, grilling, and in salads; cut, it makes a delicious addition to soups. Smoked tofu is similar in texture with a stronger flavor. You'll also find various types of Chinese and Japanese styles of fried tofu, sold in different packaging.

SQUEEZING TOFU



Put cut tofu between four layers of paper towels, weight evenly (about a pound, no more than two, is right), and let sit for a few minutes, up to a half hour or so.

Buying and Storing Tofu

Like all perishable products, tofu is best when fresh. Supermarket tofu (typically the kind sold in plastic tubs) has an expiration date; once opened it can be stored (refrigerated) in fresh water, which should be changed daily, for a few days. (The same thing goes for bulk tofu you might buy from a tub of water in an Asian market or aseptic boxed tofu once you open it.) Tofu has spoiled when it smells and/or tastes sour and the storing water is cloudy (though cloudy water alone does not mean the tofu is off). For longer storage, tofu can be frozen; see below.

Preparing Tofu

Though it's perfectly fine to drain tofu, pat it dry, and use it right away, you can easily vary the texture of tofu before cooking. The most important ways to prepare tofu before you use it are freezing, squeezing, baking, grilling, and deep frying. Here are details of the first two, and recipes for the remainder:

Freezing: The best way to store tofu for long periods, freezing also changes the texture completely, creating a darker, firmer, chewier, and meatier brick with a dry and spongy texture that's perfect for grilling, stir-fries, and braised dishes. To freeze, drain the tofu and pat it dry; wrap it in plastic (or put in a container) and freeze for several hours or up to 3 months. For extra chew, cut the tofu into cubes and dry them well before freezing. Allow enough time to defrost tofu before slicing and cooking.

Squeezing: Here you just press some of the liquid from a brick of regular tofu to give it a drier and firmer texture that makes it denser and easier to handle and cook. Cut the tofu in half through its equator; put the halves on four sheets of paper towels, then cover with another four sheets. Cover with a heavy cutting board or similar weight so the tofu bulges at the sides slightly but doesn't crack. Wait 20 to 30 minutes, or as time allows (even the few minutes it takes you to prepare other ingredients will help); change the towels if they become saturated. Of course, the longer you squeeze the tofu, the more liquid it will release and the drier it will become. (Drier tofu absorbs more flavors, which is especially important for marinating.)

Baked Tofu

MAKES: 4 or more servings

TIME: About 1 hour

M V

Good as this technique is—it's easier, less messy, and less fatty than the more common deep frying—it's relatively unknown. But treated this way, tofu becomes crusty, with an almost egglike interior. Cool, then slice or cube it, and you're ready for anything: sandwiches, salads, stir-

fries, you name it, virtually anywhere you'd use Deep-Fried Tofu (page 446). (See "16 Sauces for Any Simply Cooked Tofu," page 446.)

1 to 2 pounds firm tofu, frozen or squeezed (see previous page) or simply patted dry

Salt

① Heat the oven to 350°F. Dry the tofu with paper towels—you don't have to be too compulsive about this; just blot off excess water—and sprinkle it with salt. Put in a nonstick skillet or baking pan.

② Bake for about 1 hour, undisturbed. The tofu is done when the crust is lightly browned and firm. Remove and use immediately or cool, wrap, and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Soy-Baked Tofu. About 10 seconds' more work, and—for many uses—a significant improvement. After blotting off water, brush liberally with soy sauce. You may still want to sprinkle with salt, but very lightly.

Miso-Baked Tofu. Now you're adding serious flavor, but still quite easily: Thin a couple tablespoons of any miso with sake, white wine, vegetable stock (to make your own, see page 157), or water, just to brushable consistency. After blotting off water, brush the tofu liberally with this mixture.

Barbecue-, Teriyaki-, or Ponzu-Baked Tofu. Perhaps better suited to Grilled or Broiled Tofu (below), but easier, more leisurely, and not at all bad: After blotting off water, brush the tofu liberally with any barbecue sauce (see page 52), Teriyaki Sauce (page 55), or Ponzu Sauce (page 40).

Grilled or Broiled Tofu

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F **M** **V**

It's almost essential to freeze or press the tofu (see page 444) before grilling or broiling, adding a step. But once

that's done, the process is easy enough, especially if you use the broiler. (Of course if you have a grill going already, so much the better.)

Like baking, frying, and braising, this can be used to prepare tofu for other dishes, like stir-fries, but it's also good on its own. To season it more assertively before cooking, try rubbing it the same way you would meat or poultry, with chili powder, jerk seasoning, curry powder, or five-spice powder (to make your own, see pages 66–68).

1½ to 2 pounds any tofu, frozen or squeezed (see page 444) or simply patted dry, cut in half horizontally

Salt

Soy sauce as needed

Mirin (or honey mixed with an equal amount of water), as needed (optional)

① Heat a charcoal or gas grill to moderately high heat or heat the broiler and put the rack about 4 inches from the heat source. Sprinkle the tofu lightly with salt.

② Cut the tofu into large cubes and skewer or simply put the whole pieces on the grill or under the broiler. Carefully cook until lightly browned, then brush with soy sauce or soy sauce mixed with an equal quantity of mirin. Continue to grill or broil until nicely browned; total cooking time will be less than 10 minutes.

③ Serve immediately (whole or sliced), with a little more soy sauce drizzled on top or with any of the sauces in the list on page 446, or cool, wrap, and refrigerate for another use.

Miso Grilled or Broiled Tofu. Use any miso you like here, but any dark (red or brown) miso is best, I think: Warm together ½ cup red miso with 2 tablespoons sake or white wine and 2 tablespoons mirin (or 1 tablespoon honey mixed with 1 tablespoon water); taste and add a little more mirin if you like. In Step 2, brush the tofu liberally with this mixture and continue to cook, turning and basting, until the tofu is dark brown. Serve immediately.

about the time it takes to clean and pan-cook some spinach or make a quick tomato sauce to put on top of it. If you want to make grilled polenta (see the variation), reduce the amount of water slightly (or cook it a little longer) so the polenta is thick rather than creamy and soft.

You can make polenta with water only, but it's a little richer and creamier with some milk in there. And polenta sets as it cools, which means you can slice it into squares for grilling or frying (see the variations).

Other grains you can use: grits.

1/2 cup milk, preferably whole

Salt

1 cup coarse cornmeal

1 tablespoon butter or extra virgin olive oil, or more (optional)

Freshly grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Freshly ground black pepper

1 Combine the milk with 2 cups water and a large pinch of salt in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Bring just about to a boil, then add the cornmeal in a steady stream, whisking all the while to prevent lumps from forming. Turn the heat down to low and simmer, whisking frequently, until thick, 10 or 15 minutes. If the mixture becomes too thick, simply whisk in a bit more water. For soft polenta, you want a consistency about as thick as sour cream; for Grilled or Fried Polenta (see the variation), you want something approaching thick oatmeal.

2 Add the butter and/or cheese if you're using them, then taste, add salt if necessary and lots of pepper, and serve (or prepare it for Grilled or Fried Polenta or Polenta Gratin).

Polenta with Herbs. This is also good for Grilled or Fried Polenta: Add 1 teaspoon each chopped fresh sage and fresh rosemary (or 1/2 teaspoon each dried), along with the cornmeal. When the polenta is done, stir in 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic if you like, along with the butter or oil. Cheese remains optional.

Polenta with Fresh Corn. When the polenta is almost ready, stir in the kernels stripped from 2 ears of corn and cook for 1 minute more.

Polenta Gratin. Immediately after cooking, spoon or pour the polenta into a buttered baking dish of a size that will give you a layer about 1 inch thick. Top with about 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese and broil until the cheese melts and browns slightly. Serve (with a spoon) hot or at room temperature.

Grilled or Fried Polenta. Make sure the polenta is fairly thick when cooked and omit the butter and cheese. Pour the cooked polenta out onto a cutting board or into a loaf pan. Let cool for at least 10 minutes (it can really sit there all day), then cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices. When you're ready, brush with olive oil and grill with a little salt and pepper or brown the slices in hot olive oil in a pan.

Microwave Polenta. Frankly, I find this more trouble than it's worth, but some people swear by it, and it is a little faster: Combine the milk, water, salt, and cornmeal in a bowl and whisk until smooth. Cover and microwave for about 2 minutes; whisk. Re-cover and repeat the process, microwaving for 1 minute at a time, until the mixture is creamy and smooth. (Total time will be around 5 minutes or a little longer.) Again, if it thickens too fast, whisk in a little more water. Finish as directed.

14 Dishes to Serve on Top of Polenta

You can top a mound of soft polenta (or squares of Grilled or Fried Polenta) with almost any savory, liquid dish just as you would rice. Here are some ideas:

- 1.** Sautéed Eggplant with Tomatoes (page 295)
- 2.** Braised Endive, Escarole, or Radicchio with Prosciutto (page 298)
- 3.** Sautéed Mushrooms (page 313)
- 4.** Roasted Winter Squash Slices (add butter and Parmesan; see page 368)
- 5.** Beans and Tomatoes (page 414)
- 6.** Fast Tomato Sauce (page 502)

7. Tomato-Shrimp Sauce (pages 528–529)
8. Quick-Braised Fish Fillets or Steaks in Tomato Sauce (page 570)
9. Chicken Cutlets Roasted with Tomatoes (page 672)
10. Sautéed Chicken Cutlets with Wine Sauce (page 679)
11. Braised Pork with Milk (page 758)
12. Italian Sausage with Peppers and Onions (page 763)
13. Lamb Shanks with Tomatoes and Olives (page 776)
14. Classic Osso Buco (page 784)

The Many Forms of Dried Corn

Fresh corn is pretty easy to understand: It's a grain we eat like a vegetable. But when it's dried, things get downright confusing. Understanding the differences among pozole, hominy, polenta, grits, and cornmeal is complicated by foreign languages, outdated names, and misinformation.

The first thing to know is that these products are either simply dried corn or dried corn that's been processed with something alkaline to easily remove the hull and germ. This technique, which gives the kernels that distinctive flavor associated with good corn tortillas, has been around for thousands of years. The earliest American inhabitants discovered that soaking corn along with wood ashes (which contain lime—not the fruit but the agricultural product, calcium hydroxide) made the corn more digestible and therefore more beneficial.

- **Hominy:** Whole dried corn kernels are soaked in lime (calcium hydroxide) before removing the hull and germ. See details in "The Grain Lexicon" (page 476). Cook as you would other grains. (It will cook faster if you soak it as you would beans; see page 411.) Canned hominy is precooked. Hominy recipes are given later in this chapter (starting on page 496) since this grain takes the longest to cook of all.
- **Pozole or Posole:** The Aztec name for hominy; also the name of any stew that features hominy and, usually, pork (see page 496).
- **Masa:** The "dough" or paste made from grinding corn cooked with lime, or nixtamal. When coarsely ground, it's used for tamales; when finely ground, it is the base for tortillas. You might be able to get a tortilla bakery to sell you some.

- **Masa Harina:** This is masa dried into a convenient mix for making dough for tortillas, tamales, and other Mexican dishes. Its texture is somewhere between flour and fine cornmeal. Most supermarkets now carry masa harina; store for up to 6 months, preferably in the refrigerator.
- **Dried Corn:** Dried without lime, not very common, and not nearly as tasty as hominy. Cook like any other whole grain.
- **Cornmeal:** Ground dried corn without the lime. See "The Grain Lexicon" (page 476) for details. When cooked, most Americans call it "cornmeal mush." But raw cornmeal also goes by two other names that are the same as finished dishes: polenta, an Italian specialty best made from medium-ground yellow cornmeal (or a combination of fine and coarse), and grits, which in the American South today are simply coarsely ground white cornmeal, though true hominy grits are indeed ground from hominy.
- **Corn Flour:** Finely ground dried corn (more finely ground than cornmeal) used for baking, usually in combination with wheat flour since it has no gluten and can be heavy.
- **Popcorn:** There are two explanations for why popcorn pops. One is that it contains spirits, which escape when exposed to heat, leaving their exploded shell behind. I like this story, but it's more believable that the starch and water content in popcorn is relatively high, which makes the hull explode under high heat. When heated in oil (see the recipe on page 81), popcorn is the classic snack. (Boiled popcorn is edible, but not as good as either dried corn or hominy.)

Polenta "Pizza"

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 40 minutes

M V

This is a fun way to eat polenta, especially if you've got kids eager to get into the kitchen. Pizza toppings beyond sauce and mozzarella will work here, but you'll need a fork. (For a handheld corn-flavored pie, start with Crunchier Pizza Dough, page 179.)

You can prepare this crust in advance. Make a batch of polenta (make extra, so you can eat some warm), add a little oil, then spread it on a pan or even a plate, cover, and refrigerate for up to a day or so.

Other grains you can use: grits, cooked as you would Polenta (page 485).

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus oil for the pan

1 recipe Polenta (page 485), made with 2½ cups water and without butter or cheese

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1½ cups Fast Tomato Sauce (page 502)

1½ to 2 cups grated mozzarella, Parmesan, or fontina cheese, crumbled Gorgonzola, or a combination

Chopped fresh herbs, like basil, parsley, oregano, or marjoram, or a mixture

1 Heat the oven to 400°F. Brush a thin layer of olive oil on a pizza pan or cookie sheet. Stir 1 tablespoon of the oil into the cooked polenta and pour and spoon it onto the prepared pan. Work quickly so the polenta doesn't stiffen and spread it evenly.

2 When the polenta is cool enough to handle, cover it with a sheet of plastic wrap or wax paper and press it to a thickness of about ½ inch all over, then remove the wrap and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Spread the tomato sauce over the polenta, then sprinkle with the cheese and the herbs. Drizzle with another tablespoon or so of olive oil and put in the oven.

3 Bake until the cheese is melted and the pizza is hot, 12 to 15 minutes. Cut into slices and serve hot or at room temperature.

Mexican-Style Cornmeal Pizza. Use either grits or polenta. Substitute Salsa Roja (page 48) for the tomato sauce. Instead of the Italian cheeses, use cotija, Chihuahua, or Monterey Jack. Omit the herbs before baking and garnish with chopped fresh cilantro and scallion.

Breakfast Polenta Pizza. Omit the tomato sauce. Make 4 indents in the polenta and crack an egg into each. Top with a grating of cheese (cheddar is fine here), some snipped fresh herbs (I like sage), and crumbled crisp cooked bacon or cooked sausage if you like. Bake until the eggs are set, 10 to 15 minutes.

Tamales

MAKES: 24 tamales

TIME: At least 2 hours

M

Tamales are work, usually a group effort, but worth the labor (check out the "Naked" Tamales variation for a quicker version).

Lard is traditional and wonderful, but if you want an alternative, try this: Freeze 1 cup extra virgin olive oil until it solidifies (it will need at least an hour; the thinner it's spread out, the more quickly it will freeze). Substitute this for the lard and work quickly to beat the baking powder and masa into it; it will not fluff up like lard, but the results are good.

24 dried corn husks

2 pounds ground fresh masa or 3½ cups dry masa harina

2¼ cups chicken stock (to make your own, see page 157), plus more as needed

1 cup lard, cubed

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon baking powder

1½ cups Shredded Pork (page 759), shredded cooked chicken, or Real Refried Beans (page 418)

1 Sort through the corn husks and make sure they're all clean; soak in warm water for at least 3 hours or overnight. Drain, then separate the husks. Continue to soak until ready to use.

2 If you're using dry masa harina, add the stock a little at a time just until combined. Stop when the mixture is crumbly.

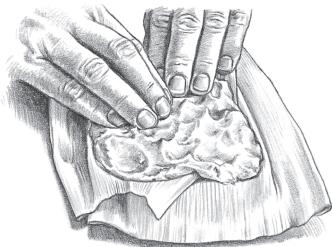
3 In a mixer, beat the lard with the salt and baking powder until fluffy. If you're using fresh masa, alternatively add the masa and stock, continuously beating. If you're using the masa harina, add the masa harina mix-

ture. Beat until the dough is light and fluffy, adding more stock if needed. The mixture is ready when a small ball of the dough floats in water.

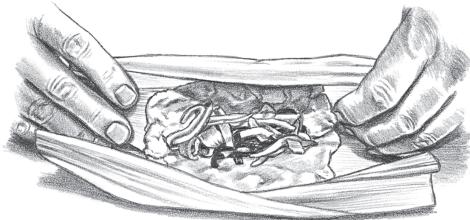
4 Drain a husk and pat dry with paper towels. Spread 2 tablespoons of the masa dough in the center of the husk, then wet your fingers and pat into a 4×3 -inch rectangle along the right edge of the husk, leaving at least 2 inches on each side. Spoon 1 tablespoon of filling lengthwise down the center of the dough rectangle. To wrap the tamales, fold the dough rectangle in half, bringing the right side of the dough over the filled center.

FORMING TAMALES

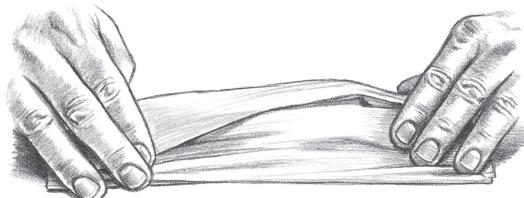
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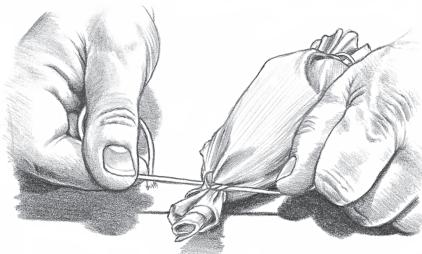
2



3



4



(**STEP 1**) For each tamale, drain a husk and pat dry with paper towels. Spread 2 tablespoons of the masa dough in the center of the husk, then wet your fingers and pat into a 4×3 -inch rectangle along the right edge of the husk, leaving at least 2 inches on each side. (**STEP 2**) Spoon 1 tablespoon of filling lengthwise down the center of the dough rectangle. To wrap the tamales, fold the dough rectangle in half, bringing the right side of the dough over the filled center. (**STEP 3**) Continue rolling tightly to the end of the husk. (**STEP 4**) Then secure the open ends with kitchen string. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

Continue rolling tightly to the end of the husk, then secure the open ends with kitchen string. Repeat with the remaining ingredients.

⑤ Prepare a large steamer by setting a steamer rack about 2 inches above gently boiling water. Stack the tamales, seam down, on the rack. Cover and steam until done, about 45 minutes. To test for doneness, remove one tamale and open the husk—the filling should be firm and come away easily. Serve warm or at room temperature.

"Naked" Tamales. Use ramekins if you have them and reduce the cooking time by about half, but unless you have 24, you'll have to work in batches. Omit the corn husks and skip Step 1. Heat the oven to 400°F. Grease a standard loaf pan or a 10-inch springform cake pan. Follow Steps 2 and Step 3. Put half the masa in the prepared pan. Top with the filling and put the remaining dough on top. Cover the pan with foil and put in a large roasting pan; carefully pour boiling water into the roasting pan to come halfway up the tamale pan. Put the whole thing in the oven and bake for about an hour, or until the masa is pulling away from the sides of the pan. Let cool a bit, then turn the tamale out onto a platter. Cut the loaf or cake into slices or wedges and serve.

10 Dishes That Make Super Tamale Fillings

Debone if necessary and chop or shred the ingredients into small pieces; be careful not to overfill the tamales.

1. Turkey Thighs in Almond Mole (page 702)
2. Broiled or Grilled Boneless Chicken Thighs, whole or in kebabs, spicy (page 642–643)
3. Braised Beef Brisket (page 743)
4. West Indian Crispy Pork Bits with Mexican Flavors (page 749)
5. Shredded Pork (page 759)
6. Beer-Glazed Black Beans (page 420)
7. Chili non Carne (page 429)

8. Chopped grilled vegetables, like eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes, chiles or bell peppers, or squash (see "Grilling or Broiling Vegetables," page 238)
9. Raw fresh corn kernels, with or without a little crumbled queso fresco
10. Grated Jack, cheddar, or cotija cheese

Grits Gratin with Arugula and Garlic

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 45 minutes with prepared grits

M **V**

A light one-dish meal; as the garlicky arugula wilts, the slices of grits form a yummy golden crust akin to croutons.

You can make the grits up to a day in advance, pour into a loaf pan or rimmed baking sheet, and let them set before proceeding.

Other grains you can use: coarse cornmeal.

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus oil for the pan

3 or 4 cloves garlic, crushed

1/2 teaspoon sugar

4 cups arugula leaves

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons balsamic or sherry vinegar

1 recipe Polenta (page 485), made with grits and molded according to Grilled or Fried Polenta

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

① Heat the oven to 400°F. Grease a shallow 2-quart gratin dish or 9 × 13-inch baking pan with a little olive oil.

② Put 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large, deep skillet over medium-low heat. When hot, add the garlic and sugar and cook, stirring occasionally, until the garlic is soft, plump, and starting to color, about 10 minutes. Turn off the heat and add the arugula. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, toss gently once or twice, and spread the

leaves in the bottom of the prepared dish. Drizzle with the vinegar.

