



En Familia

LNC 2012
Holiday Cookbook



WELCOME TO THE FAMILY TABLE.

IF YOU'RE READING THIS, IT'S BECAUSE, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU ARE PART OF THE LOPEZ NEGRETE FAMILIA. WE STARTED THIS HOLIDAY RECIPE BOOK 17 YEARS AGO, BECAUSE WE BELIEVE THAT TO SHARE WHAT IS DEAR TO US, TO SHARE OUR MEMORIES AND OUR CUSTOMS, IS TO SHARE OF OURSELVES IN THE MOST PURE AND UNSELFISH OF WAYS.

SO GO AHEAD, TAKE A SEAT. WE INVITE YOU TO PARTAKE OF THE VERY SPECIAL MOMENTS, PEOPLE AND TASTES THAT OUR COLLECTIVE FAMILY IS SHARING WITH YOURS. WE KNOW YOU'LL ENJOY EVERY BITE, SIP AND TASTE AS YOU LEARN ABOUT THE WONDERFULLY DIVERSE MEMBERS OF THE LOPEZ NEGRETE FAMILIA, OF WHICH WE'RE SO THANKFUL YOU ARE A PART OF.

WISHING YOU A WONDERFUL, RESTFUL AND DELICIOUS HOLIDAY SEASON,

ALEX & CATHY

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Molletes

Growing up in Mexico City offered me many wonderful experiences and opportunities. Among these was the fortune of attending a "bachillerato" (a preparatory school) called "Colegio Vista Hermosa." Named after its location high in the hills on the way to what was then a small town, Toluca, looking over the sprawling metropolis of the "DF" (then nearly 15 million inhabitants large), and with a breathtaking view of the Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl volcanoes, this school was also a wonderful place where kids of all ages, backgrounds and ambitions gathered to get a great education and have a lot of good, clean fun. Really.

Once sophomores, students were allowed to design their own schedules. Needless to say, we would all schedule blocks of "free" time between classes so that we could go to the library, play dominos, study, spend time in the cafeteria indulging in *chisme* (gossip), or simply going *de pinta* (playing hooky). While going *de pinta* was something we did rarely (honest truth), one of the things we would do would be to gather at Sanborns. "What is a Sanborns?" you may ask. Well, if you took a Walgreens, a Barnes & Noble, the fanciest Hallmark store, and a Denny's, and shook them all together, you'd get a Sanborns (weird retail concept, isn't it?). And, "what would you do at Sanborns?" you may also curiously inquire. First, we would hide from teachers (or an older sister or brother) who would be doing exactly as we were, and then rush to the cafeteria to devour tasty and affordable *molletes* and *chocolate caliente* (Mexico's version of hot chocolate). Emotionally charged *chisme* and feeble attempts to *sacar plan* (get a date) would ensue.

Now, while *molletes* are extremely easy to prepare, those served at Sanborns by waitresses with paper neckpieces that made them look like badly wardrobe alien nurses from "Lost In Space", were truly spectacular. Was it the wonderful melted cheese? Or maybe the fresh salsa that would clear your sinuses? Could it have been the soft bread made that morning? Or, was it the adventure tied to it all? Probably all the above, as *molletes* have never again tasted quite like they did back then. (Photo: Cathy took this picture of me in 1978, when technically I was still in my "mollette" era.) Nonetheless, I share the recipe for *molletes* with you so that you may enjoy a quick, easy-to-fix snack, which I theorize, brings about the best *chisme* sessions around.

Alex López Negrete (México)

-Alex López Negrete



Molletes

-Alex López Negrete

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

6 bolillos, hard rolls, or 4-inch lengths of french bread
3 pinches of unsalted butter, softened
2 oz of frijoles refritos, heated (goya makes great ones in a can — why do it from scratch?)
½ pinch of chihuahua cheese, mild chedd22, ar, or jack (grated)
2 oz of salsa Mexicana

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cut the rolls into halves horizontally and pull out the doughy crumb, leaving a shell just less than 1/2 inch thick around the outside. Place the rolls on a well-buttered baking sheet, about 1/4 inch apart. Brush the inside of the rolls with butter and bake until just beginning to crisp up around the outside (usually about 10 minutes).

Remove the rolls from the oven, fill with the refried beans and return to the oven for about 5 minutes, or until the beans heat through. Remove from the oven, sprinkle the top of the beans with the cheese, and just melt in the oven - don't brown them again! Serve as soon as you can, putting salsa on them to your liking (al gusto).



Sausage Crepes

We made these for the first time at Camp Butternut the summer of 2012. They are very rich and yummy. Our family ate them up so fast we had to make another batch! I think the recipe is German with a touch of Texas. Texas because the Texans went nuts for them!

—Cathy López Negrete

Servings: 10

Ingredients:

6 large eggs, beaten
2 cups milk
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp salt
2 lbs bulk Jimmy Dean® sausage
1 cup onion, chopped
1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
2 3 oz pkgs cream cheese
Onion powder
Garlic salt
Pepper

Topping
2 cups sour cream
1 cup butter, softened

Preparation:

Filling

Cook and crumble sausage in skillet. Add onion and cook until tender. Season with onion powder, garlic salt and pepper. Add cheese and cream cheese, stirring until melted and ingredients are well blended.

Crepes

Combine eggs, milk and oil in bowl. Add flour and salt, beating well until smooth. Pour about 1/8 of a cup batter into greased (vegetable oil) 10-inch preheated skillet. This is tricky; tilt to cover pan's bottom. Cook on one side and invert onto plate with paper towels between each one. Repeat.

Fill and Bake

Place 2 tbsp sausage filling on one end of each crepe and roll up. Layer rolled crepes in large baking dish. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 mins, covered. Melt the butter with the sour cream and spoon topping over crepes. Bake, uncovered, 5 mins longer.



Appetizers



Shrimp, Lobster and Jicama Salad

I tried this on a family trip in Cancun and fell in love with it. It is very easy to make and the lobster can be replaced with crab or extra shrimp. If you enjoy the beach, this will definitely make you feel as if you were there.

-Erika Villarreal

Preparation:

Build a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill, or heat a gas grill to high. If using shell-on shrimp, use small scissors to cut shells along the curved backs. Remove veins, keeping shells intact. Place shrimp and lobster in a large bowl; drizzle with 2 tbsp oil and season with salt. In a separate bowl, mix onion and 2 tbsp lime juice. Grill shrimp until just opaque in center, 2-3 mins per side. Transfer to a large plate. Grill lobster tails, flesh side down, until slightly charred, 1-2 mins. Turn lobster tails to grill until just opaque in center, about 5 mins longer. Add lobster tails to plate with shrimp and let rest for 5-10 mins. Remove lobster meat from shells; discard shells. Cut lobster into 1-inch pieces. Drain red onion; place in a large bowl. Add 3 tbsp lime juice, 2 tbsp oil, jicama, greens, tomatillos, and 1 cup cilantro. Season with salt and more lime juice, if desired. Add seafood; toss to coat. Drizzle ancho chili oil over; garnish with cilantro.

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 lb large shell-on or peeled shrimp
- 4 lobster tails (about 2 lbs total), halved lengthwise
- 4 tbsp olive oil, divided
- Kosher salt
- ¼ cup red onion, thinly sliced
- 5 tbsp (or more) fresh lime juice, divided
- 2 cups 3x¼-inch pieces jicama, peeled (from one 1-lb jicama)
- 2 cups hardy greens, such as purslane or watercress sprigs, with tender stems
- 2 cups tomatillos or small green tomatoes, thinly sliced (about 8 medium)
- 1 cup fresh cilantro leaves with tender stems, plus more for garnish
- 2 tbsp ancho chili oil or store-bought chili oil



Homemade Beef Jerky

This recipe is one of my favorites for several reasons. First off, beef jerky is amazing. I think most of us can agree on that. This recipe is also REALLY easy. Really. You can experiment with all sorts of different marinades and seasonings to create your own signature jerky. Your friends and family will be impressed. Trust me. Enjoy!

-Francisco Aguera

Servings: 16

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs boneless beef top round, fat trimmed, partially frozen
- 1 cup Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup water
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp chipotle powder
- 2 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cayenne powder

Preparation:

Slice the beef into long strips. About 1/8-in thick. (Tip: You can slice the beef thicker or thinner, but it will significantly affect how the jerky turns out. If it's thicker, the jerky will be juicier and chewier. If it's thinner, it will be more crunchy and dry. Try experimenting to see which you prefer. NOTE: Make sure that the beef is partially frozen, as this will facilitate slicing the beef into your desired thickness.) Mix the rest of the ingredients together except for the cayenne to create a marinade. Place the beef and the marinade in a Ziploc® bag and let them sit refrigerated, for at least six hours. (Mo' time - Mo' flavor.) Once the marinating is complete, wipe off the excess liquid and pieces of garlic and place on foil-lined sheets with no overlap. Sprinkle the meat with cayenne pepper. (Note: Be careful with the cayenne. If you like spicy, use all of it, but I recommend starting off mild.) Cook in your oven at 175 degrees for three hours. Turn the strips over and cook for another 2-3 hours. The time will depend since some ovens are hotter than others. The jerky will be ready when it is dry and has a leather texture, but not dry enough to be brittle. The jerky can keep in the refrigerator for three weeks.



Erituras de Malanga

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 4 yellow taro root, peeled and grated (malanga and/or yautia)
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp salt (to taste)
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 2 tbsp parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp lime juice (not the bottled kind)
- 3 small eggs
- Crushed red pepper flakes, to taste
- Vegetable oil

Dipping Sauce

- ½ cup ketchup
- ½ cup mayonnaise

This was a recipe my mom used to make as a side dish to her bistec de palomilla with white rice and black beans. It is great served along with mayoketchup dipping sauce. It's definitely one of my favorite comfort foods.

—Idalia San Juan

Preparation:

In a bowl, whip eggs. Add onion powder, garlic, parsley, salt and lime juice. Mix well, then add the malangas. Mix again, then refrigerate for a few hours. Using a frying pan, heat the oil over medium-high heat, adding red pepper flakes to taste. Using a spoon or scoop, grab spoonfuls of the malanga, and place into the pan. You can fry five or six at a time. Make sure to fry on both sides, until the malanga fritters are golden brown. Place on a large platter with paper towel to drain the excess oil. Mix ketchup and mayo and serve in a small sauce dish along with fritters. Serve fritters hot with dipping sauce and enjoy!



Spanish Ham Croquettes

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for deep-frying
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- 3 tbsp heaping all-purpose flour
- 1½ cups whole milk, heated
- 3 oz Jamón Serrano or other dry-cured ham, finely chopped
- 1 pinch salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp fine dried bread crumbs

Ever since my sister and I journeyed to Spain this past summer, we have been on the hunt for a recipe to recreate the delish cheese and ham croquettes we tried all over Madrid and Barcelona. And now I think we have finally found one.

