

EPISODES 901-914



EPISODE 901 **The Best Blueberry Pie**

Foolproof Pie Dough
Blueberry Pie



EPISODE 902 **French Classics, Reimagined**

French Chicken in a Pot
French Onion Soup



EPISODE 903 **Dinner with a Latin Accent**

Latino-Style Chicken and Rice
(Arroz con Pollo)
Sizzling Garlic Shrimp



EPISODE 904 **The Crunchiest Pork Chops Ever**

Crunchy Baked Pork Chops
Simple Applesauce



EPISODE 905 **Perfecting Pasta Sauces**

Simple Italian-Style Meat Sauce
Pasta with Creamy Tomato Sauce



EPISODE 906 **Easy Apple Desserts**

Skillet Apple Pie
Applesauce Snack Cake



EPISODE 907 **One Great Thanksgiving**

Herbed Roast Turkey
Fluffy Mashed Potatoes



EPISODE 908 **Soups of the Day**

Beef and Vegetable Soup
Hearty Tuscan Bean Stew



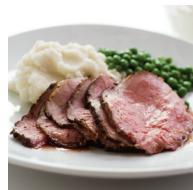
EPISODE 909 **Bringing Home Italian Favorites**

Chicken Saltimbocca
Tiramisù



EPISODE 910 **Everyone's Favorite Cake**

Fluffy Yellow Layer Cake
with Chocolate Frosting



EPISODE 911 **Resurrecting the Roast Beef Dinner**

Inexpensive Roast Beef
Mashed Potatoes and Root Vegetables



EPISODE 912 **South-of-the-Border Supper**

Enchiladas Verdes
Steak Tacos



EPISODE 913 **Lunchtime Specials**

Pizza Bianca
Creamless Creamy Tomato Soup



EPISODE 914 **Fish Made Easy**

Poached Salmon with Herb
and Caper Vinaigrette
Crunchy Oven-Baked Fish

EPISODES 915-926



EPISODE 915
A Grand, Sweet Finale

Grand Marnier Soufflé
Individual Make-Ahead Chocolate Soufflés



EPISODE 916
Holiday Ham and Biscuits

Glazed Spiral-Sliced Ham
Best Drop Biscuits



EPISODE 917
Let's Do Chinese

Pork Stir-Fry with Noodles (Lo Mein)
Teriyaki Stir-Fried Beef with Green Beans and Shiitakes



EPISODE 918
Pork on the Grill

Grilled Pork Loin with Apple-Cranberry Filling
Sautéed Spinach with Almonds and Golden Raisins



EPISODE 919
Old-Fashioned Snack Cakes

Oatmeal Cake with Broiled Icing
Spice Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting



EPISODE 920
Backyard Steak and Potatoes

Grilled Marinated Flank Steak
Grilled Potatoes with Garlic and Rosemary



EPISODE 921
Grilled Rack of Lamb Dinner

Grilled Rack of Lamb
Summer Vegetable Gratin



EPISODE 922
Four-Star Stuffed Chicken Breasts

Stuffed Chicken Breasts
Green Beans Amandine



EPISODE 923
Breadmaking, Simplified

Almost No-Knead Bread
Skillet Soda Bread



EPISODE 924
Weeknight Summer Supper

Charcoal-Grilled Bone-In Chicken Breasts
Greek Cherry Tomato Salad



EPISODE 925
French Country Cooking

Daube Provençal
Meringue Cookies



EPISODE 926
Puddings—from Simple to Spectacular

Classic Crème Caramel
Stovetop Rice Pudding

FOOLPROOF PIE DOUGH

MAKES ENOUGH FOR ONE 9-INCH DOUBLE-CRUST PIE

Vodka is essential to the texture of the crust and imparts no flavor—do not substitute. This dough will be moister and more supple than most standard pie doughs and will require more flour to roll out (up to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup).

2½ cups (12½ ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons sugar
12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold vegetable shortening, cut into 4 pieces
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold vodka
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold water

1. Pulse 1½ cups of the flour, salt, and sugar in a food processor until combined, about two 1-second pulses. Add the butter and shortening and process until a homogeneous dough just starts to collect in uneven clumps, about 15 seconds (the dough will resemble cottage cheese curds and there should be no uncoated flour). Scrape down the bowl with a rubber spatula and redistribute the dough evenly around the processor blade. Add the remaining 1 cup flour and pulse until the mixture is evenly distributed around the bowl and the mass of dough has been broken up, 4 to 6 quick pulses. Empty the mixture into a medium bowl.

2. Sprinkle the vodka and water over the mixture. With a rubber spatula, use a folding motion to mix, pressing down on the dough until the dough is slightly tacky and sticks together. Divide the dough into two even balls and flatten each into a 4-inch disk. Wrap each in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 45 minutes or up to 2 days.

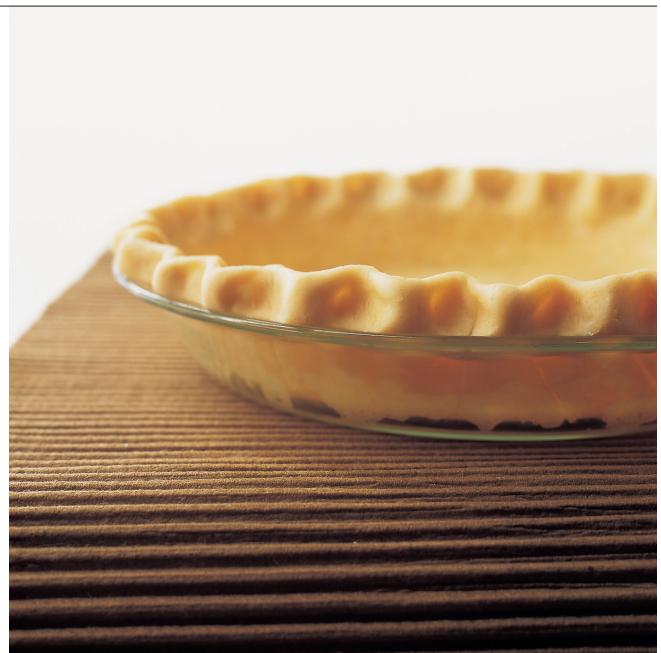


PHOTO CREDIT: CARL TREMBLAY

BLUEBERRY PIE

MAKES ONE 9-INCH PIE

This recipe was developed using fresh blueberries, but unthawed frozen blueberries (our favorite brands are Wyman's and Cascadian Farm) will work as well. In step 2, cook half the frozen berries over medium-high heat, without mashing, until reduced to 1½ cups, 12 to 15 minutes. Grind the tapioca to a powder in a spice grinder or mini food processor. If using pearl tapioca, reduce the amount to 5 teaspoons.

- 1 recipe Foolproof Pie Dough**
- 6 cups (about 30 ounces) fresh blueberries (see note)**
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and grated on large holes of box grater**
- 2 teaspoons grated zest and 2 teaspoons juice from 1 lemon**
- ¾ cup (5½ ounces) sugar**
- 2 tablespoons instant tapioca, ground (see note)**
- Pinch salt**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into ¼-inch pieces**
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten with 1 teaspoon water**

1. Roll out one of the dough disks on a generously floured (up to ¼ cup) work surface to a 12-inch circle, about ½ inch thick. Roll the dough loosely around the rolling pin and unroll into a 9-inch pie plate, leaving at least a 1-inch overhang on each side. Working around the circumference, ease the dough into the plate by gently lifting the edge of the dough with one hand while pressing into the plate bottom with the other hand. Leave the dough that overhangs the plate in place; refrigerate while preparing the filling until the dough is firm, about 30 minutes.



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2. Adjust an oven rack to the lowest position, place a rimmed baking sheet on the oven rack, and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Place 3 cups of the berries in a medium saucepan and set over medium heat. Using a potato masher, mash the berries several times to release the juices. Continue to cook, stirring frequently and mashing occasionally, until about half of the berries have broken down and the mixture is thickened and reduced to 1½ cups, about 8 minutes. Let cool slightly.

3. Place the grated apple in a clean kitchen towel and wring dry. Transfer the apple to a large bowl. Add the cooked berries, remaining 3 cups uncooked berries, the lemon zest, lemon juice, sugar, tapioca, and salt; toss to combine. Transfer the mixture to the dough-lined pie plate and scatter the butter pieces over the filling.

4. Roll out the second disk of dough on a generously floured (up to ¼ cup) work surface to an 11-inch circle, about ½ inch thick. Using a 1¼-inch round biscuit cutter, cut a round from the center of the dough. Cut another 6 rounds from the dough, 1½ inches from the edge of the center hole and equally spaced around the center hole. Roll the dough loosely around the rolling pin and unroll over the pie, leaving at least a ½-inch overhang on each side.

5. Using kitchen shears, trim the bottom layer of the overhanging dough, leaving a ½-inch overhang. Fold the dough under itself so that the edge of the fold is flush with the outer rim of the pie plate. Flute the edges using your thumb and forefinger or press with the tines of a fork to seal. Brush the top and edges of the pie with the egg mixture. If the dough is very soft, chill in the freezer for 10 minutes.

6. Place the pie on the heated baking sheet and bake 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350 degrees and continue to bake until the juices bubble and the crust is deep golden brown, 30 to 40 minutes longer. Transfer the pie to a wire rack; cool to room temperature, at least 4 hours. Cut into wedges and serve.

FRENCH CHICKEN IN A POT

SERVES 4

The cooking times in the recipe are for a 4½- to 5-pound bird. A 3½- to 4½-pound chicken will take about an hour to cook, and a 5- to 6-pound bird will take close to 2 hours. We developed this recipe to work with a 5- to 8-quart Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid. If using a 5-quart pot, do not cook a chicken larger than 5 pounds. If using a kosher chicken, reduce the amount of kosher salt to 1 teaspoon (or ½ teaspoon table salt). If you choose not to serve the skin with the chicken, simply remove it before carving. The amount of jus will vary depending on the size of the chicken; season it with about ¼ teaspoon lemon juice for every ¼ cup.

- 1 whole roasting chicken (4½ to 5 pounds), giblets removed and discarded, wings tucked under back (see note)**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt or 1 teaspoon table salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 1 small onion, chopped medium (about ½ cup)**
- 1 small celery rib, chopped medium (about ¼ cup)**
- 6 medium garlic cloves, peeled and trimmed**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1 medium sprig fresh rosemary (optional)**
- ½–1 teaspoon juice from 1 lemon**

1. Adjust an oven rack to the lowest position and heat the oven to 250 degrees. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat until just smoking. Add the chicken breast side down; scatter the onion, celery, garlic, bay leaf, and rosemary (if using) around the chicken. Cook until the breast is lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Using a wooden spoon inserted into the cavity of the bird, flip the chicken breast side up and cook until the chicken and vegetables are well browned, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove the Dutch oven from the heat; place a large sheet of foil over the pot and cover tightly with the lid. Transfer the pot to the oven and cook until an instant-read thermometer registers 160 degrees when inserted in the thickest part of the breast and 175 degrees in the thickest part of the thigh, 80 to 110 minutes.

2. Transfer the chicken to a carving board, tent with foil, and allow to rest 20 minutes. Meanwhile, strain the chicken juices from the pot through a fine-mesh strainer into a fat separator, pressing on the solids to extract the liquid; discard the solids (you should have about ¾ cup juices). Allow the liquid to settle 5 minutes, then pour into a saucepan and set over low heat. Carve the chicken, adding any accumulated juices to the saucepan. Stir the lemon juice into the jus to taste (see note). Serve the chicken, passing the jus at the table.



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FRENCH ONION SOUP

SERVES 6

Sweet onions, such as Vidalia or Walla Walla, will make this dish overly sweet. Be patient when caramelizing the onions in step 2; the entire process takes 45 to 60 minutes. Use broiler-safe crocks and keep the rims of the bowls 4 to 5 inches from the heating element to obtain a proper gratinée of melted, bubbly cheese. If using ordinary soup bowls, sprinkle the toasted bread slices with Gruyère and return them to the broiler until the cheese melts, then float them on top of the soup. For the best flavor, make the soup a day or 2 in advance. Alternatively, the onions can be prepared through step 1, cooled in the pot, and refrigerated for up to 3 days before proceeding with the recipe.

SOUP

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 3 pieces**
- 6 large yellow onions (about 4 pounds), halved and cut pole to pole into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices (see note)**
- Salt**
- 2 cups water, plus extra for deglazing**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry sherry**
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- 2 cups beef broth**
- 6 sprigs fresh thyme, tied with kitchen twine**
- 1 bay leaf**
- Ground black pepper**

CHEESE CROUTONS

- 1 small baguette, cut on bias into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch slices**
- 8 ounces Gruyère cheese, shredded (about $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups)**

1. FOR THE SOUP: Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Generously spray the inside of a large (at least 7-quart) heavy-bottomed Dutch oven with vegetable oil spray. Place the butter in the pot and add the onions and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, covered, 1 hour (the onions will be moist and slightly reduced in volume). Remove the pot from the oven and stir the onions, scraping the bottom and sides of the pot. Return the pot to the oven with the lid slightly ajar and continue to cook until the onions are very soft and golden brown, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours longer, stirring the onions and scraping the bottom and sides of the pot after 1 hour.



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2. Carefully remove the pot from the oven and place over medium-high heat. Using oven mitts to handle the pot, cook the onions, stirring frequently and scraping the bottom and sides of the pot, until the liquid evaporates and the onions brown, 15 to 20 minutes, reducing the heat to medium if the onions are browning too quickly. Continue to cook, stirring frequently, until the pot bottom is coated with a dark crust, 6 to 8 minutes, adjusting the heat as necessary. (Scrape any fond that collects on the spoon back into the onions.) Stir in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, scraping the pot bottom to loosen the crust, and cook until the water evaporates and the pot bottom has formed another dark crust, 6 to 8 minutes. Repeat the process of deglazing 2 or 3 more times, until the onions are very dark brown. Stir in the sherry and cook, stirring frequently, until the sherry evaporates, about 5 minutes.

3. Stir in the broths, 2 cups water, thyme, bay leaf, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, scraping up any final bits of browned crust on the bottom and sides of the pot. Increase the heat to high and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer 30 minutes. Remove and discard the herbs, then season with salt and pepper to taste.

4. FOR THE CROUTONS: While the soup simmers, arrange the baguette slices in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake in a 400-degree oven until the bread is dry, crisp, and golden at the edges, about 10 minutes. Set aside.

5. TO SERVE: Adjust an oven rack 6 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler. Set individual broiler-safe crocks on the baking sheet and fill each with about $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups soup. Top each bowl with 1 or 2 baguette slices (do not overlap the slices) and sprinkle evenly with the Gruyère. Broil until the cheese is melted and bubbly around the edges, 3 to 5 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes before serving.

LATINO-STYLE CHICKEN AND RICE (ARROZ CON POLLO)

SERVES 4 TO 6

To keep the dish from becoming greasy, it is important to remove excess fat from the chicken thighs and trim the skin. To use long-grain rice instead of medium-grain, increase the amount of water to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup in step 2.

- 6 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 tablespoons)**
- Salt**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried oregano**
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons distilled white vinegar**
- Ground black pepper**
- 8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs (3 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 pounds), trimmed of excess skin and fat**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 medium onion, chopped fine (about 1 cup)**
- 1 small green pepper, stemmed, seeded, and chopped fine (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup minced fresh cilantro leaves**
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce**
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water, plus more if needed (see note)**
- 3 cups medium-grain rice (see note)**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup green manzanilla olives, pitted and halved**
- 1 tablespoon capers**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup jarred pimientos, cut into 2 by $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch strips**
- Lemon wedges, for serving**

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the garlic and 1 teaspoon salt in a large bowl; using a rubber spatula, mix to make a smooth paste. Add the oregano, 1 tablespoon of the vinegar, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon black pepper to the garlic-salt mixture; stir to combine. Place the chicken in the bowl with the marinade. Coat the chicken pieces evenly with the marinade; set aside for 15 minutes.



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2. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion, green pepper, and pepper flakes; cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables begin to soften, 4 to 8 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of the cilantro; stir to combine. Push the vegetables to the sides of the pot and increase the heat to medium-high. Add the chicken to the clearing in the center of the pot, skin side down, in an even layer. Cook, without moving the chicken, until the outer layer of the meat becomes opaque, 2 to 4 minutes. (If the chicken begins to brown, reduce the heat to medium.) Using tongs, flip the chicken and cook on the second side until opaque, 2 to 4 minutes more. Add the tomato sauce, broth, and water; stir to combine. Bring to a simmer; cover, reduce the heat to medium-low, and simmer for 20 minutes.