③ Turn the grits out of the pan and cut into 1/2-inch-thick slices; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Carefully spread them out on top of the arugula, overlapping them a little if necessary. Drizzle with the remaining oil and sprinkle with the cheese. Bake until the topping is golden and bubbling, 20 to 25 minutes. Serve, topped with lots of black pepper.

Grits Gratin with Escarole, Garlic, and Lemon. Instead of the arugula, use torn escarole leaves. Substitute lemon juice for the vinegar.

Grits Gratin with Arugula and Bacon. Add a few slices of chopped bacon and reduce the oil to 2 tablespoons. Cook the bacon in the oil (with or without the garlic) until lightly crisp.

Grits Gratin with Arugula, White Beans, and Garlic. When you toss the arugula with the garlic and olive oil in Step 2, add 1 cup cooked white beans.

Kasha with Golden Brown Onions

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

The classic Eastern European kasha dish and, with its deeply browned onions, warm tasting and wonderful. Many people toss their kasha with an egg before cooking, because it keeps the grains separate. But toasting it in oil accomplishes the same goal—take your pick. (Without either, the kasha will become mushier, which is fine too.)

3 cups chopped onion

3 tablespoons neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn

1 egg or 2 more tablespoons neutral oil, like
grapeseed or corn

1 cup kasha

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water, warmed

1 to 2 tablespoons butter (optional)

① Put the onion in a large skillet with a lid over medium heat. Cover the skillet and cook for about 15 minutes, until the onion is dry and almost sticking to the pan. Add the 3 tablespoons oil, raise the heat to medium-high, and cook, stirring, until the onion is nicely browned, another 15 minutes or so.

② Meanwhile, if you're using the egg, beat it, then toss it in a bowl with the kasha. (If not, proceed to Step 3.) Put the mixture along with some salt and pepper in a heavy, large, deep skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until the mixture smells toasty, about 3 minutes. Proceed to Step 4.

③ If you're using the 2 tablespoons oil instead of egg, put it in a heavy, deep skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add the kasha, along with some salt and pepper, and cook, stirring, until the mixture smells toasty, about 3 minutes.

④ Turn the heat to a minimum, carefully add the stock, and stir once. Cover and cook until the liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Turn off the heat. Stir in the onion, taste, and adjust the seasoning. Serve or let the kasha sit for up to 30 minutes before serving.

⑤ When you're ready to serve, fluff with a fork, adding the butter if you like at the same time.

Kasha with Bacon and Golden Brown Onions. Add 4 to 6 ounces bacon, chopped, to the onion after it's cooked for 15 minutes. Cook until the bacon is crisp and the fat rendered and the onions are browned, about 10 minutes. Proceed with the recipe. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley if you like.

Kasha with Carrots or Parsnips. Replace the onion with 2 cups or so (about 1 pound) chopped carrots or parsnips. In Step 1, put the oil in the pan first, then

add the carrots or parsnips; cook until they are golden brown and tender, only about 15 minutes total.

Kasha with Mushrooms. Replace the onion with 2 cups or so (about 8 ounces) chopped or sliced mushrooms of any variety. In Step 1, put the oil in the pan first, then add the mushrooms; cook until the mushrooms are golden brown and soft, about 5 minutes.

Kasha Varnishkas. These quantities will make enough to serve 6 to 8; halve the recipe if you want less: When you begin the onions, bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. When the kasha is just about done (or is already resting), cook 1 pound of farfalle (bowtie) pasta until it's tender but not mushy and drain it, reserving some of the cooking water. Use a fork to toss the pasta with the kasha and onions, definitely adding some butter and enough of the reserved cooking water to make the dish a little creamy.

Cracked Wheat with Mustard

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 20 minutes

F M V

The difference between savory, fluffy cracked wheat and breakfast porridge is basically a lot less water and a fork. Don't confuse cracked wheat (which is raw) with bulgur (which is precooked and dried). If you use bulgur here, you'll end up with mush.

Other grains you can use: steel-cut oats, Israeli (pearl) couscous.

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 cup cracked wheat

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/4 cup dry white wine (optional)

2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon or 2 tablespoons minced fresh chives, chervil, or parsley leaves
1 pat butter (optional)

① Put the oil in a medium pan with a lid over medium-high heat. When hot, add the cracked wheat and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently with a fork, until it smells like fresh toast, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the wine if you're using it, stir briefly to combine, and cook until it almost boils off, a minute or two.

② If you didn't add wine, add a cup of water. If you did add wine, add 3/4 cup water. Either way, stir again briefly with the fork, bring to a boil, cover, and reduce the heat to low. Cook, undisturbed, for about 15 minutes.

③ Lift the lid and use the fork to stir in the mustard, the tarragon, and the butter if you like. Cover again, turn the heat off, and let sit for at least 5 and up to 15 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then fluff one last time with your fork and serve.

6 Ways to Spin Cracked Wheat with Mustard

Instead of mustard, add these combos, mixing in with a fork, all in Step 3 except for the last two, either with or without the butter:

1. 3 finely chopped scallions and 2 tablespoons sunflower seeds
2. 2 tablespoons of your favorite Chile Paste (page 74)
3. 2 tablespoons maple syrup (or less, to taste) and a pinch of cayenne
4. 1/2 cup fresh or frozen peas and 1/4 cup minced fresh mint leaves (A dollop of plain yogurt goes great with this.)
5. 6 ounces or so sausage, removed from its casing, crumbled, and cooked in the oil until browned before the wheat is added
6. Use dark sesame or peanut oil instead of extra virgin olive oil and finish by stirring in 1 tablespoon or so

of soy sauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped roasted peanuts, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh cilantro.

Millet-Cauliflower Mash

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 45 minutes, largely unattended



With the protein from the millet, these will stick to your ribs longer than mashed potatoes, and virtually all the variations and additions you find there (page 340) will work with this too.

2 tablespoons neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn

1 cup millet

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ head cauliflower, coarsely chopped (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups)

3 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159), or water

1 head Roasted Garlic (page 303), squeezed from the skin (optional)

1 Put the oil in a large pot with a lid over medium heat. When hot, add the millet and stir constantly until it toasts and turns golden, about 3 minutes.

2 Sprinkle with salt and pepper and add the cauliflower and $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the stock. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat so the mixture bubbles gently, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the millet bursts, about 30 minutes. Add a little stock anytime the mixture gets too dry.

3 Remove from the heat and use an immersion blender to purée the millet and cauliflower in the pan. Or cool the mixture slightly, pour into a food processor or food mill (which will make the mash very fluffy), and purée carefully. Return the mash to the pot, add the roasted garlic if you're using it, and reheat gently, stirring in the remaining stock if needed. Taste, adjust the seasoning, and serve.

Cheesy Millet Mash. After puréeing, in Step 3, add 1 cup grated cheddar, manchego, or Gruyère cheese to the mash, along with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup or so of milk and a pat of butter if you like.

Autumn Millet Bake

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, largely unattended



Perfect for Thanksgiving, though you'll probably want to eat it more than once a year. The slightly sweet flavor of the squash is nicely balanced with tart fresh cranberries and the nutty flavor of millet.

Other grains you can use: quinoa, cracked wheat.

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus oil for the dish

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup millet

1 medium butternut or other winter squash or 1 small pumpkin, peeled, seeded, and cut into 1-inch cubes

1 cup fresh cranberries

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage leaves or 1 teaspoon dried sage

2 tablespoons maple syrup or honey

1 cup chicken or vegetable stock (to make your own, see page 157) or water, warmed

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup pumpkin seeds or coarsely chopped hazelnuts

1 Heat the oven to 375°F and grease a 2-quart oven-proof dish, a large gratin dish, or a 9×13 -inch baking dish with olive oil.

2 Put 2 tablespoons of the oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, add the millet and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant and golden, about 3 minutes. Set aside.

3 Spread the squash cubes in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Scatter the cranberries around and spoon the millet mixture on top. Sprinkle with salt and

pepper and the sage and drizzle with syrup. Carefully pour the warmed stock over all. Cover tightly with foil and bake, undisturbed, for about 45 minutes. Carefully taste to see if the millet is done. If not, add a little warm water if it looks dry, re-cover, and return to the oven for 10 minutes or so.

4 Uncover and turn the oven up to 400°F. As discreetly as possible, sneak a taste and adjust the seasoning. Sprinkle the seeds on top (a good way to camouflage your taste) and return the dish to the oven. Bake until the mixture bubbles and the top is browned, another 10 minutes or so. Serve piping hot or at room temperature.

Autumn Millet Bake with Cream. Reduce the stock to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and add 1 cup warmed cream.

Wild Rice Pilaf

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 40 minutes



You can cook wild rice in equal quantities with brown rice, white rice, or pearled barley (I like this combo very much) and integrate its flavor into almost any other rice dish. But beware that it takes almost as long as brown rice to cook, so plan ahead a bit (or parboil it according to the instructions on page 20 before combining it with white rice). The easiest way to cook it by itself is with the recipe for Cooking Grains, the Easy Way (page 451), but this recipe is a little more sophisticated. In fact, the main recipe and its variations all make excellent poultry stuffing; double the quantities if roasting a turkey.

- 2 tablespoons butter or extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup wild rice
- 3 cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water
- 1 bay leaf

Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

1 Put the butter or oil in a deep skillet or saucepan with a lid over medium heat. When the butter is melted or the oil is hot, add the wild rice and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant and glossy, just a couple minutes. Stir in the stock, bay leaf, and some salt and pepper and bring to a boil.

2 Cover, turn the heat to low, and cook, undisturbed, for 30 minutes. Check the progress: The rice is done when the grains have puffed up and are quite tender, regardless of whether the liquid has been absorbed. If the rice is not done, continue to cook, adding more liquid if necessary. If it is done, drain if necessary (this is unlikely). Taste and adjust the seasoning and fluff with a fork; garnish with parsley and serve.

Wild Rice with Dried Fruit. When you fluff the wild rice in Step 2, stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped dried fruit, like apricots.

Is Wild Rice Wild?

Wild rice is a water grass indigenous to North America that has been harvested since prehistoric times. For Native Americans in the Great Lakes region it was a main source of protein and other nutrients. Now there is cultivated wild rice, which usually comes from California, and wild wild rice, which still comes mostly from Minnesota and neighboring states and provinces. The cultivated kind is less expensive and actually quite a different experience, though both can be quite good and both can taste like pine needles. Bottom line: Wild rice is a nice change, but there are other, more interesting grains that don't cost five or six bucks a pound. Whatever you do, don't buy the little boxes you find in the supermarket, which are inferior; rice by mail order or from a good specialty market is better (see page 982).

cots, cherries, cranberries, mangoes, or apples. Put the lid back on for a minute or two to warm through and plump.

Wild Rice with Curried Nuts. Use butter, peanut oil, or neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn. In Step 1, before you cook the rice, add 1 tablespoon curry powder or any other spice mix (to make your own, see pages 65–69) to the hot oil and cook, stirring, for a few seconds. Stir in $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup roughly chopped cashews, almonds, pecans, or walnuts. Cook, stirring, until they begin to brown. Remove with a slotted spoon, add the rice, and proceed with the recipe. When the rice is done, drain if necessary, then return to the pot and stir in the nut-butter mixture. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring, until hot.

Wild Rice with Brussels Sprouts. Reduce the butter or oil to 1 tablespoon. While the rice is cooking, prepare 8 ounces Brussels sprouts according to the recipe for Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Garlic (page 271). Stir them into the rice just as it is finishing cooking and serve.

Wild Rice with Chestnuts. Also fall-like and good combined with the Brussels sprouts (above) or mushrooms (below): Roast about 12 chestnuts (see page 287). Peel, roughly chop, stir into the rice just as it finishes cooking, and serve.

Wild Rice with Mushrooms. Reduce the butter or oil to 1 tablespoon. While the rice is cooking, cook about 1 cup sliced mushrooms (shiitakes are best) in 2 tablespoons butter or extra virgin olive oil until crisp, about 10 minutes. Or add 1 recipe Sautéed Mushrooms (page 313). Stir into the rice just as it finishes cooking and serve.

Wild Rice with Roasted Winter Squash. Reduce the butter or oil to 1 tablespoon. Roast about 1 cup butternut or other winter squash (see page 367) with butter or olive oil; stir into the rice just as it finishes cooking and serve.

Wheat Berries with Walnuts

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 45 minutes

M V

This starter recipe for wheat berries is open to variation and will work with about a dozen other grains. Even better, you can serve it at room temperature.

Other grains you can use (reduce the quantity to 1 cup): couscous, pearl couscous, bulgur, quinoa, buckwheat groats, cracked wheat, wild rice, farro, hulled barley, spelt, rye berries, or kamut.

1½ cups wheat berries

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or butter

1 shallot or ½ medium onion, minced

¾ cup chopped walnuts

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves (optional)

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 Put the wheat berries in a pot with water to cover by at least an inch. Bring a boil and cook until the grains are tender, about 40 minutes. (If you're using other grains, check the chart on page 477 for cooking times.) Check periodically to make sure the water hasn't boiled off; add more water as needed.

2 Meanwhile, put the oil in a skillet over medium heat. When hot, add the shallot and cook until tender, about 5 minutes. Add the walnuts and thyme if you're using it and cook for another minute, stirring often. When the wheat berries are done, drain them and add to the skillet along with a good sprinkling of salt and pepper. Serve immediately or cool to room temperature.

Wheat Berries with Walnuts and Apples. Core and dice (peeling is optional) 1 all-purpose apple, like Golden Delicious; add to the pan with the shallot.

Wheat Berries with Walnuts and Butternut Squash. Add 1 cup peeled and diced butternut squash. In Step 2, cook the squash in the oil along with about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water until it's tender and the pan is almost dry, about

15 minutes. Add the shallot and another tablespoon of oil. Proceed with the recipe. Use sage or rosemary instead of the thyme if you like.

Wheat Berries with Walnuts and Beets. Add 1 cup diced cooked beets (page 263) along with the walnuts in Step 2. Garnish with crumbled goat cheese if you like.

Creamed Hominy

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 20 minutes with cooked or canned hominy

F M V

This is good, old-fashioned creamed corn, only with more flavor. Serve as a side dish with roasted, grilled, or simply pan-cooked meat or poultry.

3 cups cooked (see Cooking Grains, the Easy Way, page 451) or canned hominy, well drained

1 cup cream, half-and-half, or whole milk

2 tablespoons butter

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

① Roughly chop about half the kernels of hominy. Combine the chopped and whole kernels and cream in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally, then turn the heat to medium-low.

② Simmer, stirring occasionally, until most of the cream is absorbed, 5 to 10 minutes. Stir in the butter, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and serve.

Pozole with Pork and Chipotle

MAKES: At least 8 servings

TIME: 3 to 4 hours, largely unattended; 1 hour with cooked hominy

M

This Mexican dish is perfect for parties; since the ingredients are reasonable, it can feed a crew. Though the

recipe takes some planning, it's easy. Serve it with a stack of warm tortillas, Red or Green Rice Pilaf (page 461) or Mexican Rice with Vegetables (page 461), a full spread of assorted cooked vegetables (like cubed potatoes, carrots, or chayote; sliced chard or kale; or green beans), and loads of garnishes (see the list that follows).

The pozole can be made ahead through Step 2; just cool, cover, and store the stew in the fridge for up to 2 days. Reheat before serving; the flavor will be better than if you served it immediately after making. If you want to speed things up a tad, presoak the hominy as you would beans (see page 411).

1½ cups dried hominy, or 4 cups precooked or canned hominy, liquid reserved

1 pound pork shoulder, trimmed of excess fat and cut into chunks

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon fresh oregano or marjoram leaves or 1 teaspoon dried

1 dried chipotle or 1 chile in adobo, or to taste

1 tablespoon ground cumin, or to taste

1 large onion, chopped

1 tablespoon minced garlic

① If you're using precooked or canned hominy, proceed to Step 2. Put uncooked hominy in a large pot with water to cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat so the hominy bubbles gently. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally and adding water as necessary to keep the mixture covered, until the hominy has burst and is tender, 3 to 4 hours. Drain and reserve the liquid.

② Combine the hominy, pork, some salt and pepper, the oregano, chile, cumin, and onion in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add water or some of the hominy-cooking liquid to cover by about an inch. Bring to a boil, then adjust the heat so the mixture simmers steadily but not violently. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pork is tender, about an hour; add more liquid if necessary.

③ Stir in the garlic and cook for a few minutes more. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then serve in bowls—the

can refrigerate the pansotti on the cookie sheets for up to a day or freeze them for up to 3 months.)

3 Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Cook the pansotti, 30 or so at a time, for just a few minutes, until they rise to the surface. Drain, sauce, and serve immediately.

Sweet Potato Pansotti. Wonderful boiled and sautéed with extra virgin olive oil and pecans or walnuts (for the technique, see Linguine with Garlic, Oil, and Nuts, page 505): Substitute cooked sweet potato for the butternut squash and omit the sugar.

Chestnut Pansotti. Perfect with the sauce from Spaghetti with Butter and Parmesan (page 506): Substitute cooked, peeled, and crumbled chestnuts (see page 287) for the butternut squash. Add 3 tablespoons minced shallot or onion, if you like, and mix in with the eggs.

Ravioli Nudi

MAKES: About 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F

Nudi means “naked” and refers to ravioli filling without the case: “unwrapped” dumplings that you can serve with or without pasta—as you like.

8 ounces each ground veal and pork or any combination of ground meats you prefer

1 egg

1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus cheese for serving

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves

1/4 cup chopped onion

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 pound any pasta, fresh or dried (optional)

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) butter

20 fresh sage leaves

1 Combine the meat in a bowl with the egg, cheese, parsley, onion, and a sprinkling of salt and pepper. Mix well but do not knead. Form into tiny balls, about 1/2 inch in diameter, and put on cookie sheets. Refrigerate until you’re ready to cook, or up to several hours. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it.

2 Cook the meatballs in the boiling water for about 5 minutes; remove with a slotted spoon and keep warm.

3 Cook the pasta, if you’re using it, in the same water until tender but not mushy. Meanwhile, cook the butter and sage together in a small pan over medium-low heat until the butter is light brown, about 5 minutes.

4 Drain the pasta, reserving a bit of the cooking water, then toss it with the butter-sage mixture and enough of the reserved water to make the mixture saucy. Top with the meatballs and serve, passing grated Parmesan at the table.

Vegetarian Ravioli Nudi. Substitute 1 cup bread crumbs, preferably fresh (page 876), for the meat. Add another egg and increase the Parmesan to 3/4 cup and the parsley to 1/2 cup. Allow the bread crumb mixture to rest for at least 10 minutes before shaping into balls. Proceed with the recipe, cooking the dumplings until they rise to the surface, about 3 minutes.

Spinach-Ricotta Ravioli

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings (30 to 60 ravioli)

TIME: About 1 hour with prepared pasta sheets

M V

A standby stuffed pasta. Serve it with Fast Tomato Sauce, with or Without Pasta (page 502), Traditional Pesto (page 27), or the sauce from Fettuccine Alfredo (page 507).

1 egg

1 cup cooked spinach (about 8 ounces raw), squeezed dry and chopped

1½ cups ricotta cheese, drained in a strainer for a few minutes
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley leaves
1 teaspoon minced garlic
A small grating of nutmeg
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
Salt
Cornmeal or all-purpose flour for dusting
1 recipe Fresh Egg Pasta or Eggless Pasta (pages 540 or 541), rolled into sheets and kept moist under a towel or plastic wrap

1 Combine the egg, spinach, ricotta, parsley, garlic, nutmeg, and Parmesan in a bowl and mix well. (At this point, you may refrigerate the stuffing, covered, for up to a day.)

2 Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Put a little water in a small bowl and lightly dust a flat work surface with some cornmeal or flour. Cut each pasta sheet into 2 or more 4-inch-wide strips. Drop heaping teaspoons of the stuffing at about 1½-inch intervals about 1 inch from one long edge of the strip (that is, about 3 inches from the other edge). Dampen the edges with a little water (the tip of your finger is a fine tool for this), then fold the dough over onto itself, pressing with your fingers to seal. Trim the dough with a sharp knife or fluted pastry wheel, then cut into individual ravioli. (You can prepare the ravioli up to this point in advance; dust with cornmeal and refrigerate for up to a day or freeze.)

3 Cook the ravioli, 20 or 30 at a time, for just a few minutes, until they rise to the surface. Drain, sauce, and serve immediately.

Ricotta and Herb Ravioli. Substitute 1 cup chopped mild fresh herbs, like basil, parsley, chives, chervil, mint, or dill, for the spinach.

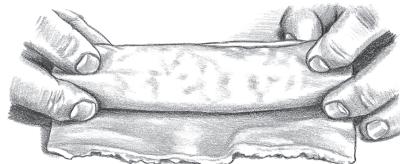
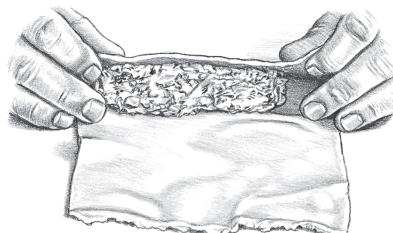
Cheese Ravioli. Herbed Fresh Pasta (page 542) is really nice here; substitute bread crumbs, preferably fresh (page 876), for the spinach. For stronger flavor, use sharper cheese, like aged pecorino, to replace some of the Parmesan.