—Jessica Hampson

Preparation:

Lightly oil a shallow 8-inch-square dish. In a saucepan over medium heat, add 2 tbsp olive oil and butter. When butter has melted, add flour and, using a wooden spoon or whisk, mix well. Continue to stir or whisk for about 2 mins, or until the flour is well blended. Add ½ cup of the milk and increase the heat to medium-high. Bring the mixture to a boil and add the remaining cup of milk. Cook, stirring constantly with the spoon or whisk, for about 5 mins, or until the mixture begins to thicken. Decrease the heat to medium and cook, stirring constantly to prevent lumps from forming, for about 10 mins, or until thickened. Add the Jamón Serrano, season lightly with salt (remember, the ham is already salty), and stir. Cook for 1 minute longer and then pour the contents of the pan into the prepared dish. Spread the mixture evenly. Let cool down, then cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, but preferably overnight. Break eggs into a bowl and beat lightly until blended. Spread the bread crumbs on a dinner plate. With 2 spoons, shape the béchamel-ham mixture into walnut-sized croquettes. Roll each croquette in the bread crumbs, shaking off any excess crumbs, and then dip into the beaten egg. Lift each croquette and roll it again in the bread crumbs, coating it evenly. Lay the croquettes in a single layer on a platter. Refrigerate for 30 mins before frying. Pour the olive oil to a depth of about 2 inches into a wide, deep, heavy pot and heat over high heat. When the oil is almost smoking, slip 5 or 6 croquettes into the oil, pressing on them gently with a slotted spoon to submerge them, and fry, turning them gently, for about 2 mins, or until they are golden on all sides. Using the slotted spoon, lift out the croquettes, holding them briefly over the pot to allow the excess oil to drain, and transfer to an ovenproof platter lined with paper towels. Keep the croquettes warm in a low oven. Fry the rest of the croquettes the same way, always making sure the oil is very hot before adding more croquettes. When all the croquettes are fried, arrange on a platter and serve immediately.



Brussel Sprouts & Bacon Vinaigrette

Combining chunks of fresh butternut squash and Brussel sprouts with steamed chestnuts and bacon, this hearty side dish is perfect for an autumn meal.

—Rene Cruz

Preparation:

In a sauté pan over medium heat, cook the bacon until browned and crispy, 8-10 mins. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Pour all but 1 tbsp of the fat into a heatproof bowl and reserve. Add the shallot to the remaining fat in the pan and sauté over medium heat, stirring occasionally until tender, 2-3 mins. Let cool. In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegar, brown sugar, mustard, thyme and shallot. Set the vinaigrette aside. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the Brussel sprouts and cook until just tender, 4-6 mins. Spoon transfer the Brussels sprouts to a bowl of ice water. Drain well, then cut them in half lengthwise and place on a paper towel-lined baking sheet. Return the water in the pot to a boil, add the butternut squash, and cook until just tender, 4-6 mins. Drain, then transfer to a bowl of ice water. Drain again and place on a paper towel-lined baking sheet. In a large sauté pan over medium heat, warm the remaining 1 tbsp olive oil. Add the squash and sauté, stirring occasionally, until light golden, 3-4 mins. Transfer to a large bowl. In the same pan over medium-high heat, warm 2 tbsp of the reserved bacon fat. Place the Brussels sprouts, cut side down, in the pan. Cook, without moving them, for 3-4 mins, then stir and add the sage and chestnuts. Cook for 2 mins more. Transfer to the bowl with the squash. Add enough vinaigrette to lightly coat the vegetables (you may not need all of it), then stir in half of the bacon. Transfer the vegetables to a platter, sprinkle with the remaining bacon, and serve immediately.

Servings: 6-8

Ingredients:

4 oz bacon slices, cut crosswise into 1/4-inch pieces
1 shallot, finely chopped
2 tbsp cider vinegar
1 tbsp light brown sugar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp chopped thyme
6 tbsp olive oil
1 1/2 lbs Brussels sprouts, halved
1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into 3/4-inch dice
1 tsp chopped sage
1 cup coarsely chopped steamed (optional) chestnuts



Bacalaitos



—Mimi Boneta

Servings: 10 bacalaitos

Ingredients:

1/4 lb cod filet
1/4 cup flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1/4 cup cod broth
1 tsp black pepper
2 tsp garlic, crushed
Oil for frying

Preparation:

Today we can buy processed bacalao that is not "dry" and does not need to soak overnight or boil for hours and hours. Make sure you get the soft bacalao that has been deboned. Sometimes it comes in a wooden box or in plastic bags. They have it at some Walmart stores, Fiesta grocery stores and many others. Rinse the bacalao and tear into smaller pieces. Boil in plenty of water for about 20 minutes or so. Discard water, add fresh water, and boil again for another 20 minutes. Let it cool in the water and **save the water**. Remove the bacalao, drain in a colander, and wait for it to cool down (save the broth). Once cool to the touch, tear the pieces into smaller pieces and set it aside. If you hold it between your fingers, it separates itself. In a medium bowl combine the flour, baking powder, salt, pepper and garlic. Add the broth and whisk. The mixture should look like pancake batter. Then add the drained bacalao and whisk again. **DO NOT** use an electric appliance to stir this stuff because the bacalao will become like fiber and you will end up with a matty mess that will have to be thrown away. I'm speaking from experience here. The batter should look like thin pancake batter. If too thick just add a bit more broth and whisk. If you put too much broth, add a bit of flour — just a bit. Spoon the batter by 1/2 cups into hot oil. The bacalaitos should be fried over high heat, turning only once. They should be golden on both sides. Drain on paper towels before serving. If they are getting too brown too fast, lower heat a bit. Any extra fish or batter may be refrigerated for a few days or frozen for later use. Remember that this recipe is only for about 10 bacalaitos — so multiply if you must.

SOUPS & BEANS



Chicken Tortilla Soup

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 lb frozen chicken (shred near end of cooking time)
- 1 15 oz can whole peeled tomatoes, mashed
- 1 10 oz can enchilada sauce
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 4 oz can chopped green chile peppers
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 14.5 oz cans chicken broth
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 10 oz pkg frozen corn
- 1 can black beans, rinsed

Preparation:

Place chicken, tomatoes, enchilada sauce, onion, green chiles, and garlic into a slow cooker. Pour in chicken broth, and season with cumin, salt and pepper. Stir in corn and black beans. Cover and cook on low setting for 6 to 8 hours or on high setting for 3 to 4 hours. Garnish with crushed tortilla chips, sour cream, shredded cheese, or avocados.

This is a quick and easy way to make a delicious pot of tortilla soup. There looks to be a long list of ingredients but don't worry; all you do is dump it all into the cooker and walk away. Great for those family get-togethers!

—Jason Remmert

Chicken Soup for the Soul

Servings: 4 big bowls

Ingredients:

- 1 organic chicken, cut in 8 pieces (save the heart, neck, liver and kidneys)
- 2 yellow onions, diced
- Handful of mushrooms (your choice)
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 8 carrots, diced
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tbsp salt
- 4 tbsp Knorr® chicken broth powder



This chicken soup is so good it'll make you feel like you are back in your mom's kitchen. And if you're in the middle of the cold or flu symptoms, this soup is sure to scare them all away. Just follow the instructions and enjoy.

—Julian Garcia

Preparation:

In a big pot, cook the breasts until pink is gone (5 mins). Set breasts aside. Sauté one of the diced onions until translucent (5 mins). Throw in the pieces of chicken together with the heart, neck, liver and kidneys. Let the chicken and onions simmer on low heat for 20 mins to allow juices to come out. (Increase heat if necessary.) After the juices have collected, add boiling water to fill the pot. Add bay leaves, salt and simmer for about 10 mins. Drain and skim the broth; discard chicken. Save a couple of tablespoons of the fat from the broth to sauté the veggies. Throw in the other onion, celery, mushrooms and carrots, and add the fat from the broth. Sauté veggies and return broth to the pot; also return the chicken breasts and add the Knorr powder. Cook on medium heat for at least 15 mins and remove the breasts. Cook on cool down and strip the meat. Bring pot to a boil and simmer for about 20 mins. At this point you can also add noodles to the pot so they are soft when you serve the soup.

Main Dishes



Mexican Picadillo

This Mexican recipe is easy, using ground beef and a few more ingredients. Simple but delicious.
-Carla Villalobos



Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1½ lbs ground beef
- 3 tomatoes
- 1 clove garlic
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- ½ onion
- 1 potato
- 2 carrots
- 1 tsp cooking oil
- 1 pinch salt and pepper
- 1 cup rice
- ½ cup water

Preparation:

Cook the potato and the carrots. Cut into small squares. Chop and fry the onion until it gets clear and add the ground beef. Keep cooking until the meat is almost fully cooked. Add salt and pepper. Blend the tomato with the garlic and the vinegar. Drain over the ground beef. Let boil for about 5 minutes. Add the vegetables and ½ cup of water. Cook until the vegetables are soft. Serve with rice and enjoy.

Honey Mustard Almond Chicken

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 1 jar Olde Cape Cod™ honey mustard (you can substitute others but the consistency of this one is the best)
- 2 small bags of sliced almonds
- 4 tbsp olive oil (enough to coat the bottom of a large frying pan)
- 4 pinches salt and pepper

My mother, Lillian, came up with this dish while she was experimenting in the kitchen, and it's always a favorite of mine to replicate in my own kitchen years later.

Preparation:

Pour olive oil in large frying pan to coat bottom. Lightly season chicken breasts on both sides with salt and pepper and cut into small chunks. On medium-low heat on stovetop, cook chicken until it starts to whiten. Pour entire jar of honey mustard into pan; stir chicken so it's coated and continue cooking. Add almonds; stir for about 5 mins. Cover pan, let cook for 5-10 mins more. Serve with your favorite side; rice would be a great recommendation.

-Dionella Martinez

Flautas Picantes de Camarón y Mango

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

Cilantro Salsa
½ cup sour cream
½ cup mayo
3 tbsp mango chutney sauce
Handful of cilantro
2 tbsp lime juice
Salt and pepper (optional)

Flautas de Camaron y Mango
Bunch cilantro finely cut
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp lime juice
1 tsp brown sugar
1½ lbs large shrimp (cut in 3 pieces), deveined and peeled
¼ cup mango, cut in small cubes
3 tsp jalapenos, diced
2 tbsp red onion, finely diced
Salt and pepper
2 cups vegetable oil to fry
25 corn tortillas

Preparation:

Salsa

Blend sour cream, mayo, chutney mango sauce, cilantro, salt, pepper and lime juice and put in a small bowl. Cover and put in refrigerator until ready to serve.

Flautas

Blend mango chutney sauce, cilantro, EVOO, lime juice, and the sugar and add to a large bowl. Add shrimp, mango, jalapeño, salt, pepper and red onions in large bowl (slowly stir to blend ingredients). Refrigerate for about 30 mins. Place 2 cups of vegetable oil in large pan at 375 degrees. Place corn tortillas 1 by 1 for about 2 seconds on each side until tortillas are flexible. Set tortillas aside (large plate) to start adding all the ingredients. Once tortillas are filled, roll tortillas and to secure place a toothpick (only if needed). Place flautas to fry in large pan. Remove once you see a golden brown color. Place in plate (remove toothpicks if added), and add the salsa. Enjoy!



This recipe is very easy to make and tastes delicious. We usually prepare it for our summer gatherings, as it is very refreshing and works extremely well accompanied by a Miller Lite or a cucumber martini :).

-Erika Villarreal

Crab Cakes with Remoulade

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

Crab Cakes
2 tsp olive oil
1 cup dry bread crumbs
½ cup green onions, thinly sliced
½ lb lump crabmeat, shell pieces removed
4 oz jar diced pimiento, drained
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
¼ tsp salt
1 large egg

Remoulade

½ cup low-fat mayonnaise
2 tsp 2% reduced-fat milk
2 tsp capers, chopped
1/8 tsp ground red pepper
1 small garlic clove, minced

Preparation:

To prepare crab cakes, heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Combine bread crumbs, onions, crabmeat and pimiento in a medium bowl. Combine mustard, lemon juice, salt and egg, stirring with a whisk. Add egg mixture to crab mixture, tossing gently to combine. Divide crab mixture into 4 equal portions, shaping each into a 1-inch-thick patty. Add crab cakes to skillet; cook 2 mins. Turn cakes; reduce heat to medium. Cook 3 mins or until golden brown. To prepare remoulade, combine mayonnaise and remaining ingredients, stirring with a whisk. Serve with crab cakes.



