

Questionable Taste









To the memories, flavors,
and aromas that make our
people ... our people.







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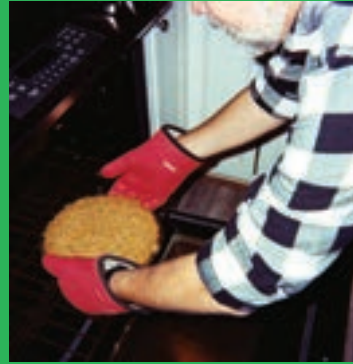


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What does



curiosity taste like

Truth is, this book can't stop answering that question. It's full of Michelin-worthy eats, soul-warming personal stories, and surely, the best intentions. The only problem? We work in advertising — and many of us lack the grandmotherly love and patience to actually pull them off. We refuse to be confined to a recipe. There's no room for revisions. And our taste is questionable. All this, plus our hands are so very fragile.

So, this one goes out to the real masterminds out there — our people's people. The ones who stoked our curiosity at a young age. The ones whose creativity went unnoticed and often unappreciated. The ones who tirelessly perfected their craft that — in many cases — skipped a generation (or two).

This is Questionable Taste.

Inspired eats. Curious executions.





Snapps

Snacks and
apps together at last.



Weird toast

An Un-recipe

FROM JILLIAN KAVINSKY RE

When we all went work-from-home for the first time in 2020, my biggest work-life double-edged sword was having access to my kitchen 24/7. It meant that I could eat whatever was in the fridge without any forethought, and it also meant I had to ... eat whatever was in the fridge without any forethought. To this day, my version of Sisyphus's rock is cleansing the fridge of whatever wilting produce I got from the CSA last week — or the cheese from the Kroger \$5 bin, or the duplicate mustards leftover from a cookout ... you get the picture.

Enter: weird toast. Left to my own devices, I am a grazer, not a meal eater, nor really a recipe-follower, which made me particularly susceptible to the philosophy of weird toast. Maggie Lange said it best in a 2017 Bon Appetit article that weird toast is “food for the moment” — less a dish, more a framework. It's an un-recipe, as I have dubbed it, designed to be weird and fun and curious. Completely different every time, never replicable.*

1 Form of bread or bread replacement

SERVES 1

1 Flavor anchor

1 Glue ingredient

1–3 Garnishes

Assembling: Carbonize your toast to whatever level your taste buds are craving. Use your glue to contain your anchor, and your garnishes to make it look as pretty as possible. While not every weird toast will be beautiful — or maybe even particularly tasty — this is your opportunity to try your darnedest. Because we all know that more aesthetically pleasing your toast is, the more likely it will be delicious, or, at the very least, memorable.





One form of bread or bread replacement — this can be the nice sourdough, but also don't disparage the lavosh cracker or slightly freezer-burned English muffin as viable options.

One flavor anchor—this is the star of your toast, the thing that will dub it “_____ toast.” If it's August, it might be a tomato or peach. When all that's available is the pantry, maybe a can of tuna or something pickled. Or fry up an egg or shred a bit of chicken leftover from dinner. I would even count a super funky cheese or bold jam as the anchor. This is a great place for the strange ingredients left in the fridge from another recipe that would otherwise have no home — the month-old jar of sundried tomatoes, the leftover caramelized onions, the mustard greens wilting in the crisper drawer. The key to weird toast is working with whatever you've got on hand.

One glue ingredient — you're going to need something to hold your toast items together. Condiments are often king here — butter, mustard, and mayo are frequenters for me—but don't be afraid to get funkier. I've used pesto, miso paste, leftover pasta sauce, ajvar, spreadable cheeses. Even simply cutting some olive oil into your flavor anchor will sometimes work if things are crumbling apart.

1–3 garnishes — this doesn't have to be anything too wild — a couple cranks of pepper, a drizzle of honey or balsamic, fresh herbs if you have them. Though they may be unassuming, this is what makes the toast feel like a meal. It's your chance to balance out the glue and anchor, especially if one or both of them are oddballs. This is what turns an otherwise weird toast into a true Weird Toast.

**Tomato toast, for example, is my all-time favorite food, and I would be remiss to not mention it. But it is still a particular recipe, and for that reason, does not count here.*

Porch basil pesto

FROM JULIA SNIDER

2 cups of fresh basil (if you don't grow your own, store bought is fine)

¼ cup of extra virgin olive oil

1 clove of garlic
(add more if you are a garlic person. I am and usually use 2 cloves)

½ cup of toasted pine nuts

Juice of a half a lemon

A pinch of sea salt

A pinch of black pepper

¼ cup of fresh grated parm.

Use fresh from a block, it's better!

SERVES 2

After a lot of trial and error with apartment porch plants ... Finally I found one that wants to flourish! BASIL. And what do you do when you have a ton of overgrown basil plants? Make pesto. Making pesto is a sustainable too! It allows you to utilize herbs and nuts that might otherwise go to waste.



In a small pan toast your pine nuts until golden.

In your food processor add garlic and pine nuts.

Start to process your ingredients and add basil.

Slowly add in your olive oil, lemon juice.

Lastly add in your parm, salt, and pepper. If you find that you want your pesto thinner, add water.

Serve over your favorite noodle shape. I recommend gemelli or casarecce.

I add fresh peas and parm to the top too.



Hanky panky bites

FROM MATT PUGH

1 lb Velveeta cheese, cubed
1 lb Jimmy Dean sausage
1 lb ground beef
1 tsp oregano
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tbsp worcestershire sauce
Mini rye bread squares

SERVES 8

My fiancée's mom makes this classic every year for Christmas and the occasional NFL game. I've got a bag in my freezer right now calling my name. All around crowd-pleasing app that comes together in a snap. Really has to be Velveeta and Jimmy Dean, so she says.

Brown meat and drain. Mix with cubed cheese and spices/sauce. Spread a dollop on pieces of mini bread. Broil until cheese melts, 3-4 minutes.

Can be frozen and reheated in broiler in a snap.

Pro-tip: don't use the broiler...
Or at least don't forget about it.





Summer stack

FROM EVAN DULANEY



STACK

1 seedless mini watermelon, thinly sliced about ¼"

2-3 heirloom tomatoes
(preferably orange and yellow), **thinly sliced horizontally about ¼"**

BLISTERED SHISHITO CREMA
1 pint shishito peppers

3 cloves garlic, peeled

2 limes, zested and juiced

1 cup cilantro, chopped

1 tbsp olive oil

3 tbsp mayo
(or sour cream or Greek yogurt)

Salt and pepper to taste

FRIED GREEN OLIVES

½ cup of green olives, roughly chopped

2 eggs, beaten

1 cup flour

1 cup panko bread crumbs

Salt & pepper

2 cups vegetable oil

SERVES 2

Every season, since I met my now wife, I turn our home into a restaurant called Little Spoon — because I believe every meal can be savored longer with smaller utensils. Each Little Spoon, I cook a four (sometimes five) course tasting menu for her, and I go WILD in the kitchen.

Experimentation, innovation, curiosity and cutesiness are all on the table at Little Spoon (I once made a McDonald's Diet Coke Braised Short Rib with American Cheese Polenta because she loves Mickey D's Diet Coke).

And of all the Little Spoons, this watermelon-tomato concoction has been my wife's favorite dish, and it happens to look almost as good as she does.

Make your shishito crema first. Toss peppers in a bowl with olive oil, salt and pepper. Heat pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add peppers. Turn occasionally to blister on both sides. Once blistered, remove.

Cut off stems and add remaining ingredients to a blender. Blend, but try to keep at a somewhat thick consistency. Don't let it get too liquidy. Pour into a squeeze bottle and let cool to room temp before refrigerating.

Now it's time to fry the green olives. It sounds weird, but they add a crunchy pungency to the dish. Add vegetable oil to a small saucepan and heat to about 350° on the stove top. While heating, line up three bowls, the first with flour, second with the eggs, third with the bread crumb (mixed with salt & pepper). In succession, coat your olive chunks with each ingredient in order. Working in batches, drop them into the hot oil, frying until golden brown. Remove, set aside on a paper towel covered plate.

Finally, the watermelon and tomato. Cut the thin slices into 2" x 4" rectangles. In alternating fashion, stack one ingredient on top of another on your serving plate. Each stack should include three watermelon slices and three tomato slices.

Dot the plate and salad stack artfully with the shishito crema. Then, dot the plate and stack with some of the fried green olives. Bon appetit.

The Doll's oysters

Bacon & Apple Cider BBQ style

FROM LAUREN DOLL

GATHER THE GOODS
1 dozen fresh oysters (we love Kusshi's or Pacific's but defer to your preference!)

THE APPLE CIDER MIGNONETTE
¾ cup of apple cider vinegar

1 ½ tbsp fresh squeezed lemon juice

¼ cup finely chopped shallot

Cracked black pepper to taste

THE TOPPINGS
Fresh cooked bacon, finely chopped to bite-sized bits
Green onion finely chopped, for garnish

MAKES 1 DOZEN

There are two key components to every single Doll family core memory: good vibes and great food. We've spent countless hours chatting, laughing, debating and dreaming at our kitchen table, and these oysters are the perfect component to a curiosity-inducing meal.

Our first taste of BBQ oysters was before a family whale watching trip at a waterfront bar in Friday Harbour, San Juan Islands. We were immediately hooked by the rich, buttery flavor and the unique combination of toppings that made them so different from a typical raw oyster on the half shell. Over the years, my dad and I have experimented with different toppings, recipes, and seasonings to create the perfect BBQ oyster, and this one definitely stands out. The bacon and apple combo is so satisfying — delivering a buttery and acidic bite that hits all the right notes.

We hope you enjoy as much as we do!

Prepare the mignonette by mixing all ingredients together and refrigerate until cold. Cook the bacon to desired doneness, and set aside to cool before chopping into small bits.

Heat grill to high heat and allow time to get HOT!

Shuck oysters, balancing open shells on heat safe platter, (a muffin tray works great!).

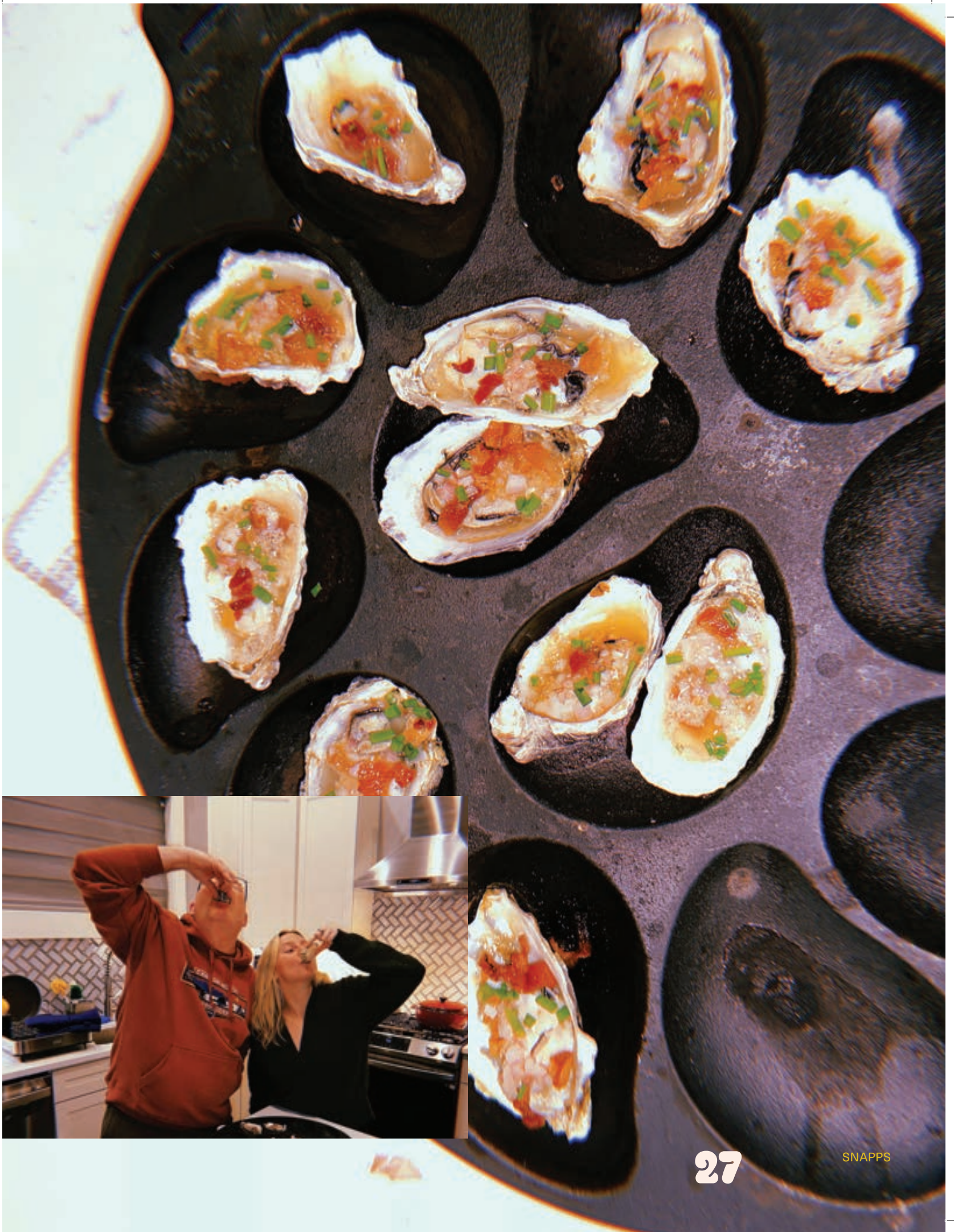
Top oysters with mignonette and bacon bits.

Grill oysters covered for 5–7 minutes, or cook for 10 minutes on a wood pellet smoker.

Remove from heat, top with sprinkled green onion and extra mignonette.

Allow to cool slightly before enjoying.

Enjoy on the shell!



Taco dip

FROM CASSIE RICE



**8 oz package cream
cheese softened**

**1 can small sliced
black olives**
(optional)

1 can refried beans
(smooth)

**24 oz jar of
mild salsa**

**8 oz Mexican
shredded cheese**

Add medium or
hot salsa if you're
feeling spicy

Make everything fat
free if you're feeling
it. If you're like me
and don't love olives,
I'd suggest removing
them or adding them
to just one half for
those who
enjoy them :)

SERVES 1

This is my family's GO-TO appetizer for gatherings, tailgating a sporting event, or just enjoying as we're getting ready for a game night. Any time we get together, my mom breaks out the dip — instantly fueling the excitement. She already knows to double up on the recipe because the dip goes fast and everyone wants leftovers to take home. :)



Put a palm-full of cheese off to the side.

Mix all ingredients together in a regular sized oven pan.

Add the extra side cheese to the top of the mixed ingredients.

Bake at 360° for 30 min.

Enjoy with your favorite tortilla chips!



