

Cook's Country

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Chocolate Blackout Cake

Serves 10 to 12

Be sure to give the pudding and the cake enough time to cool or you'll end up with runny pudding and gummy cake.

PUDDING

- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1 cup whole milk
- 6 ounces unsweetened chocolate, chopped
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

CAKE LAYERS

- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing pans
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting pans
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup Dutch-processed cocoa
- 1 cup brewed coffee
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract



1. For the pudding: Whisk sugar, cornstarch, salt, half-and-half, and milk in large saucepan. Set pan over medium heat. Add chocolate and whisk constantly until chocolate melts and mixture begins to bubble, 2 to 4 minutes. Stir in vanilla and transfer pudding to large bowl. Place plastic wrap directly on surface of pudding and refrigerate until cold, at least 4 hours or up to 1 day.
2. For the cake layers: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Butter and flour two 8-inch cake pans. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt in bowl.
3. Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Stir in cocoa and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Off heat, whisk in coffee, buttermilk, and sugars until dissolved. Whisk in eggs and vanilla, then slowly whisk in flour mixture.
4. Divide batter evenly between prepared pans and bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool layers in pans 15 minutes, then invert onto wire rack. Cool to room temperature, at least 1 hour.
5. To assemble the cake: Cut each cake in half horizontally. Crumble one cake layer into medium crumbs and set aside. Place one cake layer on serving platter or cardboard round. Spread 1 cup pudding over cake layer and top with another layer. Repeat with 1 cup pudding and last cake layer. Spread remaining pudding evenly over top and sides of cake. Sprinkle cake crumbs evenly over top and sides of cake, pressing lightly to adhere crumbs. Serve. (Cake can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

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Strawberry Poke Cake

Serves 12

The top of the cake will look slightly overbaked—that keeps the crumb from becoming too soggy after the gelatin is poured on top.

CAKE

- 12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter, softened, plus extra for preparing pan
- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for preparing pan
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 6 large egg whites
- 1¾ cups sugar

SYRUP AND TOPPING

- 4 cups frozen strawberries
- 6 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons orange juice
- ½ cup water
- 2 tablespoons strawberry-flavored gelatin
- 2 cups heavy cream



1. For the cake: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 13 by 9-inch baking pan. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in bowl. Whisk milk, vanilla, and egg whites in large measuring cup.
2. With electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat butter and sugar until fluffy, about 2 minutes, scraping down bowl as necessary. Add flour mixture and milk mixture alternately, in two batches, beating after each addition until combined, about 30 seconds each time. Using rubber spatula, give batter final stir. Scrape into prepared pan and bake until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean, about 35 minutes. Cool cake completely in pan, at least 1 hour. Once cool, cake can be wrapped in plastic and kept at room temperature for up to 2 days.
3. For the syrup and topping: Heat 3 cups strawberries, 2 tablespoons sugar, juice, and water in medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Cover and cook until strawberries are softened, about 10 minutes. Strain liquid into bowl, reserving solids, then whisk gelatin into liquid. Let cool to room temperature, at least 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, poke 50 holes all over top of cake. Evenly pour cooled liquid over top of cake. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate until gelatin is set, at least 3 hours or up to 2 days.
5. Pulse reserved strained strawberries, 2 tablespoons sugar, and remaining strawberries in food processor until mixture resembles strawberry jam. Spread mixture evenly over cake. With electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat cream with remaining sugar to soft peaks. Spread cream over strawberries. Serve. (Cake will keep, refrigerated, for up to 2 days.)

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Sunday Garlic Roast Beef

Serves 6 to 8

Look for a top sirloin roast that has a thick, substantial fat cap still attached. The rendered fat will help to keep the roast moist. When making the jus, taste the reduced broth before adding any of the accumulated meat juices from the roast. The meat juices are well seasoned and may make the jus too salty. A heavy-duty roasting pan with a dark or nonstick finish or a broiler pan is a must for this recipe.

BEEF

- 8 large garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 1 (4-pound) top sirloin roast, with some top fat intact

GARLIC-SALT RUB

- 3 large garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt

GARLIC PASTE

- 12 large garlic cloves, peeled, cloves cut in half lengthwise
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup olive oil
- Pepper

JUS

- 1½ cups low-sodium beef broth
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken broth



1. For the beef: Toast unpeeled garlic cloves in small skillet over medium-high heat, tossing frequently, until spotty brown, about 8 minutes. Set garlic aside. When cool enough to handle, peel cloves and cut into ¼-inch slivers.
2. Using paring knife, make 1-inch-deep slits all over roast. Insert toasted garlic into slits.
3. For the garlic-salt rub: Mix minced garlic, thyme, and salt together in small bowl. Rub all over roast. Place roast on large plate and refrigerate, uncovered, at least 4 hours or preferably overnight.
4. For the garlic paste: Heat halved garlic cloves, thyme, bay leaves, salt, and oil in small saucepan over medium-high heat until bubbles start to rise to surface. Reduce heat to low and cook until garlic is soft, about 30 minutes. Cool completely. Strain, reserving oil. Discard herbs and transfer garlic to small bowl. Mash garlic with 1 tablespoon garlic oil until paste forms. Cover and refrigerate paste until ready to use. Cover and reserve garlic oil.
5. Adjust oven rack to middle position, place nonstick roasting pan or broiler pan bottom on rack, and heat oven to 450 degrees. Using paper towels, wipe garlic-salt rub off beef. Rub beef with 2 tablespoons reserved garlic oil and season with pepper. Transfer meat, fat side down, to preheated pan and roast, turning as needed until browned on all sides, 10 to 15 minutes.
6. Reduce oven temperature to 300 degrees. Remove roasting pan from oven. Turn roast fat side up and, using spatula, coat top with garlic paste. Return meat to oven and roast until internal temperature reaches 125 degrees on instant-read thermometer, 50 to 70 minutes. Transfer roast to cutting board, cover loosely with foil, and let rest for 20 minutes.
7. For the jus: Drain excess fat from roasting pan and place pan over high heat. Add broths and bring to boil, using wooden spoon to scrape browned bits from bottom of pan. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until reduced to 2 cups, about 5 minutes. Add accumulated juices from roast and cook 1 minute. Pour through fine-mesh strainer. Slice roast crosswise against grain into ¼-inch slices. Serve with jus.