I love food so much, and especially seafood. These crab cakes are amazing. I was first introduced to these in a small restaurant in Paris, where I was able to help the chef prepare a few for our party. I love plating and food presentation, and if you place these crab cakes over an arugula salad you will earn a WOW.

-Erika Villarreal

Chicken Apricot Skewers

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup canned light unsweetened coconut milk
- 1/4 cup plain greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup smooth peanut butter
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice (about 2 limes)
- 2 tsp packed light brown sugar
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt plus more for seasoning
- 1/4 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves plus sprig for garnish
- 2 tbsp coarsely chopped jalapeno (about 1 large; with seed for more heat)
- 1 lb skinless, boneless chicken thighs or breasts, cut into 24 1-in chunks
- 12 firm, ripe small apricots, halved and pitted
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup unsalted, dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
- Lime wedges
- Special equipment: 24 6-inch bamboo skewers (soak in water for 1 hour before using)



If you love peanut butter, you will love these Chicken Skewers. Highly recommend when having a family cookout, as once they are cooked the smell will attract everyone. So make sure you make enough.

—Erika Villarreal

Preparation:

Purée first 6 ingredients and 1/4 tsp salt in a blender until smooth. Add 1/4 cup cilantro leaves and jalapeno and blend briefly to combine. Transfer 1/2 cup marinade to a small bowl; cover and chill for serving (return to room temperature before using). Place remaining marinade in a resealable plastic bag; add chicken, seal bag, and turn to coat. Chill for at least 3 hours or overnight. Build a medium-hot fire in a charcoal grill, or heat a gas grill to high. Holding 2 skewers parallel to each other and 1/2-in apart, thread 1 piece of chicken onto skewers, then 1 apricot half. Repeat with 1 more chicken piece and 1 more apricot half (using 2 skewers helps hold the meat and fruit together). Repeat with remaining skewers, chicken and apricots for a total of 12, each holding 2 pieces of chicken and 2 apricot halves. Season with salt and pepper. Brush apricots with some marinade from bag; discard remaining marinade. Grill skewers on one side until chicken is well browned, 3-4 mins. Turn and grill until other side is well browned, 3-4 mins longer. Move to a cooler part of grill. Cover grill and cook until chicken is cooked through, about 2 mins longer. Transfer to a serving platter; sprinkle with cilantro sprigs and peanuts, and drizzle with reserved marinade. Serve with lime wedges alongside for squeezing over.

Red Onion Potato and Goat Cheese Pizza

For all veggie lovers.

—Erika Villarreal

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 7 oz fingerling potatoes (about 5 potatoes)
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, cut into 1/2-inch thick slices
- 1 13 oz can of refrigerated pizza crust dough
- 2 tbsp cornmeal
- 1 cup part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup goat cheese, crumbled
- 1 1/2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 1 garlic clove, minced

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place potatoes in a saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Cook 10 mins or until just tender; drain. Cool slightly; cut potatoes crosswise into 1/4-in slices. Heat olive oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion to pan, and sauté 8 mins or until tender. Roll dough out on a lightly floured surface to a 14x10-in rectangle. Sprinkle cornmeal over a large baking sheet; place dough on baking sheet. Sprinkle mozzarella evenly over dough. Arrange potatoes and onion over mozzarella; top evenly with goat cheese and garlic. Bake in lower third of oven at 450 degrees for 15 mins or until browned. Sprinkle with thyme; cut into 12 pieces.



Cider Glaze Pork Chops

Preparation:
Pat pork chops dry with paper towels. Season each side with a sprinkling of pepper, and salt if desired. Heat oil in a large nonstick frying pan or skillet over medium-high heat until just hot, then add pork chops and brown both sides (around 5 mins if your pork chops are around 1/2-inch thick). Stir cider and brown sugar together and add to the frying pan. Reduce heat to low and simmer the pork chops, uncovered, turning the chops after a minute, until the meat is almost cooked through but not quite (about 2 mins). Remove pork chops to a plate with a fork. Add the vinegar and ground mustard to the frying pan juices and bring to a boil, scraping up any brown bits on the bottom of the pan with a spatula. Continue to cook until the glaze mixture is reduced to about 1/3 cup. It will take 5 to 10 mins. The cider mixture will get bubbly when it is just about at the syrup/glaze stage. Turn off heat. Place the pork chops back in the frying pan along with any juices that formed on the bottom of the plate. Flip chops over to coat both sides with the cider glaze, cover frying pan, and let sit for a minute or two to blend flavors. Check thickest part of the pork chop for desired doneness and serve. You will love these!



Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 4 sirloin pork chops, trimmed of visible fat, thickness can range from 1/2-inch to 3/4-inch (about 1 1/2 lbs)
- Fresh ground pepper
- Salt
- 2 tsp olive oil (canola oil can be used)
- 1 cup apple cider (sparkling cider can be used)
- 1 tbsp packed brown sugar
- 2 tbsp cider vinegar (I have used plain white vinegar as well with no taste difference)
- 1/4 tsp ground mustard (add a pinch or two more to taste if desired)

I am a huge fan of sweet and savory dishes, and by far this is one that I highly recommend. The presentation is also amazing, and the best part is how easy this recipe is. Hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

—Erika Villarreal

Italian Sausage Tortellini Soup



Servings: 6-8

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs italian sausage, bulk or in casing
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 10 cups beef or chicken broth
- 4 cups chopped tomatoes or 2 large cans petite-cut tomatoes
- 1 cup carrots, sliced (about 5 or 6)
- 1 tbsp basil, fresh or dried
- 1 tbsp oregano
- 1 16 oz can tomato sauce
- 3 cups quartered zucchini, sliced (about 1 or 2)
- 1 pkg (12 or 16 oz) frozen or dried cheese tortellini
- Parsley or cilantro, chopped
- 1 large green, red, yellow or orange pepper
- 2 cups spinach, chopped (fresh or frozen)
- Parmesan or romano cheese, grated

A fast, rich and delicious meal for any occasion. This recipe is not just a soup. It's a complete and hearty meal. Perfect for gatherings with friends and family. Even though this recipe calls for Italian sausage, I always use bratwurst-style sausages, original or beer. But you can just use your favorite sausage.

—Isabel López-Machado

Preparation:

Remove sausage from casing. Brown sausage with onions and garlic. Drain. Add broth, tomatoes, carrots, basil, oregano and tomato sauce to sausage mixture. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 35-40 mins. Skim fat. Stir in zucchini, tortellini, parsley/cilantro, spinach and pepper. Simmer 35-40 mins or until tortellini is tender. Stir gently. Sprinkle cheese on top when serving.



Tinga de Pollo

Tinga de Pollo is usually served cold but it's also good hot. It's a recipe that I learned from a good friend. It's light and refreshing, making it a good appetizer or snack. It's also perfect for people following the Paleo diet!

—Marcus Darilag

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1 lb skinless chicken breast
- 2 regular boxes of chicken stock
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 large onions, diced
- 4 medium tomatoes, diced
- Salt (as desired)
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- ¼ cup white vinegar
- Tortillas

Preparation:

Boil chicken breast in chicken stock until meat is cooked. Once cooked, allow the chicken breast to cool down enough so it can be comfortably and easily pulled apart. Place about a spoonful of vegetable oil in a deep pan. Sauté garlic until light brown. Then add the diced onions. Mix in the shredded chicken and diced tomatoes. And ¼ cup white vinegar. Allow to simmer. Add salt to taste. The tinga can be enjoyed cold or hot with a side of tortillas.



Beef Asado

Preparation:

Season the beef with salt and pepper; set aside. Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat; cook the diced onion and garlic in the hot oil until softened, about 5 mins. Transfer the onion and garlic to a 6-quart pot. Individually brown the beef chunks on all sides in the skillet and place in the pot. Add the tomatoes, crushed peppercorns, olives with their juice, quartered onion, bay leaves, and bouillon cubes to the pot; bring to a boil. Stir the ketchup into the mixture, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 1 hour. Remove the beef from the pot and set aside. Add the red bell pepper to the mixture and continue simmering another 30 mins. While the mixture continues to simmer, heat 2 tbsp oil in the skillet. Cook the potatoes in the oil until golden brown; immediately add to the simmering mixture. Slice the meat against the grain and add to the pot; stir. Cook together another 5 mins before serving. If the sauce is too thin, mix the corn flour and water together and stir into the sauce to thicken.

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 4 lbs beef chuck roast, quartered
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tbsp whole peppercorns, crushed
- 1 5 oz jar pitted manzanilla olives
- 1 onion, quartered
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- ½ cup ketchup
- 1 large bell pepper, sliced
- 4 small potatoes, peeled and quartered
- 1 tbsp corn flour (optional)



This dish is rich in flavor due to the slow cooking of the beef with all the ingredients. The beef can be cooked to tenderness a day before, so you can skim off the fat. Do not use pressure cooker for this dish. This is a very versatile dish. It can be served with rice, bread or boiled potatoes.

—Perry Tongol

Pierna de Cordero Asada

Lamb leg slowly broiled in the oven.

—Rafa Juarez

Servings: 2-3

Ingredients:

- 4 lbs lamb legs (or more)
- 8 oz salt (depending on size of lamb legs)
- Water as needed throughout
- ½ lb small onions
- 1 lb small red potatoes
- 8 oz garlic heads (10-15)

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place 2 lamb legs on an oven tray, add salt and place the onions, red potatoes and garlic around the legs. Place them inside the oven, close to the upper radiant heater, and broil for 45 mins to an hour at 350 degrees. Mix water with salt and pour it over the legs with a large spoon every 15 mins, or as needed to prevent dryness, keeping the moisture in the legs and tray during the whole time.



Seco de Cordero con Arroz

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs lamb (shoulder or leg), cut in 2-in cubes
- 1/8 cup vinegar
- ¼ tsp cumin
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large large red onion, finely chopped
- 1 bunch cilantro, without stems
- 2 large potatoes, cut in quarters
- 1 small tomato, peeled and cut
- ½ cube Knorr® beef bouillon
- ½ small can of peas
- Oil, salt and pepper
- Hot water

White Rice

- 2 cups parboiled rice
- 4 cups boiling water
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup oil
- 3 tsp salt

Preparation:

Lamb Stew

Brown the lamb in hot oil and remove. Blend the onion, garlic, cube Knorr, tomato, cumin, vinegar and cilantro with a little water. Place the lamb in the blended stew. Cover with hot water and cook at medium temperature until tender. Add the potatoes, salt and pepper; check the water and cook until they are ready. Add the peas. Serve with white rice (optional).

White Rice

Put the oil in a medium Teflon® pot. Fry the garlic for a couple of mins and add the water and the salt. When it's boiling, add the rice and let it boil for 5 mins. Then reduce the temperature to simmer for 8 more mins. The time is very important because the rice needs to stay al dente, no more cooking than that. Al dente is ready. Use a timer.

This is a traditional Peruvian Creole dish originated in the northern areas; our family served it during holiday times in November and December.

—Remo Mazzini



Nopalitos con Queso

Preparation:

Salsa

Peel the green tomatillos and wash them with warm water. Save the husks. Grind in a blender all the ingredients for the sauce. In a saucepan, put a tbsp of olive oil to sautee all the ingredients for the sauce.

Separately, cut cactus into squares and cook them in a small container with enough water to cover them, over medium heat for 10 mins, adding the tomatillo husks and 1/2 tsp salt. Once cooked, drain and place them into the pan with the sauce. Let them simmer for 10 mins. Add the diced Cotija cheese, cover the pan and let it cook for an additional 3 to 5 mins. Cotija cheese softens but does not melt. Serve immediately. This dish can be served with rice Mexican style and refried beans Guerrero style. Enjoy!