Spinach Ravioli. Or use chard, kale, or dandelion greens: Increase the cooked chopped spinach to 2 cups and add ¼ cup chopped fresh herbs, like sage, chervil, basil, fresh fennel fronds, or a mixture. Omit the egg and ricotta.

Mushroom-Cheese Ravioli. Use any kind of mushrooms you like: Substitute ¾ cup Sautéed Mushrooms (pages 313–314) for the spinach and reduce the ricotta to 1¼ cups. Drain the mushrooms and finely chop.

Spinach-Cheese Cannelloni. Make a simple sauce, like Fast Tomato Sauce, with or Without Pasta (page 502), or the one with Spaghetti with Butter and Parmesan (page 506). Heat the oven to 375°F. Cut the pasta sheets into rectangles (about 4 × 6 inches), boil them for 2 minutes, then drain. Use a tablespoon to dollop out a line of the filling along the short edge of a piece of pasta, about an inch or so from the edge; roll the pasta into a tube shape. Spread a small spoonful of sauce in the bottom of an ovenproof baking dish and

MAKING CANNELLONI



To make cannelloni, put a small amount of filling about an inch up from the end nearest you, spreading it almost but not quite to the sides; then simply roll up.

28 Dishes for Stuffing Pasta

From caramelized onions to mashed favas. Drain off excess liquids and mash, crumble, or finely chop large pieces as you like. Then use as filling for any of the recipes in this section.

1. Puréed Vegetables (page 242)
2. Sautéed Artichoke Hearts (page 254)
3. Sautéed Cabbage with Balsamic Vinegar (page 275)
4. Cauliflower with Garlic and Anchovies (page 280)
5. Glazed Chestnuts (page 287)
6. Sautéed Eggplant with Basil (page 295)
7. Braised Endive, Escarole, or Radicchio with Prosciutto (page 298)
8. Roasted Garlic, peeled and roughly mashed (page 303)
9. Sautéed Mushrooms (page 313)
10. Caramelized Onions (page 325)
11. Anything-Scented Peas (page 329)
12. Spinach with Currants and Nuts (page 352)
13. Sweet Potatoes, Simply Cooked (page 358)
14. Oven-Roasted Plum Tomatoes (page 361)
15. Whole Winter Squash, Cooked Three Ways (page 366)
16. White Beans, Tuscan Style (page 427)
17. Beans and Mushrooms (page 428)
18. Broiled Fish Fillets (and a Lot Else) (page 563)
19. Roasted Shrimp with Herb Sauce (pages 577–578)
20. Salmon Roasted in Butter (page 583)
21. Boiled or Steamed Crab or Lobster (pages 614–615)
22. Herb-Roasted Chicken Cutlets (page 672)
23. Sautéed Chicken Cutlets with Wine Sauce (page 679)
24. Beef Daube (page 738)
25. Braised Beef Brisket (page 743)
26. Veal Stew with Tomatoes (page 783)
27. Braised Pork with Red Wine (page 757)
28. Lamb Stew with Mushrooms (page 773)

add the cannelloni, putting them side by side and in a single layer; cover with the remaining sauce, sprinkle with grated Parmesan, and bake until bubbling, about 20 minutes.

Meat Tortellini

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings (50 to 60 tortellini)

TIME: About 1 hour



Tortellini are tricky because of their small size, but you can make them bigger if you like (and call them *tortelloni*) or make ravioli, which are easier still. Serve in a flavorful broth or with Fast Tomato Sauce (page 502), the sauces from Spaghetti with Butter and Parmesan (page 506), or any tomato sauce.

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 pound ground meat, preferably a mixture of beef, veal, and pork or pork sausage

1 cup red wine or beef or chicken stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159), or more as needed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1/4 cup chopped prosciutto or other ham (optional)

1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley leaves

1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

1 egg

Bread crumbs, preferably fresh (page 876), if needed

Cornmeal or all-purpose flour for dusting

1 recipe Fresh Egg Pasta or Eggless Pasta (page 540 or 541), rolled into sheets and kept moist under a towel or plastic wrap

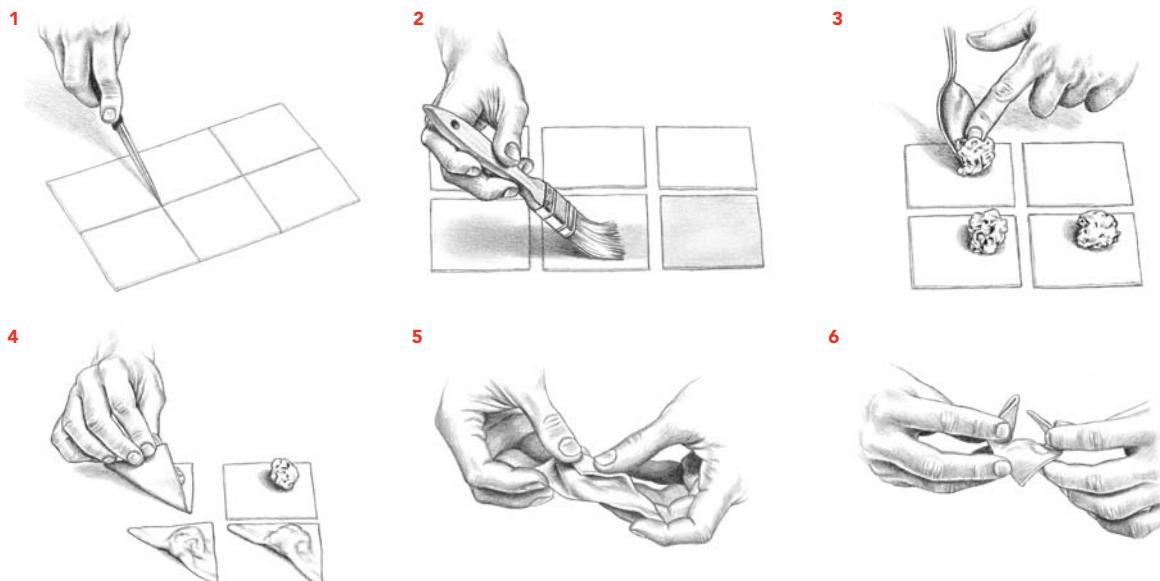
1 Put the olive oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. When hot, add the meat and cook, stirring and breaking up any lumps, until it loses its color, about 10 minutes. Add the wine and a sprinkling of salt and pepper, then turn the heat down to very low. Cook, stirring occasionally and adding more liquid if necessary, until the meat is tender and the sauce thickened, about 45 minutes.

2 Add the garlic and the ham if you're using it and cook for another 5 minutes. Cool thoroughly, then stir in the parsley, Parmesan, and egg. If the mixture is still liquidy, stir in some bread crumbs. (At this point, you may refrigerate the filling, covered, for up to a day.)

3 Lightly dust a work surface with some cornmeal or flour. Cut any length of fresh pasta dough so that it is 4 or 5 inches wide. Cut into 2- to 2½-inch squares.

4 Brush the dough very lightly with water so it will stick together when you shape the tortellini. Put a rounded teaspoon of stuffing on each square and fold into a triangle, pressing tightly to seal the edges. Fold the widest point toward the stuffing, then pick up the triangle and press the two bottom points together. Put your finger inside the newly formed ring and fold over the top of the dough inside the circle. Press to seal. Keep the tortellini separate on cornmeal- or flour-dusted cookie sheets until you're ready to cook. (At this point, you may

MAKING TORTELLINI



(STEP 1) One a counter dusted lightly with flour, cut any length of fresh pasta dough so it is 4 or 5 inches wide. Cut into 2- to 2½-inch squares. **(STEP 2)** Brush the dough very lightly with water so it will stick together when you shape the tortellini. **(STEP 3)** Place a small mound of filling on each square. **(STEP 4)** Fold into a triangle, pressing tightly to seal the edges. **(STEP 5)** Fold the widest point toward the filling. **(STEP 6)** Pick up the triangle and press the two bottom points together. Place your finger inside the newly formed ring and fold over the top of the dough inside the circle. Press to seal. Keep the tortellini separate until you are ready to cook.

dust the tortellini with flour and refrigerate for up to a day or freeze for up to 3 months.)

5 Bring a pot of water to a boil and salt it. Cook the tortellini, 30 or so at a time, for just a few minutes, until they rise to the surface. Drain, sauce, and serve immediately.

Cheese Tortellini. Omit the olive oil, ground meat, wine, garlic, and ham. Skip Steps 1 and 2. Instead, combine 1 pound ricotta cheese with the parsley, Parmesan, and egg and add a pinch of nutmeg; sprinkle with a little salt and pepper. Use this mixture to fill the tortellini. Proceed with the recipe.

Seafood Tortellini. Substitute filleted and skinned white fish, like flounder or cod, peeled and cleaned shrimp, or lobster or crabmeat, for the ground meat. Omit the wine or stock, garlic, prosciutto, and Parmesan. Cook the seafood by steaming (see page 570), poaching or boiling (see page 569), or sautéing (see page 564). Add 3 tablespoons minced shallot or onion. Chop or flake the seafood and mix it with the shallot, parsley, egg, a sprinkling of salt, and a pinch of cayenne instead of black pepper. Add bread crumbs only if absolutely necessary. Proceed with the recipe from Step 3.

The Basics of Gnocchi and Other (Mostly) Italian Dumplings

Gnocchi (pronounced, kind of, nyo-kee) are easy-to-make Italian dumplings incorporating cooked potatoes, flour, and sometimes an egg; they're then boiled and sauced. Starchy potatoes are a must here, as it's the potatoes' starch—along with the flour's gluten—that holds the dough together.

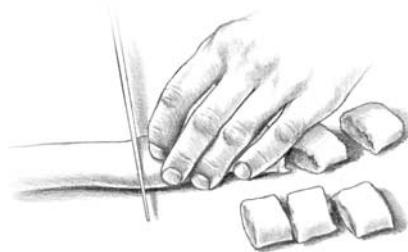
Other ingredients may be substituted for and added to the potatoes, from spinach to sweet potatoes, cheese, semolina, or cornmeal. Most of the following are indeed Italian, but Spaetzle (page 552) hails from Alsace, and some of the others are modern variations that have no

MAKING GNOCCHI

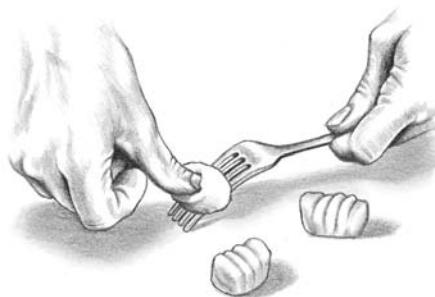
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2



3



(STEP 1) Start by rolling a piece of the dough into a log. Use flour as needed to prevent sticking, but try to keep it to a minimum. (STEP 2) Cut the dough into approximately 1-inch lengths. (STEP 3) Roll each of the sections off the back of a fork to give it the characteristic ridges.

specific European provenance. Other dumplings in this section use day-old bread, bread crumbs, flour, and egg to bind the dough.

Gnocchi Technique

Getting the dough just right for gnocchi takes a delicate balance of potato, flour, and gentle mixing. The first time you make it you'll probably use a bit too much flour and overmix the dough, but don't be discouraged if your gnocchi aren't delicate and fluffy. You'll improve with each batch and get to the point where it's easy enough to make a batch of gnocchi for lunch.

Tips for Making Great Gnocchi

- Use freshly cooked potatoes (leftover baked or mashed potatoes are better for croquettes).
- Add the flour in small amounts so you don't add too much.
- Mix and then knead the dough gently; you're trying not to overdevelop the gluten.
- Keep your work surface well floured so the gnocchi don't stick.
- Roll the logs out quickly and don't worry too much about getting them perfectly even, which may overwork your dough. They're supposed to look handmade!
- Test-cook a piece of the dough just as it comes together; it may be closer to ready than you think.
- Indenting the gnocchi with your finger or rolling them over a fork, cheese grater, or gnocchi board is optional, but it helps the gnocchi grab the sauce. To indent the dumplings, just flour your thumb and roll it over the gnocchi. Using the fork, grater, or board takes some practice; use your thumb to roll the gnocchi over the tines or ridges—your thumb will simultaneously indent the opposite side.

Potato Gnocchi

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 1½ hours



The classic recipe, with variations. Whenever you add ingredients to gnocchi dough, they won't be quite as ethereal, but will be fluffy and flavorful.

1 pound starchy potatoes, washed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

About 1 cup all-purpose flour, plus more as needed

1 Put the potatoes in a pot with salted water to cover over high heat; bring to a boil, adjust the heat so the water simmers, and cook until the potatoes are quite tender, about 45 minutes. Drain and peel (use a pot holder or towel to hold the potatoes and peel with a small knife; it will be easy). Rinse the pot, fill it again with salted water, and bring to a boil.

2 Use a fork, potato masher, or ricer to mash or rice the potatoes in a bowl along with some salt and pepper. Add about ½ cup of flour and stir; add more flour until the mixture forms a dough you can handle. Knead on a lightly floured surface for a minute or so. Pinch off a piece of the dough and boil it to make sure it will hold its shape; if it does not, knead in a bit more flour. The idea is to get a dough with as little additional flour and kneading as possible.

3 Roll a piece of the dough into a rope about ½ inch thick, then cut the rope into 1-inch lengths; traditionally, you would spin each of these pieces off the tines of a fork to score it lightly. As each one is ready, put it on a sheet of wax paper dusted with flour; do not allow them to touch.

4 Add the gnocchi to the boiling water a few at a time; stir. (You will need to work in a couple of batches so they aren't too crowded in the pot.) A minute after they rise to the surface, the gnocchi are done; remove with a slotted spoon. Put in a bowl and sauce or reheat in butter within a few minutes; these do not keep well.

Herb Gnocchi. Add ½ cup chopped fresh herbs, like basil, parsley, mint, dill, chives, or chervil, and mix in with the mashed or riced potatoes.

Spinach Gnocchi. Add 10 ounces fresh spinach or 5 ounces frozen spinach and a pinch of nutmeg if you like. Stem and wash the fresh spinach; steam it (see page 239), then drain, squeeze (get as much water out as possible), and chop it very fine. Add it to the potatoes along with the nutmeg.

Sweet Potato or Butternut Squash Gnocchi. Substitute sweet potatoes or butternut squash for the potatoes. It's best to roast or steam the sweet potatoes or squash, because they will absorb too much water if boiled. You can microwave the sweet potatoes too. If you're using butternut squash, add an egg and mix it in with the mashed squash; you will likely need more flour too.

Porcini Dumplings

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 1 hour



If you have a source for fresh porcini mushrooms, this is a good way to use them; fresh shiitakes are a good substi-

tute, and dried porcini will improve their flavor. Serve the dumplings in a flavorful broth, add them to Wheat, Whole Barley, or Farro Soup (page 140), top with a creamy sauce like Béchamel (page 57), or toss with pasta with Fast Tomato Sauce (page 502) as a twist on spaghetti and meatballs.

2 cups torn or chopped day-old bread or 1 cup bread crumbs, preferably fresh (page 876)

1/2 cup milk or cream

3 eggs

1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or butter

2 ounces dried porcini, reconstituted (see page 314), drained, and chopped

1 pound any fresh mushrooms, trimmed and chopped

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons minced garlic

1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary leaves

1 Combine the bread, milk, eggs, and Parmesan in a large bowl, mix well, and set aside.

2 Put the oil or butter in a large skillet over medium heat. When the oil is hot or the butter is melted, add the mushrooms, then sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook for a few minutes, then add the garlic and rosemary; continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until tender and with some liquid in the pan, another couple minutes or so.

3 Add the mushrooms to the bread mixture, stir well, and let sit for at least 15 minutes or up to a day, covered and refrigerated.

4 Bring a large pot of salted water (or mushroom or other stock; to make your own, see pages 157–159) to a boil, then reduce the heat so it bubbles steadily. Form the mixture into balls (no more than 1½ inches in diameter). If the batter is too soft, add bread crumbs; if it's too stiff, add milk or cream. Drop the dumplings into the pot as you roll them. When they come to the surface, they are done; remove with a slotted spoon.

"Twice-Cooked" Gnocchi

Pan-cooking or roasting cooked gnocchi or baking them with a premade sauce adds color, richness, and flavor.

To roast: Put a couple of tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or butter in a skillet over high heat; when the oil is hot or the butter is melted, add the boiled and drained gnocchi (don't overcrowd the pan; cook in batches if necessary) and cook, stirring as they brown, 5 to 10 minutes. Or roast in a 450°F oven: Toss the gnocchi in olive oil or butter and put on a baking sheet; cook, shaking the tray to roll the gnocchi every couple minutes, until all the sides are golden brown, another 5 to 10 minutes.

To bake them in a sauce: Heat the oven to 425°F. Grease a gratin or other baking dish and add the gnocchi; spoon on a sauce like Fast Tomato Sauce (page 502) or Meat Sauce, Bolognese Style (page 531) or simply toss them in melted butter, sprinkle with cheese (or other topping, see "12 Alternative Toppings for Pasta," page 516), and bake until the sauce is bubbling and hot, about 10 minutes, depending on the size of the dish.

Spaetzle

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F M

Hailing from Alsace, spaetzle (spay-tzul) are between dumpling and pasta, made from a pancakelike batter that's dropped into gently boiling water and cooked. They can then be seasoned and served, sautéed, tossed with sauce, or added to a broth or soup. They're fabulous mixed with Mornay (Cheese) Sauce (page 58), put in a gratin dish, topped with grated cheese and/or bread crumbs, and baked until bubbling—an Alsatian mac and cheese.

You can use many techniques for dropping the batter into the water—a spaetzle maker (it looks like a grater without sharp edges, with an attachment that slides across the top), a colander, or simply a spoon: Just load the spoon with about a tablespoon of the batter and let the batter drop into the water; size isn't that important here, and you need not worry if the pieces break up.

Salt

2 cups all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon or more freshly ground black pepper

3 eggs

1 cup milk, more or less

2 to 4 tablespoons butter or extra virgin olive oil

Chopped fresh parsley leaves or chives for garnish

1 Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Combine the flour with the pepper and a large pinch of salt in a bowl. Lightly beat the eggs and milk together in a separate bowl and then stir it into the flour. If necessary, add a little more milk to make a batter about the consistency of pancake batter. Have a large bowl of ice water ready.

2 Scoop a tablespoon or so of the batter and drop it into the boiling water; small pieces may break off, but the

batter should remain largely intact and form an uneven disk. Spoon in about one-third to one-fourth of the batter, depending on the size of your pot. When the spaetzle rise to the top, a couple minutes later (you may have to loosen them from the bottom, but they'll float right up), cook for another minute or so, then transfer with a slotted spoon or strainer into the bowl of ice water. Repeat until all the batter is used up.

3 Drain the spaetzle. (At this point, you may toss them with a bit of oil and refrigerate, covered, for up to a day.) Put the butter or oil in a large skillet, preferably nonstick, over medium-high heat. When the butter is melted or the oil is hot, add the spaetzle, working in batches, and quickly brown on both sides. Serve hot, garnished with the parsley or chives.

Herb Spaetzle. A mix of parsley, chervil, chives, and tarragon is lovely: Add about 1 cup chopped fresh herbs; stir into the batter.

The Basics of Asian Noodles

Some Asian noodles are practically identical to their European counterparts. Others are radically different in handling, taste, texture, and cooking. A familiarity with Asian noodles will expand your culinary repertoire significantly and happily.

The assortment of Asian noodles now widely available is absolutely thrilling. To the novice, though, it can be overwhelming. To help you make sense of it all, here's a rundown of the varieties you're likely to encounter, along with preparation tips and cooking times.

Chinese Egg Noodles

Long, thin, golden noodles made with wheat flour; round or flat, fresh or dried. The fresh noodles cook quickly, in 3 minutes or so, or you can add them to hot soup to cook. Dried take a little longer, about 5 minutes (timing depends on the thickness of the noodle, of

course); leave them slightly undercooked if you are adding them to soup or stir-frying them.

Chinese Wheat Noodles

Long and thin and either round or flat; fresh or dried. They are typically white or light yellow and are made of wheat, water, and salt. Boil the dried noodles for about 5 minutes and the fresh for half that time, roughly. Again, cooking time depends on the thickness of the noodle.

Rice Sticks, Rice Vermicelli

White, translucent rice noodles, most often from Southeast Asia, ranging from angel hair thin (vermicelli) to spaghetti thickness to greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Soak in hot water for 5 to 30 minutes, until softened, then drain and boil or stir-fry for an additional minute or two. (See Pad Thai, page 510.) For soups, add them directly to the broth or soak them for 5 to 10 minutes and then drop them into the soup.

Udon

Round, square, or flat wheat noodles from Japan, available in a range of thicknesses and lengths; usually dried but may be fresh. Most typically served in soups and stews, though you can also use them in braised dishes or serve them cold. Boil fresh or dried noodles for a few minutes, until just tender (dried take a bit longer, of course).