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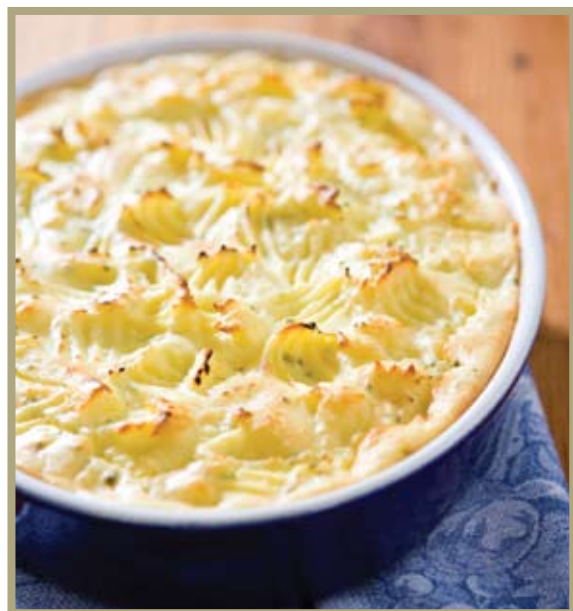
Mashed Potato Casserole

Serves 6 to 8

The casserole may also be baked in a 13 by 9-inch pan.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 pounds russet potatoes,
peeled and cut into 1-inch chunks
- ½ cup half-and-half
- ½ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 12 tablespoons (1½ sticks) unsalted butter,
cut into pieces
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 4 large eggs
- ¼ cup finely chopped fresh chives



1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 375 degrees. In large pot, cover potatoes with water to one inch over top of potatoes. Bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Heat half-and-half, broth, butter, garlic, mustard, and salt in saucepan over medium-low heat until smooth, about 5 minutes. Keep warm.
3. Drain potatoes and transfer to large bowl. With electric mixer on medium-low speed, beat potatoes, slowly adding half-and-half mixture, until smooth and creamy, about 1 minute. Scrape down bowl; beat in eggs 1 at a time until incorporated, about 1 minute. Fold in chives.
4. Transfer potato mixture to greased 2-quart baking dish. Bake until potatoes rise and begin to brown, about 35 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes. Serve.

Make Ahead: The baking dish with the potatoes can be covered with plastic and refrigerated for up to 24 hours. When ready to bake, let the casserole sit at room temperature for 1 hour. Increase baking time by 10 minutes.

Meatballs & Marinara

Serves 8

(makes enough to coat 2 pounds of spaghetti)

The meatballs and sauce both use the same onion mixture.

ONION MIXTURE

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 3 onions, chopped fine
- 8 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- ¾ teaspoon red pepper flakes

EASY MARINARA

- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
- 1 cup dry red wine
- 1 cup water
- 4 (28-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
- Salt
- 1–2 teaspoons sugar, as needed

MEATBALLS

- 4 slices hearty white sandwich bread, torn into pieces
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ pound sweet Italian sausage, casings removed
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 large eggs
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2½ pounds (80 percent lean) ground chuck



1. For the onion mixture: Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Cook onions until golden, 10 to 15 minutes. Add garlic, oregano, and pepper flakes and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Transfer half of onion mixture to large bowl and set aside.
2. For the marinara: Add tomato paste to remaining onion mixture in pot and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add wine and cook until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in water and tomatoes and simmer over low heat until sauce is no longer watery, 45 to 60 minutes. Stir in cheese and basil and adjust seasonings with salt and sugar.
3. For the meatballs: Meanwhile, adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Mash bread and milk in bowl with reserved onion mixture until smooth. Add remaining ingredients, except ground beef, to bowl and mash to combine. Add beef and knead with hands until well combined. Form mixture into 2½-inch meatballs (you should have about 16 meatballs), place on rimmed baking sheet, and bake until well browned, about 20 minutes.
4. Transfer meatballs to pot with sauce. Simmer for 15 minutes. Serve over pasta. (Meatballs & Marinara can be frozen for up to 1 month.)

Sunday Gravy

Serves 8 to 10

Most sausage has enough seasoning to make extra salt unnecessary. The hearty sauce makes a meal when paired with 2 pounds of rigatoni, ziti, or penne.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound sweet Italian sausage
- 1 pound hot Italian sausage
- 2 onions, chopped medium
- 12 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
- ½ cup dry red wine
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 pounds bone-in country-style spareribs, trimmed of excess fat
- 1½ pounds flank steak
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- Pepper



1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add sweet sausage and cook until well browned and fat begins to render, about 8 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer sausage to paper towel-lined plate to drain, then place in slow-cooker insert. Repeat with hot sausage.
2. Cook onions in sausage fat over medium heat until well browned, about 6 minutes. Stir in garlic and oregano and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomato paste and cook until paste begins to brown, about 5 minutes. Stir in wine and simmer, scraping browned bits from pan bottom with wooden spoon, until wine is reduced, about 3 minutes. Transfer to slow-cooker insert and stir in diced tomatoes and tomato sauce.
3. Submerge spareribs and flank steak in sauce in slow-cooker insert. Set slow-cooker on low, cover, and cook until meat is tender, 8 to 10 hours. (Alternatively, cook on high for 4 to 5 hours.)
4. About 30 minutes before serving, transfer sausages, ribs, and flank steak to baking sheet and set aside until cool enough to handle. Shred ribs and flank steak into small pieces, discarding excess fat and bones; slice sausages in half crosswise. Use wide spoon to skim fat off surface, then stir sausages and shredded meat back into sauce. Stir in basil and season with pepper. Serve. (Leftover gravy can be stored in airtight container in refrigerator for up to 3 days.)

Make Ahead: The recipe can be prepared through step 2 up to 2 days in advance. After reducing the wine in step 2, add the diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, and browned sausages to the Dutch oven and simmer over medium-low heat until the sausages are cooked through, about 12 minutes. Refrigerate the sausage and sauce mixture in an airtight container until ready to use. When ready to cook the gravy, warm the sauce and the sausages together over medium heat until heated through and transfer to slow-cooker insert. Proceed with step 3.

Lexington Style Pulled Pork

Serves 8 to 10

Pork butt (often labeled Boston butt) is usually sold boneless and wrapped in netting but is sometimes available on the bone. If barbecuing a bone-in roast, or if your pork butt weighs more than 5 pounds, plan on an extra 30 to 60 minutes of oven cooking time.