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

6 cactus leaves
8 oz cotija cheese, cut in larger squares
1/2 tsp salt

Salsa

6 jalapeño peppers (quantity can be adjusted to taste)
6 large green tomatillos
2 garlic cloves
1/2 regular-size onion
1 tsp Knorr® Suiza® chicken broth
1/4 tsp salt
1 tbsp olive oil

This is a delicious and easy-to-prepare recipe from the kitchen of Maricela Serrano. Used with permission. Cacti are ideal for low-calorie diets and for their high content of fiber and proteins.

—Ruth Harding

Venezuelan Arepas

Preparation:

Fish

Bring water to a rolling boil in a large pot. Add the tilapia and cook until filets turn white. Heat half of olive oil in a large saucepan. Mince the onion, garlic and half of the red and green peppers; place them in the hot saucepan (medium heat). Add chopped leek and sauté until translucent. Add the tilapia 1 by 1 and separate it into tiny chunks. Stir until mixed, reduce heat and add minced scallions, capers, raisins, salt and pepper to taste. Add the fish broth and stir. Reduce heat to low and wait until dry, stirring occasionally to avoid burning. Black beans: Heat the other half of olive oil in a pot. Mince the other halves of the red and green peppers. Place them in the hot pot and sauté until soft. Add the whole can of black beans (not drained) and stir occasionally until it dries a little (avoid burning).

Arepas

In a bowl mix the 3/4 cups of water with desired salt; slowly add the corn flour until dough is formed. Let stand for 5 mins. Form arepas of 2.5-in diameter and 1/4-in thick. Put onto a flat pan previously greased with margarine at medium heat. Cook until brown on both sides, then put into the oven at 350 degrees approximately 20 minutes (10 minutes each side).

Serving: Cut arepas in half and stuff with the fish, black beans and cheese.



The arepa is a flat, round, unleavened patty made of cornmeal or flour, water and salt, which can be grilled, baked, boiled or fried. It can be topped or filled with meat, eggs, tomatoes, salad, cheese, shrimp or fish, depending on the meal. There are several recipes for fillings.

—Salomon Dayan



Servings: 12

Ingredients:

1/4 cup olive oil
1/2 large onion
2 cloves garlic
1 cup leeks, chopped
1 red pepper
1 green pepper
1 tbsp capers
1/4 cup raisins (optional)
3 filets tilapia
1 cup fish broth
Salt and pepper to taste
2 15 oz cans black beans
2 cups mozzarella cheese, grated
3 cups corn flour (Harina Pan® or Goya Masarepa®)
3/4 cups water

Slow Cooker Carne Guisada

Really easy and flavorful beef recipe. In my family we eat it with rice and rolls for the holidays, but it's also really good as a burrito filling or just with tortillas on other days.

—Senia Villegas

Preparation:

Mix together the flour, chili powder, cumin and salt in a small bowl. In a large bowl, combine beef, potatoes, onion, red pepper, and garlic. Toss the flour mixture into the beef mixture until evenly coated. Place the mixture into a slow cooker and pour in the beef broth. The broth should barely cover the meat; if there isn't enough, then just add water. Cook on low until beef is tender, 6-8 hours. We prefer it shredded, so before serving we shred the meat using two forks and add a few shakes of black pepper.

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 1½ lbs chuck roast, cut into cubes
- 2 medium potatoes, unpeeled and diced (don't make them too small)
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp chili powder
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp salt
- 1½ cups beef broth
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into strips
- 1½ garlic cloves, crushed

Pork Loin with Mushroom Sauce

Use your slow-cooker (Crock-Pot®) to make this delicious dinner. This is great for a dinner party, because you don't have to spend a lot of time in the kitchen preparing this dish; the slow-cooker does most of the work for you.

—Theresa Jimenez

Preparation:

Pat pork loin dry with paper towels. Season with kosher salt and black pepper on all sides. Heat a large sauté pan on med-high heat, add 1 tsp olive oil and 2 tbsp butter until butter melts. Sear the pork on all sides. Place pork in slow cooker. (If your slow-cooker is not wide enough, you can cut the meat in half.) Turn sauté pan down to medium heat and add chopped red onion, sliced mushrooms, and minced garlic. Cook 3-4 mins, or until vegetables are soft. Add the contents of the sauté pan to the slow-cooker, making sure to include any drippings. Using a 4-5-in piece of kitchen twine, tie the rosemary, thyme and sage and place in slow-cooker, leaving one end of twine hanging out of the cooker (so you can easily remove the stems later). Add the entire box of stock to the slow-cooker. If the stock liquid doesn't fully cover the pork loin, add water to cover the pork. Turn slow-cooker on high, cover and cook for about 3 hours, or until meat registers 145 degrees. About 10 mins before serving, turn off slow-cooker and remove pork loin to cutting board. Slice into 1-in-thick slices, arrange on a platter, and cover with foil. While meat is resting, remove kitchen twine from slow-cooker and strain liquid into a large bowl. In the same large sauté pan, melt remaining 3 tbsp butter and add 3 tbsp all-purpose flour. Cook flour on med heat, whisking constantly for 1-2 mins or until flour becomes golden. SLOWLY add 1 cup of strained liquid from slow-cooker, whisking continuously. When liquid thickens, slowly stir in the heavy cream and continue to whisk until it becomes a thickened gravy. Add salt and pepper to taste. Add the strained mushrooms and onions back into the cream sauce if you wish, or serve on the side. Pour cream sauce over the sliced pork and serve. Garnish with chopped flat-leaf parsley on top, if desired.

Kitchen tools needed:

Kitchen twine, slow-cooker (larger size), large sauté pan, wire whisk

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 5 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 lbs boneless pork tenderloin
- 1 medium red onion (chopped in 1-inch pieces)
- 10 oz white or portabella mushrooms (sliced)
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 4 leaves fresh sage
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 cloves fresh garlic (minced)
- 32 oz box chicken or vegetable stock
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- Flat-leaf parsley (for garnish, if desired)

Raspberry Chipotle Pork Tenderloin

Servings: 2-3

Ingredients:

- 1 small pork tenderloin (ask at meat counter for a small cut; he/she has it pre-cut to the right size)
- 8 slices of raw bacon, thick cut is preferable
- 5 tsp favorite meat rub
- 2 cups raspberry jam
- Pinch of chipotle pepper powder (or more if you like spicy food)
- 1/2 tsp lemon juice
- Pinch of chili pepper seeds (preferable) or powder (more if you like spicy food)

Versatile pork tenderloin that is sweet, savory and has a little nip to it. Easy to cook, no fuss, and perfect for a two-three-person household.

—Yvonne Cantu

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Rinse pork lightly and pat dry with paper towel, leaving slightly damp. Place in baking pan. Generously sprinkle meat rub on the top and sides of tenderloin. Wrap bacon around tenderloin, securing with toothpicks on sides and underneath. Place pan in oven on center of top shelf and cook for 30 mins. Pour 1 1/2 cups of raspberry jam into medium-sized bowl, microwave for approximately 30 seconds to liquefy the jam. Add the chipotle and chile peppers and stir thoroughly. Add lemon juice a few drops at a time. Taste test, as the mixture shouldn't be too tart. Also taste test for spiciness/hotness. This is the time to add more "heat" to the mixture. Set the mixture aside to congeal somewhat but not set up like gelatin. When the tenderloin is done, remove, be careful not to roll tenderloin on its side in the pan (if it does, upright it quickly as it may pull off the bacon). Bacon should be tender and tenderloin should appear medium gray in color. Let meat rest for about 3-5 mins while stirring the raspberry sauce. Raspberry sauce should be slightly thick but NOT runny. If it's runny, place it in the refrigerator for about 3-5 mins to chill. Spoon the raspberry sauce over the tenderloin. Try to spread as evenly as possible (keeping the half cup aside for later). If it pools to the sides, that's all right. Place back into oven at 425 degrees for 10 mins. This part is important: place the oven on BROIL (high if it gives you a choice), and take pan out once again. Pour remaining mixture over tenderloin, trying to heap as much as possible on top of meat. Place back into oven so that top may broil and crust. This is a slightly tricky part. Be sure you have the oven light on so you can see. Check EVERY minute as the bacon and sauce begin to broil, bubble and crisp. DO NOT let it go past five mins, as the sauce and meat will continue to cook once you remove it from the oven. (If you hear loud bubbling and popping, take it out right away so you don't overcook the sauce.) Let the meat rest for about 4-5 mins. Use a long-tined fork (not a silverware fork if possible) and slice tenderloin carefully so as not to tear it. Try to avoid slices more than 1/2-in thick. Sauce will drip between slices and this is good, as it will make a saucy gravy. Serve while still hot. Spoon drippings and leftover sauce in pan over individual servings for "dipping" as you eat the tenderloin. (Leftovers taste just as good the next day!)



Pork Tenderloin with Plum Chutney

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

- Plum Chutney
- 4 red or black plums
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large shallot, sliced lengthwise
- 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup sherry vinegar or apple cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp chopped garlic
- 1 tbsp mustard seeds
- 2 tsp grated peeled ginger
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- Kosher salt

Pork

- 2 tbsp fresh rosemary, minced
- 4 tsp herbes de provence
- 4 tsp olive oil
- 2 pork tenderloins (about 2 lbs)
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 16 thin slices Pancetta (Italian bacon plum chutney — about 8 oz)
- Kitchen twine

Preparation:

Plum Chutney

Peel plums, if desired. Halve and pit. Cut into 1/2-inch wedges. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add shallot and cook, stirring occasionally, until shallot begins to soften, about 2 mins. Add brown sugar, next 6 ingredients, and 1/4 cup water. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture is fragrant, about 2 mins. Stir in plums. Cover and simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 8 mins. Uncover and continue cooking, stirring occasionally, until fruit is soft and juices have thickened, 20-25 mins. Season to taste with salt. Let cool slightly. DO AHEAD: Chutney can be made 1 week ahead. Cover and chill. Rewarm slightly before serving.

Pork

Stir rosemary, Herbes de Provence, and oil in a small bowl. Rub all over pork; season with salt and pepper. Wrap pancetta slices around pork and tie at 2-in intervals with kitchen twine to hold together. DO AHEAD: Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. If using a charcoal grill, build a medium-hot fire; push coals over to 1 side of grill. If using a gas grill, heat all but 1 burner to high. Grill tenderloins over hot part of grill, turning frequently, until a crisp brown crust forms on all sides, 8-10 mins. Move tenderloins to cooler part of grill to gently cook through; cover and cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the middle of each loin registers 145 degrees, 15-20 mins longer. Transfer tenderloins to a cutting board. Let rest for 10 mins. Slice thinly and serve with plum chutney alongside.

In this delicious double dose of pork, the tenderloin stays juicy inside a crispy pancetta crust. Make sure to save any extra chutney — you will want it for pork sandwiches the next day.

—Erika Villarreal



Whole Grain Tuna Pasta

Servings: 4 (approx 285 calories per serving)

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 15 oz can tomato sauce
- Salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ tsp oregano
- 4 leaves fresh basil
- 1 7 oz can light tuna in water
- ½ tbsp sugar
- 4 cups 100% whole grain extra wide noodle style pasta*



Whole grain pasta with tomato tuna sauce. Only 20 mins preparation.
—Salomon Dayan

Preparation:

Sauce

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan. Mince the onion and garlic and place in the hot saucepan (medium heat) and sauté until translucent (approx 2 mins). Add the tomato sauce and stir until it starts to make bubbles; reduce heat and add salt and pepper to taste. Add oregano and basil; continue to stir for about 5 mins. Drain the tuna and separate it into tiny chunks (with a fork) and add it to the tomato sauce. Add sugar and stir. Reduce heat to low and wait 10 mins before serving.