Best party caesar salad

FROM AMANDA ADEY

After my son was born, my husband and I went on a fancy anniversary date to celebrate. Everything was too expensive and nothing was great — except the caesar salad they made fresh at the table. We decided we could do that ourselves and make it at home. The next day, we got all the ingredients, perfected our own recipe, and it turned out to be our favorite salad ever. Any time we have parties with family or friends, they ask us to bring it, and it's always a hit. Easy and delicious — we love it!



DRESSING

3 cloves garlic
minced

2 anchovies

1 lemon (juiced)

1 tbsp
worcestershire

1 tsp hot sauce

1 egg yolk

Salt and pepper to
taste

½ cup shredded
parmesan cheese

½ cup vegetable oil

Olive oil

SALAD

2 heads of romaine
lettuce

Shredded
parmesan cheese

Croutons

SERVES 6

Dressing:

Whisk together all ingredient minus oils, should be pretty thick.

Whisk in ½ cup vegetable oil and then start adding olive oil until it gets to whatever consistency you like.

Salad:

Chop up a bunch of romaine lettuce. Toss in the dressing to your desired consistency. Top with fresh shredded parm and croutons.





Sukhi salad

FROM SUKHI KANNIKS

SALAD

**4 washed
romaine hearts**
**½ cup cherry
tomatoes**

**A handful of
parmesan crisps**

**2 green
onion stalks**

**A few sprigs of
fresh basil**

DRESSING

3 tbsp olive oil

**1 tbsp whole
grain mustard**

**2–3 tbsp
nutritional yeast**

**Juice of half of a
lemon** (hold onto the
rest of the lemon in
case you want to add
more for acidity)

1 tsp honey (adjust
accordingly and add
more until desired
sweetness)

**1 tbsp of apple
cider vinegar**

**Salt, pepper, red
chili flakes
as desired**

**1–2 grated
garlic clove**

**Some water to thin
it out if needed**

SERVES 4

Everything in my life changed the second I started grating my garlic cloves instead of merely chopping them. I think this recipe is a simple amalgamation of things that I thought would taste good along with some pantry staples — and if nutritional yeast isn't a pantry staple for you, go ahead and introduce it to your pantry. It's so good in so many things.

***Side note:** If you hate the lingering smell of garlic after chopping or grating, rinse your hands under warm water + a little bit of dish soap while rubbing anything made of stainless steel. This will immediately remove the smell from your hands. If you DO like the smell of garlic lingering on your fingers after chopping or grating then ... enjoy I guess.

Combine the dressing ingredients until smooth.

Wash and chop romaine hearts. It's not the same if you use pre-cut lettuce from the bag, but it will still be okay. Romaine hearts are the crunchiest when you prep and chop them yourself.

Roll your basil leaves and cut them into ribbon strands.

Chop cherry tomatoes into halves, and finely chop the green onion.

Add your dressing to your salad bowl, then the green onions + basil ribbons, romaine hearts, and halved cherry tomatoes. Toss thoroughly and add crushed parmesan crisps on top and EAT!



Grandma Rose's challah

FROM LEAH ZIMMER

1 ½ cups of
warm water

1 tbsp of rapid
rise yeast

½ cup of honey

3 eggs

4 tbsp olive oil

A tbsp kosher or
sea salt

7 cups flour

Muscles for
kneading & time
for resting :)

MAKES 2
LARGE LOAFS

*If you're going
through all of this
effort, might as
well make two!*

Friday eve marks the start of the Jewish holiday, Shabbat. Growing up, this was a time spent with family, allowing for freedom to relax and take in the learnings & labors from the week prior. As any proper Jewish holiday, it involves gathering 'round a delicious spread of food, sharing stories and having curious conversations.

A staple of this weekly feast is my great grandmother's Challah (braided bread). I am not going to say that we had homemade challah EVERY week, but I have special memories of making fresh-from-scratch, mouthwatering, fluffy inside, crusty outside, braided bread with my grandmother & cousin.

Challah is best enjoyed warm, right out of the oven with a fresh slab of butter. Also it's best practice (and more fun!) to not cut the loaf, but instead pull off a braided bulb straight from the source. The three strands of the braid have been said to represent truth, peace and justice. Some also say that they are woven together to look like arms intertwined, symbolizing love, which is something we can always use.

Place warm water in a large mixing bowl and sprinkle yeast over top. Stir and wait for bubbles (~5 mins).

Add honey, oil, eggs, and salt to yeast mixture. Stir with a whisk until well combined. Add in flour slowly, until dough is stiff.

Sprinkle a clean surface with flour. Add dough & knead for ten minutes, adding more flour to spots that become too sticky to knead. Then place the dough in a bowl and cover it with a clean cloth.

After 2 hours, punch down the dough and turn it out onto a floured surface. Sprinkle a little more flour over the top and knead the dough again for about five minutes.

Separate dough into two portions and then separate each portion into three smaller portions (this is for a three-strand braid). Roll each portion into a rope. Pinch three ropes together at one end and then braid them, pinching them together at the other end when done.

Spray the loaves lightly with cooking spray and cover loosely with cling wrap or waxed paper. Then, cover all of this with a towel and allow to rise for about an hour.

Preheat oven to 375°. In a small bowl, beat egg and water together. Uncover risen bread and brush with egg wash. Place in oven and bake for 15–20 minutes. Remove from oven and brush crevices on top of the bread with egg wash again. Return to oven and bake for 20–25 more minutes, or until bread is dark golden brown and sounds hollow when tapped.



Pepperoni Bread

1 loaf Rhodes dough (thawed)
Spread 1/2 the dough on greased cookie sheet
in a long thin rectangle
Put pepperoni & provolone cheese on dough
(about 1/2 lb of each)
Put remaining dough on top and seal
edges well

Brush top with:
1/4 cup melted margarine
1 egg beaten
2 tbsp grated parmesan cheese

Bake 350° For 1 hour
Slice with slicing knife
(Can be frozen before or after baking)

Merry Christmas

To: [illegible]

From: [illegible]



Have
good
Day

Pepperoni bread

FROM TELISHA GALIZIO

**1 loaf Rhodes*
frozen dough,
thawed**

**¼ lb pepperoni
slices**

**¼ lb provolone
cheese**

**2 tbsp parmesan
cheese**

**¼ cup of margarine
(or butter)**

1 egg, beaten

*May substitute
with any brand of
pre-made frozen
loaf dough

SERVES 8

In my Italian family, you always offer food when you have visitors arrive and keep doing it until they depart. My Aunt Helen would often have this bread ready to serve guests around the holidays, and my siblings and I would greedily eat it up.

A few years ago I asked her for the recipe and instead of providing over the phone or digitally, she photocopied her recipe and mailed to me. I keep it hanging on my fridge among a collection of other treasured mementos.

Spread half the dough on a greased baking sheet in a long thin rectangle.

Place a layer of pepperoni slices across the dough, followed by a layer of the provolone leaving some room at the edges for sealing.

Stretch the remaining half of the dough. Place over top and seal the edges tightly.

Brush the top of the dough with a mixture of the margarine, egg and parmesan cheese.

Bake for 30 minutes.

Cool and slice.

Can be frozen.

Roasted crostinis

Mini pepper and goat cheese

FROM JANE MANCHESTER

These crostinis come with a warning: only make if you're comfortable getting a ton of compliments. People will stop you at parties, find you at events, even grab the mic from a DJ to find you (shout out to Victor's aunt).

That said, if you can get over all the attention you'll love this delicious and incredibly easy recipe. I have enjoyed many a conversation over these crostinis with friends and strangers alike, and I hope you will too.



Small bag of mini peppers	1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp good olive oil	2 tbsp drained capers
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar	1 baguette (dense preferably)
3 cloves garlic, minced	11 oz plain goat cheese (room temp)
1 tsp kosher salt	8-10 large basil leaves

SERVES 4

Preheat the oven to 400°. Place the whole peppers coated in a little olive oil on a sheet pan and place in the oven for 15 minutes, turning once to bake both sides. Remove the pan from the oven and immediately cover it tightly with aluminum foil. Set aside for 30 minutes or until the peppers are cool enough to handle.

Meanwhile, combine the olive oil, balsamic vinegar, garlic, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Set aside. Pop the stem from each pepper, remove the seeds, and cut them in quarters. Place the peppers in a bowl along with any juices that have collected. Pour the oil and vinegar mixture over the peppers. Stir in the capers. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for a few hours to allow the flavors to blend. To assemble, spread the bottom half of the bread or cracker with the goat cheese. Add a layer of peppers and then a layer of basil leaves.



Not your millennial's avocado toast

FROM JARED FLOOD

2 slices of sourdough bread

2 spoonfuls of cannellini beans

1 pinch of salt

A dash of pepper

Garlic powder to taste (if you hate garlic, you don't need it!)

A quick little shake of cayenne pepper

A drizzle of olive oil

2 seven-minute soft boiled eggs

A sprinkle of furikake

A splash of soy sauce

Half an avocado

SERVES 1

I <3 this take on avocado toast. It's easy and cheap to make, but — thanks to stereotypes about avocado toast being so pricey it prevents millennials from owning homes — eating it makes me feel expensive.

I don't remember when I started making this, but my friends and I especially love it for rock climbing and hiking trips. All the ingredients are portable enough to travel with, so there's no reason to shove your face full of Cliff Bars first thing in the morning. And no need to break out a stove if you prep the bread & eggs pre-trip.

YuM. yUm. YUM.



Prep:

In a small pot, bring some water to a boil and place eggs, boil for 7 minutes with the lid on, remove, and place in ice bath.

While the eggs are boiling, combine avocado, cannellini beans, salt, pepper, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, and olive oil in a bowl. Mix to desired chunky consistency.

Set heat to medium and drizzle olive oil in a pan. Toast sourdough bread until desired golden brown.

Tip:

place plate on top of bread to weigh it down and get an even toasting.

Peel eggs and mash in a bowl with a splash of soy sauce.

Assembly:

Toasted sourdough + avocado mix + eggs + top with a sprinkle of furikake



Grandma Edna's orange rolls

FROM MEGHAN MOORLACH

This is my favorite family recipe — orange rolls. It's never a holiday without them. They were the one thing we could always count on from my Grandma Edna at every Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, etc. After she passed, we had a cutting board made with her handwritten recipe on it that now hangs in my mom's kitchen.

ROLLS

4 eggs
½ cup sugar
1 package yeast
¼ cup warm water
1 cup milk scalded
4 tbsp butter
4 cups flour
Pinch of salt

PASTE

3 ½ tbsp room temperature butter
½ cup sugar
Grated rind of 1 orange, some juice and pulp optional
(but recommended!)

SERVES 12

Rolls:

Mix all ingredients together to make spongy and let rise until light (1–2 hours). Punch down and let raise again. Roll out flat as if for jelly roll and spread with paste.

Paste:

Mix and spread on dough. Roll up and slice. Place sliced pieces in greased muffin pan. Bake at 350° until golden brown.





Momma Sonn's potstickers

FROM MYKA BETTS



FILLING

1 lb ground pork
1 large shallot
Ground pepper
Salt
Garlic powder
Sesame oil

SEALING

1 pack dumpling wrappers, round or square
¼ cup water

COOKING

1 can beef consommé (or stock)
Cooking oil

SERVES 20–30
(depending on how much filling you put in each)

Momma Sonn's Potstickers is a dish that was only made for special occasions when I was a kid, but it was special for other reasons too. My mother was adopted from Korea at an age that's older than most, joining a large family in small town Minnesota where nobody looked like her nor spoke her language. One thing, though, that transcends language barriers of any kind is food. My grandmother began making these potstickers as a way to make my mom feel welcomed, loved, and accepted in a way she could understand.

This recipe isn't traditionally Korean by any means, but it became a beautiful representation of my mom's cultural identity, a blending of her white American family and her Asian roots. In a way, this dish, this mixing of identities, represents me too, as I'm half of each culture, and what makes these dumplings so different is what makes them so incredible, much like myself. :)

I'm endlessly thankful that this tradition could be passed down to me, and now I can pass it onto you.

Wash them fingies, we're making filling! Peel, halve, & finely dice shallot. In a large bowl, combine ground pork, shallot, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Use your hands for extra love.

Get wrappin'! Spread out dumpling wrappers across your counter. Using a small spoon or fingers, place a small dollop of filling mix onto the center of each wrapper. You'll need less than you think.

Once the filling has been dispersed, wash your hands, grab a ¼ cup of water and a buddy bc we're putting in some elbow grease, baby! And by elbow grease, I mean we're gonna seal the dumplings. This recipe yields a lot, so a buddy comes in handy.

To seal the potsticker, dip your finger in water. Swiftly trace the perimeter of the wrapper with your wet finger. Fold the edges up like a taco, and press them together, closing up any holes. Once you get the taco fold down, feel free to get creative with other ways to fold. If the wrapper splits around the filling, you've used too much. No stress tho, it all ends in the same place anyway. :)

Fry the sealed potstickers in sesame oil until browned, don't worry about the insides because we're not done yet. Add beef consommé to pan until it cooks down and the potstickers absorb the consommé on all sides. Careful not to let it cook down too much, or else you'll see learn how potstickers got their name. I usually remove them once the consommé has cooked down enough to see the bottom of the pan. Serve & devour.

B-Fast

Bites that are
better than snooze.



Sad boring oatmeal

FROM ASHLEY NEEL

1 cup quick rolled oats
1 tbsp flax seed
(for regularity lol)
½ cup vanilla almond milk
1 scoop raspberries

SERVES 1

Ok, hear me out. I eat this breakfast EVERY SINGLE DAY. And even though it's mega lame, I enjoy it every time. You could make the case that not having to think about food frees my brain to think about other, more creative things, but I like to believe that consistency is the engine that centers my constantly spinning, constantly thinking brain.

Bonus points: You've more than likely seen me eat this on a virtual meeting. I usually forget to eat until I'm sitting in a meeting, starving.

Add 2:1 ratio of oats and water.

Place in microwave, heat for 1:30 min.

Add almond milk, flax and raspberries to taste.

Wait to cool, and don't forget to go off camera while you eat.



QUESTIONABLE TASTE





Gram's homemade granola

FROM ABBY CARR



20 cups oatmeal	4 tsp salt
2 cups pecans, chopped	2 ⅔ cups vegetable oil
2 cups coconut	1 ½ cups water
2 ⅔ cups brown sugar	2 tbsp maple flavoring
	2 tsp vanilla

MAKES 24 CUPS

One particular summer, my Grandma Dorsten (Gram) hosted cooking lessons for my sister, our two cousins, and me over a long weekend. She taught us her homemade recipes — everything from fresh bread, cookies, jam, to this homemade granola. She sent us home with mini cookbooks filled with all her favorite recipes. I'll just say, this family weekend sparked some of my first curiosities into cooking, and it's also one of my favorite memories with Gram.

In a very large mixing bowl, combine the dry ingredients. In a separate bowl, stir the liquids together. Add dry ingredients and mix well. Bake at 275° for two hours or until golden brown. Stir every 15 minutes.

A note from Gram:

Because of the quantity, this usually takes longer to bake than 2 hours. Should be golden and crisp. Make sure to stir every 15 mins.