3. Add the rice, olives, capers, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt; stir well. Bring to a simmer, cover, and place the pot in the oven. After 10 minutes, remove the pot from the oven and stir the chicken and rice once from the bottom up. Return the pot to the oven. After another 10 minutes, stir once more, adding another $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water if the rice appears dry and the bottom of the pot is beginning to burn. Cover and return the pot to the oven; cook until the rice has absorbed all the liquid and is tender but still holds its shape and the temperature of the chicken registers 175 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, about 10 minutes longer.

4. Using tongs, remove the chicken from the pot; replace the lid and set the pot aside. Remove and discard the chicken skin; using 2 spoons, pull the meat off the bones into large chunks. Using your fingers, remove the remaining fat and any dark veins from the chicken pieces. Place the chicken in a large bowl and toss with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil, remaining 2 teaspoons vinegar, remaining 2 tablespoons cilantro, and pimientos; season with salt and pepper to taste. Place the chicken on top of the rice, cover, and let stand until warmed through, about 5 minutes. Serve, passing the lemon wedges separately.

SIZZLING GARLIC SHRIMP

SERVES 6 AS AN APPETIZER

Serve the shrimp with crusty bread for dipping in the richly flavored olive oil. The dish can be served directly from the skillet (make sure to use a trivet) or, for a sizzling effect, transferred to an 8-inch cast-iron skillet that's been heated for 2 minutes over medium-high heat. We prefer the slightly sweet flavor of dried chiles in this recipe, but $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon sweet paprika can be substituted.

- 14 medium garlic cloves, peeled**
- 1 pound large shrimp (31 to 40 per pound), peeled, deveined, and tails removed**
- 8 tablespoons olive oil**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1 (2-inch) piece mild dried chile, such as New Mexico, roughly broken, seeds included (see note)**
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons sherry vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley leaves**

1. Mince 2 garlic cloves with a chef's knife or garlic press. Toss the minced garlic with the shrimp, 2 tablespoons of the olive oil, and salt in a medium bowl. Let the shrimp marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, using the flat side of a chef's knife, smash 4 garlic cloves. Heat the smashed garlic with the remaining 6 tablespoons olive oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the garlic is light golden brown, 4 to 7 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and allow the oil to cool to room temperature. Using a slotted spoon, remove the smashed garlic from the skillet and discard.

3. Thinly slice the remaining 8 cloves garlic. Return the skillet to low heat and add the sliced garlic, bay leaf, and chile. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the garlic is tender but not browned, 4 to 7 minutes. (If the garlic has not begun to sizzle after 3 minutes, increase the heat to medium-low.) Increase the heat to medium-low; add the shrimp with the marinade to the pan in a single layer. Cook the shrimp, undisturbed, until the oil starts to gently bubble, about 2 minutes. Using tongs, flip the shrimp and continue to cook until almost cooked through, about 2 minutes longer. Increase the heat to high and add the sherry vinegar and parsley. Cook, stirring constantly, until the shrimp are cooked through and the oil is bubbling vigorously, 15 to 20 seconds. Serve immediately.



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CRUNCHY BAKED PORK CHOPS

SERVES 4

This recipe was developed using natural pork, but enhanced pork (injected with a salt solution) will work as well. If using enhanced pork, eliminate the brining in step 1. The bread crumb mixture can be prepared through step 2 up to 3 days in advance. The breaded chops can be frozen for up to 1 week. They don't need to be thawed before baking; simply increase the cooking time in step 5 to 35 to 40 minutes.

Salt

- 4 boneless center-cut pork chops, 6 to 8 ounces each, $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch thick, trimmed of excess fat (see note)**
- 4 slices good-quality white sandwich bread, torn into 1-inch pieces**
- 1 small shallot, minced (about 2 tablespoons)**
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- Ground black pepper**
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 6 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 3 large egg whites**
- 3 tablespoons Dijon mustard**
- Lemon wedges**



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1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Dissolve $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt in 1 quart water in a medium container or gallon-sized zipper-lock bag. Submerge the chops, cover the container with plastic wrap or seal the bag, and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Rinse the chops under cold water and dry thoroughly with paper towels.

2. Meanwhile, pulse the bread in a food processor until coarsely ground, about eight 1-second pulses (you should have about $3\frac{1}{2}$ cups crumbs). Transfer the crumbs to a rimmed baking sheet and add the shallot, garlic, oil, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper. Toss until the crumbs are evenly coated with the oil. Bake until deep golden brown and dry, about 15 minutes, stirring twice during the baking time. (Do not turn off the oven.) Cool to room temperature. Toss the crumbs with the Parmesan, thyme, and parsley.

3. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the flour in a pie plate. In a second pie plate, whisk the egg whites and mustard until combined; add the remaining 6 tablespoons flour and whisk until almost smooth, with pea-sized lumps remaining.

4. Increase the oven temperature to 425 degrees. Spray a wire rack with vegetable oil spray and place in a rimmed baking sheet. Season the chops with pepper. Dredge 1 pork chop in the flour; shake off the excess. Using tongs, coat with the egg mixture; let the excess drip off. Coat all sides of the chop with the bread crumb mixture, pressing gently so that a thick layer of crumbs adheres to the chop. Transfer the breaded chop to the wire rack. Repeat with the remaining 3 chops.

5. Bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the chops registers 150 degrees, 17 to 25 minutes. Let rest on the rack for 5 minutes before serving with lemon wedges.

SIMPLE APPLESAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 3½ CUPS

If you do not own a food mill or you prefer applesauce with a coarse texture, peel the apples before coring and cutting them, and, after cooking, mash them against the side of the pot with a wooden spoon or against the bottom of the pot with a potato masher. Applesauce made with out-of-season apples may be somewhat drier than sauce made with peak-season apples, so it's likely that in step 2 of the recipe you will need to add more water to adjust the texture. If you double the recipe, the apples will need 10 to 15 minutes of extra cooking time.

**4 pounds apples (8 to 12 medium), preferably
Jonagold, Pink Lady, Jonathan, or Macoun,
unpeeled, cored, and cut into rough 1½-inch pieces**
¼ cup sugar, plus more as needed
Pinch salt
1 cup water, plus more as needed

1. Toss the apples, sugar, salt, and water in a large, heavy-bottomed nonreactive Dutch oven. Cover the pot and cook the apples over medium-high heat until they begin to break down, 15 to 20 minutes, checking and stirring occasionally with a wooden spoon to break up any large chunks.

2. Process the cooked apples through a food mill fitted with the medium disk. Season with extra sugar or add water to adjust the consistency as desired. Serve hot, warm, at room temperature, or chilled.



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SIMPLE ITALIAN-STYLE MEAT SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 6 CUPS

Except for ground round (which tasters found spongy and bland), this recipe will work with most types of ground beef, as long as it is 85 percent lean. (Eighty percent lean beef will turn the sauce greasy; 90 percent will make it fibrous.) Use high-quality crushed tomatoes; our favorite brands are Tutt'Orosso, Muir Glen Organic, and Hunt's Organic. If using dried oregano, add the entire amount with the canned tomato liquid in step 2. The recipe makes enough sauce for nearly 2 pounds of pasta. Leftover sauce can be refrigerated in an airtight container for 3 days or frozen for 1 month.

- 4 ounces white mushrooms, cleaned, stems trimmed, and broken into rough pieces**
- 1 large slice high-quality white sandwich bread, torn into quarters**
- 2 tablespoons whole milk**
- Salt and ground black pepper**
- 1 pound 85 percent lean ground beef (see note)**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 1 large onion, chopped fine (about 1½ cups)**
- 6 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 tablespoons)**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste**
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained, ¼ cup liquid reserved**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano leaves or 1 teaspoon dried (see note)**
- 1 (28-ounce) can crushed tomatoes**
- ½ ounce grated Parmesan cheese (about ¼ cup)**



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1. Pulse the mushrooms in a food processor until finely chopped, about eight 1-second pulses, scraping down the side of the workbowl as needed; transfer to a medium bowl. Add the bread, milk, ½ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper to the now-empty food processor and pulse until a paste forms, about eight 1-second pulses. Add the beef and pulse until the mixture is well combined, about six 1-second pulses.

2. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add the onion and mushrooms; cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are browned and dark bits form on the pan bottom, 6 to 12 minutes. Stir in the garlic, red pepper flakes, and tomato paste; cook until fragrant and the tomato paste starts to brown, about 1 minute. Add the ¼ cup reserved tomato liquid and 2 teaspoons of the fresh oregano (if using dried, add the full amount), scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to loosen the browned bits. Add the meat mixture and cook, breaking the meat into small pieces with a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 2 to 4 minutes, making sure that the meat does not brown.

3. Stir in the drained diced and crushed tomatoes and bring to a simmer; reduce the heat to low and gently simmer until the sauce has thickened and the flavors have blended, about 30 minutes. Stir in the cheese and the remaining 1 teaspoon fresh oregano; season with salt and pepper to taste.

PASTA WITH CREAMY TOMATO SAUCE

SERVES 4

This sauce is best served with short pasta, such as ziti, penne, or fusilli.

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 ounce prosciutto, minced (about 2 tablespoons)
1 small onion, diced fine (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
1 bay leaf
Pinch red pepper flakes
Salt
3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 ounces oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained, rinsed, patted dry, and chopped coarse (about 3 tablespoons)
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plus 2 tablespoons dry white wine
2 cups plus 2 tablespoons crushed tomatoes (from one 28-ounce can)
1 pound pasta (see note)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup heavy cream
Ground black pepper
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh basil leaves
Grated Parmesan cheese, for serving



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1. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the prosciutto, onion, bay leaf, red pepper flakes, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt; cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is very soft and beginning to turn light gold, 8 to 12 minutes. Increase the heat to medium-high, add the garlic, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in the tomato paste and sun-dried tomatoes and cook, stirring constantly, until slightly darkened, 1 to 2 minutes. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the wine and cook, stirring frequently, until the liquid has evaporated, 1 to 2 minutes.

2. Add 2 cups of the crushed tomatoes and bring to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is thickened (a spoon should leave a trail when dragged through the sauce), 25 to 30 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, bring 4 quarts water to a boil. Add the pasta and 1 tablespoon salt and cook until al dente. Reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the cooking water; drain the pasta and transfer it back to the cooking pot.

4. Remove the bay leaf from the sauce and discard. Stir the cream, remaining 2 tablespoons crushed tomatoes, and remaining 2 tablespoons wine into the sauce; season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the sauce to the cooked pasta, adjusting the consistency with up to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pasta cooking water. Stir in the basil and serve immediately, passing the Parmesan separately.

SKILLET APPLE PIE

SERVES 6 TO 8

If your skillet is not heatproof, precook the apples and stir in the cider mixture as instructed, then transfer the apples to a 13 by 9-inch baking dish. Roll out the dough to a 13 by 9-inch rectangle and bake the pandowdy as instructed. If you do not have apple cider, reduced apple juice may be used as a substitute; simmer 1 cup apple juice in a small saucepan over medium heat until reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (about 10 minutes). Serve the pandowdy warm or at room temperature with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream. Use a combination of sweet, crisp apples such as Golden Delicious and firm, tart apples such as Cortland or Empire.

CRUST

- 1 cup (5 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting work surface
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening, chilled
- 6 tablespoons ($\frac{3}{4}$ stick) cold unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pieces
- 3-4 tablespoons ice water

FILLING

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup apple cider
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons juice from 1 lemon
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon ground cinnamon (optional)
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds sweet and tart apples (about 5 medium), peeled, cored, halved, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick wedges (see note)
- 1 large egg white, lightly beaten
- 2 teaspoons sugar



PHOTO CREDIT: CARL TREMBLAY

1. FOR THE CRUST: Process the flour, sugar, and salt in a food processor until combined. Add the shortening and pulse until the mixture has the texture of coarse sand, about ten 1-second pulses. Scatter the butter pieces over the flour mixture and pulse until the mixture is pale yellow and resembles coarse crumbs, with the butter bits no larger than small peas, about ten 1-second pulses. Transfer the mixture to a medium bowl.

2. Sprinkle 3 tablespoons of the ice water over the mixture. With the blade of a rubber spatula, use a folding motion to mix. Press down on the dough with the broad side of the spatula until the dough sticks together, adding up to 1 tablespoon more ice water if the dough does not come together. Turn the dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap and flatten into a 4-inch disk. Wrap the dough and refrigerate 30 minutes, or up to 2 days, before rolling out. (If the dough is refrigerated longer than 1 hour, let stand at room temperature until malleable.)

3. FOR THE FILLING: Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position (between 7 and 9 inches from the heating element) and heat the oven to 500 degrees. Whisk the cider, syrup, lemon juice, cornstarch, and cinnamon, if using, together in a medium bowl until smooth. Heat the butter in a 12-inch heatproof skillet over medium-high heat. When the foaming subsides, add the apples and cook, stirring 2 or 3 times, until the apples begin to caramelize, about 5 minutes. (Do not fully cook the apples.) Remove the pan from the heat, add the cider mixture, and gently stir until the apples are well coated. Set aside to cool slightly.

4. TO ASSEMBLE AND BAKE: Roll out the dough on a lightly floured work surface, or between 2 large sheets of plastic wrap, to an 11-inch circle. Roll the dough loosely around the rolling pin and unroll over the apple filling. Brush the dough with the egg white and sprinkle with the sugar. With a sharp knife, gently cut the dough into 6 pieces by making 1 vertical cut followed by 2 evenly spaced horizontal cuts (perpendicular to the first cut). Bake until the apples are tender and the crust is a deep golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes; serve.

APPLESAUCE SNACK CAKE

MAKES ONE 8-INCH SQUARE CAKE

This recipe can be easily doubled and baked in a 13- by 9-inch baking dish. If doubling the recipe, give the cider and dried apple mixture about 20 minutes to reduce, and bake the cake for about 45 minutes. The cake is very moist, so it is best to err on the side of overdone when testing its doneness. The test kitchen prefers the rich flavor of cider, but apple juice can be substituted. Cooled leftovers can be wrapped in plastic wrap and stored at room temperature for up to 2 days.

- ¾ cup (2 ounces) dried apples, cut into ½-inch pieces**
- 1 cup apple cider (see note)**
- 1½ cups (7½ ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 1 teaspoon baking soda**
- ⅔ cup (4¾ ounces) sugar**
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground cloves**
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce, at room temperature**
- 1 large egg, at room temperature, lightly beaten**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**



PHOTO CREDIT: CARL TREMBLAY

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Cut a 16-inch length parchment paper or aluminum foil and fold lengthwise to a 7-inch width. Spray an 8-inch square baking dish with vegetable oil spray and fit the parchment into the dish, pushing it into the corners and up the sides; allow the excess to overhang the edges of the dish.

2. Bring the dried apples and cider to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat; cook until the liquid evaporates and the mixture appears dry, about 15 minutes. Cool to room temperature.

3. Whisk the flour and baking soda in a medium bowl to combine; set aside. In a second medium bowl, whisk together the sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Measure 2 tablespoons of the sugar-spice mixture into a small bowl and set aside for the topping.

4. In a food processor, process the cooled dried-apple mixture and applesauce until smooth, 20 to 30 seconds, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed; set aside. Whisk the egg and salt in a large bowl to combine. Add the sugar-spice mixture and whisk continuously until well combined and light colored, about 20 seconds. Add the butter in three additions, whisking after each. Add the applesauce mixture and vanilla and whisk to combine. Add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients; using a rubber spatula, fold gently until just combined and evenly moistened.

5. Turn the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a rubber spatula. Sprinkle the reserved 2 tablespoons sugar-spice mixture evenly over the batter. Bake until a wooden skewer inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool on a wire rack to room temperature, about 2 hours. Run a knife along the cake edges without parchment to release. Remove the cake from the pan by lifting the parchment overhang and transfer to a cutting board. Cut the cake and serve.

HERBED ROAST TURKEY

SERVES 10 TO 12

Note that kosher salt measures differently from table salt, and brands of kosher salt also measure differently from each other. If roasting an 18- to 22-pound bird, double all of the ingredients for the herb paste except the black pepper; apply 2 tablespoons paste under the skin on each side of the turkey, 1 1/2 tablespoons paste in each breast pocket, 2 tablespoons inside the cavity, and the remaining paste on the turkey skin. Roast breast side down at 425 degrees for 1 hour, then reduce the oven temperature to 325 degrees, rotate the turkey breast side up, and continue to roast for about 2 hours. Let rest 35 to 40 minutes before carving.

If roasting a 14- to 18-pound bird, increase the amount all of the ingredients for the herb paste (except the black pepper) by 50 percent; follow the instructions below for applying the paste under the skin, in the breast pockets, and in the cavity; use the remaining paste on the skin. Increase the second half of the roasting time (breast side up) to 1 hour, 15 minutes.