Pasta

Bring water to a rolling boil in a large pot. Add 1 tbsp salt. Add all the pasta at once and stir. Boil for about 7-10 mins, until the pasta is al dente. (Whole grain pasta takes more time than regular pasta.) * Can use pasta of preference – will change plate calories

Serving

When ready, serve pasta (approx 1 cup) in plate. Put ½ cup of sauce on top and decorate with 2 basil leaves on top.

Lomo Saltado Peruano

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 3 lbs filet mignon
- 5 medium potatoes
- 3 red onions
- 3 vine tomatoes
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Olive oil
- 4 tbsp red wine vinegar
- Fresh parsley
- Fresh garlic



Lomo saltado is a Peruvian dish that has Asian influences (chifa) consisting of strips of sirloin marinated in vinegar and spices, then stir fried with red onions, parsley and tomatoes. It is traditionally served over white rice with homemade French fries that look more like potato wedges. Its combination of both cultures makes the dish very popular.

—Sandra Alfaro-Rodriguez

Preparation:

Cut the filet mignon into small strips (2 inches in size), as well as the onions in long strips and potatoes also. (See Photo A.) Season the meat with fresh garlic, salt and pepper and put to one side. In a large frying pan, stir-fry the meat in small portions so that it cooks crispy and juicy (and does not boil). Remove each small portion from the pan when fried and move to a serving container. Continue frying the rest of the meat. Fry the potatoes in the pan and move to the container with cooked meat (or add the McDonald's potatoes over the meat). Add the red onions, olive oil, and salt and pepper to taste to the frying pan and saute quickly. See Photo B. (You may also add some crushed red pepper if you like some spice.) Peel the tomatoes, cut into strips, and add to the frying pan with the onions. Add 4 tbsps of red wine vinegar, fresh parsley (to taste), cover and let simmer for a few minutes, until tomatoes are tender/crushed. Remove from heat and add onion and tomato mixture over bed of meat and potatoes and mix with a large spoon. (See Photo C.) Serve over white rice.

Sides

Nochebuena Salad

The Nochebuena Salad is a Christmas Eve tradition that can't be absent during my family's Christmas dinner, and is prepared only at this time of year to accompany the typical Christmas dishes. The recipe has been passed from generation to generation for 90 years and is unlikely to disappear in the next 90 because everyone loves it.

—Agustin Loza

Preparation:

Boil the beets until tender. In the meantime peel the apples and chop in medium-size squares. As beets are cooked, chop them just like the apples. Stir apples and beets in a bowl and add the nuts. In a different vessel pour the cream, mayonnaise, vanilla, sugar and a little beet juice; stir all until it turns into a pinkish cream. The beet juice is used so the cream is not very thick, but the amount to be put into the cream depends on personal taste. With all the ingredients ready, pour into the main bowl with apples, beets and walnuts and stir everything. ¡Buen provecho!

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs yellow golden apples
- 2 medium beets
- 7 oz walnuts, chopped very tiny
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3 tbsp mayonnaise
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 3 tbsp sugar
- Beet juice (the result of boiling them)



Frijoles a la Suegra

Preparation:

Wash beans and pick out anything that's not a bean. Soak beans in clean tap water for a minimum of 3 hours; overnight is best. Pour beans through a colander to drain the soak water, place beans in stewpot. Fill stewpot with water to about one inch above the level of the beans. (In this recipe, you should always be able to see the water level. If you don't, then add more water to bring it up to a level one inch above the level of the beans.) Mince garlic and chop cilantro to a medium size. Take the box of ground black pepper and sprinkle a solid layer of black pepper on top of the water, until you can barely see through the pepper. It will seem like a lot, but it gives the beans one aspect of their character (it should be just about 3 or 4 tablespoons). Toss in the salt and your packet of Sazón. Check your recipe. Add your minced garlic and chopped cilantro. Now cover with a lid that fits the pot and bring the whole shebang to a boil, stirring first to mix everything together, then stirring again from time to time as the mixture comes to boil. ¡Ojo! As the mixture approaches boiling, it will form a foamy layer on top of the water. It's part of the recipe, so don't worry about skimming it off, but don't let it boil over onto your stove either. If it does, turn down the heat until it subsides. Once the beans have boiled, turn down the heat and let the mixture settle into a no-nonsense simmer, where they'll stay for an hour and a half or two (with you stirring them periodically so they don't stick to the stewpot). After about that amount of time, you should begin testing the beans for "done-ness," typically these beans are served when they've cooked until they're fairly soft, borderline broken-up. As you're tasting, you'll also be tasting for salty. In other words, they may taste bland here; more salt will fix that. A worthwhile reminder: During the course of cooking, if it looks like your beans are drying up, make sure you add in another cup or so of water. The beans are supposed to be served soupy. I usually serve these beans with quartered limes to be squeezed directly on top of the bowl of beans at the time of serving, and some hot sauce (Louisiana brand red sauce is my preferred) for an added kick of gusto.

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 1 lb cranberry beans (if it's important you use this variety of bean, canino's market has them; I've also found them at Kroger.)
- 1 bunch cilantro
- 2 cloves garlic
- 4 tbsp black pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 envelope Sazón seasoning (with saffron/ícon azafrán, those oranges packets)
- 1 bottle of your preferred hot sauce
- 2 quartered limes

Optional

- 1 can of your preferred beer --or--
- 1 glass of your preferred wine
- *for the chef, do not add these to the beans.



Christmas Yams

This is a tasty accompaniment to your turkey, ham, pork, rib roast or whatever you happen to be serving as a main dish.

-Diane Lowrey

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 4 (or more) yams/sweet potatoes
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup (your call) butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp allspice
- ¼ tsp ground clove (optional)
- 1 cup pecan halves
- 2 tsp orange rind, grated (optional)
- 2 (or more) throwaway aluminum pie plates

Preparation:

Day before: Wrap yams or sweet potatoes in foil and bake at 375 degrees for about one hour or until soft but not squishy. Cool and place in fridge.
Day of: Peel and slice cooked yams in ¼-inch to 1/3-inch rounds; place in pie plate, layer by layer. Pour orange juice over. Add splash of bourbon if desired. Top each round with butter, brown sugar, cinnamon, allspice and cloves if desired. Place half a pecan on each round. Repeat until you have two layers. Use as many layers and pie plates as you need. Sprinkle orange rind over if desired. Bake at about 350 degrees until hot and bubbly, taking care not to burn pecans. Sorry, I can't be exact about measurements as we never wrote this recipe down. If you're Paula Deen you'll go heavy on the butter and brown sugar. Adjust for your preferences.

Smells and tastes like the holidays!

This is the prize-winning recipe that scored an awards sweep at the 2012 Ad 2 Houston Oyster Orgy, winning both First Place and People's Choice. These are true Colombian beans, guaranteed to warm your heart on a cold winter's evening.

-Brad Drew

Salsa de Chile Pasilla

Servings: Varies

Ingredients:

- 1 lb tomatillos
- 3 slices white onion
- 7 pasilla chile pods
- 6 sprigs cilantro

Preparation:

Peel and rinse tomatillos and place in a saucepan together with the chiles. Cover with water and place on stove over medium heat. Simmer (do not boil) until tomatillos have taken on a slight brown color and the pasilla chiles are completely hydrated (usually about 15 mins). Transfer tomatillos and chiles to a large blender, add the onion and cilantro, and blend until smooth. Salt to taste. Optional: If you want a smokier-tasting Salsa Pasilla, fry the salsa over high heat in corn oil.

This salsa is a great alternative from the more typical and better-known salsas. Pasilla chiles have a smoky and raisiny taste that goes well with chicken as a main dish or as the salsa in your huevos rancheros. Even better, just eat with chips ... yum!

—Gerry Loreda

Curried Brown Rice and Peas

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp peanut oil
- ½ cup chopped leeks (white part only)
- 1½ tsp curry powder (we use 2 tsp)
- 1½ cups brown rice (uncooked)
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1 10 oz box frozen peas
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1½ tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ tsp hot-pepper sauce (we use 1 tsp)


Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Warm the oil in a lidded, ovenproof 3-quart dish/saucepan; add the leeks and curry powder. Cook and stir frequently until leeks are tender. Add the rice and stir until rice is coated with oil. Pour in the stock, peas, cilantro, soy sauce and hot sauce; bring to a boil. Cover and place in the oven. Bake for 40-50 mins or until rice is tender and liquid is absorbed. Let stand for 10 mins; fluff with fork and serve.

My youngest son did not like eating peas. Instead, he found creative things to do with them. When he turned 13 he became a vegetarian, and this is one of the recipes our entire family enjoys.

—Jane O'Dea





Banana Nut Bread

This is the best banana nut bread you've ever tasted! During the holidays my mother, grandmother and aunt would all compete to see who could make the best banana nut bread. This recipe is the result of years of refining through competition. (Pssst ... One of the big tricks is to make sure the bananas are good and ripe - they should be blackening and starting to turn mushy if you want that strong banana taste.) When sliced, covered in butter and toasted till the butter begins to brown, this stuff is amazing! Serve with eggnog.

-Jason Ramsey

Preparation:

Cream shortening and sugar together. Beat eggs until light and add mashed bananas and lemon juice. Blend all with creamed mixture. Sift flour with the baking powder and salt, then add to banana mixture. Add nuts, mix and put into greased loaf pan. Bake in preheated oven at 375 degrees for 1 1/4 hours. Makes 1-lb loaf. To check if it is done put a toothpick in the center - if it comes out all gooey, bake another 10 mins. Repeat until the toothpick comes out clean (be very careful not to overcook - it has to be juuuuusstt right). It will be a little mushy in the center, but more bananas make it taste better. Slice and butter. Enjoy with a cup of coffee or a glass of eggnog!

Servings: 6-8

Ingredients:

1/2 cup shortening (Crisco® or butter is ok)
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 cup ripe mashed bananas (I use more - 3 bananas are better but you may have to cook it a little longer)
1 tsp lemon juice
2 cups sifted flour (use 1 tbsp more flour with 3 bananas)
3 tbsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1 cup walnuts, chopped

Lefse (Norwegian Flatbread)

Servings: 6-8

Ingredients:

5 large potatoes
1 tsp salt
1/2 cup sweet cream
3 tbsp butter
Flour for rolling



This potato bread is delicious with butter, sugar and cinnamon. One of my fondest memories as a kid was the smell of my great-grandmother's fresh Lefse coming out of the oven. A large, thin potato flatbread, Lefse is sort of like a big potato tortilla. It's used just as a bread side dish, or it's perfect for wrapping things in (pickled herring being a Norwegian favorite - if you're into that sort of thing). But for Christmas, Nana would always spread butter on the warm bread, then sprinkle it with sugar and cinnamon. We'd roll it up and eat it while it was still hot!