Soba

Long, thin, flat Japanese noodles made from a combination of buckwheat and wheat flour, distinctively nutty and light beige to brownish gray (sometimes green tea is added, so they're green). Most often dried, but you may see fresh. Boil dried noodles for 5 to 7 minutes, fresh for 2 to 4.

Somen

White, round, ultra-thin all-wheat noodles from Japan that cook in just a couple minutes. Best in soups.

Ramen and Saimin

Long, slender, off-white wheat Japanese noodles that appear either crinkled in brick form or as rods; fresh, dried, frozen, or instant. The instant variety is typically deep-fried to remove moisture before being dried and packaged. (Saimin is similar but made with egg.) When fresh, boil ramen for just a couple of minutes; dried takes around 5.

Bean Threads

Mung Bean Threads, Cellophane Noodles, Glass Noodles, Spring Rain Noodles

Long, slender, translucent noodles made from mung bean starch, usually sold in 2-ounce bundles. To prepare, soak the noodles in hot or boiling water until tender, 5 to 15 minutes; use kitchen scissors to cut them into manageable pieces if necessary. (If you're adding them to soup or deep-frying them, don't bother to soak.) You can also cook the noodles by boiling them for a couple minutes.

Tofu Noodles

These are narrow, flat, beige noodles, made from pressed tofu and fabulous in salads and stir-fries. They are available fresh, frozen, and dried. To use the fresh noodles, simply rinse and pat dry; defrost frozen noodles in the fridge, then treat as fresh. Soak dried noodles in warm water for about 15 minutes, then rinse and drain.

Cold Soba Noodles with Dipping Sauce

MAKES: 4 small servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F

Even in the States, we now have restaurants specializing in the classic Japanese cold soba noodles, served with a dashi-based dipping sauce. They make a perfect light meal.

Salt

1 cup Dashi (page 160) or chicken stock (to make your own, see page 157)

1/4 cup soy sauce

2 tablespoons mirin or 1 tablespoon honey mixed with 1 tablespoon water

12 ounces dried soba noodles

1 teaspoon finely grated or minced fresh ginger for garnish

2 tablespoons minced scallion for garnish

Toasted sesame seeds (see page 317) for garnish

① Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Meanwhile, combine the dashi or stock, soy, and mirin; taste and add a little more soy if it's not strong flavored enough.

② Cook the noodles until tender but not mushy, just as you would Italian pasta. Drain and rinse quickly under cold running water until cold. Drain well. Serve the noodles with the garnishes, with the sauce on the side for dipping (or spooning over).

Cold Soba Noodles with Mushrooms. Add 4 dried shiitake mushrooms, stems removed and reconstituted in very hot water (change the water once if necessary) until soft, about 20 minutes. Or use 4 to 6 fresh shiitakes (stems removed), steamed over the noodles or sautéed (see page 313). Slice the mushrooms very thinly and toss with the cooked noodles, then garnish.

Stir-Fried Asian Noodles

Most cooked Asian noodle dishes are stir-fried (like Pad Thai, page 510), not boiled and sauced like European ones, a preparation that gives them a completely different character. When you get used to the pattern, they're easy, fun, habit-forming, and better than most restaurant noodle dishes.

Stir-Fried Noodles with Meat and Vegetables

Lo Mein

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F **V**

The model for stir-fried noodle dishes, which can be made with just about anything, and a valuable addition to any cook's repertoire.

The best cuts of meat to use are sirloin strip (beef), pork shoulder (Boston butt or picnic), and chicken breast or thigh. The meat will be easier to slice thinly if you freeze it for 30 to 60 minutes first. (This is always the case with boneless meat or poultry.) Tofu is also good, especially store-bought spiced and pressed tofu or tofu that you've frozen.

Salt

12 ounces fresh Chinese egg noodles or about 8 ounces dried Chinese wheat noodles or spaghetti

3 tablespoons peanut or neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn

8 ounces beef, chicken, pork, shrimp, tofu, or whatever-you, very thinly sliced and cut into 2-inch-long strips

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 large onion, thinly sliced

1 pound chopped broccoli florets or chopped asparagus

1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut into thin strips

1 tablespoon minced garlic

2 teaspoons minced or grated fresh ginger

1/2 cup chicken stock (to make your own, see page 157) or water

1/2 cup unsalted cashews, roughly chopped, or shelled whole peanuts (optional)

① Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Cook the noodles until tender but not mushy, about 4 minutes

for fresh noodles, longer for dried, then drain and quickly rinse under cold running water. Toss with 1 tablespoon of the oil to prevent sticking and set aside. Soak the meat in the soy sauce.

② Put another tablespoon of the oil in a deep skillet over high heat. When hot, add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until it begins to brown, about 5 minutes. Add the broccoli and red pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until the broccoli is crisp-tender, 5 to 8 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 1 minute, stirring almost constantly. Remove this mixture from the pan.

③ Add the remaining oil to the pan and turn the heat to high. Drain the meat (reserve the soy sauce), add to the pan, and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 1 minute. Add the reserved soy sauce, along with the chicken stock, and stir. Add the drained noodles, vegetables, and nuts. Toss to mix and reheat, then serve.

Stir-Fried Udon Noodles. Great with pork and shiitake mushrooms but, here, too, any meat or vegetables can be used: Substitute udon noodles for the egg noodles and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped scallion for the onion. Omit the garlic, ginger, and cashews. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bonito flakes as a garnish if you like.

18 Dishes to Toss with Asian Noodles

1. Stir-Fried Vegetables (page 241)
2. Stir-Fried Asparagus (page 259)
3. Stir-Fried Bean Sprouts (page 261)
4. Quick-Cooked Bok Choy (page 265)
5. Asian Greens, Chinese Restaurant Style (page 266)
6. Stir-Fried Vegetables, Vietnamese Style (page 374)
7. Mixed Spicy Vegetables, Thai Style (page 374)
8. Shrimp and Scallion Stir-Fry (page 575)
9. Stir-Fried Shrimp with Black Beans (page 576)
10. Squid with Chiles and Greens (page 626)
11. Stir-Fried Chicken with Cabbage (page 643)
12. Stir-Fried Chicken with Broccoli or Cauliflower (page 674)
13. Stir-Fried Chicken with Ketchup (page 677)

14. Stir-Fried Spicy Beef with Basil (page 719)
15. Stir-Fried Beef with Onions (page 731)
16. Stir-Fried Pork with Spinach (page 748)
17. Braised Pork with Spicy Soy Sauce (page 758)
18. Stir-Fried Lamb with Green Peppers (page 769)

Broad Rice Noodles with Chiles, Pork, and Basil

MAKES: About 4 servings

TIME: About 45 minutes, including time to soak the noodles

I have been making this dish for about 20 years and still love it—it's hot, sweet, and herbaceous. I keep it short of

Improvising Stir-Fried Noodles

Think of assembling Asian noodle dishes in the same way you do Italian pasta dishes. The only difference is that you almost always cook an ingredient, then remove it from the pan before cooking the next ingredient, as with most types of stir-fries. (You can put everything in a single bowl to avoid doing extra dishes.) When the noodles are ready, everything goes back in the pan.

That said, here's a basic, infinitely expandable stir-fried noodle "recipe": Cook udon, soba, somen, or any rice noodles (see "The Basics of Asian Noodles," page 552) until tender but not mushy. Follow the cooking technique in Stir-Fried Noodles with Meat and Vegetables (previous page): Cook the vegetables first, then the meat, and then add the noodles; toss until heated through. For more moisture, add a little of the noodle-cooking water or stock, a splash of soy sauce, or a drizzle of peanut, neutral, or dark sesame oil.

28 Crowd-Pleasing Thanksgiving Side Dishes You May Not Have Considered

Yes, cranberry sauce is traditional, but there are other side dishes even the kids will eat, like these.

1. Any Bruschetta (pages 83–84)
2. Greek Salad, Simplified (page 186)
3. Tomato, Mozzarella, and Basil Salad (page 187)
4. Carrot Salad with Cumin (page 188)
5. Greens with Fruit, Cheese, and Nuts (page 202)
6. Caesar Salad (page 203)
7. Red Onion and Orange Salad (page 208)
8. Raw Beet Salad with Fennel (page 210)
9. Rice Salad with Dried Apricots (page 218)
10. Grilled Bread Salad (page 222)
11. Any Puréed Vegetables (page 242)
12. Puréed parsnips (see page 243)
13. Any Vegetable Gratin (page 248)
14. Beets with Nut Butter (page 263)
15. Beet Rösti with Rosemary (page 264)
16. Cabbage Braised with Apples (page 276)
17. Quick-Glazed Carrots (page 277)
18. Fennel Baked in Stock (page 300)
19. Caramelized Onions (use small onions or shallots; page 325)
20. Potato Rösti (page 345)
21. Sautéed Apples or Other Fruit (page 383)
22. Baked Beans (page 416)
23. Risotto with Dried and Fresh Mushrooms (page 467)
24. Pearl Couscous Pilaf with Dried Tomatoes (page 481)
25. Bulgur Pilaf with Vermicelli (page 482)
26. Any polenta (pages 485–488)
27. Orzo, Risotto Style (page 525)
28. Vegetarian Lasagne (page 534)

① If you're using slab bacon, cut it into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch cubes; if you're using sliced bacon, coarsely chop it. Cook the bacon in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring or turning until crisp, about 10 minutes. Drain, dry, and crumble.

② Remove all but 3 tablespoons of the fat from the pan and, still over medium heat, cook the chopped onion, stirring, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, bread crumbs, nuts, wine, thyme, bay leaf, and bacon and remove from the heat. Season to taste with salt—you may not need any—and pepper.

③ Pack into a chicken or turkey if you like before roasting or just bake in an ovenproof glass or enameled baking dish for about 45 minutes at 350–400°F. (Or you can cook it up to 3 days in advance and just warm it up right before dinner.)

Turkey Parts

Turkey is in fact raised fifty-two weeks a year. So turkey parts—legs, ground turkey, boneless breasts, even (sometimes) specialty cuts like “osso buco” (see page 702)—are common.

All for the better: Whole turkey breast is quite good roasted, either on or off the bone (see the Essential Recipe on page 647). Turkey thighs make a nice change and become reminiscent of pork when braised. And boneless turkey may in fact be slightly tastier than commercial chicken cutlets and can be treated exactly the same and used in every recipe in which you would use boneless chicken pieces (pages 666–674).

Roast Boneless Turkey Breast with Savoy Cabbage

MAKES: 6 to 12 servings or more

TIME: About 1 hour



I love this dual method of cooking cabbage, half sautéed, half roasted. Some of the cabbage becomes tender, and

some remains crunchy, a nice combination that makes a fine base for any poultry, from turkey to pheasant.

1 medium head (about 2 pounds) Savoy or green cabbage
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or peanut oil, plus 1 teaspoon for greasing the pan
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
1 teaspoon chopped garlic
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
One 3- to 6-pound turkey breast, taken off the bone (see page 668), or 2 filleted turkey breast halves, rinsed and blotted dry
1 tablespoon dark sesame oil
1/2 cup chopped scallion greens for garnish

① Heat the oven to 450°F. Core and shred the cabbage, then roughly chop. Divide in half and chop one half a little more finely.

② Put 2 tablespoons oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When hot, add the roughly chopped cabbage and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the ginger and garlic and continue to cook until the cabbage is slightly browned, another 5 minutes or so. Add some salt and pepper, cover, and keep warm.

③ While the cabbage is cooking, use the remaining 1 teaspoon oil to lightly grease the bottom of a baking dish slightly larger than the turkey. Cover the bottom of the dish with the finely chopped cabbage. Sprinkle with salt, add the turkey, and sprinkle that with a little more salt. Roast for 25 to 30 minutes, until the turkey is almost done; it will be firm to the touch but not rubbery, white or very pale pink inside, and about 155–165°F on an instant-read thermometer.

④ Scatter the sautéed cabbage around the turkey and roast for another 5 minutes. Slice the turkey and put it on a platter, surrounded by the cabbage. Sprinkle everything with sesame oil and scallion greens and serve hot or warm.

Roast Boneless Turkey Breast with Fennel. Roasted fennel's sweet and rich flavor pairs nicely with poultry:

Substitute 2 large fennel bulbs, trimmed and sliced, for the cabbage. Omit the garlic and sesame oil and add 1 cup orange juice if you like. Proceed with the recipe, basting the turkey with the orange juice every so often.

Roast Boneless Turkey Breast with Pearl Onions.

Cipollini onions are nice here too if you can find them: Substitute about 1½ pounds pearl onions, trimmed, for the cabbage. Omit the ginger, garlic, and sesame oil. Add a tablespoon or so chopped fresh rosemary or thyme leaves. Proceed with the recipe, adding the onions and herbs in the last 10 minutes of roasting.

Turkey Thighs Braised in Red Wine

MAKES: About 6 servings

TIME: About 1½ hours, plus time to marinate

M

With their dark, rich meat and somewhat coarse texture, turkey thighs are reminiscent of pork. Substitute them for chicken parts or pork in any braise.

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 to 3 pounds (4 to 6) turkey thighs, skin removed if you like, blotted dry
1 cup roughly chopped onion
1/2 cup roughly chopped carrot
1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
2 teaspoons chopped garlic
2 cups fruity red wine
1/4 cup red wine or other vinegar
3 cloves or a pinch ground cloves
3 juniper berries
1 bay leaf
1 piece orange peel (optional)
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 ounce dried porcini mushrooms or 1/2 cup sliced shiitake mushroom caps (optional)

Stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water as needed

Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

① Put 2 tablespoons of the oil in a Dutch oven or other heavy pot with a lid over medium-high heat. When hot, brown the thighs on all sides. Remove the thighs, pour out the fat, let the pan cool a bit, and wipe it out with a few paper towels.

② Turn the heat down to medium and add the remaining oil. When hot, add the onion, carrot, celery, and garlic. Cook, stirring, until the vegetables soften, about 5 minutes.

③ Add the wine and raise the heat to medium-high. Bring to a boil and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the vinegar, cloves, juniper, bay leaf, orange peel if you're using it, and some salt and pepper and stir. Return the thighs to the pot, reduce the heat to low, and cover. The meat should cook slowly, with just a few bubbles rising from the liquid. If you're using porcini, soak them in hot water to cover until softened, about 10 minutes.

④ Turn the turkey every 15 minutes or so and add a little stock or water if the pan becomes dry. When the turkey is tender—usually about 45 minutes after covering—add the mushrooms and their strained soaking liquid, if any.

⑤ Remove the turkey from the pot and keep it warm. Skim the fat from the surface of the remaining liquid, raise the heat to high, and reduce the liquid by about half. Check for seasoning and spoon over the turkey. Garnish and serve.

Turkey "Osso Buco." If you can find them, use turkey thighs and legs cut crosswise or have your butcher cut them for you: Omit the garlic, vinegar, cloves, juniper, orange peel, and mushrooms. Substitute 1 cup white wine for the red and add 2 sprigs fresh thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried. Proceed with the recipe. Serve with Yellow Rice, the Best Way (page 463) or Polenta (page 485).

Turkey Thighs in Almond Mole

Almendrado de Pavo

MAKES: 6 or more servings

TIME: About 1 1/2 hours, somewhat unattended

M

The most exciting turkey dish I've had in the last twenty years was both completely traditional and as far from the Thanksgiving spirit as you could imagine. That's because the tradition was Oaxacan and the turkey was in a mole sauce. Many moles use dozens of ingredients and odd techniques (like burning) and take days to make. Others, like this almond-based example, are easy enough for a weeknight and, when it comes to producing a flavorful dish without too much trouble, far more reliable than the roasted holiday bird.

2 dried ancho or other mild chiles

1/4 cup neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn

1 teaspoon minced fresh chile, like jalapeño or serrano, or to taste, or hot red pepper flakes or cayenne, to taste

1 large white onion, chopped

1 cup almonds

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

5 large cloves garlic, peeled, or more to taste

3 or 4 tomatoes, cored and chopped (about 3 cups)

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch ground cloves

1 tablespoon dry red wine or other vinegar, or to taste

2 cups chicken stock, preferably homemade (page 157), or as needed

4 turkey thighs, about 3 pounds

Slivered almonds for garnish (optional)

① Soak the anchos in hot water to cover. When they're softened, after 15 to 30 minutes, remove their stems and seeds. Put half the oil in a deep skillet with a

lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the fresh chile and onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion begins to soften, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the almonds, some salt, at least $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper, the garlic, tomatoes, cinnamon, cloves, soaked ancho chiles,

About Ground Chicken and Turkey

Ground chicken and turkey can be used in any recipe calling for ground meat; they're different, of course, but they'll work, and sometimes just as well as ground beef, veal, or pork. Their advantage, presumably, is that they are lower in fat than their cousins, though that's probably not always the case, so if that's your concern, please read the label to make sure the fat content is 5 percent or less. If it isn't, you can always use a food processor or meat grinder to grind your own chicken or turkey, using skinned breast or thigh meat or a combination (or very lean beef).

If you do choose to use a food processor, cut the meat, which should be very cold or even partially frozen, into chunks. Pulse in the machine until it reaches the texture you like. A distinct advantage to grinding your own meat is that you can add herbs, spices, or other seasonings during the final stages of processing, making your burgers that much more flavorful. See "Do-It-Yourself-Ground Meat" on page 722.

In general, ground chicken and turkey are good substitutes for other ground meat where the meat will be cooked until well done, like Meatballs, Three Ways (page 114), Meat Loaf (page 723), Chili con Carne (page 429), Meat Sauce, Bolognese Style (page 531), Classic Lasagne, Bolognese Style (page 533), Ravioli Nudi (page 545), and Pot Stickers or Steamed Dumplings (page 104).

vinegar, and enough stock to keep moist and cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes begin to break up, about 10 minutes.

② Cool slightly (or for several hours), then purée in a blender. Taste and add more salt, pepper, or vinegar if you like. (You can refrigerate the purée for up to a day before continuing.)

③ Put the remaining oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, then add the turkey, skin side down. Sprinkle it with salt and pepper and, a couple of minutes later (it's not important that it brown well), pour the puréed sauce over it. Adjust the heat so the mixture simmers steadily when covered and cook, checking the heat occasionally and turning the pieces once or twice, until the thighs are very tender, about an hour.

④ Taste the sauce and adjust the seasoning. Garnish with almonds if you like and serve hot.

The Basics of Cornish Hens, Poussins, and Guinea Hens

These birds may all be cooked using any chicken recipe, as long as you adjust for time. That's a good thing, because for the most part they're more flavorful, especially when compared to store- and name-brand chickens.

Look for small Cornish, just over 1 pound each. They serve one or two people each and are ideal for splitting before cooking. Poussins, which are essentially baby chickens, may be treated as Cornish hens but tend to be a little bigger. Both have a distinct advantage over chicken: Because they're so small, you can grill them quickly (and even over direct heat) and they're unlikely to burn or dry out.

Guinea hens are a variety of chicken, usually more flavorful. Buy them if you see them and roast them simply, as you would a good chicken.

Making a Quick Poultry Stock

See the soup chapter for full-fledged stock recipes, but remember that you can make a simple but flavorful stock from the trimmings of any bird: Combine the backbone, neck, wing tips, gizzard, and any other scraps except the liver and heart in a small saucepan and add water to cover. Add 1 small onion (don't bother to peel it), 1 carrot, and 1 celery stalk, along with a pinch of salt and a few peppercorns. Bring to a boil, turn the heat to low, cover partially, and cook for as few as 30 (if you're in a hurry) to as many as 60 minutes.

Grilled or Broiled Cornish Hens with Vinegar

MAKES: 2 to 4 servings

TIME: About 40 minutes



This light sauce is super with any grilled poultry, from chicken to squab (it's good with rabbit too). Once you split the hens, you can cook them according to any recipe for split chicken (pages 692–694), adjusting the cooking time accordingly.

Other protein you can use: split rabbit (see page 653).

2 Cornish hens, about 1 pound each

1 cup chicken, beef, or other stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159)

2 tablespoons vinegar

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Minced fresh parsley leaves for garnish

① Heat a charcoal or gas grill or the broiler to moderate heat and put the grill rack about 4 inches from the heat source. Remove the backbone of the hens by cutting along their length on each side. Boil the stock and the backbones in a small saucepan until reduced by about

half, about 30 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and some salt and pepper if necessary.

② Grill or broil the hens, turning frequently so they brown but do not burn and sprinkling them with salt and pepper. Toward the end of the cooking time (which will be 20 to 30 minutes total, depending on the intensity of the heat), begin basting the hens with the vinegar sauce. When the hens are done, drizzle them with the remaining sauce. Garnish with parsley and serve hot or at room temperature.

6 Other Sauces That Are Great Basted on and Served with Grilled or Broiled Cornish Hens

1. Any Five-Minute Drizzle Sauce (page 22)
2. Soy Dipping Sauce and Marinade (page 25)
3. Compound Butter (page 32)
4. Ponzu Sauce (page 40)
5. Balsamic Syrup (page 51)
6. Any Vinaigrette (pages 199–202)

Cornish Hens and Sauerkraut

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About 2 hours



An elegant but straightforward dish and an excellent introduction to sauerkraut. But steer clear of the canned stuff; instead, look for a bottled brand that contains no more than cabbage, salt, and water. This preparation also works well with pheasant, chicken, and duck.