If you have the time and the refrigerator space, air-drying produces extremely crisp skin and is worth the effort. After brining, rinsing, and patting the turkey dry, place the turkey breast side up on a flat wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet and refrigerate, uncovered, 8 to 24 hours. Proceed with the recipe.

TURKEY AND BRINE

- 2 cups table salt, 2½ cups Morton Kosher Salt, or 4 cups Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt (see note)**
- 1 (12- to 14-pound) turkey, rinsed thoroughly, tailpiece removed**

HERB PASTE

- 1¼ cups roughly chopped fresh parsley leaves**
- 4 teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves**
- 2 teaspoons roughly chopped fresh sage leaves**
- 1½ teaspoons minced fresh rosemary leaves**
- 1 medium shallot, minced (about 3 tablespoons)**
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)**
- ¾ teaspoon grated zest from 1 lemon**
- ¾ teaspoon table salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- ¼ cup olive oil**

1. FOR THE TURKEY AND BRINE: Dissolve the salt in 2 gallons cold water in a large stockpot or clean bucket. Add the turkey and refrigerate 4 to 6 hours.

2. Remove the turkey from the brine and rinse under cool running water. Pat dry inside and out with paper towels. Place the turkey breast side up on a flat wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet or roasting pan and refrigerate, uncovered, for 30 minutes. (Alternatively, air-dry the turkey; see note.)



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3. FOR THE HERB PASTE: Pulse the parsley, thyme, sage, rosemary, shallot, garlic, lemon zest, salt, and pepper in a food processor until the consistency of coarse paste, ten 2-second pulses. Add the mustard and olive oil; continue to pulse until the mixture forms a smooth paste, ten to twelve 2-second pulses; scrape the sides of the processor bowl with a rubber spatula after 5 pulses. Transfer the mixture to a small bowl.

4. TO PREPARE THE TURKEY: Adjust an oven rack to the lowest position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a large V-rack with heavy-duty foil and use a paring knife or skewer to poke 20 to 30 holes in the foil; set the V-rack in a large roasting pan. Remove the turkey from the refrigerator and wipe away any water collected in the baking sheet; set the turkey breast side up on the baking sheet.

5. Using your hands, carefully loosen the skin from the meat of the breasts, thighs, and drumsticks. Using your fingers or a spoon, slip 1½ tablespoons of the paste under the breast skin on each side of the turkey. Using your fingers, distribute the paste under the skin over the breast, thigh, and drumstick meat.

6. Using a sharp paring knife, cut a 1½-inch vertical slit into the thickest part of each side of the breast. Starting from the top of the incision, swing the knife tip down to create a 4- to 5-inch pocket within the flesh. Place 1 tablespoon more paste in the pocket of each side of the breast; using your fingers, rub the paste in a thin, even layer.

7. Rub 1 tablespoon more paste inside the turkey cavity. Rotate the turkey breast side down; apply half the remaining herb paste to the turkey skin; flip the turkey breast side up and apply the remaining herb paste to the skin, pressing and patting to make the paste adhere; reapply the herb paste that falls onto the baking sheet. Tuck the wings behind the back and tuck the tips of the drumsticks into the skin at the tail to secure.

8. TO ROAST THE TURKEY: Place the turkey breast side down on the prepared V-rack in the roasting pan. Roast 45 minutes.

9. Remove the roasting pan with the turkey from the oven (close the oven door to retain the oven heat). Using clean potholders (or a wad of paper towels), rotate the turkey breast side up. Continue to roast until the thickest part of the breast registers 165 degrees and the thickest part of the thigh registers 170 to 175 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, 50 to 60 minutes longer. (Confirm the temperature by inserting the thermometer in both sides of the bird.) Transfer the turkey to a carving board; let rest 30 minutes. Carve the turkey and serve.

FLUFFY MASHED POTATOES

SERVES 4

This recipe works best with either a metal colander that sits easily in a Dutch oven or a large pasta pot with a steamer insert. To prevent excess evaporation, it is important for the lid to fit as snugly as possible over the colander or steamer. For the lightest, fluffiest texture, use a ricer. A food mill is the next best alternative. Russets and white potatoes will work in this recipe, but avoid red-skinned potatoes.

- 2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes (4 to 6 medium), peeled, cut into 1-inch chunks, rinsed well, and drained (see note)**
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**
- Salt**
- ½ cup whole milk, warm**
- Ground black pepper**

1. Place a metal colander or steamer insert in a large pot or Dutch oven. Add enough water to barely reach the bottom of the colander. Turn the heat to high and bring the water to a boil. Add the potatoes, cover, and reduce the heat to medium-high. Cook the potatoes for 10 minutes. Transfer the colander to the sink and rinse the potatoes under cold water until no longer hot, 1 to 2 minutes. Return the colander and potatoes to the pot, cover, and continue to cook until the potatoes are soft and the tip of a paring knife inserted into the potatoes meets no resistance, 10 to 15 minutes longer. Pour off the water from the pot.

2. Set a ricer or food mill over the now-empty pot. Working in batches, transfer the potatoes to the hopper of the ricer or food mill and process, removing any potatoes stuck to the bottom. Using a rubber spatula, stir in the melted butter and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt until incorporated. Stir in the warm milk until incorporated. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately.



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BEEF AND VEGETABLE SOUP

SERVES 6

Choose whole sirloin tip steaks over ones that have been cut into small pieces for stir-fries. If sirloin tip steaks are unavailable, substitute blade or flank steak, removing any hard gristle or excess fat. Button mushrooms can be used in place of the cremini mushrooms, with some trade-off in flavor. If you like, add 1 cup frozen peas, frozen corn, or frozen cut green beans during the last 5 minutes of cooking. For a heartier soup, add 10 ounces red-skinned potatoes, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (2 cups), during the last 15 minutes of cooking.

- 1 pound sirloin tip steaks, trimmed of excess fat and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (see note)**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce**
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil**
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, stems trimmed, caps wiped clean and quartered (see note)**
- 1 large onion, chopped medium (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups)**
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 teaspoon)**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup red wine**
- 4 cups beef broth**
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- 4 medium carrots, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (about 2 cups)**
- 2 medium celery ribs, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1 tablespoon unflavored powdered gelatin**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves**
- Salt and ground black pepper**



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- 1.** Combine the beef and soy sauce in a medium bowl; set aside for 15 minutes.
- 2.** Heat the oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add the mushrooms and onion; cook, stirring frequently, until the onion pieces are brown and dark bits form on the pan bottom, 8 to 12 minutes. Transfer the vegetables to a bowl.
- 3.** Add the beef and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid evaporates and the meat starts to brown, 6 to 10 minutes. Add the tomato paste and garlic; cook, stirring constantly, until aromatic, about 30 seconds. Add the red wine, scraping the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon to loosen any browned bits, and cook until syrupy, 1 to 2 minutes.
- 4.** Add the beef broth, chicken broth, carrots, celery, bay leaf, and browned mushrooms and onion; bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the vegetables and meat are tender, 25 to 30 minutes. While the soup is simmering, sprinkle the gelatin over the cold water and let stand.
- 5.** When the soup is finished, turn off the heat. Remove and discard the bay leaf. Add the gelatin mixture and stir until completely dissolved. Stir in the parsley, season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve.

HEARTY TUSCAN BEAN STEW

SERVES 8

We prefer the creamier texture of beans soaked overnight for this recipe. If you're short on time, quick-soak them: Place the rinsed beans in a large heat-resistant bowl. Bring 2 quarts water and 3 tablespoons salt to a boil. Pour the water over the beans and let them sit for 1 hour. Drain and rinse the beans well before proceeding with step 2. If pancetta is unavailable, substitute 4 ounces bacon (about 4 slices). For a more substantial dish, serve the stew over toasted bread.

Salt

- 1 pound (about 2 cups) dried cannellini beans, picked over and rinsed**
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
- 6 ounces pancetta, cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pieces (see note)**
- 1 large onion, chopped medium (about $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups)**
- 2 medium celery ribs, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)**
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (about 1 cup)**
- 8 medium garlic cloves, peeled and crushed**
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- 3 cups water**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 1 bunch kale or collard greens (about 1 pound), stems trimmed and leaves chopped into 1-inch pieces (about 8 cups loosely packed)**
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained and rinsed**
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary**
- Ground black pepper**
- 8 slices country white bread, each $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick, broiled until golden brown on both sides and rubbed with a garlic clove (optional)**



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1. Dissolve 3 tablespoons salt in 4 quarts cold water in a large bowl or container. Add the beans and soak at room temperature for at least 8 hours and up to 24 hours. Drain the beans and rinse well.

2. Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 250 degrees. Heat the oil and pancetta in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the pancetta is lightly browned and the fat has rendered, 6 to 10 minutes. Add the onion, celery, and carrots. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are softened and lightly browned, 10 to 16 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the broth, water, bay leaves, and soaked beans. Increase the heat to high and bring the mixture to a simmer. Cover the pot, transfer it to the oven, and cook until the beans are almost tender (the very center of the beans will still be firm), 45 minutes to 1 hour.

3. Remove the pot from the oven and stir in the greens and tomatoes. Return the pot to the oven and continue to cook until the beans and greens are fully tender, 30 to 40 minutes longer.

4. Remove the pot from the oven and submerge the rosemary sprig in the stew. Cover and let stand 15 minutes. Discard the bay leaves and rosemary sprig and season the stew with salt and pepper to taste. If desired, use the back of a spoon to press some beans against the side of the pot to thicken the stew. Serve over the toasted bread, if desired, and drizzle with olive oil.

CHICKEN SALTIMBOCCA

SERVES 4

Buy cutlets that are approximately 5 to 6 inches long. If the tip is too thin, trim back 1 to 2 inches to make the cutlet of uniform thickness. If cutlets are unavailable, you can make your own with 4 (8-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts. Although whole sage leaves make a beautiful presentation, they are optional and can be left out of step 3. Make sure to buy prosciutto that is thinly sliced, not shaved; also avoid slices that are too thick, as they won't stick to the chicken.

- ½ cup unbleached all-purpose flour**
- Ground black pepper**
- 8 thin boneless, skinless chicken cutlets (about 2 pounds), trimmed of ragged edges as necessary (see note)**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh sage leaves, plus 8 large leaves (optional)**
- 8 thin slices prosciutto, cut into 5- to 6-inch-long pieces to match chicken (about 3 ounces, see note)**
- 4 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1¼ cups dry vermouth or white wine**
- 2 teaspoons juice from 1 lemon**
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces and chilled**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley leaves**
- Salt**



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1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 200 degrees. Combine the flour and 1 teaspoon pepper in a shallow dish.

2. Pat the cutlets dry with paper towels. Dredge the chicken in the flour, shaking off any excess. Lay the cutlets flat and sprinkle evenly with the minced sage. Place 1 prosciutto slice on top of each cutlet, pressing lightly to adhere; set aside.

3. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until beginning to shimmer. Add the sage leaves (if using) and cook until the leaves begin to change color and are fragrant, about 15 to 20 seconds. Using a slotted spoon, remove the sage to a paper towel-lined plate; reserve. Add half of the cutlets to the pan, prosciutto side down, and cook until light golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side until light golden brown, about 2 minutes more. Transfer to a wire rack set on a rimmed baking sheet and keep warm in the oven. Repeat with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and the remaining cutlets, then transfer to the oven to keep warm while preparing the sauce.

4. Pour off the excess fat from the skillet. Stir in the vermouth, scraping up any browned bits, and simmer until reduced to about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice. Turn the heat to low and whisk in the butter, 1 tablespoon at a time. Off the heat, stir in the parsley and season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove the chicken from the oven and place it on a platter. Spoon the sauce over the cutlets before serving, and place one fried sage leaf (if using) on top of each cutlet.

TIRAMISÙ

SERVES 10 TO 12

Brandy and even whiskey can stand in for the dark rum. The test kitchen prefers a tiramisù with a pronounced rum flavor; for a less potent rum flavor, halve the amount of rum added to the coffee mixture in step 1. Do not allow the mascarpone to warm to room temperature before using it; it has a tendency to break if allowed to do so.

- 2½ cups strong brewed coffee, room temperature**
- 1½ tablespoons instant espresso granules**
- 9 tablespoons dark rum (see note)**
- 6 large egg yolks**
- ⅔ cup sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 1½ pounds mascarpone**
- ¾ cup heavy cream, chilled**
- 14 ounces (42 to 60, depending on size) dried ladyfingers**
- 3½ tablespoons cocoa, preferably Dutch-processed**
- ¼ cup grated semisweet or bittersweet chocolate (optional)**

1. Stir together the coffee, espresso, and 5 tablespoons of the rum in a wide bowl or baking dish until the espresso dissolves; set aside.

2. In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the yolks at low speed until just combined. Add the sugar and salt and beat at medium-high speed until pale yellow, 1½ to 2 minutes, scraping down the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula once or twice. Add the remaining 4 tablespoons rum and beat at medium speed until just combined, 20 to 30 seconds; scrape the bowl. Add the mascarpone and beat at medium speed until no lumps remain, 30 to 45 seconds, scraping down the sides of the bowl once or twice. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and set aside.



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3. In the now-empty mixer bowl (no need to clean the bowl), beat the cream at medium speed until frothy, 1 to 1½ minutes. Increase the speed to high and continue to beat until the cream holds stiff peaks, 1 to 1½ minutes longer. Using a rubber spatula, fold one-third of the whipped cream into the mascarpone mixture to lighten, then gently fold in the remaining whipped cream until no white streaks remain. Set the mascarpone mixture aside.

4. Working one at a time, drop half of the ladyfingers into the coffee mixture, roll, remove, and transfer to a 13 by 9-inch glass or ceramic baking dish. (Do not submerge the ladyfingers in the coffee mixture; the entire process should take no longer than 2 to 3 seconds for each cookie.) Arrange the soaked cookies in a single layer in the baking dish, breaking or trimming the ladyfingers as needed to fit neatly into the dish.

5. Spread half of the mascarpone mixture over the ladyfingers; use a rubber spatula to spread the mixture to the sides and into the corners of the dish and smooth the surface. Place 2 tablespoons of the cocoa in a fine-mesh strainer and dust the cocoa over the mascarpone.

6. Repeat the dipping and arrangement of the ladyfingers; spread the remaining mascarpone mixture over the ladyfingers and dust with the remaining 1½ tablespoons cocoa. Wipe the edges of the dish with a dry paper towel. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 6 to 24 hours. Sprinkle with the grated chocolate, if using; cut into pieces and serve chilled.

FLUFFY YELLOW LAYER CAKE

MAKES TWO 9-INCH CAKE LAYERS

Vegetable oil spray can be used for greasing the pans (proceed with flouring as directed). Bring all the ingredients to room temperature before beginning. Frost the cake with our Foolproof Chocolate Frosting (recipe follows) or your favorite topping.

2½ cups (10 ounces) cake flour, plus extra for dusting pans
1¼ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon salt
1¾ cups (12½ ounces) sugar
10 tablespoons (1¼ sticks) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature
3 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
6 large egg yolks plus 3 large egg whites, at room temperature

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease two 9-inch-wide by 2-inch-high round cake pans and line the bottoms with parchment paper. Grease the paper rounds, dust the pans with flour, and knock out the excess. Whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and 1½ cups of the sugar together in a large bowl. In a 4-cup liquid measuring cup or medium bowl, whisk together the melted butter, buttermilk, oil, vanilla, and yolks.

2. In the clean bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the egg whites at medium-high speed until foamy, about 30 seconds. With the machine running, gradually add the remaining ¼ cup sugar; continue to beat until stiff peaks just form, 30 to 60 seconds (the whites should hold a peak but the mixture should appear moist). Transfer to a bowl and set aside.

3. Add the flour mixture to the now-empty mixing bowl. With the mixer, still fitted with the whisk attachment, running at low speed, gradually pour in the butter mixture and mix until almost incorporated (a few streaks of dry flour will remain), about 15 seconds. Stop the mixer and scrape the whisk and the sides of the bowl. Return the mixer to medium-low speed and beat until smooth and fully incorporated, 10 to 15 seconds.

4. Using a rubber spatula, stir one-third of the whites into the batter to lighten, then add the remaining whites and gently fold into the batter until no white streaks remain. Divide the batter evenly between the prepared cake pans. Lightly tap the pans against the countertop 2 or 3 times to dislodge any large air bubbles.

5. Bake until the cake layers begin to pull away from the sides of the pans and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 20 to 22 minutes. Cool the cakes in the pans on a wire rack for 10



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minutes. Loosen the cakes from the sides of the pans with a small knife, then invert onto a greased wire rack and peel off the parchment. Invert the cakes again and cool completely on the rack, about 1½ hours. Frost with our Foolproof Chocolate Frosting or your favorite frosting and serve.