Cheerios with banana slices

FROM JANE TSIVITSE

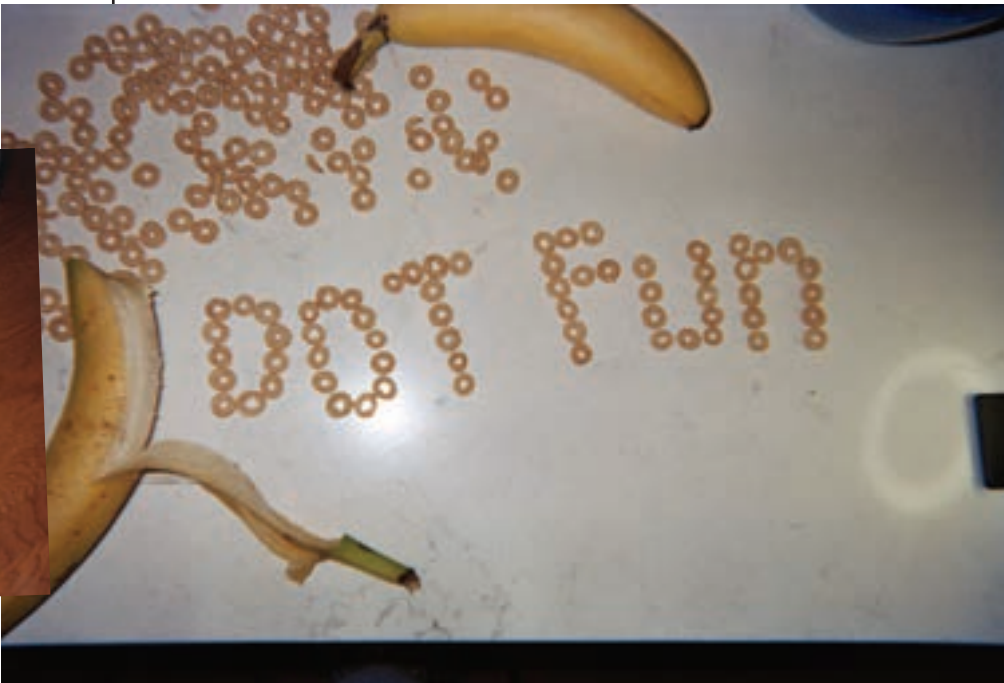
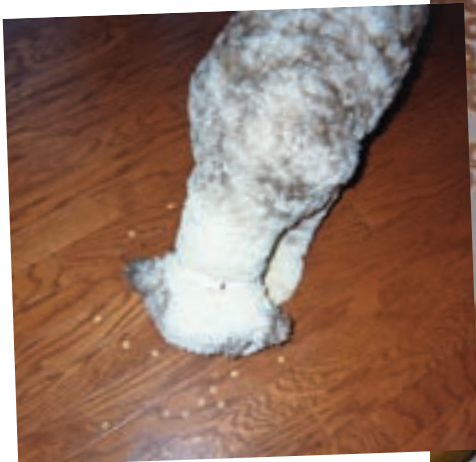
Growing up, every we'd make the trek up to Cleveland and stay at my grandparents' house on Christmas Eve. We'd celebrate with my grandma, grampa, and all 25 of my aunts, uncles, and cousins. It was always loud and chaotic to say the least.

The morning after Christmas I would go down to the kitchen and my grandma would have a bowl of cereal with banana slices in it waiting for me. We would sit at the table and talk while enjoying our breakfast, just the two of us. It's not an intricate recipe and only requires a few ingredients, but it leaves plenty of time to catch up at the breakfast table.

- 1 bowl Cheerios
 - 1 sliced banana
- SERVES 1

That's it

You'll figure it out ;)





QUESTIONABLE TASTE

48

Egg casserole

FROM ERIN MORRIS

Ever since I can remember, my dad would always make egg casserole for Christmas morning. It was the only time all year we had it, so it was something we really looked forward to. Cooking, family meals, and traditions have always been a big way my family shows love.

I've taken the recipe, passed it on to my children, and added some fun variations to it. We've also expanded it to other holidays.

The secret ingredient
in this recipe is the
dry mustard!

12 eggs

**1 pound bacon or
breakfast sausage**
(whatever you
like best)

**1 package
shredded hash
browns (20oz)
thawed**

1 cup milk

1 tsp dry mustard

**Salt and ground
pepper to taste**

**1 cup shredded
cheddar cheese**

**1 cup shredded
swiss cheese**

SERVES 10-12

Spray casserole dish with nonstick spray.

Spread hash browns on the bottom of the dish.

Spread the swiss cheese on top of the hash browns.

Whisk in a mixing bowl 12 eggs, dry mustard, salt and pepper and cheddar cheese.

Pour the sausage and then the egg mixture over the hash browns.

Cover and let sit overnight in the refrigerator or make right away in the oven at 350° for 40-50 minutes or until fully cooked.

Serve with a side of angel food cake pieces with vanilla yogurt and berries (and a mimosa)! Cheers!

Dippy egg in a cup

FROM TRICIA WOLFER

When my brother and I were growing up, my father traveled a lot during the week, so the weekends were made for time with Dad.

We would wake up on weekend mornings before a game or church to our father making breakfast. His famous concoction was called dippy eggs in a cup.

I can still see him standing at the stove in his brown robe putting this simple yet memorable breakfast treat together. There was something about how the egg yolk melted into the bread that caused the taste buds of my childhood to explode.

We would sit on the wooden, plaid-cushioned couch and devour, oftentimes asking him to make another.

Those times were so simple and so special and I will never forget.

**1-2 eggs sunny
side up**

SERVES 1

**1-2 slices white
bread** (Wonder
bread is the best!)

**Salt and pepper
to taste**

**Medium to large
cup your choice**

Cook eggs sunny side up. Make sure the yolk stays running.

Tear apart bread and put in a cup of your choice.

Once eggs are ready put into cup.

Use fork to mix all together.

Add salt and pepper to taste.



Herman's favorite banana bread

FROM TAYLOR LAATSCH

This banana bread was my paternal grandfather's favorite breakfast to eat as a child. My great grandmother used to make it for him every Sunday after they went to church, and it has continued to be a family favorite after many generations. As a child, my mother often traded out the pecans for some chocolate chips. :)



½ cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 cups flour
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 cup chopped pecans
3 large bananas

SERVES 8

Cream butter and sugar well; add eggs, then flour, soda and salt sifted together. Add mashed bananas and chopped nuts. Mix well; bake in well greased loaf pan at 325° for one hour. Good served with whipped cream and a sprinkling of chopped nuts. Delicious with cream cheese too.

Taylor's Version:
flour for a gluten-free flour, pecans for chocolate chip,
and add a dash of organic vanilla extract.



Papa John Book's pancakes

FROM ANDREA BOOK



1 ¼ cup flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tbsp sugar
¼ tsp salt
1 beaten egg
1 cup milk
2 tbsp canola oil

SERVES 3

This is the smell of Sunday morning in the Book household. My dad's pancakes. Unlike most pancakes that are light and airy, these bad boys are dense and stick to your ribs. Growing up, he would add a "secret ingredient" that my brothers and I would have to guess exactly. Some past secret ingredients have been a pinch of cinnamon, cheerios, and a singular M&M.

These pancakes have been made for family, friends, his swim team, and he even goes out of his way to make them for his coworkers every Christmas Eve. He makes miniature versions for his grandsons and granddogs making sure to blow on them so that they're not too hot.

Whisk together dry ingredients. Add egg, milk, and oil. Use a ¼ cup measuring cup to ladle batter onto skillet.



QUESTIONABLE TASTE

Andrew's breakfast hash

FROM ANDREW KANALY

This meal was a labor of love for me when I was working on perfecting my roasted potatoes and had some left over from dinner. I decided to throw the leftovers into my scrambled eggs and realized I had struck gold. There is NOTHING better than a breakfast hash alongside a nice hot cup of (preferably) light roast coffee and a glass of OJ. Make this for hungover housemates, your spouse/partner, or just make it for yourself because you deserve it.



Mini golden potatoes

Olive oil

Better Than Bouillon
italian herb paste
concentrate

Pink himalayan salt

Ground black
pepper

Eggs

Chives

SERVES 2

This was my go-to dish for a while as a connoisseur of breakfast foods, and a simple breakfast hash can really be made into a meal for any occasion/time of day.

Quarter mini golden potatoes and afterwards give them a nice rinse to get the extra starch off. Boil them until they're soft and the skin is just starting to fall off. Add in a dash of olive oil, BTB Italian Herb paste (about a tbsp worth), along with some salt and pepper to taste. Bake in the oven at 375° for about 32 minutes until golden brown. Cook your eggs however you prefer them (I typically go scrambled or over easy). Once both components are cooked, plate them and chop your chives to sprinkle on top and enjoy!



Entrees

Modern show-stoppers.
(Plus a few head-scratchers.)



Greek deliciousness platter

FROM PEYTON SUTTON

CHICKEN KABOBS
1 lb chicken breast or thighs, cut into chunks

1 red onion, quartered

1 handful dill

2 lemons

Olive oil to taste

Greek seasoning to taste

Red wine vinegar to taste

Bamboo skewers

GREEK SALAD

Your favorite green

½ pint cherry tomatoes, halved

Block feta, crumbled

1 red onion, sliced in half moons
1 cucumber, slide in half moons

PITA FRIES

5 pitas , sliced

2 tbsp vegetable or evoo oil

Greek seasoning

TZATZIKI

1 cup plain Greek yogurt

2 lemon

1 bunch fresh dill

½ cucumber

Greek seasoning to taste

Dollop sour cream

SERVES 4-6

Wayyyyyy back in the day when I was in college, I was visiting a rival school which shall not be named during football season. Despite a deep hatred for this rival school, I stumbled upon one of the most delicious things I'd ever eaten ... pita fries. Fresh, lightly fried pita strips dipped in tzaziki sauce. I knew I had to recreate them at home.

Fast forward a few years (decades), and I have assembled one of my family's favorite meals around these pita fries. The Greek Deliciousness platter, or my kids call it Mommy's Magic Dinner. Pita fries, tzatziki, chicken kabobs and Greek salad. It's family-friendly, easily adaptable for most dietary restrictions, mostly healthy, and everything can be made ahead. Yum.

Chicken Kabobs:

Thread chicken chunks onto skewers. Alternate chicken and red onion slices. Once assembled, sprinkle with fresh dill and Greek seasoning. Marinate with olive oil, juice of a couple lemons, and some red wine vinegar. Marinate for a couple of hours, or overnight. Grill or roast in the oven until done.

Greek Salad:

Assemble all ingredients and top with lemon juice and olive oil.

Tzatziki:

Mix one cup of plain Greek yogurt with a dollop or two of sour cream. De-seed and slice cucumber into half moons. Chop dill and mix in. Put in a couple of tablespoons of lemon juice, and add in some Greek seasoning. Stir and adjust to taste. Can also add in fresh garlic, garlic powder, or fresh mint.

Pita fries:

Slice pita into fingers. Heat oil over medium heat and fry pita chips until crispy. Top with Greek seasoning and flaky salt.

Assemble the platter. Tzatziki goes in the middle, alternate pita fries and kabobs.





Sesame noodles

FROM JORDAN HENGES

This is my go-to recipe for all parties and potlucks (and sometimes even a quick weeknight dinner!!) It's super to easy make and it can easily be altered to fit whatever mood you're in. You can get creative and add your favorite vegetables or even chicken or shrimp to your liking. Guaranteed to be a crowd pleaser 100% of the time. :)



1 box linguine noodles
4 whole green onions, sliced thin
½ bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
1 english cucumber, peeled and diced
Sesame seeds, to your liking

SAUCE
¼ cup soy sauce
2 tbsp sugar
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsp rice vinegar
3 tbsp pure sesame oil
1/2 tsp hot chili oil
4 tbsp canola oil

SERVES 4

Cook noodles according to instructions on box.

Chop cilantro, cucumber, and green onion and set aside.

Whisk all remaining ingredients together in a bowl. Taste sauce and adjust ingredients as needed.

Pour sauce over warm noodles and toss to coat.

Add in green onion, cilantro, and cucumber and toss.

Garnish with sesame seeds on top!



QUESTIONABLE TASTE

58

Skip the roll salmon bowl

FROM JORDAN KENNEDY



1 ½ lbs salmon fillet SERVES 4
2 cups sushi rice
1 cup diced cucumber
1 avocado (sliced or diced)
2 tbsp sesame seeds
Seaweed thins
Yum Yum sauce
Sriracha

Being a wife and working mom, I'm constantly running on fumes and the feeling that there's never enough time in the day to prepare a healthy meal for myself or my family ... then I came across this quick and easy (and oh-so-YUMMY) meal! As a sushi lover, this meal sparked my interest in that I get my favorite ingredients and that authentic sushi taste, but it only requires half the effort to make. Easy on the dollar and ready in 30 minutes, this recipe has become a weekly staple in my house.

*...and did I mention its
picky toddler approved?!*



Add sushi rice to rice cooker and let it do its thang! Follow the instructions for water-to-rice ratio and how long to cook, and don't forget to rinse your rice prior to cooking.

Once your rice is almost through cooking, cook your salmon (or don't, if raw salmon is your jam — just make sure it's sushi-grade). You can do this however you so choose! I like to season mine with garlic salt, pepper, smoked paprika and hot honey — no specific measurements, just until my ancestors tell me to stop — then I pan-sear it for a nice, crisp edge.

Once the rice and sushi are both ready to munch, separate the rice amongst your bowls, then cut and lay the salmon over top. Sprinkle in your sesame seeds.

Add diced cucumber, avocado, sriracha, and Yum Yum sauce. I like to switch it up with soy sauce and spicy mayo every now and again. You can add your seaweed thins to the bowl, or use them as a scoop. Wasabi-flavored is my personal favorite.

Mash everything together and throw down! If you like an added challenge, reach for the chopsticks instead of the fork.

*Don't forget to
thank me later.*



Foolproof lasagna

FROM ABBIGAIL LADWIG

1 lb ground Italian sausage	12 oz can tomato paste
3 garlic cloves, minced	10 oz lasagna noodles
1 tbsp whole dried basil	2 eggs
1 ½ tsp salt	3 cups ricotta
1 lb diced tomatoes canned (some fire roasted)	½ cup grated parmesan
	¼ cup romano cheese (optional)
	3 tbsp parsley (more to taste)
	1 tsp pepper
	1 lb mozzarella cheese

SERVES 8–10

Lasagna reminds me of college. It was one of the first things I cooked when I got my first apartment and something that I continued to make when friends would come over to our apartment to hang out. In college, it was the foolproof go-to I felt confident in making — if I had the grocery budget to do it.

And the best part about it was that it made A TON, it's PERFECT as leftovers, and typically a crowd pleaser. And it's easy to prep ahead of company arriving — just stick it in the oven after they arrive and that gives enough time to chat while throwing together a low-maintenance salad.

I always put any leftover slices into containers, freeze them, and then put them on a sheet pan and into the oven.

Even to this day, though my cooking skills and food knowledge have drastically improved, I still keep lasagna in mind as an easy go-to for large parties.