SPICE RUB AND PORK

- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 2 tablespoons pepper
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 (4- to 5-pound) boneless pork shoulder roast
- 4 cups wood chips

LEXINGTON BBQ SAUCE

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes



1. For the spice rub and pork: Combine spices, sugar, and salt in small bowl, breaking up any lumps as necessary. Massage entire pork roast with spice mixture. (Roast may be wrapped tightly and refrigerated for up to 1 day.)
2. Soak wood chips in bowl of water to cover for 15 minutes. Open bottom grill vents. Light large chimney starter filled halfway with charcoal briquettes (about 50 coals) and burn until charcoal is covered with fine gray ash. Pour coals into pile on one side of grill and scatter wood chips over coals. Set cooking grate in place, cover, and let grill heat up 5 minutes. Scrape grate clean.
3. Position pork on cooler side of grill. Cover, positioning half-open lid vents directly over meat, and cook until meat has dark, rosy crust and charcoal is spent, about 2 hours.
4. Meanwhile, adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Transfer pork to large roasting pan, wrap pan and pork tightly in foil, and roast in oven until fork inserted into pork can be removed with no resistance, 2 to 3 hours. Remove from oven and rest, still wrapped in foil, for 30 minutes.
5. For the sauce: Whisk together all ingredients until sugar and salt are dissolved. Using hands, pull pork into thin shreds, discarding fat if desired. Toss pork with ½ cup vinegar sauce, serving remaining sauce at table.

Lexington Style Pulled Pork for Gas Grill

Seal 4 cups soaked wood chips in foil packet. Place packet on primary burner of gas grill, turn all burners to high, and preheat with lid down until chips are smoking heavily, about 15 minutes. Turn primary burner to medium and shut off other burners, adjusting temperature of primary burner as needed to maintain average temperature of 275 degrees. Position pork over cool part of grill. Barbecue as directed.

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Memphis Coleslaw

Serves 8 to 10

In step 1, the salted, rinsed, and dried cabbage mixture can be refrigerated in a zipper-lock plastic bag for up to 24 hours.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium head green cabbage, cored and chopped fine
- 1 jalapeño chili, seeded and minced
- 1 carrot, peeled and shredded on box grater
- 1 small onion, peeled and shredded on box grater
- 2 teaspoons salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup yellow mustard
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chili sauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sour cream
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon celery seeds
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup packed light brown sugar

1. Toss cabbage, jalapeño, carrot, onion, and salt in colander set over medium bowl. Let stand until wilted, about 1 hour. Rinse cabbage mixture under cold water, drain, dry well with paper towels, and transfer to large bowl.
2. Bring mustard, chili sauce, mayonnaise, sour cream, vinegar, celery seeds, and sugar to boil in saucepan over medium heat. Pour over cabbage and toss to coat. Cover with plastic and refrigerate 1 hour or up to 1 day. Serve.



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Old Fashioned Pork Roast

Serves 6 to 8

A heavy, deep-sided (3-inch) roasting pan is the best choice for this recipe, but a shallow broiler pan also works well.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 (6-pound) boneless pork shoulder roast (Boston butt)
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 teaspoons freshly cracked pepper
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds, roughly chopped
- 2 large red onions, cut into 1-inch wedges
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil (if necessary)
- 1 cup apple cider
- ¼ cup apple jelly
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar



1. Adjust oven rack to lower-middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Trim outer fat from pork, leaving ¼-inch-thick layer. Combine garlic, pepper, salt, rosemary, sage, and fennel seeds in small bowl. Tie pork roast tightly into uniform shape. Rub with herb mixture.
2. Transfer to roasting pan and cook 3 hours. Scatter onion wedges around meat, tossing onions in pan drippings to coat. (If roast has not produced any juices, toss onions with oil.) Continue roasting until meat is extremely tender and skewer inserted into center meets no resistance, 3½ to 4 hours. (Check pan juices every hour to make sure they have not evaporated. If necessary, add 2 cups water to pan and stir browned bits into water.)
3. Transfer roast to large baking dish, place onions in medium bowl, and pour pan drippings into liquid measuring cup, adding enough water to measure 1½ cups. Allow all to cool 30 minutes, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight.
4. One hour before serving, adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 300 degrees. Cut cold meat into ¼-inch slices and overlap in large baking dish. Spoon fat layer off drippings (discard fat) and transfer drippings and reserved onions to medium saucepan. Add cider, jelly, and vinegar and bring to boil over medium-high heat, then reduce to simmer. Spoon ½ cup simmering sauce over pork slices and cover baking dish with foil. Place in oven and heat until very hot, 30 to 40 minutes. Meanwhile, continue reducing sauce until dark and thickened, 10 to 15 minutes (reheat mixture just before serving pork). Serve pork, spooning onion mixture over meat or passing at table.

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Cranberry Apple Crisp

Serves 8 to 10

If you can't find Braeburn apples, Golden Delicious will work. Serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream.

TOPPING

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed light brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 12 tablespoons ($1\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) unsalted butter, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces and chilled
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup old-fashioned oats

FILLING

- 1 pound fresh or frozen cranberries (about 4 cups)
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds Granny Smith apples (6 to 8 apples), peeled, cored, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds Braeburn apples (6 to 8 apples), peeled, cored, and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pieces
- 1 cup dried sweetened cranberries
- 3 tablespoons Minute Tapioca

1. For the topping: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. Pulse flour, sugars, cinnamon, and butter in food processor until mixture has texture of coarse crumbs (some pea-sized pieces of butter will remain), about 12 one-second pulses. Transfer to medium bowl, stir in oats, and use fingers to pinch topping into peanut-sized clumps. Refrigerate while preparing filling.
2. For the filling: Bring fresh cranberries, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar, and water to simmer in Dutch oven over medium-high heat and cook until cranberries are completely softened and mixture is jam-like, about 10 minutes. Scrape mixture into bowl. Add apples, remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, and dried cranberries to Dutch oven and cook over medium-high heat until apples begin to release their juices, about 5 minutes.
3. Off heat, stir cranberry mixture and tapioca into apple mixture. Pour into 13 by 9-inch baking dish set over rimmed baking sheet and smooth surface evenly with spatula.
4. To assemble: Scatter topping evenly over filling and bake until juices are bubbling and topping is deep golden brown, about 30 minutes. (If topping is browning too quickly, loosely cover with piece of aluminum foil.) Transfer to wire rack to cool. Serve warm.