FOOLPROOF CHOCOLATE FROSTING

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS, ENOUGH TO FROST ONE 9-INCH 2-LAYER CAKE

This frosting may be made with milk, semisweet, or bittersweet chocolate. For our Fluffy Yellow Layer Cake, we prefer a frosting made with milk chocolate. Cool the chocolate to between 85 and 100 degrees before adding it to the butter mixture. The frosting can be made 3 hours in advance. For longer storage, refrigerate the frosting, covered, and let it stand at room temperature for 1 hour before using.

20 tablespoons (2½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened (60 to 65 degrees)
1 cup (4 ounces) confectioners' sugar
¾ cup (2¼ ounces) Dutch-process cocoa
Pinch salt
¾ cup light corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
8 ounces chocolate, melted and cooled slightly (see note)

In a food processor, process the butter, sugar, cocoa, and salt until smooth, about 30 seconds, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed. Add the corn syrup and vanilla and process until just combined, 5 to 10 seconds. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, then add the chocolate and pulse until smooth and creamy, 10 to 15 seconds. The frosting can be used immediately or held (see note).

INEXPENSIVE ROAST BEEF

SERVES 6 TO 8

We don't recommend cooking this roast past medium. Open the oven door as little as possible and remove the roast from the oven while taking its temperature. If the roast has not reached the desired temperature in the time specified in step 3, heat the oven to 225 degrees for 5 minutes, shut it off, and continue to cook the roast to the desired temperature. For a smaller (2½- to 3½-pound) roast, reduce the amounts of kosher salt to 3 teaspoons (1½ teaspoons table salt) and black pepper to 1½ teaspoons. For a 4½- to 6-pound roast, cut in half crosswise before cooking to create 2 smaller roasts. Slice the roast as thinly as possible and serve with Horseradish Cream Sauce, if desired (recipe follows).

- 1 boneless eye-round roast (3½ to 4½ pounds, see note)**
- 4 teaspoons kosher salt or 2 teaspoons table salt (see note)**
- 2 teaspoons plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil**
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper (see note)**

1. Sprinkle all sides of the roast evenly with the salt. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 18 to 24 hours.

2. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 225 degrees. Pat the roast dry with paper towels; rub with 2 teaspoons of the oil and sprinkle all sides evenly with the pepper. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until starting to smoke. Sear the roast until browned on all sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer the roast to a wire rack set in a rimmed baking sheet. Roast until a meat-probe thermometer or instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the roast registers 115 degrees for medium-rare, 1½ to 1¾ hours, or 125 degrees for medium, 1¾ to 2½ hours.

3. Turn the oven off; leave the roast in the oven, without opening the door, until the meat-probe thermometer or instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the roast registers 130 degrees for medium-rare or 140 degrees for medium, 30 to 50 minutes longer. Transfer the roast to a carving board and let rest for 15 minutes. Slice the meat crosswise as thinly as possible and serve.



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HORSERADISH CREAM SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

- ½ cup heavy cream**
½ cup prepared horseradish
1 teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper

Whisk the cream in a medium bowl until thickened but not yet holding soft peaks, 1 to 2 minutes. Gently fold in the horseradish, salt, and pepper. Transfer to a serving bowl and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 1 hour before serving.

MASHED POTATOES AND ROOT VEGETABLES

SERVES 4

Russet potatoes will yield a slightly fluffier, less creamy mash, but they can be used in place of the Yukon Gold potatoes if desired. Rinsing the potatoes in several changes of water reduces the amount of starch and prevents the mashed potatoes from becoming gluey. It is important to cut the potatoes and root vegetables into even-sized pieces so they cook at the same rate. This recipe can be doubled and cooked in a large Dutch oven. If doubling, increase the cooking time in step 2 to 40 minutes.

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 8 ounces carrots, parsnips, turnips, or celery root, peeled; carrots or parsnips cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick half moons; turnips or celery root cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice (about 1½ cups)**
- 1½ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, quartered lengthwise, and cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices; rinsed well in 3 or 4 changes of cold water and drained well (see note)**
- ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth**
- Salt**
- ¾ cup half-and-half, warmed**
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh chives**
- Ground black pepper**

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. When the foaming subsides, add the root vegetables and cook, stirring occasionally, until the butter is browned and the vegetables are dark brown and caramelized, 10 to 12 minutes. (If after 4 minutes the vegetables have not started to brown, increase the heat to medium-high.)

2. Add the potatoes, broth, and ¼ teaspoon salt and stir to combine. Cook, covered, over low heat (the broth should simmer gently; do not boil), stirring occasionally, until the potatoes fall apart easily when poked with a fork and all the liquid has been absorbed, 25 to 30 minutes. (If the liquid does not gently simmer after a few minutes, increase the heat to medium-low.) Remove the pan from the heat; remove the lid and allow the steam to escape for 2 minutes.

3. Gently mash the potatoes and root vegetables in the saucepan with a potato masher (do not mash vigorously). Gently fold in the warm half-and-half and chives. Season with salt and pepper to taste; serve immediately.



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ENCHILADAS VERDES

SERVES 4 TO 6

You can substitute 3 (11-ounce) cans tomatillos, drained and rinsed, for the fresh ones in this recipe. Halve large tomatillos (more than 2 inches in diameter) and place them skin side up for broiling in step 2 to ensure even cooking and charring. If you can't find poblanos, substitute 4 large jalapeño chiles (with seeds and ribs removed). To increase the spiciness of the sauce, reserve some of the chiles' ribs and seeds and add them to the food processor in step 3.

ENCHILADAS

- 4 teaspoons vegetable oil**
- 1 medium onion, chopped medium (about 1 cup)**
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)**
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin**
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts (2 to 3 breasts), trimmed of excess fat**
- 1½ pounds tomatillos (16 to 20 medium), husks and stems removed, rinsed well and dried (see note)**
- 3 medium poblano chiles, halved lengthwise, stemmed, and seeded (see note)**
- 1-2½ teaspoons sugar**
- Salt**
- Ground black pepper**
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro leaves**
- 8 ounces pepper Jack or Monterey Jack cheese, grated (2 cups)**
- 12 (6-inch) corn tortillas**

GARNISH

- 2 medium scallions, sliced thin, for garnish**
- Thinly sliced radishes, for garnish**
- Sour cream**

1. Adjust the oven racks to the middle and highest positions and heat the broiler. Heat 2 teaspoons of the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat until shimmering; add the onion and cook, stirring frequently, until golden, 6 to 8 minutes. Add 2 teaspoons of the garlic and the cumin; cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Decrease the heat to low and stir in the broth. Add the chicken, cover, and simmer until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the chicken registers 160 degrees, 15 to 20 minutes, flipping the chicken halfway through cooking. Transfer the chicken to a large bowl; place in the refrigerator to cool, about 20 minutes. Remove $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid from the saucepan and set aside; discard the remaining liquid.



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2. Meanwhile, toss the tomatillos and poblanos with the remaining 2 teaspoons oil; arrange on a rimmed baking sheet lined with foil, with the poblanos skin side up. Broil until the vegetables blacken and start to soften, 5 to 10 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through cooking. Cool 10 minutes, then remove the skin from the poblanos (leave the tomatillo skins intact). Transfer the tomatillos and chiles to a food processor. Decrease the oven temperature to 350 degrees. Discard the foil from the baking sheet and set the baking sheet aside for warming the tortillas.

3. Add 1 teaspoon of the sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, the remaining teaspoon garlic, and the reserved $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooking liquid to the food processor; pulse until the sauce is somewhat chunky, about eight 1-second pulses. Taste the sauce; season with salt and pepper and adjust tartness by stirring in the remaining sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon at a time. Set the sauce aside (you should have about 3 cups).

4. When the chicken is cool, pull into shreds using your hands or 2 forks, then chop into small bite-sized pieces. Combine the chicken with the cilantro and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of the cheese; season with salt.

5. Smear the bottom of a 13 by 9-inch baking dish with $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the tomatillo sauce. Place the tortillas on 2 baking sheets. Spray both sides of the tortillas lightly with vegetable oil spray. Bake until the tortillas are soft and pliable, 2 to 4 minutes. Increase the oven temperature to 450 degrees. Place the warm tortillas on the countertop and spread $\frac{1}{3}$ cup filling down the center of each tortilla. Roll each tortilla tightly and place in the baking dish, seam side down. Pour the remaining tomatillo sauce over the top of the enchiladas. Use the back of a spoon to spread the sauce so that it coats the top of each tortilla. Sprinkle with the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cheese and cover the baking dish with foil.

6. Bake the enchiladas on the middle rack until heated through and the cheese is melted, 15 to 20 minutes. Uncover, sprinkle with the scallions, and serve immediately, passing the radishes and sour cream separately.

STEAK TACOS

SERVES 4 TO 6

For a less spicy dish, remove some or all of the ribs and seeds from the jalapeños before chopping them for the marinade. In addition to the toppings suggested below, try serving the tacos with Sweet and Spicy Pickled Onions (recipe follows), thinly sliced radish or cucumber, or salsa.

MARINADE

- ½ cup packed fresh cilantro leaves**
- 3 medium garlic cloves, roughly chopped**
- 3 medium scallions, roughly chopped (about ½ cup)**
- 1 medium jalapeño chile, stemmed and roughly chopped (see note)**
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin**
- ¼ cup vegetable oil**
- 1 tablespoon juice from 1 lime**

STEAK

- 1 flank steak (1½ to 1¾ pounds), trimmed of excess fat and cut lengthwise (with the grain) into 4 equal pieces**
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt or 1½ teaspoons table salt**
- ½ teaspoon sugar**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**

TACOS

- 12 (6-inch) corn tortillas, warmed**
- Fresh cilantro leaves**
- Minced white onion**
- Lime wedges**

1. FOR THE MARINADE: Pulse the cilantro, garlic, scallions, jalapeño, and cumin in a food processor until finely chopped, ten to twelve 1-second pulses, scraping down the sides of the work bowl as necessary. Add the oil and process until the mixture is smooth and resembles pesto, about 15 seconds, scraping down the sides as necessary. Transfer 2 tablespoons of the herb paste to a medium bowl; whisk in the lime juice and set aside.

2. FOR THE STEAK: Using a dinner fork, poke each piece of steak 10 to 12 times on each side. Place in a large baking dish; rub all sides of the steak pieces evenly with the salt and then coat with the remaining herb paste. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 30 minutes or up to 1 hour.

3. Scrape the herb paste off the steak and sprinkle all sides of the pieces evenly with the sugar and black pepper. Heat the oil in a 12-inch heavy-bottomed nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until smoking. Place the steak in the skillet and cook until well



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browned, about 3 minutes. Flip the steak and sear until the second side is well browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Using tongs, stand each piece on a cut side and cook, turning as necessary, until all cut sides are well browned and the internal temperature registers 125 to 130 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, 2 to 7 minutes. Transfer the steak to a cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes.

4. FOR THE TACOS: Using a sharp chef's knife or carving knife, slice the steak pieces against the grain into ½-inch-thick pieces. Transfer the sliced steak to the bowl with the herb paste–lime juice mixture and toss to coat. Season with salt. Spoon a small amount of the sliced steak into the center of each warm tortilla and serve immediately, passing the toppings separately.

SWEET AND SPICY PICKLED ONIONS

MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

The onions can be refrigerated, tightly covered, for up to 1 week.

- 1 medium red onion, halved and sliced thin (about 1½ cups)**
- 1 cup red wine vinegar**
- ½ cup sugar**
- 2 jalapeño chiles, stemmed, seeded, and cut into thin rings**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**

Place the onions in a medium heat-resistant bowl. Bring the vinegar, sugar, jalapeños, and salt to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar dissolves. Pour the vinegar mixture over the onions, cover loosely, and let cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes. Once cool, drain and discard the liquid.

PIZZA BIANCA

SERVES 6 TO 8

Serve the pizza by itself as a snack, or with soup or salad as a light entrée. Once the dough has been placed in the oiled bowl, it can be transferred to the refrigerator and kept for up to 24 hours. Bring the dough to room temperature, 2 to 2½ hours, before proceeding with step 4 of the recipe. While kneading the dough on high speed, the mixer tends to wobble and walk on the countertop. Place a towel or shelf liner under the mixer and watch it at all times while mixing. Handle the dough with lightly oiled hands. Resist flouring your fingers or the dough might stick further. This recipe was developed using an 18 by 13-inch baking sheet. Smaller baking sheets can be used, but because the pizza will be thicker, baking times will be longer. If not using a pizza stone, increase the oven temperature to 500 degrees and set the rack to the lowest position; the cooking time might increase by 3 to 5 minutes.

3 cups (15 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
1½ cups (13½ ounces) water, room temperature
1¼ teaspoons table salt
1½ teaspoons instant or rapid-rise yeast
1¼ teaspoons sugar
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 tablespoons whole fresh rosemary leaves

1. Mix the flour, water, and table salt in the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the dough hook on low speed until no areas of dry flour remain, 3 to 4 minutes, occasionally scraping down the sides of the bowl. Turn off the mixer and let the dough rest 20 minutes.

2. Sprinkle the yeast and sugar over the dough. Knead on low speed until fully combined, 1 to 2 minutes, occasionally scraping down the sides of the bowl. Increase the mixer speed to high and knead until the dough is glossy and smooth and pulls away from the sides of the bowl, 6 to 10 minutes. (The dough will pull away from the sides only while the mixer is on. When the mixer is off, the dough will fall back to the sides.)



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3. Using your fingers, coat a large bowl with 1 tablespoon of the oil, rubbing the excess oil from your fingers onto the blade of a rubber spatula. Using the oiled spatula, transfer the dough to the bowl and pour 1 tablespoon more oil over the top. Flip the dough over once so that it is well coated with the oil; cover tightly with plastic wrap. Let the dough rise at room temperature until nearly tripled in volume and large bubbles have formed, 2 to 2½ hours.

4. One hour before baking the pizza, adjust an oven rack to the middle position, place a pizza stone on the rack, and heat the oven to 450 degrees.

5. Coat a rimmed baking sheet with 2 tablespoons more oil. Using a rubber spatula, turn the dough out onto the baking sheet along with any oil in the bowl. Using your fingertips, press the dough out toward the edges of the pan, taking care not to tear it. (The dough will not fit snugly into corners. If the dough resists stretching, let it relax for 5 to 10 minutes before trying to stretch it again.) Let the dough rest in the pan until slightly bubbly, 5 to 10 minutes. Using a dinner fork, poke the surface of the dough 30 to 40 times and sprinkle with the kosher salt.

6. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 30 minutes, sprinkling the rosemary over the top and rotating the baking sheet halfway through baking. Using a metal spatula, transfer the pizza to a cutting board. Brush the dough lightly with the remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Slice and serve immediately.

CREAMLESS CREAMY TOMATO SOUP

SERVES 6 TO 8

If half of the soup fills your blender by more than two-thirds, process the soup in three batches. You can also use a handheld blender to process the soup directly in the pot. Serve this soup topped with croutons (recipe follows), if desired. For an even smoother soup, pass the pureed mixture through a fine-mesh strainer before stirring in the chicken broth in step 2.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling**
- 1 medium onion, chopped medium (about 1 cup)**
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)**
- Pinch red pepper flakes (optional)**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 2 (28-ounce) cans whole tomatoes**
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar**
- 3 large slices good-quality white sandwich bread, crusts removed, torn into 1-inch pieces**
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth**
- 2 tablespoons brandy (optional)**
- Salt and ground black pepper**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh chives**

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering, about 1 minute. Add the onion, garlic, red pepper flakes (if using), and bay leaf. Cook, stirring frequently, until the onion is translucent, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes with their juice. Using a potato masher, mash until no pieces bigger than 2 inches remain. Stir in the sugar and bread; bring the soup to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until the bread is completely saturated and starts to break down, about 5 minutes. Remove and discard the bay leaf.

2. Transfer half of the soup to a blender. Add 1 tablespoon more oil and process until the soup is smooth and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl and repeat with the remaining soup and the remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Rinse out the Dutch oven and return the soup to the pot. Stir in the chicken broth and brandy (if using). Return the soup to a boil and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve the soup in individual bowls, each portion sprinkled with pepper and chopped chives and drizzled with olive oil.