Brown meat slowly; spoon off excess fat. Add next 5 ingredients. Simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cook noodles in a large pot of boiling salted water till tender; drain, rinse, add a splash of olive oil to avoid sticking. Beat eggs; add remaining ingredients, except mozzarella.

Layer half the noodles in a 13" x 9" x 2" baking dish; spread with half the Ricotta filling; add half the mozzarella cheese and half the meat sauce. Repeat. Bake at 375° about 30 minutes (or assemble early and refrigerate; bake 45 minutes). Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Serve with a crunchy side salad.

Grandpa Cooley's chicken fettuccine

FROM CASSIE KELLY



1 stick butter	1 tsp lemon juice
¼ cup olive oil	3 to 4 chicken breasts
1 ½ cups Italian dressing	½ cup ricotta cheese
1 tbsp minced garlic	½ cup half and half
1 can artichoke drained and chopped	1 cup cottage cheese
1 ½ tbsp dried basil	1 package fettuccine nests
	Parmesan to taste
	Salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 4

Growing up, our family would head to Kansas City to visit my mom's side of the family, and we always stayed with my Grandpa Cooley. Grandpa was the best cook and he always made my favorite dish when we would visit ... chicken fettuccine. When I got older, I remember spending one evening in the kitchen with him — making the recipe and writing down every ingredient and recipe direction. To this day, I can make the recipe by heart, but I still have my original handwritten recipe. Grandpa Cooley has since passed, but his chicken fettuccine lives on, and it's one of our favorite family meals.

Every time I make it, it takes me back to my childhood and my Grandpa's kitchen.

Heat butter, olive oil, Italian dressing in a large skillet. Add chopped garlic, artichokes, lemon juice dried basil, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil stirring frequently to allow sauce to thicken then set temperature to low.

While this sauce is cooking, cook the chicken in a separate skillet — once fully cooked add chicken to the liquid sauce above. Let chicken simmer with sauce for 5–10 minutes.

With a colander separate the liquid from the chicken and artichokes. Set the chicken and artichokes off to the side.

Add liquid sauce back to the stove and add in half and half, ricotta cheese and cottage cheese to the pan. Cook for 10 minutes on low. If you need to add more liquid to the sauce, add more Italian dressing. If the sauce is not thickening, you can add a small amount of flour or cornstarch.

Boil fettuccine noodles and drain once cooked.

Serve sauce over noodles and sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

What you need

Fettuccini

Garlic (5 cloves)

Butter (3 T)

Olive Oil

Lemon Juice

Can Artichokes

1/2 cup

Basil leaves

Black pepper

Parmesan

Cut Go

Peor Dotted

four Corn

Add 7 Tbsp

Add 7 Tbsp

Add 7 Tbsp

Add 1 Tbsp

stove pot

operate

our mixtu

pepper

1/2 S

on s

a while

add in basil leaves

Turn on low

Can always add acid

if going to add liquid

wish

Crisco Can oil (2 T)

Wishbone House Italian (7 T)

Any chicken you want



add in basil leaves Turn on low

Can always add acid

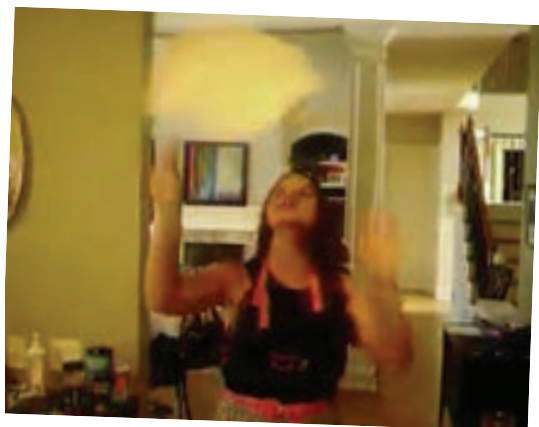
if going to add liquid wish

out ~~some~~ small cup of sauce to pour over fettuccini

artichoke to ~~the~~ sauce (might not need to add all artichoke)

Pizza crust

FROM JULIA MCCRAY



1 ¾ cup bread flour
6x ¼ tsp table salt
3x ¼ tsp
white sugar

1 packet rapid
rise yeast
3 tbsp corn oil
¾ cup warm water
(about 130°).

MAKES 1 CRUST

Growing up, pizza from the local shop was a dinner-time treat. Eventually, my father started making them himself, including the crust. I have carried on his crust making, so while making pizza at home is not new, my husband and I have added our own twist by finishing them on a smoker grill. Each pizza is unique; no two are alike. I can release my creativity by changing the toppings or style (pan, deep dish, thin crust, or artisan).



Mix the flour, salt, sugar, and yeast. Add the corn oil to the water, then use a fork to quickly combine with the dry ingredients. Now for the fun: dig in and start kneading the dough; you want to create a smooth ball, about 5–6 minutes. Brush the dough with corn oil to keep it moist. Place dough back in the bowl, cover with a towel, and place in a warm spot. I let it sit for at least an hour.

Depending on your preference, pulling it into shape or throwing it will give you a fluffy artisan shape and could produce a pretty bubble. If you prefer flat and thin, use a roller.

Preheat a pizza stone in the oven to 475° or 500° if using the smoker grill; you can also cook over the flame of a grill or a fire pit in a cast iron skillet.

Use parchment paper, sprinkle generously with corn meal and garlic salt, and lay out the crust. Add sauce and veggies, cook for about 8–9 minutes, remove pizza, add meats and cheese, and cook an additional 3 minutes until cheese is melted.

Enjoy!



Butternut squash pizza

FROM GAIL KREIMER



1 ready-to-bake
pizza dough
1 butternut squash
3-4 sweet onions

Ricotta cheese
Pizza cheese blend
Oregano
Olive oil

SERVES 4



Sometimes, as a vegetarian, ordering food at restaurants can be predictable. But, every once in a while, I'll find something on the menu that really surprises me.

My partner and I were in Indianapolis for one night to see a concert, and we stopped into St. Joseph Brewery for a bite before the show. At a gastropub, I wasn't expecting anything new until I laid eyes on the St. Joseph garden veggie pizza. Now, when I hear garden pizza, I think of onions, green peppers, spinach, mushrooms, and olives — the whole nine vegetable yards. But this pizza was topped with butternut squash. Who has ever heard of squash on a pizza!? Of course I had to order it, and obviously it was amazing.

Fast forward to a week later, I'm back home in cincy and I have a hankering for this butternut squash pizza, nothing else would suffice. So, I had no other choice but to recreate it myself.

Slice your onions and place in a pan, with a tbsp or two of olive oil, over medium heat. The key to caramelizing onions is PATIENCE. They are done when they are soft and golden brown.

Peel and cut the butternut squash into round slices, and cut in half. Cook slices in pan with some olive oil over medium heat until soft.

Roll out your pizza dough into whatever shape suits your fancy.

If your dough and veggies are ready, it is time for assembly. First cover your pizza with the caramelized onions (like you would with a pizza sauce). Then top with a pizza cheese. Next, load the butternut squash slices onto the pizza in a design of your choosing. Then, dot the pizza with as much ricotta cheese as your heart desires. Finish it off with a dusting of oregano.

Lastly, place your pizza in your oven. Cook according to dough instructions.





Muzzie's meatballs

FROM VICTOR MINELLA

1 lb ground beef
1 lb ground pork
1 cup breadcrumbs
½ cup onions

6 cloves garlic
1 cup pecorino romano cheese
½ cup parsley
¼ cup pepper
¼ cup salt

MAKES 14–16
LARGE MEATBALLS

Every year my grandpa “Muzzie” would gather me and my cousins to make hundreds of meatballs. Yes, hundreds (don’t worry, this is a pared down version). Then, we would disperse them among our family, friends, neighbors, and anyone who struck up a long enough conversation with my grandpa at Meijer. These summer meatball sessions really helped instill strong sense of community in me and made me very curious about my family and heritage.

Dice your onion and garlic. My grandpa always preferred chunks of garlic but you may mince them if that’s more your speed.

Thoroughly mix everything into your meat one at a time. Order doesn’t matter.

Form the mixture into meatballs. Remember, they will shrink a little while cooking so make them a slightly bigger than you’d like the final product to be.

Ideally, they are cooked stove top in a skillet in a generous amount of olive oil until they are fully cooked and the outsides are a little crispy but you can also put them in the oven at 350° for about 50–60 minutes.

Betsy Crook's chicken rice soup

FROM TREY HARNESS



**1 whole amish
roasting or frying
chicken (~4lbs)**
6 celery hearts
1 large white onion
**2 cups/1 lb
brown rice**

1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp onion salt
2 tsp black pepper
2 tsp celery seed
**1 beef bouillon
cube**
**1 can Campbell's
condensed cream
of celery soup** (sub
cream of chicken if
necessary) — add
an additional can for
extra creaminess.

SERVES 8

Chicken Rice Soup. It's good for the soul. That's what they say, right? I believe it to be true. This is a recipe that was passed down to my mother from my grandmother, Betsy Crook. It has been a staple in the kitchens of her children and stepchildren. It was one of the only meals that was universally loved by a mixed family brought together by a second marriage. It was like the elixir that turned acquaintances into friends and friends into brothers. It will fuel your soul.

It's the perfect blend of salty and savory, of brothy and creamy, and of comfort and wellness. I'm biased but I think it's the perfect meal, especially when paired with a piece of warm, crusty bread.

Chop celery hearts and onion, and place them in mixing bowl. Add rice and all spices to the mixing bowl, including the bouillon cube.

Remove skin and innards from chicken. Place in large (tall) soup pot with neck up.

Pour mixing bowl ingredients on top of chicken.

Fill pot with water about $\frac{3}{4}$ full, making sure the chicken is submerged.

Bring pot to boil uncovered.

Reduce to simmer and cover for 45 minutes.

Turn off the stove and remove the chicken from the pot, and pull all meat from the bones. Throw away the carcass and put the pulled chicken back in the pot. Add Cream of Celery Soup and stir.

Heat back up on the stove, if necessary, but watch it to avoid sticking/burning.

Salt and pepper to taste.

Goes great with some crusty, warm artisan bread.



Aunt Ellie's enchiladas

FROM LIBBY MOCK

This recipe comes from my mom's sister, aka my Aunt Ellie. She used to live in Cincinnati but moved to California about 20 years ago. Whenever she comes back into town, she makes these enchiladas for the family and we all LOVE them since they are not only delicious, but they remind us of the good-old-days when she lived in Cincinnati. If you like black olives, this recipe is for you!



2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken

1 can black beans

2 cups diced veggies (carrots, celery and onion)

1 small can black olives

1 small can green chiles

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

2 cups chicken broth

3 tbsp cornstarch
8-10 flour tortillas

SERVES 8

Saute the carrots, celery and onions. Add in the black olives and green chiles. Stir all veggies together, then add in the chicken, salsa, sour cream and 1½ cups of shredded cheese.

In a separate pot, thicken the broth by adding in the cornstarch and stirring while it comes to a boil until thickened.

Put the chicken and veggie mixture into 8-10 tortillas. Pour about ¼ of the broth over the chicken and veggies on each tortilla. Roll up tortillas and put in pan. Top the tortillas with the remaining cheddar. Bake at 325° for 45 minutes.

Serve with: beans and rice and tortilla chips!



Hungarian chicken paprikash

FROM KATHY PUCKETT



1 whole fryer chicken or the equivalent amount chicken

1 tbsp paprika

2x 8 oz cans tomato sauce

2 tbsp oil or grease

1 large onion

Salt and pepper to taste

~½ cup all purpose flour

~1 cup sour cream

Enough milk to make a paste using the flour and sour cream

SERVES 4-6



This paprikash recipe was a recipe my grandma made when we visited Hungary. My father brought this recipe with him when he came to the United States in 1956. It's one of my favorite Hungarian dishes that I make for my family.



Add oil/grease to skillet. Chop onion and fry in oil/grease until light brown.

Add in paprika and stir together.

In a pressure cooker or instant pot, add in chicken (cut up in pieces), salt, tomato sauce and onion mixture from the skillet. Add enough water to cover the chicken in the pressure cooker/instant pot.

Cook in pressure cooker or instant pot for 20 minutes at 15 pounds pressure.

After cooking is complete, make a paste using flour, sour cream and milk.

Take the paste and add a small amount of the liquid from inside the pressure cooker and mix well. Add this paste to the chicken. Stir gently. If it's too thick, add more milk. If it's too thin, add more flour.

Serve with homemade noodles.



Italian beef

FROM MATT CRAGNOLIN

I would say that I deserve most of the credit for the popularity and success of “The Bear” because I have been making Italian Beefs since 2017. Take that, Carmy!

You see, that’s when we had our first kid. And when you have your first kid, people start a meal train for you. Assuming you have friends, that is. Make some friends before having your first kid.

All sorts of meals chugged their way down those tracks and into our home and bellies that first month of parenthood, but one meal reigned, no ... trained supreme. It was so good, we just had to know how we could make it for ourselves. So we asked for the recipe, and our friend was kind enough to text us this very bLuRrY photo. Once we were able to read it, we could see it was actually one of the simplest recipes on earth. Where’s the beef? Look no further.

**3–4 lb boneless
chuck roast**

**1 can beef
consomme**

**1 packet Italian
salad dressing**

1 can beer

**8 oz jar
pepperoncini
(drained & whole)**

SERVES 6–8

Brown roast on high in skillet.

Transfer to Crock Pot™ and add other ingredients.

Cook on high for 1 hour and then on low for 6–8 hours.

Take beef out and shred.

Put back in juice and serve on crusty French bread.



Turkey tetrazzini

FROM JENNY BAKER

My mother always prepared this for us in the days following Thanksgiving with the leftover turkey. We thought it was such a treat because this was the only time of year we had it. I later found out when preparing it for my own family that it is a super simple recipe that anyone can make!



8 oz thin spaghetti

1 lb sliced mushrooms
(sauteed in a little butter)

½ cup butter

2–3 cups cooked turkey

1 can cream mushroom soup

1 can cream chicken soup

2 cups sour cream

1 cup grated parmesan cheese

SERVES 8–10

Preheat oven at 350°.

Cook noodles according to box directions.

While noodles are cooking combine mushrooms, butter, soups and sour cream.

Add in cooked turkey and noodles.

Stir until combined.

Spray a 9" x 13" pan with cooking spray and pour in noodle mixture.

Top with parmesan cheese and bake for 30 minutes.

Japchae for changing seasons

FROM BHAVIK JOSHI



- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce**
- 1 tbsp minced garlic**
- 1 tbsp turbinado (or brown) sugar**
- 2 tbsp toasted sesame oil**
- Salt and pepper to taste**
- 12 oz dry sweet potato glass noodles**
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil**
- ½ cup yellow onion (thinly sliced)**
- 1 cup carrots (peeled, thinly sliced)**
- 1 cup mushrooms**
- 1 bell pepper (thinly sliced)**
- ½ cup sugar snap peas (thinly sliced)**
- 1 cup baby spinach**
- ½ cup zucchini squash**
- ½ cup yellow squash**
- *or any medley of vegetables of your liking — really, I've never used the same combination of veggies twice!**

SERVES 4

I began experimenting with fermented foods over the pandemic-induced lockdown. It started with learning how to make kimchi. This got me interested in learning more about Korean cuisine and adapting those recipes to my vegetarian lifestyle (for example: savory pancakes with fermented rice batter and zucchini flowers) Before I knew it, I was hooked! The spring japchae recipe is a result of that curiosity, and has turned into a crowd pleaser at potluck gatherings, since then.