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Extra Crunchy Fried Chicken

Serves 4

Keeping the oil at the correct temperature is essential to producing crunchy fried chicken that is neither too brown nor too greasy. Use a candy/deep-fry thermometer to check the temperature of the oil before you add the chicken. If you cannot find a chicken that weighs 3½ pounds or less, or if you don't have a pan that is 11 inches in diameter, you will have to fry the chicken in two batches. Follow the recipe, frying the chicken four pieces at a time and keeping the first batch warm in a 200-degree oven while the second batch is cooking. If you want to produce a slightly healthier version of this recipe, you can remove the skin from the chicken before soaking it in the buttermilk. The chicken will be slightly less crunchy.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups plus 6 tablespoons buttermilk
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 1 whole chicken (about 3½ pounds), cut into 8 pieces, giblets discarded, wings and back reserved for stock
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 4–5 cups vegetable shortening or peanut oil



- 1 Whisk together 2 cups buttermilk and salt in large bowl until salt is dissolved. Add chicken pieces to bowl and stir to coat; cover bowl with plastic and refrigerate for 1 hour. (Don't let chicken soak much longer or it will become too salty.)
- 2 Whisk flour, baking powder, thyme, pepper, and garlic powder together in large bowl. Add remaining 6 tablespoons buttermilk; with your fingers rub flour and buttermilk together until buttermilk is evenly incorporated into flour and mixture resembles coarse wet sand.
- 3 Working in batches of two, drop chicken pieces into flour mixture and turn to thoroughly coat, gently pressing flour mixture onto chicken. Shake excess flour from each piece of chicken and transfer to wire rack set over rimmed baking sheet.
- 4 Heat oil (it should measure ¾ inch deep) in large heavy-bottomed Dutch oven with 11-inch diameter over medium-high heat until it reaches 375 degrees. Place chicken pieces, skin-side down, in oil, cover, and fry until deep golden brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove lid after 4 minutes and lift chicken pieces to check for even browning; rearrange if some pieces are browning faster than others. (At this point, oil should be about 300 degrees. Adjust burner, if necessary, to regulate temperature of oil.) Turn chicken pieces over and continue to fry, uncovered, until chicken pieces are deep golden brown on second side, 6 to 8 minutes longer. (At this point, to keep chicken from browning too quickly, adjust burner to maintain oil temperature of about 315 degrees.) Using tongs, transfer chicken to plate lined with paper towels; let stand for 5 minutes to drain. Serve.

Extra Spicy, Extra Crunchy Fried Chicken

Follow recipe for Extra Crunchy Fried Chicken, adding 4 tablespoons Tabasco sauce to buttermilk-salt mixture in step 1. Replace dried thyme and garlic powder with 2 tablespoons cayenne pepper and 2 teaspoons chili powder in step 2.

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All-American Potato Salad

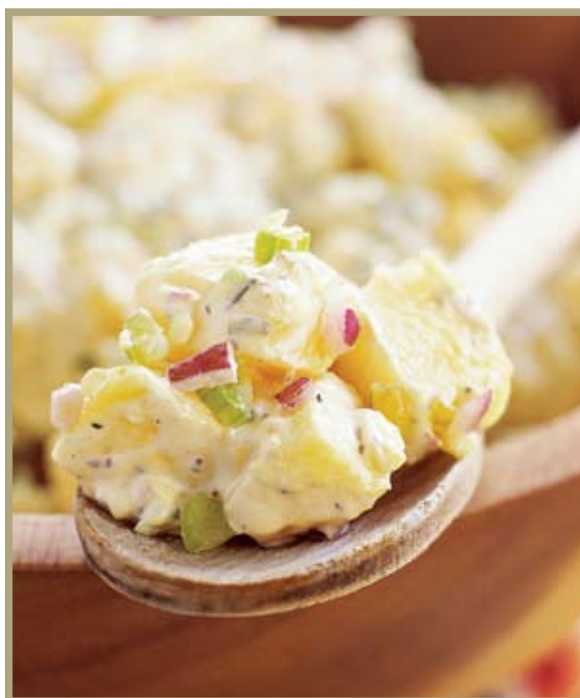
Serves 4 to 6

Make sure not to overcook the potatoes or the salad will be quite sloppy. Keep the water at a gentle simmer and use the tip of a paring knife to judge the doneness of the potatoes. If the knife inserts easily into the potato pieces, they are done.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes,
peeled and cut into ¾-inch cubes
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 3 tablespoons dill pickle juice,
plus ¼ cup finely chopped dill pickles
- 1 tablespoon yellow mustard
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon celery seed
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ½ small red onion, chopped fine
- 1 celery rib, chopped fine
- 2 hard-cooked eggs,
peeled and cut into ¼-inch dice (optional)

1. Place potatoes in large saucepan with cold water to cover by 1 inch. Bring to boil over high heat, add 1 teaspoon salt, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until potatoes are tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
2. Drain potatoes thoroughly, then spread out on rimmed baking sheet. Mix 2 tablespoons pickle juice and mustard together in small bowl, drizzle pickle juice mixture over potatoes, and toss until evenly coated. Refrigerate until cooled, about 30 minutes.
3. Mix remaining tablespoon pickle juice, chopped pickles, remaining ½ teaspoon salt, pepper, celery seed, mayonnaise, sour cream, red onion, and celery in large bowl. Toss in cooled potatoes, cover, and refrigerate until well chilled, about 30 minutes. (Salad can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 2 days.) Gently stir in eggs, if using, just before serving.



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No-Fear Pie Crust

Makes one 9-inch pie shell

The pastry can be pressed into the pie plate and refrigerated for up to 2 days or double-wrapped in plastic and frozen for up to 1 month. Once baked and cooled, the shell can be wrapped tightly in plastic and stored at room temperature for up to 1 day.

INGREDIENTS

- 1¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened but still cool
- 2 ounces cream cheese, softened but still cool

1. Lightly coat 9-inch Pyrex pie plate with cooking spray. Whisk flour, sugar, and salt together in bowl.
2. With electric mixer at medium-high speed, beat butter and cream cheese in large bowl, stopping once or twice to scrape down beater and sides of bowl, until completely homogenous, about 2 minutes. Add flour mixture and combine on medium-low until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal, about 20 seconds. Scrape down sides of bowl. Increase mixer speed to medium-high and beat until dough begins to form large clumps, about 30 seconds.
3. Reserve 3 tablespoons of dough. Turn remaining dough onto lightly floured surface, gather into ball, and flatten into 6-inch disk. Transfer disk to greased pie plate.
4. Press dough evenly over bottom of pie plate toward sides, using heel of your hand. Hold plate up to light to ensure that dough is evenly distributed. With your fingertips, continue to work dough over bottom of plate and up sides until evenly distributed.
5. On floured surface, roll reserved dough into 12-inch rope. Divide into three pieces, roll each piece into 8-inch rope, and form fluted edge. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate at least 1 hour.
6. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly prick bottom of crust with fork. Bake until golden brown, 35 to 40 minutes. Cool on wire rack. (If large bubbles form, wait until crust is fully baked, then gently press on bubbles with kitchen towel. Bubbles will settle as crust cools.)

Raspberry Chiffon Pie

Serves 8 to 10

The heavy cream must be ice cold; if not, it won't hold stiff peaks, no matter how long or hard you beat it. Soften the cream cheese at room temperature; the microwave will cause the cheese to separate.