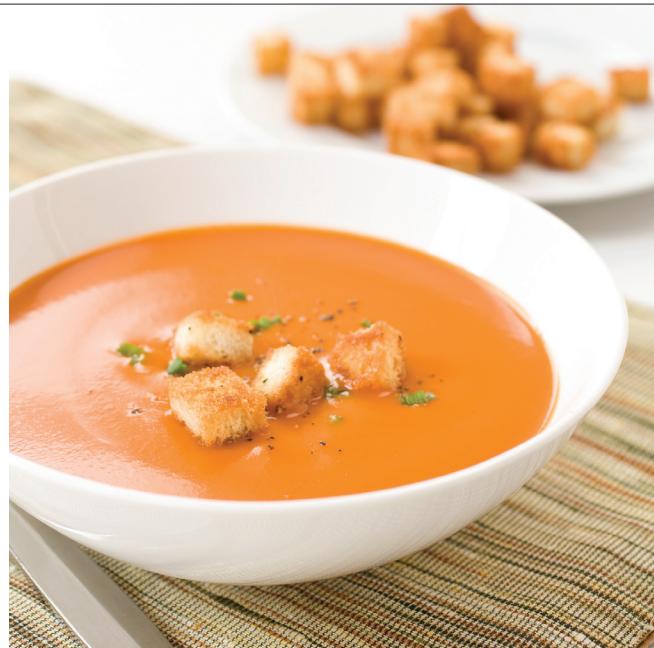


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CROUTONS

MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS

- 3 large slices good-quality white sandwich bread, crusts removed, cut into ½-inch cubes (about 1½ cups)**
- 1½ tablespoons olive oil**
- Salt and ground black pepper**

1. Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Place the bread cubes in a medium bowl and drizzle with the olive oil. Toss well with a rubber spatula to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

2. Spread the croutons in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet or in a shallow baking dish. Bake the croutons, turning them over halfway through cooking, until golden brown and crisp, 8 to 10 minutes. After cooling, the croutons can be stored in an airtight container or a plastic bag for up to 3 days.

POACHED SALMON WITH HERB AND CAPER VINAIGRETTE

SERVES 4

To ensure even-sized pieces of fish, we prefer to buy a whole center-cut fillet and cut it into four pieces. If a skinless whole fillet is unavailable, follow the recipe as directed with a skin-on fillet, adding 3 to 4 minutes to the cooking time in step 2. Remove the skin after cooking. This recipe will yield salmon fillets cooked to medium. If you prefer rare salmon (translucent in the center), reduce the cooking time by 2 minutes, or cook until the salmon registers 110 degrees in the thickest part.

- 2 lemons**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves, stems reserved**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh tarragon leaves, stems reserved**
- 2 small shallots, minced (about 4 tablespoons)**
- ½ cup dry white wine**
- ½ cup water**
- 1 skinless salmon fillet (1¾ to 2 pounds), about 1½ inches at thickest part, white membrane removed, fillet cut crosswise into 4 equal pieces (see note)**
- 2 tablespoons capers, rinsed and roughly chopped**
- 1 tablespoon honey**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- Salt and ground black pepper**



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1. Cut the top and bottom off 1 lemon; cut the lemon into 8 to 10¼-inch-thick slices. Cut the remaining lemon into 8 wedges and set aside. Arrange the lemon slices in a single layer across the bottom of a 12-inch skillet. Scatter the herb stems and 2 tablespoons of the minced shallots evenly over the lemon slices. Add the wine and water.

2. Place the salmon fillets in the skillet, skinned side down, on top of the lemon slices. Set the pan over high heat and bring the liquid to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook until the sides are opaque but the center of the thickest part is still translucent (or until an instant-read thermometer inserted in the thickest part registers 125 degrees), 11 to 16 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and, using a spatula, carefully transfer the salmon and lemon slices to a paper towel-lined plate. Tent loosely with foil.

3. Return the pan to high heat and simmer the cooking liquid until slightly thickened and reduced to 2 tablespoons, 4 to 5 minutes. Meanwhile, combine the remaining 2 tablespoons minced shallots, chopped herbs, capers, honey, and olive oil in a medium bowl. Strain the reduced cooking liquid through a fine-mesh strainer into the bowl with the herb-caper mixture, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Whisk to combine; season with salt and pepper to taste.

4. Season the salmon lightly with salt and pepper. Using a spatula, carefully lift and tilt the salmon fillets to remove the lemon slices. Place the salmon on a serving platter or individual plates and spoon the vinaigrette over the top. Serve, passing the reserved lemon wedges separately.

CRUNCHY OVEN-BAKED FISH

SERVES 4

To prevent overcooking, buy fish fillets that are at least 1 inch thick. The bread crumbs can be made up to 3 days in advance and stored at room temperature in a tightly sealed container (allow to cool fully before storing). Serve the dish with our Sweet and Tangy Tartar Sauce (recipe follows).

- 4 large slices high-quality white sandwich bread, torn into 1-inch pieces**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted**
Salt and ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves**
- 1 small shallot, minced (about 2 tablespoons)**
- ¼ cup plus 5 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 2 large eggs**
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish (optional)**
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise**
- ½ teaspoon paprika**
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)**
- 1¼ pounds cod, haddock, or other thick white fish fillet (1 to 1½ inches thick), cut into 4 pieces**
- Lemon wedges**

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Pulse the bread, melted butter, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon black pepper in a food processor until the bread is coarsely ground, eight 1-second pulses (you should have about 3½ cups crumbs). Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet and bake until deep golden brown and dry, about 15 minutes, stirring twice during the baking time. Cool the crumbs to room temperature, about 10 minutes. Transfer the crumbs to a pie plate; toss with the parsley and shallot. Increase the oven temperature to 425 degrees.

2. Place ¼ cup of the flour in a second pie plate. In a third pie plate, whisk together the eggs, horseradish (if using), mayonnaise, paprika, cayenne (if using), and ¼ teaspoon black pepper until combined; whisk in the remaining 5 tablespoons flour until smooth.

3. Spray a wire rack with vegetable oil spray and place in a rimmed baking sheet. Dry the fish thoroughly with paper towels and season with salt and pepper. Dredge 1 fillet in the flour; shake off the excess. Using tongs, coat with the egg mixture. Coat all sides of the fillet with the bread crumb mixture, pressing gently so that a thick layer of crumbs adheres to the fish. Transfer the breaded fish to the wire rack. Repeat with the remaining 3 fillets.

4. Bake the fish until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center of the fillets registers 140 degrees, 18 to 25 minutes. Using a thin spatula, transfer the fillets to individual plates and serve immediately with lemon wedges.



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SWEET AND TANGY TARTAR SAUCE

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

This sauce can be refrigerated, tightly covered, for up to 1 week.

- ¾ cup mayonnaise**
- ½ small shallot, minced (about 1 tablespoon)**
- 2 tablespoons drained capers, minced**
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish**
- 1½ teaspoons distilled white vinegar**
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**

Mix all the ingredients together in a small bowl. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the mixture rest to blend the flavors, about 15 minutes. Stir again before serving.

GRAND MARNIER SOUFFLÉ

SERVES 6 TO 8

Make the soufflé base and immediately begin beating the whites before the base cools too much. Once the whites have reached the proper consistency, they must be used at once. Do not open the oven door during the first 15 minutes of baking time; as the soufflé nears the end of its baking, you may check its progress by opening the oven door slightly. (Be careful here; if your oven runs hot, the top of the soufflé may burn.) A quick dusting of confectioners' sugar is a nice finishing touch, but a soufflé waits for no one, so be ready to serve it immediately.

SOUFFLÉ DISH PREPARATION

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup (1½ ounces) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons sifted cocoa

SOUFFLÉ

- 5 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (3½ ounces) granulated sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 5 large eggs, separated
- 1 tablespoon grated zest from 1 medium orange
- 3 tablespoons Grand Marnier
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar

1. Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Grease a 1½-quart porcelain soufflé dish with the butter, making sure to coat all of the interior surfaces. Stir together the sugar and cocoa in a small bowl; pour into the buttered soufflé dish and shake to coat the bottom and sides with a thick, even coating. Tap out the excess and set the dish aside.



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2. FOR THE SOUFFLÉ: Whisk the flour, ¼ cup of the sugar, and salt in a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Gradually whisk in the milk, whisking until smooth and no lumps remain. Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat, whisking constantly, until thickened and the mixture pulls away from the sides of the pan, about 3 minutes. Scrape the mixture into a medium bowl; whisk in the butter until combined. Whisk in the yolks until incorporated; stir in the orange zest and Grand Marnier.

3. In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the egg whites, cream of tartar, and 1 teaspoon of the sugar at medium-low speed until combined, about 10 seconds. Increase the speed to medium-high and beat until frothy and no longer translucent, about 2 minutes. With the mixer running, sprinkle in half of the remaining sugar; continue beating until the whites form soft, billowy peaks, about 30 seconds. With the mixer still running, sprinkle in the remaining sugar and beat until just combined, about 10 seconds. The whites should form soft peaks when the beater is lifted but should not appear Styrofoam-like or dry.

4. Using a rubber spatula, immediately stir one-quarter of the beaten whites into the soufflé base to lighten until almost no white streaks remain. Scrape the remaining whites into the base and fold in the whites with a balloon whisk until the mixture is just combined, gently flicking the whisk after scraping up the side of the bowl to free any of the mixture caught in the whisk. Gently pour the mixture into the prepared dish and run your index finger through the mixture, tracing the circumference about ½ inch from the side of the dish, to help the soufflé rise properly. Bake until the surface of the soufflé is deep brown, the center jiggles slightly when shaken, and the soufflé has risen 2 to 2½ inches above the rim of the dish, 20 to 25 minutes. Serve immediately.

INDIVIDUAL MAKE-AHEAD CHOCOLATE SOUFFLÉS

SERVES 6 TO 8

The yolk whipping time in step 3 depends on the type of mixer you use; a standing mixer will take about 3 minutes, and a hand-held mixer will take about 8 minutes. If using 6-ounce ramekins, reduce the cooking time to 20 to 22 minutes.

RAMEKIN PREPARATION

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar

SOUFFLÉS

- 8 ounces bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, chopped coarse
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon Grand Marnier
- 6 large egg yolks
- ⅓ cup (2½ ounces) granulated sugar
- 8 large egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 tablespoons (½ ounce) confectioners' sugar

1. FOR THE RAMEKINS: Grease the inside of eight 8-ounce ramekins with the softened butter, then coat the inside of each dish evenly with the sugar.

2. FOR THE SOUFFLÉS: Melt the chocolate and butter in a medium heatproof bowl set over a saucepan filled with 1 inch of barely simmering water, stirring frequently until smooth. Remove from the heat and stir in the salt, vanilla, and liqueur; set aside.



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3. Using an electric mixer, whip the yolks and the granulated sugar at medium speed until the mixture triples in volume and is thick and pale yellow, 3 to 8 minutes (see note). Fold the yolk mixture into the chocolate mixture. Thoroughly clean and dry the mixing bowl and the beaters.

4. Using the clean beaters, whip the egg whites at medium-low speed until frothy, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the cream of tartar, increase the mixer speed to medium-high, and whip until soft peaks form when the beaters are lifted, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the confectioners' sugar and continue to whip at medium-high speed to stiff peaks, 2 to 4 minutes (do not overwhip). Whisk the last few strokes by hand, making sure to scrape any unwhipped whites from the bottom of the bowl.

5. Vigorously stir one-quarter of the whipped egg whites into the chocolate mixture. Gently fold the remaining whites into the chocolate mixture until just incorporated. Carefully spoon the mixture into the prepared ramekins almost to the rim, wiping the excess filling from the rims with a wet paper towel. (To serve right away, bake as directed in step 7, reducing the baking time to 12 to 15 minutes.)

6. TO STORE: Cover each ramekin tightly with plastic wrap and then foil and freeze for at least 3 hours or up to 1 month. (Do not thaw before baking.)

7. TO BAKE AND SERVE: Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Unwrap the ramekins and spread them out over a baking sheet. Bake the soufflés until fragrant, fully risen, and the exterior is set but the interior is still a bit loose and creamy, about 25 minutes. (To check the interior, use 2 spoons to pull open the top of one and peek inside.) Serve immediately.

GLAZED SPIRAL-SLICED HAM

SERVES 12 TO 14, WITH LEFTOVERS

You can bypass the 90-minute soaking time, but the heating time will increase to 18 to 20 minutes per pound for a cold ham. If there is a tear or hole in the ham's inner covering, wrap it in several layers of plastic wrap before soaking it in hot water. Instead of using the plastic oven bag, the ham may be placed cut side down in the roasting pan and covered tightly with foil, but you will need to add 3 to 4 minutes per pound to the heating time. If using an oven bag, be sure to cut slits in the bag so it does not burst.

- 1 (7- to 10-pound) spiral-sliced bone-in half ham**
- 1 large plastic oven bag (see note)**
- 1 recipe glaze (recipes follow)**

1. Leaving the ham's inner plastic or foil covering intact, place the ham in a large container and cover with hot tap water; set aside for 45 minutes. Drain and cover again with hot tap water; set aside for another 45 minutes.

2. Adjust an oven rack to the lowest position and heat the oven to 250 degrees. Unwrap the ham; remove and discard the plastic disk covering the bone. Place the ham in the oven bag. Gather the top of the bag tightly so the bag fits snugly around the ham, tie the bag, and trim the excess plastic. Set the ham cut side down in a large roasting pan and cut 4 slits in the top of the bag with a paring knife.

3. Bake the ham until the center registers 100 degrees on an instant-read thermometer, 1 to 1½ hours (about 10 minutes per pound).

4. Remove the ham from the oven and increase the oven temperature to 350 degrees. Cut open the oven bag and roll back the sides to expose the ham. Brush the ham with one-third of the glaze and return to the oven until the glaze becomes sticky, about 10 minutes (if the glaze is too thick to brush, return it to the heat to loosen).

5. Remove the ham from the oven, transfer to a cutting board, and brush the entire ham with another third of the glaze. Let the ham rest, loosely tented with foil, for 15 minutes. While the ham rests, heat the remaining third of the glaze with 4 to 6 tablespoons of the ham juices until it forms a thick but fluid sauce. Carve and serve the ham, passing the sauce at the table.



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MAPLE-ORANGE GLAZE

MAKES 1 CUP, ENOUGH TO GLAZE 1 HAM

- ¾ cup maple syrup**
- ½ cup orange marmalade**
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon**

Combine all the ingredients in a small saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is thick, syrupy, and reduced to 1 cup, 5 to 10 minutes; set aside.

CHERRY-PORT GLAZE

MAKES 1 CUP, ENOUGH TO GLAZE 1 HAM

- ½ cup ruby port**
- ½ cup cherry preserves**
- 1 cup packed dark brown sugar**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**

Simmer the port in a small saucepan over medium heat until reduced to 2 tablespoons, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining ingredients and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sugar dissolves and the mixture is thick, syrupy, and reduced to 1 cup, 5 to 10 minutes; set aside.

BEST DROP BISCUITS

MAKES 12 BISCUITS

If buttermilk isn't available, powdered buttermilk added according to package instructions or clabbered milk can be used instead. To make clabbered milk, mix 1 cup milk with 1 tablespoon lemon juice and let stand 10 minutes. A $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup (#16) portion scoop can be used to portion the batter. To refresh day-old biscuits, heat them in a 300-degree oven for 10 minutes.

2 cups (10 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
1 cup cold buttermilk (see note)
8 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly (about 5 minutes), plus 2 tablespoons melted butter for brushing the biscuits

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 475 degrees. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Combine the buttermilk and 8 tablespoons of the melted butter in a medium bowl, stirring until the butter forms small clumps.

2. Add the buttermilk mixture to the dry ingredients and stir with a rubber spatula until just incorporated and the batter pulls away from the sides of the bowl. Using a greased $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup dry measure, scoop a level amount of batter and drop onto the prepared baking sheet (the biscuits should measure about $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches high). Repeat with the remaining batter, spacing the biscuits about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart. Bake until the tops are golden brown and crisp, 12 to 14 minutes.

3. Brush biscuit tops with remaining 2 tablespoons melted butter. Transfer to wire rack and let cool 5 minutes before serving.



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PORK STIR-FRY WITH NOODLES (LO MEIN)

SERVES 4

Use a cast-iron skillet for this recipe if you have one—it will help create the best sear on the pork. When shopping for Chinese rice wine, look for one that is amber in color; if not available, sherry may be used as a substitute. If no hoisin sauce is available, substitute 1 tablespoon sugar. If boneless pork ribs are unavailable, substitute 1½ pounds bone-in country-style ribs, followed by the next-best option, pork tenderloin. Liquid smoke provides a flavor reminiscent of the Chinese barbecued pork traditional to this dish. It is important to cook the noodles at the last minute to avoid clumping.