In a bowl, combine ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce, 1 tbsp each of minced garlic, turbinado sugar, toasted sesame oil, and ¼ tbsp of gochugaru (Korean chili powder).

In a large pot of boiling water, cook 12 oz of dried sweet potato noodles (aka glass noodles) until tender and translucent (8–9 mins). Transfer to a colander and run under cold water to stop the cooking.

Drain the noodles well, transfer to a large bowl, add in half of the sauce (from step 1), and toss to mix and evenly coat the noodles.

Heat 2 tbsp of vegetable oil to a large skillet. Add ½ cup thinly sliced yellow onion and 1 cup carrots, peeled and cut into thin sticks. Season with salt and black pepper to taste, and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender (3 mins).

Add 1 cup of fresh shiitake mushrooms, stemmed and thinly sliced. Stir and cook until golden brown (3 mins).

Add the remaining sauce, and 1 more tbsp of safflower oil, 1 cup of thinly sliced tri-color bell peppers and stir and cook for 2 mins. Add 1 cup of diced sugar snap peas, and 1 cup of zucchini and yellow squash, and stir and cook for 2 more mins.

Finally, add 1 cup of baby spinach to the skillet and cook until slightly wilted (2 mins). Transfer to a bowl, garnish with sesame seeds, drizzle some toasted sesame oil on it. Serve warm or at room temperature.



Jim-balaya

FROM WALLY GERMAN



- | | |
|--|---|
| 2 lb boneless chicken (cooked and cubed) | 2 medium green bell peppers (diced) |
| 2 lb smoked andouille sausage (cut into rounds) | 6 stalks celery (chopped) |
| 2 lb pre-cooked shrimp (no tails, made that mistake once. Cut into bite size) | 84 oz diced tomatoes w/juice |
| 1 large onion (diced) | 5 cloves garlic (minced) |
| 2 bunches small green onions (10-12) | 32 oz chicken broth |
| | 6 tsp cajun or creole spice mix |
| | 2 tsp dried thyme |
| | 2 tsp dried oregano |
| | 1 ½ cups long grain rice (pre cooked outside of pot) |
| | 1 stick butter |

SERVES 12

In my family, mom cooked most of the meals. But every so often, my dad would cook something special besides steaks on the grill or beer butt chicken (a story for another day). This was his go to. It takes a large part of the day to pull off, and he would start early, playing music in the kitchen, sipping beer, and enjoying the fine details of cutting each individual item. By the time the last ingredients were added, the pot would be damn near overflowing. With the crock pot on a low simmer, our house would be filled with a divine aroma. And if we were careful, the 4 of us could eat it every night for a week.



In large stir pan, add: chicken (pre-cooked), sausage, butter, and ½ cup water on low. Heat for 10 min.

In a 2 gallon crock pot, add: sauteed items above and onions, green pepper, celery, tomatoes, garlic, chicken broth, spice mix, thyme, and oregano. Cook at "high" for 2 hours, stir every 20-30 min.

Add rice and cook for 30 more min.

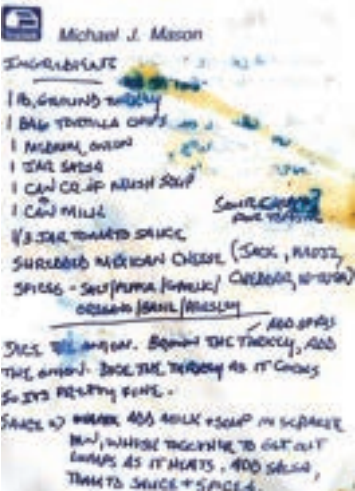
Add shrimp, stir and lower heat for 15 min.

Enjoy.



Uncle Mike's enchilada pie

FROM JENNA MASON



- 1 lb ground turkey
- 8 oz jar salsa
(choose your own
adventure, aka spice
level)
- 1 large onion
(chopped)
- 1 garlic clove
(minced)
- 1 bag tortilla chips
(Doritos if you want
the 70s vibe)
- 15 oz can cream of
mushroom soup
- 6 oz milk
- 8 oz bag shredded
cheddar cheese
- 8 oz bag shredded
Mexican cheese
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1/2 tsp cilantro
- 1/4 tsp basil
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/2 tsp salt

SERVES 8

Uncle Mike is in fact my dad and not my uncle, but he named this recipe so we're going with it! As a child I was an extremely picky eater — my family joked I only ate yellow foods! One day as my family was sitting around having Enchilada Pie, I asked my dad where this dish even came from. And here's the story ... my dad's freshman year spring break he visited a high school friend in California, and his friend's mom prepared the dish with fake meat, government cheese, and Doritos (c'mon it was the 70s). I loved the story so much, it inspired me to try to funky pie and it turns out ... I loved it! The funny thing is, he never saw that friend again and doesn't remember the mom's name, and thus his became Uncle Mike's Enchilada Pie.



In a large frying pan on stove top: Cook ground turkey (minced to around pea-size) and onion thoroughly — adding salsa and garlic to the mix, then set aside.

In a large saucepan on stove top: (1) Combine soup, milk, and remaining spices. (2) Bring to full simmer on medium heat — stir frequently. Combine ground turkey mix into the saucepan and continue to simmer. The longer this mixture combines the better — so do your thang!

In a large baking bowl: (1) Crush a layer of tortilla chips at bottom of the bowl, (2) Add a layer of turkey mix (about half). (3) Add layer of shredded cheese blended (about half). (4) Repeat steps 1-3 layers and bake for 20 minutes at 400°.

Serve with your favorite toppings and ENJOY. :)



Pesto almond crusted salmon

With roasted carrots

FROM AMBER HAYES



A big ole bunch of basil

1 cup pine nuts
(toasting optional)

Olive oil

1 lemon

4 cloves garlic

2 cups parmesan cheese (divided)

1 cup sliced almonds

4-5 pieces salmon filets

Salt and pepper to taste

Whole carrots of your choice

Honey

Garlic chili crisp

SERVES 4

I've always had a love for cooking and have been a student of the Food Network from the age of 9 or 10. Pesto was one of the first sauces I taught myself how to make. My parents always had a meal on the table for us to eat as a family, and a lot of times, I'd be right next to them stirring the pot or prepping the veg.

As a working mom, I want most meals I cook to be minimal clean up but enjoyable to eat. This one sheet meal has become a family favorite because I can prep the pesto in advance (or buy store bought to skip some steps) and get it on the table to eat in under an hour.

Make your crust topping:

Add the almonds & parm into the food processor. Blitz it until it's a crumbly consistency.

Make your pesto:

Wash & dry the basil, toast your pine nuts (dry pan no oil!), shred your parm, remove the skin from the garlic, juice the lemon. Toss all of that with some salt and pepper into the food processor. Blitz that until its a pasty consistency.

Prep your salmon:

Grab a large baking sheet and line with foil. Drizzle some oil on a foil lined baking sheet. Place salmon skin side down on the pan and season with a little bit of salt and pepper. The salmon should be completely thawed. Then spoon your pesto on the tops of the filets and spread. Combine the second half of cheese with the almonds and add the "crust" to the top of the salmon.

Prep your carrots:

Peel and chop to how you like. I usually cut in halves. Toss your carrots in some olive oil and place them on the baking sheet. Then add honey, salt & pepper. Measure with your heart. I like to add garlic chili crisp oil too. You can get creative here, but this is just my favorite way to make them.

Bake at 375° for 30 min. If your salmon isn't fully cooked after 30, (which can happen sometimes with thicker pieces of salmon) cook for 5 min increments until it's done!



PB&B crunch sandwich

FROM MATT FISCHER

My favorite recipe is a peanut butter, banana, and lettuce sandwich! Curiosity is combining seemingly incoherent ingredients to make something new and differently delicious. The ice cold lettuce is so crunchy and the mayo is tangy, it makes the peanut butter and banana taste amazing.

My mom made this for me when I was a little kid, and it always takes me back to exploring my little world! 🖐️



2 slices
Wonder bread
Peanut butter,
crunchy

1 banana (sliced)
Iceberg lettuce
(ice cold)
Mayo

SERVES 1

This is old school, so start with white bread like Wonder.

Put peanut butter (smooth or crunchy) on one slice of bread. Slice the banana and place the circles on top of the peanut butter. Take ice-cold iceberg lettuce (must be cold iceberg lettuce) and layer on top. Then put mayo on the other slice of bread and combine to make the sandwich.



QUESTIONABLE TASTE

80

Grandma's spaghetti sauce

FROM MAYA STOFFER



1 package lean ground beef

1 large onion (diced)

15 oz can tomato sauce

12 oz can tomato paste

2 tbsp parsley flakes

1 tbsp oregano

1 tsp salt

1 tsp ground red pepper

1 tsp basil

¼ tsp thyme

2 large bay leaves

½ cup water (if sauce is too thick)

SERVES 4-6

This recipe is from my maternal grandmother that she passed down to my mom and my mom in turn has shared with me. My grandma grew up on a farm and mostly cooked fresh vegetables without a lot of fancy additions, often looking for quick and hearty meals to feed her family. As a kid, I remember being excited when we'd visit my grandparents and they'd have this ready for dinner. This sauce has contributed to my love for pasta.

Brown ground beef and onion in a saucepan. Drain grease into can, freeze, then discard.

Add tomato paste and tomato sauce to the saucepan. Then, stir. Once tomato components are mixed in, add in the spices and stir.

If sauce is too thick, add ½ cup of water. After everything is thoroughly mixed, cook on low for 30-45 minutes.

Add to spaghetti (or pasta of your choice).

For leftovers:

Freeze cooled sauce in container. Thaw and reheat in bowl.

If sauce is dried up, add a splash of water or a V8 can of original 100% vegetable juice.

Enjoy!



2 A.M. mac and cheese

FROM EDDIE SMITH



12 oz macaroni or cavatappi

2 pieces dried porcini or oyster mushrooms
(optional)

12 oz evaporated milk

4 oz fake cheese
(Velveeta or American)

4 oz shredded cheddar cheese

4 oz swiss or gruyere

1 tbsp yellow mustard

1-2 tbsp butter

Kosher salt and pepper to taste

TOPPINGS

Dash or 5 hot sauce

1 cup Cheetos,
(crushed)

For your non-dominant hand 12 oz of your favorite beverage

SERVES 4-6

I first made this for my buddies visiting for the weekend, hence the name. But now, it's my go-to on Thanksgiving or a Bengals Sunday because it takes 20 minutes, dirties one pot, and is a total crowd pleaser.

PLEASE CONSUME
THIS DISH IN MODERATION,
IT'S SUPER UNHEALTHY

Add 12 oz of pasta to a pot or dutch oven. If you are using dried mushrooms, add them now and cover with enough cold water so all the noodles are submerged. Add an additional pinch of salt. The goal is to cook the pasta in just enough water so the starchiness stays with the pasta which creates a creamier sauce.

Cook on high heat, stirring pretty much the entire time. This should come together in 10 or so minutes. If you're making this at 2 am and you walk away, odds are you pass out on the couch. The water should be mostly absorbed before the noodles are completely cooked. Trust the process.

Add in the evaporated milk and bring it back up to a boil. Slowly incorporate the cheese, butter, and mustard and reduce the heat to low. Stir until the cheese fully melts.

Taste for seasoning and remove the optional mushrooms (or keep them in). Top with crushed Cheetos and way too much hot sauce. Crack open your beverage, take one bite of mac, burn your mouth, and pass out before finishing.



HOTPOINT

Sauteed chicken of the woods

FROM DANIELLE SCHUSTER

3–4 large chicken of the woods mushrooms

Kale (optional — add to liking)

2 tbsp olive oil or butter

½ cup white wine

3 cloves garlic

Squeeze of lemon juice

Parmesan

Salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 2–3

This recipe was my first time cooking something I've foraged. My friend Katie told me about a large patch of chicken of the woods mushrooms at California woods nature preserve. I drove there with my roommate Anna the next day to harvest a few for dinner. We could see the patch from the road like a burning orange beacon. There is something so magical about being able to gather and consume something directly from the earth — which is why this recipe is so special to me. Chicken of the woods is also one of my favorite mushrooms & one of the tastiest chicken alternatives out there.

After harvesting, soak mushrooms in bowl of water for 5 minutes and wipe dry.

Cut or tear mushrooms into 1–2 inch wide pieces (Think chicken strip sized).

Add oil or butter to skillet, sauté mushrooms on medium heat for about 5 minutes.

Add in garlic, salt and pepper, cook for another 5 minutes.

Add in white wine and kale, simmer till kale is wilted.

Top with lemon juice and parm and serve with your favorite side (which is pasta for me). :-)



Cauliflower soup

FROM DANIELLE PATTON



2 heads of cauliflower

4 garlic cloves
(skin on)

2 shallots, (cut in half)

2 tbsp olive oil

4–5 sprigs of thyme

1 L chicken or vegetable stock

½ squeezed lemon

SERVES 6

I'm such a fan of cauliflower and typically eat it raw w ranch, but I stepped up my game when my friend Kristen shared this soup recipe w me last year. It's so simple to make and healthy! The soup is light but filling, and it's fantastic when topped w truffle oil. Happy soup season!



In a large roasting pan add cauliflower, shallots, garlic & thyme. Season well and drizzle with olive oil.

Roast at 190° for 40–45 mins until soft.

Squeeze out roasted garlic, remove thyme and add remaining ingredients to a blender, add chicken/vegetable stock and blend.

Blend soup until you achieve a really velvety soup. Add a squeeze of lemon juice and serve with thyme, truffle oil, sea salt, and freshly ground black pepper.



Mom's chicken casserole

FROM SARAH WILKE

At my kindergarten graduation, they asked everyone their favorite food. Most answers were chicken nuggets, mac and cheese, pizza, and so on. Not me, not five year old Sarah. My favorite was my mom's chicken casserole, a casserole with broccoli, chicken, rice and a creamy cheesy topping. This meal has brought me joy and comfort for as long as I can remember. It has brought smiles to all the faces around my family's table. Chicken casserole is a meal I can share with friends and be proud of — a meal that always has, and always will, make me feel at home. I hope you enjoy this warm and fuzzy dish.