4 Cornish hens, about 1 pound each

4 slices bacon, diced, or 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 pounds sauerkraut

2 cloves

1 teaspoon juniper berries, crushed with the side of a knife

1 sprig fresh thyme or a pinch dried thyme
1 bay leaf
1 cup dry white wine
Stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water as needed
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

- ➊ Remove the backbone of the hens by cutting along their length on each side. Separate breast and leg quarters. Cook the bacon over medium heat in a large, deep ovenproof skillet until crisp, about 10 minutes, or heat the oil until it shimmers. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon and reserve. Add the hen pieces to the bacon fat or olive oil and brown them on all sides. Meanwhile, rinse the sauerkraut in a colander and heat the oven to 300°F.
- ➋ When the bird is nicely browned, add the sauerkraut, cloves, juniper berries, thyme, bay leaf, and white wine to the skillet. Cook over medium heat until about half of the liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes; move the skillet into the oven.
- ➌ Bake for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally and adding liquid as needed to keep the sauerkraut just moist, until the legs are tender and the sauerkraut is slightly browned. Remove the skillet from the oven, then remove the cloves and bay leaf. Taste the sauce, adjust the seasoning, and serve hot or warm.

The Basics of Duck and Goose

These two birds have a lot in common: They're fatty—amazingly so if you're used to chicken—which means they must be treated differently from other birds. It also means they develop a beautifully crisp, dark skin. All duck has dark meat that is far richer than that of chicken.

Both birds have dark meat that is flavorful without being at all gamy. (I'm talking about domesticated ducks

and geese. Wild ones are quite gamy—but they're also hard to come by.) Finally, because they are water birds, they have a huge chest cavity and a bone structure that makes their size deceptive. If you've ever roasted a 4- or 5-pound duck and tried to serve six people, you know what I mean; there's really enough meat on the bird to serve only two or three. That's why duck is a good candidate for smoking; when it's done, you can cut it up and use it in stir-fries, where it lends its flavor to other ingredients.

"Duck," by the way, usually means Pekin duck, the kind found at every supermarket. It's usually sold "fresh" but in fact is shipped frozen and then thawed; truly fresh duck is rare.

Many cooks avoid duck because of its high fat content. But there are lots of methods that render the subcutaneous fat from duck without drying out the meat, a few of which I describe in the following recipes. But even if you simply roast the bird in an empty pan, you get a lot of nice, clean fat that you can save (it keeps for weeks in the refrigerator, months in the freezer) for cooking other dishes in which you want a flavor boost. (This is equally true of goose.)

Increasingly, supermarkets now carry duck breasts (which are a good substitute for beef) or duck legs, which are incomparably wonderful when braised (see page 709). But rarely do you see them both packaged together (i.e., a cut-up whole duck). It's a shame, because duck parts cook well together since they are all dark meat, as you'll see if you try the following recipes. Fortunately, though, duck is nearly as easy to cut up as a chicken (see page 648), so you might give it a shot. If you decide to use duck breasts alone for any of these recipes, just be careful not to overcook them.

Goose is nearly always sold frozen. The easiest way to thaw goose is to let it sit in the refrigerator for 2 days before you plan to cook it. If you're in a hurry, defrost it by letting it sit in cold water, changing the water occasionally; but you should still plan for it to take the better part of a day for a 10-pound bird.

Whole duck is the most common way to cook duck, but not the easiest; these days, I prefer to cut my duck up before cooking, just like cutting chicken; see page 648. But there is no arguing that these are the duck presentations that are the most impressive, so there are times I turn to them, and times you will also.

Roast Duck

MAKES: 2 to 4 servings

TIME: About 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours

Duck is so difficult to roast badly that all experienced cooks seem to claim their procedure is the best. Having tried many methods, I can say that the results are all about the same. So I rely on this one, which is pretty simple and probably the easiest way to guarantee a succulent but beautifully browned bird. For more a more elaborate roast duck, see the variation.

Trying to stretch a duck to serve four is not easy, but if the four are not big on meat and you provide plenty of side dishes, it can be done.

1 whole duck, 4 to 5 pounds, trimmed of excess fat

Freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup soy sauce, more or less

① Heat the oven to 450°F. Discard the neck and giblets or keep them for another use; remove excess fat from the duck's cavity.

② Put the duck breast side down (wings up) on a rack in a roasting pan; add water to just below the rack. Sprinkle with pepper and brush with a little soy sauce.

③ Roast for 30 minutes, undisturbed. Prick the back all over with the point of a sharp knife, then flip the bird onto its back. Sprinkle with pepper and brush with soy sauce again. Add a little more water to the bottom of the pan if the juices are spattering (carefully—you don't want to get water on the duck).

④ Roast for 20 minutes, prick the breast all over with the point of a knife, and brush with soy sauce. Roast for

10 minutes and brush with soy sauce. Roast for another 5 or 10 minutes if necessary, or until the duck is a glorious brown all over and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thigh measures 155–165°F. Let rest for 5 minutes before carving and serving.

Duck à l'Orange. The old classic, still good; the acidity of the orange cuts through the duck's fat nicely: In Step 2, before putting the duck in the pan, stuff it with a roughly chopped onion, a couple of smashed cloves of garlic, and a quartered orange. While the duck is roasting, remove the zest from another orange, then juice it and mince half the zest; simmer the remaining zest in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159; duck stock would be good) for 2 minutes. Peel and section 2 more oranges. When the duck is done, remove and discard the stuffing; transfer the bird to a warm platter. Drain all the fat from the pan and put it on the stove over high heat; add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine or water and cook, stirring and scraping the bottom of the pan, until the liquid is reduced slightly. Strain the stock and add it to the pan along with the orange juice and sections; bring to a boil and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Carve the duck, spoon the sauce over it, garnish with the reserved zest, and serve. (If you want a thicker sauce, stir 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 2 tablespoons water into it and cook, stirring, until thickened.)

Steamed and Roasted Duck

MAKES: 2 to 4 servings

TIME: About 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours

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This method produces a crisp, delicious, Chinese-style roast duck with very little fat, and half the cooking can be done a day or even two in advance.

1 whole duck, 4 to 5 pounds, excess fat removed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons soy sauce

2 tablespoons honey
1 tablespoon minced or grated fresh ginger (or 1 teaspoon ground ginger)
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
2 tablespoons dry sherry or white wine
2 tablespoons dry white wine or water

- ① Rig a steamer (see page 20). Put 1 to 2 inches of water in the bottom. Put the duck on the rack or plate, cover the pot, and turn the heat to high. Steam for about 45 minutes, adding boiling water if necessary.
- ② Remove the duck from the pot, put it on a rack, and cool for at least 15 minutes (you can also wrap it well and refrigerate for up to 2 days).

③ Heat the oven to 375°F. Combine all the remaining ingredients in a saucepan and cook over low heat, stirring, until just shy of a boil. Put the duck, breast side down (wings up), on a rack in a roasting pan. Baste with the sauce.

④ Roast the duck for 15 minutes, baste it, then turn it breast side up. Raise the heat to 425°F. Baste the bird again and roast it until the skin is crisp, another 15 minutes or so, until the internal temperature is 155–165°F. Let the duck rest for a few minutes, then carve and serve.

2 cloves garlic, lightly crushed
2 pounds purple-topped turnips, peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

- ① Heat the oven to 350°F. Sprinkle the duck with salt and pepper and put the pieces in a large, ovenproof skillet with a lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Brown carefully on both sides, rotating and turning as necessary; take your time to do this thoroughly, allowing up to 15 or 20 minutes total; remove the pieces as they are browned.
- ② Drain the fat, return the duck to the pan and add the thyme, bay leaf, and garlic; cover, put it in the oven, and roast for about 30 minutes.
- ③ Remove the pan from the oven and carefully pour off most of the fat. Add the turnips, cover again, and return it to the oven. Stir and baste the turnips every 10 minutes or so until the duck is done, 30 minutes or so longer (the juices will run clear, the leg bone will wiggle a little in its socket, and the meat will be tender). Taste, adjust the seasoning, and serve garnished with parsley.

Braised Duck with Apples and Calvados. A wonderful fall dish: Substitute 1 pound Granny Smith or Golden Delicious apples, cored and cut into eighths, for half the turnips. Add 1 cup stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water and 1/4 cup Calvados or any apple brandy. In Step 2, add the stock and brandy with the herbs.

Roasted Cut-Up Duck with Turnips

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 1½ hours

You won't get crisp skin here, but you'll get very tender meat. The turnips—or other root vegetable of your choice—simmer in the fabulous duck drippings.

1 whole duck, 4 to 5 pounds, excess fat removed and cut into 8 serving pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
1 bay leaf

Fast "Roast" Duck, Chinese Style

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 1 hour

Producing the type of roast duck you see hanging in the windows of many Chinese restaurants is nearly impossi-

ble at home; but you can get similar results in less than an hour if you just begin by cutting up the duck. And with just a little attention, the duck will gain a glorious, mahogany color that will belie the amount of work you put into it.

1 whole duck, 4 to 5 pounds, excess fat removed and cut into 8 pieces
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons rice wine or dry sherry
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1/2 cup brown sugar
One 3-inch cinnamon stick
5 or 6 slices fresh ginger
4 star anise
2 cloves
1 teaspoon coriander seeds

① Put the duck, skin side down, in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat and sprinkle it liberally with salt and pepper. When the duck begins to sizzle, cover the skillet and turn the heat down to medium. After 15 minutes, turn the duck and sprinkle the skin side. After 15 more minutes, uncover the skillet and turn the heat back to medium-high. Cook the duck, turning as necessary, so that it browns nicely on both sides; this will take another 15 minutes or so.

② Transfer the duck to a plate and pour off all but a tablespoon of fat (if there are any solids, leave them in the pan). Over medium-high heat, add the rice wine and bring to a boil. Add the soy sauce and 2 tablespoons water and bring to a boil; stir in the brown sugar and spices until smooth. Once the mixture starts bubbling, return the duck to the skillet and cook, turning it frequently, until the sauce is very thick and the duck is well glazed, 5 to 10 minutes. Remove the duck, then scoop the whole spices out of the sauce. Spoon the sauce over the duck and serve.

Duck Confit

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

TIME: About 24 hours, largely unattended



It's mildly onerous to render duck fat, though preparing the confit—a word that's come to mean long, slow cooking in fat—is straightforward. You have a couple of choices: Render your own, purchase duck fat from a specialty store or online (from a site like hudsonvalley-foiegras.com), or use extra virgin olive oil. The last solution is perfectly acceptable, though it won't leave you with the delicious leftover duck fat to use for cooking.

I like to eat duck confit with something sharp or acidic (or both), like a salad with frisée or radicchio; add a crumble of blue cheese and a handful of hazelnuts and you're all set. Confit is also excellent sautéed with cooked white beans for a fast skillet cassoulet.

1 cup coarse salt
1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves, chopped, or 1 tablespoon dried thyme
2 bay leaves, ground or finely crumbled
8 duck legs or 4 legs and thighs, rinsed and blotted dry
8 cups rendered duck fat (see "How to Render Chicken (or Any Other) Fat," page 651) or extra virgin olive oil

① Combine the salt, pepper, thyme, and bay leaves. Put the duck legs on a rimmed baking sheet and sprinkle with the salt mixture. Wrap in plastic, put in the refrigerator, and cure overnight or for at least 8 hours.

② Put the fat or oil in a wide Dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Meanwhile, rinse the salt mixture from the legs and blot the legs dry. When the fat is melted and just barely sending up a bubble, carefully add the duck legs (use tongs to prevent splattering). Adjust the heat so the oil sends up bubbles every now and then. Cook the legs,

undisturbed, until the meat has pulled away from the leg bone and is very tender, about 2 hours. (At this point, the whole pot can be cooled, covered, and refrigerated for up to a couple of weeks.)

③ To serve, heat the oven to 300°F. Remove the legs from the fat and let the excess fat drain off. Put a large skillet over medium-high heat; when it's hot, add the duck pieces, skin side down, and cook until the skin is browned and crisp, about 10 minutes; transfer to a rack in the oven and bake until completely golden brown, about 15 minutes. Serve hot, warm, or room temperature.

Crisp-Braised Duck Legs with Aromatic Vegetables

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 2 hours, largely unattended

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I rarely have time for duck confit, but this recipe gives you a lot of the same benefits: crisp skin, very tender meat and, as a bonus, delicious vegetables.

4 duck legs, trimmed of excess fat

1 large onion

8 ounces carrots

3 celery stalks

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 cups stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water

① Heat the oven to 400°F. Put the duck legs, skin sides down, in a skillet large enough to accommodate all the ingredients comfortably; turn the heat to medium and cook, rotating (but not turning) the pieces as necessary to brown the skin thoroughly and evenly. Meanwhile, peel and dice the vegetables.

② When the skins are nicely browned, turn them

over and sear for 1 to 2 minutes, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and transfer to a plate. Remove all but enough of the fat to moisten the vegetables (there's plenty more fat where that came from). Add the vegetables along with some salt and pepper and cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until they begin to brown, 10 to 15 minutes.

③ Return the duck legs to the pan, skin sides up, and add the stock; it should come about halfway up the duck legs but should not cover them. Turn the heat to high, bring to a boil, and transfer to the oven.

④ Cook for 30 minutes, then turn the heat to 350°F. Continue to cook, undisturbed, until the duck is tender and the liquid reduced, at least another 30 minutes and probably a bit longer. (When done, the duck

14 Poultry Dishes You Can Reheat

Prepared in advance or simply left over, most moist chicken dishes are fine reheated. Some of the best:

1. Chicken Braised in Soy Sauce and Lemon (page 646)
2. Chicken in Red Wine Sauce (page 649)
3. Chicken and Lentils (page 650)
4. Chicken with Yogurt and Indian Spices (pages 650–651)
5. Chicken and Garlic Stew (page 652)
6. Chicken Teriyaki (page 671)
7. Double-Coconut Sautéed Chicken Breasts (page 681)
8. Chicken in a Pot (page 688)
9. Turkey Thighs Braised in Red Wine (page 701)
10. Turkey Thighs in Almond Mole (page 702)
11. Cornish Hens and Sauerkraut (page 704)
12. Roasted Cut-Up Duck with Turnips (page 707)
13. Duck Confit (page 708)
14. Pheasant Stewed with Dried Fruits and Vinegar (page 711)

will hold nicely in a 200°F oven for up to another hour.) Serve hot.

Roast Goose

MAKES: 6 to 10 servings

TIME: About 3 hours

Like duck, goose does not serve many people per pound. But the rich, dense meat is enormously satisfying, and the skin makes the effort worth it. If you plan on serving lots of people, figure about six servings; you can easily stretch it, though, with a few side dishes. One way to extend the goose is to stuff it as you would a turkey, using any of the stuffings on pages 698–700; stuffings with fruit are best with goose, because the acidity balances the fat nicely.

1 whole goose, 8 to 10 pounds, excess fat removed

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

① Heat the oven to 350°F. Prick the goose skin all over with a sharp fork, skewer, or thin-bladed knife; try not to hit the meat (the fat layer is usually about 1/4 inch thick). Sprinkle the goose with salt and pepper and put it, breast side down, on a rack in a roasting pan.

② Put the roasting pan in the oven and roast the goose for 20 minutes, prick the exposed skin again, then roast until it begins to brown, about 20 minutes longer. Turn the goose breast side up, prick again, and baste with some of the accumulated pan juices (there will be plenty). Roast for another hour, pricking the skin and basting 2 or 3 times.

③ Unless the goose is already very brown, raise the heat to 400°F and continue to roast until the meat is done, about another 30 minutes. At that point, all juices, including those from the center vent, should run clear, and the leg bone should wiggle a little in its socket. When the bird is done, an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thigh will measure about 165°F. Carve as you would turkey (see page 697) and serve.

The Basics of Squab and Pheasant

Game birds like these need not be gamy to be distinctive, and in fact gaminess is becoming rare as these are farm raised more and more. Still, it's amazing how different in flavor they can be, even within species: Farm-raised pheasant are plump and mild-tasting, not unlike chickens; "free-range" birds are leaner and slightly gamy; and most truly wild specimens—which have darker skin, meat, and fat—have a powerful flavor.

Squab, pheasant, and partridge (and quail, see page 712), the most common game birds, are sometimes sold fresh, but more often they're frozen. You can cook them as you would any chicken dish, though I generally prefer them simply roasted, grilled, or broiled. Squab—in my opinion the most delicious bird there is—can be ordered by any butcher; each bird weighs about a pound and is so rich that it can legitimately serve two. Pheasant is fairly common and is often sold in rural areas where it is raised; it can also be ordered. Pheasant have tough, muscular legs that require longer cooking than their breasts. The answer, quite frequently, is to cook the legs and breasts separately. In restaurants, that may mean "cooking the breast and tossing the rest." At home it makes more sense to work with recipes that exploit the good flavors of the entire bird. Domesticated pheasant, the most common kind, are much like chickens, weighing in at 2 pounds and more and you check for doneness the same way.

Grilled or Broiled Squab, Vietnamese Style

MAKES: 4 to 8 servings

TIME: About 1 hour



This simple boning technique—in which the wing is left intact, protecting the breast against overcooking—can be

1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 cup red wine or stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159)
Minced fresh parsley leaves for garnish

- ➊ Soak the porcini in hot water to cover.
- ➋ Put the olive oil in a large, deep skillet with a lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When hot, add the lamb chunks a few at a time, removing them as they brown and seasoning with salt and pepper as they cook. When they are all nicely browned, which will take 5 to 10 minutes, pour or spoon off the excess fat, then add the shiitakes, button mushrooms, drained porcini (reserve the soaking liquid), and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms begin to brown, 5 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and continue cooking until the mushrooms are dry and lightly browned, 5 minutes longer.
➌ Add the wine, along with about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the porcini liquid and some salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, return the lamb to the pan, turn the heat to low, and cover. Cook at a steady bubble, checking and stirring occasionally, until the lamb is tender, about an hour (at most 90 minutes) later. (At this point, you may let the dish sit for a few hours or cover and refrigerate for up to a day before reheating and proceeding.)
- ➍ Remove the cover; if the mixture is soupy, raise the heat a bit and cook until the sauce thickens. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then garnish with parsley and serve.

Lamb Stew with Vinegar. Use a whole head of garlic, separated into cloves, in place of the tablespoon of minced garlic. For the liquid, use $\frac{1}{3}$ cup good red wine vinegar mixed with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159).

Lamb Stew with Mushrooms and Olives. As the lamb gets close to tenderness in Step 3, add 1 cup good black or green olives (or a mixture; in any case there's no need to pit as long as you warn your guests!) and finish the cooking with them in the pot.

Irish Stew. Omit all the mushrooms and skip Step 1. In Step 2, after removing the lamb from the pot, stir in 1 chopped onion. Proceed with the recipe, adding 1 pound waxy potatoes (peeled or unpeeled) to the pot during the last 30 minutes of cooking.

Lamb Stew with Eggplant or Green Beans. Omit all the mushrooms and skip Step 1. Salt 3 cups peeled and cubed eggplant (see page 293) or trim and cut in half 3 cups green beans. In Step 2, sauté the eggplant or green beans after cooking the lamb. When soft and turning color, add 1 teaspoon minced garlic and 1 cup chopped tomato (drained canned is fine). Add more liquid if the mixture is dry.

Lamb Stew with White Beans. Keep or omit the mushrooms as you like. Prepare 8 ounces of cannellini or other white beans as described in Cooked Beans, the Quick-Soak Way (page 411). (If you put raw beans in, they will take too long for the lamb.) For Step 1, brown the meat and mushrooms if you're using them. In Step 2, drain the beans (saving their liquid), then add them along with the lamb. Cook, stirring occasionally and scraping the bottom to make sure the beans do not burn; add a little of the bean liquid if necessary.

Lamb Stew with Cinnamon. Omit the porcini, button mushrooms, and thyme. In Step 2, use stock or water (not wine) and add 2 cloves, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon, and one 6-ounce can tomato paste. Mix well. After 30 minutes, add 20 peeled pearl onions (frozen are fine) and 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar. Remove the toothpicks, then garnish with parsley and serve over rice or broad noodles.

Lamb Stew with Orange. For Step 1, substitute 1 large chopped onion, 2 chopped carrots, and 1 chopped celery stalk for the porcini and button mushrooms; cook until the vegetables start to brown. For Step 2, add the juice of 1 orange along with the wine; push a clove into one of the orange halves and add it to the lamb.

Lamb Curry

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About 1½ hours, largely unattended



For this it's really worth making your own curry powder if you have 10 minutes (see pages 66–67). This simple difference is remarkable. Then, if you're really feeling ambitious, make a batch of Chapati (page 848) while the meat simmers.