FRUIT LAYER

- 1 (12-ounce) bag frozen raspberries (2 cups)
- 3 tablespoons pectin (Sure-Jell)
- 1½ cups sugar
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- 1 (9-inch) pie shell, baked and cooled (see No-Fear Pie Crust)

CHIFFON LAYER

- 3 tablespoons raspberry-flavored gelatin
- 3 tablespoons boiling water
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup heavy cream, chilled

WHIPPED CREAM TOPPING

- 1¼ cups heavy cream, chilled
- 2 tablespoons sugar

1. For the fruit layer: Cook frozen berries in medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until berries begin to give up their juice, about 3 minutes. Stir in pectin and bring to full boil, stirring constantly. Stir in sugar and salt and return to full boil. Cook, stirring constantly, until slightly thickened, about 2 minutes. Pour through fine-mesh strainer into medium bowl, pressing on solids to extract as much puree as possible. Scrape puree off underside of strainer into bowl.
2. Transfer ⅓ cup raspberry puree to small bowl and cool to room temperature. Gently fold fresh raspberries into remaining puree. Spread fruit mixture evenly over bottom of pie shell and set aside.
3. For the chiffon layer: Dissolve gelatin in boiling water in large bowl. Add cream cheese and reserved ⅓ cup raspberry puree and beat with electric mixer on high speed, scraping down sides of bowl once or twice, until smooth, about 2 minutes. Add 1 cup cream and beat on medium-low until incorporated, about 30 seconds. Scrape down bowl. Beat on high speed until cream holds stiff peaks, 1 to 2 minutes. Spread evenly over fruit in pie shell. Cover pie with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until set, at least 3 hours or up to 2 days.
4. For the whipped cream topping: When ready to serve, beat 1¼ cups cream and sugar to stiff peaks. Spread or pipe over chilled filling. Serve.



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Broiled Steaks

Serves 4

To minimize smoking, be sure to trim as much exterior fat and gristle as possible from the steaks before cooking. Try to purchase steaks of a similar size and shape for this recipe. If you like your steaks well-done, continue cooking and flipping as directed in step 3 until the steaks reach the desired internal temperature.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and pepper
- 4 strip steaks, rib-eye steaks, or tenderloin steaks, 1 to 2 inches thick, trimmed (see note)

1. Adjust oven racks to upper-middle and lower-middle positions and heat oven to 375 degrees. Beat butter, thyme, mustard, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper in bowl and refrigerate.
2. Spread 2 cups salt over bottom of 3-inch-deep disposable aluminum pan. Pat steaks dry with paper towels, season with salt and pepper, and transfer to wire rack. Set rack over aluminum pan and transfer to lower-middle oven rack. Cook 6 to 10 minutes, then remove pan from oven. Flip steaks, pat dry with paper towels, and let rest 10 minutes.
3. Heat broiler. Transfer pan to upper-middle oven rack and broil steaks, flipping every 2 to 4 minutes, until meat registers 125 to 130 degrees (for medium-rare), 6 to 16 minutes. Transfer steaks to platter, top with reserved butter mixture, and tent with foil. Let rest 5 minutes. Serve.



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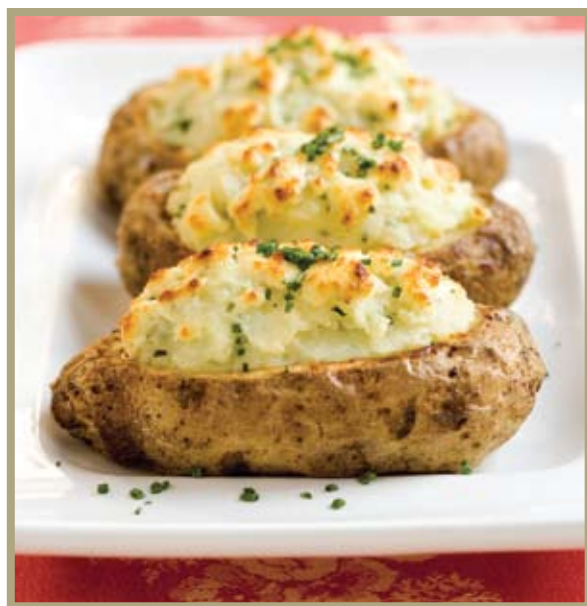
Super Stuffed Baked Potatoes

Serves 6

This recipe calls for 7 potatoes, but only 6 of them make it to the table. The remaining potato is used for its flesh; you should have 5 cups of scooped potato flesh in step 2.

INGREDIENTS

- 7 large russet potatoes (about 12 ounces each), scrubbed
- 6 tablespoons unsalted butter, 3 tablespoons melted
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 1 (5.2-ounce) package Boursin cheese, crumbled
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup half-and-half
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped fresh chives
- 1 teaspoon pepper



1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Set wire rack inside rimmed baking sheet. Prick potatoes all over with fork, place on paper towel, and microwave on high until tender, 20 to 25 minutes, turning potatoes over after 10 minutes.
2. Slice and remove top quarter of each potato, let cool 5 minutes, then scoop out flesh, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch layer of potato on inside. Discard 1 potato shell. Brush remaining shells inside and out with melted butter and sprinkle interiors with $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt. Transfer potatoes scooped side up to baking sheet fitted with wire rack and bake until skins begin to crisp, about 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, mix half of Boursin and half-and-half in bowl until blended. Cook remaining butter with garlic in saucepan over medium-low heat until garlic is straw-colored, 3 to 5 minutes. Stir in Boursin mixture until combined.
4. Set ricer or food mill over medium bowl and press or mill potatoes into bowl. Gently fold in warm Boursin mixture, 3 tablespoons chives, remaining salt, and pepper until well incorporated. Remove potato shells from oven and fill with potato-cheese mixture. Top with remaining crumbled Boursin and bake until tops of potatoes are golden brown, about 15 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining chives. Serve.

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Classic Barbecued Chicken

Serves 4 to 6

You can use a mix of chicken breasts, thighs, and drumsticks, making sure they add up to about 10 pieces. Any more than that and you won't be able to line them up on the grill. Although our jazzed-up barbecue sauce is best, this recipe also works with plain store-bought sauce; our favorite brand is Bull's-Eye.