-Jason Ramsey

Preparation:

Boil the potatoes till soft. Mash them very fine. Then add butter, cream and salt. Beat until light and let cool. Take a piece of potato dough and roll it into a ball with your hands. Then roll the dough out with a rolling pin on either a wooden board with a floured cloth or a marble floured board. Make it very thin. Then bake on a griddle or cook in a large frying pan until light brownish in color. Place bread between clean, damp cloths to keep from drying out. You can keep Lefse in the refrigerator in a plastic bag. For a Christmas snack, take warm Lefse (you can reheat it in the microwave if it isn't fresh out of the oven), butter it, and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Pan de Jamón

Preparation:
In one cup of water put two tbsp of fresh yeast. Let it sit for four mins. Warm the milk, and add the salt and sugar. Prepare on the counter a "volcano" with the 2.2 lbs of flour and add the fermented yeast. Mix thoroughly with your hands. Add two eggs, the butter and little by little the milk until all the ingredients have blended. If the dough feels too watery, use some of the additional flour to even it out. Let the dough sit for 35 mins in a warm place. While the dough is "growing," serve yourself a drink. Have a "Cuba libre": Venezuelan rum and cola. Ingredients: fine aged rum, your cola of preference, and a squeeze of lime. Chop the olives into little slices. Begin soaking the raisins in water. By now the 35 mins should have gone by and it is time to assemble the bread. Split the dough in two, and use a roller to spread it out in an even, rectangular shape. Over this rectangle you will spread the ham and the bacon as if you were adding ingredients to a pizza. Spread them evenly over the dough, covering it completely. Add the raisins and the sliced olives. Here you can add the capers. For my bread, my mother Lulu would omit them, since I dislike capers. Hey, didn't your mom indulge your tastes too? Roll up the rectangle with all the ingredients on the long side, until you have a flavorful roll that will soon become a savory bread. Pinch the seam of the roll, especially at the ends after folding them over, so that nothing spills out. Let the bread sit, covered with a damp cloth, for an additional 30 mins before placing it on a tray with light oil so it doesn't stick. Heat the oven to 250 - 300 degrees and put the bread in for 20 mins. Make a glaze with the raw brown sugar by adding an egg to it and mixing. Take the bread out so you can brush on the glaze from one end to the other, then replace it in the oven. Bake the bread for an additional 40 mins, keeping an eye on it to see if it needs an additional few mins. Watch the crust so you don't burn it! Allow the bread to cool a little bit, and slice and serve warm. It is a great addition to any holiday spread.

Servings: 12

Ingredients:

3 lbs wheat flour
2 tbsp fresh yeast
7 oz butter or margarine
3 eggs
7 oz sugar
1 tsp salt
2 cups milk
1 1/4 cups smoked bacon
4 cups ham (can be smoked also)
7 oz raisins
7 oz olives
2 tsp capers (optional)
10 tbsp raw sugar

—Joaquin Lira

Pan de jamón or "ham bread" is a traditional Venezuelan dish prepared during the holiday season. It is said that the first pan (bread) was baked in Caracas in 1905 by Gustavo Ramella. It originally only had ham, but with the years additional ingredients have been added to become what it is today. The pan de jamón, like the hallaca and other traditional dishes, will vary in recipe by family, where a lot of pride is put into its making. Even so, the core ingredients tend to remain the same: bread dough, stuffed olives and raisins. My mother, Maria De Lourdes Guanchez, makes a wonderful pan de jamón. And she would indulge us kids by adding or subtracting ingredients depending on how we liked it. When I was growing up in California, it was very popular at our scout potlucks. She figured out a way of making it using pre-made dough from the supermarket so she could make many, fast (Poppin' Fresh dough). This is always an option, and you can even go to a local bakery and ask them for fresh dough; they may sell you some. The ingredients below are a "from-scratch" method for the purists. You choose your preference. You should be able to prepare approximately 3 breads with these ingredients.

Ensalada de Aguacate

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

1 large white onion, quartered
2 large avocados, cut in thick wedges
1 can hearts of palm, drained & cut in 1/2-in pieces
1/4 cup white vinegar
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp dry oregano, crushed
Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

In a small saucepan boil water; place the onion quarters in the boiling water and remove from heat. Let stand in hot water for 30 mins. In a large bowl put salt, vinegar, oregano and pepper; mix well. Slowly add olive oil whisking constantly to emulsify dressing. Drain onion and peel off thin slices from each piece. Add onion, avocado slices and hearts of palm to dressing, and toss to coat. Serve at room temperature.

This salad is my grandmother's recipe. It can be served with grilled chicken or grilled meats. It is very simple and is done with ingredients you usually have available. Preparation time 45 mins.

—Maria Claudia Alarcon

All in Salad

Salad with spring mix, tuna, olives, pesto sauce, sundried tomatoes, feta and parmesan cheese.

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 cups spring mix
- ½ cup olives
- ½ cup sundried tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup feta cheese
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese
- 2 tbsp pesto sauce
- 1 7 oz can tuna in water (or sardines if preferred)
- Salt, pepper and balsamic vinegar to taste

Preparation:

Put the spring mix in a bowl. Add the tuna, olives, sundried tomatoes, pesto sauce and cheese. Dress with salt and pepper and balsamic vinegar.

—Salomon Dayan

Rosemary Onion Potatoes

Preparation:

Place thermometer in oven and preheat oven to 350 degrees. Once oven signals that it has reached the selected temperature, check the reading on the oven thermometer. If the temperature is off, adjust the settings on the oven until the appropriate temperature is reached. While oven is preheating, wash potatoes as well as possible and towel dry EACH one thoroughly. Cut potatoes into eighths (you can do quarters but this takes longer to cook). Rub potatoes generously with olive oil, place in pan, then sprinkle with onion powder and salt to taste. Salting them at this point helps the flavor to be absorbed, resulting in a better taste. Sprinkle with dried rosemary. Gently stir potatoes and add more rosemary if necessary so all potatoes have the rosemary on them. Place pan in oven (that is properly heated to 350 degrees) in center of top shelf (which should be just above the middle of the oven). Set a timer for 15 mins. When it goes off, stir potatoes, then set oven for another 15 mins. Do not open oven in between timer settings as it will affect cooking time. At 30 mins, open oven and with a fork, poke potatoes and test for doneness. Fork should slide into potato without forcing. Taste one, as you can still adjust the flavor. If potatoes are ready, place back into oven for another 2 mins on BROIL to give them some crispiness. Keep a close watch and check every 10-15 seconds, as you want a slight crust to the potatoes, not a burnt crisp! Stir potatoes and pour out into a serving dish (not plate, as they will become cold too fast) and serve while hot. Accompanies green beans or a salad very well.

Utensils needed:

Shallow pan, 8x8 or slightly bigger, can use glass, very sharp paring knife (knife sharpener would be good to have on hand). Oven thermometer (can be found at most grocery stores in baking aisle). Timer.

Versatile side dish that can accompany chicken, pork and beef. Easy to do: tastes like you went to a lot of trouble to make a gourmet potato dish.

—Yvonne Cantú

Servings: 2-3

Ingredients:

- 9 small red potatoes (about the size of a fist)
- Olive oil
- Rosemary seasoning
- Sea salt
- Onion powder



Avocado and Shrimp Salad

Got inspiration for the recipe after traveling so many years to Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico.

—Rogelio A. Cota

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:
2 Mexican avocados, ripe
8 oz small shrimp, cooked
1 cup mango or pineapple, cut into small cubes
2 tbsp red onion, diced
½ tsp adobo
2 tsp fresh lemon juice

Preparation:
Cut the avocado down the middle; twist the halves to separate them; remove the seed by striking it with the blade of a knife and twisting the knife. Remove the avocado from the skin with a spoon; cut the avocado into little cubes; save the skin. Set aside 4 shrimp for garnish. In a medium-sized container, mix the remaining shrimp with the mango or pineapple, the red onion, adobo and lemon juice. Carefully add and mix the avocado. Place the mix into the avocado skins, dividing it into equal parts; garnish with the shrimp you set aside.



My Mashed Potatoes

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:
2 garlic heads
1 bag large potatoes
1 cup butter/margarine
½ cup chives/green onion
Salt and pepper
12 oz sour cream
8 oz sharp white cheddar, grated
1 pack cooked bacon

Preparation:
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut tops off garlic heads. Wrap garlic in foil and roast in oven for 30-40 mins. Let cool. Peel garlic and set aside. Cut potatoes in cubes and cook in large stew pot of salted water until soft. Drain and put into bowl. Cut chives and bacon. Beat potatoes with hand mixer and/or masher until smooth. Add salt to liking, then butter, garlic, pepper and sour cream. Add in grated cheese, cut chives and cut bacon. Warm in oven 5-10 mins. Serve hot and enjoy!

I make these mashed potatoes for my family every year for Thanksgiving and I never go home with leftovers. They are easy to make, which makes it perfect for any potluck or family gathering.

—Janaile Villarreal



Easy Swiss Chard

I have to credit Brad "The Farmer" Drew for this recipe, but even more for turning me on to Swiss chard. Thank you, Brad. Swiss or not, chard is highly nutritious, and it's especially rich in vitamins A, K and C, plus on top of that, it's high in fiber. It's super-easy to prepare, and it goes well with pretty much anything else you may want to put into your digestive tract. The best chard I've had comes straight from The Farmer's backyard, but you can find chard at your local grocery store or market, since Brad doesn't package and export Swiss chard ... yet. Maybe if you say this three times, quickly: We wish he'd swiftly ship his leafy Swiss. I've tried a few recipes, but this one's pretty easy.

-Luis Gonzalez

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
½ red onion or one shallot, chopped
1 bunch swiss chard
½ cup white wine (you must drink the rest of the bottle as you cook, and no, it doesn't have to be chardonnay.)
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp Parmigiano-reggiano (or equivalent Parmesan-type cheese)
Salt

Preparation:

Start with a large frying pan, because even though the chard is going to shrivel up, you start out with a lot of leaves, so you need a place for them to go. I'm serious, it's almost magical. I have put massive amounts of chard into the pan and it always fits once it cooks down. Heat up and melt the butter and olive oil. (FYI, the olive oil prevents the butter from burning. Also, butter is tasty, olive oil is hot, so combined it's twice as tasty.) Once the buttery oily butter-oil is hot, throw in the garlic-onion choppiness and get it going. Don't let it burn like it's the first time you've ever used the stove. And get ready to turn the heat down to simmer-time. If you're going to cook the chard stems, now is a good time to throw them in, plus the ½ cup of wine, if you haven't drunk it all and still have some left. You may have to open another bottle. I have even used red wine in a pinch. It works, just know that everything turns dark red and looks weird, but it still tastes good. Why? Because it's chard, and it's awesome. Simmer the stems for about five mins, because they need to be tender. Then throw in the leaves. It won't take long for them to shrivel up to nothing, like your New Year's resolution to bring your body fat under 10%. Just keep an eye on the foliage-du-chard, as you won't want them leaves to turn to mush. At the very end, sprinkle the lemon juice, cheese and salt. Then sit down, eat Swiss chard, and thank The Farmer.



Breakfast



Christmas Gingerbread Waffles



Servings: 2-4

Ingredients:

3 cups all-purpose flour
4 tsp baking powder
2 tsp ground cinnamon
2 tsp ground ginger
½ tsp freshly grated nutmeg, eyeball it
½ tsp salt
4 large eggs
½ cup packed dark brown sugar
1 cup canned pumpkin puree
1 ¼ cups milk
½ cup molasses
½ cup (1 stick) melted butter, plus some to butter the iron
Syrup, whipped cream or fresh fruits for topping, to pass at table

Preparation:

In a large bowl combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg and salt. In a medium bowl, beat eggs and brown sugar until fluffy, then beat in pumpkin, milk, molasses and melted butter. Stir the wet into dry until just moist. Do not overstir the waffle batter. Place batter in waffle iron and cook.

Toppings: Hot chocolate sauce (see below), whipped cream, cinnamon, powdered sugar or fruit – your choice.

To make chocolate sauce: In a saucepan, combine 2 cups of boiling water, 1 cup sugar, 2 tbsp cornstarch, ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, and 1 tsp salt. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat and add 2 tsp of vanilla and 2 tbsp butter, stir until smooth.

Great Christmas tradition of gingerbread waffles with chocolate sauce and strawberries with powdered sugar, great with hot chocolate or milk. Our kids love helping make these and we have even used cookie cutters afterward to make shapes of gingerbread boys and girls.