4–5 chicken
breasts
1 box long
grain wild rice
1 bag frozen

Broccoli cuts
1 cup Hellman's
mayo
2 cans cream
of chicken soup
1 bag shredded
cheddar cheese

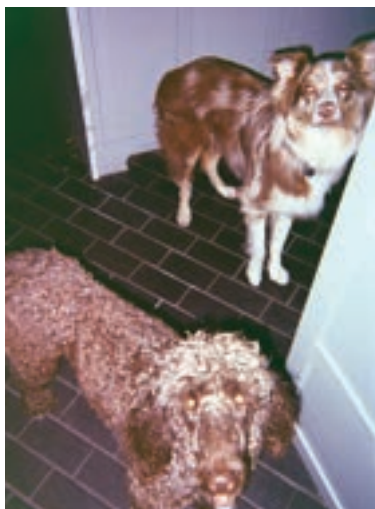
SERVES 6

In separate pots, cook chicken and shred it and the wild rice. Then in a large bowl, mix the cans of cream of chicken soup, mayo, and cheese. In a 9" x 13" casserole dish layer the rice, frozen broccoli, and chicken. Then spread the soup mixture over top. Bake uncovered for 1 hour at 350°, if you want more rice feel free to add more!



Homemade dog food

FROM JEFF WARMAN



FOR A SMALL BATCH
1 cup of uncooked long grain white rice (will cook it)

2-2 ½ lbs of fresh ground beef (80% lean 20% fat)

6 eggs (we go with natural, cage free, large brown eggs).
Shells and all.

Serving size should be about the same as a commercial dog food would recommend. But it obviously depends how big your dog is and what works best for them.

We actually double this recipe and make a large batch that lasts about 4 days for 3 different-sized dogs that get fed twice a day.

This is the recipe that we make most in our house. And it's not even for any of the humans.

We have 4 dogs and they all have issues. But one in particular was so unhealthy on every single premium commercial dog food that we tried, we had to start experimenting with homemade dog food recipes. When we finally tried this one, we started to notice everything changing for Snowy Marshmallow. His watery eyes stopped running, his coat became shinier and softer, his stomach started cooperating, he stopped itching so much, and he was just a happier pup. So we started the other dogs on the food, and they all got healthier, too. Plus, they lovvvvvvvvved the food.

Sure, it's a bit of a pain to make dog food every few days, but once you see how good they feel, you realize it's totally worth it.

Put all the ground beef into a pan.

Put in all 6 eggs and break and mix (shells included) with the beef.

Set the burner almost as low as it can go and mix and stir occasionally for about 45 minutes to an hour till it seems fully cooked.

Cook rice separately, then add it to the meat and eggs. Mix. Let cool before serving.

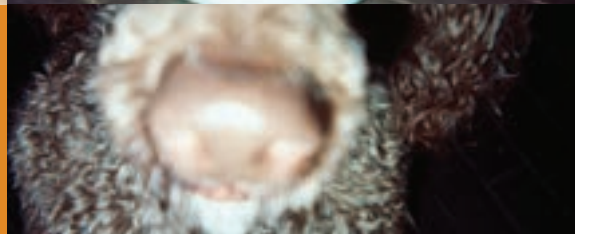
Store in the refrigerator.

Watch your dog get softer, shinier, happier and healthier.

Serving extras:

Two spoonfuls of canned salmon on top of each serving for shiny coat and allergies.

One scoop of Dinovite on top of each serving for vitamins.



Not Skyline

Chili is thicker than water.



Big Chip's midwest chili

FROM ANDY MILLARD

1 ½ lb ground beef (or other meat/ substitute)	14 oz water from a bean can
1 yellow onion (small dice)	2–3 tbsp chili powder
2 cloves garlic (minced)	½ tsp mustard powder
1 tbsp olive oil	½ tsp umami (mushroom) powder
1 tbsp tomato paste	1 tsp hot sauce
½ can lager beer	Salt and pepper (to taste)
14 oz can tomato sauce	Cheese and crackers if you'd like
14 oz can crushed or diced tomato	
3–4 cans chili beans	

SERVES 6

Since I was a kid, my dad has been making this chili. It's always been a go to for camping trips, super bowl parties and just a random fall/winter Sunday.

It's really nothing special. No wild ingredients or technical preparations. It's simple, and easy.

I've added my own components along the way, like the mustard powder, umami powder and hot sauce. Those just made sense. :)

*It's a millard
family classic.*

Preheat a large dutch oven over low/medium heat. When hot, add olive oil. Once oil is hot, add diced onion and minced garlic. Stir and let cook for 5 ish minutes. Add salt and cracked pepper. Stir. Add in ground beef and begin breaking it up with a sturdy wooden spoon. Before the beef is cooked through, add 1 tbsp of chili powder and another pinch of salt and cracked pepper (this will help the season get in to the meat). Stir mixture and let meat cook through.

Once meat is cooked through, add in the tomato paste — stir to combine and let cook out for about 3 ish minutes. De-glaze your pan with the lager beer. Let beer cook out for about 4–5 ish minutes or until it no longer smells like beer.

Add in tomato sauce, crushed or diced tomatoes, beans and water. Stir to combine. Increase your burner to about medium/high heat. Add in the remaining chili powder, mustard powder, umami powder, and salt and cracked pepper. LET THE SPICES LAY ON TOP OF THE LIQUID UNTIL LIQUID BEGINS TO BOIL. When liquid begins to boil, decrease heat to low and stir.

Let sit on low heat with lid mostly on, stirring occasionally to avoid stickage on the bottom. You can cook this for 1–3 hours. Once you're ready to eat, add in that hot sauce (if you want). I used Louisiana Brand Garlic lovers ...

Serve over pasta if you want or make a coney — top with your fixins.



Sunday football chili

FROM SAM HUERKAMP

This very simple recipe was passed down to us from my husband's aunt Mary. Coming from two football loving families, this is a recipe that we make almost every Sunday morning during football season to enjoy while we cheer on the Bengals (and whatever team we have that week in last man standing). Whether we're hosting a full house of friends and family in a playoff game, or snuggled on the couch with our 3 kids, this is the go-to Sunday Football recipe that we look forward to.

3 chicken breasts
1 cup chicken broth
2 cans great northern beans

1 can Rotel diced tomatoes and green chilis
8 oz shredded hot pepper cheese

In a crock pot, cook chicken breasts, chicken broth, and Rotel for 5 hours on low. Once chicken is cooked through and tender, shred the chicken in the crock pot. Add in beans and cook for 1 hour. Add in cheese and cook until melted. Serve with crackers of choice, and enjoy!

SERVES 6



QUESTIONABLE TASTE

Grandma's feel good chili

FROM KATIE HURIER

This chili began with grandma, hence the hint of sugar! The smells of this recipe remind me of playing with friends on crisp fall nights and coming inside to a delicious bowl of hot chili. We often had this on Halloween right before the big candy run began, I now love making this for my kids on Halloween night!



1 lb ground beef
46 oz can tomato juice (I prefer Red Gold)
¼ cup sugar

Buena Vida chili powder packet
Spaghetti (we use ¾ of a box but you can use more or less pending your preference of pasta)
Salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 8-10

Brown and drain the ground beef.

In a large stock pot combine tomato juice, chili packet, sugar, salt, pepper. Add in the cooked ground beef. Simmer for 5 min.

Add cooked spaghetti and simmer for an additional 15-20 min more or until the sauce has started to thicken.

Serve hot with a side of buttered crackers or crumbled on top (our favorite is a simple saltine cracker).

Recipe makes for great leftovers!





Pumpkin chili with toppings bar

FROM KATE WOJAN

1 tbsp olive oil	30 oz canned fire-roasted tomatoes
1 lb ground turkey (or sub your favorite ground meat/meat substitute)	15 oz can kidney beans (drained and rinsed)
1 onion , (chopped)	15 oz can black beans (drained and rinsed)
3 garlic cloves (chopped)	15 oz can pumpkin puree
1 orange or red bell pepper (chopped)	2 ½ cups chicken broth (or sub vegetable broth)
2 tsp ground cumin	1 tsp sea salt (more to taste)
1 ½ tsp chili powder	¾ tsp black pepper (more to taste)
½ tsp ground cinnamon	

SERVES 6-8

Halloween is my Super Bowl. I inherited my love of all things creative and spooky from my mom, who introduced my brother and I to so many fun fall traditions. To this day, there isn't a day on the calendar that comes remotely close to how much I love October 31st. I also love hosting a cozy and spooky party every year, and this chili (my new tradition) has been a smash hit for several years now. The fun part is the toppings bar; you can get as crazy and creative as you dare!

Heat the olive oil in a large dutch oven over medium heat. Add your ground turkey (or other meat) and cook till browned and cooked through, about 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer meat to paper-towel lined plate and set aside. Add the bell pepper and onion to the dutch oven and saute until softened. Stir in all your spices and then your tomatoes, kidney beans, black beans, pumpkin puree, chicken broth, and add your meat back in. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Assemble your toppings bar in your spookiest serving dishes, and let your guests scare up their favorite flavor combinations!

Toppings Bar Ideas:

French fries + tater tots (for base), shredded cheese, sour cream, tortilla chips, olives, green onions, corn chips, hot sauce, bacon, roasted pumpkin seeds, jalapeño peppers, chopped tomatoes, avocado, guacamole, limes, dark chocolate chips to melt in (yes it really adds something!).

Guinness chili

FROM ERIN MORRIS

2 lbs ground beef
(or vegetarian ground beef)

1 box Caroll Shelby chili seasoning kit

1 can of chili beans
(2 if you like a lot of beans in your chili)

2 cans of diced tomatoes

1 chopped white onion

1 can of tomato sauce

1 bottle or can of Guinness beer

SERVES 6

Years ago, we had a chili cook off with some friends. I was thinking of how I could make my chili unique for the cookoff. As I was thinking about it, I was drinking a Guinness beer. That's when I thought of the idea and went for it. Needless to say, I won. :-)

This recipe is a throwback to my dad and grandpa. As an Irish family, adding some Guinness makes it all the better. But really, it does. You have to try it!

Cook the ground beef in a nonstick pan. Drain the fat.

Add in the chopped onions and let them simmer with the meat for a few minutes.

While the meat is cooking, add into a large pot the chili beans, tomatoes, seasoning and Guinness.

*Add as much masa flour that is part of the seasoning kit as you want based on how thick you like the chili.

*Add as much cayenne that is part of the kit based on your level of spice

Add the meat and onion.

Let it cook for 20–30 minutes.

Enjoy with shredded cheese and oyster crackers!



Sweets

Classics with
a hint of crazy

QUESTIONABLE TASTE

100



Strawberry pie

FROM NATALIE BRINKMAN

Visiting my grandmother in California was always accompanied by many hugs and lots of homemade treats made with fresh fruit from the farmers market. My grandmother Carolyn's true specialty was pie-making. From sight alone, she could pick out the best fruit for a pie. This skill came from her history as an avid home-gardener and because she grew up on a farm. Her pies were simply the best. Making pies with my grandmother was one of my first real experiences in the kitchen — she taught me to be curious about every ingredient that goes into the food we make, eat, and celebrate.

PIE FILLING
3 boxes fresh strawberries
½ cup water

1 cup sugar
2 ½ tbsp cornstarch
1 tbsp butter
Red food coloring
(*a few drops to preference)

SERVES 8

Prepare/bake favorite 9 inch pie shell recipe.

Wash, drain, and hull strawberries.

Place 2 boxes in pastry shell.

Prepare glaze:

Crush remaining 1 box of berries and combine with water, sugar, and cornstarch. Bring to a boil for two minutes or until clear. Add butter and red food coloring.

Spoon strawberry glaze over whole berries, making sure all are covered.

Refrigerate until ready to eat, serve with whipped cream.





Pumpkin butterscotch cookies

FROM SOPHIA TIBBS

My senior year of college was also the middle of a pandemic. For a little extra company, I moved into a big house with four other women. Other than binge-watching Netflix and cramming for finals, my roommates and I spent a lot of time with food. Before we all moved out after graduating, one of my roommates gifted us a jar full of ingredients for the best cookies I have ever had. I have made them every single October since.



COOKIES

1 cup oil
1 cup sugar
1 cup canned or fresh pumpkin puree
1 egg
2 cups flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
1 ½ cup butterscotch chips

FROSTING

½ cup margarine or butter
5 tsp milk
½ cup brown sugar
½ tsp pumpkin puree
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup powdered sugar

SERVES 12

Preheat oven to 375° and line cookie sheet with non-stick parchment paper.

Mix oil, sugar and pumpkin puree together. Add egg and mix well. Add remaining cookie ingredients and drop tablespoons full of mixture onto cookie sheet.

Bake 10–12 minutes. Should see a nice fluffy rise and spread of cookies.

Optional: Prepare frosting by cooking margarine/butter, milk, pumpkin and brown sugar until dissolved on medium-low heat.

Add powdered sugar and vanilla extract and mix occasionally over low heat until it looks like any graininess has dissolved. Let cool for a little bit before adding to cookies.

Spread prepared frosting or store bought frosting on cookies.

Or scoop the prepared frosting into a ziploc bag and seal. Cut a very small opening in one of the corners of the bag and squeeze frosting onto cookies. Make designs or just do a simple swirl.

GGma's apple pie

FROM COURTNEY FRANK



PIE FILLING

Granny Smith or Jonathan apples
(sliced, skins removed)

½ – 1 cup sugar
(depending on how sweet you like it)

1 tsp cinnamon

2 tbsp butter

PIE CRUST

2 cups flour

1 tsp salt

¾ cup Crisco

5 tbsp cold milk

SERVES 8

I grew up on my grandma's apple pie. I have vivid memories of my mom and grandma baking apple pie while me and my siblings created chaos in the background. Gma kept the pie crust scraps that she had cut away. She would salt and bake them. It was the best part!

I was an excellent tasting assistant but had never attempted the legendary pie myself. When I had 3 young kids of my own, and a fourth on the way, I decided I needed to make sure that we carry on the legacy. So with sassy and eager students in tow, she taught them all her secrets. In hindsight, I should have taken more notes. She was of the mindset that you baked on instinct so the ingredients are guardrails rather than precision. She passed away this past year so I am now attempting to recreate this recipe with my kids again, this time on my own. Wish us luck!

For the pie crust, combine the flour, salt and half the Crisco. Work with hands until crumbly. Then mix the rest of the ingredients in including the rest of the Crisco. Start with 5 tbsp of milk but you may need more to make sure your dough holds together. Once combined (do not over mix) split the dough in two balls. Roll each between wax paper. Press one layer into a pie pan. Save the other for the top of the pie.

Fill the unbaked pie crust with sliced apples. The apples should slightly overfill the pie dish to allow for them to cook down when baking. Sprinkle the top with sugar and cinnamon. Dot with butter and bury under apples. Add top crust. Trim any extra crust from the sides. Crimp the edges. Cut venting holes into the top of pie, you can use a fork or knife to create your own design.

Bake at 450° for 15 mins and then at 350° for 25 mins.



Pizzelles

FROM CHRISTINE BOWDEN



8 cups flour	1 small box lemon extract (1 oz)
8 tsp baking powder	4 tsp vanilla extract
2 cups butter-flavored Crisco	Note: you will need a pizzelle iron
3 cups sugar	
1 dozen large eggs	
2 tbsp anise oil	MAKES WELL OVER 100 PIZZELLES!