2 tablespoons peanut or other neutral oil, like
grapeseed or corn

2 pounds boneless lamb shoulder, trimmed of excess
fat and cut into 2-inch cubes, or 3 to 4 pounds
bone-in lamb shoulder or neck, cut into chunks

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 cups thinly sliced onion, plus 1 cup chopped onion

1 tablespoon minced garlic

1 tablespoon minced or grated fresh ginger or
1 teaspoon ground ginger

2 tablespoons curry powder or garam masala (to make
your own, see pages 66–67)

½ teaspoon cayenne (optional)

1½ cups chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make
your own, see pages 157–159), stock made from
lamb bones, or water, plus more as needed

½ cup yogurt

Minced fresh cilantro leaves for garnish

1 Put the oil in a large, deep skillet with a lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When hot, add the lamb chunks a few at a time and brown them on all sides, removing them as they brown and sprinkling with salt and pepper as they cook. (You can also do the initial browning in the oven: Heat to 500°F and roast the lamb chunks—you may omit the oil—turning once or twice, until brown all over; time will be about the same, 20 minutes.) Drain off all but 2 tablespoons of the fat. Cook the sliced onion over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 10 to 15 minutes.

2 Add the chopped onion, garlic, ginger, spice mixture, and the cayenne if you're using it. Stir and cook over medium heat for 3 or 4 minutes, until the chopped onion softens.

3 Return the lamb to the pot along with the stock. Bring to a boil, cover, turn the heat to low, and bubble gently until the lamb is tender, at least 1 hour. Remove the cover and, if the mixture is too soupy, turn the heat to high and reduce it a bit. (If it's too dry, which is unlikely, add ½ to 1 cup more liquid and cook for 10 minutes before proceeding.) Taste and adjust the seasoning. (At this point, you may refrigerate the curry for a day or two before reheating and proceeding.) Stir in the yogurt, remove from the heat, and serve, garnished with the cilantro.

Lamb Curry with Coconut Milk. In Step 1, pour off all the fat after the lamb is browned and cook the sliced onion in 3 tablespoons butter. In Step 2, add 1 teaspoon ground turmeric (or several saffron threads, crushed between your fingers) along with the other spices. In Step 3, substitute coconut milk (to make your own, see page 389) for some or all of the stock; use more coconut milk in place of the yogurt.

Lamb Couscous

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: About 1 hour



The couscous stretches this dish out quite a bit and absorbs all the lovely flavors of the braising liquid.

Other cuts and meats you can use: cubes of beef chuck, round, or brisket.

Other grains you can use: bulgur, precooked cracked wheat.

2 tablespoons neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, or
extra virgin olive oil

1½ to 2 pounds boneless lamb shoulder, cut into 1- to
2-inch chunks

Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 large onion, chopped
3 tablespoons chopped garlic
Two 3-inch cinnamon sticks or 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 cups lamb, beef, or chicken stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water
1/2 cup raisins
Large pinch saffron threads (optional)
1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves or 1 tablespoon dried mint
1 cup couscous

① Put the oil in a saucepan with a lid over medium-high heat. When hot, add the lamb, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 10 minutes. Drain off the excess fat, add the onion, and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic, cinnamon, coriander, and cumin and cook for another minute.

② Pour in the stock, add the raisins and the saffron if you're using it, add another sprinkle of salt, and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to low so it bubbles steadily but not violently; cook, stirring once or twice, until the meat is tender, about 40 minutes. (At this point, you may refrigerate the lamb for a day or two; reheat gently before proceeding.)

③ Stir in the mint and couscous, cover, and turn off the heat; let sit for 5 to 7 minutes without disturbing. Taste and adjust the seasoning and serve.

Chicken Couscous. Substitute chicken thighs or legs for the lamb. Reduce the cooking time in Step 2 to 25 to 30 minutes.

Vegetable Couscous. Substitute peeled and cubed butternut squash, sweet or white potatoes, cauliflower, zucchini or summer squash, eggplant, cabbage, or a mixture of any of these for the lamb. Add 1 cup

cooked and drained chickpeas too if you like. Add the vegetables and chickpeas along with the stock (use chicken or vegetable stock) and cook until tender, 20 to 30 minutes.

Lamb Shanks

Lamb shanks are cheap, delicious, and soothing; simmer some on a cold winter night, open a bottle of red wine, and relax. Like most meats that take best to braising, they can be cooked in advance—up to a day or two if you refrigerate them, up to a week or two if you freeze them. Skim excess fat from the top before reheating.

You can braise lamb shanks on top of the stove or in the oven; I give examples of both methods here. Note, too, that lamb shanks take well to Asian seasonings; try them in the recipe for Anise-Scented Short Ribs (page 741).

Lamb Shanks with Tomatoes and Olives

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 2 hours or more, largely unattended



The briny flavor of olives makes this dish, so buy good ones. My favorites here are a mixture of the big green kind from southern Italy and kalamatas or the small dried olives from Morocco or Greece.

Other cuts and meats you can use: short ribs (which will also take a long time); chunks of lamb or pork shoulder (which will be faster) or beef chuck or brisket; bone-in chicken parts (which will be much quicker), preferably thighs.

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

4 lamb shanks, about 1 pound each

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

2 cups sliced onion
1 tablespoon minced garlic
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon fresh thyme leaves, a couple sprigs fresh thyme, or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159), white or red wine, water, or a combination
1 cup chopped tomato (drained canned is fine)
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups assorted olives, pitted
Minced fresh basil or parsley leaves for garnish

① Put the oil in a large pot with a lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When hot, add the shanks and brown on all sides, sprinkling with salt and pepper as they cook. (You can also do the initial browning in the oven: Heat to 500°F and roast the lamb shanks—you may omit the oil—turning once or twice, until brown all over; this will take a little longer but will be somewhat easier and much neater.) Remove the lamb and pour off all but 2 tablespoons of fat. Add the onion and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until softened and golden, about 10 minutes.

② Add the garlic and thyme and cook for another minute, then add the liquid, some salt and pepper, and the tomato; stir to blend. Return the lamb shanks to the pan, turn them once or twice, cover, and turn the heat to low.

③ Cook for 30 minutes, turn the shanks, and add the olives. Continue to cook for at least another hour, turning occasionally, until the shanks are very tender (a toothpick inserted into them will meet little resistance) and the meat is nearly falling from the bone. (At this point, you may refrigerate the shanks for a day or two and then reheat.) Garnish with basil or parsley and serve.

Lamb Shanks with Pasilla Chile Sauce. Soak 3 to 5 pasilla or other mild dried red chiles in hot water to cover until soft, about 30 minutes. Meanwhile, proceed with Step 1, adding 1 cup chopped tomato along with the onion. Transfer the onion mixture to a food processor. Drain the chiles, reserving the soaking liquid, and tear them into pieces while removing their

stems and seeds. Add the chiles to the processor along with 2 cloves garlic and purée, adding the chile liquid as necessary to get a smooth paste. In Step 2, substitute 1 tablespoon fresh marjoram or oregano leaves or 1 teaspoon dried for the thyme and add the chile purée with the stock or water (don't use wine). Sprinkle in salt and pepper and 1 teaspoon ground cumin. Proceed with the recipe, omitting the olives.

Lamb Shanks with Lentils

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: At least 2 hours, largely unattended

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From the countryside in the south of France, this rustic one-pot meal combines lentils, lamb, red wine, and little else. Once they simmer for a couple of hours, the lentils turn super-tender and hold all the flavors. If you like, sear the lamb first, following Step 1 of the previous recipe.

Other cuts and meats you can use: beef short ribs.

12 ounces dried lentils, preferably lentilles du Puy (see page 432), rinsed and picked over
2 medium carrots, chopped
1 onion, chopped
4 sprigs fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 tablespoon minced garlic
2 bay leaves
1 bottle dry red wine, or more as needed
4 lamb shanks, about 1 pound each
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

① Heat the oven to 400°F. Combine the lentils, carrots, onion, thyme, garlic, bay leaves, and wine in a roasting pan or Dutch oven and stir; bring to a boil on top of the stove, then nestle the lamb shanks among the lentils, cover the pan (aluminum foil will do), and put in the oven. Lower the heat to 350°F and cook, undisturbed, for about an hour.

② Uncover and stir the lentils gently; sprinkle with salt and pepper. Re-cover and cook for about an hour longer, until the lentils are very tender and the lamb begins to pull away from the bone; if at any point the mixture threatens to dry out, add more liquid wine or water. Don't worry about overcooking the lentils; just make sure the lamb is done. When the lamb is tender, uncover the pan, raise the heat to 400°F, and cook for another 15 minutes or so, just to brown the top a bit. Taste and adjust the seasoning and serve or refrigerate for up to a day before reheating.

Lamb Rack, Breast, and Ribs

Lamb rack is expensive and luxurious, delicious and virtually foolproof. And the traditional bread crumbs–garlic–parsley treatment has never been bettered. Boned sections of rack or saddle, sometimes called *boneless loin*, can be cut into medallions, cooked quickly, and served with a wine reduction; this is a wonderful dish to make for an intimate dinner for two.

The ribs, on the other hand, are cheap and unfortunately hard to find; sometimes you'll find them sold as "breast of lamb," and you just have to cut them up, which is easy enough. Like other ribs, these are good for grilling but must be parboiled first. After that initial treatment, which is neither time-consuming nor difficult, treat them as you would any other ribs.

ple, with plenty of side dishes. Make sure the chine bone is removed (ask the butcher) so you can easily cut through the ribs to separate them at the table. But don't bother to ask to have the ribs "frenched" (the meat removed from the top of the bones); the crisp meat along the bones is one of the pleasures of a rack of lamb. You didn't want to use little frilly doilies on top of the bones anyway, did you?

2 racks of lamb, about 2 pounds each
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 cup bread crumbs, preferably fresh (page 876)
1/2 cup minced fresh parsley leaves
1 teaspoon minced garlic

① Heat the oven to 500°F. Trim the lamb of excess fat, but leave a layer of fat over the meat. Cut about halfway down the bones between the chops; this allows the meat between them to become crisp.

② Combine the remaining ingredients and rub over the meat side of the racks. Put them in a roasting pan and put in the oven; roast for 20 minutes and insert an instant-read meat thermometer straight in from one end into the meatiest part. If it reads 125°F or more, remove the lamb immediately. If it reads less, put the lamb back for 5 minutes, no more. Remove and let sit for 5 minutes. Serve, separating the ribs by cutting down straight through them.

Roast Rack of Lamb with Persillade

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes



Do the math: Seven ribs per rack, with only a couple of bites per rib, means you need two racks for four people. But fourteen ribs could easily serve five or even six peo-

Grilled or Broiled Lamb Ribs

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 1 hour

When you see lamb breast—you may have to cut it up yourself, but it isn't hard—or lamb ribs, grab 'em. These tasty bites make wonderful eating but take a two-step cooking process: They must be parboiled before grilling

or broiling. If you skip the parboiling step, they'll be tough and virtually inedible.

If you start with whole breast, cut it into large sections and parboil it; then separate into ribs before grilling.

4 pounds lamb breast, whole or in riblets
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1/2 cup orange marmalade or maple syrup
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar or sherry vinegar
1 teaspoon ground cumin

① Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it. Add the lamb and simmer for 30 minutes if the ribs are already separate, 45 minutes if the breast is in large sections. Meanwhile, heat a charcoal or gas grill or the broiler until moderately hot and put the rack at least 4 inches from the heat source.

② Drain the ribs and let them sit until cool enough to handle. Mix together all the remaining ingredients. If necessary, cut the sections into individual ribs (just cut between them with a boning knife) and grill or broil them, basting frequently with the sauce. These burn very easily, so turn frequently and watch carefully. When they are brown and crisp all over—no more than 10 or at the most 15 minutes—remove from the grill and serve.

5 Other Basting Sauces for Grilled or Broiled Lamb Ribs

1. Tahini Sauce (page 35)
2. Simple Miso Dipping Sauce (page 39)
3. Balsamic Syrup (page 51)
4. Basic Barbecue Sauce (page 52)
5. Coconut Curry Vinaigrette (page 202)

The Basics of Veal

Veal production spurred the original charge against inhumanely raised meat—many calves were (and still are) tightly confined. And “milk-raised” veal (raised on for-

mula, not mother’s milk) is still objectionable. But the good news is that it’s easier than ever to find what the USDA calls “calf,” which is also sold as “humanely raised” or “natural” veal. There is organic and free-range veal out there also, though mostly what you see in conventional supermarkets remains so-called milk-fed. With veal as with other meat, the closer you get to traditional farming practices the better.

As for cooking: Regardless of the kind of veal you buy, it will be quite lean. And even though veal is a young cow, its cuts are more similar to lamb than beef. Properly cooked, it will also be quite tender. Those cuts that are tender enough to be cooked with dry heat, primarily the chop and the rear leg, should not be overcooked. Medium—that is, with some pinkness but no redness in the interior—is how I prefer this veal, about 140°F on an instant-read thermometer. Stop cooking when the meat measures about 135°F or a little more and you’ll hit it right.

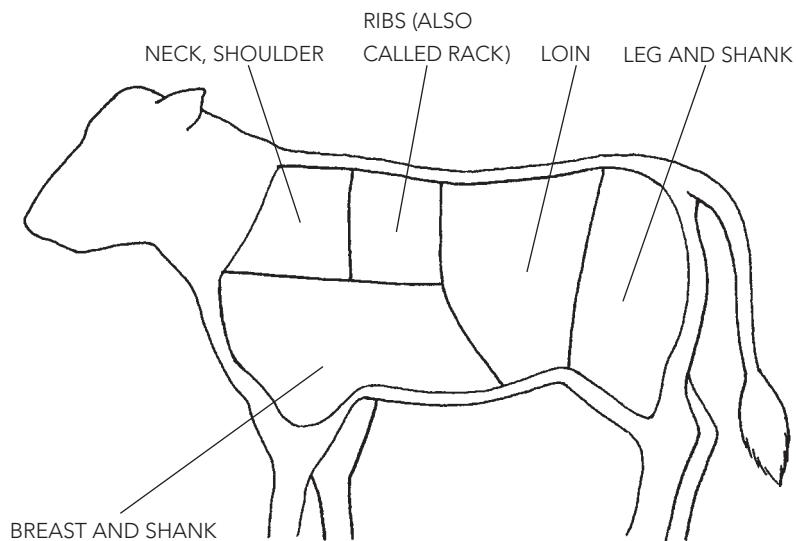
Ways to Use Game in These Recipes

Whether you can get your hands on truly wild game—caught by hunters—or some of the farm-raised “game” now available, cooking with either is not any different from cooking with other meats. Just one word of caution: Game tends to be very lean. (Wild animals run around a lot.) So if you’re grilling, searing, broiling, or sautéing, be extra careful not to overcook. And if you’re braising, be sure to let the meat simmer long enough to get fully tender.

Here’s a simple list of substitutions for cooking with game:

1. Use beef recipes for venison.
2. Use pork recipes for wild boar.
3. Use lamb recipes for goat (which is not exactly game but is still a specialty meat).
4. Use chicken recipes for rabbit (see page 753).

MAJOR CUTS OF VEAL



Braised veal, including osso buco, veal breast, and the cut-up shoulder, neck, and pieces from the leg that are sold as stew, must be cooked until well done and tender. However, this often takes considerably less time than corresponding cuts of beef.

Shoulder: Best for stew and roasts (blade roast, arm roast) cooked with liquid. Do not buy steaks (or chops) from this section (labeled *arm or shoulder steaks, blade steak*); they will be tough.

Rib: Rib chops are superb. Veal rib roasts, which are manageable in size and quite nice (and are also called *rack of veal*), may be sold bone in or out; unfortunately, they are not seen very often.

Loin: Also wonderful for chops, the loin provides good roasts, especially the boneless (and expensive) saddle roast.

Sirloin: Not that desirable in veal. Neither chops nor roasts are as good as those from the rib or loin.

Leg: Thin slices are cut for veal scallops or cutlets (or scaloppine). Rump or round roasts are neither tender nor flavorful, but roast veal leg—bone in—is a treat.

Flank: Almost always ground.

Breast: Usually sold whole (breast of veal) and can be cooked bone in or boned, in which case it is usually stuffed (you can make Matambre with it, if you like; see page 737).

Shank: Great for Osso Buco (page 784) or roasted whole.

Grilled or Broiled Veal Chops

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F

Excellent veal chops are a rare occurrence, so you will want to keep things simple and savor the meat. My favorite way is to rub the meat lightly with good olive oil, then give it the perfume of rosemary and garlic.

Veal chops are best medium-rare to medium; figure 8 to 10 minutes total cooking for a 1-inch-thick chop (an

instant-read thermometer should read 130°F or a little more).

Other cuts and meats you can use: thick-cut, bone-in or butterflied pork loin chop.

4 veal loin or rib chops, 6 to 10 ounces each

1 clove garlic, halved

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary leaves or
1 teaspoon dried rosemary

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

① Heat a charcoal or gas grill or the broiler until quite hot and put the rack no more than 4 inches from the heat source. As the fire heats, let the chops reach room temperature if you haven't already done so.

② Rub the chops all over with the split garlic, then with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil. Mix most of the rosemary with some salt and pepper and rub this into the chops well.

③ Grill or broil the chops for 5 minutes. Turn, grill or broil for 4 minutes longer, and check for doneness; the center should be fairly pink. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil, sprinkle with a tiny bit more rosemary, and serve.

Other cuts and meats you can use: pork tenderloin, thinly sliced and pounded; also see above.

1 1/4 to 1 1/2 pounds thinly sliced veal from the leg
(scaloppine)

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, or a little more

All-purpose flour for dredging

Bread crumbs, preferably fresh (page 876), for dredging

2 eggs

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1/2 cup dry white wine

Juice of 1 lemon

Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

1 lemon, quartered, for serving

① Heat the oven to 200°F. The cutlets should be less than 1/4 inch thick; if they're not, pound them gently (I use a flat rolling pin, but you can use the back of a skillet or a wine bottle) between 2 sheets of wax paper.

② Put the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat while you set out the flour and bread crumbs on plates and beat the eggs lightly in a small bowl. Sprinkle the flour liberally with salt and pepper. Set everything near the stove.

③ When the oil is hot (a pinch of flour will sizzle), dredge the cutlets, one at a time, in the flour, then dip in the egg, then dredge in the bread crumbs. Add them to the skillet as they're ready, cooking in batches if necessary to avoid crowding. Cook them over heat high enough to make the oil bubble, adding oil as needed.

④ Turn the cutlets as soon as they're browned, then cook the other side, a total of 5 minutes or less. As each piece of veal is done, transfer it to an ovenproof platter; after a few cutlets, put the platter in the oven and add to it as more cutlets cook.

⑤ When all the veal is finished, pour off the fat. Return the skillet to the stove and add the wine over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until the wine is just about evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add the lemon juice, stir, and pour this sauce (there won't be more than a few

Veal Cutlets, 1950s Style

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F

Back in the 1950s and 1960s, before we "discovered" boneless chicken breasts, slices of veal cut from the leg—called *cutlets*, *scallops*, or *scaloppine*—were the only thin, tender, boneless meat widely available. If you're lucky enough to find good veal cutlets, they are still wonderful when sautéed in olive oil and drenched in freshly squeezed lemon juice. You can make any of the following recipes with thinly pounded chicken or turkey cutlets, just as you can use most boneless chicken breast recipes for veal.

tablespoons) over the veal. Garnish and serve, passing lemon quarters at the table.

Veal Cutlets with Rosemary and Parmesan. Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup bread crumbs, 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary leaves or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary, and some salt and pepper in a bowl. In Step 3, dredge in flour and egg if you like or in just bread crumbs and Parmesan. Proceed with the recipe, skipping Step 5 and serving the veal with lemon quarters as soon as it's cooked.

Veal Parmigiana. Heat the oven to 450°F, then proceed with the recipe through Step 4, but undercook the cutlets slightly (less than 4 minutes per cutlet total cooking time). Put all the cutlets in a baking dish without overlapping (use 2 dishes if necessary). Top each with a spoonful or two of any tomato sauce you like (see pages 502–504) and then with a thin slice of mozzarella. Put the baking dish in the oven and cook just until the cheese melts, 5 to 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

Veal Paprikas

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 25 minutes

F

A liberal dose of paprika is the hallmark of this classic Hungarian dish, but it's balanced by the sour cream. The variations take the same cut in an Italian direction. All ways are good over buttered egg noodles, pasta, or rice, or with bread.

Other cuts and meats you can use: cutlets or chunks of pork, chicken, or turkey.

12 thin slices of veal from the leg (scaloppine), $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 pounds

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 cup sour cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chicken stock (to make your own, see page 157)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
3 tablespoons neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn
1 onion, sliced
1 tablespoon minced garlic (optional)
1 tablespoon hot paprika, plus a sprinkling for garnish
Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish (optional)

① The cutlets should be less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick; if they're not, pound them gently (I use a flat rolling pin, but you can use the back of a skillet or a wine bottle) between 2 sheets of wax paper. Lightly sprinkle salt, pepper, and the lemon juice over the veal. Whisk together the sour cream and stock. Put the flour on a plate.

② Put the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When hot, dip a piece of the veal into the flour and slide into the skillet; repeat until the skillet is full but not crowded. Fry until nicely browned on both sides, just a minute or two on each, adjusting the heat so that the meat browns quickly and nicely but does not burn; remove each piece from the skillet as it finishes cooking.