- 3 tablespoons soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce**
- 2 tablespoons hoisin sauce (see note)**
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil**
- ¼ teaspoon five-spice powder**
- 1 pound boneless country-style pork ribs, trimmed of surface fat and excess gristle, sliced crosswise into ½-inch pieces (see note)**
- ¼ teaspoon liquid smoke (optional, see note)**
- ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth**
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch**
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)**
- 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger**
- 4½ teaspoons vegetable oil**
- 4 tablespoons Chinese rice cooking wine (Shao-Xing) or dry sherry (see note)**
- 8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, stems trimmed, caps cut in halves or thirds (about 3 cups)**
- 2 bunches scallions, whites thinly sliced and greens cut into 1-inch pieces (about 2 cups)**
- 1 small head Napa cabbage, halved and sliced crosswise into ½-inch strips (about 4 cups)**
- 12 ounces fresh Chinese noodles or 8 ounces dried linguine**
- 1 tablespoon Asian chili-garlic sauce**

1. Bring 6 quarts water to a boil in a Dutch oven over high heat.
2. Whisk the soy sauce, oyster sauce, hoisin sauce, sesame oil, and five-spice powder together in a medium bowl. Place 3 tablespoons of the soy sauce mixture in a large zipper-lock bag; add the pork and liquid smoke, if using. Toss to combine; press out as much air as possible and seal the bag. Marinate in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes or up to 1 hour. Whisk the broth and cornstarch into



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the remaining soy sauce mixture in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl, mix the garlic and ginger with ½ teaspoon of the vegetable oil; set aside.

3. Heat 1 teaspoon of the vegetable oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet (or cast-iron skillet) over high heat until just smoking. Add half of the pork in a single layer, breaking up the clumps with a wooden spoon. Cook without stirring for 1 minute. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of the wine to the skillet; cook, stirring constantly, until the liquid is reduced and the pork is well coated, 30 to 60 seconds. Transfer the pork to a medium bowl and repeat with the remaining pork, 1 teaspoon more oil, and the remaining 2 tablespoons wine. Wipe the skillet clean with paper towels.

4. Return the skillet to high heat, add 1 teaspoon more vegetable oil, and heat until just smoking. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until light golden brown, 4 to 6 minutes. Add the scallions and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the scallions are wilted, 2 to 3 minutes longer; transfer the vegetables to the bowl with the pork.

5. Add the remaining 1 teaspoon vegetable oil and cabbage to the now-empty skillet; cook, stirring occasionally, until spotty brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Clear the center of the skillet; add the garlic-ginger mixture and cook, mashing the mixture with a spoon, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir the garlic mixture into the cabbage; return the pork-vegetable mixture and the chicken broth-soy sauce mixture to the skillet. Simmer until thickened and the ingredients are well incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat.

6. While the cabbage is cooking, stir the noodles into the boiling water. Cook, stirring constantly, until the noodles are tender, 3 to 4 minutes for fresh Chinese noodles or 10 minutes for dried linguine. Drain the noodles and transfer back to the Dutch oven; add the cooked stir-fry mixture and chili-garlic sauce, tossing the noodles constantly, until the sauce coats the noodles. Serve immediately.

TERIYAKI STIR-FRIED BEEF WITH GREEN BEANS AND SHIITAKES

SERVES 4

You can substitute 1 tablespoon white wine or sake mixed with 1 teaspoon sugar for the mirin.

- 4 tablespoons soy sauce**
- 1 teaspoon plus 2 tablespoons sugar**
- 12 ounces flank steak, cut into 2-inch-wide strips with grain, then sliced across grain into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-thick slices**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-sodium chicken broth**
- 1 tablespoon mirin (see note)**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- 1 teaspoon cornstarch**
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 8 ounces shiitake mushrooms, wiped clean, stemmed, and cut into 1-inch pieces**
- 12 ounces green beans, ends trimmed and halved**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water**
- 3 scallions, cut into $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces, white and light green pieces quartered lengthwise**



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1. Combine 2 tablespoons of the soy sauce and 1 teaspoon of the sugar in a medium bowl. Add the beef, toss well, and marinate for at least 10 minutes or up to 1 hour, stirring once. Meanwhile, whisk the remaining 2 tablespoons soy sauce, remaining 2 tablespoons sugar, broth, mirin, pepper flakes, and cornstarch in a medium bowl. Combine the garlic, ginger, and 1 teaspoon of the oil in a small bowl.

2. Drain the beef and discard the liquid. Heat 1 teaspoon more oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over high heat until just smoking. Add half of the beef in a single layer, breaking up any clumps. Cook, without stirring, for 1 minute, then stir and cook until browned, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer the beef to a clean bowl. Heat 1 teaspoon more oil in the skillet and repeat with the remaining beef. Rinse the skillet and dry with paper towels.

3. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil to the now-empty skillet and heat until just smoking. Add the mushrooms and cook until beginning to brown, about 2 minutes. Add the green beans and cook, stirring frequently, until spotty brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the water and cover the pan; continue to cook until the green beans are crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes longer. Uncover the skillet and push the vegetables to the sides to clear the center; add the garlic-ginger mixture to the clearing and cook, mashing with a spatula, until fragrant, 15 to 20 seconds. Stir to combine the garlic-ginger mixture with the vegetables. Return the beef and any juices to the skillet, add the scallions, and stir to combine. Whisk the sauce to recombine, then add to the skillet; cook, stirring constantly, until thickened, about 30 seconds. Serve.

GRILLED PORK LOIN WITH APPLE-CRANBERRY FILLING

SERVES 6

This recipe is best prepared with a loin that is 7 to 8 inches long and 4 to 5 inches wide. To make cutting the pork easier, freeze it for 30 minutes. If mustard seeds are unavailable, stir an equal amount of whole grain mustard into the filling after the apples have been processed. Use more or less cayenne, depending on how spicy you'd like the stuffing. The pork loin can be stuffed and tied a day ahead of time, but don't season the exterior until you are ready to grill.

FILLING

- 1 cup apple cider
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large shallot, halved lengthwise and sliced thin crosswise (about ¼ cup)
- 1½ cups (4 ounces) packed dried apples
- ½ cup (2½ ounces) packed dried cranberries
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds (see note)
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- ⅛–⅓ teaspoon cayenne pepper (see note)

PORK

- 2 (3-inch) wood chunks
- 1 boneless center-cut pork loin roast, 2½ pounds (see note)
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- Vegetable oil for cooking grate

1. FOR THE FILLING: Bring all of the ingredients to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and cook until the apples are very soft, about 20 minutes. Push the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer set over a bowl to extract as much liquid as possible. Return the liquid to the saucepan and simmer over medium-high heat until reduced to ½ cup, about 5 minutes; reserve the glaze. Meanwhile, pulse the apple mixture in a food processor until uniformly coarsely chopped, about fifteen 1-second pulses. Transfer the filling to a bowl and refrigerate while preparing the pork.



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2. FOR THE PORK: Soak the wood chunks in water for 1 hour. Meanwhile, cut the meat to an even ½-inch thickness. Season inside liberally with salt and spread the apple filling in an even layer, leaving a ½-inch border. Roll tightly and tie with twine at 1-inch intervals. Season the exterior liberally with salt and pepper.

3. Light a large chimney starter filled with 5 quarts of charcoal (about 85 briquettes) and allow to burn until the coals are fully ignited and covered with a thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Build a modified two-level fire by arranging the coals to cover one half of the grill. Drain the wood chunks and place on the coals. Open the bottom vent fully. Position the cooking grate over the coals, cover the grill, and heat the grate until hot, about 5 minutes; scrape the cooking grate clean with a grill brush. Lightly dip a wad of paper towels in the oil; holding the wad with tongs, wipe the cooking grate.

4. Place the roast, fat side up, on the cooking grate over the cool side of the grill. Cover the grill and position the vent, halfway open, over the roast to draw the smoke through the grill. Grill-roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the roast registers 130 to 135 degrees, 55 to 70 minutes, flipping the roast once halfway through the cooking time. Brush the roast with half of the reserved glaze; flip and brush with the remaining glaze. (You may need to reheat the glaze briefly to make it spreadable.) Continue to cook until the glaze is glossy and sticky, about 5 minutes longer.

5. Transfer the roast to a cutting board, loosely tent with foil, and let rest for 15 minutes. (The internal temperature should rise to about 145 degrees.) Cut into ½-inch-thick slices, removing the twine as you cut. Serve immediately.

SAUTÉED SPINACH WITH ALMONDS AND GOLDEN RAISINS

SERVES 4

Be sure to toast the almonds for best flavor and good crunch. If you don't have a microwave-safe bowl large enough to accommodate the entire amount of spinach, cook it in a smaller bowl in 2 batches. Reduce the amount of water to 2 tablespoons per batch and cook the spinach for about 1½ minutes.

3 (6-ounce) bags baby spinach (about 16 cups)
¼ cup water
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus
 2 teaspoons for drizzling
4 medium garlic cloves, sliced thin crosswise
 (about 2 tablespoons)
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
½ cup golden raisins
Salt
2 teaspoons sherry vinegar
⅓ cup slivered almonds, toasted

1. Place the spinach and water in a large microwave-safe bowl. Cover the bowl with a large microwave-safe dinner plate (the plate should completely cover the bowl and not rest on the spinach). Microwave on high power until the spinach is wilted and decreased in volume by half, 3 to 4 minutes. Using potholders, remove the bowl from the microwave and keep covered for 1 minute. Carefully remove the plate and transfer the spinach to a colander set in the sink. Using the back of a rubber spatula, gently press the spinach against the colander to release the excess liquid. Transfer the spinach to a cutting board and roughly chop. Return to the colander and press a second time.

2. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil, the garlic, pepper flakes, and raisins in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic is light golden brown and beginning to sizzle, 3 to 6 minutes. Add the spinach to the skillet, using tongs to stir and coat with the oil. Sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon salt and continue stirring with the tongs until the spinach is uniformly wilted and glossy green, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle with the vinegar and almonds; stir to combine. Drizzle with the remaining 2 teaspoons oil and season with salt to taste. Serve immediately.



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OATMEAL CAKE WITH BROILED ICING

MAKES ONE 8-INCH SQUARE CAKE

Do not use old-fashioned or instant oats for this recipe. Be sure to use a metal baking dish; glass pans are not recommended when broiling. If you have a drawer-style broiler (underneath the oven), position the rack as far as possible from the broiler element and monitor the icing carefully as it cooks in step 5. A vertical sawing motion with a serrated knife works best for cutting through the crunchy icing and tender crumb.

CAKE

- 1 cup (3 ounces) quick-cooking oats (see note)**
- ¾ cup water, room temperature**
- ¾ cup (3½ ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, softened**
- ½ cup (3½ ounces) granulated sugar**
- ½ cup packed (3½ ounces) light brown sugar**
- 1 large egg, at room temperature**
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract**

BROILED ICING

- ¼ cup packed (1¾ ounces) light brown sugar**
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted and cooled**
- 3 tablespoons milk**
- ¾ cup sweetened, shredded coconut**
- ½ cup (2½ ounces) pecans, chopped**



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1. FOR THE CAKE: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Cut two 16-inch lengths aluminum foil and fold both lengthwise to 5-inch widths. Spray an 8 by 8-inch metal baking dish with vegetable oil spray. Fit the foil pieces into the baking dish, one overlapping the other, pushing them into the corners and up the sides of the pan; allow the excess to overhang the pan edges. Spray the foil lightly with vegetable oil spray.

2. Combine the oats and water in a medium bowl and let sit until the water is absorbed, about 5 minutes. In another medium bowl, whisk the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg together.

3. In the bowl of a standing mixer, beat the butter and sugars on medium speed until combined and the mixture has the consistency of damp sand, 2 to 4 minutes, scraping down the bowl with a rubber spatula halfway through mixing. Add the egg and vanilla; beat until combined, about 30 seconds. Add the flour mixture in 2 additions and mix until just incorporated, about 30 seconds. Add the soaked oats and mix until combined, about 15 seconds.

4. Give the batter a final stir with a rubber spatula to make sure it is thoroughly combined. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan and lightly tap it against the countertop 3 or 4 times to dislodge any large air bubbles; smooth the surface with the spatula. Bake the cake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out with a few crumbs attached, 30 to 35 minutes, rotating the pan halfway through baking. Let the cake cool slightly in the pan, at least 10 minutes.

5. FOR THE BROILED ICING: While the cake cools, adjust an oven rack about 9 inches from the broiler element and heat the broiler. In a medium bowl, whisk together the brown sugar, melted butter, and milk; stir in the coconut and pecans. Spread the mixture evenly over the warm cake. Broil until the topping is bubbling and golden, 3 to 5 minutes.

6. Let the cake cool in the pan 1 hour. Transfer the cake to a serving platter, then discard the foil. Cut the cake into squares and serve.

SPICE CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

SERVES 12 TO 14

To save time, let the eggs, buttermilk, and butter come up to temperature while the browned butter and spice mixture cools. To prevent unsightly air holes in the finished cake, be sure to follow the instructions for removing air bubbles in the batter. Leftover cake can be stored, covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. The cake should be brought to room temperature before serving.

CAKE

2½ cups (11½ ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting pan
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
¾ teaspoon ground cardamom
½ teaspoon ground allspice
½ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
2 large whole eggs plus 3 large egg yolks, at room temperature
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1¾ cups (12¼ ounces) granulated sugar
2 tablespoons light or mild molasses
1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
1 cup buttermilk, at room temperature

FROSTING

5 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into 5 pieces, softened
1¼ cups (5 ounces) confectioners' sugar
8 ounces cream cheese, cut into 4 pieces, softened
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ cup coarsely chopped walnuts, toasted (optional)

1. FOR THE CAKE: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour a 13 by 9-inch baking pan. Combine the spices in a small bowl; reserve ½ teaspoon for the frosting.

2. Heat 4 tablespoons of the butter in an 8-inch skillet over medium heat until melted, 1 to 2 minutes. Continue to cook, swirling the pan constantly, until the butter is light brown and has a faint nutty aroma, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the spices and continue to cook, stirring constantly, 15 seconds. Remove from the heat and cool to room temperature, about 30 minutes.



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3. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in a medium bowl. In a small bowl, gently whisk the eggs, yolks, and vanilla to combine. In a standing mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream the remaining 12 tablespoons butter with the sugar and molasses at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes, scraping down the sides and bottom of the bowl twice with a rubber spatula. Reduce the mixer speed to medium and add the cooled butter and spice mixture, ginger, and half of the egg mixture; mix until incorporated, about 15 seconds. Repeat with the remaining egg mixture; scrape down the bowl again. Reduce the mixer speed to low; add about one-third of the flour mixture, followed by half of the buttermilk, mixing until just incorporated after each addition, about 5 seconds. Repeat using half of the remaining flour mixture and all of the remaining buttermilk. Scrape down the bowl and add the remaining flour mixture; mix at medium speed until the batter is thoroughly combined, about 15 seconds. Remove the bowl from the mixer and fold the batter once or twice with the rubber spatula to incorporate any remaining flour.

4. Transfer the batter to the prepared pan; zigzag the tip of a metal spatula through the batter, pulling it to the pan edges. Lightly tap the pan against the countertop 3 or 4 times to dislodge any large air bubbles; smooth the surface with the spatula.

5. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, 32 to 37 minutes. Cool the cake to room temperature in the pan on a wire rack, about 2 hours.

6. FOR THE FROSTING: In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the butter, sugar, and reserved ½ teaspoon spice mixture at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the cream cheese one piece at a time, beating thoroughly after each addition. Add the vanilla and beat until no lumps remain, about 30 seconds.

7. Run a paring knife around the edge of the cake to loosen from the pan. Using a spatula, spread the frosting evenly over the surface of the cake. Sprinkle the cake with the walnuts, if using. Cut into squares and serve.

GRILLED MARINATED FLANK STEAK

SERVES 4 TO 6

Flank steaks smaller or larger than 2 pounds can be used, but adjust the amount of salt and pepper accordingly. We prefer flank steak cooked rare or medium-rare. If the steak is to retain its juices, it must be allowed to rest before being sliced.

- 1 whole flank steak (about 2 pounds), patted dry with paper towels**
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt**
- 1 recipe wet paste marinade (recipes follow)**
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- Vegetable oil for cooking grate**

1. Place the steak on a rimmed baking sheet or in a large baking dish. Using a dinner fork, prick the steak about 20 times on each side. Rub both sides of the steak evenly with the salt, and then with the paste. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.

2. Light a large chimney starter filled with charcoal (6 quarts, or about 100 briquettes) and allow to burn until the coals are fully ignited and partially covered with a thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Empty the coals into the grill; build a two-level fire by arranging two-thirds of the coals over half of the grill and arranging the remaining coals in a single layer over the other half. Position the cooking grate over the coals, cover the grill, and heat the grate for 5 minutes; scrape the cooking grate clean with a grill brush. The grill is ready when the coals are hot (you can hold your hand 5 inches above the grate for just 2 seconds). Dip a wad of paper towels in the oil; holding the wad with tongs, wipe the cooking grate.