Four hours. That's how long it'd take to road trip to my grandparents in Canton, Ohio. And every trip, on the ride there, I'd be mulling over two questions: 1) Did Grammy make pizzelles? 2) If not, can I talk her into making them if I offer to help?

We'd arrive, say our hellos and before even unpacking the car, I'd be checking the kitchen counter for pizzelles. And she rarely disappointed!

Pizzelles are a tradition coming from the Italian side of our family, and they've become a staple of any gathering. We often leave them out on the counter to eat at any time of day. (Even now, I'll often have one or two with breakfast. There are no rules — or maybe, just no self control on my part.) The tradition has continued on — now with my very own pizzelle iron.

Call me if you want to borrow it!

Combine the flour and baking powder in a bowl and set aside.

In a separate bowl, beat the Crisco and sugar. Add 1 dozen eggs, beaten. Add the extracts: anise, lemon and vanilla.

Gradually add the flour and baking powder mixture, beating as you go. Continue to beat until it is thoroughly combined into a heavy batter.

Let the dough sit, covered, in the fridge overnight.

The next day, start to form the dough into balls the size of a golf balls and set them on wax paper.

As you are forming the balls, let your pizzelle iron heat up.

When the iron is ready, brush the iron with Crisco before placing two balls in the middle and closing it. Keep it closed for roughly 45 seconds and then remove the pizzelles to a plate to cool.

Repeat process adding Crisco and 2 dough balls until you are through the dough.

Once cooled, enjoy! If needed, you can freeze the pizzelles to keep them fresh for a later date.

Grandma Flo's butter tarts

FROM PAM FRASER

PIE CRUST

3 cups flour

1 ¼ cups lard
(TenderFlake is best)

1 egg (beaten into submission)

1 tbsp vinegar

5 tbsp cold water

½ tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

FILLING

1 egg

⅓ cups butter (not margarine — they're not called Margarine Tarts)

1 cup brown sugar

2 tbsp milk

½ cup raisins & currants (Mom says the currants are optional but then went on to say I should use ⅔ raisins to ⅓ currants so add a grain of salt)

1 tsp vanilla

MAKES 2 DOZEN

My Mom's Butter Tarts are kind of famous. People are always asking her for her recipe except my Uncle Jack who just straight up asks her to make them for him. Of the dozens of desserts my mom bakes at the holidays they have always been my favorite, so it was a no brainer when we were asked to contribute to the Curiosity cookbook. The recipe was my Grandma Flo's and I assumed her mother's mother's before her, going back to the dawn of time. But, after a quick internet search, it turns out it was a recipe in the "Five Roses Flour" promotional cookbook published in 1913. I guess have always been a product of advertising, and I love it.

PS. If you run into any hiccups or want to know the secret how my mom makes them so delicious, here's her number: 1-250-564-0875 (long distance charges may apply).

Ruth would be happy to chat. Just don't talk politics or call her on Thursdays, that's coffee meet up day with the girls.

250-564-0875

Pie Crust:

Combine dry ingredients. Cut lard into dry ingredients. Add egg & water/vinegar solution. Roll small balls of dough & push into tart pans.

Filling:

Cream butter & sugar.

Add other ingredients — raisins last.

Bake at 450° for 8 minutes. Then at 350° for 15–20 minutes.







Grandma Harkrader's cheesecake

FROM SARAH HARKRADER

1 lb softened Philadelphia cream cheese

1 tsp vanilla extract
(always measure with your heart on this one)

3 eggs

1 cup sugar

1 cup sour cream

SERVES 8

It's my birthday and my grandma doesn't even have to ask what I want — she already knows the answer — this cheesecake! My earliest memories of my grandmother are of her in the kitchen baking this cheesecake. Eventually, I became old enough to help, and now, enjoy cooking her best-in-class cheesecake on the reg. It's always a fan fav! Through this recipe, I learned the importance of precision when it comes to baking, and most importantly, always measure vanilla with a BIG heart.

Take 2 ½ lb of cream cheese, ½ teaspoon of vanilla, 3 eggs, and ¾ cup sugar and beat thoroughly. Pour in greased 9" pan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 15 minutes.

Next, take 1 cup sour cream, ¼ sugar, and ½ teaspoon on vanilla and mix together in bowl. Pour over top of cake. Return to oven and bake for an additional 10 minutes.

Let cool at room temperature for 15 minutes and then chill thoroughly in refrigerator for a couple of hours or even better, overnight!



SWEETS

Peanut butter cookies

FROM CLIVE NEISH

1 cup unsalted butter	2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 cup peanut butter	1 ½ tsp baking soda
1 cup white sugar	1 tsp baking powder
1 cup packed brown sugar	½ tsp salt
2 large eggs	1 tsp vanilla extract
	1 mandarin orange (just a squeeze)

SERVES 12

These peanut butter cookies I'd make with my mom as a late-night snack have been an absolute fave since I was a wee pup. I've since learned to mix and mingle in new flavors like potato chips and blackberries for added flare. Treat your peanut butter cookie as a canvas you can decorate with any flavor you love.



Mix ingredients in large bowl. Scoop and form to preferred cookie size. Stamp with fork to make little hashtags. Cook at 350° for 12 minutes.

Enjoy!
And Bring one
to me!



Peppermint cookie bark

FROM MANDY RUSSELL

Growing up I would get a peppermint cookie candy square in my stocking. I would look forward to getting this treat every year. The company stopped making them. Missing the candy square, I set out to make my own version by adding a twist to the classic peppermint bar, and I've never looked back! It's a staple in our family every year.



BARK

10 oz dark chocolate chips

10 oz white chocolate chips

12 chocolate sandwich cookies
(crushed)

5 candy canes
(crushed)

1/8 tsp peppermint extract

MAKES

15–20 pieces of bark depending on how small or large you break your pieces



Line a 9" x 11" baking sheet with parchment paper and crush up your chocolate sandwich cookies and candy canes. Set them aside. You'll need them later.

Melt your dark chocolate chips in a double boiler or in the microwave.

****Make sure if you're melting in the microwave that you stir frequently so the chocolate doesn't burn.**

Once your chocolate is melted, pour the melted dark chocolate on the baking sheet lined with parchment. Set in the freezer.

While the dark chocolate layer is freezing, Melt the white chocolate.

Remembering to stir throughout so the chocolate doesn't burn. Once melted, add your peppermint extract and set aside.

Take the frozen chocolate out of the freezer (should be about 5–10 minutes) and sprinkle your crushed cookies across the top. Once you have your cookies in place, pour the melted white chocolate over.

Sprinkle your crushed candy canes over the white chocolate while the chocolate is still wet. Put in the freezer again for about 10–15 minutes.

Take out the freezer and crush into bark pieces and serve!

DR's cheesecake

FROM DAVID RUSSELL

My love of baking began as a child helping (and by “helping,” I mean mostly eating) in my grandmother’s kitchen. My desserts were often the talk of the table, and after years of perfecting my cheesecakes, I’m sharing a piece of my specialty with you.



THE CRUST

½ cups salted butter
½ cup macadamia nuts
1 ½ cups graham crackers
1 ½ cups gingersnaps

THE FILLING

32 oz cream cheese
1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
½ cup sour cream
2 ½ tsp vanilla
(you can be a bit generous)
5 eggs

THE TOPPING

½ cup sour cream
2 tsp granulated sugar

SERVES 8

Preheat oven to 475°. Add large pan for water bath.

Combine crust ingredients in foil wrapped 9" Springform pan lined with parchment paper. Use bottom of drinking glass to evenly press crust into bottom and sides of pan. Bake Crust at 350° for 10 minutes.

Place in freezer.

Set aside eggs and combine rest of filling ingredients in bowl and mix until smooth and creamy. Whisk eggs in separate bowl and add to mixture until combined.

Pour filling into crust and place into water bath. Bake for 12 minutes at 475°. Turn down oven to 350° and bake for 70 minutes or until top is golden brown. Remove from oven to cool.

Once cooled, combine Topping ingredients. Spread over top of cheesecake. Cover and chill for at least a few hours.

Get ready to live!



Dump cake

FROM PATRICK BROWN

It was a tradition for my family to gather every year during the holiday season. And with the holidays came my mom's signature dessert, which she would always make without fail. As a kid, I was amazed at how she would just "dump" all the ingredients into a pan without measuring or following a recipe. I always wondered how it could possibly taste good without any precision. Ever since she showed me how to make it, it's been a tradition for me to make it every year.



**40 oz canned
crushed pineapple**
**42 oz canned
cherry pie filling**
**1 package yellow
cake mix**
2 sticks butter
**1 package sliced
almonds**

SERVES 12

Preheat oven to 400°.

Spray a 9" x 13" with cooking spray.

Dump "drained" pineapple and pie filling into pan, alternating layers.

Layer cake mix on top of pie filling and pineapple.

Make a layer of butter slices on top of cake mix.

Spread a layer of almonds on top of cake mix.

Place in the oven on the middle rack. Bake for 30–40 minutes until the top is golden brown.

Let cool 2–3 hours before serving.

Great with ice cream!



Any ol' fruit cobbler

FROM EMILY ABERG

TOPPING

1 ½ cup all purpose or whole wheat flour

⅓ cup sugar

1 tsp baking powder

½ tsp baking soda

½ tsp salt

6 tbsp cold butter,
(cut in small pieces)

½ cup buttermilk

½ tsp vanilla

FRUIT

6–8 cups bite-sized cut & peeled fruit (peaches, plums, cherries, apricots, nectarines, blackberries, blueberries, strawberries — go crazy!)

½ cup light or dark brown sugar

1 tsp cinnamon, or ½ tsp nutmeg or cardamom, or ⅛ tsp fresh or dried ginger (all optional, but really good)

¼ cup flour

½ tbsp lemon zest
(approx. ½–1 tbsp)

1 tbsp lemon juice

SERVES 6–8

I got Deborah Madison's cookbook when I was a curious teenager in Texas playing with the idea of being a vegetarian, around 2002. I've had it ever since. Deb calls this a "stone fruit cobbler", but I've tried it with tons of fruit with and without stones, so when I say go crazy, go crazy. Not only is it perfect with every fruit I've tried, it's got a sweet biscuity topping that's crunchy on top and gooey and melty where it meets the filling. It's never quite the same (thanks to the fruit), but it's always the best.



Preheat oven to 375°.

Cobbler Topping

Mix the dry ingredients together and cut in the 6 tablespoons butter. Use your hands and work it till the texture is like coarse crumbs. Stir in buttermilk and vanilla with a fork. It'll be loose and you'll wonder if it's enough liquid. It is, but you can add more if you want.

Fruit Cobbler

Toss fruit with all the ingredients except the topping. Put into the baking dish. Dollop the cobbler topping on top, using fingers or a spoon. It'll give it a nice, biscuity, cobbled look. Bake until fruit is cooked and the topping is nice and brown, about 25 minutes. Let it sit for 5–10 minutes before serving, ideally with ice cream, whip cream or yogurt. Or whatever delicious dairy you have lying around.





2-ingredient vegan chocolate mousse

FROM SOPHIA EPITROPOULOS

200g vegan chocolate
(semi-sweet)
½ cup aquafaba
(chickpea juice)

OPTIONAL
A pinch cream of tartar
1 cup berries

SERVES 4

I'm a vegan with a wicked sweet tooth and a love for using simple ingredients. I feel my best when I eat close to the source in nature and stay true to my values as a human herbivore.



Chocolate:

Place chocolate in a double boiler over the stove and melt. Once melted, set aside to cool.

Aquafaba:

Drain a can of chickpeas and reserve the aquafaba (aka: chickpea juice). Pour aquafaba in a bowl.

Mix:

Grab a HAND MIXER* and whip up the aquafaba until it gets fluffy.

WARNING: Nothing will happen until ~7 minutes of continuous whipping. It'll be easy to give up hope, but just don't, okay?

If 7 minutes has passed and nothing is happening, add a pinch of cream of tartar to the bowl — it helps to stiffen the mix. After added, get back to whipping.

Once a cloud is formed, gently fold the melted chocolate into the mix. Spoon aquafaba into ramekins of choice. Place in the refrigerator to set. Lick the bowl clean.

Once the mousse has firmed and settled, finish with chocolate shavings and berries.

*I'm a recipe rebel and love to cut corners, but there's no fooling aquafaba into anything else than what happens when you use a hand mixer vs blender. I've pulled this off twice with a coffee frother, but it took eons and nearly broke the damn thing ... don't waste your time with that route. Use a hand mixer.

Grandma Dolores' coffee cake

FROM CHRISTIAN JAEKLE



CAKE
1 ½ cups sugar
2 eggs
2 cups milk
4 cups flour
1 tbsp vanilla
4 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
⅔ stick butter

CRUMB TOPPING
1 ½ cups sugar
1 ½ cups flour
1 stick butter, melted
2 tbsp cinnamon

SERVES 12

Every Christmas, my family would drive hundreds of miles to Grandma's cozy cottage in New Jersey. After hugs and snugs, the smell of the Catholic family-sized coffee cake would lure us into the kitchen. I think the most trouble I've ever gotten in was from cutting a giant, crooked piece right out of the middle. And I'd do it again. Grandma Dolores has since passed, but her love of baking (and overuse of cinnamon) still lives within me.



Mix sugar, eggs, vanilla, and butter.

Add dry ingredients with milk.

Top with crumb and bake at 350° for 40 minutes.



QUESTIONABLE TASTE

120

Bubbie's lokshen kugel-inspired pie

FROM DEB KAVIS

Entered into KCRW's 2023 PieFest in the "Lineage" category. Inspired by my Ashkenazi Jewish upbringing and Eastern European heritage, this is a pie-i-fied version of one of my childhood favorite dishes, lokshen (Yiddish: noodles) with cottage cheese, raisins, cinnamon, and pineapple. Cooking and baking has helped me reconnect with my culture and brings up happy memories of being underfoot in the kitchen with my mother and grandmother.



FILLING

1 lb cottage cheese
2 eggs beaten
2 tbsp milk
2 tbsp sour cream
½ cup raisins
½ tsp flour
¼ tsp salt

CRUST

12 sheets cinnamon graham crackers
Roasted saigon cinnamon
1 drop cinnamon extract
8 tbsp butter
1 can crushed pineapple
¼ cup light brown sugar
⅓ cup sugar

Brûlée torch!!!

9-10" pie tin

¼ tsp pineapple extract

SERVES 8

Bottom Crust:

Crush 12 sheets of cinnamon graham crackers.

Melt 8 tablespoons of butter.

Combine with ¼ cup of sugar, 1 small drop of cinnamon extract, and roasted Saigon cinnamon.

Press the crumb crust mixture into a pie pan and bake for 9 min at 350°.

Cottage Cheese & Raisin Filling:

Open, canned, crushed pineapple, and drain juice into a bowl. Pat down crushed pineapple in strainer with a paper towel to absorb excess moisture add pineapple flavor to crushed pineapple and dry in a ceramic bowl by the residual heat of the stove.

Soak ½ cup of raisins in bowl of pineapple juice.