QUICK BBQ SAUCE

- 3 cups bottled barbecue sauce
- ½ cup molasses
- ½ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- 3 tablespoons brown mustard
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder

CHICKEN

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 pounds bone-in, skin-on chicken pieces (breasts, whole legs, thighs, and/or drumsticks), trimmed and breasts halved



1. For the sauce: Whisk all ingredients in medium saucepan and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to medium and cook until sauce is thick and reduced to 3 cups, about 20 minutes. (Sauce can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 1 week.)
2. For the chicken: Mix salt, pepper, and cayenne in small bowl. Pat chicken dry with paper towels and rub spice mixture all over chicken pieces.
3. Open bottom vent on grill. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (about 100 coals) and burn until charcoal is covered with fine gray ash. Place 13 by 9-inch disposable aluminum roasting pan on one side of grill and pour coals in even layer over other side of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, open lid vents completely, and let grill heat for 5 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean.
4. Oil grate and place chicken skin side down on cooler side of grill. Cover, with half-opened lid vents over chicken, and cook until chicken begins to brown, 30 to 35 minutes. Move chicken into single line close to coals. Begin flipping chicken and brushing with 2 cups sauce every 5 minutes until sticky, about 20 minutes. Slide chicken pieces over coals and continue to brush chicken until sauce on chicken becomes crusted and internal temperature of breast meat registers 165 degrees and legs, thighs, and drumsticks register 175 degrees, about 5 minutes. Transfer chicken to platter, tent with foil, and let rest 10 minutes. Remove foil and serve, passing remaining sauce at table.

Classic Barbecued Chicken on a Gas Grill

Prepare recipe for Classic Barbecued Chicken through step 2. Turn all burners to high, close lid, and heat grill for 15 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean and oil grate. Leave primary burner on high and turn all other burners off. Position chicken over cooler side of grill, cover, and proceed as directed.

Best Potluck Mac & Cheese

Serves 8 to 10

Block American cheese from the deli counter is best here, as prewrapped singles result in a drier mac and cheese.

INGREDIENTS

- 3–4 slices hearty white sandwich bread,
torn into large pieces
- 8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter
(4 tablespoons melted)
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt
- 1 pound elbow macaroni
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3 (12-ounce) cans evaporated milk
- 2 teaspoons hot sauce
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 2 cups shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- 1¼ cups shredded American cheese
(about 5 ounces)
- ¾ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Pulse bread, melted butter, and Parmesan in food processor until ground to coarse crumbs. Transfer to bowl.
2. Bring 4 quarts water to boil in large pot. Add 1 tablespoon salt and macaroni to boiling water and cook until al dente, about 6 minutes. Reserve ½ cup macaroni cooking water, then drain and rinse macaroni in colander under cold running water. Set aside.
3. Melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter in now-empty pot over medium-high heat until foaming. Stir in flour and cook, stirring constantly, until mixture turns light brown, about 1 minute. Slowly whisk in evaporated milk, hot sauce, nutmeg, mustard, and 2 teaspoons salt and cook until mixture begins to simmer and is slightly thickened, about 4 minutes. Off heat, whisk in cheeses and reserved cooking water until cheese melts. Stir in macaroni until completely coated.
4. Transfer mixture to 13 by 9-inch baking dish and top evenly with bread crumb mixture. Bake until cheese is bubbling around edges and top is golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let sit for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.

Make Ahead: The macaroni and cheese can be made in advance through step 3; since the pasta continues to absorb moisture, adjustments must be made to avoid dryness. To do so, increase amount of reserved pasta cooking water to 1 cup. Pour macaroni mixture into 13 by 9-inch baking dish, lay plastic wrap directly on surface of pasta, and refrigerate for up to 1 day. The bread crumb mixture may be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 2 days. When ready to bake, remove plastic wrap, cover macaroni mixture with foil, and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover, sprinkle bread crumbs over top, and bake until topping is golden brown, about 20 minutes longer.



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Smoked Double-Thick Pork Chops

Serves 6 to 8

Note: We prefer blade chops, which have more fat to prevent drying out on the grill, but leaner loin chops will also work. These chops are huge and are best sliced off the bone before serving.

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon ground fennel
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 tablespoon ground coriander
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 4 (20- to 24-ounce) bone-in blade-cut pork chops, about 2 inches thick (See note above)
- 2 cups wood chips, preferably hickory



1. Combine sugar, fennel, cumin, coriander, paprika, salt, and pepper and rub mixture all over pork chops. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours.
2. Soak wood chips in bowl of water to cover for 15 minutes. Prepare chips in foil packet. Open bottom vent on grill. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (about 100) and burn until charcoal is covered with fine gray ash. Pour hot coals into pile on one side of grill and lay foil packet over coals. Set cooking grate in place, cover, open lid vent halfway, and let grill heat for 5 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean.
3. Arrange chops, bone side toward fire, on cooler side of grill. Cover, positioning lid vents directly over meat, and cook until chops register 145 degrees, 50 to 60 minutes (if your chops are less than 2 inches thick, start checking them for temperature after 30 minutes). Slide chops directly over fire and cook, uncovered, until well browned, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to platter and let rest 20 minutes. Serve.

Smoked Double-Thick Pork Chops on a Gas Grill

Prepare recipe for Smoked Double-Thick Pork Chops through step 1. Soak wood chips in bowl of water to cover for 15 minutes, seal in foil packet (cutting vent holes in top), and place over primary burner. Turn all burners to high and close lid, keeping grill covered until wood chips begin to smoke heavily, about 15 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean. Turn primary burner to medium and turn all other burners off, adjusting temperature of primary burner as needed to maintain average temperature of 275 degrees. Proceed with step 3 as directed.

Tennessee Whiskey Glazed Pork Chops

Serves 4

Refrigerate the marinating chops in a shallow bowl in case the zipper-lock bag leaks. Watch the glaze closely during the last few minutes of cooking—the bubbles become very small as it approaches the right consistency.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup Jack Daniel's Tennessee whiskey
or ½ cup bourbon
- ½ cup apple cider
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 4 teaspoons cider vinegar
- 4 bone-in, center-cut pork chops,
about 1 inch thick
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter



1. Whisk whiskey, cider, brown sugar, mustard, cayenne, vanilla, and 2 teaspoons vinegar together in medium bowl. Transfer ¼ cup whiskey mixture to gallon-sized zipper-lock plastic bag, add pork chops, press air out of bag, and seal. Turn bag to coat chops with marinade and refrigerate 1 to 2 hours. Reserve remaining whiskey mixture separately.
2. Remove chops from bag, pat dry with paper towels, and discard marinade. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat until just beginning to smoke. Season chops with salt and pepper and cook until well browned on both sides and a peek into thickest part of a chop using paring knife yields still-pink meat ¼ inch from surface, 3 to 4 minutes per side. Transfer chops to plate and cover tightly with foil.
3. Add reserved whiskey mixture to skillet and bring to boil, scraping up any browned bits with wooden spoon. Cook until reduced to thick glaze, 3 to 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and, holding on to chops, tip plate to add any accumulated juices back to skillet. Add remaining 2 teaspoons vinegar, whisk in butter, and simmer glaze until thick and sticky, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove pan from heat.
4. Return chops to skillet and let rest in pan until sauce clings to chops, turning chops occasionally to coat both sides, and a peek into thickest part of a pork chop using paring knife shows completely cooked meat (145 degrees on instant-read thermometer), about 5 minutes. Transfer chops to platter and spoon sauce over. Serve.