③ When all the meat is cooked, add the onion to the same skillet and cook until softened, about 5 minutes; add the garlic, if you're using it. Sprinkle with the paprika and return the meat to the pan. When the meat is warm again, pour in the sour cream–stock mixture and heat through, being careful not to let the sauce boil. Garnish and serve.

Veal Scaloppine. Use dry white wine instead of the sour cream. Use a thinly sliced lemon (skin and all) instead of the onion. Use olive oil or butter instead of the neutral oil and omit the paprika. In Step 3, add the lemons to the skillet and stir in the wine and stock. Bring the mixture to a boil until it thickens a bit, then return the veal to the pan, stir gently to coat the pieces with sauce, and heat through. Stir in a couple tablespoons of capers (rinsed) at the last minute and serve.

Saltimbocca. Omit the lemon juice, sour cream, and chicken stock. Skip Step 1. Instead, put 1 or 2 fresh sage leaves on each piece of veal and lay 1 or 2 thin slices of prosciutto over the top; use a mallet or the bottom of a skillet to lightly pound the prosciutto into the veal. You want the meat to be about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick. Proceed with Step 2, transferring the meat to a serving platter in a 200°F oven. In Step 3, omit the onion, garlic, and paprika. Instead, add 1 cup dry white wine or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Marsala to the pan and cook, scraping the bottom while stirring, until the liquid is reduced by one-third. Stir in 2 tablespoons butter. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then drizzle over the top of the veal and serve immediately.

Veal Stew with Tomatoes

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 1 hour



What you see in supermarkets as “veal stew meat” is usually cut from the shoulder or leg, which makes it ideal for braising. The meat becomes tender more quickly than beef, and the possibility for variation is endless. Browning the meat first develops depth of flavor, but it’s not essential; skip that step if you’re pressed for time.

Other cuts and meats you can use: boneless chicken thighs.

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil or butter

1½ to 2 pounds lean veal stew meat, cut into 1- to 1½-inch chunks

1 cup diced onion

1 teaspoon minced garlic

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 cup white wine, meat or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159), or water

2 cups chopped tomato (drained canned is fine)

1 bay leaf

1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme or rosemary leaves or
½ teaspoon dried

1 cup pitted black olives (optional)

① Put half the oil or butter in a large pot with a lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When the oil is hot or the butter is melted, add a few veal chunks at a time, turning them to brown all over and removing the pieces as they brown. Take your time and don’t crowd the chunks or they will not brown properly.

② Lower the heat to medium and add the remaining oil or butter. When the oil is hot or the butter is melted, add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 5 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add some salt and pepper and the liquid, bring to a boil, and cook for 1 minute.

③ Add the tomato, bay leaf, and herb and bring to a steady boil. Return the veal to the pot, turn the heat down to very low, cover, and cook, stirring every now and then, until the veal is tender, 45 minutes or more. Add the olives if you like. Taste and adjust the seasoning, then serve. (At this point, you may let the dish sit for a few hours or cover and refrigerate for up to a day or two before reheating and serving; you may have to add a little water to thin the sauce a bit.)

Veal Stew with Caraway. In Step 2, cook 3 cups thinly sliced onion over medium-low heat until soft, about 15 minutes. Omit the garlic and proceed; in Step 3, replace the tomatoes, bay leaf, and thyme with 1 tablespoon caraway seeds and 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar or other vinegar. Cook as directed, stirring occasionally and adding liquid if needed. Omit the olives.

Veal Stew with Sage. In Step 2, use 3 or 4 chopped carrots and ½ cup chopped shallot, scallion, or onion; cook over medium heat until the vegetables begin to brown, about 5 minutes. Omit the garlic and proceed with the step. In Step 3, replace the tomato, bay leaf, and thyme with 20 fresh sage leaves, 1 teaspoon dried sage, or an equivalent amount of marjoram, rosemary, or savory. Proceed with the recipe. Omit the olives.

Veal Stew with Chinese Flavors. Serve over white rice: In Step 1, use peanut oil if you have it or the extra virgin olive oil. In Step 2, increase the garlic to 1 tablespoon and add 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger at the same time. In Step 3, omit the tomato and herbs, but add 2 tablespoons soy sauce. Proceed with the recipe, adding a little more liquid if needed. While the stew is simmering, cook 8 ounces shiitake (or other) mushrooms, stems removed and caps roughly chopped, and 8 ounces snow peas, trimmed, in 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high heat, just until beginning to brown, 4 to 5 minutes. When the meat is tender, add the cooked vegetables to the stew along with 1 teaspoon each minced garlic and fresh ginger. Cook for 2 minutes, then drizzle 1 tablespoon dark sesame oil over all. (Do not make this variation in advance.)

Osso Buco

Braised Veal Shanks

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 2 hours, largely unattended



Literally “bone with hole.” And it’s the creamy, delicious bone marrow that sets this dish apart, though of course the meat is good too. So be sure to check that each piece of veal shank you buy has a nice soft center (press to check).

Traditionally, osso buco is served following (or with) Risotto alla Milanese (page 466) and gremolata, a strong-flavored condiment that only takes a couple of minutes to make: Mix together 1 tablespoon minced lemon zest, 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves, and $\frac{1}{4}$ to 1 teaspoon minced garlic. Remember that this will not be cooked, so take it easy on the garlic. Sometimes gremolata seems like overkill to me, but it’s worth trying.

4 large veal shanks, 8 to 12 ounces each

All-purpose flour for dredging

4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, a combination of butter and extra virgin olive oil, or all olive oil

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 large onion, chopped

1 celery stalk, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1 or 2 sprigs fresh thyme or $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup dry white wine

1 cup chicken, beef, or vegetable stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159) or water

① Heat the oven to 350°F. For a somewhat more elegant presentation, tie the shanks around their circumference with a piece of kitchen twine to prevent the meat from falling off the bone (you don’t need to do this). Put a large pot with a lid or a Dutch oven over medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes.

② Pat the shanks dry with paper towels and dredge them in the flour. When the pot is hot, add half the butter and/or oil (a pinch of flour will sizzle when it’s ready). Add the shanks and brown them well on both sides, sprinkling them with salt and pepper as they cook. This will take a total of 10 to 15 minutes.

③ Transfer the shanks to a plate and wipe out the pot with a paper towel. Turn the heat down to medium and add the remaining butter or oil. When the oil is hot or the butter is melted, add the vegetables and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes, sprinkling with a little more salt and pepper. Add the wine, turn up the heat a bit, and let it bubble away for a minute.

④ Nestle the shanks among the vegetables and pour the stock over all. Cover and put in the oven. Cook for $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours, turning the shanks 3 or 4 times during the cooking, or until the meat is very tender and just about falling off the bone. (You can cook the meat in advance up to this point; cover and refrigerate before reheating.) Transfer the meat to a warm platter and sprinkle it with gremolata if you like. If the sauce is very soupy, cook it over high heat for a few minutes to reduce it somewhat, then pour it over the meat. Serve hot, with crusty bread and spoons or dull knives for extracting the marrow.

Osso Buco with Tomatoes, Garlic, and Anchovies. In Step 3, before adding the vegetables and thyme, cook 1 tablespoon minced garlic and 3 chopped anchovy fillets in the butter and/or oil, stirring until the anchovies break up. Add the vegetables and wine as directed, then add 2 cups chopped tomato (drained canned is fine). Cook until the mixture becomes saucy. Add only $\frac{1}{2}$ cup stock (the richer the better) and proceed with the recipe.

Sautéed Calf's Liver

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 15 minutes

F

I'm guessing the reason more people don't like liver is that they've only eaten it overcooked. But when liver is cooked medium-rare to medium, it's delicious, rich, dense, and as tender as any meat there is. Serve it with onions or sautéed apples (see the variations). If you want to serve it with bacon, cook the bacon in the pan first and use the bacon fat to cook the liver.

3 or 4 tablespoons butter, extra virgin olive oil, or a combination

1½ pounds calf's liver in $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-thick slices

All-purpose flour for dredging

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup white wine or chicken or beef stock (optional; to make your own, see page 157 or 158)

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice or balsamic or sherry vinegar (optional)

Chopped fresh parsley leaves for garnish

1 lemon, quartered, for serving

1 Heat the oven to 200°F. Put a large skillet over medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of the butter and/or oil. When the butter's foam subsides or the first wisps of smoke arise from the oil, dredge a slice of liver in the flour, shake off the excess, put it in the

skillet, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Repeat until the pan is full but not crowded; you'll probably have to do this in 2 batches.

2 As soon as a slice browns on one side, after about 2 minutes, turn and brown the other side. Add more butter or oil as needed and keep the first slices warm in the oven as you finish the others.

3 When all the liver is done, you can make a quick sauce if you like: Turn the heat under the skillet to high and add the wine. Cook, stirring all the while, until it is reduced by half, about 5 minutes. Add the lemon juice and pour over the liver. Either way, garnish with parsley and serve with the lemon quarters.

Sautéed Liver with Onions. This takes a littler longer; start the onions first: Peel and slice 5 or 6 medium onions; you want at least 4 cups of rings. Put them in a dry skillet over medium-low heat, cover, and cook for about 15 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes, until the onions have given up their liquid and become dry. Uncover, add 3 tablespoons olive oil or butter, and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and tender, another 10 or 15 minutes. Cook the liver as directed and serve, garnished with the onions.

Sautéed Liver with Apples. Here the apples are cooked after the liver, so cook the liver just as you do in the master recipe and leave it in the oven. Don't make a reduction sauce, but add 2 tablespoons butter (much better than oil in this instance) to the skillet and cook 2 to 3 cups of peeled, cored, and sliced Granny Smith or other tart, crisp apples. Stir frequently until tender, about 7 or 8 minutes.

Deviled Liver. In Step 1, use a minimum of flour and spike it with 1 tablespoon dry mustard. In Step 3, stir 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard into the reduction sauce along with the lemon juice or vinegar.

Grilled or Broiled Liver. Heat a charcoal or gas grill or the broiler until moderately hot and put the rack

- ① Heat a griddle or large skillet over medium-low heat while you make the batter.
- ② Beat together the cottage cheese, sour cream, and egg yolks. Combine the dry ingredients. Beat the egg whites until fairly stiff but not dry.
- ③ Stir the flour mixture into the cottage cheese mixture, blending well but not beating. Gently fold in the beaten egg whites; they should remain somewhat distinct in the batter.
- ④ Add about 1 teaspoon of butter or oil to the griddle or skillet and, when the butter melts or the oil is hot, add the batter by the heaping tablespoon, making sure to include some of the egg whites in each spoonful. Cook until lightly browned on the bottom, 3 to 5 minutes, then turn and cook until the second side is brown, a couple minutes more. Serve immediately; these will not hold.

Lemon-Ricotta Pancakes. Substitute ricotta cheese (you can make your own if you have time; see page 824) for the cottage cheese, increase the baking soda to $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon, and add 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice and 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest.

The Basics of Waffles

Waffles, as the variations here demonstrate, can be served not only at breakfast but at lunch or even dinner (topped with a braised dish like Chicken and Garlic Stew, page 652), as well as for dessert (topped with ice cream) and as a snack.

The best waffles are super-crisp outside and creamy inside, so it's crucial to get waffles out of the iron and onto the table quickly. You can keep them warm in the oven for a little while if you absolutely must, but it sort of defeats the whole purpose: Waffles are meant to be eaten immediately.

Raised waffles, made with yeast, are absolutely unbeatable, and—as long as you remember to start a batch the night before—they're as easy as any other kind. Buttermilk waffles are almost as good and more spontaneous. Even the simplest, pancakelike waffles, which tend to be thin and crunchy, have their place. They all share a handful of guidelines:

- The iron must be hot. Almost all have lights that let you know when they're ready for baking.
- The iron should be clean and lightly oiled (even if it's nonstick). Before turning it on, brush or spray the iron lightly with grapeseed or other neutral oil (or use an oil-soaked paper towel). When it's good and hot, open the iron for a minute to let any smoke escape; close it until it reheats a bit, then start cooking.
- If you have an extra 5 minutes, separate the eggs and beat the whites by themselves until stiff, then fold them into the remaining batter right before cooking. You'll be amazed at how much fluffier this makes waffles.

Real Maple Syrup—Making the Grade

The difference between real maple syrup and the colored and flavored sugar syrup sold at most supermarkets is equivalent to the difference between butter and margarine: One is a natural, wholesome product, and the other is a nutritionally useless, not-very-good-tasting, unnatural substitute.

The label will tell you all you need to know: ingredients (it should say "pure maple syrup" and nothing else); where the syrup is from (Canada produces the bulk, while Vermont and other New England states produce some); and the grade.

Maple syrup is made by boiling and evaporating sap; it takes about 40 gallons of sap to make just 1 gallon of syrup, so it's not inexpensive. But as luck would have it, my favorite maple syrup (and, according to many aficionados, the best) is Grade B, which happens to be the cheapest. There are three levels of Grade A—Light Amber, Medium Amber, and Dark Amber—and the flavor gets stronger as the syrups get darker. But unless you prefer a milder flavor, there's no reason to buy anything but Grade B.

- Be patient and don't underbake. After pouring or spreading the batter over the bottom plate, close the top and leave it alone for at least 2 minutes. Gently pull up on the top of the iron. If the lid resists, give it another minute or two. Don't automatically trust the indicator light and don't rely on the myth about waffles being ready when there's no more steam wafting out of the iron. If you want your waffle crisp, you're probably going to have to wait an extra minute or so after the light goes on (or off, depending on your machine), then do the little tug test.
- During those couple of minutes waiting for the waffles to bake, melt the butter and warm the syrup. I use the microwave set on low.
- Serve waffles straight from the iron. If you must, hold them for a few minutes—5, tops—on a rack in a 200°F oven.

Everyday Buttermilk Waffles

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 10 minutes, plus time to bake

F V

If you've got buttermilk, sour cream, or yogurt, these are the most tender, spontaneous waffles you can make. Plain milk works too; see the first variation.

2 cups all-purpose flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons sugar
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking soda
 $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups buttermilk or $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups sour cream or yogurt thinned with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk
 2 eggs, separated
 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, melted and cooled
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
 Neutral oil, like grapeseed or corn, for brushing the iron

❶ Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl. In another bowl, whisk together the buttermilk and egg yolks. Stir in the butter and the vanilla if you're using it.

❷ Brush the waffle iron lightly with oil and heat it. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry. Beat the egg whites with a whisk or electric mixer until they hold soft peaks. Fold them gently into the batter.

❸ Spread enough batter onto the waffle iron to barely cover it; bake until the waffle is done, 3 to 5 minutes, depending on your iron. Serve immediately or keep warm for a few minutes on an ovenproof plate in a 200°F oven.

The Quickest, Easiest Waffles. Less air and more crisp: Instead of the baking soda, use 3 teaspoons baking powder. Use $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups milk instead of the buttermilk, sour cream, or yogurt. Don't bother to separate the eggs; just whisk them in whole with the milk in Step 1.

Whole Grain Waffles. This formula works for both the main recipe and the preceding variation: Substitute up to 1 cup whole wheat or other whole grain flour, cornmeal, or rolled oats (or a combination) for 1 cup of the white flour.

12 Variations on Any Waffle Batter

You can make these changes to either of the two waffle recipes.

- 1 Up to 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon or any curry powder (to make your own, see pages 66–67)
- 2 or 3 strips of bacon laid over the batter after it's been spread on the waffle iron—the bacon will cook along with the waffles, and cooking time may be a minute or two longer
- 3 Up to 1 cup chopped (not minced) nuts, any Granola (page 821), or shredded sweetened or unsweetened coconut
- 4 About 2 teaspoons minced or grated orange or lemon zest
- 5 About 1 cup grated mild cheese, like Emmental (Swiss), cheddar, or Jack, or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 6 Whole wheat, rye, or other flour, substituted for up to half of the white flour
- 7 Molasses, substituted for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk (excellent with cornmeal)
- 8 Up to 2 teaspoons freshly minced or ground ginger

9. Up to 1/2 cup coarsely chopped dried fruit, like apricots, cherries, cranberries, or raisins
10. Up to 1 cup fresh fruit like blueberries, raspberries, or other fruit cut into 1/4- to 1/2-inch dice
11. Up to 1 cup cooked grains, like any rice, millet, wheat or rye berries, couscous, barley, quinoa, or wild rice
12. Up to 1 cup puréed cooked potatoes, sweet potatoes, or winter squash, the last two especially nice with a sprinkling of warm spices like ground cinnamon, nutmeg, or cloves

Overnight Waffles

MAKES: 4 to 6 servings

TIME: 8 hours or more, largely unattended



Eat these traditionally with butter and syrup for breakfast or use them as a “bread” to serve with virtually any meal. With a distinctive yeasty flavor and a fluffy but chewy texture, they’re that good.

1/2 teaspoon instant yeast
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 2 cups milk
 8 tablespoons (1 stick) butter, melted and cooled
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)
 Neutral oil, like grapeseed corn, for brushing the iron
 2 eggs

➊ The night before you want to serve the waffles, combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Stir in the milk, then the butter and the vanilla if you’re using it. The mixture will be creamy and loose. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside overnight at room temperature. (Of course you can do this in the morning if you want waffles for supper.)

➋ To start baking, brush the waffle iron lightly with oil and heat it. Separate the eggs and stir the yolks into the batter. Beat the whites until they hold soft peaks. Fold them gently into the batter.

➌ Spread enough batter onto the waffle iron to barely cover it; bake until the waffle is done, usually 3 to 5 minutes, depending on your iron. Serve immediately or keep warm for a few minutes on an ovenproof plate in a 200°F oven.

The Basics of Crêpes and Blintzes

Crêpes and blintzes are thin pancakes that can be filled with either sweet or savory fillings. Crêpes are French, have less filling, and are more about dough with flavoring than blintzes (sort of Eastern European cannelloni). In either case, making a crêpe or blintz sweet or savory is as simple as adding sugar, using a different flour, and/or using a sweet or savory filling. Savory crêpes are often made with buckwheat flour and folded; sweet ones rely on white flour and are rolled (though white ones can be filled with savory ingredients too, and the folding/rolling option is your call).

Though the sheer quantity makes them somewhat time-consuming, making crêpes and blintzes is easy: Use a nonstick or well-seasoned pan; flip by lifting the edges with a spatula and using your fingers to pull it up off the pan, then flip it to the other side. It takes just one or two tries (the first crêpes almost never work—even for professionals) and there’s plenty of batter to make up for the loss.

When filling, remember that crêpes are more delicate and intended to have little filling so you can taste the crêpe. Blintzes are sturdier and can hold more filling, but still need to have space to fold nicely to make sealed packages for sautéing or baking. See the recipes and illustrations on the following pages for the specifics of rolling and folding.

FOLDING AND FILLING A CRÊPE



Spoon some filling across the lower third of the crêpe.



Lift the bottom edge and roll it up.



A filled crêpe.

Crêpes, Sweet or Savory

MAKES: 12 to 16 crêpes (4 to 8 servings)

TIME: 40 minutes

M V

Crêpes are perfect for breakfast, brunch, lunch, a light supper, or dessert. The batter can be made a day ahead, and even the crêpes can be made ahead, refrigerated, and then wrapped in foil and reheated in a 325°F oven.

Change the flavor of the crêpe itself by substituting cornmeal, whole wheat, rye, or rice flour—all of which lend a slightly different flavor—for half of the flour. Adding a splash of flavored brandy, amaretto, Kirsch, or rose water is a nice addition to sweet crêpe batter too.

1 cup all-purpose flour

Pinch salt

1 tablespoon sugar (optional)

1½ cups milk, plus more if needed

2 eggs

2 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled, plus
unmelted butter for cooking

1 Whisk together all the ingredients except the unmelted butter until smooth; you can do this in a blender if you like. If the mixture isn't quite pourable, add a little more milk. If time allows, let the batter rest in the refrigerator for at least an hour and up to 24 hours.

2 Heat the oven to 200°F. Put a nonstick or well-seasoned 8- or 10-inch skillet over medium heat and wait a couple of minutes; add a small pat of butter. Stir the batter with a large spoon or ladle; add a couple tablespoons of the batter to the skillet. Swirl it around so that it forms a thin layer on the bottom of the pan, then pour the excess batter back into that which remains.

3 When the top of the crêpe is dry, after about a minute, turn and cook the other side for 15 to 30 seconds. (The crêpe should brown only very slightly and not become at all crisp.) Bear in mind that the first crêpe almost never works, even for professionals, so discard it if necessary; there is plenty of batter.

4 Repeat the process, adding butter to the skillet and adjusting the heat as needed, until all the batter is used up. Stack the crêpes on a plate in the oven and fill and fold them all at once. Or better still, fill and fold each crêpe while it's still in the pan and serve as they're ready; if you want your filling warmed, keep the pan over low heat for a few minutes.

5 To fill and roll or fold crêpes: Put the filling in the center of the bottom third and start rolling at the end with the filling (see the illustrations on page 817); or fold the bottom third over the filling, fold in the sides, then fold the crêpe from the bottom up. Slide it onto a plate and serve.

Lighter, Fluffier Crêpes. Separate the eggs. Add the yolks to the batter as directed, then beat the whites until stiff but not dry; gently fold them into the batter. Cook the crêpes as directed; as they finish, don't stack, but sprinkle each with about 1 teaspoon sugar (or to taste) and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon. Run under a heated broiler until the sugar melts, about 1 minute. Serve immediately, with butter or freshly squeezed lemon juice.

Buckwheat Crêpes. Resting this batter for an hour does make a difference, but if you're in a real hurry, reduce or skip this step: Substitute buckwheat flour for the white flour and add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white flour. Reduce the milk to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and add 1 cup water. Let the batter rest for at least an hour before cooking the crêpes.

Almond Crêpes. Substitute almond or other nut flour for half the white flour and almond milk for the regular milk, add 2 tablespoons amaretto, if you like, and use the sugar.

Chocolate Crêpes. Perfect for bananas quickly cooked with some butter and brown sugar: Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cocoa powder and use the sugar.

6 Fillings for Sweet Crêpes

As simple as sugar and lemon juice or any of these:

1. Any jam, jelly, marmalade, or macerated fruit (see page 379)

2. Nutella, any nut butter, or peanut butter
3. Any peeled, seeded (or pitted or cored) fresh fruit, cooked briefly with sugar to taste, some butter if you like, and a little rum or cinnamon (see Sautéed Apples, page 383)
4. Crème fraîche, sour cream, or yogurt (sweetened, if you like)
5. Any sweet Compound Butter (page 32) or Brown Butter (page 56), sprinkled with cinnamon, cardamom, and/or cloves
6. Creamy Caramel Sauce (page 922); not too much

6 Fillings for Savory Crêpes

Cheese and ham and cheese are the most common fillings for savory crêpes, but of course there are other possibilities:

1. Any grated or thinly sliced cheese, like Gruyère, Brie, goat, mozzarella, cheddar, or fresh cheese
2. Cooked, drained, and chopped vegetables, reheated in butter or oil per the directions on page 240 (don't bother to chop vegetables whose shape is naturally suited to crêpes, like asparagus spears)
3. Thin slice of ham and grated Gruyère or other cheese if you like
4. Any thick stew of vegetables, meat, chicken, or seafood
5. Baked Mushroom Custard (page 810), baked and then spooned into the crêpe
6. Cooked beans or lentils

Cheese Blintzes

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: About 1 hour



Blintzes are eggier and sturdier than crêpes, and because they are folded into little packages they can be filled more aggressively, with cottage cheese, Mashed Potatoes (page 339), or fruit. They're then sautéed or baked with butter.

FILLING AND FOLDING BLINTZES

1



2



3



4



(STEP 1) Spoon some filling about a third of the way from the bottom of the blintz. (STEP 2) Fold the bottom third over the filling.

(STEP 3) Fold in the sides. (STEP 4) Roll from the bottom up.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
Salt
1 cup milk
3 eggs
2 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled, plus
unmelted butter for cooking, or neutral oil, like
grapeseed or corn
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cottage cheese, drained if very moist
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sour cream or thick yogurt
1 tablespoon sugar, or to taste
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, or to taste

➊ Whisk together the flour, a pinch of salt, and the milk until smooth; you can do this in a blender if you

like. Beat in the eggs and stir in the cooled melted butter or the oil. If time allows, let rest in the refrigerator for at least an hour and up to 24 hours and beat again.

➋ Put a nonstick or well-seasoned 8- or 10-inch skillet over medium heat and wait a couple minutes; add a small pat of butter. Stir the batter with a large spoon or ladle; add a couple tablespoons of the batter to the skillet. Swirl it around so that it forms a thin layer, then pour the excess back into the batter that remains.

➌ When the top of the blintz is dry, after about a minute, turn and cook the other side for 15 to 30 seconds. (The blintz should brown only very slightly and not become at all crisp.) Bear in mind that the first blintz almost never works, even for professionals, so discard it if necessary; there is plenty of batter. Stack the finished

blintzes on a plate; you will usually reheat them before serving.

④ Combine the cottage cheese, sour cream, another pinch of salt, the sugar, and the cinnamon. Put about 2 tablespoons of the filling in the center of the blintz about a third of the way from the bottom. Fold the bottom third over the filling, then fold in the sides, then roll from the bottom up to create a package. When they are all done, you have three choices:

To bake or broil: Arrange them on a greased (preferably buttered) ovenproof platter or baking dish. Dot with butter and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon if you like. Bake in a 400°F oven for 10 minutes or put the dish under the broiler and watch carefully until the sugar caramelizes, about 5 minutes. Serve immediately.

To sauté: Put a tablespoon or so of butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat. When the butter melts, put several at a time into the pan and cook until brown and crisp on both sides, a total of about 5 minutes.

Mashed Potato Blintzes. Substitute well-seasoned

Mashed Potatoes (page 339) or half mashed potatoes and half ground meat for the cheese filling. Proceed with the recipe, cooking longer if you added meat.

Mushroom Blintzes. Substitute Sautéed Mushrooms (page 313) for the cheese filling. Before folding, sprinkle each with a tablespoon or two of grated Parmesan or Gruyère cheese.

Fruit Blintzes. Fabulous with a dollop of crème fraîche or sour cream: Substitute any peeled, seeded (or pitted or cored) fresh fruit—apples, pears, cherries, berries, or bananas to name a few—cooked briefly with sugar to taste, some butter if you like, and a little rum or ground cinnamon for the cheese filling.

The Basics of Breakfast Cereals

Cooked cereals remain breakfast staples, as they should. Whole or partially milled grains are filling, nutritious, and flavorful—although they are almost always improved by

the addition of butter and/or sweetener.

Buy your grains, if possible, in bulk at a natural food store, where they are liable to be fresher (and certainly cheaper) than the packaged stuff sold at the supermarket. And see page 451 for methods of cooking other grains, which can be readily adapted as breakfast cereals by the mere addition of sweetener.

Granola, a relatively recent addition to the American larder, is a mixture of barely cooked grains laced with nuts and sweeteners. It's easy to make at home and far better than most versions you can buy in stores.

Oatmeal or Other Creamy Breakfast Cereal

MAKES: 2 servings

TIME: 15 minutes

F V

You can cook any kind of rolled or flaked grain this way; try wheat, rye, quinoa, millet, kamut, or brown rice flakes. And please don't bother with quick-cooking or instant oats; the old-fashioned style takes barely 5 minutes more, and the flavor and texture are far better.

This recipe gives you a fairly creamy oatmeal; if you prefer it thicker, use a bit less water.

Dash salt

1 cup rolled oats or other rolled or flaked grain

Butter to taste (optional)

Salt, sweetener (like maple syrup, sugar, or honey), and/or milk or cream as desired

① Combine $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups water, the salt, and the oats in a small saucepan over high heat. When the water boils, turn the heat down to low and cook, stirring, until the water is just absorbed, about 5 minutes. Add butter if desired, cover the pan, and turn off the heat.

② Five minutes later, uncover the pan and stir. Add other ingredients as desired and serve.

10 Ideas for Oatmeal, Grits, and Other Cooked Grains

When feeding a crew, provide an array of garnishes for your guests to dress their own hot cereals.

1. Ground spices, like cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, all-spice, cardamom, or anise
2. Chopped dried fruit
3. Chopped nuts and/or seeds
4. Fresh fruit, chopped or sliced if necessary: apples, bananas, strawberries, apricots, peaches, blueberries, cherries, or raspberries
5. Jam, jelly, marmalade, preserves, or macerated fruit (page 379)
6. Shredded coconut (great when toasted; see page 389)
7. Granola (page 821)
8. Grated cheese
9. Chopped Hard-Boiled Egg (page 791)
10. Poached Egg (page 793; or simply crack an egg into the simmering mixture during the last 3 to 5 minutes of cooking)

Grits

MAKES: 2 to 4 servings

TIME: 20 minutes

F V

What's the difference between grits, cornmeal mush, and polenta? Not much in terms of how you cook them. But grits are made from ground dried hominy (see page 487), while cornmeal—the key ingredient in Polenta (page 485)—is ground from simply dried corn. The flavor difference is subtle. But grits are a southern favorite, mostly served at breakfast, with butter, or topped with Roasted Shrimp with Herb Sauce (page 577).

2½ cups water or half milk and half water

1 cup grits, preferably stone-ground

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon butter, or more to taste

① Put the water or milk and water in a small saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Turn the heat down to low and slowly stir or whisk in the grits. Beat with a wire whisk to eliminate lumps.

② Turn the heat down to a minimum and cover the saucepan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until all the water is absorbed and the grits are creamy, 10 to 15 minutes. If the mixture becomes too thick, simply whisk in a bit more water. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, stir in some butter, and serve.

Scrapple. Cook a double recipe of grits as directed (you can use cornmeal if you like). When the grits are just about done, stir in 1 to 2 cups chopped cooked bacon or sausage meat, along with 1 tablespoon minced fresh sage or 1 teaspoon dried sage. Continue to cook until the mixture is thick. Pack it into a greased small loaf pan, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight. At breakfast time, cut into ½-inch-thick slices and panfry the slices in butter, oil, or bacon fat over medium heat until browned and crisp on both sides, about 3 minutes per side.

Granola

MAKES: About 8 cups

TIME: 30 minutes

F M V

The basic technique for making granola is always the same; it's what you put in it that makes it special. Think of this recipe as a guideline for a basic granola and then customize it in any way you like; there are lots of ideas in these pages.

Rolled oats are the most common grain, but you can use lots of other rolled and flaked grains, like wheat, rye, quinoa, millet, kamut, or brown rice flakes. Increase or decrease the other ingredients as you like and toss in other ingredients like nut butters, vanilla, or citrus zest. See the variations for some ideas.

6 cups rolled oats (not quick-cooking or instant)
2 cups mixed nuts and seeds: a combination of sunflower seeds, chopped walnuts, pecans, almonds, cashews, sesame seeds, etc.
1 cup shredded coconut (optional)
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, or to taste
Dash salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup honey or maple syrup, or to taste
1 cup raisins or chopped dried fruit

① Heat the oven to 350°F. In a bowl, combine the oats, nuts and seeds, the coconut if you're using it, cinnamon, salt, and sweetener. Spread evenly on a rimmed baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes or a little longer, stirring occasionally. The mixture should brown evenly; the browner it gets without burning, the crunchier the granola will be.

② Remove the pan from the oven and add the raisins. Cool on a rack, stirring once in a while until the granola reaches room temperature. Transfer to a sealed container and store in the refrigerator; it will keep indefinitely.

Peanut Butter Granola. Any nut butter or tahini will work nicely here; toss in some chocolate chips if you like very sweet granola: Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup peanut butter and mix with the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey or maple syrup until blended. Proceed with the recipe; stir the granola every few minutes while it's baking to prevent the peanut butter from burning.

Spiced Granola. Add another teaspoon ground cinnamon, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon each ground anise and cardamom, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon each freshly grated nutmeg and ground cloves, and 2 teaspoons vanilla extract.

Ginger-Molasses Granola. Crumbled gingersnaps (see page 897) are a great addition to this: Substitute molasses for half of the sweetener and add a 1- to 2-inch piece fresh ginger, grated into the sweetener. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped crystallized ginger along with the raisins.

5 Important Breakfast Dishes Found Elsewhere

For some, breakfast is not complete without potatoes and sausage.

1. For fruit salad, see page 190; for macerated fruit, see page 379.
2. For home-fried potatoes, I suggest you make Crisp Panfried Potatoes (page 341), substituting butter for the olive oil if you like.
3. For hash browns, try Potato Rösti (page 345). Cook it slowly so the inside becomes tender before the outside burns.
4. For basic breakfast sausage, see page 762.
5. To cook bacon, see page 766.

The Basics of Dairy

Most dairy products should be refrigerated in their original (or clean glass) containers, ideally at 40°F or a little less. (Many cheeses can be held at room temperature for hours or even days.) Pour off what you need, then immediately return the rest to the fridge; never put unused milk or cream back in the carton or jug, or it'll cause the whole batch to spoil faster. Store cheese and butter tightly wrapped in the refrigerator. You can freeze unsalted butter for a month or so without noticeably affecting its flavor (and salted butter somewhat longer), but don't freeze milk or cream.

Milk—Whole (3.25 percent fat), Reduced-Fat (2 percent fat), Low-Fat (1 percent fat), Fat-Free, Skim, or Nonfat (0 percent fat): Unless otherwise noted, you can use any kind of reduced-fat (not fat-free) or whole milk in the recipes in this book, though I usually cook with whole milk.

Buttermilk: This tangy, thick, and sometimes lumpy liquid isn't at all what it used to be, which was the liquid that remained after churning butter. Now it's made from milk of any fat content, cultured with lactic acid—pro-

ducing bacteria, so it's more like thin yogurt than anything else. Use it for baking, flavoring mashed potatoes, or making cold sauces, dips, and dressings.

For a quick substitute, you can "sour" regular milk: Let 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of milk come to room temperature (or microwave it for 30 seconds or so). Stir in 2 tablespoons white vinegar and let the mixture sit until clabbered—thick and lumpy—about 10 minutes (you'll know). Use as a direct substitute for buttermilk.

Cream: You'll see all sorts of confusing labels for cream, but the kind you want is heavy—not whipping—cream, without any additives or emulsifiers, and not ultrapasteurized (this takes longer to whip and has a distinctive, definitely cooked, flavor). Generally 1 cup of cream whips up to about 2 cups. The fat content of whipping cream ranges from 30 percent to 36 percent; heavy cream is 36 percent fat or more.

Half-and-Half: Half milk, half cream, with a fat content that can range anywhere from 10.5 percent to 18 percent. It's nice in soups or sauces when you don't need quite the richness of heavy cream.

Sour Cream: Cream cultured with lactic acid bacteria to make it thick and produce its characteristic tangy flavor. Sour cream can be tricky to cook with because it can curdle—though not so quickly as yogurt—so add it to other ingredients over very low heat. If you want to use reduced-fat sour creams, find one without a lot of added ingredients and stabilizers.

Crème Fraîche: Like sour cream, this is thick, rich, tangy, and almost decadent. But it can be hard to find and expensive. Fortunately, you can make your own: Put a cup of cream in a small glass bowl and stir in 2 tablespoons of buttermilk or yogurt. Let the mixture sit at room temperature until thickened, anywhere from 12 to 24 hours. Cover tightly, refrigerate, and use within a week or so.

Yogurt: Cultured milk, made with bacteria that produces its unique flavor and texture. Look for "live, active cultures"—or similar terminology—on the label and avoid any with gelatins, gums, or stabilizers. Yogurt is available in whole, low-fat, and nonfat versions, as well as all sorts of crazy flavors. But you can flavor yogurt your-

self (see page 824); you can also make it yourself (see below). It can be warmed gently but not super-heated or it will curdle. In recipes, whole-milk yogurt always gives the richest results.

Butter: Butter is fat and water; the supermarket standard is 80 percent, which means 20 percent is water; higher-fat butter tends to be higher quality and better tasting. Always buy unsalted butter, also called *sweet butter*; store extra sticks in the freezer, not the fridge. Never use whipped butter in recipes, because its volume isn't the same as stick butter.

UHT Milk: Short for *ultra-high-temperature milk*, this is the nonrefrigerated stuff you see in aseptic (sterilized and vacuum-sealed) boxes on supermarket shelves. UHT milk keeps for 3 months after packaging and is always dated. It's great to have some in the pantry for emergencies.

Yogurt

MAKES: 1 quart

TIME: Overnight or longer, largely unattended

Though many excellent-quality yogurts are sold in stores, there is nothing quite like the slightly sweet flavor of homemade. And though yogurt is a little trickier to make than fresh cheese (see page 824)—mostly because the temperature must be controlled for a long time while it processes—it's easy enough to get the hang of. Whole milk makes the richest yogurt, though you can use any kind of milk you like.

1 quart milk, preferably whole

1/2 cup natural yogurt ("with active cultures"), ideally at room temperature

1 Put the milk in a small to medium saucepan and bring it just to a boil; turn off the heat and cool to 110–115°F (use an instant-read thermometer).

2 Whisk the milk and yogurt together. Put in a yogurt maker, a prewarmed thermos, or a heated bowl

wrapped in a towel or blanket and set in a warm place. The idea is to keep the mixture at about 100°F.

③ Do not disturb the mixture at all for at least 6 hours. Then carefully check by tilting the container to see whether the milk has become yogurt. If not, leave it alone for another 6 hours. When the yogurt is done, refrigerate and use within 1 week.

Yogurt Cheese. You can make this with store-bought yogurt too. There are even filters available specifically for this purpose: Instead of refrigerating the yogurt, put it in a jelly bag or several layers of cheesecloth and suspend it over the sink or a large bowl. Let drain for at least 6 hours, preferably longer, until the yogurt has a cream cheese-like consistency. Use exactly as you would cream cheese.

7 Ideas for Flavoring Plain Yogurt

Some of these—honey, maple syrup, or jam, for example—can be added to a whole batch. Some can be used in combination. Some are best used to make raitas and other sauces (see page 24). Start by adding just a little, then adjust to taste.

1. Honey
2. Maple syrup
3. Vanilla extract, with or without sugar
4. Chopped nuts
5. Preserves or jam
6. Chutneys (see pages 36–38)
7. Spice blends (see pages 65–69)

The Basics of Making Fresh Cheese

Yes, you can make cheese, and I strongly urge you to give it a try. It's almost as easy as boiling milk, and everything you need is available at the supermarket. The best thing is, this recipe requires virtually no practice; your very first batch will be better than anything you can buy.

Really.

All cheese begins by separating curds (milk solids) and whey (watery liquid). Most commercially made cheeses rely on rennet, an enzyme from the stomach of cows, to curdle milk, but there are easier ways for the home cook; buttermilk, which acts as a mild-tasting and effective coagulant, is the best. The result is tender cheese with a pure milky flavor, akin to the Indian staple paneer; true queso fresco, the fresh white cheese common in Mexico; the fromage blanc of France; or a dozen other products made worldwide. To use fresh cheese, just cut it into slices or cubes or gently crumble it by hand or with two forks (it's too soft to grate). Fresh cheese will keep for 3 or 4 days in the fridge, though you may freeze it (tightly wrapped) for up to 3 months.

Fresh Cheese, the Easy Way

MAKES: 6 to 8 servings

TIME: 2 hours, largely unattended

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The recipe—and all the variations except for the cream cheese—work with 1 percent, 2 percent, or whole milk, which of course makes the richest cheeses. If you live near a farm and can find raw whole milk, you'll get the best flavor.

$\frac{1}{2}$ gallon milk
1 quart buttermilk
Salt (optional)

① Put the milk in a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally to keep it from scorching, until the milk bubbles up the sides of the pot, about 10 minutes.

② Line a strainer with a triple layer of cheesecloth or a piece of undyed cotton muslin. Have a long piece of twine ready.

③ Add the buttermilk to the boiling milk all at once and stir constantly until the mixture separates into curds

and whey; this will take just a minute or so. It will look like cooked egg whites suspended in a slightly thick yellowish liquid. Remove from the heat and stir in a large pinch of salt if you like.

④ Carefully pour the mixture through the cloth and strainer so that the curds collect in the bottom and the whey drains off. Gather up the corners of the cloth and twist the top to start shaping the curds into a ball. Run the bundle under cold water until you can handle it. Keep twisting and squeezing out the whey until the bundle feels firm and dry. Don't worry about handling it roughly; it can take it.

⑤ Tie the string around the top to hold it tight, then tie the string around the handle of a long spoon or a stick to suspend the cheese back over the pot to drain. Let it rest, undisturbed, until cool and set, about 90 minutes. Remove the cloth and serve immediately or wrap in plastic and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Or freeze the cheese for up to 3 months.

Fresh Cottage Cheese. Incredible stuff; drain as dry or as moist as you like: Follow the recipe through Step 3. In Step 4, after you pour the curds and whey through the cheesecloth, simply leave the curds loose in the strainer until they've drained the amount of moisture you desire, anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. Then scoop the curds into a container and store in the refrigerator.

Fresh Ricotta. Also unbelievable, especially with top-quality milk: Reduce the amount of buttermilk to 1 pint (2 cups) and proceed with the recipe through Step 3. The mixture will look like thickened buttermilk. In Step 4, after you pour it through the cheesecloth, simply leave the ricotta in the strainer until it has reached the texture you like, anywhere from 30 to 60 minutes. Then scoop the ricotta into a container and store in the refrigerator.

Fresh Cream Cheese. So rich, you won't believe it: Use 1 quart of heavy cream instead of the milk and reduce the buttermilk to 1 pint.

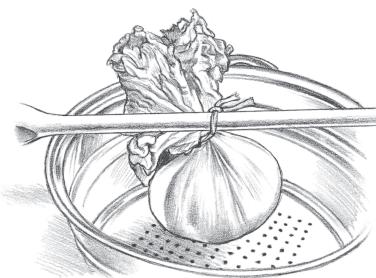
FINISHING FRESH CHEESE



Pour the coagulated, lumpy mixture into a cheesecloth-lined strainer.



Twist and squeeze out excess moisture.



Hang from a wooden spoon or other implement over the pot, the sink, or a colander or strainer set over a bowl.