—Crystal Monteleone

Pumpkin Waffles & Apple Syrup

Servings: 6

Ingredients:

Syrup

½ cup white sugar
1 tbsp cornstarch
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 cup apple cider
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp butter
4 apples, minced

Waffles

1 bottle Bisquick® (6-12 servings)
2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground allspice
1 tsp ground ginger
½ tsp salt
¼ cup packed brown sugar
29 oz canned pumpkin
2 cups milk
4 eggs, separated
¼ cup butter, melted

This is an easy recipe for some delish waffles. If you are a novice cook, this dish will certainly make your friends and family think you're a culinary genius!

—Idalia San Juan

Preparation:

Preheat a waffle iron according to manufacturer's instructions. Combine Bisquick, cinnamon, allspice, ginger, salt and brown sugar in a mixing bowl. In a separate bowl, stir together the pumpkin, milk and egg yolks. Whip the egg whites in a clean dry bowl until soft peaks form. Stir the flour mixture and ¼ cup melted butter into the pumpkin mixture, just to combine. Use a whisk or rubber spatula to fold 1/3 of the egg whites into the batter, stirring gently until incorporated. Fold in the remaining egg whites. Cook waffles according to manufacturer's instructions. To make the syrup, stir together the sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon in a saucepan. Stir in the apple cider and lemon juice. Cook over medium heat until mixture begins to boil; boil until the syrup thickens. Remove from heat and stir in the 2 tablespoons of butter until melted, plus minced apples. Serve warm.



Eggs Veggiedict

Preparation:

Hollandaise sauce

Fill the bottom of a double boiler partway with water. Make sure the water does not touch the top pan. Bring water to a gentle simmer. In the top of the double boiler, whisk together egg yolks, lemon juice, white pepper, Worcestershire sauce, and 1 tbsp water. Add the melted butter to egg yolk mixture 1 or 2 tbsp at a time while whisking yolks constantly. If hollandaise begins to get too thick, add a tsp or 2 of hot water. Continue whisking until all butter is incorporated. Whisk in salt, then remove from heat. Place a lid on pan to keep sauce warm. For an easier, faster version, however not as good: Just follow directions on the Maggi® pack for hollandaise sauce. Preheat oven on broiler setting.

To poach eggs

Fill a large saucepan with 3 in of water. Bring water to a gentle simmer, then add vinegar. Carefully break eggs into simmering water, and allow to cook for 2½ to 3 mins. Yolks should still be soft in center. Remove eggs from water with a slotted spoon and set on a warm plate. While eggs are poaching, toast the English muffins on a baking sheet under the broiler. (Using a toaster works well too.) Spread toasted muffins with softened butter, and top each one with a slice of tomato, 2 basil leaves, the cheese wedge, followed by 1 poached egg. Place 2 muffins on each plate and drizzle with hollandaise sauce. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve immediately.

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

4 egg yolks
3½ tbsp lemon juice
1 pinch ground white pepper
1/8 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 tbsp water
1 cup butter, melted
¼ tsp salt
8 eggs
1 tsp distilled white vinegar
8 round slices of tomato
8 wedges of blue cheese (or one of your preference)
4 English muffins, split
2 tbsp butter, softened
Fresh basil leaves
Chopped chives

We love breakfasts. Especially on weekends when we have more time to start the day with all of us at the table without the weekday rush. And Eggs Veggiedict has become a staple dish for weekend breakfasts in our house. And why "Veggiedict" you may ask? Well, in an effort to come up with a more vegetarian approach (I know, eggs and cheese are still considered non-vegetarian for some, but not in our house), we came up with a version that suited all of our home's taste buds. Plus, if you come to think of it, it has a very Christmassy color scheme to it. I hope you bring it into your home menu as well. ¡Buen provecho!

—Jaime Beiden

Drinks



Chocolate Indulgence Martini



Servings: 1

Ingredients:

- 2 chocolate wafer cookies
- Chocolate syrup for drizzling inside the glass and the rim
- Ice
- 2 oz store-bought chocolate milk
- 1 oz vanilla vodka
- 1 oz crème de cocoa

No one can go wrong with a Chocolate Martini. This drink never fails during our Christmas gatherings. I can't emphasize how great it tastes and how fun this drink is.

—Erika Villarreal

Preparation:

Place chocolate cookies in a plastic baggie and pound with a rolling pin or wooden mallet until fine crumbs are formed. Coat the center of a small plate with chocolate syrup in a circle. Sprinkle the crushed chocolate wafers over the chocolate syrup on the plate. Turn a martini glass upside down and dip the rim of the glass in the mixture and spin back and forth, until the rim is coated. Drizzle some chocolate syrup inside the glass, forming a swirling design and place the glass in the freezer. In a shaker with ice add the chocolate milk, vodka and crème de cocoa. Shake well. Remove glass from freezer. Strain mixture into glass and enjoy. This may sound a bit sweet, and it is, but WHO doesn't enjoy chocolate! :)

Jalapeño Margarita

A delicious, spicy and refreshing concoction.

—Manuel Villegas

Servings: 2

Ingredients:

- 4 oz silver tequila
- 2 oz Grand Marnier
- Chili powder
- Juice of 2 limes
- 1 tbsp agave nectar
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 slice lime
- Ice

Preparation:

Pour the Silver tequila, Grand Marnier, agave nectar, lime juice and jalapeño into a cocktail shaker. Add ice and shake. Put the chili powder in a small plate. Moisten the rim of the Margarita glasses with a lime and dip into the chili powder. Pour the Margarita into the chili-rimmed glasses and enjoy.



Cola de Mono (Monkey Tail)

Cola de Mono is a traditional Chilean holiday drink. It is the equivalent of the gringo eggnog. The origin of its name remains uncertain, most probably coming from the storage of the preparation in empty bottles of the Spanish liquor "Anís del Mono" (Anise of the Monkey), which pictured a long-tailed monkey on its label

—Mario Salman

Preparation:

Place cloves and cinnamon in water and heat until just boiling. Reduce heat to very low and simmer until cloves are soft and the volume is reduced about half (about 30 mins). In a small saucepan, heat 1 cup of milk and 1 cup of sugar together, stirring constantly, until just boiling. Remove from heat and stir in the instant coffee. Pour the steeped spice water into the coffee mixture using a strainer. If you want you may add a small amount of milk to the cinnamon and cloves to extract the remaining flavor. Add the vanilla and mix it into the coffee solution. In a large bowl or pot, pour the remaining chilled milk from the gallon. Then slowly stir in the hot coffee and spice mixture. Add the Pisco starting with a small amount (about 1/2 cup) and increase to taste.

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 cup water
- 18 whole cloves
- 4 cinnamon sticks
- 1 gal chilled milk
- 6 tbsp instant coffee
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp vanilla
- 1 cup pisco



Desserts



Pistachio Cake (Bizcocho de Pistacho)

Servings: 10-12

Ingredients:

Cake

- 2 sticks of margarine
- 2 cups sugar
- 5 eggs (separate yolk from egg white)
- 2 pkgs instant pistachio pudding
- 2 tbsp almond extract
- 3 cups self-rising flour, sifted
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tbsp pistachio emulsion
- 1 cup chopped pistachios

Frosting

- 8 oz pkg cream cheese
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp almond flavor extract
- 1 stick butter or margarine

I got this recipe from my cousin and it's now a family tradition. This is a dessert that we need and love to have on every occasion when we get together as a family.

—Eileen Ortiz-Garcia

Preparation:

Cake

With an electric mixer, mix the margarine and the sugar together until smooth/creamy. Add the yolks one by one; add the pistachio pudding, almond extract, pistachio emulsion and pistachios and mix. Finalize with the flour and milk, alternating a little flour with a little milk on a slow speed, beginning and finishing with flour until all is mixed together (don't beat too much; it makes bubbles). Use other bowl to beat the egg whites hasta punto de meringue (until it forms peaks). Fold it into the other mix using a rubber spatula (don't use the mixer). Pour into a ring pan sprayed with cooking oil and bake at 350 degrees for 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool for 10 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack to cool completely and frost.

Frosting

With an electric mixer, mix the butter and cream cheese together, about 3 minutes on medium speed until very smooth. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl to ensure even mixing. Add the vanilla and almond extracts and mix. Slowly add the powdered sugar. Keep adding until you get to desired sweetness and thickness. Spread on with a blunt knife or spatula, or spoon into a piping bag to decorate your cake. Enjoy!



Cheesecake

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 16 oz cream cheese
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 6 oz graham cracker pie crust



Preparation:

Mix 2 8 oz pkgs of cream cheese and ½ cup sugar until well blended. Add 2 eggs and ½ tsp vanilla extract until well blended. Pour into a 6 oz prepared graham cracker pie crust. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 mins or until center is almost set. Cool; refrigerate at least 3 hours. Once cooled, add toppings, if any, and cut into 8 pieces. Enjoy!

It's an easy recipe for a delicious cheesecake. I personally like adding strawberries with strawberry glaze on top, but cherries work too.

—Erika Marcial

Carrot Apple Raisin Paleo Muffin



Servings: Makes 12 large muffins

Ingredients:

- ½ cup coconut flour
- 6 eggs (at room temperature; if you use eggs straight out of the fridge they will make the coconut oil turn into chunks)
- ½ cup coconut oil
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 1 tbsp vanilla
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp ginger
- 1½ cups carrots, shredded
- 1 medium apple, diced
- ½ cup raisins
- 1 cup unsweetened, shredded coconut
- ½ cup orange juice
- ½ cup walnuts, chopped
- Salt

This recipe will be especially intriguing for all you health-nuts, and has a great holiday appeal. We love our menudo, enchiladas and tamales, but we are also looking to bring healthier options to our family table and came up with this one. This is a Paleo-friendly muffin. All-natural ingredients. Great for breakfast or snack time, and you won't have to worry about muffin-tops.

—Henry Cadena

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees and line a muffin tin with muffin papers. Shred your carrots (I used 3 large carrots and it came out to be about 1½ cups), and dice your apple. In a large bowl mix together the coconut oil, eggs, vanilla and orange juice. In a small bowl, mix the coconut flour, unsweetened shredded coconut, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and ginger. Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet, making sure to stir. Once combined, mix in the apple, carrot, raisins and walnuts. Scoop batter into the muffin pan. Bake 25 to 30 mins, or until browned. Cool on a wire rack and enjoy with some almond milk.

Coffee Chocoflan (Impossible Cake)



Servings: 12

Ingredients:

- ½ cup dulce de leche (cajeta)
- Cool Whip®
- Cake
- 1 pkg (2-layer) chocolate cake mix
- ½ cup sour cream (optional to add moisture)
- Flan
- 5 eggs
- 1 12 oz can evaporated milk
- 1 12 oz can condensed milk

Chocoflan is a Mexican dessert that blends chocolate cake and flan and is smothered in caramel. Chocoflan is occasionally referred to as "impossible cake." Although it is called the "impossible cake," it can be very easy to create at home.

—Karla Ruiz

Preparation:

Cake

Follow instructions on the box. If you'd like to add moisture to the cake, add the sour cream.

Flan

Slightly melt the dulce de leche on low heat and pour it into a bundt pan sprayed with cooking spray. Blend evaporated milk, condensed milk and eggs in blender until smooth and put it aside. Pour cake mix over caramel in tube pan; gently ladle flan mixture over cake batter. Cover pan with foil. Place in larger pan. Add enough water to larger pan so it comes halfway up side of tube pan. Bake 1½ hours or until toothpick inserted near center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan on wire rack. Refrigerate 2 hours. Loosen dessert from side of pan; invert onto plate. Remove pan. Serve dessert topped with Cool Whip.