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Chicago Ribs

Serves 4 to 6

The dry spices are used to flavor both the rub and the barbecue sauce. When removing the ribs from the oven, be careful to not spill the hot water in the bottom of the baking sheet.

RIBS

- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 tablespoon dark brown sugar
- 1½ teaspoons garlic powder
- 1½ teaspoons onion powder
- 1½ teaspoons celery salt
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground allspice
- 2 racks baby back ribs (about 1½ pounds each), membrane removed
- 1 cup wood chips, soaked for 15 minutes

SAUCE

- 1¼ cups ketchup
- ¼ cup molasses
- ¼ cup cider vinegar
- ¼ cup water
- ⅛ teaspoon liquid smoke



1. For the ribs: Combine mustard, paprika, sugar, garlic and onion powders, celery salt, cayenne, and allspice. Reserve 2 tablespoons for sauce. Pat ribs dry with paper towels and massage remaining spice rub into both sides of ribs. (Ribs can be wrapped in plastic and refrigerated for up to 24 hours.)
2. Open bottom vent on grill. Light 100 coals. Arrange 13 by 9-inch disposable aluminum pan filled with 2 cups water on one side of grill. When coals are covered in fine gray ash, arrange in pile on opposite side. Scatter chips over coals and set cooking grate in place. (For gas grill, place chips in small disposable aluminum pan and place directly on primary burner of grill. Place another disposable aluminum pan filled with 2 cups water on secondary burner(s) and set cooking grate in place. Turn all burners to high and heat, covered, until chips are smoking heavily, about 15 minutes. Turn primary burner to medium and shut other burner(s) off.) Position ribs over water-filled pan and cook, covered (open charcoal grill lid vent halfway), rotating and flipping racks once, until ribs are deep red and smoky, about 1½ hours.
3. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 250 degrees. Set wire rack inside rimmed baking sheet and add just enough water to cover pan bottom. Arrange ribs on wire rack, cover tightly with aluminum foil, and cook until ribs are completely tender, 1½ to 2 hours. Transfer to serving platter, tent with foil, and let rest 10 minutes.
4. For the sauce: Meanwhile, whisk ketchup, molasses, vinegar, water, liquid smoke, and reserved spice rub in bowl. Brush ribs with 1 cup barbecue sauce. Serve, passing remaining sauce at table.

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Cincinnati Chili

Serves 6 to 8

Use canned tomato sauce for this recipe—do not use jarred spaghetti sauce.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 2 onions, chopped fine
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 1½ teaspoons cinnamon
- Salt
- ¾ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon allspice
- 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 cups canned tomato sauce
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons dark brown sugar
- 1½ pounds 85-percent lean ground beef



1. Heat oil in Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. Cook onions until soft and browned around edges, about 8 minutes. Add garlic, tomato paste, chili powder, oregano, cinnamon, 1 teaspoon salt, pepper, and allspice and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in chicken broth, tomato sauce, vinegar, and sugar.
2. Add beef and stir to break up meat. Bring to boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until chili is deep brown and slightly thickened, 15 to 20 minutes. Season with salt and serve. (Chili can be refrigerated in airtight container for up to 3 days or frozen for up to 2 months.)

Five Ways to Cincinnati

Those in the know can order their chili without a second thought, but for the uninitiated, here's a quick guide to the five ways of Cincinnati chili. The chili is almost never served on its own (one-way). Just don't forget the oyster crackers.

TWO-WAY CHILI

Served over spaghetti.

THREE-WAY CHILI

Serve over spaghetti and topped with cheese.

FOUR-WAY CHILI

Served over spaghetti and topped with onions and cheese.

FIVE-WAY CHILI

Served over spaghetti and topped with onions, beans, and cheese.

California Barbecued Tri-Tip

Serves 4 to 6

If you can't find tri-tip, bottom round is an acceptable alternative. The traditional accompaniments to tri-tip are Santa Maria Salsa and California Barbecued Beans.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tri-tip roast (about 2 pounds), trimmed
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups wood chips, preferably oak
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon garlic salt



1. Pat roast dry with paper towels. Using fork, prick roast about 20 times on each side. Combine garlic, oil, and salt and rub over roast. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour or up to 24 hours.
2. Soak wood chips in bowl of water to cover for 15 minutes. Open bottom vents on grill. Light large chimney starter filled with charcoal briquettes (about 100 coals) and burn until charcoal is covered with fine gray ash. Pour hot coals in even layer over one half of grill. Set cooking grate in place, cover, open lid vents completely, and let grill heat for 5 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean.
3. Using paper towels, wipe garlic paste off roast. Rub pepper and garlic salt all over meat. Grill directly over coals until well browned, about 5 minutes per side. Carefully remove roast and cooking grate from grill and scatter wood chips over coals. Replace cooking grate and arrange roast on cooler side of grill. Cover, positioning lid vents directly over meat, and cook until roast registers about 130 degrees (for medium-rare), about 20 minutes. Transfer meat to cutting board, tent loosely with foil, and let rest for 20 minutes. Slice thinly across the grain. Serve.

California Barbecued Tri-Tip on a Gas Grill

Prepare recipe for California Barbecued Tri-Tip through step 1. Soak wood chips in bowl of water to cover for 15 minutes, seal in foil packet, and place over primary burner. Turn all burners to high and close lid, keeping grill covered until wood chips begin to smoke heavily, about 15 minutes. Scrape cooking grate clean. Wipe garlic paste off roast. Rub pepper and garlic salt all over meat. Place roast on side of grate opposite primary burner and grill, covered, until well browned, about 5 minutes per side. Leave primary burner on high and turn all other burners off; cook until roast registers about 130 degrees (for medium-rare), about 20 minutes. Rest and slice as directed.