Mix 1 pound tub of cottage cheese, two eggs that have been beaten, 2 tablespoons of milk, 2 tablespoons of sour cream and ⅓ cup of sugar with ¼ teaspoon of pineapple extract ½ teaspoon of flour and ¼ teaspoon of salt. Fold in the soaked raisins that have been drained and mix. Add a dash of roasted Saigon cinnamon.

Add mixture to prebaked pie crust.

Bake pie for 15 minutes at 425° then decrease heat to 350° and continue baking for 35 more minutes.

Check pie to make sure a knife or cake tester comes out, clean when inserted Let the pie cool.

Topping:

Top with crushed pineapple and brown sugar, and brûlée the top.

Mrs. El Paso crispy applesauce

FROM MIKE WHITE

3 cups applesauce
6 graham cracker sheets
¼ cup melted butter or margarine
3 tbsp light brown sugar (may use granulated)
¾ tsp cinnamon

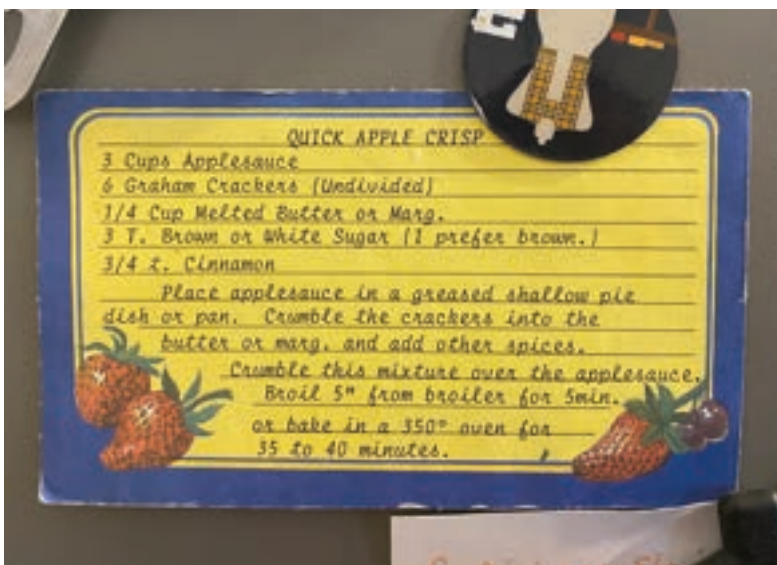
SERVES 6

Back in 1968, my mother prepared this wonderfully simple side dish for her Mrs. El Paso competition entry. Ever since, our family dinners and potlucks have been elevated by the addition of her delicious applesauce. She actually discovered this recipe in a magazine, and the burning question remains: Did she win? Absolutely! She was crowned Mrs. El Paso and then became the first runner-up for Mrs. Texas.

Place applesauce in a greased shallow pie dish or pan. Crush the graham crackers to make crumbs. Add cinnamon to crumbs. Melt butter in skillet or saucepan and add crumb mixture. Stir to blend.

Sprinkle mixture over applesauce and bake at 350° for 35–40 min. or for quicker preparation, broil (5" from broiler) for 10 min.

Serving suggestion: For larger gatherings, double or triple the recipe because everyone takes 2 or 3 servings!





Cliffy K's extra vanilla chocolate chip cookies

FROM CLIFF KARKLIN

COOKIES

2 ½ cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

1 tsp vanilla powder
(if you can get your hands on it, I make my own)

2 sticks butter,
(softened)

¾ cup granulated sugar (substitute vanilla sugar if you have it!)

¾ cup packed brown sugar

1 ¼ tsp vanilla extract

1 ¼ tsp vanilla paste

2 large eggs

1 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips (The best quality you can get your hands on. Adjust amount to your desires. Trust your heart)

VANILLA FLAKY SALT

4 oz Maldon flaky sea salt

3 vanilla beans

1 pint mason jar (or the storage vehicle of your choice)

30(ISH) SERVINGS FOR THE COOKIES.
MANY MANY SERVINGS FOR THE FLAKY SALT.

The pandemic truly broke us all in special ways. I was no different. I have always loved to bake, and I've always enjoyed vanilla. So I kicked off my pandemic by baking many many things. And then I found myself on a random reddit post where people were talking about vanilla.

It was there that someone mentioned the coop. The vanilla bean coop. Sure, I had to join via their Facebook group, and spend more time on Facebook to get the details of their upcoming beans coming for sale. But it was worth it. It was worth it for me, and it was certainly worth it for them, as I've easily spent close to a thousand dollars on vanilla beans.

My house has become a storage facility for vanilla bean based products. Beans have arrived from Indonesia, Madagascar, Hawaii, and Papua New Guinea. Vanilla Tahitensis and Vanilla Planifolia alike arriving in little purple shipping bags that make my mailbox smell like vanilla.

I've made so many vanilla things to be used as vanilla components in other vanillaful goods. A bevy of different extracts, pastes, sugars, powder, and vanilla flaky salt. All sitting in a collection of jars taking over a full section of my kitchen counter in what my family has taken to calling my Vanilla Shrine.

And most of those things are used in these cookies. These cookies that I bake and bring with my just about every time I travel to the office. These cookies that get eaten dozens at a time by my kids, and totally not by me. The vanilla flaky salt man ... the vanilla flaky salt.

I know. I have a problem.

But its a delicious problem.

Sure, you'll need a lot of vanilla stuff you probably don't already have. Sorry. But hey ... I can point you towards a vanilla bean coop if you want to make your own...



Preheat oven to 375°.

Mix your dry ingredients (flour, baking soda, salt, vanilla powder) in a bowl.

Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar, vanilla extract, and vanilla paste in a large bowl (or use your stand mixer) until creamy. Add eggs and beat well.

Gradually beat in flour mixture until thoroughly combined.
Mix in chocolate chips

Drop rounded heaping tablespoon onto parchment paper or silpat lined baking sheets.

Bake for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown or baked to your preferred cookie preference. I STRONGLY recommend keeping them soft.

Sprinkle with vanilla flaky salt immediately after taking them out of the oven. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

Eat a half dozen before anyone else sees them. Maybe a couple more. Y'know what ... you should probably make a double batch.

Vanilla flaky salt:

Pour the flaky salt into a small bowl for ease of mixing.

Split the vanilla beans with a knife, scrape the caviar out of the beans directly into the salt. Use your fingers to rub the caviar into the salt, ensuring the caviar is broken up and well distributed. Your hands will smell like vanilla for days, so this is a huge win.

Pour the salt into your jar.

Cut the split beans into 1–2 inch chunks, and submerge them into the salt in the jar. Close the jar, shake it up, and then prepare your patience.

Set this on a shelf, or into your pantry, and wait for about 2 weeks.

This will keep forever! But it won't last long, because you're going to want to put it on everything. I recommend doubling this recipe and using a bigger jar.



Holiday caramels

FROM GREG LIVINGSTON

INITIAL INGREDIENTS

2 cups sugar
1 cup cream
1 ¾ cups
corn syrup
1 cup butter

ADDITIONAL INGREDIENTS

1 cup cream
1 tsp vanilla
***Optional nuts**

MAKES ABOUT
100 CARAMELS

We make a few batches of these caramels every holiday season. The recipe is actually from my wife's (Paula) grandmother, who grew up in a prairie sod house outside of Sydney, Nebraska. She married the town banker and had six daughters (the oldest was Paula's mother). The recipe is tricky because if you stop the cooking early, or go too long, the caramels come out too soft, or too hard. It's definitely a delicate balance to hit it just right. We usually ruin at least one batch each holiday, but when they turn out perfect — they are almost addictive.

Combine the initial ingredients (sugar, corn syrup, butter) in a heavy 3 qt pan over medium heat to a full rolling boil. Add the additional cup of cream slowly.

Lower heat slightly and continue cooking, stirring constantly (wooden spoon works best) (until mixture forms a firm ball when dropped in cold water. This should take about an hour. Using a candy thermometer it should register between 238° to 245° (altitude does make a difference).

When you take off the burner, mix in 1 tsp of vanilla. Nuts are optional.

Pour into a buttered (or use spray oil such as Pam) glass 9" x 13" pan. Scrape liquid from sides/bottom of pan onto buttered plate (the harder scraping from the pan would leave a hardened caramel spot in the 9" x 13" pan). Cool for several hours.

Cut wax paper about 4" wide, then each of these strips into four pieces (end result is each piece is about 3" x 4"). Turn caramel pan upside down and peel out caramel block. Cut caramel into ½ inch strips long wise. Cut each of these strips into 1 ½ inch pieces. Using a Chef Knife works best, it may take a few runs of the knife to cut through the caramel. Roll wax paper around each individual piece of caramel and twist the ends. This recipe makes about 100 pieces.



Bevvies

Libations of all
proofs and preferences



Chef's special

FROM MYKA BETTS

1 Miller High Life
Angostura aromatic
bitters to taste

SERVES 1

This is my all-time favorite bar on a budget hack. Sometimes mistakenly referred to as a Spaggett, but very different because it doesn't use Aperol or lemon.

I first tried it at a speakeasy jazz bar behind a record shop in Chicago, called Dorian's. Their cocktails were fab, but \$\$\$, so I could only afford 1. While brainstorming the cheapest drink I could order, I noticed a small item on their menu called The Chef's Special. It was \$4, and consisted of only 2 ingredients: Miller High Life (AKA The Champagne of Beers) and Angostura Aromatic Bitters. My curiosity (and wallet) was piqued to say the least. One sip, and I was sold. The Chef's Special is now my go-to drink, and I'm constantly turning friends and family onto it. It's gotten to the point where it's the only drink we order at bars.

It makes a \$4 beer taste like an \$8 beer, and bartenders think you're cool. IYKYK, and now YK.

Step 1: Open beer.

Step 2: Pour in drops of bitters.

Step 3: Slowly, very slowly, tilt the bottle around in a circle to mix it.

Step 4: Bottoms up!

The first few sips will be FUERTE, but it'll continue to mix as you drink it.

If High Life isn't available, just order the cheapest beer on the menu and ask the bartender to put some bitters in it.







QUESTIONABLE TASTE

132

Nance's famous punch

FROM KATIE GERDES

**1 can frozen
100% grape juice
concentrate**

2 L Sprite
(chilled if possible)

SERVES ALL AGES

My mom has made this for us since we were little kids and makes it for literally every family function. It's the most nostalgic drink for my brother and I. Now, not only do we still destroy it, but her grandkids do too.

Combine both things and stir in a large pitcher or ideally a beverage dispenser with a spout. Serve with ice to keep cold.

Enjoy deliciousness.

*If ya wanna spike it up a notch, you can add your choice of vodka!

The GG

FROM ASHLEY WALTERS



**2 oz of your
favorite tequila**

**$\frac{3}{4}$ oz
simple syrup**

**$\frac{3}{4}$ oz fresh
lime juice**

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz Gran Gala
(this is the secret
ingredient)

SERVES 1

This recipe started with our love for taco night and margs. We were on the hunt to create the perfect margarita at home, not too sweet, but full of flavor. The secret is the Gran Gala. If you don't know Gran Gala, you're welcome. It's a blend of Italian brandy infused with fresh Sicilian oranges. Not too sweet. Not too bitter. The perfect secret ingredient that will make your friends say, 'what's in this' as they sip with delight.

Put in shaker.

Shake.

Pour over ice.

Serve with salt rim and lime garnish.

Enjoy.





Ginger, the cat

FROM MATT FISCHER



Lowball glass

SERVES 1

1 ½ oz bourbon

1 ½ oz hard cider
(dry)

1 oz amaretto

3 dashes
angostura bitters

Orange peel

Sprig of rosemary

My youngest daughter, Libby, is a bit of a mixologist. When My son, Matt, Jr., and his fiance Migle were getting married, they tasked her with inventing some cocktails for the reception. Libby named it Ginger the Cat, because Matt and Migle once came across a very friendly ginger cat on a camping trip, and after the cat hung around with them all weekend, they named it Ginger the Cat. This a great and very festive cocktail for the holidays.

Sveikini!

Combine all ingredients in a lowball glass and stir. Add ice, 1 large cube is ideal but multiple standard sized cubes will do the job. Lastly, gently twist the orange peel to release oil and place on top of the drink with a sprig of rosemary.

A very merry bourbon slush

FROM KELLY KINANE

We are a bourbon-loving family and this is our “go to” holiday cocktail. Every December we make a batch to keep on hand for all the holiday festivities. It’s perfect for holiday parties, cookie exchanges, or my favorite — relaxing by the fire on Christmas Eve.



2 tea bags
1 cup boiling water
½ cup sugar
6 oz can frozen lemonade
6 oz can frozen orange juice
3 ½ cups water
½ cup bourbon

SERVES 8–10

Thaw frozen juices. Steep tea bags in boiling water 2 to 3 minutes. Remove tea bags and stir in remaining ingredients. Freeze in glass or plastic containers until firm. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving. To serve, fill glass ½ with slush and ½ with ginger ale or 7 Up.





Meet



the chefs

Remember those goofy kids who always asked, “Why?” Well, that’s us.

We’re Curiosity — an indie ad agency based in Cincinnati, OH. We believe unwavering curiosity is the secret ingredient to world-class work. Our small but mighty team is full of thinkers, makers, doers, what-if-ers, and maker-uppers coming together to create things we love.

To follow along or join the fam
→ curiosity.fun







Special



thanks to ...

Natalie's grandma
Meghan's grandma
Abby's grandma
Jane's grandma
Trey's grandma
Maya's grandma
Courtney's grandma
Christine's grandma
Natalie's grandma
Pam's grandma
Kathy's grandma
David's grandma
Sarah's grandma
Christian's grandma
Katie's grandma
Greg's grandma
Leah's grandma
Victor's grandpa
Cassie's grandpa
Myka's mom
Cassie's mom
Jenny's mom
Sarah's mom
KG's mom
Mike's mom
Patrick's mom
Matt's mom
Erin's dad
Tricia's dad
Lauren's dad
Andrea's dad
Jenna's dad
Andy's dad
Julia's dad
Wally's dad
Jeff's furbabies
Telisha's Aunt Helen

Libby's Aunt Ellie
Sam's Aunt Mary
Matt's mixologist daughter
Deb's ancestors with great taste
Kelly's bourbon-loving family
Matt's future mother-in-law
Evan's Little Spoon
Sophia's college roomies
Danielle's friend Kristen
Jillian's unorthodox genius
Julia's green thumb
Crag's childhood meal train
Bhavik's fermented food addiction
Amber's pesto fascination
Eddie's elevated classics
Danielle's willingness to forage
Woj's Beaver Island delicacies
Clive's love of chunky and creamy
Mandy's battle against big business
Jordan's tasty toddler hacks
Emily's acceptance of all fruits
Gail's consideration of squash
Sophia's disdain for animal byproducts
Myka's High Life upcycling
Ashley's zest for oranges
Amanda's expensive salad scoff
Sukhi's confession that she's gaga garlic
Jane's thirst for compliments
Jared's fear of being basic
Ashley's tolerance for oats
Andrew's appreciation for spuds
Peyton's bread-pocket discovery
Jordan's party pleasers
Abbigail's passion for layering
Cliff's red-flag-worthy vanilla obsession