Simple, Shiny and Shareable Cheesecake

Servings: 8 slices

Ingredients:

- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup walnuts, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 5 tbsp butter, melted
- 3 8 oz pkgs cream cheese
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 3 eggs



Thick, creamy and tasty New York style cheesecake recipe that is simple to make, great tasting and leaves everyone wanting seconds.

—Leonardo Basterra

Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a medium bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, chopped walnuts, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and melted butter. Mix well and press into the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan. Bake in preheated oven for 10 mins. Remove from oven and allow to cool. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and sugar together until smooth. Beat in sour cream and heavy cream. Blend in the flour and vanilla. With mixer on low speed, add eggs one at a time. Pour batter over crust. Bake in the preheated oven for 60 to 70 mins, or until center is almost set (filling will be soft). Refrigerate at least 6 hours or overnight before removing from pan.

Chocolate Praline Fantasy

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

- 1 cup chocolate wafer crumbs
- ½ cup whipping cream (divided)
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- 2 cups pecans
- 30 caramels
- ¼ cup semisweet chocolate pieces
- ½ cup caramel sauce
- ¼ tsp milk

Preparation:

Melt butter in a bowl, add chocolate cracker crumbs, and mix thoroughly. Firmly pat 1 tbsp mixture into dessert dish. In saucepan, melt caramels and caramel sauce; stir in ¼ cup whipping cream. Remove from heat, add pecans. Spoon into dessert dishes until half full. Chill for an hour. In a saucepan or microwavable bowl melt chocolate and milk. Stir in remaining ¼ cup whipping cream. Drizzle over pecan mixture. Refrigerate to chill slightly. Enjoy!



Chocolate praline parfait with caramel.

—Liz Sabo

My Mommy's Lemon Meringue Pie

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

Meringue
2 egg whites
4 tbsp sugar
½ tsp vanilla

Pie Crust

1 deep dish pre-made pie crust (any brand)

Pudding

1 4.3 oz box cook-and-serve lemon pudding
1¼ cups sugar
1½ cups water

3 egg yolks, beaten

Stir above listed ingredients, then add 2½ cups water

Preparation:

Bring pudding ingredients to full boil on medium heat. Remove from heat; pudding will become firm. Stir constantly. Cool 5 mins before putting in pie crust. For meringue, beat egg whites until frothy; add sugar slowly, continuing to beat until stiff peaks form. Add vanilla. Spoon onto pie, spreading to crust edge to seal filling in. Bake at 350 degrees or until meringue is lightly browned. Cool at room temperature for 4 hours. Keep refrigerated.

Mins to Prepare: 30. Mins to Cook: 30.

—Marissa Saenz

Rich Chocolate Truffle Pie

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

12 oz semisweet chocolate chips
1½ cups heavy whipping cream
¼ cup confectioners sugar, sifted
1 tbsp vanilla extract

1 9-inch prepared chocolate cookie crumb crust

Preparation:

In microwave dish combine chocolate chips and half of the cream. Cook on high for 1 to 2 mins, stirring every 30 seconds until smooth. Cool to room temperature. Stir in sugar and vanilla. Set aside. In small bowl, beat the rest of the cream until soft peaks form. Beat in chocolate mixture on high speed 1/3 at a time. Mix well and spoon into crust. Refrigerate at least 8 hours before serving.

This pie is super easy to make and tastes DELICIOUS! My aunt always made this around the holidays. I can just smell the rich chocolate sweetness now! If you are looking for a chocolate fix around the holidays or at anytime, make this and you won't regret it!

—Preethi Mabbu



Big Batch Christmas Cookies

Servings: 6 dozen cookies

Ingredients:

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 2 pkgs (6 squares each) Baker's® white chocolate, chopped
- 2 cups Planters® pecans, chopped and toasted
- 2 cups dried cranberries

Preparation:

Heat oven to 375 degrees. Beat butter and sugars in large bowl with mixer until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs and vanilla. Add flour, baking soda and salt; mix well. Stir in chocolate, nuts and cranberries. Drop rounded tbsps of dough, $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart, onto baking sheets. Bake 9 to 11 mins or until lightly browned. Cool on baking sheets 3 mins; remove to wire racks. Cool completely.

This is a great cookie recipe that the kids can help with, and it makes enough to share! We love to give these out to our neighbors as holiday treats.

—Shelly Dominguez Lieder

Mexican Powdered Sugar Cookies

These cookies are a family favorite during the holidays to have with coffee on cold afternoons.

—Sonia Villalba

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

- 1 cup flour, unsifted
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 3 tbsp powdered sugar
- 1 stick unsalted butter at room temperature

Preparation:

Mix together. Make small to medium balls. Put on ungreased cookie sheet at 300 degrees for 30 to 35 mins. Let cool for 2 to 3 mins. In paper bag put $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar and add 5 to 6 balls at a time. Shake well to cover, then put on a cooling rack.



Chocolate Kahlúa Parfait

A nightcap dessert.

Servings: 4

—Sylvia Rodriguez

Ingredients:

- ½ cup cold milk
- ¼ cup Kahlúa®
- 1 envelope (1.5 ounces) chocolate mousse mix
- 1 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 cup whipped topping
- 2 chocolate graham crackers, crushed into fine crumbs

Preparation:

In a large bowl, combine the mousse mix, cocoa, milk and Kahlúa®. With an electric mixer whip on low speed until blended, then slowly increase to high speed; whip until fluffy. In each dessert glass, layer 2 tsp of crumbs, ¼ cup mousse, and 2 tbsp of topping. Repeat layers once or more. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.



Pumpkin Cheesecake

Preparation:

Heat oven to 400 degrees. Fit the pie crust into a 9-in pie plate and crimp the edges. For the cream cheese layer: In a medium-size bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and egg until smooth. Spread evenly into bottom of pie crust. For the pumpkin layer: In a large bowl, beat pumpkin puree, milk, brown sugar, eggs, pie spice, and salt until smooth. Using a ladle, gently spoon pumpkin mixture over cream cheese mixture. Brush the edge of the pie crust with the egg and water mix. Bake at 400 degrees for 45 mins. Cool pie completely. Refrigerate to chill. Leave out 30 mins before slicing.

Servings: 12

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg ready-to-roll pie crust
- Cream Cheese Layer**
- 8 oz cream cheese, room temperature
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- ¼ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- Pumpkin Layer**
- 1 cup pumpkin puree (not pie filling)
- ¾ cup evaporated milk
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1½ tsp pumpkin pie spice
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1 beaten with 1 tsp water



This dessert is the perfect marriage between two flavors — one that most people don't like very much, pumpkin, and another that most people love, cheesecake. It is perfect for Thanksgiving or any other party you may go to during the holidays

—Verónica I. Szabó

Buñuelos

Buñuelos are pretty traditional with my family and me, especially around New Year's Eve. We typically go to my mother's house and make posole or mole for New Year's; then we finish it off with these delicious buñuelos. My girls really love to eat them up and wash 'em down with milk!

-Yvette Leon

Servings: 20 Buñuelos

Ingredients:

3 cups flour, sifted twice
1 tbsp baking powder
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp sugar
2 eggs
¼ cup milk
½ cup butter or margarine
Oil for frying as needed

Preparation:

In a large bowl, mix flour, baking powder and salt. In a small bowl, beat one tbsp sugar, eggs and butter. Stir in milk. Add milk to flour mixture. If dough is too dry, add a few more drops of milk. Knead dough until it is very smooth. Shape into 20 balls. Cover and let stand for 30 mins. Heat oil 1-inch deep in large skillet to 360 degrees. Roll each ball out on a lightly floured board into very thin 6-in circle. Fry buñuelos until golden brown, turning once. Drain on absorbent towels. Sprinkle with sugar-cinnamon topping while warm, or drizzle with honey. These can be frozen. Wrap separately in freezer bags. Defrost and place in a 350-degree oven for a few mins to crisp.



Peras al Oporto

Flamboyant spiced pears served warm with fresh cream or a la mode make for the perfect holiday dessert. Light and fruity with a subdued yet unexpected spicy twist. My grandma's own creation of this typical Spanish dish!

-Eugenia M. Archetti

Servings: 8

Ingredients:

8 pears freshly harvested, firm meat, not green
8 oz sour orange juice or lemon; sour orange is preferred
4 tbsp softened butter
¼ cup raw sugar
¼ cup raisins soaked in port wine (oportó)
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp cinnamon
Sweetened ginger crust
8 grains of black pepper
6 cloves
2 cups oportó

Preparation:

Remove the pears' hearts and seeds with a sharp knife. Arrange in a buttered deep baking dish. Drizzle with 4 oz of sour orange juice. In a separate bowl mix the melted butter, 4 oz of sour orange, raisins, cinnamon, sugar and nutmeg. Fill the pears with this mixture. Distribute the remainder of the mix in the baking dish after adding the cloves, black pepper grains, and 1 cup of Oporto (port wine).

Cooking: Cover the dish with a sheet of aluminum foil and bake in the oven at 325 degrees between 35 and 40 mins; halfway through cooking, add the remainder of the port wine.

Serving suggestions: Must serve warm, covered with the reduced sauce and fresh Chantilly cream or vanilla ice cream on the side. Add fresh sweetened ginger crust and/or cinnamon powder for decoration! Enjoy.



Cinnamon Sugar Banana Bread

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

Bread

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- ½ cup milk
- 2¼ tsp active dry yeast
- ½ cup banana puree*
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2½ cups bread flour or all-purpose flour

Filling

- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

Glaze

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/8 cup brown sugar
- 1½ tbsp milk
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tbsp rum (or 2 tsp rum flavoring)

Preparation:

In a small saucepan, brown 2 tbsp butter over medium-high heat. Carefully allow the butter to bubble and stir periodically until it becomes a dark golden brown. Remove butter from heat. Next, heat milk in microwave or in another saucepan over medium heat until warm. Pour the milk and butter into a bowl and stir gently. Allow mixture to cool until warm but not hot. Add yeast and granulated sugar, and stir gently. Leave the mixture to rest and proof for about 10 mins. The mixture should look very foamy and roughly doubled in size when ready. Add the banana puree (blend dark bananas in a blender), salt and ½ cup of the flour, then stir until combined. Add the remaining flour ½ cup at a time until all ingredients are combined. Knead the dough for 5 mins, or until smooth, stretchy and a little sticky. If the dough is too sticky, add extra flour in small amounts. Form the dough into a large ball and place in a lightly oiled bowl. Cover with a clean towel. Now start the glaze. Repeat the steps for browning butter with the next 2 tbsp of butter. Once browned, gently stir in the vanilla extract and set aside. In a separate bowl, mix the sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg until well blended. Set aside. Once the dough has doubled, punch it in the center once and place it on a clean floured surface. Knead the dough for about 2 mins, then roll out into a large rectangle using a lightly floured rolling pin. Take your sauce or pastry brush. Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar mixture evenly over the dough and press it on to make sure it sticks. Gently fold the dough in half (with the cinnamon sugar mix on the inside). Cut the dough into even squares, then roll each square into a ball. Place the balls of dough into a greased bread or bundt pan. Cover the pan with a towel and again allow the dough to rise for about 45 mins. While the dough rises, preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Once the dough has risen again, place in the oven for 30 - 40 mins, or until a deep golden brown. Once the bread has cooled enough to handle, take it out of the pan and place it on a serving plate. Heat the butter, milk and brown sugar in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Allow the mixture to come to a boil, then immediately remove. Stir in the rum (or extract) and powdered sugar. Once the mixture is smooth, pour or brush over the bread to your liking. Serve! Feel free to pull bread pieces off with your hands and enjoy!

This delicious "real bread" banana bread melts in your mouth and will quickly become a family favorite! This is a versatile recipe; try substituting another fruit puree for a new taste!

-Victoria Cantu

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