California Barbecued Beans

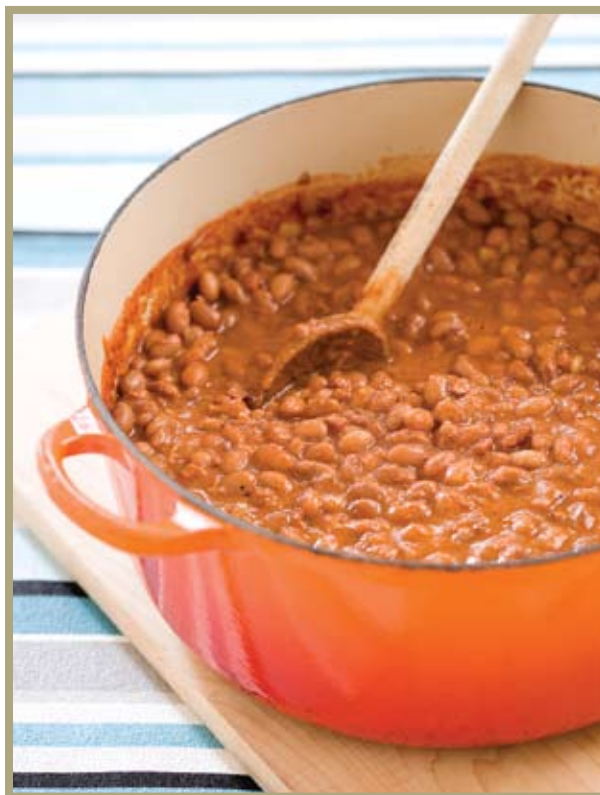
Serves 4 to 6

Note: If you can find them, pinto beans (a variety grown in the Santa Maria Valley) are traditional in this dish. Bottled taco sauce is available in the Mexican aisle of most grocery stores. Don't proceed with step 2 before the beans have simmered for an hour; it will hinder proper softening of the beans.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 slices bacon, chopped fine
- ½ pound deli ham, chopped fine
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 pound pink kidney beans (see note above), soaked overnight and drained
- 6 cups water
- 1 cup canned tomato puree
- ½ cup bottled taco sauce
- 5 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- Salt
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar

1. Cook bacon and ham in Dutch oven over medium heat until fat renders and pork is lightly browned, 5 to 7 minutes. Add onion and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add beans and water and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook until beans are just soft, about 1 hour.
2. Stir in tomato puree, taco sauce, sugar, mustard, and 2 teaspoons salt. Continue to simmer, uncovered, until beans are completely tender and sauce is thickened, about 1 hour. (If mixture becomes too thick, add water.) Stir in cilantro and vinegar and season with salt. Serve. (Beans can be refrigerated for up to 4 days.)



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Santa Maria Salsa

Makes about 4 cups

The distinct texture of each ingredient is part of this salsa's identity and appeal, so we don't recommend using a food processor.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds ripe tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 jalapeño chilis, chopped fine
- 1 small red onion, chopped fine
- 1 celery rib, chopped fine
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- ¼ cup juice from 2 limes
- ⅛ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- ⅛ teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

1. Place tomatoes in strainer set over bowl and sprinkle with salt; drain for 30 minutes. Discard liquid. Meanwhile, combine remaining ingredients in large bowl.
2. Add drained tomatoes to jalapeño mixture and toss to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand at room temperature for 1 hour before serving. (Salsa can be refrigerated for up to 2 days.)

Diner Style Omelet

Serves 2

Although this recipe will work with any electric mixer, a handheld mixer makes quick work of whipping such a small amount of cream. If using a stand mixer in step 1, transfer the whipped cream to a separate bowl, wipe out the mixing bowl, and then beat the eggs in the clean bowl.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons heavy cream, chilled
- 5 large eggs, room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ½ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 recipe omelet filling, optional

1. Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 400 degrees. With electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat cream to soft peaks, about 2 minutes. Set whipped cream aside. Beat eggs and salt in clean bowl on high speed until frothy and eggs have tripled in size, about 2 minutes. Gently fold whipped cream into eggs.
2. Melt butter in 10-inch oven-safe nonstick skillet over medium-low heat, swirling pan to completely coat bottom and sides with melted butter. Add egg mixture and cook until edges are nearly set, 2 to 3 minutes. Sprinkle with ¼ cup cheese (and half of filling, if using) and transfer to oven. Bake until eggs are set and edges are beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes.
3. Carefully remove pan from oven (handle will be very hot). Sprinkle with remaining cheese (and remaining filling, if using) and let sit, covered, until cheese begins to melt, about 1 minute. Tilt pan and, using rubber spatula, push half of omelet onto cutting board. Tilt skillet so that omelet folds over itself to form half-moon. Cut omelet in half. Serve.

Filling Station

Here are two of the test kitchen's favorite fillings for Diner Style Omelets. To help some of the filling integrate into the eggs, add half of the cooked filling to the omelet right before it goes into the oven and add the other half right when it comes out, prior to folding.

SAUSAGE AND PEPPER FILLING

- 4 ounces bulk sausage meat
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ½ red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- Salt and pepper

Cook sausage in nonstick skillet over medium heat, breaking up clumps with wooden spoon, until browned, about 6 minutes. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate. Add butter, onion, and bell pepper to empty skillet and cook until softened, about 10 minutes. Stir in sausage and season with salt and pepper.

LOADED BAKED POTATO FILLING

- 1 large Yukon Gold potato, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 4 slices bacon, chopped
- 2 scallions, sliced thin
- Salt and pepper

Microwave potatoes on high power, covered, in large bowl until just tender, 2 to 5 minutes. Cook bacon in nonstick skillet over medium heat until crisp, about 8 minutes. Transfer bacon to paper towel-lined plate and pour off all but 1 tablespoon bacon fat. Cook potatoes in bacon fat until golden brown, about 6 minutes. Transfer potatoes to bowl, add cooked bacon, and stir in scallions. Season with salt and pepper.

Home Fries

Serves 4

Although we prefer the sweetness of Yukon Gold potatoes, other medium-starch or waxy potatoes, such as all-purpose or red-skinned potatoes, can be substituted. If you want to spice things up, add a pinch of cayenne pepper.

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ pounds Yukon Gold potatoes
(4 medium), scrubbed and cut
into ¾-inch pieces
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 onion, chopped fine
- ½ teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ teaspoon salt
- Pepper



1. Arrange potatoes in large microwave-safe bowl, top with 1 tablespoon butter, and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Microwave on high until edges of potatoes begin to soften, 5 to 7 minutes, shaking bowl (without removing plastic) to redistribute potatoes halfway through cooking.
2. Meanwhile, melt 1 tablespoon butter in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook until softened and golden brown, about 8 minutes. Transfer to small bowl.
3. Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in now-empty skillet over medium heat. Add potatoes and pack down with spatula. Cook, without moving, until underside of potatoes is brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Turn potatoes, pack down again, and continue to cook until well browned and crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue cooking, stirring potatoes every few minutes, until crusty, 9 to 12 minutes. Stir in onion, garlic salt, salt, and pepper to taste. Serve.

Greek-Home Fries

Add 2 minced garlic cloves, 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice, and ½ teaspoon dried oregano to potatoes along with onion in step 3. Omit garlic salt.

Home Fries with Fresh Herbs

In step 3, add 1 teaspoon each chopped fresh basil, parsley, thyme, and tarragon along with onion.