3. Using paper towels, wipe the paste off the steak; season both sides with the pepper. Grill the steak directly over the coals until well browned, 4 to 6 minutes. Using tongs, flip the steak; grill until the second side is well browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Using a paring knife, make a small cut into the thickest part of the meat; if the meat is slightly less done than desired, transfer the steak to a cutting board (the meat will continue to cook as it rests). If the steak is significantly underdone, position so that the thinner side is over the cool side of the grill and the thicker side is over the hot side; continue to cook until the thickest part is slightly less done than desired, then transfer the steak to a cutting board.

4. Loosely tent the steak with foil; let rest 5 to 10 minutes. Using a sharp chef's knife or carving knife, slice the steak about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick against the grain and on the bias. Serve immediately.

GARLIC-CHILE WET PASTE MARINADE

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 FLANK STEAK

This paste marinade makes for a smoky-spicy steak.

- 6 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (2 tablespoons)**



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- 6 tablespoons corn or vegetable oil**
- 2 medium scallions, minced (about 3 tablespoons)**
- 1 medium chipotle chile in adobo sauce, minced (about 1 tablespoon)**
- 1 medium jalapeño chile, minced (about 1 tablespoon)**

Puree all of the ingredients in a blender until smooth, scraping down the sides of the blender jar as needed.

GARLIC-SHALLOT-ROSEMARY WET PASTE MARINADE

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 FLANK STEAK

- 6 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (2 tablespoons)**
- 6 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 medium shallot, minced (about 3 tablespoons)**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh rosemary leaves**

Puree all of the ingredients in a blender until smooth, scraping down the sides of the blender jar as needed.

GARLIC-GINGER-SESAME WET PASTE MARINADE

MAKES ENOUGH FOR 1 FLANK STEAK

- 4 tablespoons toasted sesame oil**
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh ginger**
- 2 medium scallions, minced (about 3 tablespoons)**
- 3 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (1 tablespoon)**

Puree all of the ingredients in a blender until smooth, scraping down the sides of the blender jar as needed.

GRILLED POTATOES WITH GARLIC AND ROSEMARY

SERVES 4

This recipe allows you to grill an entrée while the hot coals burn down in step 1. Once that item is done, start grilling the potatoes. This recipe works best with small potatoes that are about 1½ inches in diameter. If using medium potatoes, 2 to 3 inches in diameter, cut them into quarters. If the potatoes are larger than 3 inches in diameter, cut each potato into eighths. Since the potatoes are cooked in the microwave, use wooden skewers.

Vegetable oil for cooking grate

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 9 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 3 tablespoons)
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- Kosher salt
- 2 pounds small Red Bliss potatoes (about 18), scrubbed, halved, and skewered (see note)
- Ground black pepper
- 13 by 9-inch disposable foil roasting pan
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives

1. Light a large chimney starter filled with charcoal (6 quarts, or about 100 briquettes) and allow to burn until the coals are fully ignited and covered with a thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Empty the coals into the grill; build a two-level fire by arranging two-thirds of the coals over half of the grill and arranging the remaining coals in a single layer over the other half. Position the cooking grate over the coals, cover the grill, and heat the grate until hot, about 5 minutes; scrape the cooking grate clean with a grill brush. Remove the lid and let the coals burn until the fire on the hotter part of the grill is medium (you can hold your hand 5 inches above the grate for 5 to 6 seconds), about 10 minutes. Dip a wad of paper towels in vegetable oil; holding the wad with tongs, wipe the cooking grate.



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2. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil, garlic, rosemary, and ½ teaspoon salt in a small skillet over medium heat until sizzling, about 3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue to cook until the garlic is light blond, about 3 minutes. Pour the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a small bowl; press on the solids. Measure 1 tablespoon of the solids and 1 tablespoon of the oil into a large bowl and set aside. Discard the remaining solids but reserve the remaining oil.

3. Place the skewered potatoes in a single layer on a large microwave-safe plate and poke each potato several times with a skewer. Brush with 1 tablespoon of the strained oil and season liberally with salt. Microwave on high power until the potatoes offer slight resistance when pierced with the tip of a paring knife, about 8 minutes, turning them halfway through the cooking time. Transfer the potatoes to a baking sheet coated with 1 tablespoon of the strained oil. Brush with the remaining 1 tablespoon strained oil; season with salt and pepper to taste.

4. Place the potatoes on the hotter side of the grill. Cook, turning once, until grill marks appear, about 4 minutes. Move the potatoes to the cooler side of the grill; cover with the disposable pan and continue to cook until a paring knife slips in and out of the potatoes easily, 5 to 8 minutes longer. Remove the potatoes from the skewers and transfer to the bowl with the reserved garlic-oil mixture; add the chives and toss until thoroughly coated. Serve immediately.

GRILLED RACK OF LAMB

SERVES 4

We prefer the milder taste and bigger size of domestic lamb, but you may substitute imported lamb from New Zealand or Australia. Since imported racks are generally smaller, follow the shorter cooking times given in the recipe. Most lamb is sold frenched (meaning part of each rib bone is exposed), but chances are there will still be some extra fat between the bones. Remove the majority of this fat, leaving an inch at the top of the small eye of meat. Also, make sure that the chine bone (along the bottom of the rack) has been removed to ensure that it will be easy to cut between the ribs after cooking. Ask the butcher to do it; it's very hard to cut off at home.

12 by 8-inch disposable foil pan

Vegetable oil for the cooking grate

4 teaspoons olive oil

4 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary leaves

2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme leaves

2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)

2 racks of lamb (about 1½ pounds each), rib bones frenched, meat trimmed of all excess fat

Salt and ground black pepper



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1. Light a large chimney starter filled with charcoal (6 quarts, or about 100 briquettes) and allow to burn until the coals are fully ignited and partially covered with a thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Place the foil pan in the center of the grill. Empty the coals into the grill, creating equal-sized piles on each side of the pan. Position the cooking grate over the coals, cover the grill, and heat until the grate is hot, about 5 minutes; scrape the cooking grate clean with a grill brush. The grill is ready when the coals are medium-hot. Lightly dip a wad of paper towels in the oil; holding the wad with tongs, wipe the cooking grate.

2. Combine 3 teaspoons of the olive oil, the rosemary, thyme, and garlic in a small bowl; set aside. Rub the lamb with the remaining 1 teaspoon oil and season generously with salt and pepper. Place the racks, bone side up, on the center of the cooking grate over the foil pan, with the meaty side of the racks very close to, but not quite over, the hot coals. Cover and grill until the meat is lightly browned, faint grill marks appear, and the fat has begun to render, 8 to 10 minutes.

3. Flip the racks over, bone side down, and move to the hotter part of the grill. Grill, without moving, until well browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Brush the racks with the rosemary mixture. Flip the racks so the bone side is up and continue to grill over the hotter parts of the grill until well browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Stand the racks up and lean them against each other; continue to grill over one side of the hotter part of the grill until the bottoms are well browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted from the side of a rack into the center, but away from any bones, reads 120 degrees for medium-rare or 125 degrees for medium, 3 to 8 minutes longer.

4. Remove the lamb from the grill and allow to rest, tented with foil, 15 minutes (the racks will continue to cook while resting). Cut between each rib to separate the chops and serve immediately.

SUMMER VEGETABLE GRATIN

SERVES 6 TO 8 AS A SIDE DISH OR 4 AS A LIGHT ENTRÉE

The success of this recipe depends on good-quality produce. Buy zucchini and summer squash of roughly the same diameter. We like the visual contrast zucchini and summer squash bring to the dish, but you can also use just one or the other. A similarly sized broiler-safe gratin dish can be substituted for the 13 by 9-inch baking dish. Serve the gratin alongside grilled fish or meat and accompanied by bread to soak up any flavorful juices.

- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 pound zucchini, ends trimmed and cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices (see note)**
- 1 pound yellow summer squash, ends trimmed and cut crosswise into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices (see note)**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds ripe tomatoes (3 to 4 large), cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-thick slices**
- 2 medium onions, halved lengthwise and sliced thin pole to pole (about 3 cups)**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme leaves**
- 1 large slice good-quality white sandwich bread, torn into quarters**
- 2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese (about 1 cup)**
- 2 medium shallots, minced (about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup)**
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh basil leaves**

1. Adjust an oven rack to the upper-middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Brush a 13 by 9-inch baking dish with 1 tablespoon of the oil; set aside.

2. Toss the zucchini and summer squash slices with 1 teaspoon of the salt in a large bowl; transfer to a colander set over a bowl. Let stand until the zucchini and squash release at least 3 tablespoons of liquid, about 45 minutes. Arrange the slices on a triple layer of paper towels; cover with another triple layer of paper towels. Firmly press each slice to remove as much liquid as possible.



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3. Place the tomato slices in a single layer on a double layer of paper towels and sprinkle evenly with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon more salt; let stand 30 minutes. Place a second double layer of paper towels on top of the tomatoes and press firmly to dry the tomatoes.

4. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon more oil in a 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onions, the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of the pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are softened and dark golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Set the onions aside.

5. Combine the garlic, 3 tablespoons more oil, the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon pepper, and thyme in a small bowl. In a large bowl, toss the zucchini and summer squash in half of the oil mixture, then arrange in the greased baking dish. Arrange the caramelized onions in an even layer over the squash. Slightly overlap the tomato slices in a single layer on top of the onions. Spoon the remaining garlic-oil mixture evenly over the tomatoes. Bake until the vegetables are tender and the tomatoes are starting to brown on the edges, 40 to 45 minutes.

6. Meanwhile, process the bread in a food processor until finely ground, about 10 seconds. (You should have about 1 cup crumbs.) Combine the bread crumbs, remaining 1 tablespoon oil, the Parmesan, and shallots in a medium bowl. Remove the baking dish from the oven and increase the heat to 450 degrees. Sprinkle the bread crumb mixture evenly on top of the tomatoes. Bake the gratin until bubbling and the cheese is lightly browned, 5 to 10 minutes. Sprinkle with the basil and let sit at room temperature 10 minutes before serving.

STUFFED CHICKEN BREASTS

SERVES 4 TO 6

If your chicken breasts come with the tenderloins attached, pull them off and reserve them to make the puree in step 1. If necessary, trim these breasts to make uniform rectangles and to yield 1½ to 2 ounces total trimmings per breast. Because the stuffing contains raw chicken, it is important to check its temperature in step 5.

CHICKEN

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
(8 ounces each, see note)

STUFFING

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 10 ounces white mushrooms, trimmed, wiped clean, and sliced thin
- 1 small leek, white part halved lengthwise, washed, and chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
- ½ teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 1 tablespoon juice from 1 lemon
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley leaves
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth

SAUCE

- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1. FOR THE CHICKEN: Use the tip of a sharp chef's knife to cut each breast horizontally, starting at the thinnest end and stopping the knife tip ½ inch away from the edge so that the halves remain attached. Open up the breasts to create 4 cutlets. Place 1 cutlet at a time in a heavy-duty zipper-lock bag and pound to ¼-inch thickness (the cutlet should measure about 8 by 6 inches). Trim about ½ inch from the long sides of the cutlets (about 1½ to 2 ounces of meat per cutlet, or a total of ½ cup from all 4 cutlets) to form rectangles that measure about 8 by 5 inches. Process all the trimmings in a food processor until smooth, about 20 seconds. Transfer the puree to a medium bowl and set aside. (Do not wash the food processor bowl.)

2. FOR THE STUFFING: Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until all the moisture has evaporated and the mushrooms are golden brown, 8 to 11 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon more oil and the leek; continue to cook, stirring frequently, until softened, 2 to 4 minutes. Add the garlic and thyme and cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant,



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about 30 seconds. Add 1½ teaspoons of the lemon juice and cook until all the moisture has evaporated, about 30 seconds. Transfer the mixture to the bowl of the food processor. Return the pan to the heat; add the wine and scrape the pan bottom to loosen the browned bits. Transfer the wine to a small bowl and set aside. Rinse and dry the skillet.

3. Pulse the mushroom mixture in the food processor until roughly chopped, about five 1-second pulses. Transfer the mushroom mixture to the bowl with the pureed chicken. Add 1½ teaspoons of the parsley, ¼ teaspoon salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper. Using a rubber spatula, fold together the stuffing ingredients until well combined (you should have about 1½ cups stuffing).

4. TO ASSEMBLE AND COOK: With the thinnest ends of the cutlets pointing away from you, spread one-quarter of the stuffing evenly over each cutlet with a rubber spatula, leaving a ¾-inch border along the short sides of the cutlet and a ¼-inch border along the long sides. Roll each breast up as tightly as possible without squeezing out the filling and place seam side down. Evenly space three pieces of twine (each about 12 inches long) beneath each breast and tie, trimming any excess.

5. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Heat the remaining tablespoon oil in the skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add the chicken bundles and brown on 4 sides, about 2 minutes per side. Add the broth and reserved wine to the pan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pan, and cook until an instant-read thermometer registers 160 degrees when inserted into the thickest part of the chicken, 12 to 18 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a cutting board and tent loosely with foil.

6. FOR THE SAUCE AND TO SERVE: While the chicken rests, whisk the mustard into the cooking liquid. Increase the heat to high and simmer, scraping the pan bottom to loosen the browned bits, until dark brown and reduced to ½ cup, 7 to 10 minutes. Off the heat, whisk in the butter and the remaining 1½ teaspoons parsley and 1½ teaspoons lemon juice; season with salt and pepper to taste. Remove the twine and cut each chicken bundle on the bias into 6 medallions. Spoon the sauce over the chicken and serve.

GREEN BEANS AMANDINE

SERVES 8

Use a light-colored traditional skillet instead of a darker nonstick skillet for this recipe to easily monitor the butter's browning.

½ cup sliced almonds
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into pieces
2 teaspoons lemon juice
2 pounds green beans, stem ends trimmed
½ cup water
Salt

1. Toast almonds in large skillet over medium-low heat, stirring often, until just golden, about 6 minutes. Add butter and cook, stirring constantly, until butter is golden brown and has nutty aroma, about 3 minutes. Transfer almond mixture to bowl and stir in lemon juice.

2. Add beans, water, and ½ teaspoon salt to empty skillet. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until beans are nearly tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove lid and cook over medium-high heat until liquid evaporates, 3 to 5 minutes. Off heat, add reserved almond mixture to skillet and toss to combine. Season with salt. Serve.



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ALMOST NO-KNEAD BREAD

MAKES 1 LARGE ROUND LOAF

An enameled cast-iron Dutch oven with a tight-fitting lid yields best results, but the recipe also works in a regular cast-iron Dutch oven or heavy stockpot. Use a mild-flavored lager, such as Budweiser (mild nonalcoholic lager also works). The bread is best eaten the day it is baked but can be wrapped in aluminum foil and stored in a cool, dry place for up to 2 days.

**3 cups (15 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour,
plus additional for dusting work surface**
¼ teaspoon instant or rapid-rise yeast
1½ teaspoons salt
**¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons (7 ounces) water,
at room temperature**
**¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons (3 ounces) mild-flavored
lager (see note)**
1 tablespoon distilled white vinegar

1. Whisk the flour, yeast, and salt together in a large bowl. Add the water, beer, and vinegar. Using a rubber spatula, fold the mixture, scraping up the dry flour from the bottom of the bowl, until a shaggy ball forms. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let sit at room temperature for 8 to 18 hours.

2. Lay a 12 by 18-inch sheet of parchment paper inside a 10-inch skillet and spray with vegetable oil spray. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured work surface and knead 10 to 15 times. Shape the dough into a ball by pulling the edges into the middle. Transfer the dough, seam side down, to the parchment-lined skillet and spray the surface of the dough with vegetable oil spray. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and let rise at room temperature until the dough has doubled in size and does not readily spring back when poked with a finger, about 2 hours.

3. About 30 minutes before baking, adjust an oven rack to the lowest position, place a 6- to 8-quart heavy-bottomed Dutch oven (with a lid) on the rack, and heat the oven to 500 degrees. Lightly flour the top of the dough and, using a razor blade or sharp knife, make one 6-inch-long, ½-inch-deep slit along the top of the dough. Carefully remove the pot from the oven and remove the lid. Pick up the dough by lifting the parchment overhang and lower into the pot (let any excess parchment hang over the pot edge). Cover the pot and place in the oven. Reduce the oven temperature to 425 degrees and bake, covered, for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and continue to bake until the loaf is deep brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the center registers 210 degrees, 20 to 30 minutes longer. Carefully remove the bread from the pot; transfer to a wire rack and cool to room temperature, about 2 hours, before serving.



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SKILLET SODA BREAD

MAKES 1 LOAF

If you do not have a cast-iron skillet, the bread can be baked on a baking sheet, although the crust won't be quite as crunchy. We prefer to use low-fat buttermilk in this bread, but nonfat buttermilk will work as well (though the bread will be a little lighter in texture and flavor). Soda bread is best eaten on the day it is baked but does keep well covered and stored at room temperature for a couple of days, after which time it will become dry.

3 cups (15 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 cup (4 ounces) cake flour
1½ teaspoons baking soda
1½ teaspoons cream of tartar
1½ teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1¾ cups buttermilk, preferably low-fat (see note)
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, melted (optional)

1. Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 400 degrees. Place the flours, baking soda, cream of tartar, salt, and sugar in a large mixing bowl. Add the butter and rub it into the flour using your fingers until it is completely incorporated. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and add 1½ cups of the buttermilk. Work the buttermilk into the flour mixture using a fork until the dough comes together in large clumps and there is no dry flour in the bottom of the bowl, adding up to ¼ cup more buttermilk, 1 tablespoon at a time, until all the loose flour is just moistened. Turn the dough onto a work surface and pat together to form a 6- to 7-inch round. The dough will still be scrappy and uneven.

2. Place the dough in a 12-inch cast-iron skillet. Score a deep cross on the top of the loaf and place in the oven. Bake until nicely browned and a knife comes out clean when inserted into the center of the loaf, about 40 to 45 minutes. Remove from the oven and brush with the tablespoon of melted butter, if using. Cool for at least 30 minutes before slicing.



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CHARCOAL-GRILLED BONE-IN CHICKEN BREASTS

SERVES 6

Note that kosher salt measures differently from table salt, and brands of kosher salt also measure differently from each other. To help ensure that each breast finishes cooking at approximately the same time, buy pieces of similar size. Barbecue sauce can replace the optional glaze in step 4.

- ½ cup table salt, ⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons Morton Kosher Salt, or ⅓ cup Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt (see note)**
- 6 bone-in, skin-on chicken breast halves (about 12 ounces each), ribs removed, trimmed of excess fat and skin (see note)**
- Ground black pepper**
- Vegetable oil for the cooking grate**
- 1 recipe glaze (recipes follow; optional; see note)**

1. Dissolve the salt in 2 quarts cold water in a large container. Submerge the chicken, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate 1 hour. Rinse the chicken under cold water and dry thoroughly with paper towels. Season the chicken with pepper.

2. Meanwhile, light a large chimney starter filled with charcoal (6 quarts, or about 100 briquettes) and allow to burn until the coals are fully ignited and partially covered with a thin layer of ash, about 20 minutes. Build a modified two-level fire by arranging all the coals over one half of the grill, leaving the other half empty. Position the cooking grate over the coals, cover the grill, and let the cooking grate heat up, about 5 minutes. Scrape the cooking grate clean with a grill brush. Dip a wad of paper towels in the oil; holding the wad with tongs, wipe the cooking grate. The grill is ready when the side with the coals is medium-hot (you can hold your hand 5 inches above the cooking grate for 3 to 4 seconds).

3. Cook the chicken on all sides over the hotter part of the grill until the skin is lightly browned and the meat has faint grill marks, 6 to 8 minutes. (If constant flare-ups occur, slide the chicken to the cooler side of the grill and mist the fire with water from a spray bottle.) Move the chicken, skin side down, to the cooler side of the grill, with the thicker sides of the breasts facing the coals. Cover loosely with aluminum foil, cover the grill, and continue to cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast registers 150 degrees, 15 to 25 minutes longer.

4. Brush the bone side of the chicken with glaze (if using). Move the chicken, bone side down, to the hotter side of the grill and cook until browned, 4 to 6 minutes. Brush the skin side of the chicken with glaze; turn the chicken over and continue to cook until browned and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the breast registers 160 degrees, 2 to 3 minutes longer. Transfer the chicken to a plate and let rest, tented with foil, 5 minutes. Serve, passing the remaining glaze separately.



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ORANGE-CHIPOTLE GLAZE

MAKES ABOUT ¾ CUP

- ⅔ cup juice plus 1 teaspoon grated zest from 2 oranges**
- 1 small shallot, minced (about 1 tablespoon)**
- 1–2 chipotle chiles in adobo sauce, minced (1 to 2 tablespoons)**
- 2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves**
- 1 tablespoon light molasses**
- ⅓ teaspoon cornstarch**
- Salt**

Combine the juice, zest, shallot, chipotle, and thyme in a small saucpan, then whisk in the molasses and cornstarch. Simmer the mixture over medium heat until thickened, about 5 minutes. Season with salt to taste. Reserve half of the glaze for serving and use the other half for brushing on the chicken in step 4.

SOY-GINGER GLAZE

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP

Reduce the salt in the brine to ¼ cup when using this glaze.

- ⅓ cup water**
- ¼ cup soy sauce**
- 2 tablespoons mirin**
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger**
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)**
- 3 tablespoons sugar**
- ⅓ teaspoon cornstarch**
- 2 small scallions, minced**

Combine the water, soy sauce, mirin, ginger, and garlic in a small saucpan, then whisk in the sugar and cornstarch. Simmer the mixture over medium heat until thickened, about 5 minutes; stir in the scallions. Reserve half of the glaze for serving and use the other half for brushing on the chicken in step 4.

GREEK CHERRY TOMATO SALAD

SERVES 4 TO 6

If in-season cherry tomatoes are unavailable, substitute vine-ripened cherry tomatoes or grape tomatoes from the supermarket. Cut grape tomatoes in half along the equator (rather than quartering them). If you don't have a salad spinner, after the salted tomatoes have stood for 30 minutes, wrap the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and gently shake to remove seeds and excess liquid. Strain the liquid and proceed with the recipe as directed. The amount of liquid given off by the tomatoes will depend on their ripeness. If you have less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup juice after spinning, proceed with the recipe using the entire amount of juice and reduce it to 3 tablespoons as directed (the cooking time will be shorter).

- 2 pints ripe cherry tomatoes, quartered
(about 4 cups; see note)**
- Salt**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon sugar**
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried oregano**
- 1 medium shallot, minced (about 3 tablespoons)**
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar**
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- Ground black pepper**
- 1 small cucumber, peeled, seeded, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped pitted kalamata olives**
- 4 ounces feta cheese, crumbled (about 1 cup)**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley leaves**

1. Toss the tomatoes, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, and sugar in a medium bowl; let stand for 30 minutes. Transfer the tomatoes to a salad spinner and spin until the seeds and excess liquid have been removed, 45 to 60 seconds, stirring to redistribute the tomatoes several times during spinning. Return the tomatoes to the bowl and set aside. Strain the tomato liquid through a fine-mesh strainer into a liquid measuring cup, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible.

2. Bring $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the tomato liquid (discard any extra), garlic, oregano, shallot, and vinegar to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat. Simmer until reduced to 3 tablespoons, 6 to 8 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a small bowl and cool to room temperature, about 5 minutes. Whisk in the oil and pepper to taste until combined. Taste and season with up to $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt and set the dressing aside.

3. Add the cucumber, olives, feta, dressing, and parsley to the bowl with the tomatoes; toss gently and serve.



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DAUBE PROVENÇAL

SERVES 4 TO 6

Serve this French beef stew with egg noodles or boiled potatoes. If niçoise olives are not available, kalamata olives, though not authentic, can be substituted. Cabernet Sauvignon is our favorite wine for this recipe, but Côtes du Rhône and Zinfandel also work. Our favorite cut of beef for this recipe is chuck-eye roast, but any boneless roast from the chuck will work. Because the tomatoes are added just before serving, it is preferable to use canned whole tomatoes and dice them yourself—uncooked, they are more tender than canned diced tomatoes. Once the salt pork, thyme, and bay leaves are removed in step 4, the daube can be cooled and refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 4 days. Before reheating, skim the hardened fat from the surface, then continue with the recipe.

- $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce dried porcini mushrooms, rinsed well**
- 1 boneless beef chuck-eye roast (about 3½ pounds), trimmed of excess fat and cut into 2-inch chunks (see note)**
- 1½ teaspoons salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 4 tablespoons olive oil**
- 5 ounces salt pork, rind removed**
- 4 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch rounds (about 2 cups)**
- 2 medium onions, halved and cut into $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-thick slices (about 4 cups)**
- 4 medium garlic cloves, sliced thin**
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup unbleached all-purpose flour**
- 1 (750-ml) bottle bold red wine (see note)**
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth**
- 1 cup water**
- 4 strips zest from 1 orange, each strip about 3 inches long, removed with a vegetable peeler, cleaned of white pith, and cut lengthwise into thin strips**
- 1 cup pitted niçoise olives, drained well (see note)**
- 3 anchovy fillets, minced (about 1 teaspoon)**
- 5 sprigs fresh thyme, tied together with kitchen twine**
- 2 bay leaves**
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can whole tomatoes, drained and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dice**
- 2 tablespoons minced fresh parsley leaves**



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1. Cover the mushrooms with 1 cup hot tap water in a small microwave-safe bowl; cover with plastic wrap, cut several steam vents in the plastic with a paring knife, and microwave on high power for 30 seconds. Let stand until the mushrooms soften, about 5 minutes. Lift the mushrooms from the liquid with a fork and chop into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces (you should have about 4 tablespoons). Strain the liquid through a fine-mesh strainer lined with a paper towel into a medium bowl. Set the mushrooms and liquid aside.

2. Adjust an oven rack to the lower-middle position and heat the oven to 325 degrees. Dry the beef thoroughly with paper towels, then season with the salt and pepper. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering but not smoking; add half of the beef. Cook without moving the pieces until well browned, about 2 minutes on each side, for a total of 8 to 10 minutes, reducing the heat if the fat begins to smoke. Transfer the meat to a medium bowl. Repeat with the remaining 2 tablespoons oil and the remaining meat.

3. Reduce the heat to medium and add the salt pork, carrots, onions, garlic, and tomato paste to the now-empty pot; cook, stirring occasionally, until light brown, about 2 minutes. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring constantly, about 1 minute. Slowly add the wine, gently scraping the pan bottom to loosen the browned bits. Add the broth, water, beef, and any juices in the bowl. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a full simmer. Add the mushrooms and their liquid, orange zest, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the olives, anchovies, thyme, and bay leaves, distributing evenly and arranging the beef so it is completely covered by the liquid; cover partially and place in the oven. Cook until a fork inserted in the beef meets little resistance (the meat should not be falling apart), $\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 hours.

4. Discard the salt pork, thyme, and bay leaves. Add the tomatoes and the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olives; warm over medium-high heat until heated through, about 1 minute. Cover the pot and allow the stew to settle, about 5 minutes. Using a spoon, skim the excess fat from the surface of the stew. Stir in the parsley and serve.

MERINGUE COOKIES

MAKES 48 SMALL COOKIES

Meringues may be a little soft immediately after being removed from the oven but will stiffen as they cool. To minimize stickiness on humid or rainy days, allow the meringues to cool in a turned-off oven for an additional hour (for a total of 2) without opening the door, then transfer them immediately to airtight containers and seal. Cooled cookies can be kept in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

¾ cup (5½ ounces) sugar
2 teaspoons cornstarch
4 large egg whites
¾ teaspoon vanilla extract
⅛ teaspoon salt

1. Adjust two oven racks to the upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat the oven to 225 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Combine the sugar and cornstarch in a small bowl.

2. In the bowl of a standing mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat the egg whites, vanilla, and salt together at high speed until very soft peaks start to form (peaks should slowly lose their shape when the whisk is removed), 30 to 45 seconds. With the mixer running at medium speed, slowly add the sugar mixture in a steady stream down the side of the mixer bowl (the process should take about 30 seconds). Stop the mixer and scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl with a rubber spatula. Return the mixer to high speed and beat until glossy, stiff peaks have formed, 30 to 45 seconds.

3. Working quickly, place the meringue in a pastry bag fitted with a ½-inch plain tip or a large zipper-lock bag with ½ inch of the corner cut off. Pipe meringues into 1¼-inch-wide mounds about 1 inch high on the baking sheets, 6 rows of 4 meringues on each sheet. Bake for 1 hour, rotating the pans front to back and top to bottom halfway through baking. Turn off the oven and allow the meringues to cool in the oven for at least 1 hour. Remove the meringues from the oven and let cool to room temperature before serving, about 10 minutes.



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CLASSIC CRÈME CARAMEL

SERVES 8

Though you can make one large crème caramel, we find that custards baked in individual ramekins cook faster, are more evenly textured, and unmold more easily. You can vary the amount of sugar in the custard to suit your taste. Most tasters preferred the full $\frac{3}{4}$ cup, but you can reduce that amount to as little as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to create a greater contrast between the custard and the caramel. Cook the caramel in a pan with a light-colored interior, since a dark surface makes it difficult to judge the color of the syrup. Caramel can leave a real mess in a pan, but it is easy to clean. Simply boil lots of water in the pan for 5 to 10 minutes to loosen the hardened caramel.

CARAMEL

1/3 cup water
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
1/4 teaspoon juice from 1 lemon
1 cup (7 ounces) sugar

CUSTARD

1 1/2 cups whole milk
1 1/2 cups light cream
3 large whole eggs, plus **2 large egg yolks**
2/3 cup (4 1/3 ounces) sugar (see note)
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Pinch salt

1. FOR THE CARAMEL: Combine the water, corn syrup, and lemon juice in a heavy-bottomed 2- to 3-quart saucepan. Pour the sugar into the center of the saucepan, taking care not to let the sugar granules touch the sides of the pan. Gently stir with a clean spatula to moisten the sugar thoroughly. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and cook, without stirring, until the sugar is completely dissolved and the liquid is clear, 6 to 10 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue to cook (swirling occasionally) until the caramel turns a honey-caramel in color, 4 to 5 minutes longer. Remove the pan immediately from the heat and, working quickly but carefully (the caramel is above 300 degrees and will burn if it touches your skin), pour a portion of the caramel into each of 8 ungreased 6-ounce ovenproof ramekins. Allow the caramel to cool and harden, about 15 minutes. (The caramel-coated ramekins can be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for up to 2 days; return to room temperature before adding the custard.)



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2. FOR THE CUSTARD: Adjust an oven rack to the middle position and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat the milk and cream in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until steam appears and/or an instant-read thermometer held in the liquid registers 160 degrees, 6 to 8 minutes; remove from the heat. Meanwhile, gently whisk the eggs, yolks, and sugar in a large bowl until just combined. Off the heat, gently whisk the warm milk mixture, vanilla, and salt into the eggs until just combined but not at all foamy. Strain the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer into a large measuring cup or container with a pouring spout; set aside.

3. Bring 2 quarts water to a boil in a kettle. Meanwhile, fold a dish towel to fit the bottom of a large baking dish or roasting pan and position it in the pan. Divide the reserved custard mixture among the ramekins; place the filled ramekins on the towel in the pan (making sure they do not touch) and set the pan on the oven rack. Fill the pan with boiling water to reach halfway up the sides of the ramekins; cover the entire pan loosely with aluminum foil so steam can escape. Bake until a paring knife inserted halfway between the center and the edge of the custards comes out clean, 35 to 40 minutes. Transfer the custards to a wire rack and cool to room temperature. (The custards can be covered with plastic wrap and refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

4. To unmold, slide a paring knife around the perimeter of each ramekin, pressing the knife against the side of the dish. Hold a serving plate over the top of the ramekin and invert; set the plate on the work surface and shake the ramekin gently to release the custard. Serve immediately.

STOVETOP RICE PUDDING

SERVES 6 TO 8

We prefer pudding made with medium-grain rice, but long-grain rice works, too. Using a heavy-bottomed saucepan is key to preventing the bottom from burning.

2 cups water
1 cup medium-grain rice
¼ teaspoon salt
2½ cups whole milk
2½ cups half-and-half
⅔ cup (4½ ounces) sugar
½ cup raisins
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1. Bring the water to a boil in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan. Stir in the rice and salt, cover, and simmer over low heat, stirring once or twice, until the water is almost fully absorbed, 15 to 20 minutes.

2. Stir in the milk, half-and-half, and sugar. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to maintain a simmer. Cook, uncovered and stirring frequently, until the mixture starts to thicken, about 30 minutes. Reduce the heat to low and continue to cook, stirring every couple of minutes to prevent sticking and scorching, until a spoon is just able to stand up in the pudding, about 15 minutes longer.

3. Remove from the heat and stir in the raisins, vanilla, and cinnamon. Serve warm, at room temperature, or chilled. (To store, press plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the pudding and refrigerate for up to 2 days. If serving at room temperature or chilled, stir in up to 1 cup warm milk, 2 tablespoons at a time, as needed to loosen before serving.